

The Heavenly Sheepfold; its Door, its Entrance, and its Privileges

Preached at Providence Chapel, Oakham, on Tuesday Evening, February 21, 1854

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." John 10:9

Persons complain sometimes of the obscurity of the Bible. It is true that there are in the Scriptures deep mysteries; and, indeed, it must be so from the very nature of revelation itself. God is a mystery in his being and essence; what, therefore, God reveals must, to a certain extent, partake of his own mysterious nature. Thus, one of the fathers speaking of the Scriptures says, "It contains depths in which an elephant may swim." But if there be in it these depths, there are also in it, as the same father says, "shallows in which a lamb may wade." Look, for instance, at the passage before us. Is there any darkness or obscurity in it? Are not the words simplicity itself, pregnant with force and beauty? Who is the speaker? The Lord Jesus. How emphatically and yet how plainly does he lay down this sacred truth. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." The Lord here is speaking of the sheepfold, and declares himself to be the door in it. With God's blessing, then, I shall dwell this evening chiefly on four points, all of which have a strict bearing on and close connection with the text.

I.—*First*, the *fold*.

II.—*Secondly*, the *door*.

III.—*Thirdly*, the *entrance*.

IV.—*Fourthly*, the *privileges and blessings* which are promised to those who enter in by the door.

I.—First, then, we have to consider the "*fold*." By the "fold" I understand chiefly three things. First, the universal, though at present invisible, Church of Christ; what the Apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews (12: 23) calls, "The general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven;" and that this is one, if not the leading meaning of the word, is evident to my mind from what the Lord says in the sixteenth verse, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd." This "one fold" must be the universal church of Christ, as this "one shepherd" is the Lord Jesus. But the Lord evidently in this chapter uses the word "fold" in another sense, as denoting the visible church of Christ on earth; for he says, in the verse which I just quoted, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," evidently speaking of a fold upon earth; and, if on earth, it must mean those who are gathered into the precincts of a gospel church. In the same sense the Lord uses the word in the first verse of this chapter: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Now no man can climb up into the sheepfold above, the invisible church of Christ.

But there is a third meaning of the word which seems mainly intended by the Lord here, and that is, spiritual union and communion with himself.

Now, looking at the figure which the Lord here employs, we must not view it as at all resembling the sheepfolds which we see in this long-civilized and densely-inhabited country, where there are no wild beasts to injure or destroy the tenants of the enclosure. The fold to which the Lord here alludes was such a fold as is used in countries where there

are jackals, wolves, and wild dogs, as is now the case in Australia and other wild and uncultivated countries. This is evident from the very expression of the Lord, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way." Unless there was a wall to get over, how could there be a climbing? We need not climb over a hurdle, that is easily put aside or stridden over.

But what is the leading idea of a fold, viewed as it would be necessarily built or pitched in the east? A place selected for sheep only, a place of separation whereby they are marked off from the world.

1. Now, in pitching the fold, the first thing would be, *to select a situation suitable for it*. Carry this idea, bearing upon the sheepfold, upward. God selected this world as a place wherein to pitch the fold. Sometimes infidel ideas have come into my mind of this nature: "What is this little planet compared with the starry skies we behold? and how can we think that this comparatively insignificant spot could have been so favoured that the Lord Jesus Christ should come down, suffer, and die in it?" But I have found sometimes my mind relieved from these infidel suggestions by this consideration: "God chose earth to be as it were the theatre, the spot whereon to manifest his love." And, therefore, the insignificance of the theatre is nothing; as the place which God chose wherein to display the exceeding riches of his grace, it loses its insignificance, and becomes really of greater importance than all the innumerable orbs of the starry sky. The spot, then, which God fixed upon as a place where he would pitch his fold was this earth on which we dwell.

2. Now, when a spot has been selected as a fit and proper situation on which to pitch the fold, the next step would be to

draw a line round it, so as to mark off accurately its dimensions. The measuring line could pass the outward borders and determine exactly its length and breadth. So, in a spiritual sense, the everlasting covenant of grace is that measuring line whereby God traced out in his eternal mind the dimensions of the fold, and fixed the foundations so that they should never be moved. Thus we have a description in the Revelation, 21:16, of the new Jerusalem, of which we read that "the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal."

