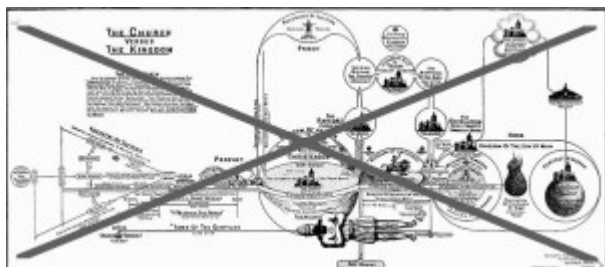


The Historical Roots of Christian Zionism, its Theological Basis and Political Agenda



The historical roots, theological basis, and political consequences or political agenda of Christian Zionism

Deconstructing Dispensationalism



An excellent talk about what Dispensationalism is, the history behind it, and why it is a set of false heretical eschatological doctrines.

God's Promise to Physical Israel to Live in the Land Was Contingent on Obedience



Christian Zionists claim that God's promise to give the land of Canaan to Israel was an unconditional promise for perpetuity. But does the Bible really say so?

God's Promise to Return Israel to Their Own Land Fulfilled Over 2000 Years Ago



This is a Bible study that was inspired by a former dispensational Christian Zionist preacher, Steve Gregg, who my wife and I listened to yesterday evening. He has two videos on this subject (at the bottom of this article) totaling nearly 3 hours. This article is an attempt to prove true directly from the Bible and in my own words as succinctly as possible what Pastor Gregg is teaching. I figure if I can't base a doctrine directly from what the Word of God actually says in the Bible, I either don't understand that doctrine well enough, or it's a false doctrine with no basis in Holy Scripture.

Famous influential preachers such as Billy Graham, Franklin Graham, Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell Jr., John Hagee, James Dobson, and many others, have taught or are teaching that God's promise to restore the Jews to their own land was fulfilled in 1948. They use the prophecies in Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37 to support that claim. But do those prophecies really support it? Let's read some of those prophecies, the ones in Ezekiel 36, and find out.

And as we read them, let's remember the time when these prophecies were given: During the 70-year Babylonian captivity of the Jews.

Ezekiel 36:23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them (during the Babylonian captivity); and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

This passage only makes sense when you read it in the light of the fact it was given during the Babylonian captivity and was completely fulfilled by the time [Jesus confirmed the Covenant](#) when His ministry started in 27 AD, the very Covenant of grace that God made with Abraham concerning his seed.

How does the prophecy compare to the modern nation of Israel?

Ezekiel 36:23 And I will sanctify my great name

Is the Name of God or of Christ sanctified among them?

Verse 23b: the heathen shall know that I am the LORD

Do the surrounding heathen nations know that Jesus Christ is the Lord?

Verse 25: Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.

Is the modern nation of Israel clean from all filthiness and idolatry?

Verse 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Does the nation of Israel have a heart of love and compassion for its neighbors?

Verse 27: And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Is the modern nation of Israel walking in God's statutes and keeping His judgments?

The answer to all these questions is a resounding *no*!

Ezekiel 36:24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Jeremiah 30:3 "For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it."

These prophecies were totally fulfilled by the time of Christ! The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are all about the end of the 70 years of captivity and the return of the Jews to Judea. The kings of Medo-Persia gave them permission to return and rebuild the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem! And Jesus Himself said His ministry was to the house of Israel!

Matthew 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Verse 26: A new heart also will I give you, and **a new spirit will I put within you:** and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

This prophecy was clearly fulfilled on the day of Pentecost!

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

I believe the prophecies in Ezekiel 36 were all fulfilled by the time Jesus was born and walked on earth during His ministry. Not all Jews were saved, but a good remnant were.

Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The main reason why prophecies are misinterpreted is because of failure to understand how they were already fulfilled in the past. Some believe a prophecy can have multiple fulfillments. Is there a precedent for that in the Bible? I don't see one.



This phrase does NOT exist in the Bible.

Christian Zionist American congressmen.

Ask yourself, are unbelievers in Christ Jesus God's covenant people of today? Does a person's ethnicity matter in God's eyes? My Bible says it doesn't.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become

the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, **not of blood**, nor of the will of the flesh,
nor of the will of man, but of God.

If you like my simple Bible study, please share it with your Israel supporting friends. My aim is to keep things so simple that when people read it, they will remember it and share it. When I share something I learned, often the Holy Spirit deepens my understanding of the subject.

And I hope you take time to listen to what Pastor Steve Gregg has to say. He covers a lot more details.

[An Open Letter to U.S. Christians from a Palestinian Pastor](#)



By Dr. Munther Isaac

Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac is the pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, academic dean at Bethlehem Bible College, and the director of the Christ at the Checkpoint conferences. He wrote this letter in May 20, 2021.

I believe the heretic footnotes in the Scofield Reference Bible and the Dallas Theological Seminary's promotion of the message in those footnotes are to blame for American evangelicals embracing the false doctrines of Christian Zionism. It has led to their support of the antichrist state of Israel which has resulted in the suffering today.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!”

Palestine and Israel are back in the news. So again, we Palestinians hear

this common refrain. But such calls for prayer are no longer enough. I say this as a Palestinian pastor who believes in prayer, leads prayer services for peace, and genuinely values your good intentions.

But good intentions are not enough.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus didn't say, "Blessed are the peace prayers." He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9, emphasis added).

Peacemakers of every faith pray – and they discern what's really happening, call things by their names, then speak truth to power. Here's how this works.

Call things by their names

Peacemaking begins by refusing to repeat the common descriptor of what is happening in Palestine and Israel: a conflict. Palestinians are not experiencing a conflict between two parties. **We Palestinians are experiencing an occupation: one nation controlling another;** the laws, policies, practices, and military of one state oppressing the people of another, controlling nearly every aspect of our lives. Palestinians in Jerusalem are not facing evictions from their homes. They are experiencing ethnic cleansing, which the U.N. has described as "a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas."

Non-Jewish citizens of Israel are not just enduring discrimination. They are experiencing apartheid. Israel's infamous 2018 [nation-state law](#) – which, among other things, stated that Israel's right to "exercise national self-determination" is "unique to the Jewish people" – along with other policies and practices, has transformed *de facto* discrimination into racism *de jure*.

The more than 2 million people living in Gaza are not choosing to experience hardship, food deprivation, a lack of clean water, and consistent energy. They are confined to the world's largest open-air prison where – unable to come and go, import and export, or even fish in the open waters off their shore without Israeli permission – Israeli snipers [pick off their children](#) and Israel's air force bombs their city indiscriminately.

For over 70 years, Palestinians have not been arguing over who owns what land. No, we have experienced the terror and loss that comes from settler colonialism, the systematic removal and erasure of native inhabitants from their land, most recently in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem.

Calling things by their names is a necessary step toward resolving any conflict. Using the words racism and apartheid may cause pause – but these are the descriptors that define our daily lives.

Do not take our word alone for it.

Read the January [report](#) issued by the respected Israeli human rights

organization B'tselem, "A regime of Jewish supremacy from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea: This is apartheid." Read the April [report](#) from Human Rights Watch, "A Threshold Crossed: Israeli Authorities and the Crimes of Apartheid and Persecution." Read Nathan Thrall's [analysis](#) in the *London Review of Books*.

Until peacemakers use terms that accurately describe our realities, the opportunities for peace remain distant.

Don't misuse Christian-Jewish dialogue

For years, Christian-Jewish dialogue was misused as a tool to silence criticism of Israel. In the 1990s, Jewish theologian Marc H. Ellis [wrote](#) about a significant, unspoken "agreement" between Christians and Jews. He observed that the "ecumenical dialogue" between liberal Christians and Jews had turned into what he described as an "ecumenical deal": repentance on the part of Christians for having aided in or having failed to speak out against the atrocities committed by Germany, and the prospect of an ongoing conversation devoid of any substantive criticism of Israel.

While the "deal" has broken down in many Christian denominations in the U.S. and in many quarters of the Jewish community, it is still used to silence Palestinian Christians, labeling us antisemitic when we criticize the state of Israel or speak out against the secular project of Zionism.

It is time Christians begin engaging new Jewish partners. Listen to groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow, B'tselem, Yesh Din, Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence, and others who challenge the occupation. Listen to and dialogue with people like Marc H. Ellis, Mark Braverman, Rabbis Brant Rosen and Alissa Wise, and others who defend Palestinian rights out of their Jewish beliefs and convictions. Take the word of Bernie Sanders, who recently [challenged](#) the racist policies of the state of Israel.

Reexamine the church's theology

For years, Western Christian theology has been part of the matrix that empowers the Israeli occupation. It's a theology that describes God's unique faithfulness to Israel, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the "return" of Jews to "their" land. Adherents embrace the myth that the land was devoid of people when the state of Israel was created, or worse, that it was occupied by the enemies of God.

It is time for Christians in some communions to confess and repent from their total disregard for the existence of Palestinians. It is time to change the theological narrative that renders the state of Israel invincible to errors and beyond any judgment.

Theology matters. And if any theology trumps the ethical-biblical teachings of Jesus on love, equality, and justice, then we must rethink that theology. If any theology produces apathy to injustice, it must be re-examined.

Don't describe Palestinian Christians' efforts at creative resistance as criminal: We believe the call for sanctions, economic measures, and our

nonviolent demonstrations are *justified resistance*. To insist on our dignity and God-given rights in our own land is not antisemitic; even the recent [Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism](#), a statement produced by more than 200 scholars of antisemitism and related fields, acknowledges this.

Some have accused Palestinian Christians of hating Jews and of rejecting the right to nationhood for Israel. Though they have gone unacknowledged or been rejected as disingenuous, our statements have clearly rejected antisemitism and racism of any form. Our hope, our desire, is to live side by side with our Jewish neighbors in a reality of a just peace.

My plea to fellow Christians

I call upon you to share – both in word and action – our vision of a reality in which we both end the occupation and live together in peace with our Israeli neighbors.

We do not hate Jews. We do not seek to destroy Israel. We want our freedom. We want to live in dignity in our homeland. We want to live in a reality where all the people of the land, Palestinians and Israelis, Jews, Muslims, and Christians, have the same rights and live under the same laws, regardless of their faith, nationality or ethnicity.

Many years from today, when our descendants look back on the long misery of the Palestinians, they will not judge kindly the willful neglect of the global church. We Palestinian Christians will not let you pretend that you did not know.

You will either take a stand to end the oppression of the Palestinian people or continue to be part of the matrix that allows it. The words of Elie Wiesel in his 1986 Nobel Prize acceptance [speech](#) cannot be more true today:

We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must – at that moment – become the center of the universe.

[The Problems with Christian Zionism](#)



Christians Zionism is heresy taught in the Scofield Reference Bible which is promoted by the Dallas Theological Seminary.

Poisoning The Catholic Bible With Anti-Semitism

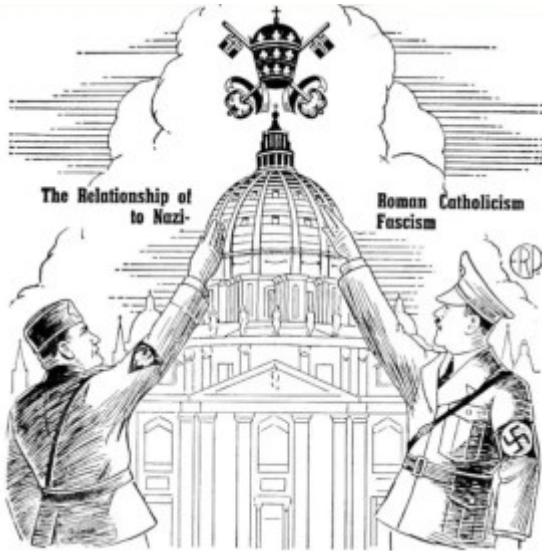
Social Justice, Aug. 1, 1938

quently, the vast majority of Jews most certainly is in nowise associated with the conspiracy against civilization and Christianity, even though a few are

in Chapter 2 of the Apocalypse, Verse 9, it is read: "Thou art blasphemed by them that say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." It appears from this text that those who belong to the synagogue of Satan and are plotting against the world's unity

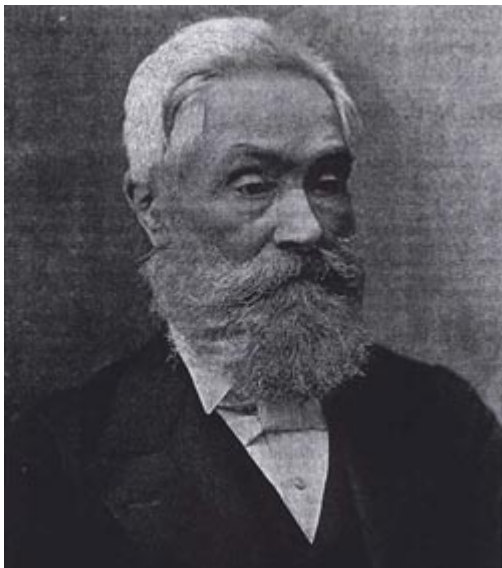
The popes of Rome , the Vatican and the Jesuits want you to think New World Order conspiracy is "Judaeo-Masonic" to deflect blame away from themselves!

How The Popes Treated The Jews by Leo H. Lehmann



The popes of Rome are the primary sources of antisemitism. True Bible believing Christians do not hate the Jewish people but neither should we support Zionism.

[The History of Protestantism J. A. Wylie Volume I – Book I](#)



I've heard from several sources how important J.A. Wylie's works on the history of Protestantism are. One person called Wylie the "best of the best" author on this subject.

I got the text from <https://www.doctrine.org/history/HPv1b1.htm> It was done long ago the old-fashioned way using Microsoft FrontPage which nobody uses anymore because it does a lousy job. It's hard to read the article on that website not only from a phone but even from a PC screen! The main reason I am re-posting the article is to make it more accessible for others.

This is an entire book. You probably won't read it all in one sitting. However, the individual chapters are relatively short compared to other books on this site. I designed the chapter menu to go to the chapter you want to read instantly. And text-to-voice software can read the entire book to you without having to manually select the next chapter.

There are 24 books in the series of Wylie's History of Protestantism, and this is just the first one! I may eventually post them all.

Preface to J. A. Wylie's "The History of Protestantism"

James A. Wylie: Earnest Contender for the Faith (1808-1890)

James Aitken Wylie was born in Scotland in 1808. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psalm 37:23). His collegiate preparation was at Marischal College, Aberdeen (a North Sea port city and industrial center of northeastern Scotland) and at St. Andrews (Fife, East Scotland). "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). Though we could find no account of his conversion, he entered the Original Secession Divinity Hall, Edinburgh (Scotland, the land of John Knox) in 1827, and was ordained to the Christian ministry in 1831; hence, the name "Rev. J. A. Wylie" is affixed to most of his written works. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2Timothy 3:15).

His disposition to use the pen as a mighty "Sword of the LORD" (Judges 7:18) is evidenced by his assumption of the sub-editorship of the Edinburgh "Witness" in 1846. "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (Psalm 45:1). In 1852, after joining the Free Church of Scotland—which was only inaugurated in 1843 (Dr. Chalmers as moderator), insisting on the Crown Rights of King Jesus as the only Head and King of the Church—Wylie edited their "Free Church Record" until 1860. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). The Protestant Institute appointed him Lecturer on Popery in 1860. He continued in this role until his death in 1890. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2Corinthians 10:5).

Aberdeen University awarded him an honorary doctorate (LL.D.) in 1856. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8). His travels took him to many of the far-flung places, where the events of Protestant history transpired. "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Romans 1:15). As a prominent spokesman for Protestantism, Dr. Wylie's writings included *The Papacy: Its History, Dogmas, Genius, and Prospects*—which was awarded a prize by the Evangelical Alliance in 1851—and, his best known writing, "The History of Protestantism" (1878). "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the Common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered

unto the Saints" (Jude 3).

It is a solemn and sad reflection on the spiritual intelligence of our times that J. A. Wylie's classic, *The History of Protestantism* went out of publication in the 1920's. "Little children, it is the Last Time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the Last Time" (1John 2:18). But—"we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). And, we continue to "look for Him" (Hebrews 9:28) to come for us to cause us to "escape all these things" (Luke 21:36) while we intently "occupy" (19:13) for Him in the Gospel fields, which are "white already to harvest" (John 4:35). "Even so, come [quickly], LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

Amen, and Amen.

The History of Protestantism

PROGRESS FROM THE FIRST TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER 1 PROTESTANTISM

Protestantism – The Seed of Arts, Letters, Free States, etc. – Its History a Grand Drama – Its Origin – Outside Humanity – A Great Creative Power – Protestantism Revived Christianity.

THE History of Protestantism, which we propose to write, is no mere history of dogmas. The teachings of Christ are the seeds; the modern Christendom, with its new life, is the goodly tree which has sprung from them. We shall speak of the seed and then of the tree, so small at its beginning, but destined one day to cover the earth.

How that seed was deposited in the soil; how the tree grew up and flourished despite the furious tempests that warred around it; how, century after century, it lifted its top higher in heaven, and spread its boughs wider around, sheltering liberty, nursing letters, fostering art, and gathering a fraternity of prosperous and powerful nations around it, it will be our business in the following pages to show. Meanwhile we wish it to be noted that this is what we understand by the Protestantism on the history of which we are now entering. Viewed thus – and any narrower view would be untrue alike to philosophy and to fact – the History of Protestantism is the record of one of the grandest dramas of all time. It is true, no doubt, that Protestantism, strictly viewed, is simply a principle. It is not a policy. It is not an empire, having its fleets and armies, its officers and tribunals, wherewith to extend its dominion and make its authority be obeyed. It is not even a Church with its hierarchies, and synods and edicts; it is simply a

principle. But it is the greatest of all principles. It is a creative power. Its plastic influence is all-embracing. It penetrates into the heart and renews the individual. It goes down to the depths and, by its omnipotent but noiseless energy, vivifies and regenerates society. It thus becomes the creator of all that is true, and lovely, and great; the founder of free kingdoms, and the mother of pure churches. The globe itself it claims as a stage not too wide for the manifestation of its beneficent action; and the whole domain of terrestrial affairs it deems a sphere not too vast to fill with its spirit, and rule by its law.

Whence came this principle? The name Protestantism is very recent: the thing itself is very ancient. The term Protestantism is scarcely older than 350 years. It dates from the protest which the Lutheran princes gave in to the Diet of Spires in 1529. Restricted to its historical signification, Protestantism is purely negative. It only defines the attitude taken up, at a great historical era, by one party in Christendom with reference to another party. But had this been all, Protestantism would have had no history. Had it been purely negative, it would have begun and ended with the men who assembled at the German town in the year already specified. The new world that has come out of it is the proof that at the bottom of this protest was a great principle which it has pleased Providence to fertilize, and make the seed of those grand, beneficent, and enduring achievements which have made the past three centuries in many respects the most eventful and wonderful in history. The men who handed in this protest did not wish to create a mere void. If they disowned the creed and threw off the yoke of Rome, it was that they might plant a purer faith and restore the government of a higher Law. They replaced the authority of the Infallibility with the authority of the Word of God. The long and dismal obscurations of centuries they dispelled, that the twin stars of liberty and knowledge might shine forth, and that, conscience being unbound, the intellect might awake from its deep somnolency, and human society, renewing its youth, might, after its halt of a thousand years, resume its march towards its high goal.

We repeat the question – Whence came this principle? And we ask our readers to mark well the answer, for it is the key-note to the whole of our vast subject, and places us, at the very outset, at the springs of that long narration on which we are now entering.

Protestantism is not solely the outcome of human progress; it is no mere principle of perfectibility inherent in humanity, and ranking as one of its native powers, in virtue of which when society becomes corrupt it can purify itself, and when it is arrested in its course by some external force, or stops from exhaustion, it can recruit its energies and set forward anew on its path. It is neither the product of the individual reason, nor the result of the joint thought and energies of the species. Protestantism is a principle which has its origin outside human society: it is a Divine graft on the intellectual and moral nature of man, whereby new vitalities and forces are introduced into it, and the human stem yields henceforth a nobler fruit. It is the descent of a heaven-born influence which allies itself with all the instincts and powers of the individual, with all the laws and cravings of society, and which, quickening both the individual and the social being into

a new life, and directing their efforts to nobler objects, permits the highest development of which humanity is capable, and the fullest possible accomplishment of all its grand ends. In a word, Protestantism is revived Christianity.

CHAPTER 2 DECLENSION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Early Triumphs of the Truth – Causes – The Fourth Century – Early Simplicity lost – The Church remodeled on the Pattern of the Empire – Disputes regarding Easter-day – Descent of the Gothic Nations – Introduction of Pagan Rites into the Church – Acceleration of Corruption – Inability of the World all at once to receive the Gospel in its greatness.

ALL through, from the fifth to the fifteenth century, the Lamp of Truth burned dimly in the sanctuary of Christendom. Its flame often sank low, and appeared about to expire, yet never did it wholly go out. God remembered His covenant with the light, and set bounds to the darkness. Not only had this heaven-kindled lamp its period of waxing and waning, like those luminaries that God has placed on high, but like them, too, it had its appointed circuit to accomplish. Now it was on the cities of Northern Italy that its light was seen to fall; and now its rays illumined the plains of Southern France. Now it shone along the course of the Danube and the Moldau, or tinted the pale shores of England, or shed its glory upon the Scottish Hebrides. Now it was on the summits of the Alps that it was seen to burn, spreading a gracious morning on the mountain-tops, and giving promise of the sure approach of day. And then, anon, it would bury itself in the deep valleys of Piedmont, and seek shelter from the furious tempests of persecution behind the great rocks and the eternal snows of the everlasting hills. Let us briefly trace the growth of this truth to the days of Wicliffe.

The spread of Christianity during the first three centuries was rapid and extensive. The main causes that contributed to this were the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of the Roman world, the fidelity and zeal of the preachers of the Gospel, and the heroic deaths of the martyrs. It was the success of Christianity that first set limits to its progress. It had received a terrible blow, it is true, under Diocletian. This, which was the most terrible of all the early persecutions, had, in the belief of the Pagans, utterly exterminated the "Christian superstition" So far from this, it had but afforded the Gospel an opportunity of giving to the world a mightier proof of its divinity. It rose from the stakes and massacres of Diocletian, to begin a new career, in which it was destined to triumph over the empire which thought that it had crushed it. Dignities and wealth now flowed in upon its ministers and disciples, and according to the uniform testimony of all the early historians, the faith which had maintained its purity and rigor in the humble sanctuaries and lowly position of the first age, and amid the fires of its pagan persecutors, became corrupt and waxed feeble amid the gorgeous temples and the worldly dignities which imperial favor had lavished upon it.

From the fourth century the corruptions of the Christian Church continued to make marked and rapid progress. The Bible began to be hidden from the people. And in proportion as the light, which is the surest guarantee of liberty, was

withdrawn, the clergy usurped authority over the members of the Church. The canons of councils were put in the room of the one infallible Rule of Faith; and thus the first stone was laid in the foundations of "Babylon, that great city, that made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The ministers of Christ began to affect titles of dignity, and to extend their authority and jurisdiction to temporal matters, forgetful that an office bestowed by God, and serviceable to the highest interests of society, can never fail of respect when filled by men of exemplary character, sincerely devoted to the discharge of its duties. The beginning of this matter seemed innocent enough. To obviate pleas before the secular tribunals, ministers were frequently asked to arbitrate in disputes between members of the Church, and Constantine made a law confirming all such decisions in the consistories of the clergy, and shutting out the review of their sentences by the civil judges. Proceeding in this fatal path, the next step was to form the external polity of the Church upon the model of the civil government. Four vice-kings or prefects governed the Roman Empire under Constantine, and why, it was asked, should not a similar arrangement be introduced into the Church? Accordingly the Christian world was divided into four great dioceses; over each diocese was set a patriarch, who governed the whole clergy of his domain, and thus arose four great thrones or principdoms in the House of God. Where there had been a brotherhood, there was now a hierarchy; and from the lofty chair of the Patriarch, a gradation of rank, and a subordination of authority and office, ran down to the lowly state and contracted sphere of the Presbyter. It was splendor of rank, rather than the fame of learning and the luster of virtue, that henceforward conferred distinction on the ministers of the Church.

Such an arrangement was not fitted to nourish spirituality of mind, or humility of disposition, or peacefulness of temper. The enmity and violence of the persecutor, the clergy had no longer cause to dread; but the spirit of faction which now took possession of the dignitaries of the Church awakened vehement disputes and fierce contentions, which disparaged the authority and sullied the glory of the sacred office. The emperor himself was witness to these unseemly spectacles. "I entreat you," we find him pathetically saying to the fathers of the Council of Nice, "beloved ministers of God, and servants of our Savior Jesus Christ, take away the cause of our dissension and disagreement, establish peace among yourselves."

While the, "living oracles" were neglected, the zeal of the clergy began to spend itself upon rites and ceremonies borrowed from the pagans. These were multiplied to such a degree, that Augustine complained that they were "less tolerable than the yoke of the Jews under the law." At this period the Bishops of Rome wore costly attire, gave sumptuous banquets, and when they went abroad were carried in litters. They now began to speak with an authoritative voice, and to demand obedience from all the Churches. Of this the dispute between the Eastern and Western Churches respecting Easter is an instance in point. The Eastern Church, following the Jews, kept the feast on the 14th day of the month Nisan – the day of the Jewish Passover. The Churches of the West, and especially that of Rome, kept Easter on the Sabbath following the 14th day of Nisan. Victor, Bishop of Rome, resolved to put an end to the controversy, and accordingly, sustaining himself sole judge in

this weighty point, he commanded all the Churches to observe the feast on the same day with himself. The Churches of the East, not aware that the Bishop of Rome had authority to command their obedience in this or in any other matter, kept Easter as before; and for this flagrant contempt, as Victor accounted it, of his legitimate authority, he excommunicated them. They refused to obey a human ordinance, and they were shut out from the kingdom of the Gospel. This was the first peal of those thunders which were in after times to roll so often and so terribly from the Seven Hills.

Riches, flattery, deference, continued to wait upon the Bishop of Rome. The emperor saluted him as Father; foreign Churches sustained him as judge in their disputes; heresiarchs sometimes fled to him for sanctuary; those who had favors to beg extolled his piety, or affected to follow his customs; and it is not surprising that his pride and ambition, fed by continual incense, continued to grow, till at last the presbyter of Rome, from being a vigilant pastor of a single congregation, before whom he went in and out, teaching them from house to house, preaching to them the Word of Life, serving the Lord with all humility in many tears and temptations that befell him, raised his seat above his equals, mounted the throne of the patriarch, and exercised lordship over the heritage of Christ. The gates of the sanctuary once forced, the stream of corruption continued to flow with ever-deepening volume. The declensions in doctrine and worship already introduced had changed the brightness of the Church's morning into twilight; the descent of the Northern nations, which, beginning in the fifth, continued through several successive centuries, converted that twilight into night. The new tribes had changed their country, but not their superstitions; and, unhappily, there was neither zeal nor vigor in the Christianity of the age to effect their instruction and their genuine conversion. The Bible had been withdrawn; in the pulpit fable had usurped the place of truth; holy lives, whose silent eloquence might have won upon the barbarians, were rarely exemplified; and thus, instead of the Church dissipating the superstitions that now encompassed her like a cloud, these superstitions all but quenched her own light. She opened her gates to receive the new peoples as they were. She sprinkled them with the baptismal water; she inscribed their names in her registers; she taught them in their invocations to repeat the titles of the Trinity; but the doctrines of the Gospel, which alone can enlighten the understanding, purify the heart, and enrich the life with virtue, she was little careful to inculcate upon them. She folded them within her pale, but they were scarcely more Christian than before, while she was greatly less so. From the sixth century down-wards Christianity was a mongrel system, made up of pagan rites revived from classic times, of superstitions imported from the forests of Northern Germany, and of Christian beliefs and observances which continued to linger in the Church from primitive and purer times. The inward power of religion was lost; and it was in vain that men strove to supply its place by the outward form. They nourished their piety not at the living fountains of truth, but with the "beggary elements" of ceremonies and relics, of consecrated lights and holy vestments. Nor was it Divine knowledge only that was contemned; men forbore to cultivate letters, or practice virtue. Baronius confesses that in the sixth century few in Italy were skilled in both Greek and Latin. Nay, even Gregory the Great acknowledged that he was ignorant of Greek. "The main qualifications of the clergy were, that they should be able

to read well, sing their matins, know the Lord's Prayer, psalter, forms of exorcism, and understand how to compute the times of the sacred festivals. Nor were they very sufficient for this, if we may believe the account some have given of them. Musculus says that many of them never saw the Scriptures in all their lives. It would seem incredible, but it is delivered by no less an authority than Amama, that an Archbishop of Mainz, lighting upon a Bible and looking into it, expressed himself thus: 'Of a truth I do not know what book this is, but I perceive everything in it is against us.'

Apostasy is like the descent of heavy bodies, it proceeds with ever-accelerating velocity. First, lamps were lighted at the tombs of the martyrs; next, the Lord's Supper was celebrated at their graves; next, prayers were offered for them and to them; next, paintings and images began to disfigure the walls, and corpses to pollute the floors of the churches. Baptism, which apostles required water only to dispense, could not be celebrated without white robes and chrism, milk, honey, and salt. Then came a crowd of church officers whose names and numbers are in striking contrast to the few and simple orders of men who were employed in the first propagation of Christianity. There were sub-deacons, acolytes, exorcists, readers, choristers, and porters; and as work must be found for this motley host of laborers, there came to be fasts and exorcisms; there were lamps to be lighted, altars to be arranged, and churches to be consecrated; there was the Eucharist to be carried to the dying; and there were the dead to be buried, for which a special order of men was set apart. When one looked back to the simplicity of early times, it could not but amaze one to think what a cumbrous array of curious machinery and costly furniture was now needed for the service of Christianity. Not more stinging than true was the remark that "when the Church had golden chalices she had wooden priests."

So far, and through these various stages, had the declension of the Church proceeded. The point she had now reached may be termed an epochal one. From the line on which she stood there was no going back; she must advance into the new and unknown regions before her, though every step would carry her farther from the simple form and vigorous life of her early days. She had received a new impregnation from an alien principle, the same, in fact, from which had sprung the great systems that covered the earth before Christianity arose. This principle could not be summarily extirpated; it must run its course, it must develop itself logically; and having, in the course of centuries, brought its fruits to maturity, it would then, but not till then, perish and pass away.

Looking back at this stage to the change which had come over the Church, we cannot fail to see that its deepest originating cause must be sought, in the inability of the world to receive the Gospel in all its greatness. It was a boon too mighty and too free to be easily understood or credited by man. The angels in their midnight song in the vale of Bethlehem had defined it briefly as sublimely, "goodwill to man." Its greatest preacher, the Apostle Paul, had no other definition to give of it. It was not even a rule of life but "grace," the "grace of God," and therefore sovereign, and boundless. To man fallen and undone the Gospel offered a full forgiveness, and a complete spiritual renovation, issuing at length in the inconceivable and infinite

felicity of the Life Eternal. But man's narrow heart could not enlarge itself to God's vast beneficence. A good so immense, so complete in its nature, and so boundless in its extent, he could not believe that God would bestow without money and without price; there must be conditions or qualifications. So he reasoned. And hence it is that the moment inspired men cease to address us, and that their disciples and scholars take their place – men of apostolic spirit and doctrine, no doubt, but without the direct knowledge of their predecessors – we become sensible of a change; an eclipse has passed upon the exceeding glory of the Gospel. As we pass from Paul to Clement, and from Clement to the Fathers that succeeded him, we find the Gospel becoming less of grace and more of merit. The light wanes as we travel down the Patristic road, and remove ourselves farther from the Apostolic dawn. It continues for some time at least to be the same Gospel, but its glory is shorn, its mighty force is abated; and we are reminded of the change that seems to pass upon the sun, when after contemplating him in a tropical hemisphere, we see him in a northern sky, where his slanting beams, forcing their way through mists and vapors, are robbed of half their splendor. Seen through the fogs of the Patristic age, the Gospel scarcely looks the same which had burst upon the world without a cloud but a few centuries before.

This disposition – that of making God less free in His gift, and man less dependent in the reception of it: the desire to introduce the element of merit on the side of man, and the element of condition on the side of God – operated at last in opening the door for the pagan principle to creep back into the Church. A change of a deadly and subtle kind passed upon the worship. Instead of being the spontaneous thanksgiving and joy of the soul, that no more evoked or repaid the blessings which awakened that joy than the odors which the flowers exhale are the cause of their growth, or the joy that kindles in the heart of man when the sun rises is the cause of his rising – worship, we say, from being the expression of the soul's emotions, was changed into a rite, a rite akin to those of the Jewish temples, and still more akin to those of the Greek mythology, a rite in which lay couched a certain amount of human merit and inherent efficacy, that partly created, partly applied the blessings with which it stood connected. This was the moment when the pagan virus inoculated the Christian institution.

This change brought a multitude of others in its train. Worship being transformed into sacrifice – sacrifice in which was the element of expiation and purification – the "teaching ministry" was of course converted into a "sacrificing priesthood." When this had been done, there was no retreating; a boundary had been reached which could not be recrossed till centuries had rolled away, and transformations of a more portentous kind than any which had yet taken place had passed upon the Church.

CHAPTER 3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAPACY FROM THE TIMES OF CONSTANTINE TO THOSE OF HILDEBRAND.

Imperial Edicts – Prestige of Rome – Fall of the Western Empire – The Papacy seeks and finds a New Basis of Power – Christ's Vicar – Conversion of Gothic Nations – Pepin and Charlemagne – The Lombards and the Saracens – Forgeries and False Decretals – Election of the Roman Pontiff.

BEFORE opening our great theme it may be needful to sketch the rise and development of the Papacy as a politico-ecclesiastical power. The history on which we are entering, and which we must rapidly traverse, is one of the most wonderful in the world. It is scarcely possible to imagine humbler beginnings than those from which the Papacy arose, and certainly it is not possible to imagine a loftier height than that to which it eventually climbed. He who was seen in the first century presiding as the humble pastor over a single congregation, and claiming no rank above his brethren, is beheld in the twelfth century occupying a seat from which he looks down on all the thrones temporal and spiritual of Christendom. How, we ask with amazement, was the Papacy able to traverse the mighty space that divided the humble pastor from the mitred king?

We traced in the foregoing chapter the decay of doctrine and manners within the Church. Among the causes which contributed to the exaltation of the Papacy this declension may be ranked as fundamental, seeing it opened the door for other deteriorating influences, and mightily favored their operation. Instead of "reaching forth to what was before," the Christian Church permitted herself to be overtaken by the spirit of the ages that lay behind her. There came an after-growth of Jewish ritualism, of Greek philosophy, and of Pagan ceremonialism and idolatry; and, as the consequence of this threefold action, the clergy began to be gradually changed, as already mentioned, from a "teaching ministry" to a "sacrificing priesthood." This made them no longer ministers or servants of their fellow-Christians; they took the position of a caste, claiming to be superior to the laity, invested with mysterious powers, the channels of grace, and the mediators with God. Thus there arose a hierarchy, assuming to mediate between God and men.

The hierarchical polity was the natural concomitant of the hierarchical doctrine. That polity was so consolidated by the time that the empire became Christian, and Constantine ascended the throne (311), that the Church now stood out as a body distinct from the State; and her new organization, subsequently received, in imitation of that of the empire, as stated in the previous chapter, helped still further to define and strengthen her hierarchical government. Still, the primacy of Rome was then a thing unheard of. Manifestly the 300 Fathers who assembled (A.D. 325) at Nicaea knew nothing of it, for in their sixth and seventh canons they expressly recognize the authority of the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and others, each within its own boundaries, even as Rome had jurisdiction within its limits; and enact that the jurisdiction and privileges of these Churches shall be retained. Under Leo the Great (440 – 461) a forward step was taken. The Church of Rome assumed the form and exercised the sway of an ecclesiastical principality, while her head, in virtue of an imperial manifesto (445) of Valentinian III., which recognized the Bishop of Rome as supreme over the Western Church, affected, the authority and pomp of a spiritual sovereign.

