

WAY TO SHILOH

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DEATH AND BEYOND - For the Non-Christian

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

Now there is a great difference between the condition of the souls of the righteous and the wicked, after their death and separation; so there is a great difference between the carriage of their spirits at their death, and upon their sick-bed. Some wicked men are stupid and senseless, and are given up to a judiciary hardness, and die in a sleep of carnal security, out of which they are not awakened, till they are awakened in the midst of flames: others more sensible, and considering what hath been, and what is coming upon them, are filled with inexpressible terrors through the roarings and tearings of a guilty accusing conscience, and the fore-thoughts of that horrible unsupportable torment they are so near unto. Now scaring dreams do terrify them, and fearfulness of the bottomless pit, and the burning lake below, doth surprise them and some breaketh forth in the anguish of their despairing souls, "Who can dwell with devouring fire, who can inhabit everlasting burnings?" and however jovial and full of pleasure their life hath been, yet at their latter end they are utterly consumed with terrors. But mark the perfect man, and behold the upright (the Christian), 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. But not so the unrighteous (the non-Christian).

The non-Christian man or woman boy or girl must go down into the dust, and their naked souls, without the case of their body, must make its passage into eternity, and appear before the highest Majesty, to render their accounts and receive their sentence. None can utter the horror which hath been upon the spirits of such, through the lashes and stings of their guilty consciences, when they have called to mind a life of sensuality and profaneness, their uncleanness, drunkenness, injustice, oaths, curses, delusions of saints and holiness, neglect of their own salvation; and when a thousand sins have been set in order before their eyes, with another aspect than when they looked upon them in the temptation; and they find God to be irreconcilably angry with them, and that the day of grace is over, the door of mercy is shut, and that pardon and salvation (which before they slighted) is now unattainable: that the grave is now opening its mouth to receive their bodies, and hell opening its mouth to receive their souls and they apprehend that they are now just entering into a place of endless woe and torment, and they must now take up their lodgings in the inferior regions of utter darkness, with devils, and their fellow damned sinners, and there abide for evermore in the extremity

of misery, without any hopes or possibility of a release; and that they have foolishly brought themselves into this condition, and been the cause of their own ruin; we may guess that the despairful agonies and anguish of such awakened sinners, hath been of all things the most unsupportable; except the very future miseries themselves.

Now "Hell from beneath" is moved at the number of the guests that are received into its chambers some were damning themselves a little before in their oaths, and God is now damning their souls for it, and is passing the irreversible sentence of damnation upon them. Some were drinking wine in bowls a little before, and strong drink without measure; and now God hath put another cup into their hands, a cup of red wine, even the sin of the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty. Some were a little before feasting their senses, pleasing their appetite, satisfying the desires of the flesh, and being past feeling, had given themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness but now their laughter is turned into mourning, and their joy into howling and woe; and they have recovered their feeling again, but instead of the pleasures which they felt, and their sensual delights, which took away the feeling of their consciences, they are made to feel the heavy hand of God; and to endure such anguish and horror through the sense of God's wraths as no tongue can express.

Now the atheists believe there is a God, and the anti-scripturists are convinced of the truth of God's word, by the execution of God's threatenings in the Word upon them. Now the covetous and unjust, the malicious and cruel, the scoffers and profane, begin to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire: and the ignorant person with the civil, who are acquainted with Jesus Christ, are not excused; yea, the hypocrites, with all impenitent and unbelieving persons, are sent down to the place of weeping; and surely Hell wonders to see so many come amongst them from such a city as London, where they have enjoyed such plenty of such powerful means of grace; and place is given to them, even the lowest and hottest, where Judas and others are of the chiefest note.

Extract from 'The soul winner' by C.H.Spurgeon

To die, in Scripture, and indeed in common language, is not to cease to exist. Very wide is the difference between the two words to die and to be annihilated. To die, as to the first death, is the separation of the body from the soul; it is the resolution of our nature into its component elements. And to die the second death, is to separate the man's soul and body, from his God, who is the life and joy of our manhood. This is eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power; this is to have the palace of manhood destroyed, and turned into a desolate ruin, for the howling dragon of remorse, and the hooting owl of despairs to inherit for ever.

The descriptions which Holy Scripture gives of the second death are terrible to the last degree. It speaks of 'a worm that never dies' and a 'fire that never can be quenched', of 'the terror of the Lord', and 'tearing in pieces', of 'the smoke of their torment which goeth up for ever and ever' and of 'the pit which hath no bottom'. I am not about to bring all these terrible things together, but there are words in Scripture which, if pondered, might make the flesh to creep, and the hair to stand on end at the very thought of the judgment to come.

Extract from 'Body of Divinity', pp. 62-3 by Thomas Watson

Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming, always dying, but never dead (Rev 9:6). "They shall seek death, but shall not find it". The fire of hell is such, as multitudes of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it; the vial of God's wrath will be always dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives to be avenged upon the wicked. Oh eternity! Eternity! Who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake (Isa.30:33), and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire? Oh eternity! If all the body of earth and sea were turned into sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand years, and fetch away in her bill but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what numberless years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched Away! Yet, if at the end of that time, the sinner might come out of hell, there would be some hope; but that word 'Ever' breaks the heart. 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.' What a terror this is to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon them!

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...