

## **TRUTH TRIUMPHANT: CHAPTER 14**

### **The Church In Europe after the Time of Columbanus**

The real work of the early Irish missionaries in converting the pagans of Britain and central Europe, and sowing the seeds of culture there, has been overlooked when not willfully misrepresented. Thus, while the real work of the conversion of the pagan Germans was the work of Irishmen, Winfried or, as he is better known, St. Boniface, a man of great political ability, reaped the field they had sown, and is called the apostle of Germany, though it is very doubtful if he ever preached to the heathen.<sup>1</sup>

THE sun of Columbanus had shone brilliantly upon the cold hearts of Europe. He and his followers brought light to the lands overspread with darkness since the advent of the Franks.<sup>2</sup> Three revolutions immediately succeeded one another, which tell the story of Europe after his death during the medieval period of the Church in the Wilderness. These were: first, the development of civilization on the Continent through the efforts of the Celtic Church leaders who succeeded Columbanus and through the early Waldensian heroes; secondly, the organized opposition of the Papacy to this work; and lastly, the disastrous centuries which followed the crowning of Charlemagne by the pope as the founder of the Carolingian line of kings and the first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

The Celtic missionaries who came from Ireland in the seventh and eighth centuries found Europe in ignorance and disorganization. Their training centers raised the intellectual level of the territories in which they labored. By evangelizing and manifesting the spirit of sacrifice, they lifted the courage and hope of the populace toward truth triumphant. They impressed upon the people the love of reverence for sacred and noble themes. The dignity of labor was not neglected. Farms arose in territories which once looked slovenly. They were stocked with cattle and other necessary domestic animals. Bright flowers bloomed where formerly was a desert. Again the eyes looked upon the fields of waving grain, and the smile of prosperity beamed upon the land.

What became of the manifold centers of civilization in Europe planted by Columbanus and his followers? Clarence W. Bispham says: "Columban introduced into Gaul such a durable monument of the religious spirit of Ireland, that during his life no less than one thousand abbots recognized the laws of a single superior."<sup>3</sup> Columbanus arrived on the Continent less than a half a century after the beginning of the 1260-year period, which began in 538. The Merovingian kings, descendants of Clovis, were the founders of the Frankish realm. The story is well known of how the enfeebled progeny of Clovis, known as the "Do-Nothing Kings," introduced into the administration the Major Domus (the mayor of the palace), a sort of prime minister. These became powerful, and in time displaced the weakling king to found the Carolingian dynasty, so named from Charles the Great (Charlemagne). The predecessors of Charlemagne gained power with the assistance of the clergy from Rome, and then harassed the successors of Columbanus.<sup>4</sup>

Attention is called to the companions of Columbanus, who appear to have left Ireland with him and who like himself became the founders not merely of training centers, but of schools, towns, and cities. These men were diligent in evangelism and in the study of literature.

Early Irish manuscripts still extant in Continental libraries testify both to the culture and to the widespread missionary activity of these Irish monks. What writings have come down to us in Old Irish

are exclusively religious. These Irish monks also surpass the rest of western Europe at this time in illuminating manuscripts; that is, in decorating them with colored initials, border designs, and illustrations.<sup>5</sup>

Mention has already been made of Gallus, also called St. Gall. Benedict Fitzpatrick gives attention to Eurcinus, who after creating a miniature Christendom on the shores of the Lake of Bienna, Switzerland, founded the town of St. Ursanne; Sigsbert who, taking leave of Columbanus at the foot of the Alps which separate Italy from Switzerland, crossed the perilous glaciers and high in the region of perpetual snow established the valuable community of Dissentis; and Dicuil, brother apparently of St. Gall, who laid out the foundations of the town and mission center of Lure.<sup>6</sup> These and many other training centers of Celtic culture endured through the centuries of crisis. They continued from their eminences to educate the rude population of Europe and to produce new generations of scholars and teachers.

The Holy Scriptures must have been greatly multiplied when one considers the vast stretch of territory in which were located the foci of the Celtic Church on the Continent. Some of these seminaries were thronged with students. Reckoning only one copy of the Bible to every three or four students, and that would be little enough, there must have been a widespread dissemination of the Old and New Testaments throughout the countries we now call France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Italy. Momentous political changes, brought about by the Papacy's entering into alliance with the rulers of these different sections to advance her church, pushed the Scotch-Irish establishments into the background.

