

Truth Triumphant for Children

From the Original book Truth Triumphant By Benjamin Wilkinson

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CHAPTER ONE ***(The First 200 Years of the Early Church)***

Very soon after Jesus went back to heaven, Satan began to bring error into the church. While the apostle Paul was preaching he said, "For 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.

One of the ways that Satan spread error was through a well-respected college in Alexandria, which was located in Northern Africa.

For more than 200 years before Jesus came to earth, there were Jewish leaders who went to this school. They were taught to compromise with pagan ideas and to accept the use of tradition along with the Hebrew scriptures. That is why many of the leaders in Israel did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah when He came. They were looking for a Messiah who would defeat the Romans and make Israel strong and prosperous. They were not looking for – and did not want – a Messiah who came to provide a way of escape from sin and Satan's power. Because of these wrong ideas the Jewish leaders were able to kill the Son of God and not even realize the awfulness of their sin.

The Alexandrian college taught what is called the allegorical method. Rather than accepting events in the Bible as really happening, or places mentioned in the scriptures as being real cities or towns, they were taught to make them represent something. An example of this type of teaching comes from Rabbi Zakkai (around AD 70) where he taught that unclean animals listed in the Old Testament, such as the hare and the pig, referred to Greece and Rome rather than to the actual animals. Another teacher, Jerome, taught that the Holy City that John the Revelator wrote about was really talking about the present world.

Dr. Wilkinson tells us that Clement, one of the best-known teachers at Alexandria (CAD194), and his famous pupil, Origen, taught students how to allegorize the Bible. They taught that the Bishop of Rome (the pope) was the supreme leader and there was no salvation if you did not belong to the Roman Church. Origen said, "Both Jews and Christians believe that the Bible was written by the Holy Spirit, but we disagree with the interpretation of what is contained in it. Nor do we live like the Jews, since we consider that it is not the literal interpretation of the law which contains the spirit of the legislation." (CopticChurch.net).

This same reasoning is given by churches today as to why they don't keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They say that they now keep the "spirit of the law" and that they do not need to keep the actual "words" of the law. We know that Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." We also are told in Revelation 14:12, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

We sometimes hear people questioning whether the Bible can be believed just as it was written. They claim that some of the stories just couldn't have happened the way they were told, so they look for other ways to explain them. Many of these arguments can be traced back to Clement and Origen. Origen discussed how the story of the Flood caused some problems since there couldn't possibly be room in the ark for all the different animals in the world. Origen taught that there was a real ark that floated on the water, but that represented the Church in the future which will escape from the fire at the end of the world.

Today you may have heard people question whether the literal six days of creation can be believed as Moses wrote them in Genesis. This is not new. Origen wrote almost two thousand years ago, "Could any man of sound judgment suppose that the first, second, and third days (of creation) had an evening and a morning, when there were as yet no sun or moon or stars? Could anyone be so unintelligent as to think that God made a paradise somewhere in the east and planted it with trees, like a farmer, or that in that paradise he put a tree of life, a tree you could see and know with your senses, a tree you could derive life from by eating its fruit with the teeth in your head? When the Bible says that God used to walk in paradise in the evening or that Adam hid behind a tree, no one, I think, will question that these are only fictitious stories of things that never actually happened, and that figuratively they refer to certain mysteries." (CopticChurch.net)

It is a serious thing to change God's Word and make it say something to suit your own ideas. God's true children will accept what the Bible says even though everything may not be perfectly clear to them now. Revelation 22:18 warns us, "If any man shall add unto these things (in God's Word), God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

We know that Satan and his agents have worked hard to cover up things that would convince us of the truth of the Bible. Dr. Carl Baugh tells about a huge seam of coal that men were digging in the United States. They uncovered many large human bones that were in with all the coal. This was powerful evidence of a flood, so it was ordered that this coal mine be flooded with water so no one could go into that area again. Today there is a dam sitting over this site.

Within 100 years of Paul's death, Tertullian (AD150 – 235), a church leader, was teaching oblations (special ceremonies) for the dead, making the sign of the cross on the forehead, and dipping people in the water three times to baptize. For those who questioned his practices he wrote: "If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as the strengthener, and faith as their observer." Truth Triumphant 53.

Just 200 years after Jesus went back to heaven there was a crisis within the church. People would have to decide if the scriptures should be read and obeyed as they were written or whether man-made traditions would direct their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

Lucian (CAD 250 – 312)

(Lucian and the Church in Syria)

As a crisis developed within the early Christian Church a defender of truth was needed. God found His hero in Lucian (CAD250 – 312) who was born in Antioch.

We are told in the Bible that most of the leadership of the early Christian church remained in Jerusalem to preach about Jesus. This was obeying what Jesus had told His disciples before He went back to heaven. He said that they should go and preach the gospel to the whole world, "beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47).

The early stories found in Acts took place in Jerusalem, but when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70 many of the Christians fled to Antioch, the capital of Syria. In Acts 11:26 we are told, "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

Antioch was a center of Greek life and culture. It was famous for its beautiful buildings, paintings and artwork. Young Lucian had to choose between the power, wealth, elegance and impurity of life in Antioch or the simple, quiet, and pious life found in the hundreds of Christian villages and cities in the surrounding areas. Dr. Wilkinson writes, "At that time they (these villages and cities) were the flourishing home of a learned, devoted Christianity, clinging closely to the early simplicity of the gospel, and refusing to adopt the unscriptural teachings and customs of heathenism which were gaining ground in some professed Christian bodies.

"The early years of Lucian were years of great contrast. He quickly discerned that there were two movements talking shape in Christendom, one loose in doctrine and affiliating itself with heathenism, the other based on the deep foundations of the Christian faith." Truth Triumphant 46.

If you were fortunate enough to visit this area of Syria today, you would find hundreds of ruins of what are called "the silent cities of Syria." These well laid-out cities are almost perfectly preserved, with architecturally beautiful houses which still have their balconies, chairs, basins, oil and wine presses and vats, water cisterns and family tombs.

On some stone doorposts there are carved inscriptions that tell us these families were followers of God. On a large house it says, "Lord, protect this house and all those living in it, Amen." And on another building you can read, "To Christ the Victory, Away Satan!" In one town some prominent buildings had inscriptions which read, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, the Word of God, dwells here; let no evil enter" or "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in" and "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Because Antioch was on the border between Rome and Persia, news, decrees and culture steadily streamed into that city. Lucian soon saw that "the churches of Rome and Alexandria had entered into an alliance. Alexandria had, for more than two centuries before Christ, been the real capital of the Jews who were compromising with paganism." Truth Triumphant 47.

Reviewing the history of the Jewish nation Lucien could see the effect of accepting the Greek education taught in Alexandria. It was because of their acceptance of Greek culture

- the sports, arts and education - that the Jews were unprepared to accept the Messiah when He came to earth. Lucien could see a similar crisis coming into Christianity and he

knew that God's education would be the only safety against the Greek education from Alexandria.

"The church at Alexandria was in this atmosphere. The city of Rome had been for seven hundred years, and was still to be for some time, the world capital of paganism. This environment greatly influenced the church at Rome. Lucian grew up in the churches of Syria and of the Near East, which were modeled after the churches of Judea. Here was the divine pattern for further believers. Lucian founded a college at Antioch which strove to counteract the dangerous ecclesiastical alliance between Rome and Alexandria." Truth Triumphant 47.

There were four things which separated the two colleges. (1) Those that started the college at Alexandria exalted tradition. (2) Clement, the most famous teacher at Alexandria, boasted that he would not teach Christianity unless it were mixed with pagan philosophy. (3) Victor I, bishop of Rome, made an agreement with Clement, (about AD 190) for his help to make Sunday the prominent day of worship in the church. (4) Victor I said anyone who would not cooperate with him in making Easter always come on Sunday would be excommunicated (thrown out of the church). The school at Alexandria was in full support of this ruling.

It was from this time that there began to be seen a real separation between the Church of the East and the Church of Rome. The school in Antioch trained many young people in theology, the arts, sciences, and architecture. Those defenders of the faith followed the counsel of Jude in his epistle: "Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Jude 3.

Lucian's greatest gift to Protestant history was his editing of what we call today the Textus Receptus, or Received Text. Lucian took all the manuscripts that were known to the early Christians and compiled them together into one "New Testament." "The Protestant denominations are built upon that manuscript of the Greek New Testament, sometimes called the Textus Receptus, or Received Text. It is that Greek New Testament from which the writings of the apostles in Greek have been translated into English, German, Dutch, and other languages. During the Dark Ages, the Received Text was practically unknown outside the Greek Church. It was restored to Christendom by the labors of that great scholar, Erasmus. It is altogether too little known that the real editor of the Received Text was Lucian. None of Lucian's enemies fail to credit him with this work. Neither Lucian nor Erasmus, but rather the apostles wrote the Greek New Testament." Truth Triumphant 50.

Origen, the teacher at the Alexandrian college, also made translations and commentaries of the Bible. These were written in such a way that they allowed many kinds of errors to be introduced into Christianity. Satan knows that if he can change the Word of God he can lead people into believing his lies.

David Otis Fuller tells us in his book, *Which Bible?*, that the Textus Receptus was the Bible of the early Eastern Christians. From this manuscript came the Bibles for the great Syrian church, the Waldensian Church of northern Italy, the Gallic Church in southern France, the Celtic Church in Scotland, and Ireland, and the Greek Catholic Church.

The question could be asked – Why did the early churches and all the Protestant Reformers choose the Textus Receptus when translating their Bibles?

Textus Receptus is based on the vast majority (90%) of the 5000+ Greek manuscripts in existence. That is why it is also called the Majority Text.

Textus Receptus is not mutilated with deletions, additions and amendments, as is the Minority Text.

Textus Receptus agrees with the earliest versions of the Bible: Peshitta (AD150), Old Latin Vulgate (AD157), the Italic Bible (AD157) etc. These Bibles were produced 200 years before the minority Egyptian codices favored by the Roman Church. Remember this vital point.

Textus Receptus agrees with the vast majority of the 86,000+ citations from scripture by the early church fathers.

Textus Receptus is untainted with Egyptian philosophy and unbelief.

Textus Receptus strongly upholds the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith: the creation account in Genesis, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, the Saviour's miracles, his bodily resurrection, his literal return and the cleansing power of his blood!

- Textus Receptus was – and still is – the enemy of the Roman Church. This is an important fact to remember.

Today we have an explosion of new Bibles. However very few use the Textus Receptus as the basis for their translations as the King James Version did. With Satan doing everything that he can to lead people away from God, maybe he has found a very clever way to give us something that looks like scripture but actually contains some of his lies in place of God's truths. We should carefully study out this controversy between the Bibles of Protestantism and those of the Roman Church. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32*

Let's review Lucian's achievements. Let me again quote from Dr. Wilkinson:

"The school at Antioch, founded by Lucian, developed a system of theology, so real that though all the power of the papacy was thrown against it, it finally prevailed...

"The Antioch system of theology extended from England to China and from Turkestan to Ethiopia....

"Lucian and his school produced and edited a definite and complete Bible....

"The text which Lucian gave to the world was to all intents pure and correct. Even his opponents declare that there are no Greek New Testaments older than Lucian's....

"The theology of Antioch stood for the binding obligation of the Ten Commandments....

"The theology of Antioch teaches salvation for sinful man through the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross....

"The majority of the churches of Syria and of the East continued to observe Saturday, the Sabbath of the fourth commandment from the days of the apostles and throughout the centuries....

"The church organization developed by the apostles and continued largely by Syrian theology was simple and evangelical. Fundamentally, it rejected the union of church and state...." Truth Triumphant 59-61.

As we have seen, it was only a short time after Jesus had been on earth that there were two parties with very different Biblical beliefs who claimed to be followers of Christ. Those same parties are still in the world today and each person will have to choose which group they will belong to.

*For more information on Bible Translations you may wish to read: *Battle of the Bible* by H. H. Meyers; *New Age Bible Versions* by Gail Riplinger; *Which Bible?* By David Otis Fuller; *The Authorized Bible Vindicated* by B. G. Wilkinson.

CHAPTER THREE

Vigilantius (AD 364 – 408)

(Vigilantius, Leader of the Waldenses)

As we learned in the previous chapter, errors began creeping into the beliefs and practices of the early church soon after the apostles died. If truth was going to be kept alive God would need brave defenders to protest against Satan's errors. One of the earliest "protestant" was Helvidius I (AD 300-360). He was from northern Italy and spoke out against a man named Jerome, who was writing a Bible for the Roman Church. Jerome's Vulgate, the Latin Bible of the papacy, used corrupted Greek manuscripts from Alexandria rather than the pure manuscripts that Lucian had edited.

Helvidius also spoke out against some of the new teachings of the church where Mary was called the "Blessed Virgin," and the new belief that she remained a virgin all her life. This was directly opposite to the teaching of the Bible in Matthew 1:24, 25. We read, "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus."

The second reformer was also from northern Italy. His name was Jovinian (AD 330-390). He also taught against Rome's new teachings. He said that it was as honorable for a woman to be a wife as for her to remain a virgin. The Roman Church was teaching that truly religious women should not marry and instead should give their life to work for the church. Jovinian said that fasting and eating with thanksgiving are equally pleasing to God, that a person baptized with the Spirit and water cannot sin (see: 1 John 3:9), that all sins are equal, and that all who are good will receive the same heavenly reward (See: Revelation 22:14).

It is likely that the followers of Jovinian took refuge in the northern valleys of Italy where their Bible-based teachings were to have a great impact on the reformation hundreds of years later.

After Jovinian, Vigilantius came forward in the battle for God's truths. "Vigilantius has been called 'The Forerunner of the Reformation,' and 'One of the earliest of our Protestant forefathers.'" *Truth Triumphant* 75. He was "the earliest leader of prominence among the noble Waldenses in northern Italy and southern France." *Truth Triumphant* 63. This strong defender of truth was born in southern France, near the Pyrenees Mountains, where his father kept one of the inns where people could rest, eat, and change horses while traveling the well-kept road that connected the Roman Empire.

From an early age Vigilantius would have been exposed to important people traveling from countries which we know today as Great Britain, various European countries like France and Spain, Greece, Turkey, the Holy Land and Egypt. Many would have been merchants, ambassadors, couriers, and bishops along with ordinary travelers. Vigilantius was exposed to the various languages and customs of these visitors and he was very interested in learning about the world he was growing up in.

As a young man Vigilantius worked for one of the great historians of that time, Sulpicious Severus. "Vigilantius early learned to love his employer. He admired greatly the brilliant intellect of this man who could feed the hungry, clothe the poor, and visit the sick, while engaged in many literary labors." Truth Triumphant 64. It was through watching his employer that Vigilantius began to see some new and strange things being done under the name of Christianity.

Sulpicious went to visit Martin, bishop of Tours, and when he came back he told stories of that pious man sleeping on the cold ground with only ashes under him and sackcloth to cover him. Martin said "a Christian ought to die on ashes." He did not wear warm clothes, even in the winter or when sick, and ate only unwholesome food. All of these actions were looked at by Sulpicious as evidence that Martin of Tours had a very deep religious experience. He worried that if he did not follow this example of self-denial that maybe he wasn't spiritual enough to be saved.

Vigilantius was not so sure. He watched Sulpicious turn from obedience to the pure words of the Bible to instead follow after visions and miracles. He saw a well-respected gentleman, Paulinus of Nola, praying in front of images to his favorite saint, and Vigilantius felt that he must write and speak against these heathen practices which were being adopted into the church.

Vigilantius traveled to Bethlehem to see Jerome, the man who wrote the Latin Bible which was used by the papacy. He found him shrunken from long fasts and mortifications (like sleeping on hard and cold floors, whipping his back and not dressing in warm enough clothes). Some church leaders were teaching that in order to serve the church best, men should not marry and instead live in secluded places (likes caves or deserts) away from normal homes. Vigilantius did some serious thinking. These man-made rules made him decide that he could have nothing to do with those that were following the teachings coming from the college at Alexandria. Their unscriptural theology and use of pagan ceremonies made it impossible for him to compromise with them to keep peace in the church. Like Jesus he said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34.

Vigilantius taught:

That those who revered relics were idolaters. (Exodus 20:4, 5)

That continence (self-restraint) and celibacy were wrong, as leading to the worst scandals. (1 Timothy 3:2-4)

That lighting candles in churches, during the day, in honor of the martyrs was wrong, because that was a heathen rite.

That Apostles and martyrs had no presence at their tombs. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6)

That it was useless to pray for the dead. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6)

That it was better to keep wealth and practice habitual charity than to give away all one's property and become poor and needy.

That it was wrong to retire into the desert.

We see that many of these errors which are still practiced within Christianity today began very early in the church. This brought great sorrow to those that wanted to follow the Bible and yet have unity with those who also called themselves Christians. Each of the members of the Church in the Wilderness had to determine that obedience to God was more important than unity with those compromising with error. That will again be a great test at the end of time.

"Satan will arouse indignation against the minority who refuse to accept popular customs and traditions. . . . Persecuting rulers, ministers, and church members will conspire against them. With voice and pen, by boasts, threats, and ridicule, they will seek to overthrow their faith. . . . Not having a 'Thus saith the Scriptures' to bring against the advocates of the Bible Sabbath, they will resort to oppressive enactments to supply the lack. To secure popularity and patronage, legislators will yield to the demand for Sunday laws. But those who fear God cannot accept an institution that violates a precept of the Decalogue. On this battlefield will be fought the last great conflict in the controversy between truth and error." The Faith I Live By 311.

CHAPTER FOUR

Patrick (CAD 360 -461)

(Patrick, Organizer of Church in Ireland)

Most of you have heard about St. Patrick. Every March there is a day named in his honor where people wear green and you see lots of shamrocks. Patrick is known as the father of Irish Christianity. We can be grateful for Dr. Wilkinson's research that is so different from what is written in most books today. As we study about this early hero of truth you will hear a history that only careful searching could have uncovered. Some of what we learn you may not have heard before because in a way there are two "Patricks" – the one that belonged to the Church in the Wilderness and then the fictional Patrick.

Patrick belonged to the Celtic race that lived in what today are England, Scotland and Ireland. History tells us that the Celts were descendants of Gomer, a grandson of Noah. Celtic Christianity came from churches in Asia Minor which sent missionaries to France and also to what we call today Great Britain. These Christians were known as the British Celtic Christians.

You may find it interesting that this well-known Irishman was not born in Ireland. Although many places have been listed as the birthplace of Patrick, Dr. Wilkinson believes that he was born in the kingdom of Strathclyde which was part of England, then referred to as "the Britains." Rome controlled this area and Patrick was probably born a Roman citizen, like the apostle Paul. His grandfather had been a presbyter (a high church leader) and his father took an active role as a deacon. Although surrounded by Christian influences, Patrick was young when he turned his back on God. When he was almost sixteen years old he was captured and carried away to Ireland.

Of this time Patrick says, "I did not know the true God; and was taken to Ireland in captivity with many thousand men in accordance with our deserts, because we walked at a distance from God and did not observe His commandments." (This was taken from his

writing, Confession.) During his seven years of captivity he learned to know, love, and obey God through the school of affliction. Like the prodigal son, he worked for his captor taking care of animals. He experienced hunger and nakedness, which turned his thoughts and heart back to his family and what he had been taught about God as a child. When he escaped and returned to his former home he was a truly converted Christian.

During his years as a captive Patrick became fluent in the Irish form of the Celtic language, which would be very important in his later preaching and teaching. He felt that God was calling him to spread the gospel to the people of Ireland who were living under the superstitions and practices of the Druids. These people believed in reincarnation (the belief that people come back again and again to the earth and live sometimes as animals or people or trees), they did divination (telling the future) and would use magic to cast spells.

Many of the Druid's pagan holidays were not destroyed but rather were changed into the Roman Church's holy days. For instance the Druid's Winter Solstice became Christmas; the festival Ostara, named after the goddess Istar, became Easter; Samhain – when they honored the dead, became Halloween and All Saint's Day; and Imbolc – which was held on February 2nd was moved to February 14th as St. Valentine's Day.

Patrick knew the strong influence of the Druids and he knew that for Christianity to grow in the future, education was very important. He established training centers like Bangor, Clonard, and Armagh. These were Bible schools where the gospel was taught so its students could go and continue to spread the gospel.

The Itala Bible, which Patrick used, was the first translation from Greek to Latin three hundred years before the Latin Vulgate was translated. Part of the students' studies included the copying of scripture so that others could have God's Word to study and memorize.