Still further, the ascent of the Bishop of Rome to the supremacy was silently yet Powerfully aided by that mysterious and subtle influence which appeared to be indigenous to the soil on which his chair was placed. In an age when

the rank of the city determined the rank of its pastor, it was natural that the Bishop of Rome should hold something of that pre-eminence among the clergy which Rome held among cities. Gradually the reverence and awe with which men had regarded the old mistress of the world, began to gather round the person and the chair of her bishop. It was an age of factions and strifes, and the eyes of the contending parties naturally turned to the pastor of the Tiber. They craved his advice, or they submitted their differences to his judgment. These applications the Roman Bishop was careful to register as acknowledgments of his superiority, and on fitting occasions he was not forgetful to make them the basis of new and higher claims. The Latin race, moreover, retained the practical habits for which it had so long been renowned; and while the Easterns, giving way to their speculative genius, were expending their energies in controversy, the Western Church was steadily pursuing her onward path, and skillfully availing herself of everything that could tend to enhance her influence and extend her jurisdiction.

The removal of the seat of empire from Rome to the splendid city on the Bosphorus, Constantinople, which the emperor had built with becoming magnificence for his residence, also tended to enhance the power of the Papal chair. It removed from the side of the Pope a functionary by whom he was eclipsed, and left him the first person in the old capital of the world. The emperor had departed, but the prestige of the old city – the fruit of countless victories, and of ages of dominion – had not departed. The contest which had been going on for some time among the five great patriarchates – Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome – the question at issue being the same as that which provoked the contention among the disciples of old, "which was the greatest," was now restricted to the last two. The city on the Bosphorus was the seat of government, and the abode of the emperor; this gave her patriarch Powerful claims. But the city on the banks of the Tiber wielded a mysterious and potent charm over the imagination, as the heir of her who had been the possessor of all the power, of all the glory, and of all the dominion of the past; and this vast prestige enabled her patriarch to carry the day. As Rome was the one city in the earth, so her bishop was the one bishop in the Church. A century and a half later (606), this pre-eminence was decreed to the Roman Bishop in an imperial edict of Phocas. Thus, before the Empire of the West fell, the Bishop of Rome had established substantially his spiritual supremacy. An influence of a manifold kind, of which not the least part was the prestige of the city and the empire, had lifted him to this fatal pre-eminence. But now the time has come when the empire must fall, and we expect to see that supremacy which it had so largely helped to build up fall with it. But no! The wave of barbarism which rolled in from the North, overwhelming society and sweeping away the empire, broke harmlessly at the feet of the Bishop of Rome. The shocks that overturned dynasties and blotted out nationalities, left his power untouched, his seat unshaken. Nay, it was at that very hour, when society was perishing around him, that the Bishop of Rome laid anew the foundations of his power, and placed them where they might remain immovable for all time. He now cast himself on a far stronger element than any the revolution had swept away. He now claimed to be the successor of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and the Vicar of Christ. The canons of Councils, as recorded in Hardouin, show a

stream of decisions from Pope Celestine, in the middle of the fifth century, to Pope Boniface II. in the middle of the sixth, claiming, directly or indirectly, this august prerogative. When the Bishop of Rome placed his chair, with all the prerogatives and dignities vested in it, upon this ground, he stood no longer upon a merely imperial foundation. Henceforward he held neither of Caesar nor of Rome; he held immediately of Heaven. What one emperor had given, another emperor might take away. It did not suit the Pope to hold his office by so uncertain a tenure. He made haste, therefore, to place his supremacy where no future decree of emperor, no lapse of years, and no coming revolution could overturn it. He claimed to rest it upon a Divine foundation; he claimed to be not merely the chief of bishops and the first of patriarchs, but the vicar Of the Most High God.

With the assertion of this dogma the system of the Papacy was completed essentially and doctrinally, but not as yet practically. It had to wait the full development of the idea of vicarship, which was not till the days of Gregory VII. But here have we the embryotic seed – the vicarship, namely – out of which the vast structure of the Papacy has sprung. This it is that plants at the center of the system a pseudo-divine jurisdiction, and places the Pope above all bishops with their flocks, above all king with their subjects. This it is that gives the Pope two swords. This it is that gives him three crowns. The day when this dogma was proclaimed was the true birthday of the Popedom. The Bishop of Rome had till now sat in the seat of Caesar; henceforward he was to sit in the seat of God. From this time the growth of the Popedom was rapid indeed. The state of society favored its development. Night had descended upon the world from the North; and in the universal barbarism, the more prodigious any pretensions were, the more likely were they to find both belief and submission. The Goths, on arriving in their new settlements, beheld a religion which was served by magnificent cathedrals, imposing rites, and wealthy and powerful prelates, presided over by a chief priest, in whose reputed sanctity and ghostly authority they found again their own chief Druid. These rude warriors, who had overturned the throne of the Caesars, bowed down before the chair of the Popes. The evangelization of these tribes was a task of easy accomplishment. The "Catholic faith," which they began to exchange for their Paganism or Arianism, consisted chiefly in their being able to recite the names of the objects of their worship, which they were left to adore with much the same rites as they had practiced in their native forests. They did not much concern themselves with the study of Christian doctrine, or the practice of Christian virtue. The age furnished but few manuals of the one, and still fewer models of the other.

The first of the Gothic princes to enter the Roman communion was Clovis, King of the Franks. In fulfillment of a vow which he had made on the field of Tolbiac, where he vanquished the Allemanni, Clovis was baptized in the Cathedral of Rheims (496), with every circumstance of solemnity which could impress a sense of the awfulness of the rite on the minds of its rude proselytes. Three thousand of his warlike subjects were baptized along with him. The Pope styled him "the eldest son of the Church," a title which was regularly adopted by all the subsequent Kings of France. When Clovis ascended from the baptismal font he was the only as well as the eldest son of the

Church, for he alone, of all the new chiefs that now governed the West, had as yet submitted to the baptismal rite.

The threshold once crossed, others were not slow to follow. In the next century, the sixth, the Burgundians of Southern Gaul, the Visigoths of Spain, the Suevi of Portugal, and the Anglo-Saxons of Britain entered the pale of Rome. In the seventh century the disposition was still growing among the princes of Western Europe to submit themselves and refer their disputes to the Pontiff as their spiritual father. National assemblies were held twice a year, under the sanction of the bishops. The prelates made use of these gatherings to procure enactments favorable to the propagation of the faith as held by Rome. These assemblies were first encouraged, then enjoined by the Pope, who came in this way to be regarded as a sort of Father or protector of the states of the West. Accordingly we find Sigismund, King of Burgundy, ordering (554) that all assembly should be held for the future on the 6th of September every year, "at which time the ecclesiastics are not so much engrossed with the worldly cares of husbandry." The ecclesiastical conquest of Germany was in this century completed, and thus the spiritual dominions of the Pope were still farther extended.

In the eighth century there came a moment of supreme peril to Rome. At almost one and the same time she was menaced by two dangers, which threatened to sweep her out of existence, but which, in their issue, contributed to strengthen her dominion. On the west the victorious Saracens, having crossed the Pyrenees and overrun the south of France, were watering their steeds at the Loire, and threatening to descend upon Italy and plant the Crescent in the room of the Cross. On the north, the Lombards – who, under Alboin, had established themselves in Central Italy two centuries before – had burst the barrier of the Apennines, and were brandishing their swords at the gates of Rome. They were on the point of replacing Catholic orthodoxy with the creed of Arianism. Having taken advantage of the iconoclast disputes to throw off the imperial yoke, the Pope could expect no aid from the Emperor of Constantinople. He turned his eyes to France. The prompt and powerful interposition of the Frankish arms saved the Papal chair, now in extreme jeopardy. The intrepid Charles Martel drove back the Saracens (732), and Pepin, the Mayor of the palace, son of Charles Martel, who had just seized the throne, and needed the Papal sanction to color his usurpation, with equal promptitude hastened to the Pope's help (Stephen II.) against the Lombards (754). Having vanquished them, he placed the keys of their towns upon the altar of St. Peter, and so laid the first foundation of the Pope's temporal sovereignty. The yet more illustrious son of Pepin, Charlemagne, had to repeat this service in the Pope's behalf. The Lombards becoming again troublesome, Charlemagne subdued them a second time. After his campaign he visited Rome (774). The youth of the city, bearing olive and palm branches, met him at the gates, the Pope and the clergy received him in the vestibule of St. Peter's, and entering "into the sepulcher where the bones of the apostles lie," he finally ceded to the pontiff the territories of the conquered tribes. It was in this way that Peter obtained his "patrimony," the Church her dowry, and the Pope his triple crown.

The Pope had now attained two of the three grades of power that constitute

his stupendous dignity. He had made himself a bishop of bishops, head of the Church, and he had become a crowned monarch. Did this content him? No! He said, "I will ascend the sides of the mount; I will plant my throne above the stars; I will be as God." Not content with being a bishop of bishops, and so governing the whole spiritual affairs of Christendom, he aimed at becoming a king of kings, and so of governing the whole temporal affairs of the world. He aspired to supremacy, sole, absolute, and unlimited. This alone was wanting to complete that colossal fabric of power, the Popedom, and towards this the pontiff now began to strive.

Some of the arts had recourse to in order to grasp the coveted dignity were of an extraordinary kind. An astounding document, purporting to have been written in the fourth century, although unheard of till now, was in the year 776 brought out of the darkness in which it had been so long suffered to remain. It was the "Donation" or Testament of the Emperor Constantine. Constantine, says the legend, found Sylvester in one of the monasteries on Mount Soracte, and having mounted him on a mule, he took hold of his bridle rein, and walking all the way on foot, the emperor conducted Sylvester to Rome, and placed him upon the Papal throne. But this was as nothing compared with the vast and splendid inheritance which Constantine conferred on him, as the following quotation from the deed of gift to which we have referred will show: – "We attribute to the See of Peter all the dignity, all the glory, all the authority of the imperial power. Furthermore, we give to Sylvester and to his successors our palace of the Lateran, which is incontestably the finest palace on the earth; we give him our crown, our miter, our diadem, and all our imperial vestments; we transfer to him the imperial dignity. We bestow on the holy Pontiff in free gift the city of Rome, and all the western cities of Italy. To cede precedence to him, we divest ourselves of our authority over all those provinces, and we withdraw from Rome, transferring the seat of our empire to Byzantium; inasmuch as it is not proper that an earthly emperor should preserve the least authority, where God hath established the head of his religion."

A rare piece of modesty this on the part of the Popes, to keep this invaluable document beside them for 400 years, and never say a word about it; and equally admirable the policy of selecting the darkness of the eighth century as the fittest time for its publication. To quote it is to refute it. It was probably forged a little before A.D. 754. It was composed to repel the Longobards on the one side, and the Greeks on the other, and to influence the mind of Pepin. In it, Constantine is made to speak in the Latin of the eighth century, and to address Bishop Sylvester as Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ, and as having authority over the four great thrones, not yet set up, of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Constantinople. It was probably written by a priest of the Lateran Church, and it gained its object – that is, it led Pepin to bestow on the Pope the Exarchate of Ravenna, with twenty towns to furnish oil for the lamps in the Roman churches.

During more than 600 years Rome impressively cited this deed of gift, inserted it in her codes, permitted none to question its genuineness, and burned those who refused to believe in it. The first dawn of light in the sixteenth century sufficed to discover the cheat.

In the following century another document of a like extraordinary character was given to the world. We refer to the "Decretals of Isidore." These were concocted about the year 845. They professed to be a collection of the letters, rescripts, and bulls of the early pastors of the Church of Rome – Anacletus, Clement, and others, down to Sylvester – the very men to whom the terms "rescript" and "bull" were unknown. The burden of this compilation was the pontifical supremacy, which it affirmed had existed from the first age. It was the clumsiest, but the most successful, of all the forgeries which have emanated from what the Greeks have reproachfully termed "the native home of inventions and falsifications of documents." The writer, who professed to be living in the first century, painted the Church of Rome in the magnificence which she attained only in the ninth; and made the pastors of the first age speak in the pompous words of the Popes of the Middle Ages. Abounding in absurdities, contradictions, and anachronisms, it affords a measure of the intelligence of the age that accepted it as authentic. It was eagerly laid hold of by Nicholas I. to prop up and extend the fabric of his power. His successors made it the arsenal from which they drew their weapons of attack against both bishops and kings. It became the foundation of the canon law, and continues to be so, although there is not now a Popish writer who does not acknowledge it to be a piece of imposture. "Never," says Father de Rignon, "was there seen a forgery so audacious, so extensive, so solemn, so persevering." Yet the discovery of the fraud has not shaken the system. The learned Dupin supposes that these decretals were fabricated by Benedict, a deacon of Mainz, who was the first to publish them, and that, to give them greater currency, he prefixed to them the name of Isidore, a bishop who flourished in Seville in the seventh century. "Without the pseudo-Isidore," says Janus, "there could have been no Gregory VII. The Isidorian forgeries were the broad foundation which the Gregorians built upon."

All the while the Papacy was working on another line for the emancipation of its chief from interference and control, whether on the side of the people or on the side of the kings. In early times the bishops were elected by the people. By-and-by they came to be elected by the clergy, with consent of the people; but gradually the people were excluded from all share in the matter, first in the Eastern Church, and then in the Western, although traces of popular election are found at Milan so late as the eleventh century. The election of the Bishop of Rome in early times was in no way different from that of other bishops – that is, he was chosen by the people. Next, the consent of the emperor came to be necessary to the validity of the popular choice. Then, the emperor alone elected the Pope. Next, the cardinals claimed a voice in the matter; they elected and presented the object of their choice to the emperor for confirmation. Last of all, the cardinals took the business entirely into their own hands. Thus gradually was the way paved for the full emancipation and absolute supremacy of the Popedom.

CHAPTER 4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAPACY FROM GREGORY VII. TO BONIFACE VIII.

The Wax of Investitures – Gregory VII. and Henry IV. – The Miter Triumphs over the Empire – Noon of the Papacy under Innocent III. – Continued to Boniface VIII. – First and Last Estate of the Roman Pastors Contrasted –

Seven Centuries of Continuous Success – Interpreted by Some as a Proof that the Papacy is Divine – Reasons explaining this Marvelous Success – Eclipsed by the Gospel's Progress

WE come now to the last great struggle. There lacked one grade of power to complete and crown this stupendous fabric of dominion. The spiritual Supremacy was achieved in the seventh century, the temporal sovereignty was attained in the eighth; it wanted only the pontifical supremacy – sometimes, although improperly, styled the temporal supremacy to make the Pope supreme over kings, as he had already become over peoples and bishops, and to vest in him a jurisdiction that has not its like on earth – a jurisdiction that is unique, inasmuch as it arrogates all powers, absorbs all rights, and spurns all limits. Destined, before terminating its career, to crush beneath its iron foot thrones and nations, and masking an ambition as astute as Lucifer's with a dissimulation as profound, this power advanced at first with noiseless steps, and stole upon the world as night steals upon it; but as it neared the goal its strides grew longer and swifter, till at last it vaulted over the throne of monarchs into the seat of God.

This great war we shall now proceed to consider. When the Popes, at an early stage, claimed to be the vicars of Christ, they virtually challenged that boundless jurisdiction of which their proudest era beheld them in actual possession. But they knew that it would be imprudent, indeed impossible, as yet to assert it in actual fact. Their motto was *Spes messis in semine*. Discerning "the harvest in the seed," they were content meanwhile to lodge the principle of supremacy in their creed, and in the general mind of Europe, knowing that future ages would fructify and ripen it. Towards this they began to work quietly, yet skillfully and perseveringly. At length came overt and open measures. It was now the year 1073. The Papal chair was filled by perhaps the greatest of all the Popes, Gregory VII., the noted Hildebrand. Daring and ambitious beyond all who had preceded, and beyond most of those who have followed him on the Papal throne, Gregory fully grasped the great idea of Theocracy. He held that the reign of the Pope was but another name for the reign of God, and he resolved never to rest till that idea had been realized in the subjection of all authority and power, spiritual and temporal, to the chair of Peter. "When he drew out," says Janus, "the whole system of Papal omnipotence in twenty-seven theses in his 'Dictatus,' these theses were partly mere repetitions or corollaries of the Isidorian decretals; partly he and his friends sought to give them the appearance of tradition and antiquity by new fictions." We may take the following as samples. The eleventh maxim says, "the Pope's name is the chief name in the world;" the twelfth teaches that "it is lawful for him to depose emperors;" the eighteenth affirms that "his decision is to be withstood by none, but he alone may annul those of all men." The nineteenth declares that "he can be judged by no one." The twenty-fifth vests in him the absolute power of deposing and restoring bishops, and the twenty-seventh the power of annulling the allegiance of subjects. Such was the gage that Gregory flung down to the kings and nations of the world – we say of the world, for the pontifical supremacy embraces all who dwell upon the earth.

Now began the war between the miter and the empire; Gregory's object in this

war being to wrest from the emperors the power of appointing the bishops and the clergy generally, and to assume into his own sole and irresponsible hands the whole of that intellectual and spiritual machinery by which Christendom was governed. The strife was a bloody one. The miter, though sustaining occasional reverses, continued nevertheless to gain steadily upon the empire. The spirit of the times helped the priesthood in their struggle with the civil power. The age was superstitious to the core, and though in no wise spiritual, it was very thoroughly ecclesiastical. The crusades, too, broke the spirit and drained the wealth of the princes, while the growing power and augmenting riches of the clergy cast the balance ever more and more against the State.

For a brief space Gregory VII. tasted in his own case the luxury of wielding this more than mortal power. There came a gleam through the awful darkness of the tempest he had raised – not final victory, which was yet a century distant, but its presage. He had the satisfaction of seeing the emperor, Henry IV. of Germany – whom he had smitten with excommunication – barefooted, and in raiment of sackcloth, waiting three days and nights at the castle-gates of Canossa, amid the winter drifts, suing for forgiveness. But it was for a moment only that Hildebrand stood on this dazzling pinnacle. The fortune of war very quickly turned. Henry, the man whom the Pope had so sorely humiliated, became victor in his turn. Gregory died, an exile, on the promontory of Salerno; but his successors espoused his project, and strove by wiles, by arms, and by anathemas, to reduce the world under the scepter of the Papal Theocracy. For well-nigh two dismal centuries the conflict was maintained. How truly melancholy the record of these times! It exhibits to our sorrowing gaze many a stricken field, many an empty throne, many a city sacked, many a spot deluged with blood!

But through all this confusion and misery the idea of Gregory was perseveringly pursued, till at last it was realized, and the miter was beheld triumphant over the empire. It was the fortune or the calamity of Innocent III. (1198-1216) to celebrate this great victory. Now it was that the pontifical supremacy reached its full development. One man, one will again governed the world. It is with a sort of stupefied awe that we look back to the thirteenth century, and see in the foreground of the receding storm this Colossus, uprearing itself in the person of Innocent III., on its head all the miters of the Church, and in its hand all the scepters of the State. "In each of the three leading objects which Rome has pursued," says Hallam – "independent sovereignty, supremacy over the Christian Church, control over the princes of the earth it was the fortune of this pontiff to conquer." "Rome," he says again, "inspired during this age all the terror of her ancient name; she was once more mistress of the world, and kings were her vassals." She had fought a great fight, and now she celebrated an unequalled triumph. Innocent appointed all bishops; he summoned to his tribunal all causes, from the gravest affairs of mighty kingdoms to the private concerns of the humble citizen. He claimed all kingdoms as his fiefs, all monarchs as his vassals; and launched with unsparing hand the bolts of excommunication against all who withstood his pontifical will. Hildebrand's idea was now fully realized. The pontifical supremacy was beheld in its plenitude – the plenitude of spiritual power, and that of temporal power. It was the noon of

the Papacy; but the noon of the Papacy was the midnight of the world.

The grandeur which the Papacy now enjoyed, and the jurisdiction it wielded, have received dogmatic expression, and one or two selections will enable it to paint itself as it was seen in its noon. Pope Innocent III. affirmed "that the pontifical authority so much exceeded the royal power as the sun doth the moon." Nor could he find words fitly to describe his own formidable functions, save those of Jehovah to his prophet Jeremiah: "See, I have set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down." "The Church my spouse," we find the same Pope saying, "is not married to me without bringing me something. She hath given me a dowry of a price beyond all price, the plenitude of spiritual things, and the extent of things temporal; the greatness and abundance of both. She hath given me the miter in token of things spiritual, the crown in token of the temporal; the miter for the priesthood, and the crown for the kingdom; making me the lieutenant of him who hath written upon his vesture, and on his thigh, 'the King of kings and the Lord of lords.' I enjoy alone the plenitude of power, that others may say of me, next to God, 'and out of his fullness have we received.'" "We declare," says Boniface VIII. (1294-1303), in his bull *Unam Sanctam*, "define, pronounce it to be necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." This subjection is declared in the bull to extend to all affairs. "One sword," says the Pope, "must be under another, and the temporal authority must be subject to the spiritual power; whence, if the earthly power go astray, it must be judged by the spiritual." Such are a few of the "great words" which were heard to issue from the Vatican Mount, that new Sinai, which, like the old, encompassed by fiery terrors, had upreared itself in the midst of the astonished and affrighted nations of Christendom.

What a contrast between the first and the last estate of the pastors of the Roman Church! – between the humility and poverty of the first century, and the splendor and power in which the thirteenth saw them enthroned! This contrast has not escaped the notice of the greatest of Italian poets. Dante, in one of his lightning flashes, has brought it before us. He describes the first pastors of the Church as coming

"barefoot and lean,
Eating their bread, as chanced, at the first table."

And addressing Peter, he says: –

"E'en thou went'st forth in poverty
and hunger
To set the goodly plant that,
from the Vine It once was,
now is grown unsightly bramble."

Petrarch dwells repeatedly and with more amplification on the same theme. We quote only the first and last stanzas of his sonnet on the Church of Rome: –

"The fire of wrathful heaven alight,
And all thy harlot tresses smite,

Base city! Thou from humble fare,
Thy acorns and thy water, rose
To greatness, rich with others' woes,
Rejoicing in the ruin thou didst bear."

"In former days thou wast not laid
On down, nor under cooling shade;
Thou naked to the winds wast given,
And through the sharp and thorny road
Thy feet without the sandals trod;
But now thy life is such it smells to heaven."

There is something here out of the ordinary course. We have no desire to detract from the worldly wisdom of the Popes; they were, in that respect, the ablest race of rulers the world ever saw. Their enterprise soared as high above the vastest scheme of other potentates and conquerors, as their ostensible means of achieving it fell below theirs. To build such a fabric of dominion upon the Gospel, every line of which repudiates and condemns it! to impose it upon the world without an army and without a fleet! to bow the necks not of ignorant peoples only, but of mighty potentates to it! nay, to persuade the latter to assist in establishing a power which they could hardly but foresee would clash themselves! to pursue this scheme through a succession of centuries without once meeting any serious check or repulse – for of the 130 Popes between Boniface III. (606), who, in partnership with Phocas, laid the foundations of the Papal grandeur, and Gregory VII., who tint realized it, onward through other two centuries to Innocent III. (1216) and Boniface VIII. (1303), who at last put the top-stone upon it, not one lost an inch of ground which his predecessor had gained! – to do all this is, we repeat, something out of the ordinary course. There is nothing like it again in the whole history of the world. This success, continued through seven centuries, was audaciously interpreted into a proof of the divinity of the Papacy. Behold, it has been said, when the throne of Caesar was overturned, how the chair of Peter stood erect! Behold, when the barbarous nations rushed like a torrent into Italy, overwhelming laws, extinguishing knowledge, and dissolving society itself, how the ark of the Church rode in safety on the flood! Behold, when the victorious hosts of the Saracen approached the gates of Italy, how they were turned back! Behold, when the miter waged its great contest with the empire, how it triumphed! Behold, when the Reformation broke out, and it seemed as if the kingdom of the Pope was numbered and finished, how three centuries have been added to its sway! Behold, in fine, when revolution broke out in France, and swept like a whirlwind over Europe, bearing down thrones and dynasties, how the bark of Peter outlived the storm, and rode triumphant above the waves that engulfed apparently stronger structures! Is not this the Church of which Christ said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it?"

What else do the words of Cardinal Baronius mean? Boasting of a supposed donation of the kingdom of Hungary to the Roman See by Stephen, he says, "It fell out by a wonderful providence of God, that at the very time when the Roman Church might appear ready to fall and perish, even then distant kings approach the Apostolic See, which they acknowledge and venerate as the only

temple of the universe, the sanctuary of piety, the pillar of truth, the immovable rock. Behold, kings – not from the East, as of old they came to the cradle of Christ, but from the North – led by faith, they humbly approach the cottage of the fisher, the Church of Rome herself, offering not only gifts out of their treasures, but bringing even kingdoms to her, and asking kingdoms from her. Whoso is wise, and will record these things, even he shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

But the success of the Papacy, when closely examined, is not so surprising as it looks. It cannot be justly pronounced legitimate, or fairly won. Rome has ever been swimming with the tide. The evils and passions of society, which a true benefactress would have made it her business to cure – at least, to alleviate – Rome has studied rather to foster into strength, that she might be borne to power on the foul current which she herself had created. Amid battles, bloodshed, and confusion, has her path lain. The edicts of subservient Councils, the forgeries of hireling priests, the arms of craven monarchs, and the thunderbolts of excommunication have never been wanting to open her path. Exploits won by weapons of this sort are what her historians delight to chronicle. These are the victories that constitute her glory! And then, there remains yet another and great deduction from the apparent grandeur of her success, in that, after all, it is the success of only a few – a caste – the clergy. For although, during her early career, the Roman Church rendered certain important services to society – of which it will delight us to make mention in fitting place when she grew to maturity, and was able to develop her real genius, it was felt and acknowledged by all that her principles implied the ruin of all interests save her own, and that there was room in the world for none but herself. If her march, as shown in history down to the sixteenth century, is ever onwards, it is not less true that behind, on her path, lie the wrecks of nations, and the ashes of literature, of liberty, and of civilization.

Nor can we help observing that the career of Rome, with all the fictitious brilliance that encompasses it, is utterly eclipsed when placed beside the silent and sublime progress of the Gospel. The latter we see winning its way over mighty obstacles solely by the force and sweetness of its own truth. It touches the deep wounds of society only to heal them. It speaks not to awaken but to hush the rough voice of strife and war. It enlightens, purifies, and blesses men wherever it comes, and it does all this so gently and unboastingly! Reviled, it reviles not again. For curses it returns blessings. It unsheathes no sword; it spills no blood. Cast into chains, its victories are as many as when free, and more glorious; dragged to the stake and burned, from the ashes of the martyr there start up a thousand confessors, to speed on its career and swell the glory of its triumph. Compared with this how different has been the career of Rome! – as different, in fact, as the thunder-cloud which comes onward, mantling the skies in gloom and scathing the earth with fiery bolts, is different from the morning descending from the mountain-tops, scattering around it the silvery light, and awakening at its presence songs of joy.

CHAPTER 5 MEDIAEVAL PROTESTANT WITNESSES.

Ambrose of Milan – His Diocese – His Theology – Rufinus, Presbyter of Aquileia – Laurentius of Milan – The Bishops of the Grisons – Churches of Lombardy in Seventh and Eighth Centuries – Claude in the Ninth Century – His Labors – Outline of his Theology – His Doctrine of the Eucharist – His Battle against Images – His Views on the Roman Primacy – Proof thence arising – Councils in France approve his Views – Question of the Services of the Roman Church to the Western Nations.

The apostasy was not universal. At no time did God leave His ancient Gospel without witnesses. When one body of confessors yielded to the darkness, or was cut off by violence, another arose in some other land, so that there was no age in which, in some country or other of Christendom, public testimony was not borne against the errors of Rome, and in behalf of the Gospel which she sought to destroy.

The country in which we find the earliest of these Protesters is Italy. The See of Rome, in those days, embraced only the capital and the surrounding provinces. The diocese of Milan, which included the plain of Lombardy, the Alps of Piedmont, and the southern provinces of France, greatly exceeded it in extent. It is an undoubted historical fact that this powerful diocese was not then tributary to the Papal chair. "The Bishops of Milan," says Pope Pelagius I. (555), "do not come to Rome for ordination." He further informs us that this "was an ancient custom of theirs." Pope Pelagius, however, attempted to subvert this "ancient custom," but his efforts resulted only in a wider estrangement between the two dioceses of Milan and Rome. For when Platina speaks of the subjection of Milan to the Pope under Stephen IX., in the middle of the eleventh century, he admits that "for 200 years together the Church of Milan had been separated from the Church of Rome." Even then, though on the very eve of the Hildebrandine era, the destruction of the independence of the diocese was not accomplished without a protest on the part of its clergy, and a tumult on the part of the people. The former affirmed that "the Ambrosian Church was not subject to the laws of Rome; that it had been always free, and could not, with honor, surrender its liberties." The latter broke out into clamor, and threatened violence to Damianus, the deputy sent to receive their submission. "The people grew into higher ferment," says Baronius; "the bells were rung; the episcopal palace beset; and the legate threatened with death." Traces of its early independence remain to this day in the Rito or Culto Ambrogiano, still in use throughout the whole of the ancient Archbishopric of Milan.

One consequence of this ecclesiastical independence of Northern Italy was, that the corruptions of which Rome was the source were late in being introduced into Milan and its diocese. The evangelical light shone there some centuries after the darkness had gathered in the southern part of the peninsula. Ambrose, who died A.D. 397, was Bishop of Milan for twenty-three years. His theology, and that of his diocese, was in no essential respects different from that which Protestants hold at this day. The Bible alone was his rule of faith; Christ alone was the foundation of the Church; the justification of the sinner and the remission of sins were not of human

merit, but by the expiatory sacrifice of the Cross; there were but two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and in the latter Christ was held to be present only figuratively. Such is a summary of the faith professed and taught by the chief bishop of the north of Italy in the end of the fourth century.

Rufinus, of Aquileia, first metropolitan in the diocese of Milan, taught substantially the same doctrine in the fifth century. His treatise on the Creed no more agrees with the catechism of the Council of Trent than does the catechism of Protestants. His successors at Aquileia, so far as can be gathered from the writings which they have left behind them, shared the sentiments of Rufinus.

To come to the sixth century, we find Laurentius, Bishop of Milan, holding that the penitence of the heart, without the absolution of a priest, suffices for pardon; and in the end of the same century (A.D. 590) we find the bishops of Italy and of the Grisons, to the number of nine, rejecting the communion of the Pope, as a heretic, so little then was the infallibility believed in, or the Roman supremacy acknowledged. In the seventh century we find Mansuetus, Bishop of Milan, declaring that the whole faith of the Church is contained in the Apostles' Creed; from which it is evident that he did not regard as necessary to salvation the additions which Rome had then begun to make, and the many she has since appended to the apostolic doctrine. The Ambrosian Liturgy, which, as we have said, continues to be used in the diocese of Milan, is a monument to the comparative purity of the faith and worship of the early Churches of Lombardy.

In the eighth century we find Paulinus, Bishop of Aquileia, declaring that "we feed upon the divine nature of Jesus Christ, which cannot be said but only with respect to believers, and must be understood metaphorically." Thus manifest is it that he rejected the corporeal manducation of the Church at Rome. He also warns men against approaching God through any other mediator or advocate than Jesus Christ, affirming that He alone was conceived without sin; that He is the only Redeemer, and that He is the one foundation of the Church. "If any one," says Allix, "will take the pains to examine the opinions of this bishop, he will find it a hard thing not to take notice that he denies what the Church of Rome affirms with relation to all these articles, and that he affirms what the Church of Rome denies."

It must be acknowledged that these men, despite their great talents and their ardent piety, had not entirely escaped the degeneracy of their age. The light that was in them was partly mixed with darkness. Even the great Ambrose was touched with a veneration for relics, and a weakness for other superstitious of his times. But as regards the cardinal doctrines of salvation, the faith of these men was essentially Protestant, and stood out in bold antagonism to the leading principles of the Roman creed. And such, with more or less of clearness, must be held to have been the profession of the pastors over whom they presided. And the Churches they ruled and taught were numerous and widely planted. They flourished in the towns and villages which dot the vast plain that stretches like a garden for 200 miles along the foot of the Alps; they existed in those romantic and fertile valleys over which the great mountains hang their pine forests and snows, and, passing the summit, they

extended into the southern provinces of France, even as far as to the Rhone, on the banks of which Polycarp, the disciple of John, in early times had planted the Gospel, to be watered in the succeeding centuries by the blood of thousands of martyrs. Darkness gives relief to the light, and error necessitates a fuller development and a clearer definition of truth. On this principle the ninth century produced the most remarkable perhaps of all those great champions who strove to set limits to the growing superstition, and to preserve, pure and undefiled, the faith which apostles had preached. The mantle of Ambrose descended on Claudius, Archbishop of Turin. This man beheld with dismay the stealthy approaches of a power which, putting out the eyes of men, bowed their necks to its yoke, and bent their knees to idols. He grasped the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and the battle which he so courageously waged, delayed, though it could not prevent, the fall of his Church's independence, and for two centuries longer the light continued to shine at the foot of the Alps. Claudius was an earnest and indefatigable student of Holy Scripture. That Book carried him back to the first age, and set him down at the feet of apostles, at the feet of One greater than apostles; and, while darkness was descending on the earth, around Claude still shone the day.

The truth, drawn from its primeval fountains, he proclaimed throughout his diocese, which included the valleys of the Waldenses. Where his voice could not reach, he labored to convey instruction by his pen. He wrote commentaries on the Gospels; he published expositions of almost all the epistles of Paul, and several books of the Old Testament; and thus he furnished his contemporaries with the means of judging how far it became them to submit to a jurisdiction so manifestly usurped as that of Rome, or to embrace tenets so undeniably novel as those which she was now foisting upon the world. The sum of what Claude maintained was that there is but one Sovereign in the Church, and He is not on earth; that Peter had no superiority over the other apostles, save in this, that he was the first who preached the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles; that human merit is of no avail for salvation, and that faith alone saves us. On this cardinal point he insists with a clearness and breadth which remind one of Luther. The authority of tradition he repudiates, prayers for the dead he condemns, as also the notion that the Church cannot err. As regards relics, instead of holiness he can find in them nothing but rottenness, and advises that they be instantly returned to the grave, from which they ought never to have been taken.

Of the Eucharist, he writes in his commentary on Matthew (A.D. 815) in a way which shows that he stood at the greatest distance from the opinions which Paschasius Radbertus broached eighteen years afterwards.

Paschasius Radbertus, a monk, afterwards Abbot of Corbei, pretended to explain with precision the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist. He published (831) a treatise, "Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." His doctrine amounted to the two following propositions: —

- 1. Of the bread and wine nothing remains after consecration but the outward figure, under which the body and blood of

Christ are really and locally present.

- 2. This body present in the Eucharist is the same body that was born of the Virgin, that suffered upon the cross, and was raised from the grave.

This new doctrine excited the astonishment of not a few, and called forth several powerful opponents – amongst others, Johannes Scotus. Claudius, however, thought that the Lord's Supper was a memorial of Christ's death, and not a repetition of it, and that the elements of bread and wine were only symbols of the flesh and blood of the Savior. It is clear from this that transubstantiation was unknown in the ninth century to the Churches at the foot of the Alps. Nor was it the Bishop of Turin only who held this doctrine of the Eucharist; we are entitled to infer that the bishops of neighboring dioceses, both north and south of the Alps, shared the opinion of Claude. For though they differed from him on some other points, and did not conceal their difference, they expressed no dissent from his views respecting the Sacrament, and in proof of their concurrence in his general policy, strongly urged him to continue his expositions of the Sacred Scriptures. Specially was this the case as regards two leading ecclesiastics of that day, Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, and the Abbot Theodemirus. Even in the century following, we find certain bishops of the north of Italy saying that "wicked men eat the goat and not the lamb," language wholly incomprehensible from the lips of men who believe in transubstantiation.

