

smaller salaries, greater economy in all details, these are suggested.

Then, various devices, by which men's burdens are laid upon women and children; by which fairs and sales and "festivals" may supplement the offertory, and by which the willing few toil for the sake of the unwilling many; these supply a perilous resort at last.

Is there any remedy for these griefs and woes and for all the shameful wrong to which they testify?

Perhaps the first answer is this: There is no remedy until Christian men shall come to say, as the least which they can say, when offerings are asked of them, I will not offer "unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. I can live in a cheap house, and wear cheap clothes, but I will not have or practice a cheap religion, in thought of Him 'who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'"

Partial endowments may come by and by, and they cannot come too soon. Parish debts, which are a source of weakness and misery, may be forbidden, or at least discountenanced. Needless expenses, which only savor of delight for man and which do not especially honor God, may be "ruled out." Yet when all else has been done which prudence and wisdom may suggest, this must be the axiom of practical Christianity: "My life in the Church of God must be very costly, as my offering of time, thought, toil, and money unto the Lord of the Church, unto that Lord whose I am and whom I serve."

It will be a grand step in the right path when Christian men shall begin to lay aside God's part of their earnings before they arrange their own expenses. It may be as true of one's substance, as of keeping aright the Lord's day,

The first fruits of a blessing prove  
To all the sheaves behind.

Ventures of faith are not too common now; but they were a power in the story of early Christianity, and they found their expression through accepting heartily the words of the Master who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."—*Living Church*

### THE BIBLE: WHAT IS IT?

We have read, or heard lately, several learned as well as faithful expositions of The Bible: What it is. A large field of grain has been sifted, and much of the good grain stored safely, while much of the evil crops of doubt and ignorance has been cast out. Yet in this sifting process it is just possible that too much care has been expended upon the mere grain and too little upon the sower. There are still some who retain the primitive faith that "all Holy Scripture is given by the inspiration of God," and though the words Scripture, or Bible, may mean all scripture—all books—yet when Christ commanded His Church to study the Scriptures, as containing the lessons for eternal life, since they testified of Him. He certainly referred to these Scriptures, accepted by the Jews as holy inspirations from the Holy Ghost, in a sense quite apart from the work of the Rabbis. What, then, is the Bible? It is the preserved books accepted by the Church as inspired by the Holy Ghost, i.e., the books were all written by men who were in personal communion with the Holy Ghost, in a sense quite apart from the ordinary life of men. Thus the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, were written by Moses, if perhaps we except the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which is evidently a mere obituary notice of the great prophet's last hours on earth, and was most probably written under Divine guidance by Eleazar, the high priest and nephew of Moses. The Book of Joshua may also have been written by Eleazar, the high priest, who had witnessed the scenes described, and been with his father Aaron on the Sacred Mount.

The books of Judges and of Ruth are said to have been written by the high priest Samuel. The remaining historical books are evidently the chronicles preserved by the Levites, who were set apart for the work of sacred Scribes. The Psalms speak for themselves; they are chiefly from the pens of the Levites engaged in the service of the Temple as well as of the royal Divinely-inspired Psalmist and penitent who had seen so much of the loving-kindness of the Lord. Also one sublime Psalm of Moses, the man of God, bearing all the impress of his majestic style, is preserved. The other books of the Bible speak for themselves. To every book, the name of the writer is appended; yet all are united (with the exception of the merely historical ones) by the same link.

"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amos" (chap. i.); "The words of Jeremiah. . . . To whom the word of the Lord came," Jer. i, 1, 2; "Now it came to pass. . . . The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest" (chap. i. 13); "In the first year of Belshazzar, King of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions; then he wrote the dream," Daniel vii. 1, viii.; also ix. 21. And this link is carried on to the very last book of the Old Testament, where it culminates in "The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel, by Malachi." The New Testament opens with the same link. The Incarnation is announced in its first book, where the link between the Old and New is preserved. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet," St. Matthew i, 21 to the end. This Divine link is even more openly displayed in the sublime Gospel of St. John, where the eternal unity of the Word of God is enforced: the testimony of St. John the Baptist given to the word which sent Him to announce the Advent of "Him Who taketh away the sins of the world." Nor does the chain end until, in the last awful book of prophecy, the solemn curse is pronounced upon those who would sever this link, or presume to suppose that any merely human inspiration was to be sent by the Word of the Lord revealed to His servants, by the accredited manifestations of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, the Spirit of Truth, and of Holiness, of Purity, and of Power. Moses did not seek God,—he was singled out for his great work and power over the elemental forces granted to him. Samuel was also, from early childhood, endowed with this awful mysterious gift, and it is to be noted that, through all the long ages, this power has never been bestowed but for some special purpose, in days of critical dangers or crying sins. The Lord descended to see if the reports He heard of Sodom were true. He heard the cry of the enslaved Hebrews in Egypt, and sent Moses. By Daniel, he prepared the way for the restoration of the captives from Babylon, under Nehemiah and Ezra, by preserving the faith of their fathers; and keeping them in that bond of united brotherhood which enabled even Esther to save her people from extinction, when they were subjects of the heathen monarchs. We are warned all through Holy Scripture to "beware of false prophets."

