

TRUTH TRIUMPHANT: CHAPTER 16

The Church of the Waldenses

The Vaudois (Waldenses) are in fact descended from those refugees from Italy, who, after St. Paul had there preached the gospel, abandoned their beautiful country and fled like the woman mentioned in the Apocalypse, to these wild mountains, where they have to this day handed down the gospel from father to son in the same purity and simplicity as it was preached by St. Paul.¹

THE preceding chapter brought the story of the Waldenses up to the work of Peter Waldo. He gave a new impetus to this church, and forged a new weapon for evangelicals who refused to walk with Rome, in that he provided popular editions of the word of God in the vernacular. As is always the case when the Bible is circulated among the laity, the believers became imbued with the spirit of evangelism. Thus Peter Waldo can be credited with contributing to the increase in numbers and influence of the Waldenses throughout the world.

However, it was not long before he felt the wrath of the Papacy. When persecuted, he withdrew to the north of France. Pursued, he fled to Bohemia. When the anger of persecution turned from him to his converts, great numbers then hastened to the Waldensian valleys in Italy.

The passing of Waldo into east central Europe and the migration of large numbers of his followers into surrounding mountainous terrain were in the providence of God. The seeds of truth sown in previous centuries were beginning to grow into a large harvest. In the twelfth century there was a longing throughout Europe to return to that type of religion which Jesus pointed out when He said, "All ye are brethren." Churches with pomp and ceremonies, which had put so great a gulf between priest and people and which had graded the clergy into ascending ranks with titles of honor, were growing in disfavor. Enforcement of doctrines by law had brought rebellion. The Scriptures were now more largely circulated. Bible principles were contrasted with hierarchical canons. Multitudes, becoming aware of a more excellent Christianity shorn of ecclesiastical accretions, drew together to form large bodies. They had been called such names as Albigenses, Cathari, and Passagians. But the former multiplicity of names bestowed upon them began to disappear as they took the general name of Waldenses.²

On the other hand, the priests who had allied themselves with kings, generals, and world officials were determined to hold what temporal power they had acquired and to possess the seat of absolute authority. Their aggressions were so plainly visible and their harsh, domineering spirit so keenly resented that the masses could no longer link heresy with vice. The attempt to dub people as criminals for freedom of belief, brought growing resentment. Therefore, the name Waldenses was found more on the people's lips, a title that was to be synonymous in Europe with the Christianity set forth by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament.

How dreadfully the Waldenses suffered under persecution is a well-known story in all histories. Their steadfastness and their victory was nothing short of miraculous. Much of the liberty, enlightenment, and advance of civilization today can be attributed to the faithfulness of the Church in the Wilderness, and especially to the courageous Waldenses because of their valiant and triumphant efforts to maintain the principles of democracy.

Their Records Destroyed

Persecution was not the only way of waging war against the evangelicals. Their records were systematically destroyed. In the empires of antiquity a new conqueror often followed up his purging of the preceding dynasty by the destruction of all writings telling of its past, even to the extent of chiseling annals from stone monuments. In like manner the noble and voluminous literature of the Waldenses, whether of the Italian, French, or Spanish branches, was almost completely obliterated by the rage of the Papacy.³ Only fragments remain. For the rest, one must use the tirades written to vilify them, the accounts of papal inquisitors, the reports of investigators to their prelates, and the decrees and sentences pronounced by emperors, papal councils, and the Inquisition against them to aid in reconstructing their history.

Learning of the Waldenses

The Waldensian pastors and teachers were well trained. To refute the reproach sometimes cast on them, the following quotations are given. Alexis Muston writes:

Gilles says, 'This Vaudois people have had pastors of great learning...versed in the languages of the Holy Scriptures...and very laborious...especially in transcribing to the utmost of their ability, the books of Holy Scripture, for the use of their disciples.'⁴

S. V. Bompiani states:

Unfortunately many of these books were lost during the persecutions of the seventeenth century, and only those books and ancient documents sent to the libraries of Cambridge and Geneva by Pastor Leger were preserved. The papists took care after every persecution to destroy as much of the Waldensian literature as possible. Many of the barbes were learned men and well versed in the languages and science of the Scriptures. A knowledge of the Bible was the distinctive feature of the ancient, and is now of the modern Vaudois... .Deprived for centuries of a visible church, and forced to worship in caves and dens, this intimate knowledge of God's word was their only light. Their school was in the almost inaccessible solitude of a deep mountain gorge called Pra del Tor, and their studies were severe and long-continued, embracing the Latin, Romaunt, and Italian languages.⁵

Alexis Muston also writes:

Superstition, obscuring the moral and religious perceptions, casts its shadows equally over all the regions of human intelligence; as, on the other hand, also, the light of the gospel...elevates, augments, and purifies all the powers of the mind. Of this, the Vaudois themselves are a proof, for they had taken their place,...at the head of modern literature, having been the first to write in the vulgar tongue. That which they then used was the Romance language, for all the early remains of which we are indebted to the Vaudois. It was from this language that the French and Italian were formed. The religious poems of the Vaudois still continue to be the most perfect compositions belonging to that period; and they are also those in which the rays of the gospel shine with the greatest brightness.⁶

The idea engendered and fostered by Rome that the Waldenses were few in number, without much organization or learning, and dependent upon Rome for their Bible and culture is dispelled by abundant trustworthy and scholarly testimony. Much proof can be produced to show that in some places the nobility were members of the Waldensian churches; that among them were the greatest scholars and theologians of the age; that among them were leaders in language, literature, music, and oratory.

Their missionary endeavors were widespread. How powerful their influence was upon the Reformation is well expressed in the following quotation:

Seemingly they took no share in the great struggle which was going on around them in all parts of Europe, but, in reality they were exercising a powerful influence upon the world. Their missionaries were everywhere, proclaiming the simple truths of Christianity, and stirring the hearts of men to their very depths. In Hungary, in Bohemia, in France, in England, in Scotland, as well as in Italy, they were working with tremendous, though silent power. Lollard, who paved the way for Wycliffe in England, was a missionary from these Valleys.... In Germany and Bohemia the Vaudois teachings heralded, if they did not hasten, the Reformation, and Huss and Jerome, Luther and Calvin did little more than carry on the work begun by the Vaudois missionaries.⁷

The extent to which the doctrines of the Waldenses or Albigenses had been accepted by the nobility may be seen by the following quotation from Philip Mornay:

Many great and noble men joined unto them as namely, Raymund Earle of Toulouse and of S. Giles, the king's cousin, Raymund Roger Vicount of Besiers and of Carcassonne, Peter Roger Lord of Cabaret, Raymund, Earl of Foix, near kinsman to the king of Arragon, Gasto Prince of Beam, the Earle of Bigorre, the Lady of the Vaur, the Earl of Carman, Raymund de Termes, Americ de Montreuil, William de Menerbe, and infinite others, both Lords and Gentlemen, men truly of that rank that no man of sound judgment will think, they would have exposed to manifest danger their life fortunes and honor for the defense of vices and errors so execrable as they were charged with all.⁸

After early schooling it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of Lombardy or to the University of Paris.⁹

A People of the Bible

It is indeed gratifying that this branch of the Church in the Wilderness was a Bible people. No subsequent Protestant church revered the Holy Scriptures more than did they. Their obedience to the book of God was at once the cause of their incomparable success, as it was also the offense which they gave to their enemies. Through the long night of the Dark Ages these people were a sanctuary for the Holy Scriptures. They were the ark in Europe which safely carried the Bible across the stormy waters of medieval persecution.

Since the Waldenses existed from the early Christian centuries, it would naturally be expected that their first Bible in their own tongue would be in Latin. Diligent research has proved that this is so. They early possessed that beautiful Latin version of the Bible called the Itala, which was translated from Greek manuscripts.¹⁰ This is proved by comparing the Itala version with the liturgy, or fixed form of divine service, used in the diocese of Milan for centuries, which contains many texts of Scripture from this Itala.¹¹ H. J. Warner says: "The version current among the Western heretics can be shown to be based upon the Greek and not upon the Vulgate."¹² When the fall of the Roman Empire came because of the inrush of the Teutonic peoples, the Romaunt, that beautiful speech which for centuries bridged the transition from Latin to modern Italian, had become the mother tongue of the Waldenses. They multiplied copies of the Holy Scriptures in that language for the people.¹³ In those days the Bible was, of course, copied by hand.¹⁴

The Bible formed the basis of the congregational worship, and the children were taught to commit large portions of it to memory.¹⁵ Societies of young people were formed with a view of committing the Bible to memory. Each member of these pious associations was entrusted with the duty of

carefully preserving in his recollections a certain number of chapters; and when the assembly gathered round their minister, these young people could together recite all the chapters of the Book assigned by the pastor.¹⁶ It thus can be seen how naturally their pastors, called "barbes," were a learned class.¹⁷ They were not only proficient in the knowledge of the Bible in Latin and in the vernacular, but they were also well schooled in the original Hebrew and Greek, and they taught the youth to be missionaries in the languages which then were being used by other European peoples.

Thus through these people has been handed down to the present generation the Bible of the primitive church, which found a permanent influence in the translation of the Authorized Version.

Persecutions of the Waldenses

There were persecutions before the thirteenth century against those considered as Waldenses, who perhaps went under other names. For hundreds of years, wars of extermination were waged in order to destroy every vestige of the writings of these different bodies. No artifice, no exertion, no expense, was spared by their enemies to efface all the records of the ancient Waldenses from the face of the earth.

