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WALDENSIAN MISSIONARY TRAINING SCHOOL IN PIEDMONTESE ALPS

In the Innermost Angrogna Valley, Nestled High Amid the Eternal Snows, Waldensian Youth Were Trained as Missionaries to Bear the Gospel to the Far-flung Lands of Europe in the Middle Ages. The Waldensian Candlestick Insigne Appears on the Wall Behind Their Teacher

Ancient Roots

of the Waldenses of Italy

I. Waldenses a Stock With Many Branches

The name Waldenses belongs today to a relatively small group of evangelical Christians inhabiting a few Alpine valleys near Turin. But that name evokes memories of an ancient and honorable ancestry, whose devotion, perseverance, and suffering under persecution have filled some of the brightest pages of religious history, and have earned immortality in Whittier's charming miniature and Milton's moving sonnet. But the Waldensians of old were not confined to the Italian valleys where live their modern remnant; they were scattered over Europe among many peoples and in varied circumstances. Their boundaries are now hard to define, for the name has been applied to many groups more or less connected with one another. And the very name has been a center of bitter dispute as to whether it points to the origin of that movement in Peter Waldo and his group of lay preachers called Poor Men of Lyons.

1. VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF ORIGIN.—The whole question of Waldensian origins has suffered from a scarcity of source materials and an excess of controversial bias. The older Protestant historians were led, in their zeal to find in the Waldenses a visible "apostolic succession" from the early church, to take unsound positions in support of Waldensian antiquity; the Catholics, on the other hand, zealous for the defense of their

own apostolicity, made the most of Waldo as the founder in their efforts to brand the movement as innovation and heresy.

The Roman Catholic controversialist Bossuet contended that the Waldenses owed their origin to Peter Waldo and had no existence in any part of the world prior to his time, but Thomas Bray charged that "it was only the malice of their enemies, and the desire to blot out the memorial of their antiquity, which made their adversaries impute their origin to so late a period, and to Peter Waldo."¹

The more critical historians, who cared nothing for proving apostolic succession, either Catholic or Protestant, surveyed the extant source material. They saw on the one hand the Waldensian traditions ascribing their origin to the time of Sylvester and to the apostasy of the church on the occasion of the apocryphal Donation of Constantine, and on the other the statements of the Catholic Inquisitors that the Waldenses had received their name from Peter Waldo, about 1170; consequently, they concluded that the Waldensian heresy was no older than the name of Waldo, and that the movement began entirely with his Poor Men of Lyons.

But further research in the field of medieval heresies has made it clear to many historians that the Waldensians in Italy are not to be traced back merely to Waldo but to earlier evangelical movements.² The English historian Beard, cataloguing the Waldenses under the term "Biblical Christians," expresses it thus:

"The more accurate research of recent years traces the origin of the Waldenses to a double fountain, the streams from which soon mingled, and were thenceforth hard to be distinguished. On the one hand, there were the Vaudois, the 'men of the valleys,' who still hold their ancient seats in the mountains of Dauphiné and Piedmont; on the other, the so-called 'Poor Men of Lyons,' the followers of Peter Waldo, a rich merchant

¹ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *The History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*, vol. 2, pp. 110, 120; see also Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 464; Thomas Bray, footnote in his translation of Jean Paul Perrin's *Histoire des Vaudois*, in *History of the Ancient Christians Inhabiting the Valleys of the Alps*, p. 24. This controversy over origins was intense between Archbishop Ussher (1581-1656) and Bishop Bossuet (1627-1704) in the seventeenth century, and between S. R. Maitland (1792-1866) and G. S. Faber (1773-1854) and W. S. Gilly (1790-1855) in the nineteenth century. See also Gilly, *Narrative*, p. 20.

² For a survey of sources on Waldensian origins with a chart, see Appendix D.

of that city, who gave himself up to apostolic work and adopted an apostolic simplicity of living. But the Waldenses, whatever their origin, were from the first Biblical Christians. They translated the Scriptures into their own tongue, and expounded them in their natural sense only. They maintained the universal priesthood of the believer."³

But it is not enough to find only two sources. It is clear that the contemporary documents divide the Waldenses into two principal branches, the Poor Men of Lyons and the Poor Men of Lombardy, but they also use other subordinate designations, some of the older party names. The Italian branch was complex in itself. Even those who trace the name Waldenses to Waldo recognize that his followers combined with older evangelicals in Italy, and that the movement known under the name of Waldenses was a fusion of elements from a number of older groups—such as the Humiliati, the Arnoldists, the Petrobrusians, the Apostolics—who accepted Waldo's leadership.⁴

The north Italian Waldenses, with whom those in Austria, Germany, and Bohemia were more closely connected, were more independent of the Catholic Church, and differed in other respects from those in France, doubtless on account of their earlier sources of dissent. This multiple source evidently accounts for the fact that they denied that they originated in Waldo's Poor Men of Lyons. That is the crux of the whole problem.

Peter Waldo was obviously not the founder of the churches of the Piedmont valleys, which were in existence long before him. We have seen how north Italy had a long tradition of independence and of evangelical principles which broke forth into antisacerdotal reactions from time to time. It is in this sense that the Italian Waldenses were the spiritual descendants of the earlier evangelicals, of Claudius, of Vigilantius, and of

³ Charles Beard, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 24.

⁴ Henry C. Vedder, "Origin and Early Teachings of the Waldenses, According to Roman Catholic Writers in the Thirteenth Century," *The American Journal of Theology*, July, 1900 (vol. 4, no. 3), pp. 476, 477; Walter F. Adeney, "Waldenses," in Hastings, *op. cit.*, vol. 12, p. 666; Wilhelm Preger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Waldeser im Mittelalter," *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 13, part 1, pp. 209, 211; Davison, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 252, 253.

Jovinian.⁵ Yet they were stirred into action and organized for aggressive propaganda by Waldo.

2. WALDO BECOMES SOURCE OF NEW MISSIONARY IMPETUS.—The rich converted merchant of Lyons, PETER WALDO (Valdes, Valdesius, Waldensis), is credited with founding the Poor Men of Lyons, whom the Passau Inquisitor specifies as being called Leonists.⁶ He began his evangelical labors about 1173. Peter's experience was similar to that of Luther, who, having finished his course of philosophy at Erfurt, found his whole life attitude profoundly affected when a stroke of lightning, in a violent thunderstorm, induced him to withdraw from the world and enter the Erfurt monastery. The story of Waldo's conversion is that on some public occasion at Lyons, when the citizens were gathered together, one of their number suddenly dropped dead. This made a profound impression upon his mind, and his contact with a ballad singer who sang of the piety and voluntary poverty of St. Alexis brought him to a decision to devote his life to following Christ literally.

Waldo distributed his substance among the poor, and devoted himself to the profession of the gospel. Having employed part of his wealth on the translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular, he distributed them among his countrymen. He also enlisted reciters and expounders of these translations, sending them forth as traveling preachers. These Poor Men of Lyons, when reprimanded for their lay preaching, warned that God must be obeyed rather than the prelates, and eventually they came to denounce the Roman church as the Babylon of the Apocalypse.⁷ The obtaining of the Scriptures gave boldness and confidence. They could show that they were not advancing new doctrines but simply adhering to the ancient faith of the Bible. Forbidden to preach by the archbishop of Lyons, Waldo

⁵ Albert H. Newman, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 558, 559, 566.

⁶ Reineri . . . *Contra Waldenses*, chap. 3, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, p. 264; the anonymous chronicle of Laon, "Ex Chronico Universali Anonymi Laudunensis," entry for 1173, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* (hereafter abbreviated to *MGH, Scriptores*), vol. 26, p. 447.

⁷ Reineri . . . *Contra Waldenses*, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, pp. 264, 265; see also Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 457.

appealed to the pope, Alexander III, who sanctioned the vow of poverty, but not the unauthorized preaching. Walter Map (Mapes), a Welsh delegate at the Third Lateran Council, tells of seeing several deputies of Waldo, who presented portions of the Scriptures in the "Gallic" tongue to the pope. Unable to obtain papal authorization to preach, they went forward without it.⁸

Finally Waldo and his followers were scattered after they had been excommunicated and exiled by the archbishop of Lyons in 1184. Leaving Lyons, Waldo took refuge in Dauphiné. Persecution forced his retreat to Belgium and Picardy, and from thence to Germany. Finally he settled in Bohemia, where he died.⁹

His followers spread over southern France, Piedmont, and Lombardy, where they "mingled with other heretics, imbibing and spreading" the teachings of older sects.¹⁰ Thus the name Waldenses came to embrace various groups, some more evangelical than the Poor Men of Lyons. Peter's followers became supporters of the principles of the valleys, and boldly resisted the corrupt innovations of Rome. So in time Peter's new French society joined hands with the ancient valley dwellers of Italy.

Until the days of Peter Waldo the valley dwellers of north Italy seem not to have moved much from their secluded homes, save into the lowlands of Turin or Vercelli. Now a new impulse was given. With the appearance of the Poor Men of Lyons, a new order of preacher-missionaries was instituted, who instead of remaining at home from generation to generation, went forth into the world at large, carrying the gospel aggressively into every quarter of Europe. Of this powerful missionary characteristic, there is abundant historical testimony from their enemies alone—the Passau Inquisitor, Pilichdorf, Map,

⁸ Laon chronicle, entry for 1178, *MGH, Scriptores*, vol. 26, p. 449; Walter Map's "*De Nugis Curialium*," translated by Montague R. James, pp. 65, 66.

⁹ J. A. de Thou, *Jac. Augusti Thuani Historiarum Sui Temporis*, vol. 1, book 4, sec. 16, p. 221; see also J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, *History of the Crusades Against the Albigenses*, p. xxxii.

¹⁰ This is referred to by Stephen of Bourbon, by the proceedings of the Inquisition of Carcassonne, and by other early sources to be cited in Appendix D.

Burchard of Ursperg (formerly confused with Conrad of Lichtenau), Thuanus, and so forth.¹¹ Large numbers of French Waldenses, harassed by incessant persecution, migrated into the valleys of Dauphiné and on beyond to dwell with their brethren, but they also continued to go forth into other countries.

3. ANCIENT ITALIAN SECT REVIVED UNDER PETER.—The comparatively late Poor Men of Lyons were clearly the disciples of Peter Waldo. But Burchard, provost of Ursperg (d. 1230), tells, in a chronicle entry for the year 1212 formerly attributed to Conrad of Lichtenau, that these Poor Men (or Leonists or Valdenses) had long since *sprung up in Italy*.¹² This, concludes Faber, was previous to their becoming celebrated in France under the impulse of Peter—the Gallican branch springing out of the parent stock, which had long flourished in the Valdis (Valden, Vaudra) of the bordering Cottian Alps of northern Italy.¹³

This accounts for the Passau Inquisitor's language as he states that the Leonists are of the ancient heretics, older than either the Arians or the Manichaeans, but that the Poor Men of Lyons, as well as the members of the older sect, are also denominated Leonists, and are modern heretics, having been founded by the opulent merchant of Lyons.¹⁴ Thus in France the followers of Waldo were no older than he, but the stock of which they were a continuation reaches back to earlier times. Walter Map in 1182 first mentioned their name, Waldesians, as connected with their leader Valdes. He had met some Waldensians at the Third Lateran Council at Rome in 1179.¹⁵

4. WALDENSES—ONE STOCK WITH MANY BRANCHES.—As noted, the followers of Waldo mingled with various other groups, and the name Waldenses covered many local varia-

¹¹ Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 466-477, in detail; also Morland and Gilly.

¹² Burchardi et Cuonradi Urspergensium Chronicon, chronicle of the year 1212, in *MGH, Scriptores*, vol. 23, p. 376.

¹³ Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-365, 460.

¹⁴ Reineri . . . Contra Waldenses, chaps. 4, 5, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, p. 264; see also Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 460, 461.

¹⁵ Walter Map's "De Nugis Curialium," pp. 65, 66.

tions and fusions of evangelical parties. Doubtless some of the older local names persisted, and that is why their contemporaries used different names in describing them. Nevertheless, the name Waldensians has been rather broadly used by some writers to designate widely separated groups. Historians of a century or so ago were inclined to extend the coverage—sometimes correctly, sometimes not—much farther than more modern writers.¹⁶ Often it is difficult to know whether an apparently farfetched identification is the result of an error, a linguistic corruption of names, a local popular usage, a term of ridicule applied by enemies, or even an isolated case of genuine contact between minor groups of which source evidence is now lost.

We cannot say, for example, that in a given place there were not cases of Waldenses and Albigenses mingling or worshipping together, and that sometimes Cathari were not absorbed into the Waldensian movement. Undoubtedly the two groups were sometimes confused in the minds of their earlier opponents, but it must be noted that the Waldenses were distinctly separated from the dualistic Albigenses or Cathari in the records of the Inquisition and, according to one chronicle, even opposed them "most sharply."¹⁷ There was, on the other hand, a definite connection between the older Waldenses and such late groups as the "Waldensian Brethren," or "Picards"—Bohemian Brethren who had procured ordination from a Waldensian bishop, and who undoubtedly absorbed Waldensian elements. These were called Waldensians by their enemies and

¹⁶ Perrin lists the various names by which they were called by their adversaries, as follows: Waldenses, Albigenses, Chaignards, Tramontanes, Josephists, Lollards, Henricians, Esperonists, Arnoldists, Siccars, Fraticelli, Insabbathas, Patarins, Passagenes, Gazares, Turlupins; likewise, by the countries in which they dwelt: Thoulousians, Lombards, Picards, Lyonists, and Bohemians. And to make them odious they were charged with confederacy with ancient heresies, and called Cathari, Arians, Manichaeans, Gnostics, Adamites, Apostolics. (Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 25; see also Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont*, pp. 12, 13; Antoine Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*, pp. 51, 52.) As a term of general reproach it was used as a synonym for misbelief, sorcery, etc. In this sense Joan of Arc was condemned as a *Vaudoise*. (Alexis Muston, *The Israel of the Alps*, vol. 1, p. 13, n. 1.)

