

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

FILLING THE EMPTY VESSELS.

A Sermon

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“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”—Philippians iv. 19.

VERY beautiful, to my mind, is the sight of “Paul the aged” immured in his prison at Rome, likely by-and-by to be put to death, but calm, quiet, peaceful, and joyful. Just now he is so happy that a gleam of sunlight seems to light up his cell, and his face shines like that of an angel. He is exceedingly delighted because he has been, in his deep poverty, kindly remembered by the little church at Philippi, and they have sent him a contribution. See how cheerful the man is—I was about to say, how contented; but I drop the word because it falls far short of the mark. He is far more happy than Cæsar overhead in the palace. He is charmed with the love which has sent him this relief. Probably the gift does not come to very much, if estimated in Roman coin; but he makes a great deal of it, and sits down to write a letter of thanks abounding in rich expressions like these:—“I have all things, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you.” His heart was evidently greatly touched; for he says, “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again.” See how little a gift may make a good man glad! Is it not worth while to be free with our cups of cold water to the prophets of the Lord? Instead of a little money, the brethren and sisters at Philippi receive a boundless blessing, and are enriched by the fervent prayers of the apostle. Hear how earnestly Paul invokes benedictions on the heads of his benefactors. Is it not a blessed state of mind which enables a heart so soon to be full to overflowing? Some would grumble over a roasted ox, and here is Paul rejoicing over a dinner of herbs.

So great was the disinterestedness of Paul that there was nothing of selfishness about his joy. He did not speak in respect of want, for he knew how to suffer need without complaint; but he looked upon the kindly contribution as a fruit of the grace of God in the Philippians; a generous proof that they were lifted out of heathen selfishness into Christian love. There was little enough of kindness in the old Roman and Greek world into which Paul went preaching the gospel. Those

were times of great hardness of heart, even to cruel heartlessness. There was no sort of provision for the poor. If a man was poor, why, that was his own look out, and he might starve and die. You know how hardened the people had become through the fights in the amphitheatre, so that the sight of blood produced a fierce delight in their brutal bosoms, and human suffering was to them rather a thing to be rejoiced in than to be prevented. There might be here and there a tender hand that gave an obolus to the poor, but, for the most part, charity was dead. The voluptuaries of that most degenerate age planned no hospitals and built no orphanages: they were too intent upon their gladiators and their mistresses. Self was lord paramount in Cæsar's court, and all over Roman realms. But here are people at Philippi thinking about one who had preached the gospel to them, and who is now suffering. They are moved by a new principle; love to God in Christ Jesus has created love to the man whose word has changed them. They will not abandon him: they will out of their own slender means cheer his sad condition. There were churches that had no such bowels of mercy: alas, that so early in the gospel-day holy charity should be so rare! There were people whom Paul had blessed greatly, who even quarrelled about him, and denied that he was an apostle of Christ; but not so the beloved church at Philippi. They had again and again ministered to his necessities, and Paul now rejoices in them again because he delights to see another instance of the transforming power of the grace of God upon character, so that those who were once selfish now rejoiced, unprompted and unasked, to send their offering to him. Was Lydia at the bottom of that subscription? I should not wonder: we know that she was open-hearted. Did the jailer add his full share? I feel sure of it, for in the prison he courteously entertained the apostle. These were a generous people, and Paul is happy in thinking of them. I may here dare to say that I also have had the like joy over many of you when I have seen how freely you have given of your substance to the work of the Lord. It would be unfair if I withheld commendation for liberality from many now before me. You have rejoiced my heart by your gifts to the cause of God. You have given up to the measure of your means, and some of you beyond what we could have asked of you. The gospel has taught you this. To God be glory that it is so. Continue in the same spirit, that none may rob me of this joy.