There were Jannes and Jambres to oppose Moses, the soothsayers to oppose Daniel, and the priests of Baal and the priest of Bethel at the king's chapel to oppose Elijah and Amos, yet the Word of the Lord which His Prophets had spoken was fulfilled. And when the Saviour of Men met with St. Paul near Damascus and endowed him with the sacred gift, it was placing in his hands that power which has indeed made him a chosen vessel to bear the Gospel of Salvation unto Gentiles and before kings for 1800 years.

Those who learn from Christ, and are taught by Him to be meek and lowly in heart, will soon learn that, though the Spirit be given to all, the Holy Ghost, Eternal and Immutable,

has for our learning recorded in the Bible the lessons of eternity as well as the lessons for this life, its consolations and its guidance.

Only by constant reference to the Word of the Lord can we "prove the spirits, whether they be of God or not." It was thus that Satan was overcome by our Saviour in the desert of temptation, and the Prince of the Power of the Air vanquished by the Word of the Lord.

—*Family Churchman*

### WHAT GIVES EFFICACY TO PRAYER.

Prayer is the solemn presentation of a petition from the subjects to their sovereign, or the simple plea of children to their father for something that they crave. No man is mad enough to wipe out all the tenderness from the relation of human fatherhood, or to make light of the great right of human petition, because children or subjects get something other than they ask. One refusal, or the gift of something other than the thing craved, means merely that the giver is wiser than we or kinder than we should be to ourselves.

Any other thought of prayer makes it a needless unreality. For if we must get everything we pray for, then we and not God become the controllers of the world, and He is not a giver, but a mere reservoir, whose contents we discharge at will. It is not often that God makes so clear the answer and the reason of the answer to man's prayer.

The Bishop of Rochester states in a single sentence in his last charge: "Is God fated so that we cannot move Him, or Will, so that we can?" It is like the hopeless alternative of the truth of the revelation, as St. Peter phrased it, when he dared to face the hard sayings of the Master: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." It is one thing or the other, ignorance, uncertainty, doubt, denial, darkness, despair; or hope, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures. And so it is one thing, or the other; the hideous fate of a Greek play, and man the sport of its cruelty; or a personal God, the Author, not only once for all, but the giver continuously of all good gifts, the God who heareth prayer, unto whom shall all flesh come.

As Charles Kingsley wrote in a letter recently published: "I do not believe in the existence of Law. Nothing exists but Will. All physical laws and phenomena are but the manifestations of that Will—one orderly, utterly wise, utterly benevolent. . . . In Him, the Father, I can trust, in spite of the horrible things I see, in spite of the fact that my prayers are not answered. I believe that He makes all things work together for the good of the human race, and of me among the rest as long as I obey His Will. I believe that He will answer my prayer, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit of it; that if I desire good I shall find good, though not the good that I long for. And 'Law' and 'Necessity' I look upon as phantoms of my own imagination, always ready to reappear, but always certain, likewise, to vanish again before one sound blow of careful logic or practical life." Meanwhile the witness appeals beyond tangible evidence and beneath logical proof, to the common impulses, the implanted and irresistible instincts of humanity, that it recognizes in its necessity the necessity of praying.—*Church Standard*.

It is almost always when things are all blocked up and impossible that a happening comes. It has to. A deadlock cannot last any more than a vacuum. If you are sure you are looking and ready, that is all you need. God is turning the world around all the time.

To have what we want is riches, but to be able to do without is power.