

these epitaphs is very marked. The Greek of the Christians was bad:¹ that of the Jews is quite as bad, and yet some of those who sin most were persons of high rank in their cities.²

¹ This is noteworthy in their epitaphs, and is animadverted on by Aristides (see *Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 351 f.).

² In I *κατεσκευασαν*: generally the spelling is more correct than in any other of these epitaphs: *ελ τις* is repeated unnecessarily; *εσται* has the plural *αυται* as subject; *η* is written for *αι*. Three of the offices are in the nominative (or dative) *αγορανομια*, etc., then follow *αρχα*s . . . *τελεσας*, but *στρατηγησαντα*.

In II *λοιπησας* (*ου* for *υ*), *ανυξη* (*υ* for *αι*), *μημηδων*, *εσε*, [*υ*]σιν: the construction *εις ορασιν*, etc., is rather mixed.

In III *εισελθοιτο* (middle for active, was loved in Phrygia: see examples quoted in my papers in *Philologus, Neue Folge*, i. p. 755; *Zft. f. vgl. Sprachforschung N. F.*, viii. p. 389): so also *ενκαταλειπετο* (*ε* for *αι*): *μηδιαν* is doubly wrong.

In IV *εκον* for *οκον*.

In V the construction of the curse is loose: *γυναικι* for accusative.

In VI *πολησει* and *γυναιριον* (on the latter see under VIII).

In VII *εδναυτο* (see under III): [*ο*]χωνα, if I rightly take it for *οκον*, is a *monstrum*. *τουνοβουα* occurs probably for *τυμβουον* in a Græco-Phrygian epitaph (Ramsay in *Oesterr. Jahreshfte*, 1905, Beib. pp. 79-120, No. XXXI, and Calder in *J.H.S.*, 1911, p. 179), so perhaps *οκονα* is formed from misunderstanding *οκον* as of declension III, and the misspellings *χ* for *κ* and *ω* for *ο* are frequent.

In VIII *Κλυδιος* (*υ* for *αυ*): *τις* for *δοτις*: *ποσει* (trisyllable): the curse has an unusual form (see footnote on the text). The word *γουντη* (compare VI) is not Greek.

The words *γουντη* and *γυναιριον* are evidently names indicating the grave or some part or accessory of it. The latter is a formation from the former, in which *υ* expresses probably a slight nasalization of *τ* (a use of *υ* of which many examples occur in the country). The word may perhaps be Phrygian in origin: it is not Hebrew or Semitic (as Prof. A. R. S. Kennedy tells me), nor is it either Greek or Latin. Keil and Premerstein quote from an inscription of North Italy the word *guntha* (with *guntharii*); and if this is connected, it must have been brought to Italy by natives of Asia Minor.

In IX *ου τεθη* (conjunctive apparently) the construction of conditional sentences is always a difficulty in these and in very many Phrygian epitaphs.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 19.

And my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

1. THIS is one of those touches of tenderness which make the letters of St. Paul so human and so helpful. It is an open window into his very heart. He had known the disappointment which comes to men when they think that they are forgotten. There is a whole world of loneliness in the simple sentence, 'no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving.' He had graciously poured out his very life for them, and for the evangel's sake he was even now an ambassador in chains, but the Church's heart had kept no loving memory of his devotion, and her hands were not stretched out in greeting and in sympathy. Then there came the gift of the Philippians, and new joy filled St. Paul's heart and a new rapture gladdened his spirit. Their gift, surely, was a cup of cold water to a tired and thirsty man. Their thought revived him, their love heartened him, and their sympathy was a staff of support. What could he send them in return? He had no gifts to offer that human hands could

carry. But this is his answer: 'My God shall fulfil every need of yours.' You have thought of me; my God will think of you. You have ministered to me; my God will cover every bit of your need with the wealth of His riches in glory.