By the seventh century much of Europe was heading into what we call the Dark Ages when most of the people lived in poverty, illiteracy (they couldn't read or write) and superstition. In contrast, Ireland was known at that time as the "land of saints and scholars." Much of the credit for the literate population, the busy schools, and the beautiful copies of the Itala Bible (which are famous even today for their gorgeous penmanship and artwork) goes to Patrick. It is believed that as many as 350 churches were established, and over 120,000 people were converted. Although most of Europe was falling into the Dark Ages, Ireland continued to be a beacon of light as its people were taught the scriptures.

We know that Patrick used the Itala Bible rather than Jerome's Vulgate, and that he permitted his pastors to marry, which went against the practice of celibacy which the Roman Church was practicing. He obeyed the Ten Commandments, and Dr. Wilkinson tells us that the Celtic Church "kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday." In talking about Columba (a student of Patrick's) we are told that "in this matter the Scots had perhaps kept up the traditional usage of the ancient Irish Church which observed Saturday instead of Sunday as the day of rest." Truth Triumphant 95.

During Patrick's day there were theological arguments swirling through Christianity. The Council of Nicaea, held in AD 325, started a controversy about how to state the relationship of the Three Persons of the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Roman Church taught that there were "three Divine Persons in one body." They did not agree with the teaching that Jesus died as man's substitute upon the cross and that the Ten Commandments were still to be obeyed as they were written in Exodus 20. Patrick, however, taught that Jesus

died our death on the cross, that the law was to be honored and obeyed, and that when Jesus died the Father and the Holy Spirit were untouched by His death.

Although Patrick stood against many of the teachings of the Roman Church, they ended up making him into a saint of their church. Many years later when the Roman Church began to try to win Ireland to her beliefs, she found the nation's love for Patrick was very deep and loyal. Rather than try to defame his name they decided to create their own Patrick - one who performed marvelous miracles. There were stories of Patrick making a stone float so a poor leper could have a ride to Ireland, and of him chasing all the snakes out of Ireland. They made up stories of him bringing many relics from Rome - including a sheet with Christ's blood on it and some of the hair of Jesus' mother. Little by little the real stories of Patrick were replaced by the imaginary ones.

For over nine hundred years the church of Ireland stood against the Roman Church's attempts to take it over, but in the middle of the twelfth century it was put under papal rule. As one author put it, "In the centuries to follow, [Patrick's] legacy as a faithful Sabbath-keeper would quickly be shrouded with half-truths and mysticism due to the eventual overthrow of the Celtic Church. (The victor always writes history.)...Sadly, the truth behind his powerful work is twisted and dimly lit, but that doesn't mean the real truth can't be told....It is a lesson we should not forget. Ireland prospered in peace for centuries as it obeyed God's commands by [Patrick's] lead. After it incorporated unholy doctrines and practices, it fell into despair and was subjugated by oppression and cruelty." (Anthony Lester, Amazing Facts Inside Report).

CHAPTER FIVE

COLUMBA AND THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND

(521 - 597)

Columba was born in Ireland in AD 521. When he was born he was given two names – Crimthann (which means "Wolf") and Colum (which means "dove"). Because of his love for God, and his kind and simple life he was best known as Colum (a dove) rather than the fiercer Crimthann. He was of royal blood but, like Moses, he chose to give up his claims to a throne and instead became a servant of God.

The most famous schools in Ireland at that time were the ones built from Patrick's work. Columba attended the schools at Moville, Leinster, and Clonard. It was at Clonard that he studied under Finnian, who was so famous and well respected that enrollment at his university was said to be 3000 students. It was here that Columba learned the art of copying and illustrating the Bible. Columba is said to have copied 300 New Testaments himself. Remember, there were no computers or printing presses in those days – each copy was done by hand. He is known to have used the Itala Bible, which was the version favored by Patrick.

One of the events to affect Columba's religious beliefs was the Council of Constantinople that took place in AD 553. "At that council, the churches of the Roman Empire surrendered their freedom to the papacy. Offended at the unscriptural [changes]...four large communions in the East – the Armenian, the Coptic, the Jacobite, and the Church of the East (often falsely called the Nestorian Church) – separated from the western hierarchy. The news of these revolutionary happenings had come to the ears of the Celtic believers throughout the British Isles." Truth Triumphant 100, 101. The church in Ireland knew that they would have to prepare themselves to meet a similar confrontation with the Roman Church.

Columba finished his schooling when he was twenty-five and went to Northern Ireland where he built a school and church at Derry. This place is now known as Londonderry. After establishing this training center, Columba spent the next seven years setting up as many as three hundred churches and many church schools throughout Ireland. He helped the sick and poor and was respected and loved by all.

Yet Columba had plans to become a missionary. Scotland was the land he chose for spreading the gospel. Much of Scotland was pagan, and since one of his relatives had won a kingdom in what was then called Caledonia, Columba decided this would be a good place to establish a center of education that would train young people to go as missionaries with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The island that he was given permission to build on was named Iona. On this small island, Columba began to build a school that would become world-famous. For 641 years the followers of Columba lived on this island until they were driven out by the Benedictine monks in 1204.

Here on Iona the students received the highest Biblical training, studied the sciences (such as astronomy), learned Greek and Latin along with gaining knowledge in agriculture, baking, mechanics, music, and architecture. The students learned how to build simple churches, homes and other buildings. Both students and teachers spent time in a work program in addition to their studies. Much of their day was spent in working the large orchards, meadows, and gardens that supplied food for those living on Iona. Others helped in the bakehouse, worked at mechanical pursuits and other manual labor.

It has been said that it often took eighteen years of training at this school before students were ordained. They finished with a thorough knowledge of God's Word, which made them powerful leaders and preachers. They were able to reproduce large portions of scripture, and had the capabilities needed to start their own school and churches.

Columba taught his followers that their beliefs and practices must be based on the Bible and the Bible only. They were taught never to accept as truth any doctrine not found in the Bible. The students were required to memorize much of the Scriptures, and the songs they sung were often Psalms set to music. For an example of an eighth century Irish hymn you might want to read the words for "Be Thou My Vision."

The young people of Iona were taught the basic doctrines of Christianity such as the divinity of Christ, baptism, the atonement (what Christ is doing in the heavenly sanctuary today), inspiration of the Scriptures, and the prophecies connected with the last days. They did reject the papal doctrines of infallibility (that the Roman Church is always correct), celibacy (the priests cannot marry), transubstantiation (the communion bread becomes the real body of Jesus, and the grape juice becomes the real blood of Jesus when the priest prays over the bread and wine), the confessional (telling a person your sins so you can be forgiven), the mass, relic worship, image adoration, burning candles and incense in front of a tomb, and the primacy of Peter.

One of the important activities on Iona was making copies of the Gospels. These scriptures were not only carefully reproduced but were beautifully decorated with artwork which had a Byzantine and Irish influence.

Iona, like the many other churches and schools that Columba had established, was well organized. Each school had a headman who was usually called the abbot. The spiritual

leader of Iona was given the special name of "coarb" and he was looked upon as the spiritual successor of Columba. The pastors were given the name "Culdee" which meant "man of God."

Columba went back to Ireland and visited and taught at many of the schools and churches that he had built before going to Scotland. In a short period of time these missionary churches covered the British Isles as well as much of the continent of Europe with the truth of the gospel.

We know that the Culdee Church kept the seventh-day Sabbath as Patrick and the church in Ireland did. "It seems to have been customary, in the Celtic churches of early times, in Ireland as well as Scotland, to keep Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day of rest from labor. They obeyed the fourth commandment, literally, upon the seventh day of the week." Truth Triumphant 114.

At the time of Columba's death it was recorded, "Having continued his labors in Scotland thirty-four years, he clearly and openly foretold his death, and on Saturday, the ninth of June, said to his disciple Diermit: 'This day is called the Sabbath, that is, the day of rest, and such will it truly be to me; for it will put an end to my labors.'" Truth Triumphant 108.

CHAPTER SIX

COLUMBA'S LEGACY

After the death of Columba, the leadership of Iona was taken over by Baithen. This great man was an experienced missionary who had built a training center on the island of Tiree. It was said that he was the most knowledgeable person in both the Scriptures and in science, of anyone living west of the Alps.

The next four hundred years saw great events take place in England, Scotland, and Ireland. There were many battles between the kingdoms in England and Scotland. All three countries were invaded by the Danes who conquered England and Ireland. There also was intense pressure put on the Celtic Church by the ever-growing papacy. Some of the kingdoms accepted the power of the papacy to help them regain their power from their invaders. The Roman Church worked through the armies of powerful papal states such as Germany, France and Spain. Those that favored the Celtic Church couldn't see any country in Europe that had not made an alliance with Rome. This left the British Isles in a vulnerable position and the papacy was quick to take advantage.

Within 125 years of Columba's death the Picts had been swayed by Rome to begin keeping the Roman Easter (which always fell on a Sunday) and ordered all the Columban pastors to leave.

Yet not everyone was against the Celtic Church. When Kenneth MacAlpine, king of the Scots, united both the Picts and the Scots into one kingdom a little over 125 years later, he quickly brought back the Culdee pastors to lead their former churches.

Because of the deep love and respect that was held for the memory of Columba and his successors, the Scottish Church remained true to most of the ideals that had been handed down to them for over 500 years.

Then in 1058 Malcolm III (or Malcolm Canmore) came to the throne. He had been educated in England with the English king, Edward the Confessor, who was a loyal Roman

Catholic. Malcolm was not well grounded in the Celtic doctrines. It was at his coronation that Celtic Christianity began a fierce struggle to survive.

Satan set a plan in motion that would help destroy the Culdee church. As he has often done in the past, he used someone the king loved to influence him for evil. Satan knows how to use "peer pressure" even on adults. This is what happened: Malcolm III married a woman named Margaret. She was a member of one of the royal houses of England, but had lived in Hungary where she became a devoted Catholic and planned to enter a nunnery. She did agree to marry Malcolm, but she insisted that she be allowed to take charge of the religious affairs of England. Dr. Wilkinson tells us, "Margaret found the Scottish Church a church of the people; she determined to make it the church of the monarch." Truth Triumphant 111.

Now began a battle between the people and the throne. Margaret was a beautiful and intelligent woman with a good memory, and she had been well trained in papal doctrines. She brought with her teachers who would help her deal with the Celtic Church. She knew that it would be unwise to try to destroy the name of Columba so she began instead to pass laws against the customs and teachings of his church. Margaret began to do what had worked so well for the papacy in many other countries – she used the power of the throne to bring obedience to the Church.

A three-day religious congress was called. Margaret was the one in charge and the king gave his full support to his much-loved wife. She began with a law to enforce the Catholic Easter and then moved into the question as to why the Culdees used their native language for services rather than Latin as the Roman Church did. She protested against the Scots' day of worship. "'Let us,' she said, 'venerate the Lord's day, inasmuch as upon it our Saviour rose from the dead: let us do not servile work on that day.'" Truth Triumphant p. 113. Sunday laws were put in place and the inevitable persecution followed.

In 1130, Margaret's son, King David, ordered the Culdees to worship on Sunday or their lands would be taken away and the people expelled. The people chose to be loyal to God's law and had to move while their properties were given to the Sunday-keeping monks. However the Celtic Church's love for the Bible and their attention toward education and critical thinking sowed many seeds of truth. For a time those seeds were hidden but in the days of Wycliffe and later when the Reformation gained strength in England and Scotland they sprang up to flourish and bear fruit.

The godly life of Columba bore a heavy harvest. His life shows us what God can do with a person totally dedicated to Him. The enemies of truth could not erase the powerful influence of this great man. Even while persecuting God's commandment-keeping people. The Roman church had to do for Columba what they had done to Patrick – they made him a Roman saint.

CHAPTER 7

PAPAS, FIRST HEAD OF THE CHURCH IN ASIA

In learning the story of God's true church we have been looking at Europe and the British Isles, but we are now moving east of Jerusalem into a land and culture that we don't know as much about. We will be studying the spread of Christianity in the area where our

most ancient history comes from - the "cradle of civilization" - the area known as Mesopotamia. Today we call that area Iran and Iraq.

Some of our favorite Bible stories come from this area. Tradition tells us that God planted the Garden of Eden in this area and the tower of Babel was built here. Abraham left Ur, a city in this region, to obey God's call, and Daniel and his three friends were brought here as captives to Babylon. Esther was crowned queen in the court of Ahasuerus, Ezra and Nehemiah worked for Persian monarchs, and the three wise men who came to worship baby Jesus were from this area that we are going to learn about.

After Jesus' resurrection and return to heaven the disciples obeyed their Master's command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." Matthew 28:19. On the Day of Pentecost people from many areas of the East heard the powerful preaching of Peter and they took the gospel back to their family and friends. "Only a hundred years after the death of the apostle John, the Assyrian Christians had planted their churches among the Parthians, Persians, Medes, ... Turks, and Huns." Truth Triumphant 118.

Although most of us haven't learned much of the history of this Church in the East it was "the oldest of Christian sects; and, in their better days, were numerous through all the vast regions from Palestine to China; and they carried the gospel into China itself." Truth Triumphant 117. God's Church in this part of the world has been called by many names - the Nestorian Church, the Assyrian Church, the Church of Babylon and also the Chaldean Church - but we are going to call it the Church of the East.

Tradition tells us that the Apostle Matthew worked among the Parthians who were the rulers at that time in what is now Iran and Iraq. Early Christianity had great success in preaching the gospel and changing the lives of its converts. As the holy scriptures were read, sang, or recited from memory, many of the Parthians came to know about the true God in heaven. These people who were known for their immoral lives began to follow God's laws. Those who were not kind to the sick and dying became compassionate and loving, and those who used to take justice into their own hands by stoning thieves now turned justice over to God.

This new church in the East was permitted to grow quickly till around AD 225. Because the ruling Parthians did not have an official state religion new religions were allowed to grow and prosper under their unprejudiced rule.

This was not the way the early Christians were treated by the Roman Empire in Europe. We have heard stories of the cruelty of Nero as he would use Christians as human torches to light up his evening entertainment. To escape these persecutions the early Christians dug out homes, meeting places and cemeteries under the city of Rome. Today if you visit that city you can take a tour into the catacombs dug out of the earth and rock and see how these faithful Christians lived.

One of the reasons for the rapid spread of the gospel was due to the many well-kept roads along the silk-trade routes linking the East and the West. These roads made it easy for people to travel, both for business and also for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Dr. Wilkinson shows the range where truth traveled, "Travelers paused at the famous cities of Edessa or Arbela as they passed on their way from the Celts of Ireland to the Celts of Turkistand or Mongolia." Truth Triumphant 121.

Christian missionaries often sacrificed the comforts of a home and family to spread the good news of salvation. We are told that many young men chose not to marry so that they

would be free to go where God led them without worrying about the obligations of a wife and family. We know the gospel went to the whole world within one generation after the return of Jesus to heaven.

All of this early activity gave a solid foundation to the Church of the East before persecution began from religions like Zoroastrianism. In AD 225 persecution began as the Persians replaced the Parthian kingdom. Its rulers were devout Zoroastrians. The leaders of that religion were worried as they saw so many in their region join Christianity. Five Christian leaders of various church districts were put to death for opposing Zoroastrianism.

Although there had been leaders over small districts before this time, it was decided that having one person over all the work in the East would help make the church a strong and coordinated organization. Papas was elected as the first person to become the head of the entire Church of the East in AD 285. He was so well thought of that churches stretching from Syria all the way to the Orient chose him to be their leader. He was known by the title "catholicos." He was a good choice because he was respected as someone with leadership qualities and he was well educated in Persian and Syrian literature.

When Papas organized the Church of the East, its first headquarters was located in Seleucia which is only about forty miles north from the ancient city of Babylon. This city was one of two cities founded on the Tigris River. Today there is another well-known city in that area that we call Baghdad - the capital of Iraq..

Baghdad is an ancient city with museums which chronicle the history of empires which existed thousands of years before Jesus was born. This is what made the looting of the libraries and museums during the 2003 war in Iraq so devastating. Those artifacts and manuscripts were valuable as a record of this "cradle of civilization" and all its history.

A supreme head of the church was valuable in keeping all parts of the work organized. Before Papas, district leaders had to solve problems, make decisions affecting the work, raise money, and plan expansion into new territories without others to counsel with. Now the districts were under the leadership of directors and they were expected to report yearly to the catholicos. Those from more distant lands, like China, were required to report at least every six years. Successes and needs could be presented and the church was able to send workers and funds where they were most needed. This caused the gospel to be spread more quickly and with better order.

We already learned about Lucien who started a college in Antioch. He and Papas lived at the same time and were both important in keeping true Christianity strong in the East. You'll remember that Lucien edited the manuscripts of scripture into what we call the Textus Receptus. This translation was the basis for the Authorized Version from which our King James Version Bible came from.

We know that the Peshitta - the Syriac translation - was the Bible used by the Church of the East. This translation came from the same manuscripts that Lucien used, and many people believe that it came from the school of Lucian.

An interesting story comes from India. A man tells that while he was visiting around 1812 "he saw in that land a Syrian version of the Bible which according to popular belief would date probably as far back as 325, the year of the Council of Nicaea." Truth Triumphant 275. Having a pure translation kept the doctrines unchanged and free from corruption. The Christian church from Syria to China all had the same beliefs.

Both Papas and Lucien had to stand against the growing apostasy that was developing in the West as the Roman Church began to exercise power over all who would bow to her authority. We learned that the Roman Church "determined to bring together Easter, a yearly festival, and Sunday, a weekly holiday sacred to the worship of the sun, to make the greatest church festival of the year." Truth Triumphant 123.

Throughout its history we see the Roman Church using pagan festivals to help keep her new members. By keeping the forms of the holidays yet "Christianizing" them, the pagan people felt comfortable in their new religion. As one writer said, "It would have been suicide for the very early Christian converts to celebrate their holy days with observances that did not coincide with celebrations that already existed. ... The missionaries cleverly decided to spread their religious message slowly throughout the populations by allowing them to continue to celebrate pagan feasts, but to do so in a Christian manner."

The name Easter comes from the Anglo-Saxon pagan festival Eostre (pronounced "Easter"). This was a celebration that took place on the full moon after the vernal equinox - sometime between March 22 and April 25. Rome saw that she could begin conditioning people toward Sunday sacredness by using the resurrection of Christ on "the first day of the week" as a starting point. Victor I's decree in AD 190 made Easter always fall on a Sunday.

Today Satan is working to have all the world worship on Sunday. Through ecumenism and the use of the Church's festivals (like Easter and Christmas) Rome hopes to lead all Christianity back into her fold. We need to study Revelation 18:4 which says, "Come out of her (Babylon), my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." We must be sure we have come out of Babylon so we don't participate in her judgments.

The Church of the East would not agree to Pope Victor's decree and Papas found his church separated from the fellowship of the Roman Church. As we will see, this exclusion was actually a protection for the Church of the East. It helped to keep her doctrines pure and she had the freedom to spread the gospel through the region.

Easter was not the only difference between the Church of the East and the Roman Church. The Church of the East "rejected the use of images, and interposed no mediator like the Virgin Mary between God and man. The Church of the East also dispensed with candles, incense, relics, and many other usages of imperial Christianity.... [They] rejected the supremacy of the bishop of Rome." Truth Triumphant 273. The clergy were allowed to marry although, as was mentioned earlier, many of the young men chose to not marry so they could work full time for God's cause. The Church of the East did not teach transubstantiation, (the wafer becoming the real body of Jesus and the wine becoming the real blood of Jesus during the mass) or that there was a purgatory.

Not only did The Church of the East have to contend with Rome's anger over their unwillingness to accept pagan customs but it was met with hostility by other religions in their area. One of them was Zoroastrianism. This was a religion which was begun by a man named Zoroaster around the time when Daniel was in Babylon (around 600 BC). Some scholars believe he knew of the Jew's beliefs and thought he could become powerful through beginning a religion that had many similarities to the Hebrews' religion but which would appeal to human nature.

In Zoroastrianism we find angels, and a messiah that was to come. They believed in a resurrection of the dead and a judgment. Foods were divided into clean and unclean meats, a

tithe was paid to support a priesthood and they taught that one day in seven was to be sacred. The many colorful ceremonies and processions pleased the people and Zoroastrianism's appeal grew rapidly. Today the ruins of its fire temples can be found in modern Iran, Iraq and India.

This new religion was primarily sun worship. Mithra, the god of light, was the object of their worship. "Sunday was devoted to Mithra, or the sun, the greatest of all gods of Zoroastrianism. ... Since it was pre-eminently a religion of sun worship, what was more appropriate than to choose Sunday, the day of the sun, as the holy day?" Truth Triumphant 130. The priests gathered the people together to be taught their religious laws and Sunday was chosen as their day of worship. Mithraism, a later religion, adopted Zoroastrianism and introduced it into the Roman Empire "thus having paved the way for this form of sun worship to become a universal religion in the Roman world. ... This same religion captivated province after province of the Roman Empire until, through the popularizing of its sun-god, Mithra, it threatened to stifle Christianity." Truth Triumphant 268, 129. The worship of the sun was something the early Christians had to face in both the East and the West.

