

highly to be prized, if for no other reason yet on account of its unique place in the literature of the ancient world. Certainly, we Christians are not concerned to deny or to ignore the great literary attractions of the Bible, the many points of interest which it presents to the historian, to the poet, to the reasoner, to the man of taste. What poetry in any language surpasses Isaiah's? What political history is more full of incident and suggestiveness than that which we gather from the historians and the prophets of Israel during those years when Palestine was the theatre of the long rivalry between the powers that ruled on the Nile and the powers that ruled on the Euphrates? Who in ancient literature is a more accomplished dialectician than is St. Paul? or who can pass so rapidly as he from logic to pathos, from the sentences which control the understanding to the sentences which touch the heart? Or where, in the whole world of letters—even if a man did not, unhappily, believe its truth—where can we discover any narrative of a life that can compare in point of literary as well as moral beauty with that which is given us by the Evangelists? It was not a Christian divine who, when he was asked what book he would choose if for the rest of his life he was to be limited to reading one book, answered that undoubtedly he would choose the Bible. And yet its literary charms are not the chief, or the real reason while we Christians prize the Bible; for the Bible is the book of the human race, and the great majority of the human race, whether from lack of sufficient education, or for other reasons, have no eye for purely literary beauty. Some of the best men that have ever lived have read and read Isaiah as if he were merely prose, and they knew nothing about the politics of Egypt or Assyria, which so deeply affected the Jewish monarchy, and they do not understand the logic of St. Paul; and if they feel, yet they cannot give a reason for feeling, the finished perfection of the Gospel's narratives. And yet they are conscious of something in the Bible which warrants them in applying to it that unspeakably sacred term "the Word of God"—something which they find in no other book whatever.

What, then, is the quality in the Bible which marks it off from all other books in the world, from the highest master-pieces of human genius, whether of ancient or of modern days? The answer is, Inspiration. St. Paul attributes inspiration to the books of the Old Testament, and, with still higher reason, the Christian Church attributes inspiration to the books of the New. But what do we mean by inspiration? The word means, generally, "an inward breathing," that secret operation of the Holy Spirit within the soul of man which, by the gift of some clearer light or of some greater strength than nature can supply, carries it luminously, impetuously onwards towards truth and goodness. But this general inspiration evidently covers a great deal of ground. On the one hand, we say in the Creed—repeating almost exactly St. Peter's words—that the Holy Ghost "spoke by the prophets"; on

the other, whenever a sinner is converted to God, it is in obedience to the light and the force of Divine grace. Both are samples of inspiration. What, then, does inspiration mean when we attribute it to the Bible? Here we are met by a fact which has often been referred to of late years—that while the Church of Christ has always spoken of the Bible as inspired, she has never attempted to define what inspiration precisely is; and she has been withheld from attempting such a definition by a very good reason, namely, that inspiration is the action of a Being whose movements are necessarily quite beyond us; as our Lord says: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." We might dare reverently to add: So is every book that is inspired by the Spirit. Clearly, we are in the presence of an Agency, the range and the methods of which are too much out of reach to allow us to attempt, at any rate, an exact or exhaustive definition; and therefore if, for instance, the question be raised whether the Holy Inspiring Spirit suggested to the sacred authors, not only the subjects about which they should write, but also the exact terms which they should employ, and the style and physiognomy of their compositions, it is only prudent to say that we do not know. We do not know enough to draw the line with any confidence whatever between what in each author may have belonged to natural disposition, temperament, training, and what may be entirely due to a higher guidance or suggestion. It may be here rejoined—What is the good of attributing inspiration to the Bible if you cannot define what you mean by inspiration? The answer is that we can describe by their effects, by what they imply, and by what they exclude, many things which we cannot define—that is, of which we cannot say what they are in themselves. What Locke, the philosopher, calls simple ideas, are, from the nature of the case, incapable of being defined, but they are by no means incapable of being sufficiently described to enable us to recognise them at once. It does not by any means follow that inspiration means nothing, or that it means anything that we please, because we cannot give a complete definition of it. It carries with it plainly some positive advantages or prerogatives which are not to be had, as far as we know, anywhere apart from it, and we may enumerate these without attempting formal definition. If the wind bloweth where it listeth, still we may hear the sound thereof, and thus inspiration means sometimes revelation, the unveiling to a human soul some truth which could not have been known to it by the light of nature. The first chapter of St. John's Gospel and the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, to name no others, are inspired in this sense. Sometimes, again, inspiration means spiritual impulse, the movement within the writer's soul which urges him to write, and which guides him to choose certain subjects, or even to embody in his work certain documents which are already in exist-

