



THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT THE WALDENSIANS
A HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

Why was there so much interest in times past in a religious group hidden away in the Alps of Northern Italy, Switzerland, and Southeastern France named Waldensians? Who were these people? What part do they really play in the history of religions and churches? Were they truly reformers before the Reformation? Did they actually descend directly from the Apostles as some claim? Why was it important enough in the English Reformation that large sums of money were spent in sending personal representatives to the countries directly to do research on these peoples? What truly happened to the personal histories of these people which were admitted into the Cambridge University Library in England and then mysteriously disappeared? This remains a mystery unsolved until this very day!

Were things found in these original histories written from the earliest times by their own people that undercut their use by the English Reformers to stretch their history to the Apostles without going through the Catholic Church?

What really were the true doctrines of the earlier Waldensians? Do these beliefs refute or substantiate the claim of the Baptists, Churches of Christ, Presbyterians, Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and so many other churches that they are their ancestors? Could they really have been the ancestors of all these churches with their tremendously

These and many other similar questions will
this research into The Plain Truth About the
WALDENSIAANS .

CHAPTER I

HISTORY

"The history of the ancient Waldenses certainly remains to be written," said Emilio Comba in the preface to his History of the Waldenses of Italy. This is certainly one of the most absolute truths to any student of Waldensian history.

Has there ever been written an unprejudiced history of these people? The Catholics carelessly lump all heretics together, intermix their doctrinal beliefs, and falsely accuse them of all types of immoralities and practices. Protestants each try to pick the bones of the carcass to find suggestions and hints or similarities that they were truly their ancestors, so as to not have to acknowledge a Catholic mother church at any time since the apostles.

One Baptist historian, Vedder, says that the Baptist historians, at one time or another, have tried to trace their history through nearly every offshoot from the Catholic church. Since this church is made to appear as the mother of all Protestants (except those who admit the Catholic church as an errant mother which needed to be reformed), we must anticipate a reading into or an ignoring of many things written in their early literature. What a sad state of affairs when the denomination of the writer becomes of prime importance in "history."

Thus, C. H. Strong in his Presbyterian history of the Waldensians will quote out of any of the Confessions of Faith the possible suggestions that they were Presbyterian. Then Orchard, in his Baptist history, will do the same, and so on by Episcopalian, Church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, Amish, Mennonite, Church of God, Christian Church, and so on ad infinitum.

Did you realize that all these varied churches trace their history back through this one ancestor? Could ALL these divergent churches have had one common ancestor so few hundred years ago? The ancient Waldenses did not mother all these children, but the Protestant daughters certainly mothered the latter and modern Waldensians as we shall see in this history. As J. L. Hurlbut said about the changed church that arose after the lost century, so must we say about the Waldensian: the cloud that covered the change of the ancient Waldensian church into the Protestant before the reformation church reveals a church that is hardly recognizable with the original. This led Comba to record:

There has been a desire on the part of some to extend backward their early history; with this only as a result, that it has been crushed out of all shape. The historian has filled it full of fables and traditions picked up at hap-hazard; then, as if with trumpet blast and clarionring, its antiquity was blazoned forth.¹

As if not content with this injustice to history, writers have then tried to pull a Methuselah-in-reverse as to the date of origin and antiquity of these people. Naturally, any Protestant

¹Emilio Comba, History of the Waldenses of Italy, preface.

writer desirous of avoiding association with the Catholic church as a mother would love to stretch the history of such an outstanding Christian people all the way back to the New Testament Apostolic Church. But should desire become the mother of invention to a historian who should be motivated by facts and not dreams or hopes?

Prior to these historian dreamers we learn that of all the records of these people,

The first writers who mention the Waldenses-- Bernardus Fontis Calidi, Alanus, Peter Vallis Cernaii, Eberhard of Bethune, and others--make no allusion to any pretension on their part to reach back through history to the early days of the church.²

So we see only after Protestant writers were sent from other countries to find traces of their ancestry among these people do we find efforts to stretch their past back to more ancient times than their real founder, Peter Waldo.

Another obvious factor to a student of Waldensian history is the long, laborious task of "the needle in the haystack" search for pertinent material among the endless pages of descriptions of valleys, rivers, mountains, and non-consequential chaff that should be limited to geographers rather than Waldensian historians. One of many examples of this is a History of Protestantism in Italy which gives 15 pages to their origin and antiquity, 29 pages in a brief description of the country inhabited by the Waldenses, 37 pages on their history, and 44 pages on their present state. And this is a very mild example--some works of antiquity on them belaboring such for three-fourths of a large volume.

²Ibid., p. 6.

Can one imagine a Christian so desirous of having his dream a reality that he would alter the date of an ancient document to make the Waldensians more ancient than their real founder, Peter Waldo? A Christian should not be too shocked to learn an evolutionist has manufactured a "Piltdown hoax" to fill the missing link in his dream being made a "reality." But for a Christian to be guilty of such a fraud? And, yet, such is the case in Waldensian history.

To "lose" ancient literature in such a place as the Cambridge University Library because it does not substantiate your dream or belief is certainly unethical, and, what is more important, unchristian. Did not our father Abraham suffer much from covering the whole truth and representing half-truths? And yet, such is the case in the history of the Waldensian literature.

Is it not about time history became history once again and we left the fables to Aesop? Or as Comba concluded:

The question of the origin of the Waldenses deserves serious investigation. Natural obscurities render the task a difficult one, and this difficulty is increased by party polemics, the result being confusion worse confounded. Solutions offered are far from agreeing with each other. It has been said: "There is hardly a sect whose origin has been more disputed over than that of the Waldenses."

. . . Let us admit at the outset, that prejudice has taken a very active part in the researches relating to the origin of the Waldenses; it has exerted its influence, somewhat over everybody, friends as well as foes. But as prejudice has no part in true history, it must be our endeavour to free ourselves of it.³

³Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER II

ANTIQUITY

The problem of Waldensian antiquity to a modern scholar in research has been long since solved. To better understand the histories written by Protestant writers, however, it is very valuable to comprehend their materials in the light of this problem.

So, first let us observe the typical Protestant writers' view of their antiquity when their histories were first recorded.

William Jones says:

The most satisfactory definition that I have met with of the term Waldenses, is that given by Mr. Robinson, in his Ecclesiastical Researches:

"From the Latin word Vallis, came the English word valley, the French and Spanish Valle, the Italian Valdesi, the Low Dutch Valleye, the Provencal Vaux, Vaudois, the ecclesiastical Valdenses, Ualdenses, and Waldenses. The words simply signify valleys, inhabitants of valleys, and no more. It happened that the inhabitants of the valleys of the Pyrenees did not profess the Catholic faith; it fell out also that the inhabitants of the valleys about the Alps did not embrace it; it happened, moreover, in the ninth century, that one Valdo, a friend and counsellor of Berengarius, and a man of eminence who had many followers, did not approve of the papal discipline and doctrine; and it came to pass about a hundred and thirty years after, that a rich merchant of Lyons, who was called Ualdus, or Waldo, openly disavowed the Roman Catholic religion, supported many to teach the doctrines believed in the valleys, and became the instrument of the conversion of great numbers; all these people were called Waldenses." (Ecclesiastical Researches, pp. 302-303)

This view of the matter, which to myself appears indisputably the true one, is also supported by the authority of their own historians, Pierre Gilles, Perrin, Leger, Sir S. Morland, and Dr. Allix.⁴

Thus we see the common approach of so many Waldensian writers of avoiding the name Waldo as of an individual who would be dated. Some went so far as to doubt any such individual ever lived, and others tried to confuse him with another Valdez. In spite of this approach, we have absolute and clear testimony ~~that there is no~~ document proving apostolic foundation for these churches. . . . However remote their antiquity, no records exist ~~as to any~~ of these churches being apostolical."⁵

Thus the Waldensians as a distinct people themselves must have had a time of origin since they were not apostolical. But how did the Protestant writers formerly answer this rebuttal? The answer is given in a source on the Waldensians put out by the Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board: "The Waldenses complain, that it has been the cruel policy of their persecutors to destroy all the historical memorials of their antiquity."⁶

Can we as historians use "the proof of silence" or such lack of information as evidence? And, it might be remembered that not only their persecutors found it advantageous to "lose" or "alter" or destroy the historical memorials of their antiquity!

⁴William Jones, History of the Christian Church: From the Birth of Christ to the XVII Century, p. 255.

⁵G. H. Orchard, A Concise History of Foreign Baptists, p. 255.

⁶Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, French Protestants: The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, p. 29.

Another legend or "out" for the Protestant historians is also recorded:

There is a legend of comparatively early invention, that the Waldensians were connected with the primitive church; that when Constantine the Great had heaped power and wealth on Sylvester, a band of devoted men resolved to preserve inviolate the apostolic life, and had become the parents of the sect. This legend, which received general credence among the Protestants until the middle of the last century, is now everywhere acknowledged to be devoid of foundation.⁷

Certainly if the Waldensians existed since Sylvester, we would not expect to find that "the first combined measures taken by the secular authority for the destruction of the Vaudois, do not appear to date before 1209."⁸

Had the much persecuted Waldensians from the thirteenth century on, existed since Sylvester unknown and unpersecuted? Definitely not!

Another possibility, and as a matter of fact the truth of church history, is that the Waldensians recognized an unbroken chain of successive church stages and eras were their ancestral chain from the Apostles. Only in this way could they claim they were apostolical, but not as Waldensians by name since the apostles. A Baptist historian states:

The people, the ancestors of the Waldenses, were termed Vaudois, . . . Puritans, . . . Paterines, . . . Lyonists, . . . Petrobrussians, . . . Arnoldists, . . . Berengarians, . . . These, with the Paulicians, were one and the same people.⁹

⁷Jones, History of the Christian Church, p. 354.

⁸Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board, French Protestants, p. 46.

⁹Orchard, Baptist History, p. 297.

In this light also we can understand the evidence recorded by Edman: "With the dawning of the Reformation in the sixteenth century they became a part of that great movement, although alleging that they were apostolic Christians and not reformers."¹⁰

Jesus had said the gates of hell (grave) would not prevail against His church, and that He would be with it always, even until the end of the world (age). It has continued to exist ever since, and in seven successive stages has come down to us today. (Revelation 2-3) In this way only can the Waldensians claim apostolic authority and succession.

History Falsified

What a shame that history has to record a fail in trust on the part of some who were given the Waldensian literature and what subsequently happened to it. To defraud such an honest and moral people is really a giant travesty in justice. Both Catholic and Protestant, as well as secular historians, record such injustice.

Since the sixteenth century, unsuccessful attempts have been made, by those who regard the Waldenses as the legitimate forerunners of Protestantism, to trace their origin back to the Apostolic age, or at least to the time of the iconoclast, Claudius of Quirin, and for this purpose their history has been falsified and their doctrines misrepresented. These efforts to pervert the truth of history have been ably refuted by Herzog, Friedrich, and Melia. According to Catholic authorities, whose honesty cannot be fairly called in question, they derive their origin from Peter Waldo (Peter of Vaux, or Valdum--English, "Wood").¹¹

¹⁰v. Raymond Edman, Light in the Dark Ages, p. 303.

¹¹John Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Vol. II, p. 658.

The Protestant writer, Perrin, who quotes many of the Waldensian documents verbatim in his history, bears witness to the lost literature:

In the year 1658, Samuel Morland, whom Oliver Cromwell had sent as ambassador to the Duke of Savoy on behalf of the persecuted Waldenses, carried from Piedmont to Britain several ancient manuscripts, which were represented to be works of the primitive Christians among the Cottian Alps. These he deposited in the University Library at Cambridge, whence most of them have since disappeared. (Faber's Inquiry, 369, 370)¹²

Old Writings Collected

The Waldensian Pastor, Leger, had collected these pieces personally, as is related by the following testimony:

Jon Leger, one of the Waldensian pastors, in the seventeenth century, carefully collected a number of ancient documents of the Waldensian doctrine. In the persecution, 1655, the plunderers of the Waldenses deprived him of every leaf of manuscript in order to bury in oblivion all knowledge of their former existence, or long continued principles. With incredible diligence he commenced a new search in the Valleys on the French side of the Alps, where the destruction had not been so severe, and found authentic copies of the same treatises. A number of these he has published in his valuable history of the Waldenses. The originals he delivered to Sir Samuel Morland, who presented them in 1658 to the library of the University of Cambridge. Twenty-one volumes were there deposited, but the first seven are now missing, though Allix quoted from one of these seven in 1690. Copies of some of these are preserved in Geneva. The remaining fourteen volumes, from H to W, are still to be seen at Cambridge.¹³

¹²Jean Paul Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses and Albingenses, p. 263, footnote.

¹³Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, The Waldenses: Sketches of the Evangelical Christians of the Valleys of Piedmont, p. 31.

Lost Literature Found

The mysterious recovery of the "lost" literature is related as follows:

First Period of Literature--The Waldenses has a literature almost from their very origin. The Manuscripts of this literature are chiefly found at Geneva, Cambridge, and Dublin; though single works may also be found at Grenoble, Zurich and Paris. Of special interest is the collection at Cambridge . . . made by Morland . . . deposited in the university library of Cambridge; but, shortly after, they disappeared and they were generally considered as lost, until in 1862 they were rediscovered by Mr. Bradshaw. (See H. Bradshaw: "On the Recovery of the Long-lost Waldensian Manuscripts," in the memoirs of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, March 10, 1862, No. XVIII.; and Groome: "The Long-lost Waldensian Manuscripts" in the Christian Advocate and Review, January, 1863, No. 23)¹⁴

Literature Date Altered

Was this merely an accidental loss of such valued, old literature of such great importance to Protestantism? Or was this an effort to cover up the knowledge that a vital date had been changed, on one document at least, to substantiate Protestant claim to the Waldensians' existence before Waldo? Notice, the literature rediscovered was termed by Mr. Bradshaw, " . . . the Long-lost. . . ."