We are told a story of the catholicos who succeeded Pappas, Mar Shimun. The Persian Shah was his childhood friend and now he was in trouble with the king because he would not force his church people to pay taxes for a war between Persia and Rome. Mar Shimun "refused to do so, on the grounds that his people were too poor to pay and that he was not a tax-collector. His arrest and the destruction of all Christian churches was immediately ordered. He was arrested at Seleucia-Ctesiphon and taken to Karka d'Ledan where the king was. ...

"He was offered freedom, not only for himself, but for his 'melet' of people, if he would worship the sun only once. 'The sun went into mourning when its creator died,' said Shimun. The king begged him by the memory of their personal friendship to yield, but the [catholicos] remained firm, and on the morning of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in the year AD 339, along with five bishops and a hundred minor clergy, he sealed his testimony with his blood. Mar Shimun, the last of the company to suffer martyrdom, died for two of the noblest causes for which it is possible for man to suffer: his faith in God and his duty to his people."

God has told us that there will again be a test for His people over worshipping the sun. In The Great Controversy 605 we are told, "The Sabbath will be the great test of loyalty, for it is the point of truth especially controverted. When the final test shall be brought to bear upon men, then the line of distinction will be drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. While the observance of the false sabbath in compliance with the law of the state, contrary to the fourth commandment, will be an avowal of allegiance to a power that is in opposition to God, the keeping of the true Sabbath, in obedience to God's law, is an evidence of loyalty to the Creator. While one class, by accepting the sign of submission to earthly powers, receive the mark of the beast, the other choosing the token of allegiance to divine authority, receive the seal of God."

Like Mar Shimun we will have a life or death decision to make. Are you learning now to trust God in everything so that you are ready for this terrible trial?

CHAPTER 8

ABA

The 250 years following Papas' leadership went back and forth between peace and persecution. The political battles of Persia brought on persecution for the Church of the East. At that time Persia was at war with the Roman Empire, and the Persian rulers were afraid of a conspiracy between the Christians of Rome and those of Persia. He did not realize that already there were differences in doctrine because the Christians in Rome were beginning to accept some of the philosophies of Mithraism.

The Zoroastrians would go to the king and stir up trouble against the Christians by accusing them of tearing down their religion. They would say, "They despise our sun-god. Did not Zoroaster, the sainted founder of our divine beliefs, institute Sunday one thousand years ago in honor of the sun and supplant the Sabbath of the Old Testament which the Jews in our land then sanctified? ... They desecrate the sacred earth by burying their dead in it and pollute the water by their ablutions. They refuse to go to war for the shah-in-shah; and they preach that snakes, scorpions, and creeping things were created by a good God." Truth Triumphant 270.

These types of accusations brought persecution on the Church of the East. Churches were destroyed and many of the leaders suffered martyrdoms. Those who especially experienced the wrath of the Persians were those who converted from Magianism. There were horrible tortures for some, while others were locked in prisons where they starved to death.

These persecutions did not weaken the faith or resolve of the Christians. They took comfort in repeating to themselves the words of Jesus who prophesied that these types of things would happen to His followers. They remembered the words of Jesus, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11, 12.

Jesus knew that His followers would be treated badly by those who did not love Him and He wanted to encourage them. He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not know the Father, nor me." John 16:1 - 3.

It is hard to think about anything positive coming from persecution, but one of the advantages of the oppression was that there was no contact between the Church of the East and the Roman Church. They were not caught up in the controversy over Sunday worship, disputes about the Godhead, or whether their ministers should marry or not. These Christians were free to evangelize and worship as they had been taught by the apostles without the conflicts which the true believers in the West had to meet. This kept the Church of the East strong and united and the message went forward quickly.

Another thing persecution did was bring many converts into the church. Often persecution only served to expand the Church of the East. When the college at Edessa was closed by the Roman emperor because its theological views did not agree with the state religion, brave leaders moved the school to Nisibis, a strong fortress city. There the college continued to grow and flourish and send out trained missionaries.

The missionaries trained at Nisibis used their skills to win the respect, trust and favor of the people whom they wanted to reach with the gospel. These Christians taught arts and sciences to the Muslim Arabs. "Physicians, in the celebrated school of medicine founded by the Nestorian Christians at Edessa in Mesopotamia, were settled at Mecca as early as Mohammed's time, and there lived on a footing of friendly intercourse with the Prophet (Mohammed) and Abu-Bekr." Truth Triumphant 274.

Christianity has always understood the need of true education for the health of the church. That is why Patrick, Columba and Lucien established training centers where students would be taught not only to read and write but to preach the gospel while teaching others these skills.

Christians of the Church of the East are credited with teaching the Turks how to write in their own language. It is well-known that the Syriac characters were the basis for the Mongolian, Manchu and Soghdian alphabets. It has been said that in Tibet, the Christian-like ceremonies practiced by the llamas came from missionaries who took the gospel to that remote and rugged land.

These early Christians studied Jesus' example of self-denying, loving service to those around Him, and they felt privileged to walk in His footsteps. Their lives showed the principles that Jesus outlined in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. They were fair with their neighbors, loving to those who treated them badly, and stood as lights in dark, heathen lands.

We find that these early Christians had friends in high offices. "When the Persian king, Kawad (AD 498), because of rebellions in his kingdom, twice took refuge with the Huns and Turks, he found Christians there who helped him to reconquer his land. When he had regained his throne, he killed some Mithraists, incarcerated others, but was benevolent toward the Christians because a company of them rendered service to him on his way to the king of the Turks." Truth Triumphant 273.

In AD 538 this quickly growing church elected a new catholicos by the name of Aba. All the districts of the Church of the East were happy about his appointment because they had not had a leader in Seleucia for twenty years. During that time heavy persecution didn't make it practical for there to be a catholicos to direct the work. Now each district needed strong leadership from Aba.

The new catholicos had been a Zoroastrian and because of his learning and ability he had been a teacher of the Magi. As we mentioned earlier, those who converted from Magianism were especially persecuted. Aba was to be no exception. The story of his life should inspire us to courage, steadfastness and faithfulness to duty.

He was quickly attacked and accused by the Zoroastrian leaders of being an apostate and converting many to Christianity. When brought before the king he admitted to the charges. In his response to the king, Aba said, "I am a Christian. I preach my own faith, and I want every man to join it; but of his own free will, and not of compulsion. I use force on no man." Truth Triumphant 177.

The king apparently liked Aba and told him, "You shall go free and continue to act as catholicos if you will stop receiving converts, admit those married by Magian law to communion, and allow your people to eat Magian sacrifices." Truth Triumphant 177. When Aba refused these conditions of release he was ordered to prison under the care of the Magi. Because of the hatred toward Aba his friends feared that he would be killed in prison. However, God took care of His faithful worker. Some people say that through the intervention

of the king Aba was allowed to live in a house of his own where he was able to carry on his duties as head of the Church of the East. He wrote letters, received visitors, consecrated bishops and helped settle problems that arose in the church.

The Magians were angry at this type of freedom which allowed Aba to continue with his duties as catholicos, and which kept him safe from their plots on his life. Aba realized that one of the plots to kill him would eventually succeed so he escaped with the help of friends and went straight to the king for help. The king was amazed to see his prisoner standing in front of him.

Aba said, "[I am] the king's servant, ready to die if that [is your] will. But though [I am] willing to be executed at the king's order, [I am] not willing to be murdered contrary to his order. Let the king of kings do justice!" Truth Triumphant 279. Because of his fear of the Magians, the king allowed Aba to be taken back to prison but he ordered that he was not to be killed.

For months Aba was kept in prison, but since he was allowed visitors he was still able to carry on the work of the church. For the summer he was ordered to go with the king on a tour of the kingdom and at each place Christians crowded around to see their spiritual leader and receive his blessing. Many of them begged the king for Aba's release, and soon after their return to Seleucia the king sent for him and gave him an unconditional pardon.

The powerful Magians were most unhappy with this development, and as soon as the king left the city they quickly took Aba back to prison. When the king heard about that he sent a strongly-worded message demanding that Aba be released immediately. This was done, but the nine years of persecution had worn down his health and he died shortly after his release from prison.

During these troubled years we find God's church gaining strength and members. Those who fled the various persecutions moved eastward and established new churches where they settled. Vast areas from India to China were under the catholicos of Seleucia. Even secular history verifies the scope of influence of the Church of the East. "Marco Polo, the famous Venetian traveler, speaks of the large island of Socotra in the Arabian Sea near the Gulf of Aden, possessing many baptized Christians who had nothing to do with the pope at Rome, but were subject to the catholicos at Bagdad." Truth Triumphant 275.

Here we see the march of truth through the East even though there were persecutions and setbacks. The most powerful nations of the eastern world were exposed to Christianity and many accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 9

TIMOTHY OF BAGDAD

(The Church Under Mohammedan Rule)

Before following the progress of the Church of the East we should look at the rise of Mohammedism. Mohammed was a charismatic man who saw the unhappiness of the Arabs with their old religion of idolatry. In AD 612 this little-known camel driver began telling about revelations from heaven. These visions and dreams convinced some to follow him. He taught that there was just one God and he (Mohammed) was His prophet.

He and his followers attacked caravans and took their rich burden of gold, silk, porcelain and other treasures to use in building up their new religion. By the time Mohammed died he ruled Arabia, and his successors quickly took over Syria, Egypt and Persia. They made Bagdad (the way they used to spell Baghdad) their capital and the Church of the East also moved their headquarters from Seleucia to Bagdad.

Mohammed and the man who took over leadership when he died, Abu Bakr, both were friendly to Christians. After Aba's time, one of the catholicos, Ishoyabh, was given a promise that the Church of the East would be granted freedom of worship, be protected from attacks of enemies, that they wouldn't be forced to change their manners and laws, and a Christian woman servant would not be made to change her faith or be forbidden to fast and pray. They also wrote up what tributes (money) the Church of the East would pay the government, but under Omar, the successor of Abu Bakr, even those taxes didn't have to be paid.

There were several reasons why the Mohammedan government treated the Christians very well. Not only did the leaders have a respect for the Church of the East but they needed the services of the students from the schools it had built. These Christians were hired as secretaries and government representatives because of their excellent skills with words and numbers. Medicine was also well developed in these schools by this time and court physicians were Church members.

Education in the Christian schools continued to mature and expand. Many of the courses taught were similar to those we find in universities today. The students were taught "science, philosophy, materia medica, medicine, astronomy, law, Bible theology, geometry, music, arithmetic, dialectics, grammar, rhetoric, Greek literature, and the Greek, Syrian, Chaldean and Egyptian languages." Truth Triumphant 287. This thorough education produced intelligent, resourceful and dedicated Christian missionaries who were well prepared to spread the gospel into foreign fields.

It was at this time (AD 780 - 824) that Timothy was elected as catholicos. He oversaw the schools and encouraged them to train more and more missionaries. "He watched over the purity of the doctrine. He was continually consecrating devoted young men that had the spirit of sacrifice, missionaries who would bring mercy into cruel hearts, who would instill culture into repulsive peoples, and who would gather the galloping tribes of the desert around them to study the messages of the Sacred Word." Truth Triumphant 287.

Under Timothy better organization took place. "The believers in all Asia had been divided by the church into twenty-six to thirty grand divisions. Over each of these there was the metropolitan or presiding officer." Truth Triumphant 296. These leaders oversaw the work in their division and found solutions for the various problems which occurred. This was an evangelistic church which rapidly established itself in the nations of the Far East.

From the time of Timothy and onward this was an exciting time for the Church of the East. The reports coming from China, the greatest empire in the world at that time, told of a huge stone monument to Christianity that had been erected with the help of the emperor. The king of the Turks became a convert to Christianity while a leader was consecrated to lead the Tibetan people.

To give you an idea of the spread of the gospel we will give some little-known facts of this Church of the East. The country of China was divided into four kingdoms known as Tartar kingdoms. There was a king over each division. There were over 400,000 families in

one kingdom which accepted and obeyed the teachings of Christ. That means there could have been a population of about eight million people who were all Christians.

We know that in India there were Christians which even today are called St. Thomas Christians. They were named after the apostle Thomas who went to preach to them. We will learn later about these people who kept their doctrines pure and did not accept the traditions of the Church of Rome. All these Christians who belonged to the Church of the East observed the seventh-day Sabbath. They also kept the Levitical health laws and their priests were allowed to marry.

Throughout the East, even in high ranking homes, there were Christians who helped to influence the laws of the land. In the early thirteenth century "the scourge of God" - Genghis Khan - appeared as the leader of the Turko-Mongol peoples. We are told that one of his wives was a Christian. Some time after his father's death, Genghis' son, Kuyuk, was elected as khan. It should be noted that he was a true Christian and during his reign the Church of the East was treated very well. After the death of Kuyuk in 1251 Christians continued have powerful positions. The wife of the next khan was a Christian and her three sons, Mangu, Hulagu, and Kublai will have their story told when we learn about the Church of the East in China.

An interesting conversion story is told of a king in what today is Russia. "The king of the Keraites (a group of people from around Lake Baikal in Siberia)...had been found wandering in a high mountain where he had been overtaken by a violent snowstorm. In his hopelessness he considered himself lost, and dreamed or thought he saw a giant appear to him in vision, saying, 'If you will accept Christ, I will lead you to safety.' Having promised to become a Christian and having returned safely to his kingdom, he sought out Christian merchants who were traveling among his tribes, and learned from them the way of salvation." Truth Triumphant 291.

As we hear these thrilling stories of the Church in the East we sometimes wonder that the gospel could spread so quickly and with such power in heathen lands. We need to learn the lessons of our early Christian heroes so that we can be as effective in spreading the gospel of Jesus today. We must know our Bibles as well as they did, have the love for God that they had, and live the self-sacrificing lives they lived and we will see an outpouring of God's Spirit which will finish the work of taking the gospel to "every nations, tongue, and people."

Satan now has a special hatred for God's Church that is giving the Three Angels' Messages. Today we have a warning to give to the people of the earth. God has told us that Satan is going to try to change our doctrines and get us to disobey God's law. People will think that they are doing a great work for God, but rather they will be deceived by the devil and obey him. Satan knows that disobedience will keep God's Holy Spirit from being given in the Latter Rain.

We are told in Selected Messages, Book 1, p. 204: "The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of reorganization. Were this reformation to take place, what would result?"

"The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed. The fundamental principles that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as error. A new organization would be established. Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual

philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath of course, would be lightly regarded, as also the God who created it. Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement. The leaders would teach that virtue is better than vice, but God being removed, they would place their dependence on human power, which, without God, is worthless. Their foundation would be built on the sand, and storm and tempest would sweep away the structure."

I hope that we will be like the Church of the East. "The members ... were not only a church of evangelical activities, but also a people of sound doctrines. It is difficult to say which is the more dangerous - sound doctrines without evangelism, or evangelism without sound doctrine. The first leads to coldness in religion; the second produces vaudeville in preaching. Both these extremes were avoided by the Church of the East. It was able to give a reason for the faith, and at the same time, it displayed a life of missionary zeal and sacrifice which has seldom been surpassed." Truth Triumphant 300

(AD 72 - 1500)

The fascinating and colorful country of India is where we will go next in our story of the Church of the East. The gospel was taken to this country of elephants, spices, exotic woods and the mighty Ganges at the same time as it was taken to Italy.

Tradition tells us that the Apostle Thomas was sent shortly after Pentecost to take the message to what was then called Parthia. "It is the constant tradition of the Eastern Church that the apostle Thomas evangelized India, and there is no historian, no poet, ... no writer of any kind who, having the opportunity of speaking of Thomas, does not associate his name with India." Truth Triumphant 302.

Throughout the East at this time there were many Jews who had left Judah before the birth of Jesus and they had thriving communities and synagogues in most of the large centers. The Aramaic language was widely used and this made it easy for the spread of the gospel. Many in the East, even in big cities like Seleucia, spoke this language so it was easy to preach and write to large masses of people.

The apostle Thomas first worked in India along the Malabar Coast with the Jewish community in Cranganor. He preached and taught in the synagogue and converted them to the gospel. This city was known as the cradle of Christianity in India. After Thomas established a church in one place he journeyed through India preaching with great success and established many churches filled with devout Christians. The Brahmins (the Buddhist priests) were very angry at the success of this new religion and created so much controversy among the people that they attacked Thomas and stoned him. One of the Brahmins put a lance through him which caused his death in AD 72.

As Christianity in India was getting established a revolution was taking place in the West. The compromise of Christianity with paganism impacted the true Christians in places such as Rome who came under heavy persecution. Groups of believers traveled to India in AD 345 bringing with them their skills as mechanics, merchants, artisans and preachers. These early Christians were well educated and many brought with them manuscripts of the scriptures in the Syriac language.

For several hundred years many Christians moved to India. Many came from Persia and the West fleeing persecution, but others came from more peaceful areas to help strengthen the church in an area where there were few believers in the Messiah.

The king of Malabar welcomed the Christians and gave them many privileges. It is even thought that some of the believers were made part of the nobility. In this sheltered environment the gospel spread rapidly and was well received. An important traveler from Florence in Italy named Marignolli tells that the Indian Christians around 1290 were the masters of the steelyards and in charge of the spices of south India.

Marco Polo, a famous explorer, wrote in 1295 about the island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean, "Their religion is Christianity, and they are duly baptized, and are under the government, as well temporal as spiritual, of an archbishop, who is not in subjection to the pope of Rome, but to a patriarch who resides in the city of Baghdad, by whom he is appointed." Truth Triumphant 310. Another explorer, Nicolo de Conti, said in 1440 that most of the people of Socotrine were Nestorian Christians.

Christian parents sent their children to the schools operated by the Church of the East with the hopes that they would become ministers or missionaries. When the Portuguese came around 1500 to India they "found [the Indian Christians] firmly organized under their spiritual leaders ... who acted as their representatives in dealing with the Indian princes. For long they had Christian kings, and at a later period chiefs, of their own.' Every community that was under a supreme spiritual director endeavored to maintain a college of advanced grades. From these institutions of learning graduates went to the scholarly theological seminaries in Assyria." Truth Triumphant 311. These devoted and well-trained young people helped carry the gospel to China, Japan, Ceylon and many countries beyond.

Satan became concerned as truth was taught and accepted. He began to work through the dominant religions of India, Buddhism and Hinduism. Their leaders saw the wide appeal of Christianity and they became concerned. In 600 AD Hinduism began to take action. Dr. Wilkinson tells the story this way: "To build a defense against the gospel, they were obliged to do three things. First, they must invent a god of their own who entered a human body. This could compete with the story of the birth of Jesus in the flesh, which was winning hearts everywhere. Secondly, they must give this counterfeit messiah a name similar to Christ, with similar events of His life and parallel teachings. Thirdly, they must arrange their chronology with Hindu astronomy to throw the date of this fabricated incarnation centuries previous to the birth of Jesus in order to make Christianity appear to have been copied from Hinduism. New literature was provided to give success to the venture.

"The deity they chose to incarnate was Krishna, a name much like that of Christ. Books written by pagans, before the coming of Christianity, had told of the descents of the gods among men. ... The new doctrine of incarnation (that you come back to earth again and again - sometimes as a dog or maybe a cow or even a person) which now sprang up produced a complete round of literature and theology concerning the wondrous birth of Vishnu, the supreme deity, who came in human flesh under the name 'Krishna.' ... Many epics were written to glorify the exploits of this god who had descended to share the joys and sorrows of humanity. In the hearts of millions, Krishna has come to occupy the place of Vishnu himself. Even as Christians may direct their prayers to Christ instead of to God, so Hindus may direct their prayers to Krishna rather than to Vishnu, the supreme deity." Truth Triumphant 137.

For many years this elaborate deception was believed. However, even the best-planned deceptions are often shown to be lies. This was the case with the story of Krishna.

Dr. Wilkinson continues the story - "Great credit is due to John Bentley who, in 1825, detected this fraud of the Brahmans after it had been accepted for twelve hundred years. The similarity between the name of Christ and Krishna had long been noticed. Writers had listed the many agreements between the events of Christ's birth and life and those of Krishna. When later translations of Hindu literature were published, thinkers were puzzled over the many startling similarities between the teachings of the two religions. The priests of India who claimed that the incarnation of Krishna was six hundred years before Christ, loved to boast that the New Testament was built out of the Hindu epics. Bentley solved the mystery. He obtained from the Brahmans the horoscope of Krishna, who, they said, was born at midnight of March 25, and also the positions of the sun, the moon, and the five planets among the heavenly constellations. This keen Englishman, skilled in the mathematics of astronomy, proved conclusively that the earliest date which could be claimed for the birth of Krishna was August 7, AD 600." Truth Triumphant 137,

138.