There are writers who have tried to indict the Celtic Church on the false ground that it was poorly organized and without central control. The probabilities and the facts of the case both are against this conclusion. The Irish colonizers studied and obeyed the Bible admonition, "Let all things be done decently and in order." (1 Corinthians 14:40.) It is true that they were not driven under the lash of a church united with the state nor forced to obey under threat of the sword. Rather, they were kept together by the invincible bonds of truth, blessed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They sought to avoid the hierarchical gradation, and so they employed other names than those used by Rome. On the other hand, the Church of the East, all the way from Assyria to China, which was the counterpart of the Celtic Church in the West, recognized as supreme pastor, the catholicos sitting at Seleucia in southern Mesopotamia, the headquarters of that church.<sup>7</sup> Surely this was organization. After the conquest of Persia by the Moslems, the organization continued; but the patriarchal seat was removed to Bagdad, and five hundred years later to Mosul (near Ninevah) on the Tigris River in northwestern Mesopotamia.<sup>8</sup>

### **Papal Hostility to the Celtic Church on the Continent**

One power, however, viewed with fear and alarm the scope of the work being built up by the Celtic Church. Pope Zachary in a letter to his chief agent in this section of Europe recognized that the pastors of this church were more numerous than those of his own church.<sup>9</sup> Neander quotes Epistle 45 from Pope Gregory III to the bishops of Germany, admonishing them to be steadfast in the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, and to beware of the doctrines of the Britons and of false and heretical priests, coming among them.<sup>10</sup> This same historian quotes from other epistles of the same pope addressed to bishops and dukes, informing them that one of the reasons he had sent Boniface among them was to win back those who had become the victims of "heresy through diabolical craft."

This leads to the consideration of Boniface (originally Winfried), so often presented to us as the apostle and founder of Christianity in Germany. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter notes, what any fair-minded reader of history would find, that Columbanus and his successors should be given the credit for the founding of Christianity in the countries in which the credit is usually given to Boniface. Unless one pays particular notice, it will escape his attention that Boniface was an Englishman brought up in scornful hatred of the Celtic Church. Wilfrid, another Englishman, must not be confounded with Winfried. The first led the bitter opposition to Celtic Christianity in England; the second, under the name of Boniface, did the same in Germany.

**As to the objectives of Boniface, Dr. A. Ebrard writes:**

His life's goal and his life's work was the subjection of the Christian churches of Austrasia as of Neustria to the papal decrees of canon law, especially the enslavement and destruction of that Christian denomination, which refused to recognize the primacy of the Roman seat but held firmly to its own constitutions and to its own ordinances. 11

Benedict Fitzpatrick, a Roman Catholic scholar of wide research, pictures how greatly Boniface was aroused against the Irish missionaries because of their teachings.<sup>12</sup> The papal agent brought them before councils and secured their condemnation as if they were heretics.

The pope greatly feared that Boniface himself might fall under the superb influence of the missionaries whose work he was delegated to destroy. Therefore, he bound Boniface, at the beginning of his labors, to the Papacy by a solemn oath. At the supposed tomb of the apostle Peter at Rome, he took this oath:

I promise thee, the first of the Apostles, and thy representative Pope Gregory, and his successors, that, with God's help, I will abide in the unity of the Catholic faith, that I will in no manner agree with anything contrary to the unity of the Catholic church, but will in every way maintain my faith pure and my co-operation constantly for thee, and for the benefit of thy church, on which was bestowed, by God, the power to bind and to loose, and for thy representative aforesaid, and his successors. And whenever I find that the conduct of the presiding officers of churches contradicts the ancient decrees and ordinances of the fathers, I will have no fellowship or connection with them, but, on the contrary, if I can hinder them, I will hinder them; and if not, report them faithfully to the pope.<sup>13</sup>

Neander goes on to say that although the missionaries whom Boniface had sworn to oppose were his superiors in learning and in soul winning, his oath to the pope meant that German Christianity was to be incorporated into the old system of the Roman hierarchy, creating a reaction against free Christian development by suppressing the British and Irish missionaries.<sup>14</sup> This shocking oath not only required Boniface to hinder all who did not agree with the Papacy; but also bound him to stifle his own convictions and concur in all things with Rome. It is the first oath of its kind; but it has since been demanded of every Roman Catholic bishop. Of it the historian Archibald Bower writes:

When Boniface had taken this oath (and it is the first instance that occurs in history, of an oath of obedience, or, as we may call it, of allegiance, taken to the pope), he laid it, written with his own hand, on the pretended body of St. Peter, saying, This is the oath, which I have taken, and which I promise to keep. And indeed how strictly he kept it, what pains he took to establish, not in Germany only, but in France, the sovereign power of his lord the pope, and bring all other bishops to the abject state of dependence and slavery, to which he himself had so meanly submitted, will appear in the sequel.<sup>15</sup>

Heinrich Zimmer writes that when the Anglo-Saxon Boniface (Winfried) appeared in the kingdom of France as papal legate in 723 to Romanize the churches already there, not one of the German tribes, i.e., Franks, Thuringians, Alamanni, or the Bavarians, could be considered pagan. What the Irish missionaries and their foreign pupils had implanted, quite independently of Rome, for more than a century, Boniface organized and established under Roman authority, partly by the force of arms.<sup>16</sup>

From this we learn that when Boniface started out on the subjection and Romanizing of the Columban missions, the Bavarian provinces practically belonged to the Columban church system.<sup>17</sup> When Boniface arrived there, he at once condemned Ehrenwolf, who was an outstanding Columban clergyman.<sup>18</sup> After Charles Martel had won his victory over the Moslems in the well-known Battle of Tours (A.D. 732), the duke of Thuringia who had previously been pressed to drive out from his territory the Scotch-Irish clergy, did not dare disregard this command from the victorious Charles. So in 733-34 the Celtic clergy were exiled.<sup>19</sup> However, the lack of pastors was so great that Boniface, terrified as he recognized the danger that whole stretches of land would swing back into heathenism, obtained a permit to reinstate a certain number of the Columban clergy.<sup>20</sup> In 743 Boniface threw two Scotch-Irish clergymen into prison on the grounds that they forbade any church to consecrate apostles or saints for veneration; that they declared pilgrimages to Rome useless; and that they rejected canonical law as well as the writings of Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory.<sup>21</sup> However, there was such an uproar among the people that even the mayor of the palace, Pepin, thought it wise to set both of the men free.

### **Charles Martel**

Like Boniface, Charles Martel has been overrated. There are writers who recognize that his victory over the Mohammedans has been overplayed. Walter F. Adeney tells us that all that Charles Martel did was to check a Moorish raid in the west that had nearly spent its force - a raid that could never have resulted in the permanent subjection of Europe.<sup>22</sup> Many do not know how weak this Moslem invasion was which Martel blocked, because of the great extent to which history has been written to glorify papal heroes.

Alban Butler reveals the further influence of the oath of Boniface in its relation to Charles Martel. "Pope Gregory gave him [Boniface] a book of select canons of the church, to serve him for a rule in his conduct, and by letters, recommended him to Charles Martel."<sup>23</sup>

Charles Martel continued after his overrated victory to build up the Papacy. Italy was still under the Eastern Roman emperor at Constantinople. The day of the Holy Roman Empire in the West was about to dawn. John Dowling presents an accurate picture of conditions at that time as he writes:

In the year 740, in consequence of the pope refusing to deliver up two rebellious dukes, the subjects of Luitprand, king of the Lombards, that warlike monarch invaded and laid waste the territories of Rome. In their distress, their fear of the resentment of the emperor forbidding them to apply to him for the assistance they urgently needed, they resolved to apply to the celebrated Charles Martel....

It is certain that he turned a deaf ear to these pathetic appeals of the pope; till the latter, despairing of gaining his help by appealing to his piety or superstition, attacked him in a more vulnerable part, by appealing to his ambition. This Gregory did by proposing to Charles, that he and the Romans would renounce all allegiance to the emperor, as an avowed heretic, and acknowledging him for their protector, confer upon him the consular dignity of Rome, upon condition that he should protect the pope, the church, and the Roman people against the Lombards; and, if necessity should arise, against

the vengeance of their ancient master, the emperor. These proposals were more suited to the warlike and ambitious disposition of Martel, and he immediately dispatched his ambassadors to Rome to take the pope under his protection, intending, doubtless, at an early period, to consummate the agreement.<sup>24</sup>