The apostle makes to them an assurance in the following verses that they shall be abundantly repaid for all that they have done. He says to them, "*You have helped me; but my God shall supply you. You have helped me in one of my needs—my need of clothing and of food: I have other needs in which you could not help me; but my God shall supply all your need. You have helped me, some of you, out of your deep poverty, taking from your scanty store; but my God shall supply all your need out of his riches in glory. You have sent Epaphroditus unto me with your offering. Well and good: he is a most worthy brother, and a true yoke-fellow; but for all that God shall send a better messenger to you, for he shall supply all your needs by Christ Jesus.*" He seems to me to make a parallel of his needs with theirs, and of his supplies from them with their supplies from the Lord. He would seem

to say,—Just as God has through you filled me up, so shall he by Christ fill you up. That is a translation of the Greek which most nearly touches the meaning,—“My God shall *fill up* all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Will you allow me to make a break here for one instant? I read you just now the story of the prophet's widow whose children were about to be taken for a debt, and how the oil was multiplied in the vessels which she borrowed, until there was enough to discharge the debt, and sufficient surplus for herself and children to live upon. Now, kindly take that picture, and join it on to this, and we have here, first, *the empty vessels*. Set them out in a row, “all your need.” Secondly, *who will fill them up?*—“My God shall fill up all your need.” Thirdly, *after what fashion will he do it?*—“According to his riches in glory.” Fourthly, *by what means will he do it?*—“By Christ Jesus.” Keep the widow and the vessels before you, and let us see the miracle worked over again on a grand scale in our own houses and hearts. May the Holy Spirit make the sight refreshing to our faith.

I. So, then, we will begin our discourse this evening by asking you to **SET OUT THE EMPTY VESSELS**. “My God shall supply all your need.” Bring forth your vessels, even empty vessels not a few. “All your need.”

I do not suppose that you are under any great obligation to go out to-night and borrow other people's needs, for you have enough of your own at home—*needs many, and needs varied*. Very well, set them out. Hide none of them away, but put them down one after another, in a long row, all of them. There are needs for your body, needs for your soul; needs for yourselves, needs for your families; needs for the present, needs for the future; needs for time, needs for eternity; needs for earth, needs for heaven. Your needs are as many as your moments; as many as the hairs of your head. I suppose it would be useless for me to attempt a catalogue of them: however carefully we made the list we should have to add a host of sundries altogether unmentionable until circumstances suggested them. I could hardly tell you all my own needs, but I know that they are enormous, and increasing with my years. I have needs as a man, as a husband, as a father, as a citizen, as a Christian, as a pastor, as an author—in fact, every position I take up adds to my needs. If I went through my own personal bill of requests I should fill a document like the roll mentioned in the Old Testament, written within and without; and hardly then could I enumerate all my own demands upon the Bank of Heaven. But if I then attempted to take all the thousands that are gathered beneath this roof, and to let each man state his particular wants, where would the computation end? The sands upon the sea-shore are not more innumerable. Dear! dear! we should want a library larger than the Bodleian to hold all the books which could be written of all the needs of the needy congregation now before me. Well, I am not sorry for it, for here is so much the more room for the Lord to work his miracles of bountiful grace. Sometimes, when I have been in need for the work of the Orphanage and the College, and such like things—and these times have occurred—I do solemnly assure you that I have felt a wonderful joy in my spirit. I have watched the ebb of the funds till nearly everything has been gone, and then I have joyfully said to myself, “Now for it! The vessels are empty;

now I shall see the miracle of filling them." What wonders the Lord has wrought for me I cannot now tell you in detail; but many of you who have been my faithful helpers know how hundreds and even thousands of pounds have poured in from our great Lord in the moment of necessity. It will always be the same, for the Lord God is the same. Until the funds run low we cannot expect to see them replenished; but when they get low, then will God come and deal graciously with us. Money is, however, our smallest want; we need grace, wisdom, light, and comfort; and these we shall have. All our needs are occasions for blessing. The more needs you have the more blessing you will get. God has promised to fill up all your needs. That is, all your empty vessels will be filled, and therefore the more the merrier. What! the more in need the better? Yes, I would have your faith believe that strange statement: your poverty shall thus be your riches, your weakness your strength, your abasement your exaltation. Your extremity shall be an opportunity that God will use to show the riches of his grace; to your utter exhaustion he will draw near with all the fulness of his inexhaustible grace, and he will replenish you till your cup runs over. He will fill up all your empty vessels. Be not slow to fetch them out from holes and corners, and place them before the Lord, however many they may be. Weep not over the empty jars, but place them out in rows in full expectation of their being filled to the brim.