¹⁷ See two extracts from the records of the Inquisition at Carcassonne, in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, pp. 3, 6, 286, and a specific statement of the difference in the *Tractatus* of the Inquisitor David von Augsburg on p. 316 of the same volume (or in Wilhelm Preger, "Der Tractat des David von Augsburg über der Waldesier," *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 14, part 2, p. 211); also William of Puy Laurens, *Chronique*, prologue, p. 206.

by Luther, who admired them, and they even used the popular designation in some of their own writings, as minority groups often do.¹⁸

The ramifications of the Waldenses as they spread over Europe cannot be fully traced. There were many branches springing from a common protest—the reaction against the corruptions of the dominant church—and the absorption by the Waldenses of members from other groups in various localities probably causes considerable confusion of designations.

In France, because of their voluntary poverty, they were called Poor Men of Lyons, and in north Italy there were the Poor Men of Lombardy. In some cases they were nicknamed in the vernacular, as, for example, *siccars*, or pickpockets. Because they did not observe the holy days of the church, it is said, they were sometimes called *Insabbatati*.¹⁹

II. Older Italian Waldenses Form Connecting Link

Although it is frequently stated that the Waldenses separated themselves from Rome, it would be more accurate from their point of view to say that Rome, degenerating, gradually departed from the original principles of the church maintained by the proto-Waldenses long before Peter Waldo of Lyons. They continued for centuries without a separation from Rome, until Rome attempted to force her errors. Then they "went out of Babylon." In her attempt to sustain the claim of unchangeableness and antiquity, Rome has resorted to the con-

¹⁸ See page 853.

¹⁹ Though some think this term refers to a kind of slipper they wore as a distinguishing mark, others dissent, especially the older investigators. Eberhard of Bethune says they are called Xabatatenes, from xabatata, referring to shoes (*MBVP*, vol. 24, p. 1572) but Monastier cites Natalis Alexandre as saying that they were thus named because they "celebrate no sabbath or feast-days, and do not discontinue their work on the days consecrated among the [Roman] Catholics to Christ, the blessed virgin, and the saints." (Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 51.) Perrin says: "The Waldenses rejected the Romish festivals, and observed no other day of rest than Sunday; whence they were named 'Insabbathas,' regards not of the Sabbaths." (Perrin, *op. cit.*, book 1, chap. 3, p. 25.) They generally disregarded the church's festival days, considering them to be man-made, except perhaps Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost. (Citations in Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-285.) On the other hand, most of them kept Sunday (*ibid.*, pp. 283-286 and note 1179, p. 355) because they regarded it as based on the fourth commandment. And there were those classed as Waldenses in the broader sense—the Passagii and some among the "Waldensian Brethren," or Picards, of Bohemia—who took that commandment quite literally and observed the seventh day of the week (extracts in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, pp. 327, 662).

tention that the Waldenses were late innovators, thus denying the Vaudois contention that they are the spiritual link that unites evangelical Protestantism with the teachings of the primitive church, just as she claims that Protestantism is without credentials or antiquity—as but of yesterday, forsaking the mother church by a revolution, miscalled a reformation. But the Waldensian principles of doctrine and worship were those which antedated papal ritualism and error.

1. TRADITION OF DISSENT FROM ROME.—In north Italy, as noted, evangelical tendencies were repeatedly coming to the surface. That ecclesiastical independence of the ancient see of Milan, built up by Ambrose, enabled that region to remain a haven for the preservation of greater purity of faith and worship. There, in the Cottian Alps, Vigilantius found a hearing for his protest against growing superstition, and there Claudius, later attacking the worship of images, was accused of reviving the teachings of Vigilantius. There flourished reforming and schismatic groups proud of their ancient heritage of freedom.

That the older Lombardian Waldenses reached back as a connecting line to Claude of Turin, and even to Vigilantius before him, is the considered conviction of various investigators. Thus A. H. Newman makes Claudius “a connecting link” between these early Reformers and the evangelicals of the twelfth century.²⁰ The Waldenses are by several clearly connected with the antecedents Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne. Waldo’s followers simply became the rallying point for other earlier groups, such as the Petrobrusians, Arnoldists, and Humiliati. These became fused together, and this union eventuated in a great spiritual and missionary impulse that nothing could check.

2. PRE-WALDO ROOTS OF WALDENSES.—Much of the early Waldensian testimony as to their antiquity and origin was admittedly destroyed in the dark days of papal persecution. But

²⁰ Albert H. Newman, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 558.



WALDENSIAN COLLEGE, TORRE PELLICE, AT ENTRANCE TO VALLEYS

Beautiful for Situation, This Waldensian College Is Nestled Conveniently on the Slopes of the Foothills Which Merge Into the Alpine Peaks With Their Eternal Snows (Upper); Statue of Henri Arnaud, Leader of the Glorious Return in 1690, With Waldensian Library at Right (Lower)

sufficient evidence remains, coupled with the attesting witness and candid admission of their enemies, to constitute satisfying evidence of their pre-Waldo rootage in northern Italy. An analysis of the available contemporary source statements of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries is rather technical for inclusion in the running text of this chapter. It is therefore given in detail with source references in Appendix D, and is there visualized by means of an analytical chart. The sources naturally comprise the only fair basis for a sound conclusion. The opinions of authorities are interesting and helpful, but they are not decisive. Too often prejudice or bias or ecclesiastical leaning overbalances evidence.

III. Organization and Missionary Ministry

The Italian and French Waldenses, united during Waldo's lifetime, did not long remain in one body. The French Waldenses regarded him as the founder of the whole sect, but the Lombards had a slightly different form of organization and retained their own ideas on the Eucharist—that it was invalid if administered by an unworthy priest. Further, they did not, as did the French, eschew manual labor. After an attempted reconciliation in a conference at Bergamo in 1218, the two groups went their separate ways for a long time.²¹

"The French Waldenses were still afraid of schism; for fear of the church they feared to cross the Rubicon. Their brethren in Milan, on the contrary, had learned in a good school that conciliation was a snare. They could not consent to a protest without issue, and they were not far from anticipating that separation which was to take place in the days of the Reformation."²²

1. INFLUENCE PENETRATES SURROUNDING COUNTRIES.—In Italy the Waldensian witnesses against the corruptions of Rome were spread over the towns of Lombardy, and in Naples, Sicily, Genoa, and Calabria. They had regular correspondence with brethren in other countries. Waldensian believers were dis-

²¹ David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 497, 498.

²² Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

persed in not only Italy but Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Moravia, and Bohemia. Their principal center, however, was at Milan.²³ Later, after persecution increased, the center was in the Alpine valleys, for persecution did not become drastic there until the beginning of the fourteenth century, and the worst came after the Reformation.²⁴

In view of the claims of the Waldenses to being the true church, with a valid ministry and organization, it is necessary briefly to survey the qualifications of that ministry, and the efficacy of that organization as it functioned in the valleys of northern Italy.

2. TRAINING SCHOOL IN SECLUSION OF PRA DEL TOR.—The Waldensian ministers, or pastors, were called *barbes*, or *barbas*, which was a title of affectionate respect, originally meaning "uncle."²⁵ There was once a training center in Lombardy, but there remain to this day the traces of a school of the *barbes* at Pra del Tor, in Piedmont, behind the well-nigh inaccessible pass of the secluded Angrogna Valley,²⁶ which served the three-fold purpose of citadel, college, and meeting place of the annual synod. There the encircling mountains shut out the world, fostered habits of contemplation and study, and opposed everything soft and yielding.²⁷ One of the old stone table tops around which the young missionary-pastors sat as they studied and transcribed the Word of God can still be seen by the visitor to Pra del Tor, as reproduced on page 838. And the old stone foundations of the ancient training school are still pointed out. There was also a large cavern in the mountainside, which sometimes served as a lecture room.

From this sanctuary, one of the most secluded spots of Europe, the intrepid young preachers sallied forth upon their sacred missions, crossing the Alps, the Apennines, and the Pyrenees to spread the evangelical message which afterward came

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75, 66.

²⁴ David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 498, 499.

²⁵ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 178; Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 18.

²⁶ Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 94; Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 18.

²⁷ Gilly, *Waldensian Researches*, p. 438.

to fruitage in the Reformation.²⁸ This preaching undoubtedly paved the way for Huss, Luther, and Calvin.²⁹

3. WELL-ROUNDED TRAINING PRECEDES ORDINATION.—

These young men were painstakingly trained, with the Scriptures as their basic study and text. They were required to memorize whole Gospels and Epistles—particularly Matthew and John, some of the general Epistles and some from Paul, with parts of David, Solomon, and the prophets.³⁰ Printing not yet being known, a part of their time was spent in laboriously copying portions of the Scriptures by hand, which they were later to distribute when they scattered over Europe as missionaries. Each transcribed copy must serve many, because of the difficult task of reproduction.

This period of instruction, occurring in the first two or three years, was followed by a similar period of retirement and further study, before they were set apart to holy ministry by the laying on of hands.³¹ Not until then were they qualified to administer the Word and the sacraments.³² During this period they were also instructed in Latin, their own Romance vernacular, and Italian; ³³ they likewise learned some trade or profession, so as to provide for their own wants, particularly when traveling.³⁴

Many of these youth became proficient in the healing art, as physicians and surgeons. Morland throws an illuminating word on their combining of medical and missionary work, as well as on the breadth of their general training.

"Those *Barbes* who remained at home in the *Valleys*, (besides their officiating and labouring in the work of the Ministry) took upon them the disciplining and instructing of the youth (especially those who were appointed for the Ministry) in Grammer, Logick, Moral Philosophy, and Divinity. Moreover the greatest part of them gave themselves to the study

²⁸ Gilly, *Narrative*, p. 255.

²⁹ Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

³⁰ Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238. Art. II, "Concerning Pastors or Ministers," from an early Waldensian Discipline of the Valley Churches of Piedmont, gives a comprehensive statement of training, duties, and privileges. Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 74.

³¹ Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 19.

³² Article IX in *Confession of 1508*, in Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³³ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 19, 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

and practise of Physick, and Chirurgery [surgery]; and herein they excelled (as their Histories tell us) to admiration, thereby rendring themselves most able and skilfull Physicians both of soul and body. Others of them likewise dealt in divers Mechanick Arts, in imitation of St. *Paul*, who was a *Tent-maker*, and *Christ* himself."³⁵

4. EMERGED TO FILL A MANY-SIDED MINISTRY.—When their training was over, and after certification of character³⁶—for only true men were to be consecrated to the office—they were set apart to the ministry by the imposition of hands, and any who later fell into gross sin were expelled from the church and the preaching office.³⁷ Very few pastors were married; as a rule they were not, so as to be free for travel.³⁸

Sometimes these young *barbes*, after their training, entered the great universities of Europe to propagate quietly their evangelical truths, many being expert dialecticians.³⁹ In their ministry they preached, visited the sick far and near, administered the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, and instructed the children. In this they were assisted by laymen. In their communities they had a considerable number of schools.⁴⁰ They also had a form of oral confession, for the comfort of those who sought their advice, but the Waldensian did not, like the priest, say, "I absolve thee," but "God absolve thee from thy sins."⁴¹ The *barbes* served as arbiters in disputes, and disciplined the unruly, even to excommunication.⁴² If problems could not be handled locally, they were brought before the synod.⁴³

In their public worship the congregation often prayed in unison just before and after the sermon.⁴⁴ They sang "hymns and paraphrases," though most of their singing was outside of

³⁵ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 183. This must have represented the peak; the training in Reformation times was more elementary, according to Barbe Morel.

³⁶ Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³⁷ Georges Morel, Letter to Oecolampadius, translated in Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 290, 291; Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

³⁸ Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 94; Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 20; art. 19 of 1508 "Confession," in Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Morel, quoted in Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

³⁹ Wylie, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 29.

⁴⁰ Gilly, *Narrative*, p. 211; Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁴¹ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 266, 267, and, quoting Morel's letter, 291.

⁴² Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁴³ William Beattie, *The Waldenses*, p. 60.

⁴⁴ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 20.

the church service.⁴⁵ They used no prayers of the church except the Lord's prayer. And the Bible was freely recited in the sermons of the *barbes*.

5. ANNUAL SYNOD DIRECTS ALL PASTORS AND MISSIONARIES.—An annual synod,⁴⁶ or general assembly, usually held in September,⁴⁷ was composed of all the *barbes* available, with an equal number of laymen—sometimes as many as 150 each. A frequent place of meeting was the same secluded, mountain-encircled valley of Angrogna. These synods were presided over by a general director, with the title of president or moderator, who was named at each synod.⁴⁸ There was no hierarchal distinction, only the recognition of age, service, and ability.⁴⁹ And they themselves chose the leaders who were to govern them.⁵⁰

At these synods young men were examined, and those that appeared qualified were admitted to the ministry. Those who were to travel to distant places or churches, usually by turn, were designated. As a rule these missions were for two years, but one did not return until another had taken his place.⁵¹ Similarly, at the synod, changes of pastoral residence in the valleys or distant churches were made, the pastors commonly being changed or exchanged every two or three years.⁵² The *barbes* never attempted important tasks without the advice and consent of their leaders.⁵³ *Regidors* (elders) were chosen to collect alms and offerings, these being taken to the general synod for distribution, for the *barbes* serving as pastors were usually supported by voluntary contributions—that is, their food and clothing were supplied.⁵⁴ Here also the condition of their various parishes was reported, and plans were laid for coming years, and assignments made for various posts.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Beattie, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

⁴⁶ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Gilly, *Narrative*, pp. 209, 210; Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁴⁷ Pierre Gilles, *Histoire ecclésiastique des églises réformées, recueillies en quelques vallées de Piedmont*, chap. 2.

⁴⁸ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵⁰ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁵¹ Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵² Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 20; Morel's letter, quoted in Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁵³ Gilles, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

⁵⁴ Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-94; Acland, *op. cit.*, p. lxxx; Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 238; Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

6. ALL WERE MISSIONARIES TRAINED IN EVANGELISM.—The Waldenses were evangelistic as well as evangelical. They were a missionary group, not only maintaining the light in their own mountain retreats, but carrying it throughout Europe. Each *barbe* was required to serve as a missionary, and to be initiated into the "delicate duties" of evangelism. This training was secured under the guidance of an older minister, burdened to train his younger associate aright.⁵⁵ It was an old law of the church that before becoming eligible as a *barbe* to a home charge, a man should serve a term as missionary, and the prospect of possible martyrdom was ever set before him.

