

The Waldenses

A scenic view of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a steep, rocky hillside is covered in lush green grass and small yellow wildflowers. A large, light-colored rock formation sits on the slope. In the middle ground, a stone building with a dark, gabled roof stands on a grassy patch. To its right, there are ruins of other stone structures, including a partially collapsed wall. The background shows a dense forest of green trees covering the mountainside under a clear sky.

**Historical Perspectives from the
Writings of Ellen G White**

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“We will not be able to meet the trials of this time without God. We are not to have the courage and fortitude of martyrs of old until brought into the position they were in...”

-- Our High Calling April 19 p. 125

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The Great Controversy

Ch. 4 – The Waldenses

by Ellen G. White

Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished. In every age there were witnesses for God--men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. They were branded as heretics, their motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated. Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come.

The history of God's people during the ages of darkness that followed upon Rome's supremacy is written in heaven, but they have little place in human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubt, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favorable for

preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romanists from carrying out their purpose.

No church within the limits of Romish jurisdiction was long left undisturbed in the enjoyment of freedom of conscience. No sooner had the papacy obtained power than she stretched out her arms to crush all that refused to acknowledge her sway, and one after another the churches submitted to her dominion.

In Great Britain primitive Christianity had very early taken root. The gospel received by the Britons in the first centuries was then uncorrupted by Romish apostasy. Persecution from pagan emperors, which extended even to these far-off shores, was the only gift that the first churches of Britain received from Rome. Many of the Christians, fleeing from persecution in England, found refuge in Scotland; thence the truth was carried to Ireland, and in all these countries it was received with gladness.

When the Saxons invaded Britain, heathenism gained control. The conquerors disdained to be instructed by their slaves, and the Christians were forced to retreat to the mountains and the wild moors. Yet the light, hidden for a time, continued to burn. In Scotland, a century later, it shone out with a brightness that extended to far-distant lands. From Ireland came the pious Columba and his colaborers, who, gathering about them the scattered believers on the lonely island of Iona, made this the center of their missionary labors. Among these evangelists was an observer of the Bible Sabbath, and thus this truth was introduced among the people. A school was established at Iona, from which missionaries went out, not only to Scotland and England, but to Germany, Switzerland, and even Italy.

But Rome had fixed her eyes on Britain, and resolved to bring it under her supremacy. In the sixth century her missionaries undertook the conversion of the heathen Saxons.

They were received with favor by the proud barbarians, and they induced many thousands to profess the Romish faith. As the work progressed, the papal leaders and their converts encountered the primitive Christians. A striking contrast was presented. The latter were simple, humble, and Scriptural in character, doctrine, and manners, while the former manifested the superstition, pomp, and arrogance of popery. The emissary of Rome demanded that these Christian churches acknowledge the supremacy of the sovereign pontiff. The Britons meekly replied that they desired to love all men, but that the pope was not entitled to supremacy in the church, and they could render to him only that submission which was due to every follower of Christ. Repeated attempts were made to secure their allegiance to Rome; but these humble Christians, amazed at the pride displayed by her emissaries, steadfastly replied that they knew no other master than Christ. Now the true spirit of the papacy was revealed. Said the Romish leader: "If you will not receive brethren who bring you peace, you shall receive enemies who will bring you war. If you will not unite with us in showing the Saxons the way of life, you shall receive from them the stroke of death."--J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, b. 17, ch. 2. These were no idle threats. War, intrigue, and deception were employed against these witnesses for a Bible faith, until the churches of Britain were destroyed, or forced to submit to the authority of the pope.

In lands beyond the jurisdiction of Rome there existed for many centuries bodies of Christians who remained almost wholly free from papal corruption. They were surrounded by heathenism and in the lapse of ages were affected by its errors; but they continued to regard the Bible as the only rule of faith and adhered to many of its truths. These Christians believed in the perpetuity of the law of God and observed the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. Churches that held to this faith and practice existed in Central Africa and among the Armenians of Asia.

But of those who resisted the encroachments of the papal power, the Waldenses stood foremost. In the very land where popery had fixed its seat, there its falsehood and corruption were most steadfastly resisted. For centuries the churches of Piedmont maintained their independence; but the time came at last when Rome insisted upon their submission. After ineffectual struggles against her tyranny, the leaders of these churches reluctantly acknowledged the supremacy of the power to which the whole world seemed to pay homage. There were some, however, who refused to yield to the authority of pope or prelate. They were determined to maintain their allegiance to God and to preserve the purity and simplicity of their faith. A separation took place. Those who adhered to the ancient faith now withdrew; some, forsaking their native Alps, raised the banner of truth in foreign lands; others retreated to the secluded glens and rocky fastnesses of the mountains, and there preserved their freedom to worship God.

The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity. But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church. Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. They contended for the faith of the apostolic church,—“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3. “The church in the wilderness,” and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world.

Among the leading causes that had led to the separation of the true church from Rome was the hatred of the latter toward the

Bible Sabbath. As foretold by prophecy, the papal power cast down the truth to the ground. The law of God was trampled in the dust, while the traditions and customs of men were exalted. The churches that were under the rule of the papacy were early compelled to honor the Sunday as a holy day. Amid the prevailing error and superstition, many, even of the true people of God, became so bewildered that while they observed the Sabbath, they refrained from labor also on the Sunday. But this did not satisfy the papal leaders. They demanded not only that Sunday be hallowed, but that the Sabbath be profaned; and they denounced in the strongest language those who dared to show it honor. It was only by fleeing from the power of Rome that any could obey God's law in peace.

The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution. They declared the Church of Rome to be the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the peril of their lives they stood up to resist her corruptions. While, under the pressure of long-continued persecution, some compromised their faith, little by little yielding its distinctive principles, others held fast the truth. Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honor.

Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains--in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed--the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the

truth maintained the ancient faith.