These empty vessels of yours are, some of them, I have no doubt, very large, and they even grow larger. Most of our wants grow upon us. You still pray, "Give us this day our daily bread;" but the one loaf which was a large answer to the prayer when you were single, would not go far at your table now: the quarters vanish like snow in the sun. You wanted faith fifty years ago, but you want more now, do you not? for you have more infirmities, and perhaps more trials, than in your younger days. I know that, apart from my loving Lord, I am much more needy now than I ever was before. Whatever a man requires in the things of God, usually the older he grows, and the more experience he has, the more he wants it, and the more of it he wants. He needs more love than he had when he was younger, more patience, more resignation, more humility, more charity, more wisdom, more holiness. He desires more faith, and a brighter hope. He wants, in prospect of death especially, more courage, and more bold, simple, child-like confidence in his Saviour. Why, some of us have wants that could not be supplied if we could turn the stars to gold and coin them and pay them away: these could not touch the hunger of the heart and soul. The world itself would be but a mouthful for our spirits' necessity—a drop in the bucket. I know some saints that have grown to be so deeply in debt to their Lord, and to his church, and to the world, that they are over head and ears in it—hopelessly involved in boundless obligation. How can we meet the demands upon us? Our responsibilities are overwhelming. All that some of us have made by our life-long trading is a bigger stock of wants than ever we had before. The vacuum within our spirit expands and enlarges, and we cry out, "More knowledge of the Scriptures; more of Christ; more of grace; more of God; more of the Holy Ghost; more power to serve God." Our

oil-vessels would each one hold a sea : and even these are expanding. We want more and more, and the mercy is that the text before us keeps pace with the growth—"My God shall supply all your need : " this includes the big needs as well as the little ones ; it comprehends all that can be as well as all that is ; it warrants us that our growing needs shall all be supplied. Let the vessels expand to their utmost, "Yet my God," says Paul, "shall fill up all those needs of yours."

Certain of our needs, again, are of this extraordinary kind, that *if they were filled up to-night they would be empty to-morrow morning*. Some of our necessities are fresh every morning ; the crop is a daily one, it springs up every moment. The grace I had five minutes ago will not serve me now. Yesterday I may have possessed great love, great faith, great courage, great humility, great joy ; but I need these to-day also, and none can give them to me but my Lord. You had great patience under your last trial. Yes, but old patience is stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden ; for the trial that is now coming can only be sweetened by the herb content, newly gathered from the garden of your heart and mixed with the bitter water of your afflictions. Our condition apart from our God may be compared to those fabled vessels that we read of in mythology that were so full of holes that, though the fifty daughters of Danaus laboured hard to fill them up, they could never accomplish the task. You and I are such leaky vessels that none but God can ever fill us ; and when we are filled none but God can keep us full. Yet so the promise stands, "My God shall supply all your need" : all the vessels shall be filled and shall be kept full.

We have certain needs, dear friends, that are *very pressing*, and perhaps most clamorous at this moment. Some wants are urgent : they must be supplied, and supplied speedily, or we shall perish with hunger, or die of sickness, or wither up in despair. Here let me add a caution : I dare not tell you that God will supply all the needs of everybody, for this promise is to the children of God, and in its most emphatic sense it is only to a certain class even among them. Those persons who profess to be Christians, and when they were well-to-do never helped anybody else, I think the Lord will let them pinch a bit, and know what a condition of poverty is like that they may become more sympathetic with the poor. I have known good stewards, and the Lord has sent them more, for they have dealt well with what they had : they have given away their substance by shovelfuls, and the Lord has sent it back by cartloads, and entrusted them with more. Others who have been bad stewards, and have not served their Master well, have lost what they had, and have come to penury. Let us hope that their substance has gone to somebody that will use it better ; but meanwhile they have to pinch, and deservedly so. But, remember, the apostle is speaking to people of a very different character from that. He is speaking to the Philippians, and I think that there is point in that pronoun, "My God shall supply all *your* need." You have been generous in helping the Lord's servant, and the Lord will repay you. Up to the measure of your ability you have served his church and helped to carry on his work in the world, and therefore God will supply all *your* need. This is not spoken to hoarding Judas, but to the generous who had voluntarily yielded of their substance when a fit opportunity was given them. Will

any of you bring your need to God and test him by like conduct? Remember that old promise of his, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." There is that scattereth and yet increaseth. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Oh yes, our gracious God will fill all the vessels at once, if time presses! If your needs urgently require to be filled bring them to him.