The missionaries visited scattered companies of Waldenses; but their chief work was to evangelize. They spread out in every direction—into Italy, France, Spain, England, Germany, Bohemia, Poland, and even Bulgaria and Turkey.⁵⁶ Their paths were marked with congregations of worshipers and with the stakes of martyrdom; we can trace their principal stations by the light of the blazing piles.⁵⁷

The Catholic Bernard of Fontcaud bitterly complained that they "continued to pour forth, with daring effrontery, far and wide, all over the world, the poison of their perfidy."⁵⁸ Before the Inquisition closed in on them they engaged in public debates with the Catholics.⁵⁹ They were cast in heroic mold.

Later they went forth, concealing their real mission under the guise of merchants, artisans, physicians, or peddlers of rare articles obtainable only at distant marts, such as silks or jewels. Thus they had opportunity to vend without money or price, the Word of God, always carrying with them portions of the Scriptures, usually their own transcriptions. The well-known story of distributing the Bible among the higher classes, in the

⁵⁵ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 19, 20; Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁵⁶ Valerian Krasinski, *Historical Sketch of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Reformation in Poland*, vol. 1, p. 53. See also Jean Leger, *Histoire générale églises évangéliques des vallées de Piémont*, book 2, pp. 336, 337; Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 385.

⁵⁷ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 74, 75.

⁵⁸ Bernard of Fontcaud, *Adversus Waldensium Sectam*, in *MBVP*, vol. 24, p. 1585. See translation in Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁵⁹ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 54, 55.

guise of peddlers of jewels, comes to us from the Passau Inquisitor.⁸⁰ The coarse woolen garments and naked feet of the peddler were in sharp contrast to the priestly purple and fine linen.

Whittier has beautifully pictured the scene:

" 'O lady fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare,—

The richest web of the Indian loom, which beauty's queen might wear;
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck, with whose radiant light
they vie:

I have brought them with me a weary way,—will my gentle lady buy? "

" 'O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings,

Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be as a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way! "

IV. Persecution Follows Control of Secular Powers

When Rome was climbing, first to legally recognized headship of all the churches, and later to mastery of the nations, her hands were full. But time cared for that. As Rome's power grew dissent increased, and consequently the Inquisition was established early in the thirteenth century. Then as the Scriptures in the vernacular came to be made available to the people by the Waldenses, and as the developed and revealed character of the Papacy was openly exposed as the fulfillment of inspired prediction, Rome was stirred to her very depths against these thorns in her side. Having at last achieved power over the nations as well as the churches, together with the instruments of coercion, she turned the full force of the secular arm upon the Waldensian and other "heretics" in a relentless attempt to subdue or to annihilate them. Thus Rome, unwilling to tolerate these burning and shining lights, loosed her fury upon them, and sought to put out the torches that flamed amid the papal darkness of apostasy. It was relentless warfare.

⁸⁰ *Reineri . . . Contra Waldenses*, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, p. 273. See translations in *Monastier*, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-103, and *Comba*, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-280.

⁸¹ John Greenleaf Whittier, "The Vaudois Teacher," *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*, p. 3.

"Unfortunately, the Inquisition also was spreading everywhere on their track, putting out, one by one, the torches that were gleaming in the darkness. . . . With all that a light does still hold on to burn upon yonder 'Alpine-altar.' " ⁶²

As the Waldensian expansion was checked by persecution in various parts of Europe, some gave up, some betrayed their brethren, some died for their faith, and some were driven underground, to a measure of outward conformity cloaking their secret faith. Many attended church occasionally to avert suspicion—perhaps muttering imprecations instead of prayers—went to the priest for marriages and baptisms, but met secretly with their brethren and received the ministrations of the traveling Waldensian missionaries. ⁶³

As persecution increased, many evangelical witnesses retired from the plains of Lombardy to the wilderness of inaccessible seclusion in the Piedmontese Alps and the near-by mountainous parts of France. There they remained hidden, though active in the more populous sections. Nowhere was there more steady, long-continued, and successful opposition to Rome than there, where evangelical truth had had a succession of witnesses, dating back before the great apostasy. It was there that the true "church in the wilderness" found one of her retreats, while most of Christendom was bound under the dominion of the papal church.

1. INDEPENDENCE OF ROME MAINTAINED IN ALPINE FASTNESSES.—The province of Piedmont is so named because it is situated *ad pedes montium*, or "*pie d'mont*," at the foot of the mountains—the Alps which separate Italy from France. The plains of Piedmont are studded with towns and villages. And behind them rises this mountain range in sublime grandeur, with glacier summits, and masses of granite sometimes rent in two, creating vast chasms through which racing cataracts pour. Here, within this rampart of mountains, amid the wildest and most secluded Alpine fastnesses—which God had prepared in

⁶² Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

advance and over which He had watched—the remnant of the evangelical church of Italy maintained its independence of the spreading Roman apostasy, and held aloft that lamp which continued to burn through the long night that descended upon Christendom. And as a lamp gathers brightness in proportion to the deepening darkness, so the uplifted torch of the mountain dwellers became increasingly conspicuous as the night of papal darkness deepened.

When God has a special work for a people to do He often makes their outward environment favorable to its performance. So it was with the Jews in Palestine, at the crossroads of the nations. And thus it was also with the Waldenses in their mountain fastnesses between Italy and France. In mountainous districts men cling longest to old customs and faiths, and are least affected by the changing world about; so these Alpine fastnesses formed a retreat in which the faith could be preserved. At the same time their central location afforded access both north and south, and east and west.

2. WALDENSIAN VALLEYS NEAR OLD ROMAN ROAD.—The valleys occupied by the Waldenses lay not far from the old Roman road leading over the passes of the Cottian Alps, the principal ancient line of communication between the primitive churches of northern Italy and southern France. It would have been the route followed by Paul if he journeyed overland from Rome to Spain. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, who was sent to Rome to report the state of the Gallic church, perhaps trod this mountain path. Ambrose, who made repeated journeys from Italy to Gaul, must have passed near here.⁶⁴ Its location was strategic.

The Councils of Arles (314), Milan (346-354), Aquileia (381), and Turin (397) all called for the use of this celebrated mountain pass. Bergier's outline of the route⁶⁵ makes it clear that it would have been possible for messengers and pilgrims

⁶⁴ Gilly, *Waldensian Researches*, pp. 49-56.

⁶⁵ Nicolas Bergier, *Histoire des grands chemins de l'empire romain*, book 3, pp. 452-455, 467-471.

journeying between Italy and France, Spain, and Britain to be brought into near contact with the inhabitants of these valleys by means of the road, which was from early times the principal and central pass into Gaul.⁶⁶ Thus the country of the Waldenses lay near a historic path of vital European travel.

A well-nigh impregnable fortress had thus been provided, in the purpose and providence of God, in the very center of Roman Christendom. This made both for protection and for persecution. Even from the top of the famous cathedral of Milan a magnificent view may be had, on a clear day, of the Alps of Piedmont, among the highest in Europe, stretching east and west as far as the eye can see. Approached from the south, across the plains, the Alps rise like a barrier chain in the background, stretching like a great wall of towering magnificence along the horizon. Some summits shoot up like spires; others resemble massive castles. Forests nestle at their base and mantle their slopes, while eternal snows and glaciers crown their summits. And the setting sun touches with gold their crowded peaks, until they glow like torches and burn like a wall of fire along the sky line.

Here, among these mountains, lie the Waldensian valleys that run up into narrow, elevated gorges, winding among the steeps and piercing the clouds that hover around the Alpine peaks—the mountain temple of the Vaudois, often crimsoned in those memorable days of old with the blood of martyrs. These were the long-time refuge and the home of the Israel of the Alps.⁶⁷

3. INTERRELATED VALLEYS FORM FORTRESS OF AMAZING DESIGN.—These Piedmontese valleys where the Waldenses long flourished, and still live, are seven in number, separated by high mountain ridges. The first three run out like the spokes of a wheel, from the hub. These are the *Luserna*, or Valley of Light,

⁶⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *op. cit.*, book 15, chap. 10, secs. 3-8, in Loeb Classical Library, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, vol. 1, pp. 183, 185.

⁶⁷ Many impressive descriptions of the valleys have been penned—such as in Morland, Gilly, Muston, Wylie, and Beattie—and they are here epitomized, augmented by the writer's personal observations in the valleys.

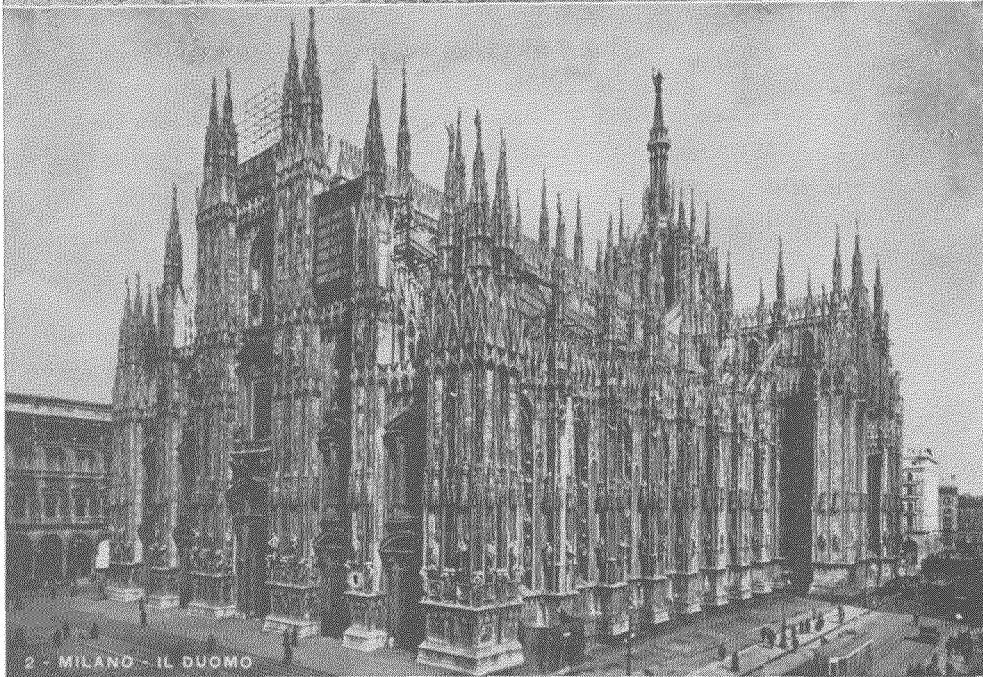
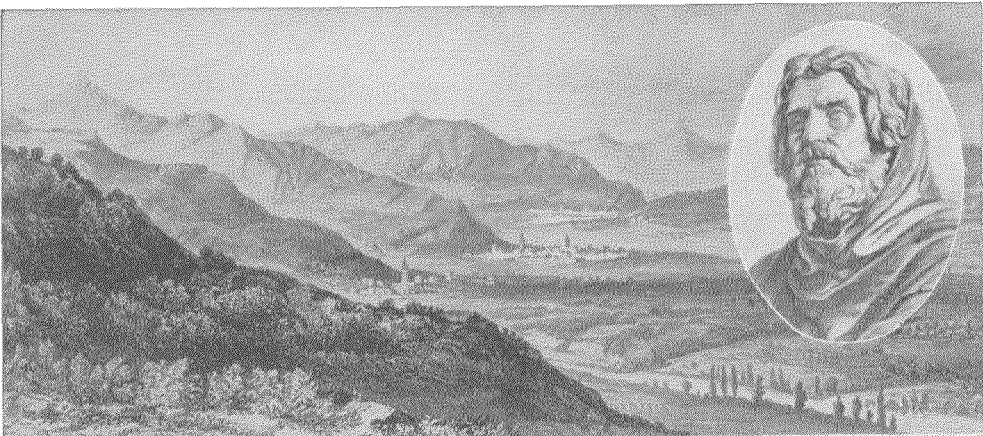
enclosed by a wall of mountains; the *Rora*, or Valley of Dews, like a vast cup, fifty miles in circumference, with the rim formed of craggy peaks; and the *Angrogna*, or Valley of Groans, the innermost sanctuary of all, which will be especially noted. Beyond that lie four others forming the rim of the half wheel and enclosed by a line of lofty mountains that constitute a common wall of defense around the entire territory. Each valley is a fortress with its own entry and exit, its caves and mighty rocks. But these valleys are so related that one opens into the other, forming a network of fortresses. They constitute a rough triangle—a fan-shaped group of valleys resting against the giant Alps. Experts declare that the highest engineering skill could scarcely have better adapted the several valleys so as to form a fortress of amazing strength. It is impossible to survey the scene and not perceive the trace of providential design plainly stamped upon it.

No other spot in Europe was so adapted to protection as this mountain home of the Waldenses. Strongholds and inaccessible glens, through which no stranger could find his way, formed an asylum fortified by the God of nature. The entrance to each is guarded by mountain ranges, perpendicular rocks, mountain peaks, and frightful precipices, and escape is provided through a labyrinth of paths, forests, rocky beds of torrents, and caverns. Impenetrable mists frequently settle down over all like an obscuring blanket. Thus were the Waldensians preserved from destruction in the times of persecution. The Waldensian writer Leger states:

"The Eternal, our God, having destined this land to be in a special way the theatre of His marvels, and the haven of His ark, has by natural means most marvelously fortified it."⁶⁸

4. WALDENSIAN AND CATHOLIC CHURCHES SYMBOLIZE CONTRASTING DIFFERENCES.—To the traveler approaching from Turin toward the town of Torre Pellice, there opens an impressive mountain portal—the entry to the Waldensian terri-

⁶⁸ Translated from Leger, *op. cit.*, book 1, p. 3.