God had provided for His people a sanctuary of awful grandeur, befitting the mighty truths committed to their trust. To those faithful exiles the mountains were an emblem of the immutable righteousness of Jehovah. They pointed their children to the heights towering above them in unchanging majesty, and spoke to them of Him with whom there is no variableness nor shadow of turning, whose word is as enduring as the everlasting hills. God had set fast the mountains and girded them with strength; no arm but that of Infinite Power could move them out of their place. In like manner He had established His law, the foundation of His government in heaven and upon earth. The arm of man might reach his fellow men and destroy their lives; but that arm could as readily uproot the mountains from their foundations, and hurl them into the sea, as it could change one precept of the law of Jehovah, or blot out one of His promises to those who do His will. In their fidelity to His law, God's servants should be as firm as the unchanging hills.

The mountains that girded their lowly valleys were a constant witness to God's creative power, and a never-failing assurance of His protecting care. Those pilgrims learned to love the silent symbols of Jehovah's presence. They indulged no repining because of the hardships of their lot; they were never lonely amid the mountain solitudes. They thanked God that He had provided for them an asylum from the wrath and cruelty of men. They rejoiced in their freedom to worship before Him. Often when pursued by their enemies, the strength of the hills proved a sure defense. From many a lofty cliff they chanted the praise of God, and the armies of Rome could not silence their songs of thanksgiving.

Pure, simple, and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest

childhood the youth were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory. Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament. Thoughts of God were associated alike with the sublime scenery of nature and with the humble blessings of daily life. Little children learned to look with gratitude to God as the giver of every favor and every comfort.

Parents, tender and affectionate as they were, loved their children too wisely to accustom them to self-indulgence. Before them was a life of trial and hardship, perhaps a martyr's death. They were educated from childhood to endure hardness, to submit to control, and yet to think and act for themselves. Very early they were taught to bear responsibilities, to be guarded in speech, and to understand the wisdom of silence. One indiscreet word let fall in the hearing of their enemies might imperil not only the life of the speaker, but the lives of hundreds of his brethren; for as wolves hunting their prey did the enemies of truth pursue those who dared to claim freedom of religious faith.

The Waldenses had sacrificed their worldly prosperity for the truth's sake, and with persevering patience they toiled for their bread. Every spot of tillable land among the mountains was carefully improved; the valleys and the less fertile hillsides were made to yield their increase. Economy and severe self-denial formed a part of the education which the children received as their only legacy. They were taught that God designs life to be a discipline, and that their wants could be supplied only by personal labor, by forethought, care, and faith. The process was laborious and wearisome, but it was wholesome, just what man needs in his fallen state, the school which God has provided for his training and development. While the youth were inured to toil and hardship, the culture of the intellect was not neglected. They were taught that all their powers belonged to God, and that all were to be improved and developed for His service.

The Vaudois churches, in their purity and simplicity, resembled the church of apostolic times. Rejecting the supremacy of the pope and prelate, they held the Bible as the only supreme, infallible authority. Their pastors, unlike the lordly priests of Rome, followed the example of their Master, who “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” They fed the flock of God, leading them to the green pastures and living fountains of His holy word. Far from the monuments of human pomp and pride the people assembled, not in magnificent churches or grand cathedrals, but beneath the shadow of the mountains, in the Alpine valleys, or, in time of danger, in some rocky stronghold, to listen to the words of truth from the servants of Christ. The pastors not only preached the gospel, but they visited the sick, catechized the children, admonished the erring, and labored to settle disputes and promote harmony and brotherly love. In times of peace they were sustained by the freewill offerings of the people; but, like Paul the tentmaker, each learned some trade or profession by which, if necessary, to provide for his own support.

From their pastors the youth received instruction. While attention was given to branches of general learning, the Bible was made the chief study. The Gospels of Matthew and John were committed to memory, with many of the Epistles. They were employed also in copying the Scriptures. Some manuscripts contained the whole Bible, others only brief selections, to which some simple explanations of the text were added by those who were able to expound the Scriptures. Thus were brought forth the treasures of truth so long concealed by those who sought to exalt themselves above God.

By patient, untiring labor, sometimes in the deep, dark caverns of the earth, by the light of torches, the Sacred Scriptures were written out, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. Thus the work went on, the revealed will of God shining out like pure gold; how much brighter, clearer, and more powerful because of the trials undergone for its sake only those could realize who were engaged

in the work. Angels from heaven surrounded these faithful workers.

Satan had urged on the papal priests and prelates to bury the word of truth beneath the rubbish of error, heresy, and superstition; but in a most wonderful manner it was preserved uncorrupted through all the ages of darkness. It bore not the stamp of man, but the impress of God. Men have been unwearied in their efforts to obscure the plain, simple meaning of the Scriptures, and to make them contradict their own testimony; but like the ark upon the billowy deep, the word of God outrides the storms that threaten it with destruction. As the mine has rich veins of gold and silver hidden beneath the surface, so that all must dig who would discover its precious stores, so the Holy Scriptures have treasures of truth that are revealed only to the earnest, humble, prayerful seeker. God designed the Bible to be a lessonbook to all mankind, in childhood, youth, and manhood, and to be studied through all time. He gave His word to men as a revelation of Himself. Every new truth discerned is a fresh disclosure of the character of its Author. The study of the Scriptures is the means divinely ordained to bring men into closer connection with their Creator and to give them a clearer knowledge of His will. It is the medium of communication between God and man.

While the Waldenses regarded the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom, they were not blind to the importance of a contact with the world, a knowledge of men and of active life, in expanding the mind and quickening the perceptions. From their schools in the mountains some of the youth were sent to institutions of learning in the cities of France or Italy, where was a more extended field for study, thought, and observation than in their native Alps. The youth thus sent forth were exposed to temptation, they witnessed vice, they encountered Satan's wily agents, who urged upon them the most subtle heresies and the most dangerous deceptions. But their education from childhood

had been of a character to prepare them for all this.

“They secretly carried about with them copies of the Bible, in whole or in part.”

WALDENSIAN MISSIONARIES



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In the schools whither they went, they were not to make confidants of any. Their garments were so prepared as to conceal their greatest treasure--the precious manuscripts of the Scriptures. These, the fruit of months and years of toil, they carried with them, and whenever they could do so without exciting suspicion, they cautiously placed some portion in the way of those whose hearts seemed open to receive the truth. From their mother's knee the Waldensian youth had been trained with this purpose in view; they understood their work and faithfully performed it. Converts to the true faith were won in these institutions of learning, and frequently its principles were found to be permeating the entire school; yet the papal leaders could not, by the closest inquiry, trace the so-called corrupting heresy to its source.