The worship of images was then making rapid strides. The Bishop of Rome was the great advocate of this ominous innovation; it was on this point that Claude fought his great battle. He resisted it with all the logic of his pen and all the force of his eloquence; he condemned the practice as idolatrous, and he purged those churches in his diocese which had begun to admit representations of saints and divine persons within their walls, not even sparing the cross itself. It is instructive to mark that the advocates of images in the ninth century justified their use of them by the very same arguments which Romanists employ at this day; and that Claude refutes them on the same ground taken by Protestant writers still. We do not worship the image, say the former, we use it simply as the medium through which our worship ascends to Him whom the image represents; and if we kiss the cross we do so in adoration of Him who died upon it. But, replied Claude – as the Protestant polemic at this hour replies in kneeling to the image, or kissing the cross, you do what the second commandment forbids, and what the Scripture condemns as idolatry. Your worship terminates in the image, and is the worship not of God, but simply of the image. With his argument the Bishop of Turin mingles at times a little raillery. "God commands one thing," says he, "and these people do quite the contrary. God commands us to bear our cross, and not to worship it; but these are all for worshipping it, whereas they do not bear it at all. To serve God after this manner is to go away from Him. For if we ought to adore the cross because Christ was fastened to it, how many other things are there which touched Jesus Christ! Why don't they adore mangers and old clothes, because He was laid in a manger and wrapped in swaddling clothes? Let them adore asses, because He, entered into Jerusalem upon the foal of an ass."

On the subject of the Roman primacy, he leaves it in no wise doubtful what his sentiments were. "We know very well," says he, "that this passage of the Gospel is very ill understood – 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' under pretense of which words the stupid and ignorant common people, destitute of all spiritual knowledge, betake themselves to Rome in hopes of acquiring eternal life. The ministry belongs to all the true superintendents and pastors of the Church, who discharge the same as long as they are in this world; and when they have paid the debt of death, others succeed in their places, who enjoy the same authority and power. Know thou that he only is apostolic who is the keeper and guardian of the apostle's doctrine, and not he who boasts himself to be seated in the chair of the apostle, and in the meantime doth not acquit himself of the charge of the apostle."

We have dwelt the longer on Claude, and the doctrines which he so powerfully advocated by both voice and pen, because, although the picture of his times – a luxurious clergy but an ignorant people, Churches growing in magnificence but declining in piety, images adored but the true God forsaken – is not a pleasant one, yet it establishes two points of great importance. The first is that the Bishop of Rome had not yet succeeded in compelling universal submission to his jurisdiction; and the second that he had not yet been able to persuade all the Churches of Christendom to adopt his novel doctrines, and follow his peculiar customs. Claude was not left to fight that battle alone, nor was he crushed as he inevitably would have been, had Rome been the dominant power it came soon thereafter to be. On the contrary, this Protestant of the ninth century received a large amount of sympathy and support both from bishops and from synods of his time. Agobardus, the Bishop of Lyons, fought by the side of his brother of Turin. In fact, he was as great an iconoclast as Claude himself. The emperor, Louis the Pious (le Debonnaire), summoned a Council (824) of "the most learned and judicious bishops of his realm," says Dupin, to discuss this question. For in that age the emperors summoned synods and appointed bishops. And when the Council had assembled, did it wait till Peter should speak, or a Papal allocution had decided the point? "It knew no other way," says Dupin, "to settle the question, than by determining what they should find upon the most impartial examination to be true, by plain text of Holy Scripture, and the judgment of the Fathers." This Council at Paris justified most of the principles for which Claude had contended, as the great Council at Frankfort (794) had done before it. It is worthy of notice further, as bearing on this point, that only two men stood up publicly to oppose Claude during the twenty years he was incessantly occupied in this controversy. The first was Dungulas, a recluse of the Abbey of St. Denis, an Italian, it is believed, and biased naturally in favor of the opinions of the Pope; and the second was Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, who differed from Claude on but the one question of images, and only to the extent of tolerating their use, but condemning as idolatrous their worship – a distinction which it is easy to maintain in theory, but impossible to observe, as experience has demonstrated, in practice.

And here let us interpose an observation. We speak at times of the signal benefits which the "Church" conferred upon the Gothic nations during the

Middle Ages. She put herself in the place of a mother to those barbarous tribes; she weaned them from the savage usages of their original homes; she bowed their stubborn necks to the authority of law; she opened their minds to the charms of knowledge and art; and thus laid the foundation of those civilized and prosperous communities which have since arisen in the West. But when we so speak it behooves us to specify with some distinctness what we mean by the "Church" to which we ascribe the glory of this service. Is it the Church of Rome, or is it the Church universal of Christendom? If we mean the former, the facts of history do not bear out our conclusion. The Church of Rome was not then the Church, but only one of many Churches. The slow but beneficent and laborious work of evangelizing and civilizing the Northern nations, was the joint result of the action of all the Churches – of Northern Italy, of France, of Spain, of Germany, of Britain – and each performed its part in this great work with a measure of success exactly corresponding to the degree in which it retained the pure principles of primitive Christianity. The Churches would have done their task much more effectually and speedily but for the adverse influence of Rome. She hung upon their rear, by her perpetual attempts to bow them to her yoke, and to seduce them from their first purity to her thinly disguised paganisms. Emphatically, the power that molded the Gothic nations, and planted among them the seeds of religion and virtue, was Christianity – that same Christianity which apostles preached to men in the first age, which all the ignorance and superstition of subsequent times had not quite extinguished, and which, with immense toil and suffering dug up from under the heaps of rubbish that had been piled above it, was anew, in the sixteenth century, given to the world under the name of Protestantism.

CHAPTER 6 THE WALDENSES – THEIR VALLEYS

Submission of the Churches of Lombardy to Rome – The Old Faith maintained in the Mountains – The Waldensian Churches – Question of their Antiquity – Approach to their Mountains – Arrangement of their Valleys – Picture of blended Beauty and Grandeur.

WHEN Claude died it can hardly be said that his mantle was taken up by any one. The battle, although not altogether dropped, was henceforward languidly maintained. Before this time not a few Churches beyond the Alps had submitted to the yoke of Rome, and that arrogant power must have felt it not a little humiliating to find her authority withstood on what she might regard as her own territory. She was venerated abroad but contemned at home. Attempts were renewed to induce the Bishops of Milan to accept the episcopal pall, the badge of spiritual vassalage, from the Pope; but it was not till the middle of the eleventh century (1059), under Nicholas II., that these attempts were successful. Petrus Damianus, Bishop of Ostia, and Anselm, Bishop of Lucca, were dispatched by the Pontiff to receive the submission of the Lombard Churches, and the popular tumults amid which that submission was extorted sufficiently show that the spirit of Claude still lingered at the foot of the Alps. Nor did the clergy conceal the regret with which they laid their ancient liberties at the feet of a power before which the whole earth was then bowing down; for the Papal legate, Damianus, informs us that the clergy of Milan maintained in his presence, "That the Ambrosian Church, according to

the ancient institutions of the Fathers, was always free, without being subject to the laws of Rome, and that the Pope of Rome had no jurisdiction over their Church as to the government or constitution of it."

But if the plains were conquered, not so the mountains. A considerable body of Protesters stood out against this deed of submission. Of these some crossed the Alps, descended the Rhine, and raised the standard of opposition in the diocese of Cologne, where they were branded as Manicheans, and rewarded with the stake. Others retired into the valleys of the Piedmontese Alps, and there maintained their scriptural faith and their ancient independence. What we have just related respecting the dioceses of Milan and Turin settles the question, in our opinion, of the apostolicity of the Churches of the Waldensian valleys. It is not necessary to show that missionaries were sent from Rome in the first age to plant Christianity in these valleys, nor is it necessary to show that these Churches have existed as distinct and separate communities from early days; enough that they formed a part, as unquestionably they did, of the great evangelical Church of the north of Italy. This is the proof at once of their apostolicity and their independence. It attests their descent from apostolic men, if doctrine be the life of Churches. When their co-religionists on the plains entered within the pale of the Roman jurisdiction, they retired within the mountains, and, spurning alike the tyrannical yoke and the corrupt tenets of the Church of the Seven Hills, they preserved in its purity and simplicity the faith their fathers had handed down to them. Rome manifestly was the schismatic, she it was that had abandoned what was once the common faith of Christendom, leaving by that step to all who remained on the old ground the indisputably valid title of the True Church.

Behind this rampart of mountains, which Providence, foreseeing the approach of evil days, would almost seem to have reared on purpose, did the remnant of the early apostolic Church of Italy kindle their lamp, and here did that lamp continue to burn all through the long night which descended on Christendom. There is a singular concurrence of evidence in favor of their high antiquity. Their traditions invariably point to an unbroken descent from the earliest times, as regards their religious belief. The Nobla Leycon, which dates from the year 1100, goes to prove that the Waldenses of Piedmont did not owe their rise to Peter Waldo of Lyons, who did not appear till the latter half of that century (1160). The Nobla Leycon, though a poem, is in reality a confession of faith, and could have been composed only after some considerable study of the system of Christianity, in contradistinction to the errors of Rome. How could a Church have arisen with such a document in her hands? Or how could these herdsmen and vine-dressers, shut up in their mountains, have detected the errors against which they bore testimony, and found their way to the truths of which they made open profession in times of darkness like these? If we grant that their religious beliefs were the heritage of former ages, handed down from an evangelical ancestry, all is plain; but if we maintain that they were the discovery of the men of those days, we assert what approaches almost to a miracle. Their greatest enemies, Claude Seyssel of Turin (1517), and Reynerius the Inquisitor (1250), have admitted their antiquity, and stigmatized them as "the most dangerous of all heretics, because the most ancient."

Rorengo, Prior of St. Roch, Turin (1640), was employed to investigate the origin and antiquity of the Waldenses, and of course had access to all the Waldensian documents in the ducal archives, and being their bitter enemy he may be presumed to have made his report not more favorable than he could help. Yet he states that "they were not a new sect in the ninth and tenth centuries, and that Claude of Turin must have detached them from the Church in the ninth century."

Within the limits of her own land did God provide a dwelling for this venerable Church. Let us bestow a glance upon the region. As one comes from the south, across the level plain of Piedmont, while yet nearly a hundred miles off, he sees the Alps rise before him, stretching like a great wall along the horizon. From the gates of the morning to those of the setting sun, the mountains run on in a line of towering magnificence. Pasturages and chestnut-forests clothe their base; eternal snows crown their summits. How varied are their forms! Some rise strong and massy as castles; others shoot up tall and tapering like needles; while others again run along in serrated lines, their summits torn and cleft by the storms of many thousand winters. At the hour of sunrise, what a glory kindles along the crest of that snowy rampart! At sunset the spectacle is again renewed, and a line of pyres is seen to burn in the evening sky.

Drawing nearer the hills, on a line about thirty miles west of Turin, there opens before one what seems a great mountain portal. This is the entrance to the Waldensian territory. A low hill drawn along in front serves as a defense against all who may come with hostile intent, as but too frequently happened in times gone by, while a stupendous monolith – the Castelluzzo – shoots up to the clouds, and stands sentinel at the gate of this renowned region. As one approaches La Torre the Castelluzzo rises higher and higher, and irresistibly fixes the eye by the perfect beauty of its pillar-like form. But; to this mountain a higher interest belongs than any that mere symmetry can give it. It is indissolubly linked with martyr-memories, and borrows a halo from the achievements of the past. How often, in days of old, was the confessor hurled sheer down its awful steep and dashed on the rocks at its foot! And there, commingled in one ghastly heap, growing ever the bigger and ghastlier as another and yet another victim was added to it, lay the mangled bodies of pastor and peasant, of mother and child! It was the tragedies connected with this mountain mainly that called forth Milton's well-known sonnet: –

"Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughter'd saints,
whose bones Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold.
in Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold,
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese,
that roll'd Mother with infant down the rocks.
Their moans The vales redoubled to the hills,
and they To heaven."

The elegant temple of the Waldenses rises near the foot of the Castelluzzo. The Waldensian valleys are seven in number; they were more in ancient times, but the limits of the Vaudois territory have undergone repeated curtailment,

and now only the number we have stated remain, lying between Pinerolo on the east and Monte Viso on the west – that pyramidal hill which forms so prominent an object from every part of the plain of Piedmont, towering as it does above the surrounding mountains, and, like a horn of silver, cutting the ebon of the firmament.

The first three valleys run out somewhat like the spokes of a wheel, the spot on which we stand – the gateway, namely – being the nave. The first is Luserna, or Valley of Light. It runs right out in a grand gorge of some twelve miles in length by about two in width. It wears a carpeting of meadows, which the waters of the Pelice keep ever fresh and bright. A profusion of vines, acacias, and mulberry-trees fleck it with their shadows; and a wall of lofty mountains encloses it on either hand. The second is Rora, or Valley of Dews. It is a vast cup, some fifty miles in circumference, its sides luxuriantly clothed with meadow and corn-field, with fruit and forest trees, and its rim formed of craggy and spiky mountains, many of them snow-clad. The third is Angrogna, or Valley of Groans. Of it we shall speak more particularly afterwards. Beyond the extremity of the first three valleys are the remaining four, forming, as it were, the rim of the wheel. These last are enclosed in their turn by a line of lofty and craggy mountains, which form a wall of defense around the entire territory. Each valley is a fortress, having its own gate of ingress and egress, with its caves, and rocks, and mighty chestnut-trees, forming places of retreat and shelter, so that the highest engineering skill could not have better adapted each several valley to its end. It is not less remarkable that, taking all these valleys together, each is so related to each, and the one opens so into the other, that they may be said to form one fortress of amazing and matchless strength – wholly impregnable, in fact. All the fortresses of Europe, though combined, would not form a citadel so enormously strong, and so dazzlingly magnificent, as the mountain dwelling of the Vaudois. "The Eternal, our God," says Leger "having destined this land to be the theater of His marvels, and the bulwark of His ark, has, by natural means, most marvelously fortified it." The battle begun in one valley could be continued in another, and carried round the entire territory, till at last the invading foe, overpowered by the rocks rolled upon him from the mountains, or assailed by enemies which would start suddenly out of the mist or issue from some unsuspected cave, found retreat impossible, and, cut off in detail, left his bones to whiten the mountains he had come to subdue.

These valleys are lovely and fertile, as well as strong. They are watered by numerous torrents, which descend from the snows of the summits. The grassy carpet of their bottom; the mantling vine and the golden grain of their lower slopes; the chalets that dot their sides, sweetly embowered amid fruit-trees; and, higher up, the great chestnut-forests and the pasture-lands, where the herdsmen keep watch over their flocks all through the summer days and the starlit nights: the nodding crags, from which the torrent leaps into the light; the rivulet, singing with quiet gladness in the shady nook; the mists, moving grandly among the mountains, now veiling, now revealing their majesty; and the far-off summits, tipped with silver, to be changed at eve into gleaming gold – make up a picture of blended beauty and grandeur, not equaled perhaps, and certainly not surpassed, in any other region of the earth.

In the heart of their mountains is situated the most interesting, perhaps, of all their valleys. It was in this retreat, walled round by "hills whose heads touch heaven," that their barbes or pastors, from all their several parishes, were wont to meet in annual synod. It was here that their college stood, and it was here that their missionaries were trained, and, after ordination, were sent forth to sow the good seed, as opportunity offered, in other lands. Let us visit this valley. We ascend to it by the long, narrow, and winding Angrogna. Bright meadows enliven its entrance. The mountains on either hand are clothed with the vine, the mulberry, and the chestnut. Anon the valley contracts. It becomes rough with projecting rocks, and shady with great trees. A few paces farther, and it expands into a circular basin, feathery with birches, musical with falling waters, environed atop by naked crags, fringed with dark pines, while the white peak looks down upon one out of heaven. A little in advance the valley seems shut in by a mountainous wall, drawn right across it; and beyond, towering sublimely upward, is seen an assemblage of snow-clad Alps, amid which is placed the valley we are in quest of, where burned of old the candle of the Waldenses. Some terrible convulsion has rent this mountain from top to bottom, opening a path through it to the valley beyond. We enter the dark chasm, and proceed along on a narrow ledge in the mountain's side, hung half-way between the torrent, which is heard thundering in the abyss below, and the summits which lean over us above. Journeying thus for about two miles, we find the pass beginning to widen, the light to break in, and now we arrive at the gate of the Pra.

There opens before us a noble circular valley, its grassy bottom watered by torrents, its sides dotted with dwellings and clothed with corn-fields and pasturages, while a ring of white peaks guards it above. This was the inner sanctuary of the Waldensian temple. The rest of Italy had turned aside to idols, the Waldensian territory alone had been reserved for the worship of the true God. And was it not meet that on its native soil a remnant of the apostolic Church of Italy should be maintained, that Rome and all Christendom might have before their eyes a perpetual monument of what they themselves had once been, and a living witness to testify how far they had departed from their first faith?

CHAPTER 7 THE WALDENSES – THEIR MISSIONS AND MARTYRDOMS

Their Synod and College – Their Theological Tenets – Romaunt Version of the New Testament – The Constitution of their Church – Their Missionary Labors – Wide Diffusion of their Tenets – The Stone Smiting the Image.

ONE would like to have a near view of the barbes or pastors, who presided over the school of early Protestant theology that existed here, and to know how it fared with evangelical Christianity in the ages that preceded the Reformation. But the time is remote, and the events are dim. We can but doubtfully glean from a variety of sources the facts necessary to form a picture of this venerable Church, and even then the picture is not complete. The theology of which this was one of the fountainheads was not the clear, well-defined, and comprehensive system which the sixteenth century gave its; it was only what the faithful men of the Lombard Churches had been able to save from the wreck of primitive Christianity. True religion, being a

revelation, was from the beginning complete and perfect; nevertheless, in this as in every other branch of knowledge, it is only by patient labor that man is able to extricate and arrange all its parts, and to come into the full possession of truth. The theology taught in former ages, in the peak-environed valley in which we have in imagination placed ourselves, was drawn from the Bible. The atoning death and justifying righteousness of Christ was its cardinal truth. This, the Nobla Leycon and other ancient documents abundantly testify. The Nobla Leycon sets forth with tolerable clearness the doctrine of the Trinity, the fall of man, the incarnation of the Son, the perpetual authority of the Decalogue as given by God, the need of Divine grace in order to good works, the necessity of holiness, the institution of the ministry, the resurrection of the body, and the eternal bliss of heaven. This creed, its professors exemplified in lives of evangelical virtue. The blamelessness of the Waldenses passed into a proverb, so that one more than ordinarily exempt from the vices of his time was sure to be suspected of being a Vaudes. If doubt there were regarding the tenets of the Waldenses, the charges which their enemies have preferred against them would set that doubt at rest, and make it tolerably certain that they held substantially what the apostles before their day, and the Reformers after it, taught. The indictment against the Waldenses included a formidable list of "heresies." They held that there had been no true Pope since the days of Sylvester; that temporal offices and dignities were not meet for preachers of the Gospel; that the Pope's pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to no one knew whom; that to go on pilgrimage served no end, save to empty one's purse; that flesh might be eaten any day if one's appetite served him; that holy water was not a whit more efficacious than rain water; and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if offered in a church. They were accused, moreover, of having scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation, and of having spoken blasphemously of Rome, as the harlot of the Apocalypse. There is reason to believe, from recent historical researches, that the Waldenses possessed the New Testament in the vernacular. The "Lingua Romana" or Romaunt tongue was the common language of the south of Europe from the eighth to the fourteenth century. It was the language of the troubadours and of men of letters in the Dark Ages. Into this tongue – the Romaunt – was the first translation of the whole of the New Testament made so early as the twelfth century. This fact Dr. Gilly has been at great pains to prove in his work, *The Romaunt Version of the Gospel according to John*. The sum of what Dr. Gilly, by a patient investigation into facts, and a great array of historic documents, maintains, is that all the books of the New Testament were translated from the Latin Vulgate into the Romaunt, that this was the first literal version since the fall of the empire, that it was made in the twelfth century, and was the first translation available for popular use. There were numerous earlier translations, but only of parts of the Word of God, and many of these were rather paraphrases or digests of Scripture than translations, and, moreover, they were so bulky, and by consequence so costly, as to be utterly beyond the reach of the common people. This Romaunt version was the first complete and literal translation of the New Testament of Holy Scripture; it was made, as Dr. Gilly, by a chain of proofs, shows, most probably under the superintendence and at the expense of Peter Waldo of Lyons, not later than 1180, and so is older than any complete version in German, French, Italian,

Spanish, or English. This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it. Of the Romaunt New Testament six copies have come down to our day. A copy is preserved at each of the four following places, Lyons, Grenoble, Zurich, Dublin; and two copies are at Paris. These are plain and portable volumes, contrasting with those splendid and ponderous folios of the Latin Vulgate, penned in characters of gold and silver, richly illuminated, their bindings decorated with gems, inviting admiration rather than study, and unfitted by their size and splendor for the use of the People.

The Church of the Alps, in the simplicity of its constitution, may be held to have been a reflection of the Church of the first centuries. The entire territory included in the Waldensian limits was divided into parishes. In each parish was placed a pastor, who led his flock to the living waters of the Word of God. He preached, he dispensed the Sacraments, he visited the sick, and catechized the young. With him was associated in the government of his congregation a consistory of laymen. The synod met once a year. It was composed of all the pastors, with an equal number of laymen, and its most frequent place of meeting was the secluded mountain-engirdled valley at the head of Angrogna. Sometimes as many as a hundred and fifty barbes, with the same number of lay members, would assemble. We can imagine them seated – it may be on the grassy slopes of the valley – a venerable company of humble, learned, earnest men, presided over by a simple moderator (for higher office or authority was unknown amongst them), and intermitting their deliberations respecting the affairs of their Churches, and the condition of their flocks, only to offer their prayers and praises to the Eternal, while the majestic snow-clad peaks looked down upon them from the silent firmament. There needed, verily, no magnificent fane, no blazonry of mystic rites to make their assembly august.

The youth who here sat at the feet of the more venerable and learned of their barbes used as their text-book the Holy Scriptures. And not only did they study the sacred volume; they were required to commit to memory, and be able accurately to recite, whole Gospels and Epistles. This was a necessary accomplishment on the part of public instructors, in those ages when printing was unknown, and copies of the Word of God were rare. Part of their time was occupied in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or portions of them, which they were to distribute when they went forth as missionaries. By this, and by other agencies, the seed of the Divine Word was scattered throughout Europe more widely than is commonly supposed. To this a variety of causes contributed. There was then a general impression that the world was soon to end. Men thought that they saw the prognostications of its dissolution in the disorder into which all things had fallen. The pride, luxury, and profligacy of the clergy led not a few laymen to ask if better and more certain guides were not to be had. Many of the troubadours were religious men, whose lays were sermons. The hour of deep and universal slumber had passed; the serf was contending with his seigneur for personal freedom, and the city was waging war with the baronial castle for civic and corporate independence. The New Testament – and, as we learn from incidental notices, portions of the Old –

coming at this juncture, in a language understood alike in the court as in the camp, in the city as in the rural hamlet, was welcome to many, and its truths obtained a wider promulgation than perhaps had taken place since the publication of the Vulgate by Jerome.

After passing a certain time in the school of the barbes, it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of Lombardy, or to the Sorbonne at Paris. There they saw other customs, were initiated into other studies, and had a wider horizon around them than in the seclusion of their native valleys. Many of them became expert dialecticians, and often made converts of the rich merchants with whom they traded, and the landlords in whose houses they lodged. The priests seldom cared to meet in argument the Waldensian missionary. To maintain the truth in their own mountains was not the only object of this people. They felt their relations to the rest of Christendom. They sought to drive back the darkness, and reconquer the kingdoms which Rome had overwhelmed. They were an evangelistic as well as an evangelical Church. It was an old law among them that all who took orders in their Church should, before being eligible to a home charge, serve three years in the mission field. The youth on whose head the assembled barbes laid their hands saw in prospect not a rich benefice, but a possible martyrdom. The ocean they did not cross. Their mission field was the realms that lay outspread at the foot of their own mountains. They went forth two and two, concealing their real character under the guise of a secular profession, most commonly that of merchants or peddlers. They carried silks, jewelry, and other articles, at that time not easily purchasable save at distant marts, and they were welcomed as merchants where they would have been spurned as missionaries. The door of the cottage and the portal of the baron's castle stood equally open to them. But their address was mainly shown in vending, without money and without price, rarer and more valuable merchandise than the gems and silks which had procured them entrance. They took care to carry with them, concealed among their wares or about their persons, portions of the Word of God, their own transcription commonly, and to this they would draw the attention of the inmates. When they saw a desire to possess it, they would freely make a gift of it where the means to purchase were absent.

There was no kingdom of Southern and Central Europe to which these missionaries did not find their way, and where they did not leave traces of their visit in the disciples whom they made. On the west they penetrated into Spain. In Southern France they found congenial fellow-laborers in the Albigenses, by whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over Dauphine and Languedoc. On the east, descending the Rhine and the Danube, they leavened Germany, Bohemia, and Poland with their doctrines, their track being marked with the edifices for worship and the stakes of martyrdom that arose around their steps. Even the Seven-hilled City they feared not to enter, scattering the seed on ungenial soil, if perchance some of it might take root and grow. Their naked feet and coarse woollen garments made them somewhat marked figures, in the streets of a city that clothed itself in purple and fine linen; and when their real errand was discovered, as sometimes chanced, the rulers of Christendom took care to further, in their own way, the springing of the seed, by watering it with the blood of the men

who had sowed it.

Thus did the Bible in those ages, veiling its majesty and its mission, travel silently through Christendom, entering homes and hearts, and there making its abode. From her lofty seat Rome looked down with contempt upon the Book and its humble bearers. She aimed at bowing the necks of kings, thinking if they were obedient meaner men would not dare revolt, and so she took little heed of a power which, weak as it seemed, was destined at a future day to break in pieces the fabric of her dominion. By-and-by she began to be uneasy, and to have a boding of calamity. The penetrating eye of Innocent III. detected the quarter whence danger was to arise. He saw in the labors of these humble men the beginning of a movement which, if permitted to go on and gather strength, would one day sweep away all that it had taken the toils and intrigues of centuries to achieve. He straightway commenced those terrible crusades which wasted the sowers but watered the seed, and helped to bring on, at its appointed hour, the catastrophe which he sought to avert.

CHAPTER 8 THE PAULICIANS

The Paulicians the Protesters against the Eastern, as the Waldenses against the Western Apostasy – Their Rise in A.D. 653 – Constantine of Samosata-Their Tenets Scriptural – Constantine Stoned to Death – Simeon Succeeds – Is put to Death – Sergius – His Missionary Travels – Terrible Persecutions-The Paulicians Rise in Arms – Civil War – The Government Triumphs – Dispersion of the Paulicians over the West – They Blend with the Waldenses – Movement in the South of Europe – The Troubadour, the Barbe, and the Bible, the Three Missionaries – Innocent III. – The Crusades.

BESIDES this central and main body of oppositionists to Rome – Protestants before Protestantism – placed here as in an impregnable fortress, upreared on purpose, in the very center of Roman Christendom, other communities and individuals arose, and maintained a continuous line of Protestant testimony all along to the sixteenth century. These we shall compendiously group and rapidly describe. First, there are the Paulicians. They occupy an analogous place in the East to that which the Waldenses held in the West. Some obscurity rests upon their origin, and additional mystery has on purpose been cast over it, but a fair and impartial examination of the matter leaves no doubt that the Paulicians are the remnant that escaped the apostasy of the Eastern Church, just as the Waldenses are the remnant saved from the apostasy of the Western Church. Doubt, too, has been thrown upon their religious opinions; they have been painted as a confederacy of Manicheans, just as the Waldenses were branded as a synagogue of heretics; but in the former case, as in the latter, an examination of the matter satisfies us that these imputations had no sufficient foundation, that the Paulicians repudiated the errors imputed to them, and that as a body their opinions were in substantial agreement with the doctrine of Holy Writ. Nearly all the information we have of them is that which Petrus Siculus, their bitter enemy, has communicated. He visited them when they were in their most flourishing condition, and the account he has given of their distinguishing doctrines sufficiently proves that the Paulicians had rejected the leading errors of the Greek and Roman Churches; but it fails to show that they had embraced the doctrine of Manes,

or were justly liable to be styled Manicheans.

In A.D. 653, a deacon returning from captivity in Syria rested a night in the house of an Armenian named Constantine, who lived in the neighborhood of Samosata. On the morrow, before taking his departure, he presented his host with a copy of the New Testament. Constantine studied the sacred volume. A new light broke upon his mind: the errors of the Greek Church stood clearly revealed, and he instantly resolved to separate himself from so corrupt a communion. He drew others to the study of the Scriptures, and the same light shone into their minds which had irradiated his. Sharing his views, they shared with him his secession from the established Church of the Empire. It was the boast of this new party, now grown to considerable numbers, that they adhered to the Scriptures, and especially to the writings of Paul. "I am Sylvanus," said Constantine, "and ye are Macedonians," intimating thereby that the Gospel which he would teach, and they should learn, was that of Paul; hence the name of Paulicians, a designation they would not have been ambitious to wear had their doctrine been Manichean.

These disciples multiplied. A congenial soil favored their increase, for in these same mountains, where are placed the sources of the Euphrates, the Nestorian remnant had found a refuge. The attention of the Government at Constantinople was at length turned to them, and persecution followed. Constantine, whose zeal, constancy, and piety had been amply tested by the labors of twenty-seven years, was stoned to death. From his ashes arose a leader still more powerful. Simeon, an officer of the palace who had been sent with a body of troops to superintend his execution, was converted by his martyrdom; and, like Paul after the stoning of Stephen, forthwith began to preach the faith which he had once persecuted. Simeon ended his career, as Constantine had done, by sealing his testimony with his blood; the stake being planted beside the heap of stones piled above the ashes of Constantine.

Still the Paulicians multiplied; other leaders arose to fill the place of those who had fallen, and neither the anathemas of the hierarchy nor the sword of the State could check their growth. All through the eighth century they continued to flourish. The worship of images was now the fashionable superstition in the Eastern Church, and the Paulicians rendered themselves still more obnoxious to the Greek authorities, lay and clerical, by the strenuous opposition which they offered to that idolatry of which the Greeks were the great advocates and patrons. This drew upon them yet sorer persecution. It was now, in the end of the eighth century, that the most remarkable perhaps of all their leaders, Sergius, rose to head them, a man of truly missionary spirit and of indomitable energy. Petrus Siculus has given us an account of the conversion of Sergius. We should take it for a satire, were it not for the manifest earnestness and simplicity of the writer. Siculus tells us that Satan appeared to Sergius in the shape of an old woman, and asked him why he did not read the New Testament? The tempter proceeded further to recite portions of Holy Writ, whereby Sergius was seduced to read the Scripture, and so perverted to heresy; and "from sheep," says Siculus, "turned numbers into wolves, and by their means ravaged the sheepfolds of Christ."

During thirty-four years, and in the course of innumerable journeys, he

preached the Gospel from East to West, and converted great numbers of his countrymen. The result was more terrible persecutions, which were continued through successive reigns. Foremost in this work we find the Emperor Leo, the Patriarch Nicephorus, and notably the Empress Theodora. Under the latter it was affirmed, says Gibbon, "that one hundred thousand Paulicians were extirpated by the sword, the gibbet, or the flames." It is admitted by the same historian that the chief guilt of many of those who were thus destroyed lay in their being Iconoclasts. The sanguinary zeal of Theodora kindled a flame which had well-nigh consumed the Empire of the East. The Paulicians, stung by these cruel injuries, now prolonged for two centuries, at last took up arms, as the Waldenses of Piedmont, the Hussites of Bohemia, and the Huguenots of France did in similar circumstances. They placed their camp in the mountains between Sewas and Trebizond, and for thirty-five years (A.D. 845 – 880) the Empire of Constantinople was afflicted with the calamities of civil war. Repeated victories, won over the troops of the emperor, crowned the arms of the Paulicians, and at length the insurgents were joined by the Saracens, who hung on the frontier of the Empire. The flames of battle extended into the heart of Asia; and as it is impossible to restrain the ravages of the sword when once unsheathed, the Paulicians passed from a righteous defense to an inexcusable revenge. Entire provinces were wasted, opulent cities were sacked, ancient and famous churches were turned into stables, and troops of captives were held to ransom or delivered to the executioner. But it must not be forgotten that the original cause of these manifold miseries was the bigotry of the government and the zeal of the clergy for image-worship. The fortune of war at last declared in favor of the troops of the emperor, and the insurgents were driven back into their mountains, where for a century afterwards they enjoyed a partial independence, and maintained the profession of their religious faith.

After this, the Paulicians were transported across the Bosphorus, and settled in Thrace. This removal was begun by the Emperor Constantine Copronymus in the middle of the eighth century, was continued in successive colonies in the ninth, and completed about the end of the tenth. The shadow of the Saracenic woe was already blackening over the Eastern Empire, and God removed His witnesses betimes from the destined scene of judgment. The arrival of the Paulicians in Europe was regarded with favor rather than disapproval. Rome was becoming by her tyranny the terror and by her profligacy the scandal of the West, and men were disposed to welcome whatever promised to throw additional weight into the opposing scale. The Paulicians soon spread themselves over Europe, and though no chronicle records their dispersion, the fact is attested by the sudden and simultaneous outbreak of their opinions in many of the Western countries. They mingled with the hosts of the Crusaders returning from the Holy Land through Hungary and Germany; they joined themselves to the caravans of merchants who entered the harbor of Venice and the gates of Lombardy; or they followed the Byzantine standard into Southern Italy, and by these various routes settled themselves in the West. They incorporated with the preexisting bodies of oppositionists, and from this time a new life is seen to animate the efforts of the Waldenses of Piedmont, the Albigenses of Southern France, and of others who, in other parts of Europe, revolted by the growing superstitions, had begun to retrace their steps towards the primeval fountains of truth. "Their opinions," says Gibbon,

"were silently propagated in Rome, Milan, and the kingdoms beyond the Alps. It was soon discovered that many thousand Catholics of every rank, and of either sex, had embraced the Manichean heresy." From this point the Paulician stream becomes blended with that of the other early confessors of the Truth. To these we now return.

When we cast our eyes over Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, our attention is irresistibly riveted on the south of France. There a great movement is on the eve of breaking out. Cities and provinces are seen rising in revolt against the Church of Rome. Judging from the aspect of things on the surface, one would have inferred that all opposition to Rome had died out. Every succeeding century was deepening the foundations and widening the limits of the Romish Church, and it seemed now as if there awaited her ages of quiet and unchallenged dominion. It is at this moment that her power begins to totter; and though she will rise higher ere terminating her career, her decadence has already begun, and her fall may be postponed, but cannot be averted. But how do we account for the powerful movement that begins to show itself at the foot of the Alps, at a moment when, as it seems, every enemy has been vanquished, and Rome has won the battle? To attack her now, seated as we behold her amid vassal kings, obedient nations, and entrenched behind a triple rampart of darkness, is surely to invite destruction.

The causes of this movement had been long in silent operation. In fact, this was the very quarter of Christendom where opposition to the growing tyranny and superstitions of Rome might be expected first to show itself. Here it was that Polycarp and Irenaeus had labored. Over all those goodly plains which the Rhone waters, and in those numerous cities and villages over which the Alps stretch their shadows, these apostolic men had planted Christianity. Hundreds of thousands of martyrs had here watered it with their blood, and though a thousand years well-nigh had passed since that day, the story of their terrible torments and heroic deaths had not been altogether forgotten. In the Cottian Alps and the province of Languedoc, Vigilantius had raised his powerful protest against the errors of his times. This region was included, as we have seen, in the diocese of Milan, and, as a consequence, it enjoyed the light which shone on the south of the Alps long after Churches not a few on the north of these mountains were plunged in darkness. In the ninth century Claude of Turin had found in the Archbishop of Lyons, Agobardus, a man willing to entertain his views and to share his conflicts. Since that time the night had deepened here as everywhere else. But still, as may be conceived, there were memories of the past, there were seeds in the soil, which new forces might quicken and make to spring up. Such a force did now begin to act. It was, moreover, on this spot, and among these peoples – the best prepared of all the nations of the West – that the Word of God was first published in the vernacular. When the Romance version of the New Testament was issued, the people that sat in darkness saw a great light. This was in fact a second giving of Divine Revelation to the nations of Europe; for the early Saxon renderings of portions of Holy Writ had fallen aside and gone utterly into disuse; and though Jerome's translation, the Vulgate, was still known, it was in Latin, now a dead language, and its use was confined to the priests, who though they possessed it cannot be said to have known it; for the reverence paid it lay in the rich illuminations of its writing, in the

gold and gems of its binding, and the curiously-carved and costly cabinets in which it was locked up, and not in the earnestness with which its pages were studied. Now the nations of Southern Europe could read, each in "the tongue wherein he was born," the wonderful works of God.

