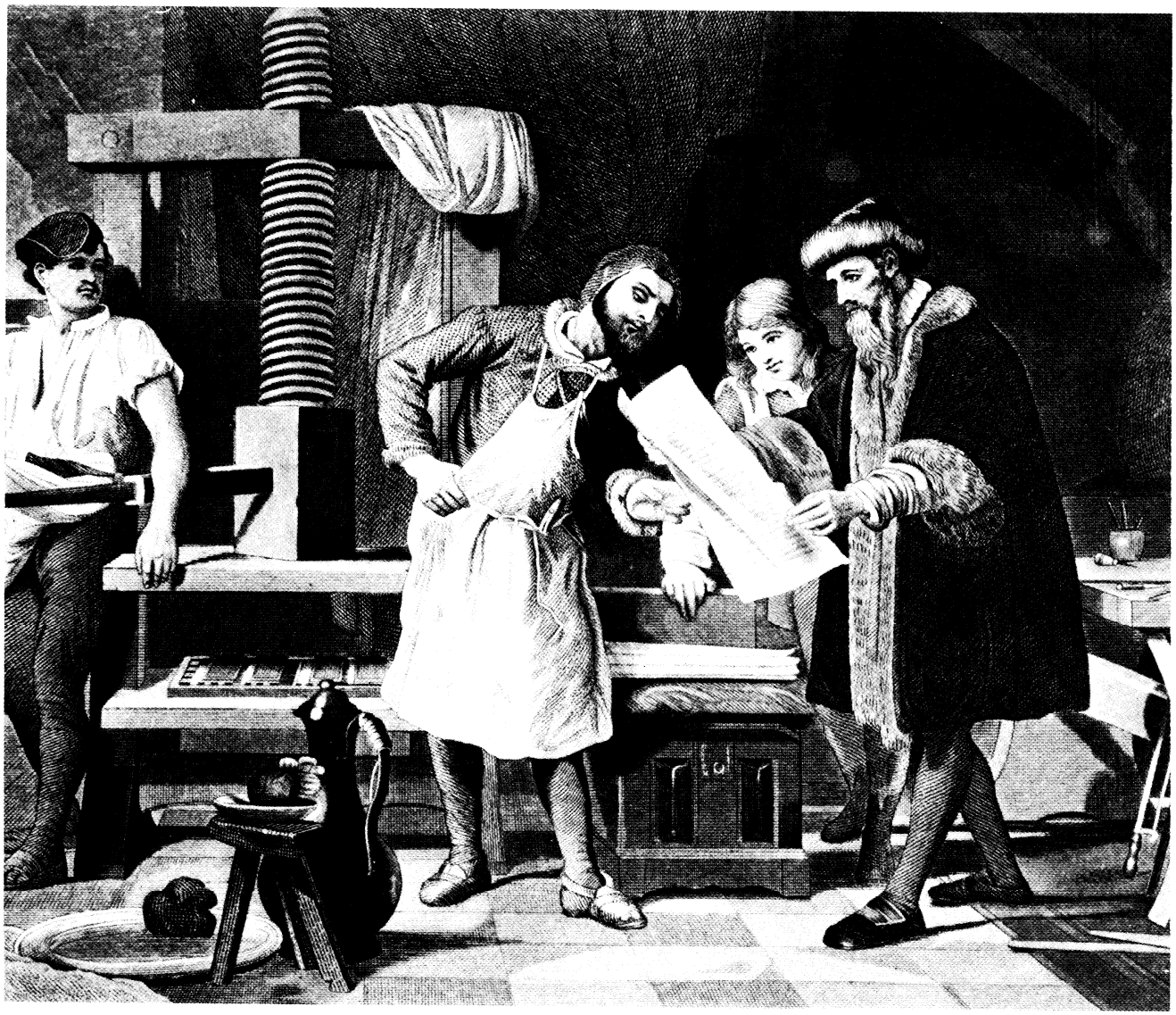
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



Why Was Printing Invented?

LESSON 52

What our STUDENTS SAY

Lesson 51

"Here's a word of thanks for the tremendous amount of time and effort that you have spent on these Bible lessons. Having just completed Lesson 51, I can truly appreciate the study you've put into these lessons on church history. For many years I have searched in vain for information on this topic out of the limited sources of public libraries and, needless to say, ended up with more questions than answers."

— Mrs. R. J. H., Oregon

Just beginning the Church History Series

"Thank you and your staff for the new Bible Lesson [49] I received a few days ago. It's 'deep' and takes a lot of study. Thank you for the *Autobiography*. It's very interesting."

— Mrs. Frank R., Illinois

Worn Out Bible

"I would like to tell you how much I enjoyed Lesson 50. I received Lesson 51 Monday and enjoy it even more. The history of the early churches and of the lives of the apostles is so interesting. I was very surprised to find that the Thyatira era is so closely related to the Philadelphia era of today.

"Would you please send me a list of prices of the Bibles you have for sale? The one I have is difficult to use because the back has come off."

— R. O., Robeline, Louisiana

• *We are very sorry to have to disappoint you — and many other students of the Ambassador College Correspondence Course. We have had to* DISCONTINUE *supplying the National Bible which we offered several years ago as a special service to our students.*

Christ has called us to teach the MEANING *of His Word. Until the late Middle Ages, it was necessary for the Church of God to hand-copy and distribute the Bible to get the gospel message to the people. But about 1450 printing was invented, and printed copies of the Scriptures began to be multiplied. Since that time, Christ has used mainly His people Israel to do this part of the work.*

As explained in this Lesson, the Church began

(Please continue on page 16)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
BIBLE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

LESSON 52

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.

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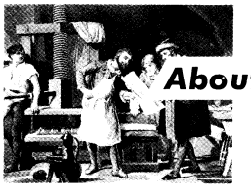


About Our Cover . . .

Gutenberg and assistants examine first proofs of the Gutenberg Bible — about the year 1450.

Beginning with this use of the newly developed art of printing by means of movable type, copies of the Bible text were multiplied and re-multiplied. No longer was the Word of God dependent on laborious hand-copying. And never again could it be threatened with complete extirpation — the destruction of every copy.

Historical Pictures Service

THE BOOK AND THE CHURCH THEY COULDN'T DESTROY

You could not have taken a Bible correspondence course if you had lived in the Middle Ages. Production, distribution and study of such a course would have been totally impossible.

There was no printing, little education, very few Bibles — and to read the few there were available was considered *illegal!*

Why is it that printing, reading and writing, and manufacture of books has become increasingly important in the last 400 years — and especially in the last 40? *Who* actually is behind this great expansion of communication? Have you ever wondered?

Who caused — in our day — the development of *radio?* Of tape recording? Television? And *why?*

You should have guessed the answer!

God Himself — who rules the universe — has brought about the invention and development of all these instruments — each one at its proper time — for a great, but almost totally *unrecognized purpose.*

For Use of God's Church!

Until the development of printing, it took a skilled and rapid writer *ten months* to make a copy of the Bible. A finished and bound copy was worth the *price of a landed estate!*

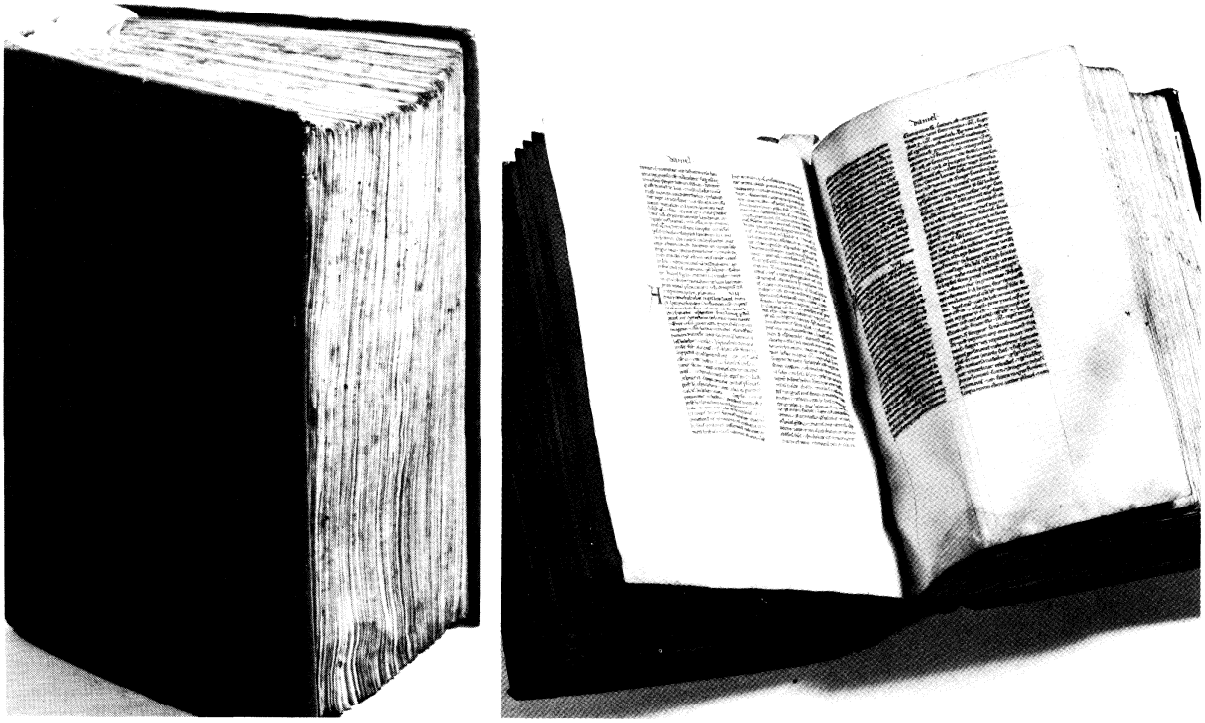
Under such circumstances it was all but impossible for God's Word to become widely read.

