

THE LORD NO MORE ANGRY WITH HIS PEOPLE

NO. 2176

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 7, 1890.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.”
Isaiah 54:9.

BEFORE any person could feel himself safe in applying such a word as this to himself, he would naturally read the chapter and study the connection in which it stands to see whether it would be a wresting of Scripture for any private Believer to understand it as being spoken by God to himself. Doing this, you will very soon be satisfied that every true Believer has his just portion here. Observe the closing words of the chapter—“This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord”—not of Jews or Gentiles as such, but of the *servants* of the Lord, be they of what race they may. It is not written that this was their heritage in some past dispensation, or shall be their heritage in some brighter era yet to come, but “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.”

Each one, therefore, may conclude that if he or she is a servant of the Lord this is his own heritage. But how are we to know these servants of the Lord? What is the distinguishing mark set upon them? The next words tell us this—“And their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.” If there is anyone among us whose righteousness is his own, worked out by himself, he is excluded from this heritage—but whoever in our number has learned personally and for himself to call the Lord Jesus, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” he may claim the blessings of this chapter as his own. Without committing a spiritual robbery, everyone who is justified in Christ Jesus may feel that every sentence in this chapter belongs to him. “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.”

Am I a servant of the Lord? Do I serve Him out of love? The Prophet further adds, “And their righteousness is of Me, says the Lord.” Have I a righteousness that is Divine in its origin and character? If so, then, my Soul, come boldly to the Master's table and whatever dainties the Lord may heap thereon, feed upon them freely—for this is the children's meat which the heavenly Father has here set before them—and they will be guilty of no presumption if they take it all to themselves and feast to the fullest! May the Holy Spirit work in us this holy liberty!

In trying to deal with the text in a somewhat superficial manner—for it would be impossible, in the short time we have this evening, to explore its depths—we shall notice two things. First, *what men have the most cause to fear* and secondly, *what the saints need never fear*.

I. And, first, **WHAT MEN HAVE THE MOST TO FEAR.** All men who are unsaved ought, with fear and trembling, to *dread the wrath of God*—the wrath present and the wrath to come. The text speaks of the Lord's being angry, as of an evil to be feared. Man has cause to be afraid of *the rebuke of God* which is named in our text—that stern rebuke of the Holy One which is the prelude to the lifting up of His unsheathed sword and the destruction of His adversaries. God's anger and rebuke make up the utmost form of terror and if men were not maddened by sin they would confess that it is so.

God's wrath is matter for fear, because, dear Friends, *to be in union with God is necessary to the happiness of the creature.* To have God for its enemy is for the creature to be removed from its foundation and placed where it cannot abide. The whole universe stands because God's power supports it—only because it is so far in unison with the will of God does it exist in order, peacefulness and joy. Take God away from the world and the world would become dark, dreary, desolate and dead. No, I correct myself—there would be no world! This great sun, the moon and stars would all subside into their native nothing, even as a moment's foam melts back into the wave that bears it and is gone forever.

In the same way, an intelligent being, a spiritual nature without its Creator, is lost—lost as a sheep which has strayed from the shepherd—lost to all that renders life worth having. It were better for such a creature that it had never

had an existence, for the wrath of God, when it goes forth in the form of a rebuke upon a thoughtful man, is as a seven-fold plague! God's rebuke on any creature is a withering thing, but on an intelligent being it is Hell! Some have felt it to a fearful degree in this life. Remember Cain, who went forth from the Presence of God a marked man. Who among us would like to have known his dread—living in fear that whoever should find him would kill him—a man accursed of the Most High and marked among his fellow men?

We read of Pashur, in the days of Jeremiah, who had the rebuke of God dwelling upon him so that he became a terror to himself. Remember the words of the Lord in the book of Deuteronomy, where the Lord threatens His erring people—“And among these nations shall you find no ease, neither shall the sole of your feet have rest: but the Lord shall give you there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: and your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall fear day and night, and shall have no assurance of your life.” What a rebuke is this! The voice of God had gone forth against him and his soul trembled!