The Christians of India were well grounded in scriptures. True converts to the Church of the East were never lured by pomp and ceremony, nor by the rites that were practiced in Buddhism or Hinduism. Because of their diligent study of scripture, the St. Thomas Christians kept their religion free of many of the heresies which had been accepted by the Church in the West. The early Christians in India did a thorough work in perserving the gospel. When the Portuguese arrived with their image of the Virgin Mary these faithful believers said, "We are Christians, not idolaters."

These St. Thomas Christians also ...

Condemned the pope's supremacy.

Affirmed that the Roman Church had departed from the faith.

Denied transubstantiation.

Condemned the worship of images.

Made no use of oils.

Denied purgatory - (A place where people who died, but didn't go straight to heaven, could be purified).

Knew nothing of auricular confessions - (confession to a priest).

Never heard of extreme unction - (special anointing and prayers when a person was dying).

Permitted the clergy to marry. Truth Triumphant 297.

For almost "sixteen hundred years the St. Thomas Christians refused to put the church above the Bible. ... They clung to the Sacred Writings as the only channel through which the saving and transforming influence of the Holy Spirit could work." Truth Triumphant 305, 306.

Through their education and the dedicated efforts of their spiritual leaders they were able to keep their faith pure and spread the gospel through all India and the islands in that area. Royal decrees, called charters, gave power and privileges and honor to the Christian

communities in India. Because of this protection from the rulers, for over fifteen hundred years the light of Jesus Christ was well-known in that populated area of Asia.

It is sad that today the Christian light has been snuffed out in most of India. Millions are dying without a knowledge of God. Many live in the darkness of Hinduism with its prison-like caste system. The poor are unable to read and write so it is difficult for them to learn about God. The principles of Buddhism, which lead to New Age spiritualism, have darkened billions of minds so that the Holy Spirit's voice is not heard or understood.

Unfortunately many who call themselves Christians are being lured into Satan's traps. The movies coming out of Hollywood, almost all of the TV programs and most of the video games contain spiritualistic thoughts which the devil wants to put into our minds. Satan knows if he can control our thoughts he can eventually control every area of our lives. This is why it is so important that we are careful what we watch and listen to.

Some people think that it is wonderful that so many children are taking an interest in reading because of the Harry Potter books. We know that books which exalt Satan's kingdom will never prepare our hearts to be workers in "God's army" like those early Christians in India. Let us be careful what we put into our minds so that we can be used by God in these last days. Remember what the Bible says: "Whatsoever things are true, ... honest, ... just, ... pure, ... lovely, ... are of good report...think on these things." Philippians

4:8.

Next time you watch a movie or TV show, listen to a CD, read a book or play a video game ask yourself whether it is true, honest, just pure, lovely and of a good report. If it isn't, ask God to take away your love for those things and to give you the grace needed to not watch, read, listen or play with things that come from Satan's kingdom rather than from God's kingdom.

If we allow God to cleanse our minds and hearts He will fill them with His Holy Spirit. Those who have those new hearts and minds that Jesus taught about are the ones who will make up the 144,000 and give the last message of warning before Jesus' Second Coming.

There are exciting days before God's people. Let us pray that we have "washed [our] robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14. When we are ready, God has a Loud Cry message to give to those in darkness. Will you be a member of God's army?

CHAPTER 11

HOW THE CHURCH WAS DRIVEN INTO THE WILDERNESS

While the Church of the East was busily expanding into new countries interesting changes were taking place with God's Church in Europe as it spread the gospel. We will look at some of the great men and women who were used by God during a time of political and religious unrest.

You remember in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image, that the ten toes represented ten kingdoms which would never be united together. In Daniel's dream about the beast with ten horns we see a similar division representing ten nations. This division took place

approximately from AD 250 – 500 when the Roman Empire was broken up into ten new nations.

In each of these new countries there was a spiritual struggle taking place which lasted for hundreds of years. There were three choices for the people:

They would keep their pagan customs and beliefs

They would accept the Celtic religion which stemmed from the Christian church at Antioch

Or they would fall under the growing dominance of the Church of Rome

It was an exciting time for those who watched as nations and religions struggled for supremacy. It was at this time that Ulfilas lived. Patrick of Ireland and Lucian of Antioch were like "bookends" for Ulfilas. He was just a boy while Lucian was alive and Patrick began his work just as Ulfilas was finishing his.

Ulfilas was a Goth (from what today is France) who lived from AD 311 – 388. His forefathers had come to Europe from Asia Minor and brought with them the teachings of the early apostolic church, which they had learned from great leaders like the apostle Paul. As Ulfilas grew up he realized that there were two positions within the professed church of Christ and he would have to decide which side would have his loyalty. .

Constantine, the newly converted Roman emperor, believed that some compromises with paganism were fine since more people would accept Christianity. Ulfilas did not agree with the allegorizing of scripture coming from Alexandria or compromises with pagan beliefs. He chose to keep the pure faith that had been handed down from the apostles. This decision put him in opposition to the Roman Church.

While most of Europe was in chaos from all the fighting between the ten nations, the Roman Church began to secure government/state power. It was at this time that Ulfilas began to evangelize the Gothic people and in a remarkably short time he had converted the whole nation to God.

The Goths didn't have a written language so Ulfilas had to invent an alphabet based on the various sounds in the Gothic language. The Bible became their best piece of literature. Like Patrick and Columba, Ulfilas taught his followers to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. They also allowed their priests to marry, they did not use images or statues and did not celebrate the Mass.

We don't want you to confuse the Goths at this time with the Christians known as the Church in the Wilderness. These Goths were a war-like people and did a lot of fighting through much of Europe, however we are told that when the Goths and Vandals went to war against the mighty Roman Empire they came as Christians. They did not burn the churches nor participate in the immoral things that the Saxons had done in Britain during its invasion.

History tells us that Constantine II (the son of Constantine) removed his support and protection from the Roman Church and gave it to the Goths. This made the corrupt leaders of the church angry and they began to call the Goths names like Arians. This was something that the Roman Church often did. Whenever someone did not agree with the compromises the Roman Church was making to God's Word, its leaders began to call those people names. This is still Satan's strategy today.

Satan was not happy as he saw pagan nations like Gaul and Germany following the life-changing truths of the Bible which Ulfilas taught them. The devil needed a strong power which would not only subdue kingdoms and rulers but would bring religion under his principles. Here is where we see God's prophecies through Daniel being fulfilled.

Let us turn in the Bible and read about how the church of God was driven into the wilderness. Daniel 7:24 says, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." Those who have studied history and the Bible agree that these ten horns refer to the ten divisions in Europe which we have been talking about.

Let us learn about the rise of the "little horn" which Daniel saw. Because there was so much war in Europe at this time it made sense that those who had the same religion should help each other in battle. The Franks, who were pagans, were looking greedily at the rich agricultural land of southern France possessed by the Christian Visigoths. Clovis, king of the Franks, decided to pretend to be converted to Rome's church and then ask for the help of the Roman Church in defeating the Visigoths and claiming their land. This left Roman Catholicism as the dominant religion in southern France. Clovis first defeated the Heroli, then in AD 509 he took the kingdom from the Visigoths (Vandals) of southern France, and finally in AD 538 the Ostrogoths in Italy were overthrown. This allowed the "little horn" –the papacy – to gain power.

Roman Emperor Justinian decided to make all the lands under his rule obedient to the papacy. He wrote an edict that said that everyone in his kingdom had three months to become Catholics or they would not be able to have a job, their property could not be willed to their children, and their lands and homes would be taken away.

Many people refused to join the Roman Church and were driven from their homes. Some people tried to go to other lands such as India but they were almost always stopped at the mountain passes and stripped of their jewels and money that they were carrying - most were then murdered. Some had all their clothes taken and were then left to die of exposure to the cold. All through this awful time the pope said nothing to stop this terrible persecution.

In AD 538 the pope began his rule as the "little horn." Justinian, the Roman emperor, publically announced the pope to be "The Head of all the Holy Churches." The pope's kingdom is called the Vatican. It is a tiny kingdom surrounded by the city of Rome. It is only ten square miles but it appoints ambassadors to all major countries, has its own money and postal service. Don't be fooled by the size of the kingdom; the Vatican has world-wide power and influence. Her biggest claim to authority on religious matters is that her traditions are equal with the authority of the scriptures.

With Justinian's decree the Vatican immediately began to flex her muscles. She continued with the persecutions that Justinian had started and began to hunt the refugees from the East who had come to Italy seeking peace and safety. These people joined the Waldenses who lived in the mountains of northern Italy. These people studied their Bibles and were convinced that the papacy was the "little horn" of Daniel. It was at this time that the words of Revelation 12:14 became a reality: "And to the woman (God's Church) 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 (1260 years) from the face of the serpent."

We call this time when the papacy had full control over Europe's religions and governments the Dark Ages. It was a dark time for God's Word which was taken from the

people and burned. It was a dark time for His faithful followers who had to flee from persecution. It also was a dark time for worldly learning since schools were closed and instructors were forbidden to teach math or Greek, art or business. Most importantly, freedom of thought were stifled which caused darkness in the mind.

The Roman Church conquered places such as Ireland, the lands of the Goths and even Italy. But rather than schools, books and industrious people, they left behind only darkness and bloodshed. It was a sad time for God's people and the truth of His scriptures.

CHAPTER 12

DINOOTH AND THE CHURCH IN WALES

(C.A. 530 – 610)

To continue tracing the history of God's church we will now go back to the British Isles to see how that church was driven into the wilderness. You will remember that Christianity spread rapidly for four hundred years while the Roman Empire ruled the British Isles. Because the church under Patrick and Columba was separated from Europe they were not bothered by the changes that the Roman Church was making on the mainland. They followed the simple religion that had been given to them from the believers in Asia Minor.

Dinooth was the director of the Celtic Church in England and Wales at this time. He had studied under Columba and followed the same methods of evangelizing that Columba had successfully used in Scotland. God blessed Dinooth's work and many Welsh believers were won to Christ and gave up their former Druid worship.

However, there were political changes in the world that were going to effect these simple, godly Christians. When war broke out between the Goths and the Roman Empire in AD 410 the soldiers who maintained order in Britain were called back to Rome to help defending their country. With their strong military presence gone, the Picts from Scotland and the Saxons from Scandinavia invaded England and Wales. This fighting and killing greatly weakened the Celtic Church of England. While the church in Wales was able to keep their faith alive, England slowly slipped back into paganism under the continuous war with the Anglo-Saxons. Their churches were replaced with heathen temples and slowly the light of the gospel was put out. During this time however, God's truth went forward in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

In England the victorious Anglo-Saxons formed an alliance of seven kingdoms which we know as the Heptarchy. The strongest kingdom was Kent. This kingdom was ruled from AD 560 – 616 by Ethelbert who was married to Bertha, the daughter of the Frank's Roman Catholic king. The papacy knew that this would be a big advantage in its plans for the British Isles. For 200 years the Roman Church had tried to establish themselves, but the thorough work done by Patrick, Columba and others had made it almost impossible for the people to accept Rome's idols and magic.

Bertha was very loyal to the Catholic Church and she brought powerful monks and other church leaders to England. Augustine arrived in England in AD 597 accompanied by his monks. We are told they came to Kent "bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board: and singing the litany." Truth Triumphant 158.

Augustine was given permission to repair broken churches and to preach to the people. It is believed that he suggested that laws be passed making it a worse punishment to offend a

bishop or harm a church building than if someone offended the king. The pope announced that Augustine was to be the head of all the British bishops. This gave him power not only over the Roman Catholics but over the leaders of the Celtic Church, too. Through these kind of laws the Roman Church was able to strengthen its control and begin the collapse of the Celtic Church.

It is interesting to read what one historian wrote about the methods used by Rome to "convert" the people. "At first it was [Pope] Gregory's intention, which he intimated, indeed, to King Ethelbert, to have all the temples of idolatry destroyed; but on maturer reflection, he altered his mind, and dispatched a letter ... in which he declared, that the idol temples, if well built, ought not to be destroyed, but sprinkled with holy water, and sanctified by holy relics, should be converted into temples of the living God; so that the people might be more easily induced to assemble in their accustomed places. Moreover, the festivals in honor of the idols, of which the rude people had been deprived, should be replaced by others, either on the anniversaries of the consecration of churches, or on days devoted to the memory of the saints, whose relics were deposited in them. ...Being thus allowed to indulge in some sensual enjoyments they could be the more easily led to those which are inward and spiritual." Truth Triumphant 169.

This was the beginning of taking the people's holidays and "Christianizing" them. If you study it out Valentine's Day, Halloween, All Saints' Day, Easter and Christmas all have their roots in paganism and were adopted by the Roman Church as their holy days.

Augustine influenced King Ethelbert to invite the leaders of the Celtic church to Augustine's Oak for meetings. Dinooth was the president of the training school at Bangor which had over 2100 students at that time. He had watched with interest the various changes which had taken place under Augustine. As the leader of both the school and the Celtic Churches in Wales, Dinooth was one of the invited delegates.

"The Roman Catholics began by accusing the Celtic pastors of doing many things against the unity of the church. Augustine requested them to abandon their method of keeping Easter, to preserve Catholic unity, and to undertake in common the preaching of the gospel to the pagans. ...It was clearly evident to those pastors ... that the unity demanded of them meant the loss of their identity. They refused to be swayed by the exhortations and rebukes of Augustine and his companions. They gave answer that it was their preference to follow their own Christian practices." Truth Triumphant 160.

A second meeting was called with seven leaders of the Celtic Church. "Before these delegates left for this conference they visited one of their ancient men noted for his sanctity and wisdom to ask his advice. He counseled them to let Augustine and his party arrive at the place of meeting first. If, when the Britons arrived, Augustine arose and received them with the meekness and humility of Christ, they were to look upon him as heaven's messenger. If, however, he displayed haughtiness and arrogance, it was a sign that they were to refuse to fellowship with him or accept his authority.

"When they did arrive at the place of meeting, Augustine was already there and, retaining his seat, did not deign to rise. Whereupon, the Britons charged him with pride, answering all his arguments. Augustine commanded them to keep Easter according to the Church of Rome, to give up their evangelical unity, and to become Romanists. The Britons fully and determinedly rejected Augustine's claims to the superior authority of his church and the supremacy of the pope who sent him. They declared that 'they would do none of those things, nor receive him as their archbishop.'" Truth Triumphant 161.

There were other things on which the two sides could not agree. Pope Gregory had announced that things voted on during the first four general councils of the church were equal with the gospels. This of course was not accepted by those who followed the Bible. The Roman Church was criticized because they accepted the idolatrous festivals of the pagans and Augustine allowed idols to be brought into the churches. These relics and celebrations were always rejected and abandoned by converts to the Celtic Church. The Celtic Church also rejected the idea of the pope as the universal head of the church and they did not accept the understanding that the bishop was a person of authority rather than a pastor. They also rejected the Roman Church's call for pastors to not marry.

But one of the biggest controversies came over the Sabbath. While Rome was trying to have everyone keep her Sunday-sabbath the Celtic Church absolutely refused to worship on any day other than the seventh-day Sabbath. "There is much evidence that the Sabbath prevailed in Wales universally until AD 1115, when the first Roman bishop was seated at St. David's. The old Welsh Sabbathkeeping churches did not even then altogether bow the knee to Rome, but fled to their hiding places 'where the ordinances of the gospel to this day have been administered in their primitive mode without being adulterated by the corrupt Church of Rome.'" Truth Triumphant 164.

For 700 years the Celtic Church in Wales was harassed, flattered, threatened and manipulated until finally the Church of Rome took control of it. Dr. Wilkinson shows eight steps that were used to bring God's church into submission to the Roman Catholic Church:

Some of the Celtic pastors felt it was necessary to be ordained by the papal leader, the archbishop of Canterbury.

The bishop of England decided he had the power to choose the pastors for Wales.

England built a Catholic monastery on Welsh land they had won during wars.

Welsh people who owed taxes had their lands taken away and given to the bishop.

The papal clergy were always trying to agitate trouble between the Welsh princes and the Welsh pastors.

Through intimidation the princes saw that it was better for them to distance themselves from the Welsh pastors.

The papal leaders began to hold conventions in Wales.

The Welsh pastors allowed a Catholic bishop to take a tour through their territory.

Although both the civil and religious laws of England took control of Wales in 1272 the people continued their distrust and dislike of their English rulers. The proud and independent people retained their love of truth and when Methodism swept through Wales the people gladly accepted its evangelism.

CHAPTER 13

AIDEN AND THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND

(-651)

If you read Roman Catholic history you will be told about the great success of Augustine in converting England to Christianity; however, not all historians agree with her view. Rapin de Thoyras says, "Austin [Augustine] has had the honor of converting the English, when in the main the progress he made was not very considerable. 'Tis true he preached to the Saxons of Kent, as Mellitus did to those of Essex, and that with good success. ... Augustine in the height of his success, for which he is so greatly honored, established but two bishops only, Justus at Rochester (in his own Kent), and Mellitus at London, though the pope had expressly ordered him to settle bishops wherever there should be occasion. ... This is clear evidence, that the progress ascribed to him was not as considerable as Gregory imagines. ... It is therefore surprisingly strange that the conversion of the English should be ascribed to Augustine, rather than to Aidan, to Finan, to Colman, to Cedd, to Diuma and the other Scotch monks, who undoubtedly labored much more abundantly than he. But here lies the case. These last had not their orders from Rome, and therefore must not be allowed any share in the glory of this work." Truth Triumphant 177.

Let us learn more about one of these great men of God who took the gospel to England. Although we are not sure of Aidan's birthday we do know that he was born in Ireland and was one of the famous students who trained at Iona. Aidan, like all the students who attended Columba's school, had wonderful teachers who trained him in all the knowledge of that day. He knew the scriptures well, was experienced in farming and had practical skills that would bring success to his ministry. He also had the opportunity while at the school to speak with visiting travelers who shared their experiences from not only far off places like Iceland and the Holy Land but the various countries that today make up the British Islands. This knowledge would give Aidan a good understanding of the seven kingdoms (the Heptarchy) of England where God would call him to work.

Aidan's call to minister in pagan England was rather interesting. A request had come to Iona from King Oswald of Northumbria for an evangelist to work among his people. A student who was known for his Bible knowledge along with his ability to live a simple life was chosen by a committee. Unfortunately this young man, like the ten spies that Moses sent into the Promised Land, quickly returned to Iona with a report of how fierce the people were and listed the many problems facing a worker in Northumbria. The committee then decided on a student who was known for his love, gentleness and patience – Aidan.

King Oswald of Northumbria was an interesting man. His father had become converted by a Roman priest named Paulinus, who came from Kent where Augustine was from. Oswald's father followed the superficial worship of the Roman Church and many of his subjects went back to paganism and idolatry when their leader was killed in battle. During the unrest caused by his father's death Oswald fled to Iona for safety and while there he learned the beauty of the gospel from the dedicated Celtic teachers and pastors.

Even though his father's priest, Paulinus, was still alive, Oswald chose to bring from Iona a spiritual leader who would teach his people the ways of Columba.

Aidan won the respect of the people of Northumbria. He was not haughty and proud and he did not seek for riches and power. Oswald was so happy to have an evangelist for his people that he himself did the humble task of translating sermons while Aidan learned the

native language. Because of this missionary's consistent life, which matched the words that he taught, it was not long before more and more people joined the Celtic church in Northumbria.

This is what was written of Aiden by a famous historian: "It was the highest commendation of his doctrine, with all men, that he taught no otherwise than he and his followers had lived; for he neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distribution immediately among the poor whatsoever was given him by the kings or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; and wherever in his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if infidels, to embrace the mystery of the faith; or if they were believers, to strengthen them in the faith, and to stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works." Truth Triumphant 170, 171.

Aidan was a man of prayer. Early in his ministry King Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne to begin an educational center. Using Iona as his model, Aidan built a school surrounded by fields which supplied food and work for the students who attended. This school was kept small because Aidan believed that many small schools needed to be built to shine the light of the gospel in many places rather than having one large training school.

Aidan was a hard worker and began work on another school shortly after building Lindisfarne. This training center, on the Tweed River, was called Melrose. At these schools young people were trained to go as missionaries to their own people or to attempt taking the gospel into areas in darkness.

Sometimes when reading about these early Celtic schools it causes confusion when they are called "monasteries" and the students were known as "monks." Today when we hear these words we think of a division of unmarried Catholic clergy. This is not what the word originally meant. The students of the Celtic training school often married and many times it would be their children who would take over their pastorates when they died. Celtic monasteries were simply the training schools for the teachers and pastors (monks) who would lead the churches.

The most famous training center for England was established at Whitby during the time of Aidan. This school was not built by Aidan but rather by a godly woman named Hilda. She was a member of the royal family and even as a child was known for her deep love and devotion for God. When many went back to paganism after the superficial work done by Augustine, she moved away and spent time in two different training centers before returning when King Oswald took the throne.

Arriving back in England she began the mammoth job of building Whitby. Hilda had a vision for a Bible training center where women could receive an education along with the men. The women were trained in giving Bible studies and they also were given practical experience in domestic jobs which would be valuable throughout their life. Hilda was known as a woman of unusual wisdom and her deed of mercy and service gave her a reputation as a wise counselor. Dr. Wilkinson tells us that even kings and princes came to her for advice.

It was from Whitby that England's first poet appeared. Often as entertainment in the evening the students would pass around a harp and take turns singing songs to each other. Caedmon, a poor and shy man, felt the others were much more talented than he was and he refused the harp and instead went out to sleep in the stable where he was in charge of the cattle.

One night as he slept he was given a dream in which a man appeared to him and asked Caedmon to sing for him. Caedmon replied that he couldn't sing and expressed his sorrow that he didn't sing like his fellow students. The man told him to sing and when Caedmon asked what to sing he replied, "The beginning of created things." Immediately Caedmon began to sing and compose a poem praising God. We no longer have the whole poem that we call "Caedmon's Hymn" but one early historian gave us the following few lines which he copied from the original text:

Now we should praise the Guardian of the Heavenly Kingdom
The Ruler's power and His understanding,
The work of the Father of Glory, how He, eternal Lord
Established the beginning of every wondrous thing.
He first created Heaven as a roof
For the children of mankind, the holy Creator;
Then the Guardian of mankind,
The eternal Lord, afterward adorned the earth –
The Lord Almighty adorned the world for men.

Hilda heard of the amazing gift which had been given to this man and asked him to come and tell her about his dream. She encouraged him to always use his gift for the glory of God. Students at the school would bring Bible verses to Caedmon and he would make them into beautiful verses sung to sacred music. Although many people could not afford Bibles or other books, through the songs of Caedmon many of the people heard the messages of Jesus and salvation taught by Aidan and his disciples.

Hilda stood firm in her opposition to what she saw happening with the Roman Church and she spoke against their authority and doctrine – especially the papal Easter. When the meeting between the papist and the British delegation took place at Whitby in AD 664, Hilda was on the side of Colman, a successor of Aidan.

After Aidan's death a man named Finan was chosen to take his place. It was during this time that an interesting story took place. A young prince named Peada fell in love with the daughter of King Oswy who was a brother of King Oswald. When he asked for permission to marry the beautiful Elflada her father refused because Peada was not a Christian. He encouraged the prince to learn about the teachings of Christ so he would be able to help convert his people.

Peada did study the Bible and learned about the gospel, the resurrection, and a future life forever with Jesus. He was so excited about what he was learning that he told King Oswy that even if he did not win the love of Elflada that he wanted to learn more about God. Finan was asked to instruct Peada in the scriptures and after preparing him well, baptized him. Four pastors were sent to give him further studies and they also stayed to help evangelize the people of Peada's land. Many people, even of the nobility, were converted, gave up their idols and were baptized.

The Christian faith continued to spread. Many of those who had been taught by Augustine had slipped back into idolatry but under Finan's leadership many turned back to God and renounced their idols and paganism. A training school was built in Tillbery and from there went young people to spread the gospel to the kingdom of Essex.

After the death of Finan, Colman became the leader of the Celtic Church. Christianity had spread rapidly throughout England, but Satan was busy and was planning a way to break the power of the gospel. King Oswy was married to a Roman Catholic queen and she and her chaplain, Wilfrid, were determined to stop Colman and his missionaries from evangelizing.

After three years in office, Colman had to face the same dispute about Easter which earlier leaders had faced. In some countries those who opposed Rome in this matter were put to death, but the queen had to use a different method in dealing with the Celtic Church. She proposed a debate and the King ordered that it take place at Witby. On one side there were Colman, Hilda, Bishop Cedd and other Bible-believing Christians while on the other side were the king, queen, Prince Alchfrid, Wilfrid and two of his priests.

Colman was able to clearly defend his position with convincing argument, but Wilfrid brought the debate around to the idea that Peter had been given the keys of heaven and hell and the pope (Peter's successor) was now the head of the Roman Church. Anyone going against the universal church (the Roman Catholic Church) was fighting God and making himself the enemy of God. The king felt that if Jesus had said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, ... and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that the successor of Peter (the pope) should be obeyed in all things -including when Easter would be celebrated. Through this type of reasoning the kings of Europe and the British Isles were brought under the rulership of the papal power.

It would be good to spend a few minutes studying this verse in Matthew 16:18 since it is the verse that Rome uses as proof of her power to lead Jesus' Church on earth. To understand this verse we must look at the Greek words which are used. When Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter," the Greek word "Peter" is Petros which means a small pebble; a rolling stone – something unstable which you must never build upon for Petros is moveable. Jesus continued and said, "And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now the Greek word translated "rock" is Petra which means a mighty rock. One person has illustrated Petra as El Capitan, a huge rock in Yosemite National Park in California. It stands over 4,000 feet in the air and is made up of solid granite which is embedded deep within the earth. Christ is saying that He will build His church upon a mighty Rock – Himself – not Peter, the rolling pebble.

When Colman could see that reasoning from scripture was having no effect on the king or others at the meeting he knew that to resist further would result in bloodshed. Immediately he and his followers left for Iona. For the next four hundred years truth seemed to be buried under the rubbish of false doctrine, ceremony and image worship. However, those seeds of truth sprang to life when watered by Wycliffe and his followers many years later and began the Reformation which ended in Protestantism.

CHAPTER 14

COLUMBANUS AND THE CHURCH IN EUROPE

(AD 543 - 615)

While Europe was descending into the Dark Ages of ignorance, God prepared a brilliant and dedicated man to help dispel the darkness of that continent.

Columbanus was a graduate of the school at Bangor where he became fluent in the scriptures and music and perfected his gift of writing poetry. There were many times when he would take his Bible and go out by himself to spend time with God. When he would return we are told that he came back strengthened and refreshed like Jesus did when He spent nights in prayer with His Father.

We are told that Columbanus was an exceptionally tall, strong and handsome man and he had many women who hoped to win his heart. However, Columbanus' first love was for God and as he heard about the need for missionaries in France he determined to be the one to take Celtic Christianity to them.

King Guntram was very pleased that such a well educated man wanted to begin a training school in his country and he quickly offered him a half-ruined Roman fort at Anagrates that he could use as the location for his mission. This land was gratefully accepted.

Building a school takes a lot of careful planning and hard work. While the buildings were being built and the land was being prepared so crops could be sown Columbanus and the Celtic missionaries who came with him experienced many hardships. Sometimes there was little food and they had to live on berries, the bark of trees and other plants they could find in the forest. Even though there wasn't enough food they had to continue the strenuous work of building and clearing land. When the king heard about their lack of food he sent provisions to the appreciative missionaries.

Reports of the new mission spread quickly. People had heard of Iona and they were thrilled that there was a training school where the skills and scriptures of the Irish colleges could be learned in their own country. Young people came flocking from all over the land to Anagrates wanting to attend the school. Many of these students were from the noble families which wanted their children to be trained in the learning of the day.

While the Celtic Church understood the need of the people to receive an education the pope in Rome, Gregory I, had issued an order in which he denounced learning in general and banned the teaching of mathematics and Greek in particular. Parents who were educated saw the need to send their children to Columbanus' school to be trained for useful service to God and to keep knowledge alive in their country.

The reason for the success of these missionaries can be found not only in their hard work and brilliant education but in their exemplary life. One writer said this about them: "Modesty and sobriety, gentleness and mildness shone forth in them all. The evils of sloth and of unruly tempers were expelled. Pride and haughtiness were expiated by severe punishments. Scorn and envy were driven out by faithful diligence. So great was the strength of their patience, love, and mildness that no one could doubt that the God of mercy dwelt among them." Truth Triumphant 186.

It wasn't long before Anagrates was too small and Columbanus made plans to begin another training center. He received permission from King Guntram to build a second school at Luxeuil which was at the base of the Vosges mountains. Here in a quiet wilderness area another old Roman ruin provided the beginnings for the new school.

Again they felled and cleared trees, constructed buildings and planted. Again youth from all over flocked to Luxeuil to be taught. It wasn't long before this school could not meet the demands for those wanting an education and the missionaries began the process all over

again. We are told that a third training school was built and from these places of learning went young people who knew the scriptures and had acquired skills needed to begin their own missionary centers.

The Roman priests were jealous of the Celtic missionaries. They tried to order Columbanus to appear before them to answer for his faith, but he refused. He sent them a letter and asked to be left alone to do the work God had called him to do. One Roman historian put it this way, "Remonstrance was useless; they adhered tenaciously to their country's usages. Nothing could convince them that what St. Patrick and the saints of Ireland had handed down to them could by any possibility be wrong. They only wanted to be let alone. They did not desire to impose their usages on others. Why should others impose their usages on them. They had a right to be allowed to live in peace in their wilderness, for they injured no man, and they prayed for all." Truth Triumphant 189.

The teachings of the Celtic Church often did not agree with the priests. While the missionaries from Ireland believed in the supreme authority of the Scriptures, Rome did not. The Romish Church upheld the importance of the pope, the need for the clergy to not marry, transubstantiation, the Trinity and other doctrines which the missionaries could not accept.

Although historical proof has been erased we must also wonder whether the keeping of Saturday as the Sabbath was another teaching that Rome tried to undermine. What we do know is that Pope Gregory I was so upset with Christians in Rome for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath "that in 602 he issued a bull declaring that when antichrist should come, he would keep Saturday for the Sabbath." Truth Triumphant 195. We can see all through history the Sabbath being the object of special hatred against God's true church.

Although King Guntram had been an influential friend to the Celtic missionaries, Satan was busy trying to cause hardship for these humble workers for God. The king's sister-in-law, Queen Brunhilda of Austrasia, was a strong Roman Catholic and took a deep dislike to Columbanus when he rebuked her for the evil things that were happening at the court. She vowed to help the bishops attack the Celtic faith and get rid of their educational system.

Columbanus was ordered banished, but rather than sail for home he went to Soissons, the capital of King Clotaire II, where he accepted a position similar to that of Prime Minister. During travels at this time we see Columbanus' influence expanding to include King Theodebert (from what today is Germany) and other influential leaders. For several years Columbanus worked in Germany and Switzerland and left behind many schools which continued the training of youth and the preservation of the scriptures.

When he was seventy years old Columbanus made a special journey to see King Agilulf of the Lombards. Here he found followers of the Church of the East – descendants of the Goths and Lombards. The people were thrilled to have a visit from this famous missionary from Ireland. It is believed that it was at this time, here in the towering Italian Alps, that the Celts and the Waldenses joined hands in spreading the gospel.

The king gave a ruined church in Bobbio and again Columbanus set to work creating a school out of the forest and lands. We are told that he had a special gift for farming and under his direction the land was tilled and planted to produce abundant harvests. He was known for his skill in domesticating wild animals which were used to keep the farm running smoothly.

Some of you may have heard of the famous library at Bobbio. It contained rare manuscripts from Ireland, books that Columbanus wrote, copies of the Holy Scriptures and of course books for the various courses taught at the school. We are told that "a tenth-century

catalogue ... shows that at that period every branch of knowledge, divine and human, was represented in this library." Truth Triumphant 193.

Because of the great legacy of Columbanus – his many schools and books and scholars - plus his truly Christian life and example, the Roman Catholic Church found his memory too strong to erase. They finally had to do for him what they did for Patrick and Columba; they made him a saint and claimed him as their own.

CHAPTER 15

THE CHURCH IN EUROPE AFTER THE TIME OF COLUMBANUS

Whenever the gospel of Jesus is taken to an area it brings great changes. The Celtic missionaries found Europe in ignorance and disorganization. Their homes were unclean and most lived in poverty and hunger. However, after the work of Columbanus and his fellow missionaries there were found clean, prosperous farms filled with healthy, domesticated animals. Places that had formerly been deserts were now lush and useful. Those who came to Europe with Columbanus later took their learning and skills and built up towns, schools and libraries throughout the countryside. The scriptures were continually copied so truth was known and followed.

The Celtic centers graduated well-trained students who went back to their homes with not only skills to create a comfortable life for themselves, but with a missionary spirit which taught truth to those in darkness. The papacy watched this well-organized church with fear. The pastors of the Celtic Church outnumbered those of the Roman Church so they knew they must find a way to limit their influence.

Onto the stage of this drama we meet Winfried who was better known in history as Boniface. His mission for the pope was to bring the widespread Celtic Church into obedience to the papacy. We are told that the pope took Boniface to the supposed tomb of the apostle Peter in Rome and made him take an oath of loyalty to the pope saying that he would work for the downfall of the Irish missionaries. This was the first time that an oath had been taken, but since then many Roman Catholics (including the Jesuits) have taken vows to uphold the papacy and destroy any of her dissenters.

You might find part of this oath interesting to read. Boniface promised, "I will abide in the unity of the Catholic faith, and I will in no manner agree with anything contrary to the unity of the Catholic church. ... Whenever I find that the conduct of the presiding officers of churches contradicts the ancient decrees and ordinances of the fathers, I will have no fellowship or connection with them; but, on the contrary, if I can hinder them, I will hinder them; and if not, report them faithfully to the pope." Truth Triumphant 201.

Boniface used all sorts of methods to further the cause he had sworn to uphold. Some church leaders he condemned as heretics and others were driven into exile by kings who would do the pope's bidding. Pastors were imprisoned for things like speaking against worshiping "saints" and refusing to accept the teachings written by Romish leaders such as Jerome, Augustine and Gregory. If there was too much resistance to following the Roman Church's traditions Boniface would at times have to use force, but where the people stood up

against Rome's bullying tactics and demanded justice, often their pastors were set free from prison. We would be wise to remember that there are still "Bonifaces" today who have taken similar vows. Satan is still working hard to hinder the spread of truth and he will use name-calling, intimidation, lies and force to silence the voices of God's people. Let us be like those who were willing to speak out against wrongs and stand firm for truth. Our courage will strengthen others and perhaps God will use our voice to bring about justice.

On Christmas Day in AD 800, the city of Rome witnessed a special ceremony. The pope placed an imperial crown on the head of Charlemagne and announced that he was the head of the whole Roman Empire. Up till this time there had been several rulers who were struggling for power to rule. This coronation had deep importance since it began the union of church and state that was to last for more than a thousand years. It would now be through the army of Charlemagne that the papacy would gain control of all the churches throughout Europe.

The Dark Ages deepened from 800 AD to 1100 AD. We see ignorance and superstition taking away the light of the scriptures and other subjects of learning like science, music and languages. People lived in poverty and most could not even sign their name. The people lived in fear of making the priests angry. Even kings were afraid of opposing the Church because they were threatened with losing the right to rule their subjects.

During this time many that loved God's Word were chased off their lands, thrown in prison and killed. But they were faithful and the record of their steadfastness is an encouragement to each of us who want to be faithful until Jesus' Second Coming.

We are told that before Jesus comes again there will be another worldwide union of church and state. The churches will ask the government to make laws which will enforce religious laws. These laws will take away our freedom of religion and will cause God's faithful followers to be thrown in prison and persecuted for worshiping on the Sabbath - the seventh day of the week, Saturday. We have been counseled not to get involved with politics and try to get our favorite person elected to government. We are to speak against laws that limit our freedom of religion, but we are not to vote or to try to enforce laws through becoming politically active. We do not want to follow in the steps of the Roman Church. We do not want to be responsible for supporting laws that will harm God's faithful remnant.

CHAPTER 16

EARLY WALDENSIAN HEROES*

(There is a wonderful book written during the 1800's by a man named J.A. Wylie called History of the Waldenses. We are going to take some facts and stories from his book for Part 4 of Truth Triumphant for Young People.)

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." Psalm 121:1.

Many times the mountains have provided refuge for God's people in times of danger. Lot and his daughters fled to the hills surrounding Sodom to escape the destruction of their doomed city. We know that David and his men often hid in caves to hide from the murderous plans of King Saul and his army. Jesus spent long nights in prayer in the mountains as He communed with God for victory over Satan's temptations.

The book of Revelation tell us that God's Church (the woman) would have to flee into the wilderness where God had prepared a place for her to be safe from the dragon (Satan).

"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 threescore days." Revelation 12:6.

As we study the geography of Europe we see a place of refuge that God prepared for His people. In northwestern Italy, southeastern France and northern Spain we see towering mountain which provided a protective wall between those who wanted to follow God and those who wanted to destroy them. In the quiet valleys among the towering mountains we find the home of those we will call the Church in the Wilderness. These people were used by God to protect the scriptures and keep truth pure from the corruptions which Rome was bringing into her worship.

When Constantine in AD 300 declared that all Christian churches must recognize the authority of the Church of Rome there began a struggle between those who wished to remain loyal to God and those who chose to follow man. This Church in the Wilderness was known by many different names but we will most often refer to them as the Waldenses. As we go through the history of these people we will learn about the Albigenses, Vaudois, Leonists, and Lollards who were the "brothers" of the Waldenses.

The history of these people is very ancient. Some have said that the Waldenses were started by Peter Waldo who was a wealthy merchant of Lyons, France about 1175. Although he was a wonderful man who gave his fortune to the help the poor and to spread the gospel, he was not the founder of the Waldenses. That honor goes to Vigilantius – a man of God we met in the first part of our "Truth Triumphant" story. Those who received the gospel from the apostles soon recognized that they would have to join the Church of Rome in her manmade traditions or they would become her enemy by upholding the truths of the Bible. The "men of the valleys" were those who upheld God's Word during a time of darkness in Europe.

Columbanus and his fellow missionaries had done their work well. Powerful evangelists, trained in their schools, helped to bring the gospel to those who were living in superstition and ignorance. Early Waldensians spoke openly against the changes being made to Christianity by the leaders of the Roman Church. At the Council of Frankfort in AD 794 the Waldensian pastors rejected the authority of Rome when they refused the Church's decree to worship images.

God blessed His Church in the Wilderness with strong leadership. Claude of Turin was born in Spain but was called by the prince of Turin to come and be its bishop. When Claude arrived he found the city full of evils such as stealing, superstition, image worship and wrong practices. He immediately began a reformation among the worshipers. He said, "If a man ought not to worship the works of God, much less should he worship and reverence the works of men." In speaking against the worship of the cross he preached, "God has commanded us to bear the cross; not to pray to it." "Claude wanted to know why they should adore the cross and not also worship many other things – as mangers, fishing boats, trees, thorns, and lances – with which Jesus came in contact. He also defended himself against those who reviled him because he denounced pilgrimages." Truth Triumphant 223, 224.

One of the Waldensian heroes was Henry of Lausanne. He taught from scripture in such a simple and powerful way that many were convicted of sin and he lead numerous people were converted. Henry wrote a book which exposed the falsehoods coming into the Roman Church. The pope became worried about its effect on the papacy and sent for the help of a trusted warrior of the Church, Bernard of Clairvaux. He was a powerful person - we are told he even influenced the choice of who would be the new pope. Bernard had helped the Church by trained Irishmen in Romish doctrine then sent them back to their native Ireland to

undermine and disrupt the work done by the followers of Patrick. Rome hoped he would be able to stop this new "heretic."

Under the direction of Bernard it was arranged to put Henry of Lausanne to death. In Bernard's own words here were the reasons such action was needed: "How great are the evils which I have heard and known that the heretic Henry has done and is daily doing in the church of God! A ravening wolf in sheep's clothing is busy in your land, but by our Lord's direction I know him by his fruits. ... Churches are regarded as synagogues, the sanctuary of God is said to have no sanctity, the sacraments are not thought to be sacred, feast days are deprived of their wonted solemnities." Truth Triumphant 240.

There was another voice that Bernard of Clairvaux worked to silence. Arnold of Brescia was a spiritual man with a brilliant mind. He preached in Switzerland, Germany, France and southern Italy. From the pulpit he opposed transubstantiation, infant baptism and prayers for the dead. He was just as vocal in favor of a democratic type of ministry and in attacking the union of church and state. Many wealthy and influential men heard him and supported him. This greatly concerned Bernard who demanded that all Arnold's books be burned.

During this time the city of Rome was in turmoil. The citizens were calling for a civil government and they succeeded in getting the pope to flee the city. Into this unstable situation Arnold arrived. Even though he had spoken out against a union of church and state, he fell into a trap by sanctioning the use of force to rid the city of the influence of the Roman Church. The people welcomed him and he took over the leadership of the government. He separated the church from the civil affairs and set up the Roman senate again as the ruling power.

Arnold taught the scriptures rather than the traditions of men and people joined God's true church in great numbers. However this triumph didn't last long and soon the pope and the emperor joined together to unseat Arnold and again control Rome. This brave man was burned and his ashes were thrown into the Tiber River. However, his influence could not be so easily put away. We are told, "The Waldenses look up to Arnold as one of the spiritual founders of their churches; and his religious and political opinions probably fostered the spirit of republican independence which throughout Switzerland and the whole Alpine district was awaiting its time." Truth Triumphant 243.

Around 1160 or 1170 Peter Waldo began to preach and he used his considerable wealth as a merchant to translate the Bible into the common language. He used the Itala rather than the Latin Vulgate. It would be good to note that this Bible influenced those translations later made by Martin Luther, William Tindale, Wycliffe and others. During the Reformation when Willaim Farrel visited the valleys and saw the handmade copies of their Bible, he insisted that the whole Bible be translated into French and be given to the new reformation church in France as a gift. As Dr. Wilkinson says, "Through the long night of the Dark Ages these people were a sanctuary for the Holy Scriptures. They were the ark in Europe which safely carried the Bible across the stormy waters of medieval persecution."

Peter Waldo preached that the papacy was the "man of sin" and the "beast" spoken of in Revelation. He moved from Lyons to the north of France to escape persecution but was forced to flee to Bohemia as Satan's agents ruthlessly pursued him. Here Waldo continued to preach and teach and many people were won to Christ. As they experienced the anger of the Roman Church many of these faithful Christians joined the Waldenses in the valleys of northern Italy. Persecution did what it always has done – it spread the truth.

CHAPTER 17

THE CAUSE OF ROME'S ANGER

Waldensian leaders kept their Church strong and united on Bible principles. However, human tradition continued to grow in the Roman Church. God's people read in Isaiah 58:1, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." They loudly denounced the falsehoods which were sweeping away the truths of the Bible. "They held that... the Pope's pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to one knew not whom, ... that holy water was not a whit more efficacious than rain water; and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if offered in a church. They were accused, moreover, of having scoffed at the doctrine of transubstantiation, and of having spoken blasphemously of Rome as the harlot of the Apocalypse." History of the Waldenses 17. Because they spoke against the Church of Rome the Waldensians were labeled as "heretics."

Labeling an enemy with a belittling name is one of Satan's favorite ways to demonize a person or group. Remember the time that Elijah, under the power of God, prayed that no rain should fall on Israel until they repented and followed God? When Ahab met God's prophet three and a half years into the famine what did he call him – "he that troubleth Israel." Joseph was called "this dreamer" by his jealous and ungodly brothers and even Jesus was labeled as one who "hath an unclean spirit." We see Rome doing this against the Waldenses. Rome called them by various names such as Henricians, Berengarians, Paulicians, Insabbatati, and Petrobrusians. This was to demonize the influence of courageous leaders such as Peter de Bruys, the Apostle Paul, Henry of Lausanne and Berengarius.

The papacy also used outright lies to excite fear of these gentle people of the valleys. We are told that one king, Charles II, asked to have some Waldensian children brought to his court. Although it seemed a strange request, twelve children and their mothers came to the court and the king examined them carefully. "He found them well formed, and testified his admiration of their healthy faces, clear eyes, and lively prattle. He had been told, he said, that 'the Vaudois children were monsters, with only one eye placed in the middle of the forehead, four rows of black teeth, and other similar deformities.'" History of the Waldenses 52.

Name-calling did not cause the Waldensian Church to stop speaking out against errors in the Roman Church. A book was written which supported the idea that the priest had the power to change the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the actual body and blood of Jesus. The Church in the Wilderness strongly attacked this new heresy and this made the Church of Rome even angrier with the Church in the Wilderness.

A poem has been written to show the foolishness of this belief of transubstantiation. I think you too will see the danger of believing doctrines that do not come from the Bible.

"A Roman Miracle"

A pretty maid, a Protestant, was to a Catholic wed;

To love all Bible truths and tales, quite early she'd been bred.

It sorely grieved her husband's heart that she would not comply,

And join the Mother Church of Rome and heretics deny.

So day by day he flattered her, but still she saw no good
Would ever come from bowing down to idols made of wood.
The Mass, the host, the miracles, were made but to deceive;
And transubstantiation, too, she'd never dare believe.

He went to see his clergyman and told him his sad tale.
"My wife is an unbeliever, sir; you can perhaps prevail;
For all your Romish miracles my wife has strong aversion,
To really work a miracle may lead to her conversion."

The priest went with the gentleman – he thought to gain a prize.
He said, "I will convert her, sir, and open both her eyes."
So when they came into the house, the husband loudly cried,
"The priest has come to dine with us!" "He's welcome," she replied.

And when, at last, the meal was o'er, the priest at once began,
To teach his hostess all about the sinful state of man;
The greatness of our Savior's love, which Christians can't deny,
To give Himself a sacrifice and for our sins to die.

"I will return tomorrow, lass, prepare some bread and wine;
The sacramental miracle will stop your soul's decline."
"I'll bake the bread," the lady said. "You may," he did reply,
"And when you've seen this miracle, convinced you'll be, say I."

The priest did come accordingly, the bread and wine did bless.
The lady asked, "Sir, is it changed?" The priest answered, "Yes,
It's changed from common bread and wine to truly flesh and blood;
Begorra, lass, this power of mine has changed it into God!"

So having blessed the bread and wine, to eat they did prepare.
The lady said unto the priest, "I warn you to take care,
For half an ounce of arsenic was mixed right in the batter,
But since you have its nature changed, it cannot really matter."

The priest was struck real dumb – he looked as pale as death.
The bread and wine fell from his hands and he did gasp for breath.
"Bring me my horse!" the priest cried, "This is a curse home!"
The lady replied, "Begone; 'tis you who shares the curse of Rome."

The husband, too, he sat surprised, and not a word did say.
At length he spoke, "My dear," said he, "the priest has run away;
To gulp such mummery and tripe, I'm not for sure, quite able;
I'll go with you and we'll renounce this Roman Catholic fable."

There were other areas where the Waldenses could not agree with the Church of Rome. One of these was on which day of the week should be the holy day of rest. By this time the Church of Rome was making the transition from Saturday worship to Sunday sacredness. In AD 864 the king of Bulgaria, and his nation, were converted by Greek missionaries. They did not use the Latin Vulgate but had scripture translated from the original Greek. "Again the Sabbath question became prominent. The churches of the East from earliest days had sanctified Saturday as the Sabbath, and wherever Sunday had crept in, religious services were observed on both days. Bulgaria in the early season of its evangelization had been taught that no work should be performed on the Sabbath." Truth Triumphant 231, 232.

We know that in 1194 the king of Aragon issued a decree saying, "We command you in imitation of our ancestors and in obedience to the ordinances of the church, that heretics, to wit, Waldenses, Insabbathi and those who call themselves the poor of Lyons and all other heretics should be expelled away from the face of God and from all Catholics and ordered to depart from our kingdom." We are told by a famous member of the Inquisition that, "Insabbatat was the name given to the Vaudois." Truth Triumphant 260.

We are told by Erasmus, a famous editor during the Reformation, that as late as 1500 there were people in Bohemia who kept the seventh-day Sabbath. We learned Peter Waldo was exiled to that country and he would have influenced their beliefs. As Lewis said, "They hold that none of the ordinances of the church that have been introduced since Christ's ascension ought to be observed, being of no worth; the feasts, fasts, orders, blessings, offices of the church and the like, they utterly reject."

It is interesting to look at a modern example of how the Catholic Church gradually introduced Sunday worship into an area where the seventh-day Sabbath was kept. In Acts 8 we are told about Philip studying and converted the Ethiopian eunuch. This man went back to his country and taught his queen the same gospel that the disciples were taking to the entire world. Because of the rise of Mohammedanism in the Middle East the rest of the world forgot the Ethiopian Christians in northeast of Africa. It wasn't until the early part of the sixteenth century that Moslem warriors attacked Ethiopia. The king sent a message to Portugal asking for support against the invaders. In 1541 troops arrived to help their Christian brothers. Imagine the surprise of the Catholic Portuguese to find out that this "Christian" nation observed the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath along with Sunday!

Soon Jesuit missionaries arrived and through captivity, torture and death convinced the Emperor Susenyos to convert to the Roman Catholic Church. In 1622 it was proclaimed that Catholicism was the new state religion of Ethiopia. However, when a law was passed that required everyone to work on the seventh-day Sabbath the people and ministers rebelled. Up to that time the people had compromised by keeping both Saturday and Sunday as rest days, but they were not willing to give up the sacredness of Saturday. Only the king, the nobles and those that worked in the palace kept the new religion.

The protests that followed caused a bitter civil war and many were killed. One of the emperor's sons, Facilidas, spoke to his father and said, "These people are not pagans; they are not Muslims. Why are we killing our own people; some of them are even our relatives." The king realized he was wrong in persecuting his subjects so he stepped down as the ruler. He appointed his son, Facilidas, to lead the nation. Under new leadership people were again given the freedom to worship as they chose.

I know a man from Ethiopia and he says that even up till forty years ago it was common for people in the smaller villages to have two days of worship – Saturday and

Sunday. It is interesting how changes were brought about in these remote areas. Sabbath (Saturday) was a solemn day, often with fasting, while Sunday was a feast day with games and songs. The children of course did not look forward to the Sabbath while Sunday was a happy day to enjoy. Through the years the people began to lose their love for the Sabbath and place their allegiance on the "fun" day of worship. Thus in most parts of Ethiopia today the history of Sabbathkeeping is being erased.

We are told that another storm of anger and persecution is coming. Revelation 12:17 tells us, "And the dragon (that's Satan) was wrath with the woman (that's God's people), and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Will we stand as firm against error and as strongly for truth as did the Waldenses?

Education is one of the most important ways to maintain a strong and healthy church. Early defenders of truth like Patrick, Columba, and Aiden understood this and founded training schools for the youth. One of the reasons why the Reformation had such power was that men like Melancthon and Martin Luther knew the value of teaching students the ways of God. They started educational centers where the truth was taught to the youth.

The Waldenses knew that they needed a strong group of young people to carry on the work of God. In The Great Controversy 67 we are told how parents trained their children to remain faithful to God. "Parents, tender and affectionate as they were, loved their children too wisely to accustom them to self-indulgence. Before them was a life of trial and hardship, perhaps a martyr's death. They were educated from childhood to endure hardness, to submit to control, and yet to think and act for themselves. Very early they were taught to bear responsibilities, to be guarded in speech, and to understand the wisdom of silence. One indiscreet word let fall in the hearing of their enemies, might imperil not only the life of the speaker, but the lives of hundred of his brethren; for as wolves hunting their prey did the enemies of truth pursue those who dared to claim freedom of religious faith."

Living in the mountain valleys the Waldenses knew all about hard work. They were farmers who had to work carefully every piece of land to plant the fruits, grains and vegetables that would provide food for them and their herds and flocks. "Economy and severe self-denial formed a part of the education which the children received as their only legacy. They were taught that God designs life to be a discipline, and that their wants could be supplied only by personal labor, by forethought, care, and faith. The process was laborious and wearisome, but it was wholesome, just what man needs in his fallen state, the school which God has provided for his training and development." The Great Controversy 67, 68.

We are told that the Bible was used as the textbook for all the Waldensian students. Before the days of printing presses all Bibles were reproduced by hand. Many hours were spent in the slow process of copying scripture to be shared with those who were seeking for truth. This meant there were few copies of scripture and even small portions were valued and treasured. The youth were required to memorize whole books of scripture so if necessary they would be able to reproduce the entire Bible if their precious copies of scripture were destroyed during the persecutions which they experienced.

Many of the young men left their valley homes and traveled to the large seminaries in Lombardy or to the Sorbonne at Paris. These young people knew that they would be exposed to temptations but they had developed characters which prepared them to meet Satan and his

sneaky assaults. They recognized that they could not become trusting of anyone. They were not at school to become friends with the world, but rather were ambassadors for their King. They were such examples of kindness, honesty, industry and piety that many of the people whom they boarded with were influenced favorably for truth. As they attended classes and asked questions, many of their fellow students and even instructors were challenged to study deeper into the scriptures.

At these educational centers they became fluent in various languages so they would be able to translate the scriptures into the common language of the people. We are told that they would go from place to place posing as merchants selling silks, jewelry and other rare goods. When they were welcomed into a home they would look for an opportunity to present scripture to those who seemed open to spiritual things. Carefully sewn into their clothing were portions of the Bible which they had written out to give to those who were searching for truth. In this careful way God's Word was placed in the hands of wealthy citizens and even those of the nobility.

Some students studied music. They became trained troubadours going from place to place singing as entertainment to both wealthy and poor. Most of their music was prepared so that as they sang they were delivering a sermon to their audience. Before the youth were asked to serve as pastors in their valleys they were expected to serve three years as missionary evangelists. During these years of training they learned tact, wisdom, faith and reliance on God that would make them godly leaders of their people.

The Church in the Wilderness was responsible for helping bring about the Reformation. As missionaries presented portions of scripture they also spoke about the deceptions that were part of the Roman Church. "The glad response was heard: 'No more long pilgrimages to make; no more painful journeys to holy shrines. I may come to Jesus just as I am, sinful and unholy, and He will not spurn a penitential prayer.'" The Great Controversy 75. Lollard, a Waldensian missionary to England, was the one who paved the way for Wycliffe who is known as the "Morning Star of the Reformation." We are told that "Huss and Jerome, Luther and Calvin did little more than carry on the work begun by the Vaudois missionaries." Truth Triumphant 249.

CHAPTER 19

PERSECUTIONS

All the missionary activity of the Waldenses caused great concern for the papacy. For over a thousand years the Roman Church turned her armies on the Waldenses. Although there were persecutions before AD 1200 the people lived in relative peace and prosperity. That all changed when Innocent III took the seat of papal power. He was determined to get rid of this large group of heretics. He could see that their evangelizing spirit, their distributing of the sacred scriptures and their failure to obey Rome would all cause problems for the papacy. He issued a bull. He sent armies into the valleys and they soon burned and ruined the Waldenses' fields and cities. John XXII continued the persecutions as more inquisitors entered the valleys to stamp out these heretics.

Most of the recorded history of the Waldenses was destroyed during the fierce persecutions, but one of the famous leaders, Pastor Leger, sent books and documents to the libraries of Cambridge and Geneva. Those who were leaders in the Protestant Reformation preserved these important records. They were recognized as a valuable history both to the people of the valleys and to Protestants in other countries. Some of the stories we are going to

relate are taken from this history by Leger. To give you an idea of what these people of the valleys experienced we will describe some of the worst persecutions they experienced.

All through their history, the people of the valleys had looked on the mountains as a place of safety from those who tried to kill them. One sad story happened on Christmas day of 1400. The people thought they were safe because of the deep snow and cold weather that covered the high passes leading into their protected valley. But the people were taken by surprise when Borelli and his armed troops marched in. The Waldensians were forced to flee their homes and quickly run for the refuge of the mountains carrying their old, sick and young. They were chased and the slow or weak were attacked and killed by the soldiers as they fled. In the morning, up on the mountain, fifty to eighty children were found dead from the cold; mothers and babies died together.

"But 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 persecutors, 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." History of the Waldenses 31. In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII issued a bull in which he called all Catholics to help in this battle with the heretics. They were told that if they killed even one Waldensian they would have all their sins forgiven. The pope also said that any contracts that had been made with the Waldenses could be legally broken and it was forbidden to give help to any heretic.

These promises got many of the worst people in society to sign up and join the army. The generals planned their strategy and decided that they would be most sure of success if they attacked the Waldenses from three different directions. The first assault was led by La Palu. When the meek Waldensian people saw the huge papal army enter through the pass into their valley, they quickly retreated to the mountains. They put the elderly and children into carts and took food and household goods that they needed for survival and began to climb Mont Pelvoux – 6000 feet over the valley. We are told they sang psalms as they climbed.

They went into a huge cave where the children, older people and women were put into the inner hall. They felt quite safe since it is said that they had provision for at least two years in the cave. The sheep and cattle were kept along the sides of the cave and the men barricaded the doorway of the cave and then took turns at keeping a lookout. Anyone foolish enough to try climbing up after them could easily be thrown over the cliff to a sure death..

However La Palu, the leader of this army, came up the mountain from the other side with a small group of soldiers. From on top of the cave he lowered his men to the cave's entrance. The Waldensians seemed to "freeze" and rather than fight they hid in the cave with the others. La Palu ordered his soldiers to pile up all the wood they could find and set it on fire at the mouth of the cave. Black smoke rolled into the cave and the people had the choice of dying of smoke inhalation or fleeing the cave and being killed by the soldier's swords. "When the cavern was afterward examined," says Muston, "there were found in it four hundred infants, suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their dead mothers. Altogether there perished in this cavern more than three thousand Vaudois, including the entire population of the Val Loysel." History of the Waldenses 37.

The second attack occurred in Pragelas - the place where the Christmas Day tragedy happened. The soldiers surprised the people as they were in the fields harvesting their crops. They fled but many were killed and their houses and fields were burned. Those who hid in caves in the mountains died as their friends did - through fire. However, after the first surprise the men organized themselves and turned on their murderers driving them out of their valleys while killing many soldiers and retrieving many of their belongings.

The third attack was on Piedmont which was known as the stronghold of the Waldensians. Because of their large, open valley most of the Waldensians had warning that enemies were in their land. They immediately took to the Alps. Cataneo, the leader of this portion of the papal army, easily took over the cities of La Torre, Villaro and Bobbio. Cataneo sent 700 of his men to rid the Valley of Prali of the heretics. They had to climb the mountain on the north side of Bobbio. As they labored up the steep trail they could see the whole valley. They stopped when they reached the top only to be met by Waldensian men ready to defend their valley. The soldiers were tired from their exhausting climb and were unprepared for battle with these men who were fighting to protect their families and homes. All of the 700 papal soldiers were killed except one. That man escaped and crept into a large crack in the rocks and hid for several days. When hunger and cold forced him out he threw himself on the mercy of the Waldenses who allowed him to go tell his superiors the fate of the 700 men who had fought with him.

You might be interested to know that the Waldensian pastors always went along with the men to battle. They went to encourage the men through prayer and Bible promises and also to see that the defending soldiers followed true Christian principles. Wylie writes, "Their pastors restrained the victorious [Waldensians], having laid it down as a maxim at the beginning of the campaign that they would use with moderation and clemency whatever victories the 'God of battles' might be pleased to give them, and that they would spill no blood unless when absolutely necessary to prevent their own being shed." History of the Waldenses 99.

During this attack on the valley of Prali, Cataneo decided to take the rest of his men and make a surprise attack on the Pra del Tor which was the capitol of the Waldensian church's government. These people of the valleys knew they had three choices - go to mass, be butchered like animals, or to fight for their lives. Women and children and the aged packed up the goods they would need and began to climb the Pra at the head of the Valley of Angrogna. The men who stayed made bows and shields of bark which would protect from the pikes and swords of the enemies. Some built barricades and others organized themselves into fighting groups.

As the enemy approached in a shower of arrows the Waldensians cried, "O God of our fathers, help us! O God, deliver us!" When the leader of the papal soldiers, Black Mondovi, heard these prayers to God he raised his visor and shouted blasphemies. "Instantly an arrow from the bow of Pierre Revel, of Angrogna, entering between his eyes, transfixed his skull, and he fell on the earth a corpse. The fall of this daring leader disheartened the papal army. The soldiers began to fall back. They were chased down the slopes by the Vaudois who now descended upon them like one of their own mountain torrents. Having driven their invaders to the plain, cutting off not a few in their flight, they returned as the evening began to fall, to celebrate with songs, on the heights where they had won it, the victory with which it had pleased the God of their fathers to crown their arms." History of the Waldenses 48.

This defeat made Cataneo very angry. He began reassembling his men and planning a new strategy. To get to the hiding places of the Waldensians the army had to go on a narrow pathway with a steep rocky wall on one side and a dark chasm on the other. Only two men could walk side-by-side on this narrow path but steadily the army approached their waiting prey.

Suddenly "a small white cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, unobserved by the [soldiers], but keenly watched by the [Waldensians], 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 vapor. ... The [Waldenses] interpreted this as an interposition of Providence in their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. ... 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 [papal host]. Panic impelled them to flee. ... 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." History of the Waldenses 50, 51.

In 1560 Count La Trinita, the leader of the papal army, came to attack the Valley of Angrogna. The Waldensians received early warning of the attack and first held a public fast then commemorated the Lord's Supper together. While the women, children and elderly climbed the mountains 1200 men prepared to defend their valley even though they had just slingshots and crossbows. They fought their way going higher and higher into the mountains. As night fell the papal army could see silhouetted against the sky the Waldensian fighters kneeling above them praying to the God of battles. Scoffs from the soldiers filled the air. Suddenly from another direction there was heard a drum beating. A young valley child had found a drum and began to play with it, but to the papal army it sounded like a call for war and they rushed around trying to get organized. The Waldensians seeing all this commotion run after the army and chased them back down the mountain. In their panic the soldiers threw away their weapons and the Waldensians were able to collect these and use them in other battles. At the end of the day La Trinita had lost 67 men while the Waldensians lost only three.

La Trinita had not finished the job he had been given so soon he was back in the Waldensian valleys. The people were just finishing their morning worship when the alarm was sounded. The enemies were coming by three routes. Instantly men went to meet them. The fighting was intense and many papal soldiers lost their lives. We are told that La Trinita sat down and cried when he saw the heaps of dead from his army, including some of his best captains.

Humiliated, but not admitting defeat, the Count again put together an army and a month later he again marched against the Pra del Tor. Six brave Waldensian men rushed to a place above the opening into the valley. Wylie tell us, "The six Vaudois made their arrangements, and calmly waited till the enemy was near. The first two Vaudois, holding loaded muskets, knelt down. The second two stood erect, ready to fire over the heads of the first two. The third two undertook the loading of the weapons as they were discharged. The invaders came on. As the first two of the enemy turned the rock, they were shot down by the two foremost Vaudois. The next two of the attacking force fell in like manner by the shot of the Vaudois in the rear. The third rank of the enemy presented themselves only to be laid by the

side of their comrades. In a few minutes a little heap of dead bodies blocked the pass, rendering impossible the advance of the accumulating file of the enemy in the chasm.

"Meanwhile, other Vaudois climbed the mountains that overhung the gorge in which the [papal army] was imprisoned. Tearing up the great stones with which the hillside was strewn, the Vaudois sent them rolling down upon the host. Unable to advance from the wall of dead in front, and unable to flee from the ever-accumulating masses behind, the soldiers were crushed in dozens by the falling rocks. Panic set in: and panic in such a position was dreadful. Wedged together on the narrow ledge, with a murderous rain of rocks falling on them, their struggle to escape was frightful. They jostled one another, and trod each other underfoot, while vast numbers fell over the precipice, and were dashed on the rocks or drowned in the torrent." History of the Waldenses 100.

La Trinita could see the waters of the Angrogna turn red and boasted that victory was at last theirs. But when a few of his soldiers reported what had happened on the way to Pra del Tor we are told that he left that very night and never came back to those valleys where he had lost so many men. The Duke of Savoy, who was the ruler of these lands, issued a document which allowed the Waldensians to rebuilt their churches, hold public worship and keep their beliefs which had been handed down to them.

CHAPTER 20

THE USE OF INTRIGUE

When the sword, fire or starvation didn't accomplish the annihilation of the Waldenses the papacy tried another way. Satan often uses deceit and intrigue to accomplish his ends. Because the Waldensian people had always taught and practiced strict truthfulness it was hard for them to imagine anyone being dishonest with them. This trusting nature made them easy prey to cruel and calculating men.

There were two papal leaders by the name of Jacomel and Gastaud who pretended to want peace with the Waldensians. They urged the people to make a couple of small compromises and then they could all be friends. The Waldensians were asked to leave all their weapons at the house of one of the magistrates and then a few representatives would go with the papal leaders to celebrate mass. After the majority (against the advice of their pastors) agreed to these demands further things was asked of them. They were promised if they would give 20,000 crowns to Jacomel he would withdraw the army and they would be left to worship and live in peace. However, the army stayed and there were other concessions asked such as sending deputies to the duke, being taxed to appease the soldiers and worst of all, they were finally asked to send away their pastors.

You may ask, "Did going along with these demands bring peace to the persecuted valley people?" We are told that the soldiers plundered the houses, people were pursued into caves and other hiding places and tortured, their oil and crops were destroyed or carried away, and their mills were broken. The poor Waldenses learned that it does not pay to compromise with evil men.

Another illustration of intrigue took place under the direction of the Marchioness de Pianez. She was the head of Turin's "Propagation of the Faith" in which she organized women to go into homes as spies. Some would go and work as servants while others would visit as

friends. If anyone had suspicions about them, these women were to spread lies about them and do evil things to them. If there were problems in a family, these women would do things to cause even more trouble between the husband and the wife or between the children and their parents. These women were to report all that they learned to the Marchioness twice a week.

This society was formed with the express purpose of getting rid of all heretics. We are told that laymen and priests, nobles and peasants were part of this vast network that reported to someone above them. It included small towns, large cities and finally all the way to Rome, where, according to Leger, "sat the great spider that held the threads of this mighty web." History of the Waldenses 133. It is easy to see the wisdom of the Waldensian parents in teaching their children to be careful of each word they spoke.

One of the worst stories of intrigue is told by Pastor Leger. A papal general, Pianezza, who had been severely humiliated by the Waldensians in previous battles decided to use a new strategy against them. He apologized for the actions of his troops and said the people had nothing to fear. He would like them to show their cooperation by allowing soldiers to sleep and eat in their homes for just a few days. Afterward he and the soldiers would leave and everything would be peaceful again. Pastor Leger and other warned the Waldensians not to ever open their doors for the soldiers, but they ignored the counsel.

These poor people agreed to this request and soldiers moved into their homes to sleep and eat at their tables. "At last the blow fell with the sudden crash of the thunderbolt. At four o'clock on the morning of Saturday, the twenty-fourth of April, 1655, the signal was given from the castle hill of La Torre....On the instant a thousand assassins began the work of death. Dismay, horror, agony, woe, in a moment overspread the valleys of Lucerna and Angrogna. Though the victims climbed the hills with what speed they could, the murderer was on their track. The torrents as they rolled down from the heights soon began to be tinged with blood. Gleams of lurid light burst out through the dark smoke that was rolling through the vales, for a priest and monk accompanied each party of soldiers, to set fire to the houses as soon as the inmates had been dispatched." History of the Waldenses 140.

Those who were not fortunate to die quickly were tortured in unheard of ways. Leger, the ignored pastor who escaped by fleeing to the mountains, says, "My hand trembles so that I scarce can hold the pen, and my tears mingle in torrents with my ink, while I write the deeds of these children of darkness, blacker even than the Prince of Darkness himself."

One of the last and most horrible chapters in the history of the Waldensian Church began on January 31, 1686. Pressure was put on the Waldenses by the king of France in an edict saying that the Waldenses could no longer worship and have religious meetings. Their churches were to be destroyed, all pastors and teachers had to become Romanists or leave their churches within fifteen days. All children were to be trained as Roman Catholics or the parents would be tortured and all who would not become Roman Catholics must leave the valleys within fifteen days.

We are told that 14,000 Waldenses were thrust into filthy prisons in Italy where 11,000 died from starvation and disease. The fortunate ones escaped from their valleys to friendly Germany and Holland to live in exile.

In 1686, thirty-one years later, the remaining 3,000 men alive in prison were released in the middle of winter and were herded over winter-clad mountains with little clothing or food. Many died along the steep path to Switzerland. In Geneva many found refuge as Calvin

and the patriarch Gianavello opened the city to those persecuted children of God. They were tenderly taken into homes and nursed back to health.

Two years later, in 1688, things were changing politically in Europe. William of Orange was on the throne of England, the Dutch had defeated the French king, and the Duke of Savoy had more important places to send his army rather than to the valleys.

Eight hundred Waldensian men, led by Henri Arnaud, who acted both as pastor and general, decided to go back and start the resettling of their native lands. Although there were some desertions, hunger, cold, fatigue and battles, seven hundred men arrived back in the village of Prali. Here they found the only church that was left standing in all the valleys. The men quickly threw out the statues and other popish relics and gathered for a church service. Henri Arnaud preached on Psalm 129. He spoke of the history of his people; of the achievements of their fathers in preserving their lands and faith, and encouraged the men in the rebuilding of their valleys.

Slowly life returned to normal. Mr. Tron-Poulat showed himself very wise. When he was going into exile he took the millstone from his mill and threw it into the river. He searched for it in the stream and found the valuable stone and soon had his mill working again.

In the spring the Duke of Savoy offered peace to the persecuted Waldensian people. They gratefully accepted his offer and pledged their support to him as their ruler. Mary of England, wife of William III, pledged money to provide pastor and teachers for the valleys. The States-General of Holland also raised money to build more schools and churches. Protestants in Switzerland set up special funds for students coming to their country for further education.

Soon the Waldensian towns and lands were prosperous again. Churches reopened and those who were in prison were set free. Many in exile again made their way to their ancestral home. Although there still were skirmishes and some intrigue, relative peace had again enveloped the valleys of the Waldenses.

CHAPTER 21

THE GREAT STRUGGLE IN INDIA

To really understand the last section of Truth Triumphant for Youth we need to look at the life of Ignatius Loyola. This man lived at the same time as Martin Luther, but rather than helping the Protestant Reformation Ignatius worked to destroy it. Loyola was a devote Roman Catholic like Martin Luther, but his choices led him in a different direction than Protestant's great Reformer. At one point in each of their lives both Loyola and Luther did not like what they saw in their characters. When Luther opened scripture he looked to Jesus as his Savior while Loyola looked to dreams and visions to find help for his troubled conscience.

Ignatius Loyola founded the order called the "Jesuits" or "Society of Jesus" on August 15, 1534. Loyola created a special training process which he called Spiritual Exercises. This tool allowed him to become master of the imagination of his followers. He would take young men and in a short time claimed their absolute allegiance. These Spiritual Exercises were so effective that at the end of the training period Loyola was the master of the minds of these followers. The Great Controversy 234 tells us, "Cut off from earthly ties and human interests, dead to the claims of natural affection, reason and conscience wholly silenced, they knew no rule, no tie, but that of their order, and no duty but to extend its power." "There was no crime

too great for them to commit, no deception too base for them to practice, no disguise too difficult for them to assume."

Here are some phrases from the Jesuit Oath: "I do further promise and declare, that I will have no opinion or will of my own, or any mental reservation whatever...but will unhesitatingly obey each and every command that I may receive from my superiors in the Militia of the Pope and of Jesus Christ. ...I furthermore promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly or openly, against all heretics, Protestants and Liberals, as I am directed to do, to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth; and that I will spare neither age, sex or condition."

The Jesuits used deception with great success. They hid their real identity as Roman Catholics and joined churches and schools pretending to be Protestants. They became preachers and teachers and used lectures and sermons to change the thinking of those they had come to influence. "As an example of their success by 1582, only forty-eight years after the order was founded, they controlled two hundred eighty-seven colleges and universities in Europe, some of which were of their own founding." Truth Triumphant 316.

The Jesuits would also become friends with influential people in government, heads of universities and churches and the wealthy and then influence them to make decisions that would be to the advantage of Rome. Sometimes the Jesuits would use a method which Emperor Nero used in Rome. You may remember that Nero blamed the Christians for causing the fire that he himself had set, then sentenced many of them to death. Jesuits would bring about disasters, then at the same time provide the help needed for those affected. The Jesuits would blame someone else for the disaster then give themselves the credit for solving the very problem they had created. This practice is still used today. Someone has called this method "creative destruction."

Quickly the Jesuits began to influence the papal agenda. Even today we are told that the "Black Pope" (the Jesuit's leader) is the real power in the Vatican, rather than Pope John Paul II. History tells us the Jesuits controlled the Council of Trent (1545 – 1563) which was the first council after the Reformation. They passed the following four decrees:

The Vulgate was the true Bible and not the Received Text

Tradition was of equal authority with the Scriptures

The Apocrypha was declared part of Scripture

The priests were the only ones able to correctly interpret the Scriptures

Of course when the Protestant leaders heard these decrees they "protested." They used scripture to defend their position and it became clear that this was a debate about obeying God or following man. This weakened the papacy's power and many people joined the Protestant Reformation. Rome watched all of this with much concern. How could they regain their lost power?

The solution came from the archbishop of Rheggio. He came to address the Council of Trent and reminded them that the Protestants (who claimed to follow "the Bible and the Bible only") would never be able to defend the sacredness of Sunday worship from the Bible. "It is then evident that the church has power to change the commandments," argued the archbishop and of course the council agreed. The Roman Church was encouraged as they thought of how they would regain their control over Protestants through Sunday worship.

More recently this same argument has been used. In *The Liberty of Christian Doctrines* 3,4 we see Rome challenging Protestants: "Why do you then keep holy Sunday instead of Saturday? ... You are a Protestant, and you profess to go by the Bible and the Bible only, and yet in so important a matter as the observance of one day in seven as a holy day you go against the plain letter of the Bible and put another day in the place of the day the Bible has commanded. ... The present generation of Protestants keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday because they received it as part of the Christian religion from the last generation ...and so on - backward from one generation to another by a continual succession until we come to the time of the so-called Reformation when it so happened that those who conducted the change of religion of this country left this particular portion of Catholic faith and practice untouched. ... In outward act we do the same as yourself in this matter; we too no longer observe the ancient Sabbath, but Sunday instead. But there is this important difference between us. We do not pretend, as you do, to derive our authority for doing so from a book, but we derive it from a living teacher and that teacher is the Church. We Catholics then have precisely the same authority for keeping Sunday holy, instead of Saturday, as we have for every other article of our creed - namely the authority of the Church of the Living God, 'the pillar and ground of truth,' (1 Timothy 3:15) whereas you who are Protestants have really no authority for it in the Bible."

One of the great lessons that I hope you learn from the reading of these chapters is that all through history the seventh-day Sabbath has been under attack. Sometimes the issues seem to be something else but usually the real reason a person or church was denounced was because of their choice to obey God rather than man.

History shows that things always changed when the Jesuits arrived in a country. We are going to learn some of the ways this Catholic order brings about submission to the Church of Rome. In the country of India the Jesuits arrived in 1560 with the power of the army of Portugal. During this time Portugal, although a small country, began settlements around the world from Africa, through the Middle East, India, China and islands as far away as the Philippines. Dr. Wilkinson says of the Portuguese, "Religious fanaticism was the inspiring principle. ...Their wars were rather crusades than patriotic struggles." *Truth Triumphant* 315.

Everyone was afraid of these cruel Portuguese men-of-war. One story tells that during a war, the Moslems killed a friend of Vasco da Gama, the commander of Portugal's fleet. In revenge da Gama went to punish the Arabs. On the way he spotted a ship full of pilgrims on their way home from Mecca. The Arabs had heard of the cruelty of da Gama and offered a large amount of money if they would be allowed to travel in peace. The commander took the money then ordered his men to burn the ship. Those on board put out the fire but da Gama ordered the fires started again while mothers held up their babies and begged for mercy.

The Portuguese began their attack on India by seizing the strongly fortified city of Goa and making it their new capital. The Jesuits came with the conquerors so they could "convert" the St. Thomas Christians to Catholicism. Today we call the way they "converted" people the Inquisition. They used various tortures such as drowning, the rack (which slowly pulled the body apart), and the well-known practice of burning people at the stake. Stories are told of the horrible tortures these loyal Christians went through. Many were thrown in filthy prisons swarming with rodents where they stayed for years.

Others were put on ships as galley slaves while others were taken and burned as a warning to other "heretics."

From the research that Dr. Wilkinson has done it seems the biggest reason for the anger of the Jesuits against the St. Thomas Christians was that they were Sabbathkeepers. George M. Rae tells us, "In the remote parts of the diocese, as well as towards the south as towards the north, the Christians that dwell in the heaths are guilty of working and merchandizing on Sundays and holy days, especially in the evenings." Truth Triumphant 320.

A French physician, Dr. M.G. Dellon, was traveling in India when he was arrested by the Inquisition. Although he was not a true believer in God he felt sorry for those who were being tortured in the prison where he was kept. He wrote about how the bones of four heretics were burned with a man and woman. Their "crime," according to Dr. Dellon, was that they "were said to have Judaized." Again we can see Satan's great hatred for those who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

The Jesuits also began a rival school in India where they trained students to speak and dress like the Syrian Christians, but these young people were trained in the doctrines and traditions of the Roman Church. When these graduates went out as leaders to the St. Thomas Christians they were not accepted by the people as preachers and the Portuguese priests were not allowed to enter any of their churches. This of course made the Jesuits angry and they surrounded the spiritual leaders with spies.

The Vatican appointed Alexis de Menezes as the archbishop of Goa and instructed that he get rid of the heresy in India. He ordered the leader of the Syrian Church, Archdeacon George, to obey the doctrines of Rome but "he refused, saying that the St. Thomas Christians had always been, and always would be, independent of Rome." The people were so upset with their oppressors that "they looked upon the Portuguese as the relentless enemies of their ancient faith, and as the barbarous persecutors of their beloved bishops and priests. They therefore rose in arms, expelled the Jesuits from their country, and in two instances, were barely restrained from putting them to death." Truth Triumphant 321, 322.

Unfortunately this freedom didn't last long. Menezes travelled to Cochin in January, 1599 to a huge welcome by the raja of that area. The Portuguese fleet had gotten rid of pirates which had been troubling the raja and in gratitude he threw a huge party. Archdeacon George could see the favor in which the papal leader was received and when he was summoned to meet with Menezes he decided to compromise. He thought that if he could just keep peace until Menezes left then things could return to normal. Archdeacon George came and kissed the hand of Menezes, allowed him to preach and to have mass in the Syrian churches.

It was during one of these church services that Menezes heard the people in their prayers refer to the catholicos of Bagdad as the universal pastor of their churches. The Vatican's archbishop was furious. He called all the teachers, students, pastors and leaders together and in a frenzy declared that the pope was the only universal leader and the catholico was a heretic. He wrote a document saying that anyone who prayed for the patriarch of Bagdad would be excommunicated. Archdeacon George was forced to show his acceptance by signing this order. He knew that there were Portuguese war ships in the harbor and if he did not cooperate he, along with many others, would be killed.

Quickly Menezes worked to change the way St. Thomas Christians worshipped. Pastors and leaders were forced to sign the same document as Archdeacon George and Menezes began to preach in the Syrian churches. Although he had promised not to talk about Roman Catholic doctrine he immediately began to preach against the beliefs and practices of the St. Thomas Christians. Menezes ordained young men who would recognize the pope as the head of the church and would teach Roman Catholic beliefs to the ministry.

After gaining control of the Syrian church Archbishop Menezes forced Archdeacon George to call a council for all the churches in India. History tells us that on June 20, 1599 the Syrian Church gave up her independence. There were almost a thousand representatives at this meeting and Menezes controlled the agenda from the beginning. He opened the meeting then celebrated the Roman Catholic mass. His sermon was on obedience to the pope and to the doctrines of the Roman Church.

Delegates were forced to sign their acceptance to the various decrees that were presented:

The Latin Vulgate would replace the Syrian Bible.

The mass was to be recognized and performed.

Penance, confession, images, indulgences and the worship of the Virgin Mary were among the doctrines they must profess.

The records, history and doctrinal books of the Syrian church were to be changed or destroyed.

All ministers were to be celibate. Those who were already married must immediately leave their wife and children to live without support.

All who were called apostate were to be burned at the stake. (This paved the way for getting rid of those who insisted on keeping the Sabbath.)

The official day was to begin at midnight rather than at sundown as had been practiced.

No one was to eat flesh on Saturday.

When people have known and loved truth they do not easily accept error in its place. This was the case with the St. Thomas Christians. Dr. Wilkinson puts it this way, "They loathed the worship of images, the adoration of relics, processions, incense, confessional, and all the ceremonies their fathers knew not. They longed for the crystal streams of the Scriptures. They yearned for the literature which the church had fostered since the days of the apostles." Truth Triumphant 329.

Their anger reached a new level when the catholico at Bagdad sent a new leader who was burned at the stake. There was outrage at this murder and the people began to gather at a huge cross near Cochin to object to this cruel control by the papacy. Thousands gathered to renounce their allegiance to Rome. There were two groups that formed within India's Christians – the Puthencoor became known as the Protestant Syrians while the Pazhayacoor remained loyal to the pope and are known as the Orthodox Syrians.

CHAPTER 22

ADAM AND THE CHURCH IN CHINA

The story of China is a fascinating one. Most of us have seen pictures of the huge Great Wall of China which winds along for 4,163 miles. We also know that they lay claim to having the longest, continuous history in the world. They are responsible for many "firsts" such as the

spinning of silk cloth, the invention of firecrackers, the use of a resin for lacquer and the making of porcelain.

There is a woman doctor, Ethel R. Nelson, who was a missionary to Thailand. As she learned Chinese she became fascinated with the scriptural meanings behind China's radical characters. As she and others studied they became convinced that the ancient Chinese had been followers of the true God in heaven for quite a while after the Tower of Babel. They have written several books -The Beginning of Chinese Characters, God and the Ancient Chinese and God's Promise to the Chinese -which can be purchased from: Read Books Publisher; HCR 65 Box 580; Dunlap, TN 37327, USA.

I know that you would enjoy reading about the story of creation and the flood that can be found in China's written characters. Most people have heard of Confucius, but have you every thought that he and other sages like Mencius were prophets teaching the ways of the true God? Learning the wise sayings of the Chinese prophets such as Mencius and Confucius will bring Bible verses to mind which say similar things. As we learn about the spread of Christianity in China you will see how these wise sayings helped prepare hearts for the truths which the Syrian missionaries brought to the Middle Kingdom.

The story of Adam takes us back to AD 781 and gives us an impressive witness to the strength of the Church of the East. In Europe the Celtic Church was being destroyed by the Papal power which had combined religion with the power of the state, but during this time the Church of the East was busy spreading the gospel far into the inhabited east. Adam was the head of the church in China and he knew many of the powerful men of the East. He not only had the good will of the Chinese emperor, but also was respected by Buddhist leaders, Japanese intellectuals and Arabian emperors.

As the Church in the East presented the scriptures, they could also point to the words of the Chinese sages. For instance, Zeng Zi said, "The doctrine of our Master is to be faithful [to the decree of Heaven] and forgiving to others – this, and nothing more." Christians could read to them from the Bible the words of Jesus, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14, 15.

The missionaries would have taught, "Therefore all things whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew

7:12 and the Chinese would immediately remember Confucius saying, "Do not do to others what you would not wish done to yourself."

Confucius said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety [law] is love. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety [law], all under heaven will ascribe love to him." The Christian could then point out Matthew 16:24 which says, "If any man will come after Me., let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

The most famous saying of Confucius is said to be: "Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety." Several Bible verses would have come to mind such as, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Proverbs 4:23. And, "He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of

defense shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure."
Isaiah 33:15, 16.

When Adam accepted the position of Metropolitan he had to battle Chinese traditions that were against Christianity. One of these was the practice of having more than one wife. They also bound the feet of little girls so their feet were deformed and they were unable to walk properly. Ancestor worship and the belief in the spirits of the dead opened the door to spiritualism. Adam and his fellow pastors had a lot of educating to do while teaching the state of the dead, God's ideal for marriages and how those made in the image of God should treat their bodies.

Adam lived at the time most Chinese scholars agree China was at its most brilliant - during the Tang Dynasty (AD 618 – 907). The most civilized city at that time was Changan. It has been said that this city was well known two thousand years before Christ and was called "the well-watered city." With the emperor's permission, Adam had a huge stone monument erected in Changan. On this monument were engraved 1,900 Chinese characters, 50 Syriac words and 70 names in Syriac. At the top of the monument written in Chinese characters it said, "A Monument Commemorating the Propagation of the Ta-Chin (Chinese name of Judea) Luminous Religion (the term used for Christianity) in the Middle Kingdom." We find the name and date of the patriarch of Bagdad. This is some of what was translated from Syria, the language of the Church of the East. "In the day of our Father of Fathers, My Lord Hanan-isho, Catholicos, Patriarch....In the year one thousand and ninety-two of the Greeks. (1092 – 311=A.D. 781)." Adam is identified as "Pastor, Vice-Metropolitan and metropolitan of China." Truth Triumphant 334. From reading the characters on this stone we know that Christianity had an effect on not only the emperor and his people, but through China's influence the other "High Asia" countries as well.

The church in China was organized and had an evangelistic outreach. In 1908 books belonging to the Church of the East were found in northwestern China. Saeki tells of these thirty-five books which were found in a cave: "They had the Apostles' Creed in Chinese. They had a most beautiful baptismal hymn in Chinese. They had a book on the incarnation of the Messiah. They had a book on the doctrine of the cross. In a word, they had all literature necessary for a living church."

At the end of the Tang Dynasty (around 845 AD) great changes took place in China. The Buddhists and Taoists took control of the government and began to persecute Christians. Because of the persecutions it was at this time the stone monument was buried to protect it from being damaged. A change in rulers was not the only thing to alter China. We know that Tamerlane, a fanatical Muslim Turk who hated Christians, killed hundreds of thousands of God's people and destroyed their churches and schools. The desert sands also brought destruction, swirling through populated towns and cities and covered them up. W. H. Johnson has said that 360 cities were buried in twenty-four hours by the shifting sands of eastern Turkestan.

Another tremendous change for China came centuries later when the Jesuits arrived. Jesuits had tried to begin their work in China years earlier but had not had much success. However in 1610 Matteo Ricci gained acceptance in Peking (the capital) because he was skilled in math, the building of war engines and astronomy. Using the Portuguese military power and Rome's money the Jesuits were quickly accepted by the scholars of Peking and their rulers.

Father Ricci caused some scandal at home by the methods he used in China, but they were really not much different than methods the Catholic Church had used in many other

countries. Dr. Wilkinson says that "Father Ricci was adopting heathen customs, baptizing converts who still held them, and so [showing] that Christ and the Roman Catholic Church were not antagonistic to such practices as ancestral worship and other pagan rites." Truth Triumphant 360.

In 1625 the huge Chinese stone monument, buried almost 800 years before, was uncovered. Immediately the Jesuits and their educated friends took possession of the monument. Because too many people had either seen or heard of this exciting discovery, the Jesuits had to scheme how to trick the people. Quoting from Jesuit authors, Dr. Wilkinson proves that an exact replica of the stone was made and the various characters were engraved into the new stone. Martin Martini, the Jesuit leader in China said, "The governor was no sooner appraised of the discovery of the monument than by a curiosity natural to the Chinese, he betook himself to the place and as soon as he examined the tokens of its venerable antiquity, he first composed a book in honor of the monument and ordered that a stone of the same size be made, on which he had engraved the contents of the other and had inscribed point-by-point the same characters and the same letters which had been impressed on the original." Truth Triumphant 362.

You might be wondering why the Jesuits needed to go to so much trouble and expense to make a new stone. The answer is simple: The Jesuits quickly saw that this newly discovered monument was proof of the vast territory covered by the Church of the East, the hated enemies of the Church of Rome. Here was their chance to literally wipe away the history of their rivals! Those who have studied the Chinese language know that their written characters have changed little in thousands of years so the rewriting of the Chinese characters was done to deceive, not promote easier reading. However, the Jesuits had to copy the Syriac writing exactly as it was written because they did not have the training to know just what the Syriac language said since it had changed over the hundreds of years since the stone had been chiseled. Today, if you could read the writing on this stone you would find that the section translated from Chinese talks about the "use of images in Christian worship and to prayers for the dead. ... There is ... praise given to the Chinese emperors and the endorsement of their practice of hanging the portraits on the walls of the churches." Truth Triumphant 363. We know that the Church of the East never practiced these things so they were obviously made up by the "translators" of the monument stone.

One of the passages reads, "On the Seventh Day we offer sacrifices after having purified our hearts....This religion, so perfect and so excellent, is difficult to name, but it enlightens darkness by its brilliant precepts." In the Syriac writing we find the year the stone was erected. It gives the correct name of the head over the Church of the East in China (Adam), it gives the name of the catholicos of Bagdad and it "also states definitely that on this stone was the doctrine of Him who was our Redeemer and the teaching that was preached by their forefathers to the kings of China." Truth Triumphant 364.

This story of the Chinese stone monument shows us why so much of the history of the Church in the Wilderness has been lost. Between manuscripts which were lost in wars through the centuries or the thousands of ancient books which were lost when famous libraries like the one in Alexandria burned, plus those records which were purposely destroyed by enemies, God's Church has lost much of its history. It is because of this well-organized destruction of truth that we can be most grateful to Dr. Wilkinson for his careful study which gives us the true history of the seventh-day Sabbath in the book Truth Triumphant.

Today the real history of God's true church is hard to find. Let us put these stories into our hearts so we will not be confused when we read books or articles which are different than these. Satan is still a liar and he knows that if he can change truth into a lie that he will have a good chance to deceive us. Maybe that is why the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

CHAPTER 23

MARCOS OF PEKING

In a previous chapter we learned about the positive reception of Christianity by Genghis Khan and his son, Ogotai. We mentioned that we would tell you more of the story of three nephews of Ogotai – Mangu, Kublai and Hulagu. After Mangu died, Kublai took over as ruler and moved the Mongolian capitol from Siberia to Peking (now Beijing). Kablai appointed his brother Hulagu as his viceroy over the Asian areas nearest to Europe. His headquarters and palace were located in Persia. Although these men treated Moslems and Buddhists with kindness they especially were eager to help the spread of Christianity. They were strong supporters of the catholicos of Bagdad because the business abilities and medical learning of the Christians gave strength to their kingdom. They found the Christians good government ambassadors because they spoke the Chinese, Mongolian and Persian languages well. Those who came from China knew the customs of their country and they also were acquainted with the people and customs of Persia through their interaction with their church headquarters in Bagdad.

It was during this time that we find the story of two young men, Marcos and Sauma. "Sauma was the son of a well-to-do Assyrian Christian who held an important office in the church at Peking. The boy was carefully educated and well instructed in the history of his church. When he was of age, he was betrothed to a maiden; and his father secured for him the position of keeper of the central church building in Peking. At the age of twenty, however, he refused to marry because he desired to give himself to religious studies. ... [He was ordained] to the ministry by Mar George, metropolitan of Peking. His fame soon spread abroad, and people came from afar to listen to his sermons.

"About this time there was another young man who lived many days' journey away. He was also an Assyrian Christian, whose father held the office of archdeacon in his home city. The name of this young man was Marcos. Renouncing the world and consecrating himself to the advancement of the gospel in those rough and troublesome times, Marcos joined himself to Sauma whose fame had previously reached him. Sauma endeavored to persuade him to return to his parents' but failing in this, he had Marcos ordained to the ministry by ... the metropolitan of Peking." Truth Triumphant 349, 350.

These two young men decided to visit Jerusalem and even though their parents didn't want them to leave they joined a caravan and set out for the West. They had letters of introduction from their church leaders which insured them warm welcomes in sister churches along the way. After visiting many large cities along the trade route, the two travelers arrived in Persia where they were privileged to meet Mar Denha, the supreme leader of their church. Because of their ability to speak the Mongolian language and their understanding of

the customs of the orient the catholicos asked Sauma and Marcos to ask the viceroy of Persia to declare him as the legally elected catholicos for the Church of the East.

After receiving consent from the great-grandson of Genghis Khan, the two young men returned with the good news for the catholicos. However Mar Denha met Marcos and Sauma with news that ended their plans to go to Jerusalem. The provincial director of the church in Peking had just died and the catholicos decided to appoint Marcos as head of the work in China and give Sauma the position of visitor-general of the churches in the west.

Shortly after these appointments Mar Denha died. The Church of the East needed a strong and well-prepared leader so Marcos was asked to be the new catholicos. He was a good choice because he was familiar with the languages and customs of his people, he had the support of the pastors and was respected by the supreme emperor, Kublai Khan. The emperor presented Marcos with many gifts and approved him as catholicos. He also helped build more training centers and churches for the Church of the East. Again we see God arranging events so that truth could go "into all the world."

It may be a surprise for some to find out that the Church of the East had an impact even in Japan. The main religion in Japan is Shintoism. This religion believes that there is a god in everything

– from the towering mountains or trees to the dish on your kitchen counter.

Japanese tradition dates back to around six hundred years before Christ. The people of Japan believe that their emperor is a true descendant of the sun-goddess, Amaterasu, so he is the most important figure in their culture. Emperor-worship and Shintoism make up the basis of their culture. One of the earliest Japanese records is the Kojiki, which gives the old traditions of "the origin of deities and the establishment of men." Truth Triumphant 366. This book was written in old Japanese and Chinese.

For most of its existence Japan looked to China for its culture. Architecture, holidays, recreation, music and even religion were brought into Japanese culture from their neighbors to the West. However it was through religion that Christianity was to have an influence on Japan. To see how this happened we must learn a little about Buddhism and how it merged with Shintoism to become the major religion in Japan.

Buddhism came into China in AD 60. We are told that the Chinese "Emperor Ming Ti had a dream which produced in his soul a consternation as profound as that which alarmed Nebuchadnezzar. The Chinese ruler, so the legend goes, beheld a great golden image flying from the heights to pause over the palace in which he slept. At that spot it halted long enough to sway backward and forward. The sun and the moon falling in radiant splendor upon the heavenly visitant made it glow with a light supernal. The emperor called for one of his able ministers, who promptly interpreted the event as a visit from the Indian deity Buddha. Whereupon the monarch commissioned a deputation of eighteen men to travel west for information about this Buddha.

"The commission returned, accompanied by white horses laden with writings and relics, to Loyang, capital of China at that time. Thereupon the emperor built to the new faith a temple, and called it the White Horse, on account of the animals which carried back from India the relics and writings of Buddhism.

"Karl Reichelt adds, 'Thus began the invading stream of Buddhist monks from India to China, which continued for over seven hundred years, and which became of such great significance to the Middle Kingdom.'" Truth Triumphant 368.

Many Chinese found Buddhism a cold and uninteresting religion, but that changed when Buddhism came under the influence of the Church of the East. Christianity, with its loving God and Redeemer, had great appeal to the people so Chinese Buddhism began to change its beliefs. They made up a doctrine of a trinity of gods and they taught that eternal life came through the substitute savior, Amitabha. They also taught that the redeemer would return to earth from his place in heaven.

As we have already said, the Chinese influenced the Japanese in many areas of culture and religion. It was through a man named Kobo Daishi that Christianity had an influence on Japanese thought. Kobo Daishi is one of the best-loved figures in Japan's history. He is thought of, even today, as Japan's greatest thinker. Because of his brilliant mind he was sent by the emperor in 804 AD to visit Changan in China to try to find a way to harmonize China's Buddhism and Japan's Shintoism.

When Kobo Daishi went to China he was introduced to the Church of the East. While in Changan he lived at a Buddhist convent which was only one street away from the training school which the Chinese emperor had built for the Church of the East. It would be reasonable to assume that Kobo Daishi observed and learned from these Christians who were such close neighbors.

It was not long before this time that the famous stone monument was built in Changan. Since this monument was erected with the favor of the emperor it is easy to imagine many of the citizens of that city watching with curiosity as the Syrian and Chinese characters were chiseled into that massive stone. There can be little doubt that Kobo Daishi would have spoken with people who had been among the crowds who watched this massive monument being prepared. He would have been able to visit the stone and read the Biblical truths that were causing such wonderful changes in China. Translators say that on the memorial stone were the words, "This religion so perfect, so excellent is difficult to name, but it enlightens darkness by its brilliant precepts." Kobo Daishi would have learned about the Sabbath, about Christ's substitutionary death on the cross, and other doctrines which the Church of the East taught.

Kobo Daishi had been sent to China with a requirement to fulfil. As he learned from the Buddhist priests he was impressed with the teaching of Amitabha and through this "Christianized" Buddhism he was able to reconcile Shintoism with Buddhism. This can be seen even today as we see similarities between many of the Buddhist temples and the Shinto shrines.

When Kobo Daishi returned to Japan he "introduced a new body of doctrine which he called Shingon, or 'true word.'" In the course of time this Shingon sect was destined to become the largest sect in Japan. Baptism became an important rite in the mysteries of Shingon." Truth Triumphant 372. Christianity shows itself in several of the beliefs which Kobo Daishi took back to Japan. He taught the idea of a holy trinity, the belief in a messiah and in the second coming. In writing of Kobo Daishi's death a historian tells us, "When he [Kobo Daishi] passed out of this life on Koya he did not die, for he lies uncorrupted in his sepulcher, awaiting the coming of Maitreya, the Buddhist Messiah." Truth Triumphant 374.

Kobo Daishi had another important influence on Japanese culture. When he returned to Japan he simplified the Japanese style of writing which made it easier to translate the best literature from other cultures. This allowed Japan to become more knowledgeable about the countries and cultures around them.

It is said that Kobo Daishi brought a lot of new information and methods back to Japan. He is credited with teaching the people how to use coal and he organized construction of dams, bridges and roads. The arts also benefited from the genius of Kobo Daishi - he introduced new methods of painting and sculpture to advance Japanese society. One of his other achievements was to build a Buddhist monastery on Mt. Koya where students studied how to promote peace and security for the islands of Japan.

The next 700 years showed Japan becoming an independent power in government, architecture, religion and literature. As their own culture grew stronger, Japan became further separated from China and developed their own national identity.

Great changes for Japan began in the middle of the 1500's. This was when the Jesuits arrived in Japan. They followed many of the same methods they were using in India. A historian, William E. Griffis, wrote, "Whole districts were ordered to become Christians. The bonzes [Buddhist priests] were exiled or killed, and fire and sword as well as preaching were employed as a means of conversion." Truth Triumphant 377. For a hundred years the patient Japanese people put up with the destruction caused by the Jesuits. Finally they unified to get rid of the foreigners in their country. Signs were made which said, "Christians to the sea." To make sure outsiders wouldn't disturb them, the Japanese banned all foreigners from entering their country. For the next two hundred years Japan was cut off from the outside world.

In 1911 a replica of the China monument was erected on Mt. Koya, the holy mountain of Japan. Some question why a Christian monument would be placed in a Buddhist monastery. Dr. Wilkinson offers the following reason: "The duplicate was set up to call to the mind of Japan, and particularly to the Buddhist church, the source of how the Church of the East penetrated the thought and life of modern Japan." Truth Triumphant

374.

Just a small observation is made in Dr. Wilkinson's book speaking of Christianity in the Philippines. There is little information left for us to trace the Church of the East in these islands but "there is evidence that before the Spaniards brought the Philippine Islands under their dominion, education was, comparatively speaking on a high level. As the Philippines had had no contact with the civilization of the West except through Christianity, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the splendid state of education at the time of the Spanish conquest (1569), was due to the Church of the East." Truth Triumphant 378.

CONCLUSION

We have finished our story of God's true church. Dr. Wilkinson tells us, "This book has sought to make it clear that the Church in the Wilderness, of the 1260-year period, is the connecting link between the apostolic church and our time. To her, we are indebted for the learning and the treasures of truth preserved throughout the Dark Ages. As to the transmission of the pure text of the Holy Bible, credit should not be given to the papacy, which has placed tradition above the Bible, but to the faithful churches who adhered through years of darkness and superstition to the original apostolic writings and their uncorrupted

translation. This volume, in some small measure, pays tribute to these unsung heroes of the past of the true Christian church." Truth Triumphant 380.

My hope is that you have a big picture of God's truth and His people. The Protestants of the Reformation were only following in the steps of those who upheld truth for the thousand years before their time - men like Patrick, Columba, Columbanus, and Vigilantius. The faithful Waldensians and their brothers perserved the uncorrupted scriptures and spoke out against the growing apostasy they saw in the Church of Rome. To all these brave soldiers of the Cross we owe our Bibles, our religious freedom and our pure doctrines. Truth has truly been triumphant.

However, the real questions is, "Will truth be triumphant in my mind and in my actions? Will I allow the Holy Spirit to fill me with wisdom and power to make me obedient to truth. Will I obey the words found in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Jesus is coming soon to take His faithful people to heaven. My prayer for each who read these pages is that we will be ready for Jesus Second Coming. We are given a glimpse into what that awesome day will be like in the Great Controversy 644, "Amid the reeling of the earth, the flash of lightning, and the roar of thunder, the voice of the Son of God calls forth the sleeping saints. He looks upon the graves of the righteous, then raising His hands to heaven He cries, 'Awake, awake, awake, ye that sleep in the dust, and arise!' Throughout the length and breadth of the earth, the dead shall hear that voice; and they that hear shall live. And the whole earth shall ring with the tread of the exceeding great army of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. From the prison house of death they come, clothed with immortal glory, crying, 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' And the living righteous and the risen saints unite their voices in a long, glad shout of victory."

Let's prepare now to stand among the heroes who were willing to die if necessary for the truths of the Bible and defend God's reputation throughout the universe.