In the meantime Charles Martel died and was succeeded by his son Pepin. The new Major Domus conceived the design of dethroning his feeble monarch, the descendant of Clovis. He resolved to obtain the spiritual recognition of the people for his project by arguing that since he possessed the power without the title, he had a right to obtain the title. Pope Zachary, who at that time had strained relations with the imperial ruler at Constantinople on the one hand, and was exposed to the warlike Lombards in northern Italy on the other, was obliged, he felt, to secure the favor and protection of the powerful Pepin and his Franks. An agreement was consummated. The feeble king was deposed. Pepin was crowned and knighted shortly after this by Boniface, who acted as the pope's legate. This conspiracy is an example of how the Papacy built itself up by alliances with the kings of the earth.

The Papacy had aided Pepin to become a king. It was now the turn of Pepin to aid the Papacy. The king of the Lombards had laid siege to the city of Ravenna and threatened to march on Rome unless his rightful authority was recognized. The pope immediately appealed for deliverance to the emperor at Constantinople, who was nominally the sovereign of Rome. When, however, he was unable to secure that succor, the pope considered that the power of the eastern emperor in Italy was at an end; and he appeared in person before King Pepin of France to request deliverance. After a short delay Pepin and the pope at the head of a victorious army recrossed the Alps and defeated the Lombards. The king then fulfilled a promise made to the pontiff by delivering up to him all the cities, castles, and territories formerly belonging to the emperor in the West to be held and possessed forever by the pope and his successors.<sup>25</sup>

### **Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire**

The colorful scene of Christmas Day at Rome (A.D. 800) when the pope placed an imperial crown on the head of Charlemagne, Pepin's son, and named him the head of the whole Roman Empire, signified a vast European revolution. It meant the removal of the emperor at Constantinople from further power in European affairs. It meant the passing of many princes, dukes, and duchies, and the subduing of Aquitaine, Alamannia, Saxony, and Bavaria, because Charlemagne was now too strong with the sword to permit rivals in power. It meant the union of church and state; the union of the Papacy with the empire for more than a thousand years. It meant that Charlemagne as a crushing warrior would wield his mighty battle-ax to spread throughout Europe the rule of the papal church. Henry Hart Milman writes:

The Saxon wars of Charlemagne, which added almost the whole of Germany to his dominions, were avowedly religious wars. If Boniface was the Christian, Charlemagne was the Mohammedan, apostle of the gospel. The declared object of his invasions, according to his biographer, was the extinction of heathenism; subjection to the Christian faith or extermination.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the war Charlemagne endeavored to subdue the tribes as he went on by the terror of his arms; and terrible indeed were those arms! On one occasion at Verdun-on-the-Aller, he massacred four thousand brave warriors who had surrendered, in cold blood.<sup>27</sup>

Such actions of Charlemagne were eloquently praised by leading papists as the pious acts of an orthodox member of the church. Among the barbarians who were supposed to be newly converted, the church instilled its superstitions and its hatred of heretics and unbelievers. The polygamy of Charlemagne was more like an Oriental sultan. The notorious licentiousness of his court was unchecked, and indeed unreproved by the religion of which he was at least the temporal head. The spiritual sovereign of this same religion had placed on his brow the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. The Mohammedans, in their fury against idols and images, claimed that God had raised them up to destroy idolatry; but the Papacy allowed its leaders to erect images in the churches.

It is a well-known fact that it was because of the fierceness with which Charlemagne drove the inhabitants of Europe into the papal faith that the Danes left their native home in great masses and sailed away, swearing that they would destroy Christians and Christian churches wherever they could find them. They soon afterward conquered England and Ireland, having invaded these countries with great forces. They wreaked their vengeance on Christianity in both these kingdoms. Two centuries passed by before Ireland, under the famous Brian Boru,<sup>28</sup> overthrew the Danish kingdom and re-established an Irish role. And so far as England is concerned, it was not until the Norman conquest that the present line of kings displaced the Danes and gained the throne of Great Britain.

From the date of the founding of the Holy Roman Empire we can hardly say that the leadership of the Church in the Wilderness in Europe was limited to the spiritual successors of Columbanus. Events occurred which brought forth the strength of all evangelical bodies. Visible unity of evangelical faith throughout the different persecuting kingdoms of the empire was impossible. But leaders arose in different sections of the Continent, and the groups of the Church in the Wilderness were united in essential doctrines though visibly separated.