Think of that proud mortal who heard God's voice of rebuke in the midst of his revelry and mirth—that God-defying monarch, Belshazzar, whose knees knocked together and the joints of his loins were loosed because he had seen the handwriting of God upon the wall. The rebuke of God burns up a man's spirit. It turns his moisture into the drought of summer and withers him like a flower broken off at the stalk—or like the hay that has fallen in the sun beneath the scythe! Oh, if such a calamity should ever come upon us, we shall have reason, indeed, to say, “Who knows the power of Your anger? Even according to Your fear, so is Your wrath”!

This wrath of God is to be feared, my Brothers and Sisters, all the more *because there is no escaping from it*. A man who is under the wrath of a monarch can escape to another kingdom. A man who has incurred the anger of the most mighty enemy can find, somewhere in this great world, a nook where he can conceal himself from his relentless pursuer. But he that has exposed himself to the wrath of *God* cannot save himself from the Almighty hand. Though you hide yourself on the top of Carmel, yet there the Omniscient eye shall see you! And though you fly to the clefts of the rock, like the eagle, yet God will find you out! There is no escaping from His Presence. Even though the beams of the morning sun should lend us wings, He would arrive before His fugitive. There is no place, even should we dive beneath Hell's profoundest wave, where He could not reach us.

It was said, in the days of the Caesars, that the whole world was but one great prison for those who were the enemies of the emperor. It is so. Earth, itself, and Heaven and Hell are but one vast dungeon for the man who is the object of the wrath of God and against whom the sentence of doom has gone forth from the eternal lips. A rebuke that withers! A rebuke from which there is no escape! Well may sinners who deserve it admire the long-suffering which invites to mercy and tremble lest the word of wrath should take its place and pursue them to the death! There is this, also, to be dreaded in the wrath of God, that, as there is no escape from it, so *there is no cure for it*.

Nothing can possibly give a man ease or safety when the rebuke of God has gone forth against him. He may be surrounded with temporal comforts, but his riches will only mock his inner poverty. Friends may utter words of cheer, but miserable comforters shall they all be—

***“When HE shuts up in long despair,
Who can remove the iron bar?”***

If God speaks the word in wrath, none can reverse the sentence. He shuts and no man opens. Instead of the mercies of this life becoming any comfort to him, when a man has the wrath of God resting upon him, it is written, “I will curse all your blessings.” Oh, terrible words! When the curse follows a man in his basket and in his store, in the fruit of his body and in the object of his life—follows him to his bed, to his board, to his work and to his rest—O wretched being! It were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck and he were cast into the sea.

Blessed God! We thank You that You have not yet so spoken against us, but have left us yet on praying ground and pleading terms with You, and sent us once again the voice of inviting Mercy, saying, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel?” Had Your rebuke gone forth against us, we had been utterly consumed with terrors! Worse still, my Brethren, the rebuke of God, if we live and die impenitent, *is one against which we cannot harden ourselves*. We cannot gather strength to endure when God strikes at the heart and dries up the spirit. There are some pains of the body which, at first, are so tormenting that patience, while suffering from them, seems impossible. But after a certain season the

nerves grow dull, or, at any rate, blunts the edge of pain, or the faintness of the flesh comes to the assistance of the sufferer.

But it is not so with the wrath of God. No shield can ward off the arrows of Almighty Justice. The Lord knows how to smite a man, not merely in hand, or foot, or head, but in the heart. The arrows of God stick fast in the man's inner self—they wound his spirit—and “a wounded spirit, who can bear?” Some of those who have been the most impudent braggarts against God have whined like cowards, and cried out—or, as the Prophet puts it, “howled upon their beds”—when He has but touched them with His finger! They cursed God until it came to dying and then they changed their tune to one of cowardly fear.

How often have atheists turned into trembling confessors when eternity has been in view! They could say once, “Who is the Lord that we should serve Him?” But, when they saw death approaching and sin pursued their soul with furies, they cried and entreated the Lord that He would have mercy. He knows, O you stout-hearted ones! He knows how to find out the joints in what you think to be your invulnerable harness! He can pierce you so that you can no longer stand up against Him! He can break the point of your spear and turn the edge of your sword—and then you will lie at the mercy of the God whom your sins have provoked! Beware how you dash yourselves upon the bosses of His shield, for you will only slay yourselves. In vain do you boast yourselves, for by strength shall no man prevail.