The modern Protestant historian, Edman, views the facts in the following way:

The origin of the Waldenses has been a matter of great dispute. They themselves allege, and their critics admit they have long held that allegation, that the group of believers has persisted in the remote valleys

¹⁴Waldenses, "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 1891, Vol. IV, p. 2473.

of the Maritime Alps since the days of Constantine. Misinterpretation of the dates of their documents by early writers has not strengthened their allegation; and it seems that their authentic records may not go back beyond the thirteenth century.

For a discussion of the validity and accuracy of the documentary evidence see James Henthorn Todd, The Waldensian Manuscripts, preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, with an Appendix containing a correspondence (reprinted from the British Magazine) on the Poems of the "Poor Men of Lyons," the antiquity and genuineness of the Waldensian Literature, and the supposed loss of the Morland Manuscripts, at Cambridge, with Mr. Bradshaw's paper on his recent discovery of them. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1865)

Among the Romanist foes of the Waldensians, there are those who declare the latter to hold the view of their great antiquity, such as Reinerius Saccho (1250), . . . see Pius Melia, The Origin, Persecutions, and Doctrines of the Waldenses from Documents, many now for the first time collected and edited. (London: James Toovey, 1870, pp. 20-25) Dr. Melia uses his documentary material to "prove" that the Waldenses originated in the twelfth century.¹⁵

For an exact account of the altering of the date, and not just a misinterpretation of same as Mr. Edman suggested, a clear account is given in Philip Smith's work as follows:

To the argument for the high antiquity of the sect from their writings which are preserved in manuscripts, the general reply is that these works belong to the 15th century, or later, and are affected by that Hussite influence to which reference is made above. The most plausible of these arguments has been derived from the metrical work (in the Romance language), entitled The Noble Lesson (Nobla Leyczon), the opening lines of which (in the first printed edition) give the date of 1100 years since Christ, and also the name "Vaudes" whence it has been inferred that the sect existed under that name, nearly a century before Waldo. But

¹⁵Edman, Light in Dark Ages, p. 301.

an inspection of the manuscripts in the Cambridge University Library has proved the true reading to be 1400 years ("mil et 4 cent ans" instead of "mil e cent ans"), thus bringing the date of the poem down to the fifteenth century.¹⁶

Avoid Name Waldo

Unprejudiced, secular, and the most authoritative modern writers readily admit the antiquity and founder of the Waldensians.

Thus the blunt information in the Collier's Encyclopedia:

"Waldenses (Fr. Vaudois, Ital. Valdesi), a religious sect which derived its name and origin from Peter Waldo, a twelfth century merchant of Lyons."¹⁷

The facts that these were deliberate attempts to avoid the dating of the people by association with the name Waldo is forcefully and conclusively brought home by the Britannica thusly:

As regards their antiquity, the attempts to claim for them an earlier origin than the end of the twelfth century can no longer be sustained. They rested upon the supposed antiquity of a body of Waldensian literature, which modern criticism has shown to have been tampered with. The most important of these documents, a poem in Provençal, "La Nobla Leyczon," contains two lines which claimed for it the date of 1100:

Ben ha mil e cent anez compli entierament
Que fo scripta l'ora, car sen al derier temp.

But it was pointed out (Bradshaw, in Transactions of Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1842, text edited by Montet, 4 to, 1887) that in the oldest manuscript existing in the Cambridge

¹⁶Philip Smith, Student's Ecclesiastical History, Part II: The History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, pp. 597-598, footnote.

¹⁷"Waldenses," Collier's Encyclopedia, Vol. 23, p. 217.

University Library the figure 4 had been imperfectly erased before the word "cent"--a discovery which harmonized with the results of a criticism of the contents of the poem itself. This discovery did away with the ingenious attempts to account for the name of Waldenses from some other source than from the historical founder of the sect, Peter Waldo or Valdez. To get rid of Waldo, whose date was known, the name Waldenses or Vallenses was derived from Vallis, because they dwelt in the valleys, or from a supposed Provencal word Vaudes, which meant a sorcerer.¹⁸

Additional evidence to show the impossibility of avoiding the association of the Waldenses with Peter Waldo is given by Philip Smith:

For it may safely be pronounced a fond fancy, which, with the aid of a mere play on the name, would trace their origin to a primitive remnant of Evangelical Christians in the Alps of Piedmont and Savoy. [Footnote: The easy transformation of Waldensis or Valdensis (the V and W being interchangable in the Latin) into Vallensis is further complicated by the resemblance to Vaudois, the name of one of the districts where the sect has survived. . . . The very likeness would be a ground for suspecting one of those frequent plays of words, of which we have seen an example in Popelican and Publicani, if the argument were one of probability only. But, with the known origin of the sect from Peter Waldo as its founder, the conclusion is quite clear, that, "when it is sought to get rid of their relation to him, as embodied in the very name which they bear and to change this name into Vallenses, the Men of the Valleys, or the Dolesmen, it is a transformation which has no likelihood, philological or historic, to recommend it." (Trench, p. 250) The only early writer, in whom we find the name Vallenses, used it as a play of words: Ebrard (Lib. antihaeresis, c. 25):

Quidam autem, qui Vallenses, and c., appellat, eo quod in valle lacrymarum manent;

¹⁸"Waldenses," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 13th ed., Vol. 28, p. 255.

and in like manner the Abbot Barnard (Adv. Waldenses) doubles the pun, saying they are called Valdenses,

nimirum e valle densa, eo quod profundis
et densis errorum tenebris involvuntur,

(evidently alluding to the German word Wald, Latin, Valda, "a wood").]¹⁹

Peter Waldo

What made Peter Waldo the type man who could usher in such a noted and godly people as the Waldensians? What training had qualified him for this task? What caused a man of his wealth and prestige to become disenchanted with life to the point of starting all over? For the exciting and beautiful story of a man's conversion and use by God, we can refer to Edward Backhouse's Witnesses for Christ. Following is a brief resume.

The hundreds of Protestant sects spread abroad have represented the gamut of belief which ranged from doubt in the Old Testament's authority to delusions regarding heavenly mysteries. Many Protestants held sound doctrines and led exemplary lives, but they all lacked the characteristics which seemed to unite the Waldenses: a pure faith which was animated by a spirit of love.

Peter Waldo was a citizen of Lyons and had amassed a certain amount of wealth by usurious means. One day he attended a civic event where he witnessed the collapse and death of a bystander. He considered that the fate of his fellow citizen might at any time be his own. He was very moved by this.

¹⁹Smith, History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, p. 578-579.

In A.D. 1173, on a Sabbath, his attention turned to a troubadour reciting passages from a Romaunt called the Life of St. Alexis. From that point on he became fascinated with the momentous subject of Christianity, so much so he went to a priest which advised him, "If you wouldst be perfect, go sell all you have and give to the poor." So, he did precisely that. He liquidated his assets so he could help support the poor. He fed all who came to him three days a week, enrolled his two daughters in a convent and publicly announced his intention to serve God rather than mammon. He practiced self-denial and invited others to follow him. He was soon joined by a number of companions and they formed together a fraternity called the Poor Men of Lyons. This was a compassionate and charitable organization.

Longing to be more knowledgeable in the Scriptures, Waldo conceived the idea of translating the Bible into the vernacular language, the Gallo-Provencal idiom. With the help of three other scholars, the entire New Testament, Psalms and many books of the Old Testament were made accessible to the bulk of the people.

Taking with them these translated books of the Bible along with other selected passages of Scripture, Waldo and his followers set out preaching the Gospel message in the streets and houses of Lyons and neighboring villages. As the seventy disciples went out two by two without staff or scrip and wearing wooden sandals, so did Waldo's disciples. As the following grew, the local priests became jealous of their work and convinced

the archbishop of Lyons to issue an order forbidding Waldo and his followers to expound the Scriptures or to preach. But Waldo's spirit of truth by which he claimed he was led could not be silenced by a petty law of the land.

Looking for justice within the Catholic Church, two of Waldo's followers journeyed to Rome to see Pope Alexander III and solicit his approbation of their work. They brought with them a translation of their Bible. The pope received them graciously and expressed his approbation of their charitable work. At the time of their visit, the third Lateran Council was in session and one of the topics of discussion was whether or not Waldo's work was a threat to the Catholic Church. The pope didn't think it would be wise to extinguish this small work, but he did grant to Waldo and his friends a limited license to preach which was subject to the control of the Catholic clergy. Up to this point Waldo's conduct was almost entirely within the Catholics' limitations and there were no grounds for ecclesiastical censure. He counselled with their priests, enrolled his daughters in convents, and the men who helped him translate the Bible were in the priestly order. They even preached within the limitations imposed by the pope--for a time.

At length their zeal became too intense to stay within the pope's guidelines. They could not be restrained. They shed the shackles of ecclesiastical censure and declared the truth in the spirit of liberty. Because of this flagrant disobedience to the apostolic office of the pope, they were immediately threatened with the severest penalties. At the Council of Verona in 1184,

under the presidency of Pope Lucius III, Waldo and his disciples were formally excommunicated.

Thus, the Waldenses were cast out of their native land. They sprinkled themselves throughout much of Europe wherever they were received. To some, theirs was a new gospel and to others a recultivation of a seed sown earlier.

Peter Waldo preached for a while in Dauphine, but the persecution was too hot so close to Lyons. He gathered many followers in Picardy. They became so numerous that the French king, Philip Augustus, sent an army against them. Hundreds of houses were burned, several towns were sacked and survivors fled to Flanders. From there Waldo went to Bohemia where he would be beyond the reach of the papal police. Here he founded a church and the membership grew tremendously. In 1315 the communicants numbered an estimated 80,000. There is little known about Waldo's last days or his death.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH and MINISTRY

Throughout church history, including the New Testament times, it has been the practice of people in general to call the church by the name of their founder, by one of their major doctrines, or by the area from which they came. Note this in Acts 24:5, with reference to the Apostle Paul, "a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," and Matt. 23:2, "and He (Jesus) came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Further research will reveal that Jesus was referred to as "the Nazarene" many other times (Matt. 21:11; 26:71; John 18:5,7; Acts 3:6; 4:10; 6:14), and this name was used in a way of derision toward Jesus and His disciples (John 1:46). Since the Jews rejected Jesus as not really being the Christ, they certainly did not call His followers Christians. The disciples were called Christians, named after their leader, first at Antioch (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16), and Nazarenes after His area of residence. When God's church refers to itself, it always denotes itself "The Church of God." This is the Biblical name of God's church twelve times in the New Testament. God's people have always objected to being named after their leader or a geographical location, with only one exception, the name Christian.

How true this is of the Waldenses. They were called after their leader by this name; called Lyonists, Poor Men of Lyons after his locations, and Vaudois later after the area into which they fled. This is also illustrated from E. Comba's work: "The Waldenses objected to being called after Peter Waldo. They teach that 'we are a little Christian flock falsely called Waldenses.'"²⁰

This did not mean that they objected to being considered followers of Waldo as if they antedated him, but that they preferred the title "The Church of God" to being called after a man. This has been true all through history of the church, whether called Nazarenes, Paulicians, Petrobrussians or Waldensians.

For Elect's Sake

Their true name and who they felt themselves to be is clearly and beautifully illustrated by the following:

As we are not numerous we live concealed, and for very good reasons; but, whatever may be said, we are the Church of God, and those who are not with us will go to perdition. We are but a handful of people; but it may be on our account that the world has not perished.²¹

Many times Jesus likened His followers to sheep, and a flock of sheep with a shepherd. Interestingly, Jesus said in Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock (Gr. poimnion--little flock in contrast to Gr. poimne--flock): for it is your Father's good

²⁰Comba, History of the Waldenses of Italy, p. 142.

²¹Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book, Vol. 9, art. 1755, p. 1073.

pleasure to give you the kingdom." In each historical reference to His church, Jesus refers to it in this same way, "little flock," in each of the following verses in the Greek (Acts 20:28-29; I Pet. 5:2-3). It is more than coincidental that both Comba and the above source both quote the Waldensians in referring to themselves in this way.

Also they felt that God might have spared the world for their sakes, just as He did for Noah's sake, as He did Israel for Moses' sake, and as He promised to do for the elect's sake in the end age of this world: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matt. 24:21-22) They also felt that God had built only one true church, and it was not divided or splintered as they said, "those who are not with us will go to perdition." This is further substantiated in their following confession of faith.

1669 Confession of Faith

It is stated in article 24 of this confession:

That God has chosen unto Himself one church in the world for the salvation of mankind, and that same church to have only one head and foundation, which is Christ. 25. That that church is the company of the faithful, who having been elected before the foundation of the world, and called with an holy calling, come to unite themselves to follow the word of God, believing whatsoever He teaches them, and living in His fear. 26. That that church cannot err, nor be annihilated, but must endure forever, and that all the elect are upheld and preserved by the power of

God in such sort, that they all persevere in the faith unto the end, and remain united in the holy church, as so many living members thereof. 27. That all men ought to join with that church, and to continue in the communion thereof. 31. That it is necessary the church should have ministers . . . together with the elders and deacons, after the manner of the primitive church.

Their pastors were called "barbas," the Waldensian term for uncle.²²

How similar this is to what Jesus told His disciples:

"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you out of the world." (John 15:16, 19) Later, at the time the Waldensians were joining the Protestant Reformation, one of their sticking points was a disagreement with Luther and the other leaders on Predestination and God's calling. Certainly we can see it would be from such quotes from their own history and confession, and that even as late as 1669 A.D.

