

Death — and Hell Followed with Him

Ah friends! If you were but yourselves, you would have a care of your souls; if you did but regard, you would see how mad they are that slight the salvation of their souls. O what will it profit your soul to have pleasure in this life, and torments in hell? (*Mark 8:36*). You had better part with all your sins, and pleasures, and companions, and whatsoever you delight in, than to have body and soul cast into hell. O neglect Christ no longer, lest you die in your sins. Imagine the agony of heart on your death-bed: instead of having the comfort of a well-spent life, and the merits of Christ, together with the comforts of his glorious Spirit: to have the sight of an ill-spent life, your sins flying in your face, your conscience uttering itself with thunder-claps against you, the thoughts of God terrifying you, death with his merciless paw seizing upon you, the devils standing ready to scramble for your soul, and hell enlarging herself, and ready to swallow you up; with an eternity of misery and torment before you, from which there will be no release. For death doth not come alone to an unconverted soul, but with such company, and if you were but sensible of it, it would make you tremble.

Consider that Scripture: “And I looked and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him” (*Rev 6:8*). Death comes not alone to the ungodly, no, but hell comes with him. Here comes death and hell unto you. Death goes into the body, and separates body and soul asunder; hell stands without, as I may say, to embrace, or rather, to crush thy soul between its everlasting grinders. Then all your mirth, your joy, and sinful delights will be ended when this comes to pass. Lo it will come. Blessed are all those who escape these soul-murdering companions by trusting in Christ. “And in hell he lift up his eyes.”

Senseless Souls in the Hour of Death

There are some that are so fast asleep, and secure in their sins, that they scarce know where they are, until they come into hell. It was in hell that he lift up his eyes. There it is that they come to themselves, that is, there they are sensible of where they are indeed. Many poor souls are so senseless, so hard, so seared in their conscience (*1Tim 4:2*), that they are very ignorant of their state; and when death comes, especially if they die suddenly, they are hurried away, and scarce know where they are till in hell they lift up their eyes. This is he who “dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet” (*Job 21:23*). “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment,” notice, “in a moment,” before they are aware, they “go down to the grave” (*Job 21:13*).

Indeed this is too much known by woeful and daily experience; sometimes when we go to visit those that are sick, O how senseless, how seared in their consciences they are! They are neither sensible of heaven nor of hell, of sin nor of a Saviour. Speak to them of their condition, and the state of their souls, and you shall find them as ignorant as if they had no souls to regard. Others, though they lie ready to die, yet they are busying themselves about their outward affairs, as though they should certainly live on and enjoy the same for ever. And others, speak to them about the state of their soul, though they have no more experience of the new birth than a beast, yet will they speak as confidently of their eternal state, and the welfare of their soul, as if they had the most excellent experience of any one in the world, saying, “I shall have peace” (*Deut 29:19*).

Thus many of them are, even an hour or less before their departure. Ah, poor souls! though they may go away from here like a lamb, as the world says, yet, if you could but follow them a little, to stand and listen soon after their departure, it is to be feared, you should hear them roar like a lion at their first entrance into hell, far worse than even did Korah and his company when they went down alive into the pit (*Num 16:31-35*). Now, by this one thing doth the devil take great advantage on the hearts of the ignorant, suggesting unto them that because the one deceased departed so quietly, without all doubt they are gone to rest and joy; when, alas! it is to be feared the reason why they went away so quietly, was rather because they were so senseless and hardened in their consciences; yea, dead in trespasses and in sins (*Eph 2:1*). For, had they had but some awakenings on their death-beds, as some have had, they would have made all the town to ring of their awful condition.

But let them look to themselves, for if they have not an interest in Christ now, while they live in the world, they will, whether they die raging or still, go unto the same place, “And lift up their eyes in hell.” O, my friends, did you but know what a miserable condition they are in that go out of this world without an interest in the Son of God, it would make you in the bitterness of soul to cry out, “What must I do to be saved?” (*Acts 16:30*). And not only so, but you would not be comforted until you found a rest for your soul in the Saviour.