There was no village of the Vaudois valleys but had its martyrs. The Waldenses were burned; they were cast into damp and horrid dungeons; they were smothered in crowds in mountain caverns, mothers and babes and old men and women together; they were sent out into exile in a winter night, unclothed and unfed, to climb the snowy mountains; they were hurled over the rocks; their houses and lands were taken from them; their children were stolen to be indoctrinated with the religion that they abhorred. Rapacious individuals were sent among them to strip them of their property, to persecute, and to exterminate them. "Thousands of heretics, old men, women, and children, were hung, quartered, broken upon the wheel, or burned alive, and their property confiscated for the benefit of the king and Holy See."¹⁸

So many books have been written relating these circumstances and picturing these heart-rending scenes that further enumeration is unnecessary. It is sufficient to say that the Waldenses remained true to the truth. When the Reformation dawned, under Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, and others, they were ready to receive a delegation from the new movement of Reformers who came to inquire of their beliefs. There were enough of them left in 1550, according to W. S. Gilly, so that eight hundred thousand souls in the Alpine provinces continued to refuse to accept the beliefs and practices of the Papacy.¹⁹

Truth Planted in Many Lands

Urged on by the power of truth triumphant, the Waldenses went forth to Europe. How widespread was the work of this noble people may be seen in the words of Samuel Edgar:

The Waldenses, as they were ancient, were also numerous. Vignier, from other historians, gives a high idea of their populousness. The Waldenses, says this author, multiplied wonderfully in France, as well as in other countries of Christendom. They had many patrons in Germany, France, Italy, and especially in Lombardy, notwithstanding the papal exertions for their extirpation.

This sect, says Nangis, were infinite in number; appeared, says Rainerus, in nearly every country; multiplied, says Sanderus, through all lands; infected, says Caesarius, a thousand cities; and spread their contagion, says Ciaconius, through almost the whole Latin world. Scarcely any region, says Gretzer, remained free and untainted from this pestilence. The Waldensians, says Popliner, spread, not

only through France, but also through nearly all the European coasts, and appear in Gaul, Spain, England, Scotland, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Saxony, Poland, and Lithuania. Matthew Paris represents this people as spread through Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, Spain, and Germany. Their number, according to Benedict, was prodigious in France, England, Piedmont, Sicily, Calabria, Poland, Bohemia, Saxony, Pomerania, Germany, Livonia, Sarmatia, Constantinople, Philadelphia, and Bulgaria.²⁰

Some have claimed that the Albigenses were different from the Waldenses. However, the truth is that they did not differ in belief. They are called Albigenses only because of Albi, the French city which was their headquarters. But the decrees of the popes have condemned them as Waldenses; papal "legates made war against them as professing the beliefs of the Waldenses; the monks Inquisitors, have formed their Proces and Indictments as against the Waldenses: the people have persecuted them as being such.... Many historiographers call them Waldenses."²¹

How the Waldenses or Albigenses made converts among Bulgarians the following quotation from Philip Mornay will show:

Matthew Paris saith further, That they spread themselves so far as into Bulgaria, Croatia, and Dalmatia, and there took such root, that they drew unto them many bishops: and thither came one Bartholomew from Carcassone in the country of Narbon in France, unto whom they all flocked...and he created bishops, and ordained churches.²²

Protestantism a Glorious Fruit of Waldensianism

In 1517, the dawn of the Protestant Reformation came to Europe. Protestantism was not so much a separation from the Church of Rome as it was a revival of apostolic doctrines so long held by the Waldenses. Protestantism was a spiritual expansion of the Church in the Wilderness. Of the remaining evangelical churches which had come down from the days of the apostles, the Waldenses were the purest and the most prominent. James D. McCabe writes concerning the delegates of early Reformers sent to a synodal assembly of the Waldenses:

Thus the time passed on until the Reformation dawned upon the world. The Vaudois were well pleased at this general awakening of the human mind. They entered into correspondence with the Reformers in various parts of Europe, and sent several of their Barbas to them to instruct them. The Reformers on their part, admitted the antiquity of the Vaudois rites and the purity of their faith, and treated the mountain church with the greatest respect. On the twelfth of September, 1532, a Synodal Assembly was held at Angrogna. It was attended by a number of deputies from the Reformed Churches in France and Switzerland. Among them was William Farel of France.... He manifested the greatest interest in the manuscript copies of the Bible which the Vaudois had preserved from the earliest times, and at his instance, the entire Bible was translated into French, and sent as a free gift from the Vaudois to the French Church.²³

