Aug 7 '68

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place . . ." Rev. 12:6.

LESSON 51

What our STUDENTS SAY

New Meaning

"Dear Mr. Armstrong: Please do send me the article about 'Where Did the Twelve Apostles Go?' I am having a wonderful time reviewing and comparing Lesson 49 with previous lessons that I've had on the churches. I never dreamed I could enjoy the Bible so much. With the lessons, pamphlets and references that I constantly use, I am kept busy — and the most enjoyable thing is discovering new and more meaningful ideas each time I reread or review certain passages."

— I. Smith, Co-Worker

"I must make a comment on Lesson 50 of the Correspondence Course: Years ago I tried reading the booklet 'A True History of the True Church,' two or three times, but somehow it was too deep for me to be able to remember things in it. But Lesson 50 was so interesting that I read the booklet again along with it, and typed an outline of it. Our minister . . . told us we should outline our studies and ask the questions 'who, what, when, where, why, and how.' He was right in saying it would make studying more interesting and easier to remember."

— Mrs. J. R. P., Arizona

Ten Days

"I read in Halley's *Bible Handbook* that some think the *ten days* of Rev. 2:10 represent the *ten imperial persecutions*. Did 10 emperors persecute the Smyrna Era?" — L. C., California

• *Several periods of severe trial for Christians, some of them lasting for a number of years, are included in these often referred to "ten imperial persecutions." Others which were short, local and generally minor are also included in order to add up a total of ten. There is no Biblical ground for supposing the prophetic "day" can be so loosely and variably applied. The plain import of the Scripture is that "ten days" in Rev. 2 refers to one continuous period and not to ten separated periods of irregular length.*

Note also that the first two of the so-called "ten persecutions" occurred before the death of the Apostle John and therefore during the EPHESUS ERA not the Smyrna Era. In the first the Apostle Paul was martyred — under the Emperor Nero — and in the second John was imprisoned on Patmos by Domitian. The third persecution — still in the Ephesus Era — is accounted to Trajan, who, as we have seen in Lesson 50, was actually not a persecutor at all.

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
BIBLE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON 51

Published at Pasadena, California; Watford, England; and North Sydney, Australia, by Ambassador College. French and German editions published at Pasadena, California. Spanish edition published at Big Sandy, Texas.

© 1968 by Ambassador College

All Rights Reserved

EDITOR
HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

DIRECTOR EMERITUS
C. Paul Meredith
1902-1968

DIRECTOR
Herman L. Hoeh

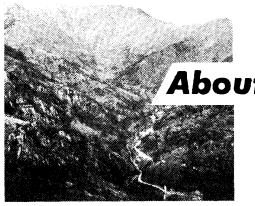
Staff Writers
Lawson C. Briggs Richard H. Sedliacik

Circulation Manager
Edward C. Kleier

Art Staff
Arthur Ferdig William S. Schuler
Basil Wolverton

Secretary
Andrea Beyersdorfer

YOUR ENROLLMENT has been paid by others. Bulk copies for distribution not given or sold.
ADDRESS COMMUNICATIONS to the Editor at the nearest address below:
United States and Canada: P. O. Box 111, Pasadena, California 91109.
United Kingdom and Europe: BCM Ambassador, London, W. C. 1, England.
South Africa: P. O. Box 1060, Johannesburg, Transvaal, R. S. A.
Australia and Southeast Asia: P. O. Box 345, North Sydney, NSW 2060, Australia.
Latin America: Apartado 927, Big Sandy, Texas 75755.
The Philippines: P. O. Box 2603, Manila 12114.
NOTICE: Be sure to notify the Correspondence Course Department immediately of any change in your address. Please include both old and new address. ***Important!***



About Our Cover . . .

High in the Cottian Alps Jesus Christ appointed a place of safety for the headquarters of His Church during the most fruitful part of the Thyatira Era — a "wilderness" refuge far above the busy plains and cities of Italy and France.

Patchy snow at our feet, we look down into the Angrogna Valley today. Beyond the high western ridge in the background lies France, where the Thyatira Work began. In the center is the Pra del Tor — plain of the tower — site of the ancient Waldensian College.

Ambassador College Photo

THE LIGHT IN THE DARK AGES

FEW understand the prophecies relating to God's Church throughout history. Most churches and their commentaries *ignore* these prophecies, explain around them, or deny they have any prophetic meaning. But why?

Could it be because *prophecy exposes the fakes?*

God's Church is a *spiritual* body. It is composed of those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, those who teach and obey His commands (Rev. 14:12). Bible prophecy lays bare the whole course of that Church.

But how would you recognize God's Church today? And where was it throughout the Middle Ages? During those years while Catholicism was supreme? The little-known answers are in Bible prophecy.

The Rest of the Story

That *visible* organization calling itself "Christian" and ruling over the nations during the Middle Ages was not God's Church. It was the church of Satan.

The True Church continued all those years, a tiny "little flock," unnoticed by the world, almost unknown to later historians. It was composed of the few who were led by God's Spirit (Rom. 8:14). Now understand, in this lesson, *how* God's Church survived the Middle Ages.

1. Does the sure word of prophecy tell us some among — and pretending to be part of — God's people would depart from the faith and accept doctrines taught by demons? I Tim. 4:1.

COMMENT: This is a prophecy for "the latter times" — not of Paul's own day when the original apostacy occurred. In era after era of God's Church, it is a repeated fact that after a few generations the local congregations are no longer generally composed of truly converted brethren, but of unconverted children and halfhearted believers of whom many go astray into error.

Such were those among the Paulicians in the eighth century who began to accept demon-inspired visions they called "the new prophecy." Some were also in touch with Gnostic sects.

Why were such heretical sects found associated with (and often confused with) God's people? Because God's Church can only exist where there is a significant measure of religious freedom, including freedom for all kinds of heresy to exist also. For example, today, God's Church is mainly in countries where no state religion is in absolute control.

Thus the Paulicians of the Pergamos Era of the True Church, and their Slavic-speaking brethren called Bogomils, included, at a later time, several groups with a medley of doctrine. All these false opinions migrated where religious freedom was allowed. And there, too, God's Church found freedom to preach. This spirit of religious freedom spread into western Europe, where those who fell away from the truth became known as Cathars.

2. Why does God allow such heresies to tempt the weak of His people? I Cor. 11:19.

3. Do those who teach the doctrines of demons really know better — as a result of their association with God's faithful? I Tim. 4:2.

4. What are the demon doctrines Paul mentions? I Tim. 4:3.

COMMENT: Cathar "*perfects*" did not marry though their "*hearers*" did. The result, of course, was rampant fornication (I Cor. 6:18; 7:2). Neither would they eat meat, milk or eggs. In our day *other*, and false, churches teach these same demon-inspired doctrines.

The "Wilderness" in Western Europe

Paulicians and Bogomils came into western Europe before the year 1000. There they found a fertile field, prepared by the living Jesus Christ, just waiting for the sowing of His Word. It was to be the scene a little later of a new expansion of Jesus' Work — during the Thyatira Era of His Church.