The fear of God is another constituent of their beliefs repeated many times, and how clearly they showed that they expected God's church to continue in an unbroken chain since Christ, and to be about His work "for the salvation of mankind." They considered church membership essential, as well as ministers with varying jobs and degrees of responsibility over one another. These facts are further substantiated by a Baptist historian:

A catechism, emanating from the Waldenses during the thirteenth century, has no allusion to infant baptism. It says of the church catholic (word for universal, not meaning Roman Catholic), that it is the elect of God, from the beginning to the end, by the grace of God, through the merit of Christ, gathered

²²Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, The Waldenses, pp. 388-390.

together by the Holy Spirit, and fore-ordained to eternal life.²³

Notice, also, they were fore-ordained, not to heaven, paradise, or such, but to eternal life.

Gospel Sent Free

One of the early pieces of their literature was a poem, entitled "The Vaudois Missionary." Stanza V of this poem relates:

The cloud went off from the pilgrim's brow,
As a small and meagre book
Unchased with gold or diamond gem,
From his folding robe he took:
"Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price--
May it prove as such to thee!
Nay, keep thy gold--I ask it not--
For the word of God is free."²⁴

The Kingdom

The message of God's church since its inception has been the same, the Kingdom of God. Jesus began this message (Luke 16:16; Matt. 4:23; 24:14), it continued in Acts (1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 28:31), and has continued to be the message of God's church ever since. It is not a surprise to discover the same knowledge among these people:

The Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others) with all their zeal and learning were babes in spiritual knowledge when compared with the Waldenses, particularly in regard to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and its institutions, laws, and worship in general.²⁵

²³Orchard, Baptist History, p. 302. (quoting Gilly's Narrative, Appendix 12).

²⁴Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, The Waldenses, p. 44.

²⁵Jones, History of the Christian Church, p. 326.'

Church Government

Many writers accuse Peter Waldo of usurping the office of an apostle, which word or title in the Greek language of the New Testament means, "one sent." Were the leaders of each of the different church eras of God's true church down through the centuries separated by God's direct calling and sent to fulfill His calling? The Apostle Paul was, as had been the apostles before him, and certainly such is suggested in the case of Peter Waldo by many references to him as acting in that capacity regardless of his wish not to be referred to as such. There were the general Biblical officers in their church: Evangelist, Pastor, Bishop, Elder, Deacon, as can be seen in Perrin's great work:

That the character of the Waldensian Barbs or Pastors may accurately be known, we insert the following testimony concerning them:

The monk Reinerius reported many things concerning the vocations of the pastors of the Waldenses which are mere fictions; as that they had a Greater Bishop and two followers, whom he called the Elder Son and the Younger, and a Deacon; that he laid his hands upon others with a sovereign authority, and sent them where he thought good, like a pope.²⁶

I realize the Protestant writer Perrin calls this report or record "mere fictions," but naturally a congregationalist quoting such Catholic records would be biased and prejudiced, but it should be considered in the light of additional references to Waldensian church government as follows.

²⁶Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses and Albingenses, pp. 48-49. (quoting Reinerius, de forma Heretic. Folio 8).

Another Baptist congregationalist writer states, "to the vows of poverty they united one of chastity and of obedience to their superiors."²⁷

The Catholic historian Alzog records, "they were at first governed by bishops of their own appointment whom they styled 'majorales' and by presbyters and deacons; all of which orders, they said, had been instituted by Christ."²⁸

The Presbyterian historian, C. H. Strong, relates:

In their "Ancient Discipline of the Evangelical Church of the Valleys of Piedmont," article II, we read, "among other powers which God has given to His servants, He hath given them authority to elect the leaders who govern the people, and to constitute the elders in their churches according to the diversity of the work in the unity of Christ, according to the apostle in the Epistle of Titus in chapter 1: 'For this cause left I thee in Crete, that you shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.'"²⁹

Annual Ministers' Conference

In article IV of the aforementioned work, it is said, "We that are pastors assemble once a year, to treat of our affairs in a general council." This general council was composed of all the ministers and two elders from each parish. Ackland, an Episcopalian, says of this council, "The Synod, presided over by the Moderator, has always possessed the chief authority in

²⁷Orchard, Baptist History, p. 261.

²⁸Alzog, Church History, Vol. II, p. 661.

²⁹C. H. Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, p. 84.

the Waldensian church. It was composed, as at present, of all the pastors and a portion of elders deputed by the people."³⁰

Further information states:

The Waldensian synod anciently met every year, in the month of September. . . . Later in their history, it met once in three years. It now (1853) meets once in five years.

At the annual synod, held in the valleys, the past conduct of the pastors was closely investigated, and their mutations of residence regulated. These mutations took place every third year among the younger pastors; the old barbas were not removed.³¹

Binding and Loosing

An ecclesiastical history of the ancient Piedmont church states the following pertaining to the Waldensian ministers:

"They declare themselves to be the Apostles' successors, to have apostolic authority, and the keys of binding and loosing."³²

Some terminology in the above quotes might be more easily understood with a little magnification. Strong states that God has given His servants authority to elect the leaders who govern the people, and to constitute the Elders in their churches. In other words, the minister or servant over an area elects, or chooses as the word meant then and in Bible times, the leaders and Elders in the ministers' churches. The people are stated as being governed, and not as doing the electing by any type of voting. In the terminology, "Elders deputed by the

³⁰Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board, The Waldenses, p. 373, (Ackland quoted in this book).

³¹Ibid., p. 373, 43.

³²A. H. Lewis, The Sabbath and the Sunday, p. 212.

people," is meant the same as the New Testament references to "being brought on their way by the church" (Acts 15:3; Rom. 15:24; I Cor. 16:6), or in other words, being financed on their way by the church, not that the church chose or elected whom to send. As many as the people could depute or afford to send came to the annual conference. "Their mutations of residence" being regulated every third year simply meant, among the younger ministers, it was thought wise to transfer them in their church assignments this frequently. For one experienced in ministerial responsibilities, the wisdom of this practice is well appreciated.

Laying on of Hands

One of the foundational principles of the doctrine of Christ is the laying on of hands (Heb. 6:1-2). Until more recently, this practice was followed in most of the Protestant churches, but now is rarely practiced. That the Waldensians followed this practice, for more reasons than one, is many times attested to. Strong says:

In Article II of "The Ancient Discipline of the Evangelical Church of the Valleys of Piedmont," which belongs to the early part of the twelfth century, it is said concerning pastors "all those who are to be received as pastors among us, having good testimonials, are by the imposition of hands, admitted to the office of preaching. He that is last received ought to do nothing without the license of him that was received before him; and in like manner the former ought to do nothing without the license of his associates to the end that all things among us may be done in good order."³³

³³Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, pp. 83-84.

The latter comment bears out the wisdom of God's recommendation that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." An excellent Biblical example of this practice is the incident in which Aquila and Priscilla took Apollos to their home and expounded to him God's way more perfectly (Acts 18:24-28). Although ministers ought to be brothers in this way, this reference in no way contradicts their previous statements of someone always being in charge and responsible for the leadership, but avoids high-handedness or lording it over God's heritage. This practice is further illuminated by their practice in training their ministers and in their ministerial college.

School of the Prophets

It was in the almost inaccessible solitude of the Pra-del-Tor, that their school was situated. There those who were preparing to be "barbas" learned by heart the gospels of St. Matthew and St. John, the Catholic epistles, and a portion of those of St. Paul. They were instructed, further, in Latin, Romane (Old French), and Italian. After this they passed several years in retirement, and they were then consecrated ministers by the administration of the sacrament and the imposition of hands.

These missionaries always journeyed in pairs, a young man and an old man, the latter being designated "regidor," the former "coadjuteur." . . . Each pastor being, in his turn, a missionary, the younger men thus became initiated in the delicate duties of evangelization, each being under the experienced conduct of an elder, whom discipline established as his superior, and whom he obeyed in all things, alike from duty and from deference.³⁴

³⁴Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, The Waldenses, p. 42.

How Ministry Supported

That the Waldensians were acquainted with the laws of tithing is clearly shown in the following testimony:

The thirteenth charge laid against the Waldenses was: that they may without sin endamage the Romish priests in their persons and goods, and retain the tithes without scruple of conscience.

Their answer was that they affirmed, that the priests might lawfully be slain or damaged in their tithes, which one might retain without scruple of conscience.³⁵

Some have falsely supposed the Waldensian ministers were compelled to be employed at a regular job and minister on the side as a policy of the Waldensian church. The fact that a minister might need to do so under certain circumstances, or in certain areas is readily admitted, but that it was a law of practice in the church is not so. They had been accustomed to paying the tithe as the above quote shows, but now withheld it from a false church until they found God's church to which to pay it. With reference to pastors working we offer the following evidence:

One charge more against them is, that they compelled their pastors to follow some trade. How satisfactory their answer! "We do not think it necessary that our pastors should work for bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us, if we could maintain them without their own labour; but our poverty has no remedy." So they speak in letters published in 1508.³⁶

³⁵Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses and Albingenses, pp. 26, 31.

³⁶Isaac Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, p. 51.

CHAPTER IV

DOCTRINES and MORALITY

What did the Waldensians really believe? Were they in doctrine really fundamentalist Protestants? What were their reactions to the Paganism in our Christianity? Did they believe in the law of God, or in Martin Luther's prefabricated "faith alone," no law Protestantism? That their doctrines were far different in their first history compared to the church that compromised with Protestantism and that now exists in Italy is abundantly recorded. Philip Smith says:

The popular misconception is aided by the idea, which such words naturally tend to perpetuate, of a perfect agreement (or, to use, under protest, the expressive modernism, solidarity) of the strong Protestant faith of these people since the Reformation with the original theology of the Waldenses.

What the Waldenses learnt to hold and teach after contact with the Hussites in the fifteenth century, and still more after communications held in the sixteenth with some chief continental reformers, has been regarded as that which they held from the beginning.³⁷

That this popular misconception is far from the truth is shown by no other greater authority than the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

The Waldenses, under their more modern name of the Vaudois, have survived to the present day in the valleys of Piedmont.

³⁷Smith, The History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, pp. 597-598.

. . . It is, however, by no means easy to determine their original tenets, as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they were a body of obscure and unlettered peasants, hiding themselves in a corner, while in the sixteenth century they were absorbed into the general movement of the Reformation.³⁸

Another source of difficulty in arriving at their early and true beliefs is the attempt of so many Protestant writers to record only so much as would suggest such a strong Biblical people and highly Christian moraled body to be their ancestral progenitors. This very difficulty is illustrated by the Baptist historian, Orchard:

Since the publication of Perrin's history of these people in 1619, many able pens have been employed to rescue their names from reproach, while each writer has, from the character of these Vaudois, been desirous of finding their religious creed in alliance with his own.³⁹

Unbiblical Christianity

When God's Spirit begins to enlighten a person, they begin to question how much they have always believed is really Christian and founded on Biblical authority. A person begins to read the Bible itself, and take it for what it says without need of human interpretation or spiritualizing it away. What does the Bible really say, is his main principle. As the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts, he may need that some man should guide him, but it must be through the scriptural references and not through human opinions or interpretation. Such happened to Peter Waldo as recorded by Philip Smith:

³⁸"Waldenses," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 13th ed., Vol. 28, p. 255.

³⁹Orchard, Baptist History, p. 255.

It is said of Waldo by the Dominican Inquisitor Stephanus de Borbone at Lyons about 1225, "His one desire was to have a fuller knowledge of Holy Scripture than he could obtain from hearing the lessons read in church, and to regulate his life by the example and precepts of Christ and His Apostles."⁴⁰

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he discovered that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them.⁴¹

Yes, what a shock it is to the average Christian when he puts his lifetime beliefs and practices to the test of Scripture. What a jolt to realize the churches have done just what Jesus said they would, coming in the Christian name teaching Christ, yet deceiving the many by their unbiblical "Christianity." Jesus again warned that in vain He would be worshipped in the teaching for doctrine the commandments of men (Matt. 24:5; Mark 7:7-9). Paul warned that the time would come when they would not endure sound doctrine, but would be turned unto fables (II Tim. 4:3-4). This is exactly what Peter Waldo discovered when God really opened his eyes. It is also recorded of the Waldensians:

They despise the decretals, and the sayings and expositions of holy men, and they only cleave to the text of Scripture.

. . . They say that the doctrine of Christ and His apostles is sufficient to salvation, without any church statutes and ordinances. That the traditions of the

⁴⁰Smith, The History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, pp. 598-599.

⁴¹Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, p. 47.

church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees; and that greater stress is laid on the observation of human traditions than on the keeping of the law of God.

"Why do you transgress the laws of God by your traditions?"

They condemn all approved ecclesiastical customs which they do not read of in the gospel, as the observation of Candlemas, Palm Sunday, the reconciliation of penitents, the adoration of the cross, of Good Friday. They despise the Feast of Easter and all other (Roman) festivals of Christ and the Saints . . . work upon holy days (of the Roman church) where they can do it without being taken notice of . . .⁴²

One of their persecutors, Reinerius, says, "they despise all ecclesiastical customs which are not read in the gospel; such as Candlemas, Palm Sunday, the adoration of the cross on Good Friday, the Feast of Easter, and the Festivals of Christmas and the Saints."⁴³

Pope of the Bible

In contrast to the customs, traditions, and commandments of men, they were willing to follow any Biblically proven practice no matter how small or difficult it might seem. So exactly did they adhere to the Bible that it is recorded of these people:

In doctrine the Waldenses insisted upon the foundation principle that the Word of God, independent of every other authority is to be recognized as the infallible and only rule of faith and practice. From their ancient Confession of Faith we can see that they held in

⁴²Lewis, The Sabbath and the Sunday, pp. 211-212.