The decree of Pope Gregory IX (A.D. 1236), mentioning these different bodies by the names they had acquired, recognized the unity of their evangelical teachings. It reads thus: "We excommunicate and anathematize all the heretics, the Puritans, Patefines, the poor of Lyons, Pasagines, Josephines, Amoldists, Speronists, and all others of whatever name: their faces might differ, but their tails are entangled in one knot."<sup>29</sup> By the expression, "their tails are entangled in one knot," the Papacy recognized how deep was the unity among the evangelical bodies. Earlier (A.D. 1183) Pope Lucius had published a bull against heresies and heretics to be found in different states of Europe and who bore different names, declaring, "all Cathad, Paterini, and those who called themselves the humble or poor men of Lyons, and Passagini...to lie under a perpetual anathema."<sup>30</sup>

The Dark Ages, as many authorities state, settled deep upon the masses of the Continent. John Dowling says:

The period upon which we are now to enter, comprising the ninth and tenth centuries, with the greater part of the eleventh, is the darkest in the annals of Christianity. It was a long night of almost universal darkness, ignorance, and superstition, with scarcely a ray of light to illuminate the gloom. This period has been appropriately designated by various historians as the "dark ages," the "iron age," the "leaden age," and the "midnight of the world." ...During these centuries, it was rare for a layman of whatever rank to know how to sign his name.<sup>31</sup>

Also, J. L. Mosheim writes: "It is universally admitted, that the ignorance of this century was extreme, and that learning was entirely neglected.... The Latin nations never saw an age more dark and cheerless."<sup>32</sup>

Ignorance and poverty left the people an easy prey to superstition. The number and order of monks and nuns, the religious soldiers of the Vatican, greatly increased. The Papacy on several occasions had sworn emperors, princes, and local rulers to hunt out those who refused to follow the imperial church and to condemn them as heretics. The masses had been so cowed by the political sword and by superstitious terrors that as time went on, if even the emperor refused to bend to the demands of the Papacy, the church declared his subjects absolved from their oath of allegiance to him. So the pope's power vastly increased. Peoples of simple evangelical faith who truly loved the Scriptures and were willing to die for them were to undergo imprisonment, confiscation of property, and slaughter.

### **The Albigenses and the Paulicians**

About the time of the establishment of the Holy Roman Empire, if not considerably before, a large body of evangelical Christians entered Europe from Asia Minor. These were the Paulicians, for centuries misrepresented and falsely accused but lately exonerated. It was because of their earnest desire to live according to the Epistles of Paul that they were called Paulicians. They soon spread over Europe, and although no chronicle records their dispersion, the fact is attested to by the appearance of their teachings in many countries of the West. They joined themselves to migrating groups, and as J. A. Wylie says, "From this time a new life is seen to animate the efforts of the Waldenses of Piedmont, the Albigenses of southern France, and of others who, in other parts of Europe, revolted by the growing superstitions, had begun to retrace their steps towards the primeval fountains of truth."<sup>33</sup>

The noble work which had been done formerly by Vigilantius in northern Italy was to be augmented by the coming of the Paulicians, and the New Testament doctrines which had been impressed upon Western Europe by Columbanus, and the liberty-loving Christianity that characterized the Visigothic Christians, were to be re-emphasized. Historians maintain that although the Paulicians have been the most wantonly libeled of all gospel sects, it has been clearly proved that they represent the survival of a more primitive type of Christianity. Nevertheless, men who should have known better have endeavored to brand them as Manichaeans. W. F. Adeney writes of them:

Mariolatry and the intercession of saints are rejected; image worship, the use of crosses, relics, incense, candles, and resorting to sacred springs are all repudiated as idolatrous practices. The idea of purgatory is rejected. The holy year begins with the feast of John the Baptist. January sixth is observed as the festival of baptism and spiritual rebirth of Jesus. Zatic, or Easter, is kept on the fourteenth Nisan. We meet with no special Sunday observances, and possibly the Saturday Sabbath was maintained. There is no feast of Christmas or of the Annunciation. When we come to consider the question of doctrine, we note that the word "Trinity" never appears on the book.<sup>34</sup>