The simplicity and purity of their lives was the result of the simplicity and purity of their doctrines. They followed the command of the apostle John that no man should add to, nor take from, the word of God. This attitude was a great defense against error, and constituted the divine rule for success in missionary enterprises. Even their enemies admitted that their beliefs were like those of the early Christians. An enumeration of these beliefs sounds like the preachings of Vigilantius in the fourth century and of Claude in the eighth. Antoine Monastier shows in the following words some of the errors that they rejected:

The ancient Vaudois constantly rejected doctrines that were based on authority and human tradition; they repelled, with holy indignation and horror, images, crosses, and relics, as objects of veneration or worship; the adoration and intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary and the saints; they consequently rejected the feasts consecrated to these same saints, the prayers addressed to them, the incense and tapers that were burned in their honor; they likewise rejected the mass, auricular confession, purgatory, extreme unction, and prayers for the dead, holy water, Lent, abstinence from meat at certain times and on certain days, imposed fasts and penances, processions, pilgrimages, the celibacy of the clergy, monkery, etc., etc. Their declaration on these points is as explicit as it is strong.²⁴

Reinerius Saccho, their enemy, was obliged to admit that they were a commandment-keeping people:

Concerning their manners, he [Reinerius] writes, they were modest, simple, meddling little with bargains or contracts.... That the first rules and instructions which for rudiments they gave unto their children was the Decalogue of the law, the Ten Commandments.²⁵

It was to be expected that persecutions, isolation, and desperate circumstances would tear away many of the people from some of their beliefs; and that at times there would be a certain amount of conformity to papal practices. Furthermore, when the Reformation, manifesting extreme liberalism in many things, swept over Europe, it had a great influence upon the ancient churches which had long suffered for many of the doctrines to which the Reformers turned. These ancient churches possessed in many points identical beliefs with those announced by the Reformation. Unfortunately, in their joy over the Reformation they conformed to certain shortcomings of the Reformers. The Reformation was a mighty influence for good as far as it went; but it is widely recognized that it did not go far enough.²⁶ Others than the pioneer Reformers were obliged to labor for the further restoration of primitive Christian beliefs and practices in the churches that were sincerely following the Master's precepts.

Did the Early Waldenses Keep the Sabbath?

Before taking up the specific cases of the observance of the Sabbath by the ancient Waldenses, it would be profitable to glance at the status of Sunday observance at the end of what is usually reckoned to be the first period of church history, terminating in the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325).

Constantine, who was the first Christian ruler of the Roman Empire at the time when the church and the state were coming together in perfect union, issued his now-famous Sunday law (A.D. 321). A comment upon this by a leading Roman Catholic journal states the case clearly:

The emperor Constantine after his conversion to Christianity, made the observance of Sunday a civil duty, and the law which commanded it is found in the Roman code. 'Let all judges and people of the town rest, and the trades of various kinds be suspended on the venerable day of the sun. Those who live in the country may, however, freely and without fault apply to agriculture, because it often happens that this day is the most favorable for sowing wheat and planting the vine, lest an opportunity offered by divine liberality be lost with the favorable moment.' Now we can scarcely conceive that Constantine would have excepted agricultural labor, if the church had from time immemorial strictly forbidden among Christians that kind of work which it prohibited at a later period.... Hence it has been the unanimous doctrine of divines, from time immemorial, that cessation from servile work is not only a point of discipline liable to change but it can be dispensed with by ecclesiastical authority whenever a reasonable cause presents itself.²⁷

There is ample evidence to show that the above quotation does not reveal any incidental condition or anything unusual in the observance of Sunday in the fourth century. This was not only the custom of

the state church in general, but it can be proved that the same church claimed that she had power enough to institute Sunday in the beginning, and also to say how much work should or should not be done on that day. As evidence, another quotation from the same journal is given:

To place the subject in a clearer light, we may state that, according to many learned writers it was not strictly commanded to abstain from work on Sunday during the first ages of the church. This day was undoubtedly viewed by Christians as a day of joy, of triumph, and of gratitude to God; and they convened in the church to offer their homage to the Almighty; but there is no evidence to show that cessation from work was considered obligatory; probably because there might have been some danger of Judaism in this cessation from work, and perhaps also because practice, in the time of persecution, would have greatly exposed the professors of Christianity. It was deemed sufficient to substitute public prayer for the Jewish Sabbath, particularly as the latter was observed by many of the faithful.²⁸

Thus it can be seen that Sunday in the early Christian centuries was not a holy day of divine appointment, but was, rather, appointed by man, and physical labor was carried on. From the quotations of church historians which follow, it will be seen that in the churches of the East as well as in all the churches of the West, except Rome, the Sabbath was publicly observed by those who were courageous enough to withstand the rising tide of those endeavoring to appease a sun-worshipping heathen world which gave special prominence to Sunday.