The major labor of God's Church in the Thyatira era was to translate, copy and make the Scriptures known. Yet for all the effort, the truth remained virtually unknown to the broad masses.

All Scripture manuscripts the authorities could lay their hands on were taken or kept out of circulation. It is a telling and little known fact that even most of the manuscripts which came

The Bible in Latin, handwritten in France in the 1200's on vellum (sheepskin), from the Ambassador College rare book collection. It is shown (at right) opened to Daniel 11:32-35 — key to the history of God's people in the Middle Ages.

Ambassador College



to be stored away in Catholic monasteries and cathedrals are ultimately traceable to the work of God's Church! You see, few scholars in the Middle Ages had ability to read or translate from the original Hebrew or Greek. So they used the Waldensian version, originally translated into the Provençal language from an early form of the Vulgate, as their main source! (Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, chapters 2, 3 and 4.)

And when later, during the 14th and 15th centuries, such Catholic groups as *Fraticelli, Beghards, Friends of God, Brethren of the Free Spirit, Brethren of the Common* (Communal) *Life*, etc. became convinced the Bible *should* be known, and some of them began to copy or occasionally translate the Scriptures, they too immediately ran into trouble. Many such people, often falsely stigmatized as Waldenses or Lollards, were *burned*. (Those truly belonging to God were *not*, as some may have assumed, the most apt to be martyred. They were not often in public view, reaching the broad masses of the world.)

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, Waldenses had become known by their enemies as Lollards — from a Flemish word, *lollen* or *lullen*, meaning to sing or speak softly, or to mumble — because of their practice of memorizing the Scripture, in the vernacular, by mumbling it to themselves or to one another. Their enemies seized on this name and attempted to connect it with Latin *lolium* —tares (see Matthew 13:25). The word came to be applied to *all* so-called "heretics," (see Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, page 70).

These "wandering and hypocritical fellows" (as their enemies called them) were noted in Holland as early as 1309. In 1315, one Walter the Lollard, a chief Waldensian minister, with his brother Raymond carried the gospel of Christ to England. He is said to have spread the Waldensian doctrine all over England before he himself was seized and burned in Cologne, Germany, in 1322 (Par Bresse, *Authentic Details of the Waldenses;* Orchard, *A Concise History of Foreign Baptists*).

Bible Translated into English

But now Jesus Christ provided His Church "a little help" (Daniel 11:34).

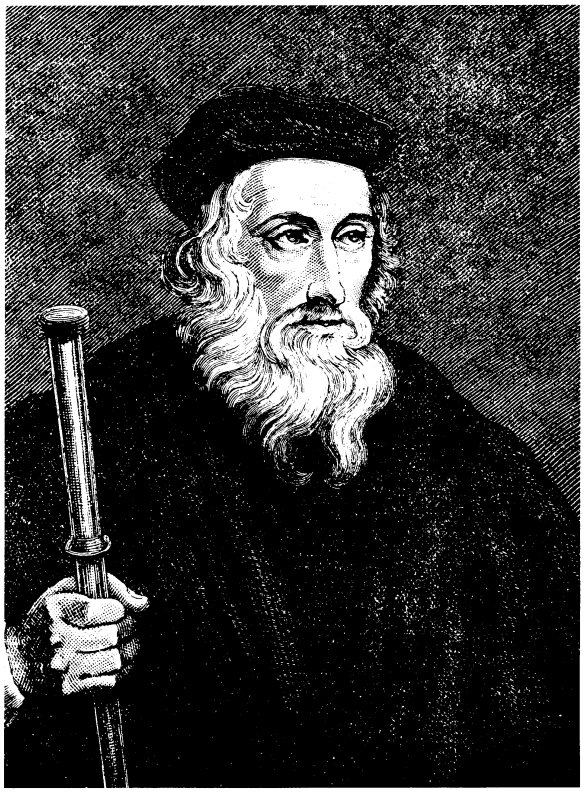
The name Lollard sprang into great prominence in England — a few years before 1400. It was a result of the studies and writings of John Wycliffe, a man whom Jesus Christ *used* —though Wycliffe was never a member of God's Church. He lived and died within the Catholic communion.

Wycliffe was a theologian and professor at Oxford. He became increasingly aware of the abuses and blasphemies committed and condoned by the priests and prelates of the Middle Ages. He began to write and distribute tracts concerning these abuses.

Immediately, he was surrounded by *enemies* — and was branded a "Lollard" — the name commonly applied to God's people in Western Europe in the 1300's.

Wycliffe responded by speaking out more freely, even declaring the priesthood in communion with Rome was not the ministry of Christ. A group of Oxford scholars and teachers gathered around him. Many of the rulers of England who had been his former associates listened to him with respect. And a great many of the common people began to look to him as their leader.

Sympathizers and Co-Workers became very numerous for a while. In the words of a contemporary, the "sect" of the Wycliffites was "held in such great honor in these days, and has so multiplied, that you can hardly see two men passing in the road, but one of them shall be a disciple of Wycliffe."



John Wycliffe, Oxford scholar, churchman, theologian — and driving force behind abortive English revolt from the Catholic Church. His followers completed the first translation of the Bible into English — an important first step in preparation for the work of God's Church in modern times.

Destruction of the writings of Wycliffe at Prague. Burning was the favorite means employed by the enemies of the truth in the Middle Ages against the Book and the Church that they couldn't destroy — no matter how hard they tried! In Bohemia, the doctrines of Wycliffe were the inspiration for John Huss. Though not of God's Church, Huss too was burned.

History loses sight of the original "Lollards" as a separate people as a result of this movement.

But Wycliffe was a scholar rather than a saint, a man with a penetrating mind and carefully guarded intellectual balance. He seems not to have understood prayer at all. He practiced infant baptism. And there is no evidence that he ever understood the truth about God's Sabbath.

His *real importance* in the history of God's Church lies in the translation of the Bible into English which he began.

Though Wycliffe himself died in 1384, the circle of scholars that had gathered around him carried forward this translation work to a successful conclusion. They saw it distributed in all parts of England during the next 30 years — for the benefit of God's people in England.

The Later Lollards

Some of these Lollards — both of Wycliffe's scholarly associates and others — had adopted from the beginning the Waldensian (and Biblical) principle of going out by twos to travel and preach throughout England. They called public attention to grievances against the religious authorities, and gave the people supplementary instruction, (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, articles "Wycliffe" and "Lollards"; MacFarlane, *John Wycliffe and English Non-Conformity*, chapters 4 and 5).

A second translation of the Bible into English, and then a third — a very readable version — were brought out and used in this work. The established church all the while remained set against the use of a vernacular Bible, and made repeated attempts to stop it but could not.

In 1401, the famous statute called *De Heretico Comburendo* was propounded against all Lollards. It forbade preaching without license, teaching "new doctrines" or favoring those who taught them. It provided that those who did so should be imprisoned or fined, and, as the name implies, if obstinate or relapsed after once abjuring their "errors," they were to be burned to death!

Under oppression, Lollards—God's people and those who helped them — spread to new parts of England and to Scotland. Local priests were often in sympathy and omitted Catholic rites.

But the Wycliffite movement was mainly secular. In a few years, it became involved in a political scheme which was badly defeated, and its leaders executed.

Most of those directly influenced by Wyclifte had recanted long before this — when faced with martyrdom. But later, many men, more influenced by the Bible and the true Lollards who constituted a part of the Church of God, were steadfast even to death. There is evidence that scattered true followers of Christ survived for two centuries in all corners of England, although they were never again prominent after the fall of the Wycliffites (see Thomsen, *The Later Lollards*).