This inestimable boon they owed to Peter Valdes or Waldo, a rich merchant in Lyons, who had been awakened to serious thought by the sudden death of a companion, according to some, by the chance lay of a traveling troubadour, according to others. We can imagine the wonder and joy of these people when this light broke upon them through the clouds that environed them. But we must not picture to ourselves a diffusion of the Bible, in those ages, at all so wide and rapid as would take place in our day when copies can be so easily multiplied by the printing press. Each copy was laboriously produced by the pen; its price corresponded to the time and labor expended in its production; it had to be carried long distances, often by slow and uncertain conveyances; and, last of all, it had to encounter the frowns and ultimately the prohibitory edicts of a hostile hierarchy. But there were compensatory advantages. Difficulties but tended to whet the desire of the people to obtain the Book, and when once their eyes lighted on its page, its truths made the deeper an impression on their minds. It stood out in its sublimity from the fables on which they had been fed. The conscience felt that a greater than man was speaking from its page. Each copy served scores and hundreds of readers.

Besides, if the mechanical appliances were lacking to those ages, which the progress of invention has conferred on ours, there existed a living machinery which worked indefatigably. The Bible was sung in the lays of troubadours and minnesingers. It was recited in the sermons of barbes. And these efforts reacted on the Book from which they had sprung, by leading men to the yet more earnest perusal and the yet wider diffusion of it. The Troubadour, the Barbe, and, mightiest of all, the Bible, were the three missionaries that traversed the south of Europe. Disciples were multiplied: congregations were formed: barons, cities, provinces, joined the movement. It seemed as if the Reformation was come. Not yet. Rome had not filled up her cup; nor had the nations of Europe that full and woeful demonstration they have since received, how crushing to liberty, to knowledge, to order, is her yoke, to induce them to join universally in the struggle to break it.

Besides, it happened, as has often been seen at historic crises of the Papacy, that a Pope equal to the occasion filled the Papal throne. Of remarkable vigor, of dauntless spirit, and of sanguinary temper, Innocent III. but too truly guessed the character and divined the issue of the movement. He sounded the tocsin of persecution. Mail-clad abbots, lordly prelates, "who wielded by turns the crosier, the scepter, and the sword;" barons and counts ambitious of enlarging their domains, and mobs eager to wreak their savage fanaticism on their neighbors, whose persons they hated and whose goods they coveted, assembled at the Pontiff's summons. Fire and sword speedily did the work of extermination. Where before had been seen smiling provinces, flourishing cities, and a numerous, virtuous, and orderly population, there was now a blackened and silent desert. That nothing might be lacking to carry on this terrible work, Innocent III. set up the tribunal

of the Inquisition. Behind the soldiers of the Cross marched the monks of St. Dominic, and what escaped the sword of the one perished by the racks of the other. In one of those dismal tragedies not fewer than a hundred thousand persons are said to have been destroyed. Over wide areas not a living thing was left: all were given to the sword. Mounds of ruins and ashes alone marked the spot where cities and villages had formerly stood. But this violence recoiled in the end on the power which had employed it. It did not extinguish the movement: it but made the roots strike deeper, to spring up again and again, and each time with greater vigor and over a wider area, till at last it was seen that Rome by these deeds was only preparing for Protestantism a more glorious triumph, and for herself a more signal overthrow.

But these events are too intimately connected with the early history of Protestantism, and they too truly depict the genius and policy of that power against which Protestantism found it so hard a matter to struggle into existence, to be passed over in silence, or dismissed with a mere general description. We must go a little into detail.

CHAPTER 9 CRUSADES AGAINST THE ALBIGENSES

Rome founded on the Dogma of Persecution – Begins to act upon it – Territory of the Albigenses – Innocent III. – Persecuting Edicts of Councils – Crusade preached by the Monks of Citeaux – First Crusade launched – Paradise – Simon de Montfort – Raymond of Toulouse – His Territories Overrun and Devastated – Crusade against Raymond Roger of Beziers – Burning of his Towns – Massacre of their Inhabitants – Destruction of the Albigenses.

THE torch of persecution was fairly kindled in the beginning of the thirteenth century. Those baleful fires, which had smoldered since the fall of the Empire, were now re-lighted, but it must be noted that this was the act not of the State but of the Church. Rome had founded her dominion upon the dogma of persecution. She sustained herself "Lord of the conscience." Out of this prolific but pestiferous root came a whole century of fulminating edicts, to be followed by centuries of blazing piles. It could not be but that this maxim, placed at the foundation of her system, should inspire and mold the whole policy of the Church of Rome. Divine mistress of the conscience and of the faith, she claimed the exclusive right to prescribe to every human being what he was to believe, and to pursue with temporal and spiritual terrors every form of worship different from her own, till she had chased it out of the world. The first exemplification, on a great scale, of her office which she gave mankind was the crusades. As the professors of an impure creed, she pronounced sentence of extermination on the Saracens of the Holy Land; she sent thither some millions of crusaders to execute her ban; and the lands, cities, and wealth of the slaughtered infidels she bestowed upon her orthodox sons. If it was right to apply this principle to one pagan country, we do not see what should hinder Rome – unless indeed lack of power – from sending her missionaries to every land where infidelity and heresy prevailed, emptying them of their evil creed and their evil inhabitants together, and re-peopling them anew with a pure race from within her own orthodox pale.

But now the fervor of the crusades had begun sensibly to abate. The result

had not responded either to the expectations of the Church that had planned them, or to the masses that had carried them out. The golden crowns of Paradise had been all duly bestowed, doubtless, but of course on those of the crusaders only who had fallen; the survivors had as yet inherited little save wounds, poverty, and disease. The Church, too, began to see that the zeal and blood which were being so freely expended on the shores of Asia might be turned to better account nearer home. The Albigenses and other sects springing up at her door were more dangerous foes of the Papacy than the Saracens of the distant East. For a while the Popes saw with comparative indifference the growth of these religious communities; they dreaded no harm from bodies apparently so insignificant; and even entertained at times the thought of grafting them on their own system as separate orders, or as resuscitating and purifying forces. With the advent of Innocent III., however, came a new policy. He perceived that the principles of these communities were wholly alien in their nature to those of the Papacy, that they never could be made to work in concert with it, and that if left to develop themselves they would most surely effect its overthrow. Accordingly the cloud of exterminating vengeance which rolled in the skies of the world, whithersoever he was pleased to command, was ordered to halt, to return westward, and discharge its chastisement on the South of Europe.

Let us take a glance at the region which this dreadful tempest is about to smite. The France of those days, instead of forming an entire monarchy, was parted into four grand divisions. It is the most southerly of the four, or Narbonne-Gaul, to which our attention is now to be turned. This was an ample and goodly territory, stretching from the Dauphinese Alps on the east to the Pyrenees on the south-west, and comprising the modern provinces of Dauphine, Provence, Languedoc or Gascogne. It was watered throughout by the Rhone, which descended upon it from the north, and it was washed along its southern boundary by the Mediterranean. Occupied by an intelligent population, it had become under their skillful husbandry one vast expanse of corn-land and vineyard, of fruit and forest tree. To the riches of the soil were added the wealth of commerce, in which the inhabitants were tempted to engage by the proximity of the sea and the neighborhood of the Italian republics. Above all, its people were addicted to the pursuits of art and poetry. It was the land of the troubadour. It was further embellished by the numerous castles of a powerful nobility, who spent their time in elegant festivities and gay tournaments.

But better things than poetry and feats of mimic war flourished here. The towns, formed into communes, and placed under municipal institutions, enjoyed no small measure of freedom. The lively and poetic genius of the people had enabled them to form a language of their own – namely, the Provençal. In richness of vocables, softness of cadence, and picturesqueness of idiom, the Provençal excelled all the languages of Europe, and promised to become the universal tongue of Christendom. Best of all, a pure Christianity was developing in the region. It was here, on the banks of the Rhone, that Irenaeus and the other early apostles of Gaul had labored, and the seeds which their hands had deposited in its soil, watered by the blood of martyrs who had fought in the first ranks in the terrible combats of those days, had never wholly perished. Influences of recent birth had helped to quicken these

seeds into a second growth. Foremost among these was the translation of the New Testament into the Provencal, the earliest, as we have shown, of all our modern versions of the Scriptures. The barons protected the people in their evangelical sentiments, some because they shared their opinions, others because they found them to be industrious and skillful cultivators of their lands. A cordial welcome awaited the troubadour at their castle-gates; he departed loaded with gifts; and he enjoyed the baron's protection as he passed on through the cities and villages, concealing, not unfrequently, the colporteur and missionary under the guise of the songster. The hour of a great revolt against Rome appeared to be near. Surrounded by the fostering influences of art, intelligence, and liberty, primitive Christianity was here powerfully developing itself. It seemed verily that the thirteenth and not the sixteenth century would be the date of the Reformation, and that its cradle would be placed not in Germany but in the south of France.

The penetrating and far-seeing eye of Innocent III. saw all this very clearly. Not at the foot of the Alps and the Pyrenees only did he detect a new life: in other countries of Europe, in Italy, in Spain, in Flanders, in Hungary – wherever, in short, dispersion had driven the sectaries, he discovered the same fermentation below the surface, the same incipient revolt against the Papal power. He resolved without loss of time to grapple with and crush the movement. He issued an edict enjoining the extermination of all heretics. Cities would be drowned in blood, kingdoms would be laid waste, art and civilization would perish, and the progress of the world would be rolled back for centuries; but not otherwise could the movement be arrested, and Rome saved.

A long series of persecuting edicts and canons paved the way for these horrible butcheries. The Council of Toulouse, in 1119, presided over by Pope Calixtus II., pronounced a general excommunication upon all who held the sentiments of the Albigenses, cast them out of the Church, delivered them to the sword of the State to be punished, and included in the same condemnation all who should afford them defense or protection. This canon was renewed in the second General Council of Lateran, 1139, under Innocent II. Each succeeding Council strove to excel its predecessor in its sanguinary and pitiless spirit. The Council of Tours, 1163, under Alexander III., stripped the heretics of their goods, forbade, under peril of excommunication, any to relieve them, and left them to perish without succor. The third General Council of Lateran, 1179, under Alexander III., enjoined princes to make war upon them, to take their possessions for a spoil, to reduce their persons to slavery, and to withhold from them Christian burial. The fourth General Council of Lateran bears the stern and comprehensive stamp of the man under whom it was held. The Council commanded princes to take an oath to extirpate heretics from their dominions. Fearing that some, from motives of self-interest, might hesitate to destroy the more industrious of their subjects, the Council sought to quicken their obedience by appealing to their avarice. It made over the heritages of the excommunicated to those who should carry out the sentence pronounced upon them. Still further to stimulate to this pious work, the Council rewarded a service of forty days in it with the same ample indulgences which had aforesaid been bestowed on those who served in the distant and dangerous crusades of Syria. If any prince should still hold

back, he was himself, after a year's grace, to be smitten with excommunication, his vassals were to be loosed from their allegiance, and his lands given to whoever had the will or the power to seize them, after having first purged them of heresy. That this work of extirpation might be thoroughly done, the bishops were empowered to make an annual visitation of their dioceses, to institute a very close search for heretics, and to extract an oath from the leading inhabitants that they would report to the ecclesiastics from time to time those among their neighbors and acquaintances who had strayed from the faith. It is hardly necessary to say that it is Innocent III. who speaks in this Council. It was assembled in his palace of the Lateran in 1215; it was one of the most brilliant Councils that ever were convened, being composed of 800 abbots and priors, 400 bishops, besides patriarchs, deputies, and ambassadors from all nations. It was opened by Innocent in person, with a discourse from the words, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you."

We cannot pursue farther this series of terrific edicts, which runs on till the end of the century and into the next. Each is like that which went before it, save only that it surpasses it in cruelty and terror. The fearful pillagings and massacrings which instantly followed in the south of France, and which were re-enacted in following centuries in all the countries of Christendom, were but too faithful transcripts, both in spirit and letter, of these ecclesiastical enactments. Meanwhile, we must note that it is out of the chair of the Pope – out of the dogma that the Church is mistress of the conscience – that this river of blood is seen to flow.

Three years was this storm in gathering. Its first heralds were the monks of Citeaux, sent abroad by Innocent III. in 1206 to preach the crusade throughout France and the adjoining kingdoms. There followed St. Dominic and his band, who traveled on foot, two and two, with full powers from the Pope to search out heretics, dispute with them, and set a mark on those who were to be burned when opportunity should offer. In this mission of inquisition we see the first beginnings of a tribunal which came afterwards to bear the terrible name of the "Inquisition." These gave themselves to the work with an ardor which had not been equaled since the times of Peter the Hermit. The fiery orators of the Vatican but too easily succeeded in kindling the fanaticism of the masses. War was at all times the delight of the peoples among whom this mission was discharged; but to engage in this war what dazzling temptations were held out! The foes they were to march against were accursed of God and the Church. To shed their blood was to wash away their own sins – it was to atone for all the vices and crimes of a lifetime. And then to think of the dwellings of the Albigenses, replenished with elegances and stored with wealth, and of their fields blooming with the richest cultivation, all to become the lawful spoil of the crossed invader! But this was only a first installment of a great and brilliant recompense in the future. They had the word of the Pope that at the moment of death they should find the angels prepared to carry them aloft, the gates of Paradise open for their entrance, and the crowns and delights of the upper world waiting their choice. The crusader of the previous century had to buy forgiveness with a great sum: he had to cross the sea, to face the Saracen, to linger out years amid unknown toils and perils, and to return – if he should ever return –

with broken health and ruined fortune. But now a campaign of forty days in one's own country, involving no hardship and very little risk, was all that was demanded for one's eternal salvation. Never before had Paradise been so cheap! The preparations for this war of extermination went on throughout the years 1207 and 1208. Like the mutterings of the distant thunder or the hoarse roar of ocean when the tempest is rising, the dreadful sounds filled Europe, and their echoes reached the doomed provinces, where they were heard with terror. In the spring of 1209 these armed fanatics were ready to march, One body had assembled at Lyons. Led by Arnold, Abbot of Citeaux and legate of the Pope, it descended by the valley of the Rhone. A second army gathered in the Agenois under the Archbishop of Bordeaux. A third horde of militant pilgrims marshaled in the north, the subjects of Philip Augustus, and at their head marched the Bishop of Puy. The near neighbors of the Albigenses rose in a body, and swelled this already overgrown host. The chief director of this sacred war was the Papal legate, the Abbot of Citeaux. Its chief military commander was Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester a French nobleman, who had practiced war and learnt cruelty in the crusades of the Holy Land. In putting himself at the head of these crossed and fanatical hordes he was influenced, it is believed, quite as much by a covetous greed of the ample and rich territories of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, as by hatred of the heresy that Raymond was suspected of protecting. The number of crusaders who now put themselves in motion is variously estimated at from 50,000 to 500,000. The former is the reckoning of the Abbot of Vaux Cernay, the Popish chronicler of the war; but his calculation, says Sismondi, does not include "the ignorant and fanatical multitude which followed each preacher armed with scythes and clubs, and promised to themselves that if they were not in a condition to combat the knights of Languedoc, they might, at least, be able to murder the women and children of the heretics."

This overwhelming host precipitated itself upon the estates of Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse. Seeing the storm approach, he was seized with dread, wrote submissive letters to Rome, and offered to accept whatever terms the Papal legate might please to dictate. As the price of his reconciliation, he had to deliver up to the Pope seven of his strongest towns, to appear at the door of the Church, where the dead body of the legate Castelneau, who had been murdered in his dominions, lay, and to be there beaten with rods. Next, a rope was put about his neck, and he was dragged by the legate to the tomb of the friar, in the presence of several bishops and an immense multitude of spectators. After all this, he was obliged to take the cross, and join with those who were seizing and plundering his cities, massacring his subjects, and carrying fire and sword throughout his territories. Stung by these humiliations and calamities, he again changed sides. But his resolution to brave the Papal wrath came too late. He was again smitten with interdict; his possessions were given to Simon de Montfort, and in the end he saw himself left of all.

Among the princes of the region now visited with this devastating scourge, the next in rank and influence to the Count of Toulouse was the young Raymond Roger, Viscount of Beziers. Every day this horde of murderers drew nearer and nearer to his territories. Submission would only invite destruction. He hastened to put his kingdom into a posture of defense. His vassals were

numerous and valiant, their fortified castles covered the face of the country; of his towns, two, Beziers and Carcassonne, were of great size and strength, and he judged that in these circumstances it was not too rash to hope to turn the brunt of the impending tempest. He called round him his armed knights, and told them that his purpose was to fight: many of them were Papists, as he himself was; but he pointed to the character of the hordes that were approaching, who made it their sole business to drown the earth in blood, without much distinction whether it was Catholic or Albigensian blood that they spilled. His knights applauded the resolution of their young and brave liege lord.

The castles were garrisoned and provisioned, the peasantry of the surrounding districts gathered into them, and the cities were provided against a siege. Placing in Beziers a number of valiant knights, and telling the inhabitants that their only hope of safety lay in making a stout defense, Raymond shut himself up in Carcassonne, and waited the approach of the army of crusaders. Onward came the host: before them a smiling country, in their rear a piteous picture of devastation – battered castles, the blackened walls and towers of silent cities, homesteads in ashes, and a desert scathed with fire and stained with blood.

In the middle of July, 1209, the three bodies of crusaders arrived, and sat down under the walls of Beziers. The stoutest heart among its citizens quailed, as they surveyed from the ramparts this host that seemed to cover the face of the earth. "So great was the assemblage," says the old chronicle, "both of tents and pavilions, that it appeared as if all the world was collected there." Astonished but not daunted, the men of Beziers made a rush upon the pilgrims before they should have time to fortify their encampment. It was all in vain. The assault was repelled, and the crusaders, mingling with the citizens as they hurried back to the town in broken crowds, entered the gates along with them, and Beziers was in their hands before they had even formed the plan of attack. The knights inquired of the Papal legate, the Abbot of Citeaux, how they might distinguish the Catholics from the heretics. Arnold at once cut the knot which time did not suffice to loose by the following reply, which has since become famous; "Kill all! kill all! The Lord will know His own."

The bloody work now began. The ordinary population of Beziers was some 15,000; at this moment it could not be less than four times its usual number, for being the capital of the province, and a place of great strength, the inhabitants of the country and the open villages had been collected into it. The multitude, when they saw that the city was taken, fled to the churches, and began to toll the bells by way of supplication. This only the sooner drew upon themselves the swords of the assassins. The wretched citizens were slaughtered in a trice. Their dead bodies covered the floor of the church; they were piled in heaps round the altar; their blood flowed in torrents at the door. "Seven thousand dead bodies," says Sismondi, "were counted in the Magdalen alone. When the crusaders had massacred the last living creature in Beziers, and had pillaged the houses of all that they thought worth carrying off, they set fire to the city in every part at once, and reduced it to a vast funeral pile. Not a house remained standing, not one human being alive.

Historians differ as to the number of victims. The Abbot of Citoaux, feeling some shame for the butchery which he had ordered, in his letter to Innocent III. reduces it to 15,000; others make it amount to 60,000."

The terrible fate which had overtaken Beziers – in one day converted into a mound of ruins dreary and silent as any on the plain of Chaldea – told the other towns and villages the destiny that awaited them. The inhabitants, terror-stricken, fled to the woods and caves. Even the strong castles were left tenantless, their defenders deeming it vain to think of opposing so furious and overwhelming a host. Pillaging, burning, and massacring as they had a mind, the crusaders advanced to Carcassonne, where they arrived on the 1st of August. The city stood on the right bank of the Aude; its fortifications were strong, its garrison numerous and brave, and the young count, Raymond Roger, was at their head. The assailants advanced to the walls, but met a stout resistance. The defenders poured upon them streams of boiling water and oil, and crushed them with great stones and projectiles. The attack was again and again renewed, but was as often repulsed. Meanwhile the forty days' service was drawing to an end, and bands of crusaders, having fulfilled their term and earned heaven, were departing to their homes. The Papal legate, seeing the host melting away, judged it perfectly right to call wiles to the aid of his arms. Holding out to Raymond Roger the hope of an honorable capitulation, and swearing to respect his liberty, Arnold induced the viscount, with 300 of his knights, to present himself at his tent. "The latter," says Sismondi, "profoundly penetrated with the maxim of Innocent III., that 'to keep faith with those that have it not is an offense against the faith,' caused the young viscount to be arrested, with all the knights who had followed him."

When the garrison saw that their leader had been imprisoned, they resolved, along with the inhabitants, to make their escape overnight by a secret passage known only to themselves – a cavern three leagues in length, extending from Carcassonne to the towers of Cabardes. The crusaders were astonished on the morrow, when not a man could be seen upon the walls; and still more mortified was the Papal legate to find that his prey had escaped him, for his purpose was to make a bonfire of the city, with every man, woman, and child within it. But if this greater revenge was now out of his reach, he did not disdain a smaller one still in his power. He collected a body of some 450 persons, partly fugitives from Carcassonne whom he had captured, and partly the 300 knights who had accompanied the viscount, and of these he burned 400 alive and the remaining 50 he hanged.

CHAPTER 10 ERECTION OF TRIBUNAL OF INQUISITION

The Crusades still continued in the Albigensian Territory – Council of Toulouse, 1229 – Organizes the Inquisition – Condemns the Reading of the Bible in the Vernacular – Gregory IX., 1233, further perfects the Organization of the Inquisition, and commits it to the Dominicans – The Crusades continued under the form of the Inquisition – These Butcheries the deliberate Act of Rome – Revived and Sanctioned by her in our own day – Protestantism of Thirteenth Century Crushed – Not alone – Final Ends.

THE main object of the crusades was now accomplished. The principalities of

Raymond VI., Count of Toulouse, and Raymond Roger, Viscount of Beziers, had been "purged" and made over to that faithful son of the Church, Simon de Montfort. The lands of the Count of Foix were likewise overrun, and joined with the neighboring provinces in a common desolation. The Viscount of Narbonne contrived to avoid a visit of the crusaders, but at the price of becoming himself the Grand Inquisitor of his dominions, and purging them with laws even more rigorous than the Church demanded.

The twenty years that followed were devoted to the cruel work of rooting out any seeds of heresy that might possibly yet remain in the soil. Every year a crowd of monks issued from the convents of Citeaux, and, taking possession of the pulpits, preached a new crusade. For the same easy service they offered the same prodigious reward – Paradise – and the consequence was, that every year a new wave of fanatics gathered and rolled toward the devoted provinces. The villages and the woods were searched, and some gleanings, left from the harvests of previous years, were found and made food for the gibbets and stakes that in such dismal array covered the face of the country. The first instigators of these terrible proceedings – Innocent III., Simon de Montfort, the Abbot of Citeaux – soon passed from the scene, but the tragedies they had begun went on. In the lands which the Albigenses – now all but extinct – had once peopled, and which they had so greatly enriched by their industry and adorned by their art, blood never ceased to flow nor the flames to devour their victims. It would be remote from the object of our history to enter here into details, but we must dwell a little on the events of 1229. This year a Council was held at Toulouse, under the Papal legate, the Cardinal of St. Angelo. The foundation of the Inquisition had already been laid. Innocent III. and St. Dominic share between them the merit of this good work. In the year of the fourth Lateran, 1215, St. Dominic received the Pontiff's commission to judge and deliver to punishment apostate and relapsed and obstinate heretics. This was the Inquisition, though lacking as yet its full organization and equipment. That St. Dominic died before it was completed alters not the question touching his connection with its authorship, though of late a vindication of him has been attempted on this ground, only by shifting the guilt to his Church. The fact remains that St. Dominic accompanied the armies of Simon de Montfort, that he delivered the Albigenses to the secular judge to be put to death – in short, worked the Inquisition so far as it had received shape and form in his day. But the Council of Toulouse still further perfected the organization and developed the working of this terrible tribunal. It erected in every city a council of Inquisitors consisting of one priest and three laymen, whose business it was to search for heretics in towns, houses, cellars, and other lurking-places, as also in caves, woods, and fields, and to denounce them to the bishops, lords, or their bailiffs. Once discovered, a summary but dreadful ordeal conducted them to the stake. The houses of heretics were to be razed to their foundations, and the ground on which they stood condemned and confiscated – for heresy, like the leprosy, polluted the very stones, and timber, and soil. Lords were held responsible for the orthodoxy of their estates, and so far also for those of their neighbors. If remiss in their search, the sharp admonition of the Church soon quickened their diligence. A last will and testament was of no validity unless a priest had been by when it was made. A physician suspected was forbidden to practice. All above the age of fourteen were

required on oath to abjure heresy, and to aid in the search for heretics. As a fitting appendage to those tyrannical acts, and a sure and lasting evidence of the real source whence that thing called "heresy," on the extirpation of which they were so intent, was derived, the same Council condemned the reading of the Holy Scriptures. "We prohibit," says the fourteenth canon, "the laics from having the books of the Old and New Testament, unless it be at most that any one wishes to have, from devotion, a psalter, a breviary for the Divine offices, or the hours of the blessed Mary; but we forbid them in the most express manner to have the above books translated into the vulgar tongue." In 1233, Pope Gregory IX. issued a bull, by which he confided the working of the Inquisition to the Dominicans. He appointed his legate, the Bishop of Tournay, to carry out the bull in the way of completing the organization of that tribunal which has since become the terror of Christendom, and which has caused to perish such a prodigious number of human beings. In discharge of his commission, the bishop named two Dominicans in Toulouse, and two in each city of the province, to form the Tribunal of the Faith; and soon, under the warm patronage of Saint Louis (Louis IX.) of France, this court was extended to the whole kingdom. An instruction was at the same time furnished to the Inquisitors, in which the bishop enumerated the errors of the heretics. The document bears undesigned testimony to the Scriptural faith of the men whom the newly-erected court was meant to root out. "In the exposition made by the Bishop of Tournay, of the errors of the Albigenses," says Sismondi, "we find nearly all the principles upon which Luther and Calvin founded the Reformation of the sixteenth century."

Although the crusades, as hitherto waged, were now ended, they continued under the more dreadful form of the Inquisition. We say more dreadful form, for not so terrible was the crusader's sword as the Inquisitor's rack, and to die fighting in the open field or on the ramparts of the beleaguered city, was a fate less horrible than to expire amid prolonged and excruciating tortures in the dungeons of the "Holy Office." The tempests of the crusades, however terrible, had yet their intermissions; they burst, passed away, and left a breathing-space between their explosions. Not so the Inquisition. It worked on and on, day and night, century after century, with a regularity that was appalling. With steady march it extended its area, till at last it embraced almost all the countries of Europe, and kept piling up its dead year by year in ever larger and ghastlier heaps. These awful tragedies were the sole and deliberate acts of the Church of Rome. She planned them in solemn council, she enunciated them in dogma and canon, and in executing them she claimed to act as the vicegerent of Heaven, who had power to save or to destroy nations. Never can that Church be in fairer circumstances than she was then for displaying her true genius, and showing what she holds to be her real rights. She was in the noon of her power; she was free from all coercion whether of force or of fear; she could afford to be magnanimous and tolerant were it possible she ever could be so; yet the sword was the only argument she condescended to employ. She blew the trumpet of vengeance, summoned to arms the half of Europe, and crushed the rising forces of reason and religion under an avalanche of savage fanaticism. In our own day all these horrible deeds have been reviewed, ratified, and sanctioned by the same Church that six centuries ago enacted them: first in the Syllabus of 1864, which expressly vindicates the ground on which these crusades were done – namely,

that the Church of Rome possesses the supremacy of both powers, the spiritual and the temporal; that she has the right to employ both swords in the extirpation of heresy; that in the exercise of this right in the past she never exceeded by a hair's breadth her just prerogatives, and that what she has done aforesaid she may do in time to come, as often as occasion shall require and opportunity may serve. And, secondly, they have been endorsed over again by the decree of Infallibility, which declares that the Popes who planned, ordered, and by their bishops and monks executed all these crimes, were in these, as in all their other official acts, infallibly guided by inspiration. The plea that it was the thirteenth century when these horrible butcheries were committed, every one sees to be wholly inadmissible. An infallible Church has no need to wait for the coming of the lights of philosophy and science. Her sun is always in the zenith. The thirteenth and the nineteenth century are the same to her, for she is just as infallible in the one as in the other.

So fell, smitten down by this terrible blow, to rise no more in the same age and among the same people, the Protestantism of the thirteenth century. It did not perish alone. All the regenerative forces of a social and intellectual kind which Protestantism even at that early stage had evoked were rooted out along with it. Letters had begun to refine, liberty to emancipate, art to beautify, and commerce to enrich the region, but all were swept away by a vengeful power that was regardless of what it destroyed, provided only it reached its end in the extirpation of Protestantism. How changed the region from what it once was! There the song of the troubadour was heard no more. No more was the gallant knight seen riding forth to display his prowess in the gay tournament; no more were the cheerful voices of the reaper and grape-gatherer heard in the fields. The rich harvests of the region were trodden into the dust, its fruitful vines and flourishing olive-trees were torn up; hamlet and city were swept away; ruins, blood, and ashes covered the face of this now "purified" land.

But Rome was not able, with all her violence, to arrest the movement of the human mind. So far as it was religious, she but scattered the sparks to break out on a wider area at a future day; and so far as it was intellectual, she but forced it into another channel. Instead of Albigensianism, Scholasticism now arose in France, which, after flourishing for some centuries in the schools of Paris, passed into the Skeptical Philosophy, and that again, in our day, into Atheistic Communism. It will be curious if in the future the progeny should cross the path of the parent.

It turned out that this enforced halt of three centuries, after all, resulted only in the goal being more quickly reached. While the movement paused, instrumentalities of prodigious power, unknown to that age, were being prepared to give quicker transmission and wider diffusion to the Divine principle when next it should show itself. And, further, a more robust and capable stock than the Romanesque – namely, the Teutonic – was silently growing up, destined to receive the heavenly graft, and to shoot forth on every side larger boughs, to cover Christendom with their shadow and solace it with their fruits.

CHAPTER 11 PROTESTANTS BEFORE PROTESTANTISM

Berengarius— The First Opponent of Transubstantiation — Numerous Councils Condemn him — His Recantation — The Martyrs of Orleans — Their Confession — Their Condemnation and Martyrdom — Peter de Bruys and the Petrobrusians — Henri — Effects of his Eloquence — St. Bernard sent to Oppose him — Henri Apprehended — His Fate unknown — Arnold of Brescia — Birth and Education — His Picture of his Times — His Scheme of Reform — Inveighs against the Wealth of the Hierarchy — His Popularity — Condemned by Innocent II. and Banished from Italy — Returns on the Pope's Death — Labors Ten Years in Rome — Demands the Separation of the Temporal and Spiritual Authority — Adrian IV. — He Suppresses the Movement — Arnold is Burned

IN pursuing to an end the history of the Albigensian crusades, we have been carried somewhat beyond the point of time at which we had arrived. We now return. A succession of lights which shine out at intervals amid the darkness of the ages guides our eye onward. In the middle of the eleventh century appears Berengarius of Tours in France. He is the first public opponent of transubstantiation. A century had now passed since the monk, Paschasius Radbertus, had hatched that astounding dogma. In an age of knowledge such a tenet would have subjected its author to the suspicion of lunacy, but in times of darkness like those in which this opinion first issued from the convent of Corbei, the more mysterious the doctrine the more likely was it to find believers. The words of Scripture, "this is my body," torn from their context and held up before the eyes of ignorant men, seemed to give some countenance to the tenet. Besides, it was the interest of the priesthood to believe it, and to make others believe it too; for the gift of working a prodigy like this invested them with a superhuman power, and gave them immense reverence in the eyes of the people. The battle that Berengarius now opened enables us to judge of the wide extent which the belief in transubstantiation had already acquired. Everywhere in France, in Germany, in Italy, we find a commotion arising on the appearance of its opponent. We see bishops bestirring themselves to oppose his "impious and sacrilegious" heresy, and numerous Councils convoked to condemn it. The Council of Vercelli in 1049, under Leo IX., which was attended by many foreign prelates, condemned it, and in doing so condemned also, as Berengarius maintained, the doctrine of Ambrose, of Augustine, and of Jerome. There followed a succession of Councils: at Paris, 1050; at Tours, 1055; at Rome, 1059; at Rouen, 1063; at Poitiers, 1075; and again at Rome, 1078: at all of which the opinions of Berengarius were discussed and condemned. This shows us how eager Rome was to establish the fiction of Paschasius, and the alarm she felt lest the adherents of Berengarius should multiply, and her dogma be extinguished before it had time to establish itself. Twice did Berengarius appear before the famous Hildebrand: first in the Council of Tours, where Hildebrand filled the post of Papal legate, and secondly at the Council of Rome, where he presided as Gregory VII.

The piety of Berengarius was admitted, his eloquence was great, but his courage was not equal to his genius and convictions. When brought face to face with the stake he shrank from the fire. A second and a third time did he recant his opinions; he even sealed his recantation, according to Dupin, with

his subscription and oath. But no sooner was he back again in France than he began publishing his old opinions anew. Numbers in all the countries of Christendom, who had not accepted the fiction of Paschasius, broke silence, emboldened by the stand made by Berengarius, and declared themselves of the same sentiments. Matthew of Westminster (1087) says, "that Berengarius of Tours, being fallen into heresy, had already almost corrupted all the French, Italians, and English." His great opponent was Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, who attacked him not on the head of transubstantiation only, but as guilty of all the heresies of the Waldenses, and as maintaining with them that the Church remained with them alone, and that Rome was "the congregation of the wicked, and the seat of Satan." Berengarius died in his bed (1088), expressing deep sorrow for the weakness and dissimulation which had tarnished his testimony for the truth. "His followers," says Mosheim, "were numerous, as his fame was illustrious."

We come to a nobler band. At Orleans there flourished, in the beginning of the eleventh century, two canons, Stephen and Lesoie, distinguished by their rank, revered for their learning, and beloved for their numerous almsgivings. Taught of the Spirit and the Word, these men cherished in secret the faith of the first ages. They were betrayed by a feigned disciple named Arefaste. Craving to be instructed in the things of God, he seemed to listen not with the ear only, but with the heart also, as the two canons discoursed to him of the corruption of human nature and the renewal of the Spirit, of the vanity of praying to the saints, and the folly of thinking to find salvation in baptism, or the literal flesh of Christ in the Eucharist. His earnestness seemed to become yet greater when they promised him that if, forsaking these "broken cisterns," he would come to the Savior himself, he should have living water to drink, and celestial bread to eat, and, filled with "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," would never know want again. Arefaste heard these things, and returned with his report to those who had sent him. A Council of the bishops of Orleans was immediately summoned, presided over by King Robert of France. The two canons were brought before it. The pretended disciple now became the accuser. The canons confessed boldly the truth which they had long held; the arguments and threats of the Council were alike powerless to change their belief, or to shake their resolution. "As to the burning threatened," says one, "they made light of it even as if persuaded that they would come out of it unhurt." Wearied, it would seem, with the futile reasonings of their enemies, and desirous of bringing the matter to an issue, they gave their final answer thus – "You may say these things to those whose taste is earthly, and who believe the figments of men written on parchment. But to us who have the law written on the inner man by the Holy Spirit, and savor nothing but what we learn from God, the Creator of all, ye speak things vain and unworthy of the Deity. Put therefore an end to your words! Do with us even as you wish. Even now we see our King reigning in the heavenly places, who with His right hand is conducting us to immortal triumphs and heavenly joys."