North Italy and south France had already known organized objections to the authority and teaching of the bishop of Rome in every century from the fourth onward. This was partly due to an original influence of true Christians who fled there from Rome and other areas in the days of Pope Sylvester and the Emperor Constantine. But that any true Christianity had survived there throughout the centuries cannot be proven. Unreliable also is a late tradition that the Apostles Paul and James preached in the "Waldensian valleys," or that their converts were first gathered into those valleys in the first, second and third centuries.

The Paulicians and Bogomils in Italy — among whom were individuals who believed Christ — came to be called Cathars, meaning *puritans*. In France, as Cathars, Publicani, Bulgars and finally Albigenses, and in Germany, particularly around Cologne, they became what the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* calls "the abiding

background of medieval heresy." It rightly identifies these people as "the debris of an earlier Christianity," that is, of the Pergamos Era (11th ed., art. "Cathars").

Fully initiated Cathar *perfects* (so-called) not counting the far more numerous *hearers*, soon numbered into thousands. And wherever they were, they always remained in contact with their brethren in Thrace and Bulgaria. Their ultimate influence was tremendous on Europe and even on the ruling Catholic Church.

"Manichaeans," falsely so-called, were cited at Limoges in central France as early as 1015. They were first put to death in 1022 at Toulouse, and *by burning* at Orleans. Others were found at Arras in the north in 1025. Catholic synods in 1028 and again in 1056 judged it necessary officially to condemn the growing sects.

Because of constant persecution and hiding, it is doubtful if any two of the scattered groups believed exactly the same doctrine. But overshadowed by this chaff of Gnosticism and heresy, Christ preserved among these people a germ of His Church in the few who were faithful to His rule over their lives. Such was the religious situation in western Europe at the time He had chosen to revitalize His spiritual Church — to raise up the Thyatira Era to do His Work.

The "Thyatira" Setting

Ancient Thyatira was a city of *merchants* and *weavers*. It was especially famous for fine woolen cloth, usually dyed the famous Thyatiran purple. We will find these things again significant for the later Thyatira ERA.

1. Where does the Bible first mention Thyatira? What does it associate with this city? Acts 16:14. Note the significant statement that the mind of this Lydia from Thyatira had been previously prepared by Jesus Christ to receive His true gospel. Verse 15. The minds of *many* in western Europe had been similarly prepared in the 1100's A.D.

COMMENT: In the Middle Ages, the geographical area of southern France, where the Thyatira Era was to begin, was the very center of the textile industry of Europe. Futhermore, the itinerant *cloth merchants* who carried the woven silks of Byzantium and the east to the eager markets of the west were the missionaries who secretly propagated the religion of the Paulicians and Bogomils. The Cathars were noted as *weavers*. Contemporaries frequently designated them *Texerant, Textors, Tisserants* — all of which meant simply *weavers*.

The parallel with the *pagan city* of Thyatira is complete. But note that the message to the Thyatira *Church* does not mention merchants nor weavers. These are therefore not signs of the Church itself, but of the economic setting in which that Church was to exist.

2. In His message to the Thyatira Church, note the first thought Jesus introduces. Does He emphasize *flames of fire?* Rev. 2:18. Compare the last part of this verse with Rev. 1:15.

COMMENT: In the Middle Ages, fire engrossed men's thoughts. The lake of fire was very real. Dante Alighieri's (1265-1321) ever-burning, tormenting inferno is a product of this obsession. In such an age, Jesus Christ's "eyes like a flame of fire," which saw everything that men did, would remind the willfully disobedient of their ultimate fate. His feet, too, which glowed like white hot molten metal, would remind of His power to tread down His enemies and to walk on the ashes of the wicked (Mal. 4:3; Mic. 7:10).

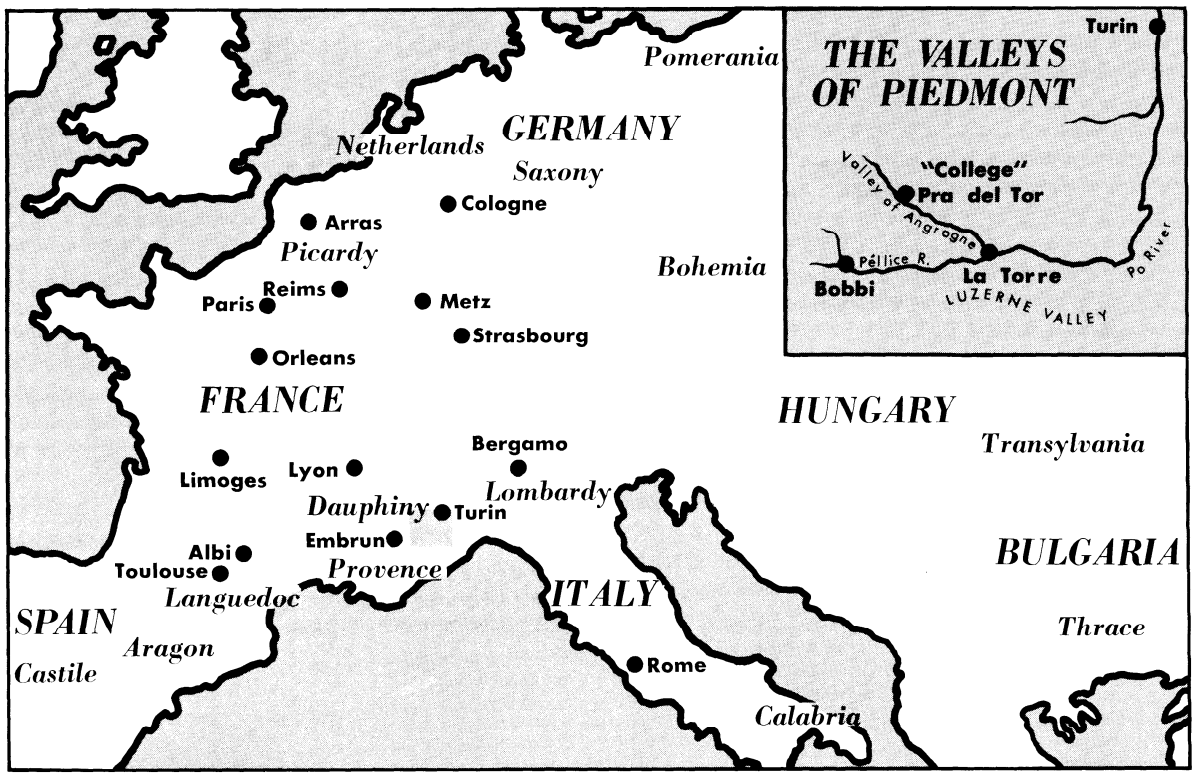
On the other hand, the all-seeing eyes (see also Rev. 2:23) assured the *obedient* that none of their suffering and work would be in vain (I Cor. 15:58), while His feet pointed out the Christian's *walk* — the life we live — the only light in this dark world (Mat. 5:14).