MILAN CATHEDRAL AND PANORAMA OF WALDENSIAN VALLEYS

Topographical Sketch of Geographical Layout of Waldensian Valleys, With Traditional Portrait of Peter Waldo, as Inset (Upper); Multi-spired Gothic Cathedral of Milan, From the High Tower of Which the Snow-capped Piedmontese Alps Can Be Seen in the Distance on a Clear Day (Lower)

tory. A low hill in front serves as a defense, while behind it rises the great Mont Vandelin, upon whose slopes, shooting up like a stupendous monolith, is Castelluzzo, like a sentinel standing guard at the gate of this renowned region. It irresistibly fills

the eye, and is hallowed by the memory of its countless martyrs, for from its top Waldenses were hurled to their death. On a hill to the right are the ivy-clad ruins of the old Catholic fort, built to overawe the inhabitants. Here, in the Middle Ages, stood a high tower from which the town derives its name—*Torre* meaning “tower.”

Torre Pellice is the present headquarters of the Waldensian valleys, and the present Catholic and Waldensian churches of the town symbolize the contrasting differences. The Roman church exhibits a large picture of the Virgin Mary pointing to a very material-looking heart, with the words below, “*Refugium peccatorum*” (Refuge of sinners); whereas the text over the door of the Waldensian church reads, “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3. And the basic difference in outlook is likewise illustrated by the texts outside the respective cemeteries. The Waldensian has, “The dead in Christ shall rise” (1 Thess. 4:16); the Catholic has, “The small and the great are there, and the servant free from his master” (Job 3:19, from the Vulgate).

5. MISSIONARY TRAINING COLLEGE AT PRA DEL TOR.—Far up in the heart of these mountains was situated the Angrogna Valley retreat, called Pra del Tor, walled in by virtually impenetrable peaks. Here their *barbes*, or pastors, met in annual synod, as we have seen. And here was the site of their ancient college, where their missionaries were trained, and after ordination were sent forth to other lands to sow the gospel seed. Its secluded position, and the ease with which it could be defended, made it a mighty fortress in times of persecution, and the scene of many a fierce combat at its entrance. A bleak, unscalable mountain runs directly across the entrance to the valley, through which some great convulsion of nature has rent a fissure from top to bottom—a deep, dark, narrow chasm through which the Angrogna torrent pours.

Entering this dark chasm, one must proceed along a narrow ledge on the mountain's side, hung halfway between the

torrent thundering in the abyss below and the summits that tower above. Journeying thus for two miles, till the passage widens, one arrives at the gates of the Pra. There, opening into a circular valley, is this inner sanctuary of the Waldenses, reserved for the true worship of God, while most of Italy was venerating images. Thus it was that Rome had before its very eyes a perpetual witness of the early faith from which it had departed. Here the Waldensian church—hidden in the “wilderness” of her mountain fortresses in the “place” prepared for her, where “the earth” helped the symbolic “woman”—entered her “chambers” and, shutting the “doors” of the everlasting hills about her, kept her lamp alight amid the bulwarks of impregnable rocks and eternal snows. It has been aptly said of this Alpine refuge:

“The Supreme Architect formed it, sinking its foundations deep in the earth and rearing high its bulwark. He stored it with food, placed His witnesses in it, and bade them keep their mountain citadel inviolate and their lamp of truth unquenched.”

V. The Waldenses and the Reformation

But returning to the narrative, we find that the passing of time brought other voices into the chorus of dissent. The troubadours of the Middle Ages joined with the Waldenses in condemning the iniquities of the church.⁶⁹ The Joachimites and their offshoots denounced the corruptions of the ecclesiastics, and Dante added his voice. It is curious that the early gleams of the revival of letters in the time of Petrarch shone on Calabria, one of the sections of Italy where the Vaudois had found an asylum.⁷⁰ Whatever we may think of the argument for a Waldensian origin of Wyclif's doctrines,⁷¹ it is certain that the seeds sown broadcast in Germany helped to prepare the way for the spread of the Reformation, and that the Bohemian evangelical faith owed a great debt to the Waldenses.

⁶⁹ McCrie, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷¹ Acland, *op. cit.*, p. xliv.

1. THE WALDENSIAINS AND THE BOHEMIAN BRETHREN.—Comenius, a Bohemian bishop, tells how, about 1450, before the Reformation, certain Hussite separatists, followers of Peter Chelcicky, in their anxiety to have their pastors ordained by those who had continued in purity from the apostles, sent three preachers to Stephen, a bishop of the Vaudois. And Stephen, with others officiating, conferred the vocation and ordination upon three Bohemian candidates by the imposition of hands. Although there was no organic affiliation with the main body of Waldenses, there was a fusion of Waldensian elements in these Bohemian and Moravian Brethren. They were spoken of as Picards, Waldensian Brethren, or simply Waldensians, by their contemporaries, both friends and foes, and even mentioned the commonly known terms by way of identification in some of their own publications.⁷²

The Waldenses were repeatedly recognized as connecting links between the early and the Reformation churches by both the Reformers and the pre-Reformation leaders. This line of transmission has been epitomized in this way:

"Thus in the Valleys of Piemont, Claudius Arch-Bishop of Turin, and he to his Disciples, and they to their succeeding Generations in the ninth and tenth Centuries: in another part of the World, Bertram to Berengarius, Berengarius to Peter Brus, Peter Brus to Waldo, Waldo again to Dulcinus, Dulcinus to Gandune and Marsilius, they to Wickleif, Hus and Jerome of Prague, and their Schollars the Thaborites to Luther and Calvin." ⁷³

When the Lutheran Reformation broke upon the world, the Waldenses, who had been virtually hounded from the face of Europe, and remained only in the Alps in any number, awoke from their sleep and stretched out their hands to their comrades in other lands. Now they could come forth openly and complete their break with Rome. They wrote to the Re-

⁷² Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 79, 80; Josef Mueller, "Bohemian Brethren," *The New Schaff-Herzog*, vol. 2, p. 214; see Catholic documents in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, nos. LIX, LXI, pp. 633-641, 661-664; Martin Luther, foreword to a work by these Brethren entitled *Rechen-schaft des Glaubens, der Dienste und Ceremonien der Brüder in Böhmen und Mähren*, in *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften* (Walch ed.), vol. 14, cols. 334, 335 and footnote. In the full title of this last-named work, given in the footnote, these "Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia" add the fact that they are also called, by some, Picards or Waldenses.

⁷³ Morland, *op. cit.*, sig. A₄v.

formers, giving account of themselves and asking questions.

"When the sun of the Reformation arose, the Waldensian light was shining still, if not as brightly, at least as purely as in the past; but in the presence of the new sun, it might well appear to have grown paler. Morel testifies to this with childlike simplicity, and an ingenuous joyful expectation, which recalls that of the prophets of old: 'Welcome! blessed be thou, my Lord,' he writes to the Basle reformer; 'we come to thee from a far off country, with hearts full of joy, in the hope and assurance that, through thee, the Spirit of the Almighty will enlighten us.'"⁷⁴

2. CHAMFORANS CONFERENCE OF WALDENSES AND REFORMERS.—Upon learning of the progress of the Reformation in Switzerland and Germany, the Vaudois of Piedmont rejoiced in the returning of this large group to the Word of God, and hastened to gather information concerning them. In 1526 they sent Barbe Martin, of Luserna, who brought back certain printed books of the Reformers.⁷⁵ In 1530 they deputed other *barbes*, including Georges Morel and Pierre Masson, to visit and confer with the Reformers at Basel and Strasburg, and to present in Latin a statement of their beliefs and practices.⁷⁶ They had several long conferences with Oecolampadius, Bucer, and others, asking many questions on the positions of the Reformers, and rejoicing in the evangelical answers given.

In 1532, two years after the Augsburg Confession, a great six-day synod, or assembly, was held at Chamforans, in the Piedmontese valley of Angrogna, attended by representatives of the Vaudois of Italy and France, and by the French Switzerland representatives, Farel, Olivétan, and Saunier, who rejoiced that the Israel of the Alps had proved faithful to their trust.⁷⁷ This meeting of the two churches—the old and the new—brought new life and hope to the Waldenses.

3. FRENCH BIBLE THEIR GIFT TO REFORMATION.—During this synod the Waldenses drew up a short "confession of faith,"

⁷⁴ Comba, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁷⁵ Monastier, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁷⁶ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 185. See Georges Morel, Letter to Oecolampadius, in A. Wilh. Dieckhoff, *Die Waldenser in Mittelalter*, pp. 363-369. For a discussion of the letters of Georges Morel and Pierre Masson to Oecolampadius and Bucer, and their replies, see J. H. Todd, *The Books of the Vaudois*, pp. 8-20.

⁷⁷ Adeney, *op. cit.*, p. 668; Wylie, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 447, 448.

to supplement their older confessions.⁷⁸ Examining Vaudois manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments in the vernacular Romaunt, the Reformed representatives urged that the whole Bible be made available in French through a printed translation. To this the Vaudois agreed, as their own books were only in manuscript.⁷⁹ Pierre Robert, called Olivétan—one of the delegates from Switzerland—was appointed to superintend the translation. For this he retired to a remote village in the valleys. The preface bears date of the seventh of February, 1535, and is sent forth “from the Alps.” This Bible, printed in Gothic characters at Neuchâtel, Switzerland, and costing the Vaudois 1,500 golden crowns, was their gift to the Reformation.⁸⁰

VI. Massacre of 1655 Arouses British Investigation

The adherence of the Waldenses to the Reformation at the Chamforans Synod of 1532 drew upon them the eyes of the Roman Curia and led to action. But the armed expeditions of 1534 and 1560-61 were successfully hurled back. This led to treaties and a period of relative tranquillity. However the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, established by Gregory XV in 1622, included among its objectives the “Extirpation of Heretics.” In 1650 a branch was established at Turin.⁸¹ The tranquillity ended in the “Bloody Easter” massacre of the Piedmont, in 1655, which aroused the British to energetic intervention.

By an edict authorized by the duke of Savoy (who was also Prince of Piedmont), dated January 25, 1655, all Waldenses were ordered to become Catholics or give up their property and leave the best portion of their valleys within a few days, under pain of death—and that in the dead of Alpine winter. On April 17, 15,000 of Pianezza's troops marched in, and on the 24th the terrible atrocities began. Butchery, torture, and en-

⁷⁸ Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148; Wylie, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 448; Leger, *op. cit.*, book 1, p. 95.

⁷⁹ Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁸⁰ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 100, 101.

⁸¹ Leger, *op. cit.*, part 2, chap. 6, pp. 72, 73; Wylie, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 449-481.

slavement was the dreadful fate. The battles continued on into May, June, July, when an army of 1,800 invested La Torre. Lofty Mount Castelluzzo, standing sentry at the entrance to the valleys, with its base covered with forests, and its peak a mass of precipitous rock, had a cave, high on its face, into which hundreds of Waldenses fled, only to be trapped by their persecutors, dragged forth, and rolled down the awful precipice. Thus Castelluzzo became a giant Waldensian martyr monument.⁸²

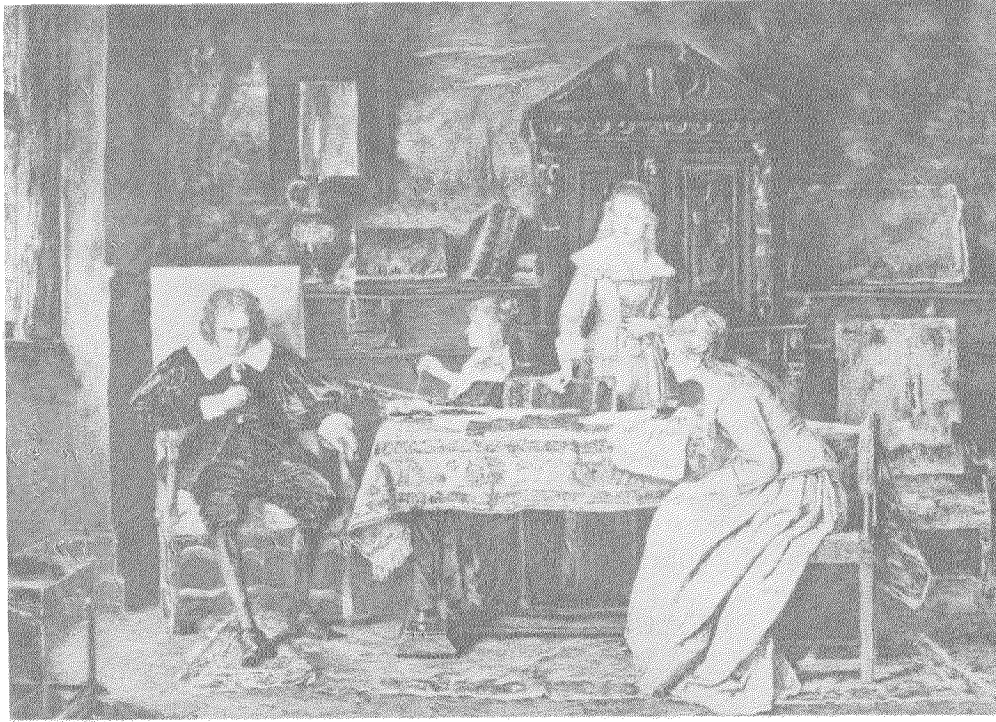
1. BLOODY EASTER INSPIRED MILTON'S POWERFUL SONNET. —It was the horrors of this spot that impelled the blind John Milton, Latin secretary to Oliver Cromwell, and then at the peak of his poetical achievements, to write the lines of his gripping sonnet titled "On the Late Massacher in Piemont." This sublime protest was heard where nothing else made any impression. It has been described as one of the most powerful sonnets ever written:

"Avenge O Lord thy slaughter'd Saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our Fathers worship't Stocks and Stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groanes
Who were thy Sheep, and in their ancient Fold
Slayn by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with Infant down the Rocks. The moans
The Vales redoubl'd to the Hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes so
O're all the *Italian* fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant: that from these may grow
A hunder'd-fold, who having learned thy way,
Early may fly the *Babylonian* wo." ⁸³

2. CROMWELL'S ENERGETIC ACTION ENDS THE PERSECUTION. —All Protestantism was stunned and incensed by the dreadful

⁸² The details of the butchery are too sickening and revolting to recite, even in generalities. The completely documented narrative of the dreadful persecutions leading up to and climaxing in the Massacre of 1655 appears in Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 263, 267-283; see also Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 287-384, 519-534; Leger, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 108-137, 186-198. Leger, a Vaudois pastor, who was an eyewitness to the massacre, wrote out the full story in his history. The original of these depositions was given by Leger to Sir Samuel Morland, and by him placed in Cambridge University.