2. God was not a far-off God to Paul. No more building altars 'to the unknown god' as heathendom did, groping in its darkness and longing for light, or, as modern scepticism does, giving up all search after God as vain, and glad on the whole that it is so! None of this in Paul, but the knowledge of God as one revealed, as one to whom he is bound by living ties of affection and daily intercourse; as one whom he can wholly trust! 'My God'—there is more than experience and confidence in the words. There is the sense of possession and the immeasurable dignity and strength involved therein. It is the old cry of David when he was hunted by Saul and had no earthly wealth and no earthly helper, 'O God, thou art my God.' No wealth? No helper? Ah, God was his, 'the Lord was his inheritance.' God was 'the strength of his heart and his portion forever.' So Paul could say that God was his, and with God all the open treasuries of God's grace and love.

Wonderful blessing of the Christian that in the darkest hour he may say, 'God is mine.' Wonderful help in his efforts to bring others to God, that he can say to them, as Paul did from the consciousness of his own great possessions in God and his knowledge of the infinite freeness of God's love: 'My God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.'

I.

THE NEED.

'Every need of yours.'

1. Paul was led to write these words under the influence of two impulses. There was the movement of his strong affection for the Philippians. He regarded them with unusual esteem and love. His Epistle furnishes abundant proofs of this: where he assures them of his confidence because he has them in his heart, where he addresses them as his 'dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown,' and now in his closing words where, sympathizing with them in their isolation and the conflicts which were surely before them, he writes, 'My God shall fulfil every need of yours.' But he had also been touched by their tokens of affection for him. More than once they had managed to send him benefactions, though sometimes the opportunity had been lacking, and a fresh gift had just reached him through Epaphroditus. These expressions of their devotion had been very grateful to him. He felt that he could accept them without hesitation as they had been given without grudging; and, anxious to make some return, but realizing that it was out of his present power, he commends them to the gracious God, who had never failed him in the hour of trial.

2. Paul was very chary of gifts from churches. There were churches far richer than that of Philippi from which he would not take a penny. Mercenary themselves, they were ever ready to think others equally so. To the church in Corinth Paul writes: 'When I was present with you I was chargeable to no man.' 'I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.' He was ready, however, to receive these repeated gifts from the church at Philippi, because he knew they trusted him and his motives. Epaphroditus, having delivered the little present, is about to return, and Paul seizes the opportunity to write them this letter, in which he heartily thanks them

for their repeated kindnesses; and, as is natural, he sought to make some return. But he had nothing to send. He was a prisoner and poor, owning nothing in this world but an old cloak, a few manuscripts, and a Bible. 'But,' he says, 'my God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.'

3. That we can ever reach a state in this world where no needs press upon us is not to be expected. We are needy creatures in a needy world.

(1) *Our needs are constant.*—This truth is implied in the prayer our Lord has taught us: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' To-day's supply is adequate only for to-day; to-morrow will assuredly bring its new demands. 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 you had five minutes ago will not serve you now. Yesterday you may have possessed great love, great faith, great courage, great humility, great joy; but you need these to-day also, and none can give them to you but your Lord. You had great patience under your last trial. Yes, but old patience is a stale stuff. You must grow more of that sweet herb in your garden; for the trial that is now coming can be sweetened only 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, which were so full of holes that, though the fifty daughters of Danaus laboured hard to fill them up, they could never accomplish the task.

(2) *Our needs vary with the successive stages of life.*—The periods of childhood, youth, manhood and womanhood, old age are very unlike, and each is characterized by special kinds of need—the need for watch-care, for guidance, for strength, for patience. At every turn in life's journey new difficulties confront us, just as the scenes shift and change, and unforeseen prospects open before us. Our life is one repetition of needs, just as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun, or the return of the seasons.

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* illustrates this truth by the striking pictures which it draws for us of what Christian met with on his way. On setting out he needed the Evangelist to show him the path to the wicket-gate, at the Slough of

Despond the services of one Help to direct his steps to dry land, on passing the lions the words of the Poster telling him that they were changed, in the dungeons of Doubting Castle when hope was dying out of his soul, the key of promise by which he could open its bolted gates.