Yet still more is revealed by these *flames of fire*.

Few people are aware that *burning to death* first became the penalty for *heresy* about this time. Among Romans, Goths, and others, burning was a *civil* penalty, and for only the most heinous crimes. Mob action such as the burning of Polycarp in the second century was outside the law. Furthermore, the early Catholic "church fathers" taught that for the *church* to put a heretic *to death* would be an inexpiable sin. They allowed no more than banishment or imprisonment. But since civil authority had prescribed burning for sorcery, it gradually became the custom to equate sorcery with heresy, which made burning the new *official* punishment for heretics. (See the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., articles "Burning to Death" and "Inquisition.")

The first heretics burned were at Ravenna, Italy, about the end of the 10th century. Thereafter burnings became numerous, an ever-present threat to all heretics, and to God's Church. Books and Bibles were likewise consigned to the flames.

The clergy became openly involved. About 1070, 28 people at Turin, including the countess, had accepted the Bible as their guide in life. They held meetings in the castle of Montfort. The bishop of Milan ordered their arrest and burned them alive in the courtyard before the cathedral.



Ambassador College

The scene of the evangelistic Work of God's Church in the Thyatira Era. Inset shows the headquarters vicinity and a part of the "Waldensian valleys." The College was located about five miles from the town of La Torre.

After 1229, the Dominican and Franciscan preaching friars — the Inquisition — were accuser, judge and jury. When they turned over their victims to the civil authorities, it was understood most would be burned!

Evil men *did indeed* wax worse and worse (II Tim. 3:13). Good fruit cannot come from an evil tree (Mat. 7:18).

The Thyatira Age Begins

The pope in 1096 described the Valley Louise in Dauphiny, France, as infested with "heresy." It was a result of Paulician and Bogomil evangelization of the Alpine regions. About 1104, a man from this valley, called Peter of Bruys, began at Embrun to preach *repentance* throughout Languedoc and Provence.

1. What does the name Thyatira mean? See Comment.

COMMENT: One of the definitions of the Greek word Thyatira is "sweet savor of contrition," in other words, "real repentance." Peter of Bruys taught that infant baptism was useless. He only baptized persons old enough to know and mean what they were doing — that is, only *after real repentance.*

He further rejected the Catholic *mystery* teaching that the priest in the Mass produced the literal flesh of Christ. He opposed reverence for crosses, emphasis on huge church edifices, the fable of purgatory, prayers for the dead with their inevitable heavy bribes paid to the greedy religious leaders who falsely claimed to represent God.

Converted followers gathered around Peter of Bruys. God's Church was beginning again to do a Work. Freed from the errors of Cathars and Catholics, a spiritual gospel was once again being widely preached. The numbers of truly converted — those led by the Holy Spirit — multiplied.

They kept God's Sabbath.

For "nearly twenty years" Peter preached. Then the false church would no longer stand for this open rejection of its authority. He was taken and burned alive at the stake!

The message to Thyatira had begun to come true!

His disciple Henry now took charge and carried on the Work. (Many books identify him with a Henry who had appeared briefly as an independent preacher at Le Mans some ten years before.) Henry condemned false opinions

of Cathars and Catholic errors alike He despised and exposed worldly Roman holidays, baptism of infants, the corruption of priests.

During the ministry of Peter of Bruys, God's people were nicknamed Petrobrusians. Now they became known as Henricians! But their own name for themselves was "the Church of God."

Peter and Henry occupied the office of *apostle*. "Has the whole world been so blinded . . . [that it should] have to wait so long for you, and choose Peter of Bruis and Henry, his disciple, as exceeding *recent apostles*, to correct the long error," chided the contemporary Abbot of Clugny, a Catholic. How similar this is to the way some disparage God's Church today!

Years passed. Even priests accepted the truth. But persecution increased. Henry was imprisoned in 1135, though later released. Moving his headquarters to the Albi-Toulouse area, he continued to preach for several more years. Again cast into prison, he died there in 1149.

The First Works Cut Short

While Peter and Henry were alive, multitudes had been attracted by their preaching. But people then were like today. Many listen and accept *parts* of the truth. But instead of continuing on to become *converted*, most either do nothing, or they join "the church of their choice." In that day, most of Peter's and Henry's hearers merely swelled the numbers of those who were loosely termed Cathars.

After Henry's death the world nearly lost sight of God's Church. The *Work* of the Thyatira Era went into temporary eclipse, lacking organization and temporarily without overall human leadership.

Then Christ acted. The man He chose to become His apostle was a wealthy *merchant* in Lyons, *the weaving capital of Europe!*

Last Works to Be More Than the First

As always it began again in the very smallest way. The world scarcely noticed. Waldo began to preach in 1161. Yet the three Catholic writers who attempt to explain the origin of his work know nothing of the first 12 to 15 years. By that time a notable work was being done. They do relate that a friend's sudden death at Waldo's side shocked him into serious consideration of the meaning of life.

Note here a contrast. Martin Luther, when a friend at his side was similarly struck by lightening, fled in *terror* of God to the life of a monk. He endured physical and mental *agony*, until, years later, he worked out his "faith alone" theology to escape the harsh God he *assumed* the Bible taught. Waldo, on the other hand, knew of God as a God of love. Obviously, he had *not* been reared as a Catholic. Like Peter of Bruys, he is said to have come from Dauphiny. In the district of Walden, his family must have known of God's Church.

Seeking completely to follow Christ, Waldo began to give away the bulk of his money. It was his enemy, he said, which had kept him from God. But with a portion of his money, he had a translation made of the Scriptures into the language of the people. He himself began diligently to study God's Word.

Christ saw by his actions that Waldo was in earnest. His mind began to be opened to the truth that had formerly meant nothing to him.

His Catholic wife and two daughters thought he had lost his mind. They separated from him. One daughter entered a convent. Apparently his wife became reconciled to him later, helping him in his need from the money he had given to her.

1. Does Christ mention "works" twice in Revelation 2:19? Were the last works (a second period of growth for the Thyatira Era) to be greater than the first?

COMMENT: Waldo brought the same practical common sense that had made him successful as a businessman to the organization and Work of the Church. He had the education and experience which so few in God's Church had (I Cor. 1:26). Jesus Christ had probably guided that experience, unknown to Waldo, long before his conversion.

As he preached, others united themselves and their efforts to his. They became, as it is said, "as many co-workers for him." They dedicated their lives and their property to the spread of Christ's gospel.

This little group became known as the "Poor Men of Lyons." But that was not the name of the Church. They called themselves the Church of God, or simply Christians.

Little is known of the progress of the Work during the first 19 years. At an unspecified but probably early period, Waldo and a group of co-workers went to Picardy (in north France). When persecution was raised there, some went further to Flanders and the Netherlands — their translation of the Bible always with them. As early as 1182, their doctrine had gained many adherents in Holland. Prominent among these were *weavers*. Picards, as these Waldenses were called, ultimately spread as far as eastern Germany, Poland and especially Bohemia.