⁸³ *John Milton's Complete Poetical Works*, ed. by H. F. Fletcher, vol. 1, pp. 43, 44. Even this poem contains prophetic interpretation; it applies the epithet "Babylon" to the "triple tyrant," the Roman pontiff.



MILTON, THE BLIND POET, DICTATING TO HIS DAUGHTERS

John Milton, Poet and Latin Secretary to Oliver Cromwell, Profoundly Stirred by the Wanton Slaughter of the Waldenses in 1655, Wrote His Powerful Lines—"Avenge O Lord Thy Slaughter'd Saints"

tidings. Deep sympathy and strong indignation were awakened. A wave of protest swept over Europe. The Reformed countries moved as one man. Almost all the Protestant churches humbled themselves before God by a day of fasting and prayer in behalf of the valleys. Liberal offerings were taken to care for the remnant, Switzerland leading the way.⁸⁴ Sweden, Germany, and Holland were all moved. But in Britain, Cromwell, the lord protector of England, took upon himself the alleviation of their sufferings. He ordered a day of fasting and prayer to be kept throughout England, and started a subscription for funds for their relief to the amount of more than £38,000.⁸⁵ At Cromwell's direction Milton, then his Latin secretary, wrote letters

⁸⁴ Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 283, 284.

⁸⁵ Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 352, 553, 596; Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-286.

of state in powerful phrasings to the rulers of Europe. Proclamations were issued, the second of which was printed as a broadside, written when the events were "hot in memory and indignation was flaming." English public opinion was swiftly formed, and help resulted from Cromwell's proclamations.⁸⁶

Sir Samuel Morland was sent by the British Government to interpose through personal appeal to the duke of Savoy and the king of France, and if possible to stop the persecution, and after investigation to lay the case before the Protestant world. Morland bore with him Cromwell's letters of astonishment and sorrow over the barbarities. He visited the valleys and saw the situation with his own eyes, and addressed the duke in a powerful plea, which included these words:

"The Angels are surprised with horreur! men are amazed! Heaven itself seems to be astonied with the cries of dying men, and the very earth to blush, being discoloured with the gore-bloud of so many innocent persons! Do not, O thou most high God, do not thou take that revenge which is due to so great wickednesses and horrible villanies! Let thy bloud, O Christ, wash away this bloud!"⁸⁷

Arriving at Turin in June, and at Geneva in July, Morland delivered so effective a protest that the edict of the duke of Savoy was withdrawn in August, 1655. A treaty brought the military operations to an end, and the Waldenses were allowed to return to their form of worship without further loss of life or property.⁸⁸

VII. The "Glorious Return" of 1689-90

Upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Louis XIV demanded that his neighbor, the duke of Savoy, eliminate the Waldensian church. When the Waldenses resisted the edict to destroy their churches and banish the pastors and teachers, they were crushed by a combined force of troops from France and Savoy. Thousands were slain, and thousands of the im-

⁸⁶ Richard W. Hale, *Poetry, Prose and History*, pp. 5, 6.

⁸⁷ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 570. (The complete correspondence of Cromwell and Morland with these rulers appears on pages 539-709.)

⁸⁸ Monastier, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-288.

prisoned men, women, and children died. The surviving three thousand were allowed to take refuge in the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. In 1689 about a thousand of the exiles, led by their pastor and military commander, Henri Arnaud, set out to return to Savoy. They drove off the French troops who attacked them, wintered on a mountain at the end of the San Martino valley, and continued the warfare. By the spring of 1690 most of the Waldenses had recovered their homes, and many other exiles returned.⁸⁰ The duke of Savoy made peace with them, and in 1694 granted them religious liberty.

These seventeenth-century tribulations of the Waldenses are outside the range of this volume, but a brief account of them has been included in order to round out the story, to show how the earlier training of these people bore the fruit of constancy under the most terrible persecutions which inspired the Protestant world. From the time of the Reformation they have formed a branch of the Calvinistic Protestants, and in modern times they have acquired the full rights of Italian citizenship.

⁸⁰ See Arnaud, *The Glorious Recovery by the Vaudois of Their Valleys*.

Waldensian Defiance of Rome

I. Waldensians Claim Apostolicity

The Waldensians claimed to have been always independent of Rome, never to have been under bondage to the papal jurisdiction, and never to have assented to its errors. And having denied its usurpations, they denounced Rome increasingly as the very apostasy of Babylon, and finally as Antichrist. The comparison was odious and dangerous. The very foundation of the papal structure was threatened. This assertion of a rival line of spiritual transmission, paralleling her own vaunted apostolic succession—of a contemporaneous line of truth that matched and countered the growing departures and apostasies marking the centuries of papal climb to power and pre-eminence—was a denial, a rebuke, and an intolerable threat to the universal headship of all the churches.

I. WALDENSIAN CLAIM MADE ROMAN CHALLENGE INEVITABLE.—The Waldensian claim of being the true church of Christ, the spiritual successor to the apostles, and the paralleling assertion that the Roman church had become the apocalyptic Harlot¹ and the synagogue of irreclaimable malignants was

¹ "Expelled from the Catholic Church they [the Poor Men of Lyons] affirmed that they alone were the church of Christ and the disciples of Christ. They say that they are the successors of the apostles and have the keys of binding and loosing. They say that the Roman church is the harlot Babylon, and all those obeying her are damned." (Translated from David of Augsburg, *Tractatus*, chap. 5, in Wilhelm Preger, "Der Tractat des David von Augsburg über der Waldesier," *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der königlich bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. 14, part 2, p. 206.)

bound to stir the wrath of Rome. The Waldenses claimed a succession, however, not so much of men as of evangelical truth. It was not a transmission through an episcopate but a perpetuation of divine principles deposited in one glorious, heavenly Mediator, and derivable from Him to all believers. It was therefore inevitable that conflict should come between such proponents and the Papacy, which laid exclusive claim to apostolicity, primacy, perpetuity, unity, and universality.² Those who refused to submit to that authority were necessarily rebels, schismatics, and heretics.

2. THE TRUE AND FALSE CHURCHES.—The Waldenses claimed to be the true church of the Scriptures persecuted by the false church, which professed to be the woman clothed with the sun but which was really the impure Babylon the Great. Wherever else she may have fled into the wilderness, the true church must also be found within the territory of Romanism, where oppression and persecution would be brought directly to bear upon her. This conclusion was obvious, and not to be rejected unless the prophetic premises outlining the two churches are set aside.

We do not, of course, admit the contention of Rome, that she is the true and only church of Christ, in view of all the foreign and adverse influences that have molded the Roman church. However, God never left Himself without witnesses to the truth and spirituality of His work of redemption among mankind. These influences are to be found within and without the pale of the dominant church. It is the church in the heart of men renewed by the Spirit of God; to all outward appearances it is often the church in the wilderness, sometimes in little groups, sometimes combining in larger communions, so that at times two churches existed. Certainly the alleged fulfillment in the Papacy of Christ's specifications for His true church, in universality, perpetuity, apostolicity, and purity, is

² For these asserted marks see *The Catechism of the Council of Trent*, part 1, chap. 10, "Of the Ninth Article," questions 10-16, Buckley translation, pp. 98-104; James Cardinal Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers*, chaps. 2-6.

so contradictory to fact, in the light of our previous study, as to warrant the charges brought by the Waldenses that the two churches of history are the two churches of prophecy.

3. MATERIALS SCANTY FOR WALDENSIAN DOCTRINES.—The witness of the Waldenses is both intriguing and vital. Their consciousness of their own role in fulfilling prophecy, as well as their interpretation of prophecy; the difficulty of clear discernment of their spiritual forefathers in the early centuries of witness in the Dark Ages; their fidelity to and preservation of the Word, and its evangelical truths; their protest against doctrinal and organizational apostasy; the resultant persecution against them throughout their witness; and the attempts of their enemies to destroy and discredit their writings—these all conspire to make the study of their beliefs particularly important.

We have very little Waldensian literature left. Much of their doctrine we must piece together from accounts of their enemies. Their original vernacular translations of the Scriptures are lost, and the vernacular writings that have survived come mostly from the valleys of Piedmont, where the remnant of the Waldenses were sheltered by their craggy ramparts, and thus their writings alone were preserved from the oblivion which overtook their sister communities in other parts of Europe. It is not in the province of this work to study the Waldensian literature in general; our quest is their doctrines, and particularly their prophetic interpretation as revealed in their doctrines.

Before proceeding to this study, however, something must be said of the language and form of the writings themselves.

II. Vaudois Literature and Language

1. MORLAND'S EMBASSY SECURES DOCUMENTS AND PRODUCES HISTORY.—Sir Samuel Morland, Cromwell's special ambassador to the duke of Savoy on behalf of the persecuted Waldenses, was urged by Archbishop Ussher, who had started

his own collection, to acquire whatever manuscripts he could find while on his visit to the Waldensians. Morland did so, and upon his return brought a collection of these writings to England in 1658. As the result of this mission Morland produced his famous history, based on his researches and on the original source documents secured. It was an official report to the British nation, dedicated to Cromwell.³ The world owes a great debt to this Cromwell expedition and to Morland's diligence, which resulted in gathering this remarkable exhibit of the writings of the Waldenses of the Cottian Alps—creeds, confessions, treatises, and sermons in the Vaudois dialect. From these documents he drew many extracts for his remarkable history,⁴ which was written to demonstrate (1) *the antiquity of their origin*, and (2) *the apostolicity of their faith*. These manuscripts, which were assembled in the form of books labeled "A," "B," "C," et cetera, were deposited by Morland in the Cambridge University Library. This is his statement:

"The true Originals of all which were collected with no little pains and industry, by the Authour of this History, during his abode in those parts, and at his Return, by him presented to the publick Library of the famous University of Cambridg."

2. "ROMAUNT" LINK BETWEEN LATIN AND MODERN LANGUAGES.—The language of the writings of the Piedmont Waldenses was a form intermediate between the Latin and the modern Romance languages. Under the impact of the barbarian conquerors from the north, during the dismemberment of Western Rome and in the following centuries, the Latin of the conquered, as well as the dialects of the conquerors, had undergone a profound change. Latin, which for centuries had

³ Samuel Miller, "Recommendatory Letter," *History of the Ancient Christians*, preliminary pp. 5-7; Morland, *op. cit.*, "The Author's Epistle Dedicatory," sig. A^o.

⁴ Gilly, *Waldensian Researches*, pp. 136, 137; Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 369, 370; Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 363.

⁵ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 94. Far-reaching implications followed the misplacement and seeming loss, on the part of the Library, of the first six of these books of manuscripts. In fact, they were not located until almost two centuries later, though they were in the Library all the time. Meantime, gratuitous conclusions were reached and serious charges made by Roman Catholics, and echoed by certain Protestants, concerning the good faith of the Waldenses and antiquity and genuineness of these writings. Unfortunately, the two-century loss of these documents led to serious suspicion on the part of some historical writers, and affected the standing of the Waldenses among casual students. (Todd, *op. cit.*, Preface, pp. x-xiii; Henry Bradshaw, "Discovery of the Long Lost Morland Manuscripts," reprinted in Todd, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-223.)



WHERE THE WALDENSES LIVED AND SUFFERED FOR THEIR FAITH

Old Waldensian Stone Church in Innermost Angrogna Valley (Upper); Title Page of Master Copy of Bull of Innocent VIII Calling for Complete Extirpation of the Vaudois, and Page Showing Authenticating Seal (Lower Left); Stone Table Top Formerly Used by Students in Waldensian Training School (Inset); Stone Houses in Typical Valley Scene (Center Right); Entrance to One of the Caves Used as Place of Worship and Refuge in Time of Persecution (Lower Right)

been the language of Gaul, Spain, and Italy, had suffered a definite decomposition. The so-called *Lingua Romana*, the *Romaunt*, or early Romance vernacular was the result, according to the older theory,⁶ but it is now believed that rather than one intermediate language there were from the first a number of dialects which grew directly out of the common spoken Latin in the various regions.⁷ The term *Romaunt* is referred to here because Gilly, whose *Romaunt Version* is cited, uses the terminology based on the older theory current in his day.

Gradually, as time passed, the many varieties of local patois settled down to well-defined forms, with accepted rules and grammar, until the modern French, Spanish, and Italian were formed—roughly from the eighth to the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.⁸ The older term “Romaunt” and the modern “Romance” refer to the languages which grew out of the “vulgar Latin” of the Gallic, Italian, and Spanish provinces of the Roman Empire.

3. LANGUAGE OF REFORM AND OF VERNACULAR SCRIPTURES.—The medieval Romance dialects not only contributed to the revival of letters in the Middle Ages—Provençal was the language of the song-poems of the troubadours—but far more important, they furnished the vehicle for the early attempts to reform the corruptions of the church, both by preaching and by the circulation of religious treatises in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which is our immediate concern. The homilies of the councils of Tours and Rheims were translated into “Romaunt” under the urge of Charlemagne.⁹

Walter Map states that at the Third Lateran Council some “Valdesians” presented to the pope a book of portions of the Scriptures with glosses, written in the “Gallic” tongue.¹⁰ The Passau Inquisitor of the thirteenth century complains that a

⁶ George Cornewall Lewis, *An Essay on the Origin and Formation of the Romance Languages*, pp. 19, 25, 30, 31.

⁷ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 161, 162.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37; see also William S. Gilly, Introduction to his edition of *The Romaunt Version of the Gospel According to St. John*, p. iv. Heavy draft has been made upon this work.

⁹ Gilly, *Romaunt Version*, Introduction, pp. v, vi.