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” Our Lord seems to be saying here that men by nature are unwilling to see or take notice of their sad state; yet in hell they shall lift up their eyes. That is, in hell they shall see and understand their miserable condition; and, therefore, to these words: “In hell he lift up his

eyes,” he adds, “being in torments.” As if he had said, though once they shut their eyes, though once they were willingly ignorant (*2 Peter 3:5*), yet, when they descend into hell, they shall be so miserably handled and tormented, that they shall be forced to lift up their eyes.

While men live in this world, and are in a natural state, they will have a good opinion of themselves, and of their condition. They will conclude that they are Christians, and their state to be as good as the best (*Matt 3:7-9*). They will conclude that they have faith, the Spirit, a good hope, and an interest in Christ; but then, when they drop into hell, and lift up their eyes there, and behold their soul to be in extreme torments; their dwelling to be the bottomless pit; their company thousands of damned souls; also the innumerable company of devils; and the hot scalding vengeance of God, not only to drop, but to fall very violently upon them; then they will begin to be awakened, who all their lifetime were in a dead sleep.

“Being in Torments”

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” When I think of the torments of hell into which the damned do fall, O unspeakable torments! O endless torments! In order that you might flee from those intolerable torments into which the damned do go, I shall show you briefly something of the torments of hell.

Hell is called an unquenchable fire, a fiery-furnace, everlasting punishment (*Matt 3:12; 13:42,50*), a never-dying worm, hell fire (*Mark 9:44-48*), eternal fire (*Jude 1:7*), the devouring fire, everlasting burnings (*Isaiah 33:14*), everlasting destruction (*2 Thess 1:9*), fire and brimstone, the bottomless pit, the lake of fire (*Rev 20:1,10*).

Then a description of the sad state of the soul in hell: **(1)** One part of thy torments will be this, you shall have a full sight of all thy ill-spent life, from first to last; though here you can sin today and forget it tomorrow, yet there you shall be made to remember how you sinned against God at such a time, and in such a place, for such a thing, and with such a one, which will be a hell unto thee. God will “set them in order before thine eyes” (*Psalms 50:21*).

(2) You shall have the guilt of them all to lie heavy on your soul, not only the guilt of one or two, but the guilt of them all together, and there they shall lie in thy soul, as if thy belly were full of pitch set on fire. Here men can sometimes think on their sins with delight, but there with unspeakable torment; for that I understand to be the fire that Christ speaketh of, which shall never be quenched (*Mark 9:43-48*). While men live here, O how

doth the guilt of one sin sometimes crush the soul! It puts a man in such a plight that he is weary of his life, so that he can neither rest at home nor abroad, neither up nor in bed. They have been so tormented with the guilt of but one sin, that they have been even at their wits’ end, and have hanged themselves. But now when you come into hell, and have not only one or two, or an hundred sins, with the guilt of them all on thy soul and body, but all the sins that ever you did commit since you came into the world, altogether clapped on your conscience at one time, as one should clap a red hot iron to thy breasts, and there to continue to all eternity: this is indeed miserable torment.

(3) You shall also be made to remember how you did so often slight the gospel of Christ. You shall consider how willing Christ was to come into the world to save sinners, and for what a trifle you did reject him. Isaiah foretold of men’s turning their backs upon the tenders of God’s grace in the gospel, when he asked, “Who hath believed our report?” that is, the gospel declared by us (*53:1*). Now this will be a mighty torment to the ungodly, when they shall understand the goodness of God was so great that he even sent his Son out of his bosom to die for sinners, and yet that they should be so foolish as to put him off time and time again; that they should be so foolish as to lose their souls, heaven and Christ, and eternal life in glory, for the society of fools, for a little sport, for this world, for a strumpet, for that which is lighter than vanity and nothing. This will be a very great torment unto thee.

(4) Another part of your torment will be this: You shall see your friends, your acquaintances, your neighbours; nay, it may be your father, your mother, your wife, your husband, your children, your brother, your sister, with others, in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourself thrust out. Jesus said, “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” when you shall see this (*Luke 13:28*), and you, for your sin and disobedience, shall be shut out, nay, thrust out. What utter torment that will be!