I began by saying that few of us had any great call to borrow other people's empty pots; *yet there are some of us whose main anxiety is about the vessels that we have borrowed.* We want more oil than others for this very reason, that we care for others. Certain of us have been called to a life which intertwists itself with many lives; we have been led by grace and providence to take upon ourselves the wants of thousands. Every genuine warm-hearted Christian does this more or less. We try to make other men's needs our own needs, by working for the poor, the ignorant, the sick, the helpless. You that care for our orphan children may well join with me in prayer that the Lord will fill up all those empty vessels not a few, which we have borrowed of poor widows. Think of my hundreds of borrowed vessels in the Orphanage, and of the number in the College. Blessed be the Lord my God, he will fill up all these. Those whom we try to help in different ways, especially those we try to lead to the Saviour, are like the woman's borrowed vessels, and they are not a few. You have made their spiritual needs your own, you have come before God to pray for them as for your own soul, and you shall be heard. You have talked to your neighbours and laid yourself out for their good as if your own eternal destiny were in their stead: rest you fully assured that the Lord that filled the borrowed pots in Elisha's day will also supply your borrowed needs. "My God will fill up all your needs." It is a blessed word. Bring out your vessels, and see if it be not true.

I should like to see every Christian here setting out all his vessels in rows at once, whatever they may be. Do not put your cares away in the back room and say, "I shall draw them out to-morrow and begin worrying over them." Instead of that, while the oil is flowing, bring them here before the Lord, that the oil may have free course, and find suitable storage. Would you limit the miracle? Have you one forgotten want? Make haste with it! Still the oil is multiplying. Come one! Come all! Arrange your vessels; and the Lord will fill up your needs by his grace, and fill your mouths with a song.

II. Secondly, let us enquire, WHO IS TO FILL THESE VESSELS? Paul says, "*My God will supply all your need.*"

"My God!" Oh, that is grand! It were foolish talking if any other name were mentioned. God can supply all the needs of his people, for he is All-sufficient; but nobody else can. He can do it alone without help; for nothing is too hard for the Lord. He is able to number the myriads of his creatures and attend to the commissariat of them all, so that not one of them shall lack: "He calleth them all by their names, by the greatness of his power not one faileth." "They that wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing." As for thee, dear brother,

“trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” He that promises to fill up all thy empty vessels is one who can do it: there is no bound to the goodness and power of God.

Then, notice that sweet word which Paul has put before the glorious word “God.” He writes,—“*My God.*” As Paul looked at the money which the Philippians had sent him, and perhaps at the warm garments that should cover him in the cold, damp jail, he cried, “See how *my God* has supplied *me!*” And then he says, “*My God shall supply you.*” This same God, Paul’s God—“shall fill up all your need.” Wonderfully had God protected Paul from the malice of those who sought for his life. Very wonderfully had he been carried by divine power through unparalleled labours, so that he had been made to triumph in every place in the preaching of the gospel; and thus he had learned from day to day to get a firmer grip of his God, and say, “My God!” with more and more emphasis. Jehovah was not to Paul the unknown God, but “My God.” With God he dwelt, and in him he reposed all his cares. This same God is our God. Think of that, poor friend, in your hour of need. Think of that, you afflicted widow-woman: you have Paul’s God to go to. Think of that, dear child of God in trouble: you have the same God as Paul had, and he is as much yours as he was Paul’s. His arm has not waxed short, neither has his heart grown hard towards any of his children. “My God,” says Paul, “who is also your God, will supply all your need.”

