



DEATH AND BEYOND - For the Christian

Extract from 'God's Terrible Voice in the City' by Thomas Vincent 1634-1678

How is it with the Christian at death? Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, the end of that man is peace; whatsoever storms they have had in their passage through a rough sea, the wind blowing, and the waves roaring, and sometimes have been ready to sink through opposition and discouragement, sometimes have been overwhelmed with grief and doubtings, sometimes have been dashed upon the rocks of terror and perplexity; yet now they are come to the haven of death, the winds are hushed and still, the waves are smooth and silent, the storm is over, and there is a great calm upon their spirits; they are past the rocks, and are out of the danger they feared, when they are in the greatest danger of approaching death.

The Christians fearing God are cut off amongst the rest; they of the same infirmity with the most profane, they are buried in the same gravel and they sleep together till the morning of the resurrection but as there is a difference in their spirits whilst they live, so there is a difference in death, and the chiefest difference, in their place and state after their separation from the body. Dives is Carried to hell, and Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, though he died with his body full of sores: devils drag the souls of the wicked after they have received their final doom at title bar of God, into utter darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; but angels convey the souls of the righteous into the heavenly paradises the New Jerusalem which is above, where God is in his glory; and the Lord Jesus Christ at his right hand, and thousand thousands stand before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand administer unto him, even an innumerable company of angels and where the spirits of all just men and women made perfects were before gathered where there is fullness of joy, and rivers of eternal pleasures running about the throne of God, the streams of which do make glad all the inhabitants of New Jerusalem. Now the weak prison-doors of the body are broken down, and the strong everlasting gates of their Father's palace are lifted up, and the saints are received with joy and triumph, into glory; and they come with singing into Zion, and everlasting joy in their hearts, and all sorrow and sighing doth fly away like a cloud, which never any more shall be seen. Now the vail is rent, and they enter the Holy of Holies where God dwells, not in the darkness of a thick cloud, as in the temple of old, but in the brightness of such marvellous light and glory, as their eyes never did behold, neither could enter into their heart to conceive there they have the vision of God's face without any eclipse upon the light of his countenance: there they have the treasures of God's love opened, and sweetest embracements; which kindles in their hearts such a flame of love, so ravishing and delightful, as words cannot utter: there they are entertained by the Lord Jesus Christ, whom in the world they have served and he that showed them his grace, which they had wondered at when they were in the body, doth now show them his glory, which they wonder at much more. There they are welcomed by angels, who rejoice, if at their conversion, much more at their coronation, there they sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of their Father there they find Moses, and David, and Samuel and Paul, and all the holy martyrs and, Christians which have died before them amongst whom they are numbered and placed, who rejoice in their increased society.

Luke 16.19 There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores

²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

²³ In hell, where he was in torment...