3. The next step, especially the Oriental fold, where there are wild animals from which it must be well protected, is to dig the foundations on which the walls are to stand. And what are the foundations of the sheepfold, but the eternal decrees of God on which he has fixed the walls and bulwarks on which this fold rests. These foundations are said in the book of Revelation to be garnished with all manner of precious stones, implying the firmness and preciousness of this firm foundation.

4. When the foundations had been laid, there would next be a raising up of the walls to stand upon them. These walls are salvation, as God himself tells us, "we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." God's plan of salvation, then, through the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation by the incarnation, sufferings, death, and resurrection of his dear Son, that salvation which, taking its original rise in the counsels of God, was brought to light in due time, and effected by the sacrifice offered upon Calvary. By these walls and bulwarks is the fold made a place of shelter for the sheep, and under their shadow do they lie protected from every enemy and every storm.

II.—Having thus considered the fold, the next point to consider is the "*door.*" Who and what this is we cannot for a moment doubt, the Lord Jesus having declared, in the most clear and emphatic language, "I AM THE DOOR." Nothing can exceed the simplicity, force, and beauty of this declaration. They are words which a child may spell; a language, so far as regards its meaning in the letter, which the meanest capacity may comprehend. But the sublimity of this divine mystery, the lengths, depths, and heights of eternal love couched in the words, are such as will take an eternity of bliss to explore.

The words we may consider both negatively and positively.

1. First, negatively, when the Lord Jesus Christ says "I am the door," he excludes every other entrance, and lays it down in a most forcible manner: other admission into the fold than by himself there is none. And how strong are his denunciations against all who enter not in by him as the door. "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep would not hear them." Let us ever beware of attempting to enter into this fold by any other door, lest, as "thieves and robbers," we be suspended on the gallows of God's eternal indignation; as the cherubim guarded with the flaming sword the gates of Paradise, forbidding all access thereto, so does the declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ, guard as authoritatively the entrance into the fold except through him.

2. Secondly in a positive sense, in what way is Christ the door? As the Mediator. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." There could be no entrance into the fold of the church above or below unless there were a Mediator through whom the sheep might enter; because, without a door, not only would there be no

entrance for them, but they are, in their natural state, utterly disqualified and unfit to enter. Sin has so marred and defiled them; they have fallen so deeply and so foully into the ditch of sin, original and actual, that only as they are redeemed by the blood of the Mediator, and washed in the fountain once opened for sin and uncleanness, are they qualified to enter into the fold of earth below or of heaven above. The glorious Person of the God-Man is "the door," the entrance into the sheepfold. By this great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," is access given us unto God. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ said of himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.) In the Revelation John viewed him clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and clad as it were in this garment, does he stand as the door into the fold. In Egypt, when the destroying angel passed over, he saw the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the lintel and side post of the doors of the houses. So one might almost say the door into the fold is sprinkled with the blood that the Lord Jesus spilt upon the cross—that "blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

Nor must we lose sight of his glorious righteousness, for in that also he stands as the door, and those who enter in by that door do so through virtue of that righteousness imputed unto and put upon them. It is not our righteousness which can gain us an entrance into that heavenly fold. This divine righteousness consists in the strict fulfilment of all his covenant engagements. All, therefore, that he did, all that he said, all that he suffered, the whole of his doing, and the whole of dying, every thought, word, and deed which passed through his holy soul or was performed by his holy hands during the whole period of his sojourn upon earth, from the moment of his conception in the womb of the Virgin, until he expired on the cross, were all a part of that righteousness

which he was to work out, whereby, and whereby alone, "we can be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Let us, therefore, ever bear in mind that however beautiful the fold may appear, however strong the foundations, walls, and bulwarks, and however ardently or earnestly we may long to get in, there is no entrance but by the door, and that that door is the Lord Jesus; Immanuel, God with us. This is a truth that all the Lord's people are sooner or later brought to receive and realise, which leads

III.—To our third point, which was to shew, *the entering into the fold*.

