

**“ENTER YE IN AT THE STRAIT GATE; FOR WIDE IS THE GATE, AND BROAD IS THE WAY, THAT LEADETH TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY THERE BE WHICH GO IN THEREAT: BECAUSE STRAIT IS THE GATE, AND NARROW IS THE WAY, WHICH LEADETH UNTO LIFE, AND FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT” (MATTHEW 7:13-14).**

# LIFE AND DEATH, OR THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY

**T**he whole world are travellers. There is no rest for the sole of man’s foot. The ways in which they walk are extremely various, yet all reducible to two: “To heaven or hell we daily bend our course.” These two are here described by their properties and end. The one is attended with things which are smooth and agreeable to the flesh, but the end is destruction. The other with things which are hard and disagreeable, but the end is everlasting life.

## **I. IF YOU INCLINE TO THE FORMER OF THESE WAYS, IT HAS MANY THINGS, IT MUST BE OWNED, TO RECOMMEND IT; PARTICULARLY,**

1. You have no difficulty in your entrance upon it. It is a wide gate; it just suits your depraved inclinations. As soon as the powers of your souls begin to act, they will incline that way. So of every particular evil course that you may take, it is easy to get into it. The gate of temptation is wide, and is set wide open to invite you. You are in ere you are aware. Evil habits are readily contracted. The transition from occasional to habitual indulgence is very short, and that of which you are scarcely sensible at the time.

2. You have also full scope for your inclination in your progress: “Broad is the way.” Though there is but one way to heaven, and that a strait one, yet there are many ways to hell, out of which you may take your choice. The broad way admits of many divisions and subdivisions. You may walk in the path of gross immorality; may swear and lie, or drink and commit lewdness; or, if you covet a degree of reputation which does not comport with such a life, you may pursue a much more decent course in the indulgence of avarice or pride. You may be a mean sycophant, cringing to the great; or a haughty, overbearing oppressor to those who are beneath you; nay, you may be both these at the same time. You may revel with the vulgar, or banquet with the genteel, as circumstances and inclination may lead you. You may scoff at all religion; or, if that does not suit, you may be religious yourself. You may be righteous in your own eyes; or, if that does not accord with your creed, you may be an advocate for grace, and turn it, when you have done, into lasciviousness.

3. Moreover, you will be in no want of company, for many go there. Rich and poor, rude and learned—it is impossible you should be at a loss for agreeable society. You will have the majority on your side, and that with many is a great matter—yea, the majority in all the nations, cities, towns and villages in the world. You will hardly go into any company or place but you will find fellow travellers to keep you in countenance... “but the end thereof is destruction!!”

## **II. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU INCLINE TO THE LATTER OF THESE WAYS, IT MUST DIRECT YOU TO COUNT THE COST. BE ASSURED IT WILL BE HARD AND DISAGREEABLE TO THE FLESH. THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH ATTEND IT ARE GIVEN AS THE REASON WHY IT IS SO LITTLE OCCUPIED.**

1. If you incline to this way, there may be great difficulties attending your entrance, for “strait is the gate.” While you are under convictions, and your hearts are not subdued to the obedience of Christ, these difficulties will appear insurmountable. To escape the wrath to come, it will appear absolutely necessary that you should enter in. Yet to forego all hope of mercy on the ground of your good deeds, or even of your prayers and penitential tears, and to sue for pardon



**BY ANDREW FULLER**


as one of the chief of sinners, wholly for the sake of Jesus Christ, is hard work for a proud heart. If you enter in, it is also necessary that you give up all your former idols without a single reserve; but this also is hard work to a corrupt heart. These are things which make many people hesitate about religion for a long time, labouring under darkness of mind, and unable to find rest for their souls.

But, let me add, these difficulties exist only in your own mind... If you can be contented to accept of mercy as one of the chief of sinners, all will be easy. Come to Jesus as such, and you will find rest unto your soul. And if His name be precious unto you, His yoke also will be easy, and His burden light. Denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him, will then be no hard service, but your very meat and drink. The way of salvation through His atoning blood will also be a source of joy unspeakable, and of peace which passeth all understanding; and you will be amazed at your former ignorance and aversion.

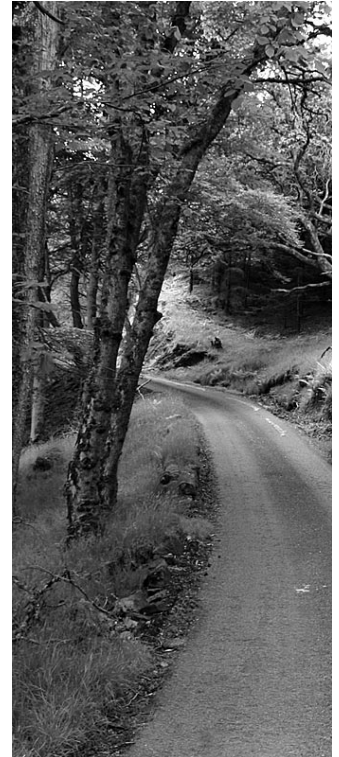
2. There may be hard struggles attending your progress, for “narrow is the way.” You may meet with contempt from the world, persecution from your connections, and, if you be faithful, with many a hard speech, and hard measure, from loose professors. You may be annoyed by temptations from without and confounded by strong struggles from within. Old companions may invite you to turn back; the allurements of the world may be placed on the right hand and on the left, to induce you to turn aside; and, through the remaining corruption of your nature, you may be too apt at times to listen to their counsels. You may also expect to meet with things that will make your heart sink within you; despondency may lay fast hold of you; and the very hand of God be stretched out against you. Let me add, however, that this way is infinitely less rugged than that in which Jesus walked to accomplish your salvation. And if your heart be with His heart, I need not add more to reconcile you to it.

3. In pursuing the narrow way, you may have but little company, for “few there be that find it.” Compared with the ungodly, religious people are but as the gleanings of the vintage. And your lot may be cast in a part of the world where few of those few are to be found. You may reside in a village where no one cares for Christ, or in a family that calls not upon His name. In such circumstances you may be the object of derision, a man wondered at, and persecuted, and even hated by your nearest relations! But be of good cheer; though there be but few who will accompany you, yet those few are the excellent of the earth. You will also hold society with an invisible host of heavenly spirits that watch over you, a host so numerous that more are they that are with you than they that are with your adversaries. And, what is more than all, the narrow way “leadeth unto life.”

Thus life and death are set before thee; which wilt thou choose? Recollect that the destruction which awaits the ungodly is not a loss of being, but of well-being. It is the loss of all that is desirable, and an exposedness to all that is dreadful; the weeping of desolation, the wailing of despair, and the gnashing of teeth which attends the most intolerable anguish. Consider also that the life which awaits the godly is not mere being, but well-being. It is an entire freedom from evil and an eternal enjoyment of bliss, “which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive” [1 Corinthians 2:9]. It will also be heightened by the trials through which we pass to the possession of it.

If you enter the strait gate, and walk in the narrow way, an abundant entrance will be ministered unto you, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; but if found pursuing the broad way, you shall hereafter strive to enter into that kingdom and shall not be able. 

*Andrew Fuller (1754-1815) was a gifted pastor, evangelist and theologian in the English Calvinistic Baptist tradition. He pastored first in Sobham and then Kettering.*



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*The punctuation of this sermon has been slightly modified and the text very lightly edited.*