In contrast to the questionable beginnings of Sunday, consider the seventh-day Sabbath at the same time. The following two quotations have been given before, but are worthy of repetition. Socrates, a church historian of the fourth century, wrote thus: "For although almost all the churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this."²⁹

Another quotation from the church historian, Sozomen, who was a contemporary of Socrates, declares: "The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria."³⁰

The substance of these two quotations reveals that the Christianity of the Greek Church was a Sabbathkeeping Christianity; and that the Christianity of the West, with the exception of the city of Rome and possibly Alexandria, was also a Sabbathkeeping Christianity.

However, there is more specific information regarding the observance of the Sabbath before 325 when one considers the history of Spain. Spain had the good fortune to escape for centuries any marked influence of the church at Rome. Its church history is divided into two periods: first, that which covered the time up to 325; and secondly, the period between 325 and 1200. For the study of the first four centuries it is more than fortunate that the eighty-one church resolutions or canons passed by the council held at Elvira, Spain (c. A.D. 305), still exist.

The records of the Council of Elvira reveal three things: first, up until the time of that council, the Church of Spain had adopted no creed, and certainly not the creed later adopted at Nicaea;³¹ secondly, punishment of faulty members by the church did not go farther than dismissal, for there was no appeal to civil law; thirdly, up to the time of the Council of Elvira, movements toward a union of the church and the state had made no progress, but it was evident that attempts were being made along this line.

When it is a matter of inquiry as to what was the attitude of Christians in Spain on Sabbath observance, the evidence is clear. Canon 26 of the Council of Elvira reveals that the Church of Spain at that time

kept Saturday, the seventh day. "As to fasting every Sabbath: Resolved, that the error be corrected of fasting every Sabbath."³² This resolution of the council is in direct opposition to the policy the church at Rome had inaugurated, that of commanding Sabbath as a fast day in order to humiliate it and make it repugnant to the people.³³

What connection is there between these facts and the early Waldensians? It is this: that while for centuries Christianity in Spain was one, yet when the encroachments by Rome on these primitive Christians in Spain began, the people of the Pyrenees separated themselves from the errors that crept in upon them. Robert Robinson writes that the people living in the valleys in different countries became known as the "valley dwellers," or Vallenses. In fact, this author states his belief that the inhabitants of the Pyrenees were the true original Waldenses.³⁴ The original word is the Latin, *vallis*. From it came "valleys" in English, *Valdesi* in Italian, *Vaudois* in French, and *Valdenses* in Spanish.³⁵ Resolution 26 of the Council of Elvira having revealed that the early church of Spain kept the Sabbath, and history having proved that the Waldenses of north Spain existed at that time, these connections prove the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath by the early Waldenses in Spain.

It is a point of further interest to note that in northeastern Spain near the city of Barcelona is a city called Sabadell, in a district originally inhabited, in all probability, by a people called both "Valdenses" and *Sabbatati*.³⁶ Could not this name, Sabadell, have originated from the expression, "dell of the Sabbathkeepers"? It is also shown that the name *Sabbatati* comes from the fact of their keeping the Sabbath. There are still in the vicinity of Sabadell archaeological remains of these ancient peoples.³⁷

Many centuries later when the Papacy rose to dominion in Spain, and persecution fell upon these dwellers in the valley, they often would go over to northern Italy where they were welcomed and given a home among the Waldenses of the Alps.³⁸

The Waldenses, a Bible People

The stronger the church at Rome grew, the greater was the emphasis placed upon Sunday. On the other hand, the churches which continued in apostolic Christianity clung as long as possible to the day which Jesus Christ and the apostles sanctified.

The Waldenses were so thoroughly a Bible people that they kept the seventh-day Sabbath as the sacred rest day for centuries. Two centuries after Pope Gregory I (A.D. 602) had issued the bull against the community of Sabbathkeepers in the city of Rome, a church council which disclosed the extent of Sabbathkeeping in that peninsula was held at Friaul, northern Italy (c. A.D. 791). Friaul was one of the three large duchies into which the Lombard kingdom had been originally organized. This council, in its command to all Christians to observe the Lord's Day, testified to the wide observance of Saturday as follows: "Further when speaking of that Sabbath which the Jews observe, the last day of the week, which also all peasants observe."³⁹ About one hundred years later (A.D. 865-867), when the sharp contest between the Church of Rome and the Greek Church over the newly converted Bulgarians and their observance of the Sabbath came to the front, the question again entered into the controversy, as can be seen in the reply of Pope Nicolas I to the one hundred six questions propounded to him by the Bulgarian king.⁴⁰

Peter Allix, speaking of an author who was discussing the doctrines of the Waldenses, writes: "He lays it down also as one of their opinions; that the Law of Moses is to be kept according to the letter, and that the keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, and other legal observances, ought to take place."⁴¹

