

better than his predecessors—treat them so as to promote the progress of theology—requires large help and special direction from above.

That spiritual illumination is necessary to the successful cultivation of doctrinal theology is abundantly attested by the history of the church from the earliest time to the present day. If we may not, in proof, instance the writings of the apostles themselves—seeing that their case, as inspired men, was unique, and also that the books which they penned have seldom the form of theological discussion—the statement may be confidently made that all real advance in the apprehension of Scripture doctrine has been connected with religious quickening, and that times of genuine revival were the times when theology received its largest benefits. Truth being the instrument by which the Spirit works in souls, the time of revival has necessarily been a time when some important element of Divine truth was clearly and vividly apprehended; and thus the way was prepared for giving such element its fitting place and prominence in the theological system.

#### HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

Illustrations are abundant, but we may refer to the times of Augustine, of the Reformation, and of the revival of the last century in England and America. In each of these instances spiritual quickening is connected with, and leads to, fresher and more satisfactory statement of vital doctrine. Augustine's conversion, following his previous life, prepares him to enunciate with great depth and spirituality the doctrines of human depravity and victorious grace. No penetration and compass of intellect could, without his religious experience, have enabled him to handle these topics as he has done, to work them into the consciousness of his age, to expound and defend the truth concerning them so that it became a possession forever. Still more conspicuously is the Reformation at once a revival of spiritual life and a renewal and advancement of theology. The men raised up to direct that movement were men of profound piety—of deep experience in Divine things. The greatest feature of the Reformation is not the vindication of the right of private judgment in religion (though this was involved), but the quickening of souls into a new life, and the exchange of superstition and