(3) *Some needs are very urgent and clamant.*—

The billows and waves sometimes pass over us; and these dark things in life not only involve suffering and produce strange forebodings, but often impress us with a sense of mystery. We do not see the reason for them; they do not seem to be contributing to any desirable end; it is difficult to explain them as dealings of the Divine Love.

The conflict is deepened and rendered more intense by the fact that we cannot anticipate how these trials will terminate. It seems to us that they are fraught with a terrible fatefulness, and we feel as though life could never be the same to us as it was when, as merry children, we wandered in the daisied fields, or in after years tasted the joys of fatherhood or motherhood. But even these extreme vicissitudes of life, with their long shadows and apparently hopeless outlook, are included by the Apostle in the phrase 'every need of yours.'

There are moments when we understand these triumphant words of St. Paul. It is the one, almost the only struggle of religious life to believe this. In spite of all the seeming cruelties of this life; in spite of the clouded mystery in which God has shrouded Himself; in spite of pain and the stern aspect of human life, and the gathering of thicker darkness and more solemn silence round the soul as life goes on, simply to believe that God is love, and to hold fast to that, as a man holds on to a rock with a desperate grip, when the salt surf and the driving waves sweep over him and take the breath away. I say that is the one fight of Christian life, compared with which all else is easy. Let all drift from him like seaweed on life's ocean. So long as he reposes on the assurance of the eternal faithfulness of the Eternal Charity his spirit at least cannot drift.¹

II.

THE SUPPLY.

'My God shall fulfil.'

There are many views which we may take of God. Some of them exhibit Him in such transcendent greatness that it separates God from us rather than brings Him into touch with us. The philosophic conception of God as the Infinite and Eternal may have its uses in broadening our minds, and rebuking the tendency which sometimes shows itself to regard Him as merely magnified man, but

¹ F. W. Robertson.

there is nothing in it to quicken faith or move the heart. The thought of God which is awakened as we contemplate the wonders of creation—the number of the stars, the forces which rule all things, the vastness of the universe—increases our awe, but is no help to the spirit in the experience of life. But the view of God which filled Paul's soul with confidence and hope, the specially Christian view of God, is truly a revelation to man's heart, and assures us that nothing which pertains to our life is indifferent to Him. He is One who watches over us and cares for us. Thus we are encouraged to look to Him at all times.

1. The supply is wisely *adapted to our need.*—Some succour which men offer is well-meant but ill-advised. Some cures for the ills from which we suffer are worse than the ills, being followed by the most serious results. But God so fulfils our need that we are richer and more blessed than if we had never known the need.

2. The supply is *adequate and overflowing and also sure.*—God always gives as God. No stinted measure ever comes from Him. Whenever you ask God for anything, expect more than you ask, for so always does God answer the prayer of faith. How many of us fail here! Swinnock says: 'We lie to God in prayer, if we do not rely upon God after prayer.' The Old Testament story of the widow in debt reveals no exceptional acting on God's part. The oil flowed until she had no more vessels in which to receive it. This is God's supply of His people's need—full to the brim. And then the supply is sure—'My God shall fulfil every need of yours.' No power of the enemy can hinder God. 'He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.'

Alexander the Great told one, who sought his help, to go to his treasurer and draw upon him for whatever sum he pleased. The man went out and asked for so large a sum that the treasurer refused to pay it until he had first consulted the king. The king's reply was, 'This man honours me by asking so much. Let him have it at once.' Brethren, our God is greater than Alexander of Macedon, albeit he was surnamed the Great. Many things may seem to be too great for us to receive, but they are not too great for God to give. God will stand to His promise. Our supply is sure.²

I remember lying on the bank of the Thames one summer day and watching the deep full river as it swelled past in silence and majesty. On the slopes opposite were herds of cattle feeding, which by and by came slowly down to the

² A. C. Price, *Fifty Sermons*, iii. 292.

water one by one to quench their thirst. One by one they drank deep draughts and returned to sleep in the meadows, and yet the river flowed past as silent, as full and majestic as ever. Its flood was not diminished nor did its waters sink a single inch in consequence of the demand upon it.¹

