

ing was by several of the Reformers even more than inferentially denied. By many great thinkers everything was referred to the direct working of the Holy Ghost ; nothing, except in the case of the elect, to that blessed medium and instrument by which He has ever vouchsafed to work—the written Word of God. Even those who held the vital truth often held it loosely and uncertainly. The full depth of the truths involved in the mysterious subject of personality had not been sounded by men whose lives were spent in action, and in the heat and dust of daily conflict. The general truth that the Holy Scriptures were no mere collection of abstract truths, but the very opening out of God's heart of love, was recognised ; but the development of this truth, and the carrying of it out into practice—as witness the mighty work of this great and prospered Society—belong to more recent days, and may be reverently regarded as a sign, clear and encouraging, that even in an age when, under one aspect, doubt would have seemed to have acquired a pervasive power hitherto unprecedented, Scripture has yet become more loved and realized than ever. Nay, to doubt itself we owe much. By the working of the power of the Holy Ghost many of those very movements of thought which are against the Truth have been overruled to further the Truth. The very alleged errors and discrepancies in Holy Scripture have led us to investigations which have opened out clearer views, and enabled us to realize characteristics, in the recognition of which much of a deeper belief has been found to be involved. We may observe, for example, how much our reverence and love of Holy Scripture has deepened in proportion as we have realized the mystery—that God, in order that He might speak to each human soul, has vouchsafed to speak unto man *through man*. Yea, blessed be God, this treasure have we in earthen vessels. The Scripture is no collection of records whose origin is hidden in twilight and mystery,—a merely supernatural revelation of superhuman truths that has come to us we know not how,—a collection of mystic documents that as much need a teaching Church to interpret, as it has needed a transmitting Church to guard and to authenticate. No, thanks be to God, that which we believe in, and on the heart's reception of which everything here and hereafter depends, is the record of that which every human soul consciously or unconsciously sigils for—redemption, and, through redemption, a return to a Father and a God. And this record, in all its wondrous detail, man has been permitted, qualified, enlightened, and inspired to write down, as it were, from the lips of God,—and yet in writing it to preserve all his human individuality, and by that very individuality to appeal the more persuasively to the heart and to the spirit. Real belief in Scripture, as I am persuaded very many here know by spiritual experience, depends on the heart and not on the head,—and it may be, nay, it would certainly seem to be, that we owe much of our deepest heart-conviction to the latent appeal of that purely truthful human element in the written Word, which answers to modern assaults on the faith have clearly brought out. Just in proportion as we feel this, and with it the true relation that this human element bears to the Divine element, do we deepen in our belief in the living and abiding truth of the Word of God.

Nay, more ; inspiration—that difficulty to many a true heart—has of late been far more clearly felt and realized. The rigid theories that made up the once popular view of a purely mechanical inspiration—an inspiration of the letter traced, and not the soul of him who was permitted to trace it, have been now tested and silently set aside. Hard and fast lines that men once strove to draw between the divine and the human in the Holy Scriptures—cold and sharp definitions that have driven many a poor human spirit into disbelief and antagonisms—have now been admitted to be unreal. Far truer and more reverential persuasions in reference to that which we feel and know to breathe through God's Word, and which eternally separates it from man's word, however elevated and spirit-stirring that word may be, have silently emerged from the very controversies through which we have passed. We feel inspiration the more because we have learned that we cannot rigorously