

GOD'S FATHERLY PITY

NO. 1650

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 2, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”
Psalm 103:13.*

IN the former part of this psalm the Psalmist sang of God's deeds of love, His gifts, His benefits, and His acts of kindness. But here he goes deeper into the divine motive, and therefore he finds sweeter incentives to devout gratitude. There is a fullness of consolation in the fact that the heart of God is towards His people. He not only dispenses blessings—so does the sun, so do the clouds, so do the fruitful fields—but He takes a warm interest in our welfare, and has a feeling towards us of kindly, gentle affection, and that of such intensity that one of the highest forms of earthly love is here used as a figure to set forth the tender mercy of our God towards us. I have always been taught as an axiom in theology that God has no griefs—that He is “without parts or passions,” I think was the definition. But I have often inwardly objected to such statements. They seemed to me so inconsistent with the tone and tenor of Scripture, for He appears to take pleasure in His people and to be “grieved” with their ill manners. Surely, metaphors that are inspired must have a meaning that is instructive. If the Father's “heart yearns,” if our Lord and Savior is “moved with compassion,” and if the Holy Spirit is “vexed,” there must be something analogous to what we call emotion among ourselves in the acknowledged attributes of the Most High. At least He appears to sympathize with us, so that “in all our afflictions He is afflicted,” and He pities us “as a father pities his children.” “That is speaking after the manner of men,” somebody says. True and it is exactly the way I do speak. In no other way do I know how to speak, and until I learn to speak after the manner of angels, you must pardon me, and accept an apology, not only for my own ignorance of any other tongue than that in which I was born, but also for the incapacity of my hearers to understand any other than human language. Neither do I know anything, so limited is my intelligence, except after the manner of men. It seems to me that if there is any other manner or means of communicating thoughts and emotions, it must belong to some other being than man. And if it is correct to speak after the manner of men, then be it understood I do speak after that manner, and I am perfectly satisfied that I am able so to speak the truth as shall give a faithful and adequate impression to your minds. There is a feeling which has a measure of pain in it, familiarly known to us as “pity.” It is a love which so sympathizes with its objects that in a manner it makes itself one with them, and if it should involve suffering, pity shares the pang. If there is any kind of grief in the one that is pitied, he that pities becomes a partaker of that grief. I believe in a God who can feel. As to Baal, and the gods of the heathen, they may be passionless and without emotion, or without anything that is akin to feeling. Not so do I find Jehovah to be described. How did His anger kindle when He gave His people over to the sword, and was angry with His inheritance! And how transporting is His love to the daughter of Zion when He rejoices over her with joy! He has a pity, yes, and a sorrow too, according to this Book. I dismiss therefore the theology of the schoolmen; I am quite satisfied with the divinity that I find in these Scriptures.

Believe it then, dear friends, with all your hearts, that God has kindly feelings towards them that fear Him, such as a father has towards his children. This is a truth of which I feel jealous, and I do not wish to see it toned down. There is a sentiment abroad that sounds plausible, and is accepted by many Christian people, that God puts us to much sorrow, wisely and for our good, while His own heart is unaffected or callous to our suffering, because He foresees, according to His own purpose, the good that will come out of it. Some kind of analogy might in that case be suggested between our gracious God and a skillful

surgeon, who cuts, and cuts deeply, when he would remove a cancer from the flesh, or a physician who administers potent drafts of medicine, which, perhaps, cause excruciating pain. The surgeon would be too intent on the success of his operation, or the physician would watch with too much anxiety, the effect of his prescription on the patient to bestow much thought or sympathy on those present sufferings which he confidently anticipates will effect a permanent cure. So he calmly looks on, intent upon the result in the future, as he ignores to some extent the anguish of the passing hour. But I pray you not to think that it is exactly so with God. Of course, in a higher scale, He has all the wisdom of the physician and He views our afflictions that we now endure in the light of that hereafter when He will heal all our diseases, give unto us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Still, He does not steel His heart to the immediate and the present trouble of His people, but, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." I can understand the surgeon looking at the patient, while causing him acute pain under the operation, with the bravery of a man whose nerves cannot easily be shaken. But the father must leave the room, he cannot bear it. The mother cannot look on—they are carried away with the immediate grief. And so it is with God, albeit that the splendor of His wisdom and His foreknowledge enable Him to see the end as well as the beginning, yet, believe me, like as a father is pitying his children, so the Lord is pitying them that fear Him. For it is in the present tense, and carries the idea of continuity. At this very moment He pities them that fear Him. Though He knows your trials will work for your good, yet He pities you. Though He knows that there is sin in you, which, perhaps, may require this rough discipline before you are sanctified, yet He pities you. Though He can hear the music of heaven, the songs and glees that will ultimately come of your present sighs and grief, yet He still pities those groans and wails of yours, for "He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." In all our distresses and present grief, He takes His share. He pities us as a father pities his children.