The Turning Point of 1179

Persecution was also raised by the archbishop at Lyons. About 1176, he forbade the "Poor Men" to preach. "We must obey God rather than men," they replied (see Acts 4:18-19; 5:28-29).

When they persisted, they were cited to appear before Pope Alexander III. Now it was no longer just a question of preaching at Lyons. The issue at stake was whether God's Work anywhere could continue. For archbishops and popes exercised civil power in that age.

Striving to be wise as serpents yet harmless as doves, Waldo himself went boldly to Rome in late 1178. He put forward the Bible translated into Provençal — which could be understood all over southern France and adjoining parts of Italy and Spain — and urged the common people's need for it. Doctrine was kept in the background.

The pope appeared willing at first to accede to Waldo's demands, but left the decision to the Lateran Council of 1179. Two of Waldo's associates appeared before the council. They were virtually condemned. "You can preach," they were told, "but only if the local priest asks you to!" The reason given? "*The Roman Church cannot endure your preaching!*"

Their reply, paraphrased, was: "Christ sent us. If you were His Church, you would not hinder us." And they continued to preach wherever they went. It took the archbishop five and a half years, a new pope, and a new bull anathematizing Waldo and all his followers, to finally drive them from Lyons.

But Waldo had already gone elsewhere. Jesus Christ had opened a *door* (II Cor. 2:12).

At the same Lateran Council, members of an ascetic association from Lombardy had also sought the right to preach. They were a section of the "Humiliated," since about 1000 a widespread movement within the Catholic Church. Their request was denied. In disappointment but apparent sincerity, they then defied the Roman Church and asked Peter Waldo to become their leader. Waldo crossed the Alps to teach them.

Thus a second branch of Waldenses was established in Italy.

A College Founded!

The Work now grew rapidly. Soon a college was founded to train qualified laborers. Three small stone buildings in the Angrogna Valley of the Cottian Alps provided classrooms. The College and the town of La Torre, located where the Angrogna Valley meets the Lucerna ("the valley of *light*"), became the new headquarters of the Work and the growing Church of God.

At the College, articles and small booklets were written and multiple copies were produced. There were no printing presses in those days. All had to be laboriously copied by hand, keeping many busy in the headquarters area. Lit-

(Please continue on page 9)

The Pra del Tor — "plain of the tower" — today. This comparatively level area is the traditional site of the ancient College where ministers and other laborers were trained in the Thyatira Era of God's Church. But not a trace of the ancient buildings remains today.

Courtesy of I. Hugon

THE PERSECUTION DECREE OF POPE LUCIUS III

Wherefore we being supported by the presence and power of our most dear son Frederick, the most illustrious Emperor of the Romans, always increaser of the Empire, with the common advice and counsel of our brethren, and other Patriarchs, Archbishops, and many Princes, who from several parts of the world are met together, do set ourselves against these heretics, who have got different names from the several false doctrines they profess . . .

More particularly we declare all Cathari, Paterines, and those who call themselves the Humble, or Poor of Lyons, Passagines, Josephines, Arnoldists, to lie under a perpetual anathema . . .

And because some under a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, as the apostle saith, assume to themselves the authority of preaching . . . we therefore conclude under the same sentence of perpetual anathema, all those who either being forbid or not sent, do notwithstanding presume to preach publicly or privately, without any authority received either from the apostolic see, or from the bishops of their respective dioceses: as likewise all those who are not afraid to hold or teach any opinions concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, baptism, the remission of sins, matrimony, or any other sacraments of the church, differing from what the Holy Church of Rome doth preach and observe. . . . And we likewise declare all entertainers and defenders of the said heretics, and those that have shewed any favor, or given countenance to them, thereby strengthening them in their heresy, whether they be called Comforted, Believers, or Perfect, or with whatever superstitious names they dignify themselves, to be liable to the same sentence.

Whosoever shall be notoriously convicted of these errors, if a clergyman, or one that endeavors to conceal himself under any religious order, he shall be immediately deprived of all prerogative of the church-orders, and so being divested of all office and benefice, be delivered up to the secular power, to be punished according to demerit, unless immediately upon his being detected, he voluntarily returns to the truth of the Catholic faith, and submits publicly to adjure his errors, at the discretion of the bishop of the diocese and to make suitable satisfaction. And as for a layman who shall be found guilty either publicly or privately of any of the aforesaid crimes, unless by adjuring his heresy, and making satisfaction, he immediately returns to the orthodox faith; we decree him to be left to the sentence of the secular judge, to receive condign punishment, according to the quality of his offence. And as for those who are taken notice of by the church as suspected of heresy, except at the bishop's command they give full evidence of their innocence according to the degree of suspicion against them, and quality of their persons, they shall all be liable to the same sentence.

But those who after having abjured their errors, or cleared themselves upon examination, to their bishop, shall be found to have relapsed into their abjured heresy; we decree, that without any further hearing they be forthwith delivered up to the secular power, and their goods confiscated to the use of the church. . . .

Furthermore, . . . we do add, that every archbishop or bishop, either in his own person, or by his archdeacon, or by other honest and fit persons, shall once or twice in the year visit the parish in which it is reported that heretics dwell, and there cause two or three men of good credit, or if need be, the whole neighborhood, to swear, that if they know of any heretics there, or any frequent private meetings, or differ from the common conversation [conduct] of mankind, either in life or manners, they will signify the same to the bishop or archdeacon. The bishop also or archdeacon shall summon before them the parties accused, who except they at their discretion, according to the custom of the country, do clear themselves of the guilt laid to their charge; or if after having so cleared themselves, they relapse again to their former unbelief, shall be punished at the bishop's discretion.

And if any of them, by a damnable superstition shall refuse to swear, that alone shall suffice to make them heretics convict, and liable to the punishments.

We ordain further, that all Earls, Barons, Governors, or consuls of cities, . . . shall promise upon oath, that in all these particulars, whenever they are thereto required, they will powerfully and effectually assist the church against heretics . . . But if any of them shall refuse to observe this, they shall be deprived of their honors and charges . . . and their goods be confiscated to the use of the church.

erature was given *free* to those who were interested (Mat. 10:8). Tithes and offerings from many countries paid the cost, and the cost of operating the College.

As the Work expanded into foreign countries, the Bible was translated into different languages. These people took the Bible *literally*. One unusual version, in Low German, was all in rhyme to make memorization easier.

(Cathars too had their local "translations" but these were filled with apocryphal eastern legends, uninspired additions and other perversions of the text.)

Why do we today call a written or printed work a *text?* Because so many *weavers (textors)* spread their written material throughout Europe in this period.

Trained Ministers Proclaim God's Word

Mature men of about age 25 were chosen for students. They attended classes during the winter months for 3 or 4 years before going full-time into the Work. After further testing when necessary, if their fruits showed Jesus Christ had called them to the ministry, they were ordained by the laying on of hands.