Edward Gibbon, who writes a whole chapter on the Paulicians, has vindicated them of the charge of Manichaeism.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, the scholar, George Faber, in his volume dedicated to the vindication of the Albigenses and Waldenses, in writing of Constantine, the founder of the Paulicians, says: "It is true, indeed, that Constantine, deeply imbued with the discourses of Christ and with the writings of Paul, openly rejected the books of the ancient Manichaeans." Faber further speaks of the purity of their

Scriptures, "Now this single circumstance alone, independently of all other evidence, is amply sufficient to demonstrate the impossibility of their pretended Manichaeism."<sup>36</sup>

Thus, the greatly increased supremacy of the Papacy faced the growing triumph of pure Bible truth in the hearts of evangelical bodies. A struggle began which would never cease until the Reformation had broken the power of darkness. Though much research has been given to the relation of the Paulicians and Albigenses to each other, only this much is clear - their beliefs and history are similar, if not identical. The Albigenses were numerous in southern France where they gained myriads of converts. Here they maintained an independence of the Papacy, and rejected transubstantiation.<sup>37</sup>

The Papacy became alarmed over the growth in dissent, and acted. First, there were persecutions on a minor scale. In 1198 Rome dispatched legates to the south of France, and a large number of Albigenses were committed to the flames. When these measures failed to secure the desired results, Raymond, the reigning count of Toulouse, was ordered to engage in a war of extermination against his unoffending subjects. Raymond hesitated. Later events increased the bitterness, and the pope proclaimed a crusade against southern France. Ample forgiveness of sins committed through a lifetime was promised to all who would join. Without entering into detail concerning the numerous adventurers, soldiers, and aspiring fighters who composed the invading army, we may say that hideous massacres and widespread slaughter upon these numerous, simple-hearted believers in the New Testament ensued.

The assembled host of the invaders were encamped around the fortified city of Beziers in July, 1209. When the citizens of the beleaguered place, the majority of whom were good Catholics, refused to surrender, the crusaders demanded of the pope's legate how they should distinguish the Catholics from the heretics. He replied, "Kill them all; God will know His own."<sup>38</sup> A terrible massacre followed. For several years the revolting slaughter went on from city to city until a cry of horror arose, not only in Roman Catholic nations, but throughout Europe. The moral prestige of the Papacy suffered.

### **The Franciscans and Dominicans**

There is another bit of history connected with this exterminating crusade that will come as a surprise to many. In the track of these hysterical religionists who had slaughtering weapons in their hands, followed the Franciscan and Dominican monks inflaming the fanatics with their mystic fury.<sup>39</sup> It was largely in order to exterminate the widespread dissent throughout the Continent, and particularly in southern France, against the unacceptable doctrines of Rome that these two orders of monks came into existence. The Franciscans were formally approved in 1223 by the pope; the Dominicans shortly before. About the year 1200, Pope Innocent III established the Inquisition. Bishops and their vicars being, in the opinion of the pope, neither fit nor sufficiently diligent for the extirpation of heretics, two new orders, those of St. Dominic and St. Francis were duly instituted.<sup>40</sup>

It is astonishing to read the vast amount of literature put forth lately by modern authors glorifying St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscans, for what they call his holy, gentle life and powerful preaching. He has been surrounded with a halo of so-called miracles and experiences as well as being made participant in events which never happened. The real facts of the case indicate that his only claim to a place on the pages of history is that he brought the unoffending believers in the New Testament to prison, to the stake, and to exile for no other crime than refusing to believe the doctrines of the Papacy. However, there is more to be said about the active work of the Dominicans in connection with



the Inquisition than the Franciscans. Also there are good authorities who, writing without any reference whatever to the heresy-hunting policy of the Franciscans and Dominicans, claim that their mystic teachings and beliefs were similar to Manichaeism and other pantheistic Oriental teachings.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Power of the Reformation**

Swiftly the years rolled by. The fundamental teachings of the Church in the Wilderness, which according to Revelation 12 was the successor of the apostolic church, gained an increasing number of adherents throughout Great Britain and on the Continent. About the time efforts were made to turn the homeland of the Albigenses into an Aeldama, the Papacy, through the successors of William the Conqueror, sent armies marching into Ireland to complete the subjection of early Celtic Christianity.