3. The supply is *all-embracing*.—‘Every need of yours.’ When you have walked thoughtfully through the crowded streets of London and noticed the dense mass of people, you have probably asked yourself, ‘How comes it that this vast population obtains an adequate supply of food?’ Well, come with me to some headland on the coast of Kent—say, the South Foreland. The Channel is full of ships, sailing or steaming, and as they pass the great lighthouse, they are making signals. We ask whence they come and whither bound? We hear, in reply, ‘From Egypt, carrying grain to London. From Calcutta, bearing rice. From Ceylon, with tea. From Ireland, with cattle. From Spain, with fruit—all for London!’ You ask: ‘Is this an unusual spectacle?’ It goes on through every hour of the day, through every hour of the night. The fields of every Continent are under tribute to London. Then your anxiety for London’s millions vanishes; the supply is quite equal to the demand. So it is with us. Rich argosies of blessing hourly arrive from heaven to meet your needs and mine. Along the invisible ladder angels are always ascending and descending. Do I need strength for daily toil; wisdom to train my children for God; grace to vanquish temptation; mercy to cover all my sins; faith to grasp all the promises of God; patience under trial; more life in me to adorn the Christian name; courage to face the foe; the fellowship of the Spirit; a strong hope that shall survive death; the full assurance of glory? All shall be mine. There never has been any lack, there never shall. Much as I have received, there is more to follow. ‘My God shall fulfil every need of yours;’ yes, all:

A missionary travelling in an unexplored part of Africa writes: The ‘white man’ is a never-ending cause of wonder to the natives, an inexhaustible source of wealth. My present carriers have had no previous experience with a European. The first day of our journey we were caught in a heavy tropical shower on an open plain. I immediately had my tent put up and all found shelter in it. ‘Wonderful!’ they exclaimed, ‘he carries his house with him!’ That evening, when we had camped, they were trying to light a fire by rubbing the point of one stick into a hole in another. I took out a box of matches and struck one. ‘What!’ they cried, ‘he carries fire in his pocket and it does not burn him!’

¹ C. F. Carver.

For their every wound or ailment I found a remedy in my medicine chest. One in agony from toothache I relieved of his tooth. ‘He has a long bird’s beak,’ he told his friends, ‘that pecks out teeth!’ On a cloudy afternoon we lost our direction. I got out my compass and, after consulting it, showed them where the sun was. ‘He carries a little god who tells him where the sun is descending.’ Their wonder was unbounded when on the *capitas* telling me with a distressed face that their food was done, I opened a tin of flour and was able to give them a meal. ‘He opened a little iron box and then poured and poured out of it an endless stream of flour,’ he told them. Somehow I seemed able to supply all their wants and more. Their conclusion is that the ‘white man’ is incredibly rich and endless in resources, and their faith in me is pathetic. Their remarks made me think of Ph 4¹⁹, ‘My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.’²

III.

THE CHANNEL.

‘According to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.’

The Apostle always centres our thoughts in Jesus Christ. Whether he be writing about God’s forbearance to men in the past, or His grace in the present, or the dealings of Providence, or the purposes of redemption, it is upon Christ he concentrates our attention. So here, while he ascribes the supply of our need to God, he proceeds to add, ‘according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.’

1. There are some striking contrasts here which are fitted to awaken devout musings. There is the contrast between need and fulness, between poverty and riches, between the time-life and the glory which awaits us. But let us fix our minds more particularly upon Him in whom they meet, and through whom the one is the passage to the other. For Jesus Christ binds together the need and the fulness, for He entered into the need, and He possesses the fulness. He joins the poverty and the riches, for though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might become rich. He unites the time-life with the eternal glory, for in the fulness of time He was born under the conditions of mortality in order that by the power of the Spirit, mortality might be swallowed up of life.

2. It is in Jesus Christ therefore that we must put our trust; but in order that we may realize the fulness of blessing which the text guarantees, there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled.

