

VII. THE WRATH OF GOD.—Men find it hard to understand what is meant by the Divine anger. "We are forbidden to let the sun go down on our wrath," it is said; "how can we conceive of the fierce and settled anger of the blessed God?" The difficulty is partly verbal and partly moral.

There are three words in the New Testament translated "anger," "wrath." Two of them describe emotional states that are nearly always wrong, and the third an emotional state that is right.

One (*thumos*) means "strong, passionate feeling," and is translated "wrath," "anger," "fierceness." In the plural [2 Cor. xii. 20], it means "bursts of anger." The word occurs nineteen times. Passionateness is the idea it represents, and it is nearly always condemned.

Another word [some form of *parorgismos*] occurs but thrice [Eph. iv. 32, Rom. x. 19, Eph. vi. 4], and is wrath in excess or wrath directed to wrong objects. The Jews were angered in this sense against the Gentiles, and it is on this excessive or misdirected wrath that the sun is not to go down. The wrongness of this feeling is expressed in the word itself.

The common word for wrath is *orge*. It implies more of a settled disposition than of passing feeling, and shows itself in punishment. Above all, it is not passionateness, but a moral sentiment. It is the feeling of the magistrate when the law is broken [Rom. xiv.], and it is the moral disapprobation or "wrath" which Scripture ascribes to God. It occurs in the New Testament five-and-forty times.

This last explanation meets the moral difficulty which some feel when they are told of the "wrath of God." A God who loves righteousness must hate iniquity. If He feel complacency in the good He cannot but be displeased with the evil; and wrath is only displeasure felt and expressed—nothing more.

I have said that the first of these words describes a state which is nearly always wrong—nearly always. In Revelation, however, the term is applied nine times to God [Rev. xiv. 10, xv. 1, xvi. 1, &c.], and is translated fierceness [of His anger], or wrath simply. This usage is peculiar in the New Testament to that book and to one passage in the Romans [ii. 8]. In the Old Testament, where anthropopathic forms are more common, the fierceness of the wrath of God is a frequent thought. In such cases, it must be regarded not as teaching passionateness, however, but as describing the intensity of the moral disapprobation with which God regards sin. "Moral disapprobation" is our cool modern phrase, doing most justice, no doubt, to our logical conception of the mental state; the "fierceness of His anger" is the Eastern phrase, doing most justice to the greatness of the evil rebuked. "Intense moral disapprobation" is the expression that does most justice perhaps to both. Such disapprobation, let it never be forgotten, is inseparable from the Divine glory. It is only the other side of God's delight in holiness.

VIII. IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.—The natural immortality of the soul is a widespread belief, and, in the right meaning of the words, it is sustained by all the arguments which a subject so difficult admits. Immateriality and immortality have the same evidence, and immortality has besides many presumptions of its own. The words do not mean, however, as some suppose, that the soul cannot be destroyed, but simply that, so far as we know, there is nothing in the make of the soul that tends naturally to death. The body is naturally mortal, for it dies unless preternaturally preserved. Its parts are ever decaying; they need nutriment, and in time the vital force which sustains their functions ceases to work in the body itself. The soul has no material parts, needs no material sustenance, nor is there anything, so far as we see or know, in the soul itself to destroy it. Even reasoners on ultimate annihilation admit that the soul does live on for ages after the body has perished. They hold, therefore, that death, in its commonest sense, is simply the separatism of body and soul, but not properly the annihilation of either. God, we have no reason to doubt, can destroy the soul; but to destroy it needs, so far as reason and analogy teach, some external interposition. This is all that is meant by natural immortality.

The whole subject of life is a profound mystery, as yet our biologists cannot tell us what it is. The analogy of the seed which lives in death—an analogy used by our Lord and by Paul—suggests that death only dissolves our bodies into their elements, leaving untouched the living germ

That germ in the corn gathers to itself new elements, which it converts into a new plant, another and still the same. In the man it can live apart, and yet is destined to reappear in a new body. If this analogy is to hold, death destroys nothing. The material elements of the body, it is notorious, all remain. The living germ separated from the body, lives still.

I lay stress upon these explanations, however only for two reasons. They answer the statement that death is of necessity destruction. They make it clear, moreover, that those who hold that "everlasting" means lasting "for a time only, because the soul is naturally mortal," have to prove from natural laws or from actual observation, that the soul must die as a body dies. From natural laws, I repeat. Scripture says, it is punished for ever; and though the punishment is called "death" and "destruction," I now know that both terms are applied to those who still live. The literal death of the soul—the annihilation of the thing made in God's image—cannot therefore be proved from the Word of God. Who is prepared to prove it, either from the nature of death, or from the nature of the soul itself?