Oh, the wrath to come! The lapse of years shall never help a man to harden himself against the punishment of sin which will forever be “the wrath to come.” Hell shall be as intolerable when it has been borne a thousand years as it was when first the soul was cast there! Throughout eternity there will be no relief to condemned spirits from the burden of their sinfulness, for as they will cling to sin, so will sin cling to them! No drop of consolation will fall into the cup of eternal woe—the impenitent shall drink *forever* of the wine of the wrath of God.

Here remember, my Brothers and Sisters, the tremendous and overwhelming fact *that the wrath of God does not end with death*. This is a Truth of God which the preacher cannot mention without trembling, nor without wondering that he does not tremble more! The *eternity* of punishment is a thought which crushes the heart. You have buried the man, but you have not buried his sins. His sins live and are immortal—they have gone before him to judgment—or they will follow after him to bear their witness as to the evil of his heart and the rebellion of his life. The Lord God is slow to anger, but when He is once aroused to it, as He will be against those who finally reject His Son, He will put forth all His Omnipotence to crush His enemies. “Consider this,” He says, “you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” It will be no trifle to fall into the hands of the living God!

He will by no means clear the guilty. Forever must His anger burn! We have nothing in Scripture to warrant the hope that God's wrath against evildoers will ever come to an end. Oh, the wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath which after ages and ages will still be to come and still to come and still to come! Well might that mighty pleader, Whitefield, when he preached, lift up his hands and with streaming eyes and breaking heart cry to the crowds—“Oh, the wrath to come, the wrath to come!”

This, then, is what men have most to dread. Did you ever dread it? He that never dreaded it nor felt in his spirit a trembling and a fear concerning it—alas for him—he has the strongest cause for alarm! Well do I remember when this awful Truth of God rolled over my spirit like the huge car of Juggernaut. I then thought myself to be utterly crushed and lost—and in a hopeless state—and, truly I would have been but for amazing Grace! Happy was it for me that I did see myself to be obnoxious to the Divine anger because I had never laid my sins upon Christ. If I could have carried them myself I would have never leaned upon His strength! If it had not been a hopeless, helpless case with me, I had never closed in with the Lord Jesus and made Him to be all my hope and help. When the wrath of God, burning in my spirit, had consumed every other hope, oh, then it was sweet to come to Christ and find in Him all consolation and salvation!

II. Enough upon this point. The delightful theme I wish to enlarge upon is this—WHAT THE SAINTS NEED NEVER FEAR. Dreadful as it is and more than sufficient to overwhelm the spirit with dismay, a fear of the wrath of God need never disturb the Believer's heart! Let us read—“For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.”

God has *sworn* that He will never be angry with His people! He does not say that He will never be so angry with their sins as to chasten them sharply—for anger with our sins is love to us. He does not say that He will not be so angry as to

punish us, although there would be great mercy, even in that. He goes much further and says that He will never be so angry with His people as even to rebuke them! He will not let His wrath rise so high as to draw an angry word from Him! “What?” you say, “then does not God rebuke His people?” Ah, verily, that He does and chastens them, too! But those rebukes and those chastisements are in *love* and not in wrath! The text before us is to be read thus: “I will not be angry with you so as to rebuke you in indignation.”

There shall never be so much as a word of wrath from the lips of God touching any one of His servants whose righteousness is of Him. So does He love those who are in Christ Jesus! So completely has He absolved them that He will not speak in anger so much as one word against them! Now, this, to make us sure of it, is first of all *confirmed by an oath*—“So have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.” We ought to believe God’s bare Word—we are bound to accept His promise as certainty itself—but who will dare to doubt the *oath* of the Eternal? You cannot accuse a man of anything more horrible than perjury!