Who is this God that will supply all our needs? Paul’s God, remember, was and is *the God of providence*, and what a wonderful God that is! We speak as if we were some very important part of the universe, but really, what are we? Our little island can scarcely be found upon the globe till you hunt long for it; what a tiny speck this congregation must be. But God supplies the wants of all the millions of mankind. “Mankind,” I said: but I ought to have included all the other creatures, too;—the myriads of herrings in the sea, the multitudes of birds that sometimes darken the sun in their migrations, the countless armies of worms and insects, strangely supplied we know not how; and yet “your heavenly Father feedeth them.” Is that all the sphere of his providence? No; far from it. I suppose that this round world of ours is but one apple in the orchard of creation, one grain of dust in the corner of God’s great palace. But all yon orbs, with all the living things that may be peopling every star, he supplies. And how? “He openeth his hand and supplieth the want of every living thing.” See how easy to him is this universal provision: he doth but open his hand and it is done. This is the God that will supply all your need. He calleth the stars by name. He leadeth out Arcturus with his sons. He looseth the bands of Orion. He doeth great things without number; and shall he not feed and clothe you, O ye of little faith? Yes, be ye sure of this, the God of providence shall supply all your needs for this life and its surroundings.

If that suffice you not, let me remind you that this God is *the God of grace*, for Paul above all men counted grace to be his treasure: his God was the God of grace. Chiefly he is the God who gave his Son to bleed and die for men. Oh, stand at Calvary and see God’s great sacrifice

—the gift of his only-begotten Son ; and when you have marked the wounds of the Well-beloved and seen Jesus die, answer me this question —“ He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? ” What will he deny us who has given up the best jewel that he had, the glorious One that heaven could not match ? There was never the like of Jesus, and yet he bowed his head to die on our behalf. Oh, my dear, dear friends, if you are anxious to-night and vexed with many cares, do think of that. It is the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who says that he will fill up all your need. Do you doubt him ? can you ? dare you distrust him ?

Now, take a flight above this present cloud-land and behold *the God of heaven*. Think of what God is up yonder

“ Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll,
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”

Behold the splendour of God ! Gold in heaven is of no account : the streets of that city are all of pure gold like unto transparent glass. The riches and the merchandise of nations are but as rags and rottenness compared with the commonest utensils of God’s great house above. There they possess inexhaustible treasures and everything that is precious ; for the walls of the New Jerusalem are described as made of twelve manner of precious stones, as if these stones were so common in Immanuel’s land that they built the walls therewith. The gates are each one a pearl. What pearls are those ! Is God thus rich ? inconceivably, incalculably rich, so that he clothes the very grass of the field more gloriously than Solomon clothed himself ? What am I at to be of a doubtful mind ? Is he my Father, and will he let me suffer want ? What ! I starving and my Father owning heaven ? No, no.

“ He that has made my heaven secure,
Will here all good provide ;
While Christ is rich, can I be poor ?
What can I want beside ? ”

My precious text is one which, years ago, when we built the Orphanage, I caused to be cut on one of the pillars of the entrance. You will notice it inside the first columns on either side whenever you go there. “ My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” This I took for the foundation of the Institution, and set my seal to it as true. And it has been so. Time would fail me if I were to tell how often God has interposed there for his numerous family —those children that are cast upon the divine Fatherhood. He has honoured his own promise and our faith, and I believe he always will. There on the forefront of the Orphanage stands also the word—“ The Lord will provide.” You shall see whether it be not so. As long as that place stands my God shall supply our need, and it shall be a standing encouragement to us all. Think of the far more extensive orphanage of our brother Müller, of Bristol, with those two thousand five hundred children living simply through prayer and faith, and yet as abundantly supplied as the Queen in her palace. Nothing is wanting where God

is the Provider. The Lord will supply without fail; let us trust without fear. Go and plead this promise with the Lord your God and he will fulfil it to you as well as to the rest of his saints.

III. Now, thirdly, let us enquire IN WHAT STYLE WILL GOD SUPPLY HIS PEOPLE'S NEEDS?

He will do it in such style as becomes his wealth—"according to his riches." There are several ways of doing most things. There is more than one way of giving a penny to a beggar. You can throw it at him, if you like; or pitch it in the mud as if you threw a bone to a dog; or you may hand it to him in a sort of huff as if you said, "Take it, and be off with you;" or you may drag the coin out of your pocket as unwillingly as if you were losing your eye-tooth. There is yet another way of doing it, namely that which makes the copper turn to gold, by a courteous kindness which expresses sympathy with the poor creature's need. Always give good things in the best way; for your heavenly Father does so.