Let us look at the text, then, believing in its meaning, and not frittering it away by saying, "That is after the manner of men." For again, I say, there is no other manner in which we can speak, and no other manner in which God Himself can speak if He means us to understand. There is doubtless some high and vast meaning which, like the covering cherub, stands high over all, but, for all that, I am but a child and cannot reach it. I am content with what I can reach; satisfied with what is obviously the meaning of this text, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him."

Hear it, dear friends, first for your encouragement, and hear it next for your imitation. Hear it that you may be encouraged, God is not unfeelingly afflicting you, but He pities you. Hear it that you may be impelled to go into the world with a like pitying eye. If you ever have to say a rough word in fidelity, or are required to utter a stern rebuke, do it after the manner of your heavenly Father, pitying even if you have to blame, and gently delivering the expostulation which it grieves you to have to deliver at all.

I am not tonight able to preach to you much by way of set discourse, for I am one of those children just now who needs his Father's pity. I half think He would have bade me go home, and not speak to you at all, had it not been that the sight of this assembly stirs my spirit, and makes it imperative that when you come together to hear, I should have something to say to you, therefore as best I can, I shall simply call attention to some things in our condition and our circumstances which make us resemble children towards whom God has pity.

Will you please observe on the outset, that the pity of the Lord extends to *all* those that fear Him. There are none of them that are not fit objects of His compassion—the very best and brightest of His saints, the brave heroes, the well-instructed fathers, the diligent workers, God pities you, my dear brethren. Will you take that home to yourselves, because there is a beautiful lesson of humility in so accounting ourselves as pitiable creatures in the eyes of the Lord, even when we are at our best estate. I have seen some brothers and sisters that really did not seem at all good subjects for pity, because they imagined that the very roots of sin had been eradicated out of their hearts. Their character and their conduct were akin to perfection in their own esteem. I forget how many weeks they had lived without a sin except they had some wandering thought once, but they could hardly remember or refer to that as a fault.

Yes, but I venture to say I pity people that talk so. If they are God's children, all that God does with them is, He pities them, and well He may, for He says to Himself, "Poor dear creatures. How little they know of themselves, and how different their estimate of perfection is from Mine." He still pities them, and that is as far as He goes. I do not find Him admiring them or exalting and extolling them. The biggest child He has, the child that is most like His Father, and has learned most of Jesus, may come to this text and see himself depicted in it—"As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him."