Biblical offices in Christ's ministry were restored. The fruits show us that Waldo occupied the office of *apostle*. Though he refused to call himself anything greater than *chief elder*, Catholics used against him the actual title. Many additional *elders* as well as *deacons* were ordained. Some — called by the Catholics "bishops" but by themselves simply *elders* — directed the work of others. Some served as *pastors* of churches. Some, as *evangelists*, carried the true gospel into foreign countries.

Waldensian ministers later came to be called "barbes" (uncles) to conceal their identity. In those dangerous, later times, most were continually on the go, on evangelistic journeys, in visiting scattered brethren. Even those given stationary assignments in old age rotated every 2 or 3 years.

It was because they would not expose wives and children to these hard perpetual journeys that few married. But they deplored and condemned the celibacy rule imposed on Roman priests (see I Cor. 7:25-26; I Tim. 4:1, 3).

They always traveled in pairs — a younger with an older (Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; Acts 15:39-40). Thus the younger man received an opportunity to profit by the older man's experience.

Because of scarcity of Bibles and imminent danger to both Bible and person carrying one,

Courtesy of I. Hugon

Above — Winter on the high slopes above the Lucerna or "valley of light." Climate presented many hardships to those in God's Church forced to wrest their living from these rocky slopes or face persecution and death elsewhere, where the Inquisition ruled.

Left — Typical peaceful scene in the Waldensian valleys.

every potential minister had to *memorize* a large amount of Scripture, besides being able to explain it. Most learned to speak at least 3 languages.

Each also learned a trade, to be able if necessary to earn his own living. Consider the apostle Paul's example (Acts 18:3; I Cor. 4:12; II Cor. 11:7. Many were specially trained in matters of physical health (see Col. 4:14), for the world's ways, then as now, were diametrically opposite to God's ways, including the dietary laws He set in motion. They understood that our healing is made possible by Christ's broken body, for which they took the unleavened bread in their yearly Passover.

Complete Educational System

The early Waldenses practiced overcoming and education in every walk of life.

They were obedient, clean, honest. Even their enemies acknowledged they could find no fault with their lives. They would not lie or swear (Mat. 5:34), nor do anything to others which they would not have done to themselves (Mat. 7:12). They dressed and acted modestly (I Tim. 2:9; I Pet. 3:3). They were chaste, temperate in all things, in control of their emotions, diligent, continually keeping busy, founding their whole teaching on the Bible. Their enemies marvelled.

They made no public show of prayer like those who wasted endless hours uselessly repeating meaningless words (Mat. 6:7). But they did teach and practice earnest, believing, *fruitful* prayer *in a private place*. They used the "Lord's prayer," so-called, as their *guide*.

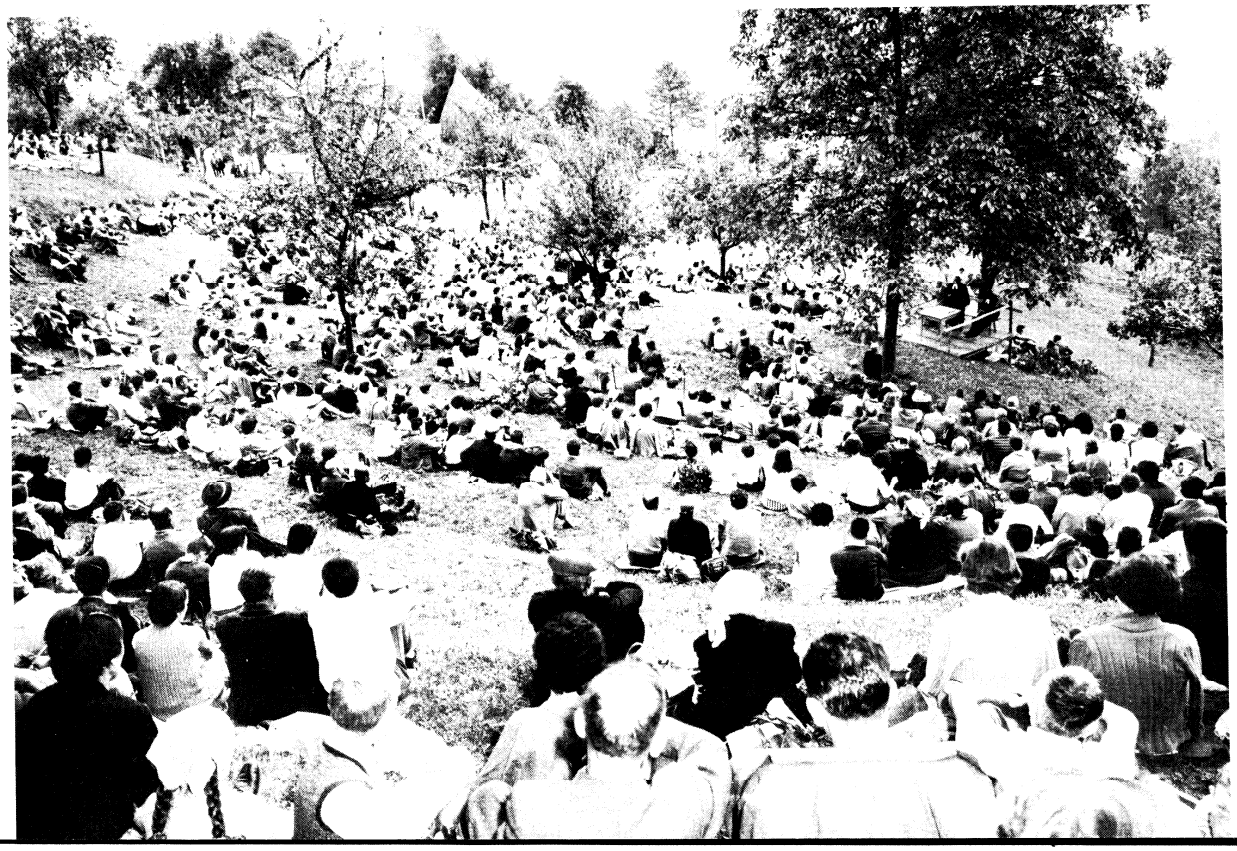
Men, women and children made it their business to learn a little more each day, according to each person's ability.

They "declared themselves to be resolved, with the Lord's help, to embrace, so far as their minds were capable of bearing it, the truth of Christ and of His bride, small as their knowledge of it might be. If to any man more knowledge of the truth was given, then, they more humbly desired to be taught by him, and to be corrected of their mistakes" (Neander's *Church History*, vol. 8).

Below the college level, a system of elementary schools was later established. Both boys and girls attended. Even small children learned to memorize and recite whole chapters of Scripture. These schools were first founded in

Annual hillside preaching services held on the 15th day of August. In much the same fashion the ancestors of these people must have kept God's Feast of Tabernacles — but on the 15th day of God's Seventh (lunar) month, which usually begins in September. The governing body of the modern Waldensian church continues to meet yearly in early September.

Courtesy of Roberto Comba



Lombardy, but rapidly spread. About 1260, the Inquisition found Waldensian schools in 42 parishes in Austria.