Now, how does God supply his children? Stingily, miserably, grudging them every pennyworth? Certainly not! I hope that it was never your misery to dine with a grudging man who watched every mouthful that went down your throat as if there was so much the less for him. Why, when one does eat, at whatever table it may be, if it is the commonest fare, one likes a welcome. It is the welcome which makes the covenant invitation so sweet, when you hear the exhortation, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." One enjoys the welcome of a heart which does all it can: like the Scotchwoman at a great communion meeting when there was nobody to take the people in,—“Come in,” said she: “come in; I have room for ten of you in my house, and I have room for ten thousand of you in my heart. Come along with you. Nobody so welcome as you that have been sitting at my Master's table with me.” How then does God dispense his favours? How does he fill up the vessels? The way he does it is not according to our poverty, nor according to our desert, “but according to his riches.” He gives like a king. Brethren, I must correct myself:—he gives as a God, and as only God can give, according to his own Godlike riches.

Nay, that is not all. He will do it in a style consistent with his present glory. It is “according to his riches in glory,” which means that, as rich as God is in glory so rich is he in giving. He never demeans himself in the mercies that he gives. He gives according to his rank, and that is the highest conceivable. He gives so as to bring him new glory. I never heard of one of his children receiving a great blessing from him, and then saying that it did not glorify God to bestow it. No, no. The more he gives the more glorious he is in the eyes of men; and he delights to give, that his glory may be seen, and that the riches of his manifested glory may be increased. Withholding would not enrich the Lord of heaven; rather would it impoverish him in glory. But giving enriches him with more revealed glory, and he therefore delights to scatter his bounty.

The fact is, brethren, *God gives gloriously*. The calculations of God—did you ever think of them? Well, let me say that he always calculates so as to leave something to spare, by which to illustrate the infinity of his goodness. I know that it is so. He does not give us just as

much light as our eyes can take in, but he floods the world with splendour till we shade our eyes amidst the blaze of noon. After this fashion did his only-begotten Son feed the thousands when he multiplied bread and fish for them to eat. We read that "they did all eat"; no doubt they were hungry enough to do a great deal of that sort of labour. So far so good: but it is added "and were filled." It takes a good deal to fill men who have come a long way into the country and have had nothing to eat for a whole day. But they *were* filled, fainting and famished though they had been. Yes; but do not stop there:—"And they took up of the fragments twelve baskets full." The Lord always has baskets full of leavings remaining for the waiters. He will be sure to fill all your needs till you have no other need remaining, and have provision on hand for needs not yet arrived. Will the day ever come when we shall say, "Bring yet another need for God to fill," and the answer will be, "I have no more needs"? Then the oil of grace will stay; but it never will till then. Nay, according to what I have said, it will not stop then, but it will go on flowing and flowing, and flowing and flowing, world without end, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The Lord will give enough, enough for all time, enough of all, enough for all, and more than enough. There shall be no real need of any believer but what the Lord will fill it full, and exceed it. It is a wonderful expression "filled with all the fulness of God;" it pictures our being in God and God in us. One has illustrated it by taking a bottle, holding it in the sea, and getting it right full,—there is the sea in the bottle. Now, throw it right into the waves, and let it sink, and you have the sea in the bottle and the bottle in the sea. So God enters into us, and as we cannot hold more, he makes us enter into himself. Into the very fulness of Christ are we plunged. What more can the amplest imagination conceive, or the hungriest heart desire? Thus God will supply our needs. Well may you fill others, who are yourselves so filled by God. Well may you serve his cause with boundless generosity when the infinite liberality of God is thus ensured to you.

IV. Lastly, let us notice BY WHAT MEANS THE LORD FILLS OUR NEEDS? It is "by Christ Jesus." Does God supply all his people's needs by Christ Jesus?

Yes, first, *by giving them Christ Jesus*, for there is everything in Christ Jesus. Christ is all. The man who has Christ has all things, as saith the apostle, "All things are yours; for ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." You will never have a spiritual want which is not supplied in Christ. If you need courage, he can create it. If you need patience, he can teach it. If you need love, he can inspire it? You want washing, but there is the fountain. You require a garment, but there is the robe of righteousness. You would have great wants if you went to heaven without Christ, but you shall not go there without him: even there he shall supply you with everything. He it is that prepares your mansion, provides your wedding-dress, leads you to his throne, and bids you sit there with him for ever. God will supply your eternal needs by giving you Christ.