¹⁰ See page 833.

leading citizen of Lyons taught the New Testament "in the vulgar tongue."¹¹ Finally, the first of the vernacular translations of Scripture were prohibited by ecclesiastical authority at the Council of Toulouse in 1299.¹² Gilly also clearly believes that as early as the twelfth century the complete New Testament was in the "Romaunt,"¹³ the first vernacular version since the fall of the empire, though there were earlier partial translations.

Claude Seyssel, archbishop of Turin, who visited the Waldenses of the Piedmontese valleys in 1517, boasted that he was the first prelate in the history of man to visit them episcopally. Seyssel refers repeatedly to books in the vulgar tongue by which the Waldenses were confirmed in their hostility to the Roman church.¹⁴

4. WALDENSIAN LANGUAGE AN ALPINE DIALECT.—The Vaudois dialect was an intermediate Romance idiom distinct from its original, with a characteristic suppression of certain final consonants indicating a loss of some original terminations. Experts have differed as to whether its source was France, as would be expected if Waldo's followers settled the valleys and brought with them the speech of Lyons, and some of the arguments have been colored by controversy. Böhmer says that the Alpine Waldenses show affinities for the Lombard group, and that the language of their later manuscripts belongs not to Lyons but to the east Provençal branch, in the Cottian Alps.¹⁵ Comba, citing various authorities, says that the progress of linguistic science returns to the opinion of Raynouard that the Waldensian language was Provençal, although the modern dialect is being transformed under French and Italian influence.¹⁶ This becomes, therefore, an evidence of their Alpine origin.

¹¹ *Reineri* . . . *Contra Waldenses*, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, p. 264; see also Gilly, *Romaunt Version*, Introduction.

¹² Canon 14. See Gilly, *Romaunt Version*, Introduction, p. vi.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

¹⁴ See Gilly's quotation from Seyssel, reprinted in Todd, *op. cit.*, pp. 169, 170.

¹⁵ H. Böhmer, "Waldenser," in Herzog, *Realencyclopädie* (3d ed., edited by Albert Hauck), vol. 20, p. 821.

¹⁶ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 165, 166.

III. Waldensian Statements of Belief

1. WALDENSES HELD CARDINAL DOCTRINES.—The Waldenses held firmly to: (1) the absolute authority and inspiration of the Scriptures; (2) the trinity of the Godhead; (3) the sinful state of man; (4) free salvation by Jesus Christ; (5) faith working by love.¹⁷ These points could not have been considered heretical; indeed, some of their enemies admitted their orthodoxy.¹⁸ But the Waldenses operated on certain basic principles which inevitably brought them into conflict with the churchly authorities: (1) the duty to preach, regardless of ecclesiastical regulation; (2) the authority and popular use of the Scriptures in the language of the people; (3) the right of laymen, and even women, to teach; (4) the denial of the right of a corrupt priest to administer the sacraments.¹⁹ They also rejected oaths, the death penalty, and some of them purgatory, prayers for the dead, the invocation of saints, and similar practices. They seem to have varied on the question of the real presence, the number of the sacraments, and infant baptism.

2. DIFFICULTIES IN DETERMINING DOCTRINES.—The differences in the accounts that have come down to us are traceable not only to actual variations among the scattered Waldenses in different times and places but also to the fact that much of our information comes from the reports of their enemies, because most of the Waldensian writings were destroyed. And some Catholics undoubtedly confused them with other heretics.²⁰ The viewpoint and purpose of each Catholic writer must be taken into account in evaluating such records of Waldensian beliefs and practices, as well as the fact that some of the information was extracted from ignorant, frightened, and sometimes tortured witnesses.

3. WALDENSIAN CONFESSIONS OF FAITH.—The beliefs of the Waldensians should be found best expressed in their con-

¹⁷ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 20, 21, citing manuscripts in Dublin and Geneva for each.

¹⁸ See page 826.

¹⁹ David S. Schaff, *op. cit.*, part 1, pp. 502-505.

²⁰ See page 835.

fessions of faith, but those which we have leave much to be desired. The confession dated 1120 by Morland and Leger, is really much later. The second that he prints is undated; the only other dated before the Reformation is the one presented to King Ladislaus of Bohemia in 1508, but it is given in a later form, as "amplified," in 1535.

The confession labeled "1120" affirms belief in the Apostles' Creed, the Trinity, the canonical Scriptures (which are listed), God the Creator, justification through Christ our "Advocate, Sacrifice, and Priest," the resurrection and the judgment, rejection of purgatory as invented by Antichrist, and of other human inventions (such as saint worship, the mass, and other ritual practices), the two sacraments only, and subjection to civil rulers. According to Perrin and Muston, it was really derived from Morel, the envoy whose consultation with the Protestant leaders has been mentioned, and whose original statement of belief will be quoted in full in this chapter.²¹

Morland's Confession of 1508 and 1535 comprises a statement of beliefs, and the reason for the separation from Rome, representing not the old-line Waldenses of Italy, but the "Waldensian Brethren" or "Picards," Bohemian Brethren whose founders had received ordination from a Waldensian bishop.²²

(1) The canonical Scriptures the rule of faith; (2) the catechism, based on the Decalogue and the Apostles' Creed; (3) the Holy Trinity; (4) sin; (5) repentance; (6) justification by faith in Christ; (7) faith and works; (8) the true church scattered throughout the nations, menaced by Antichrist; (9) a ministry preaching by precept and example, duly ordained; (10) the Word of God the basis of faith; (11) sacraments invalid without inward quickening of the Holy Spirit; (12) baptism, including children; (13) the Eucharist in both kinds, Christ's body and blood respectively; (14) the power of the church; (15) the rejection of those human traditions which ob-

²¹ See page 854 and note 76, also pages 870, 871 for Morel's statement of faith. For the confession, see Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-34; Perrin, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-214; for its connection with Morel, see Perrin, *op. cit.*, p. 51 n, and Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 478, 479.

²² See page 853.

scure the glory of Christ; (16) obedience to the secular power ordained to govern political and temporary affairs; (17. 18) repudiation of saint worship and fasts; (19) celibacy and marriage equally meritorious; (20) probation only in this life; no purgatory.²³

Specifically concerning the Antichrist of prophecy, article 8 states:

"That *Antichrist*, that man of sin, doth sit in the Temple of God, that is, in the Church, of whom the Prophets, and *Christ* and His Apostles foretold, admonishing all the godly, to beware of him and his Errours, and not suffer themselves to be drawn aside from the Truth."²⁴

4. LETTER OF 1218 STATES BELIEFS.—The earliest dated Waldensian document which discusses their beliefs is a Latin letter, the *Rescriptum*, written by the Lombard Waldenses to brethren in Austria giving an account of the council at Bergamo in 1218, when the Poor Men of Lyons and the Poor Men of Lombardy agreed to disagree about Waldo, church organization, and the Eucharist. This document reveals the fact that although neither disputed the change of the bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ, the Italians were more evangelical and less conservative than the Poor Men of Lyons, for they demanded a minister with a pure life as a condition of the validity of the sacrament, whereas the Lyonnais relied on the words of consecration; the Lombards gave less importance to baptism, particularly of children, and they held that a man should not leave his wife (to become a traveling pastor) without mutual consent.²⁵

5. CATHOLICS LIST "ERRORS" OF WALDENSIAN TEACHINGS.—We shall be driven to Catholic sources to find comprehensive lists of Waldensian teaching.²⁶ One document of 1398 shows the Austrian Waldenses as repudiating ninety-two points of Catholic doctrine and practice, including the following items:

²³ Epitome of twenty articles given in full in Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-57.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51.

²⁵ *Rescriptum Heresiarcharum Lombardiae ad Leonistas in Alemannia* (Letter of the Heresiarchs of Lombardy to the Leonists in Germany), in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, pp. 42-52.

²⁶ For such lists of "errors," see Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-285; David of Augsburg, *op. cit.*; Döllinger, *Beiträge*, *passim*; Reineri . . . *Contra Waldenses*, chap. 5.

They believe that their authority to preach comes from God alone, not the pope or any Catholic bishop.

They believe that they are the representatives and legitimate successors of the apostles of Christ.

They condemn the Roman church because from the time of Pope Sylvester it had and held possessions.

They believe that the Blessed Virgin and the other saints in the homeland are so occupied with joys that they can think nothing about us, that they cannot intercede for us, that they are not to be invoked, honored, or served.

They deny purgatory and dismiss as of no account vigils, masses, prayers, and alms for the dead, the kissing of relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, and excommunications.

They believe that the pope is the head and origin of all heretics and that all Catholics are heretics.

They believe that there is no superior sanctity in consecrated buildings, holy water, blessed palms, ashes, candles, et cetera.

They reject oaths; they denounce kings, princes, et cetera, for judicial homicide, and the pope for sending Crusaders to fight the Saracens.

These articles are held by the heresiarchs [that is, the Waldensian ministers], but by their believers more or less according to their capacity.²⁷

6. WALDENSIAN TEACHINGS AT TIME OF FIRST CONTACTS WITH REFORMATION.—At the time of contact with the Reformers, Barbe Morel's letter to Oecolampadius (1530) furnishes a short but comprehensive statement of Waldensian belief:

"With regard to our articles of beliefs, we teach our people, as well as we can, the contents of the twelve articles of the Symbol, called the Apostle's [*sic*] Creed, and every doctrine deviating from it is looked upon by us as heresy. We believe in a God in three persons; we hold that the humanity of Christ is created and inferior to the Father, who wished by means of it to redeem mankind; but we admit at the same time that Christ

²⁷ Summarized from a report of Peter the Inquisitor in Preger, "Beiträge," vol. 13, part 1, pp. 246-249; also in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, pp. 305-311.

is both very God and very man. We hold also that there is no other mediator and intercessor with God than Jesus Christ. The Virgin Mary is holy, humble, and full of grace; the same with the other saints; and they await with her in heaven the glorification of their bodies at the resurrection. We believe that, after this life, there is only the place of abode of the elect, called paradise, and that of the rejected, called hell. As for purgatory it was invented by anti-Christ, contrary to truth, therefore we reject it. All that are of human invention—such as Saints' days, vigils, holy water, fasts on fixed days, and the like, especially the mass—are, as we think, an abomination in the sight of God. We believe the sacraments to be the signs of a sacred thing, or a visible figure of an invisible grace, and that it is good and useful for the faithful sometimes to partake of them, if possible; but we believe that, if the opportunity to do so be lacking, a man may be saved nevertheless. As I understand it, we have erred in admitting more than two sacraments. We also hold that oral confession is useful, if it be observed without distinction of time and for the purpose of comforting the sick, the ignorant, and those who seek our advice, according to the Scriptures. According to our rule, charity ought to proceed as follows:—First, everyone must love God, above all creatures, even more than his own soul; then his soul more than all else; then his neighbour's soul more than his own life; then his own life more than that of his neighbour; finally, the life of his neighbour more than his own property."²⁸

IV. The "Noble Lesson" Epitomizes the Waldensian Faith

Though a poem of 479 lines, in rhythmical verse like that of the troubadours, the *Noble Lesson* was equivalent to a confession of faith, of evangelical heritage, handed down from former generations. It was evidently written for reading in church assembly, because it begins with "Hear, Brethren, a Noble Lesson." The word for "lesson" is *leyçon*, from *lectio*, the Latin word meaning "a reading in assembly."²⁹ It could have been composed only by those who knew the genius of true Christianity in contradistinction to the errors of Rome, to which it makes reference.

²⁸ Morel, *op. cit.*, translated in Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 292. For the Latin letter, see Dieckhoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-369.

²⁹ For the original text, see *La Noble Leçon*, edited by Edouard Montet. Complete English translations appear in Morland (with parallel Romaunt and English columns, pp. 99-120); also in Perrin, as translated in *History of the Ancient Christians* (pp. 263-271). Elliott (vol. 2, pp. 390-394, following Raynouard) and Faber (pp. 399-414) give extracts. It appears in paralleling Romaunt and French in Perrin (*Histoire des Vaudois*, pp. 253 ff.), and in Leger (pp. 26-30). There are several manuscript copies (see Gilly's "First Letter on the Noble Lesson," in Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 167)—two at Cambridge, one each at Dublin, Geneva, and Grenoble, and, in addition, the one from which Ladoucette took his extract in his *Histoire, topographie, antiquités, usages, dialects des Hautes-Alpes*, p. 299.

"O Brethren, give ear to a noble Lesson.
 We ought always to watch and pray,
 For we see the World nigh to a conclusion.
 We ought to strive to do good works,
 Seeing that the end of this World approacheth.
 There are already a thousand and one hundred years fully
accomplished,
 Since it was written thus, *For we are in the last time.*"³⁰

In its scope the *Noble Lesson* may be summarized as setting forth the Trinity, the fall of man, redemption through divine grace, free will, the unchangeable character of the Decalogue, the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, the ministration of the Word, and the day of judgment.³¹ It holds essentially what was taught by the apostolic church before the Waldensians, and what the Reformers taught after them. It is a connecting link between the two. Leger calls it an epitome of the Old and New Testaments.³² And Allix says, "I defy the impudence of the Devil himself to find therein the least shadow of Manicheism."³³

1. POEM INDICATES TWELFTH-CENTURY LIMITS.—The *Noble Lesson* was composed in the local Romaunt dialect of the Alps, not that of the Lyonnais, and because of its clear language, says Muston, it must have been written by the inhabitants of the mountains, not by strangers. He places its composition between the utmost limits of 1100 and 1190, and therefore rules out Waldo's disciples—for in 1100 they were not in existence, and 1190 was but six years after their banishment from Lyons in 1184³⁴—too short a time to master a new language, for the *Noble Lesson* is recognized as one of the masterpieces of the time.³⁵

³⁰ *The Noble Lesson*, translated in Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³¹ Gilly, *Waldensian Researches*, pp. 141, 142; Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 390 ff.

³² Leger, *op. cit.*, book 1, p. 30.

³³ Allix, *Churches of Piedmont*, p. 181.

³⁴ The only contemporary document giving detailed information on Waldo's first spiritual impulse and subsequent action, the Laon chronicle (*Chronicon Universale Anonymi Laudunensis*), under the years 1173, 1178 in *MGH, Scriptores*, vol. 26, pp. 447-450, establishes this fact: Peter took his vow of poverty in 1173, and was subsequently excommunicated; but he first began to have associates in 1177.

