

constitution or any body of statutes can be understood. This much is sufficient for all practical purposes, and it is for practical purposes only that the Bible was given.

Yet prepossessions, prejudices and passions come in so plentifully to darken and confuse men's minds, when they are reading the Bible. *He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures.* Men in these times need to have their understandings both opened and straightened out, that they may understand the Scriptures.

IV. The Bible is not a specimen of God's skill as a writer, showing us God's mode of thought, giving us God's logic, and God's rhetoric, and God's style of historic narration. How often do we see men seeking out isolated passages of Scripture, and triumphantly saying that such expressions are unworthy of God, and could not have proceeded from Him. They are unskillful, the mode of thought is faulty, they are illogical, in bad taste, the reasoning is not conclusive, the narrative is liable to exception. God has not put himself on trial before us in that way in the Bible, any more than He has in the creation—any more than He has promised that the Bible shall always be printed for us on the best of paper, with the best of type, and perfect freedom from typographical errors, and that after it is printed, it shall never be torn, nor soiled, nor any leaf lost: or that apostles and preachers shall be regularly handsome, men of fine forms and beautiful faces, and faultless elocution. It is always to be remembered that the writers of the Bible were 'God's penmen, and not God's pens.'\*

\* Reply to Essays and Reviews.

*There is more on other pages.*

It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired, it is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired; it is the men who wrote the Bible that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words, not on the man's thoughts, but on the man himself; so that he, by his own spontaneity, under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, conceives certain thoughts and gives utterance to them in certain words, both the words and the thoughts receiving the peculiar impress of the mind which conceived and uttered them, and being in fact just as really his own, as they could have been if there had been no inspiration at all in the case. The birth and nature of Christ afford an exact illustration. The Holy Infant in the womb of the Virgin, though begotten of God directly without any human father, (as it was said, *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*), — this infant lived by his mother's life, and grew by the mother's growth, and partook of the mother's nature, and was just as much her child as he could have been if Joseph had been his father, the human and the divine in most intimate and inseparable conjunction. It is this very fact of the commingled and inseparable union of the human and divine, which constitutes the utility, which makes out the adaptedness to the wants of men, both of the incarnation of Christ and of the gift of the word. Inspiration generally is a purifying, and an elevation, and an intensification of the human intellect subjectively, rather than an objective suggestion and communication; though suggestion and communication are not excluded.

The Divine mind is, as it were, so diffused through