The spirit of Christ is a missionary spirit. The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Saviour. Such was the spirit of the Vaudois Christians. They felt that God required more of them than merely to preserve the truth in its purity in their own churches; that a solemn responsibility rested upon them to let their light shine forth to those who were in darkness; by the mighty power of God's word they sought to break the bondage which Rome had imposed. The Vaudois ministers were trained as missionaries, everyone who expected to enter the ministry being required first to gain an experience as an evangelist. Each was to serve three years in some mission field before taking charge of a church at home. This service, requiring at the outset self-denial and sacrifice, was a fitting introduction to the pastor's life in those times that tried men's souls. The youth who received ordination to the sacred office saw before them, not the prospect of earthly wealth and glory, but a life of toil and danger, and possibly a martyr's fate. The missionaries went out two and two, as Jesus sent forth His disciples. With each young man was usually associated a man of age and experience, the youth being under the guidance of his companion, who was held responsible for his training, and whose instruction he was required to heed. These

colaborers were not always together, but often met for prayer and counsel, thus strengthening each other in the faith.

To have made known the object of their mission would have ensured its defeat; therefore they carefully concealed their real character. Every minister possessed a knowledge of some trade or profession, and the missionaries prosecuted their work under cover of a secular calling. Usually they chose that of merchant or peddler. "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."-- Wylie, b. 1, ch. 7. All the while their hearts were uplifted to God for wisdom to present a treasure more precious than gold or gems. They secretly carried about with them copies of the Bible, in whole or in part; and whenever an opportunity was presented, they called the attention of their customers to these manuscripts. Often an interest to read God's word was thus awakened, and some portion was gladly left with those who desired to receive it.

The work of these missionaries began in the plains and valleys at the foot of their own mountains, but it extended far beyond these limits. With naked feet and in garments coarse and travel-stained as were those of their Master, they passed through great cities and penetrated to distant lands. Everywhere they scattered the precious seed. Churches sprang up in their path, and the blood of martyrs witnessed for the truth. The day of God will reveal a rich harvest of souls garnered by the labors of these faithful men. Veiled and silent, the word of God was making its way through Christendom and meeting a glad reception in the homes and hearts of men.

To the Waldenses the Scriptures were not merely a record of God's dealings with men in the past, and a revelation of the responsibilities and duties of the present, but an unfolding of the perils and glories of the future. They believed that the end of all

things was not far distant, and as they studied the Bible with prayer and tears they were the more deeply impressed with its precious utterances and with their duty to make known to others its saving truths. They saw the plan of salvation clearly revealed in the sacred pages, and they found comfort, hope, and peace in believing in Jesus. As the light illuminated their understanding and made glad their hearts, they longed to shed its beams upon those who were in the darkness of papal error.

They saw that under the guidance of pope and priest, multitudes were vainly endeavoring to obtain pardon by afflicting their bodies for the sin of their souls. Taught to trust to their good works to save them, they were ever looking to themselves, their minds dwelling upon their sinful condition, seeing themselves exposed to the wrath of God, afflicting soul and body, yet finding no relief. Thus conscientious souls were bound by the doctrines of Rome. Thousands abandoned friends and kindred, and spent their lives in convent cells. By oft-repeated fasts and cruel scourgings, by midnight vigils, by prostration for weary hours upon the cold, damp stones of their dreary abode, by long pilgrimages, by humiliating penance and fearful torture, thousands vainly sought to obtain peace of conscience. Oppressed with a sense of sin, and haunted with the fear of God's avenging wrath, many suffered on, until exhausted nature gave way, and without one ray of light or hope they sank into the tomb.

The Waldenses longed to break to these starving souls the bread of life, to open to them the messages of peace in the promises of God, and to point them to Christ as their only hope of salvation. The doctrine that good works can atone for the transgression of God's law they held to be based upon falsehood. Reliance upon human merit intercepts the view of Christ's infinite love. Jesus died as a sacrifice for man because the fallen race can do nothing to recommend themselves to God. The merits of a crucified and risen Saviour are the foundation of the Christian's faith. The dependence of the soul upon Christ is as real, and its connection

with Him must be as close, as that of a limb to the body, or of a branch to the vine.

The teachings of popes and priests had led men to look upon the character of God, and even of Christ, as stern, gloomy, and forbidding. The Saviour was represented as so far devoid of sympathy with man in his fallen state that the mediation of priests and saints must be invoked. Those whose minds had been enlightened by the word of God longed to point these souls to Jesus as their compassionate, loving Saviour, standing with outstretched arms, inviting all to come to Him with their burden of sin, their care and weariness. They longed to clear away the obstructions which Satan had piled up that men might not see the promises, and come directly to God, confessing their sins, and obtaining pardon and peace.

Eagerly did the Vaudois missionary unfold to the inquiring mind the precious truths of the gospel. Cautiously he produced the carefully written portions of the Holy Scriptures. It was his greatest joy to give hope to the conscientious, sin-stricken soul, who could see only a God of vengeance, waiting to execute justice. With quivering lip and tearful eye did he, often on bended knees, open to his brethren the precious promises that reveal the sinner's only hope. Thus the light of truth penetrated many a darkened mind, rolling back the cloud of gloom, until the Sun of Righteousness shone into the heart with healing in His beams. It was often the case that some portion of Scripture was read again and again, the hearer desiring it to be repeated, as if he would assure himself that he had heard aright. Especially was the repetition of these words eagerly desired: "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15.

Many were undeceived in regard to the claims of Rome. They saw

how vain is the mediation of men or angels in behalf of the sinner. As the true light dawned upon their minds they exclaimed with rejoicing: "Christ is my priest; His blood is my sacrifice; His altar is my confessional." They cast themselves wholly upon the merits of Jesus, repeating the words, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Hebrews 11:6. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

The assurance of a Saviour's love seemed too much for some of these poor tempest-tossed souls to realize. So great was the relief which it brought, such a flood of light was shed upon them, that they seemed transported to heaven. Their hands were laid confidently in the hand of Christ; their feet were planted upon the Rock of Ages. All fear of death was banished. They could now covet the prison and the fagot if they might thereby honor the name of their Redeemer.