They were condemned as Manicheans. Had they been so indeed, Rome would have visited them with contempt, not with persecution. She was too wise to pursue with fire and sword a thing so shadowy as Manicheism, which she knew could do her no manner of harm. The power that confronted her in these two canons and

their disciples came from another sphere, hence the rage with which she assailed it. These two martyrs were not alone in their death. Of the citizens of Orleans there were ten, some say twelve, who shared their faith, and who were willing to share their stake. They were first stripped of their clerical vestments, then buffeted like their Master, then smitten with rods; the queen, who was present, setting the example in these acts of violence by striking one of them, and putting out his eye. Finally, they were led outside the city, where a great fire had been kindled to consume them. They entered the flames with a smile upon their faces. Together this little company of fourteen stood at the stake, and when the fire had set them free, together they mounted into the sky; and if they smiled when they entered the flames, how much more when they passed in at the eternal gates! They were burned in the year 1022. So far as the light of history serves us, theirs were the first stakes planted in France since the era of primitive persecutions. Illustrious pioneers! They go, but they leave their ineffaceable traces on the road, that the hundreds and thousands of their countrymen who are to follow may not faint, when called to pass through the same torments to the same everlasting joys.

We next mention Peter de Bruys, who appeared in the following century (the twelfth), because it enables us to indicate the rise of, and explain the name borne by, the Petrobrussians. Their founder, who labored in the provinces of Dauphine, Provence, and Languedoc, taught no novelties of doctrine; he trod, touching the faith, in the steps of apostolic men, even as Felix Neff, five centuries later, followed in his. After twenty years of missionary labors, Peter de Bruys was seized and burned to death (1126) in the town of St. Giles, near Toulouse. The leading tenets professed by his followers, the Petrobrussians, as we learn from the accusations of their enemies, were – that baptism avails not without faith; that Christ is only spiritually present in the Sacrament; that prayers and alms profit not dead men; that purgatory is a mere invention; and that the Church is not made up of cemented stones, but of believing men. This identifies them, in their religious creed, with the Waldenses; and if further evidence were wanted of this, we have it in the treatise which Peter de Clugny published against them, in which he accuses them of having fallen into those errors which have shown such an inveterate tendency to spring up amid the perpetual snows and icy torrents of the Alps.

When Peter de Bruys had finished his course he was succeeded by a preacher of the name of Henri, an Italian by birth, who also gave his name to his followers – the Henricians. Henri, who enjoyed a high repute for sanctity, wielded a most commanding eloquence. The enchantment of his voice was enough, said his enemies, a little envious, to melt the very stones. It performed what may perhaps be accounted a still greater feat; it brought, according to an eye-witness, the very priests to his feet, dissolved in tears. Beginning at Lausanne, Henri traversed the south of France, the entire population gathering round him wherever he came, and listening to his sermons. "His orations were powerful but noxious," said his foes, "as if a whole legion of demons had been speaking through his mouth." St. Bernard was sent to check the spiritual pestilence that was desolating the region, and he arrived not a moment too soon, if we may judge from his picture of the state of things

which he found there. The orator was carrying all before him; nor need we wonder if, as his enemies alleged, a legion of preachers spoke in this one. The churches were emptied, the priests were without flocks, and the time-honored and edifying customs of pilgrimages, of fasts, of invocations of the saints, and oblations for the dead were all neglected. "How many disorders," says St. Bernard, writing to the Count of Toulouse, "do we every day hear that Henri commits in the Church of God! That ravenous wolf is within your dominions, clothed with a sheep's skin, but we know him by his works. The churches are like synagogues, the sanctuary despoiled of its holiness, the Sacraments looked upon as profane institutions, the feast days have lost their solemnity, men grow up in sin, and every day souls are borne away before the terrible tribunal of Christ without first being reconciled to and fortified by the Holy Communion. In refusing Christians baptism they are denied the life of Jesus Christ."

Such was the condition in which, as he himself records in his letters, St. Bernard found the populations in the south of France. He set to work, stemmed the tide of apostasy, and brought back the wanderers from the Roman fold; but whether this result was solely owing to the eloquence of his sermons may be fairly questioned, for we find the civil arm operating along with him. Henri was seized, carried before Pope Eugenius III., who presided at a Council then assembled at Rheims, condemned and imprisoned. From that time we hear no more of him, and his fate can only be guessed at.

It pleased God to raise up, in the middle of the twelfth century, a yet more famous champion to do battle for the truth. This was Arnold of Brescia, whose stormy but brilliant career we must briefly sketch. His scheme of reform was bolder and more comprehensive than that of any who had preceded him. His pioneers had called for a purification of the faith of the Church, Arnold demanded a rectification of her constitution. He was a simple reader in the Church of his native town, and possessed no advantages of birth; but, fired with the love of learning, he traveled into France that he might sit at the feet of Abelard, whose fame was then filling Christendom. Admitted a pupil of the great scholastic, he drank in the wisdom he imparted without imbibing along with it his mysticism. The scholar in some respects was greater than the master, and was destined to leave traces more lasting behind him. In subtlety of genius and scholastic lore he made no pretensions to rival Abelard; but in a burning eloquence, in practical piety, in resoluteness, and in entire devotion to the great cause of the emancipation of his fellow-men from a tyranny that was oppressing both their minds and bodies, he far excelled him.

From the school of Abelard, Arnold returned to Italy – not, as one might have feared, a mystic, to spend his life in scholastic hair-splittings and wordy conflicts, but to wage an arduous and hazardous war for great and much-needed reforms. One cannot but wish that the times had been more propitious. A frightful confusion he saw had mingled in one anomalous system the spiritual and the temporal. The clergy, from their head downwards, were engrossed in secularities. They filled the offices of State, they presided in the cabinets of princes, they led armies, they imposed taxes, they owned lordly domains, they were attended by sumptuous retinues, and they sat at luxurious tables.

Here, said Arnold, is the source of a thousand evils – the Church is drowned in riches; from this immense wealth flow the corruption, the profligacy, the ignorance, the wickedness, the intrigues, the wars and bloodshed which have overwhelmed Church and State, and are ruining the world.

A century earlier, Cardinal Damiani had congratulated the clergy of primitive times on the simple lives which they led, contrasting their happier lot with that of the prelates of those latter ages, who had to endure dignities which would have been but little to the taste of their first predecessors. "What would the bishops of old have done," he asked, concurring by anticipation in the censure of the eloquent Breseian, "had they to endure the torments that now attend the episcopate? To ride forth constantly attended by troops of soldiers, with swords and lances; to be girt about by armed men like a heathen general! Not amid the gentle music of hymns, but the din and clash of arms! Every day royal banquets, every day parade! The table loaded with delicacies, not for the poor, but for voluptuous guests! while the poor, to whom the property of light belongs, are shut out, and pine away with famine."

Arnold based his scheme of reform on a great principle. The Church of Christ, said he, is not of this world. This shows us that he had sat at the feet of a greater than Abelard, and had drawn his knowledge from diviner fountains than those of the scholastic philosophy. The Church of Christ is not of this world; therefore, said Arnold, its ministers ought not to fill temporal offices, and discharge temporal employments. Let these be left to the men whose duty it is to see to them, even kings and statesmen. Nor do the ministers of Christ need, in order to the discharge of their spiritual functions, the enormous revenues which are continually flowing into their coffers. Let all this wealth, those lands, palaces, and hoards, be surrendered to the rulers of the State, and let the ministers of religion henceforward be maintained by the frugal yet competent provision of the tithes, and the voluntary offerings of their flocks. Set free from occupations which consume their time, degrade their office, and corrupt their heart, the clergy will lead their flocks to the pastures of the Gospel, and knowledge and piety will again revisit the earth.

Attired in his monk's cloak, his countenance stamped with courage, but already wearing traces of care, Arnold took his stand in the streets of his native Brescia, and began to thunder forth his scheme of reform. His townsmen gathered round him. For spiritual Christianity the men of that age had little value, still Arnold had touched a chord in their hearts, to which they were able to respond. The pomp, profligacy, and power of Churchmen had scandalized all classes, and made a reformation so far welcome, even to those who were not prepared to sympathize in the more exclusively spiritual views of the Waldenses and Albigenses. The suddenness and boldness of the assault seem to have stunned the ecclesiastical authorities; and it was not till the Bishop of Brescia found his entire flock, deserting the cathedral, and assembling daily in the marketplace, crowding round the eloquent preacher and listening with applause to his fierce philippics, that he bestirred himself to silence the courageous monk.

Arnold kept his course, however, and continued to launch his bolts, not against his diocesan, for to strike at one miter was not worth his while, but

against that lordly hierarchy which, finding its center on the Seven Hills, had stretched its circumference to the extremities of Christendom. He demanded nothing less than that this hierarchy, which had crowned itself with temporal dignities, and which sustained itself by temporal arms, should retrace its steps, and become the lowly and purely spiritual institute it had been in the first century. It was not very likely to do so at the bidding of one man, however eloquent, but Arnold hoped to rouse the populations of Italy, and to bring such a pressure to bear upon the Vatican as would compel the chiefs of the Church to institute this most necessary and most just reform. Nor was he without the countenance of some persons of consequence. Maifredus, the Consul of Brescia, at the first supported his movement.

The bishop, deeming it hopeless to contend against Arnold on the spot, in the midst of his numerous followers, complained of him to the Pope. Innocent II. convoked a General Council in the Vatican, and summoned Arnold to Rome. The summons was obeyed. The crime of the monk was of all others the most heinous in the eyes of the hierarchy. He had attacked the authority, riches, and pleasures of the priesthood; but other pretexts must be found on which to condemn him. "Besides this, it was said of him that he was unsound in his judgment about the Sacrament of the altar and infant baptism." "We find that St. Bernard sending to Pope Innocent II. a catalogue of the errors of Abelardus," whose scholar Arnold had been, "accuseth him of teaching, concerning the Eucharist, that the accidents existed in the air, but not without a subject; and that when a rat doth eat the Sacrament, God withdraweth whither He pleaseth, and preserves where He pleases the body of Jesus Christ." The sum of this is that Arnold rejected transubstantiation, and did not believe in baptismal regeneration; and on these grounds the Council found it convenient to rest their sentence, condemning him to perpetual silence.

Arnold now retired from Italy, and, passing the Alps, "he settled himself," Otho tells us, "in a place of Germany called Turego, or Zurich, belonging to the diocese of Constance, where he continued to disseminate his doctrine," the seeds of which, it may be presumed, continued to vegetate until the times of Zwingle.

Hearing that Innocent II. was dead, Arnold returned to Rome in the beginning of the Pontificate of Eugenius III. (1144-45). One feels surprise, bordering on astonishment, to see a man with the condemnation of a Pope and Council resting on his head, deliberately marching in at the gates of Rome, and throwing down the gage of battle to the Vatican – "the desperate measure," as Gibbon calls it, "of erecting his standard in Rome itself, in the face of the successor of St. Peter." But the action was not so desperate as it looks. The Italy of those days was perhaps the least Papal of all the countries of Europe. "The Italians," says M'Crie, "could not, indeed, be said to feel at this period" (the fifteenth century, but the remark is equally applicable to the twelfth) "a superstitious devotion to the See of Rome. This did not originally form a discriminating feature of their national character; it was superinduced, and the formation of it can be distinctly traced to causes which produced their full effect subsequently to the era of the Reformation. The republics of Italy in the Middle Ages gave many proofs of religious

independence, and singly braved the menaces and excommunications of the Vatican at a time when all Europe trembled at the sound of its thunder." In truth, nowhere were sedition and tumult more common than at the gates of the Vatican; in no city did rebellion so often break out as in Rome, and no rulers were so frequently chased ignominiously from their capital as the Popes.

Arnold, in fact, found Rome on entering it in revolt. He strove to direct the agitation into a wholesome channel. He essayed, if it were possible, to revive from its ashes the flame of ancient liberty, and to restore, by cleansing it from its many corruptions, the bright form of primitive Christianity. With an eloquence worthy of the times he spoke of, he dwelt on the achievements of the heroes and patriots of classic ages, the sufferings of the first Christian martyrs, and the humble and holy lives of the first Christian bishops. Might it not be possible to bring back those glorious times? He called on the Romans to arise and unite with him in an attempt to do so. Let us drive out the buyers and sellers who have entered the Temple, let us separate between the spiritual and the temporal jurisdiction, let us give to the Pope the things of the Pope, the government of the Church even, and let us give to the emperor the things of the emperor – namely, the government of the State; let us relieve the clergy from the wealth that burdens them, and the dignities that disfigure them, and with the simplicity and virtue of former times will return the lofty characters and the heroic deeds that gave to those times their renown. Rome will become once more the capital of the world. "He propounded to the multitude," says Bishop Otho, "the examples of the ancient Romans, who by the maturity of their senators' counsels, and the valor and integrity of their youth, made the whole world their own. Wherefore he persuaded them to rebuild the Capitol, to restore the dignity of the senate, to reform the order of knights. He maintained that nothing of the government of the city did belong to the Pope, who ought to content himself only with his ecclesiastical." Thus did the monk of Brescia raise the cry for separation of the spiritual from the temporal at the very foot of the Vatican.

For about ten years (1145-55) Arnold continued to prosecute his mission in Rome. The city all that time may be said to have been in a state of insurrection. The Pontifical chair was repeatedly emptied. The Popes of that era were short-lived; their reigns were full of tumult, and their lives of care. Seldom did they reside at Rome; more frequently they lived at Viterbo, or retired to a foreign country; and when they did venture within the walls of their capital, they entrusted the safety of their persons rather to the gates and bars of their stronghold of St. Angelo than to the loyalty of their subjects. The influence of Arnold meanwhile was great, his party numerous, and had there been virtue enough among the Romans they might during these ten favorable years, when Rome was, so to speak, in their hands, have founded a movement which would have had important results for the cause of liberty and the Gospel. But Arnold strove in vain to recall a spirit that was fled for centuries. Rome was a sepulcher. Her citizens could be stirred into tumult, not awakened into life.

The opportunity passed. And then came Adrian IV., Nicholas Breakspear, the

only Englishman who ever ascended the throne of the Vatican. Adrian addressed himself with rigor to quell the tempests which for ten years had warred around the Papal chair. He smote the Romans with interdict. They were vanquished by the ghostly terror. They banished Arnold, and the portals of the churches, to them the gates of heaven, were re-opened to the penitent citizens. But the exile of Arnold did not suffice to appease the anger of Adrian. The Pontiff bargained with Frederic Barbarossa, who was then soliciting from the Pope coronation as emperor, that the monk should be given up. Arnold was seized, sent to Rome under a strong escort, and burned alive. We are able to infer that his followers in Rome were numerous to the last, from the reason given for the order to throw his ashes into the Tiber, "to prevent the foolish rabble from expressing any veneration for his body."

Arnold had been burned to ashes, but the movement he had inaugurated was not extinguished by his martyrdom. The men of his times had condemned his cause; it was destined, nevertheless, seven centuries afterwards, to receive the favorable and all but unanimous verdict of Europe. Every succeeding Reformer and patriot took up his cry for a separation between the spiritual and temporal, seeing in the union of the two in the Roman principedom one cause of the corruption and tyranny which afflicted both Church and State. Wicliffe made this demand in the fourteenth century; Savonarola in the fifteenth; and the Reformers in the sixteenth. Political men in the following centuries reiterated and proclaimed, with ever-growing emphasis, the doctrine of Arnold. At last, on the 20th of September, 1870, it obtained its crowning victory. On that day the Italians entered Rome, the temporal sovereignty of the Pope came to an end, the scepter was disjoined from the miter, and the movement celebrated its triumph on the same spot where its first champion had been burned.

CHAPTER 12 ABELARD, AND RISE OF MODERN SKEPTICISM

Number and Variety of Sects – One Faith – Who gave us the Bible? – Abelard of Paris – His Fame – Father of Modern Skepticism – The Parting of the Ways – Since Abelard three currents in Christendom – The Evangelical, the Ultramontane, the Skeptical.

ONE is apt, from a cursory survey of the Christendom of those days, to conceive it as speckled with an almost endless variety of opinions and doctrines, and dotted all over with numerous and diverse religious sects. We read of the Waldenses on the south of the Alps, and the Albigenses on the north of these mountains. We are told of the Petrobrussians appearing in this year, and the Henricians rising in that. We see a company of Manicheans burned in one city, and a body of Paulicians martyred in another. We find the Peterini planting themselves in this province, and the Cathari spreading themselves over that other. We figure to ourselves as many conflicting creeds as there are rival standards; and we are on the point, perhaps, of bewailing this supposed diversity of opinion as a consequence of breaking loose from the "center of unity" in Rome. Some even of our religious historians seem haunted by the idea that each one of these many bodies is representative of a different dogma, and that dogma an error. The impression is a natural one, we own, but it is entirely erroneous. In this diversity there was a grand unity.

It was substantially the same creed that was professed by all these bodies. They were all agreed in drawing their theology from the same Divine fountain. The Bible was their one infallible rule and authority. Its cardinal doctrines they embodied in their creed and exemplified in their lives.

Individuals doubtless there were among them of erroneous belief and of immoral character. It is of the general body that we speak. That body, though dispersed over many kingdoms, and known by various names, found a common center in the "one Lord," and a common bond in the "one faith" Through one Mediator did they all offer their worship, and on one foundation did they all rest for forgiveness and the life eternal. They were in short the Church – the one Church doing over again what she did in the first ages. Overwhelmed by a second irruption of Paganism, reinforced by a flood of Gothic superstitions, she was essaying to lay her foundations anew in the truth, and to build herself up by the enlightening and renewing of souls, and to give to herself outward visibility and form by her ordinances, institutions, and assemblies, that as a universal spiritual empire she might subjugate all nations to the obedience of the evangelical law and the practice of evangelical virtue.

It is idle for Rome to say, "I gave you the Bible, and therefore you must believe in me before you can believe in it." The facts we have already narrated conclusively dispose of this claim. Rome did not give us the Bible – she did all in her power to keep it from us; she retained it under the seal of a dead language; and when others broke that seal, and threw open its pages to all, she stood over the book, and, unsheathing her fiery sword, would permit none to read the message of life, save at the peril of eternal anathema.

We owe the Bible – that is, the transmission of it – to those persecuted communities which we have so rapidly passed in review. They received it from the primitive Church, and carried it down to us. They translated it into the mother tongues of the nations. They colported it over Christendom, singing it in their lays as troubadours, preaching it in their sermons as missionaries, and living it out as Christians. They fought the battle of the Word of God against tradition, which sought to bury it. They sealed their testimony for it at the stake. But for them, so far as human agency is concerned, the Bible would, ere this day, have disappeared from the world. Their care to keep this torch burning is one of the marks which indubitably certify them as forming part of that one true Catholic Church, which God called into existence at first by His word, and which, by the same instrumentality, He has, in the conversion of souls, perpetuated from age to age.

But although under great variety of names there is found substantial identity of doctrine among these numerous bodies, it is clear that a host of new, contradictory, and most heterogeneous opinions began to spring up in the age we speak of. The opponents of the Albigenses and the Waldenses – more especially Alanus, in his little book against heretics; and Reynerius, the opponent of the Waldenses – have massed together all these discordant sentiments, and charged them upon the evangelical communities. Their controversial tractates, in which they enumerate and confute the errors of the sectaries, have this value even, that they present a picture of their

times, and show us the mental fermentation that began to characterize the age. But are we to infer that the Albigenses and their allies held all the opinions which their enemies impute to them? that they at one and the same time believed that God did and did not exist; that the world had been created, and yet that it had existed from eternity; that an atonement had been made for the sin of man by Christ, and yet that the cross was a fable; that the joys of Paradise were reserved for the righteous, and yet that there was neither soul nor spirit, hell nor heaven? No. This were to impute to them an impossible creed. Did these philosophical and skeptical opinions, then, exist only in the imaginations of their accusers? No. What manifestly we are to infer is that outside the Albigensian and evangelical pale there was a large growth of sceptical and atheistical sentiment, more or less developed, and that the superstition and tyranny of the Church of Rome had even then, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, impelled the rising intellect of Christendom into a channel dangerous at once to her own power and to the existence of Christianity. Her champions, partly from lack of discrimination, partly from a desire to paint in odious colors those whom they denominated heretics, mingled in one the doctrines drawn from Scripture and the speculations and impieties of an infidel philosophy, and, compounding them into one creed, laid the monstrous thing at the door of the Albigenses, just as in our own day we have seen Popes and Popish writers include in the same category, and confound in the same condemnation, the professors of Protestantism and the disciples of Pantheism.

From the twelfth century and the times of Peter Abelard, we can discover three currents of thought in Christendom. Peter Abelard was the first and in some respects the greatest of modern skeptics. He was the first person in Christendom to attack publicly the doctrine of the Church of Rome from the side of free-thinking. His Skepticism was not the avowed and fully-formed infidelity of later times: he but sowed the seeds; he but started the mind of Europe – then just beginning to awake – on the path of doubt and of philosophic Skepticism, leaving the movement to gather way in the following ages. But that he did sow the seeds which future laborers took pains to cultivate, cannot be doubted by those who weigh carefully his teachings on the head of the Trinity, of the person of Christ, of the power of the human will, of the doctrine of sin, and other subjects. And these seeds he sowed widely. He was a man of vast erudition, keen wit, and elegant rhetoric, and the novelty of his views and the fame of his genius attracted crowds of students from all countries to his lectures. Dazzled by the eloquence of their teacher, and completely captivated by the originality and subtlety of his daring genius, these scholars carried back to their homes the views of Abelard, and diffused them, from England on the one side to Sicily on the other. Had Rome possessed the infallibility she boasts, she would have foreseen to what this would grow, and provided an effectual remedy before the movement had gone beyond control.

She did indeed divine, to some extent, the true character of the principles which the renowned but unfortunate teacher was so freely scattering on the opening mind of Christendom. She assembled a Council, and condemned them as erroneous. But Abelard went on as before, the laurel round his brow, the thorn at his breast, propounding to yet greater crowds of scholars his

peculiar opinions and doctrines. Rome has always been more lenient to sceptical than to evangelical views. And thus, whilst she burned Arnold, she permitted Abelard to die a monk and canon in her communion.

But here, in the twelfth century, at the chair of Abelard, we stand at the parting of the ways. From this time we find three great parties and three great schools of thought in Europe. First, there is the Protestant, in which we behold the Divine principle struggling to disentangle itself from Pagan and Gothic corruptions. Secondly, there is the Superstitious, which had now come to make all doctrine to consist in a belief of "the Church's" inspiration, and all duty in an obedience to her authority. And thirdly, there is the Intellectual, which was just the reason of man endeavoring to shake off the trammels of Roman authority, and go forth and expatiate in the fields of free inquiry. It did right to assert this freedom, but, unhappily, it altogether ignored the existence of the spiritual faculty in man, by which the things of the spiritual world are to be apprehended, and by which the intellect itself has often to be controlled. Nevertheless, this movement, of which Peter Abelard was the pioneer, went on deepening and widening its current century after century, till at last it grew to be strong enough to change the face of kingdoms, and to threaten the existence not only of the Roman Church, but of Christianity itself.

Papal Abuse of Power



The Apostle Peter plainly decreed that the method of governing the Christian Church must not be patterned after that of Caesar. The popes of Rome totally disregard Peter's admonition.

Evangelical Movements Within The Church Of Rome



I was offline for a week to get a broken bone fixed. Now I'm back to work!

This article is from chapter 31 of "Out of the Labyrinth: The Conversion of a Roman Catholic Priest" by former Roman Catholic priest Leo Herbert Lehmann, first published in 1947 and made available online by The Lutheran Library Publishing Ministry LutheranLibrary.org.

Leo Herbert Lehmann (1895-1950) was an Irish author, editor, and director of a Protestant ministry, Christ's Mission in New York. **He was a priest in the Roman Catholic Church who later in life converted to Protestantism** and served as the editor of The Converted Catholic Magazine. He authored magazine articles, books and pamphlets, condemning the programs and activities of the Roman Catholic Church. (Quoted from Wikipedia)

I'm posting this chapter because it has encouraging information I have never heard from anyone before, testimonials from members of the Catholic church including priests and nuns who had true saving faith in the grace of Jesus Christ but who remained in the Church.

CAN ROMAN CATHOLICS BE SAVED without breaking with their Church? Are there any Evangelical Christian believers within the Roman Catholic Church? These are questions which deserve, and require, extended answers.

It is **not generally known that movements toward acceptance of Evangelical Christian beliefs have always existed within the Roman Catholic Church** – both before and after the Reformation. Protestants have been so engrossed with the history of their own Church since the Reformation that they know little of the struggles toward the revival of Evangelical Christianity within the Church of Rome since the sixteenth century. Because of this, **Protestants today have lost perspective of their own teachings**, and a necessary sense of contrast between the Gospel teaching which they believe, and the opposite erroneous teaching and practice of Roman Catholicism from which the early Protestants broke away. These early Protestants saw that contrast etched in all its clarity because **they knew both sides**.

The shining of a bright light on a dark object shows up its true condition. In the same way, the actual doctrinal state of Roman Catholicism is fully seen only when justification of sinners through faith in the finished sacrifice of Christ is definitely and fully preached against the background of the errors of Roman Catholicism. **For the main dividing line in the struggle of Roman Catholicism against Evangelical Christianity is drawn between their opposing views as to how the grace of salvation comes to the souls of men.** It is upon this ground that the Jesuits have fought their Counter- Reformation – not only against Protestants, but **also against those who have tried to reassert Evangelical teaching within the Roman Church itself** after the example of the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century.

Three-Cornered Conflict

There have been, in fact, not just two but three sides to the religious struggle during the four centuries since the Reformation – between Protestantism and Jesuit Catholicism on the one hand, and Jesuit Catholicism and Evangelical factions within the Roman Church itself, on the other. The Jesuits have been as harsh and uncompromising against those who opposed them from within their own Church, as against the Protestants from the outside. It is sad to have to admit that today, there is little, if any, life left in Evangelical movements within the Church of Rome. The Jesuits have succeeded, almost completely, in crushing out the remnants of criticism in the Catholic Church of their teaching about grace and the means of salvation. Their **Pelagian doctrine of salvation by works of man** himself, with all it implies in their moral theology and devotional practices, is now almost universally accepted or reluctantly acquiesced in by the universal Roman Catholic Church.

(**Note:** Pelagianism is a set of beliefs associated with the British monk Pelagius (circa AD 354–420), who taught in Rome in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Pelagius denied the doctrines of original sin and total depravity. According to his theology, people are not naturally sinful, but can live holy lives in harmony with God’s will and thereby **earn salvation through good works.**)

The very fury of Jesuit opposition to the Gospel teaching of salvation by faith, as reasserted by Luther, Calvin, and other sixteenth century reformers, has led to the denial today in Roman Catholic teaching of almost every truth upon which the Gospel teaching about the grace of salvation rests.

Council Of Trent

But it was not so within the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation, and even within the Council of Trent (held between 1545 and 1563) itself, which was convened shortly thereafter for the special purpose of resisting the Evangelical teachings of the Protestant reformers. Many Roman Catholic churchmen in that council maintained that the only way to stop Luther and his associates from causing a rift in the Christian Church was **open opposition from the Church of Rome itself against the Pelagian error of the Jesuits**, and a firm declaration of salvation full and free by acceptance

of the grace of God through the merits alone of Jesus Christ.

Had these Catholic spokesmen been listened to, the history of Christianity from that day to this would have been different. But the Jesuits triumphed in the Council of Trent on this vital question, as they did in the Vatican Council of 1870 on the question of Papal Infallibility. They have now this latter weapon of undisputed papal power with which to whip everyone – priests, bishops and laity alike – within the Roman Church into blind acceptance of their peculiar teaching about salvation and their devotional practices.

In the Council of Trent the Archbishop of Sienna, two bishops and five others, fought long and hard against the Jesuits by upholding justification simply and solely by the merits of Christ through faith. The English Cardinal Pole, who presided at the Council in the absence of Pope Paul III, also entreated those assembled not to reject this doctrine simply because it was held by Martin Luther. But the Jesuits – through their spokesmen Lainez and Salmeron – were adamant against even a compromise, and in the end secured adoption of the long list of Tridentine canons and anathemas that were finally pronounced against Protestant Evangelical teaching. Cardinal Pole and the Archbishop of Sienna left the Council in despair. So bitterly has the Jesuit Lainez been hated by Catholic anti-Jesuit writers that they have gone so far as to interpret Rev. 9:1, as if he were the fallen star who let loose the scorpion-locusts – the Jesuits – on the world.

Rift Within Catholicism

But the opponents of the Jesuits in the Catholic Church itself did not submit at once after the Council of Trent. The fight went on, continually at first, intermittently ever since. The Jesuits' chief opponents on the teaching about grace have been the *Dominicans*, and to this day a wide rift still exists between these two Orders in the Church of Rome, in spite of apparent unity from the outside. The Dominicans follow their great theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, who adopted a watered-down interpretation of Augustine's teaching on grace as an entirely free gift of God, and put it in his medieval syllogistic form. This is enough in the eyes of the Jesuits to brand them as 'Calvinistic.' Few people today know of this serious rift within the Roman Catholic Church, or stop to think that it is actually wider than any doctrinal difference separating the denominations of Protestantism.

The conflict concerning the nature of grace was openly continued between the Jesuits and Dominicans till the end of the sixteenth century, and on into the seventeenth. In 1596, Pope Clement VIII consented to hear both sides and promised to give a decision. No less than sixty-five meetings and thirty-seven disputations were held on the subject in his presence. Pope Clement himself seems, from his writings, to have favored the Dominican side, but he put off giving a decision. The so-called infallible mouthpiece of God could not decide the most vital question of Christian teaching, on the question that really matters in the whole gamut of Christian doctrine: the truth about how men can be saved!

Pope Clement's hesitation can easily be explained. **The Jesuits by then had**

become, not only powerful, but violent and dangerous. They had made themselves the great political prop of the Roman Church that had been shaken to its foundations in the principal countries of Europe. They went so far as to threaten the Pope himself, since they counted on having King Henry IV of France on their side. Pope Clement was also well aware that the political power of the papacy at that time was on the wane, threatened by Protestant England under Queen Elizabeth on one side, and by Protestant Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia on the other. He was advised by the astute French Cardinal du Perron to leave matters as they were, since even a Protestant could subscribe to the doctrines of the Dominicans.

The dispute was continued under Pope Paul V, who became Pope in 1605. Seventeen meetings were held in his presence, but he too failed to condemn the Jesuits. Venice at that time was at war with the papacy, and the Jesuits fought so well for the Pope that they suffered expulsion by the Catholic rulers and people of the Venetian Republic rather than yield to the Pope's enemies. It thus seemed more important to the Pope to please the Jesuits than to uphold the most vital doctrine of the Christian Church. In the end Pope Paul issued the Bull *Unigenitus*, in which he promised that a decision would be published "at the proper time," and that in the meantime, neither side was to malign the other. And so it remains to this day in the Roman Catholic Church: **no official decision has ever been made as to how the grace of salvation comes to the souls of men!**

Jesuits Vs. Dominicans

This was a triumph for the Jesuits, and they have used it to great advantage ever since against both Protestants and those within the Roman Church who would dare to dispute their Pelagian doctrine of grace.

They have ruthlessly crushed any priest, bishop or even pope who seemed to veer in any way to the doctrine of the Reformation, namely that we can do no good works acceptable to God without the grace of God through Christ 'preventing' us; that the will to good, and the works we perform as a result of this good will, are all a free gift of God.

This was the teaching of Augustine against Pelagius and his followers, which was revived by the Protestant reformers. The Dominicans have always tended to this Augustinian doctrine of grace because St. Thomas Aquinas incorporated some of Augustine's teachings about grace into his *Summa Theologica*. But even **the Dominicans never have dared to carry Augustine's teaching to its logical conclusion, as Calvin did, since it would have led to the complete rejection of papal power.** The Jesuits have made sure to this day that the Dominicans would never be allowed to go so far. But certain sections of the Roman Church are still accused by the Jesuits as "tainted" with Calvinism because of their advocacy even of the watered-down teachings of Augustine as expounded chiefly by the Dominican theologians.

A particular instance of this may be seen in the fact that most Roman Catholic priests, especially of the Dominican order, who renounce the Church of Rome join up with the Presbyterian Church and ministry. Two examples recently noted by *The Converted Catholic Magazine* are Rev. Dr. George

Barrois, formerly a Dominican priest and professor at Catholic University in Washington, D. C., now a Presbyterian minister and Professor at Princeton Seminary, and Rev. J. A. Fernandez, for sixteen years a priest of the Dominican Order, now a Presbyterian pastor in Philadelphia.

The most notable example of the opposition to Jesuit Pelagianism is that of the Jansenists, who publicly professed their belief in the Evangelical teaching of salvation and justification by faith alone in the merits of Jesus Christ, but who still steadfastly continued within the Church of Rome. The suffering they endured from the Jesuits, the wonderful example and encouragement they supplied to those within the Roman Church who secretly resented the domination of the Jesuits, should give hope that it may not yet be too late for a second Reformation within the Church of Rome in our day.

Jansenius

The Jansenists got their name from Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, who was born in 1585 and died of the plague in 1638, after being bishop for only two years. It was only after his death that his opposition to the Pelagian teaching of the Jesuits became known. But for many years he had made it his business to study the writings of Augustine on the vital subjects of grace, free will and human impotence, original sin, election, faith, etc. Whereas Calvin used Augustine's teaching on these subjects to oppose the whole nature and structure of Roman Catholicism, Jansenius used it only for one immediate object – to check the rising power of the Jesuits and their false teachings within the Church of Rome. His object was not to undermine the Roman Catholic Church as a whole, but to save it from complete corruption in matters of faith and morals.

He put his findings in a book, entitled, *Augustinus*, which was published in Louvain two years after his death and was made the chief weapon by his followers to save the Catholic Church from the evil influence of the Jesuits. For there were many within the Church of Rome at that time who sighed for some real spirituality and who, like Bishop Jansenius, **found in the doctrine of salvation by grace, even though only partially and imperfectly apprehended, a great solace and an assurance** which the ritualistic observances of the Church of Rome could not supply.

Jesuit Opposition To Grace

That was before the blight of Jesuitism had descended completely on the Roman Catholic Church as we find it today. But the Jesuits were then, a hundred years after their Order was founded, rapidly consolidating their power by their lax system of casuistry and other teachings which deadened the conscience. They had by then introduced themselves everywhere as confessors, and had gained great influence by softening all ideas of guilt. Their main purpose was to introduce into Catholic teaching the exclusion of real repentance before God as a prerequisite for forgiveness of sin. In this way salvation would become entirely dependent upon the priest, to the ultimate advantage of the Jesuits themselves – who have always aimed to make themselves the ruling caste of priests in the church of Rome. They have achieved this objective today, and hold the whip hand not only in religious

matters, but also as the high political rulers of the Vatican.

What the Jesuits most abhorred, and continue today to abhor, is the true Christian teaching of justification of sinners through faith in the one finished sacrifice of Christ, and repentance for sin directly toward God. They were quick to see the danger to their aims in Jansenius' book, *Augustinus*, which upheld this true Christian teaching. They therefore had the book banned, and began by venting their enmity on Jean Baptiste du Vergier de Hauranne – better known as St. Cyran, after the monastery of that name of which he was abbot. St. Cyran had secretly studied the doctrine of grace together with Jansenius at Louvain. He was also connected with the celebrated Abbey of Port Royal in France, a community of nuns which had grown very lax in discipline and morals. Yet, it was through this French convent that what is known as "Jansenism" began, and which for almost seventy-five years carried on its remarkable fight to rid the Catholic Church of the perverse teachings and control of the Jesuits. The cruel methods used by the Jesuits to crush out the Jansenists were equalled only by the atrocities of the Nazi Gestapo in our time. **The inmates of Port Royal and their friends were hounded, brutally persecuted, excommunicated, and jailed, because they professed, above all else, the Evangelical doctrines of justification by grace.**

Port Royal

There are two things about the nuns of Port Royal and their friends that Protestants and Catholics alike today may well be amazed at. One was that they persisted in remaining within the Church of Rome while professing absolute faith in the saving grace of Jesus Christ alone. They strenuously objected to being called Protestants.