Can you be so profane as to lay this at the door of God? To suspect Him of having sworn dishonestly, or dream that He can make a breach of that Covenant which He has sealed by an oath—this would be a crime against the thrice-holy Lord! Shall we tarnish the Glory of God by a suspicion that He will break His oath? And yet, perhaps, we are doing so. Under heavy chastisement you are saying—“The Lord is angry with me. He has turned His heart against me.” While you are feeling in your body the smart of fierce disease, or in your estate a gradual decay of your property—or in the person of that dear dead child, or in the decease of that beloved wife or husband—you are seeing the hand of God going out against you.

It may be you say, “*This cannot be love!* The Lord must be angry with me—so angry with me as to be striking me with cruel blows.” But, dear child of God, you must not think so for a moment. The Lord has sworn that He would not be angry with you and He cannot break His oath. Nothing but love can guide the hand of His Providence. It is not possible that there is even a mixture of motives in His dealings with you. Undiluted affection arranges every step and perhaps it is because of the greatness of His affection that you are called upon to suffer so grievously. We all acknowledge that when a father strings up his nerves at last to chastise his darling child, he then gives clearest proof of wise love since every blow of the rod falls heavier on the father’s heart than ever it can on the child’s flesh.

It is true love which whips the erring heir of Glory from his sin. To fondle and spoil a rebel were folly and cruelty and would show that the father had not enough love for his child to study his best interests. But we see the triumph of love when a wise parent, out of supreme affection, grieves himself by chastening his child. Your heavenly Father does not afflict willingly—He has a loving reason for every stripe. In all your affliction He is afflicted and He brings Himself to afflict you—if I may use such a term—as you bring yourself to the chastening of your child. Love seems to behave itself strangely when it wields the rod and bruises its darling—but, indeed, it is then most truly love. I charge you, as you love your God and would not dare to accuse Him of falsehood, do not believe for an instant that He is angry with you, or will rebuke you in anger. The rebuke He sends is a rebuke of undiluted *love*. Not a grain of Divine anger is to be found in a mountain of Divine affliction. Jehovah swears there is not—can you do other than believe Him?

As if still further to illustrate the certainty of this, *He is pleased to draw a parallel between His present Covenant oath and that which He made in the days of Noah, the second great father of the human race.* He said to Noah that the waters should no more go over the earth so as to destroy all flesh from off it—and He gave Noah the rainbow as a sign that this should never be. Observe that *the Covenant made with Noah was a Covenant of pure Grace*, for Noah found Grace in the sight of the Lord. The Lord will deal with us, also, according to His Grace. God destroyed the earth because it was corrupt—and assuredly it is corrupt today!

Many times since Noah’s day the earth has been polluted with crying sins that might well have provoked God to turn the torrents upon our race. Those were horrible days when all men did as seemed good in their own eyes in the days of the Judges! You cannot read the histories of the kings of Israel without feeling sick at heart. The other nations were no better than the Jews and probably were much worse—yet the *chosen people* were as vile as vile could be! What horrible days were those of the Roman emperors when those who governed the world were monsters in iniquity and all lands reeked with vice! What cloudy days were those of the Middle Ages when to be a genuine Christian was to be hunted to death—when every kind of superstition and villainy had sway! The Lord might well have drowned the world in any one of those times quite as justly as He did in the days of Noah. It was of His Grace, then, that although He foresaw that the world

would still be corrupt and that every imagination of man's heart would still be evil, He yet said that He would not destroy the earth, but that His long-suffering should patiently wait till the end should be.

Now, Beloved, this Covenant of pure Grace is paralleled by the Covenant we have been speaking of in your case. He has said, "I have sworn that I will not be angry with *you*, nor rebuke you." "Ah!" you say, "but my sins, my many imperfections, my shortcomings, my glaring failures, my frequent backslidings, my coldness of heart, my laxity in prayer, the mistakes into which I fall through carelessness, my unbelief, my thousands of sins—surely He will be angry with me on account of these?" But have I not shown you that He might a thousand times have been angry with the world so as to destroy it with water, but because of His Covenant He has not done so?