Annual Fall "Conference"

The Waldenses recognized that they were the true successors of the apostolic church. They kept the *Sabbath*, also the yearly *Passover*. And each September or October (in God's seventh month — see Lev. 23), they held at the headquarters church a great "conference." As many as 700 persons attended from afar. New students were chosen, ministerial assignments were made, *and crowds gathered daily to listen to sermons.*

What could this gathering have been but the Feast of Tabernacles!

Under the name of Passagini, we have the clearest sort of statement that these people, about 1200, observed the whole Old Testament law, including the Sabbath and *festivals!*

People called Cathars at Cologne, Germany, kept a fall festival, called *Malilosa*, even before Waldo began to preach. Compare this unexplained name with Hebrew *melilah* (a harvested ear of grain — *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) and the Biblical title "Feast of Ingathering" (Ex. 23:16).

How much more we might have known about these Middle Ages' Feasts of Tabernacles had not the Inquisitors so zealously burned the records!

The three-part division of tithes paid the Waldensian Church is significant. Even in the 1500's the same division continued. "The money given us by the people is carried to the aforesaid general council, and is delivered in the presence of all, and there it is received by the most ancients [the elders], and part thereof is given to those that are wayfaring men, according to their necessities, and part unto the poor" (George Morel, Waldensian elder, quoted by Lennard, *History of the Waldenses*).

1. Compare this practice with Num. 18:21 and Deut. 14:22-25, 28-29. Isn't it exactly what the Bible commands?

COMMENT: Most authors have *assumed* the "wayfaring men" were the traveling "*barbes.*" But *their* expenses would have been paid from the money given the elders, at *every* time of year, for the direct conduct of the Work —"first" tithe and offerings. Notice that in Numbers 18: 21. What Morel then mentions is a "second" tithe, for those traveling to and from the festivals — wayfaring men; and following it, the "third" to the poor. See the explanation in Deut. 14. Feast goers who had more "second tithe" than they needed shared their excess with those who had need, even as they do today!

The Work in South France

Himself going north from Lyons, Waldo apparently sent Arnold Hot to become pastor at Albi, where Henry had preached. From him were nicknamed the *Arnoldists* we read of in 1184 and 1224. (Arnoldists in Italy, about 1140, had been so-called from Arnold of Brescia.) At the same time, Waldo apparently also sent Joseph and Esperon into the regions of Dauphiny and Provence where Peter of Bruys had preached. From them the *Josephists* and *Esperonists* were named.

Pope Lucius' bull of 1184 anathematized the *Arnoldists* and *Josephists*, along with the *Poor Men of Lyons*, the *Humiliated*, *Passagines* (the Waldenses in the Alps), and all *Cathars* and *Paterines* (Italian Cathars). Like their brethren in Italy, Germany and elsewhere, the southern Waldenses continued to multiply and spread.

But in 1194, Alphonse, king of Aragon, Barcelona and Provence decreed these "*Waldenses, Zapatati* or *Inzabbati* [keepers of God's *Sabbath*] who otherwise are called the *Poor Men of Lyons*" worthy of any punishment short of death or mutilation. They were to leave his dominions immediately. Anyone who even listened to them was to have his property seized! His successor in 1197 added that every Waldense taken should be burned! Those who had fled to Castile were relentlessly tracked down.

In Languedoc, they held public disputations, as the Cathars did, in which they acknowledged nothing not provable by the New Testament. Catholic writers lumped them all together as Albigenses from a great conference and profession of faith held in 1176 in Albi.

In 1207, as chief spokesman for all the Albigenses, Arnold Hot expounded these theses: that the Roman Church was antichrist, and that Christ did not establish the Mass. With him were "Ponticus Jordanus, Arnoldus Aurisonus, Philabertus Castrensis and Benedictus Thermo."

Not many years after, holding firmly to their faith, Arnold and several associates were marched to the stake and burned.

The Albigensian Crusade

Rome had first tried military action against Cathars as early as 1180. But the people, impressed by the ascetism and dedication of the Cathar *perfects* (so-called), and the local nobility and civil rulers, who were jealous and antagonistic toward the grasping corrupt Catholic clergy, protected the "heretics." This unacceptable situation led Innocent III in 1208 to pro-

claim a "holy war" — the Albigensian Crusade. Pope and clergy, backed by all the power of northern France, were arrayed against the people of the south.

Why? *Not* primarily because of religion, but because the rulers and population of the region were rejecting the *civil* domination of Rome.

When the war began in 1209, the Provençal civilization was the most brilliant in Europe. When it was over, after 20 bitter years, that civilization had been completely destroyed. South France had become a backward region completely subject to Paris and Rome.

The infamous *Inquisition* was then set up to complete the job by eliminating religious objections. Papal bull decreed severe punishment against any person suspected of even sympathizing with "heretics." Confiscations, imprisonments, burnings and every imaginable form of persecution continued for more than a hundred years. Thousands died. In the city of Montsegur alone, 200 persons were burned in one day.

More Papal Machinations

While the Albigensian Crusade was in progress, Innocent III, one of the most energetic and forceful popes of all time, had not neglected the Waldenses elsewhere. Already by 1200, a group reading the Bible in the Gallic tongue to large numbers of people in Metz were dispersed by a delegation of abbotts from Rome, and their Bibles burned. In 1211, over 400 of a group in Strasbourg were forced to recant and surrender their books. The rest — about 80 — were burned.

Hidden grotto in a mountainside where ancient Waldenses met secretly for church services during later times of greatest persecution.

Courtesy of I. Hugon

As early as 1206, Innocent had begun to send out his own proven men by two's, poorly clad and living austerely, to counteract the Waldensian *barbes* by their own methods. He also gave official standing to the *Humiliated* who had remained within the Catholic Church.

In 1209 he authorized a rival "Waldensian" movement into which he hoped to entice many of the members of God's Church. It was an official organ of the Catholic Church, headed by Durand of Huesca, a Spanish ex-Waldense who had submitted to the pope in 1206 at one of the meetings in Languedoc. A similar arm called "Poor Catholics" was founded in Lombardy by Bernard Primo, another ex-Waldensian.

Outwardly, the pope's measures had but little success against God's Church. But within the body, they fostered an increasing sickness.

Who Was "Jezebel"?

1. Was the Thyatira Church to have internal problems with the false doctrines of a false teacher? Rev. 2:20. But why was she called "Jezebel"? Let's understand how the Bible explains this symbol.

2. Who was the original Jezebel? I Kings 16:31. Was she a Gentile? And did she represent a false — Gentile — religion? Same verse. Remember the True Church is called spiritual *Israel.*

3. What was this original Jezebel's character? Was it utterly selfish, grasping, destructive? Read all of I Kings 21. Did she scruple to plan and act deceitfully when it served her purpose? Verses 8, 10. And did she, the female, dominate and rule over the man who should have been her master? Verses 7 and 25 reveal her in action.

4. She greatly misused the power of sex to lead King Ahab around by the nose. Did she practice the same with many others? II Kings 9:22, 30.