However, the accusation that they practiced circumcision has been repeatedly proved to be false. Writing of the Passagians, who are taken to be a branch of the Waldenses, David Benedict says:

The account of their practicing circumcision is undoubtedly a slanderous story forged by their enemies, and probably arose in this way. Because they observed the seventh day, they were called, by way of derision, Jews, as the Sabbatarians are frequently at this day; and if they were Jews, it followed of course, that they either did or ought to circumcise their followers. This was probably the reasoning of their enemies; but that they actually practiced the bloody rite, is altogether improbable.⁴²

Adam Blair says:

Among the documents we have by the same peoples, an explanation of the Ten Commandments, dated by Boyer 1120. It contains a compend of Christian morality. Supreme love to God is enforced, and recourse to the influence of the planets and to sorcerers, is condemned. The evil of worshiping God by images and idols is pointed out. A solemn oath to confirm anything doubtful is admitted, but profane swearing is forbidden. Observation of the Sabbath, by ceasing from worldly labors and from sin, by good works, and by promoting the edification of the soul through prayer and hearing the word, is enjoined.⁴³

In spite of the fury of the oppressors, the protecting hand of Christ was on His commandment-keeping people. They grew in numbers. But it was not until the twelfth century that the bishop of Rome became terrified over the growth of the Waldenses. The so-called heretics in southern France were in reality the western portion of the Waldenses, and were usually referred to as Albigenses because of the great numbers in the large city of Albi. The province in which Albi attracted attention was in alliance with the king of France, though not incorporated legally into that realm. The Papacy was allied with the French kings. A synod of "heretics" was held in 1167 in the district of Toulouse at which were present Cathari from Lombardy and Italy, as well as from France. Nicetas, the Paulician leader or bishop at Constantinople, attended by request and presided.⁴⁴ Yet the Paulicians, as Adeney indicates, disregarded Sunday and sanctified Saturday.⁴⁵

In order to meet the new economic conditions in which the Roman Church found itself and to combat the threat of heresy, two orders of monks were formed - the Franciscans and the Dominicans. As one author writes: "It has been affirmed that the orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans were instituted to silence the Waldenses."⁴⁶

As to the persecutions suffered by the Waldenses for Sabbathkeeping, the following is found in the decree of Alphonso, published about 1194:

Alphonse, king of Aragon etc., to all archbishops, bishops, and to all others:... We command you in imitation of our ancestors and in obedience to the ordinances of the church, that heretics, to wit, Waldenses, Insabbathi and those who call themselves the poor of Lyons and all other heretics should be expelled away from the face of God and from all Catholics and ordered to depart from our kingdom.⁴⁷

The use of the term "Insabbathi" in the previous quotation, designating those who should be expelled from Spain, leads to a consideration of Spanish Sabbathkeepers in medieval times. That the Insabbatati were Waldenses is proved by the statement of Bernard Gui, famous program builder of the Inquisition, that "Ensavates [Insabbatati] was the name given to the Vaudois."⁴⁸ Abundance of evidence can be produced to show that these Sabbathkeepers were interchangeably called Waldenses and Insabbatati.⁴⁹

There are two items of interest which throw light upon the term "insabbathi" used in the decree of King Alphonso (A.D. 1195) as given above. The first item is that there was a Gothic Spanish liturgy.⁵⁰ It was very different from that of Rome, and was not abolished until 1088. ⁵¹ The following quotation from Michael Geddes will help to show the interrelationship of the facts: "The papal supremacy was a thing not known in the ancient Gothic Catholic Church: So that the popish doctrines of transubstantiation, and of purgatory, and of praying to angels and saints, and of adoring images, and of auricular confessions, etc. were as little known in her; may, I conceive, easily be proved from her records, which are extant."⁵² Then the author goes on to say in the same paragraph that the faith in the ancient Spanish Gothic Church was the same as that of the ancient British Church. The reader needs only to refer to former chapters in this book to be able to rehearse the evidences there given that the ancient British or Celtic Church sanctified the seventh day as the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. This constitutes another link in the chain of evidence that the term Insabbatati refers to the keeping of the seventh day as the Sabbath.