The Covenant was not made on account of what men *would* be, for the Lord foresaw that they would be evil continually! He made a Covenant because His mercy is great and His tenderness is infinite. He has made the same Covenant with you and your sins shall not disannul it! Sinner as you are, it is written—"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." Defiled as you are, yet fly to the Fountain and you are washed—and the Lord is not angry with you—neither does He rebuke you. As He made a Covenant of pure Grace not to destroy the world with water, so He has made a Covenant of pure Grace with you not to be angry with you—and until the one fails, the other will not! Oh, rejoice that God has put your freedom from wrath upon so sure a footing!

But, *that first Covenant with Noah was made after a sacrifice*. Noah offered a sacrifice of clean beasts unto God and it is said that the Lord smelled a sweet savor, or a savor of rest, and shortly after that it was that He made the Covenant not to destroy the earth. So, you see, the flood is kept away from us through a Covenant of *sacrifice*. Now, Beloved, the same reason works with God that He will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. There is a Sacrifice in which God always smells a sweet savor of rest and therefore you are secure. Ah, it is not *you* that are acceptable to Him in yourselves—oh, no—you are "accepted in the Beloved." Oh, that precious sentence—"Accepted in the Beloved"!

We have no personal sweetness, but because of the savor of our Lord's good ointments, therefore are His members fragrant unto God. Christ is as precious Incense unto God at all times and this is the reason of our salvation! You recollect how the Israelites were preserved in Egypt on the night of the Passover? It was not said to them, "When *you* look at the blood I will pass over you," or, "When *I* look at *you* I will pass over you." God said, "*When I see the blood, I will pass over you.*" God's eyes were fixed on the blood on the lintel—and He saw in that the *type* of the precious blood of Jesus—and therefore He passed over His people.

And so the Lord's eyes are fixed on Jesus and His precious Sacrifice. And God is, for Jesus' sake, well-pleased with us and utters no condemning word. When your sins rise in your conscience and you repent most bitterly of them and are downcast in your spirit concerning them—let not your sense of sin cause you to question this solemn declaration, sworn to by God's own mouth—"I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you." Be sure of God's favor, for you see the Reason of it—He does not look at you as you are in yourself, but as you are in Christ! He answers that sweet prayer we sometimes sing—

*"Him, and then the sinner see,
Look through Jesus' wounds on me."*

As He is not angry with the earth so as to drown it, so, because of the Sacrifice, He will not be angry with us so as to rebuke us in anger.

Remember, again, *that Covenant which God made with Noah was openly propounded in the ears of the whole race*. Noah and his sons heard it and we have all heard it. God has openly said, "I will no more cause the water to cover the face of the earth." Now, when a man makes a promise, if it is in private he is bound by it and his honor is engaged thereto. But when his solemn promise becomes *public*, he stakes his character among men upon the fulfillment of his word. We are accustomed to say—"If he didn't mean to do it, why did he make it so public? Why did he say it in this place and in that place?" Now, since the Lord has made public this gracious Word—"I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you," does He not intend to do as He has said?

Would He write it thus, as it were, across the sky, if He did not mean to keep it? Has He spoken in secret and disannulled this which He spoke in public? His answer is—"I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek you Me in vain." His promises are yes and amen in Christ Jesus. Not the dot of an "i," nor the cross of a "t," shall ever fail! None of His Words shall fall to the ground. Christ has not come to put any one

of God's Words away, but that they all may be established! And, my Brothers and Sisters, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the promises of our God shall fail!

Let it be remembered, also, concerning the parallel between the one promise and the other, that *God never has broken the Covenant which He made with Noah*. There have been partial deeds which have carried off the inhabitants of a valley. But the race of man has never been swept away with water since the days of Noah and the ark—and I do not think there is any man here who suspects that they will be. When the showers begin to fall, it is always delightful to mark that radiant bow set there in the sky, that God may look upon it and remember His Covenant—and that we may look upon it and remember that Covenant, too. How gloriously is it painted on the darkness of the clouds! How plainly it says to us, “Fear not!”

