

Darkness Pursuing the Sinner.

Horatius Bonar:

"Darkness shall pursue his enemies." Nahum 1:8

"But he sweeps away his enemies in an overwhelming flood. He pursues his foes into the darkness of night." Nahum 1:8

It is of Nineveh and Assyria that this prophet utters his fearful burden. That city and its inhabitants were to bear the judgments of Jehovah. It was to be swept from the earth, and they were to be driven out, pursued by destruction from the Lord. "The Assyrian" was Israel's great enemy, God's great enemy; type of the Church's great enemy in the last days. The capital city had been warned, had repented, and had returned like the dog to its vomit. Now the last blast of the prophetic trumpet is sounded; a warning to Nineveh, a consolation to Israel. Darkness has settled down on Nineveh from that day to this, and has pursued its dwellers— a type and pledge of the blackness of darkness forever. Let us take Assyria as a specimen of sinners; and this prediction as a declaration of God's way of dealing with them.

I. A SINNER IS AN ENEMY TO GOD. This is a strong word, and worthy of solemn thought. It means much. Scripture speaks of the sinner as,

- (1.) not loving God;
- (2.) forgetting God;
- (3.) disobeying God;
- (4.) departing from God.

But this is more than all these; stronger, more decided, more terrible. It means such things as the following—
 (1.) He hates God. Hater of God is his name; hater of Christ also— hater of his whole being, his righteousness, his truth, his holiness, his power, his sovereignty; no, his love.
 (2.) He tries to injure God. He would sincerely carry his hatred into effect by injury, in every way; he robs God, he mocks God, he tries to dethrone Him, and to oppose Him.
 (3.) He tries to do away with God. Enmity, when it runs its course, ends in murder. So man, if he could, would take the life of God. When the fool says in his heart there is no God, he speaks as a murderer. When the Son of God came to earth, they rested not until they had slain him. Crucify him, crucify him, was a cry, the intensity of whose bitterness and malignity arose from the suspicion in the hearts of the Jews that he was really the Son of God. Thus every sinner is an enemy of God, an injurer, a rebel, a robber, a murderer. All sin is the indication of this, and when fully carried out ends in this. And all unbelief is crucifixion of the Son of God.

II. GOD MEANS TO DEAL WITH THESE HIS ENEMIES. He is not indifferent to their enmity, he is not blind to it, he does not mean to overlook it. But he is patient, not willing that any should perish. He wishes to give them time to repent; he tries by this love of his to melt them, but, if all fail, he will at length arise and deal with them. They shall know his power and righteousness, his wrath and vengeance. Darkness shall pursue his enemies. He does not use many words, nor strong language; the threat here is very decided no doubt, but it is very calm; all the more terrible and certain from being so calm. It refers both to time and eternity; present darkness, eternal darkness.

(1.) There is darkness in store for the sinner. It is not fire or torment that is here spoken of, it is simply darkness. As such it is,

- (1.) The absence of all that gives health, and gladness, and life; for without light there is no life, no verdure, no bloom, either for man or man's earth. A world without a sun! How dismal!
- (2.) The presence of that which produces gloom, uncertainty, perplexity, terror, despair. How cheerless is a cloudy day; how much more days of never-ending cloud and darkness. No knowledge of the way, groping perpetually, exposure to dangers and enemies. How dismal would life be with nothing but darkness! Yet such is the portion of God's enemies! They have rejected the light of the world, and darkness must be their lot, a common lot with him who is the prince of darkness.

(2.) This darkness is from God. It does not come by chance, nor from man, nor from natural causes. It is produced and sent by Him who has both light and darkness at disposal. It comes as punishment— specially for their rejection of the light. Darkness coming in any way is sad, but coming from God it is infinitely terrible. We must go astray, we must stumble, we must wander forever. O enemy of God, think what it will be to be enveloped in darkness and followed by darkness forever.

(3.) This darkness shall pursue them. It shall be to them as an enemy, or as a beast of prey— ever following

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them, seeking their destruction. Wherever they go this darkness shall be upon their heels, and they shall not escape. In vain shall they seek for light, gross darkness shall compass them about. Eternal darkness shall be their portion, the blackness of darkness forever. Darkness like a rushing whirlwind shall sweep them before it— "they shall be driven to darkness."

(4.) Every enemy of God must expect this. It is a certainty. It is not possible to be an enemy of God and yet escape the darkness. However swiftly they may flee, the darkness shall overtake them like a tempest. Their enmity to God must be avenged! For the darkness does not come at random; it follows in the track of the enmity. It marks the enemy, and follows him; it finds him and pursues him.