These two things are distinct; for *the door* is one thing, and the entering in *through the door* is another. Let me explain this a little more fully. You may see in a certain way and to a certain extent the door; you may be convinced in your own conscience that there is no other entrance; you may be most fully persuaded that you only can be saved by Christ, and yet never be saved yourself. It may seem a hard saying, but it is most true, that you may be certain none can be saved except by faith in Christ; and yet you yourself may live and die without faith in Christ. So that merely to see and acknowledge there is a door will not gain you an entrance into the sheepfold. There must be an entrance into it before you can enjoy the privileges and blessings which are attached to those who enter in. Therefore the Lord says, "I am the door: by me if *any man enter in*." What, then, is it to enter in? Though there is but one entrance, yet we may be said to enter in in various ways, though all these are closely and intimately connected with each other. Faith is the grand, we may say the only means, whereby we enter in; but we enter in in various ways, according to the strength, or

weakness of that faith. Let me explain this a little more plainly and clearly. There is an entering in *by desire*. The soul being convinced of sin, is brought in due time to see that there is a blessed sheepfold, and that in it there is warmth, food, and shelter. But at present it stands without, exposed to the pitiless storm, yet all the while knowing that if found outside the door it must perish under the fury of that tempest. But the eyes being opened, it gets a transient gleam of the shelter, food, and warmth of the fold, and envies the sheep and the lambs as they lie down under the shelter of the walls, and feed upon the provision laid before them. As, then, he stands and looks into the fold, the desire of the heart goes forth that he may enter in and be one of them. Now this is entering in by desire. He cannot be said to have entered in actually, but his heart has entered in, and this is a pledge that he will in due time personally and actually enter in. But there is another degree of entrance beyond this, and that is, an entering in *by hope and expectation*. He may have been drawn a little nearer to the door than before; may have felt a degree of warmth coming out of the fold; may have got a little shelter from the leese; may have caught a glimpse of the loving countenance of the good Shepherd, and there may have been raised up in his bosom a hope that he may one day, if not now, enter in and be made manifest as one of the sheep. As in this and various ways he gets from time to time encouragement to hope in God's mercy, his doubts and fears become weakened; and as his soul is more sensibly and repeatedly favoured, so he enters in more and more in hope and expectation.

But still he has not yet entered in. The apostle, speaking of hope compares it to "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." Thus there is an entrance by hope. And yet this falls short of real and actual entrance, which is by faith and faith alone. But

how is this consistent with what I have before said of an entering in by desire and hope? for was there not faith before? If there were no faith there would be no desire and no hope. It was faith, then, we admit, but still, weak faith; if I may use the expression, it was a doubting faith; that is not faith itself doubting, but the faith of a doubter. It was therefore faith not sufficiently strong to give an entrance. Faith, like the wind, admits of degrees; the wind may blow into the harbour, but not sufficiently strong to carry in the ship. This was the spot in which the disciples so often were when the Lord told them that they had so little faith. And whilst there is only a faith of desire or a faith of hope, faith seems lacking in its full development. It is more like the bud or blossom than flower or fruit. But when the Shepherd himself draws specially near and opens a way through his Person, blood, and righteousness into the sheepfold, and faith embraces him as such, and enters in through him as the door, this is the crowning act of faith whereby the soul enters into the fold; for there must be an entering in *through* the door—not merely seeing that there is one, or seeing it opened. When, then, there is a sweet discovering of the Person, love, blood, and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, and special faith is raised up whereby he is laid hold of and entered into, then the believer enters by faith into the fold. But until this takes place in the heart, by Christ and the soul being brought together, doubt, unbelief, and guilty fear will work, and all these prevent entrance.

But the Lord has framed, so to speak, the words of the text in a most encouraging manner. It is as though he would seek by them to beat down the suggestions which Satan continually raises to cast seeking souls into despair. "If any man," he says. How the Lord seems here to open his arms wide to encourage those who have everything to discourage them. See if you cannot gather from them something

applicable to your case. You feel to have been a great sinner; your heart seems to you worse than anyone's else can possibly be; it appears as if no words could describe and no sin could exceed the baseness of your fallen nature. Well, be it so; make the worst of yourself; dip your brush into the blackest colours, and paint yourself as dark as you feel yourself to be in the most desponding moments. Then look at the words: "If *any* man enter in." Does it not appear as if the Lord uses these words with that wide sweep in order to take in those who see in themselves every disqualification, and make against themselves the strongest objections of fitness or worthiness? It is as if he would meet all their guilty fears, and address himself to all their unbelief. It is as though he would look down with the tenderest compassion on those lying at his sacred feet, longing to get into the fold, but unable to do so through the power of unbelief and the burden of a distressed and guilty conscience. O write not bitter things against yourself because you are and feel yourself to be one of the greatest and basest of all sinners! The words still run, "If any man," whatever he has been, whatever he may be, or feel himself to be, "enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