tence. The historical books of the Old Testament generally, and the narrative portions of the Gospel, are, in this sense inspired. But inspiration is not only revelation of hidden truths, not only an impulse to write, and a guidance while writing, it is also, in whatever degree, a protection and assistance to the writer against the errors which beset him on this side and on that, a protection which, if it be good for anything, must at least be assumed to extend to all matters of faith and morality. To talk about guidance from on High would be misleading if the writer who is so guided is allowed to make mistakes in the very subjects for the purposes of which the guidance is presumably vouchsafed.—*The Rock.*

Home & Foreign Church News.

From our own Correspondents.

DOMINION.

MONTREAL.

POINT ST. CHARLES.—*Grace Church.*—His Lordship Bishop Bond has appointed Rev. Samuel Massey to the temporary charge of this church. He will officiate on Sundays, and do the parish work during the week, visiting the poor, the sick and the strangers. Mr. Massey's well known energy and experience will find ample scope in that part of the city. Churchmen will wish him every success in his new position. He will commence his work as preacher in the church next Sunday.

ONTARIO.

A poplar tree, standing near the Mohawk parsonage, is over 100 years old. In May, 1784, a twig of poplar was taken from the garden of the late Ven. Archdeacon Stuart, of Kingston, by Indians, carried to the reserve, and planted where it now stands. It was planted by a man who built the first log house on the reserve.

PAKENHAM AND ANTRIM.—The Incumbent of this parish has again been favoured with the good will of his people. The following address having been lately presented to him.

To Rev. John Partridge.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned in behalf of the congregation of St. John's Church, Antrim, beg leave to express our thanks for the kind and Christian manner in which you have day by day been drawing your people closer and closer around you in the bonds of Christian love. It is true, that the time you have been among us is not long. Yet it has been long enough for us to see the result of your ministrations. Therefore, as a token of the highest regards which we entertain towards you and your most amiable wife and family, we present you with this robe and purse, and ask you to accept them not for their intrinsic value, but as coming from a people whose hearts are filled with gratitude towards you for the straightforward manner in which you are ready to defend the faith and expose error.

Our united prayer to God is, that you may long be spared amongst us to continue the good work so successfully begun. Hattie Stowe, Jennie L. Owens. Amount of list handed in was \$42.

Mr. Partridge made a suitable reply expressing his great pleasure and sincere thanks. The same day, the Rectory was visited by members of St. Mark's Church, Pakenham, and a presentation made to Mrs. Partridge of a handsome silk dress, and new carpet for drawing room. Strange to say, later on "the Parson's" Oat Bin was replenished by members of the Cedar Hill district, for all of which he is truly thankful, and most of all is he thankful for the hearty co-operation and good will of his people.

KINGSTON.—Competitive plans are being asked for looking to the enlargement and improvement of St. George's Cathedral. It is proposed to erect a chancel and vestry. The important and extensive alterations now approaching completion in St. James' Church appears to have called a spirit of enterprise generally, and consequently not only the Cathedral, but it is said even little All Saints, is catching the improvement fever, and preparing for great and striking

changes and ad possible until Who knows but tal working ord its devoted past attempt some r as the completi chancel in keep improvement w awkward appe its width being of the most c The sects in Ki in their houses God lag behind The Lord Bi the almost new March, and la His Lordship's and everywher

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MARYSBURG. realized by coo burg. Procee and organ fu Churches.

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HAMILTON.— say that he hi in Hamilton, 46 Catharine letters and pa

OAKVILLE.— —On the last away at her gentle, loving and peace of Grahame, the late rector of second daugh vicar of Figh Rev. R. C. Ca Jail, Toront Newfoundlan work under late Bishop the Cathedra to the United work, but it i Canadian ca village of Fe she met him for the remai into the deef death. Ma panied her h sion of Mintc by Bishop ardour into and it will b that she suc the nucleus built shortly to the chanc pointed. T ing died in was appoint effect the re found the re and during this was ent hame's exer been receiv England. chiefly amo from time broken hes