(5) You shall have none but a company of damned souls, with an innumerable company of devils, to keep company with. While you are in this world, the very thought of the devils appearing to you makes your flesh to tremble, and the hair ready to stand upright on your head. But O! what will you do, when not only the thought of the devils appearing, but the real society of all the devils in hell will be with thee howling and roaring in such a hideous manner, that you will be even at your wits’ end, and ready to run stark mad for anguish and torment?

(6) Again, that you might be tormented to purpose, the mighty God of heaven will lay as great wrath and vengeance upon you as ever he can, by the might of his glorious power. You shall have his wrath, not by drops, but by whole showers shall it come, thunder, thunder, upon thy body and soul so fast, and so thick, that you shall be tormented out of measure: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess 1:9). This you shall have without any intermission; you shall not have any ease; you shall have it always every hour, day and night; for their worm never dies, but always gnaws, and their fire is never quenched.

(7) In this condition you must be for ever, and that is as sad as all the rest. For if a man were to have all his sins laid to his charge, and in company with the devils, and as much wrath as the great God could inflict unto him; I say, if it were but for a time, even ten thousand years, and so end, there would be ground of comfort, and hope of deliverance; but here is your misery, this is your state for ever, here you must ever be: when you look about you, and see what an innumerable company of howling devils you are amongst, you shall know this to be your portion for ever. When you have been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament, or drops in the ocean, or sands on the sea-shore, yet you have to lie there for ever. O this one word EVER, how it will torment thy soul!

O Friends! put it off no longer, seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, lest you feel THAT with thy conscience which I cannot express with my tongue, and say, I am sorely tormented in this flame.

"And He Cried"

We see here the result of too late repentance on the part of the ungodly, when they are dropped down into hell: "And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me" (Luke 16:24). From these words, "And he cried," we see what a dramatic change the ungodly have when they come into hell. "He cried." It is like he was laughing, jesting, drinking, mocking, cursing, prating, persecuting the godly in his prosperity, among his worldly companions; but now the case is otherwise; now he is in another frame. His proud, stout carriage is come down: "And he cried." The laughter of the ungodly is short lived, and is sure to end in a cry: "The triumphing of the wicked is short" (Job 20:5).

Consider, you must have a change either here or in hell. If you be not born again in this world and made new creatures in Christ before you go hence, there will

be a great change; for if you come into hell, you must cry. The devil, as he labours to get poor souls to follow their sins, so he labours also to keep the thoughts of eternal damnation out of their minds; and, indeed, these two things are so linked together, that the devil cannot well get the soul to go on in sin with delight unless he can keep the thoughts of that terrible after clap out of their minds. But let them know that it shall not always be thus with them; for if, when they depart, they drop down into eternal destruction, they shall have such a sense of their sins, and the punishment due to the same, that it shall make them to cry aloud: "And he cried."

O what an alteration will there be amongst the ungodly when they go out of this world! It may be a fortnight, or a month before their departure, they were enjoying themselves, drinking with pleasure, slighting God's people, mocking at goodness, delighting in sin, following the world, seeking after riches, but now, they are dropped down into hell, and they cry. A little while ago they were painting their faces, feeding their lusts, following their whores, robbing their neighbours, telling of lies, following of plays and sports, to pass away the time; but now they are in hell, they do cry. It may be last year they heard some good sermons, were told their sins would be pardoned if they received the Lord Jesus; but, refusing him, and slighting the gospel, they are now in hell, and do cry. Before, they had so much time, they thought that they could not tell how to spend it, unless it were in hunting, and whoring, in dancing, and playing, and spending whole hours, yea, days, nay, weeks, in the lusts of the flesh; but when they depart into another place, and begin to lift up their eyes in hell, and consider their miserable and irrecoverable condition, they will cry.

Why the Ungodly will Cry in Hell

(1) They will cry to think that they are cut off from the land of the living, never more to have any footing therein. **(2)** They will cry to think that the gospel of Christ was so often preached to them, and yet they did not believe. **(3)** They will cry to think that now, though they would gladly repent and be saved, yet they are past all recovery. **(4)** They will cry to think that they were so foolish as to follow their pleasures, when others were following Christ. **(5)** They will cry to think that they must be separated from God, and Christ, and the kingdom of heaven for ever. **(6)** They will cry to think that their crying will do them no good. **(7)** They will cry to think that, at the day of judgment, they will be on the left hand of Christ, with an innumerable company of

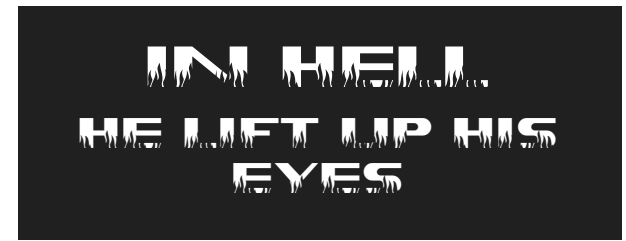
damned souls. **(8)** They will cry to think that Lazarus, whom once they slighted, must be of them that will sit down with Christ to judge; or together with Christ, to pass a sentence of condemnation on their souls for ever and ever (1 Cor 6:2,3). **(9)** They will cry to think that when the judgment is over, and others are taken into the everlasting kingdom of glory, then they must depart back again into that dungeon of darkness from whence they came out, to appear before the terrible tribunal. There they shall be tormented as long as eternity lasts, without the least intermission or ease.

How sayest thou, O proud, swearing, lying, ungodly soul, whether this be something to be made light of. Tell me now, if it be not better to leave thy sins, and commit the keeping of thy soul with Christ Jesus, notwithstanding the reproach you shall meet with for so doing, than to live a little while in this world in pleasures and lusts, in neglecting the welfare of thy soul, and refusing to be saved by Christ; and in a moment drop down into hell. Consider the torment of those who die in their sins. Think about the misery the ungodly will be in, crying out in bitterness of soul—One drop of cold water to cool my tongue, "for I am tormented in this flame!" I say, consider, and put not off the tenders of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest you lift up your eyes in hell, and cry for anguish of spirit.

O soul, whoever you may be, if you do not lay hold upon what Christ hath done and is doing in his own person for sinners, you will find such a hell after this life is ended, that you will not be able to escape its miseries for ever and ever, for "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb 2:3). Let this thought of finally ending up in hell, and being everlastingly ruined, stir you up to seek the mercy of God in Christ, instead of slighting it, and making a mock of it.

"And in hell he lift up his eyes."

—Adapted from the writings of John Bunyan (1628-1688)
Author of "Pilgrim's Progress"



The Lord himself gives us a true picture of what happens to unbelievers when this life is ended: "And in hell he lift up his eyes" (Luke 16:23). The ungodly, after they depart this life, do lift up their eyes in hell. This is a matter for us indeed to consider, that there is a hell for souls to be tormented in, when this life is over. After this man was dead and buried, "In hell he lift up his eyes." All that are ungodly, who live and die in their sins, as soon as they die, they go into hell: he died and was buried: "And in hell he lift up his eyes." There are some who are so fast asleep, and secure in their sins, that they scarce know well where they are till they come into hell; and that we gather from these words, "In hell he lift up his eyes." He was asleep before, but hell makes him lift up his eyes.

Hell is More than the Grave

So there is a hell for souls, yea, and bodies too, to be tormented in after they depart this life. The Lord Jesus Christ, who cannot lie, did say that after the sinner was dead and buried, "In hell he lift up his eyes." Now if it be objected that by hell is here meant the grave, this cannot be: **(1)** because there the body is not sensible of torment or ease; but in that hell into which the spirits of the damned depart, they are sensible of torment, and would very willingly be freed from it: "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue" (v24). **(2)** The grave is not meant here, but some other place, because the bodies, so long as they lie there, are not capable of lifting up their eyes, to see the glorious condition of the children of God, as the souls of the damned do: "In hell he lift up his eyes."

All the ungodly that live and die in their sins, so soon as ever they depart this life, do descend into hell. As the tree falls, so shall it be, whether it be to heaven or hell (Ecc 11:3). As Christ said to the thief on the cross, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Even so the devil in like manner may say unto thy soul, "Tomorrow thou shalt be with me in hell." See then what a miserable case he that dies in an unregenerate state is in; he departs from a long sickness to a longer hell; from the pains of death, to the everlasting torments of hell. "And in hell he lift up his eyes."