In secret places the word of God was thus brought forth and read, sometimes to a single soul, sometimes to a little company who were longing for light and truth. Often the entire night was spent in this manner. So great would be the wonder and admiration of the listeners that the messenger of mercy was not infrequently compelled to cease his reading until the understanding could grasp the tidings of salvation. Often would words like these be uttered: "Will God indeed accept my offering? Will He smile upon me? Will He pardon me?" The answer was read: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

Faith grasped the promise, and the glad response was heard: "No more long pilgrimages to make; no more painful journeys to holy shrines. I may come to Jesus just as I am, sinful and unholy, and He will not spurn the penitential prayer. 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' Mine, even mine, may be forgiven!"

A tide of sacred joy would fill the heart, and the name of Jesus

would be magnified by praise and thanksgiving. Those happy souls returned to their homes to diffuse light, to repeat to others, as well as they could, their new experience; that they had found the true and living Way. There was a strange and solemn power in the words of Scripture that spoke directly to the hearts of those who were longing for the truth. It was the voice of God, and it carried conviction to those who heard.

The messenger of truth went on his way; but his appearance of humility, his sincerity, his earnestness and deep fervor, were subjects of frequent remark. In many instances his hearers had not asked him whence he came or whither he went. They had been so overwhelmed, at first with surprise, and afterward with gratitude and joy, that they had not thought to question him. When they had urged him to accompany them to their homes, he had replied that he must visit the lost sheep of the flock. Could he have been an angel from heaven? they queried.

In many cases the messenger of truth was seen no more. He had made his way to other lands, or he was wearing out his life in some unknown dungeon, or perhaps his bones were whitening on the spot where he had witnessed for the truth. But the words he had left behind could not be destroyed. They were doing their work in the hearts of men; the blessed results will be fully known only in the judgment.

The Waldensian missionaries were invading the kingdom of Satan, and the powers of darkness aroused to greater vigilance. Every effort to advance the truth was watched by the prince of evil, and he excited the fears of his agents. The papal leaders saw a portent of danger to their cause from the labors of these humble itinerants. If the light of truth were allowed to shine unobstructed, it would sweep away the heavy clouds of error that enveloped the people. It would direct the minds of men to God alone and would eventually destroy the supremacy of Rome.

The very existence of this people, holding the faith of the ancient church, was a constant testimony to Rome's apostasy, and therefore excited the most bitter hatred and persecution. Their refusal to surrender the Scriptures was also an offense that Rome could not tolerate. She determined to blot them from the earth. Now began the most terrible crusades against God's people in their mountain homes. Inquisitors were put upon their track, and the scene of innocent Abel falling before the murderous Cain was often repeated.

Again and again were their fertile lands laid waste, their dwellings and chapels swept away, so that where once were flourishing fields and the homes of an innocent, industrious people, there remained only a desert. As the ravenous beast is rendered more furious by the taste of blood, so the rage of the papists was kindled to greater intensity by the sufferings of their victims. Many of these witnesses for a pure faith were pursued across the mountains and hunted down in the valleys where they were hidden, shut in by mighty forests and pinnacles of rock.

No charge could be brought against the moral character of this proscribed class. Even their enemies declared them to be a peaceable, quiet, pious people. Their grand offense was that they would not worship God according to the will of the pope. For this crime every humiliation, insult, and torture that men or devils could invent was heaped upon them.

When Rome at one time determined to exterminate the hated sect, a bull was issued by the pope, condemning them as heretics, and delivering them to slaughter. They were not accused as idlers, or dishonest, or disorderly; but it was declared that they had an appearance of piety and sanctity that seduced "the sheep of the true fold." Therefore the pope ordered "that malicious and abominable sect of malignants," if they "refuse to abjure, to be crushed like venomous snakes."--Wylie, b. 16, ch. 1. Did this haughty potentate expect to meet those words again? Did he

know that they were registered in the books of heaven, to confront him at the judgment? “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren,” said Jesus, “ye have done it unto Me.” Matthew 25:40.

This bull called upon all members of the church to join the crusade against the heretics. As an incentive to engage in this cruel work, it “absolved from all ecclesiastical pains and penalties, general and particular; it released all who joined the crusade from any oaths they might have taken; it legitimized their title to any property they might have illegally acquired; and promised remission of all their sins to such as should kill any heretic. It annulled all contracts made in favor of Vaudois, ordered their domestics to abandon them, forbade all persons to give them any aid whatever, and empowered all persons to take possession of their property.” --Wylie, b. 16, ch. 1. This document clearly reveals the master spirit behind the scenes. It is the roar of the dragon, and not the voice of Christ, that is heard therein.

The papal leaders would not conform their characters to the great standard of God’s law, but erected a standard to suit themselves, and determined to compel all to conform to this because Rome willed it. The most horrible tragedies were enacted. Corrupt and blasphemous priests and popes were doing the work which Satan appointed them. Mercy had no place in their natures. The same spirit that crucified Christ and slew the apostles, the same that moved the blood-thirsty Nero against the faithful in his day, was at work to rid the earth of those who were beloved of God.

The persecutions visited for many centuries upon this God-fearing people were endured by them with a patience and constancy that honored their Redeemer. Notwithstanding the crusades against them, and the inhuman butchery to which they were subjected, they continued to send out their missionaries to scatter the precious truth. They were hunted to death; yet their blood watered the seed sown, and it failed not of yielding fruit. Thus the

Waldenses witnessed for God centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time by those who also are willing to suffer all things for “the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”
Revelation 1:9.

Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh Day Adventists Ch. 57 – The Waldenses

by Ellen G. White

Our visit to the Waldensian Valleys was one of special interest on account of the close connection which this locality has with the history of the people of God in past ages. It was in the friendly shelter of the surrounding rocky peaks that they found protection when the fierce persecutions of the Roman church drove them from the fertile plains of Northern Italy. In these plains they had succeeded in maintaining their independence of Rome many years after others had yielded to her power. Indeed, up to the eleventh century, the diocese of Milan is said to have greatly exceeded in extent that of Rome. But the very fact that her authority was disregarded on what might be called her own territory, was very humiliating to a power to whom all the world was then bowing down; and, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to induce the bishops of Milan to yield their independence, they were finally forced to submit.

The submission, however, was by no means universal. Many refused to yield their rights, and fled, some to one country, some to another, while many retired to the Piedmontese Alps. "Behind this rampart of mountains, which Providence, foreseeing the

approach of evil days, would seem to have reared on purpose, did this 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 upon Christendom.”

Every rock upon which we gazed seemed to speak in solemn silence of the wonderful scenes it had witnessed. One place of interest which we visited, was a spot just back of the town of Bobbio, seven miles up the valley from Torre Pellice. We had a beautiful day for our trip. The air was clear, the sky as blue as only an Italian sky can be. Our party numbered seven besides the two drivers. The ride was delightful. After going as far as the carriages could carry us, we took our blankets and lunch-baskets, and prepared to ascend the mountain.

By a zigzag course our path made its way up the hillside, sometimes winding in and out among the rocks that line the banks of a mountain brook, sometimes crossing a little patch of grain which was supported by a great stone wall and thus kept from being washed down the mountain side, sometimes following along the very edge of these great walls which hold in place the mountain terraces, on which are small vineyards, pasture lands, and grain fields; then it would turn suddenly and ascend by rocky steps to the heights above. Now and then we would stop to rest, or to allow to pass us a solemn-looking flock of sheep and goats which some little girl or boy was driving to the small patches of pasture land above.

A climb of three-quarters of an hour brought us to a large open plat of ground. Here we halted, and under the friendly shade of a huge chestnut-tree spread our lunch. A few rods from us was a large house, built of stone, and plastered on the outside. Although about eight hundred years old, it was still occupied. Here it was that many of the Waldenses found shelter when driven by their persecutors from the valley below; but spies soon found them here, and soldiers were sent to exterminate them. The battle was

fought on the very spot where we were seated. Although the Waldenses were few in number, they held their ground for some time, and then, attempting to escape, most of them were brutally massacred. Two who were wounded fled to the rocks a few rods above us, where they dragged their wounded bodies through a narrow passage into a cave which extended thirty feet underground.

But a Satanic spirit drove humanity from the hearts of their pursuers, and led them to devise a means of killing these wounded men whom they could not capture. Wood and leaves were piled at the various crevices of the rock, and set on fire, and the prisoners soon perished from suffocation. After partaking of our simple lunch, we climbed up to this cave, and explored it as far as we could. Then one of our number crawled, feet first, between the rocks, and dropped himself into the inner cave where the poor martyrs miserably perished.

History tells us of several occasions when the same means of extermination was resorted to and that, too, on a much larger scale. The valley of Loyse was the scene of one of the most horrible of these tragedies. The inhabitants were quietly pursuing their vocations, when they were surprised by seeing an armed force twenty times their own number enter their valley. "Despairing of being able to resist them, they at once prepared for flight. Placing their old people and children in rustic carts, together with their domestic utensils, and such store of victuals as the urgency of the occasion permitted them to collect, and driving their herds before them, they began to climb the rugged slopes of the mountains, which rise some six thousand feet over the level of the valley." "About half way up, there is an immense cavern. In front of the cavern is a platform of rock, where the spectator sees beneath him only fearful precipices, which must be clambered over before one can reach the entrance to the grotto. The roof of the cave forms a magnificent arch, which gradually subsides and contracts into a narrow passage, or throat, and then widens once

more and forms a roomy hall of irregular form. Into this grotto, as into an impregnable castle, did the Vaudois enter. Their women, infants, and old men, they placed in the inner hall; their cattle and sheep they distributed along the lateral cavities of the grotto. The able-bodied men posted themselves at the entrance. Having barricaded with huge stones both the doorway of the cave and the path that led to it, they deemed themselves secure." "It would cost them little effort to hurl headlong down the precipices any one who should attempt to scale them in order to reach the entrance of the cavern.

"But a device of their pursuers rendered all these precautions and defenses vain. Ascending the mountain on the other side, and approaching the cave from above, the soldiers were let down by ropes from the precipice overhanging the entrance to the grotto. The platform in front was thus secured. The Vaudois might have cut the ropes, and dispatched their foes as they were being lowered one by one; but the boldness of the maneuver would seem to have paralyzed them. They retreated into the cavern to find in it their grave. Seeing the danger of permitting his men to follow them into the depths of their hiding-place, the general adopted the easier and safer method of piling up at its entrance all the wood he could collect and setting fire to it. A huge volume of black smoke began to roll into the cave, leaving to the unhappy inmates the miserable alternative of rushing out and falling by the sword that waited for them, or of remaining in the interior to be stifled by the murky vapor. Some rushed out, and were massacred; but the greater part remained until death slowly approached them by suffocation. When the cavern was afterward examined, there were found in it four hundred infants, suffocated in their cradles or in the arms of their dead mothers. Altogether there perished in this cavern more than three thousand Vaudois, including the entire population of the valley of Loyse."

This one circumstance out of many of a similar character will give something of an idea of what the Waldenses endured for the truth's

sake. Terror, mourning, and death everywhere followed in the footsteps of their persecutors. Whole villages were given to the flames. Nor could the caves, as we have seen, afford any protection to the multitudes who sought refuge in them. When the fire kindled at the mouth of these retreats was extinguished, “all was silent within.”

One can hardly imagine the indescribable feelings with which, after contemplating such scenes, we looked upon the cave now before us. After exploring it quite thoroughly, we climbed still higher, upon the rocks above it, and there bowed in a season of prayer. Jesus seemed very near while we pleaded with him to imbue us with more of the spirit of true devotion and firm adherence to principle that had led so many in these valleys in times past to lay down their lives for the truth’s sake.

It is beyond my power to describe the picture which opened before us from this high elevation. That its beauty has attracted the attention of others, appears from the glowing description which we here give from the pen of another:—

“At this point the grandeur of the valley Lucerna attains its height.” “Immediately behind Bobbio shoots up the ‘Barion,’ symmetrical as an Egyptian obelisk, but far taller and more massive. Its summit rises three thousand feet above the roofs of the little town. Compared with this majestic monolith, the proudest monument of Europe’s proudest capital is a mere toy. Yet even the ‘Barion’ is but one item in this assemblage of glories. Overtopping it behind, and sweeping round the extremity of the valley, is a glorious amphitheater of crags and precipices, inclosed by a background of great mountains, some rounded like domes, others sharp as needles.” “In this unrivaled amphitheater sits Bobbio, in summer buried in blossoms and fruit, and in winter wrapped in the shadows of its great mountains, and the mist of their tempests.” “A carpet of rich meadows clothes the valley from side to side; fruit-trees fleck it with their shadows; the Pellice waters it;

and on either hand is a wall of mountains." "Over these are hung stupendous battlements of rocks; and above all, towering high in the air, are the everlasting peaks in their robes of ice and snow."

As far as the eye could reach up the mountain sides we could see dwellings, cultivated lands, and even villages, while from many of these rocky eminences white church towers reared their heads, as if pointing the people heavenward. Here, among the rugged rocks, in places seemingly inaccessible, they sought refuge from the fury of their oppressors. Here they thought to worship God without molestation, making the mountains echo with their prayers and songs of praise to their Redeemer.

Most of those who have been born and brought up in the seclusion of these mountain homes choose to remain there. Far up on the mountain side we saw a man and woman sowing wheat under the friendly shelter of the overhanging rocks. By these people conveniences and luxuries are not thought of. If they can secure a sufficient harvest from the little patches of land among the crags to feed themselves and their children, they are content. As for clothing, they are quite independent. Near the spot where we ate our lunch, a young peasant girl was tending a small flock of sheep, and at the same time diligently plying the distaff. As we came near, she kindly showed us how the work was done, and also some of the cloth that had been made from yarn thus prepared.

We would gladly have remained longer, climbed from height to height, entered the dwellings, and spoken with the people; but we had not time or strength to go farther. As we slowly made our way down the rocky path by the side of a rushing stream, we could but wonder how many pilgrim feet had trod this rugged path before us in the hope of finding an asylum from the wrath of their oppressors, and our hearts ascended to God in prayer that the precious light of present truth might reach the descendants of this long-persecuted people. We firmly believe that God will open the way, that he will remove the obstructions, which now shut the

light from them.

The next day after our trip to Bobbio we visited an ancient fortress, which is built on a height a short distance from Torre Pellice. Here we found a large open space inclosed by walls within walls, also extensive buildings which were formerly used as a monastery. Within the inclosure is a cave. This we entered, and found ourselves in a room about eight feet square. The walls of this room were covered with a thick, green moss, on which drops of water glistened like pearls. From this room there were openings into two underground tunnels. One of these led down to the village, into a building formerly used as a convent; the other to a Catholic church in another part of the town. Here the secret workings of the mystery of iniquity had been carried on. Here many precious souls had lost their lives, and left their bones to testify of their faith. But the history of their sufferings will be made known only when every secret thing shall be revealed. The Judgment alone will bring to light the cruelties practiced in connection with these fortified heights.

There is no question as to whose banner those ranked under who thus persecuted the saints. Their master, Satan, alone could instigate men to inflict such terrible cruelties, such intense sufferings, such excruciating agony, upon their fellow-men. Those ages of cruel restriction of liberty of conscience are now in the past; but, we inquire, how long before Satan will, through his devices, again bring upon God's people a time of trouble? Satan is a deceiver, a murderer, and his power will be felt in the near future by those who love and fear God.

If their voices could be heard, what a history the everlasting mountains surrounding these valleys could give of the sufferings of God's people because of their faith! What a history of the visits of angels unrecognized by these Christian fugitives! Again and again have angels talked with men, as man speaketh with a friend, and led them to places of security. Again and again have the

encouraging words of angels renewed the drooping spirits of the faithful, and, carrying their minds above the tops of the highest mountains, caused them to behold by faith the white robes, the crowns, the palm branches of victory, which the overcomers will receive when they surround the great white throne.

What valuable lessons these pilgrims and strangers must have learned in the friendly asylum of the rocks! As they climb the steep mountain paths, they have in mind, not the homes they have left, although they still hope to possess them again; but they are looking for a home so high that the highest peak of the Alps cannot reach it,—a home with their heavenly Father in the mansions that Jesus has gone to prepare for them, from which they will never be driven. The bitter venom of the dragon cannot reach them there. Therefore they can well afford to leave their earthly treasures, to grope their way among dark and crooked paths, and to be inclosed in rocky chambers, away from the light of day, if by this means they can attain that home among the blest,—a home not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

In their lonely retreats they often met their Redeemer and conversed with him, as did the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. He would there open to them the sublime truths of his word, and strengthen them in their determination not to put confidence in false guides, but to obey and worship Him only who made and governs the world, “He sees and knows everything,” they continually repeated to themselves. “He will hear our prayers, and attend unto our wants. He who feedeth the ravens will not leave us to perish.” Thus their words of faith cheered themselves and others, and their trials and perplexities only drove them nearer to God and increased their faith.

Such was the character, such the motives, of the Waldenses of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Alas, how changed are this people now! The spirit which animated their fathers, and led them to contend for pure Bible truth, seems to have slumbered; the

light which shone from their ancestors no longer shines from them. Religious declension has marked the faith and practice of this once God-fearing people. Many dissembled to conceal their faith, and by thus compromising their religion have become corrupted. It is the old story repeated. Men forget the scenes of most hallowed interest which kept alive their lofty aspirations, and because of hardships they cease to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Scriptures. When they should be advancing, they are retrograding.

In order now to keep the name of Protestantism alive in these valleys, Protestants of other countries have expended large sums to support the Vaudois preachers and College. Until within the last year, the ministers of the Vaudois churches have been almost entirely supported by foreign missionary societies. The people have not been educated to do anything for the support of the gospel; and it was stated to us as a fact that some are even hired indirectly to become church-members. We can believe this from an incident that occurred a few months ago. A lady became very much interested in the truth, and began to keep the Sabbath. As soon as this was known, she was visited by leading ones in the church, and told that there was some means in the mission treasury, and that if she would not unite with us they would appropriate a certain amount toward repairing her house; and more than this, they would give her a certain amount each month. This was somewhat tempting to one who was very poor and who had a large family to care for; but we are glad to say that she had courage to decide for the right.

The pastors in many cases are ignorant of the Scriptures and of the power of God, and they feed themselves instead of feeding the flock. At one of their late synods it was proposed that each pastor should visit every member of his congregation at least once a year; but with almost unanimous voice they objected to the measure, some saying that if it was insisted upon they would resign their charge. With many of them religion is a mere form,

and they are doing comparatively nothing to advance the temporal or spiritual interests of their flock. The people are perishing in ignorance, while those who claim to be religious teachers take from them the key of knowledge. They enter not in themselves, and those who would enter in they hinder.

Eighteen hundred years ago the voice of Jesus, clear and distinct, like the peal of a trumpet, went forth to the weary, thirsty crowd in the temple courts: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Oh that the voice of Jesus could reach the dull senses of this people! Oh that they could feel their real need, and realize how much Jesus is willing and ready to do for them!

As a rule, the people of these valleys are poor, unlearned, and superstitious, and their standard of religion and morality is low. One Sunday morning we walked out to the market-place. Here, as in all other European cities and villages, great account is made of market-days. At this time shop-keepers from all parts of the town bring their wares, and market women from the surrounding country bring, in carts drawn by mules, or in baskets on their heads or backs, vegetables, fruit, butter, eggs, chickens, and all kinds of farm produce, and display them in the streets. The principal market-days in this place are Sunday and Friday forenoons. It was to us a novel way of keeping Sunday. Men and women were crying their wares, and people were hurrying to and fro, many of them anxious to return home with their purchases in time to prepare for church. This shows the lax ideas that many, even of those who profess to be Christians, have in regard to Sunday observance. And when they accept the Sabbath, it is often quite difficult to impress them with the importance of observing it any more strictly.

After urging our way through the narrow street, at this time

almost blockaded with people and merchandise, we found ourselves looking upon quite another scene. A swift-flowing mountain stream crosses the main street at right angles, and in an open space we see a row of women kneeling on its banks. On coming a little nearer, we find that they are washing. Each one is kneeling in a small box with the cover and one side removed, and a little straw laid on the bottom. In front of each is a slanting slab of granite rock which she uses something as we would a rubbing board. However, instead of rubbing the clothes, they squeeze, and slap, and rinse them, using a stiff brush and soap on the dirtiest parts. Occasionally one would have a few live coals by her side with a little pail of hot water in which to dip her hands when they became too stiff and cold. Most of them seemed to take considerable pains to get their clothes clean, and after they had finished they put them across a stick and carried them home on their shoulders. We are told that in all well-to-do families washing is seldom done oftener than once in six weeks, and sometimes only once in three months. It is then done by hand, without the aid even of a rubbing-board. This is the common way of washing. In the cities, places are prepared in various parts for this work; while in the country, women may be seen far off in the fields, away from any house, washing in some stream from which they have perhaps broken the ice. There are those, of course, who have regular wash-rooms in their house or in a separate building. These are furnished with immense tubs, around which the entire family can gather, if need be, when wash week comes. One room is used exclusively for clean clothes, and one for dirty, and before the soiled ones are put away, they are sprinkled with a powder which prevents them from smelling bad or spoiling.

The question with us is how these women can keep their hands in ice-cold water for hours at a time without injury to their health. Indeed, we are quite inclined to the opinion that this practice is one cause of the enlarged necks which we saw everywhere. This is, however, most commonly attributed to the water which they drink. Another thing which it seems reasonable to suppose would

produce this unnatural swelling, is the heavy loads that many carry on their heads and backs. It is not uncommon to see a man or woman coming down the mountains, carrying a bundle of wood or hay much larger than himself. When we were in Italy, men, women, and children were out gathering chestnut leaves and burrs. These they use much as we do straw, and every spot was raked as carefully as though it had been to secure the most valuable crop.

Life in Italy, with all except the wealthy, is a hard battle. Judging from the expression which we saw upon the countenances of many, the last ray of hope had died out of their souls, their ambition was gone, and as long as life should last they expected only hunger, toil, and misery. The children are taught to work almost from infancy. We met little ones not more than six years old walking and knitting as busily and intelligently as women of sixty. And many at the tender age of seven or eight are placed in factories, or set to work in stone quarries. This seemed at first almost cruel; but when we learned that the most experienced workmen in the factories received only fifty cents for sixteen hours' work, and those less experienced only twenty-five cents, and that from this meager pittance some were obliged to support a family of from eight to twelve, we felt less like judging them harshly for allowing their children to work rather than to starve. As the result, however, of standing on their feet so many hours, and working so hard in childhood, many never attain their full growth. We saw many remarkably short men and women, also many who were bow-legged and crippled. And yet all who had had a fair chance for their lives looked healthy and rosy-cheeked.

The manner in which the people live is of course the most inexpensive. Their principal articles of diet are bread and a cheap coffee. All patronize the bakeshops, as it would cost more to buy wood to bake with than to buy bread. The natural order of things seems to be somewhat reversed here. Wood sells by the pound, and bread, so the saying runs, by the yard. This, however, refers

to bread that is baked in rolls a little larger than a pipe stem, and about a yard long. This is a kind of bread peculiar to the Piedmont valleys. Repeated efforts have been put forth to make it in other places, but without success. It is as light and sweet as it is possible for bread to be, but is too expensive for the poorer classes. These buy a cheap, black-looking quality, made in long loaves; and, whenever they can get money enough ahead to do so, they buy it in quantity, and stack it up to dry, so that it will "go farther."

The dress of the people is of the most substantial kind, and is made in the most simple style. Their shoes are mostly made of wood. The father is often the shoe-maker for the entire family; that is, he buys the leather tops at a trifling expense, and puts in the wooden bottoms himself. One pair of shoes costs from twenty to forty cents, and is expected to last about year. So far as hats and bonnets for the women and children are concerned, they either go bare-headed the year round or wear a little white muslin bonnet with a fluted frill around the face.

The work of the women in the house, in cooking and sewing, being quite light, they spend much of their time in out-of-door labor. It is very common to see women digging in the ground, dressing vineyards, or hauling large loads of wood, hay, or the like, to market. The team they usually drive is cows. Horses are seldom used here except before carriages; mules, Sardinian ponies, donkeys, and oxen are quite common; but the animals most commonly used for ordinary farm labor are cows. These are usually driven by ropes attached to their horns, the driver walking by their side or going in front and guiding them by pulling them this way or that. Most other animals, except carriage horses, are taught to be driven without lines of any kind, as we drive oxen. Besides being thus used as beasts of burden, the cows are often milked regularly three times a day.

How the milk from such animals can be healthy is a great question. But we notice that they are driven very slowly, and with

only moderate loads, and they are given the very best of care. In winter they share the comforts of their owners, or, more correctly, the owners share the comforts of the cattle; or then the majority of families move into their stables, where men, women, children, sheep, goats, and cows live together in peace and harmony. This is purely an economical scheme, the heat from the animals being made to answer instead of fire. Fuel of all kinds is high. Coal can hardly be obtained. Coke costs from ten to twelve dollars a ton; and wood, which is simply limbs including the small twigs, costs a third of a cent a pound. Besides this, those who use it, have to pay a wood tax.

Most people who use wood raise it as they do any other crop. It is done in this way; Rows of willows are planted along their fences or irrigating ditches, and are allowed to grow from six to ten feet high. Then they are cut back every second or third year to the same height, and the smallest twigs and branches are used for fuel. In view of these facts in regard to fuel and the exceedingly low prices paid for labor, it is not so surprising that people resort to almost any means to keep warm without fire.

Long-established custom has made living in stables quite popular. Many people in prosperous circumstances adopt this way of living. While in Torre Pellice, we visited a stable, in the center of the town, which was occupied by a rich lady who owned and rented the whole building. In one end of the stable stood two noble-looking Jersey cows; in the other end, on a plank floor about six feet-square, stood a bench, two stools, and a table, with a few dishes. Here the woman of the house had taken up her winter quarters, and ate, cooked, and slept.

At night when it is very cold, it is customary to take a bundle of straw or leaves, and lie as close to the cattle as possible. One small window furnishes light for the apartment, while the bodies and breath of the cattle and the stack of smoking manure, afford the only means of warmth. It is astonishing to see how little

knowledge of the laws of life and health the people have. And yet if one should attempt to teach them, they would feel very much offended. We can only hope that the truth may take hold upon the hearts of some, and that they may be elevated and sanctified through it, "The entrance of Thy words," says the psalmist, giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

Although the people show signs of having endured toil and hardship, many bear a noble, intelligent countenance. How my soul went out for these, that they might have the truth presented to them! But there are many difficulties to be met in doing this work, that our American laborers do not have to encounter. It is impossible to obtain either churches or school-houses in which the truth can be presented with any degree of freedom. Both are placed under the control of the resident minister. In many villages it is almost impossible to secure even a hall. The only alternative seems to be to visit the people at their homes, and hold meetings in private houses. Here another difficulty presents itself. In summer those who live near the foot of the mountains go much higher up, and are scattered where it is almost impossible to find them. In winter they descend and live in stables. Here is the only place where our colporteurs can find them with any degree of facility.

During the past season, Bro. Geymet has been visiting and holding Bible readings with the people in these stables. At the time we were there, he was holding two meetings a week in a stable in the Angrogna valley, about seven miles from Torre Pellice. The interest was good, and the average attendance was from forty to fifty. There, on the dirt floor of the stable which was sometimes strewn with leaves or straw, or sitting on boards placed across boxes, these would sit and listen for an hour or two, and then would remain after the meeting closed, to talk over what had been said. Occasionally the meeting would be interrupted by the movements and noise of the quadrupeds; but the exercises were immediately resumed without any apparent disturbance. The people

appreciate this kind of personal labor, and often make bitter complaints because their own ministers do not visit them oftener. Although not a very agreeable manner of working, it is, as we have seen, in many cases the only way of reaching the people, and we believe that the blessing of God will attend the labor thus put forth.

It is a continual study to know how the work can best be advanced in these valleys. One thing is certain, that whatever is accomplished will be by the utmost diligence and perseverance. There must be a steady light shining in the darkness, notwithstanding this light for a time will not be comprehended. Then, again, we must have more books and pamphlets in the French and Italian languages. We are moving altogether too slowly in this respect. Time is passing. Workers who are willing to enter these foreign fields either as evangelists or translators should be selected and educated. May God grant the workers, now three in number, who are laboring in these valleys, the necessary courage and strength that they may prosecute their work with such zeal and earnestness that they may see abundant fruit of their labors in the kingdom of God.

As we go from these valleys, it is with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow,—of joy because there ever existed a people who were not afraid, even many years before the first gleamings of the Reformation, to stand in defense of Bible truth; of sorrow because so few of their descendants manifest a desire to continue to walk in the light as it shines from the word of God. We feel confident, however, that the Lord will again work for this people, and restore to those who will come to the light, their former purity and fidelity to his service. The clear light of the third angel's message will yet be reflected from the honest-hearted in these valleys. The light in them which has grown dim will be brightened.

The angel that joins the third angel is to lighten the earth with his glory. There will be many, even in these valleys, where the work

seems to start with such difficulty, who will recognize the voice of God speaking to them through his word, and, coming out from under the influence of the clergy, will take their stand for God and the truth. This field is not an easy one in which to labor, nor is it one which will show immediate results; but there is an honest people here who will obey in time. The persecutions which their fathers endured have made them apathetic and closemouthed, and they look upon strangers and strange doctrines with suspicion. But the miracle of God's mercy, working with man's human effort, will yet cause the truth to triumph upon the very soil where so many have died to defend it. Knowledge will be increased, faith and courage will revive, and the truth will shine as the light of the morning all through these valleys. The old battle field will yet be the scene of victories now unseen, and the adoption of Bible truth will vindicate the past fidelity of their fathers.



Andrews University

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