IV.—But we come now to our fourth and last point—the *privileges and blessings* which the Lord Jesus Christ has promised to those who enter through him into the sheepfold. These, as mentioned by the Lord, are three. First, "*he shall be saved;*" secondly, "*he shall go in and out;*" and, thirdly, "*he shall find pasture.*" How sweet, how expressive are these words! how they seem to fill and are adapted to every spiritual desire of the soul.

i. First and foremost comes that emphatical declaration, "*he shall be saved.*" To be saved!—this includes everything—what more do we want? To be saved!—saved from what?

saved into what? Saved from hell; from an eternity of endless misery and horror; from the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched; from the sulphurous flames; from the companionship of devils and damned spirits; saved from ever-rolling ages of ceaseless misery and horror. Have you not thought sometimes about eternity? What an eternity of misery must be, when you can scarcely bear the pain of toothache half an hour. O! to be in torment for ever!—how it racks the soul to think of it; and how, when the mind is exercised upon these solemn realities, and faith and hope are not in exercise, it strikes a gloomy damp upon the heart. What tongue, then, can express the mercy and blessedness of being saved from this; saved from hell, from the billows of the sulphurous lake, from infinite despair. I have thought of those poor creatures who lately suffered shipwreck in the *Tayleur*. What a picture does it represent to the mind of death and eternity. How thoughtless most of those poor creatures were of their approaching end until the ship struck on the rock. But did the inexorable sea listen to their cries when it swallowed them up in its briny waves? There was no respite nor rescue then. The few that escaped, escaped as it were by miracle—hundreds perishing around them. It seemed to represent to my mind how, when a soul strikes upon the rock of perdition, it is at once swallowed up in an awful eternity; and that those who are saved, are saved by a miracle of grace. And not only are they saved from all this infinite and unending misery, but they are saved into unspeakable happiness and glory. How completely do the words take salvation out of the hands of the creature and lodge it in the hands of the Redeemer. If, then, "any man," with all his sins and sorrows, doubts and fears, miseries and distresses, temptations and trials, self-condemnation and self-abhorrence—"if any man" enter in by *Me* he shall be saved, in spite of and out of all these things, however painful or distressing. What a firm foundation these words lay for a

poor sinner; what a firm rock for his weary foot to stand upon. How the Lord speaks here as man never spake, and lays down a broad platform for the foot of faith to stand upon.

And as we have looked downward and seen what he is saved *from*, may we not look upward and see what he is saved *unto*? Yes. He is saved into heaven, into eternal communion with the Three-One God, into the eternal enjoyment of his blessed presence, into the perfect enjoyment of that perfect and everlasting love in those regions of endless bliss where tears are wiped from off all faces. What a contrast! heaven and hell! eternal misery and eternal bliss! ages of boundless joy and ages of infinite despair!

But salvation includes not only what we may call salvation future, but salvation present. Thus, there is a being saved from the present guilt, filth, love, power, and practice of sin; there is a being saved from the curse and bondage of the Law, from the spirit and love of the world, from inward condemnation through the entanglement of Satan; there is a being saved in the present life from worldly anxieties and cares, from being "cumbered with much serving," from following after idols; there is a being saved from carelessness; coldness, and carnality; in a word, from every evil way and every delusive path.

The fold of Christ is a sequestered spot from the world, and therefore, those who enter into it through Christ the door, are practically and experimentally brought out of the world and delivered from it. Salvation is *past*, *present*, and *to come*. *Past* by the work of Christ upon the cross, "who *hath* saved us and called us;" *present* in the personal enjoyment and realization of it, "to us who *are* saved it is the power of God;" and *future* in the eternal enjoyment of it, when it will