The second item of interest is worthy of special note. The decree of King Alphonso of Aragon was given in the year 1194. This indicates how late in the middle ages the Waldenses were keeping the Sabbath in Spain. That papal authors in Germany, Italy, and France about the same time as the above decree were putting forth their writings against the Sabbatati, or Insabbatati, discloses how many and widespread were these people. There is an abundance of reference to "heretics" under the name of Sabbatati, or Insabbatati, in the records of the Inquisition. Explanations of their belief, however, are scarce because, as Robert Robinson writes: "It was a maxim with the catholics to avoid the mention of heresy in their synods, lest it should create a desire in any to know what it was. They forbade preachers to quote even their good arguments lest the people should entertain a favorable opinion of the authors."⁵³

These terms Sabbati, Sabbata, Insabbatati refer to keeping the seventh day as the Sabbath. The historian Goldast says of those who were called Insabbatati, "They were called Insabbatti, not because they were circumcised, but because they kept the Sabbath according to Jewish law."⁵⁴

Shortly after the decree of King Alphonso against the Insabbatati there flourished a fervent papal writer in Spain who has subsequently obtained considerable notoriety. This was Lucas of the city of Tuy, generally known as Lucas Tudensis. His writings make it clear how strong and how numerous were the Insabbatati in Spain about 1260. Lucas died about seventy-five years before the appearance of Wycliffe, "Morning Star of the Reformation." A splendid summary of his writings is given as follows:

Those, who will take the trouble to read this work, and observe how fondly Lucas dwells upon the presumed opinions of Isidore, the Spanish saint, how he laments that Spanish enthusiasm should be cooled, and should not burst out in arms against the enemies of the Catholic faith - how he declaims against heretical conventicles - the public disputations of heretics - their profanation of the parish churches - the arrival of Arnald in Spain and the transactions at Leon, - will perceive that the mind of Lucas was occupied by the consideration of Spanish and not of Albigenian, or foreign nonconformity.⁵⁵

The following testimony concerning the Sabbath was given by a Waldensian prisoner before the Inquisition (probably in Freiburg, Germany):

Barbara Von Thies testified... That on the last Saint Michael's day concerning confession as it is administered by the priests she has nothing to do with it. As to that which has to do with the Virgin Mary, on that she has nothing to answer. Concerning Sunday and feast days she says: 'The Lord God

commanded us to rest on the seventh day and with that I let it be; with God's help and His grace, we all would stand by and die in the faith, for it is the right faith and the right way in Christ."⁵⁶

The blessing of Christ upon these, His persecuted children, was so great that they entered into many lands. Mosheim declares that, prior to the age of Luther, there lay concealed in almost every country of Europe—especially in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland, and Germany - many persons in whose minds were deeply rooted the principles of the Waldenses, the Wycliffites, and the Hussites.⁵⁷

The Sabbath of the fourth commandment was observed among these peoples in obedience to the moral law. How high was the standing of Sabbatarians among lords and princes may be seen from the following quotation of Lamy:

All the counselors and great lords of the court, who were already fallen in with the doctrines of Wittenburg, of Augsburg, Geneva, and Zurich, as Petrowitz, Jasper Cornis, Christopher Famigall, John Gerendi, head of the *Sabbatarians*, a people who did not keep Sunday, but Saturday, and whose disciples took the names of Genoldists. All these, and others, declared for the opinions of Blandrat.⁵⁸

There is an abundance of testimony to show the harmonious chain of doctrine extending from the days of the apostles down to the Reformation and later, including the beliefs held by the believers of northern Italy, the Albigenses, the Wycliffites, and the Hussites. Andre Favyn, a well-known Roman Catholic historian, who wrote in French, traces the teachings of Luther back through Vigilantius to Jovinianus, claiming that Vigilantius gave his doctrines to "the Albigenses, who otherwise were called the Waldenses," and that they in turn passed them on to the Wycliffites and the followers of Huss and Jerome in Bohemia.⁵⁹

Inspired by the Redeemer, the Waldenses were always going forth in missionary labors. Because of this, they were in some places at certain times called Passaginians. Thus Gilly writes (in *Waldensian Researches*, page 61, note 2): "Passagii and Passagini, or the inhabitants of the passes, from the Latin word *passagium*, is one of the names given by ancient authors to the Waldenses."

A large proportion of the Waldenses, whether called by that name or by other names, believed the observance of the fourth commandment to be obligatory upon the human race. Because of this they were designated by the significant title of Insabbati, or Insabbatati. Farmers or townsmen going on Saturday about their work were so impressed by the sight of groups of Christians assembling for worship on that day that they called them Insabbatati. The term "Sabbath" was almost never applied to Sunday. Speaking of Constantine's Sunday law of 321, Robert Cox writes: "No evidence has been adduced, that before the enactment of this law there was Sabbatical observance of the Lord's Day in any part of Christendom."⁶⁰

That the Waldenses would be committed to Saturday as the Sabbath can be seen in these words: "They hold that none of the ordinances of the church that have been introduced since Christ's ascension ought to be observed, being of no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church and the like, they utterly reject."⁶¹ This is said of them in Bohemia. Erasmus testifies that even as late as about 1500 these Bohemians not only kept the seventh day scrupulously, but also were called Sabbatarians.⁶²

Thus, from historical statements, from unquestioned historical evidence that under various names and designations the Waldenses kept the Sabbath, as well as from their being called Sabbatati, Insabbatati, and other forms of this name, it is plain that one of the fundamental teachings and practices of the

larger part of the Waldenses was that of observing the seventh day as the sacred day of the fourth commandment.

