

The transition or division in the schools of religious thought to-day is but a reproduction of that which marked the Christian Church of the twelfth century. In this period there were important distinctions among the *teachers*; they were divided into two classes. Among the first division there were those who were called the *biblici*--the Bible divines; the *dogmatici*--the dogmatic divines; and the *veteres*--the ancient divines. Among the second were the *scholastics*--the advanced divines; and the *novi*--the new divines. The *biblici* believed in and expounded the Bible, and were not in the slightest degree dependent upon reason and philosophy; they sought for the evidences of righteousness, not reason--faith, not philosophy; they believed the Scriptures to be their own interpreters. The *scholastics* showed an utter disregard of the Bible, and expounded a "Book of Sentences"; they finally, through the subtlety of their philosophy, reduced whatever the Scriptures proposed as an object of faith and rule of practice, and obscured its divine doctrines and precepts by vain questions and worn-out speculations. And to study the memorials of such heroic, conscientious thinkers as St. Bernard, Thomas Aquinas, Godfrey, and Becket--especially those of St. Bernard, whose zeal was ardent beyond all expression, and whose influence and authority were equal to his zeal--will act as a corrective influence, will help us "to fix on decisions indisputable."

We are rapidly drifting into the deficiency of faith and soul, so evident in the earlier part of the reign of Queen Anne, and which reached its misty noon under George II.--"a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn." The Puritans were buried and the Methodists were not born. The philosopher of the age was Bolingbroke, the moralist was Addison, the minstrel was Pope, and the preacher was Atterbury. The world had an idle, discontented look of the morning after some mad holiday. The reign of buffoonery was past, and the reign of faith and genuine spiritual life

had not commenced. During the first forty years of the century the eye that sought for spiritual life could hardly find it, or as Bishop Butler has represented it in these words: "It was taken for granted that Christianity was not so much as a subject of inquiry, but was at length discovered to be fictitious. And men treated it as if this were an agreed point among all people of discernment." And there is, therefore, inspiration for us in the biography of the leaders who resolutely withstood the degenerate influences of their age, and clarified the mist so awfully dense around them. Read the life of Whitefield, "the prince of English preachers," who, in his rapture and self-devotion, traversed England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales for thirty-four years, and crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, preaching the love of God and His great gift to man. Also John and Charles Wesley. Of John Wesley it is said that he rose every morning at four, traveling every year upward of four thousand miles, and preaching nearly a thousand sermons, speaking at "class-meetings," editing books, writing letters, and always ready to talk to and sympathize with all classes of people. And further, Augustus Toplady, of whom it is declared that "his voice was music, and spirituality and elevation seem to emanate from his ethereal countenance and light, immortal form." And he who penned the "Rock of Ages, cleft for me" could also from easy explanations advance to rapid and conclusive argument, till science began to burn and feelings to take fire from his own kindled spirit. And equal in piety and strength with any of his contemporaries was William Grimshaw, who, with meat to eat that others knew not of, would dine on a crust of bread, then preaching the love of Jesus till the tears ploughed white channels in the grim faces of the Yorkshire colliers, would turn into his hay-loft and find in it a great heaven in his dream. And there are, further, the lives of Romaine, John Newton, Venn, and Simeon. Such