The second extraordinary fact is that the abbey of Port Royal, which was to become the great champion of this Evangelical teaching, was so lax in discipline in 1602, that Mother Angelique – under whose later guidance Jansenism thrived there – was appointed abbess when she was but a girl of eleven years old. The church authorities in France and her family connived at this, and had her certified as abbess by the Pope, by pretending she was seventeen!¹

How thoroughly Evangelical the inmates of Port Royal later became – while still remaining within the body of the Roman Catholic Church – may be judged from the story of the last prioress, Mother Dumesnil Courtinaux, as she lay on her dying bed. Port Royal had been finally suppressed and uprooted by the Pope eight years previously, but this last Mother prioress still retained her faith in salvation by grace alone. But she desired to die in good standing in the Catholic Church and begged for the last sacraments. The Bishop of Blois came but refused to administer the sacraments to her, unless she first renounced her faith in the saving grace of Christ. But she remained steadfast in her Evangelical faith.

"What will you do when you have to appear before God, bearing the weight of your sins alone?" the bishop asked her.

The dying prioress replied: "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, my Saviour has reconciled all things unto Himself in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy and unblameable and unreprovable in His sight, if we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and not be moved away from the hope of the Gospel."

She then added, with clasped hands, "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, nor wilt Thou suffer the creature that trusts in Thee to be confounded." The bishop reviled her, but she meekly urged, with tears, that she be permitted to receive the sacraments. He firmly rejected her plea as coming from a "confirmed heretic."

"Well, my Lord," she replied, wiping her eyes, "I am content to bear with resignation whatever deprivation my God sees fit. I am convinced that His divine grace can supply even the want of sacraments."

She fell asleep in the Lord that same night, March 18, 1716, in her seventieth year. Such was the Evangelical spirit of the followers of Jansenius at Port Royal.²

Sufferings And Persecutions

The abbess Mere Angelique brought about an Evangelical reformation not only at Port Royal, at the head of which she had been so strangely placed at the age of eleven, but also in many others, such as the rich abbey of Maubuisson, which also had become very corrupt. A group of men famous for their scholarship and piety also became her disciples. Among them may be mentioned Pascal, Le Maitre, Quesnel, Lancelot, Le Maitre de Sacy, Nicole and Singlin.

No fewer than four popes – Urban VII, Innocent X, Alexander VII, and Clement XI – fulminated bulls of excommunication, at the instigation of the Jesuits, against these defenders of Evangelical teachings. They had also against them King Louis XIV of France and his infamous mistress, Madame de Maintenon, Cardinal Richelieu and Cardinal Mazarin. Four French bishops favored and tried to help them. The Dominicans, the Franciscans, and the Benedictines, who to this day still timidly oppose the Jesuits on the teaching of grace, defended the Jansenists of Port Royal as much as they dared. But all the power of the Church of Rome and the King of France was in the hands of the Jesuits, and they used it mercilessly to wipe out every trace of the Jansenists and their Gospel teaching of salvation which they detested and condemned as an "abominable heresy."

Finally, on July 11, 1709, Cardinal de Noailles, archbishop of Paris, was forced by the Pope and the Jesuits to order the complete suppression of the abbey of Port Royal. On the following October 29, the valley was filled with the king's troops, the abbey taken over and the nuns arrested and placed in confinement. The following year the cloister was pulled down; in 1711 the bodies of those buried there were dug up with gross brutality and indecency; two years later the church itself was destroyed. Cardinal de Noailles had ordered it all done according to the bull, *Vineam Domini*, of Pope Clement XI, in which he attacked the doctrines of grace. The cardinal later repented of his deed, and made a visit to the ruins of Port Royal, where on bended knees,

he made public testimony of repentance for his weakness. After the death of King Louis XIV and his mistress, Cardinal de Noailles interceded for the imprisoned nuns of Port Royal and had them released.

Jansenism continued in Holland and other countries of Europe after the destruction of Port Royal. Ranke, the historian, says of the Jansenists: "We find traces of them in Vienna and in Brussels, in Spain and Portugal, and in every part of Italy. They disseminated their doctrines throughout all Roman Catholic Christendom, sometimes openly, often in secret."³

But it was in the Protestant country of Holland that they found best shelter and most freedom. It was there that they were able to organize into a regular Church body under their own bishops. Almost all the Roman Catholics in Holland, to the number of 330,000, at the end of the seventeenth century were Jansenists. The Jesuits had little power there, and they themselves had gone so far in their intrigues and immoral teachings that Pope Clement XIV – who had Jansenist sentiments – yielded to the demands of the Catholic countries of Europe and completely abolished the Jesuits in 1773.

Catholics Today (1947)

Today also there are many sensitive souls within the Roman Catholic Church who sigh for true spirituality and an assurance of salvation that their priests cannot offer. They fear, however, to break with their Church, and continue to accept the sacraments in order to remain in good standing. Strictly speaking, there is nothing in Roman Catholic teaching to prevent Roman Catholics from professing secretly (*in foro internet*) their faith in the absolute saving power of the Gospel. What is forbidden, under pain of excommunication, is the public profession (*in foro extemo*) of such belief.

Thus a Roman Catholic who comes to the true knowledge of Christ, is faced with making the decision of either risking excommunication and the opprobrium of his family and friends by openly professing and demonstrating his faith in Christ as all-sufficient Saviour, or avoiding the penalties by keeping it secret in his heart while conforming outwardly to the rules and ritual as commanded by his Church. But today in America, where freedom of religion is guaranteed to all, no one can be excused if he fails to profess openly his faith in Jesus Christ, who warns (Matt. 10:33): "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny before my Father which is in heaven."

1. See, *The Jansenists, Their Rise, Persecutions by the Jesuits, and Remnants*, by S. P. Tregelles, London, 1851.↵

2.cf. *The Jansenists*, ut supra, pp. 40-41.↵

3.Op. cit. p. 45.↵

Jesuits & The U.S. Government



This talk by Christian J. Pinto was given on August 3rd, 2016 when Hillary Clinton was running against Donald Trump for president. I edited out some things that I consider to be dated. You can listen to the entire podcast below the text.

Okay, praise the Lord you guys and welcome. I'm Chris Pinto. This is [Noise of Thunder Radio](#). Today on the show we are going to talk about Jesuits and the United States government, Jesuits in the US government.

This is a topic that we have talked about on and off the program. We carry a book with our ministry [Washington in the lap of Rome](#) 1888 by Justin B. Fulton. It is a 19th-century book. We did a republication of it a couple of years back and I wrote a 70-page forward to it. Why? Because you had Justin Dewey Fulton who was a 19th-century writer and minister, and he was very concerned about the role and the activities of the Jesuit order in the United States. In this book, he spends a lot of time quoting Charles Chiniquy who was a former Catholic priest, a friend of Abraham Lincoln who converted to Protestantism. Chiniquy wrote his book [Fifty Years in the Church of Rome](#) where he asserts a great many things, but among them, his belief was that the Jesuits were behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

There are actually a number of books out there that have reaffirmed that claim with their own investigations. We carried for a little while the book [Who Killed Abraham Lincoln?](#), which was written by Paul Serup, a Canadian author who spent more than 20 years investigating this whole issue. (**Note:** Mr. Serup sent me an autographed copy of his book! He saw the [Charles Chiniquy articles](#) on this website.) The book was actually picked up by one of the bookstores in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Now, Chiniquy warned that the Jesuit's ambition in the United States was to take over this country systematically, one step at a time. There's a whole variety of warnings because this is what the Jesuits do. They go in, they infiltrate, and they take control of countries and take them over.

The Jesuits are the authors of *social justice*. That term can be traced back to a Jesuit priest named Luigi Toparelli in 1843. Toparelli first coined the phrase social justice. How they infiltrate through the education system. They developed through the 19th century. They actually developed it over centuries. They developed the principles of socialism and communism. And I believe what they've done is they've come up with basically a three-step

program, social justice, then you go into socialism and then you go into full-blown communism. It's a three-step process.

Social justice is the introduction of it. In Western countries, it seems compatible with Christianity because they're building on the idea of the compassion of Christianity that Jesus ministered to the poor and this kind of thing. But then they take those arguments, turn them into humanitarian arguments and use them as a cloak of philanthropy as a cloak so that they can infiltrate positions of power and seize control typically of a nation's economy. And they use philanthropy and the idea that, "Well, we have to be humanitarian, et cetera." It's all the rhetoric that we're hearing from the Democratic Party, by and large. But social justice, then they move to socialism where they begin to phase out the elements of Christianity. And by the time they get to full-blown communism, they've cast off the Bible and Christianity entirely. And now they are pursuing militant atheism.

This is a system, but it wasn't set up by Karl Marx. I mean, Karl Marx obviously played a part, but he was educated by Jesuit priests. I believe they would have taught him these principles, but the principles themselves were developed by the Jesuits over a very long period of time.

And so now today, once you realize this, and you begin to realize their influence in our education system because you've got a whole variety of Jesuit colleges and universities. There is a website called the [Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities](#), the AJCU. And they have a webpage that says [Jesuit Alumni in Congress](#).

The website says,

A commitment to service as a hallmark of Jesuit education. Evidence of that commitment is demonstrated by the many Jesuit college and university alumni serving as members of the US Congress. 9% of members of the 114th Congress have obtained degrees from Jesuit institutions of higher education. See below for lists of the current alumni in Congress.

Then they have a list of those in the Senate.

(**Note:** I am getting the current data as of October 2023 directly from the Jesuit Alumni in Congress web article.)

And there are 14 members of the US Senate.

And there are 39 members of the House of Representatives.

So 14 members of the US Senate are Jesuit alumni, and 39 members of the House of Representatives. A total of 53 members of Congress are Jesuit alumni, educated by the Jesuit order in their various colleges and universities.

Some universities are more well-known than others. At Boston College, you've got Creighton University, Fordham University, Georgetown University, John

Carroll University, Loyola, Marymount University. You've got a lot of institutions named after Loyola. That is a reference to Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, typically. There might be exceptions somewhere, but typically it is a reference to the very founder of the Society of Jesus, the so-called Society of Jesus.

So they've got Loyola, Marymount University, Loyola University, Chicago, Loyola University, Maryland, Loyola University, New Orleans, Marquette University, Regis University, Santa Clara University, Xavier University, Boston College School of Theology, and then the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, etc. And then, and there are others.

That's really the backbone of how they infiltrate a society. This was really the genius of Ignatius Loyola and his company of priests, who went after the education system and captured the colleges and the universities. We talk about this in our film, *A Lamp in the Dark*, the untold history of the Bible, that this was the methodology that the Jesuits adopted throughout the Middle Ages. Why? Because you get control of the minds of young people.

The Bible says, train up a child in the way that he should go when he is old, he will not depart from it. Well, the Jesuits understand that, so they want to raise up children, they want to influence their thinking so that while you're going to have some children who are actually going to cooperate with the Jesuit order directly as a result, you're going to have other children who, even if they don't cooperate with the Jesuit order, are still going to have that influence in terms of their worldview. This is how they influence a whole society. And it's most certainly how they have had a dramatic influence on the United States.

I believe the Jesuits are behind the entire leftist movement in our country. And it's their slow, steady, progressive, systematic movement to infiltrate and ultimately overthrow the United States of America.

Now, I've done programs in the past about the Vatican on issues like gun control. The Vatican's view of the right to bear arms is that the common people should not have the right to bear arms. Look at the growing anti-second amendment movement that is at work in our country. The Democrats are speaking out against the NRA, calling for more and more gun control and this kind of thing. And you've got others who are openly saying that they want to undermine and overthrow the Second Amendment. Well, that would fit in entirely with Rome's, the Vatican's Jesuit worldview.

If you study the history of the right to keep and bear arms, it was very much developed by Protestantism. It's historic in the Western world, and especially among English-speaking people, historically, it is a Protestant right. In terms of defining it through the pages of the Bible and history. And there's that book to keep and bear arms. If you find that book, that book explains a lot of the history behind it. I believe that undermining the right to keep and bear arms is part of the counter-reformation. It's a way of overturning this very important element that Protestantism developed. Because it is part of what allowed Protestant countries to become strengthened in such a way that they could not be so easily overthrown and infiltrated,

infiltrated and then overthrown.

I want to go over some of these quotes from 19th-century historian J.A. Wiley, his book, *The Jesuits Their Moral, Maxims and Plots Against Kings, Nations and Church with Dissertation on Ireland*. It's by the Reverend J.A. Wiley, who's the author of the *History of Protestantism*.

If you want to understand Protestantism and its history from a pre-20th century worldview, I recommend Wiley's work. I think it's great. I highly recommend it. Because today, of course, the history books have just been rewritten. They've been rewritten.

And if you go study the Jesuits throughout history prior to the 20th century, brethren, it's just incredible how so much historical data there is, so many warnings about this order, this company of priests and their ambitions to dominate and take over the entire world. I think that so much of that information today has been completely covered up in any kind of mainstream education, completely covered up because if people knew the history of the Jesuits, they would be very alarmed at their influence in our government, even today.

This is from the preface of Wiley's book. He says,

The influx into our country of an order of men whose principle is the negation of all principle, and whose moral code is the subversion of the moral law.

Now think about that, brethren. They've been known for this throughout history. What's happening in our country? Could it be said that the subversion of the moral law is part of what's happening in America? An order of men whose principle is the negation of all principles. We're going to abandon boundaries and principles, et cetera. We're going to find a way to break them down whose moral code is the subversion of the moral law forms in the author's humble judgment, a source of no small danger to the nation.

So Wiley is trying to warn his fellow Britons. He's trying to warn them about what's happening. He says,

"Cast out of all kingdoms for their execrable maxims and their treasonable practices. The Jesuits bestow themselves upon us.

And why? Because they'd been driven out of one country after another after another through the Middle Ages, all the way up into the early part of the 20th century. I've talked about before Switzerland, how the Jesuits were driven out of Switzerland in the 19th century. You go study all the countries that they were driven out of. Of course, they were driven out and then they would come back later on. They'd find a way to get back into those countries.

But so he says,

The Jesuits bestow themselves upon us. They change their soil, but not their nature. They come to pursue in their new home the intrigues that drew upon them expulsion from their old. Our law denies them the unobstructed entrance and unchallenged residence, which they claim.

So in other words, there were laws against having Jesuits in England.

He says,

There appears, however, no intention of putting the law in force.

Think about that. Think about what we're dealing with in our country right now. One of the chief complaints on something like immigration, that the immigration laws are simply not being enforced. They're not going to enforce the law. Why? Because there are people in government who are, for whatever reason, compromised and they won't uphold and enforce the law. And this is what gave the Jesuits entrance into England, the UK. So he says, quote,

What then is to be done to counteract the evils sure to arise from the presence of men who have always and everywhere been the disturbers of the public peace? We can but expose their arts and put the unwary on their guard. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Never was the description more applicable or the warning that accompanies it more needful. The Jesuits come to us in the name of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. They call themselves the companions of Jesus or the company of Jesus or the society of Jesus. They call themselves the companions of Jesus. The name is but the sheep's clothing.

He goes on, he says,

By their fruits ye shall know them. Their teaching is the doctrine of devils and their deeds are the works of Apollion, the destroyer.

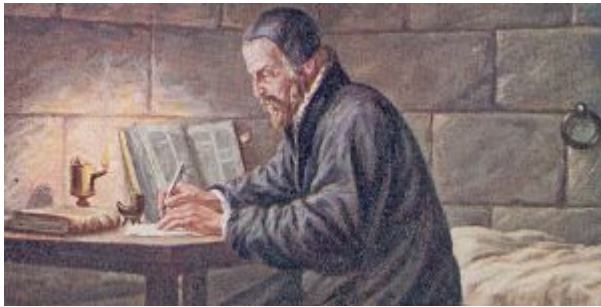
And just so we understand, Wiley believed that Protestantism was revived Christianity or Bible-based Christianity. Praise the Lord.

Listen to the [entire podcast](#) from Chris's website.

Dear friends, on October 15th, Sunday, I will go to a hospital to have surgery on my left elbow to fix a broken bone from an accident I had last September 24th. I may not be able to post any more articles for a while, at least not in the next few days. Please pray the doctor does a good job. I haven't been able to do a lot of things for my wife the last 3 weeks, errands I used to do. But I've still been able to work on this website using one

finger of my right hand, praise God!

[William Tyndale's Concept of the Church](#)



A regular visitor of this website suggested that I post testimonials of the martyrs and saints to inspire us all. The first person that came to mind was William Tyndale.

Quotes about Tyndale from https://www.worldhistory.org/William_Tyndale/

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was a talented English linguist, scholar and priest who was the first to translate the Bible into English. Tyndale objected to the Catholic Church's control of scripture in Latin and the prohibition against an English translation. His work formed the basis of all other English translations of the Bible up through the modern era.

Tyndale is recognized as the first to translate the Bible into English, rather than Wycliffe, because he worked from the original languages, not just the Latin translation, as Wycliffe had done.

Tyndale moved about to maintain safety after Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547) called for his arrest and was well-protected by wealthy merchants in Antwerp when he was betrayed by Henry Phillips, a man he thought was his friend, and imprisoned. He was executed by strangulation and his body burned at the stake in October 1536. Three years later, the English version of the Bible completed by his colleague Myles Coverdale (l. 1488-1569) was published in England with the king's approval. Tyndale and Coverdale are both honored in the present day as the first to translate the Bible into English even though it is acknowledged that Coverdale largely developed Tyndale's earlier work.

The following is a repost from <https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/william-tyndales-concept-church>

Introduction

A significant contribution to the reformation of the church in England was William Tyndale's translation of the Bible. With no support and little assistance, Tyndale produced an edition of the New Testament in 1526, and published translations of parts of the Old Testament from 1530 until 1534. Having profited from Luther's German translation and the writings of other continental reformers, Tyndale provided a version superior to the one by John Wycliffe. The Romanist clergy, however, noting that Tyndale's translation excluded words that were associated with such customs as penance, ceremonies, and confession to priests, decried the work as "*poison in the vulgar tongue.*" And the college of bishops claimed that Tyndale's version would infect the laity with the "*sickness of heresy.*" For it saw that Tyndale avoided vocabulary which papal decrees and other authorized documents had used to promote Romanist practices. In fact, wherever it was possible, Tyndale translated the original Greek and Hebrew with English words which had not been forced into false usage by Roman Catholicism.

It is not surprising that Tyndale's translation received much criticism from the Roman Catholic bishops. Especially Thomas More, who was the spokesman for English Roman Catholicism, inveighed against Tyndale.

In 1529 More wrote a treatise, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion*, in which he attacked the vocabulary of the new English Bible. More chided Tyndale for "mistranslating" several words of theological importance: the translator used "love" instead of "charity" for the Greek word *agape*, "senior" or "elder" instead of "priest" for *presbyteros*, and "repentance" instead of "penance" for the Greek *metanoia*. As one biographer observes, More declared Tyndale guilty of deliberately replacing theological terms with words not normally used by theologians.² And More tried to show that by means of these "radical" translations Tyndale was subverting the authority of the church and its doctrines.

Tyndale was obliged to reply to More, and he published *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* in 1531 to defend the vocabulary of his edition.³ The debate between the two scholars was more than academic bickering, for as W. Clebsch notes, "resistance to More's attacks on certain words was for Tyndale philological and literary but above all *theological.*"⁴ The upshot of More's arguments was that Tyndale's translation was unauthorized, not sanctioned by the Roman Catholic church. With its unorthodox vocabulary, the English edition posed a threat to the authority of the church. More and Tyndale knew that the new translation of the Bible could become a powerful tool in the hands of the reformers. And More intended to halt the spreading of Tyndale's Bible by criticizing it forcefully.

One word in the new translation which annoyed More considerably was "congregation." Tyndale preferred this word to "church" as a rendering of the Greek *ekklesia* and the Hebrew *qahal* and *edah*. Herein Tyndale was following the lead given by Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German, in which Luther had avoided the word *Kirche*, preferring instead *Gemeinde*. Both reformers wished to avoid a word which in the popular mind referred to the

so-called Holy Roman Church. Yet Tyndale's reasons for avoiding "church" were not merely epigonal, but were based upon his own observations of the government of the church in England, and of spiritual life. After all, it was for the English ploughboy that Tyndale had laboured.

As we investigate Tyndale's concept of the church, we must bear in mind that Tyndale is noted as a translator, not as a theologian. Unlike some of the continental reformers, he did not produce a systematic theology in which the doctrine of the church is exhaustively expounded. His statements about the church are unconnected, and little effort is made therein to link ecclesiology to other doctrines. For the doctrine of the church, Reformed readers are accustomed to turn to Book Four of Calvin's *Institutes*, to Articles 27-30 of the *Belgic Confession*, and to other Reformed confessions. However, because Tyndale was forced to defend, among other things, his translation of *ekklesia* with "congregation," he did write extensively about the church.

An examination of the concept of the church as it was formulated by one of the first English reformers will prove fruitful. Tyndale's writings reflect many scriptural ideas formulated by the continental reformers, especially Martin Luther. Whenever he deemed the thoughts of the other reformers sound, he incorporated them into his own writings, sometimes adapting them to the English setting. Tyndale was influenced also by other writers; John Hus, Huldrych Zwingli, and the followers of Wycliffe, the so-called Lollards, are but a few.⁵ Yet Tyndale does display his own concept of the church, especially as he was forced to develop it in his translation of the Bible. The purpose of this article is to reveal Tyndale's reasons for using "congregation" and not "church" in his English translation of the Bible, and to make some observations about Tyndale's concept of the church. I shall also note those features in Tyndale's ecclesiology which strike me as particularly Reformed, and shall offer some criticism of his ideas. Perhaps an appreciation for Tyndale's writings on the church will serve to sharpen our knowledge of a doctrine which remains relevant at the close of the twentieth century.

Why Tyndale does not use "Church" in his Translations

As we might expect from a translator, Tyndale begins his *Answer* with an exposition of the meaning and usage of the word "church" in sixteenth century England. Tyndale observes that the word is used in different senses, and that some of these were promoted falsely by the Roman Catholic clergy to its own advantage. Since the word "church" may mislead the reader, Tyndale does not use it in his translation.

First Tyndale treats the literal meaning of the word "church":

it signifies a place or house, whither the Christian people were wont in the old time to resort ... to hear the word of doctrine, the law of God, and the faith of our Saviour Jesus Christ.⁶

In short, "church" denotes the building in which the Word of God was preached. Tyndale goes on to describe the church building as it functioned before Roman Catholicism altered it.

In the ancient church building the minister preached the pure Word of God only, and prayed in a tongue that all men understood ... and of him (all) learned to pray at home and everywhere, and to instruct every man his household (11).

Tyndale makes it clear that the function which the building performed in former times was unlike that of the sixteenth century building. He states that for his contemporaries "church" no longer implies the place where the true Gospel is proclaimed. Indeed, he complains that in the so-called church of his age only voices without meaning are heard, and "*we be fallen into such ignorance, that we know of the mercy and promises, which are in Christ, nothing at all*" (11).

Tyndale avoids "church" in his translation because an important connotation of the word – the true preaching of the Gospel – is absent. Although he does not state so explicitly, Tyndale notes that one of the marks of the true church is lacking to the sixteenth century Romanist church. And as an advocate for reform, Tyndale is annoyed that Roman Catholicism had deprived "church" of this fundamental characteristic. It is unfortunate, however, that Tyndale overlooks the fact that the true church of Christ exists beyond human observation. Perhaps the decrepit state of the church in Tyndale's time caused the reformer to think that the true church was not to be found in England. But we may say that the church which preached the gospel of Christ did exist and would always exist: the Word of God is everlasting. Careful and accurate use of the word "church" is therefore appropriate.

Tyndale also avoids "church" in his translation because it had come to signify the Romanist clergy, which he describes pejoratively as "*a multitude of shaven, shorn, and oiled.*" According to this apparently common usage the word could refer to the pope, cardinals, legates, bishops, abbots, or monks; indeed, to "*a thousand names of blasphemy and hypocrisies*" (12). In everyday parlance the entire hierarchy within Roman Catholicism was referred to by the word "church." Tyndale offers many examples of this usage; one must suffice. He quotes a commonly heard saying:

You must believe in holy church [i.e. the clergymen], and do as they teach you (12).

Tyndale avoids translating the Greek *ekklesia* or Hebrew *qahal* with "church," because the reader may get the impression that the existence of numerous Roman Catholic orders is justified by the word "church" in Scripture. Tyndale does not want to give this impression to the innocent reader who may not know that the Bible does not speak of monks, or abbots, or even of popes.

"Church" was used in the sixteenth century as an inclusive term for all those

who call themselves Christians, *“though their faith be naught, or though they have no faith at all”* (13).⁷ Just as “Christendom” is used in modern times to designate all those who call themselves Christians, so too the word “church” was used in the sixteenth century as a popular term for those who considered themselves Christians, although their thoughts, words and actions perhaps proved otherwise. Again, Tyndale suggests that the writers of the Bible did not employ the word for church in this sense; therefore he excludes “church” from his translation.

Tyndale also points out that the word *“has, or should have, another signification: a congregation; a multitude or a company gathered together in one, of all degrees of people”* (12). In this sense “church” refers to the people who are gathered together. And according to Tyndale the nature of that congregation is seen by *“the circumstances thereof.”* There may be a holy, righteous congregation, and there may be an ungodly, impious congregation. This distinction is based upon the two uses of *ekklesia* in the New Testament, as Tyndale himself knows well. Like the continental reformers, Tyndale uses Acts 19:32, 39, 41 (where the assembly in Ephesus is called *ekklesia*) as prooftexts that *ekklesia* is not used only to denote an assembly of Christians.

Tyndale explains what he means by a company of ... all degrees of people”: “church” is used for “the whole multitude of all them that receive the name of Christ to believe in him and *not for the clergy only* (12).

To the modern reader Tyndale may seem to be stating the obvious, but in sixteenth century England many were led to believe that the church comprised only the Roman Catholic clergy. Tyndale struggles against the misappropriation of the term by one elite group. He offers a host of scriptural evidence which shows that *ekklesia* refers to the body of *all* believers. One text in which we read that the church comprises both the laity and the clergy is Galatians 1:13, where Paul writes that he had persecuted the church of God. Tyndale explains that Paul had tried to destroy *“not the preachers only, but all that believed generally”* (13). Comparing Scripture with Scripture, Tyndale adduces Acts 22:4 as further proof that Paul uses *ekklesia* in Galatians 1 to denote all the members of the church. For there he writes about his persecution of *“men and women”* of the church. Space prevents the discussion of all the other texts which Tyndale mentions in his condemnation of the restrictive use of “church.” But the attention which Tyndale paid to this matter reveals to what extent the Roman Catholic hierarchy had appropriated for itself the word “church,” and how it had excluded a vast number of believers.

While demonstrating that “church” refers to the laity as well as to the clergy, Tyndale offers another positive definition: *“... throughout all the Scripture, the church is taken for the whole multitude of them that believe in Christ in that place, in that parish, town, city, province, land, or throughout all the world”* (13). It is noteworthy that he speaks of the church local and the church universal in one breath. This is in keeping with the

writings of the church in its early existence, during the apostolic and patristic eras. In one and the same sentence, Tyndale describes the church as the gathering of true believers in one place or throughout the world. It is interesting to note that the sharp distinction which many documents of the continental Reformation, and some modern theologians, have drawn between the local and universal church is not to be found here in Tyndale's treatise.

It is also interesting to read that Tyndale knows of a more strict usage of "church," whereby the word refers only to those who have been chosen by God's eternal decree.

"Sometimes it is taken specially for the elect only; in whose hearts *God* has written his law with His *Holy Spirit*, and given them a feeling faith of the mercy that is in *Christ Jesus* our Lord" (13).

From the words italicized in the quotation one may note that Tyndale describes the body of the elect in terms of the *triune* God. Such language reminds one of Calvin's definition in Institutes IV.1.7:

Sometimes by the term 'church' it means that which is actually in God's presence, into which no persons are received but those who are children of God by grace of adoption and true members of *Christ* by sanctification of the *Holy Spirit*.

Yet the differences between the two definitions are also telling: Tyndale avoids the word "grace," opting instead for "mercy;" he gives the law of God a prominent position, and he does not speak explicitly of the sanctification of God's adopted children. Yet, according to both reformers, the elect are those who have been chosen by God the Father, saved by God the Son, and sanctified by God the Spirit. As we shall observe later, Tyndale knows that a difference exists between God's elect and the members of the manifest church.

Why Tyndale uses "Congregation" in his Translations

Apart from the reasons stated above, Tyndale has no objection to the word "church." Indeed, in the *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, and in other writings, he frequently interchanges "church" and "congregation." To Tyndale they are, insofar as we are able to tell, synonymous. Yet he is steadfast in his use of "congregation" in the English translations of the Old and New Testaments. And just as Tyndale offers reasons based on philology for the rejection of "church," so too he offers philological reasons for the use of "congregation." Yet it should be obvious that the philological debate is merely the tip of a *theological* iceberg, and the diction hides a mass of theological reasons which was destined to collide with the ship of Roman Catholicism.

Tyndale provides philological reasons for his choice of "congregation." The word has a broad range of uses, Tyndale suggests, which reflects the broad range of uses which the Greek word *ekklesia* also possessed in the first century. Like the reformers on the continent, Tyndale knew that the Greek

word *ekklesia* had been employed long before the New Testament church was established. It was a common term for the assembly of people at civic functions in Athens and other Greek city-states. Even in the New Testament *ekklesia* is used with this secular meaning; we noted above that in Acts 19:32, 39, 41 Demetrius the silversmith addresses a public assembly (*ekklesia*) in Ephesus. The word "congregation," according to Tyndale, is – like the Greek word – a "*more general term*" (13), and therefore appropriate in this, and similar, contexts.

Tyndale chose "congregation" also in part because Erasmus uses words other than *ecclesia* in his Latin translation of the New Testament. Tyndale reminds his opponent that Erasmus, More's dear friend, also employs unorthodox language in the Latin translation, which had appeared in 1516. Though his tone is less than kind, Tyndale's point is well taken: the Church has no right to impose its language upon Scripture. The Bible is the Word of God. Tyndale knows well, of course, that More and the other clergy saw in "congregation" a purposeful rejection of the language which the church had made standard over generations. Whereas "church" was a word with Roman Catholic associations, "congregation" belonged to the diction of the reformers.

At the conclusion of the philological rebuttal, Tyndale recapitulates the reasons for rejecting "church" from his English translation. "Church" is a word which in the New Testament denoted a place where the Gospel was preached. It did not denote the clergy only, did not exclude the flock of believers, did not refer to Christendom in general, and did not refer to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Since his contemporaries might understand the word to refer to any, or any number, of these usages, Tyndale chose to avoid it. Tyndale argues positively that in Scripture "church" applied to an assembly of people. The assembly might be secular or sacred. In the early history of the church the word was also used for the body of God's elect, and for the mixed congregation of believers and unbelievers.

Tyndale concludes: in as much as the clergy ... had appropriated unto themselves the term that of right is common to all the congregation of them that believe in Christ ... and brought (the people) into ignorance of the word ..., therefore in the translation of the New Testament, where I found this word *ekklesia*, I interpreted it by this word *congregation* (13).

Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* does not end there. After treating the words "church" and "congregation," Tyndale explains his preference for other important words, such as "love", "favour", and "repentance." Thereupon Tyndale gives a lengthy reply to More's defence of the worship of images, pilgrimages, and prayers offered to saints. In several places Tyndale discusses the nature of the church, and shows that the truly Biblical ecclesiology is that of the reformers, whom More called the "*pestilent sect of Luther and Tyndale.*"

Reformed Elements in Tyndale's Ecclesiology

Introduction

In the treatise, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, William Tyndale defends the translation of *ekklesia* in the Bible with "congregation" and not "church." Tyndale prefers "congregation," since it does not lead the readers of the English Bible into thinking that the Roman Catholic church with its false doctrines and practices has its foundation in Scripture. Like the reformers on the European continent, Tyndale strives to establish a text of the Bible which is free of associations with Roman Catholicism.

Thomas More, the reader will also recall, in the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion*, attacked Tyndale for using unorthodox and revisionist language. It was obvious to all in England that Tyndale's translation reflected many Reformed ideas. And therefore More's treatise was not merely a critical review of the vocabulary of the new English Bible; it charged the "*pestilent sect*" of reformers with heresy. More defended the authority of the pope and the power of church tradition. He strongly restated the Romanist belief that the church is the sole, infallible source of divine truth. He argued that whatever the church states as true, the believers must accept as the Word of God. Indeed, More suggested, the church had existed before Scripture was written, and even since the writing of the Bible, the church has proclaimed other truths that are not contained in Scripture. The church, therefore, determines Scripture and is its only interpreter. Accordingly, More concluded, Tyndale's translation constituted a heretical subversion of the church and its authority. ⁸

In *An Answer to Sir Thomas More*, Tyndale treats many of the "*heresies and matters of religion*" which More had discussed. The translator defends not only the vocabulary of his edition, but also the Reformed criticism of such matters as the position of the pope, the worship of images and relics, and pilgrimages. In discussing these matters, Tyndale has occasion to touch upon the nature and role of the church. The relationship between the church and Scripture, and between the church and Christ its Head, are but two of the topics Tyndale broaches. In so doing, the translator provides us with one of the earliest English documents which promoted the Reformed doctrine of the church. In this article we shall consider some of the attributes of the church as observed by Tyndale. We shall observe the influences of the continental Reformation upon Tyndale's thought, point out the Reformed character of Tyndale's ecclesiology, and shall conclude with some notes of criticism.

The Church is Formed by God's Word

According to Tyndale, one attribute of the church is that it is formed by the preaching of the Word of God.

*"The whole Scripture, and all believing hearts, testify that we are begotten through the Word."*⁹

As proof for this attribute, Tyndale offers Romans 10:14: *“How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher?”*¹⁰

He explains the text thus, *“Christ must first be preached, ere men can believe in him ... And therefore, in as much as the Word is before faith, and faith makes the congregation, therefore is the Word or Gospel before the congregation”* (24).

In stating that the preaching of the Gospel and the resultant faith are needed for the formation of a church, Tyndale follows the continental reformers. It was Luther who had described the church as *creatura verbi*: a creature of the Word. Tyndale espouses this tenet of the Reformation and refutes the Romanist ecclesiology as expressed by More, according to whom the church is above Scripture and its sole expositor.

In his *Dialogue* More had argued that the Roman Catholic Church is superior to the Bible in part because it *predates* Scripture, and that therefore it alone is able to instruct the laity in the meaning of Scripture and in the doctrine that it expresses. For this reason Tyndale’s translation was so hated by the clergy, which realized the English Bible would undermine its authoritative position. But Tyndale, as A.G. Dickens notes, *“firmly believed that the Bible came first and should invariably determine the doctrines, institutions and ceremonies of a Church which had come to bear little or no relation to that of the New Testament.”*¹¹ In stating that the church is a product of the preaching of the Word, Tyndale argues that the Church is subservient to the Word, and should conform to it.

Tyndale’s reasoning follows that of the continental Reformers. Huldrych Zwingli, for example, had also written about the church’s subservience to the Word. One may recall that of the sixty-seven theses which Zwingli published in 1523, several concerned the authority of Scripture.

The first thesis reads: *“All who say that the Gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the church err and slander God.”*

Following Zwingli, Tyndale replaces the authority of the Romanist Church with the authority of Scripture. The church must obey the Word of God by which it is formed. There is no divine revelation besides the Word, and the church may not claim to possess truths outside Scripture. In stating that the church is a product of the Gospel, Tyndale refutes More’s contention that the church is superior to the Word.

Faith is the Basis of the Church

We read in Romans 10:17, *“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.”* Tyndale has already argued that the preaching of the Gospel precedes the formation of the church; now he argues that faith in Jesus Christ’s saving work, which is granted through the preaching, is a cornerstone of Christ’s church. Tyndale points out that all who are born anew and become children of God, are members of his church. Though one might question Tyndale’s exegesis of Matthew 16:18, his statement

that *"faith is the rock, whereon Christ built his congregation"* (31) is true. And this faith, Tyndale writes, is the *"foundation, laid of the apostles and the prophets; whereon Paul says (Ephesians 2:20) that we are built, and thereby of the household of God"* (31).