Now, Beloved, if the Lord is so faithful to one Covenant, why should we imagine, even in our worse moments, that He will be unfaithful to His other Word which He has spoken concerning our souls? Dear Heart, He that is true in one will be true in another! When you have trusted a person and found him scrupulously upright in one instance, it would be a shame to mistrust him in another till you have a cause. You have never had any cause to doubt your God! Has He forgotten His oath? Has He pulled up the sluices of the great deep and bid the secret fountains leap up from their ancient lair? Has He unstopped the bottles of Heaven by the month together and bade them pour out floods which should cover the tops of the hills and drown the whole race of Adam? You are living witnesses that it is not so! Well, then, this is the proof to you of the truthfulness of the Lord our God. Doubt not His love to you until He shall have broken the Covenant that He made with Noah, since He says, “This is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.”

If you can, any of you, fully drink in the Lord's meaning, you do not need any more words of mine—the Lord's Words are more than enough! Drink in the Divine Truth and let it saturate your inmost spirit. God says, “I will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you,” by which He intends to say, “Whatever I do to you, it shall not be in wrath. Wherever I cast you—into the wilderness, into the furnace, into the grave—there shall be no wrath in My act—no, not to the extent of a rebuke. All that I do to you shall be love, love, love—nothing but love from first to last.” Surely this word is marrow and fatness! What more could the Lord say to us? What more could we desire? God grant that the wines on the lees well-refined stored up in this text may make a feast for all Believers!

Now, I want to say to you, dear Friends, that if this is the case, that God will not be angry with us, nor rebuke us, then *the greatest fear that can ever fall upon us is gone and it is time that all our lesser fears were gone with it!* For instance, there is *the fear of man*. This man says that, and that man says the other—and some people attach a wonderful deal of importance to what other people say—and so they are carried away with the fear of man's opinion. Why can they not catch the spirit of that brave nobleman who had carved over his castle gates the words—“They say. What do they say? Let them say.” We do not always attain to such independence of mind, but we ought to do so. Ordinarily we tremble because of man, though he is but grass and withers like the flower of the field. But, when we clearly understand that God is not angry with us, we feel raised above the rage of mortals!

Now, Herod, mock at your pleasure! Now, Pilate, ask your sarcastic questions! Now, scribes and Pharisees, meet in your councils! The Lord is not angry with us and what do we care for you? Let the earth be removed, let the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, let the waters thereof roar and be troubled—since God is not angry with us and does not rebuke us—we can stand like solid rocks in the midst of the storm and laugh to scorn the turmoil! Towards the anger of men we turn the armor of believing endurance now that the Lord's anger is turned away from us once and for all. So, too, *we need not fear the devil*. He is the most cunning of our adversaries and being exceedingly angry with us, he goes about to deceive and to devour.

But, Brothers and Sisters, if God will never be angry with us, the teeth of the old dragon are broken! His only hope is that God will be angry with us and for this purpose he leads us, if he can, into sin. But if he cannot effect his design, to what purpose are all his arts? O fool of fools, Prince of Darkness! A mass of cunning and folly are you! O you Fiend of Hell!—the very children in Zion laugh you to scorn and shake their heads at you—for they shall tread you beneath their feet shortly—and gloriously shall they triumph over all your power. If God will not be angry with me, nor rebuke me, why should I fear, though all Hell's legions should march against me?

Dear Brethren, if God will never be angry with us, nor rebuke us, we need not fear any of *the chastisements which He may lay upon us*. There is a vast difference between a blow that is given in anger and a pat that is given in love. Your children soon perceive the difference. A little one is in your arms and if you do but pat it lightly in anger it begins to cry. But if your hand fell heavily in sport and it saw that you only meant a love-pat, it would laugh! So we *rejoice* in tribulations and *glory* in afflictions because they come from the deep love of God. When we perceive that love is written on our trials, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. “Whom the Lord loves He chastens.”

I am glad the text does not say, “I will *never* rebuke you, even in love.” It would be an awful text if it said that! Blessed be God, He does rebuke us! If it had been said, “I will never rebuke you, nor chasten you,” why, what would follow? Is it not written, “If you are without chastisement, which all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons”? If there were no rebukes, no chastisements, it would be a sure sign that the Lord had cast the reins off our necks and had said, “He is joined to idols; let him alone.” We do not desire that the Lord should promise us freedom from trial. The true-born child of God must not escape trouble and, if he is wise, he would not if he might.

Since there is no anger in affliction, let the Lord chastise His servants even as seems good in His sight—all our souls shall say is this, “Rebuke us not in anger and then Your will be done!” The sorrows of this mortal life lose all their sharpness when we believe that the Lord will not be angry with us, nor rebuke us. My Brethren, how *this alters the look of death*. If death is a punishment to a Believer, then death wears gloomy colors. But if it is not so—if death, itself, has changed its character so as not to be to the Believer a punishment for sin—how delightful is this! The Believer’s punishment was fully borne by His Substitute, so that the bitterness of death is past!

It is not death to die—it is only undressing. These poor garments are dusty with toil and, in some cases, they are ragged with age and therefore we may be well content to put them off. “Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven.” Dying—why, it is only going to our bed chamber to sleep a while and then to wake up, at the sound of the trumpet, in the likeness of our Lord! Dying—why to our souls it is the entrance into the joy of our Lord! It is passing into the ivory palaces wherein they have made Him glad and wherein we shall be made glad in His blessed company! O Brothers and Sisters, the smell of His garments at a distance—how overpowering it is! The myrrh, the aloes and the cassia delight our souls!

What will be the fragrance when we are in the Beloved’s arms? What must be the Glory when we stand at His right hand clothed in the gold of Ophir? What must it be to be *there*? Since, then, death is changed from a foe to a friend and in death the Lord does not even so much as rebuke His people—it has become a *gainful* thing to die—a blissful thing to depart and be with Christ! After death shall come *the judgment* and in that last great day of judgment the Lord will not be angry with His people! And if the reading out of all His people’s sins before an assembled world must imply a rebuke, then it shall not be done for He will not rebuke them! In no way shall rebuke come to them.

Besides, there are no sins to be charged on His people now, for if they are searched for they shall not be found. Christ has put their iniquities away and cast them into the depths of the sea. “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” His people shall not, even in that awful day, know anything of rebuke from Jehovah’s lips. Oh, the blessedness of this glorious promise which is confirmed to us by the oath of God! So, then, what should we fear? What, indeed? The Lord grant us Divine Grace to be afraid of being afraid! May the Holy Spirit give us Grace to be ashamed to blush or doubt! And may we trust Him with a firm confidence that cannot be moved!

These four words, and I have done. If it is so, that God has sworn that He will not be angry with us, then, first, *believe it*. The inference is clear—Jehovah swears—shall not His children believe? For any man to doubt me is to dishonor me, but for my child to mistrust my oath would be the unkindest cut of all. Believe without hesitation. That is one word. The next is, *rejoice*. If He will not be angry with you, nor rebuke you, then be glad! Here is constant theme for song. The nightingale sings in the dark and so may you. Midst darkest shades, with such a word as this, your dawning is begun! Rejoice evermore!

The third word is, *be resigned*. If the Lord will not be angry with you, meekly bear without repining whatever His will ordains. You see the cup is sweetened with love—why do you make wry faces over it? Will you not accept what perfect love proffers? Oh, do not kick against a God so gracious! Lastly, *impart*. If you have learned this love in your own heart, then tell it to others. If, indeed, it is glad tidings to you, proclaim the happy message and say to every sinner you

meet with, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters.” “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

You can prove your knowing this for yourselves by your desire to make it known to others—and you have need to doubt whether you truly understand the salvation of the Lord in your own soul if you feel no inward impulse to make others know the glorious promise of your Lord. May God bless you, dear Friends, by putting this text right into your souls! I can only lay it near the open door of your ears, but the Holy Spirit can place it in the inner depths of your hearts. May He do so at once, for His name’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Isaiah 54.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—733, 226, 748.

I am unable to write even a line or two to my dear sermon readers. I am better, but so weary in brain and weak in body, that, instead of preaching to others, I must hope that they will be praying for me. So soon as I can compose, I will write a letter to follow each sermon.

Mentone, November 30, 1890.

C. H. SPURGEON.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.