5. Did she also martyr the true servants of God? I Kings 18:4; 19:2-3.

In all of these things, she was the type of the "Jezebel" of Revelation 2, who made deals with and ruled over the kings of Europe during the Middle Ages.

6. Did John see in another vision a great fallen "woman" of exactly Jezebel's character? Rev. 17:1-6; 18:3,7. We have identified this great whore in previous lessons as a great false church dominating over nations and having a fornicating relationship with the governments of this world.

7. Are her counterfeit pretensions so bedazzling to the whole world that even John had to be carried in vision into the "wilderness" to view her in proper perspective? Rev. 17:3.

COMMENT: While the whole world was drunk on her false doctrine and "Jezebel" herself drunk on the blood of God's servants (Rev. 17:2, 6), the persecuted, suffering true Church *in the "wilderness"* saw her clearly revealed in all her filthiness.

In the Middle Ages, this church sank to its lowest *depths* (Rev. 2:24). Careful, reputable, scholarly historians bear unanimous witness of her scandal and sin which *blasphemed God's name.* Her "celibate" priests begat numerous offspring. Popes filled their palaces with harlots and thieves. Vicious females actually ruled that church, elevating their lovers to the papal throne — murdering them later to elevate others!

We strongly recommend you read the short, unemotional, easy-to-read summary in Halley's *Pocket Bible Handbook,* the section on popes. Note especially the periods 900-1050 and 1200-1550. You will be shocked!

Why would God call such a "woman" *Jezebel?* Because like the ancient *Gentile* Jezebel, ruling as an *Israelite* queen, this "Jezebel" of the Middle Ages was a *Gentile* church having the same old pagan religion while masquerading as God's Church, spiritual *Israel,* and calling herself "Christian." Here is merely a later form of the same *universal paganism* that had earlier falsely claimed to be Jewish, being actually the synagogue or church of Satan (Rev. 2:9).

8. Did she call *herself* a "prophetess" — arrogating to herself authority to teach and to rule over Christians? Rev. 2:20. No wonder John *marvelled* at the splendor of her outward appearance (Rev. 17:6, last part). Even in the "wilderness" in the Middle Ages, some were deceived into hearing and heeding her false doctrine.

How "Jezebel" Seduced God's Servants

On the Waldensian emblem or seal were seven stars (Rev. 1:20). Directly below and *pointing at the fourth star* was a lighted lamp representing the then active Thyatira Church. Around the rim was the Latin motto LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS — "a light shines in darkness" (see Mat. 5:14-16).

God's people *knew* they were the Thyatira Church!

They must also have known who "Jezebel" was. One of their oldest surviving books, the *Book of Antichrist,* equates the Roman papacy and priests with Babylon (Isa. 47), the little horn of the fourth beast (Dan. 7), the *whore* (Rev. 17-18), the man of sin, the son of perdition (II Thes. 2), false prophets, lying teachers (II Pet. 2), spirit of error (I John 4), clouds without water, trees without leaves (Jude), ministers of *darkness,* Egyptians, *Balaamites,* etc.!

Half of Jesus' message to Thyatira, the longest of the seven, is devoted to warning against "Jezebel." Yet in spite of the warning, many did fall into her trap!

1. Just *how* did Jezebel seduce God's servants? Rev. 2:20 and following Comment.

COMMENT: The chief worship in the ancient city of Thyatira was that of the *sun* god Apollo. *Sun*day was the pagan's chief day.

And just outside the city of Thyatira, a *sybil* or *prophetess* presided at a famous *Chaldean* sanctuary. The Bible says her name was Jezebel (Rev. 2:20). Probably she not only pretended to be converted (as Simon did — Acts 8) but took every opportunity to urge the members of Christ's body to come to "her church," teaching them there to commit both physical and spiritual fornication, and to eat the things sacrificed to idols in her Chaldean *mysteries* (see Rev. 17:1-5).

In the Middle Ages, the false church — the antitypical "Jezebel" — strove similarly to bring the Thyatira members into her communion. She too claimed to be Christian. Some of the *Humiliated* Waldenses, not having individually repented when their group came out of the Catholic Church, were disposed to listen to her. Others were coerced by fear of persecution into following her ways — committing spiritual fornication with the world (I John 2:15-18). They allowed "Jezebel's" priests to "baptize" their infant children as demanded by civil and ecclesiastical law, gradually took part in her *Sun*day worship, and ate the "sacrifice of the Mass" (see last 7 words of Rev. 2:20).

2. What does God say about this idolatry? I Cor. 10:20-21; Acts 15:29. Note that the Greek word does not specify *animal* sacrifice.

COMMENT: The Waldenses considered these ceremonies and sacraments of the Catholic Church meaningless, and therefore harmless. But Christ thought otherwise. This coexistence with evil cost following generations the understanding of real repentance, true baptism and even of the true *Creator* God.

Decline of the Waldenses

1. Was "Jezebel's" doctrine the way that seemed good to the whole community? Rev. 2:20 and Comment.

COMMENT: In the city of Thyatira the weavers and other laborers were organized into craft guilds. Their meetings were religious and social gatherings where the food served had been dedicated to the accepted local idols, in whose honor they sometimes became mere pagan sexual orgies. These things were a *type* for the Thyatira *Era*.

The members of God's Church had to *come out* of this (I Cor. 10:20-21).

In the Middle Ages, the Lombard Waldenses in Italy had laborers' associations, too, by which former Catholic attitudes, activities and abuses continued to infiltrate God's Church. Waldo demanded the dissolution of these associations. But some would not agree. As a result of this and other disagreements, the Lombard Waldenses in 1210 rejected Waldo (I Sam. 8:7) and chose Giovanni di Ronco to lead them.

Not understanding this split, nor why it occurred, most later writers totally confuse the story of the Waldenses. Some even attribute to all of them the doctrines of the pope's "Poor Catholics" who now attracted and enticed many. Others rely on statements about French and Lombard Waldenses in later times, when they had long ceased to do God's Work.

According to tradition, Waldo spent his later years preaching in Germany and Bohemia, barely escaping capture in Strasbourg in 1211. Waldenses taken at that time reported their three chief leaders and centers were in Strasbourg, Milan and Bohemia, where Waldo died. All agree he was dead by 1217.

Due to the heavy pressure exerted upon them

© Ambassador College

ABOVE — One of many variations of Waldensian emblem — redrawn from an old book. Note how candlestick (representing God's Church in the Thyatira Era — Rev. 1:20) is associated with the fourth star (the "angel" or messenger) through which its light is transmitted and magnified to the world.

LEFT — Oldest existing Waldensian church building (built 1555). Note emblem of stars and candlestick high above the door.

BELOW — Descriptive literature of modern Waldensian church. Modern Waldensians — proud of their distinguished past — continue use of ancient symbols, here seen on masthead of newspaper and on booklet.

by the pope's minions and Waldo's long absence, the French Waldenses, with headquarters again at Lyons, apparently compromised with the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Six representatives from Lyons and six from the Lombards met at Bergamo in 1218, but they could not agree. Jesus Christ had given no new apostle!