(1) *Our trust in God through Jesus Christ must be a simple, undivided trust.*—There are two mistakes

² A. C. Murray.

into which we are liable to fall. We look to Jesus Christ, but we do not so look as to really cast our care upon Him. It is a doubting, troubled look instead of the look of faith. It has been well said, 'Wherever anxiety begins, faith ends; and wherever faith begins, anxiety ends.' Another mistake is that of professing to look unto Christ while in reality we are relying upon ourselves or upon sources outside, which we hope will avail us, or to some fortunate turn of events.

We had a half-witted boy in the city of Detroit, whose mother sent him to market to bring home a basket of provisions. It was very heavy, so he asked a carman on the way if he might not ride, and he said 'Yes.' The boy jumped up on the waggon with the basket. Presently he took the basket in his arms, and the driver said, 'Why don't you set down that basket?' 'Oh!' said the boy, 'it is not fair to ask you to carry me and my basket too!' You laugh, dear friends, but we are doing the same thing with God. We pretend to carry our cares to the Lord, and yet we try to carry the cares all the time; whereas the blessed promise—and it means what it says—tells us, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain'—what? Thy burden? That is not what He says. 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' He will take care of your burden and you too.¹

(2) *God's care for us should make us sympathetic towards others.*—It was the sense of gratitude moving Paul's heart that drew out his feeling for the Philippians. Our care is a type of the cares of others. The Divine supply which helps us is a supply upon which they may depend. Trust in Jesus Christ should never be a selfish sentiment, it should enlarge

¹ A. T. Pierson.

our sympathies; making us brothers to all. By thus helping others, we become co-workers with Jesus Christ. It is often through His brethren that Christ ministers consolation and help to the needy. And what we do for others our Lord accepts as done unto Himself.

To open your heart till the pulses of the great world go through and through you, to be unwearied in kindness as well as in gifts, to feel, to love, as well as to do what custom requires—to see in the city and the neighbourhood, and especially in the poor, the unfriended, the obscure, the dull, the uninteresting, those who are to you a Christ in disguise, and whom to benefit is the one true and lasting joy of life; this verily is the path to eternal life, and this path is open to us always. In vain you try to make the best of both worlds; in vain by prayers and services and emotion do you try to compound for the harder demand which Christ makes—care for Me and for My brethren. This alone, this alone, is the path of life.²

LITERATURE.

- Austin (G. B.), *The Beauty of Goodness*, 33.
 Banks (L. A.), *Hidden Wells of Comfort*, 265.
 Hackett (W. S.), *The Land of your Sojournings*, 157.
 Jowett (J. H.), *The High Calling*, 222.
 Lacey (R. L.), *Faith and Life in India*, 21.
 Mackenzie (R.), *The Loom of Providence*, 198.
 Price (A. C.), *Fifty Sermons*, iii. 289; ix. 385.
 Spurgeon (C. H.), *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*,
 xxix. (1883), No. 1712.
Christian Age, xlvi. 66 (L. Abbott).
Christian World Pulpit, xl. 90 (J. D. Davies).
Homiletic Review, lxiv. 394 (A. H. Strong).

² J. M. Wilson.

Contributions and Comments.

Errata.

By an oversight last month the corrections on the contributions by Professor Moulton and Mr. Carr were not incorporated.

In Professor Moulton's note—

At line 9 read ἀγάπης.

„ „ 17 „ συνάντησιν . . . ἀπάντησιν.

Add at end: We may put in the same category οικοδομή, for οικοδόμησις, but this achieved much wider currency.

In Mr. Carr's note—

At line 23 read κόλασις.

Add at end: For the Apostles at this moment pride of rivalry was the 'hand' or the 'foot' to be cut off, and 'salt' was the grace of God needed to bring peace.

Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2.

DT 33^{2b} (מימינו אשרת למו) is difficult.¹ All attempts at its explanation must be regarded as

¹ See commentaries, especially Driver's *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, in the 'International Critical Commentary,' 3rd ed., p. 390 ff.