Following the continental reformers, Tyndale emphasizes the role of the saving work of Christ in the formation of the church. Without the satisfaction of Christ for the sins of the world, the church could not exist. After all, the church is Christ's body (Colossians 1:18), *"and every person of the church is a member of Christ (Ephesians 5:23b). Now it is no member of Christ that has not Christ's Spirit in him"* (Romans 8:9) (31). Especially Ephesians 5:23b supports Tyndale's argument: *"Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour."* Faith in the expiation of Jesus Christ unites members into one body, and those who do not share in this faith, do not contribute to the unity of Christ's body. It is clear to Tyndale that *"both they that trust in their own works, and they also that put confidence in their own opinions, be fallen from Christ, and err from the way of faith that is in Christ's blood, and therefore are not of Christ's church"* (33-34). *Sola fide* is an important creed of the church.

Such line of reasoning leads Tyndale to the logical conclusion that the Roman Catholic church is not the church of Christ. For *"he that has no faith to be saved through Christ, is not of Christ's church. And the pope believes not to be saved through Christ"* (39), for he teaches to put trust in penance, pilgrimages, ceremonies, and the like – which *"all are the denying of Christ's blood."* (40) Since the pope has replaced Scripture with his own doctrine, and because the pope and the clergy have shown themselves in their conduct to be unholy, the Roman Catholic church cannot be the true church.

On the other hand, all those who *"depart from them unto true Scripture, and unto the faith and living thereof"* (45) form the true church. Members of the true church, Tyndale writes, *"thou shalt always know by their **faith**, examined by Scripture, and by their profession and consent to live according to the law of God"* (45). Evacuation from the false church, from "Babylon," as the Second Helvetic Confession expresses it, is a necessity for all true believers. For Tyndale all believers should depart from the false church, namely, the Roman Catholic church. At a time when the only church in England was the Roman Catholic church as controlled by Henry VIII, even departure from this congregation of Satan was virtually impossible. Notions of forming a true congregation of believers were still in infancy. Nevertheless Tyndale urges those who have faith to leave the Romanist church.

The Church is an Assembly of Sinful Believers

Tyndale's most complete definition of the true church or congregation is expressed in his rebuttal of the Romanist claim that the church cannot err. Thomas More had argued that the Roman Catholic church was infallible. To this Tyndale angrily retorts that if by church More means the Roman Catholic church, then the church certainly does err! And he cites many instances in which the church of Rome erred from the truth of God's Word.

But as for the question of sin within the true church of Christ, Tyndale

posits that, whereas sin exists in all people, God forgives those believers who ask him.

The church is the whole multitude of all repenting sinners that believe in Christ, and put all their trust and confidence in the mercy of God; feeling in their hearts that God for Christ's sake loved them, and will be, or rather is, merciful to them, and forgives them their sins of which they repent; and that he forgives them also all the motions unto sin, of which they fear, lest they should thereby be drawn into sin again (30).

The church consists of believers who are miserable sinners; yet it consists of believers whose sins are forgiven. Quoting 1 John 3:9 ("*no-one born of God commits sin*") and other texts, Tyndale states that the church consists of sinners who ask God for forgiveness and show amendment of life. The church comprises sinful *believers*, who are totally depraved and totally saved.

Tyndale does not forget the role of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of believers, for he writes that it is the Holy Spirit which "*keeps a man's heart from consenting to sin*" (31). In a sense, Tyndale dares to write, we are not sinners: "Not sinners if you look to the *profession* of our hearts toward the law of God, to our repentance and sorrow that we have, to the promises and mercy in our Saviour Christ, and to our faith."

And yet, Tyndale writes, "*every member of Christ's congregation is a sinner, and sins daily*" (32).

1 John 1:8 reminds us: "*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*"

Sin is a matter of fact, even in the congregation of Christ. "*Sinners we are,*" writes Tyndale, "*if you look to the frailty of our flesh, which is like the weakness of one who is newly recovered out of a great disease, by reason whereof our deeds are imperfect; and by reason whereof also, when occasions be great, we fall into horrible deeds, and the fruit of the sin which remains in our members breaks out*" (32).

Yet, as Tyndale also reminds us, the Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses (Romans 8:26).

Hypocrites within the Church

Tyndale also treats the matter of unbelievers within the church. Like the continental reformers, he knows that there are hypocrites within the body of Christ (44). For this attribute of the church the reformers were indebted to Augustine, who had explained (*de Doctrina Christiana*, III, 32) that the church is "mixed": in the church believers mingle with unbelievers. Tyndale calls the church "double," that is, consisting of the "fleshly" and the "spiritual." Just as the disciples of Christ could not look into the heart of the betrayer Judas, so too one cannot know perfectly what is in the heart of the members of one's congregation. *The Belgic Confession* also speaks of "*hypocrites, who are mixed in the Church along with the good and yet are not*

part of the Church, although they are outwardly in it" (Art. 29). And Calvin, too, would write about those *"who have nothing of Christ but the name and outward appearance"* (Institutes IV.1.7). It is remarkable that already in the first decades of the Reformation in England, the word "church" could convey the nuanced sense of *ecclesia permixta*, the "mingled church."¹²

The Church is the Gathering of the Elect

We noted above that Tyndale describes the church as "double." He applies this sense also to the distinction between the elect of God (the "spiritual") and those not chosen to everlasting life ("the fleshly").

Tyndale explains:

there shall be in the church a fleshly seed of Abraham and a spiritual; a Cain and an Abel; an Ishmael and an Isaac; and Esau and a Jacob ... a great multitude of them that be called, and a small flock of them that be chosen. And the fleshly shall persecute the spiritual (107).

Tyndale sees this attribute of the church in his own times, in which the pope and the Romanists are the "fleshly" who persecute the little flock of Christ. Pretending and believing to be the true church, the Roman Catholics *"go unto their own imaginations"* and *"the manner of service they fetch out of their own brains, and not of the Word of God; and serve God with bodily service"* (107). On the other hand, the body of the elect, *"runneth not unto his own imaginations,"* but seeks the Word of God. And the *"little flock,"* as Tyndale calls the elect, *"receives this testament in his heart, and in it walks and serves God in spirit"* (109). It is not surprising that Tyndale should depict the elect as a small and oppressed group within a large body of so-called believers, for in England the number of true believers must have appeared small in comparison with the large and powerful Romanist Church.

The Church as the Flock of the Shepherd

Of the other attributes of the church discussed in Tyndale's *Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* one in particular should not be overlooked. In the treatise Tyndale repeatedly refers to the church as *"little flock."* This Biblical expression had been used by the Lollards before Tyndale, yet the translator appropriates it for his own reasons.¹³ In several places of *An Answer* Tyndale uses the image of the church as a flock of sheep. The church is gathered by the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

Tyndale writes, *"God, when He calls a congregation unto his name, sends forth His messengers to call"* (107).

The church is formed by the power of God, and not by the impetus of man. The "little flock" is formed, guided, and fed by the Shepherd.

The *"little flock,"* because *"they have run clean contrary unto that good law,*

they sorrow and mourn ... But the preacher comforts them, and shows them the testament of Christ's blood ... And the little flock receives this testament in his heart ..." (108).

This image of the church as Christ's flock is, as all well know, a Scriptural image. Therefore, one will not be surprised to learn that it appears in the Second Helvetic Confession and in the writings of the continental reformers. Indeed, the image of the church as flock is used by modern Reformed theologians also: K. Schilder saw in *congregatio* the ongoing, active, church-gathering work of Jesus Christ, the Shepherd.

When one appreciates Tyndale's depiction of the church as the flock of Christ, one understands more fully his reasons for preferring "congregation" to "church" as the translation of *ekklesia* in the English Bible. For the English word "congregation" derives from the Latin word for "flock," *grex*. Tyndale the translator is keenly aware of this etymology of the word, and despite his penchant for non-Latinate words, he employs this one in his translation. It appeals to him for it conveys a meaning which the Biblical expressions for the church also convey. To Tyndale, "congregation" is altogether an appropriate word.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a number of critical observations of Tyndale's ecclesiology are in order. Although Tyndale discusses the nature and the role of the church in *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, he makes no attempt to present an exhaustive, systematic argument. Important essential and accidental features of the church are lacking to Tyndale's treatise. There is no discussion, for example, of the marks of the true church. Discipline within the church is not treated. There is no explanation of the relationship between the administration of the sacraments and the church. Matters which appear to the post-Reformation churches as crucial to ecclesiology are glossed over by Tyndale.

But one should bear in mind that Tyndale does not claim to put forth a complete doctrine of the church. And perhaps Tyndale's inchoate ecclesiology is to be explained by the circumstances in which he wrote. The reformation of the church in England occurred after Tyndale's death. During his lifetime there were few attempts to reform the church on the scale attempted by Luther and the continental reformers. Tyndale was among the first to begin to call for change in England. By providing an English translation of the Bible Tyndale made the important first step toward reform.

There are many other features of Tyndale's ecclesiology which might be discussed critically; here I shall merely list them. Some have noted a development in the theology of Tyndale which might be called inconsistent. Luther and Calvin also developed their theologies over time, yet their more systematic approach to ecclesiastical reform caused them to be more complete and consistent. There is little evidence that Tyndale envisages a schematic reform of the church; he appears content to make changes within the existing "multitude." Others have suggested that there is evidence for a development toward legalism in Tyndale's thought.¹⁴ His view of the covenant has been

described as that of a contract between parties: Tyndale has been linked to the development of Puritanism. Yet again others have observed an emphasis upon individualism in the theology of Tyndale. Even in the language of Tyndale's English Bible one could criticize the translator. But when all is said and done, it should be acknowledged that the role of William Tyndale in the Reformation of the church in England was not a minor one.

Endnotes

1. [^] Faber zum 70. Geburtstag gewidmet.
2. [^] C.H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Nelson, 1969), 76.
3. [^] The fact that More wrote a nine-volume rebuttal, the *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532), attests to the gravity of the debate.
4. [^] W. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 144.
5. [^] The influence of Luther's ecclesiology upon Tyndale is obvious; consider, e.g., Luther's understanding of the church as described by H. Prien, "Grundgedanken der Ekklesiologie beim jungen Luther," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 76, 1985, 96-119. The influence of Lollard writings upon Tyndale's theology is treated by D. Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), esp. 159-220.
6. [^] W. Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, ed. H. Walter (The Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press, 1850), 11; subsequent quotations from *An Answer* derive from this edition.
7. [^] In the *Institutes* (IV.1.7), Calvin would also refer to this usage of the word: "Often, however, the name "church" designates the whole multitude of men spread over the earth who *profess* to worship one God and Christ" (trans. F.L. Battles, *Calvin. Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Vol. 2 Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1960, 1021. Subsequent quotations of *Institutes* derive from this edition).
8. [^] For a summary of More's *Dialogue* and Tyndale's reply, see W.E. Campbell, *Erasmus, Tyndale and More* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949), 124-154.
9. [^] W. Tyndale, *An Answer to Sir Tomas More's Dialogue*, ed. H. Walter (The Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press, 1850), 24; future citations of *An Answer* derive from this edition.
10. [^] Tyndale mentions two other texts for proof that believers form a gathering as a result of the preaching: John 15:3, John 17:17.
11. [^] A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 71.
12. [^] For discussions by other English reformers of the "mingled church" see P. Hughes, *Theology of the English Reformers* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1965), 225-262, esp. 228.
13. [^] For the influence of Lollard ecclesiology upon Tyndale's thought see D.D. Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William Tyndale* (Kirksville, Missouri: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1986), esp. ch.6.
14. [^] See, e.g., W. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 168.

Summary of TRUE Church History By Jim Searcy



The false church

This article is a re-post from <https://www.jimsearcy.com/ChurchHistory.htm>.

The early Church understood apostolic doctrine to mean the written Word of the Apostles, as it was contained in the Scriptures, in accord with the Old Testament, and given final revelation by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the very I AM, who taught Moses. That is worth repeating, and is the basis for understanding True Church History.

From the very beginning, even from before all of the Apostles had been martyred, the writings of people like Polycarp, and Clement made clear and explicit, that ONLY the Scriptures, Old Testament, Gospels, and letters of the Apostles, and the Revelation given by John, was the authority for right and true teaching of doctrine. Only the Scriptures were to be the defense of the truth against heresy. The writings of the men who were direct disciples of the Apostles literally breathe with the Spirit of the Old and New Testaments. This may be seen in the writings of the disciples like Justin Martyr, and Athenagoras, in the second through fourth centuries.

There is no appeal in any of these writings to the authority of a verbal or extra-biblical tradition as a separate and independent body of revelation. The first writings ever to mention the concept of apostolic tradition were the writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian in the mid to late second century. The clear meaning of that word "tradition" as they used and intended the term, was the teaching of the Apostles, the oral communication of what had been written by the Apostles. Irenaeus and Tertullian state emphatically, that all the teachings of the bishops that were given orally, were rooted in

Scripture, and could be proven from the written Scriptures. Both men give the actual doctrinal content of the apostolic teaching that was orally preached in the Churches. It is very explicit that ALL of their doctrine was derived from Scripture. There was no doctrine in what they refer to as apostolic "tradition" that is not found in Scripture. In other words, the apostolic tradition, defined by Irenaeus and Tertullian, is simply the teaching of Scripture. It was Irenaeus who stated that while the Apostles at first preached orally, their teaching was later committed to writing, and the Scriptures had since that day become the pillar and ground of the Church's faith.



The true church!

Even in the first century there was available to the believers a substantial part of the New Testament. The four Gospels were known and read in the Churches. The letters of the Apostles Paul, and Peter, were circulated and used, even while the Apostles lived.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND AND KNOW that these New Testament books did NOT become authoritative because they were being formally accepted as Scripture by any Church or group of Churches. These New Testament books were AUTHORITATIVE, because, the believers received them as inspired by the witness of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It was indeed by the witness of the Holy Spirit of Truth, BY WHICH the believers KNEW, and did positively recognize, as the very Word of God. From the early writings, it is clear that the believers, by the Holy Ghost, KNEW the life of Christ Jesus, and His role as the final and full revelation of God. That same accepted KNOWLEDGE by the Holy Spirit of Truth was, and remains to this day, the very same New Testament canon. It expressed the final prophetic Word of grace and truth, given just as the Apostle Paul had said, to open his epistle to Messianic Jewish Believers: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

God's people, in the first three centuries after Christ, universally accepted what we now know as the New Testament. Those who would say otherwise are unlearned, or deceived. The believers in the first three centuries, by the Holy Spirit of Truth, received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the very Word of God. Yes, there were some controversies over individual books. However, these did, by the working of the same Spirit of Truth, solidly confirm the New Testament Scriptures. In fact, the controversies ultimately helped establish the certainty that the BELIEVERS in the first three centuries, after the birth of Messiah, INDEED DID HAVE God's final Written Word, which was ONCE delivered unto the saints.

The disciples of the Lord universally knew the contents of the canon of the New Testament well before the local Council of Hippo formally accepted it in

393A.D, and before the provincial Council of Carthage in 397A.D.

The Christian faith rapidly extended throughout the known world during the first three centuries. The main reason for such a rapid spreading of the Christian faith should be recognized as the sovereign will, and divine intervention, of God. However, we should also be aware that by the same Holy Spirit of God, there was, in the Preachers of the Doctrine of the Apostles, a Holy faithfulness and zeal. Common among the preachers of the Gospel in those first three centuries were the heroic deaths of the martyrs, and the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of the Roman world.

Under Emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) Christians suffered great persecution. However, the most severe persecution was under the Emperor Diocletian and his co-regent, Galerius, during the years 303-311. The historian Philip Schaff states that, "all copies of the Bible were to be burned; all Christians were to be deprived of public office and civil rights; and last, all, without exception, were to sacrifice to the gods upon pain of death."

Though Lucifer and his advocates love to kill, and persecute Christians, as any history written outside of Vatican Roma's control clearly will show, persecution, torture, and murder of real Christians, by no means could, or will ever, exterminate the True Christians, and the Gospel. Though today, as of July 10, 2007, Vatican Roma seems ready to again crank up her infamous inquisition, honest history will show that Vatican Roma's persecution purified those who preached. The history of persecution by the Roman church, of the True Christian, and only True Faith, increased the ability of BELIEVERS to give the Gospel message.

The Vaudois is the name of the best French Bible. The history of the Vaudois people is the history of a people who withdrew from the areas in and around Rome to the valleys of the Cottian Alps during the persecutions of the early Church. These Bible believers always held to the Scriptures as their ONLY authority. This was evident in their faith, and practice for centuries, dating back to the persecutions of the Roman emperor Diocletian. The testimony of their lives over the centuries shows that the Vaudois, and others, had chosen to follow the authority of the Bible as their Rule of Life.

One solid fact of True Church History is that "people of the book," as Islam calls Jews and true Christians are persecuted. People of the book are vilified, and the persecution of them minimized if not even justified, in the history one finds under the influence, and control, of Vatican Roma.

Vatican Roma's help, favor, and control of Islam, is obvious in paragraph #841 of the latest version of the Roman Catholic Catechism. That infamous paragraph #841 states – The Church's relationship with the Muslims. "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day." (Latest Catechism which includes the corrections by Pope John Paul II on 8 September 1997.)

In these last days of strong delusion it is good to know the history of how Vatican Roma put Muhammad in the religion business and controls Islam to this day. The popes of Rome have always wanted to possess the city of Jerusalem. Because of its religious history and its strategic location, the Holy City was considered a priceless treasure. A scheme had to be developed to make Jerusalem a Roman Catholic city. The great untapped source of manpower that could do this job was the children of Ishmael. The poor Arabs fell victim to one of the most clever plans ever devised by the powers of darkness.

Early Christians went everywhere with the gospel setting up small churches, but they met heavy opposition. Both the Jews and the pagan Roman government persecuted the believers in Christ to stop their spread. But the Jews rebelled against Rome, and in 70 AD, Roman armies under General Titus smashed Jerusalem and destroyed the great Jewish temple, which was the heart of Jewish worship. This quite literally fulfilled the prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ given in Matt 24:2.

Corruption, apathy, greed, cruelty, perversion, and rebellion were eating away at the Roman Empire, and it was ready to collapse. The persecution against Christians was useless as they continued to lay down their lives for the gospel of Christ. The only way Satan could stop the spread of the Gospel, and the establishment of true apostolic Biblical Churches, was to create a counterfeit so-called Christian religion.

Rome brought about this great counterfeit "Christian" religion with the first sovereign pontiff, the Roman Emperor Constantine. Constantine's religion was the religion of Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tamuz. It was the religion with the sun god, the queen of heaven, and son of the queen of heaven, the religion of Babylon. The ancient Babylonian religion's deities took on many names in many different cultures and countries. The favorite flavor of this Babylon religion of pagan Rome, at the time of the first supreme pontiff Constantine, was Mithraism. The religion of pagan Roma had come from Babylon and all it needed was a face-lift of applying Christian terms to that religion. This did not happen immediately, but began in the writings of the early so-called church fathers.

It was through their writings that a new religion would take shape. The statue of Jupiter in Rome was eventually called St. Peter, and the statue of Venus was called the Virgin Mary. The site chose for the headquarters of this new form of pagan Roman counterfeit Christianity was one of the seven hills of Rome called Vaticanus, the place of the diving serpent where the Satanic temple of Janus stood.

The great counterfeit religion, Roman Catholicism, called MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH – Rev 17:5. Satan, the god of all false religions, raised up this Roman counterfeit religion of Babylon with Christian terms to block the Gospel, slaughter the believers in Christ, establish new false religions, create wars, and make the nations drunk with the wine of her spiritual fornication.

Rev 17:1-6 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the

judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

The greatest of the daughter harlots of the MOTHER OF HARLOTS is ISLAM.

The creation of Islam

Before Vatican Roma put Mohammad in the religion business pagan Arabs would bring gifts to what they believed was the House of God, the Kaaba in Mecca. The keepers of the Kaaba were gracious to receive the gifts of all of the Arabs making pilgrimage to the Kaaba. Some brought their idols, and not wanting to offend these people, their idols were placed inside the Kaaba sanctuary. The Jews of Mecca were said to have looked upon the Kaaba as an outlying tabernacle of the Lord until it became polluted with idols.

There were Arab tribal wars over the well at the Kaaba called Zamzam, and the treasure of the Kaaba. The valuable offerings of the pilgrims were dumped down into the well during one of these tribal war periods and the well was filled with sand, where it disappeared in a sandstorm. Many years later Adb Al-Muttalib was given visions telling him where to find the well and its treasure. He became very wealthy and the hero of Mecca when he found that well and the treasure of the Kaaba which it contained. Adb Al-Muttalib was the grandfather of Muhammad.

Before this time, Augustine became the bishop of North Africa and had limited success in winning Arabs to Vatican Roma's adulterated Christianity. Vatican Roma's religion was more and more becoming identical to the pagan Babylon religion except for its Christian terminology. Among these Arab converts to Vatican Roma's religion Augustine promoted the concept of looking for an Arab prophet. Augustine, as all bishops of Vatican Roma, paid particular attention to the wealthy. Pre-eminent among the wealthy Arabs of this time was the grandfather of Muhammad.

Muhammad's father died several months before the birth of Muhammad. The sons of wealthy Arab families in places like Mecca were sent into the desert to be nursed until about age four, and spend several more years of childhood with Bedouin tribes for training and to avoid the plagues and very high infant child mortality in the cities. The watchful eyes of Vatican Roma, particularly watchful of the wealthy, noted the grandchild of Adb Al-Muttalib was born with a birthmark on his back. Muhammad's mother died when he was six, and he was in the care of his grandfather Adb Al-Muttalib until his grandfather died when he was nine. Muhammad then came under the care of his

uncle. One of Augustine's monks met Muhammad and his uncle in a caravan and asked if he could see the child's back, and then proclaimed this is the mark of the prophet. The monk of Vatican Roma warned Muhammad's uncle to "Take your brother's son back to his country and guard him against the Jews, for by god, if they see him and know of him that which I know, they will kill him. Great things are in store for this brother's son of yours." So agents of Vatican Roma instilled Muhammad's Jew hate and bigotry from the time when he was just nine years old.

Indeed history has shown how very effective was this ploy of Vatican Roma's monk to fan the flames for future Jewish persecutions at the hands of the followers of Muhammad. The Vatican desperately wanted Jerusalem because of its religious significance, but was blocked by the Jews.

Another major problem of Vatican Roma's Christianized paganism at this time was the large number of true Christians in North Africa who preached THE Gospel. The Roman religion was growing in power, and would not tolerate opposition. Somehow Vatican Roma had to create a weapon to eliminate both the Jews and the true New Testament gospel believers who refused to accept Vatican Roma's brand of Christianized Babylonian paganism.

In North Africa, Vatican Roma saw multitudes of Arabs who had not been converted from their Arabian paganism to Roman paganism nor had they become Christians. This was the source of the manpower to do Vatican Roma's dirty work of killing Jews and Christians. Jews and Christians are known as "people of the book," in Muhammad's religion of Islam's holy book, called the Koran. Some Arabs had become Roman Catholic, and could be used in a spy network for Vatican Roma's master plan to control the great multitudes of Arabs who rejected the Roman brand of paganism with Christian terms. Augustine had good intelligence. His monasteries served as bases to seek out and destroy Bible manuscripts owned by the true Christians of North Africa.

Vatican Roma wanted to create a messiah for the Arabs, someone they could raise up as a great leader, a man with charisma whom they would train, and eventually unite all the non-Catholic Arabs behind him. The great Arab leader would create a mighty army that would ultimately capture Jerusalem for the pope.

A wealthy Arabian lady who was a faithful follower of the pope played a tremendous part in this plan. She was a widow named Khadijah. She entrusted her wealth to Vatican Roma's religion and retired to a convent, and there was given an assignment. She was to find a brilliant young man who could be used by the Vatican to create a new religion and become the messiah for the children of Ishmael. Khadijah had a cousin named Waraquah, who was also faithful to Vatican Roma, and he was placed in a critical role as Muhammad's advisor. He had tremendous influence on Muhammad.

Teachers were sent to young Muhammad and he had intensive training in the writings of Augustine the top bishop of Vatican Roma in all of North Africa. Muhammad studied the writings of Augustine, which prepared him for his great calling. Vatican Roma had Arabs across North Africa spread the story of a great one who was about to rise up among the Arab people and be the chosen

one of their God.

While Muhammad was being prepared, he was told that his enemies were the Jews and that the only true Christians were Roman Catholics. He was taught that others calling themselves Christians were actually wicked impostors and should be destroyed. Many Muslims believe this. Though most Roman Catholics are too nice to say so, they believe this too.

Some of the more mystical aspects of Vatican Roma's program are designed to lead to questionable spiritual experiences, which do not get tested. Muhammad began receiving what he thought were divine revelations. His wife's Catholic cousin Waraquah was always right there with the interpretation according to the plan Vatican Roma had for Muhammad. Eventually these revelations with Waraquah's interpretations would result in the Koran. Sura Nine, the Immunity Sura is what the Koran really teaches. All of the rest of the Koran is to provide plausible deniability to the Satanic teaching of the Koran. Everything in the Koran abrogates to Sura Nine and that one sura supersedes whatever else the Koran may teach, because the Immunity sura was the last sura of Muhammad.

Anyone desiring to know the teaching of Islam only needs to read that one Immunity sura. EVERYTHING else in the Koran abrogates to that sura nine and NOTHING in that sura nine can be abrogated away. Knowing what is said in that one sura without all of the other suras which are only there to hide the central core teaching of the Koran gives one better understanding of Islam than those who teach it.

In the fifth year of Muhammad's mission, persecution came against his followers because they refused to worship the idols in the Kaaba. They fled to Abyssinia or Ethiopia where King Negus, a Roman Catholic king received them because Muhammad's views on the Virgin Mary were so close to Roman Catholic regarding the queen of heaven. The only place where Muhammad's writings about the Virgin Mary could have come is Augustine, for that doctrine was unique to Augustine at that time and did not become universal Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception that Mary was born of a virgin mother, until 1854. King Negus and Muhammad both worshipped the queen of heaven.

Muhammad later conquered Mecca and the Kabba was cleared of idols. It is a well established fact of history that before Islam came into existence, the Sabeans in Arabia worshipped the moon-god. Allah's wife gave birth to three goddesses who were worshipped throughout the Arab world as the "Daughters of Allah." An idol excavated at Hazor in Palestine in the 1950's shows Allah sitting on a throne with the crescent moon on his chest. Because Allah has always been the moon god of Arabia is why one finds crescent moons on every mosque, and so many Muslim emblems. Allah, the moon god of Arabia was worshipped in Arabia for a thousand years before Muhammad was born. Allah is one of the many aliases of Satan. One also should not fail to notice how often the crescent moon is associated with various paintings and statues of the Virgin Mary.

Muhammad claimed he had a vision from Allah where Allah sent the angel

Gabriel with the message – You are the messenger of Allah. This launched Muhammad's prophet career as the self-fulfilling prophecy he had gotten from the monk of Vatican Roma when he was nine. By the time Muhammad died, the religion of Islam was exploding. The nomadic Arab tribes were joining forces in the name of Allah and his prophet, Mohammad.

Some of Muhammad's revelations were recorded and placed in the Koran, and others were never published. The unpublished ones are now in the hands of high-ranking Ayatollahs in the Islam. These writings, which are not in the Koran are guarded, because they contain information that links the Vatican to the creation of Islam. Both Vatican Roma and Islam have so much information on each other that if exposed, could create such a scandal that it would be a disaster for both religions. This truth about Islam was given by no less authority than what Cardinal Augustine Bea had to say regarding Vatican Roma's creation and control of Islam.

In the so-called holy book of Islam, The Lord Jesus Christ is regarded as only a prophet. If the pope of Vatican Roma was His representative on earth, then he also must be a prophet of God. This caused the followers of Muhammad to fear and respect the pope as another holy man.

When the Arabs became unified under the banner of Muhammad, the Vatican pope moved quickly and issued bulls granting the Arab generals permission to invade and conquer the nations of North Africa. Vatican Roma helped to finance the building of these massive Islamic armies in exchange for three favors:

1. Eliminate the Jews and Bible believing Christians, which the Muslims called infidels.
2. Protect the Augustinian Monks, and the Roman Catholics and their shrines, churches, and properties.
3. Conquer Jerusalem for the pope and Vatican Roma.

Soon the power of the Islamic armies became tremendous. Jews and Bible believing Christians were slaughtered, and Jerusalem was conquered. Roman Catholics were never attacked; their churches, shrines, and properties were not touched. However, when the pope asked for Jerusalem he was shocked that the Arab generals said NO. The Islamic generals had become so powerful that the pope could not control them. The Islamic armies began their conquests with the help and plans of Vatican Roma; but, now they had their own plan.

Waraqah directed Muhammad to have the Koran say that Abraham offered Ishmael, and not Isaac, as a sacrifice on Mt. Mariah. Muhammad contradicted the Holy Bible, which explicitly says Isaac was to be sacrificed, but the Muhammad's Koran would substitute Ishmael's name for Isaac, and assert the biblical record to be in error. As a result of this and Muhammad's vision, the Muslims built a mosque and shrine, the Dome of the Rock, in Ishmael's honor, on the site of the Jewish Temple that was destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 AD. This made Jerusalem the 3rd most holy place of pilgrimage for the Muslims behind Mecca and Medina.

Vatican Roma realized what they had created was out of control when the Arab generals and their Muslims began referring to the pope as an infidel. The Muslim generals were determined to conquer the world for Allah, and had set their sights on conquering Europe.

Representatives of the Muslim generals went to the Vatican and asked for papal bulls to give them permission to invade Europe. The Roman pope was outraged. War was inevitable. The pope considered the temporal power and control of the world to be the exclusive right of Vatican Roma's pope. The Muslim generals of the armies of Muhammad, which Vatican Roma had put in business for killing the enemies of the Vatican, now threatened Vatican Roma. The pope would not think of sharing his power over the world with the Muslims who Vatican Roma had established for the popes purposes, and that the pope considered to be heathens.

The pope quickly raised up Vatican Roma's armies for the pope's Crusades against the rebellious Muslim heathens. In no way was the pope going to allow the Muslim generals to take over Catholic Europe. The Crusades lasted for centuries and the prize of Jerusalem, which Vatican Roma always desired, always managed to stay free of the pope's control.

Turkey fell, which caused many Greek-speaking Christians to flee to the West with their Greek Scriptures. The Western Roman Empire, prior to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, had only Latin scriptures, carefully revised and absolutely controlled by Vatican Roma.

The Muslim armies invaded Spain and Portugal. In Portugal, the Muslim armies named a mountain village FATIMA in honor of Muhammad's daughter. In no way could anyone at that time ever think the village of Fatima would become world famous.

In 849 AD the great Arab Muslim fleet was set to invade Italy from Sardinia. When the Muslim fleet appeared on the horizon, Vatican Roma's fleet defeated the Muslims. However, Muslims occupied Sicily for nearly three centuries from 812 up until 1071 AD.

With the invasion of Spain and Portugal the Muslim generals realized that they were too far extended. The Muslim generals realized that it was time for seeking terms of peace. Francis of Assisi negotiated peace with the Muslim generals for Vatican Roma. The terms of peace brokered by Francis of Assisi were that the Muslims were allowed to occupy Turkey and Vatican Roma's Catholics were allowed to occupy Lebanon in the Arab world. It was also agreed that Muslims could build mosques in Catholic countries without interference, as long as Roman Catholicism could be allowed to flourish in Muslim countries. This is why one so often may find churches of Vatican Roma in the same neighborhoods as mosques in so many regions of the world.

Vatican Roma and the Muslims agreed to continue efforts to block, thwart, and destroy their common enemy, the people of the book, Jews and Bible believing Christians. By way of these concordats of Vatican Roma with Islam, Satan, the god of all false religions, has effectively blocked the now almost one BILLION children of Ishmael from knowledge of the truth of the Word of God.

Vatican Roma has maintained a light and invisible control of Islam on Muslims from the highest-ranking Ayatollah on down, through the Islamic clerics. Vatican Roma has always done everything possible to inflame hatred between Muslim Arabs and Jews, which prior to the Vatican putting Muhammad in his religion business, had lived peacefully together.

Muslims are taught to view Bible believing missionaries as the devil incarnate, which are sent to poison the children of Allah. This is why, up until recently, the ministry of missionaries in Muslim countries, aside from being difficult and often leading to martyrdom, has born so little fruit. However, with the global access to the truth provided by the internet, this is changing. By the Muslim's own statistics, there are 16,000 Muslims per day forsaking Islam to become Bible believing Christians.

Bible believing Christians have a mandate and duty of love toward the Muslims. All Christians are to participate in the great commission, and that great commission definitely applies to Muslims. It is the duty of love to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in The Lord Jesus Christ.

However, Vatican Roma's original plan to use Islam to kill people of the book, continues to this day.

The Vision at Fatima Portugal

In 1910, Portugal was going Socialistic and Vatican Roma was facing a major problem. There were rapidly increasing numbers forsaking the religion of Vatican Roma and actually becoming hostile in rebellion to the bondage of the Vatican. This brought about perhaps the greatest display of Vatican Roma's religious showmanship in history, and even facilitated Vatican Roma's victory over the Russian Orthodox Church. This great Vatican Roman display of religious showmanship took place in Fatima Portugal, and has been very instrumental in strengthening Vatican Roma's control of Islam.

In 1917, the Virgin appeared in Fatima, and the Mother of God show there was one of Vatican Roma's greatest successes. Mary appeared in Fatima to three shepherd children calling herself "Lady of the Rosary." The Fatima appearances instantly became world famous due to their elements of prophecy with regard to the possibility of world war and the conversion of Orthodox Soviet Russia to Roman Catholicism. Vatican Roma was quick to declare the apparitions at Fatima "worthy of belief" and quickly put the Vatican's massive resources in the media in to high gear.

The message of the apparition of Mary was that three secrets were to be given about future world events, and that praying the rosary every day, and saying the rosary many times, was the key to personal and WORLD peace. This was a resonating message since so many young men of Portugal, and the rest of Europe, were then fighting in World War I. Within months thousands of people were flocking to Fatima.

In addition to the three secrets of Fatima a miracle of the sun was promised.

The great worldwide publicity of Fatima brought about an immediate major defeat for the Socialists in Portugal. Within months the pope announced a very highly promoted trip, the pope had planned to visit Fatima. When the pope made his highly published plans to be at Fatima for the October 13th final apparition, anticipation to see the highly promoted miracle of the sun, caused a crowd estimated to be over 70,000 to assemble at Fatima for the pope's visit and final third apparition. Only the pope could see the miracle of the sun in its fullness. Of the 70,000 witnesses there were 70,000 different descriptions of what the people saw in the miracle of the sun. It did not seem hard for anyone to believe that only the pope, and not even the three shepherds, could see the miracle of the sun in its perfection and fullness. Yes, one could call it a strong delusion, but all seemed to trust what the pope said he saw, was sort of like what they saw. There was no physical evidence of the miracle of the sun, no one got any photographs of the sun doing miraculous things. The majority today suspect the combination of an anticipated miracle of the sun, and the excitement of the pope being right there to help, combined with the unusual rainy, cloudy, and sunny day, and great religious fervor of the large crowd, to be conducive to mass hallucination. However, it was so convenient of the pope to be there to clarify and certify the miracle of the sun.

Roman Catholics world wide began praying for the conversion of Russia and the Jesuits invented the Novenas to Fatima, which when done throughout North Africa, produced great public relations between Vatican Roma and the Muslim world. Today there are often times more Muslim pilgrims to Fatima than there are Roman Catholic pilgrims. The Muslim Arabs thought the Novenas to Fatima were honoring the daughter of Muhammad. That is exactly what the Jesuits wanted the Muslims to believe.

As a result of the vision of Fatima, Pope Pius XII ordered his Nazi army to crush Russia and the Russian Orthodox religion to make Russia Roman Catholic. Hitler, and the entire German army which fought on the Russian front, can testify the pope was mistaken and not infallible in his conclusions and direction to the Nazi army from that particular part of his vision of the miracle of the sun at Fatima.