³⁵ Muston, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 15, 16.

That the *Noble Lesson* dates from the twelfth century is indicated by the lines:

"There are already *a thousand and one hundred years fully accomplished*,
Since it was written thus, *For we are in the last time.*"³⁶

Scholars state that this dating line—"a thousand and one hundred"—is a genuine part of the text, and no interpolation. The eleven hundred years is not the principal question, but the starting point of the period. Some have taken it as beginning with the Christian Era, and thus ending in A.D. 1100;³⁷ but others think it is to be computed from the time of John's first epistle, when the expression, "It is the last time" (1 John 2:18), was written. This would bring the beginning date some sixty years after the cross, and terminate the period about 1190, or perhaps 1200. In any event, in the twelfth century or immediately after the end of it, eleven complete centuries had run out, from whichever starting point.³⁸

These two lines are interesting in view of the fact that Joachim makes a similar statement twice in his *Expositio*. He says that "already more than a thousand years have passed since the blessed John said 'Little children, it is the last hour.'"³⁹ Evidently he, writing in the latter part of the twelfth century, reckoned the writing of First John as late in the first century. If our Waldensian poem was written at the end of the twelfth century, the same starting point would give an interval of approximately 1100 years. In the light of this similarity to Joachim's expression, it would be interesting to know whether there was any contact, or a common source.

Comba points out—although he does not seem to know of these Joachim statements—that the end of the twelfth century was a most logical time for our poet to expect the approach of the end, for the expectation was abroad at that time, and Joachim himself looked to the year 1200 as a significant

³⁶ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³⁷ Morland, Leger, Allix, Monastier, Raynouard.

³⁸ Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 388; Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 366 ff.

³⁹ Joachim, *Expositio*, fol. 210 r; see also fol. 83 v. Can there be some significance in the report of the chief *barbe's* residence in Calabria?

date.⁴⁰ That is why Comba thinks this date is correct, and discounts the critics' attempt to make the line read "a thousand and four hundred." True, one manuscript at Cambridge reads four hundred, but two have one hundred, and the fourth, with the erasure, cannot be read as four as was supposed, nor as anything at all, says Chaytor. And Comba explains the four hundred as a reasonable error for a later copyist.⁴¹

2. INTERNAL EVIDENCES FOR DATING.—Corroboration of this self-dating of the *Lesson* for the twelfth century by certain rather decisive internal evidences has been offered—of language, idiom, versification, theological sentiment, and historical fact. By purely literary criteria, according to Raynouard, it stands the test⁴²—dialect, style, and form of verse. It employs certain terms, as for example *baron* for nobility, *fellon* for wicked, *hostal* for house, and *saragins* [saracens]⁴³ for barbarian, corresponding to the language and contemporary writings in the Piedmontese section at the time. There has been much discussion of the language.

The phrase "all the cardinals" is another evidence mentioned by Faber. The name and office had long existed, but not a college of cardinals with the power of electing the pope. That was first instituted by Nicholas II (1059-1061),⁴⁴ and so had been in vogue about forty years when the twelfth century began. There is also reference to "Jews and saracens"—the term "Saracens" at that time being frequently applied to gentiles, for in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Saracens were the unbelievers par excellence in the current vocabulary.

There are, furthermore, certain conceptions and historical facts of the century that are evaluated in detail by Elliott and

⁴⁰ For Joachim, see pages 713-715.

⁴¹ Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-237; H. J. Chaytor, Introduction to *Six Vaudois Poems*, pp. xij, xijj.

⁴² François J. M. Raynouard, "an indisputably competent judge," pronounced it a twelfth-century document "beyond all cavil," on this technical basis (*Choix des poésies originales des troubadours*, vol. 2, pp. cxxxvii-cxliii), which decision was accepted by Henry Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. 1, chap. 1, sec. 33. In this conclusion, they are joined by Senebier and other linguists. See also Thomas McCrie, *Reformation in Italy*, pp. 20, 21.

⁴³ Raynouard, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 86, 92, 81, 93, respectively.

⁴⁴ Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 411, 412, 395, 396.

Faber,⁴⁵ for example: The persecutions mentioned—plunder and imprisonment, and not primarily torture and death—of such a character that they fit the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but not later centuries. The first bull against the Waldenses was only issued by Pope Lucius III in 1184. And the deferring, by Catholic neighbors, of confession to the priest until the deathbed, was a habit that could scarcely have existed after the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, wherein annual confession, at least, is enjoined.⁴⁶ The concept of Antichrist as someone yet to come is different from the amplified and clarified picture in the treatise on Antichrist, which portrays him as already here. Similarly, Gilly mentions the practice of reading the Scriptures in the vernacular, which evidently had not yet been forbidden in general.⁴⁷ James I, king of Aragon and count of Provence, in 1213 prohibited the circulation of the books of the Old and New Testaments translated in the *Romaunt*.⁴⁸ Then came the general ecclesiastical prohibition of Toulouse, in 1299.

The twelfth- and thirteenth-century idea of the imminent end of the world and the approaching day of judgment is reflected in the *Noble Lesson*. We have seen how Joachim stirred up the expectation of the end of the age to come soon after 1200, with a period in which Antichrist would prevail over the saints for a brief time.

3. ILLUSTRATIVE EXCERPTS FROM THE "NOBLE LESSON."—Three excerpts must suffice, though the whole should be read. The poem declares that after the apostles certain teachers who "showed the way of Jesus Christ" had continued, "even to the present time"—without any suggestion of a rediscovery or revival. Here also the Valdenses are mentioned by name. These evangelical protestors were marked out for persecution and reviled under the term Vaudés:

⁴⁵ Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 344-385; Faber, *op. cit.*, book 3, chap. 9.

⁴⁶ Canon 21, in Schroeder, *op. cit.*, pp. 259, 260; Mansi, *op. cit.*, vol. 22, cols. 1007-1010.

⁴⁷ Gilly, *Romaunt Version*, p. xv.

⁴⁸ See Gilly's "Second Letter on the Waldensian Mss.," in Todd, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

"They say, that such a person is a VAUDES [in the Romaunt: *Ilh diçon qu'el es Vaudes*], and is worthy of punishment: and they find occasion, through lyes and deceit, to take from him that which he has gotten by his just labour."⁴⁹

The great apostasy is dated from Sylvester, with its spurious offers of pardon. Thus:

"All the Popes that have been from *Sylvester* down to the present one, and all the Cardinals, and all the Bishops, and all the Abbots, even all such put together, have not so much power as to be able to pardon a single mortal sin. It is God alone who pardons; and no other can do it."⁵⁰

Then as to Antichrist, the hearer is admonished to "be well advised when *Antichrist* shall come; to the intent that we may give no credence either to his doings or to his sayings."⁵¹ And on the last things:

"Many signs and great wonders shall be from this time forward to the day of judgment. The heaven and the earth shall burn; and all the living shall die. Then all shall rise again to an ever-enduring life: and every building shall be laid prostrate. Then shall be the last judgment, when God shall separate His people."⁵²

Can there be some significance in Antichrist's being referred to in the *future* tense about the year 1200? In view of Joachim's teaching concerning the momentous events to be expected between 1200 and 1260, there might be. But if so, the hint of a future Antichrist is not the only interpretation of that symbol found among the Waldensians.

V. Prophetic Terms of Beast, Babylon, and Antichrist

In various Catholic writings listing the "errors" of the Waldenses we find them accused of applying uncomplimentary prophetic epithets to the Catholic Church. If the strongest terms, in the treatise *On Antichrist*, cannot be placed exactly, there are at least strong hints in other documents which are dated.

⁴⁹ Translation in Faber, *op. cit.*, p. 408; also in Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 392. For the original, see *La Noble Leçon*, p. 60.

⁵⁰ Quoted from Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 393, following Raynouard's translation.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

1. WALDENSES HAVE "COME OUT OF HER."—Salvus Burce, in a work dated 1235, contends with the Poor Men of Lyons and the Poor Men of Lombardy. He says that the Cathari call the church Harlot, nest of serpents, and Beast, "and you foolish ones say that same thing."⁵³

"Perhaps the heretics say: 'We have come out of the vile harlot, namely, from the church of Rome, and let us see concerning the prelates of the very beast.'"⁵⁴

2. AUSTRIAN WALDENSES CALL CHURCH APOCALYPTIC HARLOT.—The Passau Anonymous, writing about 1260 in Austria, does, incidentally, a bit of prophetic interpreting himself by calling the heretics Antichrists. He begins his enumeration of the errors of the Poor Men of Lyons:

"First, they say that the Roman Church is not the Church of Jesus Christ, but is a church of malignants. . . . And they say that they are the Church of Christ, because they observe the teaching of Christ, of the gospel, and of the apostles in word and example. . . . Sixth, that the Roman Church is the harlot of the Apocalypse because of her superfluous adornment which the Eastern Church does not care for."⁵⁵

David of Augsburg reports the epithet "harlot," as has already been mentioned.⁵⁶

3. ANTICHRIST APPLIED TO CATHOLICS.—In a list of questions issued for the guidance of Inquisitors in prosecuting heretics, certain points are outlined for examining Cathari, and then the list for Waldenses contains the following significant queries:

"Whether the Roman church is the Church of Christ or the harlot. . . . Whether the church of God fell in the time of Sylvester. And who restored it. Whether Pope Sylvester was Antichrist."⁵⁷

These questions show clearly what the Waldenses were reported as teaching, and the belief that a pope *was* Antichrist in the distant past hints of the new interpretation of the Antichrist that was developing, and that was carried further in the

⁵³ Salvus Burce, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵⁵ Translated from Reineri . . . *Contra Waldenses*, chap. 5, in *MBVP*, vol. 25, p. 265.

⁵⁶ See page 860.

⁵⁷ Document no. XX in Döllinger, *Beiträge*, vol. 2, p. 320.

treatise on Antichrist. Thus the testimony of their enemies helps to fill out the picture of the Waldensian prophetic interpretation.

At the time of the Reformation we come to Morel's aforementioned letter. In its summary of Waldensian beliefs we find the term Antichrist applied to the Catholic Church collectively, or at least to the clergy, and the phrases "Antichristian ceremonies" and "abominations of Antichrist" designating the Catholic ritual.

Note that purgatory is the invention of Antichrist. Further references to the Catholic Church as Antichrist are found in the same letter.

"We ourselves do not administer the sacraments to the people—they are Papists [Latin, members of Antichrist] who do this; but we explain to them as well as we can the spiritual meaning of the sacraments. We exhort them not to put their trust in anti-Christian ceremonies, and to pray that if they be compelled to see and hear the abominations of anti-Christ, it may not be imputed to them as a sin, but that such sort of abominations may soon be confounded to make room for truth, and that the Word of God may be spread abroad. Besides, we absolutely forbid our people to swear. All dancing is prohibited, and, generally speaking, all kinds of games, except the practice of the bow or other arms. Neither do we tolerate vain and lascivious songs, delicate clothing, whether striped or checked, or cut after the latest fashion. Our people are generally simple folk, peasants, having no other resource but agriculture, dispersed by persecution in numbers of places very distant from each other."⁵⁸

VI. The Treatise on Antichrist

The exact date of this treatise cannot be established; it bears no date in the text. The year 1120 was assigned, first by Perrin and then by Leger, in this wise: The treatise was received by Perrin in the same book or packet with a *Confession of Faith*, and certain other documents, with the general date "1120" affixed by the collector. But the affixing of a single date to several undated manuscripts is not, of course, determinative.

⁵⁸ Translated in Comba, *op. cit.*, pp. 292, 293. It is to be noted, that this was the situation of the remnant in Piedmont at the time of contact with the Reformers, after severe persecutions. There are accounts of Waldensian celebration of the Eucharist. Either this had been restricted to meetings of ministers, or the practice had been discontinued in Morel's time.

The absence of an exact date does not affect its genuineness, for its author does not claim to be writing in 1120. There are, however, three accompanying tracts—on purgatory, invocation of saints, and the sacraments—which are obviously of later date, for they refer to a thirteenth-century work.⁶⁹

In this treatise the spirit of false Christianity manifest in the papal church is none other than the Beast and Babylon, predicted by Daniel and John, and therefore the great Antichrist—Paul's Mystery of Iniquity—not an individual infidel Jew as Antichrist. The principle which grew into the papal system, in its "infancy" in apostolic times, had now grown to the full stature of the Man of Sin, the Mystery of Iniquity, which could not in earlier centuries be so easily discerned, for it was at first only a "falling away."

The Man of Sin had not yet fully developed when, under Constantine, the church was elevated by the state; nor even when, under Justinian, the Roman bishop was recognized as head of all the churches. But at the time when the Papacy was waxing most powerful, from the days of Hildebrand, who exalted himself to be head of the nations as well, the worldliness and corruption in the hierarchy were matched by the loss of faith in the church, the rising chorus of protest, and the cry for a return to evangelical poverty and simplicity.

What ecclesiastics saw from within the church with more or less haziness, the Waldenses saw from without with crystal clarity. The wonder would have been if they had remained blind to a fulfillment of prophecy so plain and palpable that even men within the apostate church recognized it. Such a treatise was therefore to be logically expected. Both Waldenses and Albigenes agreed that the church of Rome was the whore of Babylon designated in the Apocalypse, as we have seen from several sources.