The Waldenses and the Reformation

Although the reformed churches transformed the face of Europe, they failed to reject certain Latin practices which arose later to plague them. Pastor Robinson, in his farewell address to the Pilgrims departing from the shores of Holland to seek a new world, said that it was impossible for churches (referring to the Reformers) which had lately come out of such thick anti-Christian darkness to have received all the light.

Perhaps, if the churches of the Piedmont, in their joy and boundless feelings of fraternity toward the new army of Protestants, had been able to continue to hold to their ancient purity, the question concerning the modern Waldenses' tallying with the accounts of their primitive and medieval brethren would not now be raised. The answer is found in the events of 1630.

The descendants of the Waldenses who lived shut up in the valleys of Piedmont, were led by their proximity to the French and Genevans to embrace their doctrines and worship. Yet they retained not a few of their ancient rules of discipline, so late as the year 1630. But in this year the greatest part of the Waldenses were swept off by pestilence; and their new teachers, whom they obtained from France, regulated all their affairs according to the pattern of the French Reformed Church.⁶³

Although the Waldenses were one in essential doctrines with the churches of the Reformation, they did not lose their separate organization. The reformed churches grew in power to such an extent that in countries like Germany and England, they were free from Rome's persecutions. This, however, was not the case of the Waldenses, still under the rule of Italy.

After a synod when a delegation of Reformers met with them, they vowed to witness publicly more boldly than ever before. January 21, 1561, the day after delegates from their churches had sworn eternal friendship upon the snowy summits of the Alps, a decree from their enemies was published ordering all Waldenses to attend mass. After warlike attempts to drag them to the galleys, the stake, the prison, and the gallows, they developed such resistance and endurance that the duke of Savoy, influenced by his Protestant wife, granted them amnesty.

The persecution which raged from 1655 to 1689 was most terrible. It all but extinguished this evangelical people, horrible massacres, incredible acts of perfidy, burning of villages, children torn from their mothers to be dashed against the rocks, hosts of fugitives driven across the borders - such revolting acts as these followed one another. Half of the Waldenses were driven into exile for three and a half years. Concerning the persecutions of this period, one authority states: "In 1655 the persecution raged again, and if all the Protestant powers of Europe had not interposed, a complete annihilation of the Waldenses would have been the result."⁶⁴ In 1689, their pastor and hero, Henri Arnaud, led nine hundred of their warriors from Switzerland to the border town of Balsille. All winter they resisted an army of ten thousand. When all seemed lost the duke of Savoy joined the Protestant prince of Holland, and they were permitted to return in peace to their valleys. This great exploit is called the "Glorious Return." By the time the 1260-year period had run out, this faithful branch of the Church in the Wilderness had secured religious toleration.

The persecution of the Waldenses led John Milton to write his famous sonnet, "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont."

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept Thy truth so pure of old
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones.
Forget not: in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant: that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learned Thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

A World-Wide Awakening to Bible Prophecies

Protestantism was largely an abundant fruitage of the Church in the Wilderness. Protestantism rejected the development theory, an important and essential doctrine of Romanism. Through this theory the Papacy claims innate power to go on developing the teachings of the apostles. Through it Rome went on in its development of doctrine until it brought forth teachings contrary to the Bible. Cardinal Gibbons writes, "The Scriptures alone do not contain all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe."⁶⁵

Protestantism was a return to the Bible. It emphasized a more and more conscientious and enlightened application of scriptural truths. Protestantism grew mightily, and as it went on in expanding Bible study, its churches awoke in the eighteenth century to the urgent necessity of heeding the warnings wrapped up in Bible prophecies. Intensive study was applied to the great prophetic time periods. Thus John Wesley cried out in 1756 concerning the two-horned beast of Revelation 13: "He has not yet come, though he cannot be far off; for he is to appear at the end of the forty-two months of the first beast."⁶⁶

The 1260-year period of prophecy had become the concern of all. This led to a closer study of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 in which the date of Christ's crucifixion was a determining factor. The time was near for the church to come up out of the wilderness. This led to prayerful and learned consideration of the longer 2300-day period of Daniel 8. Bible societies sprang into existence; missionary associations were formed. Missionaries departed into all lands to announce that "the time of the end" had come. The centuries of faithfulness seen in the history of the Church in the Wilderness were succeeded by the period of the Remnant Church who would "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Revelation 14:2.)