Moreover, all things shall come to you *by virtue of Christ's merit*. You

deserve no good thing, but he deserves it and he says, "Set it to my poor servant's account." You may use Christ's name at the Bank of Heaven freely, for though God might not give his favour to you, he will always give it to his dear, dying, risen, pleading Son. When Jesus' name is quoted all things are yielded by the Father. God will give you all things by Christ: therefore do not go to anybody else after those things. If you have begun in the Spirit do not attempt to be perfected by the flesh. If your only hope is in what Christ has done, stick to that, and add nothing to it. Be this your motto:—

"None but Jesus! None but Jesus!"

Jesus is our all. We are complete in him. We need no *addenda* to the volume of his love. Christ, and Christ alone, shall supply all your need—all your fresh springs are in him. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace."

Now, once more, I would to God that some poor soul here that has no faith—that has no good thing about him—would, nevertheless, look over his house and see whether he has not an empty vessel somewhere. All that Christ wants of you, poor sinner, is that you should be empty and come and let him fill you with his grace. Come along with you, just as you are! Bring no good works, no prayers, no anything: but come with all your sins, and follies, and failures, which you may look upon as so many empty pots. Come to Jesus for everything. "But I have scarce a sense of need," say you. Come to him for that too. You must be very needy to be in want of *that*. Come and get it of him. I tell you, soul, you do not want a half-farthing's worth of your own; for what you think you have will only keep you back from Jesus. Come in all your poverty—a beggar, a king of beggars, come and be made rich by Jesus. You that have not a rag to cover your sin with; you that are only fit to be put into the devil's dust bin, and thrown away as worthless: come along with you! My Lord Jesus is ready to receive those that Satan himself flings away. If you are such that you cannot find anything in yourself that is desirable, and even your old companions who once cheered you on now think you too mean for them; yet come into my Master's company, for "this man receiveth sinners." Come with your beggary and bankruptcy: you cannot dig, but to beg be not ashamed, for "My God will supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

As for you that have not trusted my Lord, and boast that you can do very well without him, I suppose I must leave you to fight your own way. You declare that you will carry on your own business, and will not be dependent upon God, nor fall into any fanatical ideas, as you are pleased to call them. *But we shall see.* Already we see that the youths do faint and are wearied, and the young men utterly fall. We see that the young lions do lack and suffer hunger, and also that the best-laid plans of wisest men go oft awry, and they that have felt assured that they could fight their own way—even they have come to terrible failure. We shall see how you fare. They that mount up with wings as eagles and are proud and vainglorious, even these go down to destruction so that no flesh hath whereof to glory. As for me, let me wait upon the Lord

God and live by faith in him. Is it not better to drink of life out of the deep, inexhaustible fulness of God than to go for ever pumping and pumping at your own shallow cisterns which hold no water? Self-reliance may be well enough, but God-reliance eclipses it as the sun outshines the stars. "Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." There is a God, and those who love him and trust him and serve him know that he is a good Master. Job was slandered by the devil when he came and said, "Does Job serve God for nought?" He insinuated that Job made a good thing out of his religion and was moved by selfish motives. It was a great falsehood, and yet, in a certain sense, it is true. If anybody says the same of you, admit that it is true; own that you do make a fine thing out of your religion. God will not let you serve him for nought; you shall never have to ask the question "What profit is there if we serve God?" You shall have his peace, his love, his joy, his supplies, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. You shall know that in keeping his commandments there is great reward.

Believer, you shall have everything through Christ and nothing without him. He that trusts not the Saviour, and prays not to him, shall be like Gideon's fleece—when all around it was wet the fleece was dry; but the man who trusts God and blesses his name shall be like Gideon's fleece, when all around was dry it was full of moisture. God will not hear a man's prayers except through Christ Jesus, but if that name be mentioned the gates of heaven fly open. God withholds no real good from the man of God who is in Christ. But our plea must be Jesus first, and Jesus last, and Jesus in the midst. We must present the bleeding Lamb before God each morning and each night. I pray you seek no mercy of God apart from Christ, but lay hold upon God in Christ; and you have enough for all your need. May God the Holy Spirit cause you to abide in Christ Jesus for his name's sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 Kings iv. 1—7;
and Philippians iv.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—84 (Song II.), 23 (First Version), 708.