⁴³Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, p. 83.

abomination human inventions as antichristian inventions for which we are disturbed. So rigidly did they adhere to this principle that they were sometimes charged, by their Roman Catholic antagonists, with making a pope of the Bible.⁴⁴

It is also recorded in history that Martin Luther said of the Waldenses:

. . . that among them he had found one thing worthy of admiration, a thing unheard of in the popish church, that laying aside the doctrines of men, they meditated in the law of God day and night, and that they were expert, and even well versed, in the knowledge of the scriptures.⁴⁵

When the day's work was over, labourers and artisans gave their evenings to study.⁴⁶

Elders' Dress and Title

Should ministers of God be distinguished by their apparel? Is black and white especially pious, religious or holy to God? Thank God He did not make the sky black and the ground or grass white as tokens of His righteousness or holiness in creation! What does the dress of the individual have to do with the sanctity of the individual's heart? No, caps nor tams, robes nor shawls, sandals nor sabots indicate a pious person. It is said of the Waldensians:

Their elders and officers do not appear distinguished from their brethren by dress or names, but every Christian was considered as capable in a certain measure of instructing others, and of confirming the brethren by

⁴⁴Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, p. 51.

⁴⁵Jones, History of the Christian Church, p. 263,

⁴⁶Smith, The History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, p. 602.

exhortations. Their elders were the seniors of the brethren, while the presbyters were the whole body of the teachers, whether fixed or itinerating.⁴⁷

Even Jesus was not identifiable by His dress: "She, supposing Him (Jesus) to be the gardener" (John 20:15); and, "Now he that betrayed Him (Jesus) gave them a sign, saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast." (Matt. 26:48) Jesus had also warned against using titles in referring to human religious leaders: "Be not you called Rabbi: for one is your Master, Christ; and all you are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." (Matt. 23:8-9) We had also been told by God that "holy and reverend is His name." (Psalms 111:9)

So again we find the Waldenses to be sound in scriptural example even in the dress and titles of their ministers. One might wonder in many cases if it is not the man who is turned around backward instead of just the collar.

This quote also reveals that the people in general knew that they should "be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you" (I Pet. 3:15); and, that they should "study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15) Some have mistaken this to mean that they felt all members should be ministers and teachers, but what a twisting of the facts of their own records. Even this historical record qualifies the meaning by stating that "in a certain measure" every Christian

⁴⁷Orchard, Baptist History, p. 261.

was considered capable of instructing others, not of preaching or teaching as ministers. Many New Testament passages show that each Christian is to "confirm the brethren by exhortations," but this does not mean by preaching or teaching sermons in a public assembly. (Heb. 3:13; 12:5; 13:22; 10:25) In Romans 12:8, it is even listed as a spiritual gift or talent that some members have been given by God's Spirit to increase their natural ability in this virtue.

It might also be noted in the record that some presbyters were fixed over certain churches, while others were itinerating or traveling like an overseer or superintendent over several church areas. Thus they had their "barbs" or Pastors, Evangelists as some historians record, Elders and Deacons in their church offices, again holding true to the Bible example.

Literal "Sermon-on-the-Mount"

Their rules of practice were practiced by a literal interpretation of Christ's sermon on the mount. They consequently prohibited wars, suits at law, acquisitions of wealth, capital punishments, self-defense, and oaths of all kinds.

. . . They abstained, like the greater sort of Anabaptists in later times, from all appearances of pomp and luxury. These people contended that a church was an assembly of believers, faithful men, and that of such a church the Lord Jesus Christ is head, and He alone; that it is governed by His word, and guided by the Holy Spirit; that it behooves all Christians to walk in fellowship.⁴⁸

The literal interpretation of the sermon on the mount has always been a token in the history of God's church throughout

⁴⁸Orchard, Baptist History, p. 261.

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the ages: "Swear not at all; love your enemies; turn the other cheek; resist not evil," (Matt. 5:34; 44, 39). This literal interpretation of these sayings caused it to be said of these people, "Whosoever refuses to curse, to swear, to lie, to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to be revenged of his enemy, they say he is a Validois, and therefore they put him to death."⁴⁹

What a testimony to be recorded of any Christian body that they were so well known as living by the sermon on the mount, that anyone who even followed any of its tenets was classed as one of them.

Military Service

Another distinguishing factor of God's people in the history of the church, in and since New Testament times, has been the refusal to bear arms, revenge oneself, hate, kill, or even come under the military authority. Why should, or would, a German Baptist line up on a battlefield opposite an American Baptist and kill him in the name of his country, and against the name of his church and religion? Would not this prove his country above his faith, in priority, in slaying a brother Baptist? It is said of the Waldenses:

As to revenge, they say, "The Lord knowing that we should be delivered up, said, 'beware of men'; but He never teaches nor counsels His elect to slay anyone, but to love their enemies. When the disciples said unto Him, shall we call for fire from Heaven and consume them? Christ answering, said unto them, you know not what spirit you are of. Also the Lord said to Peter, put up thy sword into its place. . . . While we are

⁴⁹Ibid., (Voltaire's General History, cpt. 69).

here, we are the threshold of the Lord, to be beaten like corn when it is separated from the chaff.⁵⁰

Their objection to "taking human life on any ground"⁵¹ was named by Cernay as one of the four chief errors of the Waldenses.

Does this mean, however, that they objected to capital punishment even in the case of criminals? Or was this not uttered because of the bloodshed at the time in the name of religion regardless of the doctrinal grounds against "heretics"? Let their own history answer this question.

It was a gross calumny to censure them as inimical to the penal power of the magistrate, because they complained of the abuse of his power in condemning true Christians to death without a fair examination; when, at the same time, in their own books, they asserted, that "a malefactor ought not be suffered to live."⁵²

How completely they avoided warfare and military service is detailed and magnified even more so by a Baptist historian thusly:

The Vaudois, Waldenses, or Picards did not enter Ziska's army during the war. We know their principles were opposed to war, and they do not seem to have borne arms at any time. During such commotions, it is said of them, that "they were always going and coming, retiring from the cities while others were coming to reside." When they were persecuted in one city, they fled to another.⁵³

⁵⁰Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 274.

⁵¹Smith, History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, p. 603.

⁵²Milner, History of the Church of Christ, p. 51.

⁵³Orchard, Baptist History, p. 247.

Again we find them directly obedient to the word of God, for Jesus said, "when they persecute you in this city, flee you into another." (Matt. 10:23) Also, we see that they "saw trouble ahead, and avoided it," by leaving the cities and going into the mountains, when others were gathering together into their cities for safety in numbers and the fortress of the city. When the modern Waldensians bore arms, they were no longer God's true church. God had removed their candlestick into England previous to this when Lollard, a Waldensian minister, began the true church in that country. The same had been true when a large Paulician army many centuries earlier had begun to defend itself and make war. God had already removed the smaller body of faithful Paulicians into another area to continue His true church in another area and under a new name imposed on them by the world.

Another strong testimony to their attitude toward military service states: "They rejected purgatory, and intercession for the dead, indulgences, oaths, military service, and the death penalty."⁵⁴

God Fights Our Battles

From the oldest piece of literature extant of the Waldenses, dated 1400 A.D., we derive their understanding of how and why God fought for His people in the Old Testament. Note it carefully!

VI. This lesson affords us much instruction: When they kept the law, and the commandments, God fought for them against

⁵⁴F. X. Funk, A Manual of Church History, Vol. 1, p. 353.

the other nations. But when they sinned, and committed wickedness, they died; were destroyed, and made prisoners by other nations. . . . The old law said you shall love your friends, and hate your enemy; the new says, you shall no more do so, but you shall love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you, and seek occasion against you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. . . . No one should kill, or hate one another; much less should we mock the simple, or the poor. . . . Yet it is nowhere found, that the saints ever persecuted, or put any in prison.⁵⁵

Thus we realize, even in the Old Testament, when the people obeyed God, He fought their battles for them; as at the Red Sea, Gideon's battle with pitchers or vases, the walls of Jericho falling over flat, with bees or wasps, with 300 men against an army, etc. This the Waldenses knew even as we do today! This also illustrates their knowledge of the spirit of the law, contrasted with the oldness of the letter. Finally, have you ever known of a saint of God who persecuted, imprisoned, or martyred a fellow human being made in God's image? The Waldenses had "nowhere found" such an incident, nor have I, nor have you! Once Paul was a converted Christian saint, you find him doing harm to no man. The same is true of Peter, James, John, Peter Waldo, or any other servant of God, which note, they called "saints." Any later Waldensians who had forsaken these spiritual truths had "fallen from grace," and "went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." (I John 2:19) How clearly these early documents show their beliefs in

⁵⁵Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, pp. 266, 267, 269.

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this matter, and any later deviation from it is a "backsliding" from the plain truth of the heart of Christ's message.

Fear of God

Because of this permissive age in which we live, modern philosophies cannot comprehend a fear of God, correction even associated with love, and law as liberty and necessity. Yet all through the Bible we find that "the fear of the Eternal is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7; Ex. 20:20; Acts 5:11, 5); and, "by the fear of the Eternal men depart from iniquity." (Prov. 16:6) Also we find "this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3); and, "whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer." (James 1:25) The Waldenses walked in the fear of God, kept His commandments, and realized their Barbs were to correct them in love with the word of God. In their "Noble Lesson," it states, "Yet the Apostles were so strong in the fear of the Lord, and likewise the men, and women, who were with them."⁵⁶

Even the Baptists formerly realized this, for one of their historians states:

The introductory discourse of the presbyter before delivering the creed, runs thus,

"Dear brethren, the divine sacraments are not so properly matters of investigation, as of faith, and not only of faith, but also of fear, for no one can receive the discipline of faith, unless we have for a foundation, the fear of the Lord."⁵⁷

⁵⁶Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 269.

⁵⁷Orchard, Baptist History, p. 298.

Admit Error

God said through the wisest man at least until his day, Solomon, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." (Eccl. 8:11) A similar utterance of wisdom comes from the Waldensians, when in answer to the matters of correction and discipline they state:

Without correction and discipline, doctrine serves to no purpose; neither would judgment be known, or sins be punished; and that therefore just anger is the mother of discipline, and patience without reason the seed of vices, which suffers the wicked to proceed in their excesses.⁵⁸

Solomon said in summation of his lifetime's search and experiment for the summum bonum, "Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl. 12:13) These people realized this principle as a fact of life, for it is recorded among their documents:

In a confession of their faith, one of the members of the Waldenses stated their faith, "declaring that they proffered the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and comprehended in the Apostles' Creed, and admitted the sacraments 'instituted by Christ, and the Ten Commandments,' etc. . . . They said they had received this doctrine from their ancestors, and that if they were in any error they were ready to receive instruction from the word of God. . . ." ⁵⁹

How much the Protestant churches have changed even since their ancestors recorded the history of the Waldenses is shown by their own admissions as to their beliefs which at that time also

⁵⁸Perrin, op. cit., p. 30.

⁵⁹Jones, History of the Christian Church, p. 355.

coincided with these Protestants' beliefs. Notice that the Waldensian doctrine was based on the Old Testament as well as the New! How many Protestant churches who claim them as their ancestors can accept this fact? If we follow the Old Testament doctrine, in view of the Ten Commandments, which day of the week will we keep holy? If we reject all extra-Biblical customs and days of men, which holy days will we keep, and which holidays will we reject? Also these Waldenses said if they were in any error, they were ready to receive instruction from the word of God. God's church has always been willing to admit it when it was wrong, and to change. But will the Protestant churches do this? Or have they not just continually changed in a backsliding way, and continued to fall away from truths once held?

One of many such evidences is a Presbyterian Waldensian history which states: "33. Finally, that we ought to receive the symbol of the apostles, the Lord's Prayer, and the Decalogue, as fundamentals of our faith and of our devotion."⁶⁰

Do the Presbyterians today hold the Decalogue as a fundamental of their faith, or have they joined the "no-law" Protestants and thus departed from "the faith once delivered unto the saints"?

Two Sacraments

It is recorded concerning the Waldensians:

. . . that the only ordinances Christ has appointed for the churches, are baptism and the Lord's Supper; that they are both symbolical,

⁶⁰Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board, The Waldenses, "1669 Confession of Faith," p. 390.

ordinances, or signs of holy things, "visible emblems of invisible blessings," and that believers are the proper participants of them.⁶¹

Thus, in few words, Waldensian testimony refuted three major Protestant and Catholic practices; for the Catholics, seven sacraments, transubstantiation, and infant baptism; for the Protestants, open versus closed communion, infant baptism, and the number of ordinances of the church. The Waldenses did not believe the minister performed a miracle at the Lord's Supper and literally turned the bread and wine into the real, literal body and blood of Christ, which is transubstantiation. Nor did they hold that non-believers could participate in the Lord's Supper, nor non-believers, including babies and children, could participate in baptism. Their "Noble Lesson" said, "they baptized the believers in the name of Jesus Christ."⁶²

Infant Baptism?

Many attempts have been made to misrepresent the true Waldensian practice in the matter of infant baptism. One such is illustrated and then cleared up by Philip Smith:

Their alleged denial of the efficacy of baptism, especially in the case of infants, many probably have been rather (as we have seen with the Cathari) an insistence on personal faith as the essential condition of its efficacy.⁶³

⁶¹Orchard, Baptist History, p. 261.

⁶²Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 268.

⁶³Smith, History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, p. 603.

Re-baptized

The outstanding summary of all the material on this subject, especially relating to the Waldensians, is given by Orchard in his Baptist History. One of his pages of witnesses follows with his summation:

Cardinal Hossius, who presided at the Council of Trent, and wrote a history of the heresy of his own times, says, "The Waldenses rejected infant baptism and re-baptized all who embraced their sentiments."