1. ANTICHRIST STIGMATIZED AS FALSEHOOD AND DECEIT.—The opening words of the treatise comprise an unsparing

⁶⁹ Faber, *op. cit.*, pp. 370-373; Elliott, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 363, 364.

description of his character as falsehood or hypocrisy in the church:

"*Antichrist* is a Falshood worthy of eternal Damnation, covered over with a shew of Truth, and of the Righteousness of *Christ*, and his Spouse, contrary to the way of Truth, Righteousness, Faith, Hope, and Charity, as likewise to moral Life, and to the ministerial Truth of the Church, administered by the false Apostles, and resolutely upheld by the one and the other Arm of Secular and Ecclesiastical Power; or else we may say, *Antichrist* is a Deceit which hides the Truth of Salvation in substantial and ministerial matters; or, that it is a disguised contrariety to *Christ* and his Spouse, and every faithfull member thereof." ⁶⁰

2. PAPAL CHURCH FULFILLMENT OF PROPHETIC PREDICTIONS.—Antichrist is declared to be not an individual but a whole system, as the whole congregation of hypocritical ministers and laity, described under the symbols of Daniel, Paul, and John. Here is the remarkable identification:

"And so it is not any one particular person, ordained to such a Degree, Office, or Ministry, it being considered universally; but it is *Falshood* it self, in opposition to the *Truth*, covering and adorning it self with a pretence of Beauty and Piety, not sutable to the Church of *Christ*, as by the Names, and Offices, the Scriptures, the Sacraments, and many other things may appear. Iniquity thus qualified with all the Ministers thereof great and small, together with all them that follow them, with an evil heart, and blindfold; such a Congregation comprised together, is that which is called *Antichrist* or *Babylon*, or the *fourth Beast*, or the *Whore*, or the *Man of Sin*, the *Son of perdition*." ⁶¹

3. MUST EMBODY COMBINED SPECIFICATIONS OF PROPHECY.—After listing the various Biblical expressions that describe the papal clergy and the worldly character of the false church, the treatise declares that Antichrist must embody the combined specifications of prophecy.

"*Antichrist* could not come in any wise, but all these forementioned things must needs meet together, to make up a complete hypocrisie and falshood, viz. the worldly wise men, the Religious Orders, the Pharisees, Ministers, Doctours, the Secular Power, with the worldly people joynly together. And thus all of them together make up the Man of sin and error completely." ⁶²

⁶⁰ *Of Antichrist* (sometimes known as *Qual cosa sia l'Antechrist*), translated in Morland, *op. cit.*, pp. 142, 143.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 143 (see also p. 158); Leger, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

⁶² Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

4. HAS GROWN FROM EARLY EMBRYO TO FULL-GROWN MAN.—Existing only in embryo in apostolic days, and so lacking parts and facilities, he later grew to full age.

"Although that *Antichrist* was conceived already in the Apostles time, yet being but in his infancy as it were, he wanted his inward and outward members; . . . he wanted yet those hypocritical Ministers, and humane Ordinances, and the outward shew of those Religious Orders. . . . he wanted the secular strength and power, and could not force nor compell any from the truth unto falshood. And because he wanted many things yet, therefore he could not defile or scandalize any by his deceits, and thus, being so weak and tender, he could obtain no place in the Church. But growing up in his Members, that is to say, in his blinde and dissembling Ministers, and in worldly Subjects, he at length became a complete man, grew up to his full age, to wit, then when the lovers of the world in Church and State, blinde in faith, did multiply in the Church, and get all the power into their hands."⁶³

5. MAN OF SIN LONG SEATED IN THE CHURCH.—After referring to Antichrist's defrauding of God and of "Christ as Mediator," fostering idolatry, and stirring hate and violence against "those that love the truth," the treatise sets forth Antichrist as having already fulfilled Paul's specifications of the Man of Sin—and not still to be waited for:

"According to the Apostle we may truly say, This is that man of sin complete, that lifts up himself against all that is called God, or worshipped, and that setteth himself in opposition against all truth, sitting down in the Temple of God, that is in his Church, and shewing forth himself as if he were God, being come with all manner of deceivableness for those that perish. And since he is truly come, he must no longer be looked for; for he is grown old already by God's permission."⁶⁴

6. CITY OF BABYLON ALREADY SUFFERING FROM DIVISION.—This treatise declares that Antichrist "begins even to decay, and his power and authority is abated" by "divers persons of good dispositions, sending abroad a power contrary to his," and that God "puts division into that City of *Babylon*, wherein the whole generation of Iniquity doth prevail and reign."⁶⁵

7. ATTACKS TRUTH AND PERSECUTES SAINTS.—Enumerat-

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 145.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 146; Leger, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁶⁵ Morian, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

ing the "works" of Antichrist as taking away the truth, changing it into falsehood, and covering falsehood with a semblance of truth, the treatise *Of Antichrist* charges that this "perfect and complete" wickedness surpasses any other power up to the "time of Antichrist," and is Christ's most effective enemy, oppressing the true church.

"The holy Mother the Church with her true Children, is altogether troden under foot, especially in the Truth, and in what concerneth the true worship in the Truth, and the Ministry, and the exercise thereof, . . . the holy Church is accounted a Synagogue of Miscreants, and the Congregation of the Wicked is esteemed the Mother of them, that rightly believe in the Word. Falshood is preached up for Truth, Iniquity for Righteousness, Injustice passeth for Justice, Error for Faith, Sin for Virtue, and Lyes for Verity."⁶⁶

8. ROBS GOD, CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.—Antichrist robs God of "the worship properly due to God alone." He "robs and bereaves *Christ* of His Merits"—of grace, justification, regeneration, remission, and sanctification. He "attributes the Regeneration of the Holy Spirit unto the dead outward work." He puts forth the mass and a "patchwork" of Jewish, heathenish, and Christian ceremonies. He parades works and resorts to simony. Then follow the seventh and eighth works:

"The seventh Work of *Antichrist* is, that he doth not govern nor maintain his Unity by the Holy Spirit, but by Secular Power, and maketh use thereof to effect spiritual matters.

"The eighth Work of the *Antichrist* is, that he hates, and persecutes, and searcheth after, dispoils and destroys the Members of Christ."⁶⁷

9. ELECT OF GOD STILL IN ANTICHRIST'S BABYLON.—Then are enumerated the devices by which Antichrist's true character is concealed—plausible confession of faith, antiquity of succession, extent of control, apostolic authority, outward holiness, writings of the ancients, and the authority of councils. Consequently, many of God's elect are still in Babylon.

"The Elect of God, that desire and do that which is good, are detained there, as in *Babylon*; and are like unto Gold, wherewith the wicked *Antichrist* doth cover his Vanity, not suffering them to serve God alone,

⁶⁶ Morland, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

nor to put all their hope in *Christ* alone, nor to embrace the true Religion.”⁶⁸

10. CHRISTIANS BOUND TO SEPARATE FROM ANTICHRIST.—Antichrist covers his “lying wickedness” lest he be “rejected as a Pagan,” under which he acts his villanies, which necessitates separation.

“Now it is evident, as well in the *Old*, as in the *New Testament*, that a *Christian* stands bound, by express Command given him, to separate himself from *Antichrist*. For, the Lord saith, *Isai* 52. Withdraw, withdraw your selves, go forth thence, touch no unclean thing, go forth from the midst of her; cleanse your selves, ye that bear the Vessels of the Lord.”⁶⁹

11. CALLED TO JOIN HOLY CITY OF JERUSALEM.—Then follow parallel texts from Jeremiah 50 (“flee out of *Babylon*, and come out of the land of the *Chaldeans*”), Leviticus 20 (“separated you from the rest of the nations”), Exodus 34 (“Make no friendship [or alliance]”), and others. Many references are cited from the New Testament, climaxing with Revelation 18 (“*O my people*, come forth out of her, and be not partakers of her sins”). Then follows this paragraph:

“Also the Lord commands our separating from him, and joyning our selves with the holy City of *Jerusalem*: therefore knowing such things, the Lord having revealed them unto us by his Servants, and believing this Revelation according to the holy Scriptures, and being admonished by the Commandments of the Lord, we do both inwardly and outwardly depart from *Antichrist*, because we know him to be the same; and we keep company and unity one with another, freely and uprightly, having no other intent and purpose but purely and singly to please the Lord, and to be saved: and by the Lords help, we joyn our selves to the Truth of *Christ* and his Spouse.”⁷⁰

12. IMPELLED BY CONSCIOUSNESS OF TWOFOLD TRUTH.—Declaring it essential to set down the causes of the separation and the “kinde of Congregation” they themselves have in contrast, the treatise declares separation is for “the real Truths sake of the Faith.” Then follows a statement of evangelical faith in the Triune God, salvation through Christ, the communion

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 155.

of saints, the ministering of pastors to congregations in convenient place and time, and the preaching of the Word of the gospel. Next comes a list of the errors and impurities of Antichrist, who "hath reigned a good while already in the church 'by Gods permission.'" This is accompanied by an extensive catalogue of Antichrist's evil teachings and practices that well covers the range of Catholicism, climaxing with the religious orders and rules. Here is the "fourth Iniquity":

"The fourth Iniquity of *Antichrist* is, that notwithstanding his being the *fourth Beast* formerly described by Daniel, and the *Whore of the Revelation*, he nevertheless adorns himself with the Authority, Power, Dignity, Ministry, Offices, and the Scriptures, and makes himself equal with the true and holy Mother the Church, wherein Salvation is to be had ministerially, and no where else."⁷¹

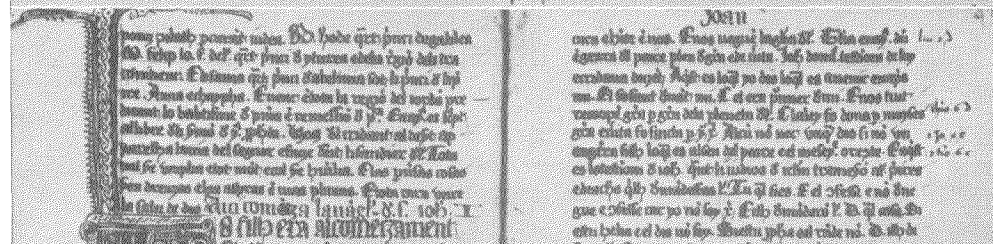
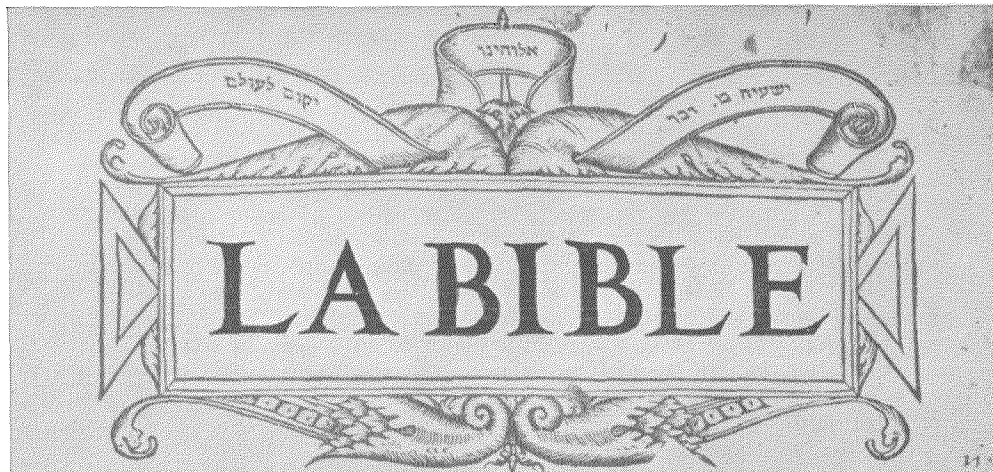
What an amazingly comprehensive and balanced statement of the prophetic platform of the ostracized Wilderness Church! It is interesting to note that the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century, in the full glory of evangelical light, expressed similar views. And the seventeenth-century British investigators like Morland, and leaders like Cromwell and Milton, whose attention was called to the Waldensians by their persecutions, openly agreed with them that the Papacy is the prophesied Antichrist of Daniel, Paul, and John. Two extracts must suffice to indicate how Morland shared their prophetic views:

"That this is the *Desart whither the woman fled* when she was persecuted by the Dragon with seven heads and ten horns. And where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her one thousand two hundred and sixty daies: That here it was that the Church fed, and where she made her Flocks to rest at noon, in those hot and scorching seasons of the nine and tenth Centuries; Then it may be thou wilt begin to believe with me, that it was in the clefts of these Rocks, and in the secret places of the stairs of these Valleys of *Piemont*, that the Dove of Christ then remained, where also the Italian Foxes then began to spoil the Vines with their tender Grapes, although they were never able utterly to destroy or pluck them up by the roots."⁷²

"This little flock of Christ in the Valleys of *Piemont*, by reason of

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 159; Leger, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

⁷² Morland, *op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. vi, vii.



WALDENSIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE REFORMATION

Part of Title Page of Bible Translated Into French in 1535, the Waldensian Gift to the Reformation (Upper); Portion of Pages of Manuscript of Gospel of John, Copied in the Medieval Language of the Waldenses (Center); Monument in the Angrogna Valley Commemorating the Meeting at Chamforans, in 1532, Between the Emissaries of the New Reformation Movement and the Waldenses (Lower Left); Close-up Showing the Insigne of the Waldenses (Lower Right)

the remoteness and obscurity of their Country, and habitations (adding thereto the natural *genius* of those plain and simple people, which was not at all to effect high things) did for many *Centuries* together, peaceably enjoy, or at least preserve amongst them the purity of that Doctrine which was left them by *Christ* and his *Apostles*; and therefore when once the *seven horn'd beast rising out of the bottomless pit*, began to shew it self in the world, and corruption to be foisted into the Church by the *Roman* Clergy, those *true Nathaniels*, could by no means drink down such abominations, but did with all their might resist and oppose the same, and that oft times, even unto blood; and upon this account, and this alone, was it, that they became first the objects of their enemies' hatred, and afterwards the subjects of their *Antichristian* fury."⁷³

An idealized picture of primitive purity amid degeneration and corruption? Perhaps. But it is not too much to say that the Waldensian witness in the face of torture and death stands in luminous contrast to the murky darkness of papal misconception and intolerance. Most appropriate were the Waldensian insigne—the lighted candle in the midst of the seven stars—and their motto, *Lux Lucet in Tenebris* (Light Shines in Darkness). This is what we would expect; it is what we find. And it was the twofold consciousness of the all-sufficiency of Christ and the ominous character of Antichrist that held the Waldenses on their course in the face of mounting persecution, and impelled them to witness to this twofold truth, even if it meant the sacrifice of life itself.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 190.