be fully completed. The children of God little know the blessings which their heavenly Father has so freely and graciously bestowed upon them; they do not value them half enough; nor do they fully and adequately realize the great, the wonderful things God has put them in possession of by giving them a name and place amongst his sons and daughters, and having written their names in the Book of Life. But the blessings of salvation are still the same, and equally theirs; though they, for the most part, so faintly realize them. And if you have ever seen what you are as a poor, lost sinner, you will feel if you are saved: at the very last it will prove an unspeakable mercy. Yes; if your lot were to pass through life a miserable creature in body and soul, to expire on a pallet in a forlorn garret, to die in the wards of a hospital, or even breathe your last in a ditch, beaten upon by snow and chilled to the bones by frost, without a crust to eat, or a friend to render you the last offices, even thus and then, to be saved as it were at the last gasp, will prove a mercy which will require an eternity of praise. Is it not worth living for, to obtain salvation at last?—worth labouring for? And yet all this unspeakable mercy comes out of entering in through Christ. "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, *he shall be saved.*" Let no man deceive himself; there is no other entrance into the fold, and no other entrance into heaven.

ii. But there is another blessing here promised by the Lord to those who enter in by the door: "*He shall go in and out.*" By these words I think we may understand chiefly two things.

1. The primary meaning of the words, as it seems to me, conveys the idea of the sweet liberty of the soul as admitted by Christ himself into the fold. Look at the idea as it stands in its native simplicity and beauty. Here is a fold, the entrance into which is by a door. Now, through this door, the sheep go in and the sheep go out; that is, they have liberty to do so. It

is with the fold in this sense as with the door in the house; the children and members of the family come in and go out, the free liberty of thus running in and out unchecked being their privilege because the house is their home. The words, therefore, do not mean that a person sometimes goes into the church, and then goes out into the world; goes into Christ, and then goes out of Christ; goes into truth, and goes out into error; goes into knowledge, and goes out into ignorance; goes into faith, and goes out into unbelief or infidelity. But it is the liberty that a child has to go in and out of its home when it pleases. The stranger knocks; but the child lifts up the latch and walks in, and this it may do with perfect liberty twenty times a day. The words, then, seem to imply that comfortable access, that holy and divine liberty, that being at home in Christ, that free admission to all the privileges of the fold whereby the child of God is no longer a foreigner and an alien, but is a fellow citizen of the saints and of the household of God. The fold of Christ is not like a show-house in which there is only admission on one day in the week, and that for pay; but having once entered through Christ into the fold the child of God has, as it were, a holy liberty to come in and go out, unchecked and unrestrained. It is as it were being made free of the fold; Christ having as it were given a free certificate of admission. If the Lord has ever indulged our soul with any manifested sense of his goodness and mercy, we are no longer strangers to him and he a stranger to us but friends; as the Lord said to his disciples, "henceforth I call you not servants but friends." It is in the church above as in the gospel church, the representation of it, below. If once admitted to a gospel church you have, so to speak, the run of the house, and the privileges which belong to a member of that church, such as partaking of the Lord's supper, attending its meetings and having a manifested interest in its prosperity and welfare. These are certain privileges which belong to you as having

entered through the door of baptism into the church. Thus, when the Lord speaks of going in and out of the fold, he means to convoy thereby the sweet liberty that the soul enjoys when it has once entered through him, the door.

2. But the words, I will admit, have a secondary meaning, and one which preachers most usually attach to them. There is in experience a going into the fold when the soul goes into it for food and shelter, lying under the warm wall and feeding at the full crib; and there is a going out back into the storm, wind, and rain, which eventually makes the fold more sweet and acceptable. But this meaning of the words seem to me somewhat strained and not fully to agree with the promise; for the Lord is not describing here the soul's experience of light and darkness, but giving certain blessed promises for its comfort and consolation. I much prefer, therefore, the first meaning of the words which I have already mentioned.

iii. But the Lord also promises another sweet privilege and heavenly blessing to him who enters in by him into the fold. "*He shall find pasture.*" This the Lord has provided abundantly in himself, and this of various kinds, suitable to the appetite and conducive to the health of the flock. For instance. There is a finding *pasture in providence*. A sweet and healthy pasture indeed this is, to watch the Lord's providential dealings with us spread through a long series of years. It is seeing the Lord's providential hand which makes the commonest temporal mercies sweet. Every nibble of grass or lock of hay which we can believe to be specially provided for us by the hand of that good Shepherd, becomes thereby doubly sweet. Is it not the office of the shepherd to bring pasture to the sheep and lambs? And is not this brought to them under the sheltering walls of the fold? and does not this kind care of the shepherd endear him to the flock? Now when we can see that our daily bread, our various