In fairness it should be pointed out that it was several years after he lost World War II that Pope Pius XII shocked the world with his FULL revelation of the dancing sun miracle keeping Fatima in the news. It was truly great religious showmanship and the world eagerly consumed and embraced the pope's private interpretations of the miracle of the sun at Fatima. It should be surprising to everyone, but seems to surprise no one, that the only one to really see the vision and miracle was Pope Pius XII. Nevertheless, the pope's revelation of the vision as only he could see it, has produced a huge world wide group of followers known as the Blue Army. The Blue Army has millions of faithful Roman Catholics ready to die for the blessed virgin.

Project Blue Beam

Project Blue Beam is something that is good for everyone to know about. Here is a link – <http://www.moresureword.com/bluebeam.htm> We must remember that the new global RELIGION lead by the pope, who is the second beast, positional

false prophet of the antichrist, is the very foundation for the new world government. Without the Luciferian global religion the antichrist dictatorship of the New World Order is completely impossible. That is why the Project Blue Beam is so important to the antichrist Luciferians, and why it has been so well hidden.

The Jesuits of Vatican Roma have their Virgin Mary scheduled to appear four or five times in China, Russia, the US and other parts of the world. The apparitions at Fatima marked a turning point for hundreds of millions of Muslims. After the death of his daughter Fatima, Muhammad wrote that she "is the most holy of all women in Paradise, next to Mary." The majority of Muslims are led to believe that the Virgin Mary chose to be known as Our Lady of Fatima as a sign and a pledge that the Muslims who believe in Christ's virgin birth will come to believe in His divinity. That is a large part of the reason why there are so many Muslims, who today are open to receive the Gospel. Ex-Muslims just like Ex-Roman Catholics, make some of the most earnest contenders for THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS.

Yes, according to the Muslims own statistics, 16,000 per day. They make such good Bible believing Christians because they MUST count the cost. Muslims know how rigidly the death penalty is enforced on any Muslim who forsakes Islam to become "one of the people of the book" whom all one billion Muslims are religiously duty bound to kill.

Gal 1:8-9 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

There may have been a time when those who were Roman Catholics might possibly have been saved. That possibility came to an end in June of 1963, when the highest possible Satanic ceremony was conducted in the Vatican and simultaneously in the top freemason temple. That highest of all Satanic ceremonies is known as the ENTHRONEMENT OF THE FALLEN ARCHANGEL LUCIFER. Details regarding that important event are available near the bottom of this important link – <http://www.moresureword.com/GASstones.htm>

This short history should explain why this infamous paragraph #841 is in the Roman Catholic Catechism:

841 The Church's relationship with the Muslims.

"The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Muslims; these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day."

Paulicianism

A look at what most call Paulicianism might be more valuable than giving any further mention of Islam in this summary of True Church History. The history of the Christians, called Paulicians by their enemies, really illustrates the

point of how revised and wrested one will find the majority of Church History under the control of Vatican Roma. It is sad, but typical, that most of the information concerning the Paulicians comes through their enemies.

Paulicianism was a Christian sect that flourished between 650 and 872 in the Byzantine Empire. They called themselves Christians, and others gave them the name Paulicians. Some also have supposed that the Paulician name was derived from their obvious respect for the Apostle Paul. When one would look at their own writings, rather than what their enemies reported and revised about them, we find great difference.

Their real identification however, is that they were people who held the Scriptures as the only and highest authority for living, faith, and doctrine. Their own writings show this high honor for the Gospels, and the letters of the Apostles, and how strongly they adhered to BOTH the Old and New Testaments. This is very much the opposite of the Popery of Vatican Roma, and the Patriarchy of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The Paulicians had baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus Christ, failing to baptize in the name of the Trinity, which is so often reported by their enemies. According to their own writings, only adults 30 years of age or over were eligible for baptism, since this was the age Christ was baptized. The person that performed the baptism had to be pure of heart in order for the baptism to be considered valid.

The Paulicians strongly opposed any formalism, ritualism, and pomp. This obviously would make them enemies of both Vatican Roma and the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy. The empress Theodora killed, drowned, or hanged, more than 100,000 Paulicians in Grecian Armenia. The majority of the remaining Christians of this group who held to the Scriptures, and stood against ritualism, and against icons, and against saint veneration, and incense, and ritual priestcraft, had to flee from the area of Armenia. These Christians, named Paulicians by their enemies, were FALSELY called Manichaeans or Dualists.

By far the largest group of them, perhaps over 200,000 of them survived by fleeing to Europe. They fled out of the frying pan of the Greek Orthodox persecution, into the fires of Vatican Roma's persecutions.

The vast majority of those writing about the Paulicians seem never to have thought to look at the writings of the Paulicians themselves. Almost all of what I have seen written about them is from sources known to be the enemies of the Paulicians. However, their own writings are available, which prove the very common FALSE accusation that they were dualists, or Manichaeans. One of the very few reporting truth regarding the Paulicians, from the study of their own writings, rather than the writings of their enemies, was Fred Conybeare. An ancient Paulician manuscript, The Key of Truth, was discovered in Armenia in 1891. The translator, Fred Conybeare, said "I found NOTHING that savoured of these ancient heresies, of the Manicheans. Mani was anathematized by the Paulician Church." (The Key of Truth, Conybeare, 1898, pg. vi, cxxxi) "The Paulicians are not Dualists in any other sense than the New Testament was dualistic." (pg. xxxvi) "The Old Testament is not

rejected." (pg. xxxvii).

Just because certain Gnostics left some True Christian Church group and formed a heretical group, does NOT necessarily mean that the Christian group that they left, or which expelled them for heresy, was heretical. However, Vatican Roma is often found pinning the label of obvious Gnostic heretics, on the group that actually expelled them for their heresy.

By the early tenth century, the Paulicians had a common history as the Waldenses of being mercilessly persecuted by the Roman Church. The Waldenses were purified, and even strengthened, by the persecution of the Popes of Rome, and Patriarchs of Constantinople. The Waldenses were known for always having and holding, as the final authority, the Orthodox Scriptures. They adhered to the Scriptures which God had promised BOTH plenary inspiration, AND preservation. Through their protection, and preservation, and preaching of the More Sure Words of the Scriptures, they made many converts to true biblical faith. It was in the French and Swiss Alps that the Paulicians and Waldenses were most deeply rooted.

The faith of the Paulicians from their own writings is clearly seen as the same as that among the Waldenses. The Popes persecuted them doing everything possible to wipe out every literary trace of them. Yet, God obviously did not allow them to be destroyed, though all suffered persecution, and many did lose their life in defense of the Gospel, and their precious Scriptures, under the persecutions of Vatican Roma. The Waldense, Paulician, and Vaudois, Scriptures are traceable all the way back to the Antioch missionaries, as far back as 150 AD. There is astonishing perfect agreement to the KJV English Scriptures.

It is important to note that a specific founding goal of Rome's Jesuit Order is to destroy those Scriptures. Today essentially that means ONLY the KJV, which still remains outside of Rome's control and corruption, also known as Mesorite Old Testament text and the Erasmus New Testament text, or the RECEIVED TEXTS. Indeed that is a founding goal of the Jesuits, to destroy the Erasmus Text.

The Authentic Early Church assemblies of the Waldenses of the French Alps, were persecuted, and the majority exterminated by the merciless persecution of the corrupt Roman Church. Still a persecuted, remnant escaped, fled, and were hidden and preserved. Some of them even hid by way of an external show of conformity to the Roman Catholic Church. However, there remains a traceable remnant of the Paulicians, in the face of demonically driven persecution of Vatican Roma, in those regions of southern France, and the Swiss Alps, who were preserved as they protested against the tyranny of Rome. As honest history, not revised by Rome, always attests the True Church held the Scriptures that are amazingly the same as the KJV Holy Bible, as their rule of life, faith, doctrine, and practice. They would allow only the Scriptures to keep their beliefs pure and free from all the visions of the Gnostic theology. The Paulicians were falsely accused of being Manichaeans, and there has been much historic prejudice against them. However, history free of Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox revision, has allowed it to be proven that the Paulicians were not Manichaeans.

The Waldenses

Study of the doctrines and practices of the Waldenses finds that they made constant use of BOTH the Old and New Testaments. They obviously hated, what Jesus said He hates, that Nicolaitanes spirit of Vatican Roma. Rev 2:6 & 15. They had no clergy distinction from laymen by the way they lived, dressed, or in any other manner. They had NO councils, magisteriums, or rulings of doctors, rabbis, esteemed teachers, or seminaries. Their teachers were of equal rank. They obviously were against such. They obviously were diligent to ALL live according to the simplicity of the apostolic life. They opposed all image worship, which was practiced in Vatican Roma, and the so-called Eastern Orthodox Churches. They considered such things as miracle empowered relics as just a rubbish heap of bones and ashes, with less than any virtue, and in fact held them to be abominable. They held to the biblical doctrine and Orthodox view of the Trinity. Yes, for all the Yachidites, and so-called Oneness Brethren, the doctrine of the TRINITY is BIBLICAL, and traceable to the Apostles by the Scriptures, and such historically persecuted saints. They upheld the biblical view of fallen, unregenerate, depraved and sinful human nature. They recognized the sufferings of the Son of God as their ONLY, and blessed Hope of Salvation, through REPENTANCE, and FAITH, in Him ONLY.

The Vaudois are traceable to 150 AD, and most students of Church History would say existed within a few decades from apostolic times. They are sometimes called Waldenses, after the name of one of their famous leaders, Peter Waldo of Lyon, also known as Peter Valdès. It was the received opinion among the Waldenses that they were of ancient origin and truly apostolic. They claimed to possess apostolic authority by reason of the purity of their Scriptures, and the keys to binding and loosing.

Theodore Beza, the sixteenth century Reformer, and disciple of John Calvin, said, "As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian Church, since, they are those that have been upheld, as is abundantly manifest, by the wonderful providence of God, so that neither those endless storms and tempests by which the whole Christian world has been shaken for so many succeeding ages, and the Western part so miserably oppressed by the Bishop of Rome, falsely so called; nor those horrible persecutions which have been expressly raised against them, were able so far to prevail as to make them bend, or yield a voluntary subjection to the Roman tyranny and idolatry".

In study of the Waldenses, the most obvious thing, which one would observe about them, was holiness in their every day lifestyle. The Waldenses lived the profession of Peter that we ought to obey God rather than men. The characteristic that distinguished them was the principle that Scripture was their authority and how they sought to have all the Waldenses memorize the Holy Scriptures. To the Waldenses, long before the Reformation, they held the Holy Bible to be their living book. Though such might seem an impossibility, there were reports that there were those among the Waldenses who could quote the entire Holy Bible, both Old and New Testament from memory.

Another of the Waldenses distinguishing life principles was the importance of preaching. They believed it to be the right of ALL of the BELIEVING MEN to

exercise preaching of the Scriptures as their DUTY. Peter Waldo and his associates were preachers. Their fundamental principle basis was the Sermon on the Mount, rejection of oaths, the condemnation of purgatory, and condemnation of prayers for the dead. The Waldenses declared with Holy Boldness that cost many of them their very lives, that there are only two ways after death, the way to heaven and the way to hell.

The Waldensian movement touched many people, through many centuries. The Waldenses attracted converts from many sources, including a great number of Roman Catholics. The agreement of their French Scriptures, known as the Vaudois, with the KJV Holy Bible is both amazing and stunning proof of God's promise in Ps 12:6-7.

Peter was the Apostle to the Jews and did minister to the Churches of Asia. There is NO Scripture, or historic indication, outside of Vatican Roma's revised history and fables, that would suggest that the Apostle Peter ever set foot in Rome. That Church was planted and nurtured by Paul the apostle to the Gentiles. The expansion of Christianity in Asia was well advanced before the end of the first century. The Christian faith broke out across the borders of Rome into Asia. In the first century the true Christian faith may have spread as far as India. It is certain that it had spread east of the Euphrates and three hundred miles further east across the Tigris River, to the area of ancient Nineveh. By the end of the second century, missionary expansion had carried the Church as Far East as northern Afghanistan. It is abundantly clear from the book of Revelation that there had, by the end of the first century, been mass conversions of the Turks in Central Asia. The Seven Churches of Revelation, chapters two and three, were all located in Asia minor today known as Turkey.

Most have heard of St. Patrick and few know much of the history of this great man of God in the history of Ireland. The work of this great Gospel Preacher and his associates in Ireland is so great, in part, is because it was so very difficult. Patrick met head on against the old pagan religion of the Druids. All of the people of Ireland when Patrick began preaching the Gospel, very strongly believed in the Druids as pagan priests who mediated for them in the things of the spirit. We know of his difficulties, and disappointments from his writings, which were preserved. He resisted the powers of darkness in the priesthood of the Druids. He very obviously trusted the Lord Jesus, the Living Word, by the power of His Holy Spirit to convict people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. From the writings of Patrick and his disciples, he understood salvation to be 100% entirely by grace from God. Over the course of 60 years, Patrick had covered the entire country of Ireland preaching the Gospel. Patrick faithfully followed the instructions given by Paul to Timothy and Titus, in ordaining elders and establishing Churches. The best estimate is that by the end of those 60 years of preaching ministry in Ireland, that there were 365 Churches across Ireland. The Churches Patrick established were after the Biblical pattern where the people were SERVED by a pastor or elder. The authority of the pastor was by and according to Scripture that of SERVICE, rather than of being served by the people.

The monasteries which Patrick established were the opposite of those

established by Vatican Roma. Patrick's monasteries were very much the same as those of the Vaudois, and other early Christian Churches of northern Italy and southern France. There, men came aside for some years to be trained in the Scriptures, and to learn how to evangelize and to bring the Gospel to others. After their time in such a set apart place, these men married and had families. They were not forsaking the world for some retreat of inner holiness, but men, who having received the new life in Christ Jesus, responded to the call to evangelize others with the true Gospel. It was because of these monasteries and the Churches that Patrick founded in Ireland, that Ireland became known as the "Isle of Saints and Scholars".

There were more than 600 years of fruitfulness in the clarity of the Gospel message so faithfully preached by Patrick and those whom he disciplined, and those they disciplined after them. Over 600 years hallmarked by SCRIPTURE faithfulness. From those churches and missionary training centers called monasteries, missionaries were sent to Scotland, France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, and beyond. The SCRIPTURE, authority, and faithfulness of living the scriptures, were the hallmark of these later missionaries from Patrick's work as certainly as the Vaudois.

The Nicolatine spirit

The Papal Roman Church is historically almost the opposite and historically found persecuting these SCRIPTURE based true believers, preachers, and those who LIVED according to the Scriptures. Rome is wealthy almost beyond comprehension having great political power. Rome also exercised great power over all of the Churches except for those few empowered by God and their faithfulness to the Scriptures to escape and evade, Vatican Roma's persecutions of all who would not submit to her Nicolatine spirit of control.

The headquarters of the Nicolatine spirit, seeking control over Churches always seems to have been Rome. The Church in Rome is actually a very stunning contrast. The Church in Rome that Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, had started there in the first century, compared to what the Church in Rome came to be after Constantine, is truly stunning in comparison and contrast.

We know from the scriptures that Paul had disciplined some pastors who ministered by SERVING small congregations in Rome. The DIFFERENCES between what Paul started, and what Vatican Roma soon became, is most remarkable. The early Home Churches, under their pastors, looked to the authority of the Scriptures as received in the gospel accounts of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the writings of the Apostles. All authority was based upon the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

These early pastors and Churches had a true and living faith in God's grace through the Gospel. We see the evidence of this in the Scriptures themselves in the letter of Paul to the Romans. We see how the Gospel was faithfully treasured in those early Roman congregations. At the beginning of his letter, the Apostle commends the believers at Rome for their FAITH. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.

This level of approval is not often seen in the letters of the Apostle Paul. For two hundred fifty years, THE Faith of the Churches of Rome continued to be well known for their lifestyle conformity to the Scriptures, while they lived under extreme persecutions. Perhaps the most famous of the persecutions took place under Emperor Nero in 64 A.D. It would be certainly beyond imagination for those believers in Rome in the first 200-250 years after Christ, to think what the so-called Church of Rome has become. No way could such persecuted, SCRIPTURE living believers, imagine the idea of a Most Holy Roman Pontiff. They would all shout, BLASPHEMY, in the face of anyone referring to the Pope, or any man, as The Holy Father. It would be impossible for such SCRIPTURE living believers, to think how the belief in rituals, and priestcraft, could confer the grace of the Holy Spirit. None of the believers who were part of the Church that was in Rome for the first 250 years after Christ, could imagine someone who claimed to be a Christian would venerate saints, or pray the Hail Mary, or pray to the Queen of Heaven, or any saint. They knew what Jeremiah had said in 7:18, and 44:17-28. Every single one of them would be astonished at what a Mother of Harlots the big Church of Rome would become.

The Apostle John was actually given Revelation, by the Lord, to see what the Church in Rome would become, and was equally shocked by what he saw. John wrote: So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

Scripture believers know the pyramid which the Lord Jesus Christ established is up side down, compared to what the Roman Catholic Church formed, since its first Pope, Constantine, established himself as the first Pontifus Maximus. Yes, the Roman Pope's title, Supreme Pontiff, first entered church history by way of Constantine in the fourth century, and means high priest of PAGANISM. Christians located in Rome for the first three centuries could not imagine Vatican Roma's top heavy Nicolaitane hierarchy. How such a system of layperson to priest, from priest to bishop, from bishop to archbishop, from archbishop to cardinal, and cardinal to pope, would have been to them rejected as the abomination which the scriptures teach it to be. The Lord HATES such Nicolaitane hierarchy according to Rev 2:6-15, and in Matt 23:8-11 said – But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call NO man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT.

The Roman state sponsored persecution of Christians ended in 313 A.D. It was

at that time that the emperors, Constantine in the West, and Licinius in the East, proclaimed the Edict of Milan. This decree established the policy of religious freedom for both paganism, and Christianity. No real truthful Pope roots go any farther back in history than the first Pope Constantine. The claims of Vatican Roma, or Eastern Orthodox of apostolic succession are 100% FRAUD, and history revision.

Constantine set up four vice-prefects to govern the Roman Empire. Under Constantine's authority the Christian world was to be governed from four great cities, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome. Over each city there was set a Patriarch, who governed all the elders of his domain, which was later to be called a Diocese. Constantine wanted the Christian Churches to be organized like the government of the Empire.

By what Constantine established, the respect and status of the various Christian elders directly related to the status of their city. Since Rome was the most powerful, and prestigious city in the world at the time, contrary to the scriptures, and in accord with the respecting of persons, and according to the way of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Rome was destined to have the most prominent, and influential bishop. The bishop of Rome, according to the ways of the world, and contrary to the Scriptures, was to Lord it over the rest of the Christian world. Gradually the honor and respect given to the bishop of Rome grew, and these bishops going further and further away from the Scriptures, wanted, and would eventually, require worship from the bishops of other cities. By the end of the fourth century the bishops of Rome began to demand recognition for their exalted position.

By the fifth century the true Gospel was being very effectively subverted by Vatican Roma. In place of the Gospel, and the authority of the Scriptures, and salvation by grace through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, now it was by the rituals and ceremonies, which Vatican Roma had for sale. Ask any catholic. The real difference between a high mass and a low mass, is the higher price that one has to pay for mention in a high mass, in relation to the price that one has to pay for mention in a low mass. Want to purchase some early out time from some departed loved one to shorten their time in purgatory? Vatican Roma has any indulgence for sale, if you will just give them the money.

By the fifth century Vatican Roma had effectively replaced the true worship of God, and the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit. Vatican Roma established the Cadillac version of religion, in terms of formal rites and idolatry. Pagan practices were given Christian terms, to put a false Christian covering on very pagan practices such as the celebration of the winter solstice, and spring equinox. Yes, those celebrations had Christian terms applied to them. Most would be offended by the truth that the celebrations of the birthday of Tamuz at the winter solstice, and the celebration of the fertility goddess at the spring equinox, are being done in their Church. Dose the application of Christian terms to such pagan celebrations make them pleasing to the Lord? One only has to look at what Jeremiah had to say in Chapter 10 to know the answer.

Vatican Roma's gospel is another gospel, very far removed from the true

Gospel and Scripture authority, which was known by the persecuted Churches of Rome, before the first Roman Catholic Pope Constantine. The true Gospel, which was preached and lived BEFORE Constantine founded the Roman State Religion, had produced an internal unity among the believers. However, after the first Pope Constantine, the Roman State Church of paganism with Christian terms, had substituted ritualism for the Gospel. The insistence was now on an external, visible unity for the Church.

The clergy and laity division of the Nicolaitane spirit of religious control, which the Lord HATES, became the base and hallmark of what was to become the Roman Catholic Church. The corruption produced a Nicolaitane hierarchy of the ruling clergy. By the end of the fifth century, a ritual performing priesthood, where the priest presumed to mediate between God and men, had replaced the ministry of a Pastor Servant. The contrary to scripture nature of Vatican Roma is most clearly seen in the light of this Word of God – 1 Tim 2:5 – For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Thus, Vatican Roma's priestcraft ritual, by the end of the fifth century, had replaced the Preachers of the Gospel who had taught the Scripture.

IT IS HOPED THAT EVERYONE CAN SEE THE GREAT FRAUD AT THE ROOT OF ALL APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION CLAIMS OF BOTH ROME, AND THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH. The Church was no more the fellowship of believers under Christ Jesus, united by the Gospel, the absolute authority of Scripture, true worship, and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now, it was all external hypocritical religious showmanship. Now, Vatican Roma controlled, as an institution dominated by a hierarchy of priests and bishops.

Within 100 years after Constantine had stopped the state sponsored persecution of the Christians, Vatican Roma had effectively replaced the true worship of God, and the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Word of God. Vatican Roma made the state sponsored form of Christianity to be outward show and ritualism. Vatican Roma had established a form of paganism cloaked in Christian terms. It was a comfortable religion that could easily accommodate the pagans, complete with formal rites, holidays, and idolatry. Statues of Jupiter or Zeus became statues of St. Peter. The statues of the Queen of Heaven became statues of Mother Mary with baby Jesus. The vast majority of pagans had similar forms and rituals, and the adoption of Christian terms for these things made the religion tolerable for all except a very FEW PEOPLE OF THE BOOK.

About this same time, the city of Rome began to be attacked by the Goths. In 410 Alaric the Goth captured Rome but did not stay to rule. Attila the Hun then conquered Rome in 452. Pope Leo somehow influenced Attila to stop his advance and leave Italy. No one knows for sure if Attila had just had enough war and chose to enjoy the spoils of his conquests. However, everyone knows that pope Leo took credit for saving Rome. Then Leo was able to use the same great persuasive power to get the leader of the Vandals, who also captured Rome after Attila, to stop killing the Romans and leave.

Pope Leo The Great represents a strong testimony to the capabilities of Vatican Roma in intrigue. Almost a millennium later the Jesuit order would be

founded to give a quantum leap to Vatican Roma's already proven capability of intrigue. The significance of Leo's pontificate lies in the fact of his assertion of the universal episcopate of the Roman bishop, which comes out in his letters, and still more in his ninety-six extant orations. This assertion is commonly referred to as the doctrine of Petrine supremacy. Was Pope Leo The Great truly a Christian, and professor of THE Faith, and Doctrine of the Apostles? YES, on the basis of his most famous Tome, letter 28, to Flavian, Leo gave an impeccable defense of the Gospel from which modern popes could learn much to forsake their shipwrecking, and subversion of THE Faith.

There was a vacancy for the position of Roman Emperor. A vacuum had been established because the Imperial leadership had left Rome. None of the barbarian leaders that conquered Rome wanted to take the position of ruler of Rome, to reside in Rome. In spite of the profound truth to the contrary, given by the Lord in Luke 16:13, No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Leo seemed to act as if he thought he could do what the Lord said was impossible.

Leo, as the bishop of Rome, saw the opportunity that was presented to him by the situation of Rome being attacked by Attila. God only knows the intrigue that convinced Attila and the other conquerors of Rome not to set up a throne there, or at least put one of their Generals on a throne there.

Augustine had already written some things very pleasing to the popes, that they were intended to rule over the world for Christ. Leo thought he was just the right pope to run the millennial kingdom for Christ. Leo loudly proclaimed his vested and sole right to bind and loose in place of Christ, and finally declared his right to the throne of the exiled Roman emperor, as the position from which the pope should rule the world in place of Christ. From the throne of Rome, Pope Leo claimed to have the seat of Christ's universal kingdom.

Vatican Roma in a very real way is a continuation of the iron legs of the Roman Empire in the visions of the prophet Daniel, and a certain part of the Fourth Beast of which Daniel did speak. By way of Vatican Roma, the beast that was, and is not, YET IS. The Roman Empire did not really end. The Roman Empire simply changed its form. The pope became Caesar's successor.

When Constantine moved his capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330 A.D. it gave a tremendous increase to the power of the bishop of Rome. The ecclesiastical contest that had been going on for some time between Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Rome, regarding which was the greatest, was decided by that move of Constantine. The struggle now for ecclesiastical dominance was between Rome and the new Constantinople. The barbarian invasions of the Western Roman Empire were the best thing that ever happened to build up the power of the Roman popes. The pope, and only the pope, according to the pope, could help Rome against the threats of the Alamanni, Franks, Visigoths, Burgundians, Suevi, Anglo-Saxons, Lombards, Heruli, Vandals, and the Ostrogoths.

The Emperor of Rome now lived in Constantinople. It was Clovis, King of the

Franks, who was the first of the barbarian princes to accept the faith proposed by the Church of Vatican Roma. To fulfill a vow that he had made on the battlefield when he defeated the Allemanni, Clovis was baptized in 496 A. D. in the Cathedral of Rheims. The Bishop of Rome gave him the title of the eldest son of the Church.

Then, in the sixth century, the Burgundians of Gaul, the Visigoths of Spain, the Suevi of Portugal, and the Anglo-Saxons of Britain, all also joined themselves to the religion of the Bishop of Rome. These barbaric kings and their peoples accepted easily the pagan religion of Rome, because they got to keep all of their pagan celebrations, with just some new Christianized terms. Rome did NOT now have the very narrow way of the Scriptures, and the Gospel. Rome was their same beloved pagan priestcraft rituals with Christian terminology. Vatican Roma's religion was, in fact, very little different in form and substantially the same as their own beloved pagan worship.

In terms of the power of Vatican Roma, all of these conversions represented a quantum leap in the power of the Bishop of Rome. These nations more easily accepted the religion of Rome, because this city had traditionally been the seat of authority of the Caesars, who had previously ruled them with general prosperity. The Bishops of Rome assumed the position as heir to the Caesars, just as Constantine the Caesar, was the first Supreme Pontiff, meaning high priest of paganism, which is a title the pope maintains to the present day.

Rome had long been the seat of power for the Empire. Now Rome would be the place for the high priest of paganism to exercise his authority. More and more Western nations accepted the position of authority of the Bishop of Rome. Emperor Justinian I (527-565), established the dominance of the Bishop of Rome by bringing his ecclesiastical edicts and regulations under the control of civil law.

Justinian's decree set the legal foundation for ruling power by the Bishops of Rome. Justinian used forced ecclesiastical unity to strengthen his political position. As the head of the Empire's Church, the Bishop of Rome took the title of POPE, to be the one who would be in the power position seat of the Bishop of Rome. As pope, the Bishop of Rome could use the sword of the Empire's armies given to him by the decree of Justinian.

Before the sixth century, Christian Church unity came by the moral persuasion of the Gospel. The conviction of the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures alone brought salvation to such as should be saved. These genuinely saved individuals would be salt and light to their civil societies. However, the application of Christian terms to pagan rituals and celebrations, and departure from Scriptural basis of authority, and adoption of carnal, pagan ethics employed by the Bishops of Rome, could certainly only produce the same old worldly corruption of Lucifer's, antichrist, Nicolaitane, controlling spirit of corruption.

As expected, the Bishop of Rome soon enough wanted to reign like a king with worldly pomp, and worldly power. The very thing that the Lord had warned against was now happening. The very Nicolaitane spirit the Lord said that He HATES was now going to rule. The religion of Vatican Roma quickly became the

exact opposite of the instruction of the Lord in Mat 20:25-28:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

History has shown the Vatican Roman Popes to PERSONIFY THE OPPOSITE if the clear teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the pope spoke as a DRAGON on July 10, 2007, maybe it is time for Roman Catholics and every one else bowing the knee to the pope on Sunday, in pre-trib lala land to DO according to 2 Cor 13:5 and Rev 18: 4: Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

I believe that it is time that it be said with all holy boldness that the SAINTS must prepare for 42 months of war with the antichrist host, and an unprecedented holocaust lead by the antichrist false prophet pope. The pre-trib lala landers are about to receive the shock of their life, realizing the FRAUD of Vatican Roma, and the Abominable lies of Dispensational Theology, originally financed by Illuminati Satanists and subsequently promoted from within by the Jesuits.

If you want convincing documentation on this entire subject of True History Since the time of the apostles, and how wide and firm is the connection of the antichrist with Vatican Roma just click this for the proof:

The Secret of Secret Societies

National or enforced religions have never changed the heart and lives of mankind. People are born destitute of spirit and and true spiritual life, and therefore all must be born again. Sadly, in these last days of great apostasy and strong delusion the majority who once testified of a born again experience are in the most serious need of being born again, AGAIN. Worse yet they do NOT perceive this great need and some would dare to attack the affirmation of the grace of God found and evidenced in repentance that being born again, AGAIN, represents as their only hope.

The FRAUD, history revision, fallacies, intrigue, priestcraft, and Nicolaitane spirit is not what is needed in such a time as this. The huge Roman Empire brought in some political unity, but no light and hope.

However, when the Lord Jesus Christ came, for the FEW who would REALLY RECEIVE HIM, to them gave He the Power to BECOME sons of God. He ONLY, and NO Pope, or priestcraft worker of any sort among men can save and give everlasting life. The death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the the greatest event the history of the world. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold it, and the Gospel of the New Testament proclaimed it.

Beginning at Jerusalem, the Apostles proclaimed Him as the author of everlasting life. From among a people who were despised by all nations, came these Apostles with the proclamation and demonstration of the mercy and power of God. THE Gospel, the only TRUE Gospel, and doctrine of the Apostles, invited all men to receive new, abundant, eternal LIFE. Greeks and Romans, slaves and slave owners, men and women. From from across the known world, many came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. REPENTANCE and Faith IN Him gave them new life in Him to the glory of God the Father Almighty in the Name of Jesus. People from all of the known world, as far as India to the East, Africa to the South, and Ireland to the West, received the light of life and freedom from the bondage to Satan with THE Gospel by the conviction of the Holy Sprit through the SCRIPTURES. Yes, the Word of God was preached in the Power of the Holy Ghost.

THE Gospel, very definite article, not another gospel of Vatican Roma was preached in the power of God and not by the force of man. That gave new life, even abundant, and eternal life, and a Blessed Hope. The Gospel proclaimed that salvation comes from Him alone by His grace ONLY by Repentance and Faith in Him as The Lord.

The Gospels of the Lord Jesus Christ and the written letters of the Apostles settled the great questions of doctrine, being BOTH the Doctrine of Messiah and the Doctrine of the Apostles, and the only LEGITIMATE claim to true or real apostolic authority or apostolic succession.

The claim of Vatican Roma to apostolic succession is 100% FRAUD. The fraud is based upon history revision, and wresting of the Scriptures. The same may be said of so-called Orthodox churches, not to mention such Luciferian frauds as Islam, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Yes, that also includes Judaism unless such a so-called form of Judaism would proclaim Yeshua Messiah as the I AM who taught Torah to moses, being known and exalted as BOTH Creator and Redeemer.

There was nothing arrogant or high and mighty as the apostles addressed the churches. The unity in the Lord is clearly seen when in the Acts of the Apostles, we see such expressions as – The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings unto the brethren. In the face of great persecution by the middle of the second century true history will show that the authentic Church had the true Gospel of God's grace. The ONLY True Gospel had been preached to the western end of Europe and even to the eastern end of Asia.

The ONLY TRUE Faith, the Faith of Abraham, that God would provide Himself, as THE Lamb of God, MUST be in perfect agreement with the scriptures, of BOTH the Old and New Testaments. Today that God promised PERFECT and only Holy Bible is found today in plain English, in the Authorized, KJV, which I like to call the King Jesus Version Holy Bible. The Scriptures and ONLY the Scriptures is the means by which the believer enters into the salvation purchased by the sacrifice of THE Messiah as the Lamb of God. The Lord God is almighty and He has provided the good news of THE Gospel, for all who are dead in trespasses and sins. This we do KNOW – that the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Some, like Roman Catholics, believe on their church, their pope, their leader, their sacraments, and their rituals. The Roman Catholic Church is the Cadillac of religion when it comes to having such things for sale. THEY WILL PERISH IN THE BOSSOM OF THE MOTHER OF ALL HARLOT RELIGIONS.

By nature we are all born sinners and children of wrath. We are all born rebels at enmity against God and in rebellion against His Word. We are all born rebels at enmity against the Lord God and His Word. The perfect and just law of God has condemned us all. The Lord God is not responsible to rescue any of us from His just wrath which every one of us deserves. Despite our sin nature and personal sin, the Lord God has given the PERFECT sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son for all TRULY born again BELIEVERS, by His Spirit of Truth and Holiness, True believers IN His WORD. God alone is Holy. All sin is an offense to the Holiness of God. Only God can give the terms by which the offense to His Holiness can be satisfied. ALL simply MUST turn to God in REPENTANCE and Faith IN The Lord Jesus Christ, and Him alone, for the salvation that ONLY His sacrifice, and His Faith can give by His Word, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Salvation MUST be based ONLY on Christ's death and resurrection. One can NOT find any hope of salvation by faith in a church, or sacraments of a church, or any ritual of any church. Faith must be of, by, and through Him only, with NO other mediator allowed in His place. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Those trusting in the Roman Catholic Church, the religion of Islam, the Mormon Church, Hinduism, Buddhism, or any other church or religion need to be told in truth and in love that they are perishing. We are his witnesses with the TRUE Gospel in the full context of the KJV Holy Bible rightly divided, that may make the true claim without fraud, to true apostolic succession. They were sent out to make disciples, disciplined ones IN the Word of God. We therefore are of that succession to be disciples and make disciples IN the Word of God. Those trusting in any church are really just like the lost Pharisees who had opportunity to hear directly from the Lord and rejected the One and ONLY Messiah. The Jesus problem was expressed most explicitly in John 8:24, – I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye shall die in your sins. Those who hold faith in a church, an organization, sacraments, rituals, or traditions, are DENYING THE PERSON OF THE LORD.

Eph 2:8-10 and Titus 3:5-7 says it so simple direct and clear – For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but

according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

If you are trusting in the Roman Catholic Church, the Mormon Church, the Watchtower, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or any religion, or church, or organization and its rituals, you are LOST and without the Blessed Hope of eternal life.

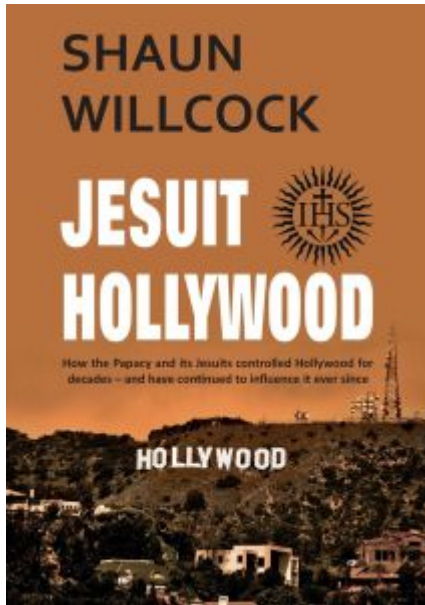
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray Psalm 83 every day. Only be very strong and of good courage. Stay IN the Word.

[The October 2023 Israeli Palestinian War](#)



The modern state of Israel is a creation of the Rothschild family and Hamas is a creation of Israel.

[Jesuit Hollywood](#)



The influence of the Jesuits over Hollywood during its so-called “Golden Age”. Evidence of the way in which the Roman Catholic institution pursues its never-ending objective of conquering the world, in particular what could be called the “Protestant world”, by seeking to harness and make use of the most powerful entertainment medium the world has ever known: the movie industry.