These notes are of necessity dry and technical. Some readers may not need them. They feel no difficulty, and take scripture just as it stands. If any who have studied the question and felt its difficulty will now turn to the first Letter they will, I trust, find the notes to the purpose. They show, as it seems to me, that the natural meaning of Scripture is amply confirmed in every part by further research.

JOSEPH ANGUS.

For the Christian Messenger.

DEPARTURE OF MISS NORRIS.

Mr. Editor,—

Since the letter from Sister Norris, (inserted in the *Christian Messenger*, Oct. 26,) was written from Boston, Oct. 13th, it appears that a speedy and convenient way for the conveyance of Missionaries to India has been made known. Mr. Haswell writes: "A new line of steamers is now in operation, and sailing monthly between Rangoon and London direct, via Suez canal. Availing herself of the opportunity thus afforded to proceed to Burmah without delay, she went on to New York, there she wrote to me, as Secretary of our Home Missionary Board, under date of Oct. 28th, stating, I sail in the morning (D. V.) by steamer Italy for Liverpool, England, thence from London by steamer Rollo, on the 16th Nov. via Suez Canal and Calcutta, direct to Rangoon. This will cost me probably not more than between five and six hundred dollars. I have been at very little expense in Boston. Thirty dollars have covered my expenses since leaving home this time. The presence of the Master goes with me."

In accordance with my request, Sister Norris has furnished some statements which may be of some interest to your readers. She says, "I left home June 23rd, 1870, and returned Aug. 29th, having met 41 appointments with different churches, organized 32 Societies, visited 7 Sabbath Schools, and attended the Central and Eastern Associations, and the Convention at Fredericton."

She also states that her expenses during that tour were met by a collection of \$14. 12½, taken at Beaver River for the purpose, a donation of \$10 from Mrs. J. G. Harding, and sums contributed by other friends.

Our sister would gladly have visited many other Churches, and held meetings in numerous places to which she did not go; but it was indispensable for her to return to Canso before taking her final leave, it would have been difficult for her to travel extensively in the cold season, and her ardent desire to be immediately preparing for her life-work urged her to proceed ere this year closed. It is sincerely hoped that the Societies already formed will increase in zeal and in numbers; and that many more of these benevolent and useful Societies will be speedily organized, and will liberally aid in this "work of faith and labor of love." "God loveth a cheerful giver."

Yours fraternally,

C. TUPPER, Secretary.

Tremont, Aylesford, Nov. 11, 1870.

Bro. Wallace informs us that a fearful disease is prevailing among the children in Lower Granville, resembling in some respects the Diphtheria. Already several children have died with it.

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER 16, 1870.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

Thursday the 24th Inst., is appointed by His Honor Sir C. Hastings Doyle, a day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for an abundant harvest and a continuation of peace and protection. How much cause have we for thanksgiving! Perhaps there is no country where, as a whole, these blessings have been more abundantly bestowed than in this good province of Nova Scotia. "Peace and protection" are most significant terms at the present time, and will not fail to call to mind the sad condition in which that country is found where these are absent,—where a hostile army is over-running its fairest portions, and dealing forth death to the people, and destruction to all the results of their industry.

Whilst we recognize the responsibility of rulers in conducting public affairs, and maintaining just and peaceful relations between the different powers, we hold that God is the author of all good. "Peace and protection" come from Him, and to Him alone must our thanks be paid for these blessings.

Our rulers are but the representatives of the people, and what is done by them is regarded as the people's act, so that the election of fit and proper men to enact laws and to administer them justly, becomes a most solemn duty men owe to God and their country.

The terrible scourge of war falls on a people doubtless as a punishment for national sins—when persisted in and unrepented of. Every country has enough of these to call forth the Divine judgments, but God is merciful. He is no less the hearer of prayer now than in past ages, and with the Thanksgiving for our own mercies we should not forget those who are so sadly deprived of them; and beseech the throne of heavenly grace that the ravages of war may be stayed, and that his kingdom may speedily come on the earth.

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CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LIBERTY.

It is a favorite theory with some people, and perhaps no less with Baptists than others, that everything in connection with religion must be perfectly free and voluntary, that christianity is so perfect a system of liberty; that believers may unite with a church, or stand aloof from it, at their own discretion, that they may contribute what they choose, little or much, towards the objects of the church, whether for the support of the ministry or for the objects of benevolence among them, just as they like. The idea of duty is repulsive to such, and they regard the gospel as consisting altogether of a system of privilege and relief from obligation, giving them blessings "without money and without price," and making them mere spiritual sponges, receiving all possible good and retaining it wholly and solely for their own pleasure and advantage. This we need hardly say, we believe, is altogether wrong.