They were constantly hunted and oppressed by the established church, and only survived by remaining under cover as much as possible. Our only source of information about them is that which was brought out in the trials of those who were caught.

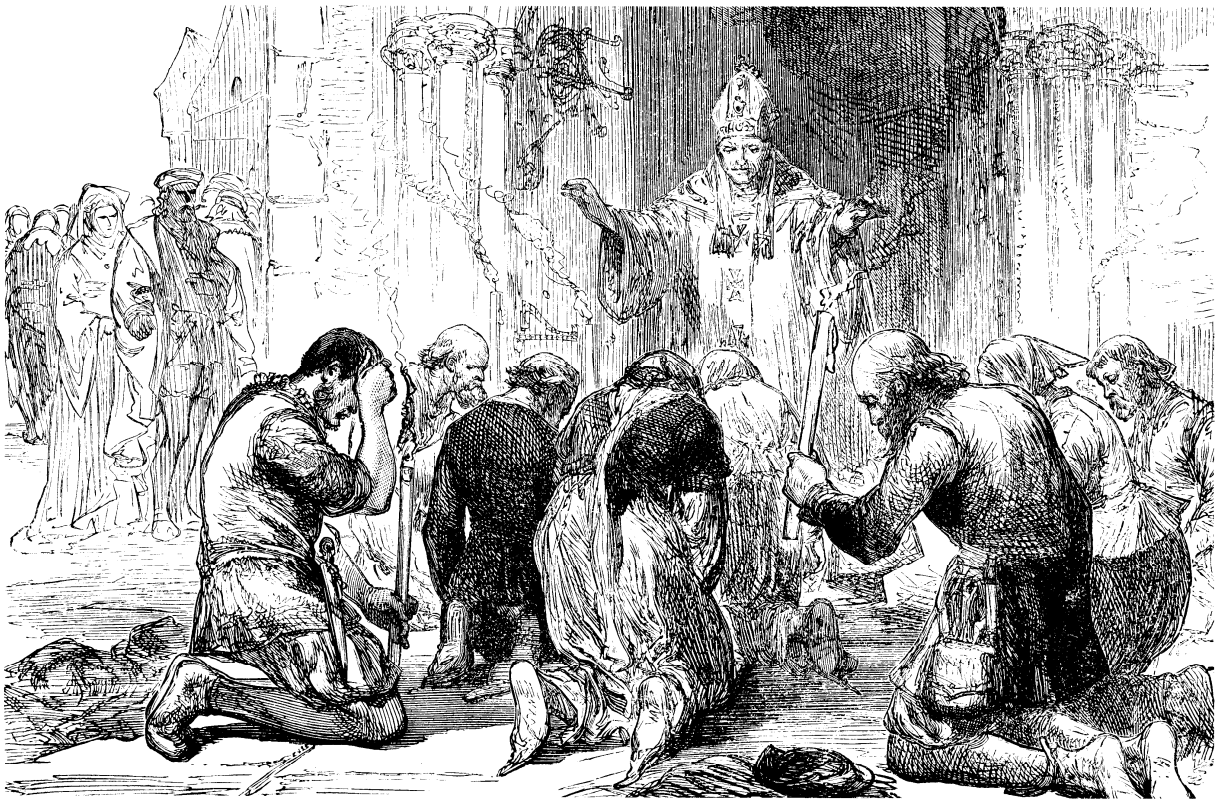
They maintained that the Papacy was a "beast" (Rev. 13) and anti-Christ, and that it had never been given any authority by Jesus' apostle Peter. Some of them, on the other hand, clearly stated that its spiritual character was that of Simon Magus! (Acts 8).

They were closer to the truth than probably even they knew!

A man ought not to be baptized, they said, until mature, and the True Church was *not* "universal" but, in this age, was limited to a few. They maintained that the sacraments of the false church were blasphemous, leading men to damnation. The relics of saints, and the miracles claimed to have been performed by them, were nothing but fakes and impositions.

(It is important to realize that most of those who were stigmatized as "Lollards," and who were persecuted and even executed, were only sympathizers. Numerous individuals listened to the few real Lollards who constituted the Church of God. But those who listened were usually interested in *purifying* the established church — restoring it to what they supposed was it's original condition — while remaining within it. They were not converted members of God's spiritual congregation. Some of those labeled

Lollards abjuring their faith. Most of the immediate followers of Wycliffe were ready to make their peace with the Catholic Church rather than face martyrdom. It was left to the few — whose religion was from another Source — to continue.



"Lollards" by the prosecutors were indeed heretics, and even atheists.)

As late as the year 1494, thirty persons called "the Lollards of Kyle" were accused before the king in Ayrshire in Scotland. Every item on the list of their alleged "heresies" is truth, and telling against the religion of Rome.

Fortunately, this group of Christians escaped execution. Others, not so fortunate, perished in a renewed fury of persecution that was provoked in Scotland by the beginning of the Reformation in Germany about twenty years later (*The Lollards*, published in London by the Religious Tract Society, no author given, page 337).

The whole Lollard movement — including many unconverted co-workers associated with the Church of God — played no small part in preparing the people and rulers of England and Scotland to accept the Protestant Reformation. And the work they did led directly to the rise of Puritanism — an attempt of carnal minds to satisfy the commandments of God (especially the *fourth* one) *without* actual repentance and obedience.

But in the meantime, God's people continued to exist on the mainland of Europe also. And great things were transpiring, for Jesus Christ was protecting and *guiding* and *helping* His Church.

Rapid Printing Invented

1. Did Jesus Christ who *built* His Church promise to supply whatever help would be needed so that it could reach the whole world with His message? Matt. 28:19-20. Also Phil. 4:13, 19.

COMMENT: About 1450, He caused the art of printing by movable type to be developed in Germany. It was not accidental that the famous Gutenberg *Bible* was one of the first books to be printed. From there, printing spread to Holland, England and all over Europe, wherever God's people were found.

The first edition of the Bible in the vernacular of the people was the German translation of 1466. Between this first edition and 1518 (the time of Luther) 14 editions of the Bible in German and 4 in Dutch were printed. Others appeared in England, Bohemia, Italy and other countries. One of these German Bibles printed in 1483 — a *generation* before Luther — is in the Ambassador College Library.

The New Testament of this first edition (1466) is demonstrably derived directly from the Waldensian version. Later, Baptists and Mennonites preferred the Waldensian version to the *Lutheran* for a century.

Clearly the impulse to spread the Word of God did not originate in Protestantism which began in 1517!

All efforts by the established religion to prevent the Word of God from reaching the people failed. Confiscation and burning of Bibles was practiced freely — but to no avail.

An attempt was made to remove the source of "heresy" by buying up and destroying the complete output of an edition printed in Holland and imported into England. As might have been expected, the presses only ran the faster on a new and larger edition. The more of the bishop's money they received, the harder the printers worked. Two Bibles appeared where only one had been before.

Jesus Christ had begun to supply the means by which His Church could — and ultimately *would* — reach all the world with His gospel. Now not only could the Bible be *printed* and *multiplied*, but it could also be *explained* — by means of the printed word.

But the spiritual strength of God's Church at that time was at such a low ebb that it was *unable* to fully exploit these new possibilities!

2. Did the One who became Jesus Christ reveal Himself even in the Old Testament as the Source which replenishes the *spiritual* strength of His people in addition to giving them *physical* help? II Chron. 14:11; Psalms 27:1; 28:7; 68:35; Isa. 40:29, 31.

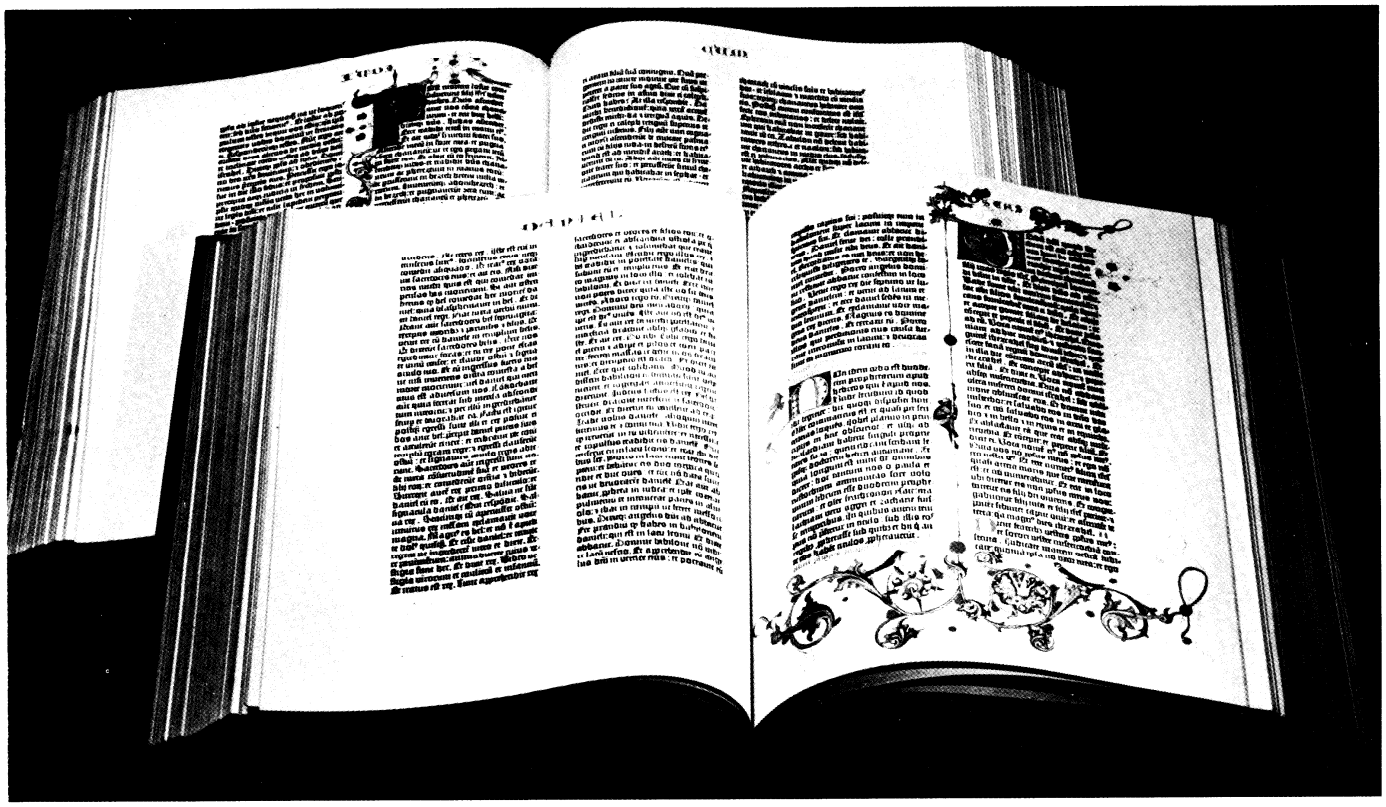
3. What caused the strength of God's people to fail? See the principle in Psalm 31:10. Iniquity — lack of *total* obedience — caused the converted King David to lose his physical strength. And lack of total obedience (see Lesson 51) caused the Church of God in the late Middle Ages to become powerless.

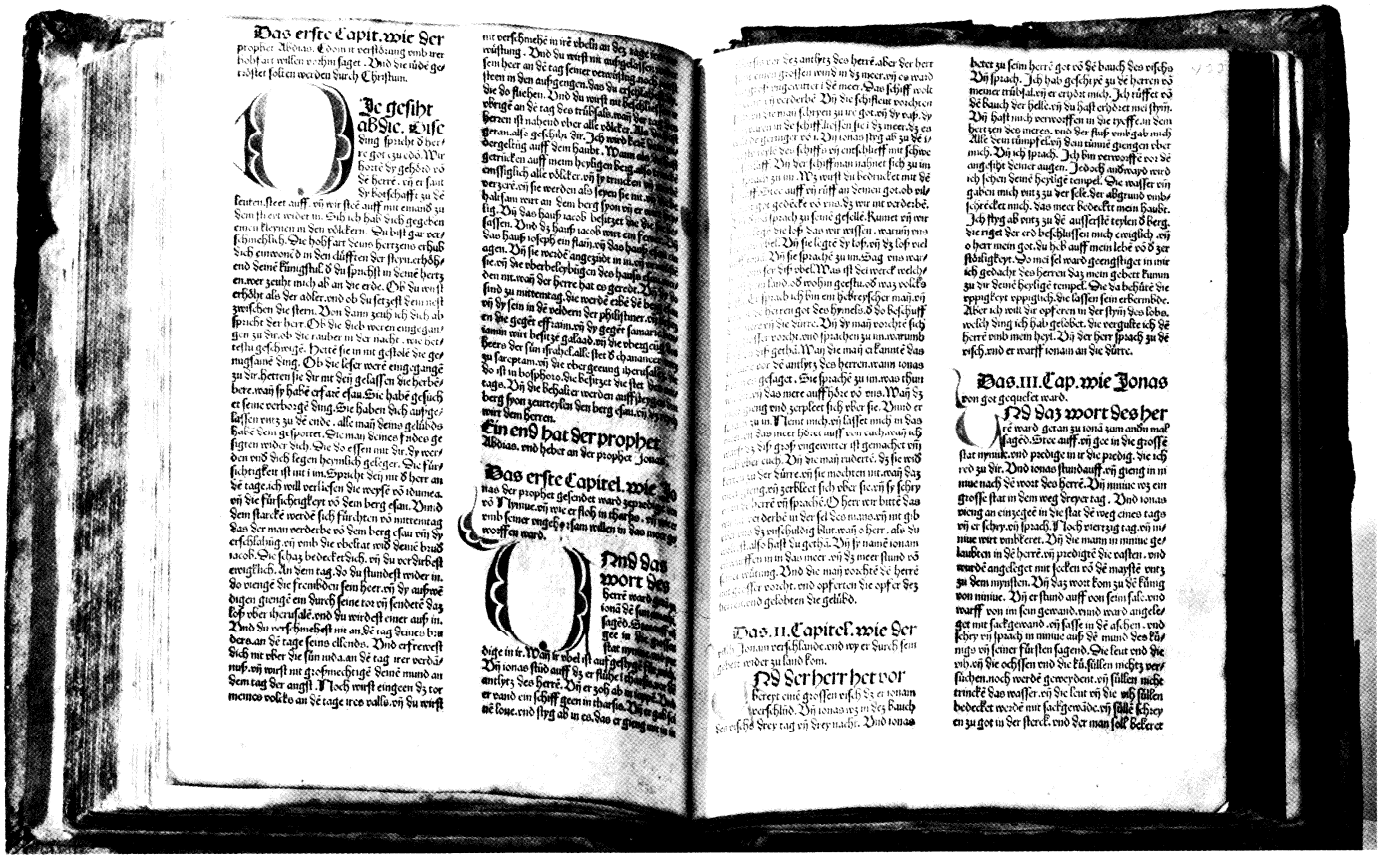
Church Tried by Fire — and Found Wanting!

Translations of the Bible were available. Printing was possible. There was a great Work to be done. But there was no strength in God's Church to perform it (Isa. 37:3; John 4:35).

1. What did Daniel prophesy would be the lot of God's people, especially during the later Middle Ages? Dan. 11:33. "Sword, flame, and captivity [imprisonment]" was *literally* fulfilled in those times.

2. Did Daniel also foresee that in the midst of these dangers, God would give them "a little help" (such as Wycliffe's translation and the invention of printing)? Dan. 11:34. But what was the spiritual condition of most of those who supposed they were Christians? Same verse.





Das erste Capit. wie der propher Abdias. Gott in verstörung vmb wer hoffart willen wehm sager. Vnd die vnde gerichter sollen werden durch Christum.

Die gesicht Abdie. Wise ung spricht der herre gott zu edo. Wir haben ey gehört von der Botschaft zu Gotte herre. vnd es sant dy botschafft zu den leuten. steet auff. vnd wir stee auff mit emand zu Kampff. Sihe ich hab dich gegeben eim kleinen in den volckern. Du bist gar verschmehlich. Die hoffart deins hertzens erhaben dich. Du wonest in den clüfften der felsen. erhöhst dein kuniglich. Du sprichst in deinem hertzen. wer zeuht mich ab an die erde. Ob du wirst erhöht als der adler. vnd ob du setzest dein nest zwischen die stern. Von dann zeuh ich dich ab spricht der herr. Ob die diebe weren eingegangen zu dir. ob die rauber in der nacht. wie bestelt geschwige. Hette sie nit gestole die genugsame kung. Ob die lese were eingegangen zu dir. herren die dir nit deyn gelassen die herbere. wann sy habe erfare esau. Sie habe gesuchet seine verborgte ding. Sie haben dich aufgelassen mit zu dem ende. alle mayn deine geliebs haben dein gespottet. Sie man deines frides gesagten wider dich. Die do essen mit dir. Dir werden vnd dich legen heymlich geleyet. Die fürsichtigkeit ist nit im. Spricht der herr. Ich werd an dem tage. ich woll verlieren die weyse vo idumea. vnd die fürsichtigkeit vo dem berg esau. Vnd dem starcke werde sich fürchten vo mitternacht das der man verderbe vo dem berg esau vnd dy erschlahung. vnd emb die vbeltat wo deine bruder iacob. Die schaz bedecken dich. vnd du verbrestest ewiglich. An dem tag. do du stundest wider in. do vnengte die fremden dem heer. vnd dy außwerdigen gienge em durch seine tor vnd sendet das los vber jherusalem. vnd du wrdest einer auf in. Vnd du verschmehest nit an dem tag deines bruders an dem tage seins ellends. Vnd es frewest dich nit vber die sun in dem tag der verdirbnus. vnd wirst nit gesprechen gegen deine mund an dem tag der angst. Ich wirt eingeen do tor meines volcks an dem tage ires vallis. vnd du wirst nit verschmehen in ire vbeltat an dem tag ire verstörung. Vnd du wirst nit aufgelegen in dem heer an dem tag seiner verwüstung. Vnd du wirst nit aufgestanden in den steen in den aufgengen. Vnd du erlesest die die do flichen. Vnd du wirst nit beschlossen vberbringe an dem tag des trübsals. Wann der tag der herren ist nahend vber alle volcker. Als du gethan hast. als geschehen ist. Ich wird dein vergeling auff dein haupt. Wann als du getrunken auff meim heyligen berg. so werden emssiglich alle volcker. vnd sy trincken. vnd verzere. vnd sie werden als seyen sie nit gewesen. Vnd auff dem berg zion wirt an dem berg syon vnd er werdet heilig. Vnd das haus iacob besitzet die besessen. Vnd das haus iosyph ein flam. vnd das haus esau zu stoppel. Vnd sie werdt angezündet in ir. vnd sie werden verbrennen. Vnd es werdet kein vberbeybigen des hauses esau. Wann der herre hat es geredt. Vnd sind zu mittern tag. die werdt erben die gegend des mittags. vnd sie werden besitzen esau. vnd dy gegend des mittags. vnd sie werden besitzen die philistiner. vnd sie werden die gegend effraim. vnd dy gegend samarie. vnd benyamin wirt besitzen galaad. vnd die vberigen des heers der sun israhel. alle stet des chanaanites zu sarepta. vnd die vberigen des heers der sun israhel. alle stet des chanaanites zu sarepta. vnd die vberigen des heers der sun israhel. alle stet des chanaanites do vsl in bosphoro. Die besitzet die stet des mittags. Vnd sie werden hinaufgehen auff den berg syon zu richten esau. Vnd es wirt dem herren.

Ein end hat der propher Abdias. vnd heber an der propher Jonas.

Das erste Capitel. wie Jonas der propher gesendet ward zu ninive. vnd wie er floh in thar so. vnd er vmb seiner vngeduld sam wollen zu dem meer geworffen ward.

Vnd das wort des herre ward dem Jonas Dem sun Amathi. vnd sprach. Stand auff. vnd gee in die grosse stat ninive. vnd predige in ir. Wann sie vbel ist auffgestiegen. Vnd Jonas stund auff. vnd gieng in ninive. nach dem wort des herre. Vnd ninive was ein grosse stat. Vnd es ward ein gang dreyer tag. Vnd Jonas fing an zu gehen in die stat. Vnd er gieng ein tag. vnd er schry. vnd sprach. Noch vierzig tag. vnd ninive wirt vmbkeret. Vnd die mann in ninive geloubten in dem herre. vnd predigten die fasten. vnd wurden angeleget mit secken von dem mayste vntz zu dem mynsten. Vnd das wort kom zu dem könig von ninive. Vnd er stund auff von seim sal. vnd warff von im sein gewand. vnd ward angeleget mit sackgewand. vnd sasse in der aschen. vnd schry vnd sprach in ninive auß dem mund des königs vnd seiner fürsten sagend. Die leut vnd die vih. vnd die ochsen vnd die kü. sullen nichts versuchen. noch werden geweydent. vnd sullen nicht trincken das wasser. vnd die leut vnd die vih sullen bedecket werden mit sackgewande. vnd sullen schrien zu gott in der starck. vnd der man solle bekeren

der antwrtz des herre. aber der herr hat geworffen vnd in dy meer. vnd es ward gesprochen vnter dem meer. Das schiff wolt zerbrochen werden. Vnd die schiffleut vorchten vnd ir yeder man schrien zu ir gott. vnd sy ewlten in die schiff. haben sie dy meer. dy es gemaynder ist. Vnd Jonas dy ab zu dem hinterste des schiffs. vnd er entschlieff vnd schwiff. Vnd der schiffman nahmet sich zu im. vnd zu im. Was wirst du bedracket mit dem schlaff. Auff vnd rüff an deinen gott. ob vns der gedencke. vnd dy wir nit verderben. Vnd sprach zu seine geselle. Kumet vnd wir werfen die los. das wir wissen. wem vnd vmb dise vbel. Was ist dein vnd welch dein land. do wohin geestu. do was volcks du bist. Vnd er sprach. Ich bin ein hebrer. vnd ich fürchte den gott des himels. do der schiff gemacht. Vnd die leut forchten sich. Vnd sprachen zu im. was hastu gethan. Wann die mann erkannt das er dem antwrtz des herren. wann Jonas gesagt. Sie sprachen zu im. was thun wir dir. das meer auff höre vo vns. Wann dy meer gingen vnd zerbleet sich vber sie. Vnd er sprach zu in. Nemet mich. vnd lasset mich in das meer. so wirt das meer hörer auff von euch. wann ich weis das dise grosse vngewitter ist gemacht vmb euch. Vnd die man ruderten. Es sie wolten wider die dürre. vnd sie mochten nit. wann das meer gingen vnd zerbleet sich vber sie. vnd sie schry zu dem herre. vnd sprachen. O herre. vnd bitte das du nit verderbest in der seel des mans. vnd nit gib vns vnschuldig blut. wann o herr. als du hast hab zu gethan. Vnd sie namen Jonam vnd warffen in im das meer. vnd das meer stund vo seiner wüthung. Vnd die man forchten die herre sehr vnd sie opferten die opfer dem herre. vnd gelobten die gelübd.

Das. II. Capitel. wie der prophet Jonas erschlunden. vnd wie er durch sein gebet wider zu land kom.

Vnd der herr het vorbereyt eine grossen visch. das er Jonam verschlind. Vnd Jonas was in des bauch des vischs drey tag vnd drey nacht. Vnd Jonas hatet zu seim herre gott vo dem bauch des vischs. Vnd sprach. Ich hab geschrye zu dem herren vo meiner trübsal. vnd er erhöret mich. Ich rüffet vo dem bauch der helle. vnd du hast erhöret mei stym. Vnd du hast mich verworffen in die tyffe. in dem hertzen des meres. vnd der fluss vmbgab mich. Alle dein küngel. vnd dein wüme giengen vber mich. Vnd ich sprach. Ich bin verworffe vor dem angesicht deiner augen. Iedoch auch wird ich sehen deine heylige tempel. Die wasser vmgaben mich vntz zu der sele. Der abgrund vmbscheydet mich. Das meer bedecket mein haupt. Ich styg ab vntz zu den aussersten teylen des berg. Die erdt der ist beschlossen mich ewiglich. vnd o hast mein got. Du hast auff mein lebe vo der abnigkeyt. So mei sel ward geenglistiget in mir ich gedacht des herren. das mein gebet kumm zu dir. Deine heylige tempel. Die da behüte die eyppigkeyt eyppiglich. die lassen sein erbermde. Aber ich wil die opferen in der stym des lobs. welch ding ich hab gelobet. Die vergulte ich dem herre. vnd mein heil. Vnd der herr sprach zu dem visch. vnd er warff sein an die dürre.

Das. III. Cap. wie Jonas von got gequeket ward.

Vnd das wort des herre ward der an zu Jona zum andern mal sagend. Stee auff. vnd gee in die grosse stat ninive. vnd predige in ir die predig. die ich red zu dir. Vnd Jonas stund auff. vnd gieng in ninive nach dem wort des herre. Vnd ninive was ein grosse stat in dem weg dreyer tag. Vnd Jonas fieng an einzegee in die stat. Er weg eines tags vnd er schry. vnd sprach. Noch vierzig tag. vnd ninive wirt vmbkeret. Vnd die mann in ninive geloubten in dem herre. vnd predigten die fasten. vnd wurden angeleget mit secken von dem mayste vntz zu dem mynsten. Vnd das wort kom zu dem könig von ninive. Vnd er stund auff von seim sal. vnd warff von im sein gewand. vnd ward angeleget mit sackgewand. vnd sasse in der aschen. vnd schry vnd sprach in ninive auß dem mund des königs vnd seiner fürsten sagend. Die leut vnd die vih. vnd die ochsen vnd die kü. sullen nichts versuchen. noch werden geweydent. vnd sullen nicht trincken das wasser. vnd die leut vnd die vih sullen bedecket werden mit sackgewande. vnd sullen schrien zu gott in der starck. vnd der man solle bekeren

(Left) Two volumes of the Latin "Gutenberg Bible" — first printed Bible.

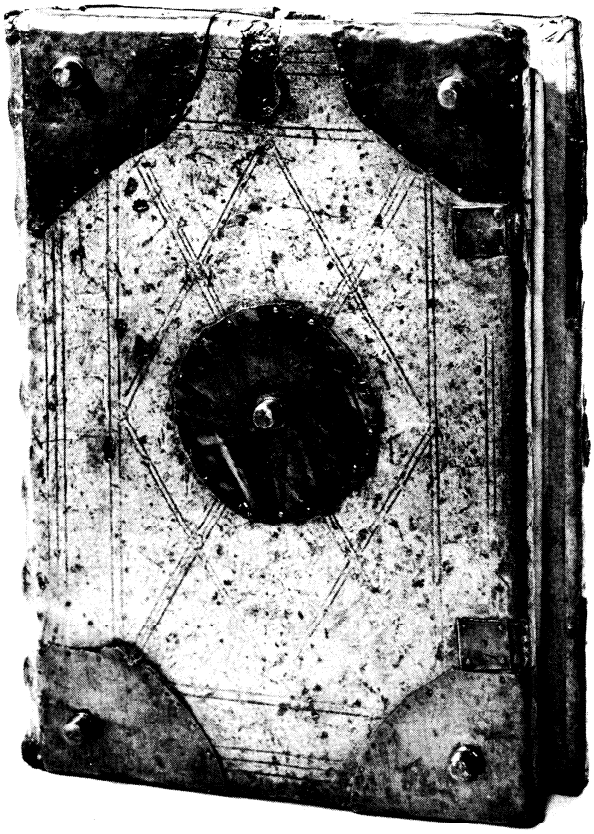
(Lower left) Edition of 1483 in vernacular German, from the Ambassador College rare book collection, open to the book of Jonah — God's message taken to the Assyrians. Large letters at the beginning of each chapter are in red and blue.

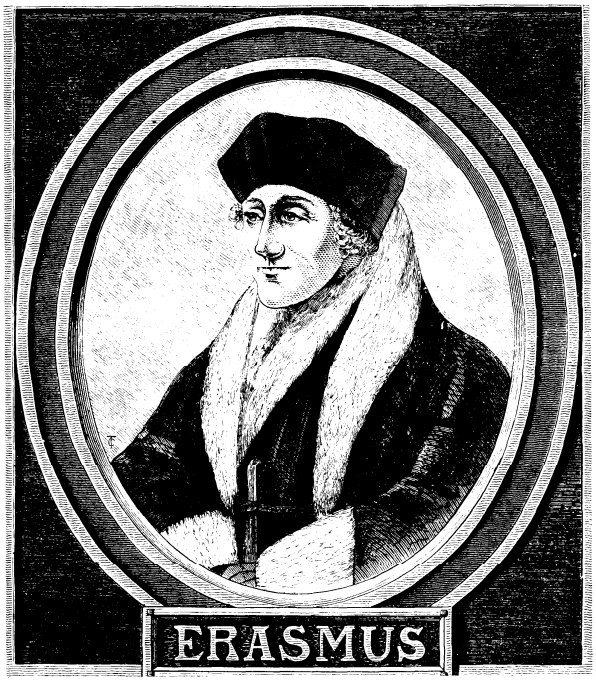
(Below) The same volume. Note the heavy board cover, sturdily bound in leather and brass. Half-inch brass legs support it while lying open.

(Upper right) Burning Tyndale's Testaments at St. Paul's, London. The authorities took vigorous measures to stop the importation of Tyndale's Testament into England. Thousands of copies were discovered in various hiding places in London, and burned with solemn ceremony. It was called "A burnt offering most pleasing to Almighty God." The printing presses kept printing more and more!

(Lower right) Erasmus, one of the greatest of Catholic scholars, lived in the time of Luther. He edited from all the Greek texts he could lay hands on, and gave to translators a comparatively accurate text of the Greek New Testament. He relentlessly criticized the Catholic Church, especially the "unholy men in holy orders."

American Bible Society, Ambassador College





COMMENT: Most were *not* really converted. When real danger drew near, many recanted.

3. Was it necessary even for *some of* the *faithful* to be martyred? Dan. 11:35. Why? Was it because *even they* needed to be made perfect? Same verse.

COMMENT: An account of events in Bohemia will illustrate the spiritual condition of most of God's people in the 15th century.

The writings and ideas of Wycliffe, having been carried early to Bohemia, provided the inspiration for John Huss — sometimes called the "forerunner of Luther." After Huss was burned in 1415, there resulted a series of wars in which all Bohemia seemed in active political rebellion against the Catholic power.

In the midst of this, those known as Waldenses or Picards (from Picardy in France) fled from city to city or into other regions to avoid being forced into military service. Most seem to have gathered in Austria.

The Waldenses declared they had lawful bishops and a lawful, uninterrupted succession from the apostles among them. They did not publicly use the *title* of bishop because of the "anti-Christian misuse" to which the word had been put by Catholics, but called their ministers simply *elders!*

In the aftermath of the Hussite wars, a group of people who saw the errors of Huss and of the Catholic Church separated from the Catholic Church and in 1467 sent emissaries to these Waldensians in Austria. (Bishop Commenius, quoted in Faber, *Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, and see also Armitage, *History of Baptists*, p. 319, and the Schaff-Herzog *Religious Encyclopedia*, article "Bohemian Brethren.")

The two groups recognized each other as "brethren."

Yet so *spiritually dead* were the Waldenses, that they would not give up their illicit union with the Catholic Church! (See the story of this "fornication" in Lesson 51.) In the interchange of letters which followed, the Bohemians reproached the Waldensians for frequenting the Pope's churches, and for too much zeal in heaping up money for use in times of persecution!

Many Waldenses did finally join these people as a result of further persecution which drove them to Bohemia and Moravia. Many perished of privation and cold. The remainder were scattered toward Brandenburg and Transylvania.

The Bohemian brethren divided. The larger part adopted a modified, easier religion, more acceptable to the world. They denied they were Picards — the remnant of God's Church. The smaller, more religious group soon disappeared. (Lutzow, *Bohemia: an Historical Sketch.*)

Sabbath Keepers Throughout Europe

Everywhere at this time, the traces of the True Church reveal its shattered condition.

Records of the Catholic Church in *Norway* mention obstinate keepers of the Sabbath at Bergen and at Oslo about 1435 (Andrews, *History of the Sabbath*). Apparently these people followed the familiar pattern of sitting among the Sunday congregations at Mass, but privately kept the true Sabbath (and no doubt other true doctrines).

We hear of them again — still continuing the same practice — over a hundred years later. The Catholic Church in Norway had by then become Lutheran.

A little known Sabbath-keeping group existed in *Russia* from about 1470 to 1503. It was crushed with great cruelty by government and church, many being burned in cages (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, article "Judaizing Heresy").

In Luther's day, at least one Sabbath keeper was executed (A.D. 1529) in *East Friesland.*

About the same time, books were published in *France* defending the Sabbath (Belcher, *Religious Denominations in the United States*, page 228).

About 1530, of three groups of people in *Moravia* who baptized adults only (therefore called "anabaptists"), one group also kept the Sabbath (Armitage, *History of Baptists*).

Erasmus, famous Catholic scholar in the time of the Protestant Reformation, speaks of Sabbath keepers in Bohemia. They were the same people known as Picards, and were descendants of the Waldenses (Lewis, *A Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday*, pp. 317, 318).

Even in *Finland*, where the Swedish king Gustav Vasa I ruled and introduced the Lutheran Reformation, the common people were persuaded the *hard times* which had come on them were for "NOT OBSERVING THE SEVENTH DAY CALLED SATURDAY." A letter from the king in 1554 ordered them to "forsake this way leading to damnation at once"!

What was the source of this seventh-day teaching?

Anjou's *Swedish Church History* speaks of an "*antichurch party.*" It was a separate *non-Catholic, non-Lutheran group* which taught the truth!

"Entirely distinct from this antichurch party of Sabbath keepers," says Anjou, "were *the rest*

who kept Saturday holy, abstaining from all work on it, but who *did not separate themselves from the* [Lutheran] *church.*" These were keeping Mass and Sabbath too! Following the practice the *Waldenses* had begun 300 years before!

This nominal Sabbath-keeping was not finally stamped out until the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in 1618.

Many "suffered death rather than deny their faith. It was very common for these *itinerant preachers*, who proclaimed the sacredness of Saturday, to connect their teachings with visions and revelations, *just as they did in Norway*" (Daae in *Theol. Tidsskrift.*, 1871).

Did you catch that? It was the *same* Sabbath-keeping *church* throughout Scandinavia! But it was involved in spiritual fornication — illicit relationships with Satan's established churches.

End of the 1260 Years

1. Did Daniel prophesy also that the Papacy (see Lesson 31 for the identification of this "little horn") would be allowed to "*wear out* the saints"? Dan. 7:8, 21, 25.

COMMENT: The Waldenses were completely "worn out." When Luther appeared, only a few scattered Sabbath-keepers remained. Even those people not in God's Church and known only as "anabaptists" (re-baptizers) were weary with persecution, and ready to surrender completely to the Roman Catholic Church.

The "anabaptists" had very little truth, but clung stubbornly to the *idea* of adult, "*faith* baptism" (though often by *sprinkling* or *pouring*). Among them were still to be found many of the traditions of the Cathars — heretics who associated with God's people. Hearing of Luther's success, they came out openly for their beliefs, but when Luther absolutely demanded they give up even their rebaptizing of adults, *many complied.*

The rest found Rome was not the only persecutor. More people were martyred after the success of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin than ever before. Worst of all in their persecution of Anabaptists were the Calvinists.

The sixteenth century was a time of great intolerance and cruelty. And this was especially true for about two generations following the

On this barren hill, modern archaeologists are excavating ancient Pella. It was here, overlooking the fruitful Jordan valley with northern Palestine beyond, that the True Church first found refuge when forced to flee Jerusalem. But the flight to Pella was only a type of a much greater flight from persecution — into the "wilderness" in which the Church remained for 1260 long years.

College of Wooster

Protestant Reformation. One did not have to be *right*, but only to *differ*, to be martyred.

2. *How long* did Daniel say that it would take to "wear out the saints"? Dan. 7:25.

COMMENT: A "time and times and the dividing of time" is three and a half times, or 3½ years. Computing a year for each day in 3½ years, we arrive at a period of 1260 years.

3. And how long was the True Church to exist in "the wilderness" — that is, away from main centers of civilization? Rev. 12:6.

COMMENT: The True Church which Jesus built was to be brought down until it was *practically* non-existent — all but dead — at the end of 1260 years. It could *never totally* die, for Christ had said "the gates of hell [the grave] *shall not prevail*" against it (Matt. 16:18).

Do not confuse this period of 1260 years of flight from Satan's anger with another 1260-year period — A.D. 554 to 1814 (see Lesson 31, page 13) — during which revivals of the old Roman Empire were dominated politically by the Papacy (Rev. 13:5).

Waldenses, Cathars and others during the Middle Ages were in unanimous agreement in stating the time God's True Church became an outcast and had fled to the wilderness. They *began it with the agreement between Emperor Constantine and Pope Sylvester*. There is no mistaking this time.

From Constantine's decree in 325 A.D. and the consequent initiation of persecution on non-Catholics, 1260 years brings us to the time immediately following 1585.

Did you notice, in the section on scattered Sabbath-keepers, how they were either completely extinct or insignificant about this time?

At this time, the hand of God is again clearly seen in events. The living Jesus Christ moved to make it *possible* for His Church to GROW AGAIN, and for His Work to be done!

In 1586-87, conviction and execution for conspiracy of Mary, Queen of Scots, removed for the last time the threat to Britain of a Catholic domination by way of the throne. And the following year, as the supposed "invincible" Spanish Armada approached Britain to attack, it was utterly overwhelmed by a great storm at sea, a miraculous intervention in the weather!

And what a miracle it was!

In that day, it was on the lips of every Englishman and even on those of continentals that this *could not have been other* than a GREAT MIRACLE from God! Not only was England enabled to remain *politically* free, she was encouraged to stay non-Catholic!

The magnitude of this defeat made Europe's strongest Catholic power second-rate. *Israelite* Britain was now *supreme*, and in the political and moral climate of a freedom-loving, Protestant Britain, God's Work could again develop!

Christ's Church would *yet* use the power of the printing press He had given!

But just as at the beginning of the 1260 years it had taken the True Church a few years to be completely removed and re-established elsewhere, now it took the Church that had been brought down to almost nothing a few years to revive and again become significant. Meanwhile, Jesus Christ took special steps *to insure* that His Church on the Continent would continue to exist.

The Church of Thyatira Continues

Shortly after the middle of the 16th century, new ideas of religious freedom from Switzerland, Germany and Bohemia came into Transylvania (western Romania today, then part of Hungary). Here an ex-Catholic priest named Francis David joined successively the Lutherans (1540), Calvinists (1559) and Unitarians (Polish Anabaptists). He founded in 1566 the first Unitarian (more properly "anti-Trinitarian" at that time) congregation in Transylvania.

Continual study led him to ever more understanding. He was soon branded by his co-religionists as an unscrupulous innovator. Proving unmoveable in his convictions, he was condemned and imprisoned in 1578, and died the following year.

After David's death, a few of his flock refused to give up what light they had received.

Meanwhile, Christ had struck down and called to His service a rich Hungarian (Szekler) noble. Andreas Eössi turned to the study of the Bible as a result of a long sickness, and the deaths of his wife and all his sons. Though he had no knowledge of Hebrew, he found the truth clearly revealed in the Bible. Well versed in church history, he dismissed as folly the idea that one could learn religion only at one of the recognized theological institutions.

In the year 1588, he began to lead a group of the people who formerly listened to Francis David. Under his direction they began to live by every word of God and put into practice the whole Bible, the Old Testament as well as the New. The history of these people may be found in the book *Sabbatarians in Transylvania* by Samuel Kohn.

They saw the Bible enjoined the keeping of the true weekly Sabbath on the 7th day. They recognized in it a type of the future state of "spiritual marriage" when the Church would be

married to Christ. They rejoiced each Sabbath adorning themselves for it in their best attire. They knew the 7th day typified that great time of rejoicing in which they — Gentiles — could be a part of the "bride of Christ," ruling with Him in the seventh thousand years.

They also kept all the *annual* Sabbaths or holy days. They kept the true Passover with unleavened bread, understanding it was the continuation of the Old Testament Passover, now in *remembrance* of the Redeemer who was coming again. Their civil New Year was the Feast of Trumpets.

The so-called "Christian" festivals — Christmas, Easter, etc., they declared, were the inventions of popes! They rejected the "baptism" of such "Christians," and even made a distinction between clean and unclean meats.

They understood that they, being Gentiles, and in part descended of the family of Japheth by flesh birth (most were Hungarian), had become a part of spiritual *Israel* and sons of Abraham (see Eph. 2:12-20 and Gal. 3:29).

Most important of all, they inculcated the moral conduct emphasized by Jesus Christ — love for God and man, moderation in all things, respect for authority, honor to those in civil offices, etc.

About 1600, they compiled — and printed — a hymn book of 110 paraphrases of Psalms and other poetical passages of the Bible. Forty-four relate to the Sabbath, 5 to the new moon, 11 to Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, 6 to Pentecost, 3 to the Festival of Trumpets, 1 to the Day of Atonement, and 6 to the Festival of Tabernacles.

New Efforts to Wear Out the Saints

The number of co-workers in Transylvania increased rapidly. Most, however, continued to assemble with one of the four established denominations of the country. They held their own meetings in secret, usually keeping the Sabbaths in the privacy of their own homes.

And no wonder! For new persecutions were continually being devised against their property, their liberty and their lives. A law was passed for the suppression of Sabbatarians in 1595. A new, usurping prince in 1600 ordered them punished and their property confiscated. At that time many of their books and writings were seized and burned. A similar regulation was propounded in 1607.

Notice an amazing pattern of 7's (1588-1595) and 12's (1588-1600) in the years beginning with Eössi's leadership!

When Eössi died, about 1600, his adopted son, a highly educated Hungarian named Simon Péchi, became leader of the Sabbath-keepers. Péchi, like many others, passed as a Unitarian and a "Christian," even holding several important public offices. But in 1618, a Unitarian synod formally excommunicated all Sabbath-keepers, while the prince proposed a new law against them. In the same year the Thirty Years' War began. Being at that time Chancellor of Transylvania, Péchi was forced to accompany the prince and his army in 1619 to war in Austria.

This was the turning point — and the end of a 19-year cycle — in the history of these people.

One cannot be both a part of this world and a true Christian at one and the same time!

Péchi was suddenly seized and imprisoned for 3½ years and afterward placed in retirement! Meanwhile there was a great influx of Sephardic Jews into Transylvania (where there had been *no* Jews before). Sabbath-keepers and Jews began to draw closer together, Péchi himself taking a lead in it after 1629.

During the last part of this 19-year cycle, Sabbatarians in Transylvania stood at the height of their secular influence. Péchi was again highly honored and again stood high in government circles.

But the *spiritual* condition of the Church did not recover.

A new, severe law issued against it in 1635 remained inoperative for three years. Then suddenly in 1638 a commission representing the four recognized religions summoned many of the Sabbath-keepers before it and sentenced them to loss of life and goods. Péchi himself was condemned, imprisoned, but later freed, having taken an oath to renounce the Sabbath!

From this time on, Sabbath-keepers in Transylvania survived only in secret. Some of their descendants were again persecuted nearly a hundred years later. The last record of them brings us to the beginning of the twentieth century. It is repeatedly true that nominal but spiritually dead professors of religion continue to exist long after every spark of spiritual life has been quenched.

In the course of time, most of them emigrated, and some became outright Jews. One story is that Péchi himself fled with a number of his followers to Moldavia and Constantinople.

Is it significant that many "Unitarians" fleeing from adjoining Poland in the same period made their way to *Holland?* It was just across the channel from Holland that God's Sabbath-keeping Church in England was already reviving.

(To Be Continued)

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

A "Presbyter John"?

"How can you be sure that the apostle John wrote the books of John and Revelation? Wasn't there another John in Asia Minor who wrote them about 100 A.D.?"

— Edward K., Wisconsin

• *The modern "higher critics" assume that the writer of John's Epistles and the book of Revelation was a certain "presbyter John" who is supposed to have lived in Ephesus about A. D. 100. They point to the opening verses of both II John and III John as supposed "proof" for this unfounded theory. John does call himself an "elder" ("presbyter" in Greek). Of course! All of God's ministers are elders. The apostle Peter was an elder (I Peter 5:1).*

But notice the immediate proof that this Elder John was the same as the apostle John. Turn to I John and read verse 1 of chapter 1. John plainly says that HIS *eyes have seen and* HIS *hands have handled Jesus Christ in the flesh. This could only have occurred while Jesus walked the earth as a man and while he was teaching and training his disciples — one of whom became the apostle John.*

The false theory about another John began with Dionysius of Alexandria, a "church father" whose influence extended from A.D. 231 to 264. By denying that the Apostle was the writer of the book of Revelation, he hoped to do away with a doctrine he didn't like — the truth that Jesus Christ and his saints will rule on earth for 1000 years (Rev. 20:4).

Dionysius deliberately misread a statement made by Papias, another of the "church fathers." Papias tells us how eager he was to hear what "the presbyters" Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John and Matthew had "said" (past tense) and what Aristion and the presbyter John (who were still alive) "were saying."

Notice how Papias is careful to distinguish Aristion from the "presbyters" — all apostles in this case — whom he obviously regarded as of higher rank. And one of those apostles — John, the presbyter — was still alive when Papias originally wrote his comments.

Despite the careful clarity of Papias, Dionysius insisted that Papias spoke of two Johns, one the apostle, the other "the presbyter." Eusebius (about 270 to 340) adopted the view of Dionysius, and for the same reason — dislike of the truth taught by the book of Revelation.

Are Many Saved?

"Lesson 50 states the number of Waldenses increased rapidly after a headquarters was established in northern Italy. How big did the Church grow during the Thyatira era?"

— E. A. B., Pasadena, California

• *There are no records of the number of converted people there were. But we know the True Church was always to remain small compared to the great organizations of this world. It was to be a "little flock" (Luke 12:32; Matt. 7:14).*

In the fourteenth century it is said there were as many as 80,000 Waldenses in the Austrian Empire. Another statement sometimes made, that there were 800,000 Waldenses in all Europe, is a misreading of a Waldensian's own comment that it was possible to travel 800 miles and stop every night at the home of a sympathizer.

In the history of God's Church it has been repeatedly true that "many have cleaved to them with flatteries" (Dan. 11:34). The Thyatira Era was no exception. Partly because MANY were dissatisfied with the degradation and oppression of the established church, a large number of friends and others who sympathized with God's true people were found in every country where God's people went. But THEY were not the Church, even though the world regarded them all as Waldenses.

Most of them were, at best, only co-workers — perhaps sincere, but unconverted — who had never given themselves completely and unreservedly to God.

Now notice what this situation led to. It "prepared the way for the transformation of his [Waldo's] following [those who cleaved with flatteries] into a sect or antichurch, a tendency already present in 1184. Under the pressure of persecution even the 'friends' felt themselves sectaries, and became increasingly merged with the main body [or better said, the small flock] of Waldenses" (from the Schaff-Herzog RELIGIOUS ENCYCLOPEDIA, *article "Waldenses"). They then began to join THEMSELVES together, rather than being all united through the Holy Spirit.*

These people were not themselves the True Church, though the True Church was AMONG *them.*

That is why they began so soon to compromise with error, and to commit "spiritual fornication."

(Right) Sheep in the upper Lucerne valley symbolize God's Church in this Alpine "wilderness" during the Thyatira Era. It was a "little flock." With God's "sheep" are the "goats" — representing the "fringers" and "hangers-on" who "cleave to them with flatteries," usually outnumbering the "sheep." (Below) One of the many abandoned Waldensian farmhouses in the uplands of the Cottian Alps graphically reveals the condition of God's people at the end of the 1260 years of persecution and hiding.

Courtesy of I. Hugon, Ambassador College

What our STUDENTS SAY

(Continued from page 2)

to receive "a little help" (Dan. 11:34) with the public printing of the Bible.

In this Philadelphia era of the Church, many different translations are available — and in almost every modern language. You should be able to obtain almost any kind of Bible you need from a local bookstore, or from a mail-order supplier.

History Lovers

"I'm thrilled with Lesson 49. I always loved history. Thank God for those who put so much time in study and research that we may know how God has preserved His Church through the ages."

Woman, Fontana, California

"Please send me the 52nd lesson, as I am through with Lesson 51. I have gone over it — I mean all the writing — once and the reading three times. It sure is good."

Mrs. J. G., Missouri

• *Thanks. And keep up the review. If we were betting men, we would bet you found something new every time you went over it that you didn't see before.*

"I would just like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for all the time and effort that is put into preparing each lesson of the Bible Correspondence Course. These last few lessons on the true history of God's Church are so remarkable — it certainly is a miracle the Church has been preserved through so much trial and persecution."

Miss L. M., Canada

Conscience Problem Solved

"Lesson 51 was *most* enlightening. On page 13 you spoke about Halley's Pocket Bible Handbook — well, I purchased the New Revised Edition that refers to the period 900-1500 and 1200-1550 and I was *sure shocked* about the 'Rule of the Harlots' — of which we read in Revelation chapter 18!!

"I was a Roman Catholic up to the age of 17, and God surely led me away from that great false church; I was even an altar boy and considered myself pious and a good Christian — but even at that age, I used to read the Bible which I thought interesting and would put questions to the priests who I thought *should* be able to enlighten me. But I saw so much corruption and the lies they told and the fear, that almost everything you did you were bound to go to hell. What hope was there, I thought.

"The way they described the horrors of hell — you would imagine they were there themselves — and that was the pattern of all their false teachings. And their grasping for all they could get and saying I WASN'T SUPPOSED to read the Bible for most of it was myth, this, *I just couldn't take.* So I left that church, but all the while I felt so guilty as if I was forsaking our Savior.

"I believe I've read my Bible a thousand times over — that book was my only solace.

"After having 3 heart attacks, I thought sure God was punishing me for leaving His Church.

"I am now keeping all of God's Holy Days, Festivals and SABBATH, which to me, as I have always felt from reading the Bible, *MUST* be the right ones. The priests used to tell me that was JEWISH, with a sneer, which used to 'burn me up.'

"I'm thanking God, every day, for giving me the power to 'prove all things.' My King James Bible, the priest told me to destroy, that I was sure going to go to hell!! I must have appeared to them as an heretic — in fact, one priest said I was. THAT finished me with them.

"I told them — all they had to do was read the book of Revelation and Daniel, which to my mind then, surely showed up *what they were.*

"Now I don't feel so guilty and I thank God every day for guiding me to the truth."

— Frank J. G., New Jersey

• *And we too are thankful that God has had a True Church on this earth and has preserved it from extinction through every generation.*

Book?

"I'm so very grateful to have known about the Work these past nine years, and been a part of it. I completed my 51st lesson in the Bible Course and I'm eagerly looking forward to the next one. Has some one begun the book on this era of the Church? Christ sent His apostles out by two's and I know they are sent now, baptizing, counseling, etc. I'm hoping when the lessons get to the Philadelphia era many of my questions will be answered."

Mrs. F. T., Pennsylvania

• *We recommend the AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG—and Lesson 53.*

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