

# **ROME** *and the* **BIBLE**

***The History of the Bible through the  
Centuries and Rome's Persecutions  
against It***

**By David W. Cloud**

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**“In the Bible, the Almighty addresses us as by a voice from heaven, ‘Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else,’ (Isa. xliv. 22) The Church of Rome stands by, and presumes to decide who shall, and who shall not, hear these words of the Almighty Saviour; and if any person at all hear them, it is by her permission. ... To assume the power of permitting creatures to hear what God shall speak, is assuming a power and authority at least equal to that of God, and a right to control, or at least to regulate the manner of his communicating his will to his own creatures.” – William M’Gavin, *The Protestant*, 1819**



# Introduction

## The Charge of “Catholic Bashing”

We know from long experience that as soon as we publish this book our detractors will claim that we hate Roman Catholics, and they will charge us with “Catholic bashing” and with narrow-minded sectarianism. Such a claim, though, would require the ability to look into another man’s heart, and we know that no one has such ability. The Lord being our witness, we do not hate Roman Catholic people. We are not vindictive or mean-spirited. We wish no one any harm. On the contrary, our zeal is for the one true gospel of Jesus Christ, and we have been taught by the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostle to warn of false gospels (Galatians 1). A faithful shepherd resists wolves. Our prayer is that every Roman Catholic will understand the perfect sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bible.

Some years ago, during a visit to Western Australia, we visited the home of an elderly Catholic lady. We asked her if she was prepared to die, if she knew that her sins were forgiven and that she was going to Heaven. She hesitated for some moments and then replied that she did not believe that anyone could know such a thing. She told me that she was doing what she could and going to mass and hoping for the best. We read Scriptures to her from the book of Hebrews, such as “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14), showing the sufficiency and completeness of Christ’s Atonement. We also read Scriptures to her that guarantee eternal life to the believer because of God’s gift of salvation in Christ: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

This dear old lady’s attitude illustrates the sad fruit of Rome’s false sacramental gospel, which offers no security because it is not founded upon the once-for-all, utterly-sufficient Atonement of Calvary.

In commenting on an excerpt from this book that was printed several months before the book’s publication, a Roman Catholic reader gave the following judgment:

“One gets the impression that ANY enemy of Catholics is your friend and that you are more intent on attacking Catholics than on loving and serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Beware the bitter root that eats up common sense in an unreasoning hatred of Catholics. It will not serve you well and it will be a stench in the nostrils of God.”

This false accusation will always be raised when one lifts his voice against error. I replied, “My friends are not ‘any’ enemy of Catholics. My friends are those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word above man-made tradition. “Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; and I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:128).

The truly important thing is not what you or I believe about [historical Christian sects], but what you or I believe about Jesus Christ, the sole Mediator between God and men, and about the Bible, the sole Word of God to man. The Lord Jesus Christ, by His once-for-all sacrifice, “hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14). The Bible is able to make the man of God “perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). That means we need nothing else.

I do consider Rome the enemy of true Christianity, but that is because of its doctrines and history. I did not make Romanism what it is; I am simply documenting it. I do not hate Roman Catholics, but I do hate the blasphemous Roman Catholic system. I hate it for the same reason that I hate Evolution or Communism or any other false system. I hate it because it is false yet it professes to be truth; I hate it because it stands between man and the truth; I hate it because its pompous claims have detracted from the exclusive mediatorship of Jesus Christ; I hate it because multitudes have gone out into eternity lost because of its false gospel.

The Psalmist said: “Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I HATE EVERY FALSE WAY” (Psalm 119:128). The Lord Jesus Christ commended the churches for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, and He encouraged the churches that He also hated both the deeds and doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6, 15). The term “Nicolaitan” means “to conquer the people,” and probably referred to the early stages of that proud hierarchical spirit which later resulted in the formation of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is a strange and fearful quirk of human nature to charge a man with being an enemy though his only motive is to preach the truth. Thus Paul inquired of the Galatians who were being led astray by false teachers: “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16).

## **Rome as the Harlot of Revelation**

By no means is the Roman Catholic Church the only institution that has persecuted Bible-believing Christians, but no other institution has persecuted more aggressively or for a longer period of time. We believe the Roman Catholic Church is the partial fulfillment of the prophecy in Revelation 17 of a one-world religious Harlot. This is not to say that Revelation 17 is entirely fulfilled by Roman Catholicism. This prophecy will not be completed until the reign of the Antichrist just prior to the coming of the Lord, and will be joined by a conglomeration of other apostate churches and organizations (her daughters), the end result, no doubt, of the present Ecumenical Movement.

*Even so, every feature of this religious Harlot is found in the Roman Catholic Church: it is yoked together with secular government; it has great wealth; it is clothed in purple and scarlet; it is drunk with the blood of the saints.*

For a thousand years and more, separatist Bible-believing Christians have identified Rome with the Harlot of Revelation 17.

At the end of the **NINTH CENTURY**, “Tergandus, Bishop of Treve, called the pope antichrist, yea, a wolf, and Rome, babylon” (*Martyrs Mirror*, 5th English edition, p. 240).

In the **TENTH CENTURY**, Arnulphus, Bishop of Orleans, called the pope antichrist, in a full council at Rheims (Peter Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, 1821, p. 229).

In the **ELEVENTH CENTURY**, Berenger of Tours denounced Rome’s dogmas and maintained that the Roman Church was the See of Satan (George Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, 1838, p. 159). The Waldensians, throughout their long history, identified the pope as the antichrist. The Waldensian treatise titled the *Noble Lesso*, dated 1100 A.D., stated: “Antichrist, the predicted murderer of the Saints, hath already appeared in his true character, seated monarchally in the seven-hilled city.”

In the **TWELFTH CENTURY**, in roughly 1120 A.D., *A Treatise Concerning Antichrist* identified the pope of Rome as the antichrist. George Faber identifies this as a production of Peter the Valdo (Faber, pp. 379-384).



In the **THIRTEENTH CENTURY**, the **ALBIGENSES** made the following confession at the conference of Montreal: “That the Church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, but the Church of confusion, drunk with the blood of the martyr. That the polity of the Church of Rome was neither good nor holy, nor established by Jesus Christ” (Peter Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, 1821 edition, first published in 1692, p. 178). The **BOHEMIANS**, a colony of Waldenses in Bohemia, held the following beliefs in the 13th century: “The first error, saith he, is that the Church of Rome is not the Church of Jesus Christ, but an assembly of wicked men, and the whore that sits upon the beast in the Revelation. ... They declare the pope to be the head and ringleader of all errors” (Allix, *Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, pp. 242-259).

Harlot of Revelation 17 by illustrator Lucas Cranach, from the Luther Bible

The **LOLLARDS** of the **14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES** maintained “that the Church of Rome was not the Church of Christ, but of infidel heathens; and they despised all ecclesiastical laws, together with all the Bishops and Ministers of the Church” (Allix, *Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, p. 230). The Petrobusians also judged the pope to be the antichrist (Allix, *Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, p. 142).

Throughout **THE REFORMATION ERA**, Rome was considered the Mother of Harlots. On September 9, 1560, Pastor Jean Louis Paschale of Calabria, just before he was burned alive in the presence of Pope Pius IV in Rome, turned to the pope and “arraigned him as the enemy of Christ, the persecutor of his people, and the Anti-Christ of Scripture, and concluded by summoning him and all his cardinals to answer for their cruelties and murders before the throne of the Lamb” (J.A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, c. 1860, p. 120).

Martin Luther said, “I believe the pope is the masked and incarnate devil because he is the Antichrist” (*Table Talks*, Vol. 54, No. 4487, p. 346). The Articles of Schmalkald call the pope “the vertiable Antichrist.” Calvin called the pope “antichrist” (*Treatise I*:276). The Second Scotch Confession of Faith (1580) called the pope “that Roman Antichrist.” The Irish Articles of Religion (1615), No. 80, called the pope “that man of sin.” The Savoy Declaration (1658) called the pope “antichrist.” Bible translator William Tyndale identified the pope as the antichrist in his treatise *The Practice of Prelates* and in the preface to the 1534 edition of his New Testament.

Their successors in the **17TH, 18TH, AND 19TH CENTURIES** persisted in this. Many of the early Protestant Bibles contained dramatic wood cuttings portraying the Scarlet Woman of Revelation 17, plainly identifying the Roman Catholic Church with this apostate religious system. The cuttings accompanying the Luther New Testament were made by Cranach. In his 1893 work titled *Union with Rome*, Bishop Christopher Wordsworth of the Church of England stated the view that prevailed among Protestants at that time: “... we tremble at the sight, while we read the inscription, emblazoned in large letters, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great,’ written by the hand of St. John, guided by the Holy Spirit of God, on the forehead of the Church of Rome.” These examples could be multiplied almost endlessly.

Old-line Protestants, independent Baptists, and other fundamentalist Christians continue **TODAY** to identify Rome with Revelation 17.

## **Our Purpose in Writing This Book**

Our goal is four-fold:

*First, we want to remind our generation of this history.* Rome, understandably, does not want its history remembered, and those who publish these matters are often viciously attacked by Catholic apologists and their sympathizers. To ignore this history, though, is to fail to understand current events. To understand the modern ecumenical movement, for

example, one needs to understand the last 2,000 years of church history. One of the reasons why this present generation of Christians is ignorant of true church history, general speaking, is the lack of sound material that is *readily* available. (There are massive materials available for those who are able to visit specialized theological libraries or who can purchase expensive out-of-print volumes, but here we are referring to the lack of material READILY available to the average Christian.) North America is filled with Christian bookstores of various sorts, but few contain sound church histories. Those popularly available, for the most part, are biased toward Rome in that they treat it as a genuine expression of the Christian church and they do not properly document the existence and persecution of separatist Christians all through the centuries.

*Second, we want to give the history of the Bible as it has been transmitted through the centuries.* We have documented the translation of the Scriptures into the chief languages and have shown Rome's attitude toward this sacred work.

Third, we want to encourage God's people to value and stand for the Word of God. Seeing the price that was paid by former generations that stood for the Scriptures, we should be motivated to be very bold and courageous in the face of this same age-old apostasy. The mood of the hour is compromise and pacifism, but boldness and conflict have always been required in the defense of God's Word. Let us not be guilty of drawing back from the heat of the battle.

Fourth, we want to reintroduce this generation to the history of the Old English Bible. The details surrounding the revision of 1611 have been covered in a number of books, but the period prior to that, from Wycliffe to 1611, has been overlooked in most books currently in print and commonly distributed to our churches. We have therefore included biographies of Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Rogers, and other men associated with that fascinating era.

**“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”**

**—2 Peter. 2:1-3**

# **PART ONE**

## **The Roman Catholic Church Enshrouded the Bible with False Doctrines and Practices**

### **The Characteristic of Apostolic Churches**

To understand the history of Roman Catholicism, one obviously must understand its origin. It claims to trace its heritage back to the apostles—to Peter, in particular. That this is false is evident when one compares the teaching of the apostles and the character of the apostolic churches to the Roman Catholic Church. Consider the following characteristics that we find in the New Testament Scriptures.

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.** The apostles preached the Lord Jesus Christ, and presented Him as sole Master, Mediator, Priest, and Head for the Christian and for the Churches.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:6-10).

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

“But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:24-25).

“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven” (Matt. 23:8-9).

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF GRACE.** The apostles taught that salvation is the free gift of God purchased by the cross-work of Jesus Christ, and it is received by grace alone through faith alone without admixture of works. They did not mix works or ordinances or “sacraments” into salvation. They did not confuse law with grace. They taught that

works follow salvation and are the fruit and evidence thereof.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. 11:6).

“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin” (Rom. 4:4-8).

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” (1 John 5:11-12).

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE ATONEMENT.** The apostles taught that man is eternally redeemed from his sin by the ONCE AND FOR ALL sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The complete sufficiency of Christ’s Atonement is seen in the fact that the believer possesses eternal life (1 John 5:13) and enters Heaven immediately upon death (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Tim. 4:6).

“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb. 10:10).

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (Heb. 10:19).

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** The apostles taught that the Holy Spirit came into the world at Pentecost to indwell believers in a unique sense in which He was not present in the Old Testament dispensation (Acts 2; Ephesians 1:12-14). The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all Truth (John 16:13), controlling them in the recording of the New Testament Scriptures. He indwells the individual believers and gives them an unction so they can discern truth from error. Though Christians are given God-called pastors and teachers in the churches (Ephesians 4:11-14), and though these men are essential for the protection and training of the churches, God’s people are not dependent on man to know truth from error. The Holy Spirit is our faithful indwelling Teacher and Guide.



“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things” (1 John 2:20).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.** It is obvious from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that the apostles viewed the Scriptures as sufficient for faith and practice.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED unto ALL good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The term “perfect” in 2 Timothy 3:17 is not used in the sense of sinless perfection, but in the sense of completion and sufficiency. The last half of verse 17 defines the first. The perfection means to become “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” *The question that follows is how do we know that the Bible, with its 66 books, contains the complete Scriptures that are able to make the man of God perfect?*

**First, the apostles were promised inspiration for the completion of Scripture.** The Lord Jesus Christ promised the apostles that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth and that He would shew them all the things they needed to know.

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:12-15).

In fulfillment of Christ’s promise the New Testament revelation was completed under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The apostolic writings were accepted as Scripture by the first century churches. The apostle Peter, speaking to the Christians about Paul’s writings, referred to them as Scripture and placed them on par with the Old Testament prophets.

“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15-16).

The apostles knew that the Lord had promised them inspiration (John 16:12-15), and they knew that they were receiving revelation. Consider, for example, Paul’s statement to the churches in Galatia:

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

Consider, too, the words of Paul to the church at Thessalonica:

"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when YE RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD WHICH YE HEARD OF US, YE RECEIVED IT NOT AS THE WORD OF MEN, BUT AS IT IS IN TRUTH, THE WORD OF GOD, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

The Thessalonian believers knew that Paul had given them the WORD OF GOD!

Consider, also, the words of Peter to the Christians in the first century churches:

"This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Peter 3:12).

Peter reminded the Christians that the commandments of the apostles are on par with the Old Testament Scriptures. Obviously this was something that the apostles taught to all of the churches. They could not have been put in remembrance of something that they had not already been taught.

The Christians of the first century were a close-knit community. It is ridiculous to think that they did not know these things, that they did not recognize that the apostles were writing Scripture and that they did not receive the New Testament epistles as such. It was left for the theological modernists of the 19th and 20th centuries to deny these things and to claim that the forming of the New Testament canon was an almost haphazard thing that did not occur until centuries after the apostles.

The people at Berea were commended because they "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so," meaning they carefully judged the doctrine they were hearing and tested it against the Scriptures alone (Acts 17:11). For this trait God called them "noble." The enthusiasm for searching the Scriptures continued among the general Christian population through the fourth century: "Among both women and men, of whatever rank in society, it was regarded as the characteristic mark of those with whom Christianity was a serious concern of the heart, that they were much occupied with the study of the Bible" (Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion*, III, p. 377). The acceptance of the Scripture as the sole authority for faith and practice and the zeal to study it is one of the marks of genuine New Testament Christianity.

***Second, we know the Bible contains the complete Word of God because we are told the Faith was ONCE delivered to the saints.***

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS" (Jude 3).

“The faith” refers to the body of New Testament truth delivered by the apostles and prophets through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The term “once delivered” tells us that this body of truth was given during one particular period of time and was completed. It refers to the New Testament Scriptures. This verse refutes the idea that the Christian faith has been progressively given through the Roman Catholic Church.

***Third, a seal was placed on the final chapter of the final book of the Bible, signifying its completion and warning every man not to add to or subtract from it.***

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

Those who claim to have a new revelation or a tradition equal to the Bible fall under the judgment described in this passage. The book of Revelation completes the Holy Scriptures.

This view, that the New Testament was formed during the lifetime of the apostles and was completed before their deaths, while denied by modernistic scholars, is not in conflict with the conservative wing of today’s scholarship. In his 1976 book *Redating the New Testament*, J.A.T. Robinson says that all of the books of the New Testament were written before 70 A.D. He claims that the book of Revelation was written last, between the middle of A.D. 68 and the beginning of A.D. 69. F.F. Bruce, though he often leaned toward the modernistic position, said this about Robinson’s research: “Dr. Robinson’s case is so well researched and closely reasoned that no one from now on should deal with this question of dating without paying the most serious attention to his arguments” (F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, p. 20).

***Fourth, the completed canon of Scripture was recognized in the second century.*** The Roman Catholic Church claims that the New Testament canon was not established until the year 393, at the Council of Hippo. Others claim that it was established in A.D. 325, at the Council of Nice. These claims are false. As we have seen, the New Testament was formed during the ministries of the apostles and was recognized by the first century churches. Christian leaders in the second century recognized the completed canon of the New Testament and accepted the apostolic writings as Holy Scripture on equal par with the Old Testament. Irenaeus (125-192), for example, in his extant writings, made 1,800 quotations from the New Testament books and used them “in such a way as to imply that THEY HAD FOR SOME TIME BEEN CONSIDERED AS OF UNQUESTIONED AUTHORITY” (Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 140). Irenaeus accepted the four Gospels, and four only, as Scripture. Clement of Alexandria (150-217) quotes from and acknowledges the four Gospels and most other New Testament books, calling them “divine Scriptures.” Tertullian (150-220) made 7,200

citations from the New Testament books and accepted them as Scripture. The Latin *Itala* translation, which was made in the second century, “contained all the books that now make up the New Testament” (Hentz, *History of the Lutheran Version*, p. 59). A list of New Testament Scriptures dating to the latter half of the second century was discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, Italy, in 1740. This second-century list contained all of the books of the New Testament canon (Ibid., p. 60).

The following excellent comments are from the *Anti-Infidel Library* by H.L. Hastings:

Doubtless thousands of infidels today really believe that the Council of Nice by some vote, or trick, or juggle, settled the canon of the Scriptures, and separated what they call the ‘spurious Gospels’ from the genuine ones. But in fact no such thing was done at the Council of Nice; and in fact no such thing could have been done by any council, with any authority or effect. The votes of councils could no more settle the canon of the New Testament than the vote of a town council could decide what were the laws of a state or nation.

The early Christians read, and believed, and quoted the same books that we read, and believe, and quote, and in the same way that we believe and quote them; and they did this for generations before councils ever meddled with the subject; and the proofs of this fact are abundant and incontrovertible. ...

‘The facilities for investigating this question are ample and easily accessible to any intelligent student. The Ante-Nicene Library, published by T. and T. Clark, of Edinburgh, comprises some twenty-four octavo volumes, averaging about five hundred pages each. In these twelve thousand octavo pages of printed matter are comprised nearly all the extant writings of some fifteen or twenty of the most eminent Christian authors who lived before the year A.D. 325, when the Council of Nice was convened. One of the volumes also contains such remains of those spurious, uncanonical and fictitious Gospels, Acts, etc., as have come down to us from early ages. In these twelve thousand pages, all of which are accessible, to skeptics in English translations, which can be compared with the originals by those who are competent to do so, will be found an overwhelming avalanche of evidence upon the question of the origin of the New Testament Scriptures.

These men, some of whom were contemporary with the apostles, and others who, as their immediate successors, were well acquainted with their associates and contemporaries, give in these writings the most positive and unmistakable evidence as to the New Testament books which they received, and as to the estimation in which those books were held. They quote passage after passage, and page after page of the same Scriptures that are quoted today and read in every Christian assembly. They quoted the books which we quote; they quoted them as we quote them; they received them as we receive them, and this long before the Council of Nice or any other council had anything to say about the canon of the Scriptures.

Polycarp, who was martyred A.D. 155 or 156, after having served Christ eighty-six years, and who was, during some thirty years of his long Christian life, contemporary with the Apostle John, whose disciple he was, quotes in his Epistle to the Philippians nearly forty passages from our New Testament; and Justin Martyr, who wrote about A.D. 140, or some forty years after the decease of the Apostle John, quotes again and again the very words which we now read in the New Testament. In the writings of Irenaeus, A.D. 178; Clement, A.D. 194; Tertullian, A.D. 200; and Origen, A.D. 230, are to be found 8,723 quotations from the New Testament, including every book which we accept as canonical.

In the sixth chapter of his *Demonstration of the Truth of the Christian Religion*, Dr. Keith records the number of quotations from the New Testament which can be seen in works which are still

extant, by the writers whom we have named. He reports seven hundred and sixty-seven (767) passages quoted by Irenaeus, from every book in the New Testament except the third Epistle of John, and the Epistle of Jude; three hundred and eighty-nine (389) passages quoted by Clement, from every book except the Epistle of James and the second and third Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude; eighteen hundred and two (1802) passages, or, if repetitions are included, more than three thousand passages, quoted by Tertullian, from every book in the New Testament except the Epistle to James, the third of John, the second of Peter, and the Epistle of Jude; while the works of Origen yet extant, contain five thousand seven hundred and sixty-five (5,765) quotations from the New Testament, including every book contained therein ...

These authors which we have named comprise but a portion of the authors who wrote before the Council of Nice; but these are sufficient to settle forever this question of the authenticity of the New Testament Scriptures. And it is thus demonstrated that if, at the time of the Council of Nice, every book contained in our New Testament had been blotted out of existence, not only every fact and statement contained in them, but also nearly every sentence now found there, could have been recovered from the now extant writings of men who had lived, and written, and quoted them as authentic and authoritative, long before the Council of Nice was ever thought of. And if the numerous other Christian writings of those days which are lost could be discovered, the number of quotations would doubtless be largely multiplied. ...

We have thus glanced briefly at a few of the facts bearing upon this subject, which demonstrate the antiquity and authenticity of the New Testament books, and show that they existed in apostolic times, and were received from apostolic hands, as authentic and authoritative records (H.L. Hastings, *Anti-Infidel Library*).

Thus the completed Greek New Testament Scriptures were being circulated and accepted by God's people under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many of the textual scholars who write today about these early centuries deny, or totally overlook, the working of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration and canonicity of the New Testament. The apostles were not left to their own devices to transcribe the record of Christ, nor were the early Christians left to their own devices to recognize which writings were Scripture. The words of the New Testament are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord's sheep know the voice of their Good Shepherd and can discern His voice from false shepherds (John 10:4, 5, 27).

***Fifth, the passages that urge Christians to follow tradition refer to the inspired tradition given by the apostles, not to the uninspired traditions of men that have followed after them.*** Tradition is used in two ways in the New Testament. First it refers to apostolic doctrine given by divine inspiration (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6). The churches are bound to obey this tradition as it is recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. Second, "tradition" refers to uninspired teachings that religious teachers attempt to add to the Word of God (Matt. 15:1-6; Mk. 7:9-13; Col. 2:8). This type of tradition is condemned.

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

"Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:13).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

We can praise the Lord that He has given us a completed revelation and that we are not dependent upon extra-biblical prophecies, visions, voices, tongues, or traditions. In the Bible we have everything we need for faith and practice until Jesus comes.

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE APOSTLES.** The apostles taught that they, together with select prophets, were chosen of God to lay the foundation for the churches (Ephesians 2:20) and to complete the New Testament Scriptures (2 Peter 3:2). They had sign gifts to authenticate their work (Mk. 3:14-15; Acts 2:43; 3:1-8; 4:33; 5:12-16; 19:11-12; 2 Cor. 12:12). There is no record in the New Testament that this office was perpetuated after the deaths of these men. Judas was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:15-26), but the standard that the apostles used to replace him teaches us that the apostolic office ceased. It was required that Judas' replacement was an eyewitness of Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). No one has been able to fulfill this standard since the first century. The churches of succeeding centuries are to be established directly upon the work of the Lord's apostles which is recorded for us in the New Testament Scriptures. Revelation 21:14 tells us there are only 12 apostles throughout eternity.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. 2:20).

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:12).

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:14).

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour" (2 Peter 3:2).

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) ... But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:1, 11, 12).

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CONGREGATION.** The apostles gave plain instructions concerning the church. They described its government. They gave details for the selection of its leaders. They detailed its ordinances, program, discipline, finances, and fellowship. They emphasized that each church is **autonomous** under its one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. When the apostles spoke of churches in a region, they used the term *church* in the plural -- churchES of Galatia (Gal. 1:3), churchES of Asia (Rev. 1:4, 11), churchES of Judaea (Acts 9:31; Gal. 1:22), churchES of the Gentiles (Rom. 16:4), churchES of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1). The book of Revelation is addressed to the churchES (plural) of Asia, not to the church (singular) of Asia. Each church had its own particular message from Christ. There was no reference to the establishment of any type of interchurch union. There was no headquarters that watched over and controlled the

churches. Each assembly was addressed and respected as a sovereign, autonomous body. In the first chapter of Revelation, we also see that each church possesses the glory of Christ, which is symbolized by the “golden candlesticks” (Rev. 1:12). Each church is also an autonomous light. There was not one candlestick (singular) in Asia, but seven individual candlesticks (plural). Each church is to seek to fulfill the Great Commission and has the authority under Christ to do so—to preach, disciple, baptize, ordain, and send forth missionaries. Compare Acts 13:1-4; 1 Thess. 1:7-8; Phil. 2:15-16. Thus when the Lord called Paul and Barnabas for their missionary work, the church at Antioch did not need to send word to Jerusalem or to some other ecclesiastical headquarters to seek permission for this endeavor. They simply ordained the men and sent them forth (Acts 13:4), and when the men completed their work, they returned to this church and gave their report (Acts 14:26-27).

Each apostolic church had its own leaders. The terms “bishop,” “elder,” and “pastor” refer to the same office in the New Testament assembly, describing three different aspects of the church leader’s work. *PASTOR* refers to the church leader as the shepherd of the flock, speaking of his work of teaching, nurturing, and protecting the assembly. The term “pastor” is translated from the Greek word *poimen*, which is translated “shepherd” 16 times in the New Testament (Mt. 9:36; 25:32; 26:31; Mk. 6:34; 14:27; Lk. 2:8, 15, 18, 20; Jn. 10:2, 11, 12, 14, 16; Heb. 13:20). In the Greek language of the New Testament, “feed the flock” means “shepherd the flock” (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). It is from the same root word translated “pastor” and “shepherd.” *ELDER* refers to the church leader’s maturity and responsibility and to the fact that he is to be an example to the church. *BISHOP* refers to the church leader’s authority, to the fact that he is to rule the church. The Greek word translated “bishop” is also translated “oversee” (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

That these terms refer to the same office in the assembly is evident by their usage. In Titus 1:5, 7, the terms “elders” and “bishops” are used interchangeably. In Acts 20 all three terms are applied to the same office. In verse 17 the church leaders are called “elders.” In verse 28 the Greek words for bishop and pastor are used. 1 Peter 5 also uses these terms to describe the same office in the church. Verse 1 refers to the “elders,” while verse 2 speaks of these elders as overseers (bishops) and shepherds. The fact that the terms are used interchangeably is significant. A pastor is an elder is a bishop. These are not separate offices; they are three terms that describe one office of leadership in the New Testament congregation.

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

## **Apostasy Prophesied**

New Testament prophecies describe two separate streams of “Christianity” operating side by side throughout the church age. First, there will be sound apostolic churches, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. They will be persecuted, hated, despised, yet they

will continue century by century until Christ's return. The Lord Jesus promised His faithful ones: "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Second, there will be apostate churches, which will increase and grow worse and worse as the centuries pass (2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; Matt. 24:4, 5, 11, 24; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; 1 John 4:1-6; Jude 4-19; Rev. 17:1-18).

"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. ... And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ... For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:4, 11, 24).

"I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

"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).

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:3-8).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Peter. 2:1-3).

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:18-19).



“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4).

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration” (Revelation 17:1-6).

The parables of Christ in Matthew 13, which describe the course of this present “church age,” portray a progression of apostasy. (“Apostasy” refers to falling away from the true faith.) *The parable of the leaven*, for example, describes a woman putting leaven into three measures of meal, “till the whole was leavened.” Leaven in Scripture stands for sin and error (Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Thus the parable tells us that the error that was introduced by false teachers even during the days of the apostles will gradually increase through the centuries until the entire religious system is leavened. The ultimate fulfillment of this is Revelation 17.

The apostasy began during the lives of the apostles and has increased steadily through the centuries. John wrote, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2:18). John taught that there will be a future antichrist, singular; but he is preceded by many antichrists, plural. We believe that the antichrist, singular, refers to the man of sin who will rule the end-time kingdom described in Daniel 9-11; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3-12; and Revelation 13. The antichrists, plural, refer to all of those that reject apostolic truth in favor of satanic deception and man-made tradition. Thus, the “antichrist” is both a man and a system; it is both one man, and many men. It is in this latter sense that the popes throughout history are identified with the antichrist.

Another passage that teaches the same truth is 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8. “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” In the days of the apostles the “mystery of iniquity” was already working, and it will culminate in the promotion of the man of sin, the Wicked One, the antichrist, who will assume the throne

of this world for a brief time at the end of the age. We are told that the culmination of this will not occur until just prior to the return of Christ, because the Wicked One will be destroyed “with the brightness of his coming.” The “mystery of iniquity” is that program of evil whereby the devil is attempting to corrupt the churches of Jesus Christ by sowing tares and apostasy. It is associated with “Mystery Babylon the Great” in Revelation 17.

## **Apostasy Fulfilled**

As we have seen, the falling away from the faith began during the lives of the apostles. They were hounded by false teachers. Many of the Epistles were written to correct error. Paul had to write to the churches of Galatia, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel” (Galatians 1:6). Again, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Galatians 3:1). And to the church of Corinth, Paul had to write that they were in danger of being led astray by false teachers working under satanic stratagem:

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. ... For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (2 Cor. 11:3, 4, 13-15).

In the first century there already existed the seeds of that apostasy that would blossom eventually in the formation of Roman Catholicism. (1) Some Christians had left their first love, which is the first step toward apostasy (Rev. 2:4-5). (2) Some were meddling with idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14-21; 1 John 5:21). (3) Some were spiritualizing Scripture truths (2 Tim. 2:17-18). (4) Some were trying to exercise unlawful authority in the churches, the first step toward hierarchicalism (3 John 9-10; Rev. 2:6, 15). (5) Some were perverting the Gospel by mixing law and grace, faith and works (Galatians 1; 1 Tim. 1:3-11). (6) Some were practicing asceticism (Col. 2:4, 8, 20-23).

By the end of the apostolic era, some of the churches were already deeply corrupted. Of the seven churches described in the book of Revelation, three were affected by error and another was nearly apostate.

In the next few centuries, these early seeds of error grew to frightful proportions, culminating in the creation of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not our purpose in this book to delve deeply into the history of the early churches and the formation of the Catholic Church. This information is available in many standard church histories. We will describe this apostasy briefly in the framework of its denial of the seven-fold sufficiency that characterized the apostolic churches.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST.** Apostate churches were not content with the perfect sufficiency in Jesus Christ. They were not content with *Christ's sufficiency as Mediator*, adding all sorts of other alleged mediators between Christ and men. The church itself became the administrator of sacramental grace, standing between Christ and the people. A special class of "saints" was invented, to whom prayers were addressed and of whom it was believed help could be obtained. Mary began to be described as participating with Christ in redemption. She was exalted to be the sinless Queen of Heaven. She was given such titles as the Mother of God and perpetual Virgin. Prayers were addressed to her; miracles attributed to her. The apostate churches were also not content with *Christ's sufficiency as Priest*. A special priesthood was set apart to offer sacrifices and to minister sacraments to the people. The apostate churches also were not content with *Christ's sufficiency as Head*. The pope and other ecclesiastical officers were given headship over the churches.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF GRACE.** Apostate churches changed the biblical definition of grace as the free, unmerited mercy of God through Christ Jesus, intermingling works and sacraments. Grace, it was believed, was purchased by Christ at the cross and was given to the "church" to administer via the sacraments. When the apostate churches taught "salvation by grace alone," they redefined this. They did not mean that a sinner could come directly to Christ and receive full forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Rather, they meant that a sinner could receive "grace" by trusting the "holy mother church" and participating in its sacraments. Baptism was perverted from its original symbolic status and became an actual means of grace whereby the participant was spiritually regenerated.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE ATONEMENT.** *The sufficiency of the Atonement of Christ was denied by the practice of the Mass.* Apostate churches perverted the Lord's Supper from a simple memorial meal into an elaborate mystic ceremony by which the elements became the actual body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and He was sacrificed anew. *The sufficiency of the Atonement was also denied by the doctrine of Purgatory*, which means expiation. Purgatory was said to be a place where sin is expiated before the Christian can enter Heaven. This is a blatant denial that man's sin is expiated fully by the Cross of Jesus Christ.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.** Apostate churches denied the people the right to judge doctrine by the Holy Spirit's unction. Instead, people were told they could not understand the Word of God without the ministry of the mystical priesthood. Eventually the Scriptures were forbidden to the people in their native tongues on this basis.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE APOSTLES.** Apostate churches claimed an apostolic succession whereby apostolic authority was passed along to the Catholic hierarchy. The Roman Catholic Church claims that its popes stand in the lineage of the apostle Peter and have the keys described in Matthew 16:19. These keys are interpreted to

symbolize spiritual authority in the earth. In truth, it was not Peter himself who was the rock upon which the church is built. That would be a mighty weak foundation! The Rock is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4; 1 Pet. 2:6). The Bible plainly says that the church is built upon Christ (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). The “rock” spoken of in Matthew 16:18 is the Lord Jesus Christ. It also refers to the testimony that Christ is the “Son of the living God,” which Peter uttered in verse 16.

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH.** As the centuries passed, churches formed ecclesiastical hierarchies that usurped Christ’s sole Headship. The autonomy of the New Testament church was abandoned. Many unscriptural ecclesiastical positions and titles were created: metropolitans, primates, prelates, priests, exarchs, patriarchs, popes. Carnal or unregenerate church leaders were not content to rule their own assemblies. They wanted to increase their sphere of influence. With the assistance of imperial edicts, they formed associations and districts. They demanded that other churches submit to their “authority.” They held councils and made doctrines that were supposed to be binding upon all churches. Those who resisted this usurpation and who determined to retain their God-given autonomy under the sole Headship of Jesus Christ were labeled heretics and divisive rebels. The following excerpt traces the amazing history of this usurpation:

The fourth century ... Under Constantine the empire was divided into four prefectures, these prefectures into dioceses, and the dioceses into provinces. ... The new arrangements, impressed by a human policy upon the Church, became every day more marked, as did likewise the gradation of rank amongst the pastors. Bishop rose above bishop ... The chief city of a province gave the title of Metropolitan, and likewise of Primate, to its bishop. The metropolis of a diocese conferred on its pastor the dignity of Exarch. Over the exarchs were placed four presidents or patriarchs. ... The first distinct recognition of the order occurs in the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 381. At that time we find but three of these great dignitaries in existence,—the Bishops of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria; but a fourth was now added ... Constantinople ...

This GRADATION OF RANK necessarily led to a gradation of jurisdiction and power. First came the Bishop, who exercised authority in his parish, and to whom the individual members of his flock were accountable. Next came the Metropolitan, who administered the ecclesiastical affairs of the province, exercised superintendence over all its bishops, convened them in synods, and, assisted by them, heard and determined all questions touching religion which arose within the limits of his jurisdiction. He possessed, moreover, the privilege of having his consent asked to the ordination of bishops within his province. Next came the Exarchs or Patriarchs, who exercised authority over the metropolitans of the diocese, and held diocesan synods, in which all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Church in the diocese were deliberated upon and adjudicated. ... In due time an arch-Patriarch arose. As might have been foreseen, the seat of the prince of the patriarchs was Rome. ...

In the year 378 came THE LAW OF GRATIAN AND VALENTINIAN II., empowering the metropolitans to judge the inferior clergy, and empowering the Bishop of Rome (Pope Damasus), either in person or by deputy, to judge the metropolitans. An appeal might be carried from the tribunal of the metropolitan to the Roman bishop, but from the judgment of the pontiff there was no appeal; his sentence was final. This law was addressed to the

praetorian prefects of Gaul and Italy, and thus it included the whole western empire, for the latter prefect exercised jurisdiction over western Illyricum and Africa, as well as over Italy. Thus did the Roman bishop acquire legal jurisdiction over all the western clergy. When the bishops applied to the pope in doubtful cases, his letters conveying the desired advice were styled Decretal Epistles; and to these decretals the Roman canonists came afterwards to attach as much importance as to the Holy Scriptures. ...

Another well-marked stage in the rise of the ecclesiastical supremacy is A.D. 445. In that year came the memorable edict of Valentinian III. and Theodosius II., in which the Roman pontiff was styled the "DIRECTOR OF ALL CHRISTENDOM," and the bishops and universal clergy were commanded to obey him as their ruler. It is believed that the decree was issued on the application of Pope Leo [the Great]. ... At about the distance of a century from the decree of Theodosius came the celebrated letter of Justinian to the pope, in which the Emperor still farther enlarged the prerogatives which previous edicts had conferred upon the Bishop of Rome. ...

Contemporarily with the publication of Justinian's code, was the rise of THE BENEDICTINE ORDER. In the course of a century the Benedictines had spread themselves over the west, preaching everywhere the doctrine of implicit submission to the see of Rome. Last of all came the edict of the Emperor Phocas, in A.D. 606, constituting Boniface III. Universal Bishop. This was the last in a series of edicts which had for their object to make the Bishop of Rome "Lord over God's heritage." ...

In the middle of the fifth century, we find THE FUNDAMENTAL DOGMA OF THE PAPACY, THAT THE CHURCH IS FOUNDED ON PETER, and that the popes are his representatives, proclaimed by the papal legate in the midst of the Council of Chalcedon, and virtually sanctioned by the silence of the fathers who were sitting in judgment on the case of Dioscorus. 'For these causes,' said the legate, 'Leo, archbishop of Old Rome, doth by us and by the Synod, with the authority of St. Peter, who is the rock and foundation of the Church, and the ground of faith, depose him (Dioscorus) from his episcopal dignity.' ... A shout followed the reading of the pope's letter:—'Peter speaks in Leo.' Hilary, the successor of Leo, accepted ... the appellation 'Vicar of Peter, to whom, since the resurrection of Christ, belonged the keys of the kingdom.' ...

Thus have we traced the history of the Papacy, from its rise in primitive times, to its formal though but partial development in the sixth century (J.A. Wylie, *The Papacy*, Chapter II: "Rise and Progress of Ecclesiastical Supremacy," 1888, pp. 17-38).

**DENYING THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE SCRIPTURES.** The Roman Catholic Church has not denounced the Bible or denied that it is the inspired Word of God. Instead, the Bible has been enshrouded in Catholic tradition and sacramentalism and priestcraft. The Catholic Church has placed itself between God and men and has made itself the sole administrator and interpreter of the Word of God. Thus, the sufficiency and authority of the Bible as the sole Word of God to man has been rendered ineffective in the minds of those who believe Rome's dogmas.

As we shall see in the following history, the Council of Trent in the 16th century proclaimed that (1) Catholic tradition is equal in authority with the Bible, (2) the apocryphal books are equal to the canonical books of Scripture, and (3) no one has the right to interpret the Bible contrary to the dogmas of the Catholic Church. The Creed of Pope Pius IV, issued at the conclusion of Trent, stated:

I also admit the sacred Scriptures, according to the sense which the holy mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures: nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers (Charles Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 6).

Trent, of course, was merely restating heresies that had been taught by Rome for hundreds of years. The result is evident. The authority of the Scripture is effectively destroyed.

Indeed, the Catholics have no certain rule at all. They can turn from Scripture to tradition, and from tradition to the Fathers. When these are against them, they can fly to Councils; and when Councils condemn them, they can have recourse to the pope ... thus the Romanist has no settled foundation on which to trust (Elliott, p. 17).

We must emphasize that the apostate religion that was formed in rebellion to apostolic doctrine is not the true church of Jesus Christ and should not be described as such. Speaking of the heretics of the first century who rejected the teaching of the apostles, John said, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John 2:19). Those who reject apostolic truth demonstrate that they are not of God.

It must be further emphasized that it was not all of the churches that apostatized. In the second to the sixth century, while the Roman Catholic Church was forming, there were churches that sought to remain faithful to the apostolic faith. This has been true in every century since. The apostates have often sought to destroy this remnant, but they have been unsuccessful, since they would have to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ to destroy His church (Matthew 16:18; 28:20).

With the rise of false churches with their false claims of authority came persecutions against those that refused to be moved from the Word of God. These persecutions were prophesied by the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles:

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. ... And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:16-18, 21-22).

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law" (Luke 12:51-53).

**“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” —*Revelation 22:18-19***

## PART TWO

# The Roman Catholic Church Set up a Corrupt Biblical Standard

At this point in our history we leave the certainty of the biblical account and move into the shadowy record of ancient history. It is important to understand that the record of the early centuries after the apostles is extremely difficult to trace, because much of the evidence has been destroyed, mutilated, or corrupted. Yet there is a record, and it is exciting to follow the hand of God century by century, preserving New Testament churches as He promised (Matthew 16:18) and maintaining a witness for the gospel in the world. The Lord Jesus Christ promised the first century disciples, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). This is a promise that true churches would be perpetuated by the abiding presence of Christ, who has all power in Heaven and in earth. Everything we present in this history is founded upon the research of men that have diligently pursued these matters and whose scholarship is at least equal to that of their detractors. The fact that some of their conclusions are denied by some modern scholars is not surprising, in light of the liberal views of the latter and the fact that they do not view church history through the eye of faith in God.

### The Development of Corrupt Greek Texts and the Catholic Latin Vulgate

In addition to copies of the apostolic books in the Greek language, within the first century after the apostles (150 A.D.) there were also translations of the Greek New Testament into Latin and Syriac and possibly other languages. The Latin versions were very important because this language was spoken widely and was very influential. These versions multiplied and many corruptions were introduced. **Heretics were busy adding to and taking away from the text**, as it pleased them. Frederick Nolan (1784-1864), a diligent researcher into early church history, said that “the founders of those different sects had tampered with the text of Scripture ... in some instances the genuine text had been wholly superseded by the spurious editions” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 468, 69). The heretics also attempted to foist extra books into the canon in spite of the seal in Revelation 22:18-19. These spurious books included Acts of Paul, Shepherd of Hermas, Revelation of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, Teaching of the Twelve, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Matthias, Acts of Andrew, Acts of John, etc. “The heretics of the 2nd century were so many, so brilliant, and so strong, that the fact that Christianity and the pure teaching of the New Testament survived is an impressive



proof of their divine origin and authority” (Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 141).

Miller observes that these heretics rejected some the apostolic writings and mutilated others to suit their fancies and errors. “The convenience of labeling as ‘interpolations’ and casting out anything that did not square with their ideas of what should be, so highly prized in our day, was popular at this time” (Miller, p. 141).

Heretics and heretical sects of the first few centuries included Marcion, Simon Magus, Basilides, Valentinus, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, the Ophites, Heraclion, the Montanists, the Lucianists, the Tatianists, the Apelleians, etc. These were heretics in a genuinely biblical sense, in the sense that they denied apostolic doctrine, not in the sense that Bible believers themselves later were called heretics by the Roman Catholic Church, for the “heresy” of denying Catholic tradition.

**Origen** (185-254) produced editions of the Bible and writings that influenced later editors, including Eusebius of Cesarea and Jerome. Origen has been called “the Father of Biblical Criticism and Exposition.” He is said to have written 6,000 books, tracts, sermons, letters, etc. He produced the *Hexapla*, which was a polyglot containing six editions of the Old Testament in various columns. The fifth column was the Greek translation of the Old Testament edited by Origen. (All entire copies of the *Hexapla* were lost sometime after the 6th century.)



Though Origen sought to defend the Scriptures against certain heretics, he himself turned from the faith once delivered to the saints and introduced many heretical teachings to his followers. “Though he very successfully combated the fundamental errors of his opponents; their reasonings, particularly when seconded by the speculations of Plato, seem to have had so far an influence upon his sentiments as to induce him to embrace some very extraordinary notions relative to the constitution of Christ’s body, and that of the human frame, after the resurrection. Some of these notions he adopted from Tatian, by whose peculiar opinions he confesses himself to have been once influenced, and from him he obviously imbibed that extraordinary attachment to a state of celibacy, which he professed in numberless places” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 467, 68). Origen rejected the testimony of the apostle Paul in Colossians 2:16-23 and lived as an ascetic. He even castrated himself in his zeal for “celibacy.” He founded a school in Caesarea, Palestine, where he taught his mongrel mixture of pagan philosophy and Christianity.

Origen is described by Mosheim (in his *Com. de Rebus Christ*, Vol. II, p. 144) as ‘a compound of contraries, wise and unwise, acute and stupid, judicious and injudicious; the enemy of superstition, and its patron; a strenuous defender of Christianity, and its corrupter; energetic and irresolute; one to whom the Bible owes much, and from whom it has suffered much.’ While

he gained, amidst the superstitious contemporaries who then gave character to Eastern Christianity, a splendid reputation for sanctity, as well as learning, his character was evidently dishonest and tricky, and his judgment most erratic. ... As a controversialist, he was wholly unscrupulous (*Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, I, p. 383).

Origen taught baptismal regeneration and “evidently had no clear conception of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith” (Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, p. 65). This is an important fact, because it means that the gospel Origen taught was a false gospel, and he therefore was under God’s curse (Galatians 1:6-8). Origen believed in purgatory and claimed that all men would eventually be reclaimed through the purgation of sin after death. This is a denial of the sufficiency of Christ’s atonement. He taught that even the demons and Satan would eventually be restored (Berkhof, p. 75). Origen taught the pre-existence of man. He believed the Holy Spirit was the first creature made by the Father through the Son. Origen “disbelieved the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, holding that the inspired men apprehended and stated many things obscurely” (Dabney, I, p. 383). Origen’s “opinions on the Trinity veered between Sabellianism and Arianism. He expressly denied the consubstantial unity of the Persons and the proper incarnation of the Godhead” (Dabney, I, p. 384).

Origen championed the method of Bible interpretation known as allegorizing, by which the literal meaning of Scripture is rejected for a “deeper meaning” discovered by the interpreter. Such a method makes the mind of the teacher authoritative over the plain meaning of Scripture; because if the plain sense of Scripture is not the true meaning, it is impossible to determine exactly what it does mean. Every man is therefore left to his own devices. Origen’s voluminous commentaries contained a wealth of fanciful interpretations, abounding “in references to apocryphal works and heretical revisals of Scripture” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, p. 367). “His reputation as the great introducer of mysticism, allegory, and Neo-Platonism into the Christian church, is too well known to need recital. Those who are best acquainted with the history of Christian opinion know best, that Origen was the great corrupter, and the source, or at least earliest channel, of nearly all the speculative errors which plagued the church in after ages” (Dabney, I, p. 383).

Of Origen’s textual efforts, Frederick Nolan makes the following important observation:

“... HE CONTRIBUTED TO WEAKEN THE AUTHORITY OF THE RECEIVED TEXT OF THE NEW [TESTAMENT]. In the course of his Commentaries, he cited the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, on the former part of the Canon, he appealed to the authority of Valentinus and Heracleon on the latter. WHILE HE THUS RAISED THE CREDIT OF THOSE REVISALS, WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BY THE HERETICKS, HE DETRACTED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THAT TEXT WHICH HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE ORTHODOX. Some difficulties which he found himself unable to solve in the Evangelists, he undertook to remove, BY EXPRESSING HIS DOUBTS OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT. In some instances he ventured to impeach the reading of the New Testament on the testimony of the Old, and to convict the copies of one Gospel on the evidence of another: thus giving loose to his fancy, and indulging in many wild conjectures, HE CONSIDERABLY IMPAIRED THE CREDIT OF THE

*VULGAR OR COMMON EDITION, as well in the New as in the Old Testament*" (emphasis added) (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 432-34).

This testimony is important because subsequent textual editors, Eusebius and Jerome, depended upon Origen's work. Nolan informs us that Origen's heretical opinions had spread widely in Egypt. "Under the circumstances, the churches of Egypt were gradually prepared for the reception of a revised text, accommodated to the principles of Origen's criticism" (Nolan, p. 440). Origen was moving away from the pure text of Scripture that had come from the apostolic hands, and successive editors of the heretical Alexandrian school continued in this direction. When we consider the spiritual condition of Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, it is little wonder that they lacked the discernment necessary to recognize and transmit the pure Word of God. Their heretical doctrines demonstrate that they were controlled by the god of this world (1 Timothy 4:1-4).

### **Eusebius of Cesarea**

Eusebius of Cesarea (270-340) collected the writings of Origen and promoted his erroneous teachings. "Whatever proof exists that Origen and his school deteriorated the correctness of the text, it is to the same extent clear that Eusebius accepted and perpetuated that injury" (Dabney, *Discussions*, I, p. 387). Constantine the Great, who joined the church and state together in the Roman Empire and thereby laid the foundation for the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church, hired Eusebius to produce some Greek New Testaments. Frederick Nolan and other authorities have charged Eusebius with making many changes in the text of Scripture.

As it is thus apparent that Eusebius wanted not the power, so it may be shewn that he wanted not the will, to make those alterations in the sacred text, with which I have ventured to accuse him (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, p. 35)

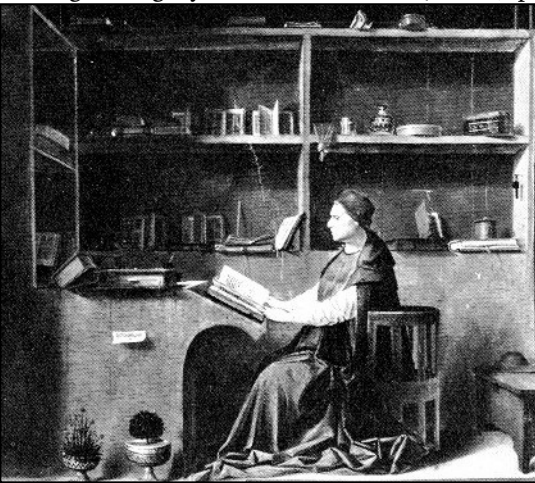
While [Eusebius] was no less biased in favour of Origen, than Hesychius, he possessed greater facilities of consulting his commentaries; a complete set of Origen's works having been deposited in the library of Caesarea. He possessed also, in the edition of Hesychius, a text in which many of the peculiar readings of Origen, his master and preceptor in criticism, had been adopted. ... FROM THE TEXT OF HESYCHIOUS, IT IS PROBABLE EUSEBIUS DERIVED MOST OF THE PECULIAR READINGS OF ORIGEN, which he adopted in his edition: having here found them incorporated in the sacred text, while the testimony of Origen became sufficient authority for him to retain them as genuine (Nolan, pp. 459, 60, 61).

Many of the noted omissions in the modern versions can be traced to this period, including Mark 16:9-20 and John 8:1-11. After intensive investigation, Frederick Nolan concluded that Eusebius "suppressed those passages in his edition" (Nolan, p. 240). In fact, many textual authorities have identified the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the manuscripts so revered by modern textual critics, as two of the copies of the Greek New Testament made by Eusebius. These manuscripts also contained the spurious apocryphal writings, Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas. Origen considered these two uninspired books canonical Scripture (Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament*, p. 103). We will see

in Part IV that the modern Bible versions contain the same type of omissions as the old Catholic versions based on the Latin Vulgate.

## Jerome

Jerome (Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus) (340-420) was called upon by his friend Damasus, the Bishop of Rome (who was exalting himself above his fellows and calling himself the pope), to produce a standard Latin Bible. This was completed between A.D. 383 and 405. JEROME "WAS BROUGHT UP WITH A DISLIKE FOR THE VULGAR [COMMON] EDITION OF THE GREEK, AND WITH A PREDILECTION FOR THE CORRECTED TEXT OF EUSEBIUS; having imbibed an early partiality for this edition, through Gregory of Nazianzum" (Nolan, p. 151). Jerome rejected old Latin texts that



Jerome in his study

differed from Eusebius and thus perpetuated textual corruptions in his version. His translation included nine spurious apocryphal books.

Modern textual critic Bruce Metzger testified that the Greek manuscripts used by Jerome "APPARENTLY BELONGED TO THE ALEXANDRIAN TYPE OF TEXT" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 76). This means they were in the same family as those underlying the modern versions. F.G. Kenyon, another influential 20th century textual scholar, affirmed this by observing that the Vaticanus manuscript so preferred by Westcott and Hort and the English Revised Version of 1881 was the same type of text as

that used by Origen and Jerome:

It [the Vaticanus] is the leading representative of the type of text which scholars associate with Alexandria, and of which Westcott and Hort thought so highly that they dubbed it 'neutral', and indeed made the Vaticanus the sheet-anchor of their edition. Powerfully supported ... in the main, by the quotations in Origen, and by Jerome in his revision of the Latin New Testament (Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 88).

Another 20th century textual critic, H. Wheeler Robinson, said that Jerome's translation was "corrected with the aid of ancient Greek codices of the Aleph B [Vaticanus] type" (Robinson, *Ancient Versions of the English Bible*, p. 113).

All of these textual scholars tell us that the Jerome Latin Vulgate represented the same type of text as the modern critical Greek text.

Jerome possibly translated only the Gospels. “The rest of the New Testament in the Vulgate is probably taken from Old Latin sources unrevised by him” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 26).

Jerome’s work was not widely accepted for centuries. The Old Latin continued to be used in some places as late as the 12th century. It was not called *vulgata editio* (the Vulgate) until the 13th century.

*It is important to understand that Jerome was deeply infected with false teaching.* Jerome had hopes of succeeding Damasus as pope but was passed over (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 25). He lived a hermetic life in disobedience to the Bible’s command to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15). As for his spirit and character, Jerome is described, even by a historian who had high respect for him, with these words: “such irritability and bitterness of temper, such vehemence of uncontrolled passion, such an intolerant and persecuting spirit, and such inconstancy of conduct” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 206). Jerome followed the false teaching of asceticism, believing the state of celibacy to be spiritually superior to that of marriage, and demanding that church leaders be unmarried. James Heron, author of *The Evolution of Latin Christianity*, observed that “no single individual did so much to make monasticism popular in the higher ranks of society” (*The Evolution of Latin Christianity*, 1919, p. 58). Jerome believed in the veneration of “holy relics” and the bones of dead Christians (Heron, pp. 276, 77). He “took a leading and influential part in ‘opening the floodgates’ for the invocation of saints,” teaching “distinctly and emphatically that the saints in heaven hear the prayers of men on earth, intercede on their behalf and send them help from above (Heron, pp. 287, 88). Jerome taught that Mary was the counterpart of Eve, as Christ was the counterpart of Adam, and that through her obedience Mary became instrumental in helping to redeem the human race (Heron, p. 294). He also taught that Mary was a perpetual virgin (Heron, pp. 294, 95). He believed in the blessing of water (Heron, p. 306).

Jerome had a particularly hateful attitude toward those that followed the simple apostolic faith and refused to accept the false doctrines and practices. His writings against these men, whom he falsely labeled “heretics,” were characterized with the most vicious sort of language. He was “engaged in many violent and bitter controversies” (Heron, p. 58). Vigilantius, Jovinian, and Helvidius were some of the men upon whom Jerome railed. These men rejected the false traditions that were being added by the early leaders of the Roman Church, including infant baptism, enforced celibacy, worship of martyrs and relics, and the sinlessness and perpetual virginity of Mary. Jerome heaped upon these men angry labels, calling them dogs, maniacs, monsters, asses, stupid fools, two-legged asses, gluttons, servants of the devil, madmen, “useless vessels which should be shattered by the iron rod of apostolic authority.” He said Helvidius had a “fetid mouth, fraught with a putrid stench, against the relics and ashes of the martyrs.” “The pen of Jerome was rendered very offensive by his grinding tyranny

and crabbed temper. No matter how wrong he was, he could not brook contradiction” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 207).

It is no wonder that a man with such a vicious tongue justified the death penalty for “heretics” (James Heron, *The Evolution of Latin Christianity*, p. 323).

It is interesting to note that Vigilantius, one of the men against whom Jerome railed, was identified by George Faber, diligent historian of the Waldenses and Albigenses, with the Waldensian Christians of northern Italy. In the year 406 Vigilantius published “a most uncompromising and decisive Treatise against the miserable growing superstitions of the age.” “In this Treatise, he attacked the notion, that Celibacy is the duty of the Clergy: censured, as idolatrous, the excessive veneration of the Martyrs and the idle unscriptural figment that they are potent intercessors at the throne of grace: ridiculed the blind reverence, which was paid to their senseless and useless relics: exposed the gross folly of burning tapers, like the Pagans, before their shrines in broad day-light: detected the spurious miracles, which were said to be wrought by their inanimate remains: vilified the boasted sanctity of vainly gratuitous monachism: and pointed out the useless absurdity of pilgrimages, either to Jerusalem or to any other reputed sanctuary” (Faber, *History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, 1838, pp. 291, 292).

Jerome composed a reply to Vigilantius “in which, it is hard to say, whether illogical absurdity or brutal scurrility is the most predominant.”

Faber made the following important remarks about the conflict between Vigilantius and Jerome:

To the ecclesiastical student, the *sentiments* of Vigilantius are familiar: and their *complete identity* with those of the Vallenses, in all ages, cannot have escaped his notice. ... *He wrote from a region, situated between the waves of the Adriatic and the Alps of King Cottius* ... Now this district, on the eastern side of the Cottian Alps, is the precise country of the Vallenses. *Hither* their ancestors retired, during the persecutions of the second and third and fourth centuries: *here*, providentially secluded from the world, they retained the precise doctrines and practices of the Primitive Church endeared to them by suffering and exile; while the wealthy inhabitants of cities and fertile plains, corrupted by a now opulent and gorgeous and powerful Clergy, were daily sinking deeper and deeper into that apostasy which has been so graphically foretold by the great Apostle: and, *here*, as we learn through the medium of an accidental statement of Jerome, Vigilantius took up his abode, at the beginning of the fifth century, among a people, who, Laics [laity] and Bishops alike, agreed with him in his religious sentiments, and joyfully received him as a brother. ... Jerome, nurtured in the adulterate Christianity of opulent cities and fanatic monks and lordly prelates, is amazed, yea horrified, at the alpine audacity of Vigilantius. ... ‘What,’ cries Jerome, scandalized to the last pitch of endurance, ‘does the Roman Bishop, then, do ill, who offers sacrifices to the Lord over the bones of dead men; the bones, I trow, of Peter and of Paul: bones, in our estimation, venerable; bones, in thy estimation, a mere worthless portion of dust? *Does the Bishop of Rome do ill, who deems their tombs the altars of Christ? Are the Bishops, not merely of a single city, but of the whole world, all mistaken: because, despising the huckster Vigilantius, they reverently enter into the stately cathedrals of the dead?*’ (italics in original) (Faber, *History of the Ancient Vallenses*, pp. 293, 94, 98).

We would gladly answer Jerome's question. Yes, a thousand times, yes. Vigilantius and his Christian friends in the Alps were correct, and your apostate bishops were *all* wrong! We do not believe Vigilantius was a huckster. It is more likely that he was a sincere man of God who was being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and the faith once delivered to the saints.

This is a fascinating bit of information. As we have seen, New Testament prophecies describe two separate streams of "Christianity" operating side-by-side through the church age. First, there will be sound churches, that hold to the faith once delivered to the saints. They will be persecuted, hated, despised, yet Jesus promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Second, there will be apostate churches that will grow worse and worse as the centuries pass (1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4).

In the battle between the Bible-believing Vigilantius and the pre-Romanist Jerome in the early fifth century, we see the two aspects of prophecy pertaining to the course of the "church age" being fulfilled side-by-side: On the one hand, there were New Testament Christians, seeking to maintain the apostolic faith and standing boldly against apostasy. On the other hand, there were apostates, fearlessly adding their extra-biblical traditions to the Word of God and persecuting those who resisted their heresies.

It is obvious that Jerome had imbibed many of the false teachings and attitudes that eventually became the entrenched dogmas and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. It was not possible, therefore, that he possessed the Holy Spirit discernment necessary to transmit the purest version of the Scriptures.

What was Damasus' motive in producing the Vulgate? Jack Moorman writes:

A man has to be more than a little naïve to believe the main reason Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome (in 383) to produce a new Latin Bible, was his concern over the differing Old Latin texts. ... Of course, the Pope's chief concern was that there be a new translation which in format (inclusion of the Apocrypha), and text was more suitable to the rising power of the Roman Church. Nor should too much weight be given the idea that Jerome was 'an independent scholar unfettered by the structure of the Church.' In fact, during the year immediately before the translation work began, he was the Pope's secretary at Rome! And Jerome certainly leaves no doubt in his preface as to what his first motivation for the work was: 'The command laid upon him by Damasus, the Supreme Pontiff' (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 334, 35) (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, 1990, p. 31).

***The Jerome Latin Vulgate became the Bible adopted by the Roman Catholic Church.*** The Council of Trent of the 16th century declared the Latin Vulgate to be the one and only authoritative edition of the Bible, and other versions were condemned. This does not mean that the Jerome Vulgate was accepted by all Christians. Far from it. Consider the following statements:

Notwithstanding the high reputation of Jerome ... it was but slowly adopted by the Western

Churches, which still persevered in retaining the primitive version (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, p. 152).

Jerome was reviled throughout the West for his labors, and ... it was not until after Gregory the Great had given it his formal approval (about 600 A.D.) that his recension came into general use in the Roman Church (Henry Vedder, *Our New Testament*, 1908, p. 297).

The separated Christians kept the old Latin versions.

... the older Latin remained popular for centuries. German Christians still quoted from these versions in the ninth century; the English and Spaniards in the tenth; and in the French province of Languedoc the Old Latin Psalter was still in use in the twelfth century. Indeed, Jerome's Latin Bible was not given its familiar label 'Vulgate' (implying common use) until the thirteenth century (Harry Frank, *The Bible through the Ages*, p. 138).

THE OLD LATIN VERSIONS WERE USED LONGEST BY THE WESTERN CHRISTIANS WHO WOULD NOT BOW TO THE AUTHORITY OF ROME—e.g., the Donatists; the Irish in Ireland, Britain, and the continent; the Albigenses, etc. (Melancthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, 1908, p. 200, note 15).

Commentators such as Aelfric and Dunstan in the tenth century employed [the old Latin translations] as the basis of their commentaries (Robinson, *Ancient Versions of the English Bible*, p. 116).

There are copies of Old Latin manuscripts and fragments in existence that date to the 13th century, “thus proving that the Old-Latin was still copied long after it had gone out of general use” (Henry Robinson, *The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions*, p. 104).

Furthermore, as we shall see, the separated Christians were not dependent completely on Latin, for they often had their own translations in the vernacular languages.

We must emphasize that **the term “Latin Vulgate” has been used in a number of different ways**. The term “vulgate” itself means “common” or “received.” It originally applied to the old Latin translation(s) that predated the Jerome version. In modern times, though, it has most commonly been used in the following two ways. First, the term “Latin Vulgate” is used to refer to *the Jerome Latin translation itself*. Beyond generalizations, it is difficult to know the precise form of that version. The oldest copy of a Latin Vulgate fragment (the Gospels) alleged to be of the Jerome type dates to 500 A.D. The oldest complete New Testament of the Jerome type that we have, dates to 546 A.D. (the Codex Fuldensis (F), written by Victor of Capua—Robinson, p. 120). Second, the term “Latin Vulgate” refers to *the tradition of the Latin Bible within the Roman Catholic Church*. In a general sense the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate dates back to Jerome's version, but it never had a settled form. *One of the chief features of Rome's Latin Vulgate, in fact, was that it was constantly changing*.

In describing Catholic history in the centuries following the creation of the Jerome Vulgate, Albert Gilmore says, “The languages of the early Bibles, Hebrew and Greek, were no longer of interest. So marked did this lack of interest become that when, after the Renaissance, Cardinal Ximenes published his Polyglot edition with the Latin Vulgate



between the Greek and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament, he stated in his preface that it was ‘like Jesus between two thieves’” (Gilmore, *The Bible: Beacon Light of History*, 1935, p. 170).

A few centuries after the apostles, **Latin became a dead language** in regard to the common man, and only the very educated could understand it. Even so, Rome continued century after century to use only Latin for its theological training and liturgy. Its attitude toward those who would put the Bible into the language of the people is evident in the following pages. Rome did not authorize any vernacular translations in the major languages of Europe until the 17th century (and these were not widely distributed), and it did not allow the mass to be performed in the common languages until the latter half of the 20th! The Holy Spirit at Pentecost gave the wonderful message of God in the manifold tongues of the people, but Rome sought to hide the Word of God in a dead language. (We aren’t implying, of course, that Rome’s liturgy is the true Word of God, but that is a separate issue.)

***It is also important to note that the Latin Vulgate was not in a settled state until the end of the 16th century, long after Rome had pronounced it authentic, and the text has remained fluid until today.*** We have mentioned this in passing, but we want to emphasize it. Bruce Metzger described the history of the Jerome Vulgate in this way:

It was inevitable that, in the course of the transmission of the text of Jerome’s revision, scribes would corrupt his original work, sometimes by careless transcription and sometimes by deliberate conflation with copies of the Old Latin version. In order to purify Jerome’s text a number of recensions or editions were produced during the Middle Ages; notable among these were the successive efforts of Alcuin, Theodulf, Lanfranc, and Stephen Harding. Unfortunately, however, each of these attempts to restore Jerome’s original version resulted eventually in still further textual corruption through mixture of the several types of Vulgate text which had come to be associated with various European centres of scholarship (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 76).

Metzger assumes that the Jerome Vulgate was originally pure and that it gradually became impure through intermixing with old Latin translations and other sources. We believe it is more likely that the Jerome edition was impure from the beginning because it was based upon impure texts similar to the corrupt Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus manuscripts.

In spite of the pontifications of the Council of Trent, which proclaimed the Vulgate the sole authentic edition of the Bible, it was not until more than forty years later that a settled edition of the Latin Vulgate appeared. A papal commission worked for more than 40 years after Trent, but failed to produce an authentic edition. Frustrated by the slow progress of the commission, **Pope Sixtus V** (1585-1590) took matters into his own hands and produced his own revision, which appeared in May 1590. This edition of the Latin Vulgate was prefaced by a papal bull that identified the Sixtus edition as “true, legitimate, authentic, and undoubted in all public and private debates, readings,

preachings, and explanations; and that anyone who ventured to change it without papal authority would incur the wrath of God Almighty of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul” (Jacobus, p. 12). Sixtus died three months later, and, as we shall see, his successors were not impressed with his papal threats! There was a small problem. The Sixtus Latin Vulgate was full of errors, “some two thousand of them introduced by the pope himself” (Johann Dollinger, *The Pope and the Council*, 1870). In September 1590 the College of Cardinals stopped all sales and bought up and destroyed as many copies as possible!

It is interesting to note in passing that the Vaticanus Greek manuscript from the Vatican library was “fully used by Carafa for Pope Sixtus V’s Septuagint in 1587” (Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 87).

The three popes that followed Sixtus did not live long enough to accomplish much. **Urban VII** lasted only two weeks; **Gregory XIV**, ten months; and **Innocent IX**, only two months.

**Clement VIII** (1592-1605) followed, and it was he who issued a new edition of the Latin Vulgate in 1592. The names of both Sixtus V and Clement VIII appeared on the title page. This is known as the Clementine Bible. It contained “more than 3,000 alterations from the text of Sixtus—whole passages being omitted or introduced, and the verses being divided differently” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 13). The Clementine Bible came with its own papal bull “which specified among other things that, as before, no word of the text might be altered, that no various readings might be registered in the margin, and that all copies were to be conformed to it” (Jacobus, p. 13). This is exactly what Pope Sixtus had pontificated some two years and three thousand changes earlier!

The point is that Rome’s Latin Vulgate, that alleged “authentic edition of the Scriptures,” was in a constant state of flux throughout the centuries.

## Augustine

To help our readers understand the early history of the Roman Catholic Church, we want to mention the name of another man who lived contemporary with Jerome. This was **Augustine** (354-430). Many historians have wisely observed that Augustine (354-430) rejected the New Testament faith to such a degree and wielded such vast influence that he laid the foundation for the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. Benjamin Warfield said that “in a true sense” Augustine is “the founder of Roman Catholicism” (Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, p. 22). The Roman Catholic Church itself acknowledges Augustine as one of its “major Church Doctors,” and has canonized him as a saint.

**Augustine was a persecutor and the father of generations of persecutors.** “Augustine of Hippo did not shrink from giving a dogmatic basis to what had come to be the practice of the church, and even professed to find warrant for it in Scripture. ‘It is, indeed, better that men should be brought to serve God by instruction than by fear of

punishment, or by pain. But because the former means are better, the latter must not therefore be neglected. Many must often be brought back to their Lord, like wicked servants, by the rod of temporal suffering, before they attain the highest grade of religious development. . . . The Lord himself orders that guests be first invited, then compelled, to his great supper.’ And Augustine argues that if the State has not the power to punish religious error, neither should it punish a crime like murder. Rightly did Neander say of Augustine’s teaching, that it ‘contains the germ of the whole system of spiritual despotism, intolerance, and persecution, even to the court of the Inquisition.’ Nor was it long before the final step was taken in the church doctrine of persecution. Leo the Great, the first of the popes, in a strict sense of that term, drew the logical inference from the premises already provided for him by the Fathers of the church, when he declared that death is the appropriate penalty for heresy” (Henry Vedder, *Our New Testament*, pp. 97, 98).

The bitter persecutions poured out upon the Bible-believing Donatists were largely at the instigation of Augustine. The Donatists contended for pure New Testament churches comprised only of those who evidenced repentance and faith. They practiced a congregational form of church government. They baptized those who came to them from churches they considered to be heretical, arguing that baptisms at the hands of men and churches that did not follow the New Testament faith are invalid. Thus they were labeled “rebaptizers,” but their leaders argued that they believed in only one baptism--one true baptism. Donatist Pastor Petilian stated: “He who accuses me of baptizing twice, does not himself truly baptize once. ... The apostle Paul says there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; this one baptism we openly profess, and it is certain that they who think there are two, are insane” (David Benedict, *History of the Donatists*, 1875, p. 49). Augustine opposed these people, arguing for a lax church discipline that allowed for unregenerate pagans and immoral ecclesiastical leaders. He demanded that the Donatists submit themselves to a centralized church system. Because the Donatists refused to submit to these heresies, the ecclesiastical authorities joined hands with the secular powers to persecute them. Many of their church leaders were put to death and great numbers of them were forced into exile. David Benedict, who labored for 10 years on his history of the Donatists, working largely from ancient Latin texts, gave the following summary:

The Novatians and Donatists were called Puritans because they held that the visible church of Jesus Christ does not, and ought not to, consist of any but those who are free from spots and falls, and that all others should be cast out. When the Catholic church was notoriously full of bad members, it was said by Augustine, the Donatist discipline would split it into a thousand schisms. The reforms of North Africa, unlike the reformers of later times, did not leave their work half done. Having repudiated the head of the church which they left, they also disowned its members, its baptisms, its ordinations, and all its official unctions; and all who came to them from the old body, whether bishops, elders, deacons or lay members, were required to be rebaptized, reordained and reappointed in their new connection, in their different stations (Benedict, *History of the Donatists*, pp. 186, 187).

Though we would not agree with the Donatists on every point of doctrine or practice, we have included this testimony because these ancient Christians have been either ignored or libeled in many church histories.

Augustine, akin to the other “doctors” and “fathers” of the Catholic Church, was polluted with many heresies. Like Jerome, he was baptized in Rome, the very seat of apostasy. He adopted some of the allegorical methods of biblical interpretation that were championed by Origen, and he redefined the church and the kingdom of God as an ecclesiastical-political alliance in this present world. He was the father of amillennialism. “Augustine was the first who ventured to teach that the Catholic Church, in its empirical form, was the kingdom of Christ, that the millennial kingdom had commenced with the appearing of Christ, and was therefore an accomplished fact” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

Augustine taught that salvation was by grace alone, but he confused the issue by claiming that the sacraments were actual means of grace, therefore perverting the gospel of the grace of Christ and intermingling works with grace (Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, pp. 206, 207). Schaff says that the center of Augustine’s doctrinal system was “the free redeeming grace of God in Christ, OPERATING THROUGH THE ACTUAL, HISTORICAL CHURCH” (Schaff, III, p. 998). This is to confuse grace with sacramentalism. The true grace of Jesus Christ is not channeled through a church; it is offered directly to the sinner through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no mediator between Christ and man. Augustine’s error pertaining to grace is one of the chief errors of Romanism.

Augustine taught that Mary was sinless, blasphemously claiming for her that which belongs exclusively to the immaculate Lord Jesus Christ. He admitted that Mary had a sinful nature inherited from Adam, but he claimed that she did not commit any actual sin (Heron, *Evolution of Latin Christianity*, p. 295).

Augustine taught a form of purgatory.

He is one of the fathers of the heresy of infant baptism and he further taught that man is regenerated through baptism. He claimed that unbaptized babies are lost. “Originally, only adults were baptized; but at the end of the second century in Africa, and in the third, generally, infant baptism was introduced; and in the fourth century it was theologically maintained by Augustine” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 216, 17). Of infant baptism Augustine pompously declared, “He that does not believe it, and thinks it cannot be done, is indeed an infidel” (G. H. Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 96). Augustine provided leadership for the Council of Mela, in 416, which made the wicked proclamation “that whosoever denieth that infants newly born of their mothers are to be baptized, let him be accursed” (David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, I, p. 59).

Augustine exalted the authority of the “church” over that of the Bible, saying, “I would not believe the gospel, if I were not compelled by the authority of the universal church.”

The noted Baptist historian Thomas Armitage observes that Augustine “became the champion of ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism, all distorted into monstrous proportions” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 217).

Thus, we see that the Jerome Latin Vulgate was formed in an era in which one of the chief fathers of the Roman Catholic Church was exercising his unscriptural influence.

**Cassiodorus**, who lived in the middle of the 6th century, attempted to resolve the conflict that existed in his day between competing editions of the Latin Bible. Jerome’s version still had not gained ascendancy. Instead of correcting Jerome’s Vulgate with the older Latin manuscripts, Cassiodorus sought to “correct” old Latin manuscripts with Jerome’s. It was during this period that many modifications were made to Latin manuscripts that have been discovered in modern times and that have been used by textual critics to determine the text of the early centuries. Frederick Nolan summarized his patient research into this era with the following words:

Calling in the aid of the Greek original, and taking St. Jerome’s version as its best interpreter, [Cassiodorus] undertook the correction of the Old Italic by the Vulgate and Greek. And the method in which he performed his task effectually removed the dissimilarity between them, which had so obstinately continued to his times. The monks who were employed in this work, were commanded to erase the words of the former translation, and to substitute those of the latter; taking due pains to make the new writing resemble the old. The manuscripts thus corrected, in which, on the basis of the old translation, the corrections of the new were ingrafted, he had incorporated with the Greek original in the same volume. ... To this cause is to be attributed the affinity discoverable between the Greek and Latin text, in which THE PATRONS OF THE GERMAN METHOD OF CLASSIFICATION SEEM TO HAVE DISCOVERED THE MARKS OF A HIGH ORIGINAL, ASCENDING TO THE APOSTOLICAL DAYS; BUT WHICH REALLY CLAIM NO HIGHER AUTHORS THAN THE ILLITERATE MONKS OF A BARBAROUS AGE. And here it is likewise conceived no improbable origin is traced for that peculiar class of manuscripts termed Codices Graeco-Latini, which are now found of such utility in correcting or in corrupting the sacred text. ... Such, or I am grossly deceived, is the true pedigree of the Cambridge, the Laudian, the Clermont, and St. Germain manuscripts, &c. which occupy a principal rank in the new classifications (Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 17, 18).

Nolan, as already noted, very laboriously traced the early history of the biblical text, and in 1815 he published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin. **Nolan concluded that the Received Text underlying the old Protestant Bibles (such as the English Authorized Version) is the text of the apostles, and that the key omissions (such as those in Mark 16:9-20; Acts 20:28, 1 Timothy 3:16) found in the modern versions were introduced by heretics of the second and third centuries.** Nolan found evidence that the early Latin version called the Italic was produced by Bible-believing Christians who were separate from Rome and its growing apostasy, and this biblical witness continued to be maintained in translations made by the Waldenses.

The author formed a hope, that some remains of the primitive Italic version might be found in the early translations made by the Waldenses, who were the lineal descendants of the Italic Church; and who have asserted their independence against the usurpations of the Church of Rome, and have ever enjoyed the free use of the Scriptures. *IN THE SEARCH TO WHICH THESE CONSIDERATIONS HAVE LED THE AUTHOR, HIS FONDEST EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN FULLY REALIZED* (emphasis added) (Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. xvii, viii).

In the sixth century Pope Gregory I bestowed papal approval upon the Jerome Vulgate, and from that time it came into general use in the Roman Catholic Church. In the thirteenth century the Jerome translation began to be known under the title “Vulgate,” referring to that which is in common use (Luzzi, *The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy*, 1913, p. 112). The Latin Vulgate was declared “authentic” by the Council of Trent in 1545.

We will say more about Trent and the condition of the Latin Vulgate in the 16th century when we come to that point in our history.

In Part IV of this book we will see that the Latin Vulgate and the Catholic versions derived from it represent a type of text similar to the modern versions.

**“... it is evident from experience that THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHEN CIRCULATED IN THE VULGAR TONGUE, HAVE, THROUGH THE TEMERITY OF MEN, PRODUCED MORE HARM THAN BENEFIT. ... It is therefore necessary to adhere to the salutary Decree of the Congregation of the Index, (June 13th, 1757,) that NO VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IN THE VULGAR TONGUE BE PERMITTED, EXCEPT SUCH AS ARE APPROVED BY THE APOSTOLIC SEE...” —*Bull of Pope Pius VII, June 29, 1816***

# **PART THREE**

## **The Roman Catholic Church Fought against the Bible**

The Roman Catholic Church, when it has held sway over nations, has fought against the Bible and against those who take it as their sole authority. Only when Rome lacked the power to accomplish its true intention did she countenance the distribution of the Bible in the vernacular languages, and even then she attempted to control such distribution and to force people to read only those Bibles that contain Catholic notes approved by its hierarchy.

For centuries Rome had kept the Bible from the common people. Even where there is no sufficient proof that this was deliberately done in order that they might be kept in ignorance of the truth, the fact remains that that was the result both of what was left undone and of what was done (William Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911, p. 45).

P. Marion Simms summarizes this history:

The Western or Roman Catholic church has until recent times denied the Bible to the common people as far as possible. The Waldenses, a party of medieval dissenters from Rome which has maintained itself down to our own time, made the first vernacular translation of the Scriptures which was prohibited by ecclesiastical authority. Their translation, made from the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate, was known as the Romaunt version; and it was prohibited by the Council of Toulouse in 1229. This action was not taken because the translation was corrupt but because it was a vernacular translation. This policy of prohibition was continued, being confirmed by the Council of Trent, in 1546, and by later papal decrees. Until quite recent times Roman Catholics could read the Bible in their own tongue only when they obtained special permission. This church dominated England in its early history, and naturally vernacular translations were slow in appearing. ... The Roman Catholic church claims the right to alter doctrines and practices, and even to make additions to doctrines contained in the Bible, by virtue of an infallible authority which it claims to possess; and this church knows well that much that it teaches and practices has no foundation in the Scriptures. This fact, doubtless, has had its influence in creating opposition to vernacular translations. It must be admitted that Bible translations have often gone hand in hand with efforts to break down this very authority of the church by an appeal to the Bible, and it is but natural that Rome would defend herself (Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, 1929, pp. 153, 154).

A Catholic writer gave the following summary of Rome's history in regard to the Bible:

The Catholic Church has for centuries prohibited her members, as a rule, from reading the Scriptures in their own tongue, and until lately special permission was needed for each person. The versions she does promulgate in countries mainly Catholic have often been too expensive for wide circulation, though of late a splendid reform has taken place in Italy by Pope Leo XIII. The Authentic Version of God's Words as Authorized by the Church of Rome is in Latin, long obsolete as a spoken language, except in an obscure corner of the Balkans



(Melancthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, 1908, p. 50).

During the first few centuries following the death of the apostles, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ were bitterly persecuted by the Grecian and Roman emperors. These worldly princes, enraged against God's people by demonic powers, poured out unspeakable torments in an attempt to destroy the testimony of Jesus Christ. These same Roman princes attempted to destroy the New Testament Scriptures. The Nicomedian edict of A.D. 303 called for the burning of all copies of Scripture (Jones, *Constantine and the Conversion of Europe*, pp. 47, 73). Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) stated that during the great persecutions that occurred under Dioclesian and Maximian (early fourth century), "the sacred Scriptures were sought with more care and destroyed with more fury than any preceding persecution" (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, p. 143).

The secular persecutions ceased by A.D. 311, and under Constantine the Great there was an alignment of "church" and state. This was a key step in the formation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Catholicism arose gradually over a period of several centuries. It was not until the end of the 6th century that the Catholic pope achieved the position he has since held. Philip Schaff said that Gregory the Great (540-604) was "the first of the proper popes" and with him began "the development of the absolute papacy" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, I, p. 15).

## **Translations Made in the Major Languages**

In spite of the bitter persecutions of the first centuries, translations of Scripture were made into many of the major languages of the world.

According to Frederick Scrivener, one of the 19th century's greatest textual scholars, the **Old Latin** version was likely translated from the Greek in roughly 157 A.D. (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, II, 1894, pp. 42, 43). Bruce Metzger adds that "during the third century many Old Latin versions circulated in North Africa and Europe, including distinctive versions which were current in Italy, Gaul, and Spain (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 72).

The first **Syriac** version also dates to the second century. Herbert Miller notes that the old Syriac "is a good translation from the Greek, and it exists practically complete in about 46 manuscripts" (Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 1937, pp. 240, 41). Though the oldest existing manuscripts of the old Syriac date to the fourth and fifth centuries, "the form of text which they preserve dates from the close of the second or beginning of the third century" (Metzger, p. 69). The Bishop of Hierapolis, who was a thorough opponent of image worship, translated the Philoxemian (Syriac) version of the New Testament in the eighth century. "He was denounced as a Manichaeon, and

the Emperor Justin banished him into Thrace, where his enemies murdered him” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 250).

Kenyon said the first **Coptic** Scripture portions date to “by or soon after the end of the second century” (*Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, 1939, p. 166).

By the fourth century there was a **Gothic** translation of the Scriptures in the time of Ulphilas, who lived in the reign of Constantine (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, 1934, p. 50). The first **Ethiopic** version dates to around 350 A.D. (Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 240).

In the fifth century there were many translations, including **Armenian**, **Georgian**, **Scythian**, **Egyptian**, **Persian**, and **Samaritan** (Miller, p. 240; Armitage, I, p. 223). Theodoret, a Syrian bishop, said that the Scriptures were translated into “*all the languages that are used by any nation*” (Armitage, I, p. 223). The Armenian version was translated by Mesrobe, “a devout Christian Minister of State to the King of Armenia.” He formed an alphabet of thirty-six letters for this work. Armitage says he “made his version first from the Syriac, and then from a Greek manuscript which was sent to him from the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431,” and he adds that “on account of its exact and elegant simplicity, it is called the ‘Queen of Versions’” (*A History of the Baptists*, I, 1890, p. 223).

The **Gregorian** version, kindred to the Armenian, dates from the sixth century (Olaf Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, 1934, p. 50).

The **Persic** Version came into existence in the eighth century (Armitage, I, p. 240).

A **Bohemian** translation appeared in the ninth century, if not earlier (Norlie, p. 168).

**Arabic** translations from Greek date from the tenth century.

A translation into a **Slavonic** dialect was “perhaps made by Methodius and Cyril of Thessalonica in the ninth century” (Norlie, p. 52).

The oldest translations in ancient **German** go back to the seventh and eighth centuries; they are mostly based on the Vulgate and are written in various dialects; Luther had not yet given Germany a language for all (Norlie, p. 53).

A translation of the Gospel of John and other Scripture portions appeared in **Anglo-Saxon**, precursor to English, by the seventh and eighth centuries.

## Persecutions during the First Millennium

We have seen one example of Bible believers that were persecuted during the first millennium. That was **the Donatists** who were persecuted during and after the days of Augustine.

Another example of the conflict between the Bible and apostate churchianity in the first millennium involved **the Paulicians**. This occurred in the eastern or Grecian part of the

Roman Empire. In roughly A.D. 660, a young Armenian named Constantine Sylvanus received a gift of the Four Gospels and the fourteen Epistles of Paul. We are told that he prized these new treasures and made these Scriptures the rule of his faith and life. It is possible that the name "Paulicians" was derived from the love Constantine and his fellow Christians had for the apostle Paul and for apostolic doctrine. Regardless of the origin of their name, it is a fact that the Paulicians determined to found their Christianity upon the Bible. Their enemies testified to this. Constantine's New Testament later included the book of Acts, the epistles of James and Jude, and the three epistles of John (George Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, 1838, pp. 50, 51). Orchard tells us that the Paulician churches "were formed as much upon the plan and model of the apostolic churches as it was in their power to bring them" (*Concise History of Baptists*, 1855, p. 132). Armitage testifies, "As best they could, they were trying to get at the Bible, and to follow its light."

For this they were hated by those who had thrown off biblical restraint. Persecutions were soon poured out upon these Bible believers. "The Paulicians were sentenced to be capitally punished, and THEIR BOOKS, WHEREVER FOUND, TO BE COMMITTED TO THE FLAMES, and further, that if any person was found to have secreted them, he was to be put to death, and his goods confiscated" (Orchard, p. 134).

Constantine was stoned to death in 690. The man who directed his stoning, Simeon, was later converted, became the leader of this people in the place of Constantine; and "finally submitted himself to the flames rather than abandon the faith which, by a sacrifice of all his worldly goods and prospects, he had embraced" (Faber, p. 60). Another leader of the Paulicians, Sergius, was cut into two pieces with an ax. In those days an entire group of Paulicians was burned to death in one enormous funeral-pyre (Faber, p. 47). The persecutions began during the life of Constantine and continued through the centuries following. They began in the Grecian empire under the authority of the emperors and empresses, but as the persecuted Paulicians were scattered to Italy and other parts of Europe, they came to the attention of the papacy, as well.

The persecutions that were poured out upon the Paulicians beginning in the 7th century caused them to be scattered throughout Europe, everywhere carrying with them the New Testament faith. The Lutheran historian Mosheim, writing in the 17th century, says: "From Italy the Paulicians sent colonies into almost all the other provinces of Europe, and gradually formed a considerable number of religious assemblies, who adhered to their doctrine, and who realized every opposition and indignity from the popes." They were later known by many names, including Paterini, Cathari, Bulgarians, Patarins, Gazarians, Turlupins, Runcarians, and Albigenses. "Many historians, besides Gibbon, such as Muratori and Mosheim, regard the Paulicians as the forerunners of the Albigenses, and, in fact, as the same people. One of the latest of these is Professor Conybeare, one of the highest authorities on Paulician matters (Christian, *A History of the Baptists in the United States*, 1926, I, p. 53). The term "Albigenses" probably derived from a Council which was held in

the year 1176 at the town of Lombers near Albi, “for the purpose of examining certain reputed heretics” (Faber, p. 221).

Though the Paulicians were charged by their persecutors with following the unscriptural doctrines of Manicheanism, many historians have proven that this was not the case, at least for the bulk of them. Their “heresy” was in cleaving to Scripture alone and in rejecting human tradition. The Grecian and Roman Catholic authorities made every effort to destroy the witness of these separated Christians, and to keep the New Testament Scriptures from the people. The power of this separated Christian movement was in the Scriptures and in the teaching that was derived from the Scriptures, and the apostate “church” attempted to destroy the books and manuscripts that provided this power. They accomplished their wicked deed so effectively that we do not have any of the actual writings of the Paulicians. What we know of them, we know largely by the mouth of their persecutors.

Paulician history has come to us mainly through the persecutors of the Paulicians, and it scarcely has its parallel for calumny in the annals of the centuries. They have always been coupled with the Manicheans, and nothing has been too base to say of them. Bossuet and Bowers have distinguished themselves in this calumny, but Bowers has been effectually answered by the learned Lardner. ... [Bossuet] confounded the Paulicians with the Manicheans, principally because he implicitly trusted their two enemies, Photius and Siculus, the authors who have sent their names down from the ninth century on a tide of acrid invective. Arnold of Germany, Beausobre and Lardner have honored themselves and the subject with sedate investigation and judicial candor, and have set right many of the inconsistencies and contradictions of Photius and Siculus.

Photius possessed great ability, but he was an interested party in his own evidence, and we may fairly question how far he is entitled to absolute credence. As Patriarch of Constantinople, no one was more interested than he in crushing the Paulicians. ... In five days he hurried himself through the five necessary orders, to become Patriarch on the sixth day, thrusting himself into the place of Ignatius, son of Michael I., a man of blameless character, who was deposed because he refused to put the Empress out of the way of plotting Bardas by forcing her into a nunnery. But Pope Nicholas I., by the advice of a synod held at Rome, deposed Photius as an usurper, A.D. 862. In turn, Photius excommunicated the pope, but Gass says that another synod deposed Photius in 867 as ‘a liar, adulterer, parricide and heretic.’ He was restored to the patriarchate on the death of Ignatius, but was degraded and banished by the Emperor Leo in 886 for political intrigue and embezzlement of the public money. This is the chief witness on whose word the Paulicians are condemned. ...

THE PAULICIANS THEMSELVES CERTAINLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN WHAT THEY WERE, AND BOTH THESE WITNESSES EXPLICITLY STATE THAT THEY REPELLED THIS CHARGE WITH GREAT SPIRIT. But what difference did that make with these maligners? So long as they could befoul their fame by that odious brand, they pinned the charge to them as if it were true. Gibbon states that the Paulicians disclaimed ‘the theology of Manes, and the authors of the kindred heresies, and the thirty generations, or aeons, which had been created by the fruitful fancy of Valentine. The Paulicians sincerely condemned the memory and the opinions of the Manichean sect, and complained of the injustice which impressed that invidious name on the simple votaries of St. Paul and of Christ.’ All through, these witnesses judged them by a false standard of their own raising, while the Paulicians are allowed no counter evidence nor cross-examination, nothing but denial and protest. ...

THERE WERE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF MANICHEANS AS WELL AS PAULICIANS, BUT PHOTIUS AND SICULUS LUMP THEM *EN MASSE* AND CONVICT THEMSELVES AGAIN AND AGAIN OF MISREPRESENTATION IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC NOTORIETY. ...

As best they could, [the Paulicians] were trying to get at the Bible and to follow its light (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, pp. 234-239).

Wherever the Word of God was made to speak in the common language of men, it brought its gifts of eternal salvation and wisdom and sanctification and joy and every blessing of God through Jesus Christ. In a word, the Bible brought light to men. It showed the error of manmade tradition and condemned ecclesiastical apostasy. Those who desired to found their Christianity upon the Bible alone, who desired to form churches after an apostolic fashion, came into conflict with those that were creating a manmade form of Christianity that conformed to the world.

Our knowledge of the spread of Christianity and of the spiritual conflicts between truth and error during the centuries immediately following the apostles is relatively meager. We have seen that portions of the Word of God were translated into major tongues and disseminated to many people. In the early history of the Paulicians, we have seen one example of the conflict between Bible believers and apostate ecclesiastical authorities. We could also mention the Novatians and the Donatists. The record, though, is murky and incomplete and we must be content to wait until we can peruse Heaven's libraries to learn the details of those years. As we have seen, very little has survived of the writings of those who resisted Rome. Practically everything we know of them, we learn from their enemies. I certainly would not want to be judged by future generations solely through the eyes of *my* enemies!

## **Persecutions in the Second Millennium 1000 - 1350 A.D.**

When we come to the end of the first millennium after the apostles, the conflict between true churches and false increases dramatically. (This is not to say that all of the churches and groups that were separated from Rome were pure Bible churches; by no means was this so.) The record also becomes plainer as we move through the centuries. During the first few centuries after the apostles, secular governments and pagan religions were the devil's instruments of choice to torment God's people. By the fourth century, the Roman Catholic Church had begun to usurp authority over other churches and was persecuting those who refused to submit to its claims. As the first millennium proceeded from the fourth to the tenth centuries, Rome gathered to itself increasing power, and by the beginning of the second millennium, the battle was raging. "In the eleventh century, capital punishment, even in its most dreadful form, that of burning alive, was extended to all who obstinately adhered to opinions differing from the received faith" (Thomas M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, 1829, p. 78).

The following is a survey of the conditions existing at the turn of the second millennium:

In the tenth century the dominion of the Roman pope had exceedingly obscured, and taken possession of, nearly all the churches in Europe, so that everything had to be done according to his pleasure, both in spiritual and secular governments; hence, great darkness prevailed at this time, in which but very few learned, virtuous, and celebrated men lived. For fear of the great tyranny, one dared scarcely speak the least word of the adulteration of the doctrine, or the abuses in the false worship, and the increase of the abominable blasphemies; for, as soon as those who knew better, and feared God, uttered the least word of opposition, the pope instantly thundered, with hail and lightning as it were, excommunications from the Roman chair, so that every one was terrified, since also the secular lords were bewitched and controlled by him (*Martyrs Mirror*, 5th English edition, p. 248).

During the reign of **Pope Benedict VIII (1012-1024)**, a synod was held at Toulouse “to consider the most effectual method to rid the province of Albigenses; and though the whole sect was in 1022 said to have been burnt, yet the emigrants from Bulgaria, coming in colonies into France, kept the seed sown, the churches recruited...” (Orchard, p. 178). Testifying to the love the separated Christians had for the Bible, a Catholic inquisitor states: “They had the Old and New Testament in the vulgar tongue; and they teach and learn so well, that he had seen and heard a country clown recount all Job, *word for word*; and divers, who could perfectly deliver all the New Testament; and that men and women, little and great, day and night, cease not to learn and teach” (Orchard, p. 266).

An old manuscript outlining an 11th century Waldensian creed reads, “In articles of faith, the authority of the Holy Scripture is the highest authority; and for that reason it is the standard of judging; so that whatever doth not agree with the word of God is deservedly to be rejected and avoided. The sacraments of the church of Christ are two, baptism and Lord’s supper. That is the church of Christ which hears the pure doctrine of Christ, and observes the ordinances instituted by Him, in whatever place it exists” (William Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 56).

It is no wonder that the tradition-bound Roman Catholic authorities hated these Bible-believing Christians.

**Pope Gregory VII [Hildebrand] (1073-1085)** wrote to Vratislav, King of Bohemia, in 1079, and forbade the use of the Scriptures in the Slavonic language (Margaret Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*, pp. 23, 24; H.G. Herklots, *How Our Bible Came to Us*, 1954, p. 70). This pope stated, “For it is clear to those who reflect often upon it, that not without reason has it pleased Almighty God that holy scripture should be a secret in certain places lest, if it were plainly apparent to all men, perchance it would be little esteemed and be subject to disrespect; or it might be falsely understood by those of mediocre learning, and lead to error. ... Wherefore we forbid what you have so imprudently demanded of the authority of S. Peter, and we command you to resist this vain rashness with all your might, to the Honour of Almighty God” (Ibid.).

From the time of Gregory VII, Catholic bishops were required, at their ordination, to swear unlimited obedience to the pope (Gideon Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 257).

During the days of **Pascal II (1099-1118)**, **Gelasius II (1118-1119)**, **Callistus II (1119-1124)**, **Honorius II (1124-1130)**, **Innocent II (1130-1143)**, **Celestine II (1143-1144)**, **Eugene III (1145-1153)**, **Anastasius IV (1153-1154)**, and **Adrian IV (1154-1159)**, various groups of humble Bible-believing Christians were tormented by the Roman Catholic authorities. Honorius II, in his *Decretals*, cursed all who refused to obey Rome's "authority" and condemned such to persecutions. "And all heretics, of both sexes and of every name, we damn to perpetual infamy; we declare hostility against them; we account them accursed, and their goods confiscated; nor can they ever enjoy their property, or their children succeed to their inheritance; inasmuch as they grievously offend against the Eternal as well as the temporal king" (Wylie, *The Papacy*, 1888, p. 137).

These groups of separatist Christians had various names, most given to them by their enemies. The Bogomiles, possibly an offshoot from the Paulicians, were condemned as heretics and suffered great persecution. "Their followers became so numerous as to demand condemnation of the **Council of Toulouse, 1119**, and that of **Tours, 1163**" (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 278).

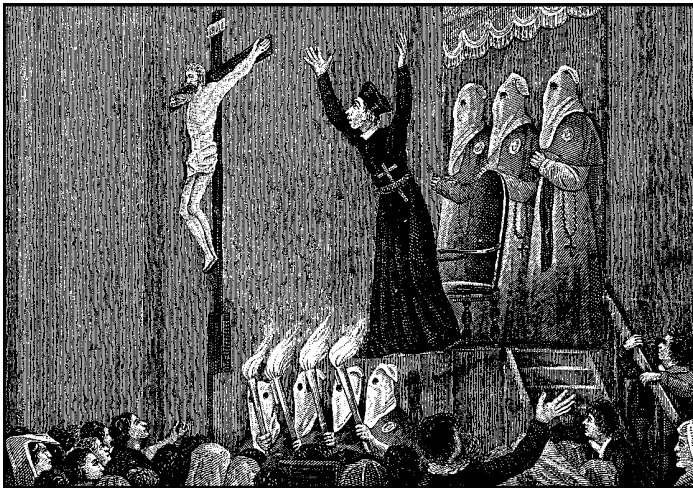
The Albigenses rejected the Roman Church and esteemed the New Testament above all its traditions and ceremonies. For their faith in God's Word, they were condemned by four different Catholic Councils. "In 1180 Cardinal Henry commenced a crusade against them with a sword. ... Their record is the brightest, briefest and bloodiest in the annals of pious, persecuting deviltry. It begins in the middle of the twelfth century, and was blotted out before the middle of the thirteenth" (Armitage, I, pp. 279, 80). A group of New Testament believers at Cologne and Bonn, which appear in the historical record in 1146, were labeled heretics because they denied infant baptism, purgatory, intercession of the saints, and other Catholic doctrines. A monk who opposed them said that they sustained their positions by the authority of Scripture. Amen! For this they were tormented without mercy.

A Bible preacher named **Henry** proclaimed gospel truth and fought against Rome's heresies in the Swiss Alps in the early part of the 12th century. "His peculiar attraction lay in his contempt for the applauded traditions of the Fathers and in his appeal to the neglected Bible" (Armitage, I, p. 288). Henry was arrested by the Bishop of Arles in 1134 and held by Pope Innocent II. Having been condemned to imprisonment in the monastery of Clairvaux, he escaped this confinement and preached another 14 years before being captured and imprisoned by Pope Eugene III in 1148. Condemned as a heretic and sentenced to perpetual confinement and hard fare, he soon died (Armitage, I, p. 291). He was either burned alive at Toulouse, or ended his days in prison (Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses*, p. 165).

**Peter of Bruis** [Peter de Bruys] was a New Testament Christian who "threw tradition to the winds with the double sense of Scripture, and took its literal

interpretation” (Armitage, I, p. 284). After 20 years of fruitful preaching, Peter was arrested and burned at the stake in 1126. Honorius II was pope.

**Arnold of Brescia** was another Bible preacher who was hounded by Roman authorities in the first half of the 12th century. The **Lateran Council**\* sentenced him to banishment for his gospel truth and for rejecting infant baptism. Arnold fled to Zurich and continued preaching. In 1155, under Adrian IV, “he was hanged, his body burned to ashes and his dust thrown into the Tiber. ... Thus perished this great patriot and martyr to the holy doctrine of soul liberty” (Armitage, I, pp. 292, 93). (\* This was the second Lateran Council, which was held in 1139 under Innocent II. The first was held in A.D. 649 under Martin I; the third, 1179 under Alexander III; the fourth, 1215 under Innocent III; and the fifth, 1513-17 under Leo X. The Lateran Councils were so-named because they were held in the Lateran palace which the Emperor Constantine donated to the Roman bishop.)



Catholic priest preaching against the “heretics”

It should be noted that some Roman Catholic inquisitors heaped the most vile and malicious slanders upon the various Bible-believing people, in an attempt to stir up animosity against them. The Inquisitor Reinerius Sacco, for example, in the early to mid-thirteenth century, gave the following description of the Waldenses:

They make a cake of meal mixed with the blood of an infant. If an infant dies, it is deemed a martyr: if it lives, it is styled a saint. They meet

together naked to pray, both men and women promiscuously. Many of their Believers of both sexes, scruple no more to approach their nearest relatives, than their respective wives or husbands. It is their common opinion, that marriage is a mortal sin: but they think, that no person is hereafter more severely punished for adultery and incest, than for lawful matrimony. Whatever sins they have committed before their making a profession of heresy, they never repent of them. This is manifest from the circumstance, that they never make restitution of what they have gained by usury or theft or rapine. Rather, indeed, they reserve it: or else they leave it to their children and grandchildren remaining in the world, because usury, they say, is no sin (Reinerius, c. 1230, cited by Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses*, pp. 80, 72).

This lying testimony is contrary to every known fact pertaining to the Waldensian



people. The Waldenses were so morally upright that their very name became a designation for purity. The wickedness of this Inquisitor is more evident when we learn that he had pretended to be a member of the Waldenses and had lived among them for 17 years before joining the Order of Preaching Friars. Reinerius also falsely charged the Waldenses with Manicheanism. This Reinerius is probably the same persecutor employed by Pope Innocent III to hunt out the “heretical” Waldenses and Cathari throughout southern France and northern Spain, and mentioned in this pope’s Decretal Epistles of the year 1199 (Faber, p. 91). “It was the barbarous though sagacious policy of the Roman Church to employ recent converts from reputed heresy in the task of hunting out and persecuting their former associates” (Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses*, p. 93).

The Waldenses were even charged with practicing witchcraft. Another Inquisitor made the following incredible charge: “When they wish to go to the said Vaulderie, they anoint themselves with an ointment which the devil has given them. They then rub it with a very small rod of wood: and, with palms in their hands, they place the rod between their legs. Thus prepared and equipped, they fly away wherever they please: and the devil carries them to the place, where they ought to hold the said assembly. In that place, they find tables ready set out, charged with wine and victuals: and a devil gives them the meeting, in the shape of a he-goat, with the tail of an ape, or in some form of a man. There, to the said devil, they offer oblation and homage:—and there they commit crimes so fetid and enormous, as well against God as against nature, that the said Inquisitor declared that he did not dare to name them” (Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses*, pp. 340, 41).

Great numbers of the unsaved masses, steeped as they were in superstition and idolatry and false religion, believed these inconceivable slanders. We must understand that the devil has not left off his hatred of the Truth, and he has not changed his tactics. He still pours out slanders upon Bible believers. Today they are labeled legalists, Pharisees, hatemongers.

## **Persecutions of Peter Waldo and the Waldensians**

**Pope Alexander III (1159-1181)** refused to sanction the Scripture translations that were made by men associated with **Peter Waldo** (or Valdo) of Lyon, France. Armitage notes that Waldo and his fellow believers (also called Albigenses, Lionists, Paterines, Good Men of Lyons, etc.) were the first sect that “commenced its existence with a popular translation of the New Testament” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 295). “Waldo employed two men to translate portions of the Bible, and extracts from the Fathers, into the popular language (1160), thus forming a little book for the people. Copies were made and circulated. ... the archbishop, neither teaching the Bible nor willing that others should do it, excommunicated these new teachers, and expelled them from his diocese [1176]. The translators were Stephen of Ansa and Bernard Ydross (Armitage, I, p. 295). Peter appealed to Rome, and sent two men to lay specimens of their translations before Pope

Alexander III (1179), requesting his sanction upon their labors. ... The pope did not give his sanction, for this would offend the clergy ... Five years later Pope Lucius put them under anathema..." (Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church*, 1880, pp. 309, 310).



Peter Waldo appealing to Scripture before the Pope

The **Council of Tours in 1163** preached inquisition against Bible believers. This synod also "called upon the bishops and clergy to forbid the Catholics to mingle with the Albigenses and to have commercial dealings with them and give them refuge. Princes were instructed to imprison them and confiscate their goods" (Schaff, V, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 519). The Decree issued by this Council stated: "No man must presume to receive or assist heretics, nor in buying or selling have

any thing to do with them, that being thus deprived of the comforts of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way" (Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, p. 221).

Alexander III laid the matter of Waldo and his followers before the **Third Lateran Council in 1179**. "The answer of the Council as delivered by the pope may be summed up in two words:—You shall not under any circumstances preach, except at the express desire and under the authority of the clergy of your country" (Comba, *History of the Waldenses of Italy*, p. 35). Two preachers associated with Waldo who were examined by this Council were ridiculed "because they avowed that Christ had sent them to preach and clothed them with power by the Holy Spirit." The Council discerned that "if we let them in, we shall be driven forth ourselves," and proclaimed that "the Roman Church cannot endure your preaching." "Many Albigenses, refusing the terms, were burnt in different cities in the south of France" (Orchard, p. 199). The Third Lateran Council "extended the punishments to the defenders of heretics and their friends" and "gave permission to princes to reduce heretics to slavery and shortened the time of penance by two years for those taking up arms against them" (Schaff, V, p. 519).

George Waddington makes an important observation on the association between **Peter Waldo** and **the Waldensians**.

That we may not fall into the error of Mosheim, who ascribes the origin of that sect to an individual named Waldus. Peter Waldus, or Waldensies, a native of Lyons, was a layman and a merchant; but, notwithstanding the avocations of a secular life, he had studied the real character of his church with attention, followed by shame. Stung with the spectacle of so much impurity, he abandoned his profession, distributed his wealth among the poor, and

formed an association for the diffusion of Scriptural truth. He commenced his ministry about the year 1160. Having previously caused several parts of the Scriptures to be translated in the vulgar tongue, he expounded them, with great effect, to an attentive body of disciples both in France and Lombardy. In the course of his exertions he probably visited the valleys of Piedmont; and there he found a people of congenial spirits. They were called Vaudois or Waldenses (men of the valleys); and as the preaching of Peter may probably have confirmed their opinions, and cemented their discipline, he acquired and deserved his surname by his residence among them. At the same time, their connection with Peter and his real Lyonese disciples established a notion of their identity; and the Vaudois, in return for the title which they had bestowed, received the reciprocal appellation of Leonists: such, at least, appears the most probable among many varying accounts. There are some who believe the Vaudois to have enjoyed the uninterrupted integrity of the faith even from the apostolic ages; others suppose them to have been disciples of Claudius Turin, the evangelical prelate of the ninth century. At least it may be pronounced, with great certainty, that they had been long in existence before the visit of the Lyonese reformer (Waddington, *Church History*, pp. 289-290).

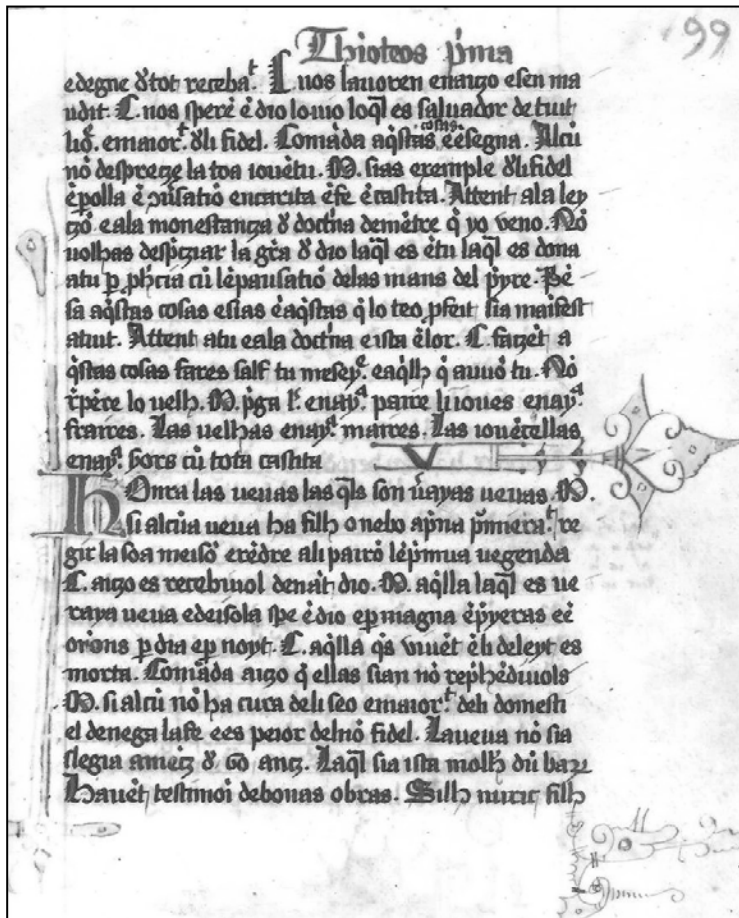


Waldensian missionary with Scripture portions

J.A. Wylie, who wrote a history of the Waldenses from the 9th to the 19th centuries, also concurred that they predated Peter Waldo. “Their traditions invariably point to an unbroken descent from the earliest times, as regards their religious belief. The *Nobla Leycon* [*Noble Lesson*], which dates from the year 1100, goes to prove that the Waldenses of Piedmont did not owe their rise to Peter Waldo of Lyons, who did not appear till the latter half of that century (1160). The *Nobla Leycon*, though a poem, is in reality a confession of faith, and could have been composed only after some considerable study of the system of Christianity, in contradistinction to the errors of Rome” (Wylie, *The Waldenses*, 1860, p. 3).

George Faber, who diligently researched that era, made the following observation about the Waldenses:

As for the Vallenses or Valdenses, the religionists, properly so called, tenanted, from a most remote period, the Alpine Valleys of Piedmont: whence they obviously derived their name, which is equivalent to the English Valesmen or Dalesmen. There was, however, a French Branch of the old Italian Tree, which, as a Branch, could claim only a comparatively modern



One page of the Waldensian New Testament, Cambridge

Piedmont (Faber, *History of the Ancient Vallenses*, pp. xxxvii, xxxviii, 459, 467).

The Waldenses themselves traced their origin to apostolic times. "God, through his wise providence, has preserved the purity of the Gospel in the Valleys of Piedmont, from the time of the Apostles down to our own time" (Boyer, *Abrege de l'Hist. Des Vaudois*, p. 23, cited by Faber, p. 287). When the Waldenses presented their Confession to Francis I of France, in the year 1544, it was prefaced with these words: "This Confession is that, which we have received from our ancestors, even from hand to hand, according as their predecessors, in all times and in every age, have taught and delivered" (Jean Leger, *General History of the Evangelical Churches of the Piedmont*, p. 163, cited by Faber, p. 288).

origin. These Galican Valdenses were the proselytes of Peter of Lyons in the twelfth century: and, as the wealthy merchant either by birth or by descent was a Vallensis; he, at once, both received himself, and communicated to his disciples, the name of Vaudois, from the primeval Mother-Church of Italy. ... With the pure and primitive doctrine of the pious Dalesman, he had long, most probably from his very childhood, been acquainted: but the full occupation of successful traffic, and the consequent increase of worldly opulence and worldly respectability, had choked the word, so that it became unfruitful in a thorny soil of mere speculative knowledge. But the Lord had a purpose of mercy for the individual. ... The disciples of Peter the Valdo were called The Poor Valdenses of Lyons in evident contradistinction to The Poor Valdenses of

The Bible translation produced and distributed by these ancient Christians was in **the Romaunt language**, which predated French and Italian. “There is reason to believe, from recent historical researches, that the Waldenses possessed the New Testament in the vernacular. The ‘Lingua Romana,’ or Romaunt tongue, was the common language of the south of Europe from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries. It was the language of the troubadours and of men of letters in the Dark Ages. Into this tongue—the Romaunt—was the first translation of the whole of the New Testament made so early as the twelfth century. This fact Dr. Gilly has been at great pains to prove in his work, *The Romaunt Version of the Gospel according to John* [William Stephen Gilly, D.D., Canon of Durham, and Vicar of Norham, London, 1848]. The sum of what Dr. Gilly, by a patient investigation into facts, and a great array of historic documents, maintains, is that all the books of the New Testament were translated from the Latin Vulgate into the Romaunt, that this was the first literal version since the fall of the empire, that it was made in the twelfth century, and was the first translation available for popular use. ... This Romaunt version ... was made, as Dr. Gilly, by a chain of proofs, shows, most probably under the superintendence and at the expense of Peter Waldo of Lyon, not later than 1180, and so is older than any complete version in German, French, Italian, Spanish, or English. This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombard. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it. Of the Romaunt New Testament six copies\* have come down to our day. ... These are small, plain, and portable volumes, contrasting with those splendid and ponderous folios of the Latin Vulgate, penned in characters of gold and silver, richly illuminated, their bindings decorated with gems, inviting admiration rather than study, and unfitted by their size and splendour for the use of the people” (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 12-13). (\* There are currently known to be seven copies. I have examined two of them, the one at Trinity College Dublin, and the one at Cambridge University.)



Waldensian Bible School; this is a life-size model in North Carolina of the original in northern Italy

The Waldenses busied themselves with copying the Scriptures for distribution throughout Europe.

The youth who here sat at the feet of the more venerable and learned of their barbes [pastors] used as their text-book the Holy Scriptures. And not only did they study the sacred volume; they were required to commit to memory, and be able accurately to recite, whole Gospels and

Epistles. ... Part of their time was occupied in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or portions of them, which they were to distribute when they went forth as missionaries. By this, and by other agencies, the seed of the Divine Word was scattered throughout Europe more widely than is commonly supposed. ... There was no kingdom of Southern and Central Europe to which these missionaries did not find their way, and where they did not leave traces of their visit in the disciples whom they made. On the west they penetrated into Spain. In Southern France they found congenial fellow-labourers in the Albigenses, by whom the seeds of truth were plentifully scattered over Dauphine and Languedoc. On the east, descending the Rhine and the Danube, they leavened Germany, Bohemia, and Poland with their doctrines, their track being marked with the edifices for worship and the stakes of martyrdom that arose around their steps. Even the Seven-hilled City [Rome] they feared not to enter, scattering the seed on ungenial soil, if perchance some of it might take root and grow. ... **THUS DID THE BIBLE IN THOSE AGES, VEILING ITS MAJESTY AND ITS MISSION, TRAVEL SILENTLY THROUGH CHRISTENDOM, ENTERING HOMES AND HEARTS, AND THERE MAKING ITS ABODE. FROM HER LOFTY SEAT ROME LOOKED DOWN WITH CONTEMPT UPON THE BOOK AND ITS HUMBLE BEARERS** (Wylie, pp. 14, 16, 18).

In the mid-13th century, the Inquisitor Reinerius gave the following testimony of the Waldenses: "They can repeat by heart, in the vulgar tongue, the whole text of the New Testament and great part of the Old: and, adhering to the text alone, they reject decretals and decrees with the sayings and expositions of the Saints" (Faber, p. 492). This is a very honorable testimony.

The Roman Catholic Church was of a different spirit than this. Century after century it opposed the efforts of the Waldensians and other Bible-believing Christians to distribute the Word of God among the people. We shall see that the popes attempted to destroy the Waldenses from the face of the earth, and they almost succeeded. In every country where the Roman Catholic Church held power, the people remained ignorant of the Scriptures, unless they came into contact with the separated Christians.

We have seen that the Paulician of the first millennium were charged with **Manicheanism**. The same charge was brought against the various Bible-believing groups persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church throughout the second millennium. Manicheanism was a term originally given to the followers of a third-century north African sect leader named Manes or Mani. It seems that Manicheanism was a form of gnosticism that combined Christian thought and paganism in various unscriptural ways. It stressed asceticism. Following are some of the principles as outlined by George Faber in his landmark *History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*: (1) that there are two independent Principles; the one, good; the other, evil: of whom, the material world was created by the Evil Principle, while the spiritual world was the work of the Good Principle; (2) that Christ was never really incarnate, his apparent flesh being a mere unsubstantial and visionary illusion; because, sincere matter was the work of the evil god and thence inherently bad itself, it was a contradiction to assert that Christ, the Son of the good God, could have assumed a true fleshly material body; (3) that baptism by material water ought not to be administered; and that marriage ought to be reviled and rejected; (4) that the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ were denied; (5) that the independent Principle of good and the

independent Principle of evil each created various angelic intelligence, severally in nature resembling their respective Creators; (6) that the resurrection of the body was denied; (7) that freedom of the will was denied; without any choice or preference, the elect were fatally impelled to perform good deeds, while the reprobate were no less fatally constrained to perform evil deeds.

These are some of the beliefs commonly attributed to the Manicheans. It is difficult, though, to know exactly what Manes and his followers believed, because most of the documentation comes from their enemies. It is extremely doubtful that such principles would ever find wide acceptance or form the basis for a popular movement. The picture is further confused by the fact that the Roman Catholic authorities falsely labeled many Bible-believing people in later centuries—such as the Albigenses and the Waldensians—as Manicheans. Respected Baptist historian John Christian makes the following comments:

It is now clearly known that the Paulicians were not Manicheans. *The Key of Truth* [an 11th century history of the Paulicians written by Gregory Magistos and published by translation in English in 1898] settles this matter. Modern Armenian scholars do not hesitate to correct this error. Conybeare [one of the most knowledgeable historians of Armenia] has no doubt on the subject. ... the same thing may probably be said of the Albigenses. The Albigenses were oppressed on account of this sentiment, which accusation was also made against the Waldenses. Care must be taken at this point, and too prompt credence should not be given to the accuser. The Roman Catholic Church sought diligently for excuses to persecute. Even Luther was declared by the Synod of Sens to be a Manichean. The celebrated Archbishop Usher says that the charge 'of Manicheanism on the Albigensian sect is evidently false' (Acland, *The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois*, lxvii. London, 1857). It would be difficult to understand the Albigenses from this philosophical standpoint. They were not a metaphysical people. Theirs was not a philosophy, but a daily faith and practice, which commended itself to the prosperous territory of Southern France (Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 55, 62).

David Benedict and George Faber, in their extensive researches into the Albigenses and Waldenses, reached the same conclusion and rejected the Roman Catholic charge that these Bible-believing people were Manicheans (Faber, *The History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*, 1838; Benedict, *History of the Donatists*, 1875).

**Pope Lucius III (1181-1185)**, as we have seen, placed an anathema upon Peter Waldo and his fellow Christians of Lyons, France, and continued the ban of their Scripture distribution. "In 1181, Lucius III. issued a decree, stating, 'We declare all Puritans, Paterines, Poor of Lyons, &c. &c., to lie under a perpetual curse for teaching baptism and the Lord's Supper otherwise than the church of Rome'" (Orchard, p. 194). Lucius called a special **Council at Verona** in 1183-84, in the presence of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, "to bind in the chain of perpetual anathema those who presumed to preach, publicly or privately, without the authority of the bishop" (Armitage, I, p. 297).

The following are excerpts from the actual decree of Pope Lucius III:

To abolish the malignity of divers heresies, which of late time are sprung up in most parts of the world, it is but fitting that the power committed to the Church should be awakened, that BY THE CONCURRING ASSISTANCE OF THE IMPERIAL STRENGTH, both the insolence and malapertness [sauciness; impudent pertness or forwardness] of the heretics, in their false designs, MAY BE CRUSHED, and the truth of catholic simplicity shining forth in the holy Church, may demonstrate her pure and free from the execrableness of their false doctrines. Wherefore WE, BEING SUPPORTED BY THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF OUR MOST DEAR SON FREDERICK, THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS, always Increaser of the Empire, with the common advice and counsel of our brethren, and other Patriarchs, Archbishops, and many princes, who from several parts of the world are met together, DO SET OURSELVES AGAINST THESE HERETICS ... MORE PARTICULARLY WE DECLARE ALL CATHARI, PATERINES, AND THOSE WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE HUMBLER, OR POOR OF LYONS, PASSAGINES, JOSEPHINES, ARNOLDISTS, TO LIE UNDER A PERPETUAL ANATHEMA ... we therefore conclude under the same SENTENCE OF A PERPETUAL ANATHEMA all those who either being forbid or not sent, do notwithstanding presume to preach publicly or privately, WITHOUT ANY AUTHORITY RECEIVED EITHER FROM THE APOSTOLIC SEE, or from the Bishops of their respective dioceses; as likewise all those who are not afraid to hold or teach any opinions concerning the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, baptism, the remission of sins, matrimony, or any other sacraments of the Church, DIFFERING FROM WHAT THE HOLY CHURCH OF ROME DOTH PREACH AND OBSERVE; and generally all those whom the same Church of Rome, or the several Bishops in their dioceses, with the advice of their Clergy, or the Clergy themselves, in case of a vacancy of the see, with the advice, if need be, of neighbouring Bishops, shall judge to be heretics. And WE LIKEWISE DECLARE ALL ENTERTAINERS AND DEFENDERS OF THE SAID HERETICS, and those that have shewed any favour, or given countenance to them, thereby strengthening them in their heresy, whether they be called Comforted, Believers, or Perfect, or with whatsoever superstitious names they disguise themselves, TO BE LIABLE TO THE SAME SENTENCE (Allix, *Remarks upon the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, 1821, pp. 281, 82).

This papal decree illustrates the pompous attitude of the popes all through the centuries. They claim to have inherited the position of the apostle Peter, but they do not believe what Peter taught and they do not act like Peter acted. Peter never yoked together with the secular Roman authorities and never persecuted those who refused to believe like he did. Peter did not seek to rule over all of the churches in the manner of Roman Catholic popes. There is no evidence that he was considered chief among the apostles. When the council was held in Jerusalem to settle the matter of law and grace, James, rather than Peter, was the spokesman for the assembled apostles and teachers (Acts 15:13-22). The apostle Paul was chosen of God to give us more of the New Testament Scriptures than Peter. We learn more about Paul in the book of Acts and in the Epistles, than about Peter. There is no evidence that Peter ever visited Rome, and certainly not that he established any sort of papacy there. The popes are impostors who have persecuted the true churches of God.

The decree also stated: "And as some with a certain appearance of piety, but denying the real sense of the Apostle's words, arrogate to themselves the right of preaching, although the very same Apostle says, 'How will they preach if they are not sent?' WE INCLUDE UNDER THE SAME PERPETUAL ANATHEMA ALL THOSE WHO, IN SPITE OF OUR INTERDICTION AND WITHOUT BEING SENT BY US, SHALL DARE TO PREACH



WHETHER IN PRIVATE OR IN PUBLIC, CONTRARY TO THE AUTHORITY REPRESENTED BY THE APOSTOLIC SEE AND THE BISHOPS” (Emilio Comba, *History of the Waldenses of Italy*, 1889, p. 38). These proud men took to themselves the authority to call men to preach the gospel, an authority that belongs solely to Jesus Christ. In Matthew 28:18-20, Christ, after His resurrection, gave the commission to go into all the world and preach. No pope can revoke this.

“Waldo was driven forth as a wanderer in France, Italy, and Bohemia where he died (1197). His followers were widely scattered, northward up the Rhine, westward through France and across the Pyrenees, and eastward as far as Prague. In 1210 Innocent III invited them to reunite with the [Roman] Church, but they went on independent and earnest in their work. They became allied to the Waldenses, and in certain countries of the South they had more schools than the Catholics” (William Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 310).

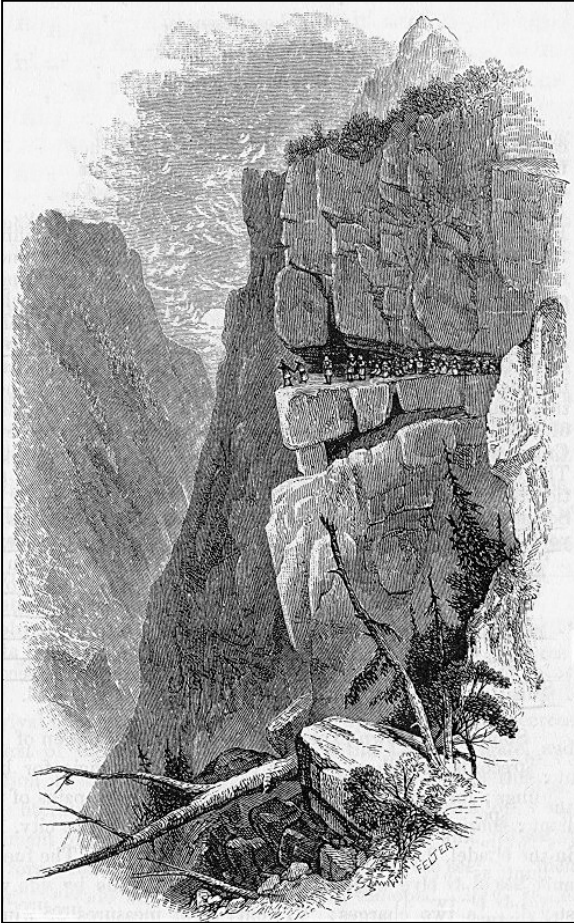
**Pope Celestine III (1191-1198)** also ordered Bible believers and their books to be committed to the flames. “In 1193, the pope sent Guy and Reiner, two legates, into France, with instructions of the most sanguinary description. Instead of making converts of the heretics, their orders were to burn their leaders, confiscate their goods, and disperse their flocks. They were not equally successful in every province; the pope, therefore, instigated the inert inhabitants of those provinces where the legates were least successful, to persecute the Albigenses; consequently, many of the leading persons among them perished in the flames, for a succession of years” (G.H. Orchard, *A Concise History of Baptists*, p. 204). Celestine III also ordered the destruction of Bible believers in Spain. In 1194 he “sent the cardinal St. Angelo as legate to attend a council at Lerida, who prevailed on Alfonso II. King of Aragon, to publish an edict, ordering the Vaudois, Poor Men of Lyons, and all other heretics, to quit his territories under severe pains” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 33). This edict was renewed in 1197 and “all governors and judges were required to swear before the bishops, that they would assist in discovering and punishing those infected with heresy, under the penalty of being themselves treated as heretics” (M’Crie, p. 33).



### **Pope Innocent III, Father of the Inquisition**

It was during the reign of **Innocent III (1198-1216)** that the Inquisition formally began. Though it is obvious from the previous facts that Bible-believers had been persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church for centuries before this, Innocent III systematized the Inquisition more thoroughly than his predecessors. This pope declared that heretics should forfeit their lives. He also forbade the people to read the Bible in their own language. In the year 1215 Innocent III issued a command “that

they shall be seized for trial and penalties, WHO ENGAGE IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED VOLUMES, or who hold secret conventicles, or who assume the office of preaching without the authority of their superiors; against whom process shall be commenced, without any permission of appeal” (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, 1838, p. 387). Innocent “declared that as by the old law, the beast touching the holy mount was to be stoned to death, so simple and uneducated men were not to touch the Bible or venture to preach its doctrines” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 723).



Cave of Castelluzzo, in which hundreds of Waldensian mothers and children were murdered

“Religious persecution assumed new forms. The Age of Innocent was one of terror to all liberty of thought and worship” (Blackburn, *Church History*, p. 307). “Innocent III. caused search to be made after [the Waldenses] in all places. We have a letter of his, writ to those of Metz, where he ordains them to be driven out and persecuted with the extremest barbarity, BECAUSE THEY TOOK THE LIBERTY TO READ THE SCRIPTURE TRANSLATED BY PETER WALDO INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE” (Allix, *Remarks upon the Ancient Churches of Piedmond*, p. 287).

**The Waldensians**, so brutally tormented under Innocent III and many other popes (almost 100 pages of the large-format 17th century *Martyrs Mirror* describe the persecutions against these people), were always described as a people who loved the Bible. “Their converts were made by the Bible and religious books. They went as peddlers to a cottage or a nobleman’s castle, offering fabrics or jewelry for sale; and when asked if they had any thing else, they answered: ‘Yes, great rarities; I have one precious stone through which you can see God, and another that kindles love to him in the heart.’ With that these peddlers brought out the

precious roll of Holy Writ” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 301). In the preface to the Olivetan French Bible, the translators say that the Waldenses “have always had the full enjoyment of that heavenly Truth contained in the holy Scriptures, ever since they were enriched with the same by the Apostles themselves” (Samuel Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches*, 1655, p. 14). Leger, a Waldensian pastor who lived during the unspeakably brutal persecutions of the 17th century, in his *General History of the Evangelical Churches of the Piedmontese Valleys* (1669), says that the ancient Scripture manuscripts of the Roman Catholics “were full of falsifications.” On the other hand, he quotes Beza, who published an edition of the Greek Received Text during the Reformation, as saying “that one must confess it was by means of the Vaudois of the Valleys that France today has the Bible in her own language.”

No characteristic was more marked in the Waldensians than their love for the sacred volume, and this love compelled them to share the treasure with others by translations into the Flemish, German and French. Herzog finds no sect which was so zealous for the circulation of the Scriptures as they. ... the Waldensians laid down the Bible as the foundation and practically built upon its truths. A Romish Inquisitor, in speaking of them, tells us: ‘They can say a great part of the Old and New Testaments by heart. They despise the decretals and the sayings and expositions of holy men and cleave only to the text of Scripture. ... They contend that the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles is sufficient to salvation without any Church statutes and ordinances, and affirm that the traditions of the Church are no better than the traditions of the Pharisees, insisting, moreover, that greater stress is laid on the observation of human tradition than on the keeping of the law of God’ (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 308).

No wonder they were hated by the ecclesiastical authorities who had perverted the simple New Testament faith. The light brought by the Scriptures exposed Rome’s heresies. The persecutions that Rome poured out upon these peace-loving people were intended to destroy them, as well as their Scriptures. “The crusade of Simon of Montfort so utterly destroyed them that Sismondi says: ‘Simon stamped out not only a people but a literature’” (Armitage, I, p. 310). The efforts of their enemies were so thorough that we will not know the details of the history of those ancient God-fearing people until we can peruse Heaven’s libraries.

Historian Thomas Armitage opens for us a window into the frightful persecutions initiated by Innocent III against the Waldensians:



Catholic authorities burning Bibles

Many of them were frozen to death, others were cast from high precipices and dashed to pieces. Some were driven into caverns, and by filling the mouths of their caves with fagots were suffocated. Others were hanged in cold blood, ripped open and disemboweled, pierced with prongs, drowned, racked limb from limb till death relieved them; were stabbed, worried by dogs, burned, or crucified with their heads downward. Fox relates one case in which four hundred mothers who had taken refuge in the Cave of Castelluzzo, some 2,000 feet above the valley, entered by a projecting crag, were smothered with their infants in their arms. And all the time that this gentle blood was flowing, that sanctified beauty known as Innocent III, drank it in like nectar of Paradise. Of the Waldensians and other murdered sheep of Christ, he said: 'They are like Samson's foxes. They appear to be different, but their tails are tied together.' The blood-thirst of the Dominicans earned for them the stigma of 'Domini Canes,' or the 'Lord's Dogs' (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 311, 12).

Another description of the persecution against the Waldenses and their literature during the days of Innocent III is given by William Blackburn:

[The Bible] was rarely translated. But wherever parts of it were rendered into popular language we see a people rejoicing in the light. A striking instance is found at Metz, on the Moselle [France]. Some Poor-men of Lyons, or Waldenses, brought there certain books of the Bible in the French language. Men and women eagerly read them. They formed Bible-reading societies ... The priests tried to stop their meetings; but the members said, 'God meant his Word for the people of every class. These books teach us far more than you ever do. We cannot give them up.' The bishop reported them to [Pope Innocent III] ... To the people he said: 'It is not proper for you to hold your meetings in private, nor to act as preachers, nor to ridicule the priests. Remember that men must have a special training before they can understand the deep things of Holy Scripture. The priests are trained for this purpose. Listen to them. Respect even the most ignorant of them. Beware of thinking that you alone are correct, and despising those who do not join you.' Then he threatened them with severity if they did not heed his paternal advice. **THUS HE LAID DOWN THE DOCTRINE WHICH ROMANISTS HAVE EVER SINCE TAUGHT—IT IS VERY WELL FOR YOU TO KNOW THE BIBLE, BUT YOUR PRIEST MUST TEACH IT TO YOU IN WHAT MANNER AND MEASURE HE PLEASES!** ... **THE RESULT WAS THAT CISTERCIAN ABBOTS WERE SENT TO METZ TO SUPPRESS THIS BIBLE-READING.** The truth-seeking laymen, in their 'pious simplicity' had found out too many priestly errors for the comfort of the priests. They persisted in holding their meetings. They were called Waldensians, as if that were a hard name. Force was applied to them. They were routed; **THEIR VERSIONS WERE BURNT**, so far as possible; their opinions rooted out. The priests of Metz breathed freely again, and went on in their old ways of ignorance, idleness, and vicious selfishness. Like cases seem to have occurred at Auxerre, and various towns in France, until the Council of Toulouse, in 1229, **FORBADE THE LAITY TO POSSESS THE BOOKS OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS IN ANY LANGUAGE**, and even popular versions of the Psalter, the Breviary, and the Hours of the Blessed Mary. Special condemnation was hurled at the Scriptures sent forth by Peter Waldo, in the Romance tongue; these must be burnt (Blackburn, *Church History*, pp. 314, 15).

*The Martyrs Mirror*, the amazing record that traces the martyrs for the New Testament faith from the time of Christ to 1660 A.D., also concurs that the Christians persecuted at Metz were despised by the Romanists "BECAUSE THEY HAD TRANSLATED THE HOLY SCRIPTURES INTO THEIR MOTHER TONGUE" (*Martyrs Mirror*, p. 300).

The persecutions under Innocent III were incredibly barbaric. Three methods were used by the inquisitors to test whether an accused person was innocent or guilty of heresy. In the

*TRIAL BY HOT IRON*, a piece of red-hot metal was placed into the hand of the accused, who was forced to walk nine paces while the iron burned into his hand. The hand was then wrapped in cloth by the priest and at the end of three days was examined. If there was a wound, the accused was declared guilty and was punished or martyred. The *TRIAL BY HOT WATER* was similar to this. The accused was forced to thrust his hand up to the elbow into a kettle of boiling water. In the *TRIAL BY COLD WATER*, the accused was forced to strip naked and then thrown into a canal or river. If he floated he was immediately condemned. If he sank, he was considered innocent. This sounds like a particularly cruel version of “heads I win, tails you lose”!



Waldensian Christians being burned alive

In 1215, Conrad of Marpurg, the grand inquisitor who had been appointed by the pope, apprehended more than 80 persons, tried them by the red-hot iron, condemned them, and then burned all of them on the same day, at Strasburg, Germany (*Martyrs Mirror*, pp. 311, 313). Great numbers of others were likewise tormented.

The Bible was also translated into Italian during the thirteenth century. “According to Professor Minocchi, the thirteenth century versions of the Italian Bible ‘sprang, like many of the other old versions, anonymously, from the people who required a means of affirming the religious ideas born in them by the change that had taken place in their minds and conscience.’ But if we consider its intimate relationship with the contemporary heretical translations of France, Provence, and Savoy, we may safely believe that the first Italian version had its origin in some centers of the sect called the ‘Poor of Italy,’ and if we consider its phraseology, we may even more definitely hold that it was issued by the Tuscan Patarenec” (John Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 92).

Wherever the Bible appeared in the common tongue of the people, wherever it was proclaimed unencumbered by Rome’s traditions, Rome sought to extinguish the light it brought to benighted men. The Roman authorities did not necessarily mind when the Scriptures were available in Latin, a language not spoken by the common people. It was the translation of Scripture into the common tongues that raised their ire.

To counter the powerful influence of the traveling missionaries that were associated with the Waldenses, Pope Innocent III established two orders of monks that traveled about in imitation of the evangelical missionaries, but they preached Rome’s unscriptural dogmas.



Unspeakable persecutions were perpetrated against the Waldenses

were raised against separatists who were labeled heretics.)

In the year 1209, a formidable army of cross-bearers, of forty days' service, was put into motion, destined to destroy all heretics. ... The cruelties of these Crusaders appear to have had no parallel; in a few months there were sacrificed about two hundred thousand lives, and barbarities practised, before unheard of, all which met the approbation of Innocent the 3rd. Two large cities, Beziers and Carcassone, were reduced to ashes, and thousands of others, driven from their burning houses, were wandering in the woods and mountains, sinking daily under the pressure of want (Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 211).

The Waldensian persecutions continued century after century:

Notwithstanding the persecution which was waged against the Waldenses, they spread within a century over a wide territory including large parts of France and Italy. The persecution in this period was less severe than in later times, and yet there were many executions. Not less than eighty Waldensian men and women were burned at the stake in 1211 at Strasburg in Alsace. Seven were burned at the stake at Maurillac in Spain, in 1214. ... In Germany there occurred from 1231 to 1233 the first general persecution of the Waldenses.

Despite persecution, the spread of the Waldenses continued. In Upper and Lower Austria Waldensian 'schools,' as their places for regular worship were called, were found in 1260 in upward of fifty places. In 1315 in a small political district in Lower Austria there were Waldenses in thirty-six villages and towns. In the whole dukedom of Austria the number of their adherents was calculated to be above 80,000. They also carried on successful missionary work in Bohemia, Moravia, Carinthia, Styria (Austrian provinces), and in Silesia, Brandenburg (modern Prussia), Pomerania, and Poland. According to a statement made by the Waldensian bishop Neumeister, who in 1315 was burned at the stake in Himburg near Vienna, they were very strong numerically in Bohemia and Moravia. In Schweidnitz, a village in Silesia, no less than fifty, among them a number of women and young people, were burned at the stake in 1315. Very many suffered martyrdom in Poland about the year 1309. Toward the end of that century the Waldenses were numerous in Hungary and had also spread into

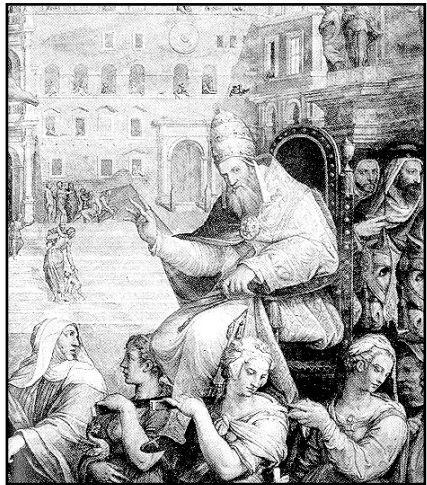
One of these was the Friars of St. Francis of Assisi (Faber, *History of the Ancient Vallenses*, p. 477 fl).

The infamous crusades against the "heretics" were first instigated by Pope Innocent III. (The crusades were not all directed toward reclaiming "Christian" territory from the Moslems in the Middle East; many

Transylvania. In Saxony and Mecklenburg they were found about fifty years later.

About a decade before the year 1400 a terrible persecution of the Waldenses began in the provinces and countries named above. The meagre extant remnants of the records of this persecution are sufficient to give an adequate idea of their strength in these countries. In southern Bohemia whole villages adhered to the Waldensian faith. In Moravia they were so numerous that the Roman hierarchy almost despaired of getting the mastery of the situation. In Brandenburg, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg no less than 443 persons were arrested in 1393 for the Waldensian 'heresy,' among them were persons whose parents already had been Waldenses. In Austria so many persons were accused as Waldenses and given a hearing that the minutes of the trials filled three thick volumes. Thirty-eight Waldenses were executed in 1393 at various places in Bavaria Three hundred persons were burned at the stake in various parts of Saxony in 1416. In 1446 twelve persons were burned at Nordhausen, and in 1454 twenty-two persons at Sangerhausen in Saxony (John Horsch, *Mennonites in Europe*, pp. 7, 8).

**Pope Honorius III (1216-1227)** followed in the footsteps of his murdering predecessor, Innocent III, and unleashed terrifying inquisitions and crusades upon Bible-believing Christians known variously as Albigenses, Paterines, etc., who maintained the sufficiency of the Scriptures in faith and practice and who denied the authority of the Roman hierarchy. From 1220 to the year of his death, Honorius labored to obtain edicts against the separatists from the emperor and also issued a series of bulls from his own pen denouncing the separatists and condemning them to death. "The edicts declared that all those Paterines to whom the bishops were disposed to show favor, were to have their tongues pulled out, that they might not corrupt others by justifying themselves, others were to be committed to the flames" (Orchard, p.



Pope carried on his throne, 14th century

158). "No alternative of escaping those human monsters presented itself but that of flight, which was embraced by many; 'indeed,' Mosheim observes, 'they passed out of Italy, and spread like an inundation throughout the European provinces, but Germany in particular afforded an asylum where they were called Gazari instead of Cathari (Puritans)' (Orchard, *Concise History of Baptists*, p. 155). Orchard tells us the result of these murdering persecutions: "The Albigensian church was now drowned in blood; their race for the present disappeared; their opinions ceased to influence society. ... No calculations can ascertain the quantity of wealth dissipated, or the destruction of human life, which resulted from these crusades. ... The slaughter had been so prodigious—the massacres so universal—the terror so profound, and of so long duration, that the church of Rome appeared completely to have attained her object. ... Terror became extreme, suspicion universal, all teaching of the proscribed doctrines had ceased, the very sight of a book made the people

tremble” (Orchard, pp. 216, 217, 218). Connected with these persecutions was the destruction of books and Scripture translations.

During this same period, **Frederick II**, head of the Holy Roman Empire from 1215-1250, ratified the pope’s Inquisition. He made laws against “heretics,” and in 1224 he condemned them either to be burned or to have their tongues torn out, at the discretion of the judge (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, p. 521). “Frederick’s subsequent legislation was commended by popes and bishops, and ordered to be inscribed in municipal statute books” (Schaff, V, p. 522).

The king of France, **Louis IX**, made the papal Inquisition the law of the land in 1228.

**Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241)** followed Honorius III and basked in the splendor of the papacy for 13 years. He was the nephew of the bloodthirsty Innocent III. The following description of Gregory’s coronation helps us understand the power and wealth of the papacy during the Middle Ages:

On the day of his coronation he proceeded to St. Peter’s, accompanied by several prelates, and assumed the pallium according to custom; and after having said mass he marched to the palace of the Lateran, COVERED WITH GOLD AND JEWELS. On Easter Day, he celebrated mass solemnly at Sta. Maria Maggiore, and returned with a crown on his head. On Monday, having said mass at St. Peter’s, he returned wearing two crowns, mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, and surrounded by Cardinals CLOTHED IN PURPLE, and a numerous clergy. The streets were spread with tapestry, INLAID WITH GOLD AND SILVER, the noblest

productions of Egypt, and the most brilliant colors of India, and perfumed with various aromatic odors. The people chanted aloud Kyrie eleison, and their songs of joy were accompanied by the sound of trumpets. The judges and the officers shown in gilded habits and caps of silk (George Waddington, *A History of the Church from the Earliest Ages to the Reformation*, 1834, p. 335).



Dominican Inquisitors

Gregory forbade the people to possess the Bible and suppressed Bible translations. As we have already seen, it was during the early part of the thirteenth century that “the Waldenses translated the Bible into the Romance and Teutonic languages” (Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 91). Professor S. Minocchi, writing in 1904, noted that among the Waldenses “the New Testament was sought after, and was spread about; and in its pages were found the condemnation



of the Church of Rome and its faulty clergy, and at the same time the hope of a religious revival among the people” (Christian, I, p. 91). Orchard tells us that “at Toulouse it is said that the first society in France was formed for circulating the Bible in the vernacular tongue” (Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 224). The response from the Roman Catholic authorities was predictable. TRANSLATIONS AMONG THE ALBIGENSES AND WALDENSES WERE BURNED, AND PEOPLE BURNED FOR HAVING THEM (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, p. 783).

**The Council of Toulouse** (1229) and the **Council of Tarragona** (1234)

FORBADE THE LAITY TO POSSESS OR READ THE VERNACULAR TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE (*Catholic Dictionary*). The Council of Toulouse used these words: “We prohibit the permission of the books of the Old and New Testament to laymen, except perhaps they might desire to have the Psalter, or some Breviary for the divine



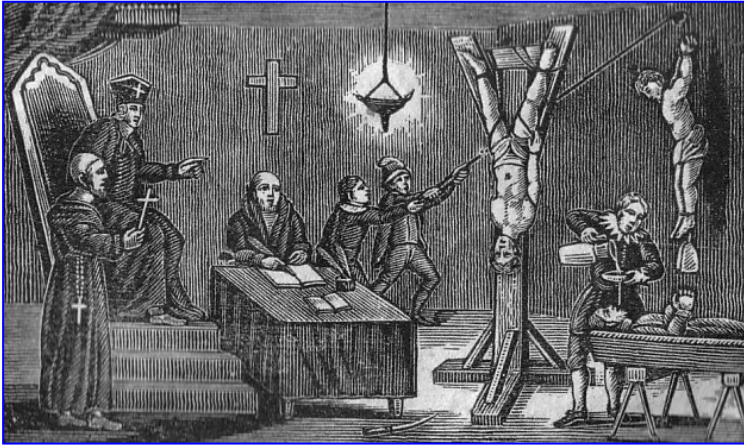
Prison of the Inquisition

service, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin Mary, for devotion; EXPRESSLY FORBIDDING THEIR HAVING THE OTHER PARTS OF THE BIBLE TRANSLATED INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE” (Allix, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, p. 213). According to P. Marion Simms, it was the Waldensian translation from the Latin, known as the Romaunt version, which was specifically condemned at Toulouse in 1229 (Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 153). The Toulouse council ordered that the bishops appoint in each parish “one priest and two or three laics, who should engage upon oath to make a rigorous search after all heretics and their abettors, and for this purpose should visit every house from the garret to the cellar, together with all subterraneous places where they might conceal themselves” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 82).

**The Synod of Tarrangona** “ORDERED ALL VERNACULAR VERSIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP TO BE BURNED” (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 162).

Referring to the Inquisition that was permanently established by the Council of Toulouse, historian William Blackburn said: “No legalized institution has ever done more to crush intellectual and religious liberty, or added more to the unspoken miseries of the human race. EVERY LAYMAN DARING TO POSSESS A BIBLE, NOW FIRST FORBIDDEN TO THE LAITY BY THIS COUNCIL, WAS IN PERIL OF THE RACK, THE DUNGEON, AND THE STAKE. The history of the Church in Spain, for six hundred and fifty years, is mainly that of the Inquisition and its destruction of human life” (Blackburn, *Church History*, p. 309).

It was in Spain during the reign of Pope Innocent III that the Inquisition had begun to be



Inquisition Torture Chamber

formed into a brutal, all-pervading mechanism. It was only left for Innocent's nephew, Gregory IX, to expand the Inquisition to all “Catholic” countries and to “fine tune” its barbarities. **Dominick Guzman, founder of the Dominican order of Catholic priests,** was one of the chief agents. “Before his time every bishop was a sort of inquisitor in his own diocese: but it was his

[Dominick's] invention to incorporate a body of men, independent of every human being except the pope, for the express purpose of ensnaring and destroying Christians. ... at the beginning of the thirteenth century, about the year twelve hundred fifteen, Dominick broke down the dam, and covered Toulouse with a tide of despotism stained with human blood. Posterity will hardly believe that this enemy of mankind, after he had formed a race like himself, called first preaching, and then friars, died in his bed, was canonized for a saint ... and proposed as a model of piety and virtue to succeeding generations” (Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, 1792, pp. 321, 22).

This was accomplished by the publication of two papal bulls on April 20, 1233. From this point forward the Dominicans and Franciscans directed the Inquisition terrors.

In 1234, an edict was made in Spain by Don Jayme of Aragon, which “prohibited the use of any part of the Old or New Testament in the vernacular tongue, and commanded all, whether laity or clergy, who possessed such books, to deliver them to their ordinaries to be burnt, on the pain of being held suspected of heresy” (M'Crie, *History of the*

*Reformation in Spain*, pp. 190, 91). Other laws were passed and a severe inquisition was established in Aragon at this time. The edicts were made at the instigation of the Catholic prelates (Lea, *A History of the Inquisition*, unabridged, I, 1887, pp. 323, 24).



The Rack

Gregory IX issued a papal brief in 1236 to introduce the Inquisition into Castile in Spain. Ferdinand III is said to have carried with his own hand the wood destined for burning his subjects (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, 1829, pp. 84, 85).

In 1237 fifteen Bible believers were burned alive in Cerdagne and Castlebon, in Spain, and the remains of eighteen others were condemned, dug up from the ground, and burned (M'Crie, p. 34).

In the year 1238, Pope Gregory IX issued a bull that promised forgiveness of sins for all who would join his crusade against the "heretics":

That all persons may more willingly and efficiently execute the duty thus committed unto them—to all who, according to the call of the Inquisitors, attend to their various stations twenty days—to them who afford counsel and favour, and hearty aid in persecuting heretics, and the favourers, receivers, and defenders of them, and all other rebels against the church, whether in fortified places or castles; from the mercy of God Almighty, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by his authority, WE RELAX THREE YEARS OF THE PENANCE ENJOINED UPON THEM: and IF ANY PERSONS SHALL DIE DURING THE PROSECUTION OF THAT AFFAIR, WE GRANT THEM A FULL PARDON OF ALL THEIR SINS; and we bestow upon the brethren the entire faculty of using all means to prosecute the work, and of executing ecclesiastical censure upon the refractory and the rebellious.

It was during the reign of Gregory IX that the Catholic Inquisition, which began under Innocent III, was fashioned into the all-pervading form it was to enjoy for the next five hundred years. Henry Lea, in his three-volume *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, describes the terror that was created by this persecution machine:

By the terms of the Treaty of Paris all public officials were obliged to aid in the inquisition and capture of heretics, and all inhabitants, males over fourteen years of age and females



The Heretic's Fork

over twelve, were to be sworn to reveal all offenders to the bishops. The Council of Narbonne in 1229 put these provisions in force; that of Albi in 1254 included inquisitors among those to whom the heretic was to be denounced ... The aid demanded was freely given, and every inquisitor was armed with royal letters empowering him to call upon all officials for safe-conduct, escort, and assistance in the discharge of his functions. ... Thus the whole force of the State was unreservedly at command of the Holy Office. Not only this, indeed, but every individual was bound to lend his aid when called upon, and any slackness of zeal exposed him to excommunication as a *fautor* [favorer, or patron] of heresy, leading after twelve months, if neglected, to conviction as a heretic, with all its tremendous penalties.

The right to abrogate any laws which impeded the freest exercise of the powers of the Inquisition was likewise arrogated on both sides of the Alps. ...

In the exercise of this almost limitless authority, inquisitors were practically relieved from all supervision and responsibility. Even a papal legate was not to interfere with them or inquire into heresy within their inquisitorial districts. ... At first their commissions were thought to

expire with the death of the pope who issued them, but in 1267 they were declared to be continuously valid. ...

Under the canon law, any one, from the meanest to the highest, who opposed or impeded in any way the functions of an inquisitor, or gave aid or counsel to those who did so, became at once *ipso facto* excommunicate. After the lapse of a year in this condition he was legally a heretic to be handed over without further ceremony to the secular arm for burning, without trial and without forgiveness. The awful authority which thus shrouded the inquisitor was rendered yet more terrible by the elasticity of definition given to the crime of impeding the Holy Office and the tireless tenacity with which those guilty of it were pursued. If friendly death came to shield them, the Inquisition attacked their memories, and visited their offences upon their children and grandchildren. ...

The papal Inquisition ... constituted a chain of tribunals throughout Continental Europe perpetually manned by those who had no other work to attend to. ... by constant interchange of documents and mutual co-operation they covered Christendom with a network rendering escape almost hopeless. This, combined with the most careful preservation and indexing of records,



The Iron Tie

produced a system of police singularly perfect for a period when international communication was so imperfect. The Inquisition had a long arm, a sleepless memory, and we can well understand the mysterious terror inspired by the secrecy of its operations and its almost supernatural vigilance. If public proclamation was desired, it summoned all the faithful, with promises of eternal life and reasonable temporal reward, to seize some designated heresiarch, and every parish priest where he was suspected to be hiding was bound to spread the call before the whole population. If secret information was required, there were spies and familiars trained to the work. The record of every heretical family for generations could be traced out from the papers of one tribunal or another. A single lucky capture and extorted confession would put the sleuth-hounds on the track of hundreds who deemed themselves secure, and each new victim added his circle of denunciations. The heretic lived over a volcano which might burst forth at any moment. ...

Flight was of little avail. Descriptions of heretics who disappeared were sent throughout Europe, to every spot where they could be supposed to seek refuge, putting the authorities on the alert to search for every stranger who wore the air of one differing in life and conversation from the ordinary run of the faithful. ... To human apprehension the papal Inquisition was well-nigh ubiquitous, omniscient, and omnipotent. ...

The organization of the Inquisition was simple, yet effective. It did not care to impress the minds of men with magnificence, but rather to paralyze them with terror. ...

It was the duty of every man to give information as to all cases of heresy with which he might become acquainted under pain of incurring the guilt of fautorship [patronship]. ...

The effectiveness of the organization was unhampered by any limits of jurisdiction, and was multiplied by the cooperation of the tribunals everywhere, so that there was no resting-place, no harbor of refuge for the heretic in any land where the Inquisition existed. Vainly might he change his abode, it was ever on his track. A suspicious stranger would be observed and arrested; his birthplace would be ascertained, and as soon as swift messengers could traverse the intervening distance, full official documents as to his antecedents would be received from the Holy Office of his former home. ... The net of the Inquisition extended everywhere, and no prey was too small to elude its meshes (Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, unabridged, I, pp. 340-396).

Under the reign of **Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254)**, persecutions continued against the Waldensian Christians and attempts continued to be made to suppress their Scripture distribution. “In 1246, at Beziers, the old Albigensian town, laymen were forbidden to have any theological books, even in Latin, while clergy and laity were alike forbidden to have them in their mother-tongue” (Blackburn, p. 315).

Innocent IV was responsible for introducing **torture** into the official proceedings of the inquisition in 1252 with his bull *Ad extirpanda* (Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, I, p. 421). This bull condemned “heretics” to death, and “was to be inscribed in perpetuity in all the local statute books. Any attempt to modify it was a crime, which condemned the offender to perpetual infamy, and a fine enforced by the ban” (O.C. Lambert, *Catholicism against Itself*, p. 154). Innocent IV “found it necessary to give full powers to his inquisitors, and to erect a standing tribunal, if possible, in every country where Puritans were known to infest. These inquisitors were armed with all imaginable power, to punish all those persons who dared to think differently than the pope and his

successors” (Orchard, *Concise History of the Baptists*, p. 159). Phillip Schaff says that “Innocent IV. and Alexander IV. alone issued more than one hundred such bulls” (*History of the Christian Church*, V, p. 520).

It was during the reign of Innocent IV that **the Council of Narbonne** was held in the year 1244 “for the purpose of aiding and abetting the recently-established Holy Office of Holy Dominic in its project of exterminating the reputed heretics of Southern France” (George Faber, *History of the Ancient Vallenses*, p. 107). This Council issued the following depraved canons:

Canon # 22 — Inquisitors were forbidden to reveal the names of witnesses.

Canon # 24 — The testimony of infamous persons, of criminals, and of those who confessed themselves to have been accomplices, should be received in the process of the Inquisition against the Albigenes.

Canon # 26 — He, who shall have been convicted by witnesses, or through any other proofs, shall henceforth be always reputed a heretic, even though he should deny the truth of the allegation.

Under this perverted system, a Bible believer could be charged with Manicheanism or witchcraft or immorality or any other preposterous thing, and his accuser, no matter how untrustworthy, remained anonymous, and the charge would be received, whether or not there was any proof to sustain it. It took all legal protection away from people and placed them utterly at the “mercy” of the brutal inquisitors.

**Pope Alexander IV (1254-1261)** also loved to persecute Bible believers. Between 1255-1258, he issued no less than 38 bulls against heretics (Schaff, V, p. 520, footnote 2). In the year 1255, for example, a papal bull proclaimed: “Houses of heretics are to be destroyed, and the materials to be distributed.” The bull for the establishment of the Dominicans as permanent Inquisitors was issued in 1258. Between the years 1260 and 1261, Alexander issued another thirteen bulls calling for the persecution of “heretics.” “For more than a century after Innocent [III], the enforcement of the rules for the detection and punishment of heretics form the continual subject of bulls issued by the Apostolic see and of synodal action especially in Southern France and Spain” (Schaff, V, p. 520). It was in 1260 that a Catholic inquisitor named Passau wrote a tract attacking the “heresy” of the Waldensians. One of his chief concerns was that “they have translated the New and Old Testament into the vulgar tongue and this they teach and learn” (Herklots, *How Our Bible Came to Us*, p. 69).

**Pope Urban IV (1261-1264)**, immediately after his accession to the pontifical throne, issued a most direful anathema against all heretics, and the opponents of the Inquisition (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, 1838, p. 390).

**Pope Clement IV (1265-1268)**, in 1265, enlarged and sanctioned the edicts of the Emperor Frederick, and the Popes Innocent IV and Alexander IV (Callender, p. 390). “Inquisitors must compel secular magistrates of cities and other places, under penalty of the

excommunication and interdict, to subscribe and inviolably to keep the constitutions of Innocent IV notwithstanding any indulgence of the court of Rome. During these years, the inquisition raged in Spain and other parts of Europe. The inquisitors of Barcelona, not satisfied with condemning living heretics, cursed those who had deceased, and ordered their bones dug up and dishonored (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 35).

During the reign of **Pope Gregory X (1271-1276)**, England's James I reaffirmed the decision of Tarragona (1234), which HAD ORDERED ALL VERNACULAR VERSIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP TO BE BURNED (Paris Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, 1929, p. 162).

**Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292)** ordered many punishments to be inflicted upon "heretics" and their accomplices; with a confirmation of the rescripts of the anterior popes (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 390).

**Pope Honorius IV (1285-1287)** enacted two laws against "heretics" similar to the preceding ones (Callender, p. 390). The popes affirmed and enforced the restrictions against vernacular Bible translations.

In the thirteenth century inquisitorial tribunals were permanently erected in the principal towns of the kingdom of Aragon and elsewhere in Spain, where the Dominicans had established convents" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 84).

**Pope John XXII (1316-1334)** attempted to convert the Waldenses to Roman dogma and papal authority; and, failing at this, he poured out persecutions upon these people. "Desirous of resuming the work of Innocent III., he ordered the inquisitors to repair to the Valleys of Lucerna and Perosa, and execute the laws of the Vatican against the heretics that people them. What success attended the expedition is not known, and we instance it chiefly on this account, that the bull commanding it bears undesigned testimony to the then flourishing condition of the Waldensian Church, inasmuch as it complains that synods, which the pope calls 'chapters,' were wont to assemble in the Valley of Angrogna, attended by 500 delegates. This was before Wicliffe had begun his career in England" (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 22).

**Pope Clement VI (1342-1352)** urged persecutions against the Waldensian Christians. In 1352 he charged the bishop of Embrun to purify that area of those who refused to bow to Rome's authority. A Franciscan friar was appointed inquisitor to oversee this work (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 23). In Spain, too, the brutal inquisition went about its evil business. "The persecution of the Albigenses seldom relaxed during the fourteenth century. Scarce a year passed in which numbers were not barbarously led to the stake" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 40).

**Pope Innocent VI (1352-1362)** was visited by the Irishman Fitzralph, who complained of the attack on the Scriptures by Roman Catholic monks in Ireland. Fitzralph (d. 1360) preached zealously against monkery in Ireland and England and "had gone to face Innocent VI. himself, on the subject of those exactions and abuses which had become past all

endurance” (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, 1845, I, p. xxxv). According to a manuscript possessed by the historian John Foxe, Fitzralph testified that “the Lord had taught him, and brought him out of the profound vanities of Aristotle’s philosophy, to the Scriptures of God” (Anderson, I, p. xxxv). He stood before the pope of Rome and complained that “no book could stir, whether in divinity, law, or physic, but these Friars were able and ready to buy it up.” Fitzralph had sent four of his chaplains on a journey from Armagh to Oxford, seeking Scriptures and sound religious materials. The result of their search was that they “SENT HIM WORD AGAIN THAT THEY COULD NEITHER FIND THE BIBLE, nor any other good profitable book in divinity, meet for their study, and therefore were minded to return home to their own country.” Anderson tells us that it has been often repeated that Fitzralph translated the New Testament into the Irish language, or at least that a translation existed in his time, but this assertion cannot be confirmed. Fitzralph died in the year 1360.

## **Bibles in Many Languages during the Middle Ages**

In spite of the attempt by the Roman Catholic Church to keep the vernacular Bibles out of the hands of the people, many translations appeared in the Middle Ages. “The Bible, in whole or in part, had been translated into some 25 languages before the invention of printing from movable type, about 1450” (Simms, *The Bible in America*, p. 69). There were **Spanish** translations as early as the 12th century. The Bible first appeared in **Old Norse**, the language of Norway and her colonies in Iceland, Greenland, and Finland, in 1220 A.D. A second edition was made in 1310 (Simms, p. 58).

The Wycliffe **English** Bible appeared in 1380.

A translation of the whole Bible in **French** first appeared in the 13th century, and “a much used version of the whole Bible was published in 1487 by Jean de Rely” (Olaf Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52).

Translations in **German** appeared in the 13th and 14th centuries, “and a complete Bible appeared before the invention of printing” (Norlie, p. 53).

Portions of the Scripture in the **Dutch** language appeared “even before 1200 A.D.” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 174). Little is known about these versions. In 1270 Jacob Van Maerlandt completed the four Gospels in Dutch, translated from the Vulgate. In 1477 Jacob Jacobzoon and Maurits Ymands published a Dutch Old Testament. Another Dutch translation appeared at Gouda in 1479 (Beardslee, p. 178).

Translations of portions of the Bible in **Swedish** and **Danish** were made in the mid-14th century.

Portions of the Bible were translated into **Arabic** by Raymond Lull for the Moslems in the 14th century (Norlie, p. 196).

The complete Bible in **Swedish** appeared in the 15th century.



The old **Bohemian** Bible, which dated to the 9th century, was revised by Jan Hus in the early 15th century.

The first complete **Slavonic** Bible dates to 1499 (Norlie, p. 168).

With the invention of printing by moveable type, the publication of Bibles exploded. By 1520, no less than 199 printed editions of the entire Bible had appeared. Of these, 156 were Latin, 17 German, 11 Italian, two Bohemian, and one Russian (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 721). The Bible, in whole or in part, had been printed in 22 languages and dialects before Luther published his New Testament in 1522 (Simms, p. 69).

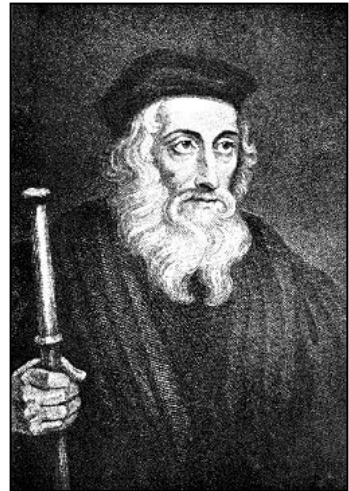
We will say more about the translations of the 15th and 16th centuries later in these studies.

## **John Wycliffe and the Lollards and Persecutions from 1350 - 1500 A.D.**

The Roman Catholic Church kept Europe in the Dark Ages by hindering vernacular translations from being made and distributed, by bitterly persecuting any Christians that attempted to do this, by shrouding the Bible with its own traditions, and by placing its priesthood between the Bible and the people.

Rome's implacable hatred of the truth is evident in its treatment of translator **JOHN WYCLIFFE (1324-1384)**. This man gave the English-speaking people the first Bible in their own tongue. There had been portions of Scripture distributed in the older Anglo-Saxon tongue prior to Wycliffe, and possibly there were some Scripture portions made into English contemporary with Wycliffe.

Consider **Bede of Jarrow**, who lived less than seven centuries after the apostles and died in the year 735. He might have translated other portions of Scripture, but the record is certain that he completed the Gospel of John in Saxon, a precursor to the English language. Bede completed this translation of John with his dying breath, according to one of his helpers who left an account of this, and it will be fascinating one day to learn of those that were saved in that distant past through the witness of this Saxon Gospel. It is the Gospel of John, of course, that was written "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). Amen!



John Wycliffe

There is no evidence, though, that there had existed an entire Bible or New Testament in English before Wycliffe. H.G. Herklots, in *How Our Bible Came to Us*, tells us that the Scripture portions most commonly found among the English people prior to Wycliffe were Anglo Saxon and French (p. 58).



Bede completing translation of  
John's Gospel into Saxon

One Catholic writer (Gasquet, in 1894) denied that Wycliffe actually translated the Scriptures, but many faithful historians have proven that this theory was in error. Though Wycliffe did have help, and though his translation was perfected after his death by a close friend, John Purvey, there is no doubt that Wycliffe himself did much of the translation. The great theme of Wycliffe's life was summed up in his glorious statement, "The sacred Scriptures be the property of the people, and one which no party should be allowed to wrest from them."

Wycliffe's era was one of tremendous upheaval and trouble. The popes had put a heavy hand upon England in the form of taxes and monkery, and from the common man to the throne, the people were tired of this usurpation. In 1376 the English Parliament stated that the taxes paid in England to Rome amounted to five times as much as those levied by the king (Cushing Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, 1886, p. 457). "The age of Wycliffe was one of great excitement; and the papal supremacy as a foreign usurpation had begun to encounter stout resistance. ... The Black Death or pestilence, which had appeared first at Dorchester in 1348, and swept over the country during the next year and a half, had returned in 1361, 1369, and 1375. The first outbreak of the epidemic had carried off half of the population, two millions and a half out of five millions..." (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, 1876, pp. 45, 49). It is estimated that this Black Death killed fifty million in England and Europe from 1348 to 1351.

One reply to the oppressions of that day was the revolt headed by Wat Tyler in 1380. "Struggling for freedom, these rebels blundered into communism, and advocated the abolition of social ranks and distinctions, so that those above them should be cast down by force to their own low level" (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, I, p. 50). This revolt was put down with great violence, and an estimated 1,500 men were executed for their alleged part in the insurrection.

John Wycliffe, though, did not support violent revolution. "There is no proof that Wycliffe's teaching, or his Bible, was connected with the tumult, though the accusation has

been often made against him” (Eadie, I, p. 51). Wycliffe taught that people should obey the existing civil authorities, even if they were sinful and unjust. He fought his battles along a spiritual line, believing that the greatest gift that could be given to his troubled people was the Bible in the common tongue and sound teaching based on the Bible. If the Scriptures could be understood and believed, the people would be delivered from priestcraft, and God’s blessings would descend upon the land. Though Rome had forbidden the people to have the Scriptures and had proclaimed its own dogmas and traditions equal in authority to Scripture, Wycliffe was of a different mind. Consider some of his statements about the Bible:

“The authority of the Holy Scriptures infinitely surpasses any writing, how authentic soever it may appear, because the authority of Jesus Christ is infinitely above that of all mankind.”

“The authority of the Scriptures is independent on any other authority, and is preferable to every other writing, but especially to the books of the Church of Rome.”

“I am certain, indeed, from the Scriptures, that neither Antichrist, nor all his disciples, nay, nor all fiends, may really impugn any part of that volume as it regards the excellence of its doctrine. But in all these things it appears to me that the believing man should use this rule—If he soundly understands the Sacred Scripture, let him bless God; if he be deficient in such perception, let him labour for soundness of mind. Let him also dwell as a grammarian upon the letter, but be fully aware of imposing a sense upon Scripture which he doubts the Holy Spirit does not demand.”

“We ought to believe in the authority of no man unless he say the Word of God. It is impossible that any word or any deed of man should be of equal authority with Holy Scriptures. ... For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instructions, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded in Holy Writ, since the Scriptures contain the whole truth.”

“That the New Testament is of full authority, and open to understanding of simple men, as to the points that are most needful to salvation. ... That men ought to desire only the truth and freedom of the holy Gospel, and to accept man’s law and ordinances only in as much as they are grounded in Holy Scripture... That if any man in earth, either angel of heaven teacheth us the contrary of holy Writ, or any thing against reason and charity, we should flee from him in that as from the foul fiend of hell, and hold us steadfastly to, life and death, the truth and freedom of the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ, and take us meekly men’s sayings and laws, only in as much as they accord with holy Writ and good consciences, and no further, for life neither for death.”



Wycliffe's pulpit at Lutterworth

Historian Cushing Hassell says: “[Wycliffe] was a pupil, a graduate, a master, a doctor, and a professor in Oxford University, an institution second to none in Europe, except the University of Paris, and in Oxford Wycliffe stood without a rival. He was a man of slender frame, genial disposition, immense energy, immovable conviction, and of austere plainness and purity of life” (*History of the Church of God*, p. 457).

Wycliffe began to preach against various Roman Catholic doctrines and practices when he was in his mid to late thirties, and he gradually grew in his understanding of the errors of



Begging Friars

Rome. About the year 1360, he began opposing the begging Friars and other Catholic clergy in his very powerful, plainspoken fashion. “The life of Wycliffe was one of conflict. ... It is an evidence both of his ability and courage, that, single-handed, he dared to attack a Monastic order of such power and authority in the Romish Church. Two of these orders, the Dominican and Franciscan, ruled the Roman Catholic Church throughout Europe for nearly three centuries, with an absolute sway. ... Day by day Wycliffe used greater plainness of speech in portraying the scandalous conduct of the friars” (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, 1881, pp. 55, 58).

This is what Wycliffe said:

“Friars draw children from Christ's religion into their private Order by hypocrisy, lies and stealing. ... And so they steal children from father and mother ... sometime such as should sustain their father and mother by the commandment of God; and thus they are blasphemers taken upon full counsel in doubtful things that are not expressly commanded nor forbidden in holy writ; since such counsel is appropriated to the Holy Ghost, and thus they are therefore cursed of God as the Pharisees were of Christ...

“Friars shew not to the people their great sins firmly as God biddeth, and namely to mighty men of the world; but flatter them or nourish them in sin.

“Also, Friars are thieves ... For without authority of God they make new religions of errors of sinful men” (John Lewis, *The Life of Dr. John Wiclif*, pp. 7, 24, 27).

In the years prior to and following the completion of his translation of the Bible, Wycliffe issued a vast number of writings that explained the Scriptures in contrast to Roman Catholic doctrine, and these writings included his translation of various relevant Scripture passages. “The literary works of Wycliffe—the longer ones in Latin which spoke to the

educated mind of Europe, and the shorter ones in English—are very numerous; and Professor Shirley's catalogue, of more than sixty octavo pages [each sheet folded eight times, about 6 X 9 inches per page], does not contain nearly the whole of them" (Eadie, I, pp. 41, 42).

In these writings Wycliffe exposed the errors of transubstantiation, sacramentalism, tradition being equal in authority with the Scripture, indulgences, the papacy (which he labeled the antichrist), baptismal regeneration, and many other dogmas of Rome.

He said that the Catholic practice of establishing universities and granting masterships and doctorates had been inherited from the heathen, and "are altogether of as much use to the church as the devil" (*Martyrs Mirror*, p. 324).



Wycliffe New Testament, first page of John's Gospel

He taught that men had the right to interpret Scripture. "Believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which all may understand."

Wycliffe taught that the apostolic churches had only elders and deacons, "and declared his conviction that all orders above these had been introduced by Caesarean pride" (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 415).

Wycliffe was very bold against the pope, contending that "it is blasphemy to call any head of the church, save Christ alone" (Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, 1740, p. 7). Consider some other statements by Wycliffe on the subject of the papacy:

"It is supposed, and with much probability, that the Roman pontiff is the great Antichrist."

"How than shall any sinful wretch, who knows not whether he be damned or saved, constrain men to believe that he is head of holy Church? Certainly, in such a case they must sometimes

constrain men to believe that a devil of hell is head of holy Church, when the Bishop of Rome shall be a man damned for his sins" (Shelton, II, p. 415).

"Antichrist puts many thousand lives in danger for his own wretched life. Why, is he not a fiend stained foul with homicide who, though a priest, fights in such a cause?" (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 46, 47).

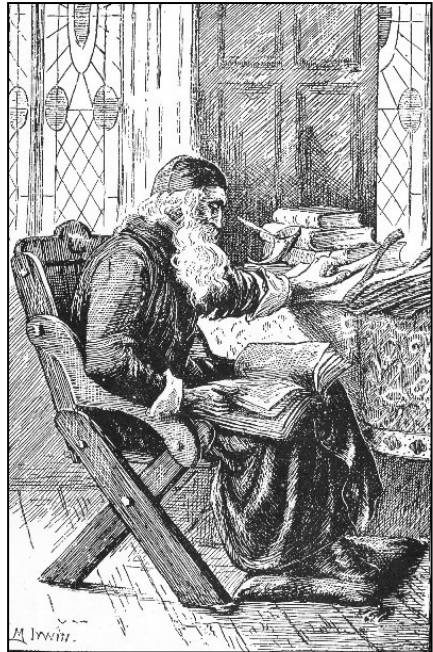
There is a lot that we do not know about Wycliffe. Many of his writings were destroyed by the Catholic authorities. Crosby notes, "As to his opinions, it is very difficult now to have a certain account of them; because they who took so much care to burn his bones, did not neglect to destroy his books, which of the two were like to do them the most hurt" (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, p. 7).

Some of his writings which we do have were written many years before the end of his life, and there is evidence that he changed some of his views later on. **Some Catholic authorities of that day charged Wycliffe with denying infant baptism**, which would mean that he might have progressed all the way to an apostolic and Anabaptist position. It is certain that many of his Lollard followers did just that. Thomas Crosby, who published the first of the four volumes of his history of the English Baptists in 1738, states that Catholic authorities Thomas Walden and Joseph Vicecomes claimed that Wycliffe rejected infant baptism and they charged him with Anabaptist views. Walden, who wrote against the Wycliffites or Hussites in the early part of the 1400s, called Wycliffe "one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pit, for denying infant baptism, that heresie of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ringleader" (Danver's *Treatise*, p. 2, 287, cited by Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 72).

Another Catholic authority, Walsingham, identified Wycliffe with the "cursed opinions of Berengarius" and said that "his followers did deny baptism to infants" (Joseph Ivimey, I, p. 72). Berengarius lived in France in the 11th century and was charged by the Catholic authorities with such "heresies" as denying transubstantiation and infant baptism. The Berengarians practiced believers baptism and were charged with being anabaptists. The council held at Blackfriars in June 1382 to condemn Wycliffe brought many articles of accusation, including the charge "that the children of believers might be saved without baptism" (Ivimey, I, p. 73). The *Martyrs Mirror*, first published in Dutch in 1660, also states that in 1370 Wycliffe issued an article "declared to militate against infant baptism" (p. 322). Jacob Mehrning, in his *History of Baptism*, said that Wycliffe "taught, among other things, that baptism is not necessary to the forgiveness of original sin; thereby sufficiently opposing, or, as H. Montanus says, rejecting, infant baptism, which is founded upon the forgiveness of original sin. On this account, forty-one years after his death, his bones, by order of the pope, were exhumed, burnt, and the ashes thrown into the water" (*History of Baptism*, pp. 737, 38). Thus, it is obvious that John Wycliffe in the 14th century went farther in his rejection of Catholic heresies than the Protestant Reformers of the 16th.

“Another prominent and remarkable feature of the life of Wycliffe was the *progressive* development of his views of Scripture truth; in his daily study and spiritual understanding of the Scriptures he discovered more and more of the unscripturalness of Romanism, and ‘he was thus carried along from one step to another in his progress as a reformer.’ His progress was not only in the *Protestant* but in the *Baptist* direction; and I am persuaded that, if he had lived longer, and additional Divine light had been given him, he would have been a thorough-going Bible Baptist. No man perfectly understands the Scriptures; we all now see through a glass darkly; it is only at the time and to the extent that the Holy Spirit opens our understandings that we discern spiritual things. Wycliffe first denounced the corrupt *practices* and then the corrupt *doctrines* of Romanism leading to those practices” (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 457).

**It is also important to understand that there were already Waldensian**, or separatist Anabaptist Christians, in England during the days of Wycliffe. The *Martyrs Mirror* describes the persecution of 443 Waldenses in 1391. At least one of these told the inquisitors that he had been a Waldensian for 30 years. That takes us back to 1361, when Wycliffe was only 37 years old and when he first began preaching against Catholic errors. “From this it appears, writes a certain author, that the Saxon countries were full of Waldenses, that is, orthodox Christians ... before the time of Huss. For it can easily be computed, that when the 443 Waldenses were examined at once, there must have been an incomparably greater number who were not examined in regard to their faith, but concealed themselves, or took to flight, in order to escape the danger. And, truly, those who are noticed in the book, as having been examined, frequently mentioned very many others of their faith, who were not present” (*Martyrs Mirror*, p. 325).



Anglican historian Joseph Milner describes the possible connection between the Waldensians and John Wycliffe: “The connection between France and England, during the whole reign of Edward III, was so great, that it is by no means improbable, that Wickliffe himself derived his first impressions of religion from [Raynard] Lollard [a Bible-believing Waldensian leader who was burned at the stake at Cologne]” (Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, 1819, III, p. 509).

Baptist historian William Jones adds the following observation: “Thomas Walden, who wrote against Wickliff, says, that the doctrine of Peter Waldo was conveyed from France

into England—and that among others Wickliff received it. In this opinion he is joined by Alphonsus de Castro, who says that Wickliff only brought to light again the errors of the Waldenses. Cardinal Bellarmine, also, is pleased to say that ‘Wickliff could add nothing to the heresy of the Waldenses’” (Jones, *A History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 91).

Joshua Thomas, in his *History of the Welsh Baptists*, gives the account of Baptists who lived in the 14th century in Olchon in Herefordshire, and he believes Wycliffe “received much of his light in the gospel” from these separatist believers (Ivimey, I, pp. 65-67).

Thus, it is possible that Wycliffe was influenced by, even directly instructed by, separatist Baptist Christians then living in England.



Wycliffe's Lutterworth Church Today

The men who are described in church histories as key contenders for the faith in various eras did not live in a vacuum. They were influenced by faithful Bible-believing Christians who preceded them and as well as by those who lived as their contemporaries.

In an earlier book titled *Dialogus*, which is cited by many historians, Wycliffe at least loosely accepted errors such as purgatory, adoration of angels, and the authority of the Roman church—all of which he later repudiated. There is no doubt that

Wycliffe rejected the error of baptismal regeneration, saying “that baptism doth not confer, but only signify grace, which was given before.” Thomas Crosby came to the following conclusion:

But whether he denied infant-baptism, or not, it is certain he was the first reformer of any note, that spread those tenets among the English which tend to overthrow the practice of baptizing infants. And if he did not pursue the consequence of his own doctrines so far, yet many of his followers did, and were made Baptists by it. He taught, that no rule or ceremony ought to be received in the church, which is not plainly confirmed by the word of God: and therefore said, ‘That wise men leave that as impertinent, which is not plainly expressed in Scripture.’ ... Amongst the followers of this great man, both in Bohemia and England, we find many Baptists. ... As to the opinions that were held by these Lollards, or disciples of Wickliff, in England, ‘tis agreed by all, that they denied the pope’s supremacy, the worshipping of images, praying for the dead, and the like popish doctrines. Whether they rejected the baptism of infants or not, has been doubted by some; but that they generally did so, is more than probable, from what is left upon record concerning them (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, pp. 11, 12, 13, 23).



In a letter dated October 10, 1519, Erasmus gave the following description of the Lollards in Bohemia: "... they own no other authority than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; they believe or own little or nothing of the sacraments of the church; such as come over to their sect, must every one be baptized anew in mere water..." (Crosby, I, pp. 14, 15). Erasmus described the Lollards as Anabaptists. This was almost 100 years before the insurrection at Munster, which many modern historians erroneously identify as the origin of the Anabaptist movement.

Frederick Nolan, who diligently pursued the history of the transmission of the biblical text, says that the Lollards were disciples of the Waldenses (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, 1815, p. xix, footnote 1).



Wycliffe answering his accusers

Wycliffe rejected the Roman policy that forbade the people to have the Scripture in their own languages. "Wycliffe's work as a translator brought upon him special hostility, for the idea of an English Bible filled the clergy with alarm and indignation. He knew, as he tells us, that THE PRIESTS DECLARED IT TO BE 'HERESY TO SPEAK OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES IN ENGLISH,' and he

adds in his *Wicket* that 'such a charge is a condemnation of the Holy Ghost, who first gave the Scriptures in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak that word in all languages that were ordained of God under heaven'" (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 81).

One of Wycliffe's enemies, Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, complained that in translating the Scriptures into English and thus laying it "open to the laity and to women who could read" Wycliffe was casting the Gospel pearl under the feet of swine. This was Rome's view toward those who would give the Word of God to the common man.

For his translation efforts and his biblical views, Wycliffe was hounded mercilessly by the Roman authorities. By Wycliffe's day, "it had become a crime for those who could read

the Scriptures in their mother tongue to do so” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, p. 314).

Wycliffe was forced to appear before the Catholic bishops in the first half of the year 1377 to give an account of his doctrine. Wycliffe had declared the Scriptures “to be the property of the people, and one which no party should be allowed to wrest from them” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xlii).

The Bible translator was protected from the wrath of the bishops at that time by the intervention of the Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt. “Failing in this attempt, the bishops now solicited the aid of the pope, Gregory XI. The desired aid was given in generous measure. In May, 1377, five bulls were issued, designed to weave the coils so effectually about Wycliffe that escape would be impossible, and calling upon the King, the royal princes, the Privy Council, the chief of the nobility, and the University of Oxford, to render their pious assistance in bringing the disturber to justice. ... Wycliffe indeed appeared before the pope’s commissioners and commenced to explain and to justify his teachings. He had not proceeded far, however, when the conference was cut short by the interference of the government and the London populace in his behalf” (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 1895, pp. 409, 10).

Wycliffe has left a record of what he thought of these papal bulls by which he was labeled a heretic for translating the Word of God into English:

You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, pp. 45-47).

It is interesting to note, too, that Wycliffe believed the Bible to be the Word of God without error from beginning to end. He testified, “It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scriptures to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another” (Fountain, p. 48).

Wycliffe would have been cut off by the Roman Catholic authorities had he not, by divine intervention, been protected by certain powerful individuals. One of these was the Duke of Lancaster, mentioned earlier, who “continued to be his shield for years,” but abandoned him in the end. Also, in 1378 Pope Gregory XI died, who had cast many papal bulls against Wycliffe, and the Great Schism began, during which there were two

popes, and these were too busy hurling curses at one another to worry much about Wycliffe in England!

It is fascinating to consider the role of two of the royal women of England as protectors of Wycliffe.

**JOAN THE PRINCESS OF WALES** (1328-85) stopped persecution against Wycliffe on at least one occasion (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xlii). She was the wife of Edward (1330-76), also known as the Black Prince (so named because of his black armor). He was the eldest son of King Edward III. In 1378, when Joan was a widow and the mother of the reigning king Richard II, the enemies of Wycliffe called him to stand before a tribunal of bishops in Lambeth Palace. Wycliffe was accused of spreading heresies, but the bishops were frustrated in carrying out the sentence. "... Sir Richard Clifford entered with a message from [Joan, the widow of the Black Prince], forbidding them to pass sentence upon Wycliffe" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 33). The trial ceased.

The next queen to sit on the English throne was **ANNE, THE WIFE OF RICHARD II** (1367-1400), daughter to the Roman emperor Charles IV and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia. Anne was only a teenager when she was brought to England to wed Richard, but it appears that she was a lover of the Word of God and a defender of God's people until her untimely death. Anne brought versions of the Gospels in German, Bohemian, and Latin with her to England.

This lady already acquainted with three languages, Bohemian, German, and Latin, soon acquired that of this country [England], and for years was distinguished for her diligent perusal of the Scriptures in English. This much was testified of her by a very notable [and hypocritical] witness—the Lord Chancellor Thomas Arundel, then Archbishop of York, when he came to preach at her interment [Arundel was the driving force behind the severe persecution of Bible believers in England in that day]. 'Although she was a stranger,' he said, 'yet she constantly studied the four gospels in English; and in the study of these, and reading of godly books, she was more diligent than the prelates, though their office and business require this of them.' ... The Queen, says Rapin, was a great favourer of Wickliffe's doctrine, and had she lived longer would have saved his followers... (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xliii).

The queen assisted in the progress of truth and the proclamation of the gospel by sending copies of Wycliffe's books into Bohemia by her attendants (Ivimey, I, p. 69). Her compassionate heart was evident in one of her first official acts. At her coronation the young queen asked the king to grant a general pardon.

The afflicted people stood in need of this respite, as the executions, since Wat Tyler's insurrection, had been bloody and barbarous beyond all precedent. The land was reeking with the blood of the unhappy peasantry, when the humane intercession of the gentle Anne of Bohemia put a stop to the executions. This mediation obtained for Richard's bride the title of 'The good Queen Anne'; and years, instead of impairing the popularity, usually so evanescent in England, only increased the esteem felt by her subjects for this beneficent princess (*Miller's Church History*, p. 661).

The godly queen died in June 1394, at the age of twenty-seven.

In 1381 Wycliffe boldly proclaimed that the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation was false. He taught that the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper do not change substance and are merely symbolical of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wycliffe's former protector, John Gaunt, refused to accept Wycliffe's denial of Rome's lynchpin doctrine. He warned Wycliffe to be silent about this, but Wycliffe refused, though he knew by his stand he would probably lose his protection from an earthly perspective. Gaunt did withdraw his guardianship, and Wycliffe was expelled from his teaching position at Oxford and was forced into exile, withdrawing to his parish of Lutterworth where he lived until his death. That same year the Chancellor "issued a mandate forbidding some of Wycliffe's theses on the Lord's Supper to be taught in the University as being plainly heterodox. At the middle of the next year the archbishop sent orders to the University prohibiting attendance upon the preaching of Wycliffe" (Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 422). In 1381 "the English Parliament passed the first English statute against heresy, enjoining the arrest, trial and imprisonment of heretics" (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 459).

In May 1382, Wycliffe was called before yet another synod of ecclesiastical authorities. This is called the Blackfriars' Synod, because it was held in the monastery of Blackfriars in London. When the 47 bishops and monks and religious doctors took their seats, a powerful earthquake shook the city. Huge stones fell out of castle walls and pinnacles toppled. "Wycliffe called it a judgment of God and afterwards described the gathering as the 'Earthquake Council'" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 39). The synod condemned Wycliffe, charging him specifically with 10 heresies and 16 errors. His writings were forbidden to be read in the land. The king gave authority to imprison those who believed the condemned doctrines.

Wycliffe died on December 31, 1384, and **John Purvey**, a friend who had lived with Wycliffe and been taught by him, completed a revision of the Wycliffe Bible in the years immediately following his death.

Another man who helped with the translation of the Wycliffe Bible was **Nicholas de Hereford**. Like Wycliffe, Hereford was denounced as a heretic by the Catholic Church. In May 1382, he was summoned to stand trial in London before the Synod of Preaching Friars, and in July he was excommunicated. He was afterward imprisoned in Rome, and later, imprisoned again in England. The Catholic historian Knyghton says Hereford recanted in 1382, but W.H. Summers says: "... the truth of this has been called into question. He went to Rome, was cast into prison by Urban VI, but escaped in 1385, when the prison was broken open in a popular tumult. Then he took the lead of the party for a time, but seems at last to have recanted. He was made chancellor of Hereford Cathedral, and died a Carthusian monk" (Summers, *Our Lollard Ancestors*, 1904, p. 47).

## The Lollards

Wycliffe had established a group of men who went through the land distributing the Scriptures and preaching the Word of God to the people. These were called “poor priests” and “Bible men” and Wycliffites and other terms, and eventually were also called Lollards. It is important to understand, though, that the term *Lollard* predated Wycliffe. “The name ‘Lollard,’ in use both in England and Germany long before the time of the Wycliffites, is involved in obscurity; variously derived, from the Dutch *lollaerd*, a mumblar (of prayers and hymns), first applied to a sect in Brabant; from Walter Lolhardus, a German; from Walter Lollardus, an Englishman burnt for heresy in Cologne; ingeniously, but not very credibly, from *lolium*, cockle, because ‘these sectaries sowed tares among the wheat’” (Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, 1914, p. 42).

Joseph Ivimey, author of *The History of the English Baptists* (1811), also traces the roots of the Lollards to Walter Lollardus, who is identified as a Waldensian pastor.



There seems to me to be reason to believe that the Lollards in England were of similar sentiments on this subject [that of rejecting infant baptism and practicing believer's baptism only]. Walter Lollard from whom they sprung, was a Waldensian barb; and I have never seen any satisfactory proof that infant baptism was practised among these Christians at this early period of their history. These, it is likely, were the first public opposers of the corruptions of the church of Rome in England, after the fatal massacre of the ancient British Christians under the direction of the pope's legate, Austin, who has been flattered with the epithet of the English Apostle, and canonized as a Saint by the church of Rome (Ivimey, I, p. 64).

Like *Waldenses* and *Paulicians*, the term *Lollard* came to be used by Roman authorities to malign various groups of separatist Christians. (At times it was also used to describe men who were motivated more by political purposes than spiritual.) There can be no doubt, however, that John Wycliffe and his Scripture translation and teachings had a large influence and did launch a Bible-believing movement that reached extensively across England and to other lands, particularly Bohemia. It is important to note that these Bible believers were not following a man, nor were they organized into any kind of broad

association. Many histories approach these Bible-believing “sects” as if they were slavishly dependent upon certain key leaders, which is not true. The churches and groups that have maintained the New Testament faith through the centuries from the time of the apostles were helped oftentimes by strong leaders raised up by God, but they were not entirely dependent upon these men. The faith of the true Christian has always leaned exclusively upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word. The Bible-believing Christian follows men only insofar as those men follow the Scriptures. The keynote of John Wycliffe’s message was the sufficiency of Scripture, and those who were influenced by him held this position, though they applied the Scripture variously, some being more thoroughly “reformed” and separated from Romanism than others.

The Scriptures, in fragments and via expensive full manuscripts, were multiplied widely among the people. One of the enemies of the Truth, testifying of the character of those who were influenced by Wycliffe, said “they all expressed profound respect for God’s law.” That is an honorable testimony!

Wycliffe’s translation was taken from the Latin, but it had a powerful influence upon the English language and people. Blackford Condit speaks of “the excellencies of Wycliffe as a translator” in these words: “There is a marked simplicity in his phraseology which has been peculiar ever since to English versions of the Scriptures. ... There is an important relation existing between Vernacular versions of the Scriptures and the languages into which they are translated. So marked is this influence where such translation is made, that it constitutes an epoch in the literary and in the religious history of the people. ... It was a bold stroke on the part of Wycliffe to set forth the Scriptures in the language of the people, but the results far exceeded his fondest expectations. In all simplicity he thought to give the word of God to his own age, but in fact he laid the foundation for the Reformation in England, and for the permanence and excellence of the English language” (*History of the English Bible*, pp. 67, 79, 80).

Many phrases from the English Bible of 1611 can be traced back to Wycliffe, including “straight is the gate and narrow the way,” “born again,” “worship the father in spirit and truth,” “the spirit of adoption of sons,” “a living sacrifice,” “the deep things of God,” “the cup of blessing which we bless,” “what fellowship hath light with darkness,” “we make known to you the grace of God,” “and upbraideth not,” “whited sepulchres,” “revelation of the mystery,” “be it far from thee,” “despise ye the Church of God,” “the world and all that dwell therein is the Lord’s,” “who is this King of glory?” “he taught them in parables.”

Though Wycliffe himself was protected by the hand of God and the Catholic authorities were never allowed to kill him, his writings were condemned and his followers were excommunicated and some were put to death. Portions of the Wycliffe Bible were multiplied rapidly and enjoyed a wide circulation, not only in England, but also in neighboring countries.

By reference to the Bishop's Registers it will appear that these little books were numerous, as they are often specified as being found upon the persons of those accused. Sometimes the Gospels are spoken of either separately, or together; or it is the book of Acts, or the Epistle of James, or the Apocalypse that is specified. It appears also from these Registers, that many of those who possessed these little volumes were either servants or tradesmen (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 75).

This Bible provoked bitter opposition, and it became necessary for the people to meet in secret to read it, as they often did. Persecution did not begin at once, but it finally became widespread and bitter. Many suffered and it has been said that some, for daring to read the Bible, WERE BURNED WITH COPIES OF IT ABOUT THEIR NECKS (Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 161).

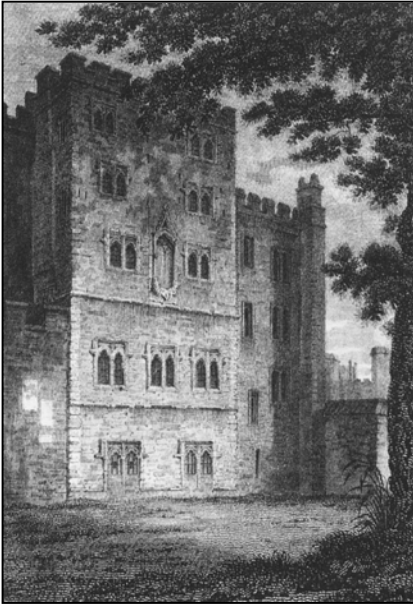
William Blackburn tells of a martyr of that day who was burned because he “kept counsel in huyding [hiding] of Lollard’s books” (*History of the Christian Church*, p. 345).

In March and April of 1388 “commissions were issued to seize the writings of Wycliffe and Hereford, and they were repeated several times in that and the following year. In 1391 a bill was written into Parliament to forbid the circulation of the English Scriptures; but it was rejected through the influence of the Duke of Lancaster” (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 83).

In 1392 a man named William Smith was persecuted for copying the Gospels and the Epistles in English.

Persecutions were poured out upon the followers of Wycliffe and upon other Bible-believing Christians from the time of **King Henry IV**, who reigned from 1399 to 1413. (Interestingly, Henry IV was the son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the man who protected Wycliffe some two decades prior to Henry’s ascension to the throne.) From the time of Henry, “Their blood flowed in a stream for nearly two centuries with slight respite” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 323). In 1401 an Act was passed under Henry IV which condemned “divers false and perverse people of a new sect; they make unlawful conventicles, they hold and exercise schools, and make and write books.” “By this Act, the lives of the subjects were put under the control of the bishops, who got power to fine and imprison all heretics, and all possessors of heretical books, while obstinate and lapsed heretics were handed over to the sheriff, to be burned at once, ‘in a high place before the people, that they might take salutary warning.’ The Act bears the title—‘The Orthodoxy of the Faith of the Church of England asserted, and provision made against oppugners of the same, with the punishment of hereticks.’ ... Though such penalties may have been inflicted on heretics at an early time, the punishment was only occasional, and the civil law intervened; but, now, a simple decree of a bishop sufficed to send a man to the stake, and the accusation of heresy became sufficiently elastic to bring within it a considerable variety of offenders” (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 84, 85).

In 1400 or 1401, the second or third year of Henry IV, a man named William Sawtree (Sautre) was burned at the stake, and in 1409 a tailor named Bradbe was roasted alive in a barrel (Eadie, I, p. 87; Hassell, pp. 465, 66).



Lollard's Tower in 1804

The prison in London called the Lollard's Tower was so named because of the great number of these Bible-believing people who were tormented behind its walls. "The Lollards' tower still stands a monument of their miseries, and of the cruelty of their implacable enemies. This tower is at Lambeth palace, and was fitted up for this purpose by Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who came to his see in 1414. It is said that he expended two hundred and eighty pounds to make this prison for the Lollards. The vast staples and rings to which they were fastened, before they were brought out to the stake, are still to be seen in a large lumber-room at the top of the palace, and ought to make protestants look back with gratitude upon the hour which terminated so bloody a period" (Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, pp. 71, 72).

In 1408 Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the Synod of Oxford, made a constitution which made it illegal to read any of Wycliffe's writings or translations within the province of Canterbury. "Detected copies of the Bible, or of any of its component books, would consequently be destroyed" (H.W. Hoare, *Our English Bible: The Story of Its Origin and Growth*, 1901, p. 100). The *Constitutions of Thomas Arundel* made the following brash demand:

WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF THE SCRIPTURE INTO ENGLISH, OR ANY OTHER TONGUE, by way of a book, libel, or treatise, now lately set forth in the time of John Wyckliff, or since, or hereafter to be set forth, in part or in whole, privily or apertly, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial" (Eadie, I, p. 89). This was the first English statute for the burning of heretics (though Bible-believing Christians had been burned before this), and it was not repealed until 1677, or 276 years later. This is Arundel's estimation of the Bible translator: "This pestilential and most wretched John Wycliffe of damnable memory, a child of the old devil, and himself a child or pupil of Anti-Christ, who while he lived, walking in the vanity of his mind ... crowned his wickedness by translating the Scriptures into the mother tongue (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 45).



Thirty of the more prominent Lollards were put to death at various times, and John Eadie tells us that “there were other executions under this disgraceful Act, of which little record has come down to us” (*The English Bible*, I, p. 88).

Some were forced to wear a depiction of a fiery torch on their clothes for the rest of their lives as a reminder “that they deserved burning” and as a continual warning to others of the potential price of standing upon the Bible and rejecting Roman Catholic authority. “... such was the craft and diligence of the clergy, that they found out means to discover many of them, and by virtue of the statute ex officio, which they had now obtained, persecuted them with great cruelty, so that the prisons were full of them, many were forced to abjure, and those that refused were used without mercy” (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, p. 22).

In 1410 about 200 copies of Wycliffe’s writings were publicly burned at Oxford.

Cushing Hassell says:

Entire copies of the Bible, when they could only be multiplied by means of amanuenses [requiring as much as a year to produce a single copy], were too costly to be within the reach of very many readers; but those who could not procure ‘the volume of the book’ would give a load of hay for a few favorite chapters, and many such scraps were consumed upon the persons of the martyrs at the stake. They would hide the forbidden treasure under the floors of their houses, and put their lives in peril rather than forego the book they desired; they would sit up at night, sometimes all night long, their doors being shut for fear of surprise, reading or hearing others read the word of God; they would bury themselves in the woods, and there converse with

it in solitude; they would tend their herds in the fields, and still steal an hour for drinking in the good tidings of great joy (J.J. Blunt, cited by Hassell, pp. 459, 60).



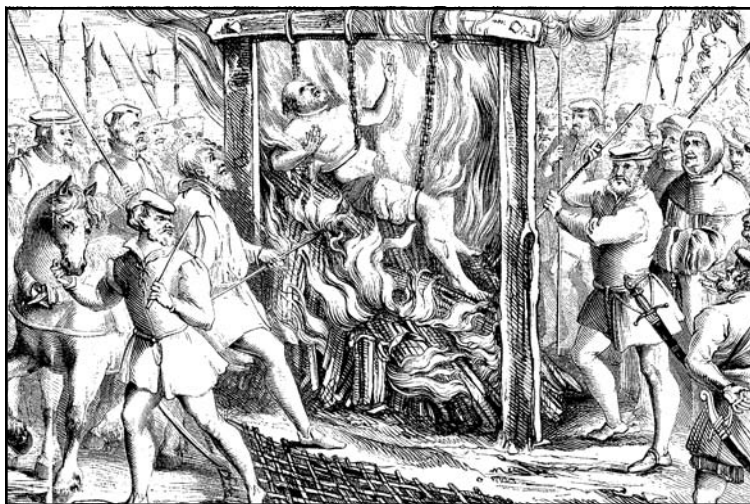
Oldcastle standing guard against the Catholic friars while a Lollard preacher proclaims the gospel

During the reign of **King Henry V** (1413-22), an Act (passed earlier under Richard II but never sent to the house of Commons) was confirmed by which the “English sheriffs were forced to take an oath to persecute the Lollards, and the

justices must deliver a relapsed heretic to be burned within ten days of his accusation. ... No mercy was shown under any circumstances” (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, pp. 323, 325).

In 1414 the legislature under Henry V joined in asking for harder measures against the Lollards. “After a suspected rising of the Lollards, a law was passed, declaring that ALL WHO READ THE SCRIPTURES IN THE MOTHER TONGUE SHOULD ‘FORFEIT LAND, CATEL, LIF, AND GOODS, FROM THEYR HEYRES [THEIR HEIRS] FOR EVER”” (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 89). In 1416 Archbishop Chichele at Oxford enjoined “upon the clergy a thorough search in every parish twice a year, for all persons that ‘hold any either heresies or errors, or have any suspected books in the English tongue,’ or harbor any heretics” (Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church from Its Origin to the*

*Present Time*, 1880, p. 346).



Oldcastle in the fire

At Christmas time in 1417, **Sir John Oldcastle (Lord Cobham)** was barbarously martyred for his faith in the Word of God and his rejection of Rome’s authority. He had caused numerous copies of Wycliffe’s Bible to be made and distributed among the people. He loved the preaching of the Lollards, supported them with his own money, and protected

them from persecution. Cobham was a favorite of King Henry IV, and was shielded by the king until his death in 1413. The enemies of the Word of God wasted no time after this. That same year Cobham was arrested and sentenced to die. He escaped and fled to Wales. The conniving ecclesiastical authorities invented a ruse to further infuriate the king against the Lollards in general and against Lord Cobham in particular. They convinced the king that the Lollards were involved in conspiracies to overthrow the crown. John Foxe tells us that these wolves in sheep’s clothing reported that the Lollards intended to murder the king, together with the princes, his brothers, and most of the lords spiritual and temporal, in hopes that the confusion that must necessarily arise in the kingdom, after such a massacre, would prove favorable to their religion.

On the basis of this fraud, the king passed a new and violent statute to suppress the Lollards. The priests then told the king that Sir John Oldcastle had gathered an uprising of 20,000 Lollards in St. Giles's in the Fields. The king himself, at the head of an army, went to the field at midnight to encounter the "rebel forces." What the king found, instead, was a pitiful group of 80 or 100 Christians who were meeting covertly to practice their religion. The king fell upon these harmless souls and destroyed many of them. Some who were captured later falsely confessed against Oldcastle under torture or in exchange for money. Thus, Oldcastle, who had nothing to do with any uprising against the king, who had, rather, often defended the throne at risk to his own life, was falsely labeled an outlaw against the state, as well as a heretic against the established church. A massive award of one thousand marks was offered for his arrest, and a promise of perpetual exemption from taxes was offered to any town that captured him.

After more than three years at large, Oldcastle was betrayed in North Wales by Lord Powis, "a covetous and bigoted papist," who sold out Oldcastle to the Catholic authorities for a considerable sum of money. The faithful baron remained steadfast in his faith to Christ to the end. Brought to the place of punishment a few days before Christmas, 1417, "having a cheerful countenance," it was evident that he still carried a burden for the souls of the people. Prior to his brutal execution, the fallen baron warned the people to obey the Holy Bible and to beware of false teachers, whose lives are contrary to Christ and His example. His rejection of Rome was evident in his refusal to allow a Catholic priest to minister to him, boldly declaring, instead, that he would confess his sins "to God only." Falling down on his knees, he prayed that God would forgive his persecutors. This man who had loved the Word of God and had caused it to be distributed among the people, was hung in chains and suspended over the fire to be roasted alive. Walsingham says Oldcastle was hung as a traitor and burnt as a heretic. As this barbarous execution proceeded, the hateful priests and monks reviled and cursed the man and did their best to prevent the people from praying for him. It was to no avail. The people loved the godly knight and they wept and prayed with him and for him. The last words which were heard, before his voice was drowned by the roaring flames, was "Praise God!"

Historian Rapin says that "Thus died Sir John Oldcastle, baron of Cobham, with wonderful constancy, perfectly answerable to the firmness wherewith he had all along maintained the doctrine of Wickliffe which he professed."

John Oldcastle has been libeled in some church histories as a traitor and an evil man, but from what we read in the ancient records, we salute him as a victorious soldier of Jesus Christ and look forward to meeting him in Glory.

Many others were burned, while still others were punished by other nefarious means. Some were branded on the cheeks. "Their necks were tied fast to a post with towels, and their hands holden, that they might not stir; and so the hot iron was put to their cheeks.

It is not certain whether branded with L for Lollard, or H for heretic, or whether it was only a formless print of iron" (Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*, p. 164).

"Multitudes were thus driven into exile, fleeing into Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, and the wilds of Scotland, Wales and Ireland; of course they carried with them the Scriptures and the love of the truth, and the glad tidings of God's salvation were thus disseminated in many countries" (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 466).



The people loved to hear the English Scriptures

Wycliffe's writings were destroyed in other lands, as well. In 1375, the Archbishop of Prague issued orders for Wycliffe's books to be burned, and "consequently two hundred volumes of them, finely written, and adorned with costly covers and gold borders, were committed to the flames" (Orchard, *A Concise History of Baptists*, p. 237). "Archbishop Zbinco burned Wickliff's writings in Prague . . .

and their final condemnation was pronounced by the Council of Rome in 1413" (Lea, *Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, abridged by Nicholson, p. 872).

P. Marion Simms says that "Wycliffe's writings were burned in large numbers, so that today only fifteen MSS. of his Old Testament and eighteen of the New remain" (*The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 164).

That the Lollards had increased dramatically in Scotland is testified by the passing of the Act of Heretics and Lollards, in March 1424. In 1411 the first inquisitor had been appointed in Scotland, named Laurence of Lindores, for the persecution of Bible believers.

In 1421 John Purvey, who took up Wycliffe's mantle upon his death, was arrested a second time for preaching against Rome's errors and for the distribution of Scriptures. (It is said that during his first arrest in 1400 he recanted.) It is probable that he died in

prison in miserable straits for his faith in the Word of God sometime during or after 1427. We are told that he “endured great suffering in Saltwood Castle” (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 65).

One Catholic leader of Wycliffe’s day complained in writing about Wycliffe’s translation with these words:

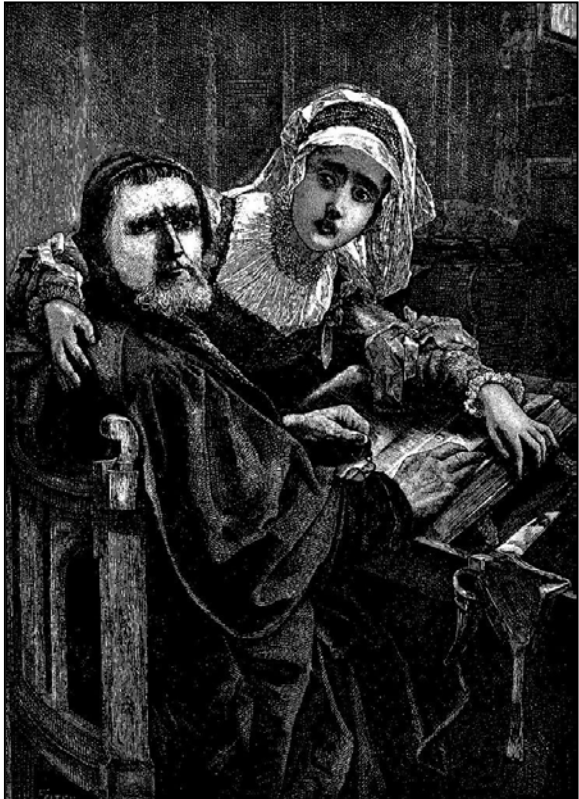
This Master John Wickliffe hath translated the Gospel out of Latin into English, which Christ had intrusted with the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker sort, according to the state of the times and the wants of men. So that by this means the Gospel is made vulgar, and laid more open to the laity, and even to women who can read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy and those of the best understanding! And what was before the chief gift of the clergy and doctors of the Church, is made for ever common to the laity (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xli). Another Catholic writer said:

The prelates ought not to suffer that every one at his pleasure should read the Scripture, translated even into Latin; because, as is plain from experience, this has been many ways the occasion of falling into heresies and errors. It is not, therefore, politic that any one, wheresoever and whensoever he will, should give himself to the frequent study of the Scriptures (Ibid.).

These poor blinded men expressed the attitude toward the distribution of Scripture which was common in that day among Catholic leaders.

Of the Catholic bishops in England from the days of Wycliffe in the 14th century until the separation of the nation from Rome in the mid-16th, historian Christopher Anderson, who looked into the history of the English nation during this era very diligently, observed:

Thus did this body of men first come out [to oppose Wycliffe], appearing as a distinct interest in the kingdom, and thus they will remain for above five generations to come; proving ever and anon, upon all occasions of alarm, that they were the determined opponents of Divine Truth. As a body, they will oppose its being conveyed to the people, and at every successive step of progress (*Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xxxviii).



The Forbidden Book

The persecutions poured out upon the English Scriptures and those who loved them did not quench the Light, and it is fascinating to recall the situation then existing among those who would read the Bible for themselves. It is good that this present generation, which can obtain a copy of the Bible for a pittance, not forget the great value of the same. The Bible was worth more than life itself to many of these ancient Christians, and so it is today to those who understand its true value.

The forbidden book was often read by night, and those who had not been themselves educated listened with eagerness to the reading of others; but to read it, and to hear it read, were alike forbidden. Copies of the New Testament were also borrowed from hand to hand through a wide circle, and poor people gathered their pennies and formed copartneries for the purchase of the sacred volume. Those who could afford it gave five marks for the coveted manuscript (a very large amount of money in that day), and others in their penury gave gladly for a few leaves of St. Peter and St. Paul a load of hay. ... Some committed portions to memory, that they might recite them to relatives and friends. Thus Alice Collins was commonly sent for to the meetings, 'to recite unto them the Ten Commandments and the Epistles of Peter and James.' ... In 1429 Margery Backster was indicted because she asked her maid Joan to 'come and hear her husband read the law of Christ out of a book he was wont to read by night.' ... The means employed to discover the readers and possessors of Scripture were truly execrable in character. Friends and relations were put on oath, and bound to say what they knew of their own kindred. The privacy of the household was violated through this espionage; and husband and wife, parent and child, were sworn against one another. The ties of blood were wronged, and the confidence of friendship was turned into a snare in this secret service. Universal suspicion must have been created; no one could tell who his accuser might be, for the friend to whom he had read of Christ's betrayal might soon be tempted to act the part of Judas towards himself, and for some paltry consideration sell his life to the ecclesiastical powers (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 91, 92, 93).

"In about three years from 1428, to 1431, one hundred and twenty persons were committed to prison for Lollardy; some of them recanted, others did penance, and several of them were burnt alive" (Benedict, *A General History*, I, p. 194).

The groups of Christians who founded their faith and practice upon the Wycliffe Bible continued to exist and continued to be persecuted until the time of William Tyndale.

On some unknown account, conjectured to be either the weariness of the persecutors or the suppression of the public worship of the Lollards, the burnings for heresy ceased in England about 1435, but were revived from 1485... In spite of the opposition, however, Lollardy made the Bible familiar to the people of England in their mother tongue (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 466).

The knowledge of divine truth, received by the reading of the Scriptures, was transmitted by a succession of pious men for more than a century after Wycliffe's death. ... Readers of the manuscript Bible were numerous in London, where they had several places of meeting; and they abounded also in the counties of Lincoln, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Buckingham, and Hereford. ... These Bible readers called themselves 'brothers' or 'sisters' in Christ, and at an early period they took the name of 'just-fast men,' or 'known men,' and 'known women' (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 94, 95).

The name "known men" referred to the conviction among these Christians that if a person did not know the New Testament he was not known or recognized of God.

In 1494 an old woman was burned at the stake for her faith in Christ.

In 1496 and 1498 many were forced to abjure their “heresies” and “to wear the fashion of a faggot, wrought in thread or painted, on their left sleeves, all the days of their lives: it being death to put on their cloaks without that cognizance. And, indeed, to poor people it was true,—put it off, and be burned; keep it on, and be starved: seeing none generally would set them on work that carried that badge about them” (Benjamin Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, p. 23, f1).

In 1506 William Tylsworth was burned for his faith in the Word of God, and his own daughter was forced to ignite the cruel fire.

There was persecution in 1511 under Warham of Canterbury and Smith of Lincoln. James Brewster was burned at the stake that year, and one of his “crimes” was “having a certain little book of Scripture in English of an old writing almost worn for age, whose name is not there expressed” (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 80). William Sweting, who was burned with Brewster, was charged with “having confidence in a book which was called Matthew.”

From 1509 to 1517 there was persecution under Fitzjames, Bishop of London (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 94). In 1514, Richard Hun, committed to the Lollard’s Tower in London, “was found dead in his cell, there being strong suspicions that he had been murdered. His indictment before his death bore that he ‘had in his keeping divers English books prohibited and damned by the law, as the Apocalypse in English, and Epistles and Gospels in English.’ One of the ‘new articles’ brought against him after his death was ‘that he defendeth the translation of the Bible and of the Holy Scripture into English” (Eadie, I, p. 92).

In 1519, six men and a woman were burned “for teaching their children the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments in English” (Eadie, I, p. 91).

“About 1520 and 1521, more than five hundred men and women were arrested in the one diocese of Lincoln, under Bishop Longhand” (Eadie, I, p. 94). A.F. Pollard, in his biography of Thomas Cranmer, identifies these persecuted people as “Lollards” (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, p. 91).

“The influence of Wycliffe had not ceased when that of Tyndale began, for in 1529, and in the fierce proclamation of that year against heretical books—Tyndale’s Testament occupying the first place on the list—all civil officers are enjoined at the same time to ‘destroy all heresies and errors commonly called Lollardies.’ Wycliffe’s followers were therefore still of such note and influence as to obtain a place in this royal document” (Eadie, I, p. 95).

Christopher Anderson speaks of seasons of persecution that occurred periodically throughout the 15th and early 16th centuries. He gives incontrovertible proof that the New Testament in manuscript was being read during the reign of James IV in Scotland

(1488-1513). Consider John Campbell, who was arrested before 1513 because he possessed an English New Testament. The details of this case had not been published before the printing of Anderson's book in 1845 (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, pp. 400-401).

In fact, Wycliffe's writings were still being mentioned in government documents even after William Tyndale's death. In 1546 a proclamation was by the English authorities again expressly forbidding the possession of Scriptures or books by various men. Wycliffe was included in the list, which tells us that some of his Scriptures and/or books were still in circulation.

Christopher Anderson gives an interesting thought on why it was the Latin Vulgate that was first translated into the English language.

It was the Latin Bible, therefore, long buried in cloisters, or covered with the dust of ages, which must now be brought forth to view. Confessedly imperfect, it was of importance first to prove that it had all along contained enough for mortal man to know, in order to his eternal salvation; and once translated into any native tongue, not only will the language touch the heart, but the people at last know what that mysterious book was, from which they had been debarred, so wickedly and so long. Although, therefore, the nation was yet an hundred and fifty years distant from the English Bible, properly so called, the present should be regarded as the first preliminary step. An all-disposing foresight, far above that of any human agent, is now distinctly visible in drawing first upon that very language which had been employed for ages as the instrument of mental bondage. It shall now be made to contribute to the emancipation of the human mind (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. xl).

John Eadie (*The English Bible*, 1876) adds this comment in regard to the Latin being the foundation for the first English Bible:

Any attempt to translate from a Greek original at that period, had it been practicable, might have led to confusion and misunderstanding; for ignorance would have branded such a book as heretical and misleading, if it was found to differ in any way from the ecclesiastical text. The common people could not have appreciated these variations, and such prejudices would have been created against the new version as the priesthood could easily foster and spread. Yet the translation of the Latin Scriptures had been a first step to something higher, an intermediate gift to the nation. The effect had been like the first touch of the Blessed Hand upon its vision—"it saw men as trees walking;" and when at length the second touch passed over it, it looked up, and then it 'saw every man clearly' (Eadie, I, p. 101).

During the days of Wycliffe, certain men were laboring to preach the Word of God to the people of Wales. About that time, **Davydd Ddu (David Blac)** translated portions of the Bible into the **Welsh** language so the people could understand the Word of God and turn to Jesus Christ from their false religion. David Black, Walter Brute, John Kent, and others labored through preaching and writing to open the Gospel to their fellow man, though they were labeled magicians by Catholic authorities. "It may be fairly conjectured that these drolleries were circulated by the clergy, to prejudice the minds of the people against the reformers" (Davis, *History of the Welsh Baptists*, 1835, p. 24). Brute was charged with heresy in 1393, and at his trial he "avowed his belief in the sufficiency of



the Scriptures, as the infallible rule of faith and practice.” Amen!

Wycliffe’s English translation was only one of the many **VERNACULAR TRANSLATIONS THAT WERE PRODUCED IN THE 15TH CENTURY**.

There were at least 12 different editions of the Bible into the **German** language prior to the discovery of America in 1492. In fact, the first printed German Bible appeared in 1466 (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 1934, p. 243).

Two translations were published in **Italian** in 1471-72, though they were probably plagiarized from a 13th century version that had been produced by the Tuscan Patarians (Luzzi, *The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy*, pp. 120-22).

A **Dutch** Old Testament appeared in 1477 (Stoughton, *Our English Bible*, 1878, p. 57).

A complete Bible in **Swedish** appeared in the 15th century. This was based on a translation made before 1350 (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52).

There were translations made into **French** in the 15th century, based on a translation completed two centuries earlier (Norlie, p. 52).

A **Spanish** version of the entire Bible by Bonifacio Ferrer was printed at Valencia in 1478 (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 191).

The **Bohemian** versions are another example of 15th-century Bible translation activity. “From A.D. 1410 to 1488, four different recensions of the entire Scriptures can be traced, and many more of the New Testament, some being translated anew. It is an interesting fact, that Guttenberg, the inventor of cut metal types, used them in printing the earliest edition of the Latin Bible (the Mazarine), A.D. 1450-1455; and that the Bohemian Bible, published by the Brethren in 1488, was one of the first instances on record where the newly-invented art of printing was applied to the use of the Bible in a living language. This was ... four years before the discovery of America by Columbus. ... This godly literature went on increasing and preparing the world for the Reformation [until Bohemian nationality was lost in the Thirty Years’ War (1620)] . . . EVERY BOHEMIAN BOOK WAS BURNT ON SUSPICION OR BRAND OF HERESY, and some individuals boasted that they had burnt sixty thousand copies of this sacred literature” (Armitage, I, p. 321).

This godly effort to bring light to the people was paralleled by Rome’s attempts to destroy the same.

It was during these days in the early part of the fifteenth century, that the tormented Albigenes were finally subdued in Spain. “On application to John II. King of Castile, a band of royal musqueteers was sent to scour the mountains of Biscay, and the higher districts of Old Castile, who drove down the heretics like cattle before them, and delivered them to the inquisitors, by whom they were committed to the flames at St.

Domingo de la Calzado, and Valladolid. Thus were the Albigenses, after a barbarous and unrelenting persecution of two centuries, exterminated in Spain, with the exception of a few, who contrived to conceal themselves in the more remote and inaccessible parts of the country, and at a subsequent period, furnished occasionally a straggling victim to the familiars of the inquisition, when surfeited with the blood of Jews and Moriscoes" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 43).

## What the Popes Were Doing in the 14th and 15th Centuries

**Gregory XI (1370-1378)**, in 1376, issued "a bull in which he deplored the dissemination of heretical books in Germany, and directed the inquisitors to examine all suspected writings, condemning those found to contain errors, after which it became an offense punishable by the Inquisition to copy, possess, buy, or sell them. ... About the same period Eymerich was engaged in condemning the works of Raymond Lully, of Raymond of Tarrage, and others" (Henry Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, abridged by Nicholson, p. 872). It became "a recognized rule with the Inquisition that he into whose hands a heretical book might fall and who did not burn it at once or deliver it within eight days to his bishop or inquisitor was held vehemently suspect of heresy. THE TRANSLATION OF ANY PART OF SCRIPTURE INTO THE VERNACULAR WAS ALSO FORBIDDEN" (Lea, p. 873). In 1377 Gregory XI "ordered Wickliffe to be seized and imprisoned, till farther orders" (Anderson, I, p. xxxviii). The pope's will toward Wycliffe was thwarted, though; and, as we have seen, Wycliffe lived seven years longer and completed his translation work. Gregory XI, on the other hand, died in March 1378; and the "great schism" began, during which there were TWO popes, one in Rome and one in Avignon, France, vying for power, "tossing curses at each other" and "consigning each other to perdition." Pope Urban VI at Rome excommunicated Clement VII at Avignon, and Clement excommunicated Urban!



**Urban VI (1378-1389)** continued in the persecuting footsteps of his forefathers. He "was a ferocious brute, who had five of his enemies secretly murdered" (J.E. Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*). In 1380, a monk inquisitor named Francis Boralli had a commission granted him "to search for, and punish the Waldenses in Aix, Ambrune, Geneva, Savoy, Orange, Arles, Vienne, Avignon, etc. He went to Ambrune, and summoned all the inhabitants to appear before him; when those who were found to be of the reformed religion, were delivered over to the secular power, and burnt; and those who did not appear, were excommunicated for contumacy, and had their effects confiscated. In the distribution of the effects, the clergy had two thirds of the property of all who were condemned, and the

secular power one third” (Foxe, abridged, p. 86).

It was during the reign of Urban that the “papal schism” occurred, and for the next 40 years there were two popes, who excommunicated and cursed one another, calling one another “heretic, demon, antichrist.” The Catholic countries of Europe chose sides. Germany and England and some of the smaller states siding with Urban, while Spain, France, and Scotland stood with Clement. Armies went to battle under the standard of their chosen pope and blood flowed. When King Henry IV of England wrote to one of the popes and asked him to step down for the sake of peace, he referred to “many thousands of lives” that had been lost in this quarrel.”

Then, to make matters even more confusing, the Council of Pisa in 1409 condemned the two popes, Gregory XII and Benedict XIII, pronouncing them “notorious and incorrigible heretics,” and elected a THIRD pope, Alexander V! The first two popes immediately cursed and excommunicated Alexander, and he replied in kind.

The peaceful, Bible-loving Waldensians suffered greatly during the reign of **Pope Boniface IX (1389-1404)**. An inquisitor named Boralli, already mentioned, representing

Pope Boniface, had 150 Vaudois men, women, and children, brought to Grenoble and burned alive (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 26). At Christmas in the year 1400, this same blood-thirsty inquisitor, at the head of an armed troop, came upon the Waldenses of the Valley of Pragelas. The people were forced to flee into the stormy, snow-covered mountains, carrying their sick, elderly, and infants. “Without shelter, without



food, the frozen snow around them, the winter’s sky overhead, their sufferings were inexpressibly great. Fifty to eighty children died, ‘some lying on the bare ice, others locked in the frozen arms of their mothers, who had perished on that dreadful night along with their babes’” (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 27).

During the reign of **Gregory XII (1406-1410 or 1416)**, as mentioned earlier, the Synod of Oxford in 1408 made the following proclamation: “No unauthorized person shall

translate any part of the holy Scriptures into English, or any other language, under any form of book or treatise; neither shall any such book, treatise, or version, made either in Wiclif's time, or since, be read, either in whole or in part, publicly or privately, under penalty of the greater excommunication, till such translation shall be approved" (Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 162). Under this pope, harsh persecution was poured out upon those who read the English Scriptures. In Spain, "from 1412 to 1425, a great number of persons who entertained the sentiments of the Vaudois were committed to the flames by the inquisitors of Valentia, Rousillon, and Majorca" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 42).

It was the **Council of Constance (1415-1418)** that condemned John Wycliffe of England and John Huss of Bohemia as heretics and granted authority for the removal of Wycliffe's bones from their resting place. "As his Bible aroused the English conscience, the pope felt a chill; he heard unearthly sounds rattle through the empty caverns of his soul, and he mistook Wickliff's bones for his Bible. The moldering skeleton of the sleeping translator polluted the consecrated ground where it slept. The Council of Constance condemned his Bible and his bones to be burnt together" (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 315).

Huss was invited to explain his teachings to this Council and was promised a safe conduct. Once there, he was imprisoned under very harsh circumstances and his safe conduct was withdrawn. He was condemned as a heretic and burned on his birthday, July 6, 1415. Huss's books also were burned. Two months earlier, on May 30, this same Catholic Council had burned Huss's fellow-countryman, Jerome of Prague.

Thirteen years after the Council of Constance, the strange deed of exhuming John Wycliffe's bones was accomplished. During the reign of **Pope Martin V (1417-1431)**, the bones of the Bible translator were dug up and burned and the ashes scattered. This was nearly forty-four years after Wycliffe's death! What sight could be more unscriptural, more pagan, more wicked, than these Catholic leaders digging up old bones in a graveyard so they can publicly desecrate the long-dead Bible translator? What other evidence do we need that the Roman Catholic Church is apostate? After the remains of Wycliffe were burned, the ashes were cast into the little river Swift that runs near the Lutterworth Church. The



Catholic authorities burning Wycliffe's bones

historian Thomas Fuller saw in this a far grander vision than the one enjoyed that day by the Catholic authorities who carried out the dastardly deed:

To Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissarie, Official, Chancellour, Proctors, Doctors, and the Servants ... take, what was left, out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift a Neighbouring Brook running hard by. Thus this Brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow Seas; they, into the main Ocean. And thus the Ashes of Wickliff are the Emblem of his Doctrine, which now, is dispersed all the World over (Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*).

In the year 1418, Martin V issued his own anathema against the followers of Wycliffe and Huss and any others that would trust in Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures alone (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 391).

The Catholic historian Knighton complained that “Christ gave the Gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church that they might administer it gently to laymen and weaker persons, according to their needs; but this Master John Wyclif has translated it into the Anglic—not angelic—tongue, and made it vulgar and more open to the laity and to women than it usually is to the lettered clerks; and so the jewel is made the sport of the people.” William Blackburn wisely comments: “What sort of sport was it for the people to prize it, read it, believe it, hide it when their houses were searched, and be willing to die for it when arrested?” (Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church*, p. 343).

During the reign of **Pope Callistus III (1455-1458)**, the first book printed in Europe on **movable type** came off **John Gutenberg’s** (1400-1468) **press** in Mentz, Germany. The first was a Latin Psalter in 1454, and two years later an entire Latin Bible was published. It was two volumes and contained 1,282 pages. “The very first homage was to be paid to that Sacred Volume, which had been sacrilegiously buried, nay, interdicted so long; as if it had been, with pointing finger, to mark at once the greatest honour ever to be bestowed on the art, and infinitely the highest purpose to which it was ever to be applied” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. liv).

This invention, which was to have an earth-shaking effect upon the nations, spread rapidly, almost miraculously. Its inventors attempted to keep it a secret, but the city of Mentz was invaded and the printing press of Gutenberg (which had been taken over by a man named Fust) was captured and the printers were scattered—and with them the knowledge of this marvelous invention was spread quickly throughout western Europe. Within ten years after the capture of Mentz, “the art had reached to upwards of thirty cities and towns, including Venice, and Strasburg, Paris, and Antwerp; in only ten years more ninety other places had followed the example, including Basil and Brussels, Westminster, Oxford, and London, Geneva, Leipsic, and Vienna. . . . This rapidity, rendered so much the more astonishing from the art having risen to its perfection *all at once*, producing works so beautiful that they have never been excelled, has been often remarked, though it has never yet been fully described” (Anderson, I, p. lx).

Under the reign of Callistus III the Inquisition continued. In England, for example, Reginald Pecocke was deposed from being a bishop in 1457 “for being suspected of loving his Bible more than his Church” (Blackburn, p. 346). Pecocke’s writings were burned. Countless other cases could be cited of the persecutions that continued throughout these centuries and the attempt by Catholic authorities to keep the Bible from the people. In 1458, Calistus III “ratified the bulls of Pope Innocent IV concerning the proclamation of crusades, the grant of indulgences, and the processes for punishment (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 391).



Gutenberg Press

**Pope Pius II (1458-1464)** was the reigning Catholic pontiff in 1460, when “a Franciscan monk, armed with inquisitorial power, was sent on a mission of persecution, and to drive the inhabitants from the neighborhood [Waldenses in the French valleys Fraissiniere, Argentiere, and Loyse]. Such was the ardor with which this zealot proceeded in his odious measures, that scarcely any persons in those valleys escaped being apprehended, either as heretics, or as their abettors” (Orchard, p. 278). Pius II, prior to assuming the papacy, was named Aeneas Sylvius. He “had written powerfully against the antichristian delusions, pomp, and bloody mindedness of the various orders of the Papal hierarchy. But in the year 1463, immediately after his being crowned pope, he promulgated a long retraction of his former works; enjoined upon all Papists not to believe his writings as Aeneas Sylvius, but his infallible rescripts as Pope Pius II” (Callender, p. 391)!

**Pope Paul II (1464-1471)** confirmed the Inquisition that was announced by the Synod of Toulouse (1229) and the Synod of Tarragona (1234) and perpetrated the restrictions against Bible translation and distribution (Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 162). We are told that the mitre of this persecuting pope “was set with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, and jaspers” (Gideon Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 230).

**Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484)** urged on the establishment of the all-pervading and incredibly brutal **Spanish Inquisition**. The Roman Catholic Church had maintained

inquisitions against “heretics” in Spain and elsewhere for many centuries prior to this, but the *modern* Inquisition was formally established at this time. Thomas M’Crie distinguishes between the ancient and the modern Inquisitions in this way:

The ancient Inquisition was a powerful engine for harassing and rooting out a small body of dissidents; the modern Inquisition stretched its iron arms over a whole nation, upon which it lay like a monstrous incubus, paralysing its exertions, crushing its energies, and extinguishing every other feeling but a sense of weakness and terror (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 103, 104).

In a letter to Queen Isabella, Pope Sixtus IV signified that “he had felt the most lively desire to see it [the Inquisition] introduced into the kingdom of Castile” (M’Crie, p. 114). The papal bull for establishing the Inquisition in Castile was issued on November 1, 1478, and the first inquisitors commenced their proceedings on January 2, 1481. During *the first year* of the inquisition in Seville and Castile, some 2,000 people were burned alive, 2,000 burned in effigy, and 17,000 condemned to lesser punishments (M’Crie, p. 104).

In 1483, the infamous Inquisitor-General Thomas Torquemada began his reign of torment, of which we will say more later on.

Ferdinand and Isabella “PROHIBITED ALL, UNDER THE SEVEREST PAINS, FROM TRANSLATING THE SACRED SCRIPTURE INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES, OR FROM USING IT WHEN TRANSLATED BY OTHERS” (M’Crie, p. 192). For more than three centuries in Spain the Bible in the common tongue was a forbidden book and multitudes of copies of Scriptures perished in the flames, together with those who cherished them.

## **Persecutions against the Waldensians in the 15th Century**

**Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1492)** “remembered how his renowned namesake, Innocent III., by an act of summary vengeance, had swept the Albigensian heresy from the south of France. Imitating the vigour of his predecessor, he would purge the Valleys as effectually and as speedily as Innocent III. had done the plains of Dauphine and Provence” (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 27).

In 1487 this pope issued a bull against the peaceful Waldensian in the northern Italian Alps and urged their destruction, saying that if they refused to repent and turn to Rome, they were “to be crushed like venomous snakes.” A brutal man named Albert Cataneo (de Capitaneis) was appointed as the pope’s representative for the enforcement of this bull. The pope sought to raise a crusade against the Waldenses and to this end he worked on two fronts. First, he sent letters to all of the kings, princes, dukes, and authorities under whose jurisdiction the Waldenses lived, urging them to take up arms against this people. Second, the pope’s bull invited all Catholics to move



Pope Innocent VIII

against the “heretics,” and those who obeyed this dastardly edict were promised spiritual blessing and possession of the Waldensian property which would be confiscated by force. Charles VIII of France and Charles II of Savoy agreed to raise an army for the destruction of these people, and to this regular army were joined a crowd of “volunteers” urged on by the promised blessings. “Ambitious fanatics, reckless pillagers, merciless assassins, assembled from all parts of Italy” (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 29).

Samuel Morland, who, in the 17th century, gave assistance to the persecuted Waldensians as the ambassador of Britain’s Oliver Cromwell, and who diligently gathered up historical documents relating to these people, translated Innocent VIII’s bull and published it in his *History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont*. As this bull illustrates the hatred that was shown by the popes toward all who dared to follow the Bible alone for doctrine and who trusted Jesus Christ alone for salvation, we offer the following excerpts. Remember, the only “crime” that the Waldenses had committed against the pope was the “crime” of rejecting his usurped authority:

We have heard, and it is come to our knowledge, not without much displeasure, that certain sons of iniquity, inhabitants of the Province of Eureux, FOLLOWERS OF THAT ABOMINABLE AND PERNICIOUS SECT OF MALIGNANT MEN, WHO ARE CALLED THE POOR PEOPLE OF LYONS, OR THE WALDENSES, who have long ago endeavoured in



Piemont, and other neighbouring parts, by the procurement of him who is the sower of evil works, through by-ways, purposely sought out, and hidden precipices, to ensnare the sheep belonging unto God, and at last to bring them to the perdition of their souls by deadly cunning, are damnably risen up under a feigned pretence of Holiness, being led into a reprobate sense, and do greatly err from the way of truth; and following superstitious and heretical Ceremonies, do say, act and commit very many things contrary to the Orthodox Faith, offensive to the eyes of the Divine Majesty, and which do occasion a very great hazard of souls. ...

We therefore having determined to use all our endeavours, and to employ all our care, as we are bound by the duty of our Pastoral charge, TO ROOT UP AND EXTIRPATE SUCH A DETESTABLE SECT, and the foresaid execrable Errors, that they may not spread further, and that the hearts of believers may not be damnably perverted from the Catholick

Waldenses meeting secretly in a cave



Church. ... to proceed to the execution thereof against the forenamed Waldenses, and all other Hereticks whatsoever, TO RISE UP IN ARMS AGAINST THEM, AND BY A JOINT COMMUNICATION OF PROCESSES, TO TREAD THEM UNDER FOOT, AS VENEMOUS ADDERS ...

Moreover, that Charles our most beloved Son in Christ the illustrious King of France, and our beloved Sons the Noble Charles of Savoy and of the adjacent forenamed places, and the Dukes, Princes, Earls, and temporal Lords of the Cities, Territories; and Universities of places, and the Confederates of High Germany, and all others of those parts who are believers in Christ, do take up the Shield of the Orthodox Faith which they did profess when they were Baptized, and of the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom Kings Reign, and Lords bear Rule, and give assistance to the same Archbishops, Bishops, and to you and the foresaid Vicars and General Officials, and to the Inquisitor, with reasonable savours, and their secular power, as they shall see it expedient for the execution of THIS MOST NECESSARY AND WHOLESOME INQUISITION; and ardently oppose themselves against those most detestable Hereticks ... by procuring THAT THEY MAY BE EXTERMINATED AND DESTROYED. And if you shall think it expedient, to cause, exhort, and induce all the faithful in those parts, by fit Preachers of God's word, preaching the Cross or the Croisado [Crusade], to fight manfully against the same Hereticks, having taken the saving sign of the Cross upon their hearts and garments: And to grant, THAT SUCH AS ARE SIGNED WITH THE CROSS, AND FIGHT AGAINST THE SAID HERETICKS, OR SUCH AS CONTRIBUTE THEREUNTO, MAY OBTAIN according to your appointment, once in their life, and also AT THE POINT OF DEATH, A PLENARY INDULGENCE AND REMISSION OF ALL THEIR SINS ...

In the mean time to choose, DEPUTE AND CONFIRM ONE OR MORE FIT GENERALS OF WAR, AND CAPTAINS FOR THE GATHERING OF THE CROISADO ARMY, in our name, and in the name of the Church of Rome...

Given at Rome at St. Peters, in the year of our Lord's incarnation One thousand four hundred eighty seven, the Twenty seventh of April, and in the Third year of our Popedome (Innocent VIII, Bull for the Extirpation of the Waldenses, given to Albertus de Capitaneis his Legate and Commissioner General, 1487).

These were not idle threats. The result was a blood bath of murderous rage poured out upon the peaceable Waldenses.

Before all these arrangements were finished it was the month of June of 1488. The pope's bull was talked of in all countries; and the din of preparation rung far and near, for it was not only on the



Waldensian Children being torn asunder during the persecutions

Waldensian mountains, but on the Waldensian race, wherever dispersed, in Germany, in Calabria, and in other countries, that this terrible blow was to fall. All kings were invited to gird on the sword, and come to the help of the Church in the execution of her purpose of effecting an extermination of her enemies that should never need to be repeated. ... The joint army numbered about 18,000 regular soldiers. This force was swelled by the thousands of ruffians, already mentioned, drawn together by the spiritual and temporal rewards to be earned in this work of combined piety and pillage.

This army attacked the Waldensian mountain valleys simultaneously from France to the northwest and from Italy to the south. Thousands of Bible-believing Christians perished in this crusade.

The pontiff's measures were not vapor. An army was soon raised by Albert, the pope's legate, and marched directly into the valley of Loyse. The inhabitants, apprised of their approach, fled to their caves at the tops of the mountains, carrying with them their children, and whatever valuables they possessed, as well as what was thought necessary for their support. The lieutenant, finding the inhabitants all fled, and that, not an individual appeared with whom he could converse, had considerable trouble in discovering their retreats; when, causing quantities of wood to be placed at the entrance of their caves, he ordered the same to be set on fire. The consequence of this inhuman conduct was, four hundred children were suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their dead mothers, while multitudes to avoid death by suffocation, or being committed to the flames, precipitated themselves headlong from their caverns upon the rocks below, where they were dashed to pieces; if any escaped death by the fall, they were immediately slaughtered by the brutal soldiers. It appears more than three thousand men and women, belonging to the valley of Loyse, perished on this occasion. Measures equally ferocious, were adopted against the inoffensive inhabitants of other valleys, and with a like cruel success (G.H. Orchard, *A Concise History of Baptists*, pp. 279, 80).

More than 3,000 Waldensian Christians perished in one cavern called Aigue-Froid. "Cataneo distributed the property of these unfortunates among the vagabonds who accompanied him..." (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 33).

In some areas the Waldenses successfully resisted the armies that were bent on their destruction, though at great cost in life and property. When the Waldenses took up arms to defend themselves, they were able to defeat an army vastly superior in manpower and arms and military training. At one point, for example, a large group of Waldensians had escaped from their homes in the valleys and fled to the Val de Angrogna, where they determined to make a stand. The papal legate, Albert Cataneo, pursued them at the head of a large body of soldiers. To reach the Waldenses they had to proceed along a narrow rocky ledge on the side of a mountain, and in doing so they were routed by their intended victims:

The leader of the Papal host boldly ordered his men to enter and traverse this frightful gorge, not knowing how few of them he should ever lead back. The only pathway through this chasm is a rocky ledge on the side of the mountain, so narrow that not more than two abreast can advance along it. If assailed either in front, or in rear, or from above, there is absolutely no retreat. The pathway is hung midway between the bottom of the gorge, along which rolls the stream, and the summit of the mountain. Here the naked cliff runs sheer up for at least one thousand feet; there it leans over the path in stupendous masses, which look as if about to fall. ... It was into this terrible defile that the soldiers of the Papal legate now marched. They kept

advancing, as best they could, along the narrow ledge. ... It seemed impossible for their prey to escape them. Assembled on this spot the Waldensian people had but one neck, and the Papal soldiers, so Cataneo believed, were to sever that neck at a blow. But God was watching over the Vaudois. ... The instrumentality now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the pass, and brought the march of the host to an instant halt.

A white cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, unobserved by the Piedmontese, but keenly watched by the Vaudois, was seen to gather on the mountain's summit, about the time the army would be entering the defile. That cloud grew rapidly bigger and blacker. It began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain's side, wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven—a sea of murky vapour. It fell right into the chasm in which was the Papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick black fog. In a moment the host were in night; they were bewildered, stupefied, and could see neither before nor behind, could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering on terror.

The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of Providence in their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of the Pra, and issuing from all their hiding places in its environs, they spread themselves over the mountains, the paths of which were familiar to them, and while the host stood riveted beneath them, caught in the double toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up huge stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into the ravine. The Papal soldiers were crushed where they stood. Nor was this all. Some of the Waldenses boldly entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front. Consternation seized the Piedmontese host. Panic impelled them to flee, but their effort to escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois, or the rocks that, swift as arrow, came bounding down the mountain. They jostled one another; they threw each other down in the struggle; some were trodden to death; others were rolled over the precipice, and crushed on the rocks below, or drowned in the torrent, and so perished miserably (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 46-49).

This crusade against the Waldensians lasted for a year. We must remember that these were religious persecutions. The Roman Catholic authorities had forbidden the people to own and distribute Scriptures in the vernacular tongues, and this crusade was aimed at the heart of one of the chief sources for such Scriptures at that time. Not only were the Waldensian Christians themselves destroyed wherever the armies could gain ascendancy, but their literature and vernacular Scriptures were destroyed with a vengeance during these persecutions. The Catholic priests who accompanied the armies made certain of this.

In Spain, the Inquisition was raging in all its horrible fury, and every effort was made to stop the progress of Bible distribution and reading. "In 1490, many copies of the Hebrew Bible were committed to the flames at Seville by the order of Torquemada, and in an auto-de-fe celebrated soon after at Salamanca, six thousand volumes shared the same fate, under the pretext that they contained judaism, magic, and other illicit arts" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 105). Any person who was caught translating, printing, distributing, preaching from, reading, or studying the Scriptures in any version other than the Latin Vulgate were subject to imprisonment, torture, loss of all property, and burning.

**Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503)** “issued a bull prohibiting the printers of Mentz, Cologne, Treves, and Magdeburg from publishing any books without the express license of their archbishops. Finding that the reading of the Bible was increasing, the priests began to preach against it from their pulpits. BIBLES AND TESTAMENTS WERE SEIZED WHEREVER FOUND, AND BURNT; but more Bibles and Testaments seemed to rise as if by magic from their ashes. The printers also were seized and burnt. ‘We must root out printing, or printing will root out us,’ said the vicar of Croydon in a sermon preached at Paul’s Cross. And the university of Paris, panic-stricken, declared before the parliament, ‘There is an end of religion if the study of Greek and Hebrew is permitted’” (*Miller’s Church History*, p. 687). In 1501 all printers in Germany “were ordered in future, under pain of excommunication and of fines applicable to the apostolic chamber, to present to the archbishop of the province or to his ordinary all books before publication, and only to issue those for which a license should be granted after examination. All existing books in stock, moreover, were to be subject to similar inspection, and of such as should be found to contain errors, all copies accessible were to be delivered up for burning” (Lea, *Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, abridged by Nicholson, p. 873).

During this period, the Bible was translated into the Bohemian language and repeatedly printed, for the demand for it among the people was great. “As they had a rapid sale they set up one printing press at Prague, another at Bunzlau in Bohemia, and a third at Kralitz in Moravia, where in the beginning nothing but Bohemian Bibles [were printed]” (Robert Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 502).

This distribution of the Scripture in the language of the people quickly drew the ire of the Catholic authorities. The bishops manipulated the King, Uladiflaus, to sign a statute forbidding the separatists to hold religious assemblies or to preach or print literature (Robinson, pp. 503-504).

Alexander VI also issued a bull in 1493 “conferring on the Spanish sovereigns domination over the territories discovered by Columbus” the previous year (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, 1908, p. 191).

**Pope Leo X (1513-1521)**, who railed against the doctrine of faith alone and Scripture alone preached by Martin Luther, called the **fifth Lateran Council** (1513-1517), which charged that no books could be printed except those approved by the Roman Catholic Church. “[Leo] endeavored to check [the Reformation] by general regulations still more rigid in a bull which was unanimously approved, except by Alexis, Bishop of Amalfi, who said that he concurred in it as to new books, but not as to old ones. After an allusion to the benefits conferred by the art of printing, the bull proceeded to recite that



numerous complaints reached the Holy See that printers in many places printed and sold books translated from the Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldee, as well as in Latin and the vernaculars, containing errors in faith and pernicious dogmas, and also libels on persons of dignity, whence many scandals had arisen and more were threatened. THEREFORE FOREVER THEREAFTER NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRINT ANY BOOK OR WRITING WITHOUT A PREVIOUS EXAMINATION, TO BE TESTIFIED BY MANUAL SUBSCRIPTION, BY THE PAPAL VICAR AND MASTER OF THE SACRED PALACE IN ROME, and in other cities and dioceses by the Inquisition, and the bishop or an expert appointed by him. FOR NEGLECT OF THIS THE PUNISHMENT WAS EXCOMMUNICATION, THE LOSS OF THE EDITION, WHICH WAS TO BE BURNED, a fine of 100 ducats to the fabric of St. Peters, and suspension from business for a year” (Lea, *Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, abridged by Nicholson, pp. 873, 74).

The fifth Lateran Council also issued a bull that affirmed papal power and supremacy in the strongest language, “asserting it to be altogether necessary to salvation for all Christians to be subject to the Roman pontiff. To this was added the atrocious declaration that disobedience to the pope is punishable with death” (Schaff, VI, pp. 487, 88).

In 1520 Pope Leo X issued a bull condemning Luther’s “damnable heresies,” prohibiting his tracts, commanding him not to preach, forbidding all persons to read his works, enjoining all Papists to seize him and his associates, and ordering that Luther be “denounced as a heretic in every Masshouse in the world” (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 392). On December 10th of the same year Luther publicly burned this bull outside the city walls of Wittenburg, thus making the formal break with Rome.

For centuries prior to Leo, the papacy had been labeled the antichrist and the harlot and Babylon of Revelation 17 by separatist Christians. Leo X decided to deal with this problem. In 1516 he issued a papal bull that forbade preachers to touch on the subject of the antichrist in their sermons (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 20)!

## **Persecutions against French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Portuguese Bibles**

### **Lafevre French Bible**

Bibles in the French language had existed from the middle of the twelfth century. These were made by the Albigenses of Southern France and the Waldenses (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, 1899, p. 208). We know very little about them, though. Coming to more modern times, the record becomes clearer. In 1523 a French New Testament was published by **Simon de Colines**. The Old Testament appeared in 1528. “Like most efforts of the kind, it was bitterly opposed by the Roman Catholic authorities, and finally proscribed” (John Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 211).



Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples

**Jacques Lefevre D'etaples** [Faber Stapulensis] (1455-1536), a professor at the University of Paris, published a French New Testament in 1523 and the complete French Bible in 1528. Lefevre [or le Fevre] had turned from the wisdom of the world to the Bible at an advanced age. While engaged in collecting the legends of the saints and martyrs with the design of publishing these in chronological order, Lefevre became disgusted with these largely fictitious and unscriptural accounts.

The sublimity of the Word of God made him perceive the paltry nature of these fables. They now appeared to him no better than 'brimstone fit to kindle the fire of idolatry.' He abandoned his work, and throwing these legends aside, turned ardently towards the Holy Scriptures. ... Lefevre, weaned from the fables of the Breviary, began to study the Epistles of St. Paul; the light increased rapidly in his heart, and he immediately imparted to his disciples that knowledge of the truth which we find in his

commentaries. ... The doctrine of justification by faith, which overthrew by a single blow the subtleties of the schoolmen and the observances of popery, was boldly proclaimed in the bosom of the Sorbonne. 'It is God alone,' said the doctor, and the vaulted roofs of the university must have been astonished as they re-echoed such strange sounds, 'it is God alone, who by his grace, through faith, justifies unto everlasting life. There is a righteousness of works, there is a righteousness of grace; the one cometh from man, the other from God; one is earthly and passeth away, the other is heavenly and eternal; one is the shadow and the sign, the other the light and the truth; one makes sin known to us that we may escape death, the other reveals grace that we may obtain life. ... Thus a new life and a new teaching had penetrated into the university of Paris (J.H. D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, pp. 339-40).

One of Lefevre's converts, William Farel, became a key leader in the Protestant Reformation and established a Protestant government in Geneva prior to Calvin.

As we will note further on, Lefevre was protected at times by **Margaret, sister to King Francis I** (who ruled from 1515-1547). Margaret was two years older than her brother. She loved Lefevre's preaching and became a protector of him and of other Bible-believing Christians. At age thirty-five, Margaret, having been widowed, was wed to Henri d'Albret, titular King of Navarre. This was in 1548. Thus she inherited the title Queen of Navarre. She was converted about the year 1521 through reading the Greek New Testament and conversations with leading Protestant leaders. Three times she was instrumental in obtaining the release of Louis Berquin, a decorated knight and an officer of the king's bodyguard. Berquin was a zealous Christian who translated and published tracts in French at his own expense and in many other ways sought to proclaim the Gospel to his countrymen. In 1523 he was arrested and charged with heresy, but Margaret prevailed upon Francis to obtain his release. This happened two more times, but with Berquin's fourth arrest no one was able to rescue him; he was burned at the

stake April 22, 1929. About five years later Margaret obtained the release of three other preachers--Roussel, Berthault, and Couralt--who had been condemned to die.

J.H. Merle D'Aubigne described Margaret in his *History of the Reformation*, and we will include this brief biography of her life since very few Christians today have any information on this interesting woman:

This Margaret, so beautiful, so full of wit, and living in the atmosphere of a corrupted court, was one of the first to be carried away by the religious movement then beginning in France. ... Margaret, yet hesitating and wavering, in the midst of the depraved society that surrounded her, looked for support, and found it in the Gospel. She turned towards this fresh breath that was reanimating the world, and inhaled it with delight as an emanation from heaven. From some of the ladies of her court she learnt what the new doctors were teaching; they lent her their writings, their little books, called in the language of the time, 'tracts;' and spoke to her of the 'primitive Church, of the pure Word of God, of worshipping in spirit and in truth, of christian liberty which shakes off the yoke of superstition and traditions of men to bind them closer to God alone.' Erelong this princess conversed with Lefevre, Farel, and Roussel; their zeal, their piety, their purity of morals,—all in them struck her imagination ...

Thus, in the midst of the brilliant court of Francis I. and of the profligate household of Louisa of Savoy, was accomplished one of those conversions of the heart which, although not thoroughly evangelical, are not the fruit of a mere aesthetical religion. Margaret subsequently recorded in her poems the different movements of her soul at this important period of her life; and in them we may trace the path she then trod. We find that the sense of sin had taken strong hold of her, and that she wept over the levity with which she had treated the scandals of the world.

*Is there a gulf of ill, so deep and wide  
That can suffice but e'en a tenth to hide  
Of my vile sins?*

... And erelong a sense of the love of God in Christ was shed abroad in her heart. Margaret had found faith, and her enraptured soul indulged in holy transports.

*Word Divine, Jesus the Savior,  
Only Son of the eternal Pater,  
The first, the last; of all things renovator,  
Bishop and king, and mighty triumphator,  
From death by death our liberator.  
By faith we're made the sons of the Creator.*



Lefevre French New Testament

In fact, the princess experienced, not long after, the truth of the saying, that all who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution. At the court, they talked of Margaret's new opinions, and the surprise was great. What! Even the sister of the king takes part with these people! For a moment it might have been thought that Margaret's ruin was certain. She was denounced to Francis I. but the king, who was tenderly attached to his sister, pretended to think that it was untrue. Margaret's character gradually lessened the opposition. Every one loved her, says Brantome: 'she was very kind, mild, gracious, charitable, affable, a great alms-giver, despising nobody, and winning all hearts by her excellent qualities.' ...

The timid heart of the princess trembled before the anger of the king. She was constantly wavering between her brother and her Saviour, and could not resolve to sacrifice either. ... However, such as she is, she is a pleasing character on the stage of history. ... She is a star, slightly clouded no doubt, but shedding an indescribable and gentle radiance, and at the time of which I am treating her rays shone out still more brightly. It is not until later years, when the angry looks of Francis I. denounce a mortal hatred against the Reformation, that his frightened sister will screen her holy faith from the light of day (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, 1835, pp. 352-357).

A biographer of William Farel gives the following portrait of Margaret: "And thus it would seem that the Princess Margaret was really converted to God. She did not cease to be a papist, nor did she follow the Lord fully in any way, for she knew Him but very dimly. Still we cannot but think of her as one who, after a sorrowful and doubtful course, will yet be found amongst the number of those who now sleep in Jesus. In any case it is certain that she used her influence with her brother, the king, on the side of the truth. She encouraged those who preached it, and, as far as she had power, she protected them from persecution and opposition" (Frances Bevan, *The Life of William Farel*, p. 51).

One of Margaret's poems, "Mirror of the Sinful Soul," "was so evangelical in tone, that it was honored by the doctors of the Sorbonne with their censure..." (Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 173, f1). She said, "Kings and princes are not the lords and masters of their inferiors, but only ministers whom God has set up to serve and to keep them."

When Francis determined to crush the Protestants, Margaret left Paris and retired to Lower Navarre and Bearn, an ancient province of France in the mountains of the Pyrenees. This became a religious asylum. Wylie, author of *The History of Protestantism*, called Margaret a "wise and virtuous princess" and described her little kingdom as follows:

Many refugee families brought their industry and their fortunes. Everything assumed a new face. The laws were corrected, the arts cultivated, agriculture was improved, schools were established, and the people were prepared to receive the teaching of the Reformation. In a short time, the foundations were laid of that remarkable prosperity which made the little kingdom in the Pyrenees resemble an oasis amid the desert which France and Spain were now beginning to become (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, II, p. 212).

From Geneva, John Calvin corresponded with Margaret and with her daughter, Jeanne d'Albret.



When Lefevre published his translation of the Four Gospels in 1522, he sent a copy to Margaret, requesting that she present them to her brother, King Francis, and to their mother. “Thus, probably, was the Word of God placed at that time (in 1522 and 1523) under the eyes of Francis I. and Louisa of Savoy. They came into contact with that Gospel which they were afterwards to persecute” (D’Aubigne, III, p. 380).

In one of her letters, Margaret left a fascinating picture of her relationship with the Bible. This love for the Scriptures is one of the key things that set her apart from Roman Catholics of that day:

You ask me, my children, to do a very difficult thing—to invent a diversion that will drive away your *ennuis* [boredom]. I have been seeking all my life to effect this, but I have found only one true and perfect remedy, which is, reading the Holy Scriptures. In perusing them, my mind experiences it’s true and perfect joy; and from this pleasure of the mind, proceed the repose and health of the body. If you desire me to tell you what I do, to be so gay and so well, at my advanced age; it is because AS SOON AS I GET UP, I READ THESE SACRED BOOKS. There I see and contemplate the will of God, who sent his Son to us on earth, to preach that Holy Word; and to announce the sweet tidings, that he promises to pardon our sins and extinguish our debts, by giving us his Son, who loved us, and who suffered and died for our sakes. This idea so delights me, that I take up the Psalms, and sing them with my heart; and pronounce with my tongue, as humbly as possible, the fine hymns with which the Holy Spirit inspired David, and the sacred authors. The pleasure I receive from this exercise, so transports me, that I consider all the evils that may happen to me in the day, to be real blessings; for I place Him in my heart, by faith, who endured more misery for me. Before I sup, I retire in the same manner, to give my soul a congenial lesson. At night, I review all that I have done in the day; I implore pardon for my faults; I thank my God for his favours; and I lie down in his love, in his fear, and in his peace, my soul being free from every worldly anxiety. Lo! my dear children, what has, for a long while, made me so happy (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 584, f42).

“Queen Margaret had well known what it was to be suspected, opposed, and hated, for her opinions. Montmorency, the Premier, had told the King that if he wished to exterminate heresy, he must begin with his own Court, and, especially, with his sister, the Queen of Navarre. Her table, however, was still the resort of those who loved the Scriptures, and there, in 1536, sat Lefevre, their translator into French ...” (Anderson, I, p. 485, f42).

Margaret had one daughter by her second marriage, and this daughter, Jeanne d’Albret, became a more consistent Protestant than her mother. After Margaret’s death, Jeanne “established churches, schools, and hospitals; she endowed these from the national property, and soon her little kingdom, in point of intelligence and wealth, became one of the most flourishing spots in all Christendom” (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, III).

In 1617, King Louis XIII, at the instigation of his Jesuit confessor and other Catholic authorities in France, used military force to require the inhabitants of Bearn to return to Catholicism. At the time, 65 to 90 percent of the inhabitants of Bearn were Protestant, but they were allowed no liberty of conscience. The king’s army broke open churches, burned Protestant books and Bibles, and killed and imprisoned those who refused to

kneel before the Catholic host. King Louis' Jesuit confessor, Arnoux, encouraged him to break his promises to the Protestants. Money for the brutal campaign against them was contributed by the pope in Rome.

Lefevre, though advanced in age when converted, yearned for his people to have the Scriptures in their own tongue. As we have seen, there had been French translations of the Scripture since the 13th century among the Waldensians, and the 1487 translation by Jean de Reley, called the Great Bible, had been widely used (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52). But these translations were antiquated and doubtless Latin-based, whereas Lefevre worked from Greek.

The 16th century was God's appointed time for fresh Bible translations to appear, many of which were based upon the Received Greek New Testament which had been printed near the beginning of that century. Lefevre and Pierre Robert Olivetan were two of God's chosen instruments for this great task in the French language.

Lefevre was 68 years old when he completed his New Testament in French in 1523. At the time, he was living in Meaux, under the protection of William Bricconnet, bishop of Meaux, who soon abandoned the Reformation cause, and in his will, commended his soul to "the Virgin Mary" (Bevan, p. 104). Lefevre's New Testament "was read, or listened to, with great eagerness by the common people, where opportunity was given, as we learn from a letter of Lefevre to Farel" (Shelton, III, p. 172). His French Old Testament appeared five years later.

For his labor of love to the French people, the elderly Lefevre was hated and persecuted by the Romanist authorities. One thing that galled them particularly was his principle that all Christians should read the Scriptures. One of these angry authorities, Noel Beda, exclaimed: "Does he not dare to recommend all the faithful to read the Scriptures? Does he not tell therein that whoever loves not Christ's Word is not a Christian; and that the Word of God is sufficient to lead to eternal life?" (D'Aubigne, III, p. 385).

"The Sorbonne [the theological faculty of the University of Paris] condemned him as a heretic; he fled to Strasbourg (1525); Marguerite interceded for him; Francis recalled him and made him royal librarian at Blois and tutor to his children. In 1531, when Protestant excesses had angered the King, Lefevre took refuge with Marguerite in southern France, and lived there till his death..." (Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, VI, p. 502).

Ian Paisley says:

The Sorbonne ... declared war on printing and printers. A book written by a zealous papist entitled 'Bourgeois de Paris' chronicled the atrocities meted out to those who had found a living Saviour and a living Christ. This volume records that in the six months prior to June, 1534, twenty men and one woman were burnt alive. One of those was a printer whose sole crime was that of printing some of Luther's writings, while another was a bookseller who had sold the same. On the 26th February, 1535, the Sorbonne obtained from the king of France an act for the suppression of printing. Printing however by that time had developed nerves of steel and muscles of iron, and no puny act of any man could stop its triumphant march. Man could have

as soon stopped the rising sun with a rush or with a reed as stop the flow of sheets, pamphlets and books from the printing presses of Europe (*The Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, pp. 4, 5).

The persecutions in France forced many Bible believers into exile. Some settled in Basle, Switzerland, and established printing operations to publish Scriptures, as well as evangelistic and Bible study materials for the French people. "They felt the importance of scattering the Holy Scriptures and pious books in their country, still overshadowed with the gloom of superstition" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, p. 435). Lefevre's New Testament was revised and republished, and colporteurs were secured to distribute the books from village to village and house to house.

"Thus as early as 1524 there existed in Basle a Bible society, a tract society, and an association of colporteurs, for the benefit of France" (Ibid., p. 437).

This only increased the hatred of the Catholic authorities. Beginning in 1525, many Christians were burned alive in France for denying Catholic doctrine. An alarm was raised against the "new learning." Noel Beda, one of the chief French persecutors of the Bible, exclaimed: "Let us banish from France this hateful doctrine of grace" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, p. 449). "At the head of this conspiracy and of these clamours were Beda, Duchesne, and Lecouturier. These irreconcilable enemies of the Gospel flattered themselves they might easily obtain from public terror the victims that had been hitherto

refused them. They instantly employed every device; conversations, fanatical harangues, lamentations, threats, defamatory writings, to excite the anger of the nation, and particularly of their governors. They vomited fire and flame against their adversaries, and covered them with the most scurrilous abuse. All means were good in their eyes; they picked out a few words here and there, neglecting the context that might explain the passage quoted;



substituted expressions of their own for those of the doctors they criminated, and omitted or added, according as it was necessary to blacken their adversaries' characters. ... At the

same time the pulpits resounded with lamentations, threats, and maledictions; prompt and exemplary punishments were loudly called for” (D’Aubigne, III, pp. 449, 50).

The opportunity to physically punish the Bible believers came when the king was taken captive by Germany during a battle and was confined for some months. Noel Beda immediately addressed the king’s mother, Louisa of Savoy, with these words: “All the writings of the heretics should be prohibited by a royal proclamation; and if this means does not suffice, we must employ force and constraint against the persons of these false doctors; for those who resist the light must be subdued by *TORTURE* and by *TERROR*.”

Louisa sent word to Pope Clement VII and asked his advice. “The pope, delighted that he could wreak his vengeance in the ‘most Christian kingdom’ against a heresy that he could not destroy either in Switzerland or Germany, gave immediate orders for the introduction of the Inquisition into France, and addressed a brief to the parliament.” The parliament responded by issuing a decree that trials should be conducted of those that were tainted with doctrines contrary to the Catholic faith. On May 20, 1525, the pope formally approved of these proceedings. Those suspected of harboring “heretical” doctrines were delivered up and condemned to be burned.

In August of the same year, Beda aimed his Inquisition guns at the Bible translator Lefevre. In print he exclaimed: “What! Lefevre affirms that whoever places his salvation in himself will surely perish; while the man that lays aside all strength of his own, and throws himself entirely into the arms of Jesus Christ, will be saved! ... Oh, what heresy! To teach the inefficacy of meritorious works! ... What a hellish error! what a deceitful snare of the devil! Let us oppose it with all our might.”

Lefevre fled to Strasburg, out of reach of those who were calling for his blood. The latter did not wait long before they found another victim. That same month **a Gospel preacher named Schuch** was burned in the town of Nancy. When he was arrested and tried, he had his Bible with him, and holding the same as he stood before his accusers, he preached to them out of the Scriptures and “meekly yet forcibly confessed Christ crucified.” His words so incised his tormentors that “transported with rage, [they] rushed upon him with violent cries, TORE AWAY THE BIBLE FROM WHICH HE WAS READING THIS MENACING LANGUAGE, ‘and like mad dogs, unable to bite his doctrine, THEY BURNT IT in their convent.’” The man was immediately condemned to be burned alive, and the sentence was carried out quickly.

On the 19th of August 1525 the whole city of Nancy was in motion. The bells were tolling for the death of a heretic. The mournful procession set out. It was necessary to pass before the convent of the Cordeliers, who, rejoicing and expectant, had assembled before the gate. At the moment that Schuch appeared, Father Bonaventure, pointing to the carved images over the portals of the convent, exclaimed: ‘Heretic! Pay honour to God, to his mother, and to the saints.’—‘Ye hypocrites!’ replied Schuch, standing erect before these blocks of wood and stone, ‘God will destroy you, and bring your deceits to light!’

When the martyr reached the place of execution, HIS BOOKS WERE BURNT BEFORE HIS

FACE; he was then called upon to retract; but he refused, saying: 'It is thou, O God, who hast called me, and thou wilt give me strength unto the end.' After this he began to repeat aloud the fifty-first psalm: 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness.' Having mounted the pile, he continued to recite the psalm until the smoke and the flames stifled his voice (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, pp. 468, 69).

SCHUCH'S BIBLE WAS BURNED WITH HIM (Frances Bevan, *The Life of William Farel*, p. 106).

**Louis de Berquin**, a young nobleman who had been converted to the Lord Jesus Christ and was diligently writing, translating, printing, and circulating Gospel books, was soon arrested, and would have been burned had Margaret not interceded for him. He was later martyred for his faith.

"Many printers were arrested, and for a time all printing was prohibited. ... Francis declared that he would behead his own children if he found them harboring these blasphemous heresies. ... six Protestants were burned to death in Paris by a method judged fit to appease the Deity: they were suspended over a fire, and were repeatedly lowered into it and raised from it so that their agony might be prolonged. Between November 10, 1534, and May 5, 1535, twenty-four Protestants were burned alive in Paris" (Durant, *History of Civilization*, VI, p. 505).

At this time the remnant of the Waldenses drew the ire of the Catholic authorities. "Cardinal de Tournon, alleging that the Waldenses were in a treasonable conspiracy against the government, persuaded the ailing, vacillating King to sign a decree (January 1, 1545) that all Waldenses found guilty of heresy should be put to death. ... Within a week (April 12-18) several villages were burned to the ground; in one of them 800 men, women, and children were slaughtered; in two months 3,000 were killed, twenty-two villages were razed, 700 men were sent to the galleys" (Durant, VI, pp. 505, 506).

In 1546 a congregation in Meaux was broken up and fourteen of its members burned. That same year PETER CHAPOT WAS BURNED TO DEATH FOR BRINGING FRENCH BIBLES INTO FRANCE AND FOR SELLING THEM (Foxe, abridged, p. 100). The bitter persecutions continued under Henry II (1547-1559), who took the throne upon the death of Francis.

"An edict was issued in 1546 by the Roman Catholic authorities against Lefevre and his work, in which the following statement is found: 'It is neither expedient nor useful for the Christian public that any translation of the Bible should be permitted to be printed; but that they ought to be suppressed as injurious.' It was also ordered that any person possessing a copy of it should deliver it up within eight days" (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, pp. 211, 12).

Many Bible believers were tormented and martyred in France in those days. Peter Chapot, for example, was arrested in 1546 when he brought Scriptures from Geneva and began distributing them. He was condemned and burned. Because of his bold testimony at the place of execution, a decree was made that "all which were to be burned, unless they

recanted at the fire, should have their tongues cut off. Which law diligently afterward was observed” (Foxye, unabridged, II, p. 133).

Thirteen others were burned in Paris about this time. Stephen Polliot was arrested in 1546 with a bag of Scriptures and Gospel books he was distributing. His tongue was cut out and he was burned, “his satchel of books hanging about his neck” (Foxye, unabridged, II, p. 134).

Nicholas Nayle, a shoemaker, was arrested in Paris in 1553 when he brought parcels of books to distribute among the believers. He was burned soon after his arrest.

In 1554 Dionysius Vayre, who had smuggled many books into France, was arrested in Normandy. He was sentenced to be “burned alive, and thrice lifted up, and let down again into the fire” (Foxye, unabridged, II, p. 145).

Bartholmew Hector, who made his living selling books, was arrested in 1556 and burned at Thurin.

Foxye’s unabridged Martyrology is a massive set of books. I have the 8th edition, which was printed in 1641. It is three volumes folio, 3,227 pages. The three books together are nearly a foot wide, and each page is 9 X 13.5 inches. Roughly 150 of these large pages are devoted to an enumeration of just *some* of the French martyrs.



Foxye’s Martyrology, 8th edition, 1641

Edicts against the Bible believers were issued in 1549 and 1551. Inquisitors were appointed in 1557. “Martyrdoms followed plentifully in the wake of the intolerant edicts” (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, III, p. 184). In 1562 a Huguenot congregation was destroyed at Vassy, and roughly sixty men, women, and children were killed, and one hundred wounded (Shelton, III, p. 192).

The barbarous St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre occurred in Paris in 1572, and twenty thousand or more were slaughtered in that blind religious rage.

Under the reigns of Louis XIII (1610-1643) and Louis XIV (1643-1715), Bible-believing Christians suffered greatly. Under the latter, 200,000 Christians were forced to flee France to avoid persecution.

Even as late as the 19th century, under Napoleon,

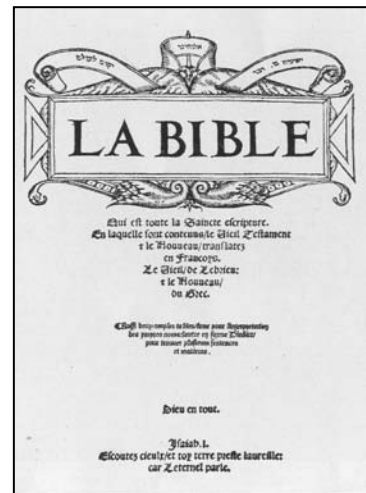
Catholic authorities in France were persecuting Protestants and other Bible believers. A decree dated October 31, 1854, forbade all religious meetings, and the Christians were forced to congregate secretly in the forests and fields (R.P. Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, pp. 114, 115).

## Olivetan French Bible

**Robert Olivetan** (c. 1506-1538) is the next man we meet in the history of the French Bible in modern times. According to the *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church*, Olivetan, who was born at Noyon in Picardy, France, was a cousin of John Calvin. He studied law at the University of Paris, and later at Orleans, and was converted to Protestantism. Later he influenced Calvin to adopt Protestant doctrines. Being suspected of Lutheranism by the Catholic authorities, he was forced to flee to Strassburg about 1528, and there he began the study of Hebrew and Greek. In 1532, Olivetan had made a journey with other men to northern Italy to preach the Gospel and to receive from the Waldenses the funds to print a French Bible (Daniel Lortch, *Histoire de la Bible Francaise [History of the French Bible]*, p. 105; from an English translation appearing in *Documentation on the Olivetan-Ostervald Bible* by Curtis Gibson, p. 2). In 1533, Olivetan went to Geneva and “with the help of Lefevre’s translation began to translate the Scriptures into the French.” This was printed in June 1535. Calvin wrote the preface. Olivetan moved to Italy and died there in 1538.

Theodore Beza and others in Geneva revised this translation and republished it in 1588. “They carefully compared the translation with the original Hebrew and Greek, but left its essential features unchanged” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 220).

It is a fascinating fact of history, already mentioned in passing, that the Olivetan New Testament was funded by the **Waldenses** in northern Italy. The translation project had been agreed upon at the assembly held in Chamforans in October 1532, at which the Waldenses and various Protestants (including William Farel, already mentioned in the context of our history of the French Bible) had deliberated on doctrinal matters. “At the synod, the resolution was taken to translate and print both the Old and New Testaments, and, as this was to be done at the sole charge of the Vaudois [Waldenses], it was considered as their gift to the Churches of the Reformation. A most appropriate and noble gift! That Book which the Waldenses had received from the primitive Church—which their fathers had preserved with their blood—which their barbes [pastors] had laboriously transcribed and



Olivetan French Bible

circulated—they now put into the hands of the Reformers, constituting them along with themselves the custodians of this, the ark of the world’s hopes. ... The entire expense was defrayed by the Waldenses, who collected for this object 1,500 crowns of gold, a large sum for so poor a people” (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 61,62).

The Olivetan in its various editions became *the* Bible of French believers for three hundred and fifty years. The *History of the French Bible* gives the following summary: “There you have the translation, revised many times, as we shall see, by which our churches of the French language have lived during more than three centuries, under the fire of persecution, in hiding places, on the slave ships, in the desert, and in the days of the revival of the nineteenth century. It is appropriate to salute with veneration the memory of the modest, conscientious, and learned Olivetan, who was far from, most assuredly, seeing the success of his work” (*Histoire de la Bible Francaise*, pp. 127-28; from an English translation appearing in *Documentation on the Olivetan-Ostervald Bible* by Curtis Gibson, p. 3).

John Beardslee, in *The Bible among the Nations*, says, “Its hold upon the Protestant churches was so strong that it could not be superseded, although many new translations were offered” (p. 220).

Between 1696 and 1707, the Olivetan translation was revised by **David Martin**, a native of Languedoc. He was forced to flee from France because of persecution, and later he became the pastor of the Walloon Church at Utrecht, in Holland. “His aim in revision was chiefly literary, removing obsolete and objectionable words and idioms, and replacing them with those in common use” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 221).

In 1864 the **Bible Society of France** separated from the Bible Society of Paris because of the latter’s theological modernism. The first article of the newly-formed Bible Society described the chief doctrinal issue that caused the separation: “The Bible Society of France is founded on the faith in the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and in their infallible authority in religious matters.” The Bible Society of France propagated French versions based on the Received Text and “without the apocrypha.”



Frederic Ostervald

In 1881 this Bible Society issued a version of the complete Olivetan Bible called the Frossard Edition of the Ostervald Bible. **Frederic Ostervald**, a Swiss pastor, had published the first revision in 1724 and the final one in 1744. Pastor **Charles L. Frossard** completed a revision of the Ostervald New Testament in 1869, and it was published by the Bible Society of France in 1872.



In the foreword to the Frossard-Ostervald, the Bible Society of France made this important statement: “We possess, in the translation of the Bible, reviewed by J.F. Ostervald, *A VERSION WHOSE ORIGINS ARE INTIMATELY A PART OF THE VERY ORIGINS OF THE REFORMATION*, and its history with that of our French churches. Its language has been up to this day that of all our seminaries, theologians, debaters, and catechists. *HER WORDINGS FILL FOR THREE CENTURIES ALL THE PROTESTANT WRITINGS*. Many times reviewed and corrected, from Olivetan to Ostervald, she acquired for herself under the latter name a favor without equal, took her place in all our temples, in all our homes, in all our memories, and has not ceased since that time to be at the same time the most offered and the most asked for, even up to this hour and since the propagation of the new translations of moderate price. It is in fact, our true and only ecclesiastical and popular version” (emphasis added) (foreword to the first edition, 1881 Frossard-Ostervald; translation into English from *Documentation on the Olivetan-Ostervald Bible* by Curtis Gibson, p. 4).

Recently we were pleased to learn that the Frossard edition of the Ostervald French Bible is being put back into print by Baptist missionaries who are concerned about the pure word of God in this important language.

The Olivetan was not seriously challenged until the late 19th century when the Louis Segond and the John Darby versions appeared. These contain many textual departures from the Received Text underlying the Olivetan and other faithful Protestant versions and represent a serious departure from the old Reformation text that was molded in the fires of persecution. Segond was a professor at Lausanne, Switzerland, and he published an entirely new French version in 1873. “It often reveals an evident dislike of old doctrines and a determination to weaken them by translations needlessly offensive to the reader” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 225).

The introduction to the 1885 Darby version stated, “We have abandoned the text called by the Elzevirs, without any acceptable foundation, Received Text.”

This statement is not true, because the Reformation editors such as the Elzevirs and Beza had many “acceptable” reasons for believing that their Greek New Testament was truly the text received from the apostles.

### **Sacy French Bible**

In 1667 and 1668 a new French Bible was published by the brothers **Antoine and Louis Isaac le Maitre de Sacy**. It was widely distributed by the English Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was condemned by Pope Clement IX and by Innocent XI (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 215).

## Pre-Luther German Bibles

Long before Luther's Bible appeared, Roman Catholic authorities in Germany took steps to quench the publication of Bibles in the German language.

The first complete printed Bible in **High German** had been published by Johann Mentelin (John Mentel) (1410-1478) at Strassburg in 1466 (Norlie, p. 73). Mayence (or Mainz) was the most active publication center in Germany at that time. In 1485, Archbishop Bertholdt "the archbishop of Mayence, primate of Germany and in intimate friend of the emperor, issued HIS EDICT PRESCRIBING CENSORSHIP FOR ALL TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE. Any printer who cared for the good graces of the all-powerful clergy would think twice before engaging in so unpopular an undertaking. The Roman Church certainly cannot claim the credit for the German Bibles before Luther. ... the restrictions placed upon the publication of texts in the vernacular by Berthold of Mayence was a general prohibition of the publication of the German Bible, and the German translation of devotional books in general, unless approved by certain commissioners" (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 76).

THE EDICT FORBADE THE SCRIPTURES TO BE GIVEN TO SIMPLE AND UNLEARNED MEN AND TO WOMEN. "The punishment for the violation of the edict was excommunication, confiscation of books and a fine of 100 bulden" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 725).

Following is an excerpt from the Archbishop's edict:

We have observed books containing the office of the mass and also containing divine things and lofty matters of our religion and translated from Latin into the German language, not without damage to religion, circulating among the hands of the vulgar ... for who will give to the ignorant and unlettered persons, and to the female sex at that, into whose hands the manuscripts of sacred learning should fall, the ability to find the true sense? No sane person would deny that the texts of the Holy Gospels and of the Epistles of Paul require many additions and explanations from other writings.

"The earliest presses in Germany printed many more editions of the Bible than of the Classics. Twenty-one editions of the Psalms in Germany appeared before 1518. No fewer than fourteen (some say seventeen) editions of the whole Bible were printed in High German and three in Low German during the earlier decades of the sixteenth century. The Anabaptists generally held by the older versions, and these pre-Reformation German Bibles are said to have been in use almost two hundred years after the Reformation" (G.E. Horr, *The Baptist Heritage*, 1934, p. 5).

## Luther German Bible

In September 1522, **Martin Luther's (1483-1546) German New Testament** first appeared. Pope Leo X had died the previous year, and the new pope was **Adrian VI (1522-1523)**. The 3,000 copies of this treasure sold so quickly that a second edition was published in December of the same year. By 1533, fifty-eight editions had appeared, and the

number of copies sold ran up into the hundred thousands (Hentz, *History of the Lutheran Version*, p. 21). One Wittenberg publisher, Hans Luft, from 1534 to 1574 sold about one hundred thousand copies (Hentz, *History of the Lutheran Version*, p. 109). “The actual number sold is beyond estimate, and the effects of its reading were marvelous” (Ibid.).

D'Aubigne, in his *History of the Reformation*, describes how Rome replied to this event: “Ignorant priests shuddered at the thought that every citizen, nay every peasant, would now be able to dispute with them on the precepts of our Lord. The King of England denounced the work to the Elector Frederick and to Duke George of Saxony. But as early as the month of November THE D U K E H A D



Luther working on his Bible translation with Melancthon (left), George Spalatin (standing), and Caspar Cruciger (right)

ORDERED HIS SUBJECTS TO DEPOSIT EVERY COPY OF LUTHER’S NEW TESTAMENT IN THE HANDS OF THE MAGISTRATES. BAVARIA, BRANDENBURG, AUSTRIA, AND ALL THE STATES DEVOTED TO ROME, PUBLISHED SIMILAR DECREES. IN SOME PLACES THEY MADE SACRILEGIOUS BONFIRES OF THESE SACRED BOOKS IN THE PUBLIC PLACES” (D'Aubigne, III, p. 77). Persecutions were poured out by the Catholic authorities upon those who read the works of Luther. An example of those who were tormented for distributing the German Luther New Testament was a bookseller named John in Buda, Hungary. He had circulated the German Scriptures throughout that country. “He was bound to a stake; his persecutors then piled his books around him, enclosing him as if in a tower, and then set fire to them. John manifested unshaken courage, exclaiming from the midst of the flames, that he was delighted to suffer in the cause of the Lord” (D'Aubigne, III, p. 152).

“In Wurtemberg, an inquisitor named Reichler caused the Lutherans, and above all the preachers, to be hanged upon trees. ... Similar persecutions took place in the other states of the catholic league. ... The persecution was most violent in the states of the Duke of Bavaria ... spies filled the whole country, and in every heart reigned mistrust and alarm. ... the Roman party was everywhere drawing the sword against the Reformation” (D'Aubigne, III, pp. 152, 53, 56).

In 1520 a strict search for Lutheran Bibles and books was instigated in Venice, and those found were destroyed (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 28).

The Catholic authorities who instigated these persecutions were opposed to the Bible in the German vernacular and destroyed large quantities of the Luther Bible. Together with other “unapproved” vernacular translations, the Luther German Bible was forbidden by the Council of Trent in 1546.

## **Anabaptist German Bible**

**The German Bible produced by Anabaptists** appeared in 1529, five years before the entire Luther Bible. This was called the **Worms Bible**, because it was published in the city of Worms. Ludwig Keller, in *The Reformation and the Older Reform Parties*, says: “The fact is by no means yet sufficiently recognized, that the first complete Bible translation of the Reformation which we possess, namely, the so-called Worms Bible, of the year 1529, had its origin from the Baptists” (p. 432).

The translation was done by two Anabaptists, Ludwig Hetzer and Hans Denck, “accomplished scholars, thoroughly versed in Hebrew and Greek, as well as in Latin. Denck studied and received the degree of Master at the University of Basel, under and with Erasmus, Hetzer was an alumnus of Basel, and also of the University of Paris” (Dr. A.C. Osborn, cited by John Porter, *The World's Debt to the Baptists*, p. 138).

“Ludwig Keller in his monograph, ‘Hans Denck, Ein Apostel der Wiedertaufer,’ (page 211) says: ‘At the time of its publication the approval of the Denck-Hetzer edition was unlimited and universal. Within three years thirteen separate editions appeared in folio, quarto, octavo, and duo-decimo at Strasburg, Augsburg, Hagenau, and other places. The first edition [of the prophets of the Old Testament] was printed five times in one year, and in the next year, 1528, eleven editions appeared. The Augsburg edition was five times printed in nine months. In a word, in all Germany the book of the despised Anabaptists was bought, read, and treasured” (Porter, p. 139).

This German Bible and its translators suffered the fate we have described so many times. “Denck, suffering with tuberculosis, under the decree of banishment and outlawry, died in hiding, in Basel, in 1529, a little before the Bible came from the press. Hetzer was arrested, condemned as a heretic, and beheaded the same year at Constance. ... EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT WAS MADE TO SUPPRESS THIS ‘HERETIC BIBLE;’ PRINTING OFFICES, PLACES WHERE THE BOOK WAS FOR SALE, PRIVATE HOUSES AND

INDIVIDUALS WERE SEARCHED, AND ALL COPIES FOUND WERE DESTROYED. Only three copies that are accessible to scholars are now known to be in existence, one is in the library in the University of Bonn, one in a library in Stuttgart, and one in the New York Public Library” (Porter, p. 139).

## Italian Bibles

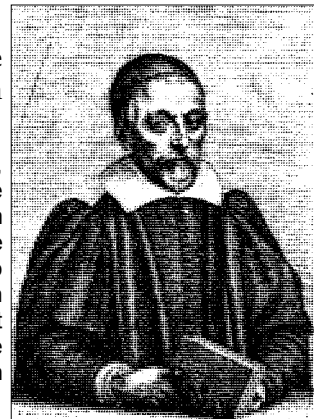
Not very much is known about the early Italian versions of the Bible, and various authorities give conflicting testimonies. All agree that a translation appeared as early as the middle of the thirteenth century. This was connected with the Waldensians.

Another Italian version appeared in 1471. The translator is said to have been **Nicolo Malermi** (or Malerbi), and this translation went through 21 editions during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 39). Luzzi, in *The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy*, claims that this version was “plagiarized from a 13th century version which had been produced by the Tuscan Patarenes” (pp. 120-22). This was a group of separated Christians that was persecuted by Rome.

The need for a more faithful version in modern Italian began to be met by **Antonio Brucioli** (c. 1495-1566), who published an Italian New Testament at Venice in **1530**, and an entire Bible two years later (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 60). It was also translated from Latin, but it was done in current Italian. Brucioli also produced a commentary on the whole Bible, which was published in seven volumes. “His translations of the Bible were put into the first class of forbidden books, and all his works, on whatever subject, ‘published or to be published,’ together with all books which came from his press, even after his death, were strictly prohibited” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 56).

The following statement describes the influence Brucioli’s Bible had in Italy, and the violence with which the Catholic Church sought to destroy it:

Though Italy be the fortress and strength of the papal empire, because the authority of the pope is most firmly established over the people of that country, this could not prevent the light from penetrating it in different quarters; in consequence of which the scales fell from the eyes and the fetters from the hands of many who sat in darkness and captivity. This was effected by the means of an Italian translation of the Bible by Brucioli, which was published at that time, and which it was not judged prudent to stifle in its birth, by those violent measures which were afterwards employed for its suppression (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 57).



Diodati

In **1607 Giovanni Diodati** (1576-1649) published an Italian Bible in Geneva that was based upon the Greek and Hebrew. Diodati, though born in Switzerland, was the descendant of a noble family of

Lucca that had to go into exile because of its having embraced the Reformed Faith (Alexander Robertson, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, 1903, p. 223). At age 21 he was appointed professor of Hebrew by Theodore Beza. In 1609 Diodati succeeded Beza as professor of theology in Geneva, and he continued in that position for 40 years. Diodati is called “the most important figure in the history of the Italian Bible (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 60). He also published annotations on the entire Bible. “These were printed in English by order of the Long Parliament in 1642” (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, I, p. 45). It is interesting to note that Diodati took a New Testament position on baptism. Referring to the baptism of John in Matthew 3:6, he commented: “Plunged in the water for a sacred sign and seal of the expiation and remission of sins” (Diodati, *Pious and Learned Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, London, 1648; cited by John Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, chapt. 9).

## Dutch Bibles

As noted earlier, portions of the Scripture in the Dutch language appeared “even before 1200 A.D.” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 174). Little is known about these versions, though.

In 1270 **Jacob Van Maerlandt** completed the four Gospels in Dutch, translated from Latin. “This effort aroused the wrath of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Utrecht, who thought it was disrespectful to the Scriptures thus to bring them within the reach of the common people, and Van Maerlandt nearly lost his life as a reward for his labor” (Beardslee, p. 175).

In 1477 **Jacob Jacobzoon** and **Maurits Ymands** published a Dutch Old Testament. Another Dutch translation appeared at Gouda in 1479 (Beardslee, p. 178). In 1516 **Nicholaas de Grave** published a Dutch Bible translated from Latin. The same year, **Erasmus** published the first Dutch New Testament translated from Greek (Beardslee, p. 179).

In September 1526, the first entire Bible in Dutch was published by **Jacob van Liesveldt** in Antwerp. It was based on Luther’s German translation and another German version that had been published at Cologne by Henry Quenstel in 1480. In 1546 Liesveldt was beheaded in Antwerp “for his printing labours” (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, I, p. 35). “Thus did this noble work of Bible translation receive its baptism of blood, and as always in the history of the Church, the blood of heroic men who do not count their own lives dear unto themselves, gave greater emphasis to the truth, and made more intense the desire and determination to have the word of God in their own language” (Beardslee, p. 183).

## Portuguese Bibles

“The prohibition of vernacular Bibles by the Inquisition in both Portugal and Spain meant that such translations could not be published there. The translation of the New Testament into Portuguese was carried out by **Joao Ferreira d’Almeida**, and its first edition appeared at Amsterdam in 1681” (*The Reformation of the Bible*, p. 61).

## Latin America

The Inquisition was established in Latin America in the 16th century and quickly busied itself with arresting, torturing, impoverishing, burning, and hanging heretics and other “enemies” of the Catholic Church.

The popes quickly laid claim to the territories discovered by Columbus. In 1493 Alexander VI issued a bull “conferring on the Spanish sovereigns domination over these territories” (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 191). Inquisitor Martin de Valencia arrived in **Mexico** in 1524 and burned at least one heretic soon thereafter. These are probably the Englishman and the Frenchman mentioned by Thomas M’Crie who are said to have been burned alive in Mexico in 1524 “as impenitent Lutherans” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 335).

Inquisition edicts were read publicly, “pledging every one, under fearful maledictions, spiritual and temporal, to aid the Inquisition in every way and to denounce and persecute heretics as wolves and mad dogs” (Lea, p. 202). The Index of Prohibited Books was enforced in Mexico, and every owner of books was required to present a sworn list of those in his possession (Lea, p. 204). The book shops were examined and “calificadores were appointed who exercised a most vigilant supervision over all books introduced into the colony” (Lea, p. 264).

“It will be seen from all this that the Mexican Inquisition exercised an independent function of censorship; the earliest printing-press in the New World was established in the city of Mexico and its products were supervised by the tribunal, which condemned them, when necessary, without awaiting a reference to distant Spain. Prohibitory edicts, moreover, emanating from the home censorship, were duly published from every parish pulpit between the Caribbean and the Pacific” (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 265). “Incident to the censorship was the *visita de navios*, or search of all vessels on their arrival, regarded as an indispensable duty to prevent the importation of forbidden books and the immigration of suspected heretics and Judaizers, as well as to ascertain whether, during the voyage, any one on board had committed acts subjecting him to inquisitorial jurisdiction” (Lea, p. 266).

In 1659 an Irishman named William Lamport was condemned to the flames in Mexico City “for being infected with the errors of Luther, Calvin, Pelagius, Wicliff, and John Huss; in a word, because he was guilty of all imaginable heresies” (M’Crie, p. 335). Many others perished in like manner through the years.

The Inquisition was established in **Peru** in 1570, with the arrival of Servan de Cerezuela. The Edict of Faith was ordered to be published regularly in all of the Catholic churches, calling for all “the faithful” to expose “heretics.” This particular office of the Inquisition extended throughout a vast territory, including almost all of South America. “From an early period the Lima tribunal examined books and prohibited such as it saw fit. The importation of printed matter was also, as in Spain, subject to its supervision. The original instructions, borne by Cerezuela, enjoined special watchfulness by the commissioners at the seaports, to prevent the introduction of all works that were on the Index. ... There was always a haunting dread of the efforts attributed to the Protestants to smuggle heretic books into the land. ... It required that all ships on arrival should be visited by the commissioner before any passenger or merchandise was landed” (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 444).

Books and vernacular Scriptures continued to be confiscated and burned through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**Pope Paul III (1534-1549)**, the pope that established the Jesuit order in 1540 and called the Council of Trent in 1545, reiterated all the antecedent papal bulls respecting the duty of Inquisitors against heretics. In 1542, he “published a bull for the establishment of the Inquisition. ‘The Jesuits,’ says Ranke, ‘account it as a glory of their order that their founder, Loyola, supported this proposition by an express memorial’ (*The Jesuits*, p. 26).

The Jesuits were religious warriors who vowed absolute and unquestioning submission to the pope. The Jesuit oath included these fearful words: “I do further declare the doctrine of the church of England, of the Calvinists, Huguenots, and other protestants, to be damnable, and those to be damned who will not forsake the same” (Dowling *The History of Romanism*, p. 605).

In 1543 Pope Paul III “PUBLISHED AN EDICT AGAINST BOOKSELLERS, PRINTERS, AND ALL OTHER PERSONS IN THAT BUSINESS, IN WHICH HE DENOUNCED, THAT THE UTMOST WRATH OF THE PAPACY SHOULD BE EFFUSED UPON ALL THOSE WHO PRINT, SELL, BUY, READ, OR SECRETE BOOKS SUSPECTED OF HERESY” (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, pp. 393, 94). This wrath was exercised toward those who printed and distributed vernacular Bibles as well as other “heretical” books.

The Reformation had taken root in many Italian towns and cities by this time, and Thomas M’Crie describes the effect of Paul III’s inquisition in that land:

No sooner was this engine of tyranny and torture erected, than those who had rendered themselves obnoxious to it by the previous avowal of their sentiments, fled in great numbers from a country in which they could no longer look for protection from injustice and cruelty. The prisons of the inquisition were everywhere filled with those who remained behind, and who, according to the policy of that court, were retained for years in dark and silent durance, with the view of inspiring their friends with dread, and of subduing their own minds to a recantation of their sentiments. With the exception of a few places, the public profession which had been made of the Protestant religion was suppressed. Its friends, however, were still numerous; many of them were



animated by the most ardent attachment to the cause; they continued to encourage and edify one another in their private meetings; and IT REQUIRED ALL THE ACTIVITY AND VIOLENCE OF THE INQUISITORS, DURING TWENTY YEARS, TO DISCOVER AND EXTERMINATE THEM (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, pp. 123, 24).

Great numbers of peaceful, Bible-believing people were destroyed during these persecutions. “The massacre of Merindol and Cabrieres occurred in 1545, at the command of Pope Paul III. Twenty-four villages were burnt to ashes. Several thousands of the Waldenses were killed; and multitudes of the fugitives were starved while endeavouring to escape to Geneva and Switzerland. All the men of Cabrieres who were captured, amounting to nine hundred, were collected in a large field, and there butchered piece-meal, and their mangled remains left scattered on the ground; while the women, after the usual infamous Popish violations, were shut up in barns with straw, and burned. Those atrocious crimes were attended with cruelty so horrific, that even the bigoted blood-thirsty monarchs were agonized with remorse, when they heard the woeful narrative” (Callender, p. 425).

Inquisitors were sent to various cities to enforce the papal bulls and to oversee the persecution and destruction of vernacular Bibles and “heretical” books. Consider one example:

Annibale Grisone, who was sent to Istria as inquisitor, in the year 1546, spread distress and alarm among the inhabitants. He read everywhere from the pulpits the papal bull, requiring all, under the pain of excommunication, to inform against those whom they suspected of heresy, and to deliver up the prohibited books which might be in their possession. ... Not satisfied with public denunciations, he entered into every house in search of heretical books. Such as confessed that they had read the New Testament in the vulgar tongue, he charged to abstain from that dangerous practice for the future, under the severest pains. ... At first, only a few individuals of weaker minds were induced to inform against themselves, or their acquaintances; but at last consternation seized the multitude, and every one became afraid that his neighbour would get the start of him. The ties of consanguinity and gratitude were disregarded: the son informed against his father, the wife against her husband, the client against his patron (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, pp. 137, 38).

The inquisition raged far and wide under the watchful eye of Pope Paul III. In **Naples**, for example, “an edict was issued requiring the surrender of heretical books, of which large numbers were collected and solemnly burnt, and a pragmática of October 15, 1544, established a censorship of the press” (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 70).

Great numbers of Christians were tormented by the persecutions in France and Spain during those days, and many of the men who were to become famous in the annals of Protestant Bible publishing were forced to flee the persecutions. In 1541, for example, **Francis de Enzinas** fled the persecutions in France and Spain and settled in Wittenburg. He later completed a Spanish Bible. In 1545 **Jean Crespin** fled France after he was threatened by the Inquisition. He became a publisher in Geneva, and in 20 years he published nearly 200 titles, including Bibles in French, Latin, and Greek. He also

published the enormously popular *Book of Martyrs*, which grew from one book (4.5 x 2.5 inches, 900 pages) in 1554, to 12 volumes (6 x 9 inches, 2,000 pages) in 1619. In 1548 **Theodore Beza** fled from France to Geneva and went on to produce editions of the Bible in Greek, Latin, and French. In 1550, **Robert Estienne** was forced to flee from Paris to Geneva, where he continued his very influential Bible publishing enterprise. Others could be mentioned.

## Persecutions against William Tyndale and the English Bible

We now turn to England in the early sixteenth century for the continuation of our story of the Bible, its distribution and its persecution. The history of Britain and its Bible during that era reads like a novel.

### William Tyndale



William Tyndale\* (c. 1484-1536), born one hundred years after the death of Wycliffe recognized England's need for the Scriptures in the mother tongue translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek. (\*Some of the branches of the Tyndale family had adopted the name Hitchens or Hutchens, and William Tyndale was also known by this name at times.)

Wycliffe's version was translated from Latin and it had never been printed, having been distributed only in handwritten manuscripts. It took a copyist ten months to produce just one complete Wycliffe Bible.

Tyndale was born during an era of great spiritual decline.

It is saying but little, that at this era evangelical religion was low. Effects never exist apart from causes; and as the ministry was a mass of ignorance and superstition, no one has a right to expect grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles. The people never rise in moral excellence and social virtues higher than their teachers. ... The people relied 'on the merit of their own works' toward their justification, such as pilgrimages to images, kneeling, kissing, and cursing of them, as well as many other hypocritical works in their store of religion; there being marts or markets of merits, full of holy relics, images, shrines, and works of superstition, ready to be sold; and all things they had were called holy: holy cowls, holy girdles, holy pardons, holy beads, holy shoes, holy rules. 'They were greatly seduced by certain famous and notorious images, as by our Lady of Walsingham, our Lady of Ipswich, St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Anne of Buxton, the Rood of Grace [an image at Boxley in Kent which was cleverly rigged to bow its head, roll its eyes, smile and frown] ... To these they made vows and pilgrimages, thinking that God would hear their prayers in that place rather than in another place. They kissed their feet devoutly, and to these they offered candles, and images of wax, rings, beads, gold, and silver abundantly.' ... The moral and intellectual condition of the clergy can scarcely be described. Their power over the masses was complete. The destiny of the

people for both worlds was in their hands. With their influence they encircled them from the cradle to the grave. Claiming to be the vicegerents or the representatives of the Holy One, their lives were a perpetual exposition of the hypocrisy which marked them. Decency was thrown aside, and morality unknown. Brothels were kept in London for the especial use of the priesthood. The confessional was abused, and profligacy was all but universal. ... The moral state of the people under such teaching was almost beyond conception. Ignorance, vice, and immorality of the worst kind, reigned all but universally" (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, 1862, pp. 28, 29, 33).

The Translator was also born to a time of great change. When he was eight years old, Columbus discovered America. When Tyndale was fourteen, Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to India, and the great era of world exploration had begun. Just three years before Tyndale was born, the Spanish Inquisition was established, and by the time Tyndale was fifteen, 8,800 had been burned to death and 90,000 imprisoned under the pope's Inquisitor General in Spain, Thomas de Torquemada. In 1492, when Tyndale was a young lad of eight, 500,000 Jews had been driven out of Spain and their wealth confiscated. As Tyndale learned his letters and grew to manhood, terrible persecutions were being poured out upon the Waldensian Christians in Bohemia and Moravia. Just a couple of decades before his birth, the inhabitants of the valley of Loyse were destroyed by the Roman Catholic armies. When Tyndale was a toddler, an army of 18,000 Catholics made war against the Waldensian Christians of Piedmont.

The popes of Tyndale's day were very powerful and very wicked. Sixtus IV (1471-1484) established houses of prostitution in Rome. Innocent VIII (1484-1492) had seven illegitimate children, whom he enriched with church treasures. Alexander VI (1492-1503) lived with a Spanish lady and her daughter, and reveled in the grossest forms of debauchery. "The accounts of some of the indecent orgies that took place in the presence of the pope and [his daughter] Lucrezia are too bestial for repetition" (William Kerr, *A Handbook on the Papacy*, pp. 228, 29). Pope Alexander had five children, and his favorite son, Caesar Borgia, murdered his brother and his brother-in-law. Just a few years before Tyndale's birth, work had begun on the fabulous St. Peter's Basilica and parts of the 1,000-room Vatican palace, under the reign of Pope Nicholas V. When Tyndale was a young man, Michelangelo (1475-1564) began his four-year project of painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

The most important change of all, though, had to do with the printing press. Just a few years before Tyndale's birth, the city of Mentz was invaded and the knowledge of printing could no longer be kept a secret by its founders. By the time Tyndale was born, Gutenberg had been dead only a few years and printing presses existed in more than 120 cities of Europe.

Tyndale yearned to see the Scriptures translated into English directly from the original Hebrew and Greek and to see the English Bible printed and made available to the

common man. The historian John Foxe tells us that Tyndale was “singularly addicted to the study of the Scriptures.”

While debating the need for ecclesiastical reform and theological purity, Tyndale exclaimed, “If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest.”

He was addressing a Catholic priest who had stated that “we are better without God’s laws than the pope’s.”

It is evident that God had enflamed Tyndale’s heart with a passion to produce a pure English translation of the Scriptures, and to the fulfillment of this noble purpose he dedicated his life, willingly suffering great privations, forgoing the joys of marriage and a settled family life, for the sake of endowing his beloved people with the eternal Word of God.

### **Tyndale’s Education and Christian Faith**

Tyndale obtained a good education, beginning at Oxford and later transferring to Cambridge. It is possible that Tyndale studied under Richard Croke, who returned to Cambridge from Germany to lecture on Greek in 1518.



Little Sodbury Manor, 19th century

It was possibly during his Oxford years that Tyndale was converted and submitted his life to the authority of the Holy Scripture. Foxe tells us that while there “he read privately to some of the students and fellows of Magdalen college, in divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the scriptures; and all that knew him reputed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition, and of unspotted life” (Foxe, abridged, p. 252).

At Cambridge Tyndale enjoyed sweet fellowship with certain student friends who shared his faith in Christ. At Cambridge these “young men associated themselves together, and strengthened each other’s hands in the work of reading the New Testament and preaching the Gospel of repentance to their fellow students” (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, 1881, p. 96). John Fryth, who would face martyrdom later, was led to Christ by Tyndale.

We don’t know much about Tyndale’s family and childhood. He was born near the border of Wales, though he lived most of his time in Gloucestershire, and Davis, in his *History of the Welsh Baptists*, 1835, tells us that the name of William Tyndale is

mentioned in Welsh manuscripts in connection with other Baptist ministers.

The following are the names of a few of the most noted Baptist ministers in Britain before the reformation ... The names of several others are mentioned in Welsh manuscripts, as being noted; but in what respects we are not informed: except William Tyndal, who translated the Bible into the English language, and translated the five books of Moses into the Welsh language, in the year 1520... Llewellyn Tyndal and Hezekiah Tyndal were members of the Baptist church, at Abergaverney, South Wales (Benjamin Evans, *The Early English Baptists*, p. 21).

It is possible, then, that Tyndale's family, or at least some of his near relatives, were Anabaptists. We know that Tyndale associated himself, at least through letters from the Continent, with a body of dissident Christians in London, and we will see more of this church when we consider the martyrdom of Tyndale's friend John Fryth.

Historian John Christian gives the following bit of information:

It is certain he shared many views held by the Baptists, but that he was a member of a Baptist church is nowhere proved. He always translated the word *ecclesia* by the word congregation, and held to a local congregation of a church (Tyndale, *Works* II. 13. London, 1831). There were only two offices in the church, pastor and deacon (I. 400). The elders or bishops should be married men (I. 265). Upon the subject of baptism he is very full. He is confident that baptism does not wash away sin. 'It is impossible,' says he, 'that the waters of the river should wash our hearts' (Ibid, 30). Baptism was a plunging into the water (Ibid, 25). Baptism to avail must include repentance, faith and confession (III. 179). The church must, therefore, consist of believers (Ibid, 25). His book in a wonderful manner states accurately the position of the Baptists (Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 187-88).

On baptism, Tyndale wrote the following in his Prologue to the Book of Leviticus:

If baptism preach me the washing in Christ's blood, so doth the Holy Ghost accompany it; and that deed of preaching through faith doth put away my sins. The ark of Noah saved them in the water through faith.

A more comprehensive statement of Tyndale's view on baptism is as follows:

[T]he washing without the word helpeth not; but through the word it purifieth and cleanseth us, as thou readest Eph. 6. How Christ cleanseth the congregation in the fountain of water through the word: the word is the promise which God hath made. Now as a preacher, in



Little Sodbury Manor, the Great Room where Tyndale ate meals and had religious discussions; photo taken in 2003

preaching the word of God saveth the hearers that believe so doeth the washing in that it preacheth and representeth to us the promise that God hath made unto us in Christ, **the washing preacheth unto us that we are cleansed with Christ's blood shedding** which was an offering and a satisfaction for the sin of all that repent and believe consenting and submitting themselves unto the will of God. **The plunging into the water signifieth that we die and are buried with Christ as concerning the old life of sin which is dead. And the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in anew life full of the Holy Ghost** which shall teach us, and guide us, and work the will of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6 (Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I, citing "The Obedience of All Degrees Proved by God's Worde," imprinted by Wyllyam Copland at London 1561).

That is definitely a Baptist statement on baptism. Another plain statement of Tyndale's position on believer's baptism was given in his *Obedience of a Christian Man*, as follows: "The plunging into the water signifieth that we die and are buried with Christ, and the pulling out again signifieth that we rise again with Christ in a new life."

We also know that Tyndale's brother, John, was a Christian and that he suffered persecution for his faith in Christ, but, again, we do not know many of the details of this brother's Christianity, except that he was opposed to Roman Catholic dogma and he loved and distributed the Scriptures. In 1530 John Tyndale and his friend Thomas Patmoreh were arrested for distributing Scriptures, fined the large sum of 100 pounds each, and made to ride through London on horseback, facing backwards, with sheets of the New Testament sewn on their clothing.

### **Tyndale's Attempt to Translate the Scriptures in England**

Upon leaving Cambridge, Tyndale obtained a job as tutor to the children of Sir John Wals at Little Sodbury Manor, and he remained with this household for about two years. Walsh was a famous warrior who had been knighted as the king's champion at the coronation of Henry VIII. During these days, Tyndale preached at a church that was located on a hill above Little Sodbury Manor, in homes, and in open-air meetings in nearby villages. He also debated with the local Catholic priests. It was during one of these debates that he uttered the memorable words mentioned already, that he would make the plow boy know the Scriptures better than these priests.

While at Little Sodbury Manor he translated one of the works of Erasmus, the *Christian Soldier's Manual (Enchiridion Militis Christiani)*. ("Erasmus' writings Tyndale admired, but saw through the defects in his character" —Christopher Anderson, p. 38).

Lady Walsh seems to have been enamored with the wealth commanded by the Catholic scholars. Foxe tells us that one day she exclaimed: "Why, here is such a doctor as may dispense a hundred pounds; and another, two hundred; and another, three hundred pounds; and were it reason, think you, that we should believe you before them?"

Tyndale was not so blind. It appears that the Walshes treated Tyndale kindly and helped him go to London when the time came for him to leave. There is some indication that Sir

John Walsh and his wife might have received the Gospel that was explained by the famous translator they entertained unawares.

Tyndale's views on the sole authority of Scripture and his bold exposure of Rome's errors soon drew the ire of the Catholic authorities. Tyndale later testified of these experiences in the following words:

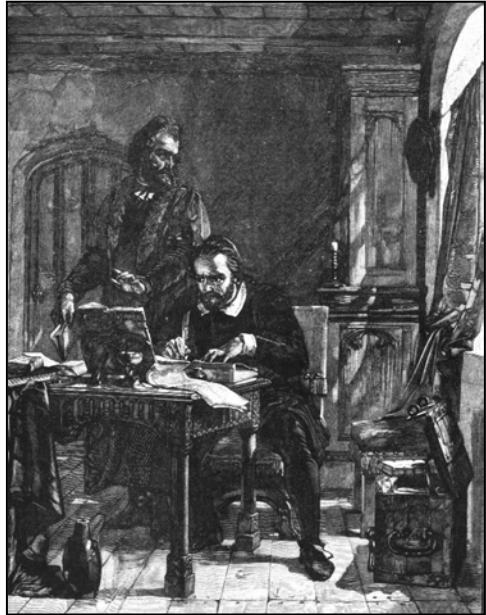
A thousand books had they rather to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrine, than that the Scripture should come to light. For as long as they may keep that down, they will so darken the right way with the mist of their sophistry, and so tangle them that either rebuke or despise their abominations, with arguments of philosophy, and with worldly similtudes, and apparent reasons of natural wisdom; and with wresting the Scriptures unto their own purpose, clean contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text; and so delude them in descanting upon it with allegories . . . that though thou feel in thine heart, and art sure, how that all is false that they say, yet couldst thou not solve their subtile riddles. *WHICH THING ONLY MOVED ME TO TRANSLATE THE NEW TESTAMENT. BECAUSE I HAD PERCEIVED BY EXPERIENCE, HOW THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH THE LAY PEOPLE IN ANY TRUTH, EXCEPT THE SCRIPTURE WERE PLAINLY LAID BEFORE THEIR EYES IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, THAT THEY MIGHT SEE THE PROCESS, ORDER, AND MEANING OF THE TEXT:* for else, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again . . . that is with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making; and partly in juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as is impossible to gather of the text itself

(Tyndale, Introduction to *Five Books of Moses*).

Tyndale thought the need for the Scriptures in the vernacular languages was obvious. Consider his words in the Prologue to the first edition of his New Testament. Arguing that it was superfluous to state the reasons for translating the Scriptures into the English tongue, he added:

... for who is so blind to ask, why light should be showed to them that walk in darkness, where they cannot but stumble, and where to stumble, is the danger of eternal damnation; either so despitiful that he would envy any man (I speak not his brother) so necessary a thing...

This was exactly opposite to the view held by the Catholic Church in that day. Tyndale describes the various opinions he had encountered on this topic:



Tyndale translating the Bible

Some of the papists say it is impossible to translate the Scriptures into English, some that it is not lawful for the layfolk to have it in the mother-tongue, some that it would make them all heretics (William Tyndale, Preface, Pentateuch, cited from Schaff, VI, p. 726).

In 1522, Tyndale was brought before the authorities to answer for his “heretical” opinions. Later he described that event in the following words:

When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog; and laid to my charge whereof there could be none accuser brought forth, as their manner is not to bring forth the accuser; and yet, all the Priests of the country were there the same day.

ROME WAS REACHING OUT ITS LONG ARM AND DIRECTLY FINGERING THE MAN WHO YEARNED TO TRANSLATE THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES. The Cardinal who had appointed this Chancellor was none other than Thomas Wolsey, who had been appointed Cardinal by Pope Leo X, and who would continue to persecute God’s people throughout his life. Wolsey himself aspired to the papacy and pursued this object zealously, though unsuccessfully. Later Wolsey lamented to the pope that the printing press had made it possible for “ordinary men to read the Scriptures.”

The pope at the time of this early persecution against Tyndale was Adrian VI (1522-1523), who had only recently made Wolsey his legate or personal representative in England. The Bishop of Worcester (the area in which Tyndale was first persecuted) was Julio di Medici, who later became Pope Clement VII (1523-1534). The Chancellor who berated Tyndale in 1522 was Thomas Parker, who later displayed his unreasonable fury against the truth by digging up the bones of William Tracy and burning them to ashes. This was done in 1531, during the persecutions that were being poured out upon Bible believers throughout England. Tracy had been condemned after his demise “because in his last will he had committed his departing Spirit to God, through Jesus Christ alone, and left no part of his property to the priests, to pray for his soul” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 296, 97).

Rome was directly connected, then, with the persecutions against this noble translator from beginning to end. Nothing frightened the old religious Harlot more than the thought of the Scriptures laid open before the common man. The devil, surely understanding something of the importance of England and its language, employed his false church in a bitter warfare against this Bible that was to have a worldwide influence without peer among translations.

Even after his confrontation with the authorities, Tyndale attempted to make his translation in England. He journeyed to London and presented his plan before Cuthbert Tunstall (remember that name), Bishop of the city, who turned him away. Tyndale quickly found that it would be impossible to complete his project in England because of the oppression against the Word of God. “I understood that not only was there no room in my lord of London’s palace to translate the New Testament, but also there was no place to do it in all England.”



No English printer would dare print a forbidden vernacular Bible. The pope had given England's King Henry VIII the title "Defender of the Faith" for his rigorous defense of Roman doctrine. Tyndale remained a few months in London in the home of Humphrie Munmouth, who helped finance his journey to Europe and supported him from time to time in his translation activities. Munmouth was later persecuted for the kindness he showed to Tyndale.

Determining to complete his translation outside of England, Tyndale traveled to Europe in January 1524 to prepare his masterpiece for the English-speaking world. He could not have known, though he might have suspected, that he would never return to his beloved native land. He would be exiled for 12 years and then put to death for his great work.

### **Tyndale Completes the New Testament**

Tyndale had his translation of the New Testament ready for the printer in Cologne by 1525. A Catholic spy named John Dobneck, better known as Cochlaeus, a man who was a bitter enemy of Martin Luther and the Protestant movement, learned about Tyndale's efforts to contract a first printing of his New Testament in Cologne. Christopher Anderson called Cochlaeus "perhaps the most virulent enemy to the Word of God being translated into any vernacular tongue, who ever breathed. . . . he not only strove to prevent the diffusion of the Scriptures, and longed to strangle every attempt at their translation in the very birth, but even gloried in his enmity to all such proceedings."

He had heard certain whisperings that led him to believe that such a printing was ongoing, but he did not know the details. While visiting a printing establishment, Cochlaeus "heard them in unguarded moments boast of the revolution which could be shortly wrought in England." Inviting some of these printers to his house, Cochlaeus loosened their tongues with wine and learned exactly where the 3,000 copies of Tyndale's first printing were being completed and made ready for clandestine transport to England.

Cochlaeus reported this information to the authorities, who forbade the printers to proceed with the work.



Tyndale New Testaments were small for concealment

Tyndale and the man who was helping him at that time, William Roye, were able to get away with most of the completed sheets; and, being forced to flee, they escaped by boat up the Rhine river to the city of Worms, where the printing was completed.

Being foiled of his plan, Cochlaeus then sent a description of Tyndale's translation to religious leaders in England that they might guard against its importation. He carefully described the format of the copies he had seen at the printers before Tyndale made his escape, and urged the authorities to be on the lookout for these. Wisely, though, Tyndale set up another edition which was issued before the first printing was completed. That second printing, which was probably sent to England before the first, was made in a format smaller than the first, to more easily avoid detection. Almost immediately copies began to be smuggled into England from the Continent, hidden in bales of merchandise.

But notwithstanding the impending dangers, five Hanseatic merchants took the precious books into their ships, and sailed for London. They expected to find the enemy on guard, but instead, the way was open and the books were landed and safely conveyed to the Merchants' warehouse in Thames Street. If the enemy slept, the friends of the Bible were awake and expectant. Not only in London, but in Oxford and Cambridge, they anxiously awaited the coming of the newly printed English Testaments. The soil was prepared for the seed. For almost a hundred and fifty years this preparation had been going forward: so intimately allied was the close of the fourteenth with the beginning of the sixteenth century. The name of John Wycliffe was still fresh in the minds and hearts of his friends; neither was it forgotten by his enemies, for they still kept alive the fires of persecution so early kindled against his followers. Then these Lollards, or Broders in Christ, still preserved and read the old brown manuscripts of Wycliffe's New Testament. They were familiar also with religious tracts of his writing. Besides all this there was a more recent preparation which began with the revival of learning, and the publishing of Erasmus' Greek and Latin Testament. A movement which influenced the educated, not excepting those of the Universities. Finally, by way of preparation, the influence of Luther must not be forgotten, which was beginning to sweep like a great wave over England. Thus the way was fully prepared, and from the first the people received these newly printed Testaments joyfully, but, from necessity, secretly (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, pp. 103, 104).

The first copies of the Tyndale New Testament arrived in England in the dead of winter, in January 1526.

### **Persecutions Begin in England**

A letter to King Henry VIII dated December 2, 1525, from the man who later became Archbishop of York, shows the attitude that was typical of Roman Catholic authorities of that day toward vernacular Bibles: "All our forefathers, governors of the Church of England, hath with all diligence forbade and eschewed publication of English Bibles, as appeareth in Constitutions Provincial of the Church of England" (Hoare, *Our English Bible*, 1901, p. 144).

It must be recalled that the Church of England was a part of the Catholic Church until the break in 1534, and Henry himself was never Protestant in doctrine. "Henry continued to defend the principal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, required all people in

England and Wales to adhere to the Roman creed, and was quite willing to put to death men and women who opposed his will by embracing Protestant doctrine” (Sidney Houghton, *Sketches from Church History*, p. 113).

Tyndale’s translation was forbidden by ecclesiastical authorities in England; those who attempted to distribute copies were hounded and persecuted; and stacks of the printed copies were burned.

Cardinal Wolsey was actively employed in hunting down and burning the “heretical” books that were pouring into England. In February 1526, he ordered that a search be made in many places where copies were suspected to be hidden, requiring that London, Cambridge, and Oxford be searched all at one time. At Oxford the authorities arrested a number of young men who were suspected of holding heretical opinions. Their quarters were searched, and a large pile was made from the manuscripts and New Testaments that were found. The young men were then marched in procession, each made to carry a torch with which the books were lighted, and each being required to toss books into the fire. The young men were then cast into a foul dungeon that had been used to store fish. Four of them died during the imprisonment that lasted from the beginning of March through the middle of August.

Among the young men arrested were John Fryth, who became Tyndale’s closest friend and was later martyred; Richard Taverner (who was not required to go into the dungeon), who later published an edition of the English Bible; and Thomas Garret, who was burned to death in 1540.



Thomas Bilney, who was martyred in 1531, was converted at this time (1526) by the reading of the newly smuggled Tyndale New Testament. Under Bilney’s preaching many others, including Hugh Latimer and Robert Barnes, both of whom were later martyred, were converted during his brief years of ministry.

At Cambridge, too, and in London, secret search was made for books and Scriptures, and those found were instantly impounded and their owners apprehended. Spies were appointed to locate Bible lovers.

On February 11, 1526, the first pile of Scriptures and theological books was burned in London, under the approving eye of that aspiring pope, Cardinal Wolsey. A description of this scene reminds us of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation:

The Cardinal had a scaffold made on the top of the stairs for himself, with six and thirty Abbots, mitred Priors, and Bishops, and he, in his whole pomp, mitred, which [Robert] Barnes [in a sermon] had denounced, sat there enthroned! His Chaplains and Spiritual Doctors, in gowns of damask and satin, and he himself in purple! And there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs, for Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, to preach against Luther and Dr. Barnes; and great baskets full of books, standing before them within the rails, which were commanded, after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northern, (or large crucifix at the north gate of St. Paul's), there to be burned; and these heretics after the sermon, to go three times round the fire, and cast in their faggots (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 106).

Christopher Anderson reminds us that “THE CHIEF AUTHOR OF THIS NEW WAR [AGAINST THE SCRIPTURES IN ENGLISH], HOWEVER, WAS OUR FORMER BISHOP OF WORCESTER, THE ROMAN PONTIFF HIMSELF, who had been actually more busy than any other to produce it” (Anderson, I, p. 114). The pope was **Clement XII**, who reigned from 1523-1534.

That same year William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Cuthbert Tunstall (remember that name), Bishop of London, also denounced Tyndale's New Testament and condemned copies to the flames. In a proclamation signed October 24, 1526, Tunstall railed against the new Bible, saying:

[M]any children of iniquity, maintainers of Luther's sect, blinded through extreme wickedness, wandering from the way of truth and the Catholic faith, craftily have translated the New Testament into our English tongue ... which truly, without it be speedily foreseen, without doubt will contaminate and infect the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison and heresy, to the grievous peril and danger of the souls committed to our charge, and the offence of God's Divine Majesty: Wherefore we, Cuthbert, the Bishop ... Do charge you, jointly and severally ... that, by our authority, you warn, or cause to be warned, all and singular ... under pain of excommunication, and incurring the suspicion of heresy, they do bring in, and really deliver unto our Vicar-General, (Geoffrey Wharton,) all and singular such books, as contain the translation of the New Testament in the English tongue...

In November a similar mandate was announced by Warham, requiring that his entire province be searched. “By the end of this year, therefore, many copies of the New Testament must have been consumed in the flames, for it has been altogether a mistake to confine this to one or two great occasions. On the contrary, in the very first month of next year we shall presently hear the ambassador of Henry, in the Low Countries, bringing it forward as an argument for burning other there, that this had been doing in England daily!” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 122).

During 1526 and 1527, the authorities arrested and tormented many Bible readers. “Public Registers are filled with these cruel depositions. During this visitation, in the early part of the year 1527, Father Hacker, alias Ebb, a notable Lollard and Bible reader and teacher, who for the past six years had been going from house to house, reading and expounding the Scriptures, was arrested and compelled upon his oath to discover many of his friends and followers. A long list of the names of those thus detected, and the accusation against them, is recorded by Strype” (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 107).

By 1528, the prisons were “already filled to the full with those whose only crime is that of reading the New Testament in English” (Condit, p. 107).

“The fierceness and destructiveness of the opponents of Tyndale’s translation systematically followed up and destroyed the thousands of copies that had been widely sold through England and Scotland” (Ira Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, pp. 247, 48).

This hatred of Tyndale’s Bible was so aggressive and thorough that though at least 3,000 copies of the first edition were printed, and possibly many more, only TWO complete copies, ONE partial copy, and ONE fragment are known to exist today.

In 1527, Tyndale testified to the animosity which was being heaped upon him and his Bible by Catholic authorities in Britain in these words: “In burning the New Testament, they did none other thing than I looked for; no more shall they do if they burn me also, if it be God’s will it shall so be. Nevertheless in translating the New Testament I did my duty and so do I now...”

“The earliest importations of these precious volumes would furnish a very curious subject of enquiry. The various methods adopted for several years in order to secure their entrance into this country, can never now, indeed, be fully detailed; but the conveyance of Tyndale’s New Testaments into England and Scotland, with other books illustrative of the Sacred Volume, could only the half be told, would form one of the most graphic stories in English history. No siege, by sapping and mining, which Britain has ever since achieved, could furnish the tenth part of the incident, or evince half the courage, by which she was herself assailed” (Anderson, I, p. 88).

### **Destroying Tyndale’s New Testament on the Continent**

Not being satisfied with the destruction of Tyndale’s New Testaments in England itself, Wolsey and others resolved to search for books in Europe. In February 1526, Henry VIII and Wolsey addressed letters to various authorities in Antwerp, asking them to pursue and destroy all copies of Tyndale’s New Testament. Princess Margaret of Antwerp “pointedly commanded her officers to search the country for these books, intending to proceed in all rigour against those whom they found culpable” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 124).

John Hackett, an agent of the English crown, was commanded to seek out these Scriptures in various cities, and we are told that in this capacity he visited Antwerp, Barrow, Zealand, Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, Louvaine, and elsewhere, all in obedience to Cardinal Wolsey's instructions. Printers were threatened, and at least one, Christopher Endhoven, was imprisoned.

A plan was also devised by some of the Catholic leaders in England to purchase copies of the Tyndale New Testament before they could be imported, and then destroy them in great lots. A very interesting thing happened at that time to provide Tyndale with some working capital at a time when he had considerable debts. A bishop already mentioned, Cuthbert Tunstall, played a key role in this. Knowing the eagerness with which Tunstall yearned to destroy Tyndale's work, an enterprising merchant named Augustine Packington had the idea to approach the bishop when he was in Antwerp and offer to sell him an entire printing of Tyndale's New Testaments. Packington told Tyndale of the plan; and, receiving his blessing, everything proceeded as they had hoped. Tunstall eagerly purchased the entire lot and burned them, but Tyndale got the money and could then pay his debts and print even more copies of the English New Testament!

In 1526-27 an amazing series of events transpired that marked the hand of God at work on behalf of His Word. For political reasons, Flemish and German ships had ceased to enter English ports. It so happened, due to the location of the publishing enterprises in Europe, that the Scriptures needing to be smuggled into England had to be brought in by these very ships. It so happened that great untimely rains fell in sowing time in the spring of 1527, and by the fall of the year the price of wheat, and therefore bread, had increased so dramatically that the people were in danger of starvation. Before long neither wheat nor bread could be obtained for any price. This situation forced the hand of the authorities and they had to allow wheat and other merchandise from France and Germany, and intermingled with that life-giving wheat were the Life-giving Scriptures! Christopher Anderson comments, "Men are but too apt to overlook the footsteps of a particular providence, but the arrival of books through such a medium, and at such a period, was too remarkable an event to be passed over in silence. ... The bread that perisheth must rise in price, and finally fail, that the bread of life may come."

In December 1527, one of the printers and smugglers of the English Scriptures, John Raimond, was arrested and thrown into prison. In Antwerp he had printed a beautiful fourth edition of Tyndale's New Testament "enriched with references and engravings on wood, and each page bordered with red lines." Raimond himself helped smuggle 500 copies of these Scriptures into England, and his love for the Word of God was rewarded with imprisonment.

In 1528-29 the persecutions in England became more intense. Tunstall sat as "the grand Inquisitor" from February until May, trying numerous cases. "The shrewd and systematic method adopted by Tunstall seems to have been, to find out the most intelligent or

influential men, among these people who were to be cross-examined, and by effectually threatening them, so detect many of the rest” (Anderson, I, p. 180).

It was during these trials that **Humphrie Munmouth**, the businessman who had befriended Tyndale during his months in London, was persecuted. The authorities searched his property and imprisoned him in the Tower of London, “on suspicion of heresy, for some books found in his house.” He was accused of “maintaining those who are translating the Scriptures into English; of subscribing to get the New Testament printed in English, with or without glosses; of having imported it into the kingdom; and, lastly, of having said that faith alone is sufficient to save a man” (D’Aubigne, V, p. 386). Munmouth was not put to death, and he testified of his faith in Christ in his will when he died of natural causes some years later on November 16, 1537. He left a large gift for three preachers of the Word of God, and commended his soul to Christ Jesus, “my Maker and Redeemer, in whom, and by the merits of whose blessed passion, is all my whole trust of clean remission and forgiveness of my sins.” He refused to leave any of his inheritance for the saying of Roman masses.

Also in 1528 the Catholic authorities in England made alliance with their fellow persecutors on the Continent to arrest the men that were printing and selling the English New Testaments. Christopher Endhoven was arrested in Antwerp for the “heresy” of printing the Scriptures in the vernacular, though he was able to gain his release. Richard Harman and his wife were imprisoned on July 12, 1528. One of the charges was that he had “received books from a German merchant (viz., New Testaments in English without a gloss), and sold them to an English merchant who has had them conveyed to England.” They languished in prison for seven months and suffered great harm to their business.

### **Persecutions in Scotland**

The persecutions against the English Scriptures were being waged at the same time in Scotland to the north. In 1525 an Act had been passed by Parliament, forbidding the importation of books and Scriptures of foreigners. This was strengthened in 1527 to include native



The parting of Hamilton from his friends

importers. By 1527-28, any ship arriving with copies of the New Testament on board was liable to be confiscated, with its entire cargo. The captain of the ship could also be imprisoned for this offense.

It was during this time that **Patrick Hamilton** became a martyr for the Protestant faith in Scotland. He was from a well-to-do family, his brother having succeeded his father as sheriff of a county. More importantly, he had become an earnest preacher of the gospel, having been associated with William Tyndale and John Fryth during journeys to the Continent. His articles on “The Law and Gospel” and “Faith and Works” were translated from Latin into English by Fryth. His preaching centered on the necessity of repentance towards God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and he urged his hearers to read the Scriptures. He also taught that baptism does not wash away sin, that children are not saved through baptism, that a man is not justified by works but by faith only, and that “good works make not a good man, but that a good man doeth good works.” Consider an excerpt from one of his writings:

Therefore, wheresoever any question, or doubt riseth of Salvation, or our justifying before God, there the law and all good works must be utterly excluded and stand apart, that grace may appear free, and the promise simple, and that faith may stand alone, which faith alone without law or works, worketh to every man particularly his salvation, through mere promise, and the free grace of God. ... For as the body of Christ is the cause efficient of the redemption of the whole world in general: so is faith the instrumental cause, by which every man applieth the said body of Christ particularly to his own salvation (Patrick Hamilton, Foxe, unabridged, II, p. 234).

Hamilton was deceptively invited to St. Andrews with solemn promises of safety by the Cardinal David Beaton, who claimed he wanted only to converse with him. Beaton made a show of kindness upon Hamilton’s arrival, and he gave him lodging in the city, but a Dominican friar named Alexander Campbell was secretly instructed to draw heretical statements from Beaton during his visit. “In fact, he had been only a few days in St. Andrews, when, under night, he was apprehended in bed and carried to the Castle; and the very next day he was before Beaton, with thirteen different articles laid to his charge, by the man who seems to have long thirsted for his blood” (Anderson, II, p. 418). HE WAS CHARGED WITH THE “HERESY” OF SAYING THAT IT “IS LAWFUL TO ANY MAN TO READ THE WORD OF GOD, and in special the New Testament.” On Saturday, February 28, 1528, Hamilton was tried, condemned, and burned, all before the sun went down! “Thus gloriously fell, as far as we know, the first native of Scotland as an unspotted martyr for the truth, for the Word of God itself, as well as our right to read it” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 421).

In 1532, the Catholic bishops in Scotland issued an edict prohibiting the New Testament in English from being read or sold.

**Alexander Ales**, who had been imprisoned earlier for his faith, wrote an open letter to the king of Scotland, beseeching him to overrule the bishops and stop the edict against the Bible. Ales had been a Catholic priest and had attempted to convert Patrick Hamilton from his “heresy” before his martyrdom in 1528. This effort “back fired” and he himself was



pierced by conviction and converted by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ales' letter to the king was entitled "An epistle of Alexander Ales, against a certain Decree of the Bishops in Scotland, which forbids to read the books of the New Testament in the vernacular tongue." Not only was this letter ignored, but Ales himself was forced to flee from his homeland to save his life. Ales understood the difference between the Roman Catholic Church and true churches. In one of his writings he said:

Wherefore men mistake, if, on this account, they think there is no fault in Church doctrine and worship, because it was once a Church. How many prophecies are there, both by Paul and Daniel, which foretell, that the Word of God should be obscured, concealed, little known? That good and pious teachers should be slain by impious high priests? By these prophecies the Holy Spirit fortifies us before hand against those who set the title of The Church in opposition to The Word of God. ... For there exist some writings of almost all ages, which smell sweetly of the pure doctrine of the Apostles. I have seen in my own country some monuments of this kind; I have found them also in Germany (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 455).

In his letters to the king (others followed the first), Ales spoke very boldly in support for the Word of God in the vernacular tongues:

What is this new paradox in the Church, that Christians are to be prevented from reading the Sacred Books? God commanded the law to be written on the lintels of the houses, and on the borders of their garments, to be always in view. ... In Acts xvii. chapter, the diligence of those is commended, who, when they heard the Gospel, yet daily searched the Scriptures, that by their testimony, they might both confirm their faith and excite other spiritual affections. ... The German translation has had this good effect, not only in those countries which openly profess their attachment to the purer doctrine, but even in the rest of Germany, boys and girls, in almost all the more respectable families read the New Testament, learn Psalms, and read other useful books upon good morals, and by that discipline are happily trained both to piety and good morals. ... And there is greater necessity in Scotland for books written in the vernacular tongue than in Germany; for so great is the darkness among the Scots, that the people reckon it an atonement to repeat the Lord's Prayer in their native tongue, from whence it may be judged how great is the necessity there for books written in the native language. ... This is the very cause why the Monks struggle so earnestly, that domestic reading may not be permitted to the people! Thieves, as it is said, hate noise. FOR YOU CANNOT SUPPOSE, MOST EXCELLENT KING, THAT THERE IS ANY OTHER CAUSE WHY THE MONKS ARE UNWILLING THAT THE SACRED BOOKS SHOULD BE BROUGHT OUT, THAN THAT THEY FEAR THEIR ERRORS AND ABUSES SHOULD BE DETECTED, IF ONE COMPARED WITH THE GOSPEL (Anderson, II, pp. 458, 59).

In 1533, **Henry Forrest**, a Benedictine monk who had been converted through the Word of God, probably through the preaching of the martyr Patrick Hamilton, was burned in St. Andrews, Scotland. One of the specific charges was that Forrest had in his possession a copy of the New Testament in English.

### **Attempts to Arrest Tyndale**

About this time attempts began to be made by English authorities to arrest Tyndale and other men associated with the printing or importation of Scriptures. These attempts were increased in 1531, at which time King Henry VIII was fiercely desirous of capturing and



Tyndale captured through treachery

destroying Tyndale. Various individuals were commissioned to seize the translator, or to entice him back to England. “His anxiety to seize the man, or allure him into the kingdom, will be found to harmonise with the growing ferocity of his character” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 267).

In spite of these efforts that were being made to capture Tyndale, God continued to hide him from his persecutors. His work on earth was not finished. A fascinating thing happened in this connection in April 1531. Stephen Vaughan, one of the men that were hunting Tyndale, was in Antwerp. Tyndale, hearing of this, contacted Vaughan by a middleman and requested that Vaughan accompany this man to meet “a certain friend, unknown to the messenger, who is very desirous to speak with you.” Vaughan

inquired as to the mystery friend’s name, but he was told that the messenger did not have this information. He agreed to accompany the man, anyway, to satisfy his curiosity and was brought outside the gates of Antwerp into a field, where he found himself face to face with William Tyndale, the very object of his inquisition. What a surprise this must have been to the king’s agent! Following is the dialogue as recorded by Vaughan himself in a letter to the English authorities:

‘Do you not know me?’ said this Tyndale.

‘I do not well remember you,’ said I to him.

‘My name,’ said he, ‘is Tyndale.’

‘But, Tyndale,’ said I, ‘fortunate be our meeting!’

Then Tyndale—‘Sir, I have been exceeding desirous to speak with you.’

‘And I with you; what is your mind?’

‘Sir,’ said he, ‘I am informed that the King’s Grace taketh great displeasure with me, for putting forth of certain books, which I lately made in these parts; but specially for the book named ‘The Practice of Prelates,’ whereof I have no little marvel,—considering that in it, I did but warn his Grace, of the subtle demeanour of the Clergy of his realm, towards his person; and of the shameful abusions by them practised, not a little threatening the displeasure of his Grace, and weal of his realm: in which doing, I showed and declared the heart of a true subject, which sought the safe-guard of his royal person, and weal of his Commons: to the intent, that his Grace thereof warned, might in due time, prepare his remedies against their subtle dreams. If, for my pains therein taken,—if for my poverty,—if

for mine exile out of mine natural country, and bitter absence from my friends,—if for my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherewith I am every where compassed;—and finally, if for innumerable other hard and sharp fightings which I endure, not yet feeling of their asperity, by reason (that) I hoped with my labours, to do honour to God, true service to my Prince, and pleasure to his Commons;—how is it that his Grace, this considering, may either by himself think, or by the persuasions of others, be brought to think, that in this doing, I should not show a pure mind, a true and incorrupt zeal, and affection to His Grace? ... Again, may his Grace, being a Christian prince, be so unkind to God, which hath commanded his Word to be spread throughout the world, to give more faith to wicked persuasions of men, which presuming above God's wisdom, and contrary to that which Christ expressly commandeth in his Testament, dare say, that it is not lawful for the people to have the same, in a tongue that they understand; because the purity thereof should open men's eyes to see their wickedness? ... As I NOW AM, very death were more pleasant to me than life, considering man's nature to be such as can bear no truth.'

Vaughan ends his description of this amazing scene by saying, "After these words, he then, being something fearful of me lest I would have pursued him, and drawing also towards night, he took his leave of me, and departed from the town, and I towards the town—saying, 'I should shortly, peradventure, see him again, or if not, hear from him.'"

Thus the exiled Translator departs to continue his work. Vaughan attempted to persuade Tyndale to return to England, promising him safety, but the Lord gave the translator wisdom enough to ignore these entreaties so that he might continue the translation. What a poignant description is given by Tyndale of his condition in exile. For the king and the religious authorities that were persecuting him to ignore this plea and to continue tormenting him is proof of their utterly apostate, unregenerate condition.

In December 1529 a committee of bishops in England was appointed to deal with "heretics" and their books. A proclamation was issued throughout the land as follows:

First—that no man within the King's realm, or other dominions subject to his highness, hereafter presume to preach, teach, or inform, any thing openly or privily, compile and write any book, or keep any school, contrary to the determination of Holy Church. That no man willingly favour or maintain any such person. That all persons having such books and writings deliver them up, within fifteen days. ... Also, the Chancellor, the Treasurer of England, the Justice of the one Bench and of the other, Justices of Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailies, and other officers, shall make oath on taking their charge, to give their whole power and diligence, to put away, and make utterly to cease and destroy, all heresies and errors commonly called Lollardies. ... That no person is henceforth to bring into this realm, or to sell, receive, take, or detail, any book or work, printed or written, against the faith Catholics—the decrees, laws, and ordinances of Holy Church—or in reproach, rebuke, or slander of the King, his counsel, or the Lords spiritual and temporal. In case they have any such books they shall immediately bring them to the Bishop of the diocese, without concealment or fraud: or if they know any person having any of the said books, they shall detect them to the said Bishop, all favour or affection laid apart, and that they fail not thus to do as they will avoid the King's high indignation and displeasure.

A list of more than 100 forbidden books and tracts in Latin and English was attached to this proclamation.

## **Tyndale's Books and Sermons**

Tyndale not only occupied himself with the translation of the Scriptures, he wrote many profitable books and sermons, including “The Revelation of Antichrist,” “The Supplication of Beggars,” “The Parable of the Unrighteous Mammon,” “The Obedience of a Christian Man,” “and “How Christian Rulers ought to Govern.” In 1530, he published “The Practice of Prelates,” in which he boldly described the pope as ivy, which climbs up a tree and gradually saps the strength of the host and kills it. This tract shows Tyndale’s excellent understanding of church history.

Even so the Bishop of Rome, at the beginning, crope along upon the earth, and every man trod upon him in this world. But as soon as there came a Christian Emperor, he joined himself unto his feet, and kissed them, and crope up a little with begging,—now this privilege, now that,—now this city, now that ... St. Peter’s patrimony,—St. Peter’s rents,—St. Peter’s lands,—St. Peter’s right; to cast a vain fear and superstitiousness into the hearts of men ... And thus, with flattering and feigning, and vain superstition, under the name of St. Peter, he crept up and fastened his roots in the heart of the Emperor; and with his sword climbed up above all his fellows; and brought them under his feet. And as he subdued them with the Emperor’s sword, even so, by subtilty and help of them, after that they were sworn faithful, he climbed above the Emperor and subdued him also; and made him stoop unto his feet, and kiss them another while. Yea, Celestinus crowned the Emperor Henry the Fifth, holding the crown between his feet. And when he had put the crown on, he smote it off with his feet again, saying—that he had might to make emperors and put them down again. ... And as the pope played with the Emperor, so did his branches and his members, the bishops, play in every kingdom, dukedom, and lordship ... And thus,—the Ivy tree hath under his roots, throughout all christendom, in every village, holes for foxes, and nests for unclean birds, in all his branches,—and promiseth unto his disciples all the promotions of the world (Tyndale, “The Practice of Prelates”).

In 1530, one of the bitterest foes of the English Scriptures died. This was Cardinal Wolsey. He was put to death for treason, a charge probably well deserved from a political viewpoint, but unquestionably deserved from a spiritual viewpoint, as he had certainly committed treason against the Word of God. With his dying lips he continued to spew forth hatred toward those who loved the Bible, requesting the king to be vigilant against the “heretics” that had arisen in the days of Wycliffe and John Oldcastle and were overrunning the country in his day.

This mention of Wycliffe and Oldcastle (who was brutally martyred in 1417) is evidence that Wolsey had been endowed with that age-old hatred toward God’s people that has been found among unsaved religionists since Cain killed his righteous brother, Abel. This hatred can be traced through the centuries, being evident in Christ’s day in the Pharisees and Sadducees who had Him crucified, and throughout church history by those who have tormented God’s faithful remnant that has cleaved to the faith “once delivered unto the saints.”

Christopher Anderson describes Wolsey’s death in these words: “Thus the man who had been literally clothed in purple or scarlet and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,—having daily in his hall three special tables spread for his principal officers; who had the

highest nobility for his household servants; his steward, treasurer, and comptroller in waiting, with their white robes, as in the King's palace, his master-cook, in damask satin, with a chain of gold round his neck; with hundreds of individuals, of various ranks, in daily attendance on his person ... who had not only governed England for the space of twenty years, but influenced the most important affairs of Europe; and during that period, had been courted, flattered, caressed, by the Kings of the civilized world;—this man dies, not merely in obscurity, but disgrace; and though the charge of high treason hung over him unrefuted, with his last breath he enforces persecution!” (*Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 254).

### Persecutions Become More Severe

Persecutions continued in England in 1530-32. For example, **John Tyndale**, the younger brother of William the translator, and one of his friends, Thomas Patmore, were arrested in 1530 and charged with receiving Tyndale's Testaments and other books and with distributing the same in London. They were fined heavily and forced to ride through the city sitting backwards on horses, with sheets from the New Testament and other books pinned to their garments. These they were forced to toss into a fire at the end of their ride. John Tyndale was also fined for sending money to William in Europe. In May 1530, Tonstal burned a great pile of New Testaments in London (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 113). In August of the same year **Thomas Bilney**, mentioned earlier, was burned to death for his preaching and distribution of Scriptures. A man named Christopher was cast into prison that year for selling New Testaments, and he died there. In November 1531, **Richard Bayfield**, a priest who

was converted to Christ through the reading of a Latin New Testament and who had thereafter helped smuggle many Scriptures into the country, was betrayed and burned at the stake. He had brought assistance to Tyndale and Fryth and had distributed their books widely. He was tortured unmercifully during his imprisonment in



Thomas Bilney on the way to the stake

the Lollard's Tower, while the authorities attempted to learn the names of others who were distributing Scriptures. **John Tewksbury** perished in the flames on December 20, 1530. His "crime" was distributing copies of the Word of God and believing in salvation by faith in Christ alone. He had been reading the Wycliffe Bible since 1512 and had obtained the Tyndale New Testament upon its publication in 1526. He was arrested in April 1529 and was so brutally tortured that he was crippled. During his agonies, his faith faltered and he had renounced his Scriptural doctrines, but, happily, he strengthened himself in the Lord and went on to pay the ultimate price as a demonstration of his confidence in the Gospel and his love for Jesus Christ.

One year later, in December 1531, **James Bainham** was arrested for possessing Scriptures in the English language and for holding heretical doctrines. In an attempt to persuade him to accuse others, he was mercilessly tortured on the rack until he was lamed. His wife, refusing to reveal the location of the suspected books, was cast into Fleet Prison, and all their worldly goods were confiscated. Five months later, on May 1, 1532, the faithful old Christian Bainham was burned at the stake. Addressing the crowd just before the lighting of the fire, he exclaimed:

I come hither, good people! Accused and condemned for an heretic; Sir Thomas More being my accuser and my judge. And THESE BE THE ARTICLES THAT I DIE FOR, which be a very truth, and grounded on God's Word, and no heresy. They be these: FIRST, I SAY IT IS LAWFUL FOR EVERY MAN AND WOMAN, TO HAVE GOD'S BOOK IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE. The second article is,—that the Bishop of Rome is Antichrist, and that I know no other keys of heaven-gates but only the preaching of the Law and the Gospel; and that there is no other purgatory, but the purgatory of Christ's blood; and the purgatory of the cross of Christ, which is all persecutions and afflictions; and no such purgatory as they feign of their own imagination: for our souls immediately go to heaven, and rest with Jesus Christ for ever...

Bainham died, according to his own statement, without any pain, even when half consumed in the flames (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 334).

Great numbers of other men and women were arrested for possessing Tyndale's New Testament and other Scriptures and gospel books. John Foxe lists dozens of individual cases.

Laurence Staple was arrested in 1531 for having the Testament in English; John Haymond, in 1531, for possessing books of Luther and Tyndale; John Row, in 1531, for binding, buying, and dispersing prohibited books; Christopher, a Dutchman of Antwerp, in 1531, for selling certain New Testaments in English; W. Nelson, a priest, in 1531, for possessing certain books of Luther, Tyndale, etc.; Walter Kiry, a servant, in 1531, for possessing the New Testament in English; William Smith, a taylor, in 1531, for receiving prohibited books into his house and for "much reading in the New Testament"; John Mel, in 1532, for possessing and reading the New Testament in English; Christopher Fulman, a servant, in 1532, for transporting prohibited books; Thomas Topley, in 1532, for reading prohibited books; John Medwell spent 24 weeks

in prison, “until he was almost lame,” for having in his custody the New Testament in English.

Foxe summarized the persecution of those years as follows:

So great was the trouble of those times, that it would overcharge any story to recite the names of all them which during those bitter days, before the coming in of Queen Anne, either were driven out of the realm, or were cast out from their goods and houses, or brought to open shame by adjuration. Such decrees and injunctions then were set forth by the bishops, such laws and proclamations were provided, such watch and narrow search was used, such ways were taken by force of the oath, to make one detect another so subtilly, that [barely] any good man could, or did escape their hands, but either his name was known, or else his person was taken. Yet nevertheless so mightily the power of God's Gospel did work in the hearts of good men, that the number of them did nothing lessen for all this violence or policy of the adversaries, but rather increased in such sort, as our story almost suffereth not to recite the particular names of all and singular such as then groaneth under the same cross of affliction and persecution of those days (Foxe, unabridged, II, p. 323).

“The Public Registers are filled with accounts, not only of those martyred, but of those who were imprisoned, put into stocks, and degraded by every indignity” (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, p. 117).

### **Tyndale's Friend John Fryth Burned**

It was in 1533 that Tyndale's brilliant friend John Fryth was martyred in England. He died a noble death and gave a bold witness to the truth. Fryth had been arrested in 1526 in Oxford when the persecutions first broke out. John Foxe tells us that Fryth had “first received into his heart the seed of the gospel, and sincere godliness” under Tyndale's ministry at Cambridge. Thus his conversion was attributed directly to Tyndale's preaching, and Tyndale counted him as a son in the faith.

Fryth was probably with Tyndale in 1523 when he was searching for a place in London in which to perform his translation work, and they “used to converse respecting the necessity for the Scriptures being ‘turned into the vulgar [common] speech, that the poor people might also read and see the simple plain Word of God’” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 168).

Fryth fled to the Continent in the autumn of 1526 and joined Tyndale for some time, before returning to England to minister in the separatist churches. A number of congregations were meeting in England in those days entirely independent of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and many of the pastors of these congregations were martyred for their faith. Christopher Anderson says of these congregations that they were “perhaps the earliest resemblance of a Christian Church, upon English ground, in the sixteenth century” (Anderson, I, p. 334, 344).

These congregations, which met in secret, were located in London and in many other counties. They rejected sacramentalism, practicing the Lord's Supper as a simple memorial meal (Anderson, I, p. 356), and there is evidence that some of them practiced believer's

baptism. Thomas Armitage quotes Fryth as follows: “Baptism bringeth not grace, but doth testify unto the congregation that he which is baptized had such grace given him before” (Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, “Bohemian Brethren and the Lollards”). If they believed that baptism is not the means of grace and salvation but is, rather, the public testimony of salvation, it is possible that they had renounced infant baptism and were covertly practicing some form of believer’s baptism. Infant baptism is certainly not a public testimony of one’s faith in Christ!

Upon Fryth’s return from Europe, he traveled from place to place worshipping with and ministering to these Bible-believing congregations. Some of his gracious letters to these churches are still in existence, and they are similar to the letters by the Lord’s apostles to the churches in the first century. Fryth continually exhorted the people to stand solely upon the Word of God and to have confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and to be faithful unto death. Tyndale wrote similar letters to the same churches.

In late 1532 Fryth was captured and thrown into the Tower of London. At first he was chained to a post, “for I may not have such books as are necessary for me; neither yet pen, ink, nor paper, but only secretly, so that I am in continual fear both of the Lieutenant and of my keeper, lest they should espy any such thing by me.” A wonderful and very powerful letter addressed to him from Tyndale just prior to his arrest is still in existence. Consider an excerpt, for it exposes the heart of the translator of our Old English Bible, as well as, again, his clear understanding of the Gospel:

The grace of our Saviour Jesus, his patience, meekness, humbleness, circumspection, and wisdom, be with your heart, amen! Dearly beloved brother, mine heart’s desire in our Saviour Jesus is, that you arm yourself with patience, and be cool, sober, wise, and circumspect; and that you keep you alow by the ground, avoiding high questions that pass the common capacity. But expound the law truly, and open the veil of Moses, to condemn all flesh, and prove all men sinners, and all deeds under the law, before mercy have taken away the condemnation thereof, to be sin and damnable. And then, as a faithful minister, set abroach the mercy of our Lord Jesus, and let the wounded consciences drink of the water of him. Then shall your preaching be with power, and not as the doctrine of the hypocrites, and the Spirit of God shall work with you, and all consciences shall bear record unto you, and feel that it is so. ... Finally, if there were in me any gift that could help at hand, and aid you, if need required, I promise you I would not be far off, and commit the end to God: my soul is not faint, though my body be weary. But God hath made me evil-favoured in this world, and without grace in the sight of men, speechless and rude, dull and slow-witted: your part shall be to supply that which lacketh in me—remembering, that as lowliness of heart shall make you high with God, even so meekness of words shall make you sink into the hearts of men. Nature giveth age authority, but meekness is the glory of youth, and giveth them honour. Abundance of love maketh me exceed in babbling (Tyndale to John Fryth, reprinted in Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 347, 348).

Fryth’s wife and family had stayed behind in Europe upon his dangerous return to England, and when Tyndale wrote to him in May 1533, he encouraged him that his wife “is well content with the will of God, and would not, for her sake, have the glory of God hindered.” Praise the Lord for such mothers in the faith!



For a short time Fryth's terms of imprisonment were relaxed somewhat and the keeper of the Tower allowed him to have liberty in the evenings to meet with his Christian friends. This soon ended, though, and in June he was brought before certain bishops and other authorities who demanded that he repent of his "heresies." On his way to appear before these examiners, Fryth was offered an opportunity to escape, but he refused, saying, "If I should now start aside, and run away—I should run from my God, and from the testimony of his holy Word—worthy then of a thousand hells." He knew what God wanted from him in that evil hour, and he was determined to finish the course.

Sentence was swiftly passed, and he was committed to a dark dungeon under Newgate prison. He was "laden with irons, as many as he could bear, neither stand upright, nor stoop down!" (Anderson, I, p. 376). Yet even in this condition he was able to write a letter to his friends, which, after his death, was found by his wife and oldest son and published with other of his writings.

The next morning, July 4, 1534, John Fryth, together with a companion in the faith, Andrew Hewet, went to their fate at Smithfield. When they were bound to the stake, a Catholic minister exhorted the people not to pray for them, "any more than they would for a dog." The fire was lit and the two men were consumed in the flames. "The wind made his death somewhat longer, as it bore away the flame from him to his fellow; but Fryth's mind was established with such patience, that, as though he had felt no pain, he seemed rather to rejoice for his fellow than to be careful for himself" (Anderson, I, p. 377).

### **Tyndale's Jonah Translation and Its Amazing Prologue**

In 1531, Tyndale published the newly translated book of Jonah with a long Prologue for the English people. An excerpt from this illustrates Tyndale's keen spiritual discernment, and particularly his understanding of biblical repentance. Such discernment is absolutely necessary for an effective translator of the Holy Scriptures, yet it is so sadly lacking in most modern translators. To have great textual knowledge and linguistic skills is utterly insufficient if not accompanied by at least an equal degree of spiritual life and discernment.

As the envious Philistines stopped the wells of Abraham, and filled them up with earth, to put the memorial out of mind, to the intent that they might challenge the ground; even so the fleshly-minded hypocrites stop up the veins of life, which are in the Scripture, with the earth of their traditions, false similitudes, and lying allegories; and that, of like zeal, to make the Scripture their own possession and merchandise, and so shut up the kingdom which is in God's Word; neither entering in themselves, nor suffering them that would. ...

Since the world began, wheresoever repentance was offered, and not received, there God took cruel vengeance immediately. As ye see in the flood of Noah, in the overwhelming of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the country about; and as ye see of Egypt, of the Amorites, Canaanites, and afterwards of the very Israelites; and then at the last of the Jews too, the Assyrians, and Babylonians, and so throughout all the empires of the world.

Gildas preached repentance to the old Britons that inhabited England: they repented not; and therefore God sent in their enemies upon them on every side, and destroyed them up, and gave their land to other nations; and great vengeance hath been taken in that land for sin, since that time. Wickliffe preached repentance unto our fathers not long since: they repented not, for their hearts were indurate; but what followed? They slew their true and right king, and set up three wrong kings in a row, under which all the noble blood was slain up, and half the commons too; what in France, and what with their own sword, in fighting among themselves, for the crown; so the cities and towns decayed, and the land was brought half into a wilderness, in respect of that it was before. ...

And now Christ, to preach repentance, is risen yet once again out of his sepulchre, in which the pope had buried him, and kept him down with his pillars and pole-axes, and all disguisings of hypocrisy—with guile, wiles, and falsehood, and with the sword of all princes, which he had blended with his false merchandise. And as I doubt not of the ensamples that are past, so I am sure that great wrath will follow, except repentance turn it back again and cease it (Tyndale, Prologue to Jonah).

We see that the father of our English Bible was not only a master translator and a linguistic genius; he was a prophet of God to his nation. He understood the times and the seasons and called his people to repentance. He even sent very powerful and pointed exhortations to King Henry VIII, though, as history tells us, these were ignored by the lustful monarch. Consider these words addressed to the king in 1530:

And I beseech his Grace also, to have mercy on his own soul, and not to suffer Christ and his Holy Testament to be persecuted, under his name any longer, that the sword of the wrath of God may be put up again, which for that cause, no doubt, is most chiefly drawn. And I beseech his Grace to have compassion on his poor subjects, which have ever been unto his Grace, both obedient, loving, and kind; that the realm utterly perish not, with the wicked counsel of our pestilent prelates. ... Many a man, both great and small, have they brought to death in England, even in my days, beside in time past, whose blood God will seek once. ... And unto all subjects I say, that they repent; for the cause of evil rulers is the sin of the subjects, as testifieth the Scripture; and the cause of false preachers is, that the people have no love unto the truth,—2 Thess. ii.—We be all sinners, an hundred times greater than all that we suffer. Let us, therefore, each forgive the other, remembering, the greater sinners the more welcome, if we repent, according to the similitude of the riotous Son. For Christ died for sinners, and is their Saviour, and his blood their treasure to pay for their sins,—and his merits, that goodly raiment to cover the naked deformities of our sins (Tyndale, “The Practice of Prelates”).

The exiled translator of the English Bible understood the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he also understood the politics of that time.

## **Henry Breaks with Pope; Persecutions Continue**

On March 26, 1534, the English Parliament renounced all dependence upon the “Court of Rome.” The long expected break with the pope was finally made, though Henry never rejected Roman Catholic doctrine. After this, the persecutions continued and increased, but they changed character somewhat. Before, the watchword was heresy. Now, it was treason. Before, the trouble was mainly poured out upon Bible believing Christians and possessors of the English Scriptures. Now, it was poured out upon anyone, Protestant or Catholic or whatever, who opposed Henry’s actions.

The persecutions also continued in Scotland in these days. On August 27, 1534, David Stratoun and Norman Gourlay were burned in Fife, for their faith in the Word of God. “The stake was planted so far up the hill as that not only the surrounding crowd from the city, whether below or above, might see; but ‘to the intent,’ says Calderwood, ‘that the inhabitants of Fife, seeing the fire, might be stricken with terror and fear, not to fall into the like’” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 471).

On the next day Katharine Hamilton was brought before the authorities and would probably have been burned except for the intervention of the king. Katharine’s story is very interesting:

The Bishops gathering courage by their progress, neither her rank or sex could shield her. Mr. John Spens of Condry, the lawyer, and future King’s Advocate, or one of the men who had sat in judgment on her brother Patrick in 1528, held a long discourse respecting works, telling her there were divers sorts; ‘works of congruity and works of condignity.’ Katharine, disturbed with the length and nicety of the argument, at last out of all patience, cried out before them all, the King also sitting by—‘Work here, work there, what kind of working is all this? I know perfectly that no works can save me, but the works of Christ my Saviour.’ His Highness, amused with the very brief manner in which she had disposed of the lawyer’s tedious harangue, interposed, and saved her from death (Anderson, II, p. 471).

In June 1535, THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT DECLARED THAT ALL PERSONS POSSESSING NEW TESTAMENTS OR “HERETICAL” BOOKS” MUST “DELIVER THEM UP TO THEIR ORDINARY WITHIN FORTY DAYS, under the penalty of confiscation and imprisonment” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 487).

This Parliament prohibited even the discussion of opinions! “An exception was made in favour of clerks in the schools, who might read, in order to refute. The consequence was, that a number of these clerks, by reading and discussion, sincerely embraced the same sentiments, or the reverse of those which were intended by the indulgence” (Anderson, II, p. 487).

In May 1536, “THE READING OF THE SACRED VOLUME IN THE ENGLISH TONGUE WAS PUBLICLY PROHIBITED.”

In March 1539, five men were burned at the stake in Edinburgh. “The fire was prepared on the esplanade of the Castle, visible at once far and near, to two counties, Mid-Lothian and Fife” (Anderson, II, p. 499). One of the men burned in this group, **Dean Forret**, had been saved through reading the book of Romans. He studied the Scriptures from six in the morning until noon. He committed three chapters of the Bible to memory each day, and in the evening he made his servant hear him repeat the portion he had memorized. The New Testament he memorized was the one by William Tyndale. Just before announcing his sentence against Forret, the Roman Catholic authority proclaimed: “Knows thou not, heretic, that it is contrary to our acts and express commands, to have a New Testament or Bible in English, which is enough to

burn thee for?” Christopher Anderson adds, “Then the council of the clergy gave sentence on him to be burnt, for the having and using of the same book—the New Testament in English.”

Soon thereafter, two more men were burned at Glasgow, and yet another, at Cupar in Fife.

It is important to note that great numbers of Bible believers were tormented in ways other than martyrdom. One of these was **the confiscation of their goods**. This happened frequently in England and Scotland during these times. In Scotland, for example, in 1538, Walter Stewart was convinced of heresy and fined “his whole estates, or possessions moveable and immoveable.” In January 1539, five men were seized and charged with “breaking his Highness’ proclamation, in having and using such books as are suspected of heresy, and are prohibited by the Kirk” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 498). One of these men was burned at the stake, and the others were required to forfeit their entire estates. “Similar forfeitures extended to Perth, as well as to Stirling ... and so far as the seizure of property was concerned, the persecution lay very heavy upon Dundee” (Anderson, II, p. 498).

### Tyndale Is Betrayed and Arrested



Picture of Vilvoorde castle at the Tyndale Museum in Vilvoorde

As early as 1527 Tyndale stated that he knew his enemies would be satisfied with nothing less than his life, if God allowed it. As it turned out, it was God’s will for the faithful translator to give his life as a testimony for Christ and for His Word. William Tyndale was betrayed to his enemies in May 1535, in Antwerp, by **Henry** [also called Harry] **Phillips**, a man pretending to be his friend, and by **Gabriel Donne**, a Catholic monk who was posing as Phillips’ servant. (Some biographers have claimed that Donne did not assume the position of servant to Phillips, but John Foxe, who was contemporary with those events, said Donne took this position, and Christopher Anderson’s research on this, in the mind of this writer, is convincing enough to close the book on this issue.) J.F. Mozley, in his 1937 biography of William Tyndale, brought new light upon Henry Phillips. He was the son of Richard Phillips, a very wealthy man who was a member of parliament three times and high sheriff twice. Some time around 1534 or 1535, Henry was

entrusted to carry a large sum of money to someone in London. Upon reaching the city, instead of going straight to that person and completing his duty, Henry decided to gamble with the money, hoping thereby to gain some easy income for himself. Instead, the foolish young man lost the entire sum! This brought him into extreme difficulty. He was afraid to return to his father, and he was destitute of money.

Mozley says: "It was, then, a few months after he had grievously offended his father and brought shame upon himself, that Phillips appears in Brabant, and carries out a carefully conceived plan of apprehending Tyndale. He made Louvain his headquarters, a town devoted to the papal cause, and he is described as a student of the university. ... At Louvain he was within easy reach of Antwerp, and could spy out the land at his leisure. ... While in London after his theft, well-nigh in despair, not knowing whither to turn, he was approached by somebody, who, seeing in him a valuable tool, an educated man, hostile to the reformation, ready to turn his hand to anything, took advantage of his extremity, and offered him the job of entrapping Tyndale, supplying him also with money for the purpose" (Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 1937, pp. 298-300).

Thus, we see something of the character of the man who betrayed the faithful Bible translator. The question naturally arises, who hired Phillips? We don't know the exact answer. Christopher Anderson believed the conspiracy proceeded from the bishops in England. Mozley agreed with this, believing, more specifically, that Stokesley, Bishop of London, was the culprit.

He was bishop of the capital city; he it was that was most active with Thomas More in the examination of Lutherans [a term not limited strictly to Lutherans, but extending to all who held Protestant or Anabaptist views] in 1531, when special inquiries were made about the lodging and appearance of Tyndale. ... All this, together with the cruelty of his character, his zeal for persecution, his boasts on his deathbed of the number of heretics whom he had robbed of life, makes it reasonable enough to see in him the chief backer, if not the prime engineer, of the plot which destroyed Tyndale (Mozley, pp. 300, 301).

Mozley admits that we cannot be certain of this, and this side of eternity we will probably never know more about this conspiracy than what we have here.

We do know that Tyndale was condemned and burned on the authority of the Roman Catholic clergy. Hall's *Chronicle* of 1548 contained the following information (we have modernized the spelling): "This year in the month of September William Tyndale otherwise called Hitchens was by the cruelty of the clergy of Louvain condemned and burned in a town beside Brussels in Brabant called Vilvorde" (Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 172).

The story of Tyndale's betrayal comes upon good authority, having been recorded by historian John Foxe (1517-1587) from the mouth of Thomas Poyntz, one of the key figures in these events.

Tyndale had been living for almost one year with Poyntz when Henry Phillips discovered him and gradually befriended him. Just hours before the betrayal, the wicked Phillips

borrowed forty shillings from Tyndale, knowing he would not have to repay it. Phillips lied, claiming that he had lost his purse during a journey. That afternoon Phillips invited Tyndale to be his guest for dinner that evening, but the gracious Tyndale protested that he, instead, would provide the meal at his expense and that Phillips should be his guest. Phillips brought officers with him and they laid in wait outside of the house while Phillips met Tyndale at the door and pretended that he was ready to go to dinner. As they were leaving the house, at the prearranged signal Tyndale was seized by the officers of Emperor Charles V, a bitter opponent of the Reformation, and he was imprisoned at the castle of Vilvoorde.

It is interesting to note at this point that God is not mocked. Henry Phillips was later charged with treason against England's king, and he was pursued from city to city on this account. In the end he was destitute and friendless. "We take our leave of him, disowned by his parents, cast aside by his friends, denounced by his country, shunned by the very party for whose sake he had marred his life, mistrusted by all, valued only as a tool, friendless, homeless, hopeless, destitute, fated to go down to history as the author of one perfidious deed" (Mozley, *William Tyndale*, p. 323).

The imprisoned Tyndale was convicted of heresy by the Romanist authorities under the laws of the Inquisition and condemned to die. One of the Catholic theologians conspicuous for his zeal to prosecute Tyndale was Ruwart Tapper, Doctor of Theology and Chancellor of the University of Louvain. Tapper "was conspicuous for his untiring and unsparing zeal in opposing and suppressing the encroachments of Protestantism." He is said to have vowed the maxim, "It is no great matter, whether they that die on account of religion be guilty or innocent, provided we terrify the people by such examples; which generally succeed best when persons eminent for learning, riches, nobility, or high station, are thus sacrificed" (Robert Demaus, *William Tindale*, p. 175).



William Tyndale in prison

Tyndale's friend Thomas Poyntz, a wealthy businessman, made a valiant effort to help him, writing letters and speaking on his behalf. He must have realized that by interceding this way for Tyndale he was endangering himself, but he persevered anyway. In fact, he lost a great deal from a worldly standpoint. He neglected his own business for two months, traveling with letters and even crossing over to England to bring the matter before English authorities. A letter from Poyntz to his

influential brother in Essex in Tyndale's behalf is still extant. Poyntz was finally imprisoned for his efforts and kept in confinement for 13 weeks in Brussels and fined a large amount of money. Realizing that he might himself be put to death as a heretic, he made a daring escape at night, and eluding those who pursued after him on horseback, he made his way to England. It is probable that Poyntz's suspicions were correct, because the man responsible for overseeing Poyntz's imprisonment was fined a large amount of money by the Brussels city council for permitting the escape of "a prisoner accused of Lutheranism." Poyntz was banished from the Netherlands and lost his goods and his occupation. His wife, a native of Antwerp, refused to join him in England, and for many years he also did not see his children. "In a worldly way his life was ruined by his generous championship of Tyndale: but the lustre of his deed is his perpetual possession" (Mozley, *William Tyndale*, p. 319). The Latin epitaph on Poyntz's grave describes him as a man who had an "ardent profession of evangelical truth."

For sixteen long months the godly Bible translator remained in this cold, lonely prison. This encompassed one long winter. During part of that time he was examined by Catholic theologians from the University of Louvain, who sought to prove his heresies.

The following is excerpted from the only letter by Tyndale that is known to have survived from his imprisonment. It was discovered in Belgian archives in the 19th century.

I entreat your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out, as also are my shirts. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark.

But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study.

And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always that it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen (Andrew Edgar, *The Bibles of England*, 1889, pp. 66-69).

Though Tyndale was bound, the Word of God was not. Even during his imprisonment, three editions of his New Testament were printed, as well as editions of some of his books.

## Tyndale Is Martyred

On the morning of October 6, 1536, he was led forth to the place of execution. He was tied to a stake, strangled, and then burned. At his death Tyndale cried out, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.”

Tyndale’s spiritual character was evidenced by his life in prison. “Such had been the power of his doctrine, and the sincerity of his life, that during the time of his imprisonment, which endured about one whole year and a half, (or rather a year and three-quarters,) it is said he converted his keeper, the keeper’s daughter, and others of his household. The rest that were in the Castle, and conversant with Tyndale, reported of him, that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust: and the Procurator-General, the Emperor’s attorney, being there, left this testimony of him, that he was ‘*Homo doctus, pius, et bonus*’—a learned, pious, and good man” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 517, 18).

John Foxe, who was contemporary with Tyndale and who diligently interviewed people about the events we have described, drew the following picture of the man:



First, he was a man very frugal, and spare of body, a great student, and earnest labourer in the setting forth of the Scriptures of God. He reserved or hallowed to himself two days in the week, which he named his pastime, Monday and Saturday. On Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England, by reason of persecution, into Antwerp, and these, once well understanding their good exercises and qualities, he did very liberally comfort and relieve; and in like manner provided for the sick and diseased persons. On the Saturday, he walked round about the town, seeking every corner and hole, where he suspected any poor person to dwell; and where he found any to be well occupied, and yet over-burdened with children, or else were aged and weak, those also he plentifully relieved. And thus he spent his two days of pastime, as he called them. And truly his alms were very large, and so they might well be; for his exhibition that he had yearly, of the English merchants at Antwerp, when living there, was considerable, and that for the most part he bestowed upon the poor. The rest of the days of the week, he gave wholly to his book, wherein he most



diligently travailed. When the Sunday came, then went he to some one merchant's chamber, or other, whither came many other merchants, and unto them would he read some one parcel of Scripture; the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly and gently from him, much like to the writing of John the Evangelist, that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience, to hear him read the Scriptures: likewise, after dinner, he spent an hour in the same manner (Anderson, I, pp. 520, 21).

The noble Tyndale fought a good fight and finished his course, and we now leave him to rest in Glory and to await the fulfillment of the prophecies that he translated so well.

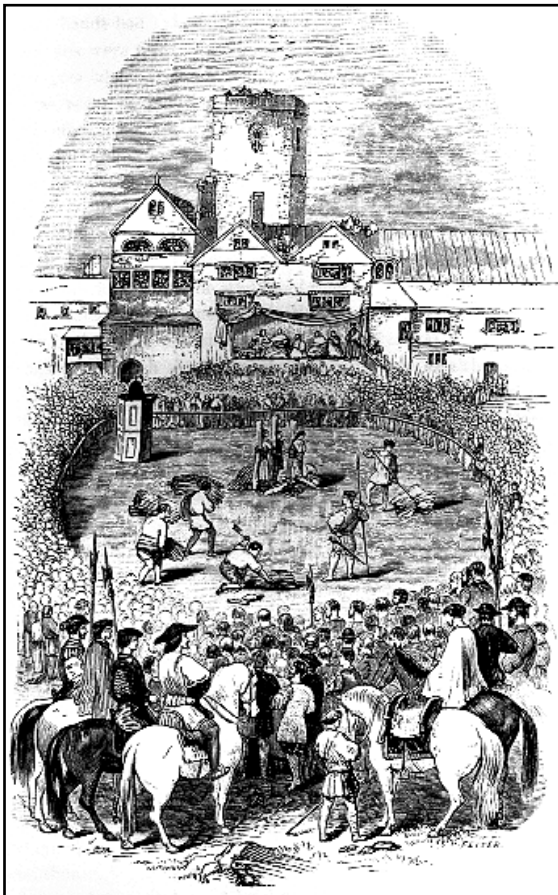
The death of Tyndale did not stop the persecutions in England or the efforts of the ecclesiastical authorities to destroy the Bible believers and their books. Two years later, Tyndale's former associate, John Lambert, was executed at Smithfield in England for

maintaining the same doctrinal positions as Tyndale (Demaus, *William Tyndale*, p. 181).

In November 1538, "the King put forth a proclamation, in which he condemns all the books of the Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, and appoints those to be punished who vented them; and in December following he sent a letter to all the Justices in England, in which, after many other things, they are earnestly pressed to take care, that all the injunctions, laws and proclamations, against Sacramentarians and Anabaptists, be duly executed" (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, 1740, pp. 38, 39).

Tyndale's translation was again condemned by Roman authorities in 1546 (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 25).

That same year **ANNE ASKEW** became "the first female martyr of rank or family [in England], tormented and burnt to ashes, for no alleged crime, save stedfast adherence to the truth of Scripture" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 190). Anne was the



The burning of Anne Askew

daughter of Sir William Askew and had married a man named Kyme. When she accepted the grace of Jesus Christ and rejected Rome, she was disowned both by her father and her husband; and after she was arrested, her husband and her own son testified against her and called for her punishment. Being driven from her home, she was befriended by certain believers and dissenters. It is said that she was a great favourite of Queen Catharine Parr and that she was “frequently at court” (Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I, p. 84). In her diary she states that she spent much of her time sitting in Lincoln Cathedral praying and reading the Scriptures, and that she was often confronted by the bigoted priests, who hated her “heresies.” She was first arrested in March 1545 but was released on bail after a few days. A year later, she was again arrested and charged with denying the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (that the wafer of the mass becomes the actual body and blood of Christ). When her accusers asked her if she denied that the sacrament of the mass is Christ’s body and blood, she wisely replied:

Yea: for the same Son of God that was born of the Virgin Mary, is now glorious in heaven, and will come again from thence at the latter day like as he went up (Acts 1:11). And as for that ye call your God, it is a piece of bread. For a more proof thereof (mark it when you list,) let it but lie in the box three months, and it will be moldy, and so turn to nothing that is good. Whereupon I am persuaded that it cannot be God (Foxe).

After the 24-year-old woman was condemned to die and imprisoned in the Tower of London to await execution, her persecutors attempted to get her to inform on other believers. They specifically asked her if Lady Suffolk, Lady Sussex, Lady Hertford, Lady Denny, or Lady Fitzwilliam belonged to her “sect.” They also hoped to gain information against Queen Catherine herself. When Anne refused to give them any information, they put the frail woman upon the rack and commanded Sir Anthony Knyvet, Lieutenant of the Tower, to instruct his jailer to torture her. He did so, but not very strenuously, having pity on her feminine weakness. Not being satisfied with the racking given to her by the Lieutenant, Thomas Wriothesley, chancellor of England, and Master Rich, the Solicitor-General, angrily took control of the rack with their own hands and treated the godly woman with an inhuman viciousness. So intent were they on gaining the names of any high-placed ladies who believed in the grace of Jesus Christ, they cruelly tortured her, pulling her bones and joints out of place, so much so that she was unable to walk after that and had to be carried to her execution in a chair. All the while she did not cry out and bore their wicked torments with the patient grace given to her of the Lord, refusing to turn any of her friends over to the tormenters. She finally swooned from the pain, and Sir Knyvet took her up in his arms and laid her on the floor. When she awoke and while she was still lying on the hard stone floor, Wriothesley remained by her for two hours longer attempting to talk her into recanting her religious views.

Anne and three other believing dissenters were brought to the place of execution on July 16, 1546. In her written testimony, the brave Christian woman gave a glorious witness to

her faith in Jesus Christ and in His blood and grace alone for salvation, and she stated that her sole authority was the Bible.

Finally, I believe all those Scriptures to be true, which he hath confirmed with his most precious blood. Yea, and as St. Paul saith, those Scriptures are sufficient for our learning and salvation, that Christ hath left here with us; so that I believe we need no unwritten verities to rule his church with. Therefore look, what he hath said unto me with his own mouth in his holy gospel, that have I, with God's grace, closed up in my heart, and my full trust is, as David saith, that it shall be a lantern to my footsteps (Psalm 119:105) (Foxe, unabridged, 1641).

Though abandoned by her father, her husband, and her son, and hated by the rulers of her own country, we can be sure that this humble Christian lady was not abandoned by her Heavenly Father. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Psalm 27:10). When the condemned prisoners were chained to the stake, they were offered a pardon if they would sign a recantation. They refused even to look at the paper containing the pardon and stated that they had not come to that place to deny their Lord. At that, the fire was lit and Anne and her friends were burned to death.

Just eight days before this execution, a proclamation had been made by the English authorities again expressly forbidding the possession of Scriptures or books by Tyndale and others. (Wycliffe was also mentioned in the list, which tells us that some of his Scriptures and books were still in circulation).

There were at least a few more books burned after this, but no other men or women were put to death in the reign of Henry VIII. Anne and her three friends have the distinction of being the last. Only a few months later Henry himself would be dead.

Some have claimed that Tyndale's translation was condemned only because it contained controversial notes that were opposed to Romanism, but Marion Simms, author of *The Bible from the Beginning*, discerningly comments, "The [Catholic] church, however, was opposed to any Bible for the common people, and doubtless would have sought to destroy it in any event" (Simms, p. 168).

Tyndale made a good start on his translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew, but he did not live to complete it. His work was picked up by two others. The first was Miles Coverdale; the second, and the more important of the two in this writer's estimation, was John Rogers. The Coverdale Bible appeared in October 1535, and it was probably first printed in Europe. This was the first complete English Bible in print, but while Coverdale used Tyndale's New Testament, the Old Testament was Coverdale's own translation from German and Latin. Coverdale was not a Hebrew scholar. The Coverdale Bible eventually was licensed by the king, the first edition with such a license. It appears in 1537, only a few months after Tyndale's death.

## **Anne Boleyn**

The Coverdale Bible received a boost from an unexpected source. Henry VIII divorced his wife Catherine, and in November 1532 (some accounts say January 25, 1533), he married

one of her ladies-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn (1501-1536). In Meteren's *History of the Low Countries*, she is described as "a beautiful creature, well proportioned, courteous, amiable, very agreeable, and a skilful musician." Anne had spent the years from 1519 to 1521 and from 1523 to 1527 in the French court, and had a close association there with Princess Margaret of Valois, sister to Francis I (1515-1547), the king of France. Margaret, as we noted earlier, was a friend of the Protestant Reformation. D'Aubigne gives the following description of Margaret's influence upon Anne: "Margaret, duchess of Alencon, the sister of Francis, and afterwards queen of Navarre, often charmed the queen's circle by her lively conversation. She soon became deeply attached to the young Englishwoman, and on the death of Claude took her into her own family. Anne Boleyn was destined at no very remote period to be at the court of London a reflection of the graceful Margaret, and her relations with that princess were not without influence on the English Reformation" (D'Aubigne, V, p. 131). We are told that Anne began reading the Bible during these years in France, and it was doubtless the Jacques Lefevre New Testament which had first appeared in 1523. Lefevre was one of Margaret's friends, and a Lefevre Bible was one of the possessions left behind by Anne after her beheading in England.

It is obvious, in light of Anne's later conduct in England that she was at least aware of and interested in the Bible truth that was being discussed so earnestly in the royal court at France. We do not know all of the details of her spiritual life, but we do know that she had a keen interest in Protestant doctrine and in the Tyndale and the Coverdale Bibles. Before her marriage to Henry, Cardinal Wolsey wrote to the pope and informed him that "a young lady, brought up by the queen of Navarre, and consequently tainted by the Lutheran heresy, had captivated the king's heart." D'Aubigne tells us that "from that hour Anne Boleyn became the object of the hatred and calumnies of Rome" (*History of the Reformation*, V, p. 317).

Anne read the Bible devotionally and helped many of the Bible believers. Thomas Crosby describes her as "being a special favourer of the gospel" (Crosby, *History of the*



Anne Boleyn

*English Baptists*, I, p. 32). F.F. Bruce comments, "The queen certainly manifested a keen interest in Coverdale's version, and but for her sad fate, this version might have been approved before long for setting up in the parish churches of England" (Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, p. 64). Blackford Condit, in his *History of the English Bible*, says that Anne headed up "the New Testament party" in the royal house in England (p. 133).

The English historian John Foxe was seventeen years old when Anne was beheaded, and he later

interviewed many of her acquaintances. He testified that Anne “without all controversy was a special comforter and aider of all the professors of Christ’s Gospel” (Foxe, unabridged, 1641, II, p. 332).

Anne also conducted herself modestly in the midst of an immoral society. Some historians have treated Anne viciously, claiming she was a scheming and immoral woman. Having read many of the historical reports from that era, including rare material gleaned from visits to the British Library, we are convinced this characterization is a lie. The historian J.A. Wylie describes Anne as “beautiful and virtuous” (Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, 1899, III, p. 402, p. 375 f4). Consider the following testimony to Anne’s chaste behavior:

The ladies of the court, who had hitherto adopted a different fashion ... covered the neck and bosom as she did; and the malicious, unable to appreciate Anne’s motives, ascribed this modesty on the young lady’s part to a desire to hide a secret deformity (D’Aubigne, V, p. 313).

We know, too, that Anne resisted Henry’s adulterous advances and refused to be his mistress before his divorce. When Henry approached her and desired to be her lover, she replied: “I deem, most noble King, that your Grace speaks these words in mirth, to prove me; if not, I beseech your Highness to believe me that I would rather die than comply with your wishes” (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, III, p. 375).

When Henry replied that he would live in hope that she would change her mind, she answered: “I understand not, mighty King, how you should entertain any such hope. Your wife I cannot be, both in respect of my own unworthiness, and also because you have a queen already. Your mistress, be assured, I never will be” (Turner, *History of England*, II, p. 196).

At first she refused to marry him, but she was worn down by pressure from the powerful and persuasive Henry and even from her own father. This is not to say that she had no improper motive in her relationship with Henry, nor do we justify her marriage. We believe she was wrong in submitting to that illicit union; but in spite of her failings, her conduct was certainly more modest than that commonly found in the licentious courts of England and Europe in the 16th century.

When Tyndale’s New Testament began to be smuggled into England in 1526, Anne obtained a copy. “Anne Boleyn, notwithstanding her smiling face, often withdrew to her closet at Greenwich or at Hampton Court, to study the gospel. Frank, courageous, and proud, she did not conceal the pleasure she found in such reading; her boldness astonished the courtiers, and exasperated the clergy” (D’Aubigne, V, p. 324).

Before becoming queen, Lady Anne, in 1529, had possessed a copy of Tyndale’s *Obedience of a Christian Man*, and a very interesting thing happened in connection with this book. We must remember that to own such a book at that time was illegal and dangerous. Consider one of the “heretical” statements made in the book: “If thou

believe the promises, then God's truth justifieth thee; that is, forgiveth thy sins and sealeth thee with his Holy Spirit."

Cardinal Wolsey had ordered the members of the royal court to be on the lookout for such books. Ignoring these instructions, Anne had lent the book to one of her female attendants, who was found reading it by her suitor, George Zouch, one of the men in the royal household. He playfully snatched the book away and refused to give it back. After he began to read it, he became fascinated by it, and soon thereafter he was reading it during a sermon at the royal chapel. The dean of the chapel confiscated the book from Zouch and delivered it to Cardinal Wolsey. In the meantime, Anne, learning of the loss, approached the king, desiring his help in retrieving the book. A short while after Anne left the royal presence Wolsey approached the king about the matter, hoping perhaps to bring charges against Anne. Henry, though, had determined that Anne was to get her book back, and the matter was closed! Observing the state of the king's mind on the subject, Wolsey quickly excused himself from the royal quarters. Upon regaining possession of the book, Anne brought it to the king and requested that he read it, and he did so, and even commented to her that it was a good book! Thus, we see the hand of God in giving a witness to the haughty king upon the throne. He was maneuvered into reading a sermon by the very man he was persecuting.

Anne probably was wed to Henry in November 1532 (Froude, *History of England*, I, 1893, p. 410). Some accounts put the marriage in January 1533, which, if true, would mean that Anne cohabited with Henry before the marriage, as their first child was born on September 7, 1533. I do not believe this is the case. At her unjust trial, she testified: "Think not that I am so bewildered in my mind as not to lay the honour of *my chastity* to heart now in mine extremity, *when I have maintained it all my life long, as much as ever queen did*" (emphasis added, Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, 1875, II, p. 257).

Her coronation was held on May 31, 1533. The next year Anne helped one of the persecuted Bible believers, Richard Harman, to regain his liberty and the possession of his house and business privileges in Antwerp which had been taken from him five years earlier for his efforts in smuggling New Testaments. Her letter to Thomas Crumwell in behalf of this Christian man is still in existence, and is evidence of her love for the Word of God. She told Crumwell:

[F]or nothing else ... but only for that he, still like a good christian man, did both with his goods and policy, to his great hurt and hindrance in this world, *help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English*: We therefore desire and instantly pray you, that, with all speed and favour convenient, ye will cause this good and honest merchant, being my Lord's true, faithful, and loving subject, to be restored to his pristine freedom, liberty, and fellowship, aforesaid..." It was signed Anne the Queen. Anderson notes that "it should not now pass unnoticed that no *man*, either of influence or office in all England, ever so expressed himself, *while Tyndale lived* (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 411).

It was also in 1534 that Tyndale, “in recognition of her protection to the friends of the New Testament,” had a special copy of his New Testament printed for the Queen (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 133). It was beautifully printed on vellum (made from the skins of lambs or young calves), with illustrations, and bound in blue morocco. The cover contained, in large red letters, the words (in Latin) ANNE QUEEN OF ENGLAND. It resides today in the British Library.

Anne had a direct role in Henry VIII’s proclamation in 1535 that the Bible should be printed and deposited in every church. Archbishop Parker, chaplain to the Queen, testified of this: “His royal Majesty was petitioned by the whole Synod, to give commandment that the Holy Scriptures might be translated into the English tongue; for so it could be more easily discerned by all, what was agreeable to the Divine Law. To this, Stephen Gardiner--the King’s most secret counsellor--made resistance as covertly as possible. But *through the grace and intercession of our most illustrious and virtuous mistress the Queen, permission was at length obtained from the King*, that the Holy Scriptures should be printed and deposited in every church, in a place where the people might read them; which grant of the King did not go into effect, because this most illustrious Queen soon after suffered death” (emphasis added) (Strype, *Life and Acts of Parker*, p. 7).



Hugh Latimer exhorting Ridley at the stake

Anne also encouraged Miles Coverdale in his translation of the English Bible. “Before the close of this same year [1535], Coverdale had completed and carried through the press a translation of the whole Bible, *which owed much to her patronage, and was dedicated to her*, conjointly with the King” (emphasis added) (Conant, *Popular History of the English Bible*, p. 282).

Anne also demonstrated a love for Bible truth in her relationship with the preacher **Hugh Latimer** (1485-1555), who was later martyred for his faith. On one occasion she helped Latimer escape the wrath of the Catholic bishops, and later she arranged for Latimer to preach to the royal household. This man’s strong Bible conviction is evident in the reply he gave to a bishop who had asked him why he objected to certain church traditions. Latimer testified, “I will be guided by God’s book; and rather than dissent one jot from it, I would be torn by wild horses” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 68). He was imprisoned in 1540 for refusing to sign the King’s Six Articles, which affirmed

Catholic doctrine, and he remained in prison until the accession of the Reformed-minded Edward VI in 1547. When Queen Mary ascended to the throne in 1553 and re-established Catholicism, Latimer was again imprisoned, and after two years confinement in Oxford he was burned at the stake in 1555. (It is both interesting and sad to note that Latimer himself assented to the burning of Anabaptists in one of his sermons preached before King Edward VI. He alluded to the burning of fourteen Anabaptists in May 1535 and said that “a brave death is no proof of a good cause.” After describing the cheerfulness with which they faced their gruesome execution, Latimer said: “Well, let them go” [Froude, *History of England*, II, pp. 257, 258]. Thus the Protestants who burned the Baptists were later burned by the Catholics.)

Anne also helped Thomas Garret, who was one of the first men, if not the first, to distribute the smuggled Tyndale New Testaments into England. Garret had been imprisoned in the foul dungeon at Oxford in 1526. In 1535, Queen Anne attempted to help this man obtain a position that was vacant at the time (Anderson, I, p. 120). In 1540, Garret was finally martyred for his love for the Word of God.

Anne also had occasion to rescue some Englishmen that had been consigned by the Inquisition in France to slavery on board the galley ships. This is described by Foxe as follows:

They were put on board the galleys [for details about the galleys, see page 235], where they were subjected to the absolute control of the most inhuman and barbarous wretches who ever disgraced the human form. The labor of rowing, as performed in the galleys, is described as being the most excessive that can be imagined; and the sufferings of the poor slaves were increased many fold by the scourgings inflicted on them by their savage taskmasters. The recital of their miseries is too horrible to be dwelt upon: we shall therefore pass to that period when the Lord, of his infinite mercy, gave ear to the cries of his afflicted servants, and graciously raised them up a deliverer in Anne, queen of England, who, filled with compassion for the unhappy fate of so many of her fellow-protestants, ordered her ambassador at the court of France, to make a spirited remonstrance in their favor, which Louis, whose affairs were then in a very critical situation, was under the necessity of complying with; and he accordingly dispatched orders to all the seaports for the immediate release of every galley slave condemned for his religion. ...

A deputation of those who had been released by the interposition of queen Anne, waited upon her majesty in London, to return their most grateful thanks, on behalf of themselves and their brethren, for her Christian interference in their favor. She received them very graciously, and assured them that she derived more pleasure from the consciousness of having lessened the miseries of her fellow-protestants, than from the most brilliant events of her reign (Foxe, abridged, pp. 180, 181).

Anne's firstborn after her marriage with Henry was a little girl, who would grow up to sit upon England's throne in a somewhat better hour. Her name was Elizabeth, and she was born September 7, 1533. After this, on January 29, 1536, Anne did bear a son for the king, but the child died soon after birth. Having grown frustrated by the fact that his new wife could not quickly give him a son and having become enamored with another woman, the willful Henry brought ridiculous false charges of unfaithfulness and treason against her



(claiming that she had improper relations with her own brother, as well as with several other men, and that she had conspired with them to take the king's life).

On May 19, 1536, Queen Anne was beheaded, less than five months after miscarrying Henry's boy child. Her little daughter was two years old. There is no record of evidence for the charges against her, and Christopher Anderson painstakingly traced the dastardly conspiracy that resulted in the death of this queen who did so much to protect God's people in those evil days (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 459-488). Anderson concluded his research with these words:

It was not enough, that she had been tried in secrecy, by determined enemies; she must, as quietly as possible, be put to death. ... in short, there is not one solitary step in the entire course, from first to last, which is not pregnant with suspicion or wrong (pp. 475, 479).

During Anne's "trial," she gave this noble testimony:

I have always been a faithful and loyal wife to the King. I have not, perhaps, at all times, shewn him that humility and reverence which his goodness to me, and the high honour bestowed by him upon me, did deserve. I confess that I have had fancies and suspicions of him, which I had not strength nor discretion enough to manage; but God knows, and is my witness, that I never failed otherwise towards him: and I shall never confess any other at the hour of my death. Do not think that I say this on design to prolong my life: God has taught me to know how to die, and He will fortify my faith (Anderson, I, p. 472).

Her own uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, an avowed Romanist and a bitter enemy of Anne and of her faith, pronounced the sentence against her. On hearing that she must die, she lifted her eyes to Heaven and exclaimed: "Oh, Father and Creator! Thou who are the way, and the truth, and the life! Thou knowest that I have not deserved this death" (Meteren, *History des Pays Bas*, p. 21; cited by Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, III, pp. 403, 404).

By wily maneuverings, the authorities who prosecuted Anne pronounced her marriage with Henry null from the beginning, "and she was condemned, although nothing could be more contradictory; for if she was never the king's wife, she could not be guilty of adultery, there being no breach of the faith of wedlock, if they were never truly married" (Foxe, abridged, p. 225).

Before noon on May 18, 1536, Anne was beheaded in the Tower. "She herself would not consent to have her eyes covered with a bandage, saying, that she had no fear of death; but with her own hands removing her hat and collar, and then kneeling, she repeated several times before the blow—"Christ, I pray thee, receive my spirit—Jesus! receive my soul!" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 476).

At the moment of her execution, artillery was fired as a predetermined signal to Henry, who was out in the fields hunting. Those present said he responded thus: "Ah! Ah! It is done; the business is done! Uncouple the dogs, and let us follow the sport!" The very next morning he married Jane Seymoure, with whom he had been infatuated for some

months (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, III, p. 404; Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, II, p. 69).

Anne Boleyn's life was summarized as follows by the fascinating old British historian Thomas Fuller: "In a word, she was a great patroness of the Protestants, protector of the persecuted, preferrer of men of merit (among whom Hugh Latimer,) a bountiful reliever of the poor, and the happy mother of queen Elizabeth" (Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, 1837, II, p. 66).

W.J. Heaton, author of *The Bible of the Reformation*, alumnus of the London University, and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, also saw through the slander that has been heaped upon this Queen. He said:

Anne Boleyn was a great supporter of Protestant scholars at Cambridge, and in fact her generosity was remarkable. If any one chooses to believe the flimsily supported charges brought against her by the great bloated, cowardly wife-murderer, he may. But the average mind will find them hard to harmonise with the testimony of her silk-woman (Miss Wilkinson), who said that she kept all those about her so occupied in making shirts and smocks for the poor, that there was no idleness nor doubtful pastimes such as are commonly seen in princes' Courts. And of the Duchess of Richmond, who said that she thought no day well spent wherein some had not fared the better by some benefit at her hands. But as Wolsey once said, if the king had ordered a jury to bring in a verdict that Abel killed Cain, they would have done it. Of course she was obnoxious to the supporters of the Pope both at home and abroad, and Wyatt in his *Memoirs* of her ascribes her downfall to their plottings, 'the most and chiefest of them having come from Rome' (*The Bible of the Reformation*, 1914, p. 125).

We believe the Lord's judgment was uniquely visited upon Henry for arranging the false accusations to be brought against Anne. His fifth wife, Catherine Howard, was convicted "on the clearest evidence, and by her own confession, of gross lewdness and debauchery, with several persons; and was beheaded, with lady Rochford, her principal accomplice and confident, February 14th, 1541. The latter, it will be recollected, was the chief instrument in the destruction of Anne Boleyn..." (Foxe, abridged, p. 239). Lady Rochford, in great contrast to Anne, went to her execution in a state of extreme panic and with no evidence of divine comfort or fortitude.

### **Jane Seymoure**

Interestingly, the woman Henry married next, Jane Seymoure, also rejected Roman Catholicism. She did bear Henry the longed-for son on October 12, 1537, but she died twelve days later. Edward, for so he was named, apparently was trained at a young age in the doctrines of the Word of God, at least from a Protestant perspective, and when he ascended to the throne at age nine (as Edward VI), it is said that he ordered a Bible to be carried before him in the royal procession. His brief reign was characterized by liberty for the distribution of the Word of God. (This does not mean there was no persecution against Bible believers. The Church of England was itself a haughty persecutor, but that is another story. Two Anabaptists were put to death even during

the reign of Edward VI, having been martyred by the bishops in spite of his protests.)

### **Catherine Parr**

Henry's sixth and final wife, Catherine Parr, was the widow of a Bible believer and a personal friend of the Reformation. Though more than 20 years Henry's junior, Catherine became his sixth wife in July 1543. John Foxe tells us that Catherine "was very much given to the reading and study of the holy Scriptures, and that she, for that purpose, had retained divers well learned and godly persons to instruct her thoroughly in the same; with whom as at all times convenient she used to have private conference touching spiritual matters." (Unless otherwise noted, the rest of the quotations in this section on Catherine Parr are from Foxe (1517-1587), who gathered his information from firsthand sources that were members of Catherine's royal household. The 1641 unabridged Foxe in my library contains the entire account.)

These Protestant preachers not only instructed the queen in private, but they were invited to hold services in the queen's chamber for any members of her household that desired to hear. Thus many of the ladies of Henry VIII's court heard the truths of the Word of God expounded. Foxe tells us that these sermons not only dealt with positive Bible truth but boldly exposed the errors of the Catholic Church. The queen "become very zealous toward the gospel, and the professors thereof." None of this was done in secret, and at first the elderly Henry did not oppose Catherine's religious activities. This was so even when the godly queen pressed the haughty king himself to bow to the Bible's authority and to carry the reformation of the Church of England forward. She was bold to reason with Henry out of the Scriptures, "oftentimes wishing, exhorting, and persuading the king, that as he had, to the glory of God, and his eternal fame, begun a good and a godly work in banishing that monstrous idol of Rome, so he would thoroughly perfect and finish the same, cleansing and purging his church of England clean from the dregs thereof, wherein as yet remained great superstition."

Anne Askew, who was tortured mercilessly on the rack and then burned at the stake in July 1546, was said to be "a great favourite of queen Catherine Parr" (Joseph Ivimey, *The History of English Baptists*, I, p. 84).

As time passed, the ecclesiastical authorities in England who remained committed to Rome attempted to halt the progress of the reformation that was proceeding in the king's own household. Foxe exposes the names of the leaders of the opposition as "[Stephen] Gardiner bishop of Winchester, Thomas Wriothesley, then lord chancellor, and others, as well of the king's privy chamber, as of his privy council." (Wriothesley was the man who brutally tortured Anne Askew on the rack in 1546.) Henry was captivated by Catherine, not only for her bright intellect and cheerful personality but much more, probably, for her physical beauty and her total dedication to his welfare and comfort. She was a faithful and good wife to the cantankerous old king. "For never handmaid sought with more careful

diligence to please her mistress, than she did, with all painful endeavor, apply herself, by all virtuous means, in all things to please his humor.”

Caring nothing for the truth and not fearing to apply deceit and cunning in an attempt to destroy a godly person, the aforementioned enemies of the gospel wickedly sought to embitter Henry against Catherine and thus destroy the source of reformation in the king’s household. “These, seeking (for the furtherance of their ungodly purpose) to revive, stir up, and kindle, evil and pernicious humors in their prince and sovereign lord, to the intent to deprive her of this great favor which then she stood in with the king (which they not a little feared would turn to the utter ruin of their antichristian sect, if it should continue), and thereby to stop the passage of the gospel; and consequently (having taken away her, who was the only patroness of the professors of the truth), openly, without fear of check or controlment, with fire and sword, after their accustomed manner, to invade the small remainder, as they hoped, of that poor flock—made their wicked entry unto this their mischievous enterprise, after this manner following.”

It so passed that Gardiner and the other conspirators against Catherine could long find no means of destroying her favor with the king. Even though Henry did not agree with Catherine’s religious views, he showed no sign of resisting her, and he appeared to gain great enjoyment from their conversations. “During which time, perceiving her so thoroughly grounded in the king’s favor, they durst not for their lives once open their lips unto the king in any respect to touch her, either in her presence, or behind her back.” It was not until the king became very ill with a wound in his leg and had “waxed sickly, and therewithal froward, and difficult to be pleased,” that they found their chance. Observing that the king had become a little weary of Catherine’s spiritual entreaties, Gardiner quickly used the situation to his advantage. He flattered the king that he did not need a mere woman to instruct him, seeing that the king himself was wiser and more learned in religious matters “above not only princes of that and other ages, but also above doctors professed in divinity.” Thus appealing to Henry’s infamous pride, Gardiner went on to cautiously warn that it was dangerous for the king to allow himself to “suffer insolent words at his subjects’ hands.” Gardiner also reminded the king that if ordinary citizens held to the queen’s religious views, they would be condemned by his own laws to die. Gardiner further encouraged the king that the queen’s “heresies” were not only evil in themselves but cloaked treasonous ambitions against the kingdom, and that if given the king’s permission he could root out and destroy these dangers.

Henry was so stirred by these lies that he immediately gave Gardiner permission to research the matter more thoroughly and to draw up proper charges. Instead of directly attacking the queen herself, though, these conniving wolves determined to first attack three of the queen’s closest friends and fellow believers in the gospel. They drew up six charges against Lady Herbert, the queen’s sister; Lady Jane, the queen’s cousin; and Lady Tyrwit, who “for her virtuous disposition” was in very great favor with the queen. All

three were intimate members of Catherine's royal household. The plan was to arrest these three women, then to search their quarters to find written evidence of religious heresy.

It must be noted that it was against the law to possess writings that dissented from the national church. The prohibition of 1526 by the bishop of London named more than 100 specific writings, including those by Tyndale, Wycliffe, Luther, and Zwingli. Furthermore, the Six Articles law had been passed by Parliament in 1539, which required that the people accept six Catholic doctrines, chiefly transubstantiation, the celibacy of the priesthood, and auricular confession. Anyone who "by word, writing, imprinting, ciphering, or any otherwise, should publish, preach, teach, say, affirm, declare, dispute, argue, or hold any opinion" contrary to the six articles were to be charged as heretics and punished severely.

These laws were very much in force, and during Catherine's day, many English citizens were being persecuted on their authority.

Believing they would find many heretical writings in the possession of the queen's friends, the conspirators planned to charge the queen herself with spreading dangerous errors, to arrest her and transport her by barge to the London Tower for imprisonment. Gardiner was able to obtain the king's signature of authority upon the first part of the plan, that of searching the friends of the queen (the king being unaware of the last part of the plan), and the deed would surely have proceeded to success had not the Lord intervened. The following are the fascinating details of how the plan was thwarted.

A couple of days before the plan was to take effect, the queen was told something of the charges against her friends and she became extremely disturbed, so much so that when the king was informed of her condition, he sent his doctors to minister to her. One of these, named Wendy, knew the details of the conspiracy, and at great danger to his own life he informed the queen about the plan and advised her to ingratiate herself anew to the king. The next evening, which was the day before the evil plan was to be put forward, Catherine determined to approach the king in his private chambers. She instructed her friends to take away all unlawful books, and then attended by Lady Herbert and Lady Jane she went to the king's bed chamber. Henry was talking with certain gentlemen, but he immediately broke off his conversation with them and warmly welcomed the queen. He thereupon broached the topic of religion and asked Catherine to help him solve various questions. The following is Foxe's description of the amazing conversation that followed:

Catherine: "Your majesty doth right-well know, neither I myself am ignorant, what great imperfection and weakness by our first creation is allotted unto us women, to be ordained and appointed, as inferior and subject unto man as our head; from which head all our direction ought to proceed: and that as God made man to his own shape and likeness, whereby he, being endued with more special gifts of perfection, might rather be stirred to the contemplation of heavenly things, and to the earnest endeavor to obey his commandments, even so, also, made he woman of man, of whom and by whom she is to be governed, commanded, and

directed; whose womanly weaknesses and natural imperfection ought to be tolerated, aided, and borne withal, so that, by his wisdom, such things as be lacking in her ought to be supplied. Since, therefore, God hath appointed such a natural difference between man and woman, and your majesty being so excellent in gifts and ornaments of wisdom, and I a silly poor woman, so much inferior in all respects of nature unto you, how then cometh it now to pass that your majesty, in such diffuse causes of religion, will seem to require my judgment? which when I have uttered and said what I can, yet must I, and will I, refer my judgment in this, and in all other cases, to your majesty's wisdom, as my only anchor, supreme head and governor here in earth, next under God, to lean unto."

Henry: "Not so by St. Mary; you are become a doctor, Kate, to instruct us (as we take it), and not to be instructed or directed by us."

Catherine: "If your majesty take it so, then hath your majesty very much mistaken me, who have ever been of the opinion, to think it very unseemly, and preposterous, for the woman to take upon her the office of an instructor or teacher to her lord and husband; but rather to learn of her husband, and to be taught by him. And whereas I have, with your majesty's leave, heretofore been bold to hold talk with your majesty, wherein sometimes in opinions there hath seemed some difference, I have not done it so much to maintain opinion, as I did it rather to minister talk, not only to the end your majesty might with less grief pass over this painful time of your infirmity, being attentive to our talk, and hoping that your majesty should reap some ease thereby; but also that I, hearing your majesty's learned discourse, might receive to myself some profit thereby: wherein, I assure your majesty, I have not missed any part of my desire in that behalf, always referring myself, in all such matters, unto your majesty, as by ordinance of nature it is convenient for me to do."

Henry: "And is it even so, sweet heart! and tended your arguments to no worse end? Then, perfect friends we are now again, as ever at any time heretofore."

Foxe continues his description of the touching scene:

And as he sat in his chair, embracing her in his arms, and kissing her, he added this, saying, that it did him more good at that time to hear those words of her own mouth, than if he had heard present news of a hundred thousand pounds in money fallen unto him. And with great signs and tokens of marvelous joy and liting, with promises and assurances never again in any sort more to mistake her, entering into other very pleasant discourses with the queen and lords, and the gentlemen standing by, in the end (being very far in the night) he gave her leave to depart: whom, in her absence, to the standers-by, he gave as singular and as affectuous commendations, as before time, to the bishop and the chancellor (who then were neither of them present), he seemed to mislike of her. Now then, God be thanked! The king's mind was clean altered, and he detested in his heart (as afterwards he plainly showed) this tragical practice of those cruel Caiaphases...

The end of the story reminds us of that of another godly queen named Esther.

The next day, Henry was in the garden enjoying the afternoon air, when he called for the queen to come to him. She did so, attended by the very three ladies who were the objects of Gardiner's plot. The king's attitude toward the queen that afternoon was "as pleasant as ever he was in all his life before," and it was into this pleasant scene that Gardner entered with 40 of the king's guards to arrest the queen's ladies and the queen herself! When Henry "sternly beheld" this procession, he broke off his conversation with the queen and called Gardiner aside to give an answer to the matter. Gardiner fell upon his knees before

the king and earnestly sought the king's forgiveness. Though Gardiner's exact words, since they were softly spoken and the two were some distance from the queen and her ladies, could not be comprehended by those who later reported the matter to Foxe, Henry's reply was definitely understood. He vehemently exclaimed, "Knave! arrant knave! beast! and fool!" and commanded Gardiner to go out of his presence.

The queen sweetly besought Henry to treat the deceiving counselor with mercy, to which Henry replied: "Ah! poor soul, thou little knowest how evil he deserveth this grace at thy hands. Of my word, sweet-heart! He hath been towards thee an arrant knave, and so let him go."

With this, the conspiracy against Catherine was broken. After Henry's death in January 1547, the widow Catherine married Lord Seymour of Sudeley, the High Admiral of England, another unsuitable husband for her. Seymour had asked her to marry him in 1543, but she had deferred to Henry's proposal. Catherine died the next year in childbirth, and Lord Seymour was beheaded in 1549 on charges of treason.

### **Lady Jane Grey**

Though Lady Jane Grey (1537-1553) does not fit properly into our record at this exact point of time, I want to include her here as another of the godly queens of the 16th century. She became queen of England briefly upon the death of King Edward VI in July 1553. The attractive, vivacious Jane, born in 1537, was the firstborn child of the Duke of Suffolk. That was the same year that Jane's cousin Edward, the son of Henry VIII, was born. Lady Jane received a strenuous classical education, mastering Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic, French, Italian, and Spanish. Her intelligence was renowned. Historian John Foxe compared the teenaged Lady Jane to "university men which have taken many degrees of the schools." It is not her intellectual brilliance that wins her a place among the godly queens of history, though. It is her simple faith in Jesus Christ.

There were many spiritual influences in Lady Jane's young life. One was her favorite tutor, John Aylmer, who was Jane's teacher until she was nine years old. This dedicated Protestant taught the inquisitive little girl many basic Bible truths. Another influence was Catherine Parr, the sixth and final wife of King Henry VIII. In 1547, when she was nine, Jane was sent to live with Catherine at the splendid Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire. As we have seen, Catherine had married Lord Sudeley after the death of Henry VIII in January 1547. In February of that year, nine-year-old Edward had been crowned king of England. Catherine became like a mother to Jane. She naturally encouraged Jane in her love for the gospel, but sadly, Catherine died in 1548. Another influence upon Jane was certain leaders of the Reformation in Europe. She corresponded in Latin with Bucer, Bullinger, Pellican, among others. It is said that she corresponded with Bullinger in Latin at least equal to his own (Froude, *History of England*, 1893, V, p. 181).

Jane's spiritual discernment is evident by a scene that we have from her life when she was only 12 years old. She was visiting her cousin, Princess Mary, and as Jane and a companion, Lady Anne Wharton, were passing Mary's chapel, Anne curtsied in honor of the host that was always displayed in the Catholic chapel. Jane asked her why she curtsied and asked if Lady Mary was in the chapel. Anne replied, "No, Madam, I make my curtsy to Him that made us all." Jane then answered, "And how can He that made us all be there, seeing that the baker made him?" Mary was very angry when she was told about this conversation, and from then on she considered Jane an enemy of her faith.

Jane was the unknowing and unwilling pawn of her scheming relatives, who desired to draw themselves closer to the crown of England. John Dudley, who had become the Protector of the young King Edward, arranged for Jane to marry his son, Guilford. Dudley then convinced the dying young king Edward (he died when he was only 16) to pass over his sister Mary and to declare Lady Jane as his successor. The king agreed, but since the decision was not backed by an Act of Parliament, it was not legal and did not succeed. When Edward died in July 1553, Jane was pronounced the queen of England. She strongly protested that she was not the proper heir, but the teenage girl was forced by her father-in-law and mother-in-law and by her own parents and others involved in the conspiracy to yield to their desires. In the mean time, Mary, who as Henry VIII's natural daughter was the rightful heir, pronounced herself queen and mobilized support. Jane was queen only nine days. She and Guilford were arrested for treason and imprisoned separately in the Tower of London, and there they remained for the next seven months. It is reported that Mary did not want to put her cousin to death, but she was arranging a marriage with Prince Philip of Spain, a staunch Roman Catholic, and his envoys insisted as a condition of the alliance that Jane and others associated with the conspiracy be put to death. It was finally decided that Jane could be allowed to live and be restored to her distinguished position in society if she would agree to convert to Roman Catholicism. Given that choice, Jane chose to die.

Great efforts were made by Catholic authorities to convert her. Just before her scheduled execution, Dr. Feckenham, who was renowned for his persuasive debating skills, was sent to change her mind. He gained a three-day postponement of execution and arranged a public debate. She stood firm in her faith, and the ensuing debate showed her solid grasp of Scripture truth. Following is an excerpt from this amazing conversation:

Feckenham: I am here come to you at this present, sent from the Queen and her council, to instruct you in the true doctrine of the right faith; although I have so great confidence in you, that I shall have, I trust, little need to travail with you much therein.

Lady Jane: I heartily thank the Queen's highness, who is not unmindful of her humble subject.

Feckenham: What is then required of a Christian man?

J: That he should believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; three persons, and one God.

F: What! Is there nothing else to be required, or looked for, in a Christian, but to believe in Him?



J: Yes, we must love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourself.

F: Why, then, faith justifieth not, nor saveth not?

J: Yes, verily; faith, as Paul saith, only justifieth.

F: Why St. Paul saith, if I have all faith, without love it is nothing.

J: True it is; for how can I love Him Whom I trust not? Or how can I trust Him Whom I love not? Faith and love go together, and yet love is comprehended in faith.

F: How shall we love our neighbour?

J: To love our neighbour is to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and give drink to the thirsty, and to do to him as we would do to ourselves.

F: Why, then it is necessary unto salvation to do good works also, and it is not sufficient only to believe?

J. I deny that; and I affirm that faith only saveth; but it is meet for a Christian, in token that he followeth his master Christ, to do good works, yet may we not say that they profit to our salvation; for when we have done all, yet we be unprofitable servants, and faith only in Christ's blood saveth us.

F: Why, what do you receive in that sacrament [the Lord's Supper]? Do you not receive the very body and blood of Christ?

J: No, surely, I do not so believe. I think that at the supper I neither receive flesh nor blood, but bread and wine; which bread, when it is broken, and which wine, when it is drunken, putteth me in remembrance how that for my sins the body of Christ was broken, and His blood shed on the cross, and with that bread and wine I receive the benefits that came by the breaking of His body, and shedding His blood for our sins on the cross.

F: Why, doth not Christ speak these words, Take, eat, this is My body? Require you any plainer words? Doth He not say, it is His body?

J: I grant He saith so; and so He saith, I am the vine, I am the door: but He is never the more the door nor the vine. Doth not St. Paul say, He calleth things that are not, as though they were? God forbid that I should say that I eat the very natural body and blood of Christ; for then either I should pluck away my redemption, or else there were two bodies or two Christs. One body was tormented on the cross, and if they did eat another body, then had He two bodies; or if His body were eaten, then was it not broken on the cross; or if it were broken on the cross, it was not eaten of His disciples.

F: Why, is it not as possible that Christ by His power could make His body both to be eaten and broken, and to be born of a woman without man, as to walk upon the sea having a body, and other such like miracles as He wrought by His power only?

J: Yes, verily. If God would have done at His supper any miracle, He might have done so; but I say that then He minded no work nor miracle, but only to break His body, and to shed His blood on the cross for our sins. But I pray you to answer me this one question, Where was Christ when He said, Take, eat, this is my body? Was He not at the table when He said so? He was at that time alive, and suffered not till the next day. What took He but bread? What brake He but bread? Look what He took He brake, and look what He brake He gave, and look what He gave they did eat; and yet all this time He Himself was alive, and at supper before His disciples, or else they were deceived.

F: You ground your faith upon such authors as both say and unsay with a breath, and not upon the church, to whom ye ought to give credit.

J: No, I ground my faith on God's Word, and not upon the church; for if the church be a good church, the faith of the church must be tried by God's Word, and not God's Word by the church, neither my faith . . . I say it is an evil church, and not the spouse of Christ, but the spouse of the devil . . . To that church, say I, God will add plagues to it, and from that church will He take their part out of the book of life.

When the debate was concluded, Feckenham told Jane that he was sorry for her and that he was sure they would never meet again. Jane replied: "True it is, that we shall never meet, except God turn your heart; for I am assured, unless you repent and turn to God, you are in evil case. And I pray God, in the bowels of His mercy, to send you His Holy Spirit—for He hath given you His great gift of utterance—that it may please Him also to open the eyes of your heart."

Thus the 16-year-old girl urged her persecutors to submit to the gospel. Jane spent her last hours writing letters of comfort to her family. She gave her Greek New Testament to her sister, with the words, "It will teach you to live, and learn you to die."

She admitted her fault in allowing herself to be thrust into the queenship and acknowledged that she deserved death according to the law.

On the morning of February 11, 1554, Jane was brought to the place of execution. In her farewell speech to the crowd, she said: "I pray you all . . . to bear me witness that I die a true Christian woman, and that I look to be saved by none other means but only by the mercy of God, in the blood of His only Son, Jesus Christ, casting far behind me all the merits of my own actions, as things so short of my true duty." As she recited Psalm 51, her eyes were covered with a cloth. She laid her head on the block and called out loudly and clearly, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," just before the executioner's axe rudely ushered her into Glory. An excellent report on Lady Jane Grey that appeared in the *Sword & Trowel* in 1998 offered this good conclusion: "Though executed for high treason rather than religion, she should surely be counted among the martyrs of Christ, having stood firm while many fell."



### **Miles Coverdale and the Great Bible**

Mile's Coverdale's (1488-1569) life is also interesting, though he does not appear to have been as consistently principled and courageous as William Tyndale.

Educated at Cambridge, Coverdale had been an Augustinian friar in the Roman Catholic Church, but he left the priesthood after experiencing the converting power of the Gospel. He fell in love with the Scriptures and later wrote, "Wherever the Scripture is known it reformeth all things. And why? Because it is given by the inspiration of God."

It took a lot of courage to take such a step in those days. Like Tyndale, Coverdale was forced to flee England for the relative safety of certain cities on the European Continent, which thing he did in 1528. He spent some time working with Tyndale in Hamburg. He also helped proofread the Tyndale manuscripts as they went to press in Antwerp prior to Tyndale's arrest. In 1535, Coverdale returned to England to enjoy the brief respite from persecution during the latter days of Cromwell's influence. Henry VIII, in the midst of his wicked divorce from Catherine and his strife with Pope Clement VII over this matter, gave permission for some English Bibles to be distributed. It was probably a political ploy on his part, but it gave some blessed respite from the bitter persecutions. The king's license extended particularly to the Coverdale and the Matthew's and the Great Bibles. This blessed period lasted only from 1536 or 37 until 1543, when Henry again severely restricted the distribution and use of the vernacular Scriptures. At that time Coverdale returned to Europe and remained there until the death of Henry in 1547.

Coverdale oversaw the completion and printing of **THE GREAT BIBLE**. This was a new edition of the Matthew's Bible, and it was so named for its massive size, some 16.5 X 11 inches. The printing began in Paris in 1538. Coverdale wrote that the work was "daily threatened" even from its inception. The license they obtained for the printing had a provision that warned that the project had to conform to Inquisition laws. Before the printing could be finished, the Romanist French ambassador to England learned of the project and wrote to the French authorities, suggesting that the Bible be destroyed. Being warned of impending trouble, Coverdale and his workers labored diligently to ship to England the portions that had already been printed. Coverdale wrote, "If these men proceed in their cruelty against us, and confiscate the rest yet this at the least may be safe." Four days later the Roman Catholic Inquisitor-general for France demanded that the printing cease and called for any completed sheets to be removed. The feared Roman Catholic inquisitors descended upon the printing facility, seized the sheets that had not already been shipped to Britain, amounting to, some say, 2,500 Bibles, and ordered them burned.

Bible translator Miles Coverdale and his friend Grafton, who had been overseeing the printing, had to flee from Paris to avoid persecution. Later, through diplomatic negotiations, they were able to return to Paris and recover the printing presses and type. Some historians also tell us that, by God's grace, they were able to recover even many of the condemned sheets. Instead of burning them, the authorities had sold them for waste paper, and the men who had purchased them were more than willing to sell them back to Coverdale!

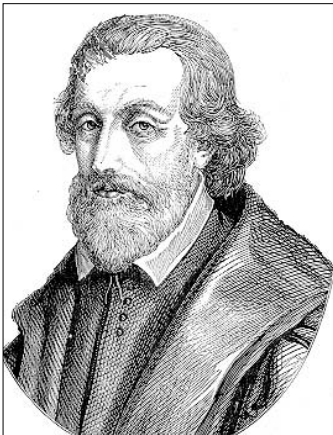
The first printing of the Great Bible was completed in April 1539. Cromwell "ordered that ... a copy of the Great should be placed in every parish church in England. ... Thus it came about that Tyndale's Bible was circulated extensively for many years in the name of others, and with the king's formal authorization, and became the basis for subsequent translations" (P. Marion Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 178).

Not only did Tyndale's Bible, under the appearances of the Coverdale, the Matthew's, and the Great, gain royal approval, but it also appeared at one point with the imprimatur of Cuthbert Tunstall, the very same Bishop of London who had condemned Tyndale and consigned his New Testaments to the flame! This happened with editions of the Great Bible appearing in 1541. After the Vicar General Thomas Cromwell was maligned, falsely charged, and then executed in July 1540 (something that happened regularly to friends and wives of Henry VIII), it was necessary from a political viewpoint that the names of bishops that had opposed Cromwell appear in the approved Bible rather than the name of Thomas Cranmer, who had been closely aligned with Cromwell in the past. Cuthbert Tunstall was one of the two names that newly appeared on the title page of the Great Bible, which was really the Tyndale Bible, in 1541. Who says God does not have a sense of humor!

Coverdale returned to England during the brief reign of young king Edward VI and became Bishop of Exeter in 1551. Edward ascended to the throne at age nine and lived to reign only six and a half years, from 1547 to 1553, but his reign brought blessed peace and liberty to the British kingdom until he was cut off in his youth and the persecuting Queen Mary rose to take his place. During Edward's reign, there were some 48 printings of the New Testament and the complete Bible (Westcott, *The History of the English Bible*, p. 86).

Coverdale was forced yet once again to flee persecution in England during the reign of Mary.

When Elizabeth I, the daughter of the murdered Anne Boleyn, ascended to the throne in 1558 and relative peace settled once again over England, Coverdale was 70 years old. He returned home in his old age and lived out the remainder of his years in relative obscurity. Elizabeth reigned until 1603, and was followed by James I (1603-25) who called for the translation of that masterpiece of English Scripture, the King James Version.



### **John Rogers and the Matthew's Bible**

John Rogers (1500-1555) completed the Old Testament where Tyndale left off and published a complete Tyndale Bible. Tyndale had published the Pentateuch and the book of Jonah before his martyrdom. It is believed that he had also completed the translation of the books from Joshua to 2 Chronicles, and that John Rogers obtained these manuscripts and completed the Old Testament, using portions of the Coverdale Old Testament.

Rogers issued a Bible known as the Matthew's Bible in 1537. The name Thomas Matthew, which appeared on the Bible's

title page, was a pen name. “The sentence pronounced on him before his martyrdom contains, four times, the expression, ‘Johannes Rogers alias Matthew.’ The Council Register of Mary’s reign says, ‘John Rogers alias Matthew, is ordered to keep his house at Paul’s; and we know that he was for some time a prisoner in his own house” (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 176).

(Some historians of this present brash day despise much of what has been written aforetime, alleging that they are more capable of determining the truth of ancient events than were historians living near those times. This has always seemed pretentious to me. Remember, this is the very same day which has given us theologians who claim they can tell us more about the “genuine Jesus” than the men who walked and talked with Him and who witnessed Him rise from the dead. What silly presumption! I am not saying that old historians are infallible, nor am I saying that modern historians are totally undependable. Much helpful research has been accomplished in the past century and many new facts have been brought to light. A historian is not accurate simply because he wrote before the 20th century. There have been undependable historians in all centuries. I have mentioned this simply to warn of the pride that is encountered frequently in modern histories.)

The Matthew’s Bible was intended for serious study. It contained “a collection of biblical passages constituting ‘An Exhortation to the Study of the Holy Scripture’, a summary of the chief doctrines contained in the Bible, adapted from Jacques Lefevre’s French Bible of 1534 ... an alphabetic concordance to the subjects dealt with in the Bible, translated from Pierre Robert Olivetan’s French Bible of 1535...” (Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, p. 66).

On February 4, 1555, John Rogers followed his friend Tyndale into the flames and gave his life for his testimony for Christ. Rogers had a large family; at the time of his imprisonment he had eleven children, one a nursing baby. His pitiful request that his wife be allowed to visit him was cruelly denied by the ecclesiastical authorities. He did not see her or the children until he was on the way to his execution.

How quickly Tyndale’s dying prayer was answered. Yea, though Tyndale had no way of knowing, being far from the events transpiring quietly in his homeland toward the authorization of the Coverdale and the Matthew’s and the Great Bibles, his prayer was answered in part before he even prayed it! As already noted, the fickle Henry VIII had been persuaded by Cromwell to authorize an English Bible, though he did not know that the Bibles he would eventually authorize, by God’s sovereign purposes, were largely those of the man he despised, William Tyndale! Henry hated Tyndale because he had opposed his divorce from Catherine (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 170). “In this Bible [the Matthew’s] we have therefore what purports to be the first authorized English version, and it is a strange paradox that two-thirds of it was really the work of Tyndale, who had suffered martyrdom only the preceding year for having dared to translate Scripture in the face of the opposition of king and ecclesiastical authorities. ... strangely enough, it not

only carries the initials of Tyndale nearly two and a half inches high, at the end of Malachi, but it contains that arch-heretic's prologue to the Epistle to the Romans, not to speak of other objectionable features" (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 185).

God answers the prayers of His people, and He always has the final word!

## **Tyndale's Influence**

William Tyndale's influence on later editions of the English Bible was immense. His was the first printed English Bible and the first translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek. Much of the powerful, direct, energetic style of the old English Bible we still use today, almost five centuries later, is Tyndale's. Historian Froude observes:

Of the translation itself (the 1611), though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air (Froude, *History of England*, III, p. 84).

The King James Version is merely a revision of the Tyndale Bible. Comparisons have been made, showing, for example, that nine-tenths of the Authorized Version in First John and five-sixths of Ephesians are directly from Tyndale. "These proportions are maintained throughout the entire New Testament" (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 251). "In the Gospel of St. Mark and the Epistle to the Hebrews [in Tyndale] there are not more than eighty words ... which are not found in our Authorized Version of the Bible; that is to say, there are not more than four strangers in every thousand words, or nine in every hundred verses" (Moulton, *The History of the English Bible*, p. 70).

In 1998, a computer study was done on 18 carefully selected portions of the Bible, comparing the King James with the Tyndale. The authors of the study were Jon Nielson and Royal Skousen. They concluded that 83% of the King James Bible was contributed by Tyndale (Nielson and Skousen, "How Much of the King James Bible Is William Tyndale's," *Reformation*, 3, 1998, pp. 49-74).

Every person who has been blessed through a sound English Bible over the past four centuries owes a large debt to the humble translator who was faithful unto death. The Tyndale Bible literally transformed the nation of England. Multitudes of commoners were motivated to learn to read by their desire to study the Bible in their own tongue. The excitement and change that was wrought in British society by the distribution of the first printed English Bible cannot be described fully. The 16th-century historian John

Foxe, who carefully documented the persecutions of that era, noted, “Everybody that could bought the book or busily read it or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose. And even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the holy Scripture read.”

The Tyndale Bible changed the destiny of nations. It had a great role in the creation of the United States of America. The Bible brought to America by its first settlers in the early 1600s was the Geneva, an edition of the Tyndale, and the Bible that had such a large influence upon America’s founding political documents in the late 1700s was the King James, another edition of Tyndale.

## King Henry VIII

England’s Henry VIII (1509-1547), as we have seen, opposed the Reformation and supported Roman Catholic doctrine to the end of his life, in spite of his rebellion against the pope over his divorce and remarriage. His break with the pope was over political and practical concerns, not doctrine. Historian S.M. Houghton tells us that he “remained a bitter enemy of the reformed faith ... whatever else he did, he had no love for Protestant doctrine and Protestant worship” (*Sketches from Church History*, p. 112). As already noted, Henry dedicated his 1521 anti-Luther treatise to Pope Paul III. The title was “Defense of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther,” and the pope showed his appreciation by awarding the king of England the title “Defender of the Faith.” In this treatise Henry had defended the doctrine of the papacy. As we have seen, many Bible-believing people were put to death through Henry’s persecutions.

“In October 1538, the king appointed a Commission composed of Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as President, with other distinguished men to prosecute the Anabaptists. The result was that the books of the Baptists were burnt wherever they were found. On November 16, following, the king issued a proclamation to the effect that none were ‘to sell or print any books of Scripture,’ without the supervision of the king, one of the councils, or a bishop. Sacraentarians, Anabaptists, and the like, who sell books of false doctrine, are to be detected to the king or Privy Council” (Christian, *A History of the Baptists*, I, pp. 192, 93).

Sidney Collett tells us, “The destruction of Bibles by the Roman Catholics about that time was very great” (Collett, *The Scripture of Truth*, p. 36).

“[Henry] was never very favorably disposed toward Protestantism; he was only politically Protestant. His



inclination led him to Rome, his interests in the opposite direction. After the fall of Cromwell his distrust of Protestant leaders increased. No Bibles were published under Henry VIII. after 1541. In 1543 all Testaments bearing the name of Tyndale were ordered destroyed, and in 1546 every Bible and separate New Testament except the Great Bible received the same condemnation. A great burning of Bibles resulted. Bible reading was greatly restricted, prohibited in fact, among the lower classes” (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 180).

Possibly because of his immorality (he had numerous extramarital affairs and at least one illegitimate son), Henry’s body became full of disease during his final months. He was literally being consumed with sin. He had grown so heavy that he could not go up and down the stairs and had to be lowered up and down by a mechanical device. We close the account on him with the following sad descriptions:

Henry had been distinguished for sensuality ... as a natural consequence, he became a mass of disease, so unwieldy as to be moved from room to room only by the aid of machinery. His temper, always headstrong, now displayed itself by sudden paroxysms of resentment or fury. From the state of his body, to approach and wait upon him soon became a loathsome task (Anderson, II, p. 210).

He had grown so fierce and cruel, that those about him were afraid to let him know that his death seemed near, lest they might have been adjudged guilty of treason, in foretelling his death (Foxe, abridged, p. 250).

Henry died on January 28, 1547, and went to his long home. Strype, one of the most frequently quoted historians of that era, says that just before Henry died, Thomas Cranmer asked of him a sign that he rested on Christ alone. “Henry pressed his hand and expired” (Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, I, p. 139).

Henry was fifty-six years old and had reigned thirty-eight long years.

## **Queen Mary**

During the reign of the persecuting Roman Catholic Queen Mary (1553-1558), Bible-believers were tormented bitterly throughout England. Rome wasted no time in using Mary’s ascension to the throne to reclaim its power over England. On November 1554, the pope’s hand-picked man, Cardinal Reginald Pole, arrived from Italy “with a commission to reconcile England to the papacy and to absolve it from the sin of schism” (Elton, *Reform & Reformation*, pp. 378, 379). The British Parliament, then in session, submitted to the pope’s legate and “revived the old heresy laws” (Elton, p. 384). There followed four years of torment for Bible believers. Geoffrey Elton tells us that “even by contemporary standards, the Marian heresy-hunt was exceptionally bloody” (p. 387). Some modern historians have suggested that John Foxe’s account of those persecutions is highly exaggerated. Elton debunks this. “Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, first published in 1563, did not (as apologists would have it) create a legend; it commemorated a truth” (*Reform & Reformation*, p. 386).



Nearly 300 were burned at the stake during Mary's reign. Roughly 100 more perished under torture and in prisons. Hundreds fled to Europe. "One Bible, partly burnt at that time, is still preserved as a relic of those dark and bloody days" (Sidney Collett, *The Scripture of Truth*, p. 38).

"Reading the English Bible and offering Protestant prayers were forbidden under penalty of death. To accomplish her purpose the queen resorted freely to the rack and the fagot, and as a result came to be known as Bloody Mary" (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 182).

"The public use of [English Bibles] was necessarily forbidden. Proclamations against certain books and authors were issued" (Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 89).



The rage of the Catholic authorities against the English Bible during Mary's reign was such that even the Scripture texts painted on church walls were removed. "Bishop Bonner went so far in his christian zeal, as he called his angry and irregular passion, as by his mandate, dated October 25, 1554, to require all parsons, &c. to warn their church-wardens to abolish and extinguish the texts of Scripture painted on the church-walls, which, he said, were wrongly applied, and opened a window to all vices, and utterly closed up the way to virtue. ... At this visitation likewise, it seems as if the English Bibles and Common-Prayer Books were all ordered to be taken out of churches, and the texts of scripture on the walls defaced. Since at the visitation of the diocese of Canterbury, 1565, I find the following presentment made by the churchwardens of Wemingswold, in Kent, viz. That they have had no Bible since their church was defaced ten years before" (John Lewis, *History of the English Translations of the Bible*, pp. 198, 201).

Another incident from the early days of Mary's reign illustrates the attitude of the Catholic authorities toward the Bible in those days.

On the accession of 'Bloody Mary' to the throne of England, in 1553, there existed a painting in London of King Henry VIII., in which he was represented standing holding in one hand a sceptre and in the other a Bible with the words on its cover, Verbum Dei [God's Word]. This exhibition of the 'Word of God' was so offensive to Papal eyes that it was obliterated, and a pair of gloves painted in its place. And we all know how during the reign of Mary--that same good daughter of the Church--tons of Bibles were used as faggots to light the piles for martyrs, than which, it was said, 'no burnt offerings could be more pleasing to Almighty God' (Alexander Robertson, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, p. 210).

Bible translator **John Rogers**, already mentioned, was the first to fall victim to Mary's fury in 1555 (Henry Hoare, p. 180). Rogers' translation was known as the Matthew's Bible, because his pen name Thomas Matthew appeared on its title page.

The bones of two dead Bible translators were burned by Queen Mary (Westcott, p. 89). These were **Paul Fagius** and **Martin Bucer**. In 1548, these two renowned European scholars had been invited by Archbishop Cranmer to come to England and assume professorships at Cambridge. Cranmer desired that they undertake the revision of the English Bible. Fagius began work on the Old Testament, and Bucer started with the Gospel of John, but sickness and death intervened to stop this project (Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible*, pp. 46, 47, 149).

The suffering of Bible-believers during Rome's resurgence in England was not limited to the torments of death.

But martyrdom was often a relief from more barbarous atrocities. In the sad winter months which were approaching, the poor men and women, who, untried and uncondemned, were crowded into the bishops' prisons, experienced such miseries as the very dogs could scarcely suffer and survive. They were beaten, they were starved, they were flung into dark fetid dens, where rotting straw was their bed, their feet were fettered in the stocks, and their clothes were their only covering, while the wretches who died in their misery were flung out into the fields where none might bury them (Froude, *History of England*, V, p. 559).

A chief instigator of these persecutions was the papal legate, Reginald Pole, acting under direct orders from the pope. In his 12-volume *History of England*, James Froude describes Pole's zeal for persecuting the saints:

Deep in the hearts of both Queen and Cardinal lay the conviction that if she would please God, she must avoid the sin of Saul. Saul had spared the Amalekites, and God had turned his face from him. God had greater enemies in England than the Amalekites. Historians have affected to exonerate Pole from the crime of the Marian persecution; although, without the legate's sanction, not a bishop in England could have raised a finger, not a bishop's court could have been opened to try a single heretic. ... When the persecution assumed its ferocious aspect, she was exclusively under the direction of the dreamer who believed that he was born for England's regeneration. All evidence concurs to show that, after Philip's departure, Cardinal Pole was the single adviser on whom Mary relied. ... From the legate came the first edict for the episcopal inquisition. ... He was not cruel; but he believed that, in the catalogue of human iniquities, there were none greater than the denial of the Roman Catholic Faith, or the rejection of the Roman Bishop's supremacy; and that he himself was chosen by Providence for the re-establishment of both (Froude, *History of England*, V, pp. 539-41).

Mary's earthly end came quickly, and it was frightful to behold. She was abandoned by her Spanish husband, Philip, who shamed her with his public affection for immoral women. She was tormented with mental depressions and fears. She thought that she was pregnant, but this bright hope turned out to be the figment of her own imagination. She had mistaken the physical effect of her maladies as a pregnancy.

... the impression grew daily that the Queen had not been pregnant at all. ... From confidence she fell into anxiety, from anxiety into fear, from fear into wildness and despondency. ... Her women now understood her condition; she was sick of a mortal disease; but they durst not tell her ... Throughout May [1555] she remained in her apartments waiting—waiting—in passionate restlessness. With stomach swollen, and features shrunk and haggard, she would sit upon the floor, with her knees drawn up to her face, in an agony of doubt; and in mockery of her wretchedness (Froude, V, pp. 520, 21).

Thinking that God was displeased with her because she had not destroyed all of the Protestants, she wrote a letter to hasten the persecutions. “Under the fresh impulse of this letter, fifty persons were put to death at the stake in the three ensuing months...” (Froude, V, p. 523).

“The queen’s health had been long declining. ... Her malady was greatly augmented by the anxiety of her mind, which was a prey to the most painful reflections. ... she died on the 15th of November, 1558, in the forty-third year of her age, and the sixth of her reign” (Foxye, abridged, p. 455).

## **The Geneva Bible**

Finding a haven at Geneva from Mary’s wrath some of the English refugees were successful in completing an English Bible translation that became known as the Geneva Bible. The New Testament was published in 1557 and the entire Bible in 1560. Its very name reminds us of the Roman Catholic persecutions that were raging against the Bible and against Bible believers in that day. The Geneva quickly became the most popular English Bible and wielded a powerful influence for almost 100 years, until its popularity waned in favor of the King James Version.

## **Anglican Church persecutions**

At this point we complete our history of the early English Bibles, and with it we leave off our discussion of the Anglican Church, which was formed politically in 1534 when King Henry VIII rebelled against the pope, and which was formed doctrinally during the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. Sadly, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, this daughter of Rome imitated its mother’s attitude toward independent religious conviction. While the Church of England did not openly persecute the Bible itself, by destroying copies of it or by issuing proclamations against it, it did persecute those who sought to obey the Bible independently of the state church. The same was true for a number of other Protestant bodies. To pursue that history, though, would require that we veer from the subject of this particular book. Yet we want to emphasize again that the Roman Catholic Church is not the *only* persecuting ecclesiastical organization in history. Far from it! Rome is not the only persecutor; yet it is the *oldest, most persistent* persecutor.

(See “The Protestant Persecution of Baptists” at the Way of Life web site, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.)

## The Greek Received Text

### Desiderius Erasmus



Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) published the first printed edition of the Greek Received Testament in 1516. Though Pope Leo X (1513-1521) wrote a commendation of Erasmus' New Testament and though this pope refused to sanction Erasmus, other popes and Roman ecclesiastical authorities treated him as a heretic. Pope Pius IV (1559-1565) placed everything Erasmus had written on the Index of Forbidden Books. This included his Greek New Testament and his translation of the Latin New Testament (Roland Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, pp. 277, 78).

Though Erasmus was not a thorough-going reformer, though he never left the Catholic Church, and though he was not spiritually courageous, he did strongly desire the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of every man. As we have seen, this sentiment was in dramatic contradiction to prevailing Catholic thought, and it was severely condemned by papal law. In the first edition of the Erasmus New Testament, published in 1516, the Greek editor said:

I vehemently dissent from those who would not have private persons read the Holy Scriptures nor have them translated into the vulgar tongues, as though either Christ taught such difficult doctrines that they can only be understood by a few theologians, or the safety of the Christian religion lay in ignorance of it. I should like all women to read the Gospel and the Epistles of Paul. Would that they were translated into all languages so that not only Scotch and Irish, but Turks and Saracens might be able to read and know them (Preserved Smith, *Erasmus*, p. 184).



Erasmus Greek N.T. Third Edition, Erasmus Museum, Brussels, Belgium

In the preface to the third edition of his New Testament, January 14, 1522, Erasmus said he would consider it a great triumph and glory to the cross if the Bible "is celebrated by the tongues of all men; if the farmer at the plow sings some of the mystic Psalms, and the weaver sitting at the shuttle often refreshes himself with something from the Gospel. Let the pilot at the rudder hum over a sacred tune, and the matron sitting with gossip or friend at the colander recite something from it" (Smith, *Erasmus*, pp. 184, 85).

The reaction against the Erasmus New Testament among the Catholic clergy is described in the following statements:



Erasmus' desk, Erasmus  
Museum Brussels

Traditional Catholicism uttered a cry from the depths of its noisome pools (to use Erasmus' figure). Franciscans and Dominicans, priests and bishops, not daring to attack the educated and well-born, went among the ignorant populace, and endeavoured by their tales and clamours to stir up susceptible women and credulous men. 'Here are horrible heresies,' they exclaimed, 'here are frightful antichrists! IF THIS BOOK BE TOLERATED IT WILL BE THE DEATH OF THE PAPACY!' 'We must drive this man from the university,' said one. 'We must turn him out of the church,' added another. 'The public places re-echoed with their howlings,' said Erasmus. The firebrands tossed by their furious hands were raising fires in every quarter; and the flames kindled in a few obscure convents threatened to spread over the whole country....

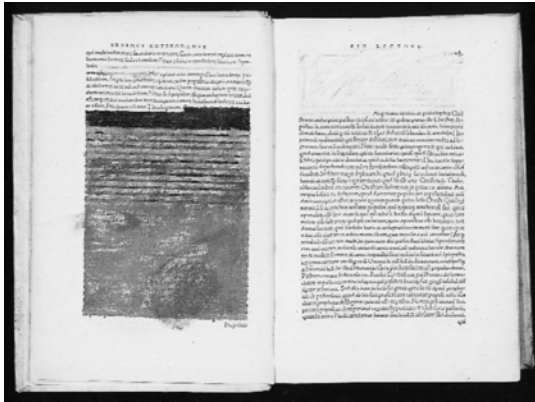
The priests saw the danger, and by a skillful maneuver, instead of finding fault with the Greek Testament, ATTACKED THE TRANSLATION AND THE TRANSLATOR. 'He has corrected the Vulgate,' they said, 'and puts himself in the place of Saint Jerome. He sets aside a work authorized by the consent of ages and inspired by the Holy Ghost. What audacity!' and then, turning over the pages, they pointed out the most odious passages: 'Look here! This book calls upon men to repent, instead of requiring them, as the Vulgate does,

to do penance!' (Matt. 9:17). THE PRIESTS THUNDERED AGAINST HIM FROM THEIR PULPITS: 'This man has committed the unpardonable sin,' they asserted, 'for he maintains that there is nothing in common between the Holy Ghost and the monks—that they are logs rather than men!' ... 'He's a heretic, an heresiarch, a forger! He's a goose. ... He's a very antichrist!' (J.H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, 1835, V, pp. 153- 54).

Edward Lee, a staunch papist, organized a league of Englishmen to oppose Erasmus. D'Aubigne describes the wide influence of this league: "In every place of public resort, at fairs and markets, at the dinner-table and in the council-chamber, in shops, and taverns, and houses of ill-fame, in churches and in the universities, in cottages and in palaces the league BLATTERED AGAINST ERASMUS AND THE GREEK TESTAMENT. Carmelites, Dominicans, and Sophists, invoked heaven and conjured hell."

Standish, bishop of St. Asaph, preached a sermon rebuking Erasmus for printing the Greek New Testament.

The University of Cologne "was especially outraged by Erasmus' attempt." Conrad of Hersbach wrote: "They have found a language called Greek, at which we must be careful to be on our guard. It is the mother of all heresies. In the hands of many persons I see a book, which they call the New Testament. It is a book full of thorns and poison. As for Hebrew, my brethren, it is certain that those who learn it will sooner or later turn Jews" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 722).



Erasmus book expunged by the Inquisition

In France, the Sorbonne burned French translations of Erasmus' work that had been made by Lewis de Berquin. This was in the summer of 1525. The next year Berquin was arrested for the second time, kept in prisons for long interrogations, and burned at the stake on April 17, 1529. In 1530 and again in 1532 the sale of Erasmus' books was forbidden. Search was made for his books in Paris, and the Franciscans examined his works and found a thousand errors in them (Smith, *Erasmus*, p. 275).

The French ambassador at Rome, Albert Pio, published a work against Erasmus.

In Spain, Erasmus' writings had a wide influence and were also bitterly attacked by Catholic authorities. His *Enchiridion* [*Christian Soldier's Manual*] was translated into Spanish about 1526 by Alphonso Fernandez "and it enjoyed an extensive circulation" (Hulme, *The Renaissance*, 1923, p. 335). Erasmus "was at once accused of heresy, especially of disapproving the punishment of heretics, of preferring marriage to virginity, and thinking ill of the Inquisition" (Smith, *Erasmus*, p. 400). A party named *Erasmistas* rose up to oppose these "heretical" doctrines, and Pope Clement VII issued a bull demanding the suppression of the man's writings and doctrines. Juan de Vergara (1492-1557), who had worked on the Ximenes Polyglot Bible, was imprisoned for four years because of his sympathy with Erasmus (Hulme, p. 336). In 1535, Charles V made it a capital offense to use Erasmus' *Colloquies* in the schools (Smith, p. 400).

In the Netherlands the Dominican prosecutor of Cologne, Hochstraten, condemned Erasmus' books during the summer of 1522 (Smith, p. 331). On July 1, 1523, the inquisitors burned two of Erasmus' acquaintances in Brussels (Ibid.).

Erasmus' works were burned in Milan on January 29, 1543.

The Council of Trent (1545-1564) branded Erasmus a heretic and prohibited his works. As mentioned already, Pope Paul IV, in 1559, placed Erasmus on the first class of forbidden authors, which means their writings were condemned completely. "All his commentaries, notes, criticisms, colloquies, epistles, translations, books, and writings, even if they contain absolutely nothing against religion or about religion" (Smith, p. 422).

In the Expurgatorial Index of 1584 in Spain, a list of passages to be deleted from

Erasmus' works filled fifty-five quarto pages. The edition of 1640 had expanded to fifty-nine double-columned folio pages (Smith, p. 422).

It was a Catholic apologist who made the famous statement, "Erasmus laid the egg which Luther hatched." Another said, "Erasmus planted, Luther watered, but the devil gave the increase" (Smith, p. 399).

### Robert Estienne

Robert Estienne, or Stephanus (1503-1559), was born into a family of printers. His father and brother were printers; he was a printer; and his son and grandson followed in his shoes. His father, Henri, had a printing establishment in Paris between 1502 and 1520, averaging seven editions a year and specializing in publications connected with the religious revival surrounding Jacques Lefevre (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 64). In 1526, Robert married Perette Badius, whose father was a senior member of the Paris book trade. He gave her a dowry of books! By 1528, Robert was set up in his own printing business and had published his first book, a Latin Bible. As the years passed, this family was blessed with six children.



Estienne published a Latin New Testament, two printings of the Hebrew Bible, and four editions of the Greek New Testament (1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551 respectively). It is his third edition that is commonly regarded as **the *Textus Receptus*, or Received Text**, in Britain.

In 1546, the publishing activity of Estienne had drawn the ire of the Catholic authorities in Paris. "The Paris Faculty of theology began a campaign against him and them [his Bibles]. After a long struggle in which he stood in peril of the stake, he found himself unharmed as to his person but surrounded by dangers and faced with a total ban on his editions of the Bible. The decision to move from Paris to Geneva was not a hasty one. When the Estienne family arrived at the city gates it was not as destitute refugees. Nevertheless it was genuine flight from danger. The whole manoeuvre was full of difficulty and required secrecy" (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 68).

Estienne was a brilliant and energetic printer, and he popularized a number of important innovations. He was responsible for the modern verse divisions in the Bible, which first appeared in his fourth edition of the Greek New Testament, 1551. (This edition also contained two Latin texts in parallel columns on either side of the Greek. One was the Vulgate; the other, that of Erasmus.) Estienne's was not the first Bible to appear with verse divisions. A Latin Bible printed at Lyons in 1538 was divided into

verses, but it was different from that devised by Estienne, and it was Estienne's system that was adopted by the Bible publishing world.

Estienne's son, Henri, said that he made the divisions while journeying on horseback from Paris to Lyons. "He took with him one of his own smaller editions of the Latin Bible and marked the places where he wanted the verse divisions to be made and numbered them accordingly. The printer would then use the marked copy for setting up the Greek-Latin Testament of 1551" (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 76).

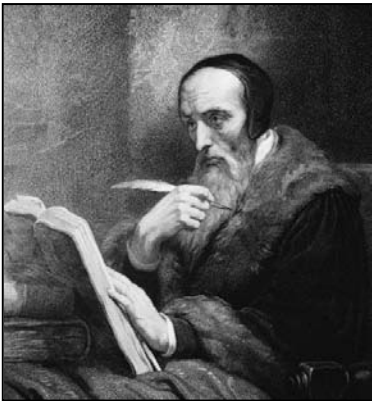
It is hard to imagine now how difficult it was to study the Bible without verse divisions. It is obvious that Estienne was mindful of the need for careful Bible study, and he bestowed a blessing upon the generations of Bible readers that have lived after him.

Estienne was the first to incorporate the use of italics into his printings. "He invented the practice, still to be seen in our King James's Bible, of printing the words not in the original tongue in italic" (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 67).

He also published editions of the Bible that were much smaller than those that were common in his day. He accomplished this by foregoing illustrations and using the newly created Roman face types, which were cut for him by the famous type designer Claude Garamond, instead of using the old Gothic Black Letter type. The Garamond type style is still popular today.

The following testimony of Estienne's love for the Bible was given by his son, Henri:

Endowed with a high and heroic spirit in the undertaking of literary work and in carrying the burden it entails, he employed his slight physique on immense and well nigh Herculean labours. But because he was right thinking and burning with the love of God, he devoted himself to publication of the Holy Scriptures more ardently by far than of any other books. On others he would pour out of his money; on these he positively lavished it. Indeed not only did he lavish money unhesitatingly on all that pertains to throwing light on the Holy Scriptures, but he was so unsparing of work that in carrying it through, he lavished thereupon as his end showed life itself! (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 64).



### **Theodore Beza**

Theodore Beza (Theodore de Beze) (1519-1605), another editor of the Received Greek New Testament, was born into an aristocratic family in France, received the best education in literature, philosophy, and law, and by his thirtieth year had achieved a prominent position in literary circles in Paris.

He was also living a carefree, worldly life, in spite of the fact that he had understood justification by faith and had trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour some years earlier as a student. God used a serious illness to awaken



Beza from his spiritual lethargy, and he made the decision to leave the Catholic Church and seek refuge in Geneva.

Arriving there in October 1548, he married Claudine Denosse, to whom he was already engaged. They remained happily married for 40 years, though they did not have any children.

When Beza returned to France in 1549 to complete some unfinished business, the Parliament issued a warrant for his arrest and accused him of heresy. He was forced to flee back to Geneva (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, III, p. 106). That year they moved to Lausanne, where he assumed the position of professor of Greek for the next 10 years.

He completed his Latin translation of the New Testament in 1556.

In 1559, he returned to Geneva and became associated with John Calvin as a pastor and teacher. He was also professor of Greek. "On the death of Calvin in 1564, Beza assumed the place held by him, and was recognised as the head of the protestant community in Geneva" (Kitto, *A Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, I, p. 362).

In 1557, Beza traveled to many cities to represent the persecuted Waldenses of Piedmont. His understanding of New Testament truth is evident in the following statement about these people:

As for the Waldenses, I may be permitted to call them the very seed of the primitive and purer Christian church, since they are those that have been upheld, as is abundantly manifest, by the wonderful providence of God, so that neither those endless storms and tempests by which the whole Christian world has been shaken for so many succeeding ages, and the Western part so miserably oppressed by the Bishop of Rome, falsely so-called; nor those horrible persecutions which have been expressly raised against them, were able so far to prevail as to make them bend, or yield a voluntary subjection to the Roman tyranny and idolatry (Theodore Beza, quoted by Samuel Morland, *History of the Evangelical Churches*, p. 7).

Beza also said:

The Waldenses, time out of mind, have opposed the abuses of the Church of Rome, and have been persecuted after such manner, not by the sword of the word of God, but by every species of cruelty, added to a million of calumnies and false accusations, that they have been compelled to disperse themselves wherever they could, wandering through the deserts like wild beasts. The Lord, nevertheless, has so preserved the residue of them, that, notwithstanding the rage of the whole world, they still inhabit three counties, at a great distance from each other, viz: Calabria, Bohemia, and Piedmont, and the countries adjoining, where they dispersed themselves from the quarters of Provence about two hundred and seventy years ago. And as to their religion, they never adhered to Papal superstition, for which reason they have been continually harassed, by the bishops and inquisitors abusing the arm of secular justice, so that their continuance to the present time is evidently miraculous (Theodore Beza, cited by David Ray, *Baptist Succession*, 1912, p. 177).

From these remarks we can see that Beza viewed the Roman Catholic Church as superstitious apostasy, the pope as false, and the Waldenses as faithful Christians who had maintained the New Testament faith through the Dark Ages.

Beza published an edition of the Greek New Testament in 1565, accompanied in parallel columns by the Latin Vulgate and by his own Latin translation.

In 1582, he published a second edition of the Greek text (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, II, p. 78).

## **Persecutions against the Spanish Bible**

Rome's attitude toward the Scriptures is also evident in the history of the Spanish Bible. Rome controlled Spain for many centuries, even until modern times, but it did not produce an approved Spanish Bible until 1823-25, when the translation of Don Felix Torres Amat, bishop of Barcelona, was published. Even this was not a people's Bible. It was published in 19 volumes octavo, each of which was about 6 X 9 inches! The New Testament was issued in a cumbrous 2 volumes quarto, a book about 9.5 X 12 inches. Though 2,000 copies of the Latin-Spanish edition were printed, only 500 copies of the separate Spanish edition issued from the Catholic press.

The brave men who did give the Spanish people a portable Bible in their own tongue were tormented by the ecclesiastical authorities and their translations were burned.

In the fifteenth century a Roman Catholic priest named **Bonifacio Ferrer** translated the whole Scriptures into the Valencian or Catalanian dialect of Spain. He died in 1417, and his translation was printed in Valencia in 1478. In spite of the fact that it was produced by a Catholic author and had been examined and corrected by the Catholic inquisitor, James Borrell, "it had scarcely made its appearance when it was suppressed by the Inquisition, who ordered the whole impression to be devoured by the flames. So strictly was this order carried into execution, that scarcely a single copy appears to have escaped" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 191, 92).

In 1645, four leaves of this translation were discovered in a monastery.

We come now to the sixteenth century. For the following history of the Spanish Bible I am indebted particularly to the following resources: *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century* by Thomas M'Crie (1829); Foxe's unabridged *Acts and Monuments of Martyrs* (1641); an unpublished manuscript by J. Hurtado, Jr., titled *History of the Translation of the Reina-Valera Version of the Bible*; and James Heron's *Evolution of Latin Christianity* (1919).

## **Francisco de Enzinas**

The story of the pure Spanish Bible in the Reformation era begins with Francisco de Enzinas [also known in Germany by the name of Dryander] (1520-1553). He and his

brothers, Jayme and Juan, were sent abroad by their wealthy parents to be educated at Louvain University in Belgium, and there all three turned from Roman Catholicism to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Juan** moved back to Paris in 1541 and was impressed with the cruelty of the persecutions there, which were even more barbarous than those in Spain. "There was something solemn, though appalling, in the composure with which a Spanish assembly witnessed the barbarous spectacle of an auto-de-fe; but the wanton ferocity with which a Parisian mob shouted, when the executioner, with his pincers, tore the tongue from the mouth of his victim, and struck him with it repeatedly in the face, before binding his body to the stake, was disgustingly horrible and fiendish" (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 178,79). Being required by his father to go to Rome, Juan reluctantly obeyed. After several years, when he was preparing to leave the country, he was betrayed to the Inquisition as a heretic. He died at the stake in Rome in 1546.

**Jayme** was fruitful in soulwinning and Bible teaching and led a man to Christ named **Juan Diaz**. The latter became a master of the biblical languages and was diligently serving Christ in Germany and Bavaria. Diaz's brother Alfonso, though, an official in the Roman curia, was a staunch Roman Catholic and was maddened by the news that his brother had "defected." In the spring of 1546 Alfonso journeyed from Rome to Neuburg, Bavaria, to convince his brother, Juan, to travel with him to Italy. Failing in this, Alfonso feigned himself to depart that country, but he returned to the town stealthily and, with the help of his servant or assistant, murdered his own brother in a religious rage by burying a hatchet into his head (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 181-86). Alfonso was arrested, but the court was unable to convict him due to interference from the Catholic authorities. The murderer was welcomed back to Rome as a hero and later appeared openly at the Council of Trent with his assistant.

**Francisco's** parents apparently intended that he become a military man, but he became a soldier of the Cross instead. He mastered the Greek language, and in 1541 he moved to Wittenburg and became closely associated with Philip Melancthon, co-worker with Luther. It was natural for this Spanish-speaking Greek scholar, in that Reformation climate, to commence translating a Spanish translation from the same Greek Received Text that Luther had used for German and Tyndale had used for English.

In 1543 in Antwerp the Enzinas New Testament was published with the title "The New Testament, that is, the New Covenant of our Only Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, translated from the Greek to the Castillian [Spanish] language."

Enzinas presented a copy of his New Testament to Charles V, Emperor of the Roman Empire (1519-1558), during the emperor's visit to Brussels. Historian Thomas M'Crie describes what happened:

Charles received it graciously, and promising his patronage if it were found to contain nothing contrary to the faith, gave it to his confessor Pedro de Soto to examine. After various delays, Enzinas, having waited on the confessor, was upbraided by him as an enemy to religion, who

had tarnished the honor of his native country; and refusing to acknowledge a fault, was seized by the officers of justice and thrown into prison. Besides the crime of translating the scriptures, he was charged with having made a translation of a work of Luther, and visiting Melanchthon (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 194-95).

Roman Catholic inquisitors discovered three alleged “heretical indications” in the Enzinas New Testament: First, the phrase “the New Covenant” was condemned as “Lutheranism”! Second, the phrase “Only Redeemer and Saviour” was condemned as a heresy because it left out the authority of the pope and the “Holy Church.” Third, key passages in the Epistle of Romans concerning justification by grace were printed in bold capital letters, and this was considered unacceptable.

Rome’s blasphemy is plain in this condemnation of a lovely Spanish New Testament. Rome claims to be a mediator between Christ and men, thus it was offended at the phrase “Only Saviour”! It is opposed to justification by faith alone through grace alone, thus it was offended that Enzinas would draw his readers’ attention to the biblical doctrine of justification.

Francisco’s father and uncles visited him in prison and reproached him for dishonoring his family. After fifteen months’ confinement he miraculously escaped and fled to Antwerp. From there he traveled to Wittenburg, then on to England, where, in 1548, he was given the chair of Greek at Cambridge. He returned to the European continent in 1550 and died of the plague at Strasbourg in 1553.

“Most of his New Testaments were burned and all of his manuscripts were destroyed by the Inquisition.”

### **Juan Perez de Pineda**

Another man who was raised up by God to provide the Spanish world with a vernacular Bible was Juan Perez de Pineda (c. 1490-1567).

In Seville, Spain, Perez earned the doctor of divinity and was the head of the College of Doctrine. There “he contracted an intimacy with Egidius [Juan Gil] and other favours of the reformed opinions” (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 199). He associated himself with a small Protestant congregation pastored by Christobal Losada.

That entire region had been affected with Protestant and Bible-believing thought, and a great many of the priests and nuns and nobility were at least interested in the “new” doctrines. Juan Perez, Cassiodoro de Reina, and Cypriano de Valera, all of whom later became translators of the Spanish Bible, were three of the many men that were influential in the revival that was progressing in the Seville area. The Protestant doctrines had permeated the monastery of San Isidro del Campo. “Nothing remained of the old system but the monastic garb ... by their conversation, and by the circulation of books, these zealous monks diffused the knowledge of the truth through the adjacent country” (M'Crie, p. 223).

The Spanish New Testament that had been produced by Enzinas in 1543 was being smuggled into the area. In 1557, “an ample supply of copies of the scriptures and protestant books, in the Spanish language, having been received, they were read with avidity by the monks” (M’Crie, p. 222).

Such things could not escape notice of the Inquisition. Juan Gil, in spite of his esteemed reputation, had been charged with heresy and imprisoned some years earlier in 1550. “The charges against him related to the doctrine of justification, assurance of salvation, human merits, plurality of mediators, purgatory, auricular confession, and the worshipping of images” (M’Crie, p. 157). Gil was imprisoned until 1555 and died the following year, but his enemies pursued him even beyond the grave. His bones were dug up and committed to the flames and his property was confiscated by the Inquisition.

When Gil was arrested, Perez and some of his friends found an opportunity to flee Spain. Perez settled in Geneva and was the first to form a Spanish church in that city (M’Crie, p. 363). Afterwards he moved to France. His translation of the New Testament into Spanish, relying heavily on the Enzinas version, was published in 1556 in Geneva.

The Scriptures and other books that were published by the Spanish Protestants in Geneva remained locked up for some time for lack of someone willing to smuggle them into Spain. “But at last a humble individual had the courage to undertake, and the address to execute the task. This was **JULIAN HERNANDEZ**, a native of Villaverda in the district of Campos, who on account of his small stature was commonly called Julian the Little. Having imbibed the reformed doctrine in Germany, he had come to Geneva and entered into the service of Juan Perez as amanuensis and corrector of the press. Two large casks, filled with translations of the scriptures and other protestant books in Spanish, were in 1557 committed to his trust, which he undertook to convey by land; and having eluded the vigilant eyes of the inquisitorial familiars, he lodged his precious charge safely in the house of one of the chief protestants of Seville, by whom the contents were quickly dispersed among his friends in different parts of the country” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 204, 205).

Hernandez had been smuggling the Enzinas New Testament into Spain for several months when he was betrayed by a “friend” who was spying for the Roman authorities. He had shown the man a copy of the New Testament in an attempt to bestow upon him eternal blessings through Jesus Christ, and his repayment for this kind deed was betrayal into the hands of the inquisitors.

“Julian the Little” proved himself to be Julian the Giant of the faith by his bold testimony before his persecutors. “He did not seek to conceal his sentiments, and gloried in the fact that he had contributed to the illumination of his countrymen by furnishing them with the scriptures in their native tongue. ... Hernandez displayed a firmness and heroism altogether above his physical strength and his station in life. During the three years complete that he was kept in prison, he was frequently put to the torture, in every form and with all the

aggravations of cruelty which his persecutors, incensed at his obstinacy, could inflict or devise; but, on every fresh occasion, he appeared before them with unsubdued fortitude” (M’Crie, pp. 240-242).

After three years of unspeakable suffering, this brave friend of the truth was burned at the stake.

Most of the Spanish New Testaments of Perez and Enzinas were captured and burned by the Inquisition, but not all, and the smuggling did not cease with the capture of Hernandez. “Many copies of the Spanish Bible, published by Cassiodoro de Reyna at Basle in 1569, made their way into Spain, notwithstanding the severest denunciations of the Holy Office, and the utmost vigilance of the familiars” (M’Crie, p. 332). Some of these were smuggled in casks of wine.

Not being able to get their hands on the Bible translator himself, the raging inquisitors burned an effigy of Perez in Seville in 1560. Perez died of a disease in Paris in 1567 and “bequeathed all his fortune to the printing of the Bible in his native tongue” (M’Crie, pp. 200, 201).

### **Cassiodoro de Reina**

Another of the men that fled Spain’s Inquisition terrors was Cassiodoro de Reina [Reyna] (1520-1594).

Reina is described by Thomas M’Crie as “the person who had the greatest influence in effecting” the change previously mentioned at the San Isidro del Campo monastery (p. 222). He was soon caught in the Inquisition net. Dozens of persons in Seville were arrested and charged with the crime of being “Lutheran,” a term applied broadly to those who rejected Romanism and took the Bible alone as their authority.

In September 1559, twenty-one were burned at the stake, but before this some escaped from prison; Reina, among them. (The autos-de-fe were held at least annually from 1559 until 1570 in Spain in all twelve of the cities that had Inquisition tribunals.)

By 1570, the reformation had been suppressed in Spain. “After that date, protestants were still discovered at intervals by the Inquisition, and brought out in the autos-de-fe; but they were ‘as the gleaned grapes when the vintage is done’” (M’Crie, p. 336).]

Reina escaped the Spanish Inquisition in 1557 and fled to London, where he preached to a Spanish congregation (Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, I, p. 40). Later he journeyed to Geneva and was associated with a Protestant Spanish church, the pastor of which was Juan Perez de Pineda.

In 1567, he completed a Spanish New Testament that “is hailed to this day as the greatest literary triumph in Spanish history.”

Reina settled in Basle, where “meeting with a kind reception in that seat of literature, he finished his translation of the Bible, which had been his chief employment for several years” (M’Crie, p. 349). The complete Bible appeared in 1569.

Reina later pastored a Spanish church in Antwerp until 1585. He died in 1594, and his work was taken over by a friend who had fled from Spain.

### **Cipriano de Valera**

Reina’s friend was Cipriano de Valera (1532-1602?). At this point we can see the origin of the name of the popular Spanish translation called the Reina-Valera.

It was probably in 1550, at the arrest of Juan Gil, that Valera fled Spain, though it might have been later, such as in 1557 when the first large-scale arrests were made. In 1565, he joined Oxford University and became well known for his linguistic expertise, “having mastered at least ten languages.” He revised and corrected Reina’s work and published the New Testament in London in 1596, and, the entire Bible in 1602 in Amsterdam.

All of these Spanish Bibles “were accompanied with vindications of the practice of translating the scriptures into vernacular languages, and the right of the people to read them” (M’Crie, p. 202).

What a contrast this was to the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church! A Spaniard, Alfonso de Castro, gave the opinion of the latter in these words: “the translation of the scriptures into the vernacular tongues, with the reading of them by the vulgar, is the true fountain of all heresies.”

As late as 1747, the Inquisitor General in Spain fretted that “some men carried their audacity to the execrable extreme of asking permission to read the sacred scriptures in the vulgar tongue, not afraid of finding in them the most deadly poison” (M’Crie, p. 202, f3).

The Roman Catholic authorities poured hatred and contempt upon the work of these men throughout that entire era, doing everything in their power to keep the pure Word of God from the Spanish-speaking people.

“One of the most important of the functions of the Inquisition was its censorship of the press. No book could safely be printed, imported, or offered for sale, without its permission” (Edward Hulme, *The Renaissance*, p. 334).

Pope Julius III addressed a papal bull to the inquisitors in 1550 in which he warned them of the Spanish Bibles that were being smuggled into the country (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 203). The inquisitors were given instructions “to seize all the copies, and proceed with the utmost rigour against those who should retain them, without excepting members of universities, colleges or monasteries.”

“At the same time the strictest precautions were adopted to prevent the importation of such books by placing officers at all the sea-ports and land-passes, with authority to search every package, and the person of every traveller that should enter the kingdom” (M’Crie, p. 204).

## The Spanish Inquisition

The Spanish branch of the Inquisition was particularly horrible. It was established in 1480 and the first chief Confessor of the Inquisition, or Grand Inquisitor, was **Thomas de Torquemada**. Described as “a pitiless man,” he ruled the terribly mis-named Holy Office in Spain for 18 years, during which “ten thousand two hundred and twenty individuals were burned alive, and ninety-seven thousand three hundred and twenty-one punished with infamy, confiscation of property, or perpetual imprisonment, so that the total number of families destroyed by this one friar alone amounted to one hundred and fourteen thousand four hundred and one” (John Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, cited by Heron, *Evolution of Latin Christianity*, p. 325).

The awful “auto de fe” was instituted, whereby groups of “heretics” were burned publicly at the conclusion of an elaborate public pageant. “Auto de fe” means “act of faith,”



because it was considered an act of faith to punish and burn heretics. Thus did the Roman Catholic authorities strike terror into the hearts of people, and thus did they impress men’s minds with the heavy price they would pay if they dared to reject Roman Catholicism.

Processional of victims to the “auto-de-fe”

**Juan Antonio Llorente** (1756-1823), a Spanish priest who was

secretary of the Inquisition at Madrid from 1789-91, had access to its archives and used this unique position to write a history of the Inquisition. His research was given further impetus when Napoleon conquered Spain in 1808 and all of the Inquisition archives were placed at Llorente’s disposal. Llorente wrote: “A firm conviction, from knowing the deep objects of this tribunal, that it was vicious in principle, in its constitution, and in the laws, notwithstanding all that has been said in its support, induced me to avail myself of



the advantage my situation afforded me, and to collect every document I could procure relative to its history” (*The History of the Inquisition of Spain from the Time of Its Establishment to the Reign of Ferdinand VII*, London, 1827).

Llorente concluded that the Spanish Inquisition, down to the date of its suppression in 1808, had executed 31,912 persons, burned in effigy 17,659, and inflicted severe punishment on 291,456 (James Shaw, *The Roman Conflict*, p. 383). “These figures have been criticised by Hefele, Ranke, Prescott, and others, but the consideration of there being a few more or less matters little” (James Heron, *Evolution of Latin Christianity*, p. 326).

I believe it is important at this point to give a description of the torments that were poured out upon humble, Bible-believing people (as well as upon other victims of the Inquisition). The following is from James Heron’s *The Evolution of Latin Christianity*, 1919:

The iniquity of the method of trial to which the victims were subjected was simply colossal. The proceedings were conducted in secret. The accused was kept in ignorance of the charges against him, as well as of the evidence on which the charges were based. The tribunal of monks ‘had its familiars in every house, diving into the secrets of every fireside, judging and executing its horrible decrees without responsibility.’ The accuser might be the man’s own son or daughter, or the wife of his bosom; for all were required under the penalty of death to inform the Inquisitors of every suspicious word a man spoke. It was assumed from the first that he was guilty, and every effort was made to force him to confess. Persons pretending to be friendly were allowed to interview him in order to entrap him into admissions, and to frighten him with fictitious evidence. Then, when worn out by solitude, suffering, hunger and terror, he was exposed to the most cruel tortures, often fiendish in their ingenuity.

‘The torture took place at midnight in a gloomy dungeon, dimly lighted by torches. The victim—whether man, matron, or tender virgin—was stripped naked, and stretched upon the wooden bench. Water, weights, fires, pulleys, screw—all the apparatus by which the sinews could be strained without cracking, the bones bruised without breaking, and the body racked exquisitely without giving up the ghost—were now put into operation. The executioner, enveloped in a black robe from head to foot, with his eyes glaring at his victim through holes cut in the hood which muffled his face, practised successively all the forms of torture which the devilish ingenuity of the monks had invented. The imagination sickens when striving to keep pace with these dreadful realities’ (Motley, *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Part II, Chap. III).

Scathing as they are, Dr. Gwatkin’s words are amply justified: ‘Ghastly as the records of heathen persecution are, the work of blood was never done with the infernal thoroughness of Papal Rome’ (Gwatkin, *Early Church History*, I, p. 210).

‘Had the Son of Man been in body upon the earth during the Middle Ages, hardly one wrong and injustice would have wounded His pure soul like the system of torture. To see human beings, with the consciousness of innocence, or professing and believing the purest truths, condemned without proof to the most harrowing agonies, every groan or admission under pain used against them, their confessions distorted, their nerves so racked that they pleaded their guilt in order to end their torture, their last hours tormented by false ministers of justice or religion, who threatened eternal as well as temporal damnation, and all this going on for ages, until scarce any innocent felt themselves safe under this mockery of justice and religion—all

this would have seemed to the founder of Christianity as the worst travesty of His faith and the most cruel wound to humanity' (Brace, *Gesta Christi*, p. 274).

The procession that took place at the execution of heretics was known as the Auto-de-Fe. It was generally held on a Sunday, often on 'All Saints' Day.' The tolling of a bell at dawn was the signal for the opening of the horrible pageant. Men of the highest rank, even the Sovereign himself, found it prudent to countenance it with their presence. The procession itself was led by the Dominicans, carrying the banner of the Inquisition in the van; then followed the penitents; behind them, but separated from them by a great cross, came those condemned to death, barefooted, clad in the 'san benito,' [yellow dress with pictures of demons drawn on it] with a pointed cap on the head; then effigies of the fugitives; lastly, the bones of dead culprits in black coffins, painted with hellish flames and other symbols; while an army of priests and monks formed the rear of the procession. If at the last any of the condemned professed the Catholic faith they were strangled before being burnt.

Instead of being burnt many were 'immured' in cells or narrow niches made in the walls of the 'house of inquisition,' and kept there for years or for life. In 1312, for example, the penalty of being perpetually 'immured' was inflicted on some eighty-seven persons. Three men, one of them old, and three women, two of them widows, are condemned to be 'perpetually shut up in closer wall and straiter place, in fetters and chains.'

Dr. Rule in his *History of the Inquisition* gives an account of walled-up victims, the skeletons of three of which were found in the Convent of Santo Domingo in Mexico, and four in the Inquisition at Puebla. These were carefully photographed on their discovery. Dr. Rule mentions that the skeletons of about two hundred human bodies were found in a long gallery in the Inquisition at Puebla; and while these were being removed another discovery was made. 'What seemed to be the interior face of the main wall, not interrupted by door or window, was for some distance smooth with a brick facing, but in some places along the smooth part the bricks had been broken away from the floor upward, disclosing spaces resembling very narrow closets, empty, as if rifled of their contents. These breakages excited suspicion that the remaining unbroken surface might cover similar recesses. Dr. Butler, therefore, had that part of the wall sounded with hammers; in four places he found it hollow, and had the bricks carefully removed. To the horror of the explorers four human bodies [or skeletons rather] met their view; one man sitting on a stone; two men standing; one woman laid on her back; with a bundle at her feet, said to contain an infant. ... The niches which held three of the four were vertical, and must have resembled narrow chimney-flues, barely sufficient for a living person to stand upright, and not wide enough to allow the body to fall prone when life became extinct. Although it might bend a little, the body was held up by the sides of the tomb, and stiffened after death in the same posture that it had in its last agony.' ... Think of the horrible sufferings and inevitable death to which they were subjected! (Heron, pp. 326-328).

Thomas M'Crie, in his *History of the Reformation in Spain*, gives a description of the prison in which tens of thousands of people suffered under the Inquisition:

The injustice of the inquisitorial process can only be equalled by its cruelty. Persons of undoubted veracity, who had the happiness to escape from the secret prisons of the Inquisition during the sixteenth century, have described them as narrow and gloomy cells, which admitted the light only by a small chink,—damp, and resembling graves more than prisons, if they were subterraneous; and if they were situated in the upper part of the building, feeling in summer like heated furnaces. ... even those who give the most favourable description of these abodes admit, that nothing can be conceived more frightful than the situation of the individual who is immured in them, left as he is to conjecture respecting his accuser and the particular crime with which he is charged; kept in ignorance of the state of his process; shut out from every kind of

intercourse with his friends; denied even the consolation of conversing confidentially with the person to whom his defence has been intrusted; refused all use of books; afraid, if he has a fellow-prisoner for a few days, to do more than exchange salutations with him, lest he should be confiding in a spy; threatened if he hum a tune, and especially a sacred one, to relieve his languor; plunged, during the rigour of the winter months, in total darkness for fifteen hours of every day in an abode that never saw the cheerful blaze of a fire; and, in fine, knowing that if ever he should be set free, he must go out to the world lost for ever in public opinion, and loaded with an infamy, heavier than that of the pardoned assassin or parricide, which will attach to his children of the remotest generation (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 99, 100).

The prisoners were required to be completely silent. When a Mr. Martin was led to his cell in Grenada, after being arrested by the Inquisition, he was given these orders:

You must observe as great silence here, as if you were dead; you must not speak, nor whistle, nor sing, nor make any noise that can be heard; and if you hear any body cry, or make a noise, you must be still, and say nothing, upon pain of 200 lashes (Foxye, abridged, pp. 116, 117).

The requirement of complete silence was the same in Inquisition prisons in other lands:

Sentinels walk about continually to listen; if the least noise is heard, they call to, and threaten the prisoner; if the noise is repeated, a severe beating ensues. The following is a fact: a prisoner having a violent cough, one of the guards came and ordered him not to make a noise; to which he replied that it was not in his power to forbear. The cough increasing, the guard went into the cell, stripped the poor creature naked, and beat him so unmercifully that he soon after died (Foxye, abridged, p. 108).

James Shaw reported:

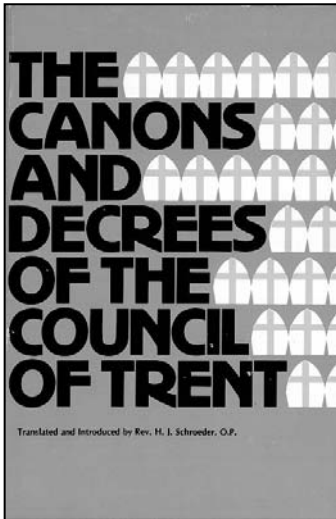
When the French invaded Spain and took Madrid, the army broke open the Inquisition, and Colonel Lemanouski found in the dungeons dead and dying bodies, with a large number of both sexes, from the young man and maiden up to persons of threescore and ten, all naked, as when born into the world, with the instruments of torture of every kind which the ingenuity of men or devils could invent (Shaw, *The Roman Conflict*, p. 383).

It must not be forgotten that, as we have seen, these bitter torments were frequently used against those who sought to give the common people the Bible in their own tongue, and against the men and women whose only “crime” was their love for the Bible.

## **The Council of Trent Hurls Its Curses**

The Council of Trent (1545-1564) placed the Bible on its list of prohibited books and forbade any person to read it without a license from a Roman Catholic bishop or inquisitor. This is the statement:

And wishing, as is proper, to impose a restraint in this matter on printers also, who, now without restraint, thinking what pleases them is permitted them, print without the permission of ecclesiastical superiors the books of the Holy Scriptures and the notes and commentaries thereon of all persons indiscriminately, often with the name of the press omitted, often also under a fictitious press-name, and what is worse, without the name of the author, and also indiscreetly have for sale such books printed elsewhere, [this council] decrees and ordains that in the future the Holy Scriptures, especially the old Vulgate Edition, be printed in the most



correct manner possible, and that IT SHALL NOT BE LAWFUL FOR ANYONE TO PRINT OR TO HAVE PRINTED ANY BOOKS WHATSOEVER DEALING WITH SACRED DOCTRINAL MATTERS WITHOUT THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR, OR IN THE FUTURE TO SELL THEM, OR EVEN TO HAVE THEM IN POSSESSION, UNLESS THEY HAVE FIRST BEEN EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE ORDINARY, UNDER PENALTY OF ANATHEMA AND FINE prescribed by the last Council of the Lateran [the fifth Lateran Council, 1516]. If they be regulars they must in addition to this examination and approval obtain permission also from their own superiors after these have examined the books in accordance with their own statutes. Those who lend or circulate them in manuscript before they have been examined and approved, shall be subject to the same penalties as the printers, and those who have them in their possession or read them, shall, unless they make known the authors, be themselves regarded as the authors. The approbation of such books, however, shall be given in writing and shall appear authentically at the beginning of the book, whether it be written or printed, and all this, that is, both the examination and

approbation, shall be done gratuitously, so that what ought to be approved may be approved and what ought to be condemned may be condemned (Fourth session, April 8, 1546, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Translated by H.J. Schroeder, pp. 17-19).

The Council approved ten rules concerning prohibited books. I will give the entire text, as these declarations are not commonly available to Christians today:

1. ALL BOOKS CONDEMNED BY THE SUPREME PONTIFFS OR GENERAL COUNCILS, BEFORE THE YEAR 1515, AND NOT COMPROMISED IN THE PRESENT INDEX, ARE, NEVERTHELESS, TO BE CONSIDERED AS CONDEMNED.

2. THE BOOKS OF HERESIARCHS,—whether of those who broached or disseminated their heresies prior to the year above mentioned, or of those who have been, or are, the heads of leaders of heretics, as Luther, Zuingle, Calvin, Balthasar, Pacimontanus, Swenchfeld, and other similar ones,—ARE ALTOGETHER FORBIDDEN, whatever may be their names, titles, or subjects. And the books of other heretics, which treat professedly upon religion, are totally condemned, but those which do not treat upon religion are allowed to be read, after having been examined and approved by Catholic divines, by order of the bishops and inquisitors. Those Catholic books also are permitted to be read which have been composed by authors who have afterwards fallen into heresy, or who, after their fall, have returned into the bosom of the Church, provided they have been approved by the theological faculty of some Catholic university, or by the general inquisition.

3. Translations of ecclesiastical writers, which have been hitherto published by condemned authors, are permitted to be read, if they contain nothing contrary to sound doctrine. Translations of the Old Testament may also be allowed, but only to learned and pious men, at the discretion of the bishop, provided they use them merely as elucidations of the vulgate versions, in order to understand the Holy Scriptures, and not as the sacred text itself. But TRANSLATIONS, OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, MADE BY AUTHORS OF THE FIRST CLASS OF THIS INDEX, ARE ALLOWED TO NO ONE, SINCE LITTLE ADVANTAGE, BUT MUCH DANGER, GENERALLY ARISES FROM READING THEM. If notes accompany the

versions which are allowed to be read, or are joined to the vulgate edition, they may be permitted to be read by the same persons as the version, after the suspected places have been purged by the theological faculty of some Catholic university, or by the general inquisitor.

4. Inasmuch as IT IS MANIFEST FROM EXPERIENCE, THAT IF THE HOLY BIBLE, TRANSLATED INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE, BE INDISCRIMINATELY ALLOWED TO ANY ONE, THE TEMERITY OF MEN WILL CAUSE MORE EVIL THAN GOOD TO ARISE FROM IT, it is, on this point, referred to the judgment of the bishops or inquisitors, who may, by the advice of the priest or confessor, permit the reading of the Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented, and not injured by it; AND THIS PERMISSION THEY MUST HAVE IN WRITING. But if ANY ONE SHALL HAVE THE PRESUMPTION TO READ OR POSSESS IT WITHOUT SUCH WRITTEN PERMISSION, HE SHALL NOT RECEIVE ABSOLUTION UNTIL HE HAVE FIRST DELIVERED UP SUCH BIBLE TO THE ORDINARY. Booksellers, however, who shall sell, or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, to be applied by the bishop to some pious use, and be subjected to such other penalties as the bishop shall judge proper, according to the quality of the offence. But regulars shall neither read nor purchase such Bibles without a special license from their superiors.

5. Books of which heretics are the editors, but which contain little or nothing of their own,—being mere compilations from others,—as lexicons, concordances, apothegms, similies, indices, and others of a similar kind, may be allowed by the bishops and inquisitors, after having made, with the advice of Catholic divines, such corrections and emendations as may be deemed requisite.

6. Books of controversy betwixt the Catholics and heretics of the present time, written in the vulgar tongue, are not to be indiscriminately allowed, but are to be subject to the same regulations, as Bibles in the vulgar tongue. As to those works in the vulgar tongue which treat of morality, contemplation, confession, and similar subjects, and which contain nothing contrary to sound doctrine, there is no reason why they should be prohibited; the same may be said also of sermons in the vulgar tongue designed for the people. And if, in any kingdom or province, any books have been hitherto prohibited as containing things not proper to be read without selection by all sorts of persons, they may be allowed by the bishop and inquisitor, after having corrected them, if written by Catholic authors.

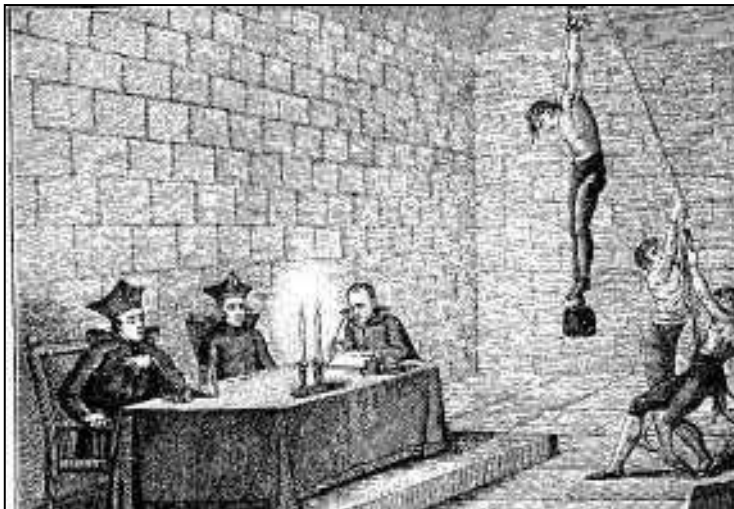
7. Books professedly treating of lascivious or obscene subjects, or narrating or teaching them, are utterly prohibited, &c. But THE WORKS OF ANTIQUITY, WRITTEN BY THE HEATHENS, ARE PERMITTED TO BE READ, BECAUSE OF THE ELEGANCE AND PROPRIETY OF THE LANGUAGE; though on no account shall they be suffered to be read by young persons.

8. Books, the principal subject of which is good, but in which some things are occasionally introduced tending to heresy and impiety, divination, or superstition, may be allowed, after they have been corrected by Catholic divines, by authority of the general inquisition. The same judgment is also formed of prefaces, summaries, or notes, taken from condemned authors, and inserted in the works of authors not condemned; but such works must not be printed in future until they have been amended.

9. All books and writings of geomancy, necromancy, magic, &c., are utterly rejected. The bishops shall also diligently guard against any persons reading or keeping any books, treatises, or indices, which treat of judicial astrology, &c. But such opinions and observations of natural things as are written in aid of navigation, agriculture, and medicine, are permitted.

10. In the printing of books or other writings, the rules shall be observed which were ordained in the tenth session of the Council of Lateran, under Leo X. Therefore, if any book is to be printed in the city of Rome, it shall first be examined by the pope's vicar, and the master of the sacred palace, or other persons chosen by our most holy Father for that purpose. In other places, the examination of any book or manuscript intended to be printed, shall be referred to the bishop, or some skilful person whom he shall nominate, and the inquisitor of heretical pravity of the city or diocese in which the impression is executed, who shall gratuitously, and without delay, affix their approbation to the work in their own handwriting, subject, nevertheless, to the pains and censures contained in the said decree,—this law and condition being added, that an authentic copy of the book to be printed, signed by the author himself, shall remain in the hands of the examiner; and it is the judgment of the Fathers of the present deputation, that THOSE PERSONS WHO PUBLISH BOOKS IN MANUSCRIPT BEFORE THEY HAVE BEEN EXAMINED AND APPROVED, SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME PENALTIES AS THOSE WHO PRINT THEM; AND THAT THOSE WHO READ OR POSSESS THEM, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS THE AUTHORS, IF THE REAL AUTHORS OF SUCH WRITINGS DO NOT AVOW THEMSELVES. The approbation given in writing shall be placed at the head of the books, whether printed or in manuscript, that they may appear to be duly authorized; and this examination and approbation, &c., shall be granted gratuitously.

Moreover, in every city and diocese the house or places where the art of printing is exercised, and also the shops of booksellers, shall be frequently visited by persons deputed for that purpose by the bishop or his vicar, conjointly with the inquisitor of heretical pravity, so that NOTHING THAT IS PROHIBITED MAY BE PRINTED, KEPT, OR SOLD. BOOKSELLERS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION SHALL KEEP IN THEIR LIBRARIES A CATALOGUE OF THE BOOKS WHICH THEY HAVE ON SALE, SIGNED BY THE SAID DEPUTIES; NOR SHALL THEY KEEP, OR SELL, NOR IN ANY WAY DISPOSE OF ANY OTHER BOOKS WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE DEPUTIES, UNDER PAIN OF FORFEITING THE BOOKS, AND BEING LIABLE TO SUCH OTHER PENALTIES AS SHALL BE JUDGED PROPER BY THE BISHOP OR INQUISITOR, WHO SHALL ALSO PUNISH THE BUYERS, READERS, OR PRINTERS OF SUCH WORKS. If any person import foreign books into any city, they shall be obliged to announce them to the deputies; or if this kind of merchandise be exposed to sale in



any public place, the public officers of the place shall signify to the said deputies, that such books have been brought; and NO ONE SHALL PRESUME TO GIVE, TO READ, OR LEND, OR SELL ANY BOOK, WHICH HE, OR ANY OTHER PERSON HAS BROUGHT INTO THE CITY, UNTIL HE HAS SHEWN IT TO THE DEPUTIES, AND OBTAINED THEIR PERMISSION, unless

it be a work well known to be universally allowed.

Heirs and testamentary executors shall make no use of the books of the deceased, nor in any way transfer them to others, until they have presented a catalogue of them to the deputies, and obtained their license, under pain of the confiscation of the books, or the infliction of such other punishment as the bishop or inquisitor shall deem proper, according to the contumacy or quality of the delinquent.

With regard to those books which the Fathers of the present deputation shall examine, or correct, or deliver to be corrected, or permit to be reprinted on certain conditions, booksellers and others shall be bound to observe whatever is ordained respecting them. THE BISHOPS AND GENERAL INQUISITORS SHALL, NEVERTHELESS, BE AT LIBERTY, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THEY POSSESS, TO PROHIBIT SUCH BOOKS AS MAY SEEM TO BE PERMITTED BY THESE RULES, if they deem it necessary for the good of the kingdom, or province, or diocese. And let the secretary of these Fathers, according to the command of our Holy Father, transmit to the notary of the general inquisitor the names of the books that have been corrected, as well as of the persons to whom the Fathers have granted the power of examination.

FINALLY, IT IS ENJOINED ON ALL THE FAITHFUL, THAT NO ONE PRESUME TO KEEP OR READ ANY BOOK CONTRARY TO THESE RULES, OR PROHIBITED BY THIS INDEX. BUT IF ANY ONE KEEP OR READ ANY BOOKS COMPOSED BY HERETICS, OR THE WRITINGS OF ANY AUTHOR SUSPECTED OF HERESY, OR FALSE DOCTRINE, HE SHALL INSTANTLY INCUR THE SENTENCE OF EXCOMMUNICATION; AND THOSE WHO READ OR KEEP WORKS INTERDICTED ON ANOTHER ACCOUNT, BESIDES THE MORTAL SIN COMMITTED, SHALL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED AT THE WILL OF THE BISHOPS.

These rules were affixed to the Index of Prohibited Books and were constantly reaffirmed by popes in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These prohibitions have never been rescinded. It is our estimation that the history of the world does not contain a more presumptuous or wicked proclamation.

It is true that the Council of Trent did not *absolutely* forbid the reading of the Scriptures. It did allow a few exceptions. The priests were allowed to read the Latin Bible. Bishops and inquisitors were allowed to grant a license for certain faithful Catholics to read the Scriptures in Latin as long as these were accompanied by Catholic notes and if it was believed that these people would not be “harmed” by such reading. *In practice, though, the proclamations of Trent forbade the reading of the Holy Scriptures to the vast majority of the people.* Rome’s claim to possess authority to determine who can and cannot read the Bible is one of the most blasphemous claims ever made under this sun.

The following remarks by William M’Gavin, published in 1819, were made in connection with the debate that was then raging in Britain between Catholics and Protestants in regard to the free distribution of Scripture. The British and Foreign Bible Society had been formed only fifteen years earlier. As we will see later in these studies, the popes condemned the Bible societies throughout the 19th century. They continually made reference to the Council of Trent’s restrictions against non-discriminate distribution of Scripture. M’Gavin carried on a public debate in print with a number of Catholics from

1818 to 1822. The following remarks pertain to the charge by these Catholics that it was wrong to form Bible societies and to attempt to distribute the Bible to all people:

The Scriptures contain the word of God, which is addressed to every human creature under heaven. They contain a complete revelation of his will for the salvation of our fallen race. They inform us how our race became fallen and ruined, and of the provision which God has made for the recovery and salvation of miserable sinners, by the incarnation, obedience, and death of his own Son. That part of the Bible which is properly called the gospel, is purely a revelation of the mercy of God to sinners. It is a proclamation of grace and pardon to the very chief of sinners, upon the footing of what Christ has done in the stead of the guilty, when he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. The Bible informs us, how guilty and miserable creatures become interested in what Christ has done and suffered in the room of the ungodly;—that is in the way of believing in him; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, (John iii. 16.) This is good news,—it is glad tidings of great joy to all people, (Luke ii. 10.); and by the commandment of the everlasting God, it is to be made known to all people, (Rom. xvi. 26.) ...

In the Bible, the Almighty addresses us as by a voice from heaven, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else,' (Isa. xlv. 22) The Church of Rome stands by, and presumes to decide who shall, and who shall not, hear these words of the Almighty Saviour; and if any person at all hear them, it is by her permission. ... To assume the power of permitting creatures to hear what God shall speak, is assuming a power and authority at least equal to that of God, and a right to control, or at least to regulate the manner of his communicating his will to his own creatures. ...

[Some Catholics claim] that I cannot produce any authority of the Council of Trent *absolutely forbidding* the reading of the Scriptures. This is admitting that the reading of them is forbidden, but not *absolutely*; and this is precisely the import of the canon of the said council. The reading of the Bible is forbidden generally; but there are exceptions. It is not forbidden to clergymen. It is not even forbidden to such discreet laymen as are otherwise secured from being hurt by it, provided they read only such translations as have been made by Catholic authors; BUT TO THE GREAT BODY OF THE PEOPLE IT IS FORBIDDEN. The bishops and inquisitors are constituted sole judges, who are and who are not fit to be trusted with the word of God, even after it has been neutralised by the corrupt glosses of translators and commentators: and if any poor layman should be detected with a Bible in his possession, though it should be one of those which have been fenced by Popish annotations, he is considered guilty of so great a crime, that he cannot receive the ablution,—the pardon, or washing from his sins, till he has sent away the Bible from his house. This is the express law of the Church of Rome, as it was decreed by the Council of Trent, and as it stands at this day; for every Popish priest is taken bound by solemn oath to adhere to all the doctrines and canons of that council.

THE ALMIGHTY ADDRESSES HIS WORD TO EVERY CHILD OF ADAM: BUT THE CHURCH OF ROME FORBIDS ANY OF ITS MEMBERS TO HEAR OR TO READ IT, BUT A FAVOURED FEW, WHO MUST HAVE A LICENSE FOR THE PURPOSE! This is directly setting up her authority against the authority of God. He calls upon all men to hear him. His voice is to the sons of men. It is addressed to all ranks and classes of the human race without exception. But the Church of Rome will not suffer *all men* to hear the voice of God in his word. She allows it to be addressed only to such as will receive thereby an increase of faith and piety; that is, to persons who are already faithful and pious in some degree. God addresses his gospel to sinners, as such, in order that, hearing and believing it, sinners may be saved. But the Church of Rome exercises her authority to prevent, as far as she is able, the word of God from reaching



the ears of sinners. Thus, she proves herself to be in league with Satan, for the purpose of keeping men under the bondage of sin, to the everlasting ruin of their souls

[It was not a small matter for the Council of Trent to forbid the people to read any edition of the Scriptures but that which she approved, for,] in fact, THIS WAS AN ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION OF READING THE BIBLE, TO AT LEAST NINE TENTHS OF THE PEOPLE, for the only edition or version that was approved by the Church, for many centuries, was the Latin Vulgate, which none but the learned could read (M'Gavin, *The Protestant*, February 6, 1819, pp. 145, 146, 147).

The attitude of Catholic authorities in the 16th century toward the Bible was evident from a speech delivered at Trent by Richard Du Mans, in which he said “that *the Scriptures had become useless*, since the schoolmen had established the truth of all doctrines; and though they were formerly read in the church, for the instruction of the people, and still read in the service, yet *they ought not to be made a study, because the Lutherans only gained those who read them*” (M'Gavin, p. 144).

It is true that the Bible leads men away from Roman Catholicism, but this is only because Roman Catholicism is not founded upon the Word of God!

The Council of Trent also weakened the authority of Scripture by placing its own tradition on the same level of authority and by adding the apocryphal books to the canon.

If anyone does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate Edition, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, let him be anathema (Trent, Fourth session, April 8, 1546).

Of the Latin Vulgate, the Council of Trent said: “Moreover, the same holy council ... ordains and declares that the old Latin Vulgate Edition, which, in use for so many hundred years, has been approved by the Church, be in public lectures, disputations, sermons and expositions held as authentic, and that no one dare or presume under any pretext whatsoever to reject it” (Trent, Fourth session, April 8, 1546).

### **Persecuting Popes 1550-1800 A.D.**

**Pope Julius III (1550-1555)**, who had an illegitimate son and daughter, issued a series of bulls commanding the destruction of all heretical and Lutheran books (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 394). As we have seen, the fourth session of the Council of Trent, 1546, had proscribed the distribution of all non-approved Bibles (meaning any other than the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate) and had included vernacular translations of the Bible on its list of heretical books. The Bible in the vernacular was also prohibited by the Index of 1551 in



Pope Julius III

Spain. This Index “placed the ban even upon fragments and extracts, no matter how orthodox the translation” (Edward Hulme, *The Renaissance*, p. 339).

During this pope’s reign, the following oath of ordination began to be required of Catholic bishops:

I, N.N. Bishop elect, of the See of N. do swear, that, from this time henceforth, I will be faithful and obedient to the blessed Apostle Peter, to the holy Church of Rome, and to our Lord the pope and his successors canonically appointed. ... I will keep with all my might the rules of the holy Fathers, the Apostolical decrees, ordinances, disposals, reservations, provisions and mandates; and cause them to be observed by others. Heretics, Schismatics, and rebels to our Lord the pope and his successors aforesaid, I will to the utmost of my power persecute and destroy (Gideon Ouseley, *Defense of the Old Religion*, p. 258).

**Pope Paul IV (1555-1559)** was particularly brutal and zealous in his persecutions. He prohibited the possession of Bible translations not permitted by the Inquisition (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, p. 783). He even forbade the use of Catholic versions to laymen unless a priest specifically judged that such reading was beneficial (O.C. Lambert, *Catholicism against Itself*, II, p. 167).

This pope placed all of the writings of Erasmus on the Index of Forbidden Books. This included Erasmus’ Greek and Latin New Testaments.

During Julius’ reign, persecutions were poured out upon Bible-believing Christians on many fronts. An example was the Waldensian bookseller Barthelemy Hector. He traveled widely preaching the gospel and distributing Scriptures. In 1556 he was arrested and brought before a representative of the Inquisition.

‘You have been caught in the act,’ said his judge, ‘of selling books that contain heresy. What say you?’

‘If the Bible is heresy to you, it is truth to me,’ replied the prisoner.

‘But you use the Bible to deter men from going to mass,’ urged the judge.

‘If the Bible deters men from going to mass,’ responded Barthelemy, ‘it is a proof that God disapproves of it, and that the mass is idolatry.’

The judge, deeming it expedient to make short shrift with such a heretic, exclaimed, ‘Retract.’

‘I have spoken only truth,’ said the bookseller, ‘can I change truth as I would a garment?’ (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 68).

Hector languished in prison for some months, after which he was condemned to the flames.

During Paul IV’s reign, Inquisitors were dispatched from Rome to persecute some of the Waldensian churches. The pope’s Inquisitor-General, Cardinal Alexandrini, obtained a small army of soldiers to pursue the inhabitants of San Sexto, who had fled to avoid their tormentors.

Tracking them to their hiding-places, in the thickets and the caves of the mountains, they slaughtered many of them; others, who escaped, were pursued with bloodhounds, as if they

had been wild beasts. A group of the fugitives climbed to the Apennines, which was an almost inaccessible retreat high in the mountains, and the army was unable to dislodge them. An edict was then issued by the viceroy, who was intent upon the destruction of these separatist Christians, “promising a free pardon to all bandits, outlaws, and other criminals who might be willing to undertake the task of scaling the mountains and attacking the strongholds of the Waldenses. In obedience to this summons, there assembled a mob of desperadoes, who were but too familiar with the secret paths of the Apennines. Threading their way through the woods, and clambering over the great rocks, these assassins rushed from every side on the barricades on the summit, and butchered the poor Vaudois. Thus were the inhabitants of San Sesto exterminated, some dying by the sword, some by fire, while others were torn by bloodhounds or perished by famine (Wylie, p. 116).

A climate of extreme fear was created throughout the lands under Catholic dominion. Spies were hired by the Inquisition to report any suspected “heretical” activity:

A horde of commissioned spies were dispersed over Italy, who, by means of the recommendations with which they were furnished, got admission into private families, insinuated themselves into the confidence of individuals, and conveyed the secret information which they obtained in this way to the inquisitors. Assuming a variety of characters, they haunted the company of the learned and illiterate, and were to be found equally in courts and cloisters (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, 1856, p. 131).

The Index of Prohibited Books was enlarged and vigorously enforced under Paul IV.

Deputies were despatched without delay to the different states of Italy, for the purpose of promulgating the papal decree in confirmation of the index, and seeing it carried into effect. The doom of the condemned books was the same with that pronounced against heretics—consumption by the flames. ... The number of books committed to the flames was immense, so that if they had all been collected into one place, it would have equalled the burning of Troy. ... So strict was the search at this period, that domiciliary visits were appointed with the view of discovering such books as were prohibited; and those who were unwilling to have them committed to the flames, or who had neglected to deliver them up within the prescribed time, adopted the precaution of burying them in the earth, or immuring them in their houses (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, pp. 185, 186, 187).

Hundreds of Bible-believing Christians died in murderous persecutions during Paul IV's days. The Waldensian villages of Mantalto, San Sisto and La Guardia were destroyed and the people brutally tormented. “San Sisto was burnt; the women and children, subjected to every species of outrage, scattered through the mountains, where most of them were captured and sent to Cosenza ... Sentence of death was also pronounced against a hundred of the older women; the whole number of captives was reckoned at 1600, all of whom were condemned” (Henry Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependences*, 1908, pp. 81, 82).

“Some were thrown from the tops of towers, or precipitated over cliffs; others were torn with iron whips, and finally beaten to death with fiery brands; and others, smeared with pitch, were burned alive. ... many were drafted off to the Spanish galleys” (Wylie, *Histories of the Waldenses*, pp. 117, 118).

On June 11, 1561, eighty-eight men in Montalto had their throats slit like so many sheep. “They were all shut up in one house as in a sheep-fold. The executioner went, and bringing

out one of them, covered his face with a napkin, or *benda*, as we call it, led him out to a field near the house, and causing him to kneel down, cut his throat with a knife. Then, taking off the bloody napkin, he went and brought out another, whom he put to death after the same manner. In this way the whole number, amounting to eighty-eight men, were butchered” (Wylie, p. 117).

Henry Lea says:

Those more obstinate were to be sent to the galleys, and the ministers and leaders to the stake; of these five had already been sent to Cosenza to be burnt alive, after smearing them with pitch so as to prolong their sufferings and serve as a terrifying example. A reward of ten crowns a head had been offered for the capture of fugitives and they were being daily brought in. ... All children under fifteen years of age were scattered among Catholic families, at a distance of at least eight miles from the Waldensian settlements and were forbidden to intermarry. How long the persecution lasted does not appear, but a letter of December 12, 1561, from the viceroy, alludes to prisoners whose trials he ordered to be expedited (*The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependences*, p. 83).

La Guardia, San Sisto, and the surrounding area was burned and utterly laid waste.

All of the vernacular Scripture translations and other religious books that the Inquisitors could find were destroyed in these inquisitions.

On November 13, 1561, Fra Valerio was commissioned as inspector of heretical books throughout the kingdom. He was authorized to go to the points of importation and to summon secular magistrates to his assistance (Lea, p. 84).

The Waldenses and other Bible-believing people were treated with great cruelty by the pope’s representatives.



Waldensian children being thrown over cliffs

Some of these martyrs perished by cruel, barbarous, and most horrible methods. To recite all these cases would be beyond our purpose, and to depict the revolting and infamous details would be to narrate what no reader could peruse. We shall quote only part of the brief summary of Muston. ‘There is no town in Piedmont,’ says he, ‘under a Vaudois pastor, where some of our brethren have not been put to death ...

Hugo Chiamps of Finestrelle had his entrails torn from his living body, at Turin. Peter Geymarali of Bobbio, in like manner, had his entrails taken out at Lucerna, and a fierce cat thrust in their place to torture him further; Maria Romano was buried alive at Rocco-patia; Magdalen Foulano underwent the same fate at San Giovanni; Susan Michelinini was bound hand and foot, and left to perish of cold and hunger at Saracena. Bartholomew Fache, gashed with sabres, had the wounds filled up with quicklime, and perished thus in agony at Fenile; Daniel Michelinini had his tongue torn out at Bobbio for having praised God. James Baridari perished covered with sulphurous matches, which had been forced into his flesh under the nails, between the fingers, in the nostrils, in the lips, and over all his body, and then lighted. Daniel Revelli had his mouth filled with gunpowder, which, being lighted, blew his head to pieces. Maria Monnen, taken at Lioussa, had the flesh cut from her cheek and chin bone, so that her jaw was left bare, and she was thus left to perish. Paul Garnier was slowly sliced to pieces at Rora. Thomas Margueti was mutilated in an indescribable manner at Miraboco, and Susan Jaquin cut in bits at La Torre. Sara Rostagnol was slit open from the legs to the bosom, and so left to perish on the road between Eyral and Lucerna. Anne Charbonnier was impaled and carried thus on a pike, as a standard, from San Giovanni to La Torre. Daniel Rambaud, at Paesano, had his nails torn off, then his fingers chopped off, then his feet and his hands, then his arms and his legs, with each successive refusal on his part to abjure the Gospel.' Thus the roll of the martyrs runs on, and with each new sufferer comes a new, a more excruciating and more horrible mode of torture and death (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 69, 70).

**Pope Pius IV (1559-1565)** required the bishops to refuse permission to “lay” persons to read even Catholic versions of the Bible unless their confessor or parish priests judged that such reading was likely to prove beneficial (*Catholic Dictionary*, Addis and Arnold, 82). This pope approved the Congregation of the Index of Prohibited Books, which we have previously printed in full. He commanded that this tyrannical decree should be observed by “all the faithful everywhere.”

To jog our readers’ memories, we repeat the fourth rule of this Index, because this portion of the Index in particular was mentioned frequently by and affirmed by subsequent popes:

Since it is manifest by experience that *IF THE HOLY BIBLE IN THE VULGAR TONGUE BE SUFFERED TO BE READ EVERYWHERE WITHOUT DISTINCTION, MORE EVIL THAN GOOD ARISES*, let the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor be abided by in this respect; so that, after consulting with the parish priest or the confessor, they may grant permission to read translations of the Scriptures, made by Catholic writers, to those whom they understand to be able to receive no harm, but an increase of faith and piety, from such reading: which faculty let them have in writing. But *WHOSOEVER SHALL PRESUME TO READ THESE BIBLES, OR HAVE THEM IN POSSESSION WITHOUT SUCH FACULTY, SHALL NOT BE CAPABLE OF RECEIVING ABSOLUTION OF THEIR SINS, UNLESS THEY HAVE FIRST GIVEN UP THE BIBLES TO THE ORDINARY*. Booksellers who shall sell or in any other way furnish Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to anyone not possessed of the licence aforesaid, shall forfeit the price of the books, which is to be applied by the bishop to pious uses, and shall be *otherwise punished at the pleasure of the said bishop*, according to the degree of the offence. Moreover, Regulars may not read or purchase the same without licence had from their superiors.

Pius IV, in his Creed of November 1564 (the year the Council of Trent was concluded), point number three, stated that the Scripture could only be understood in the sense given to it by the Catholic Church: “I also admit the sacred Scriptures, according to the sense

which the holy mother Church has held and does hold, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures: nor will I ever take or interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers” (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 2).

In 1564, this pope also recalled “all licenses to read heretical and prohibited books.”

The following is the “Profession of faith of Pope Pius IV,” which for centuries was ratified by every Roman Catholic priest in his oath of ordination:

I acknowledge the Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all churches: and I PROMISE TRUE OBEDIENCE TO THE BISHOP OF ROME, SUCCESSOR TO PETER, PRINCE OF THE APOSTLES AND VICAR OF JESUS CHRIST. I most steadfastly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same church. I also admit the holy scripture according to that sense, which our holy mother the church has held, and does hold, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the scriptures; neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the fathers. I LIKEWISE UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVE AND PROFESS ALL THINGS DELIVERED, DEFINED, AND DECLARED BY THE CANONS AND GENERAL COUNCILS, AND PARTICULARLY BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT: and I CONDEMN, REJECT, AND ANATHEMATIZE ALL THINGS CONTRARY THERETO, AND ALL HERESIES WHICH THE CHURCH HAS CONDEMNED, REJECTED, AND ANATHEMATIZED. I do freely profess, and sincerely hold this faith, without which no one can be saved (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 397).

In 1560, this pope “commenced a general persecution of the Protestants throughout the Italian states, when great numbers of every age, sex, and condition, suffered martyrdom. Concerning the cruelties practised upon this occasion, a learned and humane Roman Catholic thus speaks in a letter to a nobleman: ‘I cannot, my lord, forbear disclosing my sentiments with respect to the persecution now carrying on. I think it cruel and unnecessary; I tremble at the manner of putting to death, as it resembles more the slaughter of calves and sheep, than the execution of human beings’” (Foxye, abridged, p. 161).

During these persecutions, in the city of Auinion, a bookseller was arrested for possessing Scriptures and gospel books in French and Latin. The Catholic authorities had him arrested when they saw his books arranged for sale on the street. Just prior to his arrest, these same authorities, who were strolling through the city, had purchased an assortment of pornographic materials that they found for sale nearby. Foxye describes these materials as “bawdy images and pictures, with filthy rhymes and ballets annexed to the same, to move and stir up the people to whoredom” (Foxye, unabridged, II, p. 190). When the bookseller was condemned, he testified, “What greater blasphemy can there be, than to forbid God’s most holy books which he ordained to instruct the ignorant, and to reduce and bring again into the way such as are gone astray? What cruelty is this, to take away from the poor silly souls their nourishment and sustenance? But my Lords, you shall give an heavy account, which call sweet sour, and sour sweet, which maintain abominable and detestable books

and pictures, and reject that which is holy” (Foxe, unabridged, II, p. 191).

The man was marched to his execution with two Bibles hanging about his neck, one before, and one behind him. “But this poor man had also the word of God in his heart and in his mouth, and ceased not continually by the way, until that he came to the place of execution, to exhort and admonish the people to read the holy Scriptures; insomuch, that divers were thereby moved to seek after the truth” (Foxe).

It was also during these persecutions that Francesco Spinula was put to death in Venice under the Inquisition. He had produced a Latin poetical version of the Psalms that had been printed several times. “He was thrice brought before the judges, and on one of these occasions the papal legate and a number of the chief clergy attended. In their presence, and when threatened with a fiery death, he professed openly the articles of the Protestant faith, and bore an explicit testimony against the usurpations of the pope, the doctrine of purgatory, and the invocation of saints” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 142). He was put to death by drowning, which was the favored method of the capital punishment of “heretics” in Venice at the time. The victim was carried out into the bay on a small boat, in the company of another boat. A plank was placed between the boats and the victim was made to stand on the plank, having a heavy weight tied to his legs. When the boats pulled apart, the victim descended to his watery grave.

Outside of Venice, burning continued to be Rome’s favorite means of dispatching “heretics.” One of the Bible-believing men burned by Pope Pius IV was the Waldensian pastor **Jean Louis Paschale** (Joannes Aloisius Pascalis). He and two other Waldensian preachers, James Bovell and Stefano Negrino, were arrested in the Waldensian town of Calabria, in southern Italy. Bovell was taken to Messina and martyred. Negrino starved to death in prison (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 172).

The pope’s Inquisitor-General, Cardinal Alexandrini, ordered Paschale to be brought to Rome. For months he languished in a vile dungeon. Writing to his brother from prison, Paschale testified: “But as for me, God has bestowed on me that knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ which assures me that I am not in an error, and I know that I must go by the



Paschale saying goodbye to his betrothed

narrow way of the cross, and seal my testimony with my blood. I do not dread death, and still less the loss of my earthly goods; for I am certain of eternal life and a celestial inheritance, and my heart is united to my Lord and Saviour” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 173).

On September 9, 1560, Paschale was burned in a public spectacle. Wylie describes the scene, which was repeated countless other times:

Entering the court-yard of the old castle, an imposing sight meets the eye. What a confluence of ranks, dignities, and graudeurs! In the centre is placed a chair, the emblazonry of which tells us that it claims to rise in authority and dignity over the throne of kings. The Pontiff, Pius IV., has already taken his seat upon it, for he has determined to be present at the tragedy of today. Behind his chair, in scarlet robes, are his cardinals and counsellors, with many dignitaries besides in mitres and cowls, ranged in circles, according to their place in the Papal body. Behind the ecclesiastics are seated, row on row, the nobility and beauty of Rome. ... The vast sweep of the Court of St. Angelo is densely occupied. Its ample floor is covered from end to end with a closely-wedged mass of citizens, who have come to see the spectacle. In the centre of the throng, rising a little way over the sea of human heads, is seen a scaffold, with an iron stake, and beside it a bundle of faggots (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 119, 120).

Addressing the crowd, Paschale proclaimed, “Good people, I am come here to die for confessing the doctrine of my Divine Master and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” He described the pope as the anti-christ and summoned him and all his cardinals to answer for their cruelties and murders before the throne of Christ. At these words, “the people were deeply moved, and the pope and the cardinals gnashed their teeth.”

The executioners strangled him, kindled the fire, and consumed his body to ashes,

which were collected and thrown into the Tiber River.



A Huguenot Service

Just before Paschale had moved to Calabria, and prior to his arrest there, he was betrothed to a Protestant girl named Camilla Guerina. They were to be married after his first preaching journey to Calabria, but because of Rome’s brutalities the marriage was never to be.



Michele Ghislieri, who eventually became **Pope Pius V (1566-1572)**, in 1550 was the inquisitor at Comi, in Italy. He seized twelve bales of books that had been prohibited by the Inquisition, but the people of that area were so incensed at Ghislieri for attempting to put them under the laws of a foreign ecclesiastical power that he had to flee for his life (Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 442). Ghislieri was made supreme inquisitor by Pope Paul IV in 1558, and eight years later he became Pope Pius V.

In the year 1569, Pius V declared that “No person shall read the books forbidden by the synod of Trent” (Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 394). This, as we have seen, included the Scriptures in “unapproved” vernacular translations.

Pius V repeatedly called for the extermination of the Huguenots, or French Protestants, and tens of thousands of them were murdered in the persecutions that ensued. Ian Paisley writes:

The parliament of Toulouse issued a proclamation based on a bull of the pope, dated March, 1568, in which Protestants were described as ‘atheists, men living without God, without faith, without law, Jesus Christ himself inspires all good Catholics with the idea of assuming the cross, taking up arms and preparing a war ... The faithful are reminded that the heretical Albigenses destroyed in that very district to the number of 60,000 and are exhorted to pursue with the same fervour these new enemies of God and to show them no mercy. If the crusaders die in the expedition their blood will serve them as a second baptism, washing out all their sins, and they will go with the other martyrs straight to Paradise...’ This was resolved at Toulouse on the 21st September, 1568, and a note says ‘the above is done under the authority of our holy father the pope. Priests are to be the captains of this holy army of faith’ (Paisley, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, pp. 55, 56).

This pope encouraged persecutions in other parts of Europe. “In February, 1568, the Spanish Inquisition solemnly condemned all the inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics. Philip II immediately ratified the Inquisition’s condemnation and ordered instant execution without regard to sex, age or condition” (Paisley, p. 57).

Under Pius V the Inquisition reached furious proportions in Italy. “Many were thrown into prison, and not a few sent to Rome to undergo the fiery ordeal. These severities continued, with intervals of relaxation, during several years” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 157).

In 1568, the following testimony was given by a man who lived on the borders of Italy: “At Rome some are every day burnt, hanged, or beheaded: all the prisons and places of confinement are filled, and they are obliged to build new ones” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 166).

Countless numbers of books and Bibles were also burned.

In 1567, Pius V oversaw the beheading and burning of Pietro Carnesecchi, who was put to death at Rome for his refusal to bow to the pope’s usurped authority.

Three years later, the same pope oversaw the death of **Aonio Paleario** (Antonio dalla Paglia), who was probably the author of the widely-read, anonymously-published book,

*The Benefit of Christ's Death*. This was written in Italian and first printed in 1543; afterwards it was translated into Spanish, French, and English (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 82). The book was aggressively sought out by the Inquisitors, and of the estimated 40,000-80,000 copies published, only a few escaped destruction. Consider an excerpt from this "dangerous, heretical" book:

O great unkindness! That we who profess ourselves Christians, and hear that the Son of God hath taken all our sins upon him, and washed them out with his precious blood, suffering himself to be fastened to the cross for our sakes, should nevertheless make as though we would justify ourselves, and purchase forgiveness of sins by our own works. ...

Wherefore, my dearly beloved brethren, let us not follow the fond opinion of the bewitched Galatians, but rather let us follow the truth which St. Paul teacheth us, and let us give the whole glory of our justification unto God's mercy and to the merits of his Son...

O happy is that man who shutteth his eyes from all other sights, and will neither hear nor see any other thing than Jesus Christ crucified, in whom are laid up and bestowed all the treasures of God's wisdom and knowledge! (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, III, pp. 215, 16).

Standing before the senators at Sienna about the year 1543, Paleario gave the following testimony in the face of the persecutions against him:

When I wrote a treatise this very year, in the Tuscan language, to show what great benefits accrue to mankind from His death, this was made the ground of a criminal accusation against me! Is it possible to utter or conceive anything more shameful? I had said, that since He in whom the divinity resided, has poured out His life's blood so lovingly for our salvation, we ought not to doubt of the goodwill of heaven, but might promise ourselves the greatest tranquility and peace. I had affirmed, agreeably to the most unquestionable monuments of antiquity, that those who turn with their souls to Christ crucified, commit themselves to Him by faith, acquiesce in the promises, and cleave with assured confidence to Him who cannot deceive, are delivered from all evil, and enjoy a plenary pardon of their sins. These things appeared so grievous, so detestable, so execrable to the twelve—I cannot call them men, but—inhuman beasts, that they judged the author worthy of being committed to the flames. If I must undergo this punishment for the foresaid testimony (for I deem it a testimony rather than a libel), then, senators, nothing more happy can befall me. In such a time as this I do not think a Christian ought to die in his bed. I am not only willing to be accused, to be dragged to prison, to be scourged, to be hung up by the neck, to be sewed up in a sack, to be exposed to wild beasts—let me be roasted before a fire, provided only the truth be brought to light by such a death (Thomas M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, pp. 82-83).

In 1566, soon after the ascension of Pius V to the papacy, Paleario was captured in Bologna by the Inquisitor Angelo de Cremona and taken to Rome. One of the four charges against him was that he "appeared to ascribe justification solely to confidence in the mercy of God forgiving our sins through Jesus Christ." For this heinous crime he was imprisoned for three years, and then on July 3, 1570, was burned. He was 70 years old. The official Catholic records state: "When it appeared that this son of Belial was obstinate and refractory, and could by no means be recovered from the darkness of error to the light of truth, he was deservedly delivered to the fire, that, after suffering its

momentary pains here, he might be bound in everlasting flames hereafter (M'Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 180).

### St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre

The Directory for the Inquisitors, describing the laws and punishments and strategies of the Inquisition against the “heretics,” was printed at the order of **Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585)**. We have given lengthy excerpts from this Directory in Appendix 1 at the back of this book.

This pope delighted in the torment which was poured out upon separated Bible believers, and he rejoiced greatly over the Massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), in which tens of thousands of Protestant Christians were murdered.

A plan was hatched by Catholic authorities in France to destroy the Huguenot Protestants by inviting them to a wedding. The Huguenots had been bitterly tormented and had fought in self-defense in an attempt to preserve a place in the land. A peace treaty had been signed with them a short while before the St. Bartholomew Massacre, and they wanted nothing more than to dwell in peace and to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience and their understanding of the Word of God.

When the Huguenots were settled in various dwellings in Paris for the wedding and were completely unsuspecting of foul play, at a preset signal they were set upon by mobs who “neither spared the aged, nor women great with child, nor even infants” (Mezerai, *History of France*, II, p. 1098). In three terrible days “six hundred houses were repeatedly pillaged, and 4,000 persons massacred, with all the confusion and barbarity that can be imagined.” Thousands of others were murdered outside of Paris. “All over France the massacre was carried out. The fearful scenes of Paris were repeated in almost all the



kingdom. ... The massacre dragged out in the provinces for two long weary months until the persecutors, wearied of blood shedding, dropped their blunted swords” (Paisley, pp. 110, 111).

The popes had long called for the extermination of the French Protestants, so it is no surprise that when

Medal struck by Pope Gregory XIII to commemorate the deceptive destruction of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day

word of this butchery reached Rome, Gregory XIII called for a grand celebration:

The news of the bloody deed was received with unbounded joy by the pope at the Vatican. The Cardinal of Lorraine presented the messenger who brought the news to Rome with a thousand pieces of gold and exclaimed that the King's heart had been filled with a sudden inspiration from God when he ordered the massacre (Smedley, *History of the Reformed Religion in France*, II, p. 36).

The pope and his Cardinals proceeded at once to the High Altar, after the dispatches from Paris had been read in Conclave, to offer thanks for 'the great blessing which Heaven vouchsafed to the Roman See and to all Christendom. Salvoes of artillery thundered at nightfall from the ramparts of St. Angelo; the streets were illuminated; and no victory ever achieved by the arms of the Pontificate elicited more tokens of festivity. The pope also, as if resolved that an indestructible evidence of the perversion of moral feeling which Fanaticism necessarily generates should be transmitted to posterity, gave orders for the execution of a commemorative Medal' (Smedley, II, p. 35).

This medal, an original of which can be seen in the British Museum, inculcated the message that the massacre was the joint result of Papal counsel and Divine instrumentality. On one side of the medal is a profile of the pope surrounded by his name and title and on the other side an angel is depicted bearing in one hand a cross and in the other a sword with which he is killing a fallen host of Huguenots. The wording on this side is 'The slaughter of the Huguenots 1572.'

Wylie describes the rejoicing and thanksgiving of the pope as follows:

Through the streets of the Eternal City swept, in the full blaze of Pontifical pomp, Gregory and his attendant train of cardinals, bishops and monks, to the Church of St. Mark, there to offer up prayers and thanksgivings to the God of heaven for His great blessing to the See of Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. Over the portico of the church was hung a cloth of purple, on which was a Latin inscription most elegantly embroidered in letters of gold, in which it was distinctly stated that the massacre had occurred after 'counsels had been given.' On the following day the Pontiff went in procession to the Church of Minerva, where, after mass, a jubilee was published to all Christendom, 'that they might thank God for the slaughter of the enemies of the Church, lately executed in France.' A third time did the pope go in procession, with his cardinals and all the foreign ambassadors then resident at his court, and after mass in the Church of St. Louis, he accepted homage from the Cardinal of Lorraine, and thanks in the name of the King of France, for the counsel and help he had given him by his prayers, of which he had found the most wonderful effects (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, II, p. 606).

As an enduring monument the pope commanded three paintings to be put in hand by George Vasari. These frescoes originally bore the following inscriptions, 'Gaspard Coligny, the Admiral is carried home wounded;' 'The slaughter of Coligny and his companions;' 'The King approves Coligny's slaughter.' Some time ago the Vatican had the inscriptions deleted from the frescoes (Wylie, II, p. 606).

Such was the Unholy Rejoicing of 'Holy' Men over this unparalleled butchery of Protestants. Not content to imbrue their own hands in innocent blood they sought to stain the throne of God with that blood as well. In their sinful barbarity they blasphemously attempted to make the Eternal God of heaven not only a partner to their crime but indeed its very promoter and inspiration.

Surely here we have, 'THE WOMAN DRUNKEN WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS AND WITH THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS OF JESUS' (Paisley, *The Massacre of St. Bartholomew*, pp. 117-120).

The leader of the Huguenots, Gaspard D'Coligny, was killed at the beginning of the massacre, and his body was subjected to the most pagan barbarities.

The head was cut off and the other extremities torn from the corpse. The trunk was then dragged through the streets to the River Seine. The mutilated flesh was further hung up by one leg from a gibbet and the whole slowly roasted. De Thou, a historian and writer, himself witnessed this loathsome sight. ... The head of Coligny was eventually sent to Rome (Paisley, pp. 115, 16).

Also during the days of Gregory XIII, the first large *auto-de-fe* was held in **Mexico City**. This was on February 28, 1574. Seventy-four people were punished, including thirty-six for "Lutheranism," a catch phrase for those who believed in salvation by grace alone through faith alone and who held that Scripture alone is the authoritative Word of God. Of these 36 "Lutherans," two or three were burned. The others were beaten or consigned to imprisonment and hard labor in the galleys.

The beatings were delivered as the victims were forced to walk through the streets. "The wholesale scourging was performed the next day, through the accustomed streets, the culprits being preceded by a crier calling out 'See these English Lutheran dogs, enemies of God!' while inquisitors and familiars shouted to the executioners 'Harder, harder, on these English Lutherans!'" (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, pp. 205-206).

On March 6, 1575, another Protestant, Irishman William Cornelius, was burnt in Mexico.

A huge amount of property was confiscated from the "heretics" and other victims of the Inquisition in Mexico.

"The most trivial acts inferring suspicion were watched and denounced, so that every man lived under a universal spy-system stimulated by the readiness of the Inquisition to listen to and make record of the veriest gossip passing from mouth to mouth" (Lea, p. 228).

To be sent to labor in **THE GALLEYS** was a horrible punishment. A.J. Wylie, author of *The History of Protestantism*, describes the arduous journey to the French galleys:

Of all the punishments to which the proscribed Protestants of France were doomed, the most dreadful was the galleys. The more famous galleys were those of Marseilles, and the journey thither entailed hardships so terrible that it was a common thing for about three-fourths of the condemned to die on the road. They marched along in gangs, carrying heavy irons, and sleeping at night in stables or vaults. 'They chained us by the neck in couples,' says one who underwent this dreadful ordeal, 'with a thick chain, three feet long, in the middle of which was a round ring. After having thus chained us, they placed us all in file, couple behind couple, and they passed a long thick chain through these rings, so that we were thus all chained together. Our chain made a very long file, for we were about four hundred.' The fatigue of walking was excessive, each having to carry about fifty pounds weight of chains. One of their halting-places, the Chateau de la Tournelle, he thus speaks: 'It is a large dungeon, or rather spacious cellar, furnished with huge beams of oak placed at the distance of about three feet apart. To these beams thick iron chains are attached, one and a half feet in length, and two feet apart, and at the end of these chains is an iron collar. When the wretched galley-slaves arrived in this dungeon, they are made to lie half down, so that their heads may rest upon the beam; then this

collar is put round their necks, closed, and riveted on an anvil with heavy blows of a hammer. And these chains with collars are about two feet apart, and as the beams are generally about forty feet long, twenty men are chained to them in file. This cellar which is round, is so large that in this way they can chain up as many as five hundred. There is nothing so dreadful as to behold the attitudes and postures of these wretches there chained. For a man so chained cannot lie down at full length, the beam upon which his head is fixed being too high; neither can he sit, nor stand upright, the beam being too low. I cannot better describe the posture of such a man than by saying he is half lying, half sitting, — part of his body being upon the stones or flooring, the other part upon this beam. The three days and three nights which we were obliged to pass in this cruel situation so racked our bodies and all our limbs that we could not longer have survived it — especially our poor old men, who cried out every moment that they were dying, and that they had no more strength to endure this terrible torture.’

This dreadful journey was but the prelude to a more dreadful doom. Chained to a bench of his galley, the poor prisoner remained there night and day, with felons for his companions, and scarcely any clothing, scorched by the sun, frozen by the cold, or drenched by the sea, and compelled to row at the utmost of his strength — and if, being exhausted, he let the oar drop, he was sure to be visited with the bastinado. Such were the sufferings amid which hundreds of Protestants of France wore out long years. It was not till 1775, in the beginning of Louis XVI’s reign that the galleys released their two last Protestant prisoners, Antoine Rialle and Paul Archard (Wylie, III).

Sixteenth-century historian John Foxe, who lived in the days of the galley ships, describes it this way:

They were subjected to the absolute control of the most inhuman and barbarous wretches who ever disgraced the human form. The labor of rowing, as performed in the galleys, is described as being the most excessive that can be imagined; and the sufferings of the poor slaves were increased many fold by the scourgings inflicted on them by their savage taskmaster (Foxe).

John Dowling, who wrote *The History of Romanism*, described those who were sent to the galleys from the Inquisition in France.

[They were] confined—wretchedly fed on disgusting fare—and wrought in chains for many years. The prisoners often died under their sufferings. When they did not acquit themselves to the mind of their taskmasters, or disregarded any of their persecuting enactments, they were subjected to the lash. Fifty or sixty lashes were considered a punishment severe enough for the criminals of France—men who were notorious for every species of profligacy; but nothing less than one hundred to one hundred and fifty would suffice for the meek and holy saints of God. They were considered a thousand times worse than the worst criminals (Dowling, pp. 594, 595).

Marolles, a French minister “of eminent piety and extensive scientific attainments,” wrote to his wife about his days of slavery on a galley, describing it in terms of beatings, chains, and “the horrid and blasphemous sounds with which those places continually echo” (Dowling, p. 596).

Pierre Mauru is another example of the countless Christians that were tormented on the galleys. He was cruelly beaten with 20 to 40 stripes at a time, for several days in succession, all the while being blasphemously mocked by the ships officers. He testified that “the excessive toil of rowing, and the blows I received, often brought me to the brink of the grave.” The captain’s steward called the beatings “painting Calvin’s back,” in mockery of Mauru’s Protestant faith. “When he saw me sinking from day to day under cruelties and fatigue, his

happiness was complete. The officers, who were anxious to please him, had recourse to this inhuman sport for his entertainment, during which he was constantly convulsed with laughter" (Dowling, p. 597).

Through these examples one is given some small idea of the terrible plight of the large numbers of Bible-believing Christians that were sentenced to the galleys.

### **The First Catholic English Bible**

It was not until 1582 that the Roman Catholic Church published its first English translation of the Bible. This was two hundred years after John Wycliffe had provided the English-speaking world with a Bible, and almost a half century after William Tyndale produced the first printed English New Testament. Both men were mercilessly hounded by Catholic authorities.

When Rome finally did produce its own edition of the English Bible, it was an attempt to counter the powerful influence of the Protestant English Bibles that were flooding the English-speaking world with spiritual light. Rome's attempt to quash this light had been unsuccessful, so it would use a second tactic, that of setting up a competing translation in English in an attempt to keep its people from reading the Tyndale versions. By having their own English translation, the Catholic authorities could insert their heretical notes and thereby obscure the plain meaning of Scripture to the undiscerning.

The first Roman Catholic English translation was the **Rheims-Douay**, so named for the location of the Catholic college under the auspices of which it was produced. The seminary was founded at Douay, Spain, in 1568 "for the training of priests who were to win England back to the Catholic faith" (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 114). In 1578, it was moved to Rheims, France, and it was here that the New Testament was completed in 1582. The school was moved back to Douay in 1593, where the Old Testament was completed some fifteen years later, in 1609-10.

One of the translators was **William Allen**, the founder of the college, who "for a quarter of a century was the mainspring of the movement for the restoration of England to communion with Rome" (William Moulton, *The English Bible*, 1878, p. 182). He hated Queen Elizabeth and said that she was under the curse of God and of the "holy Church." One biographer says his tongue was "a razor" (Jacob Mombert, *English Versions of the Bible*, 1906, p. 293). "He is said to have been the designated Primate of England and the Legate of Rome, had the Spanish Armada succeeded" (John Stoughton, *Our English Bible*, 1878, p. 226). He pleased the papacy so much that he was made a cardinal by Pope Sixtus V in 1587 (Moulton, p. 182). After the failure of the Spanish Armada, we are told that Allen "passed the rest of his life in getting up plots and conspiracies against her majesty, and died 1594" (*The Jesuits*, p. 142).

Though an English New Testament had finally been produced by Catholic authorities, it was not allowed free distribution even among Catholic people. "It was extremely literal, stiff,

formal, and often meaningless. It was such a work as required the priesthood for its understanding. And no Catholic was permitted to read it until a license in writing had been obtained. With such restrictions Catholic use was greatly limited. And, as a matter of fact, the New Testament was reprinted by Catholics only three times, and the Douay Old Testament, published later, only once, between 1582 and 1750—a period of 168 years” (P. Marion Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 187).

We recall that Pope Pius IV (1559-1565), only a few years before the Rheims New Testament appeared, “required bishops to refuse lay persons leave to read even Catholic versions of the Scriptures unless their confessor or parish priests judged that such reading was likely to prove beneficial” (*Catholic Dictionary*, Addis and Arnold, p. 82).

The Bible commentator Matthew Poole made the following observation in the preface to the first edition of his commentary in 1685:

Of late the church of Rome would seem to bear something of a motherly affection to her children, and allow them the Scriptures in the mother tongue; but it is indeed a gift not worthy of its name. They must first get a licence in writing before they use them; and to get that, they must approve themselves to their confessors to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with the leaven, of their superstition [in other words, utterly committed to Catholic dogma]. ... They will allow none to be read but the Doway Bibles, and the Rhemish Testaments, (the corruptions of which have been sufficiently manifