

*A History
of the
True Church*

Traced From 33 A.D. to Date

*By
Andrew N. Dugger and Clarence O. Dodd*

*Published by
THE ANDREW N. DUGGER
REPUBLISHING PROJECT*

A History of the True Religion Traced From 33 A.D. to Date

By

Andrew N. Dugger and Clarence O. Dodd

Originally Copyrighted, 1936

Second Edition, Tebet (January) 1968

Third Edition, Jerusalem, Israel Sivan (June) 1972

Reprinted by Giving & Sharing, 1996

Edited by Richard C. Nickels with Horst Obermeit - First Electronic

Edition July 2003

Re-edited in Portable Document Format (PDF) by Massimo Marino – Italy
Massimo's Note on PDF Edition: I thank Mr. Richard C. Nickels for providing me the necessary file for producing this PDF edition. Also I thank the following individuals for typing support: Carol Billigmeier, Curtis Garner, Kerry and Rachel Roberts, Mr. & Mrs. Michael Williams.

CHCoG Editions: the text of the online pdf has been extensively restored and the PDF made more readable on mobile devices. HTML and Ebook versions have also been released (Oct 11, 2020).

The original publication of this book "*A History of the True Church*", copyrighted in 1936, stated that the book was published by A.N. Dugger and C.O. Dodd for *The Bible Advocate*, Salem, W. Va. The title of the third edition was *A History of the True Religion*. Dugger apparently changed the word "Church" to "Religion," in deference to his later "Hebrew Name" beliefs.

The view of church history shared by most of the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God today was founded on this book. I hope that the republication of this book and the work of "The Andrew N. Dugger Republishing Project" will create renewed interest in the legacy of Andrew N. Dugger.

ISBN 1-887670-01-7

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 96-77314

Table of Contents

Andrew N. Dugger & Clarence O. Dodd—A Short Biography.....	VII
Andrew N. Dugger.....	VII
Clarence O. Dodd.....	VIII
PREFACE.....	1
Explaining The Name.....	3
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	4
Founded on the Rock.....	4
CHAPTER 2: BRIEF PROPHETICAL ANALYSIS.....	5
The Two Churches Contrasted.....	5
The Church Name in Both Old and New Testaments.....	6
CHAPTER 3: THE DRAGON AND BEAST MAKE WAR ON THE CHURCH.....	8
The Period of Great Tribulation.....	8
CHAPTER 4: THIRTY-THREE A.D. TO ONE HUNDRED A.D. .	12
The Apostolical Church.....	12
The Apostle Paul.....	12
Simon Peter, the Apostle.....	14
John the Revelator.....	19
The Early Protestant Church.....	20
The Real Bible Name.....	24
The Day of Rest.....	25
History of Christian Martyrs to the First General Persecutions under Nero.....	27
CHAPTER 5: ONE TO TWO HUNDRED A.D.....	33
The Rise of Christian Sects.....	33
The Great Apostasy.....	33
Early Writers.....	37
The True Church.....	39
CHAPTER 6: TWO TO THREE HUNDRED A.D.....	41
The Remnant Church.....	41
Origin of Other Sects.....	43
False Doctrines.....	45

CHAPTER 7: THREE TO FOUR HUNDRED A.D.....	45
Continued Persecution.....	45
Constantine.....	46
Popes.....	46
Doctor Arius.....	47
Nicean Council.....	48
Sunday.....	51
The Sabbath.....	54
False Doctrines.....	55
Julian the Apostate.....	58
The True Church.....	58
CHAPTER 8: FOUR TO FIVE HUNDRED A.D.....	61
From Bishop to Pope.....	61
CHAPTER 9: FIVE TO SIX HUNDRED A.D.....	65
The Flight of the True Church to the Wilderness.....	65
Valley Dwellers — Vaudois.....	66
CHAPTER 10: SIX TO SEVEN HUNDRED A.D.....	68
The Church of God Scattered Abroad.....	68
CHAPTER 11: SEVEN TO EIGHT HUNDRED A.D.....	73
A True Light Amidst Gross Darkness.....	73
CHAPTER 12: EIGHT TO NINE HUNDRED A.D.....	78
Increase in the Popedom.....	78
CHAPTER 13: NINE TO TEN HUNDRED A.D.....	83
The Woman in The Wilderness.....	83
CHAPTER 14: TEN TO ELEVEN HUNDRED A.D.....	88
Heresy and Truth.....	88
CHAPTER 15: ELEVEN TO TWELVE HUNDRED A.D.....	92
Peter Waldo.....	92
The Waldensian Church of God.....	96
Some General Remarks.....	101
The Doctrine and Discipline of the Waldenses.....	105
CHAPTER 16: TWELVE TO THIRTEEN HUNDRED A.D.....	108
Rome Continues to Harass the Church.....	108
The Persecutions of the Waldenses.....	111

General State of Roman Church in the Thirteenth Century.....	119
CHAPTER 17: THIRTEEN TO FOURTEEN HUNDRED A.D....	122
The Lollards and Other Protestants.....	122
CHAPTER 18: FOURTEEN TO FIFTEEN HUNDRED A.D.....	125
The Climax of Popery.....	125
Deliverance from Armed Hosts.....	127
The Panic-stricken Invaders.....	128
“Armies of the Aliens” Put to Flight.....	130
A Covering Cloud.....	134
CHAPTER 19: FIFTEEN TO SIXTEEN HUNDRED A.D.....	136
The Protestant Reformation.....	136
Church Tribulations of the Past.....	141
Address of Hutter to Marshal of Moravia, About 1530.....	142
CHAPTER 20: SIXTEEN TO SEVENTEEN HUNDRED A.D....	145
Darkness Before Dawn.....	145
The Need Supplied.....	147
How the Lord Fed and Protected His Church.....	151
How Matthew Warren Escaped.....	151
John Nofworthy’s Experience.....	152
Hanserd Knollys in London.....	152
A Child the Agent of Deliverance.....	153
How Dr. Stennett Escaped Conviction.....	156
Evil Intent Turned to Good.....	159
Relief in Time of Extremity.....	160
The Church of God in Italy.....	162
The Church of God in Armenia.....	168
The Church in the British Isles.....	170
Mill Yard Church of London.....	175
The Work of a Martyr.....	179
Summary.....	181
The Earth Helped the Woman.....	182
The Seven Church Periods.....	184
CHAPTER 21: SEVENTEEN TO EIGHTEEN HUNDRED A.D.	187
Immigration from Europe to America.....	187

The Church from the Wilderness.....	188
Benjamin Franklin’s Cure For Hard Times.....	192
The Church in America.....	193
The Church of God from London to America.....	198
The Name of The Church.....	200
CHAPTER 22: EIGHTEEN HUNDRED TO PRESENT DATE A.D.	
.....	205
In the Latter Times Some Shall Depart from the Faith.....	205
The Seventh Day Baptists.....	206
The Seventh-Day Adventists.....	210
Names of Ministers from 1844 to 1860.....	211
The Name of The Church.....	212
Changing the Church Name.....	214
The Reconstruction.....	216
The Reorganization.....	219
The Choosing of the Twelve, the Seventy and the Seven.....	220
Apostolic Succession.....	224
Succession in Apostolic Ordination.....	225
The Wilbur Church.....	228
CONCLUSION.....	231
1972 Update.....	232

Andrew N. Dugger & Clarence O. Dodd—A Short Biography

By Richard C. Nickels

Andrew N. Dugger

Andrew N. Dugger (1886-1975) was the most famous Church of God, Seventh Day, leader in the twentieth century. He was born in Bassett, Nebraska.

Andrew N. Dugger's father, A.F. Dugger, Sr., had been an Advent Christian Minister. When commissioned by his church to do a study refuting the Sabbath, A.F. Dugger instead became convinced that the Sabbath should be observed. The result was a book he later published, called *The Bible Sabbath Defended*. For more than thirty-five years, until his death in 1910, A.F. Dugger, Sr., was a leader in the Church of God, Seventh Day. His son Andrew, a school teacher and farmer, was in his early 20's when his father died.

A bright light in the sky around him seemed to Dugger to be a sign from God that he should follow his father's footsteps in the ministry. A.N. Dugger immediately sold his large farm and equipment, and went to the University of Chicago, where he majored in theology and public speaking, mastering Greek, Hebrew, and German.

Dugger periodically returned to Bassett to visit his mother and Effie Carpenter (1895-1980), a student of his whom he wanted to marry. Although he first proposed to her when she was sixteen, it wasn't until 1925 until they were married.

They shared fifty years together.

Soon after college graduation, Dugger was invited by the Executive Committee of the Church of God to move to Stanberry, Missouri, to become editor of *The Bible Advocate*, a position his father had held before being forced to retire because of ill health. In

1914, Dugger arrived in Stanberry to begin his work in the ministry. For eighteen years he was editor, also serving as President of the General Conference. As field representative, he traveled widely, holding evangelistic meetings and public debates. The famous “Porter-Dugger Debate,” between Dugger and W. Curtis Porter, a Church of Christ minister, was later published as a book of over 230 pages. In 1919, Dugger wrote *The Bible Home Instructor*, which publicized the Seventh Day Church of God, and substantially increased its membership during the 1920s.

Two of Dugger’s most adamant doctrinal positions were: a scriptural form of church organization with leaders chosen by lot rather than election, and a world headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel. After visiting Israel for only a year in 1931-32, Dugger returned to live in Sweet Home, Oregon. In 1935, A.N. Dugger and C.O. Dodd published *A History of the True Church*, which traces Sabbath-keepers from apostolic times to modern days. Dugger greatly influenced Herbert Armstrong, who was for years affiliated with the Church of God, Seventh Day, but later formed his own church, the Radio (later Worldwide) Church of God.

Dugger remained pastor at Marion, Oregon until 1953, when he and Effie settled permanently in Jerusalem, and launched the *Mt. Zion Reporter*. His aggressive leadership resulted in thousands of converts around the world. Andrew N. Dugger died in 1975 at the age of 89. Dugger’s son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, continued the Jerusalem work at *Mount Zion Reporter*, P.O. Box 568, Jerusalem, Israel.

Clarence O. Dodd

Clarence O. Dodd (1899-1955), a founder of the Sacred Name Movement, lived in Salem, West Virginia, most of his life. In 1920, he married Martha Richmond. A writer and minister, Dodd firmly believed that he should support himself and his family, earning his own way, and serve the Almighty’s people without pay. He worked

as a clerk for 35 years for Hope Natural Gas Company until he retired early due to Hodgkins' disease. He died two years later.

Dodd taught a Methodist Bible class. He was standing on main street of Salem one day, when a man gave him a tract on the Sabbath, which convicted Dodd of the Bible Sabbath. He never saw the man again, and was convinced the agent was an angel. He became a leading minister in the Church of God, 7th Day. At the November 4, 1933, meeting in Salem, West Virginia, when the Church of God split, Dodd was chosen by lot as one of the seventy elders (along with Herbert Armstrong), as well as one of the seven men placed over the business affairs of the Church (along with A.N. Dugger).

After the 1933 split of the Church of God (Seventh Day) into the Stanberry and Salem factions, Dodd became editor of the *Salem Bible Advocate*. He had begun to accept the annual Feast Days in 1928, which put him at odds with the leadership. In 1937, he resigned, and began to publish his own magazine, *The Faith*. A year later, Dodd accepted the Sacred Name doctrine. He wrote many articles and tracts, using his own funds to establish a print shop in his home. His writings are sometimes reprinted in *The Faith* magazine, now published by the Assembly of Yahweh, PO Box 102, Holt, Michigan 48842. A full list of his articles is available from *The Faith Bible and Tract Society*, PO Box 321, Amherst, Ohio 44001, carried on by his daughter, Mary Dodd Ling, since 1978.

Dodd had a close relationship with Church of God (Seventh Day) Elder John Kiesz, who held evangelistic meetings in Salem, W. Va. around the 1930s. Kiesz likewise believed in the annual Holy Days, and was favorable to the Sacred Name doctrine. Kiesz named his youngest daughter Martha after Dodd's wife. Dodd never met Herbert Armstrong, but corresponded with him via mail.

Mary Dodd Ling describes her father as a very handsome, personable man. He was an avid student of the Bible, writer, and a man of prayer. Martha Dodd, an integral part of his ministry, died in 1982. Dodd's associates in the Sacred Name movement were Cessna, Briggs, Smith, William Bodine, and A.B. Traina (who translated a

Sacred Name Bible). When Dodd accepted the doctrine that believers must use the Hebrew names Yahweh and Yahshua, he was rebaptized into the name of Yahshua.

Clarence Dodd was perhaps more of a writer than a speaker and debater like Dugger. It is likely that in collaborating with Dugger on the book, *A History of the True Church*, Dodd had the greater part in writing.

Contacts

Giving and Sharing

<http://www.giveshare.org/>

PO Box 100, Neck City, MO 64849 USA

Email celewis2@juno.com

Jerusalem Seventh Day Church of God

<https://jsd-cog.org/>

Central Highlands Congregation of God

<https://chcpublications.net/>

PO Box 236 Creswick VIC 3363 Australia

Email info@chcpublications.net

References

Most of the reference material used by this article can be freely downloaded from the Internet Archive at <https://archive.org/index.php> or from GoogleBooks. Jones' *History of the Christian Church*, 1832 edition from archive.org is highly recommended for anyone who wants a deeper look into this topic.

PREFACE

The object of this treatise is not so much to give the history of the great national religious sects as it is to give a history of the true religion, tracing it down through the ages, century after century by its doctrine as practised and taught in the Old Testament, by Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others, and then extended with minor changes down through the New Testament to the present time, as set forth by Christ, (Hebrew-Yahshua, Aramaic Jeshua) and His apostles, all of whom were Israelites.

Jesus (Yahshua/Jeshua) said “the gates of hell would not prevail against it.” Therefore that same religion established at Pentecost, (Acts 2nd chapter), that three thousand Jews embraced, was never stamped out, but continued amidst the most severe persecution from Rome, and is spreading over the entire world today.

There has been but little interest manifest in the history of religion of the past because most historians leave the history of the true faith with the death of the apostles, and then trace what they call Christianity down through the “Dark Ages” as it emanated from Rome after being polluted with the teaching and practice of “Sun-worshippers” of the East, through the historical “Council of Nicaea,” 325 A.D., presided over by King Constantine of Rome.

Nineteen hundred years have passed since the days of Christ, and the world still awaits a record of the Church of the wilderness, Revelation, twelfth chapter. Hundreds of histories have been palmed off on the people as narratives of the true people, but with few exceptions the writers leave the true church entering into the wilderness at the beginning of the Dark Ages, and for this same period of time minutely sketch the sects of the great apostasy.

It must be admitted that something is wrong, when out of nineteen centuries of church history, thirteen of them are given to the history of these apostate bodies.

This present writing is not a work to cater to anyone, but is a history of the congregations of God down through the ages, through over twelve hundred years of persecutions and bloodshed, even unto

A History of the True Church

the present time. It narrates from histories and ancient records the course of these certain people of God, who, down through the course of time, have upheld the doctrine of the Scriptures, and kept the light of divine truth burning when all the world around them was in gross darkness known, and mentioned repeatedly by historians, as “The Dark Ages.”

It must be conceded that a history of the true religion must contain authentic quotations from noted historians of the past concerning these people who were found upholding the scriptural truth and teaching the same doctrine taught in the Holy Bible, and carried it to much of the known world following the crucifixion and ascension of our beloved Messiah, who is soon to return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 11:15).

Any people deviating from the teaching of the scriptures, be they ever so sincere, cannot be the people of the true religion composing the “Assemblies of Elohim,” mentioned repeatedly in the New Testament as “The Church of God,” and in the Old Testament as “The daughter of Jerusalem” and “The daughter of Zion.”

This is the people who through trials and severe persecution have brought the Holy Bible and its precious truths down through the “Dark Ages” pure and unadulterated placing them now within our reach in this enlightened twentieth century.

We cannot help from praising our wonderful Creator for such men and women as this history reveals unto us who lived in the age when it required the lives of the faithful to be true to our Heavenly Father. We cannot be thankful enough for those who were true in the face of death, and rather than deny the faith, died as true martyrs. How firm we should be to dig deep and get the hidden truths long cherished by these faithful martyrs, who lived and died that we might have the unadulterated gospel truth as a guide for our souls.

With the above explanation of our motive, we now present unto the reader the history of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (Yahshua/Jeshua), trusting that what little we may say will be the means of leading him deeper into the truth for which the saints have died.

— The Authors

A History of the True Church

Explaining The Name

3

After having lived in Israel for nearly fifteen years among people from nearly one hundred different countries, and as many languages, we feel saddened to learn that our beloved Messiah, and mighty Creator are called by almost as many different names as there are languages. This surely is not pleasing to them, or to the Holy Angels of their presence.

These two holy ones Who rule the heavens and the earth have each a name, and not all of this great confusion of Gentile names. We read “Who hath established the ends of the earth. What is His name, and what is His Son’s name?” Proverbs 30:4.

These names are in the Hebrew language, [and are Jehovah (God’s name), Yahshua/Jeshua (Jesus’ name in Hebrew and Aramaic) and Elohim (meaning God)].

As this history is being re-printed using photography, photographing each page, the Gentile words will have to be used for their names, and we do so with this explanation, trusting that each reader will make this a prayerful study, because when He hath redeemed Jerusalem, His people will know His name, Isaiah 52:6 to 9, Psalms 91:14, also 69:35, 36.

— A.N. Dugger

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**Founded on the Rock**

While the term “Protestant” originated in Reformation times, when strong fearless men boldly protested against the false doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, we shall use the same term to represent a people who, long before the days of the reformers, stood for the faith of Protestantism. The Scriptural name applied to these people at the time of our Savior was the “Church of God,” and this work will prove, as it has set out to do, both from Scripture and secular history, that this New Testament church was not the church which later ruled the world from Rome, known as the Roman Catholic church.

The church set in order by Jesus Christ has remained separate and distinct down through the gospel dispensation to the present time, and, even amidst the most severe persecution, it has held forth the true light, carrying the torch of freedom and religious liberty down to our own day and time.

The word “Protestant” should not apply only to the people who in the days of Martin Luther protested against the error and corruption of the Church of Rome; but it rightly applies to a people who have since the days of Moses, and even before that time, protested against error, superstition, idolatry, mythology, witchcraft, and every form of pagan religion and philosophy. Hence this work, as it sets forth the true history of these protesting people, cannot have for its beginning the time of the Protestant Reformation, or even the days of our Savior. Mention is made of the “Church,” as found in Acts 7:38, which takes us to a much earlier period. The text reads, speaking of Jesus, “This is He that was with the church in the wilderness.” The same church being constituted of, as it always has, God’s true children here upon earth, existed in the wilderness. Instead of Jesus endeavoring to reform it with so much corruption, error, and superstition, he immediately set out in the work of reorganization, choosing anew the twelve and the seventy.

CHAPTER 2: BRIEF PROPHETICAL ANALYSIS

The Two Churches Contrasted

The church set in order by Jesus with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and with proper administration of government, is symbolized by a virtuous woman in the New Testament. The Lord says of her, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you unto one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ,” II Corinthians 11:2. In Revelation 19:7-9, the church is again spoken of as the bride, the Lamb’s wife, having on the wedding garments of linen, clean and white. Again, John the Revelator beholds this church in vision, and describes her as follows: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” Revelation 12:1.

A woman being a symbol of a church, we have here in prophecy the true church of the apostles’ time, clothed with the sun, the ruler of the day. All darkness was expelled, and the sunlight of God’s truth and righteousness radiated with brightness and splendor as the power of the sun. She had the moon under her feet, thus picturing that the ruler of night and darkness was subdued and under subjection; while her crown of twelve stars symbolized the twelve apostles. That this woman, or true church, did not fall, and later become the Catholic church ruling from Rome, is evident; for there are two churches clearly set forth in the Scriptures, existing in the same period, one driven to the wilderness, while the other is exalted to civil power, and rules the world from Rome.

This second woman, or church, is introduced in prophecy in Revelation 17:1-6. The angel said to John, “Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters . . . And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast full of the names of blasphemy . . . the woman was arrayed in purple and

A History of the True Church

scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones . . . upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS . . . and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

The fact that this second woman becomes drunk with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, shows clearly that the two churches were different, yet existed together, and that the woman drinking of this blood was not the true church. Verse 15 says, “The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” This fallen woman, or church, ruled over the world. She sat in authority and power, being united with the state, and thus put to death the martyrs of Jesus who constituted the true church of God.

Noting the contrast in the two churches, it is sufficient evidence of their distinction and entire separation. One was clothed with the sun, the other adorned with gold and precious stones; one held the moon under her feet, the other was seated upon the beast; one possessed the crown of twelve stars, the other wearing the inscription, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots”; and one was drunk on the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, while the other was driven into the wilderness, nourished there by God.

The Church Name in Both Old and New Testaments

From the time of the exodus of the twelve tribes of Israel from Egyptian bondage, to the advent of our Savior, the church was called “Israel,” this term having originated through the experience of Jacob wrestling with the angel.

The church in the wilderness was organized with twelve patriarchs, one at the head of each of the twelve tribes, Numbers 10, and then the Sanhedrin, or the seventy elders, Exodus 24:1 and Numbers 11:16. This form of church government and organization remained until the dispersion of Israel, and the Sanhedrin continued

until the time of Jesus. The name "Israel" was also the name applying to these people.

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of events concerning the church, said, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory, and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name," Isaiah 62:2. This prophecy was fulfilled when the Gentiles were received into God's favor, beholding His righteousness, and receiving His favors through Jesus. The church was to be "called by a new name," which the mouth of the Lord would name. This also met its fulfillment when Jesus gave the new name for the church recorded twelve times in the New Testament, viz., "The Church of God."

In the Savior's prayer before Calvary, he said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me . . . while I was with them . . . I kept in thy name . . . I have declared unto them thy name, and I will declare it," John 17:11, 12, 26. That Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in the change of name from "Israel" to the "Church of God" is further seen by reading Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." In I Corinthians 1:2, Paul addresses the church at Corinth, as follows: "To the church of God which is at Corinth." Nowhere do we find the Catholic church spoken of; still they claim to be the oldest in the world. The people following the Lord Jesus, called out from both Jews and Gentiles, I Corinthians 10:32, and called the church of God, were not the forerunners of the Roman church, as definite history, set forth in the further pages of this work, will prove.

We find Paul discussing the church, 59 A.D., in the following manner. He says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ," I Corinthians 12:12. The church therefore existed as one body to this time, and the Word said further that when one member suffers, all members suffer with it, and when one member is honored all members rejoice with it.

Five years later, in 64 A.D., Paul says, “I bow my knees to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,” Ephesians 3:14, 15.

CHAPTER 3: THE DRAGON AND BEAST MAKE WAR ON THE CHURCH

The Period of Great Tribulation

“And there appeared another wonder . . . a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns . . . And the dragon stood before the woman . . . to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne, . . . and . . . the dragon . . . persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child,” Revelation 12:3-13.

It is necessary that we investigate carefully this strange symbol, introduced in connection with the history of the church, for it is this power that began the long period of religious persecutions, during which thousands of true followers of Jesus gave their lives for the true faith.

In verse 6 we read, “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and three score days.” In verse 14 we read, “To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

It is evident that these two verses given above, set forth the same period of prophetic time, covering the sojourn of the church in the wilderness while persecuted by the beast. The phrase, “Time, times, and half a time,” in verse 14, must therefore be 1260 days, as stated

in verse 6. Furthermore, “time” is the ancient word for year. “Times” always meant two or more years, and “half a time,” one-half a year. There were also 360 days as in the pre-flood year; therefore we have one year, 360 days; two years, 720 days; and one-half a year, or 180 days, a total of 1260.

The Lord tells us the prophecies are of no private interpretation, therefore we must obtain divine information as to the meaning of all mysterious symbols found in prophetic vision. Daniel beheld four beasts coming up out of the sea, diverse one from another, and each playing an important part in the affairs of this world. The angel came to him and made known their meaning in the following words: “These beasts which are four, are four kings that shall arise in the earth . . . and the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, Daniel 7:17, 23. Hence, we do not place private interpretation upon these sacred matters when we identify the beast, the persecutor of the church, with the Roman empire.

These four beasts, the angel said, were four kings that would arise in the earth, and the fourth one was the fourth kingdom. As the vision begins with Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon Daniel, chapters two and seven, the first beast would represent this king and his kingdom; the second beast, the kingdom that overthrew the Babylon empire, viz., the Medes and Persians, the bear; the third, like unto a leopard, symbolizes the third kingdom to rule the world, which all history tells us was the Grecian empire, under Alexander the Great. The fourth beast, with ten horns, symbolizing the fourth kingdom, represents the Roman Empire, for it was the fourth in order down from King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Hence, we have located the persecutor of the church, and find that both the Old and the New Testaments tell the same story.

In this chapter Daniel 7:25, it says this beast makes war with the saints, and prevails against them for “a time, times, and the dividing of a time.” This is the same expression used relative to the beast standing before the woman, in Revelation, twelfth chapter, where it is said to mean twelve hundred and sixty days. Compare verses 6 and 14 of this chapter.

In Daniel, seventh chapter, the ten horns upon this beast are said to be ten kings, verse 24, and another, arising among them, plucks up three of the ten horns, and makes war with the “saints of the most High.” This beast was the fourth in order.

The Roman Empire was also the fourth kingdom, consequently this beast corresponds with the Roman Kingdom. The beast had ten horns, and the angel said the horns were ten kings. History says the Roman Empire was divided; and there are ten kings named in the divisions. How wonderful as history responds to the call of prophecy. A little horn came up among the ten and plucked up three by the roots, and made war with the saints of God. History tells of the Papacy, the Roman Catholic church with its papal government, coming up during the reign of the ten kings of Rome, and plucking up three of the kingdoms, and also of this power persecuting the church, driving the true followers of Jesus into the wilderness. They took refuge, as this work will further prove, in the mountains and forests and caves of the earth.

In Ezekiel 4:5, 6, we are told to take a day for a year in calculating prophetic time periods, and this figures out with wonderful precision and accuracy as history meets prophecy. This fourth beast, while carrying the little horn and persecuting the church, continued exactly 1260 years. Three of the ten kings of the Roman kingdom were plucked up by this papal horn, viz. Burgundians, Vandals, and Ostrogoths. The last one of these three horns, or Roman kings, was plucked up in the year 538 A.D., when the period of 1260 years evidently began. It was also this year that Justinian wrote the famous letter to the pope of Rome offering to unite church and state, which was accepted. Consequently, it was this year (538 A.D.) that the harlot woman of Revelation, seventeenth chapter, mounted the beast, and it was this year that the true Church of God fled into the wilderness. The same prophetic period covering her sojourn there, also covers the period of the beast’s power and rule. Hence, as she went into the wilderness in 538 A.D., and was to remain there 1260 years, we would add this to 538, and it brings us down to 1798. This was the very year that Napoleon sent General

Berthier in conquest of Rome, and the city was captured, the pope taken prisoner and banished in exile, where he died three years later. The Protestant banners were unfurled in the streets of Rome, and union of church and state dissolved throughout Europe. While these events brought us to the end of the prophetic period, and we see history wonderfully responding to the call of prophecy, it is also worthy of note that at this particular time the Constitution of the United States had not long been written, granting the persecuted followers of Jesus a refuge, giving them that freedom and liberty of conscience, which they of right possess according to the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Constitution was ratified on June 21, 1788.

As the true church fled into the wilderness in the year 538 A.D., and the Lord declares that he fed her there for 1260 days, or years, it is definite proof that the church lived, functioned, and remained down to the time of 1798. It would not be possible for the owner of a herd of cattle to take them to a pasture, and feed them there for six months, during the summer season, unless they lived, and existed for that period of time: neither would it be possible for the Lord to carry the church away into the wilderness, and feed her there for 1260 years unless she lived, and existed for that period of time. The history of the church, therefore, is definitely traced from the days of Jesus, through the sacred writings, down to this eventful year 1798, and even farther, for it is said of the church at the end of her wilderness experience, that "The earth helped the woman, Revelation 12:16. As previously stated, a new nation had been born, and was the only place of refuge for the persecuted followers of Jesus. In the Constitution of that nation, religious liberty was granted, and to the United States of America refugees fled from Europe, and worshiped God according to the dictates of their own conscience. These principles of religious liberty soon spread throughout the world, for indeed the earth had helped the woman. History has again met prophecy: the church is out of the wilderness and enjoying religious liberty, while by her the true gospel light is again being carried to every nation, kindred, tribe, and people.

CHAPTER 4: THIRTY-THREE A.D. TO ONE HUNDRED A.D.

The Apostolical Church

A history of the true Church of God could not be written without taking into consideration the lives and work of the outstanding leaders of the Gospel Age, that is, the apostles Paul, Peter and John; for by, or under their direction, most of the New Testament Scriptures were written, and the fortunes of the church advanced during the first century, and fashioned for future centuries.

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul, who after his conversion, secluded himself in the desert of Arabia, not mingling with the Church for three years, Galatians 1:17-19, became the intellectual giant of apostolic days, and his writings embrace much of the early history of the church down to 66 A.D.

When the three years were expired and Paul (or Saul) had gone up to Jerusalem, he returned to the church at Antioch, his name still being Saul, Acts 12:25. His office in the church was prophet or teacher, Acts 13:1. His ordination and preparation for the apostleship was performed in the usual way, by the laying on of hands, and prayer, after which service he was called Paul, and the title of "Apostle" applied to him, Acts 13:1-9, also 14:14. Although having been miraculously called by Jesus on the Damascus Road, his preparation covered a similar period of three years as the other apostles, and his ordination was in keeping with the New Testament practice. The thirteenth chapter of Acts, as above, gives us the brief narrative of his being received into the apostleship, which evidently was to fill the vacancy made by the death of the apostle James,

recorded in chapter 12:1, 2.

“In his later years, the Apostle Paul spent more time in preparing the churches for the great future apostasy than in pushing the work farther on. He foresaw that this apostasy would arise in the West. Therefore, he spent years laboring to anchor the Gentile churches of Europe to the churches of Judea.

“The Jewish believers had back of them 1500 years of training. Throughout the centuries God had so molded the Jewish mind that it grasped the idea of sin; of an invisible Godhead; of man’s serious condition; of the need of a divine Redeemer. But throughout these same centuries, the Gentile world had sunk lower and lower in frivolity, heathenism and debauchery.

“It is worthy of notice that the Apostle Paul wrote practically all of his epistles to the Gentile churches — to Corinth, to Rome, to Philippi, etc. He wrote almost no letters to the Jewish believers. Therefore, the great burden of his closing days was to anchor the Gentile churches of Europe to the churches of Judea. In fact, it was to secure this end that he lost his life.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, 1930 Ed. p. 10.

This is how the Apostle Paul used the churches of Elohim in the land of Judea as an example, a pattern, by which Gentile churches were to be built. He said to the Thessalonians: “For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews, I Thessalonians 2:14.

Nowhere in all the writings of the Apostle Paul can we find where he taught believers to follow the Gentile churches, either the church at Rome, at Corinth, in Galatia, at Thessalonica, or any other place. Why? Without doubt it was because they were not suitable patterns, while those churches in Judea, filled with Jewish believers, were

organized, governed, and patterned after the will of the Master, and were doctrinally and organically correct.¹

“St. Paul did his best to maintain his friendship and alliance with the Jerusalem Church. To put himself right with them, he travelled up to Jerusalem, when fresh fields and splendid prospects were opening up for him in the West. For this purpose he submitted to several days restraint and attendance in the temple, and the results vindicated his determination.” — Stokes, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Vol. 11, p. 439.

Simon Peter, the Apostle

“Peter was the son of a certain Jona or John, and was according to John 1:44, a native of Bethsaida, though later he became a citizen of Capernaum, where he had a house, and with his brother Andrew was engaged in the fishing business in partnership with Zebedee and his two sons, James and John. He was married . . . Though not wealthy, Simon was a man of some property, not a poor, grossly ignorant laborer . . . In childhood he was probably taught, as many other Jewish children were, to read the Hebrew Scriptures, although in the rabbinical sense he was not learned (Acts 4:13).

“Among those who flocked to hear John the Baptist were Peter and his brother Andrew — an indication of their interest in the religious hopes of the times. John’s words made such an impression that the brothers attached themselves to him as (at least temporary) disciples. Soon after, Andrew met Jesus and at once sought his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus, who even then

¹ [CHCoG- Though there is much truth in this, it is also true that the Jewish churches were often contaminated by the unbiblical traditions of the Pharisees, which Jeshua clearly rejected.]

A History of the True Church

foreshadowed his future career by saying that he should be called Cephas, from the Aramaic. After continuing with Jesus for a while, they seem to have returned to their accustomed occupation. To what extent Peter was with Jesus during the period covered by John, chapters two to four is uncertain. When Jesus opened His public ministry in Galilee He summoned the brothers to a more permanent discipleship (Mark 1:16-20). For this summons their previous acquaintance with Jesus had prepared them, and it was with enthusiastic self-sacrifice that they left all and followed Him. As yet, however, Peter was only one of many whom Jesus attracted to Himself during the early months of His work in Galilee. This was a testing time for Simon. He was a whole-hearted, though often blundering, disciple. While he had much to learn, he was also willing to be taught, and finally he showed such appreciation of Jesus' person and teaching that he was chosen by Jesus to be one of twelve, selected from the larger body of disciples, who were to be 'apostles,' i.e., intimately associated with Him to learn from Him and (ultimately) to be sent out by Him to declare His message and carry on His work (Mark 3:14).

“With the brothers James and John, Peter made a group of three with whom Jesus was most intimate and who alone were associated with Him on such occasions as the Transfiguration and the Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane . . . The twelve remained steadfast even after Jesus' popularity began to wane, and it was Peter who voiced their conviction later in response to Jesus' searching question that He was indeed the Messiah (Mark 8:29; Matthew 16:16a; Luke 9:20; cf. John 6:68).

“When Jesus was arrested, Peter drew his short sword and struck off the ear of one Malchus. Though with the others he fled when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:50), he followed the party into the city and through the influence

A History of the True Church

of the unnamed disciple gained admission into the palace where Jesus' trial was proceeding. Here, when taunted by a servant-maid, with an oath he denied that he knew Jesus. Overcome by shame, he went outside and wept. He witnessed Jesus' sufferings on the cross. These scenes were so indelibly stamped on his mind that years after, the impression was still vivid. The despair that settled over his soul when he saw his beloved Master die was not lightened by any strong hope of a resurrection.

“But when the women early Sunday morning brought the news of an open and empty tomb, Peter and ‘the other disciple’ ran to investigate. They found the tomb empty and wondered, with an incipient faith, at the orderly appearance of the grave-clothes (Jn 20:3-10), and then returned to their company. Later in the day Jesus appeared to Peter, the first of the Twelve to whom He showed Himself after the Passion. To Peter this was as a new birth, filled with a living hope. He was present at most of the post-resurrection interviews between Jesus and His disciples, and to him in particular, probably because of his denial, Jesus very tenderly and suggestively re-entrusted the Apostolic commission, intimating at the same time the self-denial and suffering involved in his future career (Jn ch. 21).

“Peter now took a leading part in the direction of the little band of disciples that was the nucleus of the Christian Church . . . Up to the time of the persecution that followed the martyrdom of Stephen, the new movement was confined almost exclusively to Jerusalem, and it was Peter who had a chief share in the guidance of affairs. His associate was John. These two figure prominently in the accounts of the first conflicts with the Jerusalem authorities . . . After the martyrdom of Stephen the Christian movement took on larger proportions, spreading throughout Palestine and into the neighboring

countries. To a certain extent it was supervised by the Apostles. Acts preserves a record of two visitations by Peter in connection with this work. The first was when he and John were sent by the Apostles to oversee the evangelistic labors of Philip in Samaria . . . The second tour led him as far as Joppa (Ac 9:32 ff.), whence he was summoned by a vision and by messengers from Cornelius, a centurion at Caesarea, to be the first to preach the gospel to Gentiles. In this matter Peter also found himself doing what he had never done before, fellowshiping freely with Gentiles, recognizing them as Christian brethren, and eating with them . . .

“Some time after this Peter was arrested by order of Herod Agrippa, with a view to executing him on the following day. But he escaped and left Jerusalem immediately (Ac 12:1-17). Whither he went is not said, and for all further knowledge of Peter’s movements we must trust to incidental statements in the New Testament or to the somewhat unreliable notices in early Christian literature. Since Herod Agrippa died in 44 A.D., the events narrated in Acts, chapters one to twelve, in case they are arranged in chronological sequence, must have covered a period of about fifteen years. We may say, then, that for that length of time Peter was a foremost figure of the early apostolic church. It was during this period, three years after his conversion, that Paul visited Jerusalem to talk matters over with Peter (Gal 1:18), staying with him fifteen days. Paul’s desire to have this personal interview with Peter incidentally reveals the important place held by the latter in the apostolic church at that time. His subsequent career was just as important, but its details have not been preserved. About five years later (49 A.D.), Peter was present at the council in Jerusalem and took a leading part in its deliberations. By this time he had become recognized as the ‘apostle of the

A History of the True Church

circumcision,' (Gal 2:7), through whom God was working as effectually as he was through Paul for the 'uncircumcision' (*i.e.*, the Gentile world). These expressions suggest that Peter's activity was—like his own—largely missionary in character and to the Jews of the dispersion as his was to the Gentiles. For this reason Peter was in Jerusalem probably only occasionally after his escape from Herod Agrippa in 44 A.D. We learn further, from Gal 2:11-14, that at Antioch (either soon after the Council of 49, before Paul set out on his second missionary journey, or at the close of that journey, when Paul was at Antioch for a while; cf. Ac 18:23), Peter was sharply rebuked by Paul for weakly yielding to emissaries of the strict Judaistic party of Jerusalem and withdrawing from that familiar fellowship with the uncircumcised Gentile members of the church . . .

“Of the remainder of Peter's career we are in almost total ignorance. He appears to have continued his missionary labors. In these he was frequently accompanied by his wife (I Co 9:5). Early Christian tradition erroneously looked back to him as the first 'bishop' of the Church of Antioch. But it is certain that he did not organize the great Church. Other ancient traditions speak of his labors in Asia Minor, especially in the regions near the Black Sea. . . Mark was with the apostle at the time (serving as his 'interpreter' and gathering the material [in part] for his Gospel), also Silvanus, who appears to have penned the Epistle (I Pe 5:12-13). . . According to a wide-spread tradition, which has become generally accepted in Christendom, Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome.” — *A New Standard Bible Dictionary*, pp. 656-659.

A History of the True Church John the Revelator

19

The Apostle John is also deserving of special mention in this work. He is the apostle spoken of as the one Jesus loved, and without doubt he was, like Paul, a chosen vessel of the Lord to fulfill a special mission.

John was sentenced to death, and it seemed his fate was to have been much the same as most of the other apostles had been, a martyr's death. He was to be killed by being cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, which was always fatal to the victim.

His would-be-executioners carried out the orders to the letter; but, to their amazement and surprise, he arose from the boiling oil, praising God, and without bodily injury. Such fear was thus caused among many who witnessed the miracle, that hundreds of conversions were made to the faith they were vainly endeavoring to stamp out. Fearing further to try to take the apostle's life, he was banished to the island of Patmos, about seventy-five miles off the northeast shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It was on this island where the angel of God visited the apostle, and gave him the last book of the New Testament, the Revelation. See chapter 1:1-9.

“The last of the apostles to pass away was John. His death is usually placed about 100 A.D. In his closing days he cooperated in the collecting and forming of those writings we call the New Testament.” — Dr. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the New Testament*, Vol. 11, p. 544.

“While St. John lived, these heretics (the Docetae, or Gnostics, and the Ebionites), were much discountenanced; and those who embraced their sentiments, were always considered as perfectly distinct from the Christian church. Doubtless they called themselves Christians, and so do all heretics, for obvious reasons; and for reasons as obvious, all, who are tenders of the fundamental principles of the gospel, should not

A History of the True Church

own their right to the appellation.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s Church History*, Ed. 1816, Page 57, 58.

“While John lived, heresy could make no serious headway. He had hardly passed away, however, before perverse teachers infested the Christian church . . . These years were times which saw the New Testament books corrupted in abundance.

“Eusebius is witness to this fact. He also relates that the corrupted manuscripts were so prevalent that agreement between the copies was hopeless; and that those who were corrupting the Scriptures, claimed that they really were correcting them.” — Wilkinson’s *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, p. 11.

In spite of these efforts to pollute the words of God, and bring confusion, our Lord was able to care for His sacred writings, and He wonderfully directed, when certain manuscripts were chosen to become a part of the New Testament.

The Early Protestant Church

Its various names falsely ascribed: The true name, and its doctrine and practice will now be considered.

It has already been shown that the New Testament name for the true church organized by Jesus Christ was the “Church of God,” and as we leave the New Testament writings and launch out into secular history, which we must do, as the New Testament narrative only carries us to about 96 A.D., we will find the same name brought to view down through the Gospel Age. These people, however, have always been called, by their enemies, by other names. The name “Nazarenes,” applied to them by the world, during the first period following the days of the apostles, will be considered first.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he gave warning to his

followers of the great destruction decreed upon Jerusalem, and the Jewish temple there. He told those living in Judea to flee to the mountains. Consequently, when they saw Jerusalem compassed with armies, the church fled to a town called Pella. The following bit of history gives us information concerning this flight and escape.

“Under the reign of Vespasian, Rome declared war against the Jews because of their repeated revolts, and General Titus besieged the city of Jerusalem 70 A.D. It is said that eleven hundred thousand Jews perished in the six month siege, but the church there escaped the horrors of the siege by following the instruction of Christ in Matthew 24, and fleeing to the mountains beyond the Jordan. This timely retreat was made to the small town of Pella.” — Hugh Smith’s *History*.

“In the fall of Jerusalem, few if any Christians perished. From the prophetic utterances of Christ, the Christians received warning, escaped from the doomed city, and found refuge at Pella, in the Jordan valley.” — Pages 41, 42, Hurlbut’s *Story of the Bible*.

Of the early apostolic Christians, Hurlbut says, “All the members of the Pentecostal Church were Jews; and, so far as we can perceive, none of the members, or even of the apostolic company, at first dreamed that Gentiles would ever be admitted to membership . . . The Jews of that age were of three classes, and all were represented in the Jerusalem church, . . . Hebrews, . . . Grecian Jews or Hellenists, . . . Proselytes.” — Pages 21, 22, *Idem*.

The first secular name given the true church by the outside world was “Nazarenes,” and of them *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has the following:

“Nazarenes, an obscure Jewish-Christian sect existing at the time of Epiphanius (fl. A.D. 370) in Coele-Syria,

A History of the True Church

Decapolis (Pella) and Basanitis (Cocabe). According to that authority, they dated their settlement in Pella from the time of the flight of the Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, immediately before the siege in A.D. 70; he characterizes them as neither more or less than Jews pure and simple, but adds that they recognized the new covenant as well as the old, and believed in the resurrection, and in the one God and His Son Jesus Christ. He cannot say whether their Christological views were identical with those of Cerinthus and his school, or whether they differed at all from his own. But Jerome (Ep. 79, to Augustine) says that they believed in Christ the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rose again, but adds that, ‘desiring to be both Jews and Christians, they are neither the one nor the other.’ They used the Aramaic recension of the Gospel according to Matthew, which they called the Gospel to the Hebrews, but, while adhering as far as possible to the Mosaic economy as regarded . . . sabbaths, foods, and the like, they did not refuse to recognize the apostolicity of Paul or the rights of (Gentile) Christians,” Jerome, Comn. in Isaiah 9:1 — *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, Vol. 19.

From the above quotation we have learned that the church during the first four centuries used the Aramaic recension of the Scriptures. Also they were known by the world as Nazarenes (Acts 24:5). The name originated from Nazareth, the city of the nativity of our Lord, as Jesus was raised to manhood in and around the city of Nazareth. We read from Matthew 2:23, as follows: “And He came and dwelt in the city of Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

It is not strange therefore, that the early church would be known by the name Nazarenes, as the prophet long before his birth said that Jesus would be given this title of national distinction. The people of

Nazareth spoke the Aramaic tongue, consequently, this was the native language of our Savior. Hence, we find on the event of his death he cried, “Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani,” which is in the ancient language of Nazareth, the Aramaic. The name Nazareth, or “Nazarenes,” is therefore the regional name, as Texan, Alabaman, Scottish, etc. In no way, however, was this name intended by the Lord to apply to His church, or He would never have given the name, “The Church of God,”² twelve times, as He did in the New Testament writings.

In the ancient records of the early writers when sending letters back and forth between the churches, they always addressed one another as “The Church of God in Smyrna,” the “Church of God in Philadelphia,” etc. In the second century Ignatius wrote to the Smyrnaeans thus: “To the Churches of God in Smyrna.” On page 79, in the epistle to the Philadelphians, he writes, “To the Church of God, which is at Philadelphia.” — *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, Vol. 1.

Eusebius, who wrote of the church of the first centuries, speaks of the church observing the Lord’s supper at the same time the Jews kept the passover; viz., on the 14th of the first month, Nisan. There were at first two elders, or bishops, appointed for each city, as instructed by Paul to Titus (Titus 1:5); but toward the close of the second century this practice began to give away to the appointment of one bishop instead of two, and these bishops were appointed over not only the city, but a certain community or district, while an inferior order of ministers were appointed called deacons to preside over the local affairs of the church.

“The first Christian church established at Jerusalem by apostolic authority became in its doctrine and practice a model for the greater part of those founded in the first century. The first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem were all Jews, except [possibly] one, St. Mark, and the congregation over which they presided united the

² [CHCoG - In the Aramaic, which Jeshua spoke, they were called the Congregation of God.]

A History of the True Church

teachings of Moses with the doctrines of Christ.” — *History of the Christian Church*, by Hugh Smith, pp. 50, 51, a Presbyterian work.

Hugh Smith says further, in his history of these Christian adherents to the faith as taught by the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem, “These Judaizing Christians were first known by the outside world as ‘Nazarenes’.” He speaks again of this matter on page 69, as follows: “All Christians agreed in celebrating the seventh day of the week in conformity to the Jewish converts.”

“As long as the Christians were supposed to be Jews they were not especially molested. They simply suffered from the ill-feeling which the Romans had for the Jews. But in a process of time the Christians were hated for other reasons. They nearly all came from the lower classes, the tradesmen, the freed-men and slaves. Being devoted to their religion, they refused to engage in the practices commonly engaged in by the Romans. They disapproved of the Roman amusements, the gladiatorial shows, the races in the circus, the plays, the dances, and the theaters. They were hence regarded as unsocial, and ‘Haters of mankind.’ Their churches were looked upon as secret societies, which were contrary to law. They were hated, and frequently subjects of mob violence.” — Myer’s *General History*.

Mosheim’s *History* speaks of a sect of Christian worshipers who were made poor by the destruction of Jerusalem, and who kept all of the commandments given by the great law-giver.

The Real Bible Name

While the name given these people by the world during this period was “Nazarenes,” still they were known among themselves by

the Bible name, "The Church of God." The following sketches bear out this fact.

Regarding the death of Polycarp, who was an associate with John the Revelator, the church at Smyrna addresses the church in Philomelium thus: "The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, mercy, peace, and love from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied." — Vol. 1, *Ante-Nicean Fathers*.

The Day of Rest

In the history of the first centuries by Eusebius, he speaks of Jewish Christians who observed the Sabbath, and also says that Polycarp, baptized by St. John, held to the Passover as an institution peculiarly handed down by St. John. — *Eusebius* p. 243.

Bishop White, in speaking of Sabbathkeeping as opposed to the practice of the church and as heretical, says, "It was thus condemned in the Nazarenes and in the Cerinthians, in the Ebionites and in the Hysistarii. The ancient Synod of Laodicea made a decree against it [364 A.D.], canon 29, also Gregory the Great affirmed it was Judaical. In St. Bernard's days it was condemned in the Petrobrussians. The same, likewise being revived in Luther's day, by Carlstadt, Sternberg, and some secretaries among the Anabaptists, hath both then, and ever since, been condemned as Jewish and heretical." — A.H. Lewis, *A Critical History of the Sabbath and the Sunday in the Christian Church*, Ed. 1886, p. 218.

"As long as the church was mainly Jewish, the Hebrew Sabbath was kept; but as it became increasingly Gentile, the first day gradually took the place of the seventh day." — Hurlbut, *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 45.

That the observance of the Sabbath was not confined to Jewish converts, the learned Gieseler explicitly testifies: "While the Jewish

Christians of Palestine retained the entire Mosaic Law, and consequently the Jewish festivals, the Gentile Christians observed also the Sabbath and the Passover (I Corinthians 5:6, 8), with the reference to the last scenes of Jesus' life, but without Jewish superstition." — *Eccl. Hist.*, Vol. 1, chap. 2, sec. 30.

“While the Christians of Palestine, who kept the whole Jewish Law, celebrated of course all the Jewish festivals, the heathen converts observed only the Sabbath, and, in remembrance of closing scenes of our Savior's life, the Passover, though without the Jewish superstitions.” — *Church History, Apostolic Age to A.D. 70*, Sec. 29; Lewis, *History of Sabbath & Sunday*, p. 135.

The first century closes with the death of St. John the Revelator, which is said to have occurred in the year 100 A.D. As a summary of the work accomplished by the church of this century, we shall quote the following:

“In this century (First), a revolution took place, in the human mind and in human manners, the most astonishing that was ever seen in any age, and was effected against the united opposition of all the powers then in the world; and this too, not in countries rude or uncivilized, but in the most humanized, the most learned, and the most polished part of the globe, within the Roman empire; no part of which was exempted from its effects. This empire, within the first century seems to have been the proper limit of Christian conquests.

“And what was the change? It was from bad to good. The religious and moral principles of both Jews and Gentiles were, before their conversion, grossly bad. The idolatries, abominations and ferocity of the Gentile world, must be allowed not to have been less than they were described in the first chapter to the Romans. The

writings of Horace and Juvenal prove that the picture painted by the apostle is not overdrawn. The extreme wickedness of the Jews cannot be denied.

“In this revolution, are thousands of men, turned from sin to holiness, many in a very short space of time, reformed in understanding, in inclination, in affection; knowing, loving, and confiding in God; from a state of mere selfishness converted into the purest philanthropists, living only to please God, and to exercise kindness toward one another.” — Pages 58, 59, Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s Church History*, Ed. 1816.

History of Christian Martyrs to the First General Persecutions under Nero

Christ our Savior, in the Gospel of St. Matthew, hearing the confession of St. Peter, who, first of all others, openly acknowledged Him to be the Son of God, and perceiving the secret hand of His Father therein, called Him (alluding to His name) a rock, upon which rock He would build his church so strong that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. In which words three things are to be noted: First, that Christ will have a church in this world. Secondly, that the same church should mightily be impugned, not only by the world, but also by the uttermost strength and powers of all hell. And, thirdly, that the same church, notwithstanding the uttermost of the devil and all his malice, should continue.

Which prophecy of Christ we see wonderfully to be verified, insomuch that the whole course of the church to this day may seem nothing else but a verifying of the said prophecy. First, that Christ hath set up a church, needed no declaration.

Secondly, what force of princes, kings, monarchs, governors, and rulers of this world, with their subjects, publicly and privately, with all their strength and cunning, have bent themselves against this church! And, thirdly, how the said church, all this notwithstanding,

hath yet endured and holden its own! What storms and tempests it hath overpast, wondrous it is to behold: for the more evident declaration whereof, I have addressed this present history, to the end, first, that the wonderful works of God in His church might appear to His glory; also, that, the continuance and proceedings of the church, from time to time, being set forth, more knowledge and experience may redound thereby, to the profit of the reader and edification of Christian faith.

As it is not our business to enlarge upon our Savior's history, either before or after His crucifixion, we shall only find it necessary to remind our readers of the discomfiture of the Jews by His subsequent resurrection. Although one apostle had betrayed him; although another had denied Him, under the solemn sanction of an oath; and although the rest had forsaken him, unless we may except the disciple who was known to the high priest; the history of His resurrection gave a new direction to all their hearts, and, after the mission of the Holy Spirit, imparted new confidence to their minds. The powers with which they were endued emboldened them to proclaim His name, to the confusion of the Jewish rulers, and the astonishment of Gentile proselytes."

I. St. Stephen

St. Stephen suffered the next in order. His death was occasioned by the faithful manner in which he preached the Gospel to the betrayers and murderers of Christ. To such a degree of madness were they excited, that they cast him out of the city and stoned him to death. The time when he suffered is generally supposed to have been at the Passover which succeeded to that of our Lord's crucifixion, and to the era of his ascension, in the following spring.

Upon this a great persecution was raised against all who professed their belief in Christ as the Messiah, or as a prophet. We are immediately told by St. Luke, that 'there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem'; and that 'they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.'

About two thousand Christians, with Nicanor, one of the seven deacons, suffered martyrdom during the ‘persecution that arose about Stephen.’

II. James the Great

The next martyr we meet with, according to St. Luke, in the history of the apostles’ acts, was James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John, and a relative of our Lord; for his mother Salome was cousin-german to the Virgin Mary. It was not until ten years after the death of Stephen that the second martyrdom took place; for no sooner had Herod Agrippa been appointed governor of Judea, than, with a view to ingratiate himself with them, he raised a sharp persecution against the Christians, and determined to make an effectual blow, by striking at their leaders. The account given us by an eminent primitive writer, Clemens Alexandrinus, ought not to be overlooked; that as James was led to the place of martyrdom, his accuser was brought to repent of his conduct by the apostle’s extraordinary courage and undauntedness, and fell down at his feet to request his pardon, professing himself a Christian, and resolving that, James should not receive the crown of martyrdom alone. Hence they were both beheaded at the same time. Thus did the first apostolic martyr cheerfully and resolutely receive that cup, which he had told our Savior he was ready to drink. Timon and Parmenas suffered martyrdom about the same time; the one at Philippi, and the other in Macedonia. These events took place about A.D. 44.

III. Philip

Was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee and was first called by the name of ‘disciple.’ He labored diligently in Upper Asia, and suffered martyrdom at Heliopolis, in Phrygia. He was scourged, thrown into prison, and afterwards crucified, A.D. 54.

IV. Matthew

Whose occupation was that of toll-gather was born at Nazareth. He wrote his gospel in Hebrew, which was afterwards translated into

A History of the True Church

Greek by James the Less. The scene of his labors was Parthia, and Ethiopia, in which latter country he suffered martyrdom, being slain with a halberd in the city of Nadabah, A.D. 60.

V. James the Less

Is supposed by some to have been the brother of our Lord, by a former wife of Joseph. This is very doubtful, and accords too much with Catholic superstition, that Mary never had any other children except our Savior. He was elected to the oversight of the churches of Jerusalem; and was the author of the Epistle ascribed to James in the sacred canon. At the age of ninety-four he was beaten and stoned by the Jews; and finally had his brains dashed out with a fuller's club.

VI. Matthias

Of whom less is known than most of the other disciples, was elected to fill the vacant place of Judas. He was stoned at Jerusalem and then beheaded.

VII. Andrew

Was the brother of Peter. He preached the gospel to many Asiatic nations; but on his arrival at Edessa he was taken and crucified on a cross, the two ends of which were fixed transversely in the ground. Hence the derivation of the term, St. Andrew's cross.

VIII. Mark

Was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He is supposed to have been converted to Christianity by Peter, whom he served as an amanuensis, and under whose inspection he wrote his Gospel in the Greek language. Mark was dragged to pieces by the people of Alexandria, at the great solemnity of Serapis their idol, ending his life under their merciless hands.

IX. Peter

Among many other saints, the blessed Apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit

some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus said that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshiping, said, 'Lord, whither dost Thou Go?' To whom he answered and said, 'I am come again to be crucified.' By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome said that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

X. Paul

Paul, the apostle, who before was called Saul, after his great travail and unspeakable labors in promoting the Gospel of Christ, suffered also in the first persecution under Nero. Abdias, declareth that under his execution Nero sent two of his esquires, Peregá and Parhemius, to bring him word of his death. They, coming to Paul instructing the people, desired him to pray for them, that they might believe; who told them that shortly after they should believe and be baptized at his sepulcher.

This done, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers were made, gave his neck to the sword.

XI. Jude

The brother of James, was commonly called Thaddeus. He was crucified at Edessa A.D. 72.

XII. Bartholomew

Preached in several countries, and having translated the Gospel of Matthew into the language of India, he propagated it in that country. He was at length cruelly beaten and then crucified by the impatient idolaters.

XIII. Thomas

Called Didymus, preached the gospel in Parthia and India, where exciting the rage of the pagan priests, he was martyred by being thrust through with a spear.

XIV. Luke

The evangelist, was the author of the Gospel which goes under his name. He traveled with Paul through various countries, and is supposed to have been hanged on an olive tree, by the idolatrous priests of Greece.

XV. Simon

Surnamed Zelotes, preached the Gospel in Mauritania, Africa, . . . Britain, in which latter country he was crucified, A.D. 74.

XVI. John

The 'beloved disciple,' was a brother to James the Great. The churches of Smyrna, Pergamos, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Thyatira, were founded by him. From Ephesus he was ordered to be sent to Rome, where it is affirmed he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil. He escaped by miracle, without injury. Domitian afterwards banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the Book of Revelation. Nerva, the successor to Domitian, recalled him. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death.

XVII. Barnabas

Was of Cyprus, but of Jewish descent, his death is supposed to have taken place about A.D. 73.

And yet, notwithstanding all these continued persecutions and horrible punishments, the church daily increased, deeply rooted in the doctrine of the apostles and of men apostolical, and watered plenteously with the blood of the saints. — Based on Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, Foster's 1895 ed., pp. 24-35.

CHAPTER 5: ONE TO TWO HUNDRED A.D.

The Rise of Christian Sects

The first century closed with the death of the last of the apostles and writers of the New Testament, the Apostle John. No sooner had the apostles and disciples, who had been with Jesus, fallen asleep, than a new order arose and a different class of writers began to pen religious epistles. Hurlbut says of this change, in his *Story of the Christian Church*:

“For fifty years after St. Paul’s life, a curtain hangs over the church, through which we vainly strive to look; and when at last it rises, about 129 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church-fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul.” — Page 41.

The Great Apostasy

The apostle Paul declared that the day of the Lord could not come, “Except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way,” II Thessalonians 2:1-7.

Paul also wrote as follows, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them,” Acts 20:29, 30. In verse 32 he says, “And now, brethren I commend you to God, and to the Word of his grace.”

The above prophecies of Paul have been most strikingly fulfilled, as will be shown by the following historical notations taken from

reliable sources. The great falling away came, and that man of sin, "The Papacy," was revealed in his time.

Mr. Dowling, in his *History of Romanism* bears the following testimony:

"There is scarcely anything which strikes the mind of the careful student of ancient ecclesiastical history with greater surprise than the comparatively early period at which many of the corruptions of Christianity, which are embodied in the Romish system, took their rise; yet it is not to be supposed that when the first originators of many of these unscriptural notions and practices planted those germs of corruptions, they anticipated or even imagined they would ever grow into such a hideous system of superstition and error as that of popery. . . . Each of the great corruptions of the latter ages took its rise in a manner which it should be harsh to say was deserving of strong reprehension . . . The worship of images, the invocation of saints, and the superstition of relics, were but expansions of the natural feelings of veneration and affection cherished toward the memory of those who had suffered and died for the truth." — Book 2, ch. 1, sec. 1.

The working of the mystery of iniquity in the first centuries of the Christian church is thus described by a recent writer:

"During these centuries, the chief corruptions of popery were either introduced in principle, or the seeds of them so effectually sown as naturally to produce those baneful fruits which appeared so plentifully at a later period. In Justin Martyr's time, within fifty years of the apostolic age, the cup was mixed with water, and a portion of the elements sent to the absent. The bread, which at first was sent only to the sick, was, in the time of Tertullian and Cyprian, carried home by the people,

and locked up as a divine treasure for their private use. At this time, too, the ordinance of the supper was given to infants of the tenderest age, and was styled the sacrifice of the body of Christ. The custom of praying for the dead, Tertullian states, was common in the second century, and became the universal practice of the following ages; so that it came in the fourth century to be reckoned a kind of heresy to deny the efficacy of it. By this time the invocation of saints, the superstitious use of images, of the sign of the cross, and of consecrated oil, were become established practices, and pretended miracles were confidently abduced in proof of their supposed efficacy. Thus did that mystery of iniquity, which was already working in the time of the apostles, speedily after their departure, spread its corruptions among the professors of Christianity.” — *The Modern Sabbath Examined*, pp. 123,124.

“Toward the close of this century (second), the controversy concerning the proper time of the observation of Easter (Passover), was unhappily revived. Synods were held concerning it, and uniformity was attempted in vain throughout the church . . . That this controversy should appear to be a matter of such moment, at this time, proves that the power of true godliness had already suffered considerable declension. When faith and love are simple, strong, and active in an eminent degree, such subjects of debate are ever known to vanish as mists before the sun.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p. 87, Ed. 1816.

Robinson, author of the *History of Baptism* speaks as follows:

“Toward the latter end of the second century, most of the churches assumed a new form, the first simplicity disappeared; and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to

A History of the True Church

their graves, their children, along with new converts, both Jews and Gentiles, came forward and new-modeled the cause.” — *Eccl. Researches*, chap. 6, p. 51, 1792.

“At the end of the second century, . . . it is obvious to remark the changes that had already been introduced in much of the Christian worship. The garb of heathenism was already being worn. The seed of most of these errors . . . marred its beauty and tarnished its glory, also that distinction of grades began to be established that ended in the papal hierarchy.” — Wharey’s *Church History*.

“By the ambitious intrusions of self righteousness, argumentative refinements, and Pharisaic pride, the Spirit of God was grieved, and godliness in the professed friends of Christ, began in this Century (second) to decay.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p. 88.

Mosheim’s *History* speaks of a sect of Christians who met on the first day of the week, with their faces turned toward the sun to pray, also of their singing songs in honor of the sun and moon. They taught that Christ was in both, and that the soul after death first went to the moon to be cleansed of outward sins, and then to the sun to be purified within, after which they flew out among the stars to shine forever more.

The steady gains made by the Church of God in diffusing their pure religion among the Romans, who were sun-worshipers, could not long pass unnoticed. Their open attacks upon paganism made them extremely obnoxious to the populace. Horrid tales of their abominations were circulated throughout the Roman empire, during the century, and thus the minds of the pagans were prepared for every act of cruelty possible to inflict upon them. Rome was set on fire and much of the city destroyed, and it is not strange that Nero should try to transfer to this hated sect the guilt of which he was strongly

suspected, that of having caused the fire. With this view they inflicted upon the church terrible persecution. Some were crucified, some thrown to wild beasts, and many wrapped in clothes saturated with tar, were burned as torches in the garden of Nero, and in other parts of the city of Rome. The virtues of the church, their zeal for truth, and constancy in suffering, contributed to their respect and made this sect generally known. The death of these humble martyrs thus won thousands to the cause by inflaming zeal, uniting hearts, and putting to shame their enemies. — Hugh Smith's *Church History*.

“The first Christians, with the purest benevolence toward the persons of heretics, gave their errors no quarter, and discountenanced them by every reasonable method. The real heretics, on the contrary, endeavored to unite themselves with Christians. This they did, with a view, no doubt, to obtain a more extensive circulation of their errors, under the cloak of their being still in fellowship with those, whose real piety and soundness in the faith could not be doubted.” — Townsend's *Abridged Milner's*, p. 60. Ed. 1816.

Early Writers

After the death of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and John, history of the early church is confined to the writings of the Church Fathers, so called, who penned their epistles perhaps in sincerity, but not under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as did the apostles. While we may consider the epistles of these early writers from a historical viewpoint, we cannot consider them as a basis of doctrine, or faith, for their opinions are varied, the one contradicting the other.

Lamson says of these early writers:

“Many of them were learned, but few of them knew how to apply their learning to any good purpose . . . The

A History of the True Church

theology of most of them exhibited a strange and unnatural union of Christian doctrines with the philosophy taught in the Platonic schools of Alexandria, the most worthless that ever tasked the speculative intellect; and they were, almost without exception, addicted to the fanciful modes of interpretation, and particularly the allegorizing spirit, which characterized the same schools. There is no species of absurdity, in the interpretation, reasoning, faith, or opinion, of which their writings do not furnish abundance of examples.” — Lamson, *Church of the First Three Centuries*, Ed. 1874, pp. 331, 332.

He further says: “There is not an opinion so extravagant that an advocate for it may not be found among the old Fathers of the Church.” — *Idem*, p. 335.

Irenius, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, Justin Martyr, Dionysius, and Apolinaris, were all early writers of the church. Their writings in the first centuries, after the death of the original apostles and disciples, were laborious and expensive, being mostly confined to baked clay tablets, and some parchments, and bark from trees. These writings remained, much of which was found in the great library of Alexandria, Egypt, where they were totally destroyed by the followers of Mohammed, early in the sixth century. Upon the capture of Alexandria by the Mohammedans, they decided that if this vast library agreed with the writings of Mohammed they did not need them, and if they disagreed they should be destroyed, says Sales, in his history of Mohammedanism. Thus these early writings became extinct with the exceptions of fragments having been taken to Rome and Constantinople. As the contention between the Bishops of Jerusalem and Alexandria with those of the West, and especially with Rome, became intense, the original writings of these men were either totally destroyed, or forever concealed, and new and spurious works printed during the seventh century, the writings being so changed, in revisions, they could scarcely be recognized. Such work, however,

sufficed in putting down opposition to the Roman hierarchy; for, as these volumes were circulated throughout the Eastern churches much opposition to the interpretation on doctrine, as taught by the bishops of the West, ceased. Many books of the early writers were never reprinted, as those of Hierapolis on the defence of the Christian religion, Symmachus, Melito, Apolinaris and others.

Concerning Tertullian, one of the leaders in the province of Africa, who flourished from the year 194 to 220, if historians are correct concerning him: “He exhibited a striking instance how much wisdom and weakness, learning and ignorance, faith and folly, truth and error, goodness and delusion, may be mixed up in the composition of the same person.” — Haweis’ *Church History*, Vol. 1, p. 192.

The True Church

“It has been observed that on the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., by Titus, the church retired to Pella. In this situation they were forbidden to return to Jerusalem. Languishing for sixty years, deprived of revisiting the place of their dearest hope, they evaded the law, directed against Jews, by electing Mark, a prelate of the Gentile race for their bishop. Thus, they were permitted entrance into the city, and the standard of Christianity, 130 A.D., was again erected in the Holy City. A considerable part of the Jewish Christians, however, for various reasons remained behind at Pella.” — Hugh Smith’s *History*, p. 72.

Professor Hugh Smith, the Presbyterian writer, in his *Church History* says, of these so-called Nazarenes,

“Abhorred and publicly execrated by the Jews for their attachment to Christianity, and despised by the Christians for their prejudice in favor of the Mosaic law

A History of the True Church

(the Sabbath), they were peculiarly oppressed and unfortunate. Traces of this sect appear as late as the fourth century, being joined by what is known as the Ecesaites, a mixture of Judaism and Christianity.” — p. 72.

Dr. Francis White, Lord Bishop of Ely, mentions the Nazarenes as one of the ancient bodies of Sabbath-keepers who were condemned by the church leaders for that heresy; and he classes them with heretics, as Morer has done (*Decline and Fall*, chap. 15). Yet the Nazarenes have a peculiar claim to our regard, as being the apostolic church of Jerusalem, and its direct successors.

“The Jewish converts, or, as they were afterwards called, the Nazarenes, who had laid the foundations of the church, soon found themselves overwhelmed by the increasing multitudes, that from all the various religions of polytheism enlisted under the banner of Christ . . . The Nazarenes retired from the ruins of Jerusalem to the little town of Pella beyond the Jordan, where that ancient church languished above sixty years in solitude and obscurity.” — Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chap. 15.

Although, as we have stated previously, the writings of the Church Fathers cannot be taken for scriptural doctrines, yet we may glean from them items of historical note. For instance, we find in their writings, addressed to the various assemblies, the title of “The Church of God” as applying to the various bodies, showing that the true name was still retained generally in the first centuries.

In the writings of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans, in the second century, he addresses the church of Smyrna thus: “The Churches of God.” On page 79, in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, he says, “To the Church of God, which is at Philadelphia.”

The churches in Smyrna and Philadelphia are spoken of by the Apostle John in Revelation, Revelation 2:8, and chapter 3:7. The

church of Antioch is mentioned in Acts 11:26, and Ignatius on page 85, in his “Epistle to the Philadelphians,” writes thus: “To the church which is at Antioch . . . it will become you as a Church of God to elect a deacon to act as the ambassador of God for you.” We see how, therefore, the New Testament name “Church of God,” was preserved and used to this time in speaking of the true followers of Jesus Christ, even though the world characterized them by other names.

CHAPTER 6: TWO TO THREE HUNDRED A.D.

The Remnant Church

In the preceding century we learned that the persecuted Church, driven from Jerusalem, found refuge at Pella, and there continued in the grace of God, upholding the beautiful truths God had entrusted to her care, while she was known to the world as Nazarenes, but claiming for herself the inspired Scriptural name, “The Church of God.”

About 130 A.D., the Church was again permitted to return to Jerusalem, although some remained behind at Pella. For over a hundred years they continued in peace, with the headquarters again in the Holy City, as at the beginning. Later, however, trouble arose, and as persecutions began to fall upon the holy men of God at Jerusalem, they again fled, being scattered over the world. Some fled in vain, being captured by their enemies; and lost their lives for the gospel’s sake. Smith says of the Church at this period:

“About one hundred and twenty years after the Church of God at Pella was permitted to become again established at Jerusalem, under the leadership of Mark, an imperial edict was issued from Decius, the Roman emperor, and the Church was again exposed to great calamities. The venerable bishops of Jerusalem and Antioch died in prison, and many true followers were

A History of the True Church

scourged to death, many sacrificed to wild beasts, some burned, and others perished by the sword. The Lord interferred, it seems, by sudden death coming upon the emperor Decius, but Gallus his successor, continued in the path of his predecessor. In two years, however, Gallus fell at the hand of one of his own soldiers, thus the year 253 closed this brief but terrible period of violence to the Church.” — Hugh Smith’s *History*.

During the period of peace, when persecutions were at a low ebb against the church, it seems that little progress was made by the true saints in broadening the fields of labor, or strengthening the resources that they already possessed.

However, with the renewed persecutions, evangelistic efforts were again energetically pursued, and the gospel was carried into whatever new fields the fleeing members of the church happened to find refuge. Wherever they fled they carried with them the true doctrines, the true name, and the commandments of God, as well as the faith of Jesus, which were their heritage from the original Church of God at Jerusalem.

As in the old days, Jehovah worked with these humble and earnest men of God, and confirmed the truths they proclaimed, with signs and wonders following. Wharey says of God’s vindicating power, that it went with the saints through this century.

“From A.D. 251 to 300, miracles were still performed in the church, Mosheim tells us, although less common than in previous years, and the church, he says, never wielded a sharper weapon against its enemies than the holy lives of its members.” — Wharey’s *History*, p. 42.

The renewed zeal of the true followers of Christ, however, was accompanied with an increase among the number of apostate Christians, the multiplicity of sects, and the growth of false doctrine, and the lowering of the true Christian standard. The breach between

the true Church of God and the sects was widening, and the churches were taking form, which eventually materialized in the Roman Catholic church, and the Greek Catholic church. Milner speaks of this decadent condition in the following words:

At the beginning of the persecution under Decius, about 248 A.D., “Each was bent on improving his patrimony: forgetting what believers had done under the apostles, and what they ought always to do, they brooded over the arts of amassing wealth. The pastors and deacons equally forgot their duty, works of mercy were neglected, and discipline was at the lowest ebb. Usury and effeminacy prevailed. Metricious arts in dress were cultivated. Fraud and deceit were practised among brethren. Christians could unite themselves in matrimony with unbelievers, could swear, not only without reverence, but without veracity; with haughty asperity they despised their ecclesiastical superiors; could rail one against another with outrageous acrimony, and conduct quarrels with settled malice; even many bishops, who ought to be guides and patterns to the rest, neglecting the peculiar duties of their stations, gave themselves up to secular pursuits; deserting their places of residence and their flocks, they traveled through distant provinces in quest of gain, gave no assistance to the needy brethren, were insatiable in their thirst of money, possessed estates by fraud, and multiplied usury.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p. 110, Ed. 1816.

Origin of Other Sects

One of the most celebrated sects was that founded by Manes, who strategically conceived a plan to unite the Christians and pagans by adopting a religious belief in common to both, with broad compromises and concessions. It flourished for a time, but the

Persian Christians excommunicated him from the church, causing further divisions.

The Manichaeans, founded by Manichaeus, the inventor of other superstitious but pleasing doctrines, attained considerable following.

The two sects founded by Noetus and Sabellius, toward the close of this century, spread their respective doctrines in many parts of the empire. The severe edicts of Valerian were directed against these sects, and their writings, which were numerous, have become extinct.

The Apostolic Canons and Constitutions, works which it has been pretended were composed by the twelve apostles and jointly with St. Paul, have been supposed by many writers to have been fabricated in the third or fourth century, to establish several points relative to discipline and doctrine in the Church of Rome. Part of this work has been ascribed to Hippolytus, an Arabian writer, and published from Rome.

The Sabbath was still observed in the true church in this century, and was generally retained by many of the sects which had sprung up in this and the preceding centuries.

Novatian, who wrote about A.D. 250, prepared a treatise on the Sabbath, which is not extant. There is no reference to Sunday in any of his writings. He makes the following striking remarks concerning the moral law:

“The law was given to the children of Israel for this purpose, that they might profit by it, and return to those virtuous manners which, although they had received them from their fathers, they had corrupted in Egypt, by reason of their intercourse with a barbarous people.

Finally, also, those ten commandments on the tables teach nothing new, but remind them of what had been obliterated — that righteousness in them, which had been put to sleep, might revive again, as it were, by the afflatus of the law, after the manner of a fire (nearly extinguished).” — *Novatian on the Jewish Meats*, chap.

False Doctrines

Hugh Smith says, “Some new doctrine concerning the state after death appeared to have made considerable progress during the third century. The undistinguished believer was consigned to purification after this life before his participation of joys of heaven” (page 78). This doctrine, propagated through the heathen philosophers Plato and Socrates, gained further accession and popularity. Lent had been observed for a few days before Easter, but in the course of the third century it was extended at Rome for three weeks, but it did not stop here, before the middle of the succeeding age it was lengthened to six weeks, and then to forty days.” — Hugh Smith’s *History*, p.82.

CHAPTER 7: THREE TO FOUR HUNDRED A.D.

Continued Persecution

The church enjoyed freedom of worship for almost another hundred years, but when Diocletian consulted with Galerius Caesar, after returning victorious from the Persian Wars, they formulated plans for the extermination of Christians. The edict obtained stated that churches, and all Christian writings, should be destroyed, and all their rights and privileges annulled. Furious persecutions raged. Some were broiled to death on gridirons after being cruelly scourged, and their wounds washed in brine. Others were thrown to wild beasts, and some starved to death.

These persecutions lasted approximately ten years. This is the period of persecution prophesied by our Savior, in Revelation 2:9, 10, where He said they would have tribulation ten days (ten years) and admonished them to be faithful unto death and He would give them a crown of life. This Smyrna period corresponds to the time of Diocletian. A dreadful and loathsome disease fell upon the emperor,

eventually causing him to cease his persecutions of Christians about the year 310, and the emperor abdicated.

Constantine

At this time Constantine, the pagan emperor, came to the throne, who from beholding, as he claimed, a luminous cross in the sky, with the inscription, "By This Conquer," he accepted Christianity, and in 313 an edict was issued from Milan legalising the church, and peace was enjoyed for twenty-four years. He was baptized by Eusebius of Nicomedia, an Arian, on his death-bed in 337.

During this time, at the council of bishops and prelates assembled at Nicaea, 325 A.D., among other ecclesiastical laws, one was passed affecting the Sabbath, stating that all townspeople should rest from their labors on the venerable day of the sun. This was the first of a series of laws passed wherein the bishops of the numerous cities and districts tried to compromise with the pagan sun worshippers.

Popes

There were bishops presiding over each of the following cities, having jurisdiction over the surrounding territory as well: Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Corinth, Ethiopia, Damascus, Sardis, Constantinople, Rome, Caesarea, Nicomedia, and Tyre. The bishops were recognized as superior church prelates, and called "papa," or "pope." This title was widely used in both the Eastern and Western churches, being ascribed to all of the bishops, during the third and fourth centuries. Many doctrinal divisions were apparent among the bishops, and rivalry as to authority and power. The bishop of Jerusalem was at first given the greatest honor and respect, but later a strong rivalry arose between the pope at Constantinople and the pope, or bishop, of Rome. Because of the advantage given the Roman bishop, in being near the emperor of Rome, and both together struggling for peace and power, they early conceived of the advantage to both, in a united policy. The bishop of Rome was soon

placed at the head of the clerical order, as superior bishop, and he maintained his claim of superiority by immense splendor and magnificence. His authority had, however, before the close of the fourth century, a formidable rival in the bishop of Constantinople, who at a council in that city was elevated to bishop of second clerical rank. The powers which had been invested in the people of choosing their bishops became productive of great scandal, which right was withdrawn at the council of Nicaea in 325. — See Hugh Smith's *Church History*, p. 100.

All bishops were called “papa,” or pope, which title was later applied to the bishops of Constantinople, and Rome only, and much later to the bishop of Rome alone.

For a long period the pope at Constantinople regulated the affairs for the professed followers of Christ in the East, while the pope or bishop of Rome ruled the West.

Doctor Arius

Dr. Arius, the most talented, intellectual, and spiritual power of the fourth century, was the central figure against which the evil and polluted minds of the western Roman bishops were directed. He was indeed a man of God, in whom the truth found its most consecrated and able defender. Like the Apostle Paul, he traversed the then known world, propagating truth, and denouncing error. He was a staunch observer of the seventh day Sabbath; he held the Lord's Supper once a year on the 14th of Abib, as did all the Jewish Christians, and most of the members and bishops of the Eastern churches. He believed in the one God, and Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, and contended that the Holy Spirit was a power sent forth from God, entering into hearts and lives of Christians, transforming them into servants of God, of which he himself was a living example.

A History of the True Church Nicean Council

In the year 325 A.D., the first general church council was called by Constantine to convene at Nicaea in which 318 bishops are said to have participated. At this council the doctrine of Arius was discussed and rejected, resulting in the banishment of the old man, and of Eusebius of Nicomedia. Dr. Arius sponsored the truth of the sonship of Jesus, claiming that he was truly the son of God, begotten by the Holy Spirit, and was not God Himself, in the *co-equal, co-eternal* sense now being taught by the western bishops. This contention finally resulted a hundred years later in the three Arian Kingdoms, the Burgundians, Vandals, and Ostrogoths, being plucked up, as set forth in the prophecy of Daniel 7:8, 25.

At this council, the Passover was placed on the Sunday after the Jewish Passover, which fell on the Fourteenth of Nisan, or Abib. This made Easter a semi-fixed festival, instead of falling on any day of the week, according to the day of the fourteenth of this month. The Eastern churches to this time had celebrated the Passover once a year on the fourteenth of Abib. — From *Eusebius*, also *Encyclopadia Britannica*, and Mosheim's *History of the Church*.

It was also at this council where the first edict was made in favor of the “venerable day of the sun,” being observed as a day of rest. Up to this time Jewish and Gentile Christians observed the *seventh-day* Sabbath according to the commandment, with the exceptions of a number of bishops in the west, in the sphere of the Roman church, who observed both days.

Wharey says,

“A dispute arose at an early period between the Eastern and Western (Roman) churches about the time of celebrating Easter. The Asiatic churches kept it on the same day that the Jews kept their Passover which was the fourteenth day of the full [new] moon, of the first Jewish month, which might fall on any day of the week. The Latin (Western, or Roman) churches kept Easter always on that Sunday which was the first after that same

fourteenth day of the first new moon of the new year. The Jews began their ecclesiastical year with the new moon of March. This difference in the time of holding Easter was the cause of much contention between the East and West until it was finally settled by the council of Nicaea in favor of the Latin mode, A.D. 325.” — Wharey’s *Church History*, p. 37. and published by the Presbyterian Board of Publications.

Brother Arius, with a large company of other bishops, was banished upon islands of the sea, following this council, and his writings wherever found consigned to the flames. This was a great victory over the truth by civil legislation. While the three hundred and eighteen bishops attending this conference were representatives of churches, still Constantine the emperor of Rome presided over the meeting, and the decisions made by these church bishops were endorsed and given sanction by civil law, and backed by military power.

The ‘Christian’ churches which were flourishing in worldly wealth, were those mainly represented at this council, the humble companies of the poor, not being financially able to travel hundreds and even thousands of miles, were thus prevented from being there. The humble devoted Christians will always be found in larger numbers among the poor than the rich, consequently the voice of the council of Nicaea was the voice of the churches clothed in wealth and splendor, catering to the popular trends of the time.

“It has been already stated how, following the council of Nicaea 325 A.D., that Dr. Arius was banished, and his writings committed to the flames. A company of bishops who secretly favored Dr. Arius were discovered and banished into Gaul.

One of the followers of Brother Arius, who, by the dying words of his Sister Constantina, had been recommended to the emperor of Rome, had the address

A History of the True Church

to persuade him that the sentence of Dr. Arius was unjust. The emperor consequently recalled him, and endeavored to have him received into the church at Alexandria, but the bishop refused his admittance, but Arius and his adherents were received into the communion of the church at Jerusalem.” — Hugh Smith’s *History*, p. 114.

After Arius had been released from banishment, and received into membership in the church at Jerusalem, he passed away, but “his works followed him.” Like the ministry of Paul, the seeds of truth that he had both sown and watered were growing, flourishing, and bearing an abundant harvest of fruit. His banishment and death by no means checked the spread of the truth, but rather scattered it abroad, and inflamed hearts with renewed zeal. The church, called by the world Nazarenes, Waldenses, Puritans, Arians, etc., was shining brightly in many darkened places of Europe, causing the enactment of civil laws, and the waging of bitter persecution against them.

The harvest resulting from the seed sowing of Dr. Arius had brought into existence three nations known as the “Arian Kingdoms,” viz., the Burgundians, the Vandals and Ostrogoths. The pope was raised to spiritual power over the Roman state, and by the consent and agreement of Emperor Justinian of Rome, church and state were united in the year 538 A.D.

War against these powerful adherents of Arius, known as the Arian Kingdoms, resulted in their overthrow. Three crowns thus fell, and three kings were plucked up by the roots, in fulfillment of Dan.7:8- 25. The last one of these three, viz., the Ostrogoth kingdom, fell in the year 538. Thus we have the final overthrow of the true church, and the woman driven into the wilderness. When the 1260 days (or years) prophetically announced for her sojourn there are completed, reaching to 1798, we find her at that date coming forth again, and given religious liberty to proclaim the truth, which for so many centuries had been trampled under the feet of tyrants, who themselves had become drunk of the wine of Babylon, from the golden cup of the mother of harlots. — Revelation 17.

Sunday

“It is a remarkable fact that the first instance upon record which the bishop of Rome attempted to rule the Christian church was by an edict in behalf of Sunday. It had been the custom of all the churches to celebrate the Passover, but with this difference; that while the Eastern churches observed it upon the fourteenth day of the first month, no matter what day of the week this might be, the Western churches kept it upon the Sunday following that day, or rather, upon the Sunday following Good Friday. Victor, bishop of Rome, in the year 196 (Bower’s *History of the Popes*, vol. 1, pp. 18, 19; Rose’s *Neander*, pp. 188-190; Dowling’s *History of Romanism*, book 1, chap. 2, sec. 9), took upon him to impose the Roman custom upon all the churches; that is, to compel them to observe the Passover upon Sunday.” “This bold attempt,” says Bower, “we may call the first essay of papal usurpation” (*History of the Popes*, vol. 1, p. 18). Dowling terms it the “earliest instance of Romish assumption” (*History of Romanism*, heading of page 32). The churches of Asia Minor informed Victor that they could not comply with his lordly mandate. Then, says Bower:

“Upon the receipt of this letter, Victor, giving the reins to an ungovernable passion, published bitter invectives against all the churches of Asia, declared them cut off from his communion, sent letters of excommunication to their respective bishops; and, at the same time, in order to have them cut off from the communion of the whole church, wrote to the other bishops, exhorting them to follow his example, and forbear communicating with their refractory brethren of Asia.” — *History of the Popes*, vol. 1, p. 18.

The victory was not obtained for Sunday in the struggle, as Heylyn testifies:

“Till the great council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) backed with the authority of as great an emperor (Constantine), settled it better than before; none but some scattered schismatics, now and then appearing, durst oppose the resolution of that famous synod.” — *History of the Sabbath*, 2nd Ed, 1636, part 2, chap. 2, sec. 5.

Constantine, by whose powerful influence the council of Nicaea was induced to decide this question in favor of the Roman bishop, that is, to fix the Passover upon Sunday, urged the following strong reason for the measure:

“Let us, then, have nothing in common with the most hostile rabble of the Jews.” — Boyle’s *Historical View of the Council of Nicaea*, p. 52, ed. 1842.

“The retention of the old Pagan name of ‘Dies solis,’ or Sunday, for the weekly Christian festival, is in great measure owing to the union of pagan and Christian sentiment, with which the first day of the week was recommended by Constantine to his subjects, pagan and Christian alike, as the ‘venerable day of the sun.’ His decree regulating its observance has been justly called a new era in the history of the Lord’s Day. It was his mode of harmonizing the discordant religions of the empire under the common institution.” — Dean Stanley, *Eastern Church*, p. 193.

“The first day of the week was proclaimed as a day of rest and worship, and its observance soon became general throughout the empire. In 325 A.D. Constantine forbade the courts to be held on Sunday, except for the purpose of giving freedom to slaves; and on that day soldiers were commanded to omit their daily military exercises. But the

public games were continued on Sunday, tending to make it more a holiday than a holy day.” — Hurlbut’s *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 77.

“As a protest against Jewish observance of the seventh day, the practice of fasting on Saturday arose in the West, but never in the East. Later the Roman Catholic fast-day was changed to Friday.” — *Idem*, p. 127.

“Originally, labour did not cease on the first day of the week; but seems to have been gradually discontinued as circumstances permitted. At what time cessation from it became general, if it became so before the time of Constantine, when it was enjoined by law, except in agricultural districts, where sowing and reaping, and tending the vine, were allowed, it is impossible to ascertain.” — Footnote, page 379, *Church of the First Three Centuries*, Lamson, Ed. 1873.

Among the festivals, considered simply as voluntary memorials of the Redeemer, Sunday had very little preeminence; for it is well stated by Heylyn:

“Take which you will, either the *Fathers* or the *Moderns*, and we shall find no *Lord’s Day* instituted by any *Apostolic Mandate*; no *Sabbath* set on foot by them upon the *first day of the week*, as some would have it; much less that any such *Ordinance* should be hence collected, out of these words of the Apostle.” — *History of the Sabbath*, part 2, chap. 1, sec. 10.

A Catholic claim follows: “It was the Roman Catholic church that changed the Sabbath from Saturday, the seventh day of the week, to Sunday, the first day, and at the council of Laodicea, we anathematized those who kept the Sabbath, and urged all persons to

labor on the seventh day of the week under penalty of anathema,” — Father Enright, Catholic Priest, deceased, Kansas City, Missouri; from a lecture at Harlan, Iowa, published in the Harlan Weekly Paper.

From “*Faith of Our Fathers*,” by Cardinal Gibbons, page 89, edition of 1917, we glean the following illuminating information, as to Rome’s attitude toward the Holy Scriptures and God’s Sabbath:

“A rule of faith, or a competent guide to heaven, must be able to instruct all the truths necessary for salvation. Now the Scriptures alone do not contain all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obliged to practice. Not to mention other examples, is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most promising of our sacred duties? But you may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will not find a single line authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The Scriptures enforce the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we never sanctify.”

William James, in his “*Sermons on the Sacraments and Sabbath*,” pp. 122, 123, says, “When the practice of keeping Saturday Sabbaths, which had become so general at the close of this century (the fourth), was evidently gaining ground in the Eastern church, a decree was passed in the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 364), ‘That members of the church should not rest from work on the Sabbath like Jews.’”

The Sabbath

In the history of the first century by Eusebius, he says on page 243, “The Sabbath was not dropped by the church at Laodicea until the year 363.” On page 188, he says, “The Jewish Christians also

observed the Sabbath.”

“At the council of Laodicea, held the year 364, where several hundred bishops gathered, a law was passed prohibiting Christians to Judaize, i. e., to rest from their work on Saturday, as do the Jews. This law was thought by the bishops necessary because of the rapid gain throughout the Eastern church of Saturday observance.” — William James, *On Sacraments and Sabbath*, pp. 122, 123.

By Judaism, Neander meant the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath. Dr. Charles Hase, of Germany, states the object of the Roman church in very explicit language:

“The Roman church regarded Saturday as a fast day in direct opposition to those who regarded it as a Sabbath. Sunday remained a joyful festival in which all fasting and worldly business was avoided as much as possible, but the original commandment of the decalogue respecting the Sabbath was not then applied to that day.” — *Ancient Church History*, part 1, div. 2, A.D. 100-312, sec. 69.

False Doctrines

Concerning Christianity established by law under Constantine: “Now they began to remodel the Christian church, the government of which was, as far as possible, arranged conformable to the government of the state.”

The working of the mystery of iniquity in the first centuries of the Christian church is thus described by recent writers:

“About the year 379 the apostate church began to seek Scriptures to teach the erroneous doctrine of the deity of the Holy Ghost” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p.

Hurlbut says, “It was two generations after Constantine when images began to appear in the churches; the early Christians having a horror of all that might lead to idolatry.” — *Story of the Christian Church*, p. 75.

Under Constantine,

“This constitution of things was an entire departure from the order of worship, established under divine direction by the apostles of Christ in the primitive churches. In fact, scarcely any two things could be more dissimilar than was the simplicity of the gospel dispensation from the hierarchy established under Constantine the Great.

“Let none,” says Dr. Mosheim, alluding to the first and second centuries, “confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church, with those of whom we read in the following ages. For though they were both designated by the same name, yet they differed extremely, in many respects. A bishop, during the first and second centuries, was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which, at that time, was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly, he acted, not so much with the authority of a master, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful servant.” W. Jones, *The History of the Christian Church*, 1832 3rd American Ed., pp. 166, 167.

The bishop of Rome claiming more honor and dignity than other bishops, because of his close association with the Roman emperors, living as he did in the same city, his decisions on doctrine were favorably received because of his distinguished position, and that his influence became felt and his decrees esteemed. Thus the Roman

church became strong and popular, and the name “catholic,” or universal, applied to it.

There were the Macedonians of the fourth century, known also as semi-Arians, being the strongest sect among them, and who finally signed the Nicean Creed.

In the fourth century there was also a distinguished man by the name of Priscillian, who founded a sect known as the Priscillianists, who differed in some respects from the bishop of Rome.

Practically all of the above sects, signed the “Nicean Creed,” following the council of Nicaea 325 A.D., and gradually became lost, as they were submerged into the Roman Catholic church, which so rapidly gained the ascendancy at Rome, with the assistance of civil power.

As Doctor Arius was the leader in defence of the true faith at this council, we herewith enter some historical extracts, further showing the conditions as they were, in this period.

“It is happy for simple Christians that their rule of duty is plain, though, unfortunately, not sanctioned by either the catholic or the reformed church. It is ‘Not to admit into worship of God anything which is either not expressly commanded, or plainly exemplified, in the New Testament.’ This was evidently the principle upon which Arius proceeded in opposing the superstitions of his time, and for which he deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance. It is the only principle which evinces a becoming deference to the wisdom and authority of God in the institution of his worship; and, it may be added, which secures uniform regard of his people to the institutions of his kingdom to the end of time.” — *Idem*, p.154.

“From the time of the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, to the end of the fourth century, a period of more than seventy years, the disciples of Jesus

A History of the True Church

were highly privileged. They were in general permitted to sit under their own vine and fig tree, exempt from the dread of molestation. The clergy of the Catholic church, indeed, persisted in waging a sanguinary and disgraceful contest with each other about church preferments, and similar objects of human ambition; but, notwithstanding the squabbles of those men of corrupt minds, it must have been a season of precious repose and tranquillity to the real churches of Christ, which stood aloof from such scandalous proceedings, and kept their garments unspotted from the world.” — *Idem*, p. 162.

Julian the Apostate

“In 361 Julian the apostate obtained possession of the whole Roman empire. He was educated in the Christian religion, but turned away and made every attempt possible to deprive the clergy of their privileges, and discredit the claims of the church for the divinity of the Holy Scriptures.

“He showed much partiality to the Jews and granted them the privilege of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, in order to contradict and falsify the predictions of the Scripture. This the Jews attempted, but were obliged to desist before even the foundation was laid: for balls of fire issued from the ground, accompanied with a great explosion and tremendous earthquake, which disbursed both the materials that were collected and the workmen.” — Wharey’s *Church History*, p. 53.

The True Church

“The type of Christianity which first was favored, then raised to leadership by Constantine was that of the Roman Papacy. But this was not the type of Christianity

that first penetrated Syria, northern Italy, southern France, and Great Britain. The ancient records of the first believers in Christ in those parts, disclose a Christianity which is not Roman but apostolic. These lands were first penetrated by missionaries, not from Rome, but from Palestine and Asia Minor. And the Greek New Testament; the Received Text, they brought with them, or its translation, was of the type from which the Protestant Bibles, as the King James in the English, and the Lutheran in German, were translated.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 16, 17.

In the midst of all the turmoil and the wrangling caused by ambitious bishops, each trying to gain the ascendancy over the others, there dwelt a people untouched by the worldliness of the apostate church. This was the true Church of God, known, it is true, by various man-made names, but among themselves holding to the true name, and the pure unadulterated doctrines advocated by the disciples of the first century.

President Edwards says of this people, later called Waldenses, Puritans, etc.:

“Some of the popish writers themselves own that this people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, ‘The heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world. It is supposed that they first betook themselves to this place among the mountains, where they existed before Constantine the Great, and thus the woman fled into the wilderness, from the face of the serpent (Revelation 12:6, 14). ‘And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.’ The people being settled there, their posterity continued (there) from

A History of the True Church

age to age; and being, as it were, by natural walls, as well as by God's grace, separated from the rest of the world, they never partook of the overflowing corruption.'— Edward's *History of Redemption*, period 3, part 4, sec. 2.

The following historical sketch tells of a body of believers who fled out of Judea late in the fourth century, and who by their faith were evidently the Church of God.

The Bishop of Ely names these also as a body of Sabbath-keepers whose heresy was condemned by the church. Joseph Bingham, M.A., gives the following account of them:

“There was another sect, . . . ‘Hypsistarians,’ that is, worshippers of the most high God, whom they worshipped as the Jews only in one person. And they observed their Sabbaths, and used distinction of their meats, clean and unclean, though they did not regard circumcision, as Gregory Nazianzen whose father was one of this sect, gives the account of them.” — *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book 16, chap. 6, sec. 2.

It is not strange that the church which fled out of Judea at the word of Christ should long retain the Sabbath, as it appears that they did, even as late as the fourth century. Morer mentions these Sabbath-keepers in the following language:

“About the same time were the Hypsistarii, who closed with these as to what concerned the Sabbath, yet would by no means accept circumcision as too plain a testimony of ancient bondage. All these were heretics, and so adjudged to by the Catholic church. Yet their [sincerity] and industry were such as gained them a considerable footing in the Christian world.” — *Dialogues on the Lord's Day*, p. 67.

“Gradually the first day of the week came into prominence as an added day, but finally by civil and ecclesiastical authority as a required observance. The first legislation on the subject was the famous law of Constantine, enacted 325 A.D.

“The acts of various councils during the fourth and fifth centuries established the observance of the first day of the week by ecclesiastical [Roman Catholic] authority, and in the great apostasy which followed, the rival day [Sunday] observed the ascendancy. During the centuries which followed, however, there were always witnesses for the true Sabbath, although under great persecution. And thus in various lands, the knowledge of the true Sabbath has been preserved.” — Wharey’s *Church History*, p. 37, Presbyterian.

CHAPTER 8: FOUR TO FIVE HUNDRED A.D.

From Bishop to Pope

“In the beginning of the fifth century, Vigilantius, a learned and eminent presbyter of a Christian church, took up his pen to oppose the growing superstitions. His book, which unfortunately is now lost, was directed against the institution of monks—the celibacy of the clergy,—praying for the dead and to the martyrs—adoring their relics—celebrating their vigils—and lighting up candles to them after the manner of the Pagans. Jerome, esteemed a great luminary of the Catholic church, who was a most zealous advocate for all these superstitious rites, undertook the task of refuting Vigilantius, whom he politely styles “a most blasphemous heretic,” comparing him to the Hydra, to Cerberus, the Centaurs, &c. and

A History of the True Church

considers him only as the organ of the dæmon. He, however, furnishes us with all the particular articles of his heresy, in the words of Vigilantius himself, which are as follows:

“That the honours paid to the rotten bones and dust of the saints and martyrs, by adoring, kissing, wrapping them up in silk and vessels of gold, lodging them in their churches, and lighting up wax candles before them, after the manner of the heathens, were the ensigns of idolatry. That the celibacy of the clergy was a heresy, and their vows of chastity the seminary of lewdness. That to pray to the dead, or to desire the prayers of the dead, was superstitious; for that the souls of the departed saints and martyrs were at rest in some particular place, whence they could not remove themselves at pleasure, so as to be present everywhere to the prayers of their votaries. That the sepulchres of the martyrs ought not to be worshipped nor their fasts and vigils to be observed; and lastly, That the signs and wonders said to be wrought by their relics and at their sepulchres, served to no good end or purpose of religion.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 206.

In Asia and Europe there were considerably over one hundred bishops presiding over as many cities and districts, each one being subject to the presiding bishop over the respective district either eastern or western, according to their situation, Constantinople in the East, and Rome for the West. Besides the rivalry and clamor for power in religious controversy between these two popes, or bishops, many of the lesser dignitaries also assumed powers over others, and many queer and unscriptural doctrines arose, thus hastening the falling away.

Soon after Constantine, emperor of the Roman empire, had embraced Christianity, the bishop of Rome, being located near the throne of the emperor, naturally was received into favor as the presiding prelate over other bishops. The bishop of Rome was soon

placed at the head of the clerical order, as superior bishop, and he maintained his claim of superiority by immense splendor and magnificence. His authority had, before the close of the fourth century, a formidable rival in the bishop of Constantinople, who at a council in that city was elevated to bishop of second clerical rank.

There were several sects in the fourth century outside of the Roman church. Orchard says, "It must not be forgotten that there were churches more or less extensive throughout Africa, besides the Donatists, and known as Manicheans, Montanists, Novationists, and others, whose morals were far more excellent than even St. Augustine's (of the Roman church), but all these were heretics in his view, and objects of his most virulent animosity."— *A Concise History of Foreign Baptists*, G.H. Orchard, Ed. 1838, p. 95.

This author also says,

"The innumerable Christians of the East, who were not in communion with either the Greek or the Roman churches, may be divided into two classes. The *first* consists of such as in ages past dissented from the Greek church, and formed similar hierarchies, which yet subsist independent of one another, as well as of the Grecian and Roman communities. The *second* consists of those who never were of any hierarchy, and who have always retained their original freedom. The number of such orientals is very great, for they lived dispersed all over Syria, Arabia, Egypt, Persia, Nubia, Ethiopia, India, Tartary, and other eastern countries. "It is remarkable," says Robinson, "that although they differ, as Europeans do, on speculative points of divinity, yet they all administer baptism by immersion, and there is no instance to the contrary."— *Idem*, pp. 109-110.

"The Messalians or Euchites (the one a Hebrew term, the other a Greek, and signifying a *praying people*) had in Greece a very early existence. . . These people, like all

A History of the True Church

other nonconformists, are reproached and branded with heresy. . . . The morality of this people was severe and captivating to the simple, but their discipline and worship are both reproached. . . . They were often named from the country they inhabited Some were called after the names of their teachers The term Euchites among the Greeks was a general name for Dissenters, as the Waldenses was in the Latin church, and Nonconformists in England. This large body of Dissenters were resident in the empire from the first establishment of Christianity, till its destruction in the thirteenth century.” — *Idem*, pp. 110-111.

Among these Dissenters, under various man-called names, was the Church of God, still upholding the true faith, still observing the Sabbath, with the Law of God, as well as the Faith of Jesus, unadulterated.

Of the Sabbath and first-day in this century of the church, Coleman says:

“The last day of the week was strictly kept in connection with that of the first day for a long time after the overthrow of the temple and its worship. Down even to the fifth century the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was continued in the Christian church, but with a rigor and solemnity gradually diminishing.” — *Ancient Christianity Exemplified*, chap. 26, sec. 2.

This, of course, applied to the sects, and the Roman church especially; but, as further proof will show, the true church did not forsake the Sabbath, nor observe it with a lessened ardor.

Coleman continues:

“During the early ages of the church, it (the first day) was never entitled ‘the Sabbath,’ this word being

confined to the *seventh day* of the week, the Jewish Sabbath, which, as we have already said, continued to be observed for several centuries by the converts to Christianity.” — *Idem*, chap. 26, sec. 2, pg 529

This fact is made still clearer by the following language, in which this historian admits Sunday to be nothing but a human ordinance:

“No law or precept appears to have been given by Christ or the institution of the Lord’s day [by which Coleman refers to Sunday in error], or the substitution of the first for the seventh day of the week.” — *Idem*. chap. 26, sec. 2, pg 530

“The observance of the Lord’s day was ordered while yet the Sabbath of the Jews was continued; nor was the latter superseded until the former had acquired the same solemnity and importance which belonged, at first, to that great day which God originally ordained and blessed. . . . But in time, after the Lord’s day was fully established [in the Roman Catholic church], the observance of the Sabbath of the Jews was gradually discontinued, and was finally denounced as heretical [by the popish church].” — *Idem*. chap. 26, sec. 2, pg 531

CHAPTER 9: FIVE TO SIX HUNDRED A.D.

The Flight of the True Church to the Wilderness

It was between 500 and 600 A.D. that the Church of God was sorely oppressed by the state religion clothed with civil power, completely overpowered, and scattered to the valleys of the mountains in all parts of the world. We shall now insert a few facts from reliable historians to show how the true followers of Jesus were

indeed driven into the wilderness, where they took refuge in the rocks, and dens, and caves of the earth, yet they rejoiced in persecution, and lived in humble obedience to the will of God, being fed by Him from His word.

The historian Jones gives an account of the flight of the persecuted saints from the oppression of the harlot church seated upon the Roman beast. His account follows:

“Multitudes however, fled like innocent and defenceless sheep from these devouring wolves. They crossed the Alps, and travelled in every direction as Providence and the prospect of safety conducted them, into Germany, England, France, Italy, and other countries. There they trimmed their lamps and shone with new lustre. Their worth everywhere drew attention, and their doctrine formed increasing circles around them. The storm which threatened their destruction only scattered them as the precious seeds of the future glorious reformation of the Christian Church.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 274.

Valley Dwellers — Vaudois

The fleeing Christians who escaped from the wrath of the Roman church and state, found a haven in the mountains and valleys of the north of Italy, and the south of France, in main, although they fled into all nations wherein they could find an entrance and protection from the persecutions of the papacy. Though these Christians were known by many names for various reasons in their new homes, yet the predominating name for them seems to have been “Vaudois,” which means “Valley Dwellers.” From the fact they dwelt in the valleys of the mountains they received the name “Valley Dwellers,” or, in the native tongue, “Vaudois.”

The Vaudois, known as such by the world, but holding to the true Bible name, were persecuted for the true faith. They observed the

seventh day of the week, according to the commandment, immersed for believers baptism, and kept the Passover, or the Lord's Supper, once a year, in the first month. — See pages 348, 349, *Persecutions and Atrocities on the Vaudois*.

Gilly says of these ancient “Valley Dwellers,” who had fled from the wrath of the papal church in its early centuries, and were still found abiding under the protection of the Almighty in the Waldensian wilderness in the thirteenth century:

“They occupy a mountain district . . . and yet from this secluded spot, have they disseminated doctrines, whose influence is felt over the most refined and civilized part of Europe. They . . . speak the same language, have the same patriarchal habits and simple virtues, and retain the same religion, which was known to exist there more than a thousand years ago.

They profess to constitute the remains of the pure and primitive Christian church, and those who would question their claims cannot show either by history or tradition that they were subscribed to the popish rituals, or bowed down before any of the idols of the Roman church. . . . In short, there is no other way of explaining the political, moral, and religious phenomenon, which the Vaudois have continued to display for so many centuries, than by ascribing it to the manifest interposition of Providence, which has chosen in them the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.”— Gilly, *Excursions to Piedmont*, pp. 259.

From the above testimony we gather that the Vaudois had inhabited these same valleys for over one thousand years, and that they made the claim, which could not be disputed, that they were the remains, the remnant, of the true Church of God, who had fled into the wilderness. It should be noted also that no history can show these saints of God to ever have been within the fold of the Catholic

Church, but had remained separate, letting their light shine, through the darkest hours of the Dark Ages.

CHAPTER 10: SIX TO SEVEN HUNDRED A.D.

The Church of God Scattered Abroad

We shall now trace the general dispersion of the Church of God as she was scattered throughout the various countries of Europe and Asia, during the 1260 years of her wilderness experience. We find the identification of the true church, both by the name and doctrine, scattered from Palestine to Spain, and from the Piedmont valley of Italy to Scotland, Ireland and England.

As has already been shown that the people honoring the true faith, and bearing the Scriptural name, were called by the world, Waldenses, Vaudois, Henricians, Catharists, Puritans, Bougres, Paulicans, Publicans, Lombardists, Albigenes, and also other names from leading preachers among them, and from countries from which they would be expelled; but they disowned these names, calling themselves the Church of God.

The following extracts from numerous writers will further the facts that this work has set out to show, viz., that the true church, with the true name and doctrine has been preserved by the power of heaven, and fed by our Lord in the wilderness as He said, for the prophetic period of 1260 years, given in Revelation 12 to 14.

“Indeed, from the borders of Spain, throughout the greatest part of the south of France, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, and even to Bohemia, thousands of the disciples of Christ, as will hereafter be shown, were found, even in the very worst of times, preserving the faith in its purity, adhering to the simplicity of Christian worship, patiently bearing the cross after Christ: men distinguished by their fear of God and

obedience to His will, and persecuted only for righteousness' sake." — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 248.

In Hugh Smith's history of the seventh century, we find the statement on page 191, as follows: "Missionaries from Britain, Scotland, and Ireland traveled into Germany with the design of propagating or preserving Christianity."

This historian further says, on page 201, "The year 692 Justinian II called the sixth general council to convene at Constantinople, as an imperial order from Rome." He says, "This council among various regulations of discipline was so favorable to the marriages of the clergy as to decree that the separation of those of clerical order, who were already married, from their wives was contrary to the command of Christ. It condemned the Saturdays."

We note that in this century there were so many Christians observing Saturday Sabbath that this council also found it necessary to legislate against it.

The true Church of God is further identified at this time by the following:

"The Paulicians were undoubtedly the most numerous sect of this century (600 to 700 A.D.). According to the opinion of some celebrated writers this sect was thus named from their attachments of its professors to the Apostle Paul. The names of the apostolic churches were applied to their congregations. The teachers were distinguished by their Scriptural names, by their zeal and knowledge, and by the austerity and simplicity of their lives. They were, however, soon involved in the horrors of persecution. Under the reign of Theodore, one hundred thousand were extirpated." — Hugh Smith's *Church History*, pp. 216, 207.

He says further that they "spread westward, and disseminated a

secret through powerful discontent among the pious against the church of Rome, and settled in Bulgaria, Italy, and in the southern provinces of France among the Albigeois.”

These Christians were called after their settlements. These names by which they are commonly known, however, are only terms applied to them by the world, for the Albigenes were the same sect as the Waldenses, who were known among themselves by the Bible name, the “Church of God.”

In the seventh century the true Christians were compelled to continue their flight from country to country, fleeing from before the persecutions of the rising papal power.

In the end of the preceding century, Pope Gregory had operated upon society to the detriment of the true people of God. This pope wrote to two African bishops, requiring them to exert themselves in every possible way to suppress their opponents, who dared to differ with them. In the beginning of the seventh century, it is presumed, these people “of whom the world was not worthy,” emigrated into Spain and Italy, from the Asiatic countries, and mingled with the pagans in the interior, and worshiped the Redeemer as opportunities afforded. “From their conduct in assembling in caves and dens of mountains to worship, they obtained the name Montenses, i.e., mountaineers.” — Orchard, *History of Foreign Baptists*, pp. 99.

“The Nonconformists continued to be dispersed all over the empire, and had trusted to Providence for liberty to worship. Their history is large, and has proved difficult to many. Their clergy were always troublesome, but never attempted their conversion. Some emperors had been indifferent to them, others had cherished them, others had persecuted them.” — *Idem*, p. 123.

“We have authentic evidence in the writings of the Apostle Paul that *he preached the gospel of Christ in Illyricum*, and that Titus visited Dalmatia; hence the Bohemians infer that the gospel was preached in all the

countries of Slavonia in the first ages of Christianity. They also say that Jerome, who was a native of Stridon, a city of Illyricum, translated the Scriptures into his native tongue (about 378), and that all the nations of Slavonian extraction, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Russians, the Wallachians, the Bohemians, and Vaudois, use this translation to this day.” — *Idem*, p. 223.

“Their enemies confirm their great antiquity. Reinerius Saccho, an inquisitor, and one of their most implacable enemies, who lived only eighty years after Waldo, admits that the Waldenses flourished five hundred years before that preacher (600 A.D.). Gretzer, the Jesuit, who also wrote against the Waldenses, and had examined the subject fully, not only admits their great antiquity, but declares his firm belief that the Toulousians and Albigenses . . . were no other than Waldenses.’ In fact, their doctrine, discipline, government, manners, and even the errors with which they have been charged [by the Catholics], show that the Albigenses and Waldenses were distinct branches of the same sect, or that the former sprang from the latter.” — Dr. Rankin’s *History of France*, vol. III, p. 198, 202

“The soil, touched by the plough of the Vaudois (Waldenses), seemed to feel a charm that made it open its bosom and yield a tenfold increase. The vine tended by Vaudois hands bore richer clusters, and strove in generous rivalry with the fig and the olive to outdo them in enriching with its produce the Vaudois board. And how delightful the quiet and order of their towns, and the air of happiness on the face of the people! And how sweet to listen to the bleating of the flocks on the hills, the lowing of the herds in the meadows, the song of the reaper and grape-gatherer, and the merry voices of children at play

around the hamlets and villages.” — Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 106.

In a confession of their faith, one of the members of the Waldenses stated their faith, “Declaring that they professed the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments, and comprehended in the Apostles’ Creed; and admitted the sacraments instituted by Christ, and the ten commandments, &c. . . . They said they had received this doctrine from their ancestors, and that if they were in any error they were ready to receive instruction from the word of God. . . .” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 481.

Theodore Beza, contemporary and colleague of Calvin, says, “As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian church.” . . . “And as to their religion, they never adhered to papal superstitions. . . .” — *Idem*, pp. 353, 354.

Reimer says, “The Waldenses were very ancient and date their belief and practice from 300 A.D., more ancient are they than Peter Waldo, the rich merchant of Lyons.” — Sismondi, *History of the Crusades against Albigenses*, London.

“In Languedoc, the Catholics affirmed that the origin of these heretics was recent, and that they derived their name of Vaudois, or Waldenses, from Peter Waldo, one of their barbes or preachers, whose immediate followers were called Waldenses; but this was rather the renovation of the name from a particular cause than its original. Accordingly it extended over that district only, in France, where Peter Waldo preached; for in other districts the people who were branches of the same original sect, as in Dauphiné, were from a noted preacher, called Josephists—in Languedoc they were called Henricians—and in other provinces, from Peter Bruys, they were called Petrobrusians. Sometimes they received their name from their manners, as “Catharists” (*Puritans*), and from the

foreign country from whence it was presumed they had been expelled, they were called “Bulgarians” or Bougres. In Italy they were commonly called Fratricelli, that is, “men of the brotherhood,” because they cultivated brotherly love among themselves, acknowledging one another as brethren in Christ. Sometimes they were denominated “Paulicians,” and, by corruption of the word, “Publicans,” considering them as sprung from that ancient sect, which, in the seventh century, spread over Armenia and Thrace, and which, when persecuted by the Greek emperor, might migrate into Europe, and mingle with the Waldenses in Piedmont. Sometimes they were named from the country or city in which they prevailed, as Lombardists, Toulousians, and Albigenses. All these branches, however, sprang from one common stock, and were animated by the same religious and moral principles.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, pp. 308, 309.

CHAPTER 11: SEVEN TO EIGHT HUNDRED A.D.

A True Light Amidst Gross Darkness

Although it is commonly believed that the Roman Catholic church held complete sway over the world through the dark ages, yet it is a fact that never in any century did the apostate church hold sway over the actions and consciences of all believers, but that there were always men and women of the true faith, a remnant indeed, but a remnant, who never acknowledged the popish religion.

Milner says: “The despotism of Antichrist was then [786 A.D.] so far from being universal, that it was not owned throughout Italy itself. In some parts of that country, as well as in England and France,

the purity of Christian worship was still maintained.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p. 361.

Sacho admits that the Waldenses flourished at least five hundred years before the time of Peter Waldo.

“That the messengers of God who carried manuscripts from the churches of Judea to the churches of northern Italy and so on, brought to the forerunners of the Waldenses a Bible different from the Bible of Roman Catholicism, I quote the following:

““The method which Allix has pursued in his *Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, [EHACP, 1821 Ed.] is to show that in the ecclesiastical history of every century, from the fourth century, which he considers a period early enough for the enquirer after apostolical purity of doctrine, there are clear proofs that doctrines unlike those which the Roman church holds, and conformable to the belief of the Waldensian and Reformed churches, were maintained by theologians of the north of Italy down to the period when the Waldenses first came into notice. Consequently the opinions of the Waldenses were not new to Europe in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, and there is nothing improbable in the tradition that the Subalpine Church persevered its integrity in an uninterrupted course from the first preaching of the Gospel in the valleys.” — Gilly, *Waldensian Researches*, pp. 118, 119, quoted in Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 19, 20.

“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. . . . Here for

a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith . . . In a most wonderful manner it (the Word of Truth) was preserved through all the ages of darkness.” — E. G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 65, 66, 69, quoted in Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 25, 26.

Grantz, in his *History of the United Brethren*, speaks of them as follows, “These ancient Christians date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century.”

“Neither the prevailing corruptions of that [the Roman] church, nor the arrogant claims of its successive popes, were implicitly allowed by all the other bishops and churches, even in Italy itself.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 249.

Dr. Allix says, “We have found a body of men in Italy, *before the year one thousand and twenty-six*, five hundred years before the Reformation, who believed contrary to the opinions of the church of Rome, and who highly condemned their errors.” — *Idem*, p. 288.

“That the Waldensian faith and worship existed many centuries before Protestantism arose is undeniable; the proofs and monuments of this fact lie scattered over all the histories and all the lands of medieval Europe; but the antiquity of the Waldenses is the antiquity of Protestantism. The Church of the Reformation was in the loins of the Waldensian church ages before the birth of Luther; her first cradle was placed amid those terrors and sublimities, those ice-clad peaks and great bulwarks of rock. In their dispersions over so many lands—over France, the Low Countries, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, England, Calabria, Naples — the Waldenses sowed the seeds of the great spiritual revival which,

A History of the True Church

beginning in the days of Wycliffe, and advancing in the times of Luther and Calvin, awaits its full consummation in the ages to come.” — Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 19, 20.

Between the years of 700 and 800 A.D., Hugh Smith says, in his *History of the Church*, page 232, “Many British missionaries crossed the ocean (the English Channel), and penetrated into the gloomy recesses of the German forests for the instruction of the fierce and uncivilized people.”

Charlemagne, emperor of Rome, called a council of 300 bishops, 794 A.D., to consider the subject of images in the churches, and some other matters. The first teaching of transubstantiation appeared during this century in the teaching of the Roman church, says Hugh Smith, page 222.

How Rome sought to extirpate the true faith by the sword of the legions of Charlemagne, is told in the following extract from Orchard:

“In 789, Charles the Great resolved to subdue the Saxons or destroy them, unless they accepted of life on the condition of professing the Christian religion agreeably to the Roman ritual. On pain of death the Saxons, with their *infant offspring*, were to receive baptism. Germany in time was subdued, and religious liberty destroyed. The king took an oath of fidelity of them and received pledges for the fulfilment of his stipulations. In this way the religious privileges of these and other nations were infringed on, and by these and similar means Christianity, under state patronage, made rapid progress for ages, as detailed in the works of hierarchists. To make the conversion of these people accord with the gospel record, apostles were sent to them, but the Germans were exceedingly jealous of such bifarious commissioned ministers of religion. These

apostles of Rome preached *trine immersion*, but said nothing of infants. Success attended the imperial commands; other kingdoms were visited in virtue of the same authority, and converted from fear of the carnal weapon. The evidence of their complete conversion was made apparent by their baptism. Wooden tubs and other utensils were placed in the open air, and the new converts with their children *were immersed naked* into the profession of Christianity. This indelicacy in the mode originated with the advocates of minor baptism as already shown: it has never been practised in Baptist communities. This mandate of Charles is the first legal authority for infant baptism, and we ask if the mental character must not have been exceedingly low, to enforce such terms of denudation on the female portion of candidates. We repudiate the charge, and leave the blot on those who were guilty of the practice.

“The wilds and forests of Germany would prove asylums to dissenters through the rise and assumption of the man of sin. That Germany was inhabited by persons of this description is evident, and that such persons must have been very active in disseminating the truth becomes plain, since it is recorded that the Baptist itinerant preachers, could in their travels, pass, during the ninth century, through the whole German empire, and lodge every night at the house of one of their friends. It is very probable these travelling ministers were Paulicians or Paterines from Bulgaria or Italy. They were termed by Catholics anabaptist preachers. Their sentiments of religion are learned, and their views of the ordinances proved, from their confession of faith, which asserts, “In the beginning of Christianity there was no baptizing of children; and their forefathers practised no such thing:” and, “We do from our hearts acknowledge that baptism is a washing, which is performed with water, and doth hold

out the washing of the soul from sin.”— Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, pp. 311 to 313.

CHAPTER 12: EIGHT TO NINE HUNDRED A.D.

Increase in the Popedom

During this century says Hugh Smith, on page 251 of his history, “It was fashionable to explain Scripture by the writings of the fathers. No man was allowed to vary in the least from their decisions. The apostolic rule to compare spiritual things with spiritual things was lost. The popedom now grew stronger and stronger, and whoever dared to oppose the bishop of Rome drew upon himself a host of enemies.”

Persecutions continued during this period against the Paulicans and the Waldensians, which constituted the true church, and who were still holding to the Scriptural name, the “Church of God,” observing the true Sabbath according to the commandment. They also taught the literal reign of Christ upon the earth, and celebrated the Lord’s Supper yearly. We gather the following account of how they were persecuted during this century from Hugh Smith’s *History*. He says,

“Simeon, a Greek officer clothed with imperial power came to Colonia, and apprehended Sylvaneus and a number of his disciples. Stones were put in the hands of these last, and they were required to kill their pastor as the price of their forgiveness. A person named Justus was the only one of the number who obeyed, and he stoned him to death who had labored among them for twenty-seven years. Justus signalized himself still more by betraying the brethren, while Simeon (the imperial officer), struck with the divine grace apparent in the sufferings, embraced the faith which he came to destroy,

gave up the world, preached the gospel and died a martyr. For one hundred and fifty years these servants of Christ underwent the horrors of persecution with patience and meekness. If the acts of their martyrdom, their preaching, and their lives were distinctly told they would resemble those the church justly reveres.” All of this time the power of the Spirit of God was with them, and they practised the thirteenth chapter of Romans, as well as other precious truth.” — *Idem*, p. 254.

Not all secular rulers during these dark ages were upholding Rome, for many befriended the industrious and holy people within their boundaries. Jones says:

“The ambassadors to the duke of Savoy, asking for mercy for the Waldenses in his provinces, stated that these Christians “in the (Piedmont) Valleys did not hold, by the concessions of their princes, the liberty to exercise in public their religion, because it was established in this country above eight centuries ago; and that they enjoyed this right long before they were the subjects of his royal highness’s ancestors; insomuch that, having never been of the same religion as their prince, it could not be said that they had abandoned it, nor could he oblige them to return to it.”” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 547.

“Memorial presented to Court of Savoy by Murat and Murat, Counsellors of State, of Zurich and Berne, Switzerland, states in part: ‘We find ourselves obliged to represent to your royal highness, that the churches of the valleys in Piedmont did not separate themselves from the religion of their prince; because they live in that they received from their predecessors about eight centuries ago, and which they did profess before they were under the dominion of your royal highness’s ancestors, who,

A History of the True Church

having found them in the possession of their religion, have maintained them therein by several declarations.’ . . .

“They were a very peaceable people, beloved by their neighbours (in Provence, France)—men of good behaviour, of godly conversation, faithful to their promises, and punctual in paying their debts. That they were moreover, liberal to strangers and the travelling poor, as far as their ability extended. . . . They were a people who could not endure to blaspheme, or name the devil, or swear at all, unless in making some solemn contracts, or in judgment. Finally, they were known by this, that if they happened to be cast into any company where the conversation was lascivious or blasphemous, to the dishonour of God, they instantly withdrew.” — Perrin and Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 348.

“Claudius Seisselius, archbishop of Turin, is pleased to say, that “their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear but by compulsion, they fulfil their promises with punctuality; and, living for the most part in poverty, they profess to preserve the apostolic life and doctrine. They also profess it to be their desire to overcome only by the simplicity of faith, by purity of conscience, and integrity of life; not by philosophical niceties and theological subtleties.” And he very candidly admits that “In their lives and morals they were perfect, irreprehensible, and without reproach among men, addicting themselves with all their might to observe the commands of God.”— Jones, *History of the Church*, pp. 346,347.

“Eating the bread of poverty and dressed in the garments of penury, the church in the wilderness followed on to serve the Lord. She possessed the

untampered manuscripts of holy revelation which discountenanced the claims of the Papacy. Among this little flock, stood out prominently the Waldenses. Generation after generation of skilled copyists handed down, unadulterated, the pure Word. Repeatedly their glorious truth spread far among the nations. In terror, the Papacy thundered at the monarchs of Europe to stamp out this heresy by the sword of steel. In vain the popish battalions drenched the plains of Europe with martyr blood. The Word lived, unconquered.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 254, 255.

“Jacobus de Riberia, who in his time assisted in persecuting the Waldenses . . . acknowledges that they were so well instructed on the Holy Scriptures, that he had seen peasants who could recite the book of Job *verbatim*, and several others who could perfectly repeat all the New Testament.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 347.

“The antiquity of the Valdenses, or believers, is asserted by their friends, and corroborated by their enemies. Dr. Maclaine, in *Mosheim’s history*, says, “We may affirm, with the learned Beza, that these people derived their name from the valleys they inhabited; and hence Peter of Lyons was called, in Latin, *Valdus*, because he had adopted their doctrine.” Reiner Sacco speaks of the Lionists as a sect that had flourished above five hundred years (back to 750); while he mentions authors of note among them, who make their *antiquity remount to the apostolic age*. Theodore Belvedre, a popish monk, says that the heresy had always been in the valleys. In the preface to the first French Bible, the translators say, that they (the Valdenses) have always had the full enjoyment of the heavenly truth contained in the

A History of the True Church

Holy Scriptures, ever since they were enriched with the same *by the apostles*; having in fair MSS. preserved the entire Bible in their native tongue, from generation to generation.” — Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, p. 249.

“*Beza* affirms * * * the Waldenses were the relics of the pure primitive Christian churches; some of them were called “the poor of Lyons.” *Paul Perrin* asserts, that the Waldenses were time out of mind in Italy and Dalmatia, and were the offspring of the Novatianists, who were persecuted and driven from Rome, A.D. 400 (rather 413); and who, for purity in communion, were called Puritans. The name of Paterines was given to the Waldenses; and who, for the most part, held the same opinions, and have therefore been taken for one and the same class of people, who continued till the Reformation under name of Paterines or Waldenses. There was no difference in religious views between the Albigenses and Waldenses. All those people inhabiting the south of France were called, in general, Albigenses; and, in doctrine and manners, were not distinct from the Waldenses. *Bossuet*, bishop of Meaux, says, as to the Vaudois, they were a species of Donatists, and worse than the ancient Donatists; they formed their churches of only good men; they all, without distinction, if they were reputed good people, preached and administered the ordinances. The celebrated *Matthew Francowitz* says, the Waldenses scent a little of anabaptism. The Waldenses were, in religious sentiments, substantially the same as the Paulicians, Paterines, Puritans, and Albigenses.” — *Idem*, pp. 251, 252.

“Their elders and officers do not appear distinguished from their brethren by dress or names, but every

Christian was considered as capable, in a certain measure, of instructing others, and of confirming the brethren by exhortations. Their elders were the seniors of the brethren, while the presbyters were the whole body of the teachers, whether fixed or itinerating. Their rules of practice were practised by a literal interpretation of Christ's sermon on the mount. They consequently prohibited wars, suits at law, acquisitions of wealth, capital punishments, self-defence, and oaths of all kinds. The body of believers was divided into two classes; one of which contained the *perfect*, the other the *imperfect* Christians. The former gave up all worldly possessions, the latter were less austere, though they abstained, like the graver sort of Anabaptists in later time, from all appearances of pomp and luxury. These people contended that a church was an assembly of believers, faithful men, and that of such a church the Lord Jesus Christ is head, and he alone; that it is governed by his word, and guided by the Holy Spirit; that it behoves all Christians to walk in fellowship; that the only ordinances Christ hath appointed for the churches, are baptism and the Lord's Supper; that they are both symbolical ordinances, or signs of holy things, "visible emblems of invisible blessings," and that believers are the proper participants of them." — *Idem*, p. 253.

CHAPTER 13: NINE TO TEN HUNDRED A.D.

The Woman in The Wilderness

Investigators made a report to Louis XII, king of France, that:

"They had visited all the parishes where they (Waldenses) dwelt, had inspected their places of worship,

A History of the True Church

but that they had found there no images, nor signs of the ornaments belonging to the mass, nor any of the ceremonies of the Romish Church; much less could they discover any traces of those crimes with which they were charged. On the contrary, they kept the Sabbath-day, observed the ordinance of baptism, according to the primitive church, instructed their children in the articles of the Christian faith and the commandments of God.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 348.

“Whosoever refuses to curse, to swear, to lie, to kill, to commit adultery, to steal, to be revenged of his enemy, they say he is a Vaudois, and therefore they put him to death.” — Voltaire’s *Gen. Hist.*, chap. 69.

“An ancient inquisitor, to whose writings against the Waldenses I had occasion to refer in a former section, thus describes them. “These Heretics are known by their manners and conversation, for they are orderly and modest in their behaviour and deportment. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress; they neither indulge in finery of attire, nor are they remarkable for being mean and ragged. They avoid commerce, that they may be free from deceit and falsehood. They get their livelihood by manual industry, as day-labourers or mechanics; and their teachers are weavers or tailors. They are not anxious about amassing riches; but content themselves with the necessaries of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober. They abstain from anger. Even when they work, they either learn or teach. In like manner also, their women are modest, avoiding backbiting, foolish jesting, and levity of speech, especially abstaining from lies or swearing, not so much as making use of the common asseverations, ‘in truth,’ ‘for certain,’ or the like, because they regard these as oaths—contenting themselves with

simply answering ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”— Jones, *History of the Church*, p. 346.

“Alluding to the churches of the Waldenses in Piedmont, and those scattered throughout the diocese of Italy, he (Claudius Seisselius, archbishop of Turin) tells us, that the most cruel persecutions had not been able to extirpate them, or hinder them from a constant defence of that doctrine which they had received from their ancestors.” — *Idem*, p. 328.

It will be observed that the people called by the world “Waldenses,” were driven by Rome into the Piedmont valleys.

“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-labourers in the Albigenses, by whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over Dauphiné 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.

A History of the True Church

“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 labours 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.” — Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 18, 19.

Of the persecution against the Vaudois of La Guardia, Wylie says:

“Enticing the citizens outside the gates, and placing soldiers in ambush, they succeeded in getting into their power upwards of 1,600 persons. Of these, seventy were sent in chains to Montalto and tortured, in the hope of compelling them to accuse themselves of practising shameful crimes in their religious assemblies. No such confession, however, could the most prolonged tortures wring from them. “Stefano Carlino,” says M’Crie, “was tortured till his bowels gushed out;” and another prisoner, named Verminel, “was kept during eight hours on a horrid instrument called the *hell*, but persisted in denying

the atrocious calumny.” Some were thrown from the tops of towers, or precipitated over cliffs; others were torn with iron whips, and finally beaten to death with fiery brands; and others, smeared with pitch, were burned alive.” — *Idem*, pp. 116, 117.

Of the Roman persecutions against the true followers of the Lamb in the town of Pragelas, Wylie says:

“It was “the closing days of the year 1400 . . . and the inhabitants dreaded no attack, believing themselves sufficiently protected by the snows which then lay deep on their mountains. They were destined to experience the bitter fact that the rigours of the season had not quenched the fire of their persecutor’s malice. Borelli, at the head of an armed troop, broke suddenly into Pragelas, meditating the entire extinction of its population. The miserable inhabitants fled in haste to the mountains, carrying on their shoulders their old men, their sick, and their infants, knowing what fate awaited them should they leave them behind. In their flight a great many were overtaken and slain. Nightfall brought them deliverance from pursuit, but no deliverance from horrors not less dreadful . . . without shelter, without food, the frozen snow around them, the winter’s sky overhead, their sufferings were inexpressibly great. When morning broke, what a heart-rending spectacle did day disclose! Some of the miserable group lost their hands and feet from frostbite; while others were stretched out on the snow, stiffened corpses. Fifty young children, some say eighty, were found dead from cold, some lying on the bare ice, others locked in the frozen arms of their mothers, who had perished on the dreadful night along with their babes.” — *Idem*, pp. 26, 27.

CHAPTER 14: TEN TO ELEVEN HUNDRED A.D.

Heresy and Truth

“The persecution of Waldo and his followers, with their flight from Lyons, is a remarkable epoch on the annals of the Christian church. Wherever they went, they sowed the seeds of reformation. The countenance and blessing of the King of kings accompanied them. The Word of God grew and multiplied, not only in the places where Waldo himself had planted it, but in more distant regions.” — Jones, *History of the Church*, pp. 313, 314.

Concerning Biblias, a female martyr, during the persecution at Lyon and Vienne: “The fact which was pressed upon her to acknowledge was that the Christians ate their children. In her torture she recovered herself, it is said, and awoke as out of a sleep, and, in answer to their interrogations, thus remonstrated: “How can we eat infants — we, to whom it is not lawful to eat the blood of beasts?”— *Idem*, p. 131.

John Milton, the famous poet as quoted in Jones’ *History of the Christian Church*, p. 356 makes mention of Peter Giles, in his history of the Waldenses, and how the Waldensian ministers “bred up themselves in trades, and especially in physic and surgery, as well as in the study of scripture, which is the only true theology, that they might be no burden to the church . . . But our ministers scorn to use a trade, and count it the reproach of this age that tradesmen preach the gospel. It were to be wished they were all tradesmen; they would not then for want of another trade make a trade of their preaching: and yet they clamour that tradesmen preach, though they preach while *they are* themselves are the worst tradesmen of all.”

“Mr. Robinson (the noted historian) has here given the very words of the inquisitor Reinerius, who describing the Waldenses, says, ‘It is also a common opinion among the Puritans (*Cathari*) that man sins grievously who [without necessity] kills any bird, from the least to the greatest—or a quadruped, from a weasel to an elephant.’”—Footnote, page 388, *Idem*.

“They can say a great part of the Old and New Testaments by heart. They despise the decretals, and the sayings and expositions of holy men, and they only cleave to the text of Scripture.” . . . “They say that the doctrine of Christ and his apostles is sufficient to salvation, without any church statutes and ordinances. That the traditions of the church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees; and that greater stress is laid on the observation of human traditions than the keeping of the law of God. ‘Why do you transgress the law of God by your traditions?’ They condemn all approved ecclesiastical customs which they do not read of in the gospel, as the observation of Candlemas, Palm Sunday, the reconciliation of penitents, the adoration of the cross, of Good Friday. They despise the feast of Easter and all other [Roman] festivals of Christ and the Saints, because of their being multiplied to that vast number, . . . and work upon holy days [of the Roman church] where they can do it without being taken notice of.” . . . “They declare themselves to be the apostles’ successors, to have apostolic authority, and the keys of binding and loosing. They hold the church of Rome to be the whore of Babylon, and that all who obey her are damned, especially the clergy that are subject to her since the time of Pope Sylvester.” . . .

“They hold that none of the ordinances of the church that have been introduced since Christ’s ascension ought

A History of the True Church

to be observed, being of no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church, and the like, they utterly reject.” — *Eccl. Hist. of the Ancient Piedmont Church*, pp. 216, and Lewis, *History of Sabbath & Sunday*, pp. 211, 212.

Regarding the Paulicians:

“During a period of one hundred and fifty years, these Christian churches seem to have been almost incessantly subjected to persecution, which they supported with Christian meekness and patience; and if the acts of their martyrdom, their preaching, and their lives were distinctly recorded, I see no reason to doubt that we should find in them the genuine successors of the Christians of the first two centuries. And in this as well as former instances, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. A succession of teachers and churches arose, and a person named Sergius, who had laboured among them in the ministry of the gospel thirty-seven years, is acknowledged, even by their vilest calumniators, to have been a most exemplary Christian. The persecution had, however, some intermissions, until at length Theodora, the Greek empress, exerted herself against them beyond all her predecessors. She sent inquisitors throughout all Asia Minor in search of these sectaries, and is computed to have killed by the gibbet, by fire, and by the sword, A HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p.245.

“Information of these things (the ministry of Waldo) was then conveyed to pope Alexander III, who no sooner heard of such heretical proceedings than he anathematized the reformer and his adherents, commanding the archbishop to proceed against them with

the utmost rigor. Waldo was now compelled to quit Lyons. His flock in a great measure followed their pastor; and hence a dispersion took place not unlike that which arose in the church of Jerusalem on the occasion of the death of Stephen. The effects were also similar. . . . His (Waldo's) principles took deep and lasting root, and produced a numerous harvest of disciples, who were denominated Leonists, Vaudois, Albigenses, or Waldenses, for the very same class of Christians is designated by these various appellations at different times, and according to the different countries, or quarters of the same country, in which they appeared." — *Idem*, p. 313.

"The following facts are indisputable: that the general body of the Albigenses received the doctrines of Peter Waldo, . . . and that the Waldenses and Albigenses were two branches of the same sect." — *Idem*, p. 322.

Monsieur de Vignaux, forty years a Waldensian pastor, wrote, "We live in peace and harmony one with another, have intercourse and dealings chiefly among ourselves, having never mingled ourselves with members of the church of Rome by marrying our sons to their daughters, nor our daughters to their sons."

He also states, "That the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to our salvation, and that we are called to believe only what they teach, without any regard to the authority of man — that nothing else ought to be received by us except what God hath commanded — that "there is only one mediator between God and man, and consequently that it is wrong to invoke the saints." — *Idem*, p. 354.

A History of the True Church
CHAPTER 15: ELEVEN TO TWELVE
HUNDRED A.D.

Peter Waldo

“The Cathari, who were evidently a people of God, received great accessions of members from the learned labors and godly zeal of Peter Waldo, an opulent merchant of Lyons, toward the close of the twelfth century. They were gloriously distinguished by a dreadful series of persecutions, and exhibited a spectacle, both of the power of Divine grace, and of the malice and enmity of the world against the real gospel of Jesus Christ. I purpose to represent in one connected view the history of this people till a little after the time of the Reformation. The spirit, doctrine, and progress of the Waldenses will be more clearly understood by this method, than by a broken place in which their story should be introduced.

“These people were numerous in the valleys of Piedmont. Hence the name Vaudois, or Vallenses was given them, particularly to those who inhabited the valleys of Luverne and Argorgne. A mistake arose from similarity of names, that Peter Valdo, or Waldo, was the first founder of these churches. For the name Vallenses being easily changed into Waldenses, the Romanists improved this very easy and natural mistake into an argument against the antiquity of these churches, and denied that they had any existence till the appearance of Waldo. During the altercations of the papists and protestants, it was of some consequence that this matter should be rightly stated; because the former denies that the doctrines of the latter had any existence till the days of Luther. But from a just account of the subject, it appeared, that the real protestant doctrines existed during the dark ages of the church, long before Waldo’s time.

“About 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men. This led to idolatry. Men fell down before the consecrated host and worshiped it as God. The impiety of this abomination shocked the minds of all men who were not dead to a sense of true religion. The mind of Peter Waldo was aroused to oppose the abomination, and to strive for a reformation. A fear of God, in union with an alarming sense of the wickedness of the times, led him to conduct with courage in opposing the dangerous corruptions of the hierarchy. He abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, who flocked to him to share his alms, received the best instructions he was capable of communicating, and revered the man, of whose liberality they partook, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

“A secular man like Waldo needed instruction. But where could it be found, at a time of such general ignorance and declension? He knew that the Scriptures were given by infallible guides, and thirsted for those sources of instruction, which, at that time, were in a great measure a sealed book in the Christian world. To men who understood the Latin tongue, they were accessible. But how few were these compared with the bulk of mankind! The Latin vulgate Bible was the only edition of the sacred book at that time in Europe: and, the languages then in common use, the French and others, however mixed with the Latin, were, properly speaking, by this time separate and distinct from it. It appears that the Christian world under providence, was indebted to Waldo for the first translation of the Bible into a modern tongue. No pains had been taken, by those who were attached to popish system, to diffuse Biblical knowledge among the vulgar. The benevolent attempt to send the bread of life among the common people, by giving them the

A History of the True Church

Scriptures in their own tongue, if we accept the single instance of the Slavonian version, was purely and exclusively of Protestant origin.

“As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures, he saw that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the pope. He did more: as he advanced in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Christ, he taught his neighbors the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

“John de Bekes Mayons, archbishop of Lyons, a distinguished member of the corrupt system, forbade the new reformer to teach anymore, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as a heretic. Waldo replied, that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter that concerned the salvation of men. On this, the archbishop endeavored to apprehend him. But the great affection of Waldo’s friends, the influence of his relations, who were men of rank, the universal regard paid to his probity and piety, and the conviction which, no doubt many felt, that the extraordinary circumstances justified his assumption of the pastoral character; all things operated so strongly in his favor that he lived concealed at Lyons three years.

“Pope Alexander III, having heard of the proceedings of Waldo, anathematized him and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against him with the utmost rigor.

“Waldo fled from Lyons, and his disciples followed him. By this dispersion, the doctrine of Waldo was

widely disseminated throughout Europe. In Dauphiny, whither he retired, his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people probably did join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bible, was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people. Waldo himself, however, seems never to have been among them.

“Persecuted from place to place, he retired into Picardy. Success attended his labors; and the doctrines which he preached appear to have so harmonized with those of the Vaudois, that they and his people were henceforth considered as the same.

“To support and encourage the church formed no part of the glory of the greatest and wisest princes of that age. Phillip Augustus, one of the most prudent and sagacious princes that France ever saw, was enslaved by the god of this world. He took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down 300 houses belonging to those who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burned. It appears that, at this time, Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia, where he ended his days about the year 1179. He appears to have been one of whom the world was not worthy, and to have turned many unto righteousness. The word of God then grew and multiplied. In Alsace and along the Rhine the gospel was preached with a powerful effusion of the Holy Spirit: persecution ensued, and 35 citizens of Nantz were burned at one fire, in the city of Bingen, and at Mentz, 18. In those persecutions, the bishop of Mentz was very active, and the bishop of Strasburg was not inferior to him in vindictive zeal: for, through his means, 80 persons were burned at that place.

“Everything relating to the Waldenses resembled the

A History of the True Church

scenes of the primitive church. Numbers died praising God, and in confident assurance of a blessed resurrection; whence the blood of the martyrs became again the seed of the church. In Bulgaria, Croatia, Dalmatia, and in Hungary, many churches were planted; which flourished in the thirteenth century, governed by Bartholomew, a native of Carcassone, a city not far from Poulouse, which might be called in those days; the metropolis of the Waldenses, on account of the numbers who there professed evangelical truth. In Bohemia and the country of Passaw, the churches were reckoned to have contained in the former part of the fourteenth century eighty thousand professors. Almost throughout Europe Waldenses were then to be found; and yet they were treated as the off-scouring of the earth, and as people against whom all the power of wisdom of the world were united. But the witness continued to prophesy in sackcloth, and souls were built up in the faith, hope, and charity of the gospel.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, pp. 405-409.

The Waldensian Church of God

During the twelfth century the work of the Church of God, known to the world as “Waldenses,” was at its best since the days of the apostles. Men of ability had been raised to the leadership of God’s people in the wilderness, and much increase was made in winning souls from the paganistic Roman Catholicism of the dark ages. In various countries these people were known by many names which were not acknowledged by the people themselves. The predominating names brought to use by history are “Waldenses,” “Cathari,” and “Albigenses,” but the people themselves objected to these man-made names.

From E. Comba’s work, Guild Hall Library, London, we get the following. “The Waldenses objected to being called after Peter

Waldo. They teach that ‘we are a little Christian flock, falsely called Waldenses.’ Further they say, ‘We are proud of working.’ and reproached the Roman clergy with idleness.”

The enemies of the church, and also others who do not understand, attribute the beginning of the Waldenses, also known by other names, to the time of Peter Waldo, the leading preacher of his time; but a careful search will reveal that the Waldenses, as a people separate and distinct from Rome, existed prior to the ministry of Waldo.

“Further, the provincial councils of Toulouse in 1119, and of Lombes in 1176, and the general councils of Lateran in 1139 and 1179, do not treat of them, nor condemn them as Albigenses but as heretics; and when they particularize them, they denominate them as ‘bons homet,’—(i.e., good men)—‘Cathari,’ —‘Paterini,’ —‘Publicani,’ &c., which shows that they existed before they were generally known as Albigenses. It is also proved, from their books, that they existed as Waldenses before the times of Peter Waldo, who preached about the year of 1160. Perrin, who wrote their history, had in his possession a New Testament in the Vallese language, written on parchment, in a very ancient letter, and a book entitled, in their language, ‘Qual cosa sia l’ Antichrist?’—that is, ‘What Is Antichrist?’ under date of the year 1120, which carries us back at least twenty years before Waldo. Another book, entitled ‘*The Noble Lesson*,’ is dated A.D. 1100.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 309.

Of these true servants of God, Milner bears the following witness:

“In this century (XII) there were numerous opposers of the reigning idolatry and superstitions of the church of Rome, who were dominated by their enemies, Cathari;

A History of the True Church

they, as to worldly property, were in low circumstances, and in general, mechanics. Cologne, Flanders, the south of France, Savoy, and Milan were their principal places of residence. These appear to have been a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious sect of Christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners the whole apparatus of the fashionable idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the Divine Word.

“They seem to have conformed to the public worship much in the same manner as the apostles did to the Jewish church, while it existed, still preserving a union among themselves in worship, and in hearing sermons, so far as the iniquity of the times would permit.

“This people continued in a state of extreme persecution throughout this century. Bernard, who seems to have been extremely ill-informed concerning them, remarks that they had no particular father of their heresy, and condemns them in whatever respects they stood opposed to the high claims and superstitions of the church of Rome. We cannot, however, find that he ever opposed their real piety.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, pp. 396, 397.

Let us note that Milner says Bernard knew of no particular father of their heresy.

Mr. Jones gives Saccho’s own opinion, as following:

“Their enemies confirm their great antiquity. Reinerius Saccho, an inquisitor, and one of their most implacable enemies, who lived only eighty years after Waldo, admits that the Waldenses flourished five hundred years before that preacher. Gretzer, the Jesuit, who also wrote against the Waldenses, and had examined the subject fully, not only admits their great antiquity, but declared his firm

belief “that the Toulousians and Albigenses condemned in the years 1177 and 1178, were no other than the Waldenses.”” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 309.

Concerning Waldenses, according to the Roman churchman Evervinus, about 1140:

“They say that the church is only among themselves, because they alone follow the ways of Christ, and imitate the apostles, not seeking secular gains, possessing no property, following the pattern of Christ, who was himself perfectly poor, nor permitted his disciples to possess anything.”³ . . . “I must inform you also, that those of them who have returned to our (Roman) church, tell us that *they had great numbers of their persuasion scattered almost everywhere, and that amongst them were many of our clergy and monks*. And as for those who were burnt, they, in the defence they made for themselves, told us that this heresy had been concealed from the time of the martyrs—and that it had existed in Greece and other countries.”” — *Idem*, pp. 277, 278.

These people of God then, as in all ages of the church, understood the prophesies applying to themselves, and understood that they were to be preserved by Jehovah in the wilderness until the time of persecution would end.

A celebrated leader among the Waldenses and Albigenses, Arder Joachim of Calabria, the year 1190, when in conversation with Richard the Lion Hearted, said,

“Certain wicked nations called ‘Gog and Magog’ shall rise up to destroy the Church of God and shall subvert the

³ Jones’ footnote: ‘We shall see reason hereafter to believe that, in this particular, Evervinus misrepresented them.’

A History of the True Church

race of Christians, and then shall be the day of judgment. He says John speaks of the church, that the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared of God that He should feed her there a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days.”

“The ancient Waldenses . . . held that to endow churches from state funds is an evil thing,’ and that the church then fell and became the whore sitting on that beast mentioned in the book of the Revelation, when under pope Sylvester, she received those temporal donations.” — *Idem*, p. 356.

The true church while opposed by Rome, was respected by the people among whom she dwelt. Her doctrine was scriptural, and the lives of her people were faultless in that age of darkness.

In *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, London Library, on page 653, in speaking of heretics it says, “Of all the sects in this century (the twelfth), the one which by the purity of its doctrine, and by the ability of its leaders, there were none that surpassed the Waldenses.”

From nation to nation the Waldenses fled, and never were secure from the unrelenting wrath of the minions of Rome.

Anathema of Pope and edicts of kings repeatedly were hurled against them of which the following will suffice to show the fury of Rome against God’s saints:

“Forasmuch as it hath pleased God to set us (the Roman church) over his people . . . we . . . do command and charge that the Waldenses, Inzabbati, who otherwise are called ‘the poor of Lyons,’ and all other heretics who cannot be numbered, being excommunicated from the holy church, adversaries to the cross of Christ, violaters and corrupters of the Christian religion, and the avowed enemies of us and our kingdom, to depart out of our kingdom and all our dominions. Whosoever, therefore,

from this day forward, shall presume to receive the said Waldenses and Inzabbati, or any other heretics of whatever profession, into their houses, or to be present at their pernicious sermons, or to afford them meat, or any other favour, shall thereby incur the indignation of Almighty God, as well as ours” — Edict of Ildefonsus, King of Arragon, Spain, in the year 1194.”
From Pegna’s *Directory of the Inquisitors*, p. 317.

Some General Remarks

“Here we are justly called upon to vindicate the claim, which this people made to the honorable character of the Church of God. In times of great declension, whoever is led by the Spirit of God to revive true religion, necessarily exposes himself to the invidious charges of arrogance, uncharitableness and self-conceit. By condemning all others, such a one provokes the rest of the world to observe and investigate his faults. These disadvantages the Waldenses had in common with other reformers; they had also disadvantages peculiarly their own. Power, knowledge, and learning were almost entirely in the hands of their adversaries: in them very particularly, God Almighty chose the weak and foolish things of the world, to confound the wise. As they were, for the most part, a plain and uneducated people, they furnished no learned divines, no profound reasoners, nor able historians. The vindication, therefore, of their claims to the character of a true church must be drawn principally from the holiness of their lives and the patience of their sufferings.

“Rainerius, the cruel persecutor, owns that the Waldenses frequently read the Holy Scriptures, and in their preaching, cited the words of Christ and his apostles concerning love, humility, and other virtues; insomuch

A History of the True Church

that the women who heard them, were enraptured with the sound. He further says, that they taught men to live, by the words of the gospel and the apostles, that they led religious lives; that their manners were seasoned with grace, and their words prudent; that they freely discoursed of divine things, that they might be esteemed good men. He observes, likewise, that they taught their children and families the epistles and gospels. Claude, bishop of Turin, wrote a treatise against their doctrines, in which he candidly owns, that they themselves were blameless, without reproach among men, and that they observed the Divine commands with all their might.

“Jacob de Riberia says that he had seen peasants among them who could recite the book of Job by heart; and several others, who could perfectly repeat the whole New Testament.

“The bishop of Cavaillon once obliged a teaching monk to enter into conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood might be prevented. This happened during a great persecution in 1540, in Merindol and Provence. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that he had never known in his whole life so much of the Scriptures, as he had learned during those few days, in which he had held conference with the heretics. The bishop however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men, who had lately come from the Sorbonne, at Paris, which was renowned for theological subtlety. One of them openly owned, that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children in their catechism, than by all the disputations which he had ever heard. This is the testimony of Vesembecius in his oration concerning the Waldenses. The same author informs us farther, that Louis XII, importuned by the calumnies of informers, sent two respectable persons into Provence, to

make inquiries. They reported that in visiting all their parishes and temples, they found no images or Roman ceremonies, but, that they could not discover any marks of the crimes with which they were charged: That the sabbath day was strictly observed; that the children were baptized according to the rules of the primitive church, and instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God. Louis having heard the report declared with an oath, They are better men than myself or my people.'

“We must add here the testimony of that great historian, Thuanus, enemy, indeed, of the Waldenses, though a fair and candid one. “He is describing one of the valleys inhabited by this people in Dauphiny, which is called the stony valley. Their clothing, he says, is of the skins of sheep; they have no linen. They inhabit seven villages: their houses are constructed of flint stone, with a flat roof covered with mud, which being spoiled or loosened by rain, they smooth again with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however, by a fence. They have besides two caves, set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other, themselves, when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being by constant practice, excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live separate from the rest of mankind. One thing is astonishing, that persons externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They can all read and write. They are acquainted with French so far as is needful for the understanding of the Bible, and the singing of psalms. You can scarce find a boy among them, who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith which they profess, in this, indeed, they resemble their brethren of the other valley, they pay tribute with a good conscience,

A History of the True Church

and the obligation of this duty is particularly noted in the confession of their faith. If by any reason of the civil wars, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and at the first opportunity put it to the king's taxgatherers.'

"Francis I, the successor of Louis XII, received, on inquiry the following information concerning the Waldenses of Merindol, and other neighboring places; namely, that they were a laboring people, who came from Piedmont to dwell in Provence, about 200 years ago; that they had much improved the country by their industry; that their manners were most excellent; that they were honest, liberal, hospitable, and human; that they were distinct from others in this, that they could not bear the sound of blasphemy, or the naming of the devil, or any oaths, except on solemn occasions; and that if they ever fell into company where blasphemy or lewdness formed the substance of the discourse, they instantly withdrew themselves.

"Such were the testimonies to the character of this people from enemies!

"Luther, who owns that he was once prejudiced against them, testifies that he understood by their confessions and writings, that they had been for ages singularly expert in the use of the scriptures. He rejoiced and gave thanks to God, that he had enabled the reformed and the Waldenses, to see and own each other as brethren. By the general confession of the Romanists, it appears that the Protestants and the Waldenses were looked on as holding the same principles. The churches of Piedmont were, however, on account of their superior antiquity, regarded as guides of the rest.

"From the borders of Spain, throughout the South of France for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to

Bohemia, thousands of godly souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ, against whom malice could say no evil, except that which admits the most satisfactory refutation: men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of godliness itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the church. But of what church? Of that, which the thirteenth century, and long before, had shown itself to be anti-christian. How faithful is the promise of God in supporting and maintaining a church, even in the darkest times! But her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on the earth.

“The Waldenses were conscientiously obedient to established governments, and their separation from a church, so corrupt as that of Rome, was with them only a matter of necessity. We shall now see what they were in point of doctrine and discipline.”

The Doctrine and Discipline of the Waldenses

“The leading principle of this church was, ‘that we ought to believe that the Holy Scriptures alone contain all the things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God hath revealed to us.’

“Wherever this principle dwells in the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry. There the worship of one God, through the one Mediator, and by the influence of one Holy Spirit, is practised sincerely. The dreams of purgatory, the intercession of saints, the adoration of images, dependence on relics and austerities, cannot stand before the doctrine of Scripture. The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principle of Protestantism. They affirm that there is only one

A History of the True Church

mediator, and therefore we must not invoke the saints. That there is no purgatory; but that all those who are justified by Christ go into life eternal.

“A number of their old treatises evince, that for some hundred years, the principles of the gospel, which alone can produce such holiness of life as the Waldenses exhibited in their conduct, were professed, understood, and embraced by this chosen people, while Antichrist was in the very height of his power.

“In a book concerning their pastors we have this account of their vocation:

“All who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God, that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets. Afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands. The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors; nor are the seniors to undertake anything without the approbation of their colleagues, that everything may be done among us in order.

“We pastors meet together once every year, to settle our affairs in a general synod. Those whom we teach, afford us food and raiment with good will, and without compulsion. The money given to us by the people is carried to the general synod, is there received by the elders, and is applied partly to the supply of travelers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us shall fall into gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching.’

“The Waldenses in general expressed their firm belief that there is no other mediator than Jesus Christ: they spoke with great respect of the virgin Mary as holy, humble, and full of grace; at the same time they totally discountenanced that senseless and extravagant admiration in which she has been held for ages.

“The labors of Claudius, of Turin, in the ninth century, appear, under God, to have produced these blessed results as to the faith and honesty of the Waldenses. Men, who spend and are spent for the glory of God, and for the profit of souls, have no conception on the importance of their efforts. These often remain in durable effects, to succeeding generations, and are blessed to the emancipation of thousands from the dominion of sin and Satan.

“The Waldenses took special care for the religious instruction of their children, by catechetical and expository tracts, adapted to the plainest understandings. These formed a very salutary body of instruction, and early taught the youth the great things which pertained to life and godliness. If more could be said of this people, than that they hated the gross abomination of popery, and condemned the vices of the generality of mankind, they might have been ostentatious Pharisees, or self-sufficient Socinians. But though, no doubt, there were unsound professors among them, as among all denominations, yet in their community, there were many real Christians, who knew how to direct the edge of their severity against their indwelling sins; and who being truly humbled under a view of their native depravity, betook themselves wholly to the grace of God in Christ for salvation.

“It is clearly evident from the general current of their history, that the Waldenses were a humbled people, prepared to receive the gospel of Christ from the heart, to walk in His steps, to carry His cross, and to fear sin

A History of the True Church

above all other evils. They were devoutly strict in the discharge of family religion. In some ancient inquisitorial memoirs, describing their names and customs, it is said of them: Before they go to meat, the elder among them says, "God, who blessed the five barley loaves and two fishes in the wilderness, bless this table, and that which is upon it, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And after meat he says, "The God, who has given us corporal food, grant us spiritual life, and may God be with us, and we always with Him." After their meals, they teach and exhort one to another.'

"There were evidently many humble and devout followers of Christ among this people, who felt the power and enjoyed the consolations of the doctrines of the cross." — Townsend's *Abridged Milner's*, pp. 409-416.

CHAPTER 16: TWELVE TO THIRTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

Rome Continues to Harass the Church

The Church of God continued to grow in numbers and prestige in various nations, but among the various peoples was known by its distinctive name separating it from other peoples. Jones quotes the Roman churchman Evervinus, as saying, "Those of them who have returned to our church tell us that they had great numbers of their persuasion scattered almost everywhere." — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 278.

In the preceding century, we have noted how the pontiffs were troubled with the true believers, known as Waldenses, Albigenses, etc. In some countries these followers of the Lamb were called "Paulicians" and "Puritans." The Paulicians emigrated:

“from Bulgaria, who, leaving their native land,” Orchard says, “spread themselves throughout various provinces. Many of them, while doing good to others, and propagating the gospel, were put to death with the most unrelenting cruelty. Their accessions from different sources made the Puritan or Paterine churches very considerable, and to their enemies very formidable, even before the name of Waldo of Lyons was known. Besides these foreign accessions, some books had been written and circulated by the Puritans, while several reformers appeared in different kingdoms, all advocating the same doctrines and practice; so that the clergy and pontiff were aroused to vigorous opposition.” — Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, p. 150.

Although the severe persecutions were raised against them in various countries controlled by the Roman pontiff, these people continued as a distinct people, and known as “Puritans” even until after their settlements in America.

“In the year 1215, Pope Innocent III, of bloody celebrity, held a council at the Lateran, and denounced anathemas against heretics of every description. . . Rome extended its sanguinary measures over Italy. . . with an edict of Frederick II. . . No alternative of escaping those human monsters presented itself but that of flight. Mosheim observes, “they passed out of Italy, and spread like an inundation throughout the European provinces, but Germany in particular afforded an asylum where they were called Gazari instead of Cathari (Puritans).”” — Mosheim, *Ecc. Hist.*, v. 2, pp. 426, 430, and Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, pp. 151-152.

“In 1227 a new army was raised against Jews and

A History of the True Church

heretics, personally enumerating as heretics Raymond, the Count of Foix, and Viscount of Beziers. They first attacked the castle of Becede, in Lauraquais. The Archbishop of Narbonne, with the Bishop of Toulouse, hastened to aid in the siege. Part of the besieged made their escape, the rest were either knocked on the head or put to the sword. It is said the Bishop of Toulouse saved several from the violence of the soldiers, that he might be gratified in seeing them perish in the flames.” — *Idem*, p. 214.

Frederick II, emperor of the Romans, from Padua, in the year 1224, promulgated four edicts against the heretics, saying “We condemn to perpetual infamy, withdraw our protection from, and put under our ban, the Puritans, Paterines, Leonists, Arnoldists, Passignes, Josephines, Albigenes, Waldenses, &c., and all other heretics of both sexes, and of whatsoever name.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 363.

Frederick, in his proclamation against the heretics, uses the term “The Church of God.” This is found in the book entitled, *Holy Roman Empire*, in the Public Library of London.

“The council of Toulouse established the inquisition to complete the work of heresy; and in the year 1229, first forbade the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.” — Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, p. 217.

It is to be also wondered at that God never overlooks these acts against His people, for in this same city: “At Toulouse it is said the first society in France was formed for circulating the Bible in the vernacular tongue.” — *Idem*, p. 217, note.

By fire, by sword, by prison, and every imaginable form of persecution and death, the Roman apostates sought to destroy the

people of God; but the more she persecuted, the more she slew, the greater the church, and the stronger became her people, until Rome at last threw all her strength against the unyielding people of the most High. Rome's endeavors to stamp out the truth, and the constancy of the saints of this age is ably summed up by the able historian Wylie in these words:

“Rome saw that she was making no progress in the extermination of a heresy which had found a seat amid these hills, as firm as it was ancient. The numbers of the Waldenses were not thinned; their constancy was not shaken, they still refused to enter the Roman church, and they met all the edicts and inquisitors, all the torturings and burnings of their great persecutor, with a resistance as unyielding as that offered by their rocks to the tempests of hail and snow which the whirlwinds of winter hurled against them.” — Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 27.

“The preceding sections will have enabled the reader to form a tolerably correct judgment concerning the religious principles and general character of that denomination of Christians called Catharists, Paterines, Albigenses, or Waldenses. And I should now proceed to a more detailed account of their history, subsequent to the times of Peter Waldo, and especially of the dreadful persecutions and complicated sufferings which came upon them in consequence of their adherence “to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 358,359.

The Persecutions of the Waldenses

“The external history of this people is little else than a series of persecutions, and it is to be regretted, that while

A History of the True Church

we have large and distinct details of the cruelties they endured, we have very scanty accounts of the spirit with which they suffered, and still less of the internal exercises of holiness, which are known only to the people of God. That which raged against them in the former part of the thirteenth century was an assemblage of everything cruel, perfidious, indecent, and detestable. This was a time when the princes of the earth, as well as the meanest persons, were generally enslaved to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God with the most savage barbarity. In 1179, some, under various pretexts of their having embraced heretical sentiments, were examined by the bishops and condemned. They were accused of having received only the New Testament, and rejecting the Old, except in the testimonies quoted by our Lord and the apostles. This charge is, however, confuted by the whole tenor of their authentic writings. They were also accused of asserting the Manichean doctrine of two independent principles; . . . and of many other things, and all with an evident design to persecute them to death; because they stood opposed to the errors and abominations of the church of Rome.

“Rainerious, who was a bigoted papist, owns that the Waldenses were the most formidable enemies of the church of Rome, ‘because’, saith he, ‘they have a great appearance of godliness; because they live righteously before men, believe rightly in God in all things, and hold all the articles of the creed; yet they hate and revile the church of Rome, and in their accusations they are easily believed by the people.’

“But it was reserved to Innocent the Third, than whom no pope possessed more ambition, to institute the inquisition; and the Waldenses were the first objects to its cruelty. He authorized certain monks to frame the process

of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular power. The beginning of the thirteenth century saw thousands of persons hanged or burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was that they trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteousness, idolatry and superstition. Whoever has attended closely to the subject of the epistles to the Colossians and Galatians, and has penetrated into the meaning of the epistle, sees the great duty of HOLDING THE HEAD, and resting for justification by faith, on Jesus Christ alone, inculcated throughout them as the predominant precept of Christianity, in opposition to the rudiments of the world, to human works and devices of whatever kind. Such a person sees what true Protestantism is, contrasted with genuine popery; and, of course, he is convicted, that the difference is not merely verbal or frivolous, but that there is a perfect opposition in the two plans; and such as admits of no coalition or union; and that therefore the true way of withstanding the devices of Satan, is to be faithful to the great doctrine of justification by the grace of Jesus Christ, through faith alone, and not by our own works or deservings. Hence the very foundation of false religion is overthrown; hence troubled consciences obtain solid peace, and faith working by love, leads men into the very spirit of Christianity, while it comforts their hearts, and establishes them in every good work.

“Schemes of religion so extremely opposite being ardently pursued by both parties, could not fail to produce a violent rupture. The church and the world were then seen engaged in contest. Innocent first tried the methods of argument and persecutions. He sent bishops and monks, who preached in those places, where the Waldensian doctrine flourished. Their success was very inconsiderable. In the neighborhood of Narbonne two

A History of the True Church

monks were employed, Peter de Chateauneuf, and Dominic. The former of these was murdered, probably by Raymond, Count of Toulouse, because he had refused to remove the excommunication, which he had denounced against that prince. Though there appears no evidence that Raymond either understood or felt the vital influence of the Protestant doctrines, yet he strongly protected his Waldensian subjects. He witnessed the purity of their lives and manners, and he heard with indignation the calumnies with which they were aspersed by their adversaries, who proclaimed to all the world their own hypocrisy, avarice and ambition. He was incensed at the wickedness practised on his subjects, and indignant at his own unmerited disgrace; but his conduct in this instance was unjustifiable. The event was disastrous. Innocent obtained what he wished, a decent pretence for his horrible and most iniquitous persecution; and thousands of the sincerely pious were unrighteously calumniated as accessory to crime.

“The insidious customs of the inquisition are well known. From the year 1206, when it was first established, to the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless Christians was so great, that certain French bishops, in the last mentioned year, desired the monks of the inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment, till the Pope should be advertised of the great numbers apprehended; numbers so great that it was impossible to defray the charge of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true it is, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, that in the year 1539 there were in Europe above eight hundred thousands who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

“When the Waldenses knew that the design of the pope was to gain the reputation of having used gentle and

reasonable methods of persuasion, they agreed among themselves, to undertake the open defence of their principles. They, therefore, gave the bishops to understand that their pastors, or some of them in the name of the rest, were ready to prove their religion to be truly Scriptural, in an open conference, provided it might be conducted with propriety. They explained their ideas of propriety, by desiring that there might be moderators on both sides, who should be vested with full authority to prevent all tumult and violence; that the conference should be held at some place, to which all parties might have free and safe access; and that some one subject should be chosen, with the common consent of the disputants, which should be steadily prosecuted, till it was fully discussed and determined; and that he who could not maintain it by the Word of God, the only decisive rule of Christians, should own himself confuted.

“This was perfectly equitable and judicious, and the bishop could not with decency refuse to accept the terms. The place of discussion agreed on was Montreal, near Carcassone, in the year 1206. The umpires on the one side were the bishops of Villencuse and Auxere; on the other R. de Bot, and Anthony Riviere.

“Several pastors were deputed to manage the debate for the Waldenses, of whom Arnold Hot was the principal. He arrived first at the time and place mentioned. A bishop named Dusus, came afterwards on the side of the papacy, accompanied by the monk Dominic, two of the pope’s legates, and several other priests and monks. The points undertaken to be proved by Arnold, were, that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous, and unscriptural; that the church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, and that its polity was bad and unholy. Arnold sent those propositions to the bishop, who required fifteen days to answer him, which were granted.

A History of the True Church

At the day appointed, the bishop appeared bringing with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired to be heard by word of mouth, only entreating their patience, if he took a considerable time in answering so prolix a writing. Fair promises of a patient hearing were made to him. He discoursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience.

“At length Arnold desired that the bishop and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the Word of God. What they said on the occasion we are not informed; but the cause of the abrupt conclusion of the conference showed which party had the advantage. While the two delegates were disputing with Arnold, the bishop of Villeneuve, the umpire of the papal party, declared, that nothing could be determined because of the coming of the crusaders. What he asserted was too true; the papal armies advanced, and, by fire and faggots, soon decided all controversies.

“Arnold and his assistants were, doubtless, of the number, who did truth, and therefore came to the light, that their deeds might be made manifest that they were wrought in God. And their adversaries were of those who hated light, and would not come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved.’

“The recourse of the popish party to arms, in the room of sober argumentation, was to pour contempt on the Word of God, and to confess that its light was intolerably offensive to them. The approach of crusaders, who, in the manner related, put an end to the conference, was not an accident; for Innocent, who never intended to decide the controversy by argument, on occasion of the unhappy murder of the monk, before mentioned, had dispatched

preachers throughout Europe, to collect all, who were willing to revenge the innocent blood of Peter of Chateauneuf; promising paradise to those who should bear arms for forty days, and bestowing on them the same indulgence as he did on those who undertook to conquer the Holy Land. 'We moreover promise,' says he in his bull, 'to all those who shall take up arms to revenge the said murder, the pardon and remission of their sins. And since we are not to keep faith with those who do not keep it with God, we would have all to understand, that every person who is bound to the said earl Raymond by oath of allegiance, or by any other way, is absolved by apostolical authority from such obligations; and it is lawful for any Roman Catholic, to persecute the said earl, and to seize upon his country,' etc.'

"The tyrant proceeds in his bull: 'We exhort you, persecute them with a strong hand: deprive them of their lands, and put Roman Catholics in their room.' Such was the pope's method of punishing a whole people for a single murder committed by Raymond.

"The French barons, incited by the motives of avarice which Innocent suggested, undertook the whole work with vigor. The Waldensian Christians then had no other part to act, after having performed the duty of faithful subject and soldiers, but to suffer with patience the oppressions of Antichrist. Three hundred thousand men, induced by avarice and superstition, filled the country for several years with carnage and confusion. The scenes of baseness, perfidity, barbarity, indecency and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided, can scarcely be conceived. These were conducted, partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Monfort.

"The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A certain abbott

A History of the True Church

undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring his labor was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled, and burned 140 persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face and told Simon, that on the last day when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives, if they would submit to the popedom. But the Christians ‘loved not their lives to the death’: only three women of the company recanted.

“Another castle named Thermes, not far from Menerbe, in the territory of Narbonne, was taken by Simon in the year 1210. ‘This place,’ said Simon, ‘is of all others the most execrable, because no mass has been sung in it for 30 years.’ A remark which gives us some idea both of the stability and numbers of the Waldenses: the very worship of popery, it seems, was expelled from that place. The inhabitants made their escape by night, and avoided the merciless hands of Simon.

“But the triumphing of the wicked is short: after he had been declared sovereign of Toulouse, which he had conquered, the general of the armies of the church, its son and its darling; after he has oppressed and tyrannized over the Waldenses by innumerable confiscations and exaction, he was slain in battle in the year 1218.

“Earl Raymond died of sickness in the year 1222, in a state of peace and prosperity, after his victory over Simon. No man was ever treated with more injustice by the popedom. But nothing is known of his character for knowledge and piety. His persecutor, Innocent, died in

1216; and the famous Dominic in 1220.

“The Waldenses suffered sore and incessant persecutions from the church of Rome, in many different parts of Europe, till the time of the Reformation, and, in most instances, they endured them with admirable patience and constancy.

“Thus largely did the King of saints provide for the instruction of his church, in the darkness of the middle ages. The Waldenses are indeed the middle link which connects the primitive Christians and fathers with the reformed; and by their means, the proof is completely established that salvation, by the grace of Christ, felt in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost, and expressed in the life, has ever existed from the time of the apostles till this day; and that it is a doctrine marked by the cross, and distinct from all that religion of mere form, which calls itself Christian, but which wants the spirit of Christ.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, pp. 416-423.

General State of Roman Church in the Thirteenth Century

“Though the narrative of the Waldesian transactions does not belong exclusively to the thirteenth century, it is, however, ascribed to it, because during this, the sect endured most cruel persecutions, and experienced many severe conflicts, which particularly excited the attention of all Europe.

“It was then a time of immense ignorance and wickedness. True, the Aristotelean philosophy greatly prevailed; but it is by all means, enlightened beyond measure. The most learned doctors, with very few exceptions, were not, in their knowledge, many degrees above the most ignorant and vulgar. The herd of students foolishly employed themselves about the miserable

A History of the True Church

transactions of Aristotle, to no purpose. Their ambition was to appear learned in the eyes of the senseless multitude. The Dominicans and Franciscans were almost the only orders which devoted themselves to study They had ample buildings and princely houses. They attended the deathbeds of the rich and great, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders. These gained much ground, and till the time of the institution of the Jesuits were the pillars of the papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great part of their employment. While the other orders had, by their immoralities reduced themselves to contempt; these two orders, having the semblance of worth, not the substance, revived the authority of the Romish church, supported and strengthened every reigning superstition, and by deep-laid plans of hypocrisy, induced numbers to enrich both the papacy and monastic establishments. These two orders, having obtained a decided ascendancy in England, arrogated to themselves great power. The abject slavery and superstition under which England then sunk, appears, from a commission which Innocent IV gave to John the Franciscan, in 1247, as follows:

“We charge you, that, if the major part of the English prelates should make answer, then, by ecclesiastical censures, to withdraw their appeals, any privilege or indulgence notwithstanding.’

“So shameless were the popes, at this time, in their exactions and so perfect was their dominion over mankind, that they grossly defrauded the Franciscans themselves, and were not afraid of the consequences. Men, who received not the testimony of Jesus Christ, and refused submission to his easy yoke, were induced to kiss the iron rod of the Italian tyrant.

“The greater part of Europe had now forsaken the all-important article of justification by the merit of Jesus

Christ alone through faith, and were entangled in the nets of pharisaical religion, and readily betook themselves to numberless superstitions, to give quiet and ease to their consciences. The Waldenses found peace and comfort, and the expectation of heaven through Jesus Christ alone by faith, and hence despised the whole popedom with all its appendages; while others, who trembled in conscience for their sins; and knew not the holy wisdom of resting in Christ alone for salvation, might well swell with indignation at the wickedness of the court of Rome, but durst not emancipate themselves from its bonds. The power of the Pope was then but a cement of wickedness which encouraged men with the hopes of heaven, while living in superstition and the indulgence of the greatest crimes.

“In 1234, Pope Gregory IX, desirous of increasing the credit of the popedom, by a bull directed to all Christendom, invited men to assume the cross, and to proceed to the Holy Land. In this he says, ‘the service to which they are now invited is an EFFECTUAL ATONEMENT for the miscarriages of a negligent life. The HOLY WAR is a compendious method of discharging men from guilt, and restoring them to the Divine favor. Even if they die on their march, the intention will be taken for the deed, and many may in this way be crowned without fighting.’

“In this, Gregory, in effect, opposed the doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and in contempt of it, taught men to expect justification from God, on the merit of military service, rendered at the command of his [self-styled] Vice-regent. In this way, the human mind was removed from faith in Christ, and men were taught to rely for pardon on the sovereign pontiff, and were led to imbibe the fatal doctrines that wickedness might be committed, with the flattering prospect of gaining the divine favor,

A History of the True Church

without a reformation of heart and life.

“The same general ignorance and superstition, the same vices and immoralities, which predominated in the last century, abounded in this. Real Christians were to be found only among the Waldenses, or in those who worshiped God in obscurity. Various other sects arose, who were cruelly persecuted by the popes and emperors; but none appear to have professed the real doctrines, or were influenced by the real spirit of Jesus. Some of them, both in principles and practice, were the disgrace of human nature. But to detail the narratives of fanaticism, with which most ecclesiastical histories abound, is not the object of this work. The Church of God, considered as a society, seems then to have existed only among the Waldenses.

“There were numerous societies in this century, that suffered extremely by the iron hand of power. Among all these, the Waldenses, sometimes called Lollards, by the way of reproach, seem perfectly distinguished, by their solid piety, sound scriptural judgment, and practical godliness; and therefore they may justly be accounted to have suffered for righteousness’ sake; while the rest, as far as certainty appears were martyrs of folly, turbulence, or impiety.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, pp. 423-425, 428-429.

CHAPTER 17: THIRTEEN TO FOURTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

The Lollards and Other Protestants

“A bold and intrepid teacher was raised up among the Beghards, or Picards, in 1315, in the person of Walter

Lollard, who became an eminent barb or pastor among them, and from whom the Waldenses were called Lollards. . . Moreland asserts he was in great reputation with the Waldenses, for having conveyed their doctrines into England, where they prevailed all over the kingdom. . . . Walter was in unity of views in doctrine and practice with the Waldenses. . . . In 1320, Walter Lollard was apprehended and burnt. . . . His death was highly detrimental to their affairs, but did not, however, ruin their cause; for it appears they were supported by men of rank and great learning, and continued their societies in many provinces of Germany.” — Orchard’s *History of Foreign Baptists*, pp. 322, 323.

From Germany came the Sabbath-keeping brethren who founded the Ephrata, Pa., colony, and to our time the truth of the commandments of God has been kept before the world by the descendants of these worthy children of God.

“About 1330 the people of God in Germany were grievously harassed and oppressed by an inquisitor named Eachard, a Jacobin monk. After inflicting cruelties for some time upon these people, he was induced to investigate the causes and reasons of the separation from the church of Rome.” “The force of truth ultimately prevailed over all his prejudices. His own conscience attested that many of the errors and corruptions which they charged on that apostate church really existed; and finding himself unable to disprove the articles of their faith by the Word of God, he confessed that truth had overcome him, gave glory to God, entered into the communion of the Waldensian churches, which he had been engaged in persecuting even to death. The news of his conversion aroused the ire of the inquisitors. Emissaries were dispatched in pursuit of him; he was at

length apprehended and conveyed to Heidelberg, where he was committed to the flames.” — *Idem*, pp. 333, 334.

In spite of the fact that Rome was ruthlessly on the trail of every leader among the churches during this century, the truth continued to prevail regardless of sword, fire, or dungeon. True children of the Lamb were found throughout Europe, and especially numerous in France, Italy, Germany and Bohemia.

According to the work of Benedict, there were 80,000 heretics in Bohemia, who were called Waldenses, in the year 1315.

In the *New Schaff Herzog Religious Encyclopaedia*, article Waldenses, page 243, it says they were determined to celebrate the Lord's Supper yearly, and that in France it had been the custom of these people to celebrate it yearly from an early time. This work says further, "In Germany as well as in France, the Waldenses celebrated the Lord's Supper yearly, between the years of thirteen and fourteen hundred. In the Cottain Alps, on the other hand, as well as in Provence, Apulia, Calabria, and middle Italy, this independent celebration of the Lord's Supper continued much longer than in France."

Benedict, in his *Gen. Hist. of the Baptist Denominations*, 1848 Ed., p. 308) speaks of separate and distinct societies of Sabbath-keeping Lollards as early as A.D. 1389.

"The Waldenses taught that the Roman church departed from its former sanctity and purity in the time of Constantine the Great: they therefore refused to submit to the usurped powers of its pontiff. They said that the prelates and doctors ought to imitate the poverty of the apostles, and earn their bread by the labor of their hands. *They contended that the office of teaching, confirming, and admonishing the brethren, belonged in some measure to all Christians, &c.* Their discipline was extremely strict and austere, for they interpreted Christ's discourse on the mount according to the literal sense of

the words, and they condemned war, lawsuits, the acquisition of riches, capital punishments, oaths, and [even] self-defence.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, page 357.

Although this century witnessed much persecution against the true children of God from the Roman apostates, yet God protected them and preserved them, and permitted them to hold fast the truth which had been preserved by their forefathers in the faith down through the Dark Ages. It was to these worthy brethren who, in an age of darkness, carried the Scriptural truths down to the reformers of the succeeding centuries, that we owe our sincere thanks for the truth thus preserved for us.

CHAPTER 18: FOURTEEN TO FIFTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

The Climax of Popery

In the fifteenth century corruption in the Romish church reached its greatest extent, and the work of the true children of God within the Roman fold to clean up the apostate system, was more than equalled by the ministry of the true Church of God without the harlot system.

The Protestant Reformation, which will be more fully treated in the following century, can be said to have begun in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries through the work of Walter Lollard, Wycliffe, Huss, and others, and which work was taken up in the following century by Luther, Knox, and others.

However, it must not be imagined that the true Church of God was not witnessing against popery and its anti-christian systems during this time; for it was faithfully proclaiming the message against Babylon, the call of the angel in Revelation, “Come out of

her, my people,” during the entire age of darkness, and did not let up even when the Reformers came forth from the Romish church, but continued to boldly witness against the harlot mother of the Tiber.

Jones says: “But it is presumed the reader will have seen enough in the preceding pages to satisfy him that the opinion, which has so currently prevailed among us, of the almost total extinction of the Christian profession, in its purity, at the time of, and for ages preceding, the Lutheran reformation, is altogether a popular error.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p.439.

It must not be thought, however, that the true church at the dawn of the Reformation had lost its pristine purity, for it had not, but still faithfully held to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, which had in the beginning of the Gospel age been delivered to the saints.

Benedict (*Gen. Hist. of the Baptists*, p. 308) speaks of “separate and distinct societies” of Sabbath-keeping churches, which were known with the dawn of the Reformation.

Another direct and important testimony is found in a “*Treatise on the Sabbath*,” by Bishop White. Speaking of Sabbath-keeping as opposed to the practice of the church and as heretical, he says:

“It was thus condemned in the Nazarenes and in the Corinthians in the Ebionites and in the Hypsistarii. The ancient Synod of Laodicea made decree against it, chap.29; also Gregory the Great affirmed it was Judaical. In St. Bernard’s days it was condemned in the Petrobrussians. The same, likewise being revived in Luther’s time, by Carlstadt, Sternberg, and by some sectaries among the Anabaptists, hath both then and ever since, been condemned as Jewish and heretical.” (P.8, London, 1635.) — Lewis, *History of Sabbath & Sunday*, p. 218.

In “*Life of Milton*,” 2nd Edit., pp. 309, 319, is quoted from Dr. Symmons a note about the separateness of the Waldenses type of

Christians and the Protestant reformer type. Dr. Symmons says, “I call them, as they are called in these official dispatches, by the generally-known name of Protestants; but the dissenters from the papal church, who occupied the valleys of Piedmont, had neither connection nor common origin with those who were properly called Protestants, from one of the first acts of their association in Germany. THE WALDENSES asserted a much more ancient pedigree, and assumed to be of the old Roman church before it was corrupted by the papal innovations.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, Page 508, Footnote .

“There were no priests among them, no quarrels about religious worship, no lawsuits: they determined their differences among themselves. None but those who repaired to the neighbouring cities knew that there existed any such things as mass or bishops. They prayed to God in their own jargon, and being continually employed, they had the happiness to know no vice. . . . Such was the tranquillity which the Waldenses enjoyed (for above 200 years), when the reformers of Germany and Geneva came to hear that there were others of the same persuasion as themselves.” — *Idem*, p. 439.

We shall now endeavor to show through the following extracts from historians of repute, as quoted in the book *The Intervening Hand of God*, how the Lord has watched over and delivered His people from the armed hosts of the adversary at the dawn of the Reformation.

Deliverance from Armed Hosts

“Escaped the edge of the sword.” — Hebrews 11:34.

From one of the centuries when armed ecclesiasticism sought to

overrun and subdue every land where the plant of reformed truth was taking root, come stories of deliverance that read like the chapters out of the history of ancient Israel. As the Syrian army before Samaria fled in panic, when the Lord “made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses” (II Kings 7:6), so, more than once, a supernatural terror set to flight invading forces that had expected easy conquest.

The Panic-stricken Invaders

It was the old-time view of defending the truth for which Huss was burned at Constance that led Bohemians who loved his memory to take up arms to defend the truth of God. Luther caught the true idea when, at the beginning of his work, he insisted that it was by the Word of God alone that error was to be met. But a hundred years before Luther, this truth was imperfectly recognized, and it must be admitted that the carnal weapons were sometimes drawn in essentially religious conflicts. However, at this special time it was not an ordinary conflict over religion, but a vast scheme of invasion of their whole land, that the Bohemian people were called to meet. And evidently it was not to be allowed by Providence that the forces of intolerance should overrun the region where the early glimmerings of the light of reformation had begun to appear.

Pope Martin had organized a great crusade, which entered Bohemia in June, 1427. Electors, princes, and counts led the invading host, with a special papal legate in charge. The little army of the Hussites, under Ziska, the “one-eyed,” went out to meet the invaders. The historian, J. A. Wylie, says:

“They were now within sight of them, and the two armies were separated only by the river that flows past Meiss. The crusaders were in greatly superior force, but instead of dashing across the stream, and closing in battle with the Hussites whom they had come so far to meet, they stood gazing in silence It was only for a few

moments that the invaders contemplated the Hussite ranks. A sudden panic fell upon them. They turned and fled in the utmost confusion. The legate was as one who awakens from a dream. His labours and hopes at the very moment when, as he thought, they were to be crowned with victory, suddenly vanished in a shameful rout.” — *History of Protestantism*, 1878 Ed. p. 231.

Urged on still by the Pope, a yet greater crusade was organized and entered Bohemia in 1431, “chanting triumph” as they marched. Wylie again says:

“The enemy were encamped near the town of Reisenberg. The Hussites were not yet in sight, but the sounds of their approach struck upon the ears of the Germans. The rumble of their wagons, and their war-hymn chanted by the whole army as it marched bravely forward to battle, were distinctly heard. Cardinal Cesarini and a companion climbed a little hill to view the impending conflict. Beneath them was the host which they expected soon to see engaged in victorious fight. It was an imposing spectacle, this great army of many nationalities, with its waving banners, its mail-clad knights, its helmeted cavalry, its long lines of wagons, and its numerous artillery. The cardinal and his friend had gazed only a few minutes when they were startled by a strange and sudden movement in the host. As if smitten by some invisible power, it appeared all at once to break up and scatter. The soldiers threw away their armour and fled, one this way, another that; and the wagoners, emptying their vehicles of their load, set off across the plain at full gallop. Struck with consternation and amazement, the cardinal hurried down to the field, and soon learned the cause of the catastrophe. The army had been seized with a mysterious panic. That panic extended

A History of the True Church

to the officers equally with the soldiers. The Duke of Bavaria was one of the first to flee. He left behind him his carriage, in the hope that its spoil might tempt the enemy and delay their pursuit. Behind him, also in inglorious flight, came the Elector of Brandenburg; and following close on the elector were others of less note, chased from the field by this unseen terror. The army followed, if that could be styled an army which so lately had been a marshalled and bannered host, but was now only a rabble rout, fleeing when no man pursued.” — *Idem.* p. 235.

The comment of the historian Wylie expressed the conviction that must come to every heart:

“There is something more in the facts we have related than the courage inspired by the consciousness of a good cause, and the feebleness and cowardice engendered by the consciousness of a bad one. There is here the touch of a Divine finger — the infusion of a preternatural terror.” — *Idem.* p. 236.

“Armies of the Aliens” Put to Flight

In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a decree, or bull of extermination, against the Vaudois people of the Piedmont valleys of Italy. Their consistent refusal to accept Romish doctrine, long prior to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, had made them objects of papal hatred.— The Inquisition had been refused permission to set up its machinery of espionage and torture in the valleys, the people turning its agents back by force of arms. This brought the papal bull ordering total destruction.

Troops came in thousands, eighteen thousand regulars of France and Piedmont, joined by a host of plunderers and brigands who were after the spoils of the happy valley homes. Some of the accounts of

deliverance that saved the people from total destruction in this first general persecution of the Vaudois, read like stories from the days of Israel.

The campaign of massacre, watched by a legate named Cattanee (or Cataneo), on behalf of the Pope, began in an attack on the valley of Angrogna. The enemy was breaking the line of the Vaudois defence, at a point behind which were the women and children and aged. Dr. Mauston says:

“Seeing their defenders yield, these families threw themselves upon their knees with many tears; women, and children, and old men united together in fervently crying, ‘O Die ajutaci! O Lord help us! O my God, save us!’ This cry of prayer was the only cry which broke from their heart in their distress, and arose to heaven. But their enemies laughed at it, and seeing this company upon their knees, hastened their advance. ‘My fellows are coming — they are coming to give you your answer,’ exclaimed one of their chiefs, surnamed ‘The Blace of Mondovi,’ because of his swarthy complexion; and immediately, joining bravado to insult, he raised the visor of his helmet, to show that he was not afraid to encounter the poor people whom he insulted. But at the moment a steel-pointed arrow, let fly by a young man of Angrogna, named Peter Revel, struck this new Goliath with such violence that it penetrated into his skull, between his eyes, and laid him dead. His troop, struck with terror, fell back in disorder; a panic seized them; the Vaudois took advantage of the moment, and impetuously rushed forward, hurling their adversaries before them, and, eagerly continuing the pursuit, swept them into the very plain, where they left them vanquished and dispersed. Then, re-ascending to their families so miraculously delivered, they likewise flung themselves upon their knees, and all together gave thanks to the God of armies

for the victory which they had just gained.” — *History of the Waldenses*, Vol. I, pp. 33, 34.

But the invaders were by no means defeated; they had only been turned back and angered. On they came the next day, fiercer than ever. This time let Wylie tell the story:

“It seemed impossible for their prey to escape them. Assembled on this spot, the Waldensian people had but one neck, and the papal soldiers, so Cataneo believed, were to sever that neck at a blow. But God was watching over the Vaudois. He had said of the papal legate and his army, as of another tyrant of former days, “I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will cause thee to return by the way which thou camest.” But by what agency was the advance of that host to be stayed? Will some mighty angel smite Cataneo’s army, as he did Sennacherib’s? No angel blockaded the pass. Will thunderbolts and hailstones be rained upon Cataneo’s soldiers, as of old on Sisera’s? The thunders slept; the hail fell not. Will earthquake and whirlwind discomfort them? No earthquake rocked the ground; no whirlwinds rent the mountains. The instrumentality now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the pass, and brought the march of the host to an instant halt.

“A white cloud, no bigger than a man’s hand, unobserved by the Peidmontese, but keenly watched by the Vaudois, was seen to gather on the mountain’s summit, about the time the army would be entering the defile. That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. It began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain’s side, wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven — a sea of murky vapour. It fell right into the

chasm in which was the papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick, black fog. In a moment the host were in night; they were bewildered, stupefied, and could see neither before nor behind, could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering on terror.

“The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of Providence in their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of the Pra, and issuing from all their hiding-places in its environs, they spread themselves over the mountains, the paths of which were familiar to them, and while the host stood riveted beneath them, caught in the double toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up huge stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into the ravine. The papal soldiers were crushed where they stood. Nor was this all. Some of the Waldenses boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front. Consternation seized the Piedmontese host. Panic impelled them to flee, but their effort to escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois, or the rocks that, swift as arrows, came bounding down the mountain. They jostled one another; they threw each other down in the struggle; some were trodden to death; others were rolled over the precipice, and crushed on the rocks below, or drowned in the torrent, and so perished miserably.” — *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 47-49.

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” The Reformation history shows that it was by witnessing and suffering, and not by fighting, that the light of truth was caused to shine. But in these experiences of deliverance we see God’s providence in keeping alive the little band of witnesses in the Piedmont valleys until the time of reformation should come.

A History of the True Church A Covering Cloud

The Vaudois of the Piedmont valleys had been all but exterminated. While the Reformation was spreading in Northern Europe, the papal forces visited the Vaudois villages with fire and sword. The remnant, driven out, had found refuge in Switzerland and southern Germany. After several years of exile, they were endeavoring to return to their homes. Spies sent into the valleys had reported the fields untilled and the villages deserted; and now a pioneer band of eight hundred men was making "the glorious re-entry," as it was ever afterward called.

Against the assaults of their enemies, they had pressed on from Lake Geneva, through Savoy, near to their own country. But on the slopes of a mountain called the Balsiglia, they were surrounded by the French and Piedmont troops sent to make an end of them. Their last stand apparently had been made, and now the enemy, with artillery in position, rested as evening drew on, confident that the next morning would deliver the little band to the slaughter. Wylie says:

"Never before had destruction appeared to impend so inevitably over the Vaudois. To remain where they were was certain death, yet whither could they flee? Behind them rose the unscalable precipices of the Col du Pis, and beneath them lay the valley swarming with foes. If they should wait till the morning broke, it would be impossible to pass the enemy without being seen; and even now, although it was night, the numerous camp-fires that blazed beneath them made it almost as bright as day. But the hour of their extremity was the time of God's opportunity. Often before it had been seen to be so, but perhaps never so strikingly as now. While they looked this way and that way, but could discover no escape from the net that enclosed them, the mist began to gather on the summits of the mountains around them. They knew the old mantle that was wont to be cast around their

fathers in the hour of peril. It crept lower and yet lower on the great mountains. Now it touched the supreme peak of the Balsiglia.

“Will it mock their hopes? Will it only touch, but not cover, their mountain camp? Again it is in motion; downward roll its white, fleecy billows, and now it hangs in sheltering folds around the war battered fortress and its handful of heroic defenders. They dared not as yet attempt escape, for still the watch-fires burned brightly in the valley. But it was only for a few minutes longer. The mist kept its downward course, and now all was dark. A Tartarean gloom filled the gorge of San Martino.

“At this moment, as the garrison stood mute, pondering whereunto these things would grow, Captain Poulat, a native of these parts, broke silence. He bade them be of good courage, for he knew the paths, and would conduct them past the French and Piedmontese lines, by a track known only to himself. Crawling on their hands and knees, and passing close to the French sentinels, yet hidden from them by the mist, they descended frightful precipices, and made their escape. “He who has not seen such paths,” says Arnaud in his *Rentrée Glorieuse*, “cannot conceive the danger of them, and will be inclined to consider my account of the march a mere fiction. But it is strictly true; and I must add, the place is so frightful that even some of the Vaudois themselves were terror-struck when they saw by daylight the nature of the spot they had passed in the dark.” When the day broke, every eye in the plain below was turned to the Balsiglia. That day the four hundred ropes which Catinat had brought with him were to be put in requisition, and the *feux-de-joie* so long prepared were to be lighted at Pinerolo. What was their amazement to find the Balsiglia abandoned! The Vaudois had escaped and were gone, and might be seen upon the distant

A History of the True Church

mountains, climbing the snows, far out of the reach of their would-be captors. Well might they sing,—

“Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. The snare is broken, and we are escaped.” —
History of the Waldenses, pp. 198-200.

They reached their own valley of the Pra del Tor, and to their joy found, all unexpectedly, agents of the Duke of Savoy, their prince, with a message of good will, giving authority to bring back their families and fellow believers from all places whither they fled. Thus again the Waldensian people found homes among the mountains that had hidden their fathers away from Rome’s wrath in the days of old.

CHAPTER 19: FIFTEEN TO SIXTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

The Protestant Reformation

The sixteenth century is the reformation period of the Roman Church. During this century Martin Luther came forth from the Roman system, and with him many of the leaders of the Reformation in various countries. Many historians, in error, trace the history of the true church of God from the days of the apostles to the apostasy after the death of the apostles and disciples, and then assume that she was within the fold of the Roman church until the time of the Reformation, not realizing that God had protected the true church, and kept her separate and distinct from the apostate system during the entire Dark Ages, at the time of the rule of the apostate church. — That the true church was in existence and distinct from the Reformers at the beginning of the Reformation, we may be assured from the following testimony of Jones:

“An attentive reader of the works of Luther and

associates will easily perceive that their minds laboured under a somewhat similar mistake as to their own case. It was not without surprise they learned that there were numbers around them, in every country, opposed to the corruptions of the church of Rome, and sighing in secret for a reform. It may also be added that Protestants in every succeeding age have but too implicitly imbibed their error. The blessed God hath never left Himself without witnesses in the world; and even during the reign of Antichrist—a period of the most general and awful defection from the purity of His worship, He had reserved to Himself thousands and tens of thousands of such as kept His commandments and the Faith of Jesus. Nor is there anything in this to occasion our surprise. The real followers of Christ are subjects of a kingdom that is not of this world. And having no national establishment, nor aiming at worldly power, their principles and conduct have seldom been thought worthy of regard by the world, except in so far as their public testimony against it has subjected them to persecution. The true profession of Christianity leads its friends to cultivate peace and union among themselves, and, like its divine Author, to avoid all turbulence and faction in the state.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 439,440.

The Waldenses of Piedmont, in making petition to their sovereign for mercy from their persecutors, about 1559, made the following statement in their appeal:

“They implored his highness to consider that their religious profession was not a thing of yesterday, as their adversaries falsely reported, but had been the profession of their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, yea, of their predecessors of still more ancient times, even of the martyrs, confessors, apostles, and prophets; and they

A History of the True Church

called upon their adversaries to prove the contrary if they were able. Persuaded, therefore, as they were, that their religion was not a human invention, but founded upon the Word of God, which shall remain forever, they were confident that no human force would be able to extinguish it.” — *Idem*, p. 354.

“The Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others) with all their zeal and learning, were babes in spiritual knowledge when compared with the Waldenses, particularly in regard to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and its institutions, laws, and worship in general.” — *Idem*, p. 326.

“Four Bibles produced under Waldensian influence touched the history of Calvin: namely, a Greek, a Waldensian vernacular, a French, and an Italian. Calvin himself was led to his great work by Olivetan, a Waldensian. Thus was the Reformation brought to Calvin, that brilliant student of the Paris University.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, p. 37.

Luther said of the Waldenses “that among them he had found one thing worthy of admiration, a thing unheard of in the popish church, that, laying aside the doctrines of men, they meditated in the Law of God day and night; and that they were expert, and even well versed in the knowledge of the Scriptures.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 353.

“In the year 1530, George Morel, one of the pastors of the church of the Waldenses, published *Memoirs of the History of their Churches*, in which he states, that at the time he wrote, there were above eight hundred thousand persons professing the religion of the Waldenses;” — *Idem*, p. 440.

That these Waldensian descendants were the people of the true Church of God, and still retained her distinctive doctrines, and observed the seventh day as the Sabbath, as a part of the commandments of God, we have the following authoritative statements.

“Erasmus (1466-1536) wrote of Sabbatarians in Bohemia early in the Reformation, ‘Descendants of the Waldenses in Bohemia and Holland formed material for Sabbath-keeping churches, which appeared with the dawn of the Reformation.’— Lewis, *History of Sabbath & Sunday*, pp. 317-320.

Chambers’ Cyclopaedia states that “many conscientious and independent thinkers in the reign of Elizabeth (1558-1603) advocated the seventh day.”

The *Sabbath Recorder* of June 11, 1868, says: “In 1552 many in England were known as Sabbatarians.”

Luther himself, while it is said he believed in and practised the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, did not prescribe it in his articles of faith for his followers, in the copies that we now have access to. However, it has been said that in his original thesis, Luther advocated the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, but that his colleagues objected on the grounds that it was an unpopular doctrine, which would have a tendency to repulse supporters of the Reformation who were not as pious as they should have been, but were of great assistance against the usurpations of the papacy.⁴

Luther in his works has written of his belief in the Sabbath as follows:

“The Sabbath was before the Law of Moses came, and

⁴ [CHCoG: There is no indication whatsoever in Luther’s 95 Theses that he had even the least concern about the seventh-day Sabbath. As he knew it was being observed by devout Christians and did not do so, or if he observed it secretly while allowing his followers to break one of God’s Ten Commandments, his witness is at best pathetic. Nor do his 95 Theses protest against idol worship. His reformation was only a pale shadow of the Way that the Waldenses were already living.]

A History of the True Church

has existed from the beginning of the world. Especially have the devout, who have preserved the true faith, met together and called upon God on this day.” — Luther’s *Work*, XXXV, p. 330.

As the Reformation became a success, many from among the ancient Waldensian churches of God were drawn over to the bodies of believers coming out of Rome’s system under the Reformers, and left the main tenets of the faith held so dear by the Waldensian churches; but the Church of God itself, made up of the faithful who knew and practised the truths maintained at the price of the lives of their fore-parents in past centuries, kept the true gospel free from the corruptions that crept into doctrines of the new sects through the Reformers who came from among the Roman clergy.

The *Baptist Cyclopedia* (1881), states: “In 1530, according to Du Pin, the Waldenses united with Reformers, and were persuaded to renounce certain peculiarities which heretofore they held, and to receive doctrines which till then had been foreign to their creed. This new arrangement harmonized the reformations of the twelfth and sixteenth centuries.”

“In the middle of the sixteenth century the breath of Protestantism from the north began to move over these colonies. The pastors who visited them told them of the synod which had been held in Angrogna in 1532, and which had been as the “beginning of months” to the ancient Church of the Valleys. More glorious tidings still did they communicate to the Christians of Calabria. In Germany, in France, in Switzerland, and in Denmark the old Gospel had blazed forth in a splendour unknown to it for ages. The Lamp of the Alps was no longer the one solitary light in the world: around it was a circle of mighty torches whose rays, blending with those of the old luminary, were combining to dispel the night from Christendom.” — Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p.

Church Tribulations of the Past

“Jan Everts of Deventer was put to death at Middelburg, in the year 1535. He had been baptized at Hague by Meynart, a teacher of the church. He further confessed that his wife had been baptized at Delft, by Obbo of Leeuwarden; that for four years he had not gone to the sacrament of confession; that he did not believe God was himself present in the sacrament of the altar, but that it was only useful as a memorial of the sufferings and death of our Lord. The customs and institutions of the church of Rome he did not esteem; and those of his fellow-believers whom he had seen put to death at Amsterdam, he held to be Christians, and as Christians had died. When promised forgiveness if he would repent, he steadfastly refused. Thus another witness of the truth was added to the martyred host of the Lamb. . . .

“It has already been observed that a large emigration, numbering some thousands of the persecuted baptists of the Tyrol, Switzerland, Austria, Styria, and Bavaria, took place about the year 1530, under the guidance of Jacob Hutter. The exiles found a refuge in Moravia. Soon after their settlement, King Frederic ordered their expulsion; but by the persuasion of the marshal, and from the expressed resolution of the people to make common cause with the refugees, the edict was withdrawn. Places of worship were now erected, farms purchased, the mutual advantages of commerce enjoyed, and families bound together by the closest and most endearing ties. Their numbers multiplied. The oppressed of many lands sought refuge and liberty of conscience in this land of peace. Again, an edict was issued for their expulsion, and its command sustained by military force. Time was,

A History of the True Church

however, allowed for the removal of their movable property; but no entreaties prevailed to obtain permission for them to inhabit the villages they had built, or to reap the fruits of the harvest they had sown. They offered to pay tribute for their possessions, and for the enjoyment of liberty to worship God; but the offer was rejected, and they were mercilessly driven away.

“The dense forests on the confines of Moravia afforded them a hiding place. Amid the dark alleys and shades, the minds of the wanderers were animated to patience, constancy, piety and devotion, by the exhortations of their leader. “Be ye thankful unto God,” ran the words of Hutter, “that ye are counted worthy to suffer persecutions and cruel exile for his name. These are the rewards of the elect in the prison-house of this world, the proofs of your heavenly Father’s approbation. Thus did his people Israel suffer in Egypt, in the desert, and in Babylon. Thus have apostles and all the followers of the Lamb, some in prisons, in exile, and in persecutions: some in torments, in sufferings, and in martyrdoms, enjoyed the favour of their Lord, and have passed the more quickly to the paradise above. Sadness be far from you; put aside all grief and sorrow, reflect how great the rewards awaiting you for the afflictions ye now endure.” Hutter further addressed the following epistle to the marshal, in the name of all.” — T.J. van Braght, *Martyrology of the Churches of Christ*, 1660, English Ed. 1850, pp. 147, 148

Address of Hutter to Marshal of Moravia, About 1530

“We brethren—who love God and his word, the true witnesses of our Lord Jesus Christ, banished from many countries for the name of God and for the cause of divine truth, and have come hither to the land of Moravia,

having assembled together and abode under your jurisdiction, through the favour and protection of the Most High God, to whom alone be praise, and honour, and laud for ever. We beg you to know, honoured ruler of Moravia, that your officers have come unto us, and have delivered your message and command, as indeed is well known to you. Already have we given a verbal answer, and now we reply in writing: viz., that we have forsaken the world, an unholy life, and all iniquity. We believe in Almighty God, and in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will protect us henceforth and for ever in every peril, and to whom we have devoted our entire selves, and all that we possess, to keep his commandments, and to forsake all unrighteousness and sin. Therefore we are persecuted and despised by the whole world, and robbed of all our property, as was done aforetime to the holy prophets, and even to Christ himself. By King Ferdinand, the prince of darkness, that cruel tyrant and enemy of divine truth and righteousness, many of our brethren have been slaughtered and put to death without mercy, our property seized, our fields and homes laid waste, ourselves driven into exile, and most fearfully persecuted.

“After these things we came into Moravia, and here for some time have dwelt in quietness and tranquillity, under thy protection. We have injured no one, we have occupied ourselves in heavy toil, which all men can testify. Notwithstanding, with thy permission, we are driven by force from our possessions and our homes. We are now in the desert, in woods, and under the open canopy of heaven: but this we patiently endure, and praise God that we are counted worthy to suffer for His name. Yet for your sakes we grieve that you should thus so wickedly deal with the children of God. The righteous are called to suffer; but alas! Woe, woe, to all those who

A History of the True Church

without reason persecute us for the cause of divine truth, and inflict upon us so many and so great injuries, and drive us from them as dogs and brute beasts. Their destruction, punishment, and condemnation draw near, and will come upon them in terror and dismay, both in this life, and in that which is to come. For God will require at their hands the innocent blood which they have shed, and will terribly vindicate his saints according to the words of the prophets.

“And now that you have with violence bidden us forthwith to depart into exile, let this be our answer. We know not any place where we may securely live; nor can we longer dare to remain here for hunger and fear. If we turn to the territories of this or that sovereign, everywhere we find an enemy. If we go forward, we fall into the jaws of tyrants and robbers, like sheep before the ravening wolf and raging lion. With us are many widows, and babes in their cradle, whose parents that most cruel tyrant and enemy of divine righteousness, Ferdinand, gave to the slaughter, and whose property he seized. These widows, and orphans, and sick children, committed to our charge by God, and whom the Almighty hath commanded us to feed, to clothe, to cherish, and to supply all their need, who cannot journey with us, nor, unless otherwise provided for, can long live — these, we dare not abandon. We may not overthrow God’s law to observe man’s law, although it cost gold, and body and life. On their account we cannot depart; but rather than they should suffer injury we will endure any extremity, even to the shedding of our blood.

“Besides, here we have houses and farms, the property that we have gained by the sweat of our brow, which in the sight of God and men are our just possession: to sell them we need time and delay. Of this property we have urgent need in order to support our wives, widows,

orphans, and children, of whom we have a great number, lest they die of hunger. Now we lie in the broad forest, and if God will, without hurt. Let but our own be restored to us, and we will live as we have hitherto done, in peace and tranquillity. We desire to molest no one; nor to prejudice our foes, not even Ferdinand the king. Our manner of life, our customs and conversation, are known everywhere to all. Rather than wrong any man of a single penny, we would suffer the loss of a hundred gulden; and sooner than strike our enemy with the hand, much less with spear, or halbert, as the world does, we would die and surrender life. We carry no weapon, neither spear nor gun, as is clear as the open day; and they who say that we have gone forth by thousands to fight, they lie and impiously traduce us to our rulers. We complain of this injury before God and man, and grieve greatly that the number of the virtuous is so small. We would that all the world were as we are, and that we could bring and convert all men to the same belief, then should all war and unrighteousness have an end.” — Braght, *Martyrology of the Churches of Christ*, pp.149-151

CHAPTER 20: SIXTEEN TO SEVENTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

Darkness Before Dawn

The seventeenth century marks the crisis of persecution against the true people of God. In the ancient nations of Europe the saints of God were scattered, preserving the true faith, keeping the commandments of God, and living exemplary lives in the valleys and hills of the continent. The time came, however, when the land became more thickly settled, and the enemies of the truth were

pressed against the settlements of the true children of God, and persecutions became more intense. The result was that these saints were driven from nation to nation, but finding no lasting asylum as the hordes of Rome followed them. The following extracts will serve to manifest the spirit of persecution and the state of despair confronting the saints in this century.

In a letter from Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England, 1665, to the Lords of the United Provinces, in defence of the Waldenses then persecuted in the provinces of the Duke of Savoy, we note the following:

“But if, on the other hand, he shall continue firmly resolved utterly to destroy, and to drive to a state of distraction, those men, among whom our religion was either planted by the first preachers of the gospel, and so maintained in its purity from age to age, or else reformed and restored to its primitive purity more early than among many other nations: we hereby declare ourselves ready to advise, in common with you, and the rest of our brethren and allies of the reformed religion, by what means we may most conveniently provide for the preservation and comfort of these distressed people.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 516.

Again to the Evangelical Cantons of Switzerland, Cromwell says, “Next to the help of God, it seems to devolve on you, to provide that *the most ancient stock of pure religion* may not be destroyed in this remnant of its ancient professors. . . .” — *Idem*, p. 530.

Some refugees from Tyrol valley gave this account of themselves to citizens of Coire in Switzerland in 1685:

They were “*a remnant of the old Waldenses*. They worshipped neither images nor saints; and they believed the sacrament (of the Lord’s Supper) was only a commemoration of the death of Christ; and in many other

points they had their opinions different from those of the church of Rome. *They knew nothing of either Lutherans or Calvinists*; and the Grisons, though their neighbours, had never heard of this nearness of theirs to the Protestant religion.” — *Idem*, p. 562.

In 1603 an explanatory declaration was made by the Waldenses in refutation of the false accusation of the Romanists against them. “It begins by stating, that, from time immemorial, and from generation to generation, the same doctrines and religious profession had been maintained by their predecessors in the marquisate of Saluces” — *Idem*, p. 493.

The Waldenses made petition to the Duke of Savoy for protection from their enemies, asking permission to follow their faith learned from their ancestors. “This petition was seconded by the Duchess of Savoy, who was a merciful princess, and had great power over the affections of the Duke. It being ever her judgment that this people were not to be so severely used, who had not changed their religion a few days ago, but had been in possession of it from their ancestors so many ages.” — *Idem*, p. 482.

During all these persecutions, however, God was very near His true children, and His intervening hand was readily apparent in their distresses, as they called upon Him. The following gleanings will show examples of God’s care over His own.

The Need Supplied

How often, in times of distress, has God shown His watchful care by impressing some unknown agent to act as His messenger to a child of His in need! Andrew Duncan, of Scotland, had been regent of St. Leonard’s College. He was at one time banished to France for his religious convictions, and now, in the days of 1621, as a minister at Crail, he was banished from the Scottish kingdom for nonconformity. He went, with his family, over the English border to Berwick.

“They were reduced to great hardships . . . One night in particular, the children asked for bread, and there being none to give them, they cried very sore: the mother was likewise much depressed in spirit; as for Mr. Duncan, he had recourse sometimes to prayer, and in the intervals endeavoured to cherish his wife’s hope, and please the children, and at last got them to bed; but she continued to mourn heavily. He exhorted her to wait patiently upon God, who was now trying, but would undoubtedly provide for them; and added, that though the Lord should rain down bread from heaven, they should not want. This confidence was the more remarkable, because they had neither friend nor acquaintance in that place to whom they could make their case known. And yet, before morning, a man brought them a sackful of provision, and went off without telling them from whence it came, though entreated to do so. When Mr. Duncan opened the sack, he found in it a bag with twenty pounds Scots, two loaves of bread, a bag of flour, another of barley, and such like provisions; and having brought the whole to his wife he said: “See what a good Master I serve.””—
Howie, *The Scots Worthies*, 1870 Ed. p. 112.

Again, when Mrs. Duncan was giving birth and sore in need, and they knew not where to turn, a lady came, — ‘a gentlewoman,’ Scots Worthies says, — evidently of means, bringing needed supplies and comforts with her, and herself rendering the help so sorely needed in the hour that brought another little one into the family. The messenger of mercy left them, leaving no hint of her identity, or of the means by which she had been led to come to their aid. Andrew Duncan could only leave on the record his testimony to God’s care for His children in distress.

“Mr James Hamiltoun, Minister at Edinburgh, was

outed and lived at Mortounhall under very great straites. One night, his wife and family and he had noe more meal than they gotte their supper of, and yet he still kepted up his confidence in God. That night, Sir James Steuart of Gutters, who lived not farr from him, but kneu nothing in particular of his present straites, told his Lady, when in her bed, that he was troubled in his mind about Mr Hamiltoun; and again and again it was born in upon him that he was in straits; and caused his Lady rise out of her bed, and give orders to the servants, early nixt morning, to carry a load of meal to Mortounhall, which was accordingly done, and it came most seasonably.” — Wodrow, *Analecta: Materials of Remarkable Providences*, 1862 Ed. Vol. 1, p. 91.

“Such were the men thy hills who trod,
Strong in the love and fear of God,
Defying, through a long dark hour,
Alike the craft and rage of power.” — *Struthers*.

“Who can follow the story of these men and women who witnessed amid trial, in those sad times of mistaken and cruel zeal for state-enforced religion, and not recognize again the hand of watchful Providence, stretched forth in hours of human extremity and need? Even so in gentler times may the same dear hand lead us on.

“O’er moor and fen,
O’er crag and torrent,
Till the night is gone.”
— *The Intervening Hand*.

The “New World” had been opened up to emigrants from Europe for colonization, and the persecuted saints known by various names

in history, fled to America for a haven of safety. The Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers, had scattered among them the true Church of God, and carried with them to the shores of the New World the faith once delivered unto the saints, and preserved by their fore-parents by the price of blood in the wildernesses of Europe.

The churches in the nations of Europe were literally destroyed in this century, and the history of them as churches can truly be said to have ceased, with a few notable exceptions, which we shall consider under the title of the Church of God in the British Isles.

Jones says of the extermination of the churches of the Waldenses in the Piedmont valleys:

“I professed to give the History of *the Churches* of Piedmont and other places commonly designated Waldenses and Albigenses, not of individuals; and as I consider these churches to have been utterly dispersed and scattered by a series of persecutions which terminated in the year 1686, I consider myself to have brought the subject to its legitimate close.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, Preface, page xxi.

The reader will note with interest the closing remarks of the historian regarding these people. How, because of the bitter persecutions in Europe, the church was utterly scattered and dispersed until he considered his subject to its legitimate close.

This persecution was following the year 1600, and it was during this very same period that the Pilgrims were coming to America to escape persecution, and when according to the Revelation of Jesus, chapter 12:16, that “The earth helped the woman,” the church. It was to America, the land of religious freedom, that the people known to the world as Waldenses, Puritans, Anabaptists, Lollards, etc., were fleeing from persecution, and who were in general known by the scriptural name, “The Church of God.”

How the Lord Fed and Protected His Church

We will now relate a few of the wonderful manifestations of God's intervening power in behalf of His true commandment-keeping people, in times of distress and danger. — These nonconformists were spoken of as such because they would not conform to the Episcopal church, which at that time had been recognized as the state church of England.

These nonconformist people stood for the Word of God in its purity, with the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus as their creed. Numerous testimonies elsewhere tell of their loyalty to the name and true faith of the Church of God.

How Matthew Warren Escaped

Matthew Warren was a scholar of Oxford, England. Being one of the non-conforming ministers, he was often sought by the authorities, and when silenced as a minister, devoted himself to educating youth for the ministry. Calamy reports:

“At one time he was very remarkably and providentially preserved. His wife had a strange impression upon her mind that if he did not remove till such a time from the house to which he had retired (he being away from home), he would certainly be taken prisoner. Accordingly she sent a messenger with a letter, earnestly begging him to be at home by such a time, or else he might never see her more.

“He, imagining it was her indisposition, and not the fear of his danger, that was the cause of her urgency, immediately took leave of his friends, and went homeward. But he was not far from the house before, looking back from an ascent, he saw it surrounded by persons that were sent to search there for him.” — *Nonconformists' Memorial*, Vol. II, p. 350.

A History of the True Church John Nofworthy's Experience

John Nofworthy was also an Oxford man, who lived in Devonshire. Driven out for nonconforming, he was hunted from prison to prison by persecuting officials. Calamy says:

“He was several times reduced to great straits; but he ‘encouraged himself in the Lord his God,’ and exhorted his wife to do the same. Once when he and his family had breakfasted, and had nothing left for another meal, his wife lamented her condition, and said, ‘What shall I do with my poor children?’

“He persuaded her to take a walk abroad with him; and seeing a little bird, he said: ‘Take notice how that little bird sits and chirps, though we cannot tell whether it has been at breakfast; and if it has, it knows not whether to go for dinner. Therefore be of good cheer, and do not distrust the providence of God; for are we not “better than many sparrows”?’ Before the time came for dinner, true to the preacher’s faith, sufficient provisions for the daily need had been sent in to them from an unknown source.” — *Idem*, Vol. I, p. 381.

Hanserd Knollys in London

“Be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” — Hebrews 13:5.

This promise was food and deliverance to Hanserd Knollys, one of the most eminent of the early English dissenters, at a time when he and his family were in distress. The incident here related occurred in London, after his return from America, whence he had fled for a time to escape imprisonment. He was still under the ban of the authorities, and ministry of the word was attended with peril. Of the deliverance

that came in the crisis of his family's need, as he pleaded the promise of God, Knollys says:

“I was still poor and sojourned in a lodging till I had but sixpence left, and knew not how to provide for my wife and child. Having prayed to God and encouraged my wife to trust in him, and to remember former experiences, and especially that word of promise, ‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,’ I paid for my lodging and went out, not knowing whither God’s good hand would lead me to receive something toward my present subsistence. About seven or eight doors from my lodgings, a woman met me in the street, and told me she came to seek me, and her husband had sent her to tell me that there was a lodging provided and prepared in his house by some Christian friends for me and my wife. I told her of my present condition, and went along with her to the house. There she gave me twenty shillings which Dr. Bastock, a late sufferer, had given her for me, and some linen for my wife, which I received, and told her husband I would fetch my wife and child and lodge there. I returned with great joy, and my wife was greatly affected with this seasonable and suitable supply. After we had returned praises to God, we went to our new lodgings, where we found all things necessary provided for us, and all charges paid for fifteen weeks.” — in Higgins & Brisbane, *Illustrations of Divine Government in Remarkable Providences*, 7th Ed, 1865, p 332, 333

A Child the Agent of Deliverance

“In the times when ministers in England were being ejected from the state churches for nonconformity, in 1662, a Mr. Rogers was expelled from his church. He lived near a persecuting magistrate, Sir Richard

A History of the True Church

Craddock. Being very bitter against dissenters, the magistrate set spies to watch Mr. Rogers, and was glad when he could summon him for preaching at a place near by. The preacher, and several of his friends who attended the service, were condemned to prison. The magistrate was in another room making out the papers.

“Sir Richard had a little granddaughter, who had met Mr. Rogers and had been petted by him. She was a wilful child, so hysterically impatient of restraint that she had once injured herself with a knife when contradicted. On this account, through fear that she would do something desperate, Sir Richard had given orders that she should be given her own way in everything. She came in and learned that her friend was to be sent to prison.”

The account, as given in Calamy’s *Nonconformists’ Memorial*, continues:

“She ran immediately to the chamber where her grandfather was and knocked with her head and heels till she got in, and said, ‘What are you going to do with my good old gentleman here in the hall?’

“‘That is nothing to you,’ said her grandfather: ‘get you about your business.’

“‘But I will not,’ she said; ‘he tells me you are going to send him and his friends to jail; and if you send him, I will drown myself in the pond as soon as they are gone; I will indeed.’

“When he saw the child was peremptory, it overcame him. He stepped into the hall, with mittimus in his hand, and said, “‘I had here made out your mittimus to send you all to jail, but at my grandchild’s request, I set you all at liberty.’

“They all bowed and thanked him. Mr. Rogers stepped up to the child and laid his hand upon her head, and

lifting up his eyes to heaven, said: ‘God bless you, my dear child: May the blessing of that God whose cause you now plead, though as yet you know Him not, be upon you in life, at death, and throughout eternity.’

“Many years after that, when Mr. Rogers had died, his son, Timothy Rogers, known as an author of a book on religious melancholy, was visiting the home of a Mrs. Tooley, of London, a lady famous in that day for her hospitality to religious workers. Here he told the story of his father’s deliverance. Mrs. Tooley listened with great interest, and said, ‘And are you that Mr. Rogers’ son?’—
“‘Yes, madam,’ he answered.

“‘Well,’ she said, ‘as long as I have been acquainted with you, I never knew that before. And now I will tell you something you never knew before: I am the very girl your dear father blessed. It made an impression upon me I could never forget.’

“Then she told her story. She had inherited her grandfather’s estate, and as a young girl had followed all the fashionable gaieties of the world. But there was no satisfaction in it. At the ancient Roman town of Bath, in the west of England, where she was visiting the springs for pleasure and health, an old doctor got her to promise to read the New Testament for her health. It made her only the more uneasy. Back to London she went.

“One night she had a dream about being in a place of worship, and she was so impressed that she told her lady companion that she was going to search for the church she saw in her dream. Sunday morning they started out and passed a number of churches. They came at last to the narrow lane called the Old Jewry, off Cheapside, and saw a throng of people going as if to church. The account continues:

“She mixed herself among them, and they carried her to the meetinghouse in the Old Jewry. So soon as she had

A History of the True Church

entered the door and looked about, she turned to her companion and said, 'This is the very place I saw in my dream.' She had not long stood, till Mr. Shower, minister of the place, went up into the pulpit; as soon as she looked on him, she said, 'This is the very man I saw in my dream; and if every part of it hold true, he will take for his text, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." When he arose to pray, she was all attention, and every sentence went to her heart. Then he took for his text that very passage; and there God met her in a saving manner; and she at last gained what she had long sought in vain elsewhere — rest in Christ to her troubled soul.' — *Nonconformists' Memorial*, Vol. 1, pp. 381-385

How Dr. Stennett Escaped Conviction

"Dr. Edward Stennett was a Nonconformist minister, in those times of trial and repression; a physician he was also, by which profession he supported his family. His son, Joseph Stennett, became a well-known London preacher. To the published *Works of Joseph Stennett* (London, 1732), some writer prefaces an account of Dr. Edward Stennett, who spent a considerable time in prison "for the cause of conscience and religion." "While I speak of his sufferings," says this writer, "it may not be amiss to preserve an account of one very extraordinary deliverance he met with, which I have heard his son relate." The account follows:—"He dwelt in the castle of Wallingford, a place where no warrant could make forcible entrance, but that of a chief justice; and the house was so situated that assemblies could meet, and every part of religious worship be exercised in it without any danger of a legal conviction, unless informers were admitted, which care was taken to prevent; so that for a long time he kept a constant and undisturbed meeting in

his hall.

“A gentleman who was in the commission of the peace, and his very near neighbour, being highly incensed at the continuance of an assembly of this kind so near him, after having made several fruitless attempts to get his emissaries admitted into the house in order to (*get*) a conviction, in the rage of disappointment, resolved, together with a neighbouring clergyman, upon doing it by subordination of witnesses.

“They accordingly hired some persons fit for their purpose, to swear they had been at those assemblies, and heard prayer and preaching there, though they had never been in the house on those occasions. The clergyman’s conduct in this affair was the more censured because he had professed a great friendship for Mr. Stennett, and was under considerable obligations to him, having often had his assistance in the way of his profession, as a physician for his family, without any reward.

“Mr. Stennett, finding an indictment was laid against him on the Conventicle Act, founded upon the oaths of several witnesses, and being well assured that nothing but perjury could support it, was resolved to traverse it, and accordingly did so.

“The assizes were held at Newbury; and when the time drew near, there was great triumph in the success the gentlemen proposed to themselves, when on a sudden the scene was changed.

“News came to the justice that his son, whom he had lately placed at Oxford, was gone off with a player; the concern whereof, and the riding in search of him, prevented his attendance in the court.

“The clergyman, a few days before the assizes, boasted much of the service which would be done to the church and the neighborhood by his prosecution, and of his own determination to be at Newbury to help carry it

A History of the True Church

on; but to the surprise of many his design was frustrated by sudden death.

“One of the witnesses, who lived at Cromish, was also prevented, by being seized with a violent and sad disease, of which he died. Another of them fell down and broke his leg, and so was hindered.

“In short, of seven or eight persons engaged in this wicked design, there was but one left who was capable of appearing. He was a gardener who had been frequently employed by Mr. Stennett at day labor, but never lodged in his house, nor was admitted to the religious assemblies held there. They thought to make him, as he was a servant to the family, a very natural evidence, and kept him in liquor for several days for that purpose.

“But coming to his reason just as the assizes drew on, he went about the town exclaiming against himself for his ingratitude and perjury, as well as against those who had employed him; and absolutely refused to go. So that when Mr. Stennett came to Newbury, neither prosecutor nor witness appearing against him, he was discharged.”

“Dr. Stennett, his son Joseph, and the grandson Samuel were all Nonconformist ministers, and all Sabbatarians — observers of the seventh-day Sabbath. Joseph Stennett was the author of the much-used hymn,

“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon the Savior’s brow.”

He also wrote the hymn found in many collections,

“Another six days’ work is done,
Another Sabbath is begun;
Return, my soul, enjoy thy rest,
Improve the day that God has blessed.”

— Spicer, *Our Day in Prophecy and Providence*, pp.

Evil Intent Turned to Good

“Nicolas Thoroughgood, a scholar of Cambridge, had been a merchant and a traveler. Becoming a minister, he went out of the state church with the two thousand other nonconforming ministers, and endured privation with them. “In his diary,” says Calamy, “he recorded a variety of remarkable providences in the course of his life, of which he takes notice with great thankfulness.” Here is an account of one of these deliverances:

“At one time, while he was at Monkton, reproving the sin of swearing, one of his hearers, sensible of his guilt, and thinking he was the person particularly intended, resolved to kill him, and in order to do it, hid himself behind a hedge which he knew Mr. Thoroughgood would ride by when he went to preach his weekly lecture.

“When Mr. Thoroughgood came to the place, he offered [endeavored] to shoot him, but his piece failed, and only flashed in the pan. The next week he lay in the same place and with the same intent. When Mr. Thoroughgood was come up, the wretch offered to fire again, but the piece would not go off. Upon this, his conscience accusing him for such a wickedness, he went after him, and falling down on his knees, with tears in his eyes, related the whole to him, and begged his pardon. This providence was the means of his conversion; and he became from that time a serious, good man.” — *Nonconformists’ Memorial*, by Calamy, Vol. II, p. 76, in Spicer, *Our Day in Prophecy and Providence*, pp. 441, 442.

A History of the True Church Relief in Time of Extremity

“Another deliverance of these times is thus narrated in an old volume, *Life of Oliver Heywood*, by J. Fawcett. We read:

“The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B. D., in a time of great persecution, was ejected from Coley Chapel, near Halifax, in Yorkshire. In 1664 a writ came out for apprehending him as an excommunicated person; but he was not taken. He acted with prudence and caution, in order to avoid a long imprisonment, keeping himself private; and it pleased God to protect him from the search of his pursuers. In one of those seasons, being deprived of his income, his family were in great straits. Their little stock of money was quite exhausted, and family provisions were entirely consumed.

“Martha, their faithful servant, who would not desert her master and mistress in their distress, still abode with them but could lend no more assistance from her little savings. Mr. Heywood still trusted that God would provide; and when he had nothing but the divine promise to live upon, he said,

“When cruse and barrel both are dry,
We still will trust in God most high.’

“When the children began to be impatient, Mr. Heywood called his servant, and said to her: ‘Martha, take a basket and go to Halifax. Call upon Mr. N—, the shopkeeper in Northgate, and tell him I desire him to lend me five shillings. If he will be kind enough to do it, buy us some cheese, some bread, and such other little things as you know we want. Be as expeditious as you can in returning, for the poor children begin to be fretful for want of something to eat. The Lord give you good speed. In the meantime, we will offer up our requests to Him who feeds the young ravens when they cry, and who

knows what we have need of before we ask Him.’

“Martha went; but when she came to the house, her heart failed her, and she passed by the door again and again without going in to tell her errand. Mr. N—, standing at the shop door, called her to him, and asked, ‘Are you not Mr. Heywood’s servant?’ When she told him she was, he said to her, ‘I am glad to see you, as some friends have given me five guineas (about 25 dollars) for your master, and I was just thinking how I could send it.’ Martha burst into tears, and told him her errand. Mr. N— was much affected with the story, and bade her come to him if the like necessity should return.

“She made haste to procure the necessary provisions, and with a heart lightened of its burden, ran home to tell the success of her journey. When she knocked at her master’s door, which now must be kept locked for fear of constables and bailiffs, it was presently opened. Upon her entering the house, the children eagerly examined the basket, the patient mother wiped her eyes, and the father, hearing the servant’s narrative, smiled and said, ‘The Lord hath not forgotten to be gracious. His word is true from the beginning, “They that seek the Lord shall not want any good.”’— Psalm 34:10.

“Fawcett’s *“Life”* tells further how Heywood was forced to leave home by pressure of persecution. He let his horse go its own way, not knowing where he should go. After travelling for hours in winter cold, the horse turned aside from, the main road, and went into the yard of a farmhouse, where Heywood asked food for his horse and shelter by the fire for himself, saying that he had no money to pay for entertainment. He was kindly received, and when the people learned he was from Halifax, they cautiously asked if he knew one Oliver Heywood there. It then appeared that his horse had led him to the home of earnest Nonconformist believers, who rejoiced to arrange

A History of the True Church

a meeting of friends, who later helped the minister on his way.” — Spicer, *Our Day in Prophecy and Providence*, pp. 442, 443.

The Church of God in Italy

Before tracing the true church in its migration from the old world to the shores of America, we shall first give an account of these saints of God in different countries where they were driven into the mountains and wildernesses to escape the persecuting power of Rome.

The following quotations from reliable historians will furnish the reader with ample evidence of the existence of the true church with the true faith in Italy, the home of the harlot.

Benedict in his *General History of the Baptists* says of the Waldenses:

“We have already observed from Claudius Seyssel, the popish archbishop, that one Leo was charged with originating the Waldensian heresy in the valleys, in the days of Constantine the Great. When those severe measures emanated from the Emperor Honorius against re-baptizers, the Baptists left the seat of opulence and power, and sought retreats in the country, and in the valleys of Piedmont (Italy) which last place in particular, became their retreat from imperial oppression.” — p. 23

“Dean Waddington *Church History*, chap. 22, sec. 1., bears testimony as follows:

“Rainer Sacho, a Dominican, says of the Waldenses: ‘There is no sect so dangerous as Leonists, for three reasons: first, it is the most ancient; some say it is as old as Sylvester, others, as the apostles themselves. Secondly, it is very generally disseminated; there is no country where it has not gained some footing. Third, while other sects are profane and blasphemous, this [sect] retains the

utmost show of piety; they live justly before men, and believe nothing concerning God which is not good.”

“This same writer, *Sacho*, admits that they flourished at least five hundred years before the time of Peter Waldo. Their great antiquity is also allowed by *Gretzer*, a Jesuit, who wrote against them. *Crantz*, in his *History of the United Brethren*, speaks of this class of Christians in the following words:

“These ancient Christians date their origin from the beginning of the fourth century, when one Leo, at the great revolution in religion under Constantine the Great, opposed the innovations of Sylvester, Bishop of Rome. Nay. Rieger goes further still, taking them for the remains of the people of the valleys, who when the Apostle Paul, as is said, made a journey over the Alps into Spain, were converted to Christ.” — Lewis, *Sabbath and Sunday*, pp. 139, 140

Irenaeus, A.D. 178, says “There is no difference of faith or tradition in any of these countries.”

“The Reformers held that the Waldensian Church was formed about 120 A.D., from which date on, they passed down from father to son the teachings they received from the apostles. The Latin Bible, the Italic, was translated from the Greek not later than 157 A.D. —Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, p. 35.

“Thus when Christianity, emerging from the long persecutions of Pagan Rome, was raised to imperial favor by the Emperor Constantine (313 A.D.), the Italic Church in northern Italy — later the Waldenses — is seen standing in opposition to papal Rome.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, p. 35.

From E. Comb's work, found in "Guild Hall Library—London," we quote the following: "The Waldenses object to being called Waldenses." They say, "We are a little flock, falsely called Waldenses."

It has already been abundantly proven that the people called Waldenses were driven by Rome into the valleys of Piedmont, Italy. Other references will be shown also in this work that the name Waldenses was not endorsed by them as a church; but they held to the true Bible name.

"Here then," says Dr. Allix, "very truly, we have found a body of men in Italy, *before the year one thousand and twenty-six*, five hundred years before the Reformation, who believed contrary to the opinions of the church of Rome, and who highly condemned their errors. Atto, bishop of Verceulli, had complained of such people *eighty years before*, and so had others before him, and there is the highest reason to believe that they had always existed in Italy." — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 288.

Mosheim says:

"In Lombardy, which was the principal residence of the Italian heretics, there sprung up a singular sect, known by the denomination of Passaginians, and also by that of the circumcised. Like the other sects already mentioned, they had the utmost aversion to the dominion and discipline of the church of Rome; but they were at the same time distinguished by two religious tenets which were peculiar to themselves. The first was a notion that the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offering of sacrifices, was obligatory upon Christians; in consequence of which they circumcised their followers, abstained from those meats, the use of

which was prohibited under the Mosaic economy, and celebrated the Jewish Sabbath. The second tenet that distinguished this sect was advanced in opposition to the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature; for the Pasaginians maintained that Christ was no more than the first and purest creature of God; nor will their adopting this opinion seem so surprising, if we consider the prodigious number of Arians that were scattered throughout Italy, long before this period of time.” — *Eccl. Hist.*, Maclaine trans, 1825 Ed. Cent. 12, part 2, chap. 5, sec. 14, pp. 127, 128.

That the Cathari did retain and observe the ancient Sabbath, is certified by Romish adversaries. Dr. Allix quotes a Roman Catholic author of the twelfth century, concerning three sorts of heretics — the Cathari, the Passaginians, and the Arnoldistae. Allix says this Romish writer “pretends to discover the doctrines of the Cathari”:⁵

“He lays it down also as one of their opinions, “that the Law of Moses is to be kept according to the letter, and that the keeping of the Sabbath, Circumcision, and other legal observances, ought to take place. They hold also that Christ the Son of God, is not equal with the Father, and that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, these three Persons are not one God and one substance; and as a surplus, to these their errors, they judge and condemn all the doctors of the Church, and universally the whole Roman church. Now since they endeavour to defend this their error, by testimonies drawn from the New

⁵ [CHCoG – Like Mosheim above, these anti-Waldenses authors accuse them of requiring physical circumcision and having a Jehovah’s Witness view of Jeshua. As they were scripturalists, it is improbable that they practised physical circumcision, and their view of Jeshua would likely be that presented in our article [Jeshua, Son of God or Part of a Trinity?](https://chcpublications.net) at <https://chcpublications.net>.]

A History of the True Church

Testament and prophets, I shall, with assistance of the grace of Christ, stop their mouths, as David did Goliath's, with their own sword." — *Eccl. Hist. Of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, p. 169.

"The Paterines were decent in their deportment, modest in their dress and discourse, and their morals irreproachable. In their conversation there was no levity, no scurrility, no detraction, no falsehood, no swearing. Their dress was neither fine nor mean. They were chaste and temperate, never frequenting taverns, or places of public amusement. They were not given to anger and other violent passions. They were not eager to accumulate wealth, but content with the necessaries of life. They avoided commerce, because they thought it would expose them to the temptation of collusion, falsehood, and oaths, choosing rather to live by labour or useful trades. They were always employed in spare hours either in giving or receiving instruction. Their bishops and officers were mechanics, weavers, shoemakers, and others who maintained themselves by their industry." — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, pp. 288,289.

"Much has been written on the etymology of the word PATERINE; but as the Italians themselves are not agreed on the derivation, it is not likely foreigners should be able to determine it. In Milan, where it was first used, it answered to the English words vulgar, illiterate, low-bred; and these people were so-called because they were chiefly of the lower order of men; mechanics, artificers, manufacturers, and others, who lived by their honest labor. GAZARI is a corruption of *Cathari*, Puritans; and it is remarkable that in the examination of these people, they are not taxed with any immoralities, but were condemned for speculations, or rather for virtuous rules

of action, which all in power accounted heresies. They said a Christian church ought to consist of only good people; a church had no power to frame any constitutions; it was not right to take oaths; it was not lawful to kill mankind; a man ought not to be delivered up to officers of justice to be converted; the benefits of society belonged alike to all members of it; faith without works could not save a man; the church ought not to persecute any, even the wicked:—the law of Moses was no rule to Christians;⁶ there was no need of priests, especially of wicked ones; the sacraments, and orders, and ceremonies of the church of Rome were futile, expensive, oppressive, and wicked; with many more such positions, all inimical to the hierarchy.” — *Idem*, p. 287.

“A powerful chain of churches, few in number compared with the manifold congregations of an apostate Christianity, but enriched with the eternal conviction of truth and with able scholars, stretched from Palestine to Scotland And when the Greek East for one thousand years was completely shut off from the Latin West, the noble Waldenses in northern Italy still possessed in Latin the Received Text.” — Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 41, 42.

“The despotism of Antichrist was then (about 787 A.D.), so far from being universal, that it was not owned throughout Italy itself. In some parts of that country, as well as in England and France, the purity of Christian worship was still maintained.” — Townsend’s *Abridged Milner’s*, p. 361.

⁶ [CHCoG - This statement contrasts utterly with the following, quoted on p. 165 of this book: “that the observance of the law of Moses, in everything except the offering of sacrifices, was obligatory upon Christians.” It is clear that the Waldenses did not live lawless lives, nor reject God’s Instructions.]

The charge of circumcision of Gentile adherents was made by the enemies of the true church—the Romanists, and is not well sustained. Even if it were true, they were not Judaists, but, as even their enemies admit, were most blameless and worthy Christians. Concerning this charge, Benedict says:

“The account of their practising circumcision is undoubtedly a slanderous story forged by their enemies, and probably arose in this way: Because they observed the Seventh day, they were called, by the way of derision, Jews, as the Sabbatarians are frequently at this day; and if they were Jews, it followed of course, that they either did or ought to circumcise their followers. This was probably the reasoning of their enemies; but that they actually practised the bloody rite is altogether improbable.” — *Hist. Baptist Denom.*, Ed. 1813, Vol. 2, p. 414.

The Church of God in Armenia

Many of the persecuted brethren of the early Churches of God in Palestine and Syria fled to the north, entering the valleys of Armenia, and have ever since been the objects of cruel persecution, by the Roman Catholic church, and later by the Mohammedan Turks.

The following history will suffice to show their existence, and how they held to the true faith, observing the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus:

Since the time of Xavier, the East Indies have fallen under British rule. A distinguished clergyman of the church of England, some years since visited the British Empire in India, for the purpose of acquainting himself with these churches.

He gave the following deeply interesting sketch of these ancient Christians, and in it particularly marks their Sabbatarian character:

“The history of the Armenian church is very

interesting. Of all the Christians in Central Asia, they have preserved themselves most free from Mahometan and papal corruptions. The pope assailed them for a time with great violence, but with little effect. The churches in lesser Armenia, indeed, consented to a union, which did not long continue; but those in Persian Armenia maintained their independence; and they retain their ancient Scriptures, doctrines, and worship, to this day. 'It is marvellous,' says an intelligent traveller who was much among them, 'how the Armenian Christians have preserved their faith, equally against the vexatious oppression of the Mahometans, their sovereigns, and against the persuasions of the Romish church, which for more than two centuries has endeavoured, by missionaries, priests, and monks, to attach them to their communion. It is impossible to describe the artifices and expenses of the court of Rome to effect this object, but all in vain.'

"The Bible was translated into the Armenian language in the fifth century, under very auspicious circumstances, the history of which has come down to us. It has been allowed by competent judges of the language, to be a most faithful translation. La Cruze calls it the 'Queen of Versions.' This Bible has ever remained in the possession of the Armenian people; and many illustrious instances of genuine and enlightened piety occur in their history The Armenians in Hindoostan are our own subjects. They acknowledge our government in India, as they do that of the Sophi in Persia; and they are entitled to our regard. They have preserved the Bible in its purity; and their doctrines are, as far as the author knows, the doctrines of the Bible. Besides, they maintain the solemn observance of Christian worship throughout our empire, on the seventh day, and they have as many spires pointing to heaven among the Hindoos as we ourselves. Are such a

A History of the True Church

people, then, entitled to no acknowledgement on our part, as fellow Christians? Are they forever to be ranked by us with Jews, Mahometans, and Hindoos?" — Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, pp. 159, 160, and Lewis, *History of Sabbath & Sunday*.

Of the Syrians, or Surians, as the author variously spells the name, who from their relation appear identical with the Armenians, the historian says, "They keep Saturday holy and do not esteem the Saturday fast lawful, but on Easter even they have solemn services, while on Saturday eat flesh and feast it bravely like the Jews." (Purchas, His *Pilgrimmes*, part 3, chap. 16, sec. 15, p. 1269, London, 1625.) The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 8, p. 595, eighth edition, speaks of Purchas as "an Englishman admirably skilled in language and human and divine arts, a very great philosopher, historian, and theologian."

"It was at Antioch, capital of Syria, that the believers were first called Christians. And as time rolled on, the Syrian speaking Christians could be numbered by the thousands. It is generally admitted, that the Bible was translated from the original languages into Syrian about 150 A.D.⁷ This version is known as the Peshitto (the correct or simple). This Bible even today generally follows the Received Text." — Wilkinson's *O. A. B. V.*, p. 25.

The Church in the British Isles

"Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, A.D. 325-340, . . . says, "Some passed over the ocean to those which are called the British Isles."

⁷ [CHCoG: There are many today, ourselves included, who believe the New Covenant was originally written in Aramaic, and then translated into Greek, Latin, etc.]

“Chrysostom, A.D. 398, mentions “The Britannic Isles” as having felt the power of the Word, and says, “To whatever quarter you turn — to the Indians or Moors or Britons, even to the remotest bounds of the West, you will find this doctrine.”

“Clement of Rome, A.D. 96, says, “St. Paul preached in the East and West, leaving behind him an illustrious record of his faith, having taught the whole world righteousness, and having traveled even to the utmost bounds of the West.”

“Jerome, A.D. 392, says, “St. Paul, having been in Spain, went from one ocean to another. . . His diligence in preaching extended as far as the earth itself. . . After his imprisonment he preached in the western parts.”

“Venantius Fortunatus, A.D. 560, says, “St. Paul passed over the ocean to the Island of Britain, and to Thule (Ireland?), the extremity of the earth.” — ASTS, *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, Vol. I., p. 23

“Benedict (*Gen. Hist. Baptists*, p. 308), further says:—
“They now abounded; more than half of the nation became Lollards; yea, they covered all England. In 1389 they formed separate and distinct societies, agreeable to the scriptures (Rapin). In these churches all the brethren were equal, each could preach, baptize and break bread. They were united in opinion as one man (Fox), and were called *Bible-men*, since they allowed no office not enjoined in the Word of God (BP. Pecock). They held Berenger’s opinion on infant baptism, and would not take their children to church to be baptized. They called the rite the key to hell. Their numbers and decided hostility to the hierarchy aroused their adversaries to adopt severe measures; and in 1400, a law was passed, sentencing Lollards to be burnt to death. In Norfolk they abounded,

A History of the True Church

and there they suffered severely. . . . Still the Bible-men increased, and became dangerous to the church. It is said they amounted to *one hundred thousand*.”

“Henry VIII, while in conflict with the pope, relieved and encouraged the Lollards in his kingdom: and this led their persecuted brethren from all parts of Europe to flock to England in great numbers, to enjoy religious liberty, and to strengthen the cause of true religion. . . .

“Benedict (p. 308), says of Walter Lollard:— “He was in sentiment the same as Peter de Bruys, who was the founder of the Petrobrussians of France.” The Lollards were like the Petrobrussians, and these were Sabbath keepers. . . .

“Bishop White, in speaking of Sabbath-keeping as opposed to the practices of the church, says:— ‘It was thus condemned in the Nazarenes and in the Cerinthians, in the Ebionites and in the Hysistarii. The ancient Synod of Laodicea made a decree against it; also Gregory the Great affirmed it was Judaical. In St. Bernard’s time it was condemned in the Petrobrussians. The same hath then and ever since been condemned as Judaish and heretical.’” (Treatise on the Sabbath, p. 8) — *Idem*, pp. 33-35.

“We believe the Sabbath was observed here [in Ireland] because:

“1. Ussher says that the church in this island was established ‘*statim post passionem Christi*’ — soon after the passion of Christ; and therefore before Sunday was thought of.

“2. “The constant enmity between Ireland and ancient Rome prevented any kind of friendly intercourse. This doctrine [of Christ] came not immediately from thence here, but from the churches of Asia.” (O’Halloran’s *Hist. of Ireland*, p. 146)

“3. O’Halloran further says in this connection (p. 172), ‘In the present reign [of Dearnod, A.D. 528], and for a century preceding it, Christianity was in the most flourishing condition in Ireland. They had, as we have seen, received it from the Asiatics. These last, in many instances, adhered more closely to the Jewish customs than the Roman Christians did.’

“4. There is ample evidence that St. Patrick, “The Apostle of Ireland,” never had any connection whatever with Rome, and that he was a Sabbath-keeper. The establishment of the Sabbath-keeping community on the island of Iona, under the headship of St. Columba, was manifestly the result of Patrick’s preaching. Like begets like.

“5. Celtic Ireland was neither papal nor inclined to submit to the papacy, until Henry II riveted the Roman Yoke upon them, *for* in A.D. 1155 Pope Adrian IV gave Ireland to King Henry to bring into the Romish fold.” (Froude’s *English in Ireland*, p. 16; O’Halloran’s *Hist. of Ireland*, p. xxi).

“A small remnant of Sabbath-keepers has persisted in Ireland unto this time; a church or society being found there as late as 1840.” — ASTS, *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, 1910 Ed., p. 27.

“The faith and discipline of the Scottish churches in Ireland, were the same with the British churches, and their friendship and communion reciprocal. The ordinances of the gospel in both islands, at this time, were administered in their primitive mode. The venerable Bede says, that the supremacy of Rome was unknown to the ancient Irish. The worship of saints and images was held in abhorrence, and no ceremonies used which were not strictly warranted by Scripture. All descriptions of people were not only allowed but desired to consult the

A History of the True Church

sacred writings as their only rule of conduct.

“In short, from what we have stated, and the evidence produced by the learned archbishop Ussher, quoted by William Hamilton, ‘we have the strongest reasons to conclude that these islands enjoyed the blessings of a pure enlightened piety, such as our Savior himself taught, unembarrassed by any of the idle tenets of the Romish Church.’” — *History of the Baptists*, p. 24.

“In the thirteenth century the Waldenses had spread abroad through twenty-two countries of Europe, Britain being one.” — Benedict, p. 311.

“Mr. George Molyneaux, a resident of Milford Haven, Wales, says, ‘All the Christian Church were seventh-day observers during the early centuries. Sunday is from Rome and was but slowly pushed into the British Church.’” — *Sev. Day Bap. in Europe and Amer.*, 1910 Ed., p. 32.

“Dr. Samuel Kohn, chief Rabbi of Budapest, Hungary, in a recent work (*Sabbatarians in Transylvania*, 1894, pp. 8, 9), says, “In Bohemia Sabbatarians sprung up as early as 1530. Such Sabbatarians, or similar sects, we meet about 1545 among the Quakers in England. Several leaders and preachers of the Puritans have re-transferred the rest day from Sunday to Saturday; and the Christian Jews who arose in England and partly emigrated to Germany, and settled near Heidelberg, believed, indeed, in Jesus, but they also celebrated the Sabbath and regarded the Jewish laws in reference to meats and drinks.’” — *Idem*, p. 38.

Chambers’ Cyclopaedia states that in England “many conscientious and independent thinkers in the reign of Elizabeth

(1558-1603) advocated the seventh-day.”— In the book entitled *History and Antiquity of Dissenting Churches*, page 37, Queen Elizabeth mentions the “Church of God.” Author W. Wilson, volume 4, catalogue, D. 9, 8, Library, London.

Mill Yard Church of London

“1. *Origin.* Some have supposed that this church owes its origin to the labors of John James, who was martyred Oct. 19, 1661. President Daland goes back as far as about 1580. In 1617 (or 1616) John Trask came to London from Salisbury and held revival meetings. One of his disciples, named Hamlet Jackson, was the means of bringing Trask and many, if not all, of his congregation to the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath in about 1617, and Elder William M. Jones says that this Traskite congregation was the origin of the Mill Yard Church. All the records of this church, prior to 1673, were destroyed in the fire of 1790; the “Old Church Book,” dating from 1673 to 1840, refers to an older record. The ‘New Church Book’ dates from 1840 to the present time.

“2. *Place of worship.* From the beginning until 1654 they worshipped “near Whitechapel;” in 1661 their meeting place was in “Bull Stake Alley,” and in 1680 they were at East Smithfield — for from here they addressed a letter to the Newport (R.I.) Church, dated East Smithfield, London, Dec. 21, 1680. From 1691 to 1885 they worshipped in Mill Yard Goodman’s Fields, County of Middlesex, a part of London, now in the heart of the Metropolis. Their chapel here was burned in 1790, and in September of the same year the first stone of a new edifice was laid by John, Joseph and William Slater, the only trustees for some years.

“After being dispossessed of their Mill Yard property in 1885, they met for worship in the Commercial Street

A History of the True Church

Baptist Church until 1892, and then in the Welsh Baptist Church in Eldon Street, where once worshipped a Calvinistic Seventh-day Baptist Church, which became extinct about 1840. For some time since 1900, the congregation assembled in private houses; and to accommodate the widely scattered flock, two separate meetings were held — one at the residence of Lt. Col. Thomas W. Richardson, and the other either at the house of the Church Secretary, or at the home of the deacon. On the 4th of April, 1903, this Church began to hold services in St. Thomas' Hall, Gillespie Road, Highbury Vale.” — *Sev. Day Bap. in Europe and Amer.*, pp. 39, 40.

We are indebted for the following to the labor and courtesy of Secretary George Vane of the Mill Yard church of London, who did considerable research work for us the year 1926 in the libraries of London in the matter of church history. He wrote us under date of May 21, 1926, as follows, “I find that the Pinner's Hall Sabbatarian church was established at Devonshire Square E. C., on March 1, 1574, and 1830 came to Mill Yard church to hold their services.”

The Pinner's Hall Sabbatarian church mentioned above was organized by Francis Banefield, who was a noted author and a gifted Hebrew scholar. He is the author of a book entitled *Shem Acher*, and on page 28 he mentions “The Church of God,” referring to his congregation. He adds further that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of the church. On page 27 of this valuable work, the author mentions the fact of there being two other Sabbatarian churches in London at that time. The Mill Yard church, which was then meeting in Bell Alley, is spoken of as carrying on a public discussion on the Sabbath question between W. Jeremiah, Brother Lillam, Dr. P. Chamberlain, and W. Coppinger. He does not mention the location of other congregations, but it is thought likely he refers to one in Swan Alley.

There is but one copy of this book on record, and it is found in the British Museum Library, London.

In this same work on page 28, and the eighth line from the top,

the “Church of God” is mentioned. On page 29 he says, “The final cause, or the great end, or ends, for which Jehovah has formed his church.” Again, on pages 58 to 60, he speaks of the relationship of the “Church of God” to the Sabbath. He uses the terms of Jehovah and Elohim when speaking of the Old Testament church, and he brings forth evidence to show that the Church of God of that day (1677), like the Sabbath, is a continuation of the Church of Jehovah in the Old Testament.

He says on page 59, “The Churches of Elohim, had in all ages such as were gifted, and called to office to preach the word.” He furthermore says that “Melchisedec was a priest in the church of Elohim,” or the Church of God. — British Museum Library, London, England.

Space forbids inserting evidence by this able and talented author that the “Church of God” functioning in the year 1677 was the same church organized by Moses, and spoken of in Acts, seventh chapter, as “The church in the wilderness.” It was his sincere belief, that there had never been a time when the “Church of God” was not in existence, and that the Sabbath with other kindred truths, cherished by the church then, were also believed and defended as truth in every period.

It was the pleasure of one of the authors of this book to spend some months during 1931 and 1932 with the Mill Yard church in London, and we were caused to rejoice, upon finding them advocating the same doctrine on the great essentials, in perfect harmony with the Church of God in America, and throughout the world. Although having corresponded with several of the members for a number of years, we were not sure just how these brethren believed on many points of faith until our visit there. How wonderful that the dear Lord had kept the light of his glorious gospel shining brightly from this ancient lighthouse, and that amidst the darkness and sin of this present time, she is still radiating the same gracious truth, showing sinners the way of eternal life, though now connected with the Seventh Day Baptists in America.

We will now offer some more historical extracts to further

confirm the truth of the existence of the Church of God, by both name and doctrine, through the period we are now considering.

In *Confession of Faith, and Other Public Documents*, edited by E. B. Underbill, he says, "The humble petition, etc., of several Churches of God in London, commonly though falsely called 'Anabaptists.'" "This word was written the year 1649." — Public Library, London.

The word "Anti-baptist" was a term used in derision by the enemies of the truth, as the previous historical notation proves, as well as much other proof that could be produced. The Church of God during the wilderness experience, and after the days of the Reformation, was teaching against the common substitute forms of baptism. Consequently, all converts to the truth from the Catholic church were re-baptized; that is, they were in reality baptized or immersed. The church was therefore known to be opposed to the Roman mode of baptism universally practised in that day, hence called "Antibaptists." The word "anti" means against; thus they were called by their enemies "Anti-baptists," and later "Anabaptists."

The Anabaptists in London were called "The Churches of God," according to E. B. Underbill, writing in 1649, and the following extracts from reliable sources proved further that these churches of God, observed the Sabbath, as well as held to the universal reign of Christ on the earth during the millennium.

Many, if not all, of the Anabaptists observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Dr. Francis White (*Treatise of the Sabbath Day*, p. 132) says: "They who maintain the Saturday Sabbath to be in force, comply with the Anabaptists."

Russen (*On Anabaptists*, London, 1703, p. 79), speaking of heresies, says: "Under this head I could conclude some of them under those of Anabaptists, who have been inclined to this personal reign of Christ, and have embraced the seventh day Sabbath."

James Ockford, whose book on the Sabbath was "sharply confuted with fire," in 1642, was called an Anabaptist.

A History of the True Church The Work of a Martyr

179

In *Confession of Faith*, by Vavasor Powell, 1662, London, England, he writes, “Much less then should any other person usurp this authority over the church and people of God.” — Page 40.

On page 87, he says, “I have considerations of the great sufferings of the Church of God of old, and the ground of their comfort which is Christ. From Revelation 12, I was much refreshed to consider that the church when she went into the wilderness was by the wings that God gave her.”— This faithful brother and writer died in prison for the true faith, and while in this confinement wrote a book called *The Bird in the Cage Chirping*, evidently referring to himself. He addressed this book to “The Churches of God, and Scattered Saints Throughout All Wales.”

This faithful martyr was esteemed so highly among many faithful followers of the Lord, that someone graciously wrote a book titled *Life and Death of Vavasor Powell*, published anonymously in 1671. The following extracts, relating some of his experiences in the gospel, will be interesting:

“About the year 1647, the island of Anglesey in north Wales, being then unreduced, the Parliament forces went to reduce it, and their chief officers sent for me to preach unto that brigade of soldiers, and as I marched with them into the place, either the night immediately before or the night before that, it was revealed into me in my sleep that I should be wounded, and two of my fingers cut (and the very fingers were pointed out), which accordingly came to pass; yet when I was in extreme danger between several enemies who fell upon me, receiving that and some other wounds, there being no likelihood to escape, I heard a voice, as I apprehended, speaking audibly to me, ‘I have chosen thee to preach the gospel,’ to which I answered, ‘O Lord, then bring me off’; and immediately God guided my horse (though he was very wild and not well commanded) to go backward out of the barricade

A History of the True Church

that I had entered at, and so I was indeed miraculously preserved.”

“Thousands of miles Mr. Powell journeyed over mountains and through valleys, preaching by day and night. He says:

“One time, coming from preaching, I lost my way, and being out till it was far in the night in a wood or forest, among lakes, briars and thorns, I went up and down until I was quite weary. But by looking up to the Lord, I was presently directed into my way.

“The like experience I had another time, when another preacher and myself had lost our way in a very dark night, and had tired ourselves in searching to and fro to no purpose. At last calling to mind how God had formerly heard in that case where I sought unto Him, we called upon the Lord, who immediately pointed out our way, and it seemed as clear to us as if it had been daylight.” — Spicer, *Our Day Prophecy Providence*, p. 444.

The name “Church of God,” as applied to the true followers of Christ, is found in the Dorchester Antiquarian London Library.

In John Tombers’ *Dispute on Baptism*, London, pages 12, 13, a complaint is entered on certain people for celebrating the Lord’s Supper in the morning, when it is said it should be celebrated in the evening. The name “Church of God” is mentioned twice on these pages referring to people holding the Passover in the evening. — Public Library, London.

In *The Confession of Faith* of seven churches in London, first published in 1646 A.D., in the 13th article, page 31, concerning the mediatorship of Christ, it states, “This office to be mediator, that is to be prophet, priest and king of the ‘Church of God’ is so proper to Christ that neither in whole, or in any part thereof, can it be transferred to any other.” — I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:14; Acts 4:12.

On page 15, in the preface to the first edition, they term

themselves, “The poor despised churches of God in London.” Page 293 also mentions “The Churches of God sanctified in Christ Jesus.”

Summary

From the foregoing historical facts from these ancient works we have discovered:

1st. That John Trask and John James were the founders of the Mill Yard Church, London, 1616 to 1661.

2nd. That in 1546 there were seven congregations in London which called themselves collectively “The poor despised ‘Churches of God.’”

3rd. That one hundred and fifteen years later (1661), John James, the founder of one of the Sabbath-keeping churches in London, died a martyr’s death for the precious truth, showing the severity of the persecution against these despised people of God.

4th. That Francis Banefield, writing sixteen years later (1677), in the book of which he is author, *Shem Acher*, speaks of the church of which he is pastor, calling it the Church of God, and says there were then two other Sabbath-keeping churches in London.

5th. That Francis Banefield included the Mill Yard church with two other churches, by mentioning a public debate it was then carrying on in defence of the Sabbath, against opposers to this truth.

6th. That at least three of the seven “poor despised Churches of God” in London in 1646 had survived the persecutions which eventually cost the death of John James, and others, and were functioning in the year 1677. Also that Francis Banefield’s church moved to the Mill Yard church to hold their services the year 1830.

7th. That Francis Banefield is author of a book (1677), in which he brings out evidence to show “The Church of God” of that day, like the Sabbath, is a continuation of the “Church of God” of the Old Testament, which is exactly what this work has done except that it brings the church down to 1935.

It will not be thought strange that the churches of God in London were reduced from seven congregations down to three from 1646 to

1677, when severe persecutions were being carried on against the Sabbath-keepers of England during this period, and in America there was an open door offered to the Church of God. "The earth helped the woman," as John the Revelator expressed it in Revelation 12:16. It was to this country the Pilgrims, the Puritans, and the Quakers came, the first ones landing at Plymouth the year 1620, and many others followed. It was quite natural that churches in England at this time would come to America, the only place in the world where freedom of religion was offered to the persecuted ones.— In the next chapter we shall trace the Church of God from England and Europe to America, and it will be shown that among the Pilgrim fathers, who risked their lives on the Mayflower, and landed at Plymouth 1620, were Sabbath-keepers, observing the seventh day of the week, who baptized by immersion, and called themselves the "Church of God."

The Earth Helped the Woman

It has already been mentioned that the beloved Apostle John beheld the true church as a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. — Revelation 12:1, 2.

In Revelation 19:7, it says, "Let us be glad and rejoice . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." The lamb spoken of here is Jesus (John 1:29), and his wife is the church. In II Corinthians 11:1, 2, we read, "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Here we have the church again compared to a woman, and it will be remembered that in Matthew, twenty-fifth chapter, Jesus gives a parable in which he is spoken of as the bridegroom coming to meet the bride when the marriage takes place. Also, in Revelation, seventeenth chapter, the apostate church is represented by a fallen woman, said to be the "mother of harlots."

There is also introduced in Revelation, twelfth chapter, a beast called the dragon, which stands before the woman endeavoring to

destroy the child as soon as it is born, which represents pagan Rome and the children in Bethlehem under two years of age, murdered in Herod's effort to kill Christ. — Matthew 2:16.

A beast in Bible prophecy always symbolizes an earthly kingdom so when this beast made war with the woman, driving her into the wilderness, it was most remarkably fulfilled during the fifth century, as this work has clearly shown, when the church was driven to the mountainous districts of Europe by the Roman beast government, and compelled to remain in this state of exile until the prophetic period was fulfilled. She was to remain in the wilderness for 1260 years — Revelation 12:6, 14.

As the children of Israel in Egyptian servitude were sorely treated under the bondage of Pharaoh, so was the church in the wilderness oppressed and persecuted. Driven from one country to another, under the heavy yoke of Antichrist she found no permanent abiding place. But, following this period of persecution, under the cruel despotism of Roman kings and ecclesiastical tyrants, the seer of Patmos declared in vision a time when the earth would help the woman (Revelation 12:16). The "New World," as America was called, had been discovered by Christopher Columbus at the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and, slowly but surely, there was being prepared a haven of refuge here for the persecuted churches of Europe. It was many years after the beginning of the Reformation when the most violent persecutions against the church were raging in Europe. It was a final and most desperate effort by the beast in its bleeding and wounded state to crush its assailant, and conquer its foe, but all in vain. The soil of Europe being drenched in the blood of the martyrs, the true servants of God finding new enemies among those supposed to be their friends, and amidst the darkest period, the church found refuge across the waters toward the setting of the sun.

To America the Pilgrims came, trusting only in the God whom they served for protection and care. They brought with them that true faith and pure doctrine, cherished in the hearts of their forefathers, and carried by them amid blood and tears and patient suffering, from the land Palestine through Asia and Europe, wherever the divine

hand of destiny would point them to a land of safety, until at last that prophetic time period was about to be reached when “the earth helped the woman.” Other persecuted ones came, establishing the truth, and churches of God consequently sprang up in this land of liberty wherever the Lord chose to place His name.

The Seven Church Periods

The church had at this time passed through five periods, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis, and but two remained ahead. In Revelation, chapter one, we find these seven brought to view, the name as well as the message to each one, corresponding to the seven periods of the Gospel Dispensation, and a timely message of admonition given each church or epoch. The word “Ephesus” means desirable, or the first period; then “Smyrna,” signifying death; “Pergamos,” meaning high and exalted; “Thyatira,” sacrifice of that which is nearest and dearest; “Sardis,” that which is left; “Philadelphia,” brotherly love; and “Laodicea,” the judgment of the people.

The history of the early days of the church in America, from about 1620 to 1789 is covered by the latter part of the Sardis period. The word “Sardis” means that which is left, and the message as given, “Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy,” Revelation 3:4.

This verse shows how the true church would be reduced by persecution into a small remnant. The Church of God wandered from country to country, seeking that freedom of worship which the human heart craves, and had come at last to America, a scattered remnant. These humble servants established themselves in small congregations throughout the eastern states. The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock in the fall of 1620, who are mentioned on other pages of this work, and in the fall of 1638 the English became acquainted with the coast along Connecticut to the west, and on page 123 of Ridpath’s *History of the United States* we read as follows of

their settlement here:

“Here some men of Boston tarried over winter, built cabins, and founded New Haven, Connecticut. Thither in April came a Puritan colony from England lead by Theophelos Eaton and John Davenport. On the first Sabbath after their arrival they met for worship under an oak; and Davenport preached a touching sermon on the ‘Temptations in the Wilderness.’”

How remarkable it is that these people were understanding the prophecies of the church being in the wilderness, and on the Sabbath day having a discourse on the subject.— The historian goes on to relate, “In June 1639, the men of New Haven held a convention in a barn and adopted the Bible for their constitution. The government was called the House of Wisdom, of which Mr. Eaton, Mr. Davenport, and five others were the seven pillars.”

The church in Rhode Island was founded the year 1671, and Ephrata, Pennsylvania, May, 1725, with numerous other congregations throughout the eastern states as previously mentioned in this work. During these early colonial days congregations were at first isolated because of distance and a lack of means of travel with no roads between them. Thus being isolated from fellowship with one another, we find companies in one place called the Church of Christ, and the Church of God, while in other communities they were simply called “Sabbatarian Congregations,” but the belief was practically the same. They stood for the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, observing the true Sabbath, keeping the Lord’s Supper yearly on the 14th of the first month, with other tenets of faith in harmony with the true faith today.

Owing to the isolation of these scattered companies they were known by different names which evidently gives rise to the Scriptural statement relative to the Sardis period, “I know thy works, that thou hast a NAME,” Revelation 3:1. As the church entered the Pergamos period, or the wilderness experience, the Lord commends it for

holding fast to “My Name,” Revelation 2:13, and as they emerge from the wilderness, and the open door is placed before them in the Philadelphia period, the Lord says, “For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept MY WORD, and hast NOT denied MY NAME,” Revelation 3:7, 8. Thus we have found, as the evidence is disclosed elsewhere, that during the sojourn of the church in the wilderness she was known by the Father’s name, “The Church of God.”

Now we enter the Philadelphia period, or the sixth. The word “Philadelphia,” meaning brotherly love, we have come down to the time when religious liberty was granted to all people, regardless of faith, when they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. When the church in America had taken root, and was growing and flourishing, when the constitution of the United States had been drafted, granting freedom of religion, freedom of speech and of the press.

The city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had been founded where true commandment-keeping people had come and settled: where that most distinguished character, and staunch supporter of religious freedom, Benjamin Franklin, lived, and from where his influence as a true Sabbath-keeper emanated.

The Lord spoke of the Philadelphia period thus: “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name,” Revelation 3:7, 8.

This open door of religious liberty soon spread to others, and the Lord had said of this period, He would set before the church an open door which no man could shut. How true this has been, and every effort to hide the truth and restrain God’s people from giving it has failed.

The Philadelphia period evidently had for its beginning about the year 1789, for it was then that the constitution was drafted and ratified by eleven states, which placed that open door before the

church that no man, or set of men, have since been able to shut. It was the only official document in the world ratified by a national government, granting freedom of worship, freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

The name of Benjamin Franklin, a staunch Sabbath-keeper, who history says shone with a “peculiar luster,” was one of the brightest in this period of reconstruction. Many Sabbath-keeping churches dotted the east. They were of a sturdy type of individuals, whose recent ancestors had suffered death as martyrs. These faithful people were standing for faith and truth which were to them more precious than life itself, and for which many of their fathers and mothers had with joy given their lives.— The Lord says of this time, “Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied MY NAME.” That true name for God’s church, “The Church of God,” was loved and cherished in many hearts together with the same kindred truths that the same church loves and teaches today.

CHAPTER 21: SEVENTEEN TO EIGHTEEN HUNDRED A.D.

Immigration from Europe to America

We shall now consider the church in Pennsylvania especially. After William Penn had received his grant of land, including all of Pennsylvania, he visited Germany and other places in search of colonists. Because of persecutions in Europe many sought refuge in “the New World.”

Thirteen families were the first to immigrate, arriving at Germantown, in October, 1683. Another company arrived from Friesland in 1684. June 24th, 1694, another large company arrived, under the leadership of Kelpius. In 1719, twenty families arrived, settling in Germantown, near Philadelphia, but now a part of the latter city.

Numerous others came, and most of these people were Sabbath-keepers. The last to come were the Moravians in 1740, permanently settling where Bethlehem now stands. Thus the town was settled and named by zealous Sabbath-keeping people, known as Moravians nationally, but believing in and accepting the true name, "The Church of God."

The Church from the Wilderness

The prophecies have been frequently given in this work of how the Lord Jesus said the church was to go into the wilderness, remain there 1260 years, and then the earth would help the woman, or the church. Now we come to a band of forty men coming to this country under the leadership of Brother Kelpius, mentioned previously, and forming a society called the "Society of the Woman in the Wilderness."

These men left Germany during the summer of 1693, coming to Holland, London, and to Plymouth, where they spent the winter, then leaving on the actual voyage to America on April 25th, and reaching Philadelphia on June 23rd. After holding a solemn religious service they walked two by two, observing the city which embraced scarcely 500 houses, and there being no town hall, courthouse, or prison. They went to Germantown and found Brother Jacob Isaac Van Bebber, one of their countrymen, who had formerly lived on the borders of Holland.

Randolph says "Because of their persistent teaching that the millennium was at hand, holding that the Woman in the Wilderness mentioned in Revelation XII:14-17, prefigured the great deliverance of the Church of Christ, the Fraternity came to be called *The Woman in the Wilderness*, or *The Society of the Woman in the Wilderness*.—The German Seventh Day Baptists, by Corliss F. Randolph in *Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America*, 1910 Ed., pp. 949, 950.⁸

⁸ [CHCoG - There are two quite different editions of this work, both published in 1910. The archive.org Columbia University set is used here.]

He says further on page 951, "It is a fact conclusively attested, that as early as 1699 Kelpius was in communication with the churches of Rhode Island and Connecticut."

Randolph says further of the people in Pennsylvania, "When Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the *Unitas Fratrum*, or Moravian church in Germany, visited America in 1741, he was astonished to find the hold the Sabbatarian doctrine had upon the entire German populace of Pennsylvania." — *Idem* p. 1036.

Mr. Sachse gives assurance of the close affiliation between the Sabbath-keeping body known as "The Order from the Wilderness," with the Sabbatarian brethren of New England, and also with the Sabbatarians at Ephrata. Pa., "They established and maintained at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, a classical school for boys, which was patronized by the leading families of Philadelphia and Baltimore. There Latin was taught as the medium of polite correspondence." — *Idem*, p. 937.

It was the privilege of one of the authors of this work to visit the church at Ephrata, Pennsylvania, in 1928, where much was learned about the founders of this pioneer church of Sabbatarians in this country. Conrad Beissel, the founder, was an associate of Brother Kelpius, leader of the forty men landing at Philadelphia in 1694. When we visited the Ephrata church in 1928, we learned from leaders there that their doctrine was practically the same as that of the Church of God today, although this church has been isolated from other churches of the same belief for over two hundred years. There is a number of their German Sabbatarian churches of the same belief in the east affiliating together. They were glad to learn of the great activity of the Church of God in spreading the truth throughout the world, and of so many other companies in the east, as well as the west and north and south, spreading the message of the last days. Since then we have been more or less connected with them by their reading our literature and our ministers visiting their churches.

It is a fact familiar in the history of these Sabbatarians, as well as the history of our nation, that when the constitutional congress sought a man competent and skilled in languages, they chose Peter

Miller, pastor of this Ephrata Church, to translate the Declaration of Independence into seven languages. He was an honored man from the University of Heidelberg, a member of the American Philosophical Society, a personal friend of the Penns, and of Benjamin Franklin.

He was also personally acquainted with George Washington, and invited him to Ephrata, and to bring his soldiers, suffering from the frigid weather of that memorable winter at Valley Forge, when the fate of the colonists seemed hanging in the balance. We saw a graveyard at Ephrata where hundreds of the loyal soldiers lay at rest, the tombstone inscriptions identifying them as victims of the revolution who did not survive, after coming there wounded.

Peter Miller is the central figure of one of the most touching narratives of Revolutionary times, and his name is mentioned in many old schoolbooks of the nation. One of his bitterest enemies was caught sleeping on sentinel duty, the penalty of which was death. He was to be executed at a certain set time. Peter Miller traveled all night to reach the president, George Washington, in hope of saving his enemy. Washington, knowing Miller, expressed the thought of the condemned man being his good friend. Then Miller informed him that the condemned man was his bitterest enemy and incessant reviler, but that his Master taught him to pray for his enemies. So impressed was Washington that he took him by the hand, and with tears flowing down his cheeks, thanked him for his example of Christian forbearance and generosity, and granted him the request.

In the fall of 1744 Israel Eckerlin, Samuel Eckerlin, Alexander Mack and Peter Miller set out upon a pilgrimage to New England for the purpose of visiting the Sabbath-keeping communities there and those lying between in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The simple preparations being made, as the journey was on foot, a solemn love feast was made on Friday, Sept. 21, 1744. These services lasted far into the night, and even the hours between midnight and dawn were spent in prayer and supplication. On the morning Sabbath the Pilgrims were present at the service. After the close of the Sabbath they started on their journey, accompanied a

short distance by many of the brethren.

When fairly upon their way, they walked single file, silently and bareheaded, as was their custom. Meetings were first held at Nantmeal, in Chester County, the next at Coventry, thence across the Schuylkill to the German settlements along the way until they reached Germantown. Stops were made with Conrad Matthäi, Brother Seelig, and the Brother Mystics. After the brethren had visited the company at Pennepek they started on their long pilgrimage toward Rhode Island, but stopped over at Amwell, where converts to the truth had been baptized some six years before. After leaving there they went toward the ocean where the country was sparsely settled, and some nights the pilgrims spent the hours around their campfire in the woods to frighten away the wild beasts, and also to provide warmth as the nights were cold and frosty.

Their intention was to call at a place commonly called Barnegat. A company of Sabbatarians had emigrated here from Stonington, Conn., and Westerly, Rhode Island, a few years before, and a few others had joined them from Pennsylvania.

Sachse says, in his work, relative to this company,

“At the advent of our pilgrims, this company numbered but fifteen adult members, who, not withstanding the smallness of their number, met and signed a covenant shortly after their settlement, binding themselves to live and walk together as Christian people, though they had no church organization or pastor.

“The pilgrims were kindly received; meetings were arranged and held in their honour. At these gatherings. Rev. Peter Miller preached and admonished them to remain steadfast in their faith. This resulted in a church being organized, and William Davis, the elder, although in his eighty-first year, was elected pastor.” — *Idem*, pp. 1043-1045.

Among these early settlers of the region, now known as

Pennsylvania, were Christians known as Quakers. These people were of the Puritans from England, and among them we also find Sabbath-keepers, preserving the true faith.

This information corresponds with that recently published in a newspaper of California, that Benjamin Franklin, the famous Pennsylvania Quaker, was an observer of the seventh-day Sabbath. The quotation, as it appeared in the paper, reads as follows:

Benjamin Franklin's Cure For Hard Times

“Make a full statement of all you owe, and of all owing to you. As fast as you can collect, pay those you owe. Go to business diligently. Be industrious. Discard all pride. Lose no time. Waste no idle moments. Attend church. Attend prayer meeting. Always help the worthy poor. Pursue this course for seven years, and if you are not in comfortable circumstances. I will pay your debts.’

“We wonder how many of our readers are aware of the fact that Franklin kept the seventh day of the week, according to the commandment written by Jehovah God, on the tables of stone, with His own finger?

“God's people are going to see that table of stone some day.” — *Shoshoni Independent* (Calif.)

From his epitaph which he composed himself, we may understand that, like Job of old, Franklin believed in the resurrection. Job said, “If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee.” . . . “And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” — Job 14:14; 19:26.

Franklin said in his epitaph,

“The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer (like the cover of an old book), lies here, food for worms. But the work shall not be lost, for it will (as he believed) appear

once more in a new and more elegant edition, revised and corrected by the Author.” — *New Standard Encyclopedia*.

It will be noted from the historical proofs given that the church which had been established at Jerusalem, carried across Asia Minor, preserved in the wilderness of the Waldensian mountains, and then scattered throughout Europe prior to the Reformation, at last found its way to its final resting place in the wilderness of the American continent, and here revived the ancient truths preserved from generation to generation throughout its long pilgrimage from the Holy Land.

The Church in America

All familiar with the early history of the United States remember that the Puritans, coming here in the Mayflower, landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620. They had fled from persecutions in England, coming to what was known as “the new world,” where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. When they had gathered in their bountiful harvest, a day was set apart in which to render thanks to Almighty God, for having thus blessed them in provision for the coming winter. This day has ever since been celebrated in the United States as Thanksgiving.

The Pilgrims were the same as the Puritans, Nonconformists, and Separatists, as the boys and girls of our country who remember these early chapters of American history understand. The Puritans were zealously endeavoring to purify the church of England, as well as the Catholic church. They were called Separatists because of their separation from these churches, and those who risked their lives on the pilgrimage to the “new world,” have since been called Pilgrims.

As noted earlier, Chief Rabbi Kohn of Budapest, Hungary, in a work entitled, *Sabbatarians in Transylvania*, says of the Puritans, “Certain leaders and preachers of the Puritans have [1554] re-transferred the rest day from Sunday to Saturday.” — p. 9.

That the Pilgrims were Sabbath-keepers, and evidently from the same line of Sabbatarian-Puritan preachers mentioned in this work, the following evidence will confirm.

While one of the authors was living in the city of St. Joseph, Missouri, during the winter of 1934, the following editorial appeared in the St. Joseph, Mo., *Daily Gazette*, during the Christmas season, written by the editor, Mr. Hugh Sprague.

“Strange as it may seem, in the early history of America there was an attempt at suppression of Christmas spirit. The stern Puritans at Plymouth, imbued with the rigorous fervor of the Old Testament, abhorred the celebration of the orthodox holidays. Their worship was on the Sabbath (Saturday), rather than Sunday, and Christmas in particular they considered a pagan celebration. Later immigrants attempted to observe Christmas as a time of joy, but were suppressed. Governor Bradford, Elder Brewster, Miles Standish and other leaders were firm against the yuletide spirit as we know it today.”

The author’s wife, having first noticed the above editorial, called his attention to it. He immediately drove over to the Gazette office where, upon finding Mr. Sprague, he asked him where he obtained the evidence of the Pilgrim Fathers keeping the Sabbath or Saturday. He said, “Why do you desire this information? Do you doubt the truth of the statement?”

He answered, that from information already at hand he had frequently made the statement that they were observers of the seventh day of the week, but thought he might have something additional. He said he did not know of any book mentioning this, but that he had additional evidence. He said, “The Pilgrims are my direct ancestors, and we know very well their religious practice and belief.” He assured him that all his grandparents and great-grandparents knew that the Pilgrims of the Mayflower days were strict Sabbath-

keepers on the seventh day of the week instead of Sunday.

Should anyone wish to obtain direct information from this editor, which we are sure he will cheerfully give, you can reach him by posting a letter, with stamp for reply, to St. Joseph, Mo., in care of the Gazette.

The noted historian Robinson, quoting from the words of the tyrant persecutor Reinerius shows that the Waldenses, Puritans, and Cathari, are the one and the same religious sect. — From the work entitled, *From a Weasel to an Elephant*, and footnote, Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 288.

In speaking of those called Gazari, Jones says, “Gazari is a corruption of *Cathari*, Puritans, and it is remarkable that in the examinations of these people, they are not taxed with any immoralities, but were condemned for speculations, or rather for virtuous rules of action, which all in power accounted heresies.” He states further that they are opposed to the ceremonies of the church of Rome. — *History of the Christian Church*, p. 287.

Many historical statements have been printed on previous pages of this work, proving beyond doubt that the Cathari, Puritans, and Waldenses were the same people, and that they observed the seventh day of the week, held the Lord’s Supper on the 14th of Abib, immersed for baptism, accepted the Bible name for the church, and, in general, held the truth as now taught by the Church of God. We may, therefore, without disappointment, expect to find the same doctrine taught and practised by the Puritans in tracing their history in America.

We find in the public library of London, England, a book entitled *A Necessity of Separation*, referring to the separation from the church of England of those receiving divine light and truth. The author is John Canne. He frequently mentions the Church of God, or God and His Church.

In chapter 4, page 183, when speaking of the meaning of the word “church,” he says, “The Church of God.” On page 184, he says, “The church, the house and the temple of the eternal God.” On page 185, he says “The means whereby men are made fit for the Church of

God, is by His word.” On page 187, he uses the term “Church of God,” also page 163, he uses the term again, and also says “The Church of the Living God.”

It will be remembered, however, from previous notes that there were several Sabbath-keeping congregations in London prior to this time, who observed the Passover yearly, and who were known by the term “Church of God.” It has also been shown that the Separatists, Puritans, and Pilgrims were zealous for the commandments of God, observing the seventh-day Sabbath, and from the foregoing it is also evident they held to the sacred Bible name.

From Lewis’ *History of Sabbath and Sunday*, we get the following information:

“The same Divine Hand which guarded the Sabbath through the dark centuries between the first great apostasy and the reformation, transferred it from England to America, the last battleground whereon the great reforms of modern times have been and are being carried forward. True Sabbath reform could not find a place among the masses until ‘Sunday’ had borne its fruit, decayed in weakness, and crumbled from the hands of the church. This trial could best be made in America. Hence, guided by that ‘divinity which shapes our ends,’ in 1664 Stephen Mumford emigrated from England to Newport, Rhode Island. He brought with him the opinion the Ten Commandments as they were delivered from Mount Sinai, were moral and immutable and that it was the anti-christian power which changed the Sabbath from the Seventh to the first day of the week. He united with the Baptist church in Newport, and soon gained several of its members to the observance of the Sabbath.” — p. 218.

On the same page of the above history it is stated that a Sabbath-keeping church was organized by these Sabbath-keepers in

December 1671, and that William Hiscox was chosen and ordained their elder, which office he filled until his death in 1704. Also that he was succeeded by William Gibson, a minister from London, who labored among them until his death in 1717.

Joseph Crandall then presided over the church until 1737. Joseph Maxson was then pastor, who was succeeded by William Bliss, the latter passing away in 1808 at the age of 81. He was succeeded by William Burdick. Richard Ward was a prominent member of this church, being governor of the state of Rhode Island, and well known in history.

Lewis gives us some more interesting history of the early Sabbath-keepers in this country in his History, as follows:

“Able Noble arrived in this country about the year 1684, and located near Philadelphia About this time a difference arose among the Quakers in reference to the sufficiency of what every man was naturally within himself for the purpose of his own salvation. This difference resulted in a separation under the leadership of George Keith. These seceders were soon after known as Keithian Baptists. Through the labors of Able Noble, many of them embraced the Bible Sabbath and were organized into churches near the year 1700. These churches were Newton, Pennepeck, Nottingham and French Creek, and probably, Conogochage.” . . . “The churches of Pennsylvania fraternized with the churches in Rhode Island and New Jersey, and counseled them in matters of discipline. Some of their members also united with their churches. Some of them, with some members of the church of Piscataway, and others of Cohansey, near Princeton, emigrated to the Parish of St. Mark, S.C., and formed a church on Broad River and formed a settlement and a church at Tuckaseeking, in Georgia. These churches have long since become extinct. (Traces of these Sabbath-keepers are still found in the South.)” —

The Church of God from London to America

The first organization of Seventh-day Baptists in America, now known to history, was that of the church at Newport, R.I., in 1671, as indicated above, which began this way:

“Stephen Mumford came over from London in 1664, and brought the opinion with him that the whole of the ten commandments as they were delivered from Mount Sinai, were moral and immutable; and that it was the antichristian power which thought to change times and laws, that changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. Several members of the first church in Newport embraced this sentiment.” — Backus, *History of New England Baptists*, 1871 Ed. pp. 500, 501

They formed the oldest known organized Seventh-Day Baptist church in America in 1671. In the chapter devoted to the history of the Church of God in the British Isles, mention is made of a certain letter written by the church at Mill Yard, London, on December 21 1680, to the church in Newport, R.I. This letter was copied from the old files of the Mill Yard church, the oldest Sabbath-keeping church in America being connected with the oldest in London.

Consequently, we must naturally conclude that these two churches will be found to agree in principle and doctrine, and this further evidence will confirm.

The first record we have of the organization of a local church in this country reads as follows: “We enter into a church covenant this 23rd day of December, 1671 (Old Stile), William Hiscox, Stephen Mumford, Samuel Hubbard, Rodger Baster, Sister Tacy Hubbard, Sister Mumford, and Sister Rachel Langworthy.” Wm. Hiscox was chosen pastor. The church had no articles of faith except the Bible. As churches in other places sprung up, and a desire was felt in many

hearts to follow the instruction of the Lord in I Corinthians 1:10 that they all speak the same thing, a mutual understanding was sought among them, that those in one locality who having advanced in knowledge and truth deeper, might benefit the others by these truths. Thus certain doctrines were outlined with Scriptures showing their soundness, and unity and harmony was sought and maintained.— On October 31, 1683, Brother Hubbard wrote to Elder Wm. Gibson, who lived at New London, and said in part, “O, that we could have a general meeting, but winter is coming upon us.” The next May another letter was written, as follows, “This church has appointed a general meeting to be held here the 14th of May, 1684, and hope to see all my daughters and friends together, if God permit, from Westerly, Narragansett, Providence, Plymouth, of Martha’s Vineyard, and at home, that we may humble our souls at that royal throne of the grace of Jehovah, and to rejoice together in his holy way and order.” This was the first general meeting held by these early churches that we have any record of in America.

At the beginning of the year 1708 there were 113 members of the Newport, Rhode Island, church, when it was thought best for the brethren living in the western part of the city to be organized into what was called the “Westerly Church.” — From the *Seventh-day Baptist Memorial*.

In 1705 a church was organized at Piscataway, N.J. And, according to a letter from Samuel Hubbard, one of the charter members of the Newport church, another was organized at an early date at Noodles Island, now East Boston, Mass. We quote from his letter, which began with these words: “Unto the church of Jesus Christ meeting on Noodles Island, in New England . . .” — *Idem*, p. 152, Vol.1, No. 3.

In the year 1668 there were at least nine Sabbatarian churches in England, according to a letter written from London by Dr. Edward Stennett, of the Bell Lane Church, to the Sabbath-keeping brethren in Rhode Island. We quote:

“Here are, in England, about nine or ten churches that

A History of the True Church

keep the Sabbath, besides many scattered disciples, who have been eminently preserved in this tottering day, when many once eminent churches have been shattered to pieces.” — Dated Feb. 2, 1668, at Abingdon, Birkshire.
— *Idem*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 27.

In a narrative respecting the Newport church, it is said that in July 3, 1669, they sent a letter to a church in Bell Lane, London, England, about some certain difficulties they had encountered. It also states that prior to this, in October 6, 1665, they had sent a first letter to “several churches on the observation of the seventh day, for advice.” — *Idem*, p. 29, Vol. 1.

Thomas Ward, a prominent lawyer of Newport, was a member of the Newport church in 1689. Richard Ward, governor of Rhode Island from 1741 to 1742, was also a member of this church.

Col. Jobe Bennet in 1763 was one of a committee of two to draft the constitution of the Brown University, and served as its Treasurer from 1765 to 1775. He was a member of this church. Deacon John Tanner of this church was also a trustee of Brown University.

The Name of The Church

The connection between this church at Newport and the Churches of God in London has already been shown in this work, as well as their harmony in doctrine. The Mill Yard church in London being the oldest Sabbath-keeping church of which we have a definite record, and at this date, 1935, their doctrine agrees with that of the churches of God throughout America. This fact is significant of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit whose office work is declared to be to lead its possessor into all truth.

It is evident that the church at Newport, Rhode Island, was at first called “Church of God,” because of its relationship with the Sabbath-keeping churches of London known by this name.

The early records of the Newport church have been destroyed by fire, but we do have copies of some of these ancient records, and in

these we have intimation of the church clinging to the true name. In a reply concerning an investigation respecting Sabbatarians in Newport, the following is stated by members of the Newport church:

“Under the former dispensation there was a church and a world as there is now; and as it is the duty of the world now to repent and believe the Gospel, so it was the duty of the world to be proselyted and joined to the then Church of God.” — *Idem*, p. 36, vol. 1.

Questions asked of the early Sabbatarian churches to a candidate minister, among others, was this one: “Have you entire freedom to administer the ordinances of God among them as a Church of God, to pray with them and for them, and endeavor to build them up in the faith?” — *Idem*, p. 160, vol. 2, no. 4.

The following charge was given to Elder Davis, an early Sabbatarian minister by the church in Shrewsbury, N.J.:

“Brother Davis, I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou take the charge of the Church of God dwelling at Shrewsbury. Preach the word in and among them; be instant in season and out of season; administer the holy ordinances amongst them; exhort and rebuke with all long suffering and patience, with meekness and humility of mind, as thou shalt answer the same, when thou shalt give up thy account to God, at his appearing and kingdom. Amen.” — *Idem*, p. 160, vol. 2, no. 4.

In the year 1705, a church of Sabbath-keepers was organized at Piscataway, N.J. The first record in the old church record book, after the articles of faith, was the following statement, proving beyond all question that these early churches retained the Scriptural name of the Church of God. The record reads:

“The Church of God keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ, living in Piscataway and Hopewell, in the province of New Jersey, being

A History of the True Church

assembled with one accord, at the house of Benjamin Martin, in Piscataway, the 19th day of August, 1705 — we did then, and with one mind, choose our dearly beloved Edward Dunham, who is faithful in the Lord, to be our elder and assistant, according to the will of God; whom we did send to New England to be ordained; who was ordained in the church-meeting in Westerly, Rhode Island, by prayer and laying on of hands, by their elder, William Gibson, the eighth of September, 1705.” — *Idem*, p. 121, vol. 2, no. 3.

The faith of the Piscataway church reads as follows:

“I. We believe that unto us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, who is the mediator between God and mankind, and that the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God. — I Corinthians 3:6, I Timothy 2:5, II Timothy 3:6, II Peter 1:21.

“II. We believe that all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration, are the Word of God — II Peter 1:19, 20, 21, II Timothy 3:16, Mark 7:13, I Thessalonians 2:13, Acts 4:29, 31 — and are the rule of faith and practice.

“III. We believe that the ten commandments, which were written on two tables of stone by the finger of God, continue to be the rule of righteousness unto all men. — Matthew 5:17, 18, 19, Malachi 4:4, James 1:21, Romans 7:25, Romans 3:21, Romans 13:8, 9, 10, Ephesians 6:2.

“IV. We believe the six principles recorded in Heb. 6:1, 2, to be the rule of faith and practice.

“V. We believe that the Lord’s Supper ought to be administered and received in all Christian churches. — Luke 2:19, I Corinthians. 11:23, 26.

“VI. We believe that all Christian churches ought to have church officers in them, as elders, and deacons. —

Titus 1:5, Acts 6:3.

“VII. We believe that all persons thus believing ought to be baptized in water by dipping or plunging, after confession is made by them of their faith in the above said things. — Mark 1:4, 5, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:37, Romans 6:3, 4, Colossians 2:12.

“VIII. We believe that a company of sincere persons, being formed in the faith and practices of the above said things, may truly be said to be the Church of Christ. — Acts 2:41, 42.

“IX. We give up ourselves unto the Lord and one another, to be guided and governed by one another, according to the Word of God. — I Corinthians 8:5, Colossians 2:19, Psalm 84:1, 2, 4-10, Psalm 133:1.” — *Idem*, pages 120,121, vol. 2, no. 3.

That there were members of the Church of God among the Sabbatarians which organized as the Seventh Day Baptist Churches in America, we know, and from the records of the Baptist people themselves, which are very accurate, we learn the truth of this fact. A recorded letter of one William Davis, a Sabbatarian Baptist, states the following:

“Now all this enmity among seventh-day men arose against me originally from a noted seventh-day man and soul sleeper in this country, who above twenty years ago opposed me about my principles of immortality of human souls, and afterward proceeded to differ with me about my faith in Christ and the Trinity, who, having poisoned several other seventh-day men with the mortal and atheistical notion, and set them against me, he secretly conveyed this drench over to Westerly to the persons before-named, who, complying with him in their judgments in the Socinian and Anti-Trinitarian error, drank it greedily down before I came among them”

— *Idem*, p. 108, vol. 2, no. 3.

One of the main points of doctrine of the Church of God, which distinguishes it from other bodies of believers, is the belief in the separateness of Almighty God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit of God, as pertains to entities, but one as to unity of purpose and spirit. This Scriptural truth held dear by Dr. Arius and his followers in the early centuries, is still dear to the Church of God in our day, and was to the saints during the colonization of America.

Another tenet of faith which distinguished the Church of God is its teaching of immortality only through Jesus Christ, that is, a conditional immortality, which is given to the saints only, and not to all mankind.

The third article of faith which should be noted, is Sabbath-keeping, that is, the observance of the seventh day of the week.

From the quotation taken from the letter of the Sabbatarian Baptist, Elder William Davis, it is noted that this noted Sabbatarian of whom he speaks was not only a Sabbath-keeper, but also one who held to the truth of the individuality of Jesus Christ and his heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit of God, and to the truth of immortality only through Christ. There is no body of Christians in the world, with the exception of the Church of God, which teaches all three of these beautiful truths, hence, we know this man was of the Church of God, and contended for the “faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

It has been previously shown how the early churches in the east were composed of, and raised up through the labors of members of the Churches of God from London, and other parts of Europe, and, furthermore, evidence has been given that they were actually known among themselves by the name “The Church of God.” It is claimed, however, in the *History of the Seventh Day Baptists*, volume 2 page 613, that these churches had no official name. The reason for this claim is evidently due to the fact they did not believe in incorporating with the state, or of filing a charter, for the Bible, they said, was sufficient. We quote from this work as follows, “In the first records

of the first minute book extant the church is referred to as the church of Rhode Island, and Westerly, Rhode Island, referring to the Island and not to the whole colony, and to Hopkinton, Westerly, Charleston, and Richmond. Sometimes it is spoken of as the ‘Church,’ at other times the official name – ‘Congregation’, but it had no official name.” — Randolph’s *History*, p. 613.

In apology for the New England churches, on page 66, we find the name, “The Church of God.”

CHAPTER 22: EIGHTEEN HUNDRED TO PRESENT DATE A.D.

In the Latter Times Some Shall Depart from the Faith

Those familiar with the Old Testament history of the church know of Israel’s repeated backslidings, how they departed from righteousness in times of peace and prosperity, but when God punished them with disease, drought, and defeat in battle, they would turn to Him in submission and obedience. It was true then, and still is today, that, “When God’s judgments are in the earth, the people learn righteousness.” Israel’s conduct before God in times past, tells the story of succeeding generations down through the history of time. Persecutions and adversity have always stirred to action the very best qualities hidden in the hearts of God’s elect, and brought them to action, in humble submission and obedience. Thus we find as the church passed through the centuries of persecution during her wilderness experience, the people remained pious, loyal, and prayerful.

As we enter the period when the “Earth helped the woman,” and the true followers of Christ came to America, where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience, filled with holy zeal, these humble servants of God founded congregations of pious men and women, holding to the Bible name, and the true

doctrine, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

It is to be regretted, however, that some among the oldest of these congregations which are still in existence have, like Israel of old, departed to some degree, from the old paths in which their forefathers trod. While they still hold to the true Sabbath and baptism these certain congregations have taken an unscriptural gospel, and lost several other important tenets of faith.

This has been true of the church established at Newport, Rhode Island, and a number of other cities of the east, which we have mentioned on previous pages of this work, including the church at Shrewsbury, N.J., which emigrated in a body to what is now Salem, W.Va.

The Seventh Day Baptists

While the Sabbath-keepers of Europe were under the fire of persecution, and being driven from one country to another, they were humble and devoted to God. They trusted in the Lord to lead and deliver, and were fervent and instant in prayer, and earnest in spirit. However, after they came to America, and had enjoyed for a hundred years or more, the religious liberties granted first by the charter of William Penn, and later extended to other colonies, some ceased to pray as earnestly as before, and settled down to a state of formality in worship, depending upon the laws of man for security, instead of the intervening hand of God. Consequently, some began gradually drifting away from the former piety and love for the Bible, and the Bible only, for their faith and practice, and took upon themselves another name besides the one divinely given by God. In their history in America, this was mainly among the first signs which marked their drift toward the world.

In later records of the early Sabbatarians, who later became known as Seventh Day Baptists, we find them using the name the Church of Christ, and the Church of Jesus Christ. See *Seventh Day Baptist Memorial*, vol. 2, p. 27.

Often the names, the Church of God, and the Church of Christ,

were used interchangeably. — Randolph, *History of Seventh Day Baptists*, pp. 11, 12.

In later records we find the name, Sabbatarian Church of Christ, and Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ. Later the words “Church of Christ” were dropped, and these people became known as Seventh Day Baptists. — *Idem*, p. 36, vol. 2 no. 1.

After the church at Newport had faithfully held the true light aloft for one hundred and forty-five years, in obtaining a charter the year 1819, their name was registered as “The Seventh Day Baptist Church of Christ.”

We get the following from the *History of the Seventh Day Baptists in America*, vol. 2, page 610: “There were no bylaws, constitution, charter, or articles of faith, save the scriptures, which were considered all of these.” On speaking of the west Newport church, or Hopkinton church, it further says on this page, “There seems to have been no special thought that it should have any special name It was referred to as the Sabbatarian church in Westerly (1758). In Hopkinton the church was known as the Hopkinton church.”

Sixty-one years later (1880) the name “Church of Christ” had been dropped and the name “Seventh Day Baptist” retained, and a charter given that year under title of “The First Seventh Day Baptist Church” by the state legislature.

Thus we see how, by consecutive stages, the divine scriptural titles are supplanted by worldly names, which could not be pleasing, or bring rejoicing, to the divine courts of heaven.

We have given previously a record where the church at Shrewsbury, N.J., called themselves the Church of God. The record of the history of this Sabbatarian church at Shrewsbury, N.J., begins as follows:

“This is a book of records of the settlement and proceedings of the Church of Christ, keeping the commandments of God, particularly the Holy Seventh Day, with the rest of the commandments of God, and believing and practicing the Holy Ordinances of the Gospel of Christ and the doctrines thereof.” . . . pp.

11, 12, Randolph, *History of the Seventh Day Baptists*.

A later record reads: "The Church of Christ in Shrewsbury and Middletown in the observation of God's Holy Sanctified Sabbath. First agreed to, the — (day) of the sixth month, 1774 . . . 13th. We believe that a company of sincere persons may truly be said to be the Church of God." — *Idem*, p. 20.

It was the Shrewsbury church which in 1789 emigrated to Salem, West Virginia. The people from Shrewsbury founded the town of New Salem, Va., now Salem, West Virginia.

Although we know from the records above quoted, the Shrewsbury church was called the "Church of Christ" and the "Church of God," (while in New Jersey), it is a fact that when the church was reorganized at Salem, the Bible name was dropped, and the members denominated themselves "The Seventh Day Baptists," which name is held by them until this present day.

It is an evident fact, however, that all of the Shrewsbury members who settled at Salem did not approve of the departure from the Bible for a church name, for upon settling in other parts of the State, and organizing other Sabbatarian bodies we find at least one church re-adopted the name "the Church of Christ." In addition to Sabbath-keeping, and believers' baptism, by immersion, some of these members in these assemblies observed other kindred truths held by the "Church of God" down through the centuries. The following extracts will bring out these facts:

Foot washing was practised by some of the early congregations of the people now called Seventh Day Baptists. The following extract is taken from an epistle written by the Shrewsbury Church of Christ, in 1790 to another sister congregation. We quote:

"And now, dear Brethren, we shall use the freedom to acquaint you with one thing, and do heartily desire to recommend it to your serious and Christian consideration, and that is about the duty of washing one another's feet.

"This is a duty and work which some of us have been

long thoughtful and in part persuaded of . . . and have concluded to put it in practice some time since, in the following manner; viz, at the end of the Lord's Supper . . . the Elder, in imitation of the Lord, takes a towel and girds himself; then he pours water in a basin and begins to wash the disciples' (viz., the brethren's) feet, and from him they take it, and the brethren to the brethren, and the sisters to the sisters, they wash one another's feet through the present assembly." — page 15, Randolph, *History of the Seventh Day Baptists*.

"The practice of feet-washing was continued by this church after its removal to Virginia (now Salem, W.Va.) but was probably abandoned at sometime during the first half of the nineteenth century . . ." — *Idem*, p. 15.

Clarke, in his *History of the Sabbatarians in America*, page 64, states: "Some of those (western Virginia) churches, believe in the washing of one another's feet at appointed times, etc. — but the Sabbath and Baptism are their distinguishing tenets . . ."

Concerning the Passover, or the Lord's Supper, in at least one assembly of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, the following is illustrative: "March 21, 1853, it was voted that communion service be held once in twelve months 'on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month'; i. e., on the evening of the Passover." — Randolph, *History of the Seventh Day Baptists*, p. 201 & 2.

The diet of some of the early Sabbatarians in West Virginia, can be understood from the following extract concerning the South Fork of Hughes River Church in 1849:

"In their efforts to follow the mandates of the Mosaic law, the flesh of swine for food was placed under ban. Mutton and beef tallow took the place of lard in cooking. A few of the more well-to-do used olive oil." — *Idem*, p. 203.

This church was called the “Church of Christ” in its records as given on page 20, and the Sabbath-keeping body at Lost Creek, W.Va., was also organized with the same name “Church of Christ,” as recorded on page 146 of this same history.

Another congregation of early Sabbatarians settled on the South Fork of Hughes River in West Virginia, in Richie County, and among them were leaders who taught contrary to the Sabbatarians then known as Seventh Day Baptists. Of these Christians it is recorded that they “taught obedience to the Ceremonial Law, and enforced on the church, contrary to the faith of the (Seventh Day Baptist) Denomination, abstinence from certain meats, peculiarities of dress, and urged that the church should be governed by elders exclusively.” — *Idem*, p. 213.

The above records, we feel justified in saying, are enough to convince the most skeptical of our readers that the Lord left Himself not without witness during the centuries following the colonization of America; and that wherever these saints of God went, they carried with them the truths held dear to the Church of God in all ages, and preserved them for us of today.

The Seventh-Day Adventists

While certain churches were growing cold and indifferent toward the truth, drifting toward the world, and becoming like the Gentiles around them, the Lord was raising up humble servants as they walked about and taught by the power of the Holy Spirit. New churches with new blood and new life were brought into existence, by the grace of God, and a real spiritual revival swept the country. The truth of the Bible Sabbath, with the fulfilling of prophecy, was stirring men and women everywhere into action for God.

William Miller, an earnest prophetic student and minister, was the main leader in the movement of 1835, in which the time of the second coming of the Lord was set. His great enthusiasm for Christ’s return, and a partial knowledge of the prophecies, led him to believe the Lord would come in 1844. From the year 1835 onward, this

belief gripped the minds of young and old alike. Thousands in every walk of life were anxious to leave the affairs of the world behind and prepare to meet Jesus. Commandment observers sprang up in every quarter, and men and women, fired with zeal, went forth with the message, depriving themselves of the necessities of life that precious souls should be won to Christ and prepared to meet him at his coming. When the expected year arrived, the disappointment was bitter. Jesus did not come, but this did not dampen their zeal or slacken their work. Discovering their error in prophetic calculation and knowing that other conditions must first shape themselves for the Lord's return, they went on with the truth.

The year of the disappointment, 1844, James White began publishing *The Messenger* at Rochester, New York. The name of the paper was later changed to *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. It was launched by devoted Church of God brethren who were led by the Spirit of God upholding the precious truth, which God had called them to proclaim.

Names of Ministers from 1844 to 1860

It will be of interest to know who were leaders in the Church of God in America as the truth spread from state to state toward the west, and to the north and the south. Some of the leaders were as follows, J. N. Loughborough, M. E. Cornell, James White, Isaac Sanborn, Wm. S. Ingrahm, W. M. Allen, Joseph Bates, John Bostwick, J. N. Andrews, B. F. Snook, E. W. Shortridge, D. Richmond, C. Stanley, J. Sisley, J. Byington, H. Keeney, R. F. Cornwell, James Sawyer, B. F. Robbins, E. J. Wagoner, B. McCormick, E. E. Taylor, G. W. Holt, J. Dudley, L. E. Jones, J. P. Fleming, J. Clark, Brother Butler, S. W. Rhodes, Luther Kerr, Brother Cramner, R. V. Lyons, R. E. Cotterell, A. C. and D.C. Bordau, A. S. Hutchinson, Brother Spery, H. S. Garney, M. S. Kellogg, Washington Morse, H. R. Lasher, and others.

State associations were formed and functioning in Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, New York,

A History of the True Church

Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and in several of the southern states. Two gospel tents were paid for and in operation in the state of Iowa, and the other state associations had purchased tents, which were in use, and churches and isolated brethren were scattered from one end of the country to the other.

The Name of The Church

That the church name at this time was “The Church of God” is evident from the early writings and experiences and views by Mrs. Ellen G. White, the wife of James White, editor of the church paper mentioned above. She wrote numerous volumes called *Spiritual Gifts*, and experiences and views, in which she frequently mentioned the name “Church of God.”

Also the first songbook published by these people is dedicated to “The Church of God scattered abroad.” This statement is made in the preface of the book.

Again on page 40 of the church paper of December 18, 1860, we find the following, under caption of “Resignation”:

“Brother Smith, I will be thankful for the privilege of saying through the Review to my Sabbath-keeping brethren and sisters that I have so poorly filled the office of a good minister of Jesus Christ, in my ministration of the Third Angel’s Message, in The Church of God during ELEVEN years past, I do this day resign this holy office, and retire from my public labors, to a more humble relation to the church with which I have been associated and which I still love devotedly.” — Signed, S. W. Rhodes, Hubbardsville, N.Y., Dec. 8, 1860.

This good brother, because of declining years, resigns from his active work as a minister of the “Church of God,” which he says he has been filling for eleven years. This would take the name back to the year 1849.

The following testimony is borne to the truth of the Seventh-day Adventists originally retaining the Scriptural name, "The Church of God." Elder J. M. Orn-Naerem, of Norway, a former Adventist minister, writes as follows of the records of the old church, and the changed name:

"I have before me a copy of the work, *Advent Review*, issue of 1850, which was sent to me by E. S. Ballenger. I cling to this work as proof that the Adventists had the right church name before 1844, and onward to 1860, the 3rd of October, at which time the name, Seventh-day Adventists' was adopted. I conclude in view of this proof, that Hiram Edson, David Arnold, George W. Holt, Samuel W. Rhodes, and James White, of whom this first publishing committee consisted, all belonged to the Church of God, and acknowledged no other church name as late as 1850. It says that this book was written in the Holy Spirit by many leaders of the advent movement; consequently, all those leaders were members of the Church of God, for this book is published by the Church of God, and not by the Seventh-day Adventist Church . . .

"On page 18 of this work is reprinted an article of Elder Marsh, from the *Voice of Truth* of May 21, 1845, in which Elder Marsh is quoted as saying, 'Finally we object to the doings of the Albany conference, because the proceedings as a whole looked like forming a new sect under a sectarian name, instead of coming to the order of the New Testament under the name there given to the true church. It looks like laying plans of our own devising to be acted upon in the future, when we have in our possession the perfect economy of the Lord by which we should be guided, and when we profess to be looking for his coming every hour.'

"It seems that James White is the editor in charge of reprinting this extract from Elder Marsh's article, as he

finished with the following remarks:

“We hope and pray that these testimonies may inspire the hearts of God’s children with stronger faith and brighter hope while they obey the divine injunction — “Call to remembrance the former things. “ — J.W.’

“Mrs. Ellen White said, ‘Before 1844 we were all united in the truth, but since 1844, in the time of perplexion, many new views have sprung up, and darkness and confusion have been the result.’ — This is a citation from a tract, *The Daily*, by O. A. Johnson, professor in theology at Walla Walla College, in the State of Washington.”

Changing the Church Name

We find on the fourth page of the church paper, *Review and Herald* of March 19, 1861, an article entitled “Organization,” in which the necessity for a general organization is set forth. The reasons given are that property holdings including the printing press and buildings should not be held by private individuals, to perpetuate confidence in the work and assure unity of effort.

It was further stated, as follows: “Late information from Lansing, Michigan, gives us to understand that a bill has passed into law under which we can organize. We shall soon be made acquainted with the provision, and friends of the cause, who are waiting to aid by becoming members of this association, will be given an opportunity of joining us in the work.” In subsequent issues of the paper we find reports given and later a general organization formed, which we deeply regret was not according to the Scriptural organization for the Church of God, neither was the name adopted a Scriptural one.

Again we find God’s true people, like Israel of old, desiring to be like the nations about them (I Samuel, fourth chapter), forming an organization with a president, vice president and the general organization patterned after the civil courts of worldly nations. In the absence of Moses, when he went upon Mount Sinai to receive the

tables of stone, Israel worshiped the calf, and so it has ever been among God's children. Their history has been one of repeated backslidings, and the Lord raising up others to carry on his work in the earth.

As further proof that the church carrying the message of truth, teaching the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, at this time was called "The Church of God," we submit the following, from the *Review and Herald* of April 9, 1861, under title of "Secession." It reads as follows:

"Brother Smith: We conclude from present aspects that the name, Seventh Day Adventist,' is being made obligatory upon our brethren. Without further light Ohio cannot submit to the name, 'Seventh Day Adventist,' as either a test, or an appropriate name for God's people.— "Being appointed a finance committee at the last conference, and having now on hand means for carrying on the cause in Ohio, we could not conscientiously expend those means in any other way than the advancement and extension of the truth and the 'Church of God.'— "If such means are expended otherwise it will be necessary for the churches in Ohio to assemble in conference, and to give instruction to that effect, and to choose some other committee to make the disbursements. "Signed J. Dudley, L. E. Jones, J. P. Flemming, Finance committee of Ohio."

James White, editor of the *Review and Herald*, answered as follows:

"The Battle Creek conference October 1, 1860, voted that we call ourselves 'Seventh Day Adventists.' . . . The brethren as far as we can learn are adopting the name, and we never heard of, or thought of, its being made a test until we read the above from Ohio

A History of the True Church

“We will here add that as a friend from Gilboa complains of the non-publication of an article from Gilboa setting forth the evidence in favor of the name Church of God, we wish to say that AT THAT TIME NO ONE connected with the REVIEW office OBJECTED to the NAME. “ — Signed J. W.

The foregoing is ample proof of the origin of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, that they are a branch from the original church, “The Church of God” and came into existence as a separate body October 1, 1860. The Church of God, however, continued on, holding forth the banner of truth, as she had done since the days of Jesus. While this was a great blow to the work, yet there were many strong spirit-filled men left, who soon launched another paper, and went about strengthening the work that remained and gathering together other companies of believers, as it pleased God to add to His church.

Following this conference several other unscriptural doctrines began to creep into the Seventh-day Adventist churches, including the observance of the Lord’s Supper quarterly instead of yearly. This came about through the influence of Mrs. E. G. White, the wife of the editor, who when a girl, was associated with a church which still observes the sacred ordinance every three months. The Church of God has from the days of our Savior practised the yearly observance of the Lord’s Supper, and some of the churches continued this practice, not heeding the teachings set forth in the “*Early Writings*” of Mrs. E. G. White, who was thought by many to possess the gift of prophecy, and was considered as a prophetess for the remnant church, by those who departed from the faith.

The Reconstruction

Many ministers throughout America and in foreign fields endorsed the action of the Battle Creek conference, and followed the advice of their supposed prophetess, not only in the change of the

church name, but in other erroneous teachings which were creeping in among God's people. Although this falling away, prophesied by Paul in I Tim. 4:1 to 3, which was to take place in the "latter times," did much damage to the cause of truth, yet the work of the Lord continued to go forward. Strong men filled with the blessed Holy Spirit were not deceived. They went steadily on undaunted, carrying the true name and the true faith. The following ministers prominent among the remnant are worthy of mention in this work:

R. V. Lyons of Niagara Falls, New York, Philip Howe and Luther Kerr of Canada, and Elders Cramner and Thomas Howe of Michigan.

The following year these brethren and others from surrounding states met at Battle Creek, Mich., and began the publication of a monthly paper which they called *The Remnant of Israel* [sic., the author means *The Hope of Israel*]. They decided on this name, feeling that it was to serve the few left out of this apostasy, who were truly "The Remnant of Israel." This publication continued, but the name was changed later to the *Sabbath Advocate*, and still later to the *Bible Advocate*, the name of the present paper.

The next step was the obtaining of a charter in Michigan for the Church of God there, and the following names were placed on this document: L. A. Munger, A. E. Case, Seth Munger, Will Slater, and John Campbell. This charter is still held by the Michigan brethren, and is in the hands of Elder James Merriam, district-overseer of that territory.

During the reconstruction period of the church, following this apostasy, a number of valiant soldiers of the cross contributed their lives in the gospel ministry and are worthy of mention in these pages. Some of the most prominent were:

S.E. Brinkerhoff, Jacob Brinkerhoff, A.C. Long, W.C. Long, E.S. Sheffield, David Leard, N.A. Wells, A.F. Dugger, Jasper Moore, J.C. Branch, Lemiel Branch, J. R. Goodenough, E. G. Blackmon, Adelbert Branch, J.W. Niles, S.S. Davison, I.N. Kramer, S.V. Grimm, J.T. Johnson, J. A Nugent, M. B. Ellis, J.C. Bartlett, J.H. Nicholas, B.F. Snook, R.E. Caviness, M.C. Cornell, C.E. Carver, L.L. Presler, J.H. Hinds, John Wilbur, Samuel Davison, and others.

The church paper launched at Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1861, *The Remnant of Israel*, was later moved to Marion, Iowa, and still later to Stanberry, Mo. A general Conference was organized in Missouri, and state conferences were also organized in various states with presidents and vice presidents, with a similar organization as that formed in October, 1860, at Battle Creek, Michigan, when the name was changed to Seventh Day Adventist. For some reason, God did not put it upon the hearts of His people at that day to restore the New Testament organization as set forth by Jesus and the holy Apostles. As time went on, work was opened up in foreign fields, and the precious truth found its way into many countries, and islands of the sea. Hundreds of thousands of tracts were printed and distributed, together with many books, and for a period of 72 years from 1861 to 1933 the church continued to send forth the true doctrine.

In the fall of 1931, it was voted at the General Conference that the church should send someone to Jerusalem to look after the work, in view of moving the world headquarters there when conditions would permit. Arrangements were consequently made for Elder A.N. Dugger to go and look after this work. A printing press was given to him, while holding meetings in London, by Brother Samuel Brown, of that city, which was shipped to Jerusalem. During the summer of 1932, with the assistance of Elder Henry Cohen, a Hebrew Christian, they published a hundred and fifty thousand gospel tracts in the Hebrew language, and in August of that year, in company with Jacob Futerman, David Golden, Jacob Kort, and Henry Cohen, Elder Dugger went all over Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, systematically distributing these gospel messengers among all the Jewish cities and towns.

A good number of Jewish converts were baptized during 1932 in Palestine, and a number of Hebrew workers started into the gospel work there. Sister Rose Miller helped much in the good work which the Lord had laid upon His church to do in the Holy Land.

A History of the True Church The Reorganization

219

At this time it seemed that the Spirit of God was moving again in the camps of Israel, and men filled with the Holy Spirit from California to the New England states, and from north to south were impressed with the improper and unscriptural organization of the church. They were writing to one another in different places of the evils manifest in state and general elections of presidents, vice presidents, and suggesting the need of the restoration of the Scriptural organization of the twelve to look after the spiritual affairs of the church, and seven to take charge of the financial business, and also the seventy to go forth two by two in giving the warning message for the hour.

Two letters, now on file, were written so near the same date that they passed each other enroute from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Los Angeles, California. Elder Haeber, in California, wrote the brother who was at that time in Battle Creek, laying out before him the need of the Bible organization, as stated above, which he said had not been suggested by others living in California, as no correspondence had passed between them or any other minister previously on the question.

Before this letter reached its destination the brother to whom it was written had also written a letter to Elder Haeber telling him of the movement that seemed to be sweeping into the minds of many on the question, and also that the matter could be brought up the following fall at the General Conference convening at Stanberry, Mo. Time forbids further details in the matter, but Elder R. A. Barnes, of Arkansas, and Elder Ed. Severson, of Oklahoma, had for some time been talking over the matter between themselves, but unknown to the church in general. Brother Theodore Gillespie, an old time member of the Church of God in St. Joseph, Missouri, voluntarily suggested the matter to Brother A.N. Dugger a few months after his return from the Holy Land. Neither Brother Dugger, nor anyone else, had introduced the question to him.

He was informed of this being the opinion of the church at Jerusalem, and that others were seriously considering the matter.

The Lord Jesus prophesied in Revelation 19:7, 8, concerning his church in the latter times, as follows: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

From this Scripture it was understood by many leading brethren that the church was not ready but she should "Make herself ready," as she said. Hence they had set their hearts to prayer, and were consequently led in one accord to stand for a clean church without worldly spot or wrinkle; also to form the Scriptural organization, so when Jesus came to receive his bride, he would find her prepared and ready, having cast to one side the organization patterned after the civil organizations of this world, and with world headquarters moved to the place he himself had chosen. Thus the reorganization became more and more impressed upon the church, and its needs more apparent. A set time and place therefore were chosen to perform this work. It was set for November 4, 1933, and the place chosen was Salem, West Virginia, U.S.A.

The following account of the reorganization meeting is copied from the *Bible Advocate* published at Salem, Nov. 6, of that year.

The Choosing of the Twelve, the Seventy and the Seven

Several weeks prior to November 4th, a call was sent to many countries for prayer that God would again choose men to lead His church as in the former time. These countries were: Jerusalem, South Africa, Australia, Egypt, England, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, China, India, New Zealand, Panama, Japan, Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad, Guam, Canada, Nova Scotia, Liberia, Barbados, Venezuela, Syria, Madagascar, Burma, Newfoundland, and Mexico.

The practice of choice by lot is very ancient among the Jews, and was practised also by the early church, Acts 2:23 to 26.

Therefore, after a call to prayer throughout the world was sent forth, besides to about ten thousand people in America, ministers and

brothers and sisters in Christ met at Salem, W.Va., according to appointment on Nov. 4th. From one thousand miles westward, to nine hundred miles northeast, and six hundred miles south, they came together, most of them arriving Friday. Although tired from riding great distances, some being up driving for the two previous nights, they all joined together with the Salem church, and spent the entire night in fasting and prayer. A wonderful meeting indeed it was. How good to be there, and how short the passing hours. The time was not simply endured but enjoyed.

In Salem, the city of peace, many hearts rejoiced with love, and the sacred presence of God hallowed the meeting.

The meeting was opened by singing, "Oh, To Be More Like Jesus"; "The Church of God"; and "Humble Thyself to Walk With God." Beginning on Friday afternoon, we began to fast and remained in prayer until the early morning hours of the Holy Sabbath, then letters were gone over from ministers and names gathered, sent in from far and near. One hundred and forty names were presented, and a box was prepared from which to draw the names according to the leadings of God, for these respective offices. As we approached the set time, it seemed we could feel the presence of God. The power of His presence through the world circle of prayer was keenly apparent, and hearts rejoiced in the hope and joy of his salvation.

The congregation then made choice of three men whose names were placed on separate slips of paper, and dropped into the box. A prayer was given that God would make choice of one of these three, whom He could best use and guide in drawing out the ministers names for the twelve and the seventy. Elder Dodd drew out one slip which contained the name of Brother John Adams of Salem.

Ministers' names were then placed into the box, and a brief silent prayer given. It was just a few minutes past eleven A.M., Washington time. The names for the Twelve were drawn out in the following order, by Brother Adams:

No. 1, Elder J. M. Oren-Naerem, of Norway; No. 2, Elder F. C. Robinson, of Missouri; No. 3, Elder R. A. Barnes, of Arkansas; No. 4, Elder R. L. Taylor, of Oregon; No. 5, Elder C. Heywood, of

A History of the True Church

Michigan; No. 6, Elder W. W. McMicken, of West Virginia; No. 7, Elder C. E. Groshans, of Indiana; No. 8, Elder Henry Wood, of Massachusetts; No. 9, Elder Raymond Saenz, of Mexico; No. 10, Elder H. Negby, of Palestine; No. 11, Elder John Kiesz, of Missouri; No. 12, Elder Chas. L. Royer, of Connecticut. A prayer of thanks was now given by Elder Dodd.

These names were written down one by one as chosen, by Elder O. D. Grimm, acting as Secretary *pro tem*. Another short season of silent prayer was then called, and the names of the Seventy were chosen one by one.

They were as follows in the order of choice:

Elder John Anderson, Mo.; Elder D. Davis, Mich.; Elder H. Tavel, C. A.; Elder Adolph Gusman, Mex.; Elder William Bodine, Ark.; Elder Otto Haeber, Calif.; Elder E. H. Shadel, Ark.; Elder Robert Nance, Ark.; Elder L. M. Jackson, Ala.; Elder William Berry, South America; Elder W. A. Summers, Okla.; Elder John Brenneise, S. Dak.; Elder V. Amos, India; Elder Samuel Brown, London, England; Elder Will Barnes, Ark.; Elder Andrew J. Williams, Texas; Elder J. E. Benson, Pan.; Elder J. D. Bagwell, Ala.; Elder N. P. Daniel, India; Elder E. O. Bradberry, Ark.; Elder G. Flores, Elder L. F. Claspell, Ind.; Elder Kenneth Freeman, W.Va.; Elder V. J. Benjamin, India; Elder B. Israel, South India; Elder Pete Bartschi, Ark.; Elder S. A. Oberg, Ore.; Elder H. Snyder, Wash.; Elder J. A. Ijames, Jr., N.C.; Elder A. H. Stith, Idaho; Elder T. V. Taylor, La.; Elder D. B. Garcia, Mex.; Elder E. Campos, Mex.; Elder E. P. Roche, Mich.; Elder J. E. Codrington, Pa.; Elder Noah Barnabas, Palestine; Elder C. Sobers, New York City; Elder A. C. Turner, Mich.; Elder E. Echiavaria, Tex.; Elder Herbert Armstrong, Ore.; Elder A. Steede, Mich.; Elder J. W. Tarver, La.; Elder J. A. Ijames, N.C.; Elder J. E. Hamilton, C. A.; Elder Allen Castor, B.W.I.; Elder J. G. Smith, Cal.; Elder L. W. Runyon, Okla.; Elder C. O. Vallery, La.; Elder J. M. Rodriguez, Tex.; Elder J. Servantes, Mex.; Elder W. W. West, Calif.; Elder E. J. Younce, Ill.; Elder V. J. Joseph, India; Elder C. O. Dodd, W. Va.; Elder J. Siler, Mich.; Elder Archie Craig, Okla.; Elder Roy Kanady, Ark.; Elder B. Bernsten, China; Elder G. Thompson,

Panama Canal; Elder James Relford, Kan.; Elder Chas. J. Ellis, British West Indies; Elder Charles Welch, Okla.; Elder E. H. Jenkins, Ark.; Elder Ed. Severson, Okla.; Elder W. C. Bryce, Tex.; Elder Albert Bodine, Ark.; Elder Arthur Barnes, Ark.; Elder Hugh Brown, London, England; Elder Will Briley, Ark.; Elder F. G. Zoller, Neb.

Following a prayer of grateful thanks to our dear heavenly Father for leading in this work, the assembly proceeded as in Acts 6:1 to 6 in choosing the seven men to place over the business affairs of the church. The choice resulted as follows:

A. N. Dugger of Missouri, C. O. Dodd of West Virginia, John Brenneise, of South Dakota, Hugh Miller of Nebraska, F. L. Summers, of West Virginia, John Adams of West Virginia, R. E. Winsett of Tennessee.

A prayer service followed in which the hands of those of the Twelve present were laid upon the Seven who were at this meeting and they were thus set apart for the work assigned, as in Acts 6:6. A prayer then followed for the officers chosen who were not present, that God would lead them and fully set them apart for the life duties thus involved.

It was late in the afternoon, and although the brethren had been fasting and praying since the beginning of the Sabbath the evening before, they were not hungry. They had been feasting on spiritual food, manna from heaven, and it was indeed refreshing to the soul. All were filled with joy, strengthened by the presence and power of God, and felt that it was good to be there. — From *Bible Advocate*, page 5, Nov. 6, 1933.— Following the reorganization new life and new activity sprung forth like the budding trees at springtime. Workers all over the world were inflamed with zeal to push the Third Angel's Message as never before, and the Holy Spirit, operating through men and women to go forth and bear fruit for the Master, was everywhere apparent.

The brethren voted unanimously for the world headquarters to be Jerusalem, Palestine, and money was secured for the purchase of a building there for the headquarters building, and the work there began progressing with a great and wonderful future.— While

Jerusalem was chosen for the world headquarters, the United States headquarters was Salem, West Virginia; the Mexican headquarters, Mexico City, Mexico, D. F.; European headquarters, Rosenburg, Egersund, Norway; Indian headquarters, Jonnalapalem, Penumentra, W. Godavaria, South India.

Apostolic Succession

“The view that a wise and perfect form of church government and organization was set in order by the New Testament founders of the church, which has right to continue, and that the order has been handed down by the apostolic succession, was maintained by many foreign adherents of the Reformation.” “In England this was taught by Richard Cartwright, the Puritan opponent to Hooker, and by an entire school of his day.” “They appealed to history, and especially to that of the Alexandrian church, and more especially to St. Jerome.” — *Britannica Encyclopaedia*, volume 5, page 759, article, “Church.”

It is worthy of note here also that adherents of the early Puritan and Pilgrim religion strictly taught the observance of the ten commandments literally, and also the seventh-day Sabbath. The Puritans being citizens of England, were subject to her state religion. They were so named because of their ardent desire and untiring work in attempted church reform, on the Sabbath, Christmas, Easter, and other erroneous teaching.

The Pilgrims were a body of these people who embarked from England about 1619 on the Mayflower, bound for America, where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Landing at Plymouth Rock, under divine favor and blessings, they zealously taught the true faith in this country, Benjamin Franklin being a follower, and a zealous Sabbath-keeper. Much history is accessible of the doctrine and faith of these early adventurers to this new world, where their influence meant so much in establishing religious freedom and liberty, through which this nation has blessed humanity.

That the succession of apostolic power has come down unbroken

to the days of our pilgrim ancestors, as taught by the school in the days of Richard Cartwright, is further proven by Cotterill's *Genesis of The Church*, where mention is made of the "Seven," who looked after the business of the church, before the divisions of Eastern and Western Rome, 395 A.D. This view of apostolic succession, and heavenly virtue being thus transferred unbroken to the days of the Puritans, is strongly supported by the history of the Eastern churches, as well as by living schools of the Anglican.

Gladstone attacks this in a friendly criticism, by expressing doubt as to why a church would remain silent for some thirteen centuries and then be able to speak. This mystery, however, is made clear with a correct understanding of the prophecy of Revelation, where it was clearly shown beforehand that it would be so. The church was to go into the wilderness and be nourished there for 1260 years, from the face of her persecutor, the beast. Then as the earth helped the woman, she was to come forth again. This actually took place, and while remaining in silence, as far as the world was concerned, yet she is not only able to speak, but divinely empowered with the right to do so.

Britannica Encyclopaedia, volume 2, page 194, says, "Very early, however, the notion that the apostleship is essentially a hierarchical office, found entrance in the church. Irenius and Tertullian regard the continuation of the apostolic function. This view," it says, "is further developed by Cyprian."

Succession in Apostolic Ordination

The Scriptures teach us most emphatically that the apostolic virtue and power was handed down from apostle to apostle by the divine ordinance of laying on of hands and prayer. — Numbers 8:10, 27:28; Acts 6:6; 13:3; I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 1:5.

That the Sabbath-keeping "Church of God," has a most definite link of connection back through holy men to the days of the apostles is certain. The very same faith, and practice in divine worship, have been definitely handed down to the present time by strong men of God, filled with His blessed Holy Spirit, zealous for the precious

commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, fervent in zeal, and faithful unto death.

The following extract of history shows how careful the Church of God has been, from time remote, to preserve this sacred link of divine virtue, that the true church with apostolic power and purity might truly be manifest in the world when Jesus returns to take up his jewels.

The following historical narrative occurred about the year 1350 A.D. Commenius, who published a synopsis of the discipline of the churches of Bohemia, dwells particularly upon this article which shows that “a stated ministry was always considered as a matter of great importance among the Waldensian churches.” A dreadful persecution broke out against the Bohemian brethren, in the days of Commenius, which produced such havoc among them that he himself was ‘the only surviving bishop that escaped.’ The scattered brethren in process of time (about 1350) elected three persons as qualified for the pastoral office, but ‘found themselves greatly perplexed about the ordination.’ . . . They resolved to send . . . one of their pastors, with two other persons, to find out those Waldenses, and give them an account of what had passed among them, and especially ask their advice upon the matter in hand. They met with one Stephen, a Waldensian bishop, who sent for others also residing in that quarter, with whom they had a conference upon the doctrines of the gospel and the state of their churches, and by them the three pastors were ordained by the imposition of hands.

“Hence,” says Dr. Allix “it is abundantly evident, that as the Waldenses have preserved the faith that was committed to them, so have they been as careful to preserve entire amongst them the ancient discipline of the church—and hence it will follow that nothing can be more false than what is pretended, viz., that they had no kind of lawful ministry among them, but that laymen took upon themselves the power of preaching, of ordaining ministers, and administering ordinances.” —

Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 345, quoting Dr. Allix's remarks, page 245.

Their religious views are further stated by Allix:

“They declare themselves to be the Apostles’ successors, to have apostolical authority, and the keys of binding and loosing. They hold the church of Rome to be the whore of Babylon, and that all that obey her are damned, especially the clergy that are subject to her since the time of Pope Sylvester. They deny that any true miracles are wrought in the Church, because none of them did ever work any. They hold that none of the ordinances of the Church that have been introduced since Christ’s ascension ought to be observed, as being of no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church, and the like, they utterly reject.” — Allix, *Hist. Anc. Church of Piedmont*, p. 209.

A considerable part of the people called Waldenses bore the designation of Inzabbatati. Mr. Jones alludes to this fact in these words: “Because they would not observe saints’ days, they were falsely supposed to neglect the Sabbath also, and called “Inzabbatati or Insabbathists.” — Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, p.308.

As further evidence in this work clearly shows, the unbroken link in the true church reaches down to the present, and the claim is not an empty one, that we still possess in our ministry the same divine unction and virtue possessed by the ancient people of God. Through the practice of laying on of hands and prayer, the true baptism passed down through the centuries. Ministers thus ordained, in every period, have retained and passed on to others this ordination power, a peculiar treasure.

A History of the True Church The Wilbur Church

As an example of the persecutions the early ministers had to endure in order to establish congregations in the truth, we shall give the history of the Wilbur Church of God, which is the oldest true Church of God now functioning in the state of West Virginia. It has been faithfully upholding the true gospel since its organization in 1859, and has always carried the true name, though originally it was known by outsiders by the term "Nilesites," from the name of the minister under whom the little company was raised up.

Elder J. W. Niles, the organizer of the Wilbur congregation, came from Erie, Pa. He was an able speaker, and feared not to declare the whole counsel of God, which, of course, brought the wrath of the evil ones against him. Troublesome times were passed through by Elder Niles and the little company who dared to live up to the light of God's word, as revealed in the Bible.

A little congregation of followers of Jesus stepped out from the world, covenanting to keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Of these we recall the following: John Pierson and wife, Stephen Wilcox and wife, Samuel Vandegrift Grimm and wife, Levi Shuman and wife, Ralph Baker and wife, Newton Wilcox and wife, Perry Brown and wife. Later Hon. Wilcox, Drusilia Wilcox, Rachel Ann Wilcox, Paul Kirk Wilcox, Leander Shuman, Jennie Shuman, Asberry Shuman and wife, and Can Vandegrift and wife united with the congregation.

Not having any church house at the time, they met for worship at the different homes. Opposition was unrelenting against them, however. Satan did his best to destroy them, especially the one responsible for the raising up of the church.

At one particular time a meeting was in progress at the home of Cornelius Pierson. While Elder Niles was preaching, a noise was heard without, and upon investigation it was found that Mr. Solomon Stewart was standing on a log, preaching against what he called "the strange doctrine of 1859," the "Nilesites" as they were called.

On another occasion the foot-bridge over the creek was fixed in such a way that it would throw Elder Niles and John Pierson and his

wife into the waters of the creek and drown them as they returned home from the meeting. However, as God ever does, His divine intervening hand was placed around them, and they decided to stay with Cornelius Pierson for the night, their lives being thus saved.

Another incident is recalled of the severe antagonism that the church incurred at that time. After the meeting of the evening, and the family had retired for the night, the house was rocked by members of the community who were inflamed over the new doctrine as they called it. The rocks were aimed mostly at Elder Niles; but one of them struck John Pierson on the head, inflicting a severe wound. All the windows of the dwelling were broken; but God delivered His servants.

As a last extreme, lies were circulated against the truth. As no one could withstand the logic of Elder Niles, as he declared the plan of salvation from the Scriptures, it was put forth that the Bible used by him was a different one than those used by other ministers. To prove that it was the same Bible which others believed in, it was taken to Mr. Davis Hickman, at that time Clerk of the Court, and upon investigation he declared it to be the same kind of Bible. However, this assertion is continually met with by the ministers of the Church of God, on account of the fact that they use passages from the Holy Writings that other ministers seldom mention. People being unacquainted with them, believe another Bible is being used. Ministers should declare the whole counsel of God, which would, necessarily, bring in all the Bible, and then the congregations would be acquainted with the entire word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation, through Christ.

Another false report, which is believed in to this day, was that the Church at Wilbur appointed the time of the coming Jesus. It was reported that the day and hour was set for the return of Jesus to this world; and that upon this set night, the church assembled prepared to meet the Lord, robed in white garments made for the occasion. It was also claimed that a hole was cut through the roof in order that the Lord might alight in their midst more easily. The reliable of the community did not believe the false report; yet the more susceptible

did, and to this day the irresponsible have been repeating it, when there is not one iota of truth in the fable.

The truth of the matter was that the church had met on the night in question, which was the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, in the spring time, which was the month and day which were kept as the Passover by the children of God from the night that God, by the hand of Moses, led them out of the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:1-17). Jesus, who was the light of the world, met on this day and celebrated the Passover with his disciples and then instituted the "Lord's Supper," instructing them that they should eat it "in remembrance" of him. — Luke 22:7-20.

The early church, as the Apostle Paul said, kept the Passover in its season, that is the fourteenth day of Nisan, counting from the new moon nearest the spring equinox. As the beloved Paul said, "I have received from the Lord that which I have delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." — I Corinthians 11:23-26.

In other words, the Wilbur brethren were celebrating the annual observance of the Lord's Supper. Being on the fourteenth day, it was the same as when Jesus ate it with his disciples. Being at night, it was the same time that he ate it. Being supper it was the right kind of a meal. In all this the Church of God has ever followed the example of her Lord and Master.

The Church of God has never set the time for the coming of the Lord, and yet they are not in darkness of this event, as others who do not take heed to the sure word of prophecy. By the signs that are given in the prophecies of the holy men of God the church ever knows certain things must come to pass before that event comes upon the world. Our ministers preach the coming of the Lord, as all

good ministers of Jesus Christ should do. We look forward to its occurrence, trusting that we will be worthy to stand when it arrives. Yet we know by the signs of the times that Jesus is coming, and that soon, too. He is even at the door. — I Thessalonians 5:1-6; Rev. 22:20.

Church of God ministers at Wilbur have ever had to defend the word of truth, and three debates have been held with those who wish to know the truth of the Scriptures. The most notable of these discussions were that of Dugger and McVey, and Jones and Moore. The truth has ever been verified in these discussions, and the Church of God has continued to stand with it.

Today the Wilbur church does not stand alone, but other companies and scattered members hold aloft the true faith over the state. Not only so, but the headquarters for the work in the United States is located at Salem, West Virginia, and from there the “faith once delivered unto the saints” is going rapidly to those who have not heard.

CONCLUSION

We now bring to a close the history of the true church of the living God. We have endeavored to trace her wanderings before the cruel hand of the oppressor from country to country, from the holy city Jerusalem, through Asia Minor, into the mountains and valleys of Europe, across the Atlantic, into the wilderness of the new world, America. The course these saints have followed has been marked with the life blood of the martyrs, who, rather than deny the true gospel, suffered after the example of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of this faith.

The unquestioned integrity of these true followers of the Lamb, the purity of their doctrine, and their lives, the ardent love they manifested for the gospel Jesus preached, the zeal they evidenced in the face of every opposing foe, as they witnessed to the truth which they had inherited, the faithfulness which actuated their lives in the

midst of darkness, sin, ignorance and superstition, have thrilled our very being as we have traced their path through the centuries to our day.

The fact that God has not been without witness in every generation of the gospel age, is evidence indeed that there is a supreme Architect over all, fashioning the ages as He will, impelling men by that divine love, which only heaven can give, to stand firm against every device and agent of Satan. As we look back upon the faithfulness and martyrdom of those, who in past ages witnessed for “the faith once delivered unto the saints” of God, how it should inspire us, the remnant of the children of the woman driven into the wilderness, to devoutly adore Him—the true God, and uphold the same pristine gospel of Christ for which saints in all generations have willingly died.

The true faith has come down to us through persecution and bloodshed. The fact that we have the scriptures for our learning, and the liberty we now enjoy to worship God according to His Word is a heritage we owe not only to God, but also to those who have died for the true faith. The history of the true church is not yet completed, and will not be until the day when the Gospel Age closes with the coming of the Prince of Peace. Until that day may the same God, who actuated the lives of the saints of the past who were faithful unto death, so inspire each reader to hold aloft the true gospel amidst the trials and persecutions which shall come, and be among those faithful ones of past generations who shall have a place among the followers of the Lamb.

1972 Update

The world headquarters has been established at Jerusalem, Israel, according to a resolution passed at the General Conference of the Church of God in August 1931, at Stanberry, Missouri, and one of the same nature passed unanimously at Salem, West Virginia, as mentioned previously.

The church building at Jerusalem will comfortably seat around one hundred people, and the Publishing House is fully equipped with two self feeding large printing presses, one of which is an off-set press which does beautiful color printing, and a good Linotype on which is set five different languages. The Publishing House is well equipped with all other necessary machinery.

The Israel Bible Correspondence School, with Elder Harry Schlenker manager, sends out 44 Bible lessons in seven languages, with more languages being added. At this date, June, 1972, around three thousand have ordered the lessons in Hebrew from Israel, and about three hundred in other languages. There are also sixteen hundred readers of the monthly magazine "*Mount Zion Reporter*" in Israel who have sent in their own orders for the paper.

Over sixty thousand New Testaments in the Hebrew language, and Bibles with both Testaments have been ordered by card and letter from Israel during the past two years, and have been supplied from headquarters by those associated together in the Father's work at Jerusalem.

The Jerusalem World Headquarters has representatives laboring in establishing this true faith in about every country of the world, where many congregations have been raised up, and many evangelists are laboring. Calls come in to Jerusalem World Headquarters for Jewish ministers, and they are being sent to different countries. Two years ago, Elder A.M. Shoemaker was sent in answer to a call from Kenya, Africa. In about two months labor there he baptized 284 converts and ordained sixteen men called to the ministry, and receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The *Jerusalem Messenger*, published at Jerusalem, gives many reports and photographs of groups and workers over the world who love Jerusalem. Psalm 128:5, 6.

There are a number of other groups of this same faith with some slight non-essential doctrinal differences in various places carrying on a good work, and printing various publications from their national headquarters. We believe they are all gathering fruit for the kingdom, and the foundation creed of all of these groups is the same, viz.,

Revelation 12:17, “the commandments of Elohim and the testimonies of Yahshua/Jeshua (Christ).”

One of these headquarters is Denver, Colorado; another, Meridian, Idaho, and some that make the sacred Hebrew names of the Father and the Son, a special part of their message (Proverbs 30:4; Psalm 68:4, and 91:14, also 69:35, 36, and Isaiah 52:6) are located at Junction City, Oregon, and Jackson Gap, Alabama, also The Faith of Holt, Michigan.

We believe these will all fall in line with the Holy Scriptures and publicly affirm that Jerusalem was chosen by the Father, and must be recognized as the World Headquarters by all of the remnant people holding to the New Testament name, and the true faith once delivered to the saints, as they are led further by the Holy Spirit.

“Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man.” — Luke 21:24 to 36.

Some Other Resources Available from <https://chcpublications.net/>

Publications

The Holy Bible CHCoG Translation - This translation from the original Hebrew and Aramaic is accurate and readable, giving you a clear understanding of God's message to you.

Everlasting Life is God's Gift - Does the Bible teach that you have everlasting life? If not, how can you receive God's gift of immortality?

Fifty Years in the Church of Rome - This is Charles Chiniquy's stunning classic about his life as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, and how he leads his people out and into a living relationship with Christ.

Books of Moses - Fact or Fiction Series - Are the miracles recorded in Genesis and Exodus our true history? Do the facts support Special Creation or the Big Bang & Evolution scenarios?

What is God's Name? - How can we know what God's Name is and how to Pronounce it? Does the Bible teach us to use God's Name?

The Ten Commandments - What are God's Ten Commandments? How do they guide us in our relationships with God, our family and our neighbours? Shows how obedience to Jehovah's Instructions would result in true civilization.

Jeshua the Messiah: Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity? - Explores the relationships between God the Father, our Lord Jeshua the Messiah, the Holy Spirit and us.

The Sabbath in Scripture - Has God's Seventh-day Sabbath been 'done away with'? What does the Sabbath mean, and does God want us to keep it?

Spirit, Soul and Body - Take a deeper look at the Bible's teachings about the composition of human beings and the roles of our soul and spirit.

Rome's Challenge: Why do Protestants Keep Sunday? - This Roman Catholic article proves there is no scriptural basis for changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, and shows that the Roman Catholic church made the change.

Eastern Meditation and Jeshua the Messiah - Recounts the experiences of a CHCoG member who became a Christian while practising Eastern Meditation.

God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah - Shows how God's Calendar reveals that Jeshua truly kept the Sign of Jonah, His ultimate proof that He is the Messiah.

Radiocarbon Dating - Shows how changes in normal and radioactive carbon levels can drastically alter radiocarbon dates. Not heavily technical.

Software

Calculated Biblical Calendar - Calculates dates of Annual Holy Days, Crucifixion, Flood, Creation: allows you to test the new moon visibility locally.

Radiocarbon Dating - Calculates the effects that changes in the geomagnetic field and radiocarbon/carbon ratios on radioactive dating.

Free Library

We have a large range of Christian and Creationist literature, CDs and DVDs that are available for borrowing within Australia. Please contact us for our list.