

The Anger and the Goodness.

by Horatius Bonar

God's anger is real and righteous, but his goodness is powerful, watchful, and unchanging, and is always available to those who trust in him.

Scripture: Nahum 1:6

Topics: "God's Goodness", "God's Anger"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the duality of God's nature, focusing on His anger and goodness as depicted in Nahum 1:6-7. He explains that God's anger is real, righteous, dreadful, and inexorable, serving as a reminder of the seriousness of sin and the consequences of judgment. Conversely, Bonar highlights God's goodness as sincere, powerful, watchful, and unchanging, showcasing His love and mercy towards sinners. He urges listeners to recognize the impending day of judgment while also embracing God's patience and desire for repentance. Ultimately, Bonar calls for a response of love and trust in God's goodness amidst His righteous anger.

Transcript

"Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knows those who trust in him." - Nahum 1:6,7

"Who can stand before his fierce anger? Who can survive his burning fury? His rage blazes forth like fire, and the mountains crumble to dust in his presence. The Lord is good. When trouble comes, he is a strong refuge. And he knows everyone who trusts in him." - Nahum 1:6-7

Throughout this chapter, and specially in these verses, let us note these two things, (1.) Jehovah's anger, (2.) Jehovah's goodness. They stand out very strongly in this "burden."

I. JEHOVAH'S ANGER

(1.) It is REAL. There is such a thing as anger in God. Many are the expressions used concerning it both in this chapter and elsewhere- jealousy, vengeance, fury, wrath; all to indicate its existence, and to show us that the human theories of divine universal benevolence are not true; being created for a purpose, and that purpose to persuade the sinner's own conscience that he need not be alarmed because of his guilt; and that no one need dread the infliction of punishment, except perhaps a few of the most wicked of our race.

But God's words are not exaggerations, nor words of course. There is a terrible truth contained in these often repeated words of Scripture, "His anger was kindled." Loving and gracious as Jehovah is, his anger is real. When Jesus comes the second time he comes to "take vengeance."

(2.) It is **RIGHTEOUS**. It is not the rage of selfishness, or passion, or affront. It is judicial anger; the anger of the righteous judge. It is anger against sin, against the sinner; anger because of insulted law and dishonored righteousness. Nothing in it is unjust, or cruel, or arbitrary. Then the condemned soul will be compelled hereafter to say, it was all right and just; it shall be right and just to all eternity.

(3.) It is **DREADFUL**. Though calm, it is unutterably dreadful; no, overwhelming. No power and no numbers shall be able to stand before it. It shall sweep everything before it like a whirlwind. The expulsion from Paradise, the deluge, the ruin of Sodom, are specimens of its terribleness. The lost soul shall be utterly overwhelmed.

(4.) It is **INEXORABLE**. Nothing shall turn it aside or soften it when once it is kindled. "The vengeance of eternal fire," the "everlasting burnings," the "worm that dies not," these are dreadful words. No bribery, no argument, no influence shall prevail against it. Not even pity to the poor soul. God will forget to be gracious; repentance shall be hid from his eyes. O anger of Jehovah, how real, how righteous, how terrible, how inexorable!

Yet, let me say one thing, should you be one of the eternally lost, and should you, in the course of your weary and tormented eternity, say to yourself, 'Oh that God were not so just;' then think what a wish that would be for yourself. Your security against unjust and over-severe punishment is that very justice against which you petition. Bad as your case may be at the hands of a just God, it would be unspeakably worse at the hands of an unjust God. The anger of a righteous God is no doubt terrible, but the unbridled fury of an unrighteous God is something too horrible even to think upon.

II. **JEHOVAH'S GOODNESS**. He is good, and he does good. He is kind to the unthankful and the unworthy. God is love. God loves the sinner.

(1.) His goodness is **SINCERE**. He does not utter words of course, nor pretend to feelings which are not in him. His words mean just what they say; his deeds mean just what they indicate; the works of his hands have a most substantial and authentic expression of goodness. God is not a man that he should lie, either in his words of goodness or of anger.

(2.) It is **POWERFUL**. It is Almighty goodness. He is able to deliver those whom he loves. Their interests are safe in his hands. "He is slow to anger, and great in power." Who can withstand his love? "It is God that justifies, who is he that condemns?"

(3.) It is **WATCHFUL**. His eye is on us at all times, specially in the day of trouble. His is watchful goodness. His is the unsleeping eye, and the untiring hand. He is not weary of blessing. He delights in opportunities for pouring out his love; and our extremities are his opportunities.

(4.) It is **UNCHANGING**. Like himself, his goodness is without variableness; not ebbing and flowing, but always flowing. His heart is the heart of the unchangeable One. Not like the tides, or the seasons; but like the sky above us, ever one calm arch of gentle, loving azure, embracing earth.

Such is the God with whom we have to do. He is righteous and cannot allow sin to go uncondemned and unpunished. Yet is he good and gracious, not willing to destroy or to take vengeance; a God before whom

the sinner may tremble; a God in whom the chief of sinners may find forgiveness. I remind you of two passages which will form the practical improvement of all I have said.

(1.) "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand!" It is not yet come; but it is coming! Judgment lingers not, damnation slumbers not. It will be a day of terror for the sinner when the pent up wrath of God shall pour itself out, not in seven vials, or seventy times seven, but in an eternity of vials without number.

(2.) "He is patience toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Such is his goodness now. He is rich in mercy. His patience is beyond all conception or measure. And in his patience there is salvation- salvation to the uttermost. He pities, yearns, pleads, beseeches, spares, prolongs the day of grace, presents pardon, salvation, life to the ungodliest, free. Yes, freely to the last! Let this patience goodness draw us, melt us, awaken confidence, and win us to love.

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