earthly and most undeserved comforts, our raiment, house, and home, family and friends, are all bestowed upon us by a kind providence—when we can receive them as such, immediately from the hands of God, as though he himself brought them unto us, then there is finding pasture in providence. Viewed in this light, the commonest mercies shine before our eyes as bearing stamped upon them the lovingkindness of God. I remember, many years ago, when I was in the church of England, and fellow of a college, going on one occasion to receive my half-yearly salary. As I sat waiting in the room to receive it, I had a most clear and sweet view, such as I never had before, how it was given me by God himself. Though not very large in amount, and though I have often taken much more, yet it was, I think, the sweetest money I ever took in my life, because I could so clearly see the goodness of God in giving it me. Whenever, then, we can see the goodness of God in giving us the bounties of providence, it seems to stamp upon them a double value, and we enjoy them, as it were, with a twofold relish, as coming from his bounteous hand. "These wait all upon thee: that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good." (Psalm 104:27, 28.) If you want to eat your food in misery, take it with a thankless, rebellious heart; if you want to eat in sweetness, take it with a thankful heart, seeing it stamped with the goodness of God. A crust of bread, received thankfully as the gift of God, is sweeter than the richest and daintiest meal in which his hand is not seen: at a table so spread, you may sit down with discontent, and rise up with ingratitude.

But the pasture here spoken of is also more specially and particularly *pasture in grace*. And O what pastures in grace has God provided for his hungry sheep! Look at the promises and declarations, the sacred truths and heavenly

consolations scattered up and down the Scriptures of truth. But of all spiritual pasture thus provided for the flock, the chiefest is the flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus. This is his own divine declaration: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John 6:55.) But besides this special food from heaven, there is a wide range of pasture provided. Thus, every communication of grace to the soul out of the fulness of Christ, every promise applied with a divine power to the heart, every truth which drops with heavenly savour, every season of encouragement; in a word, every part of God's word which the soul can eat and feed upon is spiritual pasture. Thus the prophet found it of old: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." (Jeremiah 15:16.)

But before we can find the pasture, we must have a *spiritual appetite given us*. Without this, the richest pasture presents no food, and we may starve in the midst of plenty, die of famine in the "green pastures," and perish of drought "beside the still waters."

Here, then, are three marks whereby you may know whether you have entered by faith into the sheepfold. First, have you any evidence of being saved in the Lord Jesus Christ with an everlasting salvation? Secondly, have you felt any blessed and holy freedom and liberty of going in and coming out of the heavenly sheepfold? Thirdly, have you found pasture? Sometimes finding pasture in the ordinances of God's house; sometimes in the sacred truths of the gospel, as you read or hear the word of truth; and especially in partaking by faith of the flesh and blood of the Lamb.

But there may be those in the congregation who are in this spot. They see plainly that Christ is the door, and are fully

convinced there is no other way of entrance into the fold but by him; and yet they do not seem to have entered personally and experimentally in, so as to enjoy for themselves its privileges and blessings. But have you never entered in by hope and expectation? And how could you enter in by expectation unless something in you, which you could not give yourself, were expecting a blessing from God; unless you possessed a principle of living faith, whereby, though at present weak and feeble, you yet seem to realize the sweetness of the blessings held forth in the gospel. How different is this state of soul experience from climbing daringly and presumptuously over the wall, or taking the ladder of self-righteousness, and thus helping yourself in by some other way than the door. How much better to be lying in humility at the gate, looking to Jesus and longing to enter in, begging of him to open the door and give you admission, than to make yourself a daring and rash intruder. How different is this humble, dependent, and self-abased state of soul, from self-righteousness on the one hand, and bold presumption on the other. There is everything to encourage the weak and feeble part of the flock who long to enter into the fold. To them Jesus opens his arms wide, and says in their heart and ears, "I am the door:" enter through me, and by no other way. There is access to God by me, for "I am the way, the truth, and the life." If ye enter in by me ye shall be saved from all you justly dread and fear, both as regards this life and the life to come. Ye shall go freely in and freely out, and find pasture; lying down and feeding on my divine Person, flesh, and blood on earth, as the prelude and foretaste of enjoying me for ever in the blissful courts of heaven above. Amen.