The voluntary principle is sadly perverted when it is made to destroy the proper distinction between good and bad; or when men hold themselves to be at liberty to do one or the other as they think proper. The proposition that men are at liberty only to do right, and are not at liberty to do wrong, will, we suppose, be assented to very readily. Let this be granted, and it is not difficult to perceive that as a consequence the church of Christ has claims upon men and women which cannot be set aside, and no person is at liberty to say "I will unite with the church or not just as I think proper."

Christ has himself established his church in the world, not only for the salvation of men of the present day, but for preserving the knowledge of himself and his work to the end of the world. The observance of the ordinances as symbols of obedience and of attachment to him are as imperative and universal as the command to believe on the Son of God, and it is at our peril to neglect them.

The primary ground of men's condemnation is that they do not believe in Christ

the Son of God. "He that believeth not is condemned already."

If then men are not permitted to be unbelievers, they are less at liberty to renounce the claims which follow upon faith. A man is not at liberty to neglect or injure his own body, how much worse is it for him to be indifferent about his soul's concerns and his everlasting welfare. It is plain then that every human being ought to be a believer in Christ, and is it less apparent that all should be members of churches?

It may be supposed that a christian who admits the truth of the positions we have taken may choose which of the religious communities he shall unite with in the observance of Christ's ordinances. If all were equally in accordance with God's Word doubtless he might. We have an open Bible, and in all our religious opinions and practices we should be guided by its teachings, rather than by any motive of personal gratification or convenience. In doing this we should feel that a great privilege is enjoyed, not that a favor is conferred by us upon the church, or upon Christ. The permanence of our relation to the church should induce us to act towards it in a very different manner than we would towards a mere human organization. Our own pleasure and preferences should be quite secondary considerations. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? should be our enquiry in this matter.

Our convictions of truth and duty must rule, or we fail to honor the Divine Redeemer and secure the highest enjoyment of His favor. It is possible to trifle with such convictions, and, eventually, in a great measure to stifle them, but to do this will be at the risk of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, and thus rendering the future of life anything but the joyous course of the faithful follower of the Lord Jesus.

THE BISHOP OF NOVA SCOTIA ON OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM AND SEPARATE SCHOOLS.

Bishop Binney in his late Charge to the Clergymen under his jurisdiction, speaks very clearly his sentiments respecting Separate Schools in Nova Scotia. After expressing his belief that the religious teaching of the young should not be overlooked or neglected, he adds:—

"Even with the utmost amount of assistance that could be afforded from the public funds, Separate Schools could not be maintained throughout the Province, and, in consequence of the unhappy divisions among Christians, it would not be possible, without injustice to some, to have religious instruction given in the Common Schools. The only practicable plan therefore appears to me to be, that of a strictly secular education in the public Schools, fairly and honestly carried out, with care on the part of the authorities, that there shall be no tampering with the belief of any of the pupils, that the instruction, and that the books used, shall be carefully selected upon this principle, no others being allowed in those Schools. Against the plan of providing for the introduction of religion, by dividing all Schools into Roman Catholic and Protestant I most strenuously protest; for from the so-called Protestant Schools, all dogmatic teaching, upon many important points, must be strictly excluded, while the Roman Catholics would be enabled to inculcate their own peculiar truths, in all their details at the public expense. The belief that they are doing this in some Schools, under our present system, has lately caused much dissatisfaction, and we are bound to insist that the authorities shall take care that the system adopted, and sanctioned by law, shall be impartially administered."

It is notorious that this principle of our School Law is not observed in Halifax. The religious dogmas of the Roman Catholics are inculcated in the Schools belonging to that body, whilst no other denomination is allowed to make use of the Common Schools to teach their peculiar religious tenets.

Whatever amounts are received will be acknowledged, and credited to whatever date they pay, whether for arrears, or advance payment.

The movement for the Revision of the Sacred Scriptures is developing some curious features on the Communion question. Some of the ordinary advocates of open communion, are showing that the practical carrying out of the principle is anything but agreeable or satisfactory, when it comes in contact with their own views. It is the opinion of many that the Dean of Westminster, has seriously damaged the revision scheme, by the invitation he gave to all the revisors to partake of the Lord's Supper in Westminster Abbey, previous to their entering on their work. Some of the Church of England dignitaries have taken very strong ground against the movement sim-