Nevertheless new and vigorous spiritual leaders were arising who, though of different names and organizations, took up the banner of truth as it was struck from the hands of the Celts and the Albigenses. Wycliffe, "the Morning Star of the Reformation," during the fourteenth century filled all England with his opposition to Rome and with his championship of the Bible. In Bohemia he was followed by Huss and Jerome, both of whom were burned at the stake. Before the epochal Reformation led by Luther had broken forth in Germany, the Papacy had slaughtered the Waldenses of northern Italy as it had previously persecuted the Albigenses. John Calvin, the successful leader against the Papacy in France and Scotland, is recognized as a direct descendant of the Waldenses.<sup>42</sup> The Lollards, as the followers of Wycliffe are often called, were indoctrinated by the Albigenses and the Waldenses.<sup>43</sup>

In previous chapters we have noted the rage of Rome against those who continued to believe that Saturday, the seventh day of the week, was the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It is recalled that the historian A. C. Flick and other authorities claim that the Celtic Church observed Saturday as their sacred day of rest, and that reputable scholarship has asserted that the Welsh sanctified it as such until the twelfth century. The same day was observed by the Petrobrusians and Henricians, and Adeney, with others, attributes to the Paulicians the observance of Saturday. There are reliable historians who say that the Waldenses and the Albigenses fundamentally were Sabbathkeepers.

The Reformation came, and within a third of a century from its inception powerful nations of Europe had been wrenched away from the Papacy. Would one now be tempted to say that this was the time that the church came up out of the wilderness? Hardly. The Reformation forms part of the history covered by the Church in the Wilderness. It falls inside the 1260- year period. The twelfth chapter of Revelation, however, does not present the Reformation church as the successor of the Church in the Wilderness. The Remnant Church, or the last church, is to proclaim the soon-coming of Jesus Christ and the keeping of "the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. The Remnant Church is the true and final successor to the Church in the Wilderness.

### **The End of the Holy Roman Empire**

What the Reformation did in restoring the Bible to western lands, the armies of the French Revolution were to do in releasing the nations of the Continent from the grip of the old regime. The human race was to have one more chance in perfect freedom and with unprecedented advantages in learning and science to demonstrate to the universe whether it would believe and live according to the revealed will of God in the light of fulfilling prophecy. The United States of America was the first nation to write complete religious liberty into its Constitution. The British Empire and some other governments

manifest a tolerance which in practice amounts to religious liberty, but they still maintain a state church and do not, as a legal right, grant full liberty of conscience to their citizens.

The effect of the American Revolution was electrifying on France. The common people arose and broke the tyrannical rule of the nobles and the clergy; and, copying the American Bill of Rights, not only proclaimed religious liberty to France, but also to all peoples wherever the armies of the French Revolution went. The crowning act occurred in May, 1798, when the armies of France entered Rome, took the pope prisoner, dispersed the college of cardinals, and proclaimed religious liberty upon Capitoline Hill, the most famous of Rome's seven mountains. One is justified in saying that the 1260-year prophecy terminates at this point in history.

The crushing of the old regime continued. That military genius, Napoleon, placed himself at the head of France's revolutionary armies and disposed of what was left of the order established by the illegitimate union between Charlemagne and the pope throughout the Continent. The Holy Roman Empire is usually said by historians to have breathed its last by the fatal strokes of Napoleon in 1804. It is true Napoleon made a concordat for France with the pope in 1801, but in it the victorious general refused to accord the Papacy its old standing under the former kings; he would recognize no more than that the Catholic faith was the religion of the majority of Frenchmen. Though Napoleon accorded other recognitions to the Papacy, they were nothing more than the usual gains sought through diplomacy.

To whom shall be ascribed praise for having liberated the oppressed Western world from this awful tyranny? - not to the sword of any great conqueror, but to the Church in the Wilderness, which suffered and bled and died throughout centuries for freedom, truth, and the Holy Scriptures. The examples of these martyrs put into the hearts of the people the spirit to resist tyranny until liberty became the law of the land.

Thus the spirit and power of Columbanus and his successors, mingled with the spirit of freedom, dwelt in the descendants of the Celts, the Goths, and the Lombards, and arose to a crescendo in the hearts of kings who determined to do the will of God. The story of Europe is not complete, however, without knowing how richly the Waldenses contributed to dispelling the Stygian shades of the Dark Ages and to restoring Biblical Christianity; and there is much to be told of the Church in the Wilderness in the Near East, in India, in central Asia and China.