19-Year Cycles in the Thyatira Era

Every 19 years the sun, moon and earth return to the same relative position. By a series of these 19-year time cycles, Jesus Christ put His signature as the *Creator* and *Sustainer* of the physical universe on His Church of the Thyatira Era just as He had done on the Ephesus Era.

Peter of Bruys preached the first 19 years, beginning in 1104. Henry then led the Church through the second cycle and part of the third. For approximately 12 years the Work languished.

But exactly on schedule, at the beginning of the next time cycle, in 1161, Peter Waldo began to preach. For 19 years the Work was centered in Lyons. In 1180, it was transferred to Italy. Shortly after, Waldo's disciples were driven from Lyons.

Between 1180 and 1199, the Work expanded greatly. The College bore fruit. God's Word was proclaimed in power. Arnold Hot and others flourished in various regional areas, and Waldenses began to be found almost everywhere in western Europe.

In 1199, Pope Innocent sent representatives to stir up the prelates of south France against the Albigenses, which culminated ultimately in the Albigensian Crusade. In the same period, he began a series of moves to pervert, seduce or vitiate God's Church. When the Lateran IV Council of 1215 forbade the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, it virtually *closed the door* on the evangelistic Work of God's Church. And Jesus Christ allowed it!

By 1218, Waldo now dead and the Waldenses divided, the Work became ineffective.

About 1215 also, the pope instituted the Franciscans *(Preaching Friars)* and Dominicans *(Minor Friars)* to combat more forcefully the Lombard *Humiliated* and the *Poor Men of Lyons*, respectively. In 1233, the Inquisition was put in their charge.

The Council of Toulouse, 1229, strengthened the rule against reading the Bible — the Inquisition enforced it by torture and fire! (In 1242 the Council of Tarragona even prohibited the *clergy of the Roman Church* to read the Bible!)

The one additional cycle (1218-1237) allowed to headquarters and College now drew to a close. Gregory IX issued another bull against the Waldenses in 1231. From 1231 to 1233 a general persecution raged in Germany, cutting short the Work in Holland. By 1235, persecution on a large scale began at Milan, original seat of the Lombard Waldenses. The archbishop "razed their school" — apparently the College — but *left the people free!* On the French side of the Alps, killing and burning reached the Valley Louise in 1238. The Thyatira WORK was through!

The Waldenses Later

Most of the French Waldenses had already joined the Italians in the valleys of the Cottian Alps. More than a century of persecution by the Inquisition destroyed or dispersed the remainder. The valleys, overpopulated, sent colonists to Calabria and Apulia, where about 1380 the chief Waldensian leader dwelt.

In the mid-13th century they had already adopted the name of Vallenses (*Vaudois* in French) meaning "people of the valleys," because, as they said, they "dwelt in a vale of tears." Later they regarded it as equivalent to Waldenses. Forgotten was the connection with Waldo of this name given them by the world. All but forgotten, too, the name "Church of God"!

But in the valleys they practiced their religion *openly*, and though often threatened, were divinely protected.

1. Did 7000 persons in the original Jezebel's day prefigure these? I Kings 19:2, 10, 18.

2. What assurance did Jesus Christ give those who remained free from Jezebel's ceremonies and practices? Rev. 2:24-25. "[To those who] have not known [experienced] the *depths* [deep things — *mysteries*] of Satan . . . I will put upon you *none other burden* . . . hold fast." They were to be given no additional work to do, nothing additional to endure, only they *must* withstand that false system.

COMMENT: Even here the prevailing doctrine became in time no more than a form of puritanic Catholicism. They began to claim the 9th century bishop Claude and other early dissenting Catholics as their spiritual ancestors. And when in 1380 many of them took up arms to repel the invading Inquisitors, God's protection ceased. From 1319, their valleys were invaded repeatedly until they were decimated.

Courtesy of I. Hugon

In the Angrogna Valley stands the simple "Monument of Chamforan" (built 1932) where in 1532 an assembly of the surviving Waldensians disavowed the original true doctrines of their faithful ancestors by declaring their solidarity with the Swiss Calvinists and the Protestant Reformation. Only a handful refused to subscribe to this agreement. From this date the Waldensians of the valleys began to copy the ways of the Protestant churches.

In 1530, *all but a handful* of the survivors in the valleys officially adhered to the Swiss Reformation. Even these were mostly destroyed in the 1580's.

Elsewhere, too, Waldenses were greatly persecuted about 1310-1330, and again about 1375. In the earlier period, one, Echard, martyred many in town after town in Germany. Then, overcome by the truth and himself converted, he began to preach the very gospel he once hated. He too in the end was hunted down and burned.

About this time others were martyred, driven into hiding or scattered as far as Hungary and Transylvania by a Bohemian Inquisition. Many disciples of Bohemian teachers were discovered in Saxony and Pomerania about 1390. Waldenses from Picardy fled into Poland.

During the century, the *scattered* groups lost contact with the valleys. Many carnal-minded individuals attended Mass, pretending in every way to be good Catholics while continuing to teach their children what remained of their own doctrine.

Cathars in Germany disappeared in this century also. But their tell-tale doctrines reappeared among the late Waldenses, who ceased proper ordination, began to require long periods of probation before baptism, etc. After the Reformation, in every area where such Waldenses had been known previously to exist, numbers of "baptists" suddenly appear.

Remember, the original Waldenses before they became corrupted were in no way Protestant. The doctrine of salvation by "faith alone" cannot be found among the original Waldenses. The spirit of Protestantism was utterly foreign to them, as to God's Church in all ages.

Thyatira's Reward

1. Was God's Church a centuries-long witness to Catholicism? Rev. 2:21. Note how this verse parallels Acts 8:22. "Jezebel," like Simon, "*willed* not to repent" (correct translation) and kept on grasping for more power.

2. What was to happen to "Jezebel"? Rev. 2:22. On a sickbed, children were to be born of her. The nations who sinned with her were also to have great trouble. Did these things happen? Yes! In the Protestant Reformation and accompanying strife! Did her Protestant daughters *repent* of her ways? No! Verse 23. Extinction for them will come with a final "great tribulation." See also Rev. 17:16 and 18:16-21.

3. What reward will Jesus Christ give to all who overcame and "held fast" in the Thyatira Era? Rev. 2:26-27.

COMMENT: The authority of Jesus Christ Himself — the very "power over the nations" which *Jezebel* sought by harlotry — will be given to God's Church — the Thyatira Era — who learned by repentance and long-suffering (*patience* does not adequately convey the meaning — verse 19) to show love and mercy.

4. And what else will He give those who had this spiritual love for others? Rev. 2:28; 22:16.

COMMENT: He will give them His own ability to enlighten the world! Because they were in their time a "morning star" — a "light-bringer" which shone brightly before dawn on a world yet dark. This is clearly a reference to the star and the motto on the Waldensian seal — LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS — "a light shines in darkness!" *Believe* II Peter 1:19! Could prophecy more surely identify the Thyatira Era?

(To be continued)