As for us who are not so big, and are still among His little children, I am sure the Lord first pities our *childish ignorance*. He is not angry with us, because we do not know everything, He is not angry with us because the little we do know we mostly turn topsy-turvy, upside down. He is not angry with us because what He has taught us we are very apt to forget by reason of our fickle memory. No, He pities us. Schoolmasters of the olden type used to think that the boys must do all the lessons that were given them and learn everything that was contained in their school books, then they asked them questions which, if the pupils could answer, there would be no need for any tutors, but if the boys did not know the answers, there was nothing for them but a fierce word and a hard blow. That is not how fathers teach—true fathers, but when their children do not know, they tell them. If they cannot quite understand them, they watch their faces and they put the thing into another shape, and if the child has not got it then, they try again, and at last they find the keyhole of the child's understanding, and put the key in, and straightway the mind is opened, and the truth, like a precious treasure, is stowed therein. A father does not act like a schoolmaster, but he pities his children, and he is willing patiently to teach them. Does the father expect his child to know as much as himself? Does the politician expect the little boy to understand the secrets of the Cabinet? Does the tradesman expect his child to come into his shop and perceive the intricacies of his business? Certainly not, and when the child makes many mistakes, at which others laugh and mock and make some bitter jest till the tears rise in his tender eyes, and roll down his little cheeks, the father feels the affront and pities his child. He too smiles at the strange things, the freaks of the child's mind, yet there is not an atom of scorn in that smile. He loves him too much to ever think of him in that way, and he goes on to teach him more. "Why did you tell your child that piece of information twenty times?" asks one. "Why," said the mother, "I told him twenty times, because when I had told him nineteen times he did not know it, so I went on to twenty times." And that is how God does with us. He has taught some of us nineteen times, and we do not know it, so He will teach us twenty times, for He pities us. Oh, if He were to treat us as some lads have been treated at schools—where they dismiss a boy as incorrigible, too dull, too stupid ever to shine—some of us would have been turned away long ago. But He takes us, dull scholars as we are, and He tires not of teaching, as He gently insinuates one truth after another—not too much at a time, for He says, "You cannot bear them now, though I have many things to say unto you"—and so by degrees He does get a little into us. Blessed be His name for that little! It is worth the entire world. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see. I have got that drilled into me. To know Him, and to know something of the power of His resurrection, and something of conformity to His death—these are lessons we are going on to learn with a sweet prospect of being taught yet more and more, and never a fear of being dismissed because of our dullness, for "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." Let us take a word of admonition from this instance of pity before we go any further. Do not let us think that we have not the privileges of children because we do not know as much as more experienced saints, because we cannot engage in the devotion at prayer meetings, or conduct a Bible class, or perhaps can hardly understand the creed of the church well enough to give a clear account of it. Do not let us think our heavenly Father does not love us, that He will refrain from keeping His eye upon us, or cease to watch our growth in grace and in the knowledge of Christ until He shall have more fully instructed us. Do not let us begin to condemn those of God's children that do not know as much as we do. We have not got far ourselves. Still, there is a tendency in some to say, "Why, this cannot be genuine grace, for it is accompanied with such little knowledge." Well, now, if that suspicion shall lead you to give more instruction, it is well, but if it shall lead you to set aside the uninstructed one,

it is ill. In the church of God it behooves us to have the same pity on the ignorant as our heavenly Father has shown towards us in our ignorance, and we ought to have even more, seeing He has no ignorance of His own, and we have much. Let us therefore be very compassionate and exceedingly pitiful towards those of our brethren who as yet know but little.

Another thing in which our heavenly Father shows Himself pitiful to us is in *our weakness*. Children cannot do much; they have but little strength, especially little children, too young, too helpless to run alone. The mother does not despise, she rather dotes on the babe whose little body is a burden she has to carry because it cannot walk. Her heart is not hardened against her infant because the wee baby is unable to help itself. Our heavenly Father knows our weaknesses. Some of you know something of your own lack of strength. You are bowed down under a sense of your infirmity tonight. Now, do not let your weakness lead you into any unbelief or mistrust of God. He knows our frame; He remembers that we are but dust. An infant's incapacity never excites a parent's ire. You, being evil, know how to be tender with your offspring. How much more shall the Father of spirits sympathize with such weakness, as He knows we are all prone to experience. Possibly the weakness that distracts you comes from languor of body. I have been sometimes so sorely sick as scarcely able to pray, that is to say, not to express my desires in a consecutive prayer. And I remember one who said to me, "I appeal to you, as a father, were your child suffering from a fever, his mind wandering, and his speech delirious, would you reproach him because he did not address you just as he has been accustomed to do when he was in health?" I felt I should have rather commiserated his sickness than complained of his frenzy. Neither will our heavenly Father, deviate from the instincts that He has implanted in the nature of His creatures, and revealed to us as an illustration of His own emotions toward those that fear Him. If you who have been accustomed to guide your class in their studies, cannot find anything instructive to teach them, or if you are a minister, should it seem to you that the tide runs out when you looked for your thoughts to flow freely, and that the words fall frozen when you hoped they would fire volleys from your lips, there may be some rational solution for your languor. If there is any wrong in your heart or in your habits, you may well blame yourselves, but if it is pure weakness—whether it comes from the body or from the mind that you are weary, disorganized, depressed and bowed down—do not think of aggravating your distress by self-reproach, but hear the text say, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust." Some of our brethren seem to think we are made of cast iron. They would have us preach all day and all night long. At times they are so thoughtless as to make use of very bitter language when some servant of Christ cannot, through physical or mental weakness, do all they want of him. "So-and-so does it," they say. A man in perfect health and strength may joyfully accomplish what another man cannot even think of undertaking. So are God's servants misjudged by the sterner sort, but they are not misjudged by God, for He pities the weakness of His people, and blames them not. I wish I could speak a word that would be encouraging to any here that would go about Christ's service if they could, but cannot. I remember John Bunyan's little picture of the man that is sent for the doctor, and he has to go on a horse and make all the haste he can, but the horse is a sorry jade, and cannot go very fast. "Oh," he says, "look at the man, how he kicks, how he tugs at the bridle, and his master knows he would go if the horse would only carry him." Under such circumstances the messenger could not surely be to blame. So, sometimes God sees the efforts of His servants to work for Him. Why, they would drive the church before them and pull the world behind them if they could. And if they do not seem to be able to do it, does He blame them? No, verily, but He pities the weakness of them that fear Him.

We will go a step further now. In children there is something much worse than ignorance and weakness, and that is their *childish follies*. There are some persons who have a great affection for children, and find great pleasure in being with them by the days together. I confess I find a larger portion of pleasure when they are out of the way. Perhaps it is because I need quiet and stillness that I am better able to bear with them a little at a time. But there are persons who seem to take a delight in all their childish pranks and games, and all their romps and frolic. Well, that is good, and I hope you will have

plenty of it, you that like it. But the father is the one who can bear with his children when other people cannot. I have occasionally been in houses where I have felt that I was glad the father could bear with them, for I did not feel inclined to be very patient with their play myself, however proper I may think it for young people to be lively. And you know a father and mother will put up with a thousand little things in their children that strangers would frown at. Those dear, kind mothers, with a little tribe about them, they do not seem wearied and worn out, and if anybody says, "Oh, look what he is doing." "Ah, well," says the mother, "he is only a boy." "Oh, but see that girl." "Oh, well, she is so young; she must have her little frolics." There are all sorts of excuses made on their behalf, and it is right enough that it should be so. It is not weakness in the child, it is just childishness. And when we were children, we did the same, and others bore with us, and so parents bear with their children. But oh, how God our Father bears with us! We think we are very wise, it is highly probable that we are never such fools as when we think we are displaying our wisdom. We think we are pleasing God sometimes, and in that very act we are displeasing Him, though we know it not. There are sins in our holy things, oh, how strange must some of the things that we do seem to our great God! We have gotten so accustomed to them, we have seen them in others, we have come to put up with them in others, and others put up with them in us. Now, we who talk sometimes about our doubts and fears, why, there must be much in them which must be very depressing to the mind of the great Father. Do we doubt Him? Do we distrust His promises? We try to make out that we do not, but if you sift it thoroughly, it does come to that. Oh, the Father knows that we do not mean it, that we shrink in a moment from the idea of making Him to be a liar, and if anybody else were to put forward the very doubt which we have been entertaining, we should be horrified with it. And I believe it is a great part of our heavenly Father's pity that He should thus look on us, and often construe what we do in such a kind and tender way. You know how Jesus prayed for His murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And the Son is very like the Father, our Father does the same with us, He forgives us because we "know not what we do." It was very beautiful of our Lord, even with Pilate to say, "He that delivered Me unto you has the greater sin." It was the best He could say for Pilate, which though his sin was great yet there was a greater. And our Father has all those kind thoughts ready; we may be sure, for His children's wild and wayward deeds. Jesus had them ready even for His most fierce and wicked adversaries. Yes, He pities our follies and bears with us still.

But children have something worse than follies; they have *faults to be forgiven*. Now, our Father pities the faults of His children, and He shows His pity by this fact, that He has provided for their cleansing, and He freely gives them the use of that provision, and readily forgives them their iniquities. A good child, when it has done wrong, is never satisfied until it gets to the father and says so, and asks the father's forgiveness. Some fathers, perhaps, think it wise to withhold the forgiving word for a little time, so may our great Father, but as a rule is it not wonderful how readily He forgives? He does for a little time, perhaps, make us smart under the sin for our good, but it is not often. As a rule, the kiss is on our cheek almost before the confession has left our lips. Oh, have we not gone to Him and we have thought, "He will chasten me for this. I may expect to be put in the dark, and to be without communion with Him for many days." But we have just ingenuously opened up our heart, and told Him that we grieved, and asked Him to make us even more grieved, that we might hate the fault, and never fall into it again. And almost at once He has said, "I have blotted out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities; go and sin no more." Do you not think that Peter ought to have been thrown out of the church a good long while after denying his Master with oaths and cursing? Well, perhaps he would have if we had been consulted in the matter, but when Jesus Christ was here on earth, by a kind look or a gentle word He could set very crooked things straight. So we see Peter in company with John and the rest of the brethren within two or three days of his committing that serious trespass. The Lord is very ready to forgive; it is the church that is unmerciful sometimes, but not the Master. He is always willing to receive us when we come to Him, and to blot out our transgression. Come along then, you that have erred and gone astray, you backsliders that are sensible of sin, you His children that did walk in the light but a few days ago, and have got into the dark by some sad slip, yet come along. You are very ready to forgive

your children, are you not? Do you not remember, you that are too old to have them about the house, how readily in your younger days you picked up your little ones in your arms and said, "Dear child, do not cry any more, you must not do it again, but father fully forgives you this time"? Just so your heavenly Father waits to pick you up, and to press you to His bosom and say, "I have loved you with an everlasting love," not "with a love that can soon be set aside by your fault." "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I will blot out again your transgression, and set your feet on a rock, and strengthen you to sin no more." Oh, it is a sweet, sweet thought—our Father pities us in our faults!

Go a step further. A father's pity tenderly *lifts up those that fall*. When your child falls down, as children are very apt to do, especially when they first begin to walk, do you not pity them? Is there a nasty cut across the knee, and it cries, the mother takes it up in her arms, directly, and she has some sponge and water to take the grit out of the wound, and she gives a kiss and makes it well. I know mothers have wondrous healing lips! And sometimes, when God's servants do really fall, it is very lamentable, it is very sad, and it is well that they should cry. It is a pity that they should be willing to lie in the mire, but when they are up again, and begin crying, and the wound bleeds—well, let them not keep away from God, "For as a father pities his fallen children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." Have you come in here tonight with that cut knee of yours? I am sorry you should have fallen, but I am glad that our blessed Master is willing to receive you still. Come and trust in Him who is mighty to save, just as you did at first, and begin again tonight. Come along! Some of us have had many times to begin again. You do the same. If you are not a saint you are a sinner, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Put your trust in Him, and you shall find restoration, and maybe through that very fall you shall learn to be more careful, and from now on you shall walk more uprightly to His honor and glory.

But how the pity of a father comes out to a child in the matter of pain! With what exquisite tenderness *a child's pains are soothed* by a parent! It is very hard to stand by the bedside and see a dear child suffer. Have not some of you felt that you would gladly take your children's pains if they might be restored? You have one dear one at home now, the tears are in your eyes as I mention it—a life of suffering she has. Well, it may be others of you have children who have mental troubles, the body is healthy, but the little one has a fret and a worry. I hope you sometimes have seen your children weeping on account of sin, it is a blessed grief, and the sooner it comes, the better. In such a grief as that, as indeed in all others, I am quite sure you pity your children. So your Father pities you. Broken heart, God's heart is longing to heal you. Weeping, weeping for your transgressions, the Father longs to clasp you to His bosom. Tried child of God, you that are often despondent and always ailing, God would not send this to you if there were not a necessity for it, and in sending it He shares it as far as this text goes, and it goes blessedly far, for He pities you. Sometimes hard-hearted persons do not pity those that suffer, and some forms of suffering do not awaken sympathy, but all the sufferings of God's people touch the heart of Jesus, and sympathy comes to them at once. I know some of you say, "I am quite alone in the world, and I have much sorrow." Please revise that hard saying! You are like your Master, of whom it is written that He said, "You shall leave Me alone: yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." Your Father is with you. I wish you had some Christian friend to speak with you as a companion, but in the absence of such a social confidant there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and there is One above who is a Father to you. Oh, believe it, there is no poverty, there is no reproach, there is no sorrow of heart, there is no pain of body in this world among them that fear God, but what the Lord sees it, and knows all about it, and has a pity to them that endure it.

Still passing on, our children have our pity *when anybody has wronged them*. I have heard say that there are some men that you might insult, almost with impunity, and should you even give them a blow they would stop to ask the reason before showing any resentment, but if you put a hand on their children, you shall see the father's blood come up into his face, and the most patient man will, all of a sudden, become the most passionate. There was a livid blue mark where you struck the child, and the father looks as though he could forgive you if that were on his own body, but on his child—no, that he cannot endure, he turns it over and over, and he cannot resist his indignation, that his child should be wantonly

made to suffer. The wrongs of children call loudly for redress in the ears of every sensitive man or woman, but they are sure to awake a thrilling echo in a father's heart. "And shall not God revenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" I tell you that He will avenge them speedily, though He bears long with the adversary. That cry of Milton's, when he prayed God to avenge God's elect among the valleys of Piedmont for all the accursed persecutions of the Church of Rome, was certainly heard and answered. Look at Spain to this day, degraded among the nations because she was chief in the army of inquisitors, and crushed out the word of God from her midst. She cannot rise; the blood of saints is on her. And other nations, too, that have shed the blood of the righteous like water have had to smart for it. That revolution in France, when blood flowed at the guillotine, was God's reply to St. Bartholomew, for He remembered it, and took vengeance for His saints, and so He will till the end of the world shall come. There is no wrong done to His people but it is registered in God's archives. "He that touches you touches the apple of My eye." Christ seemed to sit still in heaven till He saw the blood of His saints shed, and then He stood up as in indignation when they stoned Stephen. You remember how He cries, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me*?" It was Jesus that suffered, though His saints were made to die. Leave, then, your wrongs with God. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord," and let your reply be always gentleness and kindness towards those who hate you for righteousness' sake.

And now, once more, the father will pity his children so as not only to set right their wrongs, but to *remove his children's dreads*. There are some people in the world that seem to take delight in frightening children with old bogey stories so that they hardly dare go out at night, but a kind father, if he finds his child frightened so, explains it all to him—he does not like to see him blanched with fear or haunted with terror. It may be that some here present are suffering just now because they are sorely afraid. Are any of you under a dread of some boding evil, as though the dark shadow of a calamity you cannot define were flitting before your eyes? Be sure of this, your heavenly Father pities you. There are some of our hymns that always speak of death as associated with pains and groans and agonizing strife. Very much of that is old bogey—

*"Imagination's fool and error's wretch,
Man makes a death which nature never made;
Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one."*

How many of God's people have we seen die without pains or groans or dying strife! I do remember one who used to be all her life subject to fear of death. She retired as usual to bed one night, and when they went to call her in the morning, there she lay with a sweet smile upon her face, she had gone to heaven in her sleep, it was evident she never knew anything at all about it. Are God's people by their observation of other saints driven to conclude that death is always the terrible thing the world says it is? I think not. There may be some whom God puts to bed in the dark, as we sometimes do our children, but usually He takes the candle with Him and sits and talks with His child till he falls asleep, and wakes up, and there he is among the angels. God kisses the souls of His saints out of the bodies—

*"One gentle sigh, the fetter breaks:
We scarcely can say, 'they're gone!'
Before the ransomed spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne."*

Go to your heavenly Father and tell Him you are frightened, and He has ways of taking away these fears, for though they may be ridiculous to some, a child's dreads are never too frivolous for the sympathy of a loving father, but He meets them as if there were some great reality in them, and so sets them aside. Whatever then your need, your woe, your grief, fly away to your great Father's mercy seat and spread them there, and He will give you comfort, and always believe from this night forward that God pities all them that fear Him, and whatever He sees of weakness in their nature and of sorrow in their lot He will help them. So may you find it now and evermore, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 103.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—103, 195, 625.

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