Amidst all the productions of early writers, friends and foes, confessors of the whole truth and opposers of it, annalists, historians, recorders, inquisitors, and others, with the labored researches of Usher, Newton, Allix, Collier, Wall, Perrin, Leger, Morland, Mosheim, Maclean, Gilly, Sims, and others, all of the Paedobaptist persuasion, with every advantage of learning on their side, who collated councils, canons, synods, conferences, chronicles, decrees, bulls, sermons, homilies, confessions, creeds, liturgies, and c., from the private creed of Irenaeus, down to the rules of Ausbergh; who examined documents at home, and explored the territories abroad,--their united labors could never produce a single dated document or testimony of Paedobaptism among the Vaudois, separate from the Romish community, from Novatian's rupture to the death of the execrable monster, Alexander VI, 1503.⁶⁴

Annual Lord's Supper

Do you realize the practice of celebrating the "Lord's Supper" more frequently than once a year is a modern practice? The original dispute between the eastern and western segments of the universal church, and that between the Pope and Polycarp, who was John's disciple, was whether the Passover should be on

⁶⁴Orchard, Baptist History, pp. 304, 307. (In his letters, apud. opera, pp. 112-213. Bap. Mag.; Vol. 14, p. 53).

the 14th or 15th of the first month of the Jewish calendar. This was once a year, and not a question of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. Do you realize the complete authority for celebrating it more often than once a year is based upon reading into two verses (I Cor. 11:25-26) what they do not say? Other translations render this, "every time" ye drink or eat this bread, or "each time." Paul was warning the Corinthians about taking it unworthily by letting the many years they took it cause "familiarity to breed contempt." He was not saying, take it as often as you please. Other passages showed how often it should be taken: "You know that after two days is the Passover" (Matt. 26:2); "Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve." (Matt. 26:20); And, "when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him." (Luke 22:14) Everyone knows the very length of Christ's ministry is proven by the number of annual Passovers He kept as recorded by John. The Waldensians knew all of this, for strong testimony is given concerning them:

. . . they were determined to celebrate the Lord's Supper yearly, and that in France it had been the custom of these people to celebrate it yearly from an early time. This work says further, "In Germany as well as France, the Waldenses celebrated the Lord's Supper yearly, between the years of thirteen and fourteen hundred. In the Cottian Alps, on the other hand, as well as in Provence, Apulia, Calabria, and middle Italy, this independent celebration of the Lord's Supper continued much longer than in France.⁶⁵

⁶⁵"Waldenses," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 243.

Unleavened Bread

Leger, one of the historians of the Waldenses, who himself was a pastor in the valleys nearly twenty-four years, says that "as a consequence of the Waldensians' supply of ministers from France and Geneva in 1630, one of the changes made was the giving up of the use of unleavened bread in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper."⁶⁶

Notice how long they held onto this truth about the use of unleavened bread with the Lord's Supper. Until they began their compromise with the Protestants, they still followed this practice from their foundation, and in all these countries. How sad to see such an exemplary people lose these vital truths one by one in being swallowed up by the Protestants.

Feast of Pentecost

Was the Lord's Supper the only church festival that the Waldensians recognized? The fact that they observed this ordinance with unleavened bread would suggest to some that they also understood there was an unleavened bread festival for seven days following the Passover or Lord's Supper day. This is rendered even more likely in the light of their testimony about other points connected with the Lord's Supper and other holy days. From the ninth article of their "Noble Lesson" we read:

He remembered them at the Feast of Pentecost; and sent them the Holy Ghost, who is the comforter: who taught the apostles heavenly doctrines; and made them understand

⁶⁶Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, p. 81.

languages, and the holy scriptures; then they remembered what He had said.⁶⁷

In Acts 2:1, the Bible relates "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Yet, the Waldensians termed this the Feast of Pentecost, showing they realized it was one of God's feast days, and not some New Testament day just beginning. And they knew the "gifts of tongues" was God's supernatural way of making them understand languages, and not some "unknown tongue" or unintelligible jibberish. Some have even tried to read into this record a trinity belief. Why did they say, "who is the comforter," and "who taught the apostles"? Simply because the word "comforter" is masculine in the New Testament Greek language, and thus requires masculine personal pronouns. Christ was the original Comforter, and when He promised them another Comforter, He explained this by saying further, "I will come to you." This He did in the essence or through the instrumentality of the Spirit. The Greek word Spirit is in the neuter gender and requires the neuter pronouns "it," or "which."

Footwashing

Another service connected with the original Lord's Supper was the footwashing ordinance of humility recorded in conjunction with this supper in John 13. Of this service, Jesus said, "you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

⁶⁷Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 268.

(John 13:14-15) That the Waldensians took this also literally is borne out by history:

In the seventh century, we have a liturgy of Bobbio, near Genoa, but this directory contains no office for the baptism of children, nor the least hint of pouring or sprinkling; on the contrary, there is a directory for making a Christian of a pagan, before baptism, and for washing the feet after it.⁶⁸

Healing

Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17-18) The Waldenses took this in faith to mean what it said, for it is written of them as to their belief, "It is in the manner of God to show His power in the church, and to work miracles there--that is to say, to give sight to the blind, to make the lame to go, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear."⁶⁹

It is obvious from this testimony they did not think the day of miracles is or was past, nor that Jesus was anything but "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever." (Heb. 13:8) Ancient Baptists and other denominations also formerly believed in the miracle of healing still being available to the church. Why has this promise been neglected? It was not among the Waldensians.

⁶⁸Orchard, Baptist History, p. 297.

⁶⁹Strong, A Brief Sketch of the Waldenses, p. 74.

Marriage and Divorce

Jesus called the generation when He walked this earth "an evil and adulterous generation." (Mark 8:38) This makes it obvious He had not loosed His Ten Commandment law which said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Ex. 20:14) John the Baptist literally "lost his head" for telling Herod that "it is not lawful for you to have her" (Matt. 14:4, 3-12); her being "his brother Philip's wife." Also Jesus had told the Gentile woman at the well, "You have well said, I have no husband: for you have had five husbands; and he whom you now have is not your husband." (John 4:17-18) Since the Waldenses made so much of the Ten Commandments, how did they understand the spirit of this law? Did they think it was spiritualized away, and therefore no longer binding? Or did they take it literally, as we have found they did in so many of their practices? We will present the testimony of a great Protestant historian to reveal their stand.

Adultery and Marriage

Apology of the Waldenses--Among other things, they publish, like angry and barking curs, that it is a law, and common amongst us to say: Prostitute thyself; whereby men obey the vilest part of their body more than God, who hath forbidden it. The foolish woman doth not only destroy the happiness of her husband, but her own too. He who addicts himself to this vice, doth not keep faith with anyone. Whence it came to pass, that David caused his faithful servant to be slain, that he might enjoy his wife. Ammon defiled his sister Tamar. This vice consumes the estates of many, as it is said of the prodigal son, who wasted his substance in riotous living. Balaam made choice of this vice to provoke the children of Israel to sin, which was the occasion of the death of twenty-four thousand persons. This sin was the occasion of Samson losing his sight. It perverted Solomon, and

many have perished through the beauty of a woman. . . .

. . . In answer to the second scandal, that they maintained, that a man might leave his wife when he pleased, they said, "Matrimony is a bond which nothing but death can untie, unless it be for the cause of fornication, as our Lord Jesus Christ saith. And Paul in the first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7, saith, 'Let not the wife depart from the husband, nor the husband put away his wife.'"

They replied concerning marriage, that it was ordained by God of old in Paradise; that it is a good means against adultery, and that it was the saying of Paul, speaking thereof; Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. Also the husband ought to love his wife as Christ loves His Church; and those who are married ought to live holily together, with their children, in the fear of God. (Remedy against the Sin of Luxury, Chapt. 21., Waldensian book on the Virtues; Chapter on Marriage.)⁷⁰

Additional testimony concerning the newness of the spirit of the law contrasted with the oldness of the letter comes from their oldest literature extant, "The Noble Lesson," in article seven:

The old law forbad fornication, and adultery; but the new forbids looking at a woman to lust after her. The old law allowed of breaking the marriage ties, and permitted divorces by a writing; but the new says, thou shalt not marry her that is put away; and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.⁷¹

What if someone had already been married more than once before they learned of the Bible teaching concerning this from the Waldenses? Jesus had shown His clear answer to this predicament

⁷⁰Jean Paul Perrin, History of the Ancient Christians, (1847), pp. 27-28.

⁷¹ Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, (1624), p. 267.

when He told the woman married to her fifth husband that he whom she then had was not her husband. What would this woman have had to do in order to obey Christ and be His disciple? Why had Jesus said, "everyone that hath forsaken . . . wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matt. 19:29)

Remember also that this is the conclusion to the very chapter that included Jesus to clear teaching on this very matter. And thus we read, "they laid as a charge against the Waldenses, that those Christians maintained, that a man might abandon his wife at his pleasure, and also a woman might forsake her husband, to follow their church."⁷²

What if a person's mate did not accept the Waldensian beliefs, and was no longer pleased to dwell with them because of their new "religion"? God says, "if any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. . . . But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart." (I Cor. 7:12-15) Thus a mate might have to depart from an adulterous situation in order to obey God's law and quit sinning, and become a Waldensian. Or a believer might have his unbelieving mate depart from him, and thus leave him without a mate. This is the only way "a man might abandon his wife at his pleasure, and also a woman might forsake her husband, to follow their church" as it did not allow adulterous unions, and taught that an unbeliever departing should be permitted and not hindered according to the teaching of God's word.

⁷²Perrin, History of the Ancient Christians, (1847) p. 26.

Not Intermarry

Another consideration pertaining to marriage is shown by the testimony of a Waldensian pastor for forty years who says:

We live in peace and harmony one with another, have intercourse and dealings chiefly among ourselves, having never mingled ourselves with the members of the church of Rome, by marrying our sons to their daughters, nor our daughters to their sons.⁷³

Fornication

The Waldensian solution to this danger to a young Christian is again right-down-the-line with the Bible, and crystal clear. In comes an answer of theirs to a false accusation thusly:

In answer to the charge of lewdness, they strongly deny it, and gravely express their abhorrence of the sin. . . . "The remedies for this sin, are fasting, prayer, and the keeping at a distance from temptation. Other vices may be subdued by fighting; in this we conquer by flight, and by not coming near it; of which we have an example in Joseph."⁷⁴

What Happens at Death?

Did the Waldensians believe in the fundamentalist Protestant doctrines of an immortal soul, an everburning hell, going to your reward of heaven, or punishment of hell, at death? Later Waldensians did as they came under the influence of the Protestants, but did the ancient Waldenses? Ample testimony is recorded to answer these questions. Philip Smith says, "They denied the doctrine of purgatory, and the lawfulness of the

⁷³Orchard, Baptist History, p. 26.

⁷⁴Milner, The History of the Church of Christ, p. 49.

practices connected with it--some of them believing in an intermediate state of rest or of punishment."⁷⁵

Their understanding of what the Old Testament taught concerning these matters is clearly shown from their "Noble Lesson":

To the good He promised life, but threatened death to the wicked. . . . Many others perished in another way, the earth opening, and hell receiving them. . . . However, he who is thus persecuted for the fear of the Lord, comforts himself greatly by this,--that the kingdom of heaven shall be given to him at the end of the world. Then he will have great glory for all his dishonour.⁷⁶

What revealing testimony that is! Life, not heaven, was promised to the good. Death, perishing, the earth as hell was the fate of the wicked, not burning forever in eternal punishing--the repulsive belief without foundation of most of "Christianity." Notice when they taught the saints would receive the kingdom of heaven (belonging to, not in heaven), at the end of the world. The saints will have great glory then, not just a cloud and harp to float around heaven all day.

Catholic records relate: "Some of them denied the existence of purgatory, asserting that souls, when parted from the body, go either to heaven or hell, while others believed in an intermediate state."⁷⁷

⁷⁵Smith, The History of the Christian Church During the Middle Ages, p. 604.

⁷⁶Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, pp. 265-266, 269.

⁷⁷Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Vol. II, p. 660.

An interesting point on Christ's resurrection is shown in "The Noble Lesson": "He rose from the grave on the third day; and raised to life many of His saints."⁷⁸

Jesus had given this as the only sign He would give to "an evil and adulterous generation" that sought after a sign. (Matt. 12:38-40): "There shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights (not three days and nights, by total) in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Angels

The truth about the fall of the angels under the sway of Satan before man was created upon the earth, as recorded in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, was understood by them, to an unknown degree thus far. Article seven of their 1669 A.D. Confession of Faith states:

That the angels were all in the beginning created pure and holy, but that some of them are fallen into irreparable corruption and perdition; and that the rest have persevered in their first purity by an effect of divine goodness, which has upheld and confirmed them.⁷⁹

Man's Original Nature

The Bible records that after God had created man in His image, He "saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was

⁷⁸Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 268.

⁷⁹Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board, The Waldenses, p. 386. (from "A Confession of Faith" published by the Evangelical Churches of Piedmont, 1669).

very good." (Gen. 1:27, 31) The Waldenses understood this fact, for in the same confession quoted above, article eight states: "That man was created clean and holy, after the image of God, and that through his own fault he deprived himself of that happy condition, by giving credit to the deceitful words of the devil."⁸⁰

Good Works

Did the Waldenses predate the Protestants as bearers of their doctrines, as "reformers before the Reformation"? Surely the doctrine of "good works," being one of the vital and key Protestant issues, should bear this out. In a Catholic world of penance works, indulgences, pilgrimages, etc., the Waldenses would have every reason, and perhaps desire, to do away with good works once-and-for-all as the Protestants later did, yet we read of this issue from their confession:

16. That the Lord having fully and absolutely reconciled us unto God, through the blood of His cross, by virtue of His merit only, and not of our works, we are thereby absolved and justified in His sight. . . . 20. That as God has promised us that we shall be regenerated in Christ, so those that are united unto Him by a true faith ought to apply, and do really apply themselves unto good works. 21. That good works are so necessary to the faithful, that they cannot attain the kingdom of heaven without the same, seeing that God hath prepared them that we ought to avoid vice, and to apply ourselves to Christian virtues, making use of fasting, and all other means which may conduce to so holy a thing. 22. That although our good works cannot merit anything, yet the Lord will reward or recompense them with eternal life, through the merciful

⁸⁰Ibid.

continuation of His grace, and by virtue of the unchangeable constancy of His promises made unto us.⁸¹

Watch and Pray

One of the identifying signs of God's church in the Bible and since has been the spirit of prophecy. John described the church as "the remnant of her (the Church) seed, which keep the commandments of God (not a new law of Christ), and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 12:17) When you permit the Bible to interpret itself, it reveals in Rev. 19:10 that, "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." One work of God's Spirit is to "show you things to come." (John 16:13)

The Waldensians understood many of the fundamentals of prophecy, although many of the things were to them as unto Daniel, "Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." (Dan. 12:9) Many of the end time prophecies they did not need to understand, in fact, may have been hindered or hurt to have understood. Yet, in the heart of their literature, and in the oldest extant document, we read:

"The Noble Lesson," date 1100, Leger tells us was found quite entire in a book of parchment, written in manuscript in an old Gothic character. In Leger's time two exemplars were preserved, one at Cambridge, and one at Geneva. Only the latter is now to be found. Mr. Jackson saw it in 1825. The lesson is in verse, in their own ancient tongue, that it may be more agreeable to the reader, and that the youth may more easily imprint it upon their memory. The original begins thus:

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 387-388.

O Brethren give ear to a Noble Lesson.
We ought always to watch and pray,
For we see this world to be near a conclusion,
We ought to strive to do good works,
For we see the end of this world to approach,
A thousand and one hundred years are fully
accomplished.⁸²

Prophecy for Today!

These people of God then, as in all ages of the church, understood the prophecies applying to themselves, and understood that they were to be preserved by Jehovah in the wilderness until the time of persecution would end.

A celebrated leader among the Waldenses and Albigenses, Arder Joachim of Calabria, the year 1190, when in conversation with Richard, the Lion Hearted, said, "Certain wicked nations called 'Gog' and 'Magog' shall rise up to destroy the Church of God and shall subvert the race of Christians, and then shall be the Day of Judgment. He says John speaks of the church, that the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared of God that He should feed her there a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days."⁸³

The Waldenses understood when the day of judgment would come, but thought "Gog" and "Magog" would rise up in an attempt to destroy the church, rather than God's people, Israel. They mistook the term, the people of God, to mean the church rather than God's nation as when the prophecies were given.

They understood that they were the church in the wilderness, and that the lampstands of Revelation 1-3 were two churches in their time: "The Waldenses on one hand and the Albigenses on the other, were like the two olive trees, or the two lamps of

⁸²Ibid., pp. 29-30.

⁸³Jones, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, 5:1, p. 266. (Dugger, p. 145).

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which John speaks, the fatness and light of which were diffused throughout all the ends of the earth."⁸⁴

A Presbyterian writer, whose doctrines relate far better to the current Waldensian church than the ancient, if, in fact they relate at all to the ancient Waldensians, says:

The character of the early Waldensian church is set forth with singular truth and beauty in their ancient insignia. (see copy in appendix) That church was indeed a "light shining in darkness," and blessed be God its candlestick has not yet been removed from its place.⁸⁵

Roman Church

Unfortunately the Waldensians lived at the very time of the deepest degeneracy of the Roman church and clergy. The extreme contrast of the Waldensian purity brought upon them a revenge just that much more vigorous. No wonder God likened them to a church in the wilderness. They said, "The Romish Church has become a Babel, a synagogue of Satan."⁸⁶

A Sabbatarian writer says, "They hold the church of Rome to be the whore of Babylon. . . . They are Papists." (Latin: "members of Antichrist")⁸⁷

Philip Smith said of them, "Pope Sylvester was identified with the little horn of the prophet Daniel (7:8)."⁸⁸

⁸⁴Perrin, p. 46.

⁸⁵Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board, The Waldenses, p. 39.

⁸⁶Neufeld and Neuffer, SDA Bible Students' Source Book, Vol. 9, art. 1755, p. 1072.

⁸⁷Lewis, The Sabbath and the Sunday, p. 212.

⁸⁸Smith, History of the Christian Church, p. 604.

Perrin relates that, "Lollard, also, was in great esteem amongst them, not on account of the commentary that he wrote on Revelation, but also, because he conveyed and made known their doctrine in England, from whom the British Waldenses were called Lollards."⁸⁹

The Baptist historian Orchard records: "The real Waldenses abhorred every vestige of the man of sin, (p. 316)."

Mark of the Beast

Since a "beast" in Bible prophecy is shown to be a nation or kingdom in this world (Dan. 7:3-8, 17, 19, 23), then what would a mark of a beast be? A national symbol? A national church? A national church's symbol? Let us see what the Waldensians thought, as revealed again by the very helpful work of Orchard:

The Vaudois did not practice Paedobaptism, nor receive the sign of the cross: this they called the mark of the beast. This is evident from the laws enacted to regulate commercial affairs, and which excluded those from any advantages in trade, who refused this "shibboleth." The cross running through the whole of that system is certainly the mark of the beast. (Bp. Narton, Diss. 2, pp. 195, 289)

It was the ground model of their sanctuaries, the ornament within and without; it was placed on the forehead in baptism, and, by various digitary motions, conferred on every part of the body; it was worn on the clothes, or carried in the hand; it was the ensign of peace, or the signal of war; it was the emblazonry of the field, and the escutcheon of the mansion; it was the pope's signet, and the peasants' security; it was the talisman in private, and the Palladium of the public interest; the pontiff's tiara, the church's

⁸⁹Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 47.

confidence, the community's glory and dread. This mark the Waldenses did not receive, and there was no baptism conferred on infants without it. Had they received the mark of the beast, they could not be considered free of the threatened indignation. (Rev. 14:9)⁹⁰

Astrology and Galatians 4:10

What an amazing discovery to find that the Waldenses understood Galatians 4:10 in the light of its true meaning, and not as Protestants twist it in an attempt to do away with God's Sabbath and holy days. If they did not use this verse, nor Col. 2:16, nor Eph. 2:14, to do away with the Sabbath and holy days of God, did they not rather keep them? We shall see in the next chapter. But for now, what about astrology? This is one of the fastest growing "religions" in the world today. Yet the Waldensians knew exactly what God said about it. Why do not their "descendants" in the Protestant churches today know? Now to reveal their scriptural knowledge on this matter we quote:

"They act against the first commandment," say the Waldenses in the exposition on the first commandment of the law, "who believe the planets can force the free will of man. Such, as much as in them lies, esteem the planets to be God's; for they attribute to the creature that which belongs to the Creator. Against whom the prophet Jeremiah saith, 'learn not to follow the ways of the nations, and be not afraid of those things at which the people are astonished.' And Paul, Galatians IV, 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you, lest I bestowed upon you labour in vain.'

They act against this commandment who believe in sorcerers and diviners, for such believe the demons to be gods. The reason is, because they ask that of the demons, which God

⁹⁰Orchard, Baptist History, pp. 315-316.

alone can grant; to discover things secret,
and to declare the truth of things to come;
which is forbidden by God, Leviticus 19--
'Thou shalt not regard them that have familiar
spirits, neither seek after wizards. Moreover
thou shalt not divine, nor give any heed to
dreams. Thou shalt not be an enchanter,
neither take counsel with familiar spirits, or
wizards nor inquire after the truth among the
dead; for all these things are an abomination
unto the Lord. And because of this sin He
will destroy you all at your Entrance.'⁹¹

⁹¹Perrin, Historie of the Waldenses, p. 31.

CHAPTER V

THE SABBATH

We have seen that the Waldensians very vigorously made the Decalogue a foundational matter in their doctrines. They also established their doctrines from both the Old and New Testaments. They refused very vigorously the unbiblical holidays of the Romish church, including Easter and Christmas. They understood Galatians 4:10 to refer to astrology and observing times superstitiously. They rejected anything added to the church practices not proven in the Bible. Would you expect them to observe the "Sunday-Lord's Day" myth then? Since the Sabbath was a sign between God and His people (Ex. 31:13-17); since it was also one of God's holy days or feasts (Lev. 23:1-3); and since it was the true Lord's day (Matt. 12:8), these people must have kept the seventh day as the Sabbath if they were really God's church.

The Seventh-Day Baptist historian covers the subject so well with such pertinent points and system, that I will present the reader his evidence as follows:

Nevertheless, Antichrist, as represented in the Papacy never succeeded in driving the Sabbath wholly from his domains. Dissenters who kept the Sabbath, existed under different names and forms of organization, from the time of the first Pope to the Reformation. They were either the descendants of those who fled from the heathen persecutions previous to the time of Constantine--which is most probable--or else those who, when he began to rule the

Jones and Benedict agree with Robinson in rejecting the idea that the Waldenses received these names from their shoes. Mr. Jones held, on the contrary, that they were given them because they did not keep the Romish festivals. (Jones's History of the Church, Vol. II, 5:1)

Mr. Benedict favors the view that it was because they kept the seventh day (General History of the Baptist Denomination, Vol. II, p. 413). But let us now see who they are that make these statements respecting the observance of the Sabbath by the Waldenses, that Robinson alludes to in this place. He quotes out of Gretser the words of the historian Goldastus as follows: "Insabbatati (they were called) not because they were circumcised, but because they kept the Jewish Sabbath." (Eccl. Researches, chapt. 10, p. 303)

Goldastus was "a learned historian and jurist, born near Bischofszell, in Switzerland, in 1567." He died in 1635 (Thomas' Dictionary of Biography and Mythology, article, "Goldastus"). He was a Calvinist writer of note (D'Anbignes Reformation in the Time of Calvin, Vol. III, p. 456). He certainly had no desire to favor the cause of the seventh day. Gritser objects to his statement on the ground that the Waldenses exterminated every festival; but this was the most natural thing in the world for men who had God's own rest-day in their keeping.

Robinson also quotes on this point the testimony of Archbishop Usher. Though that prelate held that the Waldenses derived these names from their shoes, he frankly acknowledges that many understood that they were given to them because they worshipped on the Jewish Sabbath. This testimony is valuable in that it shows that many early writers asserted the observance of "the Saturday for the Lord's Day" by the people who were called Sabbatati. (Eccl. Researches, chapt. 10, p. 304; Usher's De Christianar. Eccl. success et stat. chapt. 7)⁹⁶

⁹⁶Andrews, History of the Sabbath, pp. 409-412.

A slightly varied rendering of this name is given by Philip Smith thusly: "Besides the name derived from their founder, his followers are called Sabati, Xabatenses, Inzabbattati."⁹⁷

Quoting more fully than given by Andrews, Jones's view on the meaning of Insabbathists is:

. . . the names imposed on them in France by their adversaries, they say, have been intended to vilify and ridicule them, or to represent them as new and different sects. Being stripped of all their property, and reduced by persecution to extreme poverty, they have been called "the poor of Lyons." Because they would not observe saints' days, they were falsely supposed to neglect the Sabbath also, and called "Inzabbatati" or "Insabbathists." Dr. Mosheim traces the derivation of this word to a kind of slipper which they wore, as a distinguishing badge of the sect, and Gibbon has adopted his opinion. But I agree with Mr. Robinson in thinking it very unlikely that people who could not descend from their mountains into neighboring states, without hazarding their lives through the furious zeal of inquisitors should tempt danger by affixing a visible mark on their shoes. The above opinion, therefore, appears to me much more probable.⁹⁸

End Paragraph

If the name Insabbatati, Insabbathists, or Inzabbatati all mean regardless of Sabbath, because they worked on all Roman sabbaths they could get away with, then what must the opposite name of Sabbatati, Sabbathists, or Zabbatati mean? Of course, it would mean regarding Sabbaths, which must

⁹⁷Smith, History of the Christian Church, p. 598, footnote.

⁹⁸Jones, History of the Christian Church, p. 256.

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include more than just the weekly Sabbath since it is plural. The fact that they were called both proves that they did not regard Rome's sabbaths, but instead regarded God's Sabbaths. This we have already seen in this work in that the Waldensians kept the Lord's Supper annually, understood it was the Feast of Pentecost and almost certainly kept it as well, and understood that unleavened bread was essential with the Lord's Supper. This in addition to direct testimony from several sources that they kept the seventh day as the Sabbath. We have seen direct proof that they detested all of Rome's days, including Easter and Christmas, so is it reasonable in the light of all this that the "Sunday-Lord's day myth" escaped this exclusion? Certainly not.

APPENDIX I

THIRD CONFESSION

1. We believe that there is but one God, who is a Spirit--the Creator of all things--the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us of who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth--upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity, and adversity. We love Him as the source of all goodness; and reverence Him as that sublime being, who searches the reins and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and image of the Father--that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells, and that by Him alone we know the Father. He is our Mediator and advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven by which we can be saved. In His name alone we call upon the Father, using no other prayers than those contained in the Holy Scriptures or such as are in substance agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray; being by Him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy church, comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be to the end thereof. Of this church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head--it is governed by His word and guided by the Holy Spirit. In the church it behooves all Christians to have fellowship. For her He (Christ) prays incessantly, and His prayer for it is most acceptable to God, without which indeed there could be no salvation.

5. We hold that the ministers of the church ought to be unblamable both in life and doctrine; and if found otherwise, that they ought to be deposed from their office, and others substituted in their stead; and that no person ought to presume to take that honor unto himself but he who is called of God as was Aaron--that the duties of such are to feed the flock of God, not for filthy lucre's sake, or as having dominion over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, and in chastity.

6. We acknowledge, that kings, princes, and Governors, are the appointed and established ministers of God, whom we are bound to obey (in all lawful and civil concerns). For they bear the sword for the defense of the innocent, and the punishment of evil doers; for which reason we are bound to honor and pay them tribute. From this power and authority, no man can exempt himself as is manifest from the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily paid tribute, not taking upon Himself any jurisdiction of temporal power.

7. We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, is within us--namely, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through (the faith of) Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people previously professing and declaring our faith and change of life.

8. We hold that the Lord's Supper is a commemoration of, and thanksgiving for, the benefits which we have received by His sufferings and death--and that it is to be received in faith and love--examining ourselves, that so we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures.

9. We maintain that marriage was instituted of God--that it is holy and honorable, and ought to be forbidden to none, provided there be no obstacle from the divine word.

10. We contend, that all those in whom the fear of God dwells, will thereby be led to please Him, and to abound with the good works (of the gospel) which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them--which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, sobriety, and the other good works enforced in the Holy Scriptures.

11. On the other hand, we confess that we consider it to be our duty to beware of false teachers, whose object is to divert the minds of men from the true worship of God, and to lead them to place their confidence in the creature, as well

as to depart from the good works of the gospel, and to regard the inventions of men.

12. We take the Old and the New Testament for the rule of our life, and we agree with the general confession of faith contained in (what is usually termed) the apostles' creed.

In the year 1508, about ten years before Luther began the Reformation, and during the reign of Ladislaus, king of Hungary and Bohemia, a dreadful persecution broke out against that class of his subjects, who held the principles of the Waldenses. The latter, to justify themselves from several charges erroneously imputed to them by their adversaries, drew up an apology addressed to the king, which was still extant in the time of Perrin, and as he has handed down to us the substance of it, I shall here extract a few of the more interesting particulars.

(1) It was said of them, by their adversaries, that a man might leave his wife when he pleased. On which they reply, that "matrimony is a bond which nothing but death can dissolve, except the crime of fornication, as saith the Lord Jesus Christ;" and also the Apostle Paul, I Corinthians VII saith, "Let not the wife depart from her husband, nor the husband put away his wife."

(2) A second calumny regards a community of goods and wives--to which they reply that marriage was of old ordained by God in Paradise; that it was designed as an antidote against adultery; and that it is recorded by the apostle, when speaking of this subject, "Let every man have his own wife, and every woman her own husband." Also, that "the husband ought to love

his wife as Christ loveth the church," and that such as are married ought to live holily together with their children in the fear of God. That as for goods, everyone hath possessed his own at all times and in all places--they never having had any such intercommunity among them, as tended in the smallest degree to derogate from that lawful propriety which everyone has by right to his own estate.

(3) Another scandalous charge was, that they worshipped their barbs or pastors. The grossness of this calumny, indeed, sufficiently refuted itself. At one time they are represented as setting aside the necessity of the pastoral office altogether, and making its peculiar duties common to every member--at others they are charged with holding their pastors in such estimation, that they paid them divine honors. The Waldenses refer, on this subject, to their own writings, in which they have shown that God alone is the object of worship, and that they never intended to give that to any creature. And that as to their pastors, regarding them as those by whom they have heard the word of reconciliation, they consider themselves as bound in conscience and duty to treat them with kindness, and to esteem them in love for their work's sake.

(4) They have been accused of maintaining that it was in no instance lawful to swear. In reply to that they say that "some oaths are certainly lawful, tending both to the honor of God and the edification of their neighbors," instancing Hebrews VI:17. That "men swear by a greater than themselves, and an oath made for confirmation is an end of all strife." They also allege that it was enjoined upon the people

of Israel, Deut. VI to swear by the name of the Lord--and also the oath made between Abimelech and Isaac in Genesis XXVI and that of Jacob, Genesis XXXI.

(5) Another calumny was, that they showed no reverence to sacred places maintaining that is not a more grievous sin to burn a church than to break open another house. To defend themselves against this charge they say,

That neither the place nor the pulpit makes a man holy--and that those are greatly deceived who think the better of themselves because of the dignity of the place. For what was greater than Paradise, or what more pure than heaven? Notwithstanding which, man was driven out of Paradise, because he sinned there; and the angels were expelled from heaven, that they might be an example to all succeeding ages, teaching us that it is neither the place nor its grandeur and dignity, but innocence of life that makes a man holy.

(6) Again; they are charged with holding, that the civil magistrate ought not to sentence anyone to death. To which they answer, "that it is written a malefactor shall not be suffered to live; and that without correction and discipline, doctrine serves to no purpose, neither would judgments be known or wickedness punished." That therefore, just anger is the mother of discipline, and patience without reason the seed of vices, encouraging the wicked to proceed in their excesses. True it is, that they complained of the conduct of the magistrates in delivering them up to death, without any other knowledge of them than they had obtained from the priests and monks who pretended to discover errors in them and then exclaiming against them as abuse which they had introduced into the church, condemned them as heretics, and delivered them up to

the secular power. Moreover, they regarded it as both unwise and cruel, on the part of the magistrates, to give credit to men so carried away with passion as were the priests, and that they should put to death so many poor innocent persons without having either heard or examined them.

(7) Allied to the foregoing was another slander, tending to render them odious to kings and princes, namely, "that a layman in a state of grace hath more authority than a prince living in mortal sin." In reply to that imputation, they said,

that everyone ought to be subject to those who are placed in authority--that it is their duty to obey them, to honor them with double honor, to be subject to them with allegiance, and promptly paying them tribute.

(8) The next charge was that the Waldenses affirmed the pope had no authority over the kings and princes of the earth, who derived their authority from God alone; and on which account they took occasion to call them Mamchaeans. They replied:

We believe that the holy Trinity created all things, both visible and invisible, and that (Jehovah) is Lord of all things in heaven, earth, and hell, as it is written, 'All things are created by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.'

(9) It was further alleged against them, that they objected to the payment of tithes--that priests might lawfully be put to death, or dispossessed of their tithes, which anyone might retain without scruple of conscience. And it is certain, says their historian, that could the Waldenses have

appropriated their tithes to any other purpose than the maintenance of those whom they regarded as "dumb dogs," drowsy watchmen, slow bellies, deceivers, and deceived, they would have done it; but as they had not power to detain them, some of them made any disturbance about the matter. It indeed appears, that in what depended upon their own voluntary choice they gave nothing to such persons, nor cared for any of their helps after death, of which the priests complained, and these took occasion to accuse them as heretics. But let us hear them upon the subject of revenge. "The Lord knowing that we should be delivered up, said 'Beware of men.' But He never teaches or counsels His elect to slay anyone, but on the contrary, to 'love their enemies.' When the disciples said to Him, 'shall we call for fire from heaven and consume them?' Christ answered, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.' Also the Lord said to Peter, 'Put up thy sword into its place.' Besides, temporal distresses ought to be despised and sustained with patience, for in them nothing happens that is new. Whilst we are here, we are the Lord's threshold, to be beaten like corn when it is separated from the chaff."

(10) Claude de Rubis, a virulent Catholic writer, who compiled the history of the city of Lyons, defames them by saying, that, having retired from the city of Lyons, and taken from refuge among the Alps, the Waldenses, like the rest of the inhabitants of the valleys, had become sorcerers--and indeed, says he, there are two things which commonly accompany each other, that is heresy and sorcery, as hath been verified in the

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cities and provinces which have admitted heresy amongst them.

To justify themselves against this foul aspersion, they say:

Those act against the first precept of the Decalogue, who believe the planets can control the free-will of man. Such do, in effect, esteem the planets to be gods; for they attribute to the creature that which is the peculiar province of the Creator. Against such the prophet Jeremiah saith, 'learn not the way of the heathen, and be not afraid of those things at which the heathen are dismayed.' Paul also says to the Galatians, 'Ye observe days and months and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labor in vain.'

They also act against this commandment who believe in sorcerers and diviners, for such believe the demons to be gods. The reason is, because they ask that of demons which God alone can grant, viz. to discover things that are secret, and to reveal the truth of things to come, which is forbidden by God. Leviticus XIX, "Thou shalt not be an enchanter, neither take counsel with familiar spirits or wizards, nor inquire the truth among the dead, for all these things are an abomination to the Lord." And as to the punishment which God in a way of vengeance, inflicts upon such, we read in the book of Kings, that Elijah demanded of Ahaziah, saying, "What! is there no God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." Saul died, because he had prevaricated with the commandment that God had given him: he kept it not, neither put his trust in the Lord, but asked counsel of a witch: wherefore the Lord slew him, and transferred his kingdom

to David, the son of Jesse. It is also said, in the book of Leviticus, that, "whosoever shall turn aside to enchanters and wizards, I will lay my hand upon him, and cut him off from the midst of his people." Everyone ought to know that all enchantment, or conjuration, or charms, or spells, carried for a remedy to men or beasts, are of no avail, but on the contrary a snare and ambush of the old adversary the devil, through which he endeavors to deceive mankind.

(11) One more charge against them is, that they compelled their pastors to follow some trade. Their answer to this is surely a very satisfactory one. "We do not think it necessary, say they, that our pastors should work for their bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us if we could maintain them without their own labor."

APPENDIX II

THE NOBLE LESSON

I. O BRETHREN, attend to this excellent lesson:

We should often watch and pray, for we see this world is near to a close.

We should be very careful to do good works, seeing that the end of this world is at hand.

One thousand and one hundred years are now completed, since it was written, "It is the last time."

We should desire little, for we are now at the remnant.

Daily we see the signs in the increase of evil, and decrease of good. These are the perils, which the Scriptures mention: and the same recorded in the gospels, and confirmed in St. Paul's writings. No man living can know the hour of his death: therefore we ought to fear the more, because we are not sure, whether we shall die today or tomorrow. But when the day of judgment comes, everyone will receive his full payment: both those that have done evil, and those that have done good. For the Scriptures say, and we should believe them, that all men must pass by two roads: the good will go to glory, and the wicked to torments. But he that does not believe these parting ways, should examine the Scriptures from the beginning; and there he will find, if he have understanding, that from the time when Adam was formed, few are the saved, in proportion to the others.

But whoever wishes to do well must begin by the love of God.

He should likewise call on His glorious Son, the dear child of the blessed virgin Mary;

And on the Holy Spirit, who shows us the right way.

These three are the Holy Trinity, and the one God, to whom prayer is due; and He is all-powerful--all-wise--and all-good.

We should often beg, and pray that He would strengthen us to fight against our enemies (the world, the devil, and the flesh), so that we may overcome them before we die:

And that He would, in His goodness, give us wisdom to know the way of life, and to keep pure the soul, that He gave us; yea, both soul and body in all charity, so as to love the Holy Trinity, and our neighbour as God has commanded.

Not only those, who do us good, but those who injure us.

And we should ask for a steadfast hope in the King of heaven, that at the end He may receive us into His glorious mansion.

This is hard to be received by the wicked who love gold and silver; despise the promises of God; keep none of His laws and commandments; nor suffer the good to keep them, but hinder them according to their power.

II. How came evil to enter into mankind?

Because Adam sinned at the beginning, by eating of the forbidden apple, and, the grain of the evil seed taking

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root in others, he thus brought death on himself, and all his posterity.

Well may we say this was a bitter morsel.

But Christ has redeemed the good by His sufferings.

Alas! We find in this lesson, that Adam believed not in God his Creator; and now we see men grown worse, forsaking God, the Almighty Father, and trusting in idols to their own destruction.

Which were forbidden by the law from the beginning; viz. the law of nature, (common to all men) written in the heart of the man first formed; God giving him a free power to do either good or evil; though He forbade the evil, and commanded the good.

And you may clearly see, that this was ill observed, for we have all left the good, and done the evil; as Cain the eldest child of Adam, did; who killed his brother Abel without any cause; except that he was good, and put his trust in the Lord, and not in any creature.

Here we may take an example from the law of nature, which we have broken, and transgressed, by sinning against the Creator, and injuring the creature.

This was a noble law, that God gave us, and wrote in the heart of every man, that he might read and keep it, and learn righteousness; love God in his heart above all creatures, and fear and serve Him without reserve.

This law is therefore, not found in the Holy Scriptures.

Also, that he should be true to his marriage bond; that excellent compact, and be at peace with his brethren, and love all other people.

Moreover, that he should hate pride, and love humility; and do unto others, as he would be done by; and, if he did the contrary, that he should be punished.

Few there were, who observed this law; and the greater part broke it, forsaking the Lord, and dishonouring Him.

They believed the devil, and his temptation:

Loving this world too much, and heaven too little;
And served the body, more than the soul.

Therefore we find, that many perished.

III. Here everyone may be reproved, who says, that God did not make man to allow him to perish.

But let each take heed, that it happens not to him, as it did to them; for the deluge came, and destroyed the wicked:

Nevertheless God caused an ark to be made, in which He saved the good.

So many were the wicked, and so few the good, that of all the world only eight persons were saved.

IV. Let us all be hereby admonished to avoid evil, and to repent: for Jesus Christ has said, and St. Luke has written, that all, who do not, shall perish.

To those, who escaped, God promised, that the world should never more perish by water; and they believed Him, and multiplied.

But the favours which God bestowed on them, they soon forgot, having little faith, and great fear; so that they did not fully believe the word of the Lord, and dreaded the waters again troubling the world.

They therefore talked of building a tower, where they might take refuge: and they began it (as it is recorded):

And they said they would make it large and high,-- so lofty, that the top should reach heaven:

But this they could not accomplish; for it displeased God, and He made His displeasure known to them.

That great city was called Babel, but now Confusion, on account of its sad condition.

There was then but one language among men.

And that they might not understand one another, God parted and confounded them, that they might not finish what they had begun: and languages were thus spread through the world.

After this they sinned grievously, forsaking the law of nature; for the Scriptures affirm, and it may be easily proved, that five cities, which committed wickedness, were destroyed by a judgment of fire and brimstone from God.

He destroyed the sinners, but delivered the righteous, viz. Lot and his family, which the angel brought out, four in number; but one was punished, and that was his wife, because she disobeyed the command:

A notable example this, for the whole world to take heed to what God forbids.

V. In those days lived Abram, a man who pleased God, and begat a patriarch, of whom came the Jews, a noble race, fearing the Lord.

They dwelt in Egypt among wicked people, who oppressed and afflicted them a long time.

But when they cried unto the Lord, He sent them Moses, who set His people free, and destroyed the other nations.

They passed through the Red Sea, as through a dry and pleasant place; but their enemies, who pursued them, all perished in the waters.

Many other wonders did God show to His people; feeding them forty years in the wilderness, and giving them the law graven and excellently arranged on two tables of stone, which He sent by Moses.

This taught them, that there is a Lord over all, whom they were bound to believe, and love with all their heart; and also to fear, and serve to the end of their lives.

Likewise, that everyone should love his neighbour as himself;

That they should give counsel to widows, and maintain the fatherless; shelter the poor, and clothe the naked; feed the hungry, and guide the traveller; and, in short, carefully observe His law; God promising to those who kept it, the kingdom of heaven.

He forbad the worship of idols, manslaughter, adultery, and all kinds of uncleanness; lying, perjury, and false witness; usury, rapine, and evil coveting; as also avarice, and all manner of wickedness.

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To the good He promised life, but threatened death to the wicked.

Then were they clothed with pride; but those that sinned, and did wickedly, died, and were destroyed without mercy.

For the Scripture says (and it is plain enough) that thirty thousand were left in the wilderness; and thirty thousand, and more, (as the law saith) were destroyed by the sword, fire, and serpents.

And many others perished in another way, the earth opening, and hell receiving them.

And here we have matter for reprovng ourselves very seasonably.

But those which pleased the Lord inherited the land of promise.

Now there were in those days many worthies: as David and Solomon, the kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many others, who fought for the faith, and defended it.

But there was only one people chosen by God out of all the world:

And many were their enemies round about, who persecuted them.

VI. This lesson affords us much instruction:

When they kept the law, and the commandments, God fought for them against the other nations.

But when they sinned, and committed wickedness, they died; were destroyed, and made prisoners by other nations.

This people prospered so much, and became so rich, that they kicked against the Lord.

Wherefore we find in this lesson, that the king of Babylon put them in prison; where they were distressed, and afflicted a long time.

Then they cried to the Lord with a repentant heart, and He restored them to Jerusalem.

But there were few that were obedient, and kept His law, and feared to offend the king.

Indeed, there were some of them full of deceit and falsehood, and these were the Pharisees, and others acquainted with the Scriptures:

Who kept the law (as plainly appears) only to be seen by men, and to be held in greater respect.

But that honour, soon comes to nothing, is of little value.

Then were the saints,--the just and the good,--persecuted.

And they prayed to the Lord with cries and tears, that He would come down upon earth, and save the world:

For all mankind were in the road to destruction.

Then God sent the angel to the noble virgin of the royal family.

And he sweetly saluted her, (for he came by command) and then said unto her,

Fear not, Mary, for the Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee, and thou shalt bear a Son, whom thou shalt call Jesus: He shall save His people from their sins.

Nine months did the glorious virgin bear Him: but that she might not be made a public example, Joseph married her.

The virgin was pure, and so was Joseph:

And this we must believe, because the Gospel declares it.

When the infant was born, He was laid in a manger, wrapped in clothes, and meanly lodged.

This is a reproof to the covetous, and misers, who never cease to heap up riches.

Now there were many wonderful things done, when the Lord was born:

God sent the angel to make it known to the shepherds:

A star appeared to the three wise men in the east:

Glory was given to God in heaven, and peace on earth to the good.

Afterwards the child suffered persecution:

Nevertheless He grew in favour, and in stature; and likewise in Divine wisdom, in which He was taught.

And He chose the twelve apostles, who were rightly so named;

And He was pleased to change the law, which He before gave:

He did not so change it, as to do it away altogether, but renewed it, that it might be better kept.

He Himself was baptized, that He might give salvation to us.

And He commanded the apostles to baptize the nations.

For then began the renewal.

VII. The old law forbad fornication, and adultery; but the new forbids looking at a woman to lust after her. .

The old law allowed of breaking the marriage ties, and permitted divorces by a writing; but the new says, thou shalt not marry her that is put away; and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

The old law cursed the barren womb; but the new recommends us to keep ourselves chaste.

The old law only forbad perjury; but the new says, swear not at all,--and let your conversation be only yes and no.

The old law commanded fighting against enemies, and returning evil for evil: but the new says, avenge not yourselves, but leave your revenge to the King of heaven, and let those, who injure you, live peaceably, and you shall find pardon from the heavenly King.

The old law said you shall love your friends, and hate your enemy; the new says, you shall no more do so, but you shall love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you, and seek occasion against you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

The old law said, punish those who do you evil; but the new says, forgive all sorts of persons, and you will have forgiveness of your Almighty Father; but if you will not forgive, you shall not be saved.

No one should kill, or hate one another; much less should we mock the simple, or the poor.

Neither should we despise the foreigner, or stranger;
for in this world we are all pilgrims.

And we are all brethren, and ought to serve God.

This is the new law, which Jesus Christ says we ought to
keep.

VIII. And He called His apostles, and commanded
them to go throughout the world, to make disciples of all
nations:

To preach to Jews and Greeks, and every human being.

He gave them power over serpents; also to cast out
devils, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,
and to do to others, as He had done to them:

He bid them not to possess gold or silver, but to
be content with food and clothing:

To love one another, and be at peace.

He promised the kingdom of heaven to them, and to
those, who are poor in spirit:

And He, who knew the spiritually poor, said, He
would soon number them.

Then He told them what should come to pass:

How He must die, and afterwards rise again:

And He foretold the signs, and wonders, which
must happen before the end.

He spoke many excellent parables to them, and to the
people, which were written afterwards in the New Testament.

But if we will love Christ, and know His doctrine,
we must watch and read the Scriptures:

Where we shall find, when we read, that Christ was persecuted only for doing good.

He raised the dead by divine power;

He made the blind to see, who never had before seen;

He cleansed the lepers, and made the deaf to hear;

He cast out devils, and worked many more miracles.

And the more good He did, the more He was persecuted.

His persecutors were the Pharisees;--the followers of Herod, the king, and those of the priesthood;

For they all envied Him, because the people went after Him, and believed in Him, and His commandments.

They formed a design to put Him to a most cruel death.

And spoke to Judas, and made an agreement with him, to deliver Him up for thirty pieces of silver.

Now Judas, being a covetous man, betrayed Him, and gave up his Master to those wicked people.

The Jews were the occasion of His being crucified, and having His feet, and His hands pierced with nails.

A crown of thorns was set on His head, and they reproached Him much, and blasphemed Him.

And when He said He was thirsty, they gave Him gall and vinegar to drink.

The torture was so sharp and painful, that His soul separated from His body, to procure salvation for sinners.

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The body remained hanging upon the cross between two thieves.

Four wounds were inflicted on Him; besides other blows.

They then gave Him the fifth, to finish Him.

For one of the soldiers came, and pierced His side;

And immediately there flowed out blood and water together.

Then all the apostles fled, but one returned,

And stood there with two women near the cross.

All were in great grief, particularly the mother,

When she saw her Son dead, and naked, fastened to the cross.

He was buried by the good, and guarded by the wicked.

He rose from the grave on the third day; and raised to life many of His saints.

And He appeared to His disciples, as He had foretold them.

Then they rejoiced greatly, when they saw the Lord.

And they were comforted, for before they were in great fear.

And He conversed with them till the day of the ascension.

When our Saviour went up into glory, saying to His apostles, and all His other followers, that He would be with them to the end of the world.

IX. He remembered them at the feast of Pentecost:
And sent them the Holy Ghost, who is the Comforter:
Who taught the apostles heavenly doctrine;
And made them understand languages, and the Holy
Scriptures;

Then they remembered what He had said.

And they proclaimed without fear the doctrine of Christ,
preaching to Jews and Greeks, and working many miracles.

And they baptized the believers in the name of Jesus
Christ.

Then there became a people of new converts.

And they were called Christians, because they
trusted in Christ.

But we find in the Scriptures, that the Jews and
Saracens persecuted them grievously.

Yet the Apostles were so strong in the fear of the
Lord, and likewise the men, and women, who were with them,

That they did not leave off speaking, and doing for
all that,

Whatever might come of it, so that they might win
Jesus Christ.

Great were their torments, according to what is
written;

And only, because they taught the doctrine of
Jesus Christ.

But as for their persecutors, we need not so much
wonder;

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For they had not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ;
Like those, who now-a-day seek occasion to persecute
so much;

These ought indeed to be Christians, but have a poor
claim to the name.

But in this respect they are to be blamed, that
they persecute and imprison the good:

Yet it is nowhere found that the saints ever
persecuted, or put any in prison.

Now after the apostles, there were certain teachers,
who showed the way of Jesus Christ our Saviour;

And some of these are found even at this present
time, but they are known to very few.

They have a great desire to point out the way of
Jesus Christ:

But are so persecuted, that they can do but little.

So blinded by error are the false Christians: and
especially the pastors;

For they persecute, and kill those, who are better
than themselves,

And let those live quietly, who are false, and
deceivers.

But by this we may know, that they are not good
shepherds:

For they love not the sheep, except for their
fleeces.

Nevertheless the Scripture says, and we may read
it,

That if anyone love the good, he must needs love and fear God, and Jesus Christ.

Such a one will never curse, swear, or lie.

He will not commit adultery, kill, or cheat his neighbour:

Neither will he take revenge of his enemies.

Now such a one is called a Waldense, and to be deserving of punishment.

And they find occasion, by lies and deceit, to take from him what he has earned by fair dealing.

However, he who is thus persecuted for the fear of the Lord, comforts himself greatly by this,--that the kingdom of heaven shall be given to him at the end of the world.

Then he will have great glory for all his dishonour.

But in this their malice is very evident:

For he who curses, lies, swears, often lays out his money at usury, kills, fornicates, and takes revenge of those who injure him;

He, they say, is to be considered a good, and honest man.

But let them take heed, that they be not deceived at last.

X. When the mortal disease comes, and death seizes on one of them, and makes him almost speechless;

Then he calls for a priest to confess to him.

But according to the Bible, he has delayed this too long:

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For that commands, and teaches us to repent in good time, and not to put it off to the last:

The priest asks him, if he has any sin upon him.

He answers in two or three words, and soon makes an end:

The priest replies, that he cannot be forgiven, except he make restitution, and amends for his frauds.

When he hears this, he is very much troubled, and thinks within himself, if he restores all,

What shall he have to leave to his children; and what will the world say?

Then he commands the children to examine their faults,

And he buys a full absolution from the priest,

Though he possess a hundred, or two hundred shillings of another, yet the priest acquits him for a hundred pence, and sometimes for less, when he can get no more.

Telling him a long story, and promising him pardon;

And that he will say masses for his soul, and for his relations.

And in this way he pardons the righteous, and the wicked, by laying his hand on their head.

But when he takes his leave, he assures the sick, person that he is fully pardoned:

Then the priest makes good cheer.

But he is sadly amended thus, who has committed sin:

And will find himself deceived by such an absolution.

And he that occasions him to believe it, is guilty of a deadly sin.

For I dare say it, because it is true,

That all the popes from Sylvester to the present one,

And all the cardinals, bishops, and abbots-- altogether, have no power to forgive sin.

They cannot forgive any creature a single mortal sin.

It is God alone who pardons, and no other being can.

XI. But those who are pastors should do this: They should preach to the people, and pray with them; Feed them often with divine doctrine, And punish sinners with discipline, and admonish them to repent.

And chiefly, that they should confess their sins to God without reserve;

And repent in this life; fast, give alms, and pray with a fervent heart;--

For by these things the soul finds salvation.

Wherefore we Christians who have sinned, and forsaken the commands of Jesus Christ, because we have no fear, faith, or love,

We should acknowledge our sins without delay;

We should weep tears of penitence for the offences we have committed,

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Particularly for these three mortal sins, the lust of the flesh,--the lust of the eye,--and the pride of life; by which we have done evil.

We must keep in this way, if we will love and follow Jesus Christ:

We must be poor in spirit and heart:

Love chastity, and serve God humbly.

Then we follow the way of Jesus Christ, and thus overcome our enemies.

XII. There is a short account in this lesson of three laws, which God gave to mankind;

The first law shows sensible and reasonable creatures, How to know God and honour their Master.

For whoever has understanding, may easily think within himself, that he neither made himself, nor any other.

Therefore, he may know by his own judgment and reason, That there is one Lord God, who created all the world. And knowing Him, he ought to honour Him greatly.

For those who would not do this, were damned.

The second law which God gave to Moses, teaches us to fear God, and to serve Him with all our strength.

For He condemns and punishes every offender.

But the third law, which exists in this present time, teaches us to love God, and to serve Him purely;

For He waits for the sinner, and gives him time to repent in this life.

As for any other law to come, we shall have none, but this: viz. to imitate Jesus Christ, and to do His will.

To keep steadfastly what He commands us,
And to be well aware of the coming of antichrist.
And not to believe either his words or his works.
Now, according to Scripture, there are many antichrists:
For all those are antichrists, who are against Christ.
There will be many signs and great wonders from this
time until the day of judgment.

Heaven and earth shall be burnt up; all the living
shall die, and every building shall be thrown down.

After which all shall rise again to never-ending life.

Then shall come the last judgment, when God shall
separate His people according as it is written:

To the wicked He will say, Depart from me, ye cursed,
into everlasting fire:

There to be tormented with the heaviest punishments;
a multitude of pains, and sharp tortures;

For you shall be damned without fail.

From which may God, in His good will, preserve us!

And give us to hear what He shall then say to His own
people:

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

There you will have pleasures, and riches, and honour.

May it please that Lord, who formed the world, that we
may be of the number of His elect, to dwell with Him in His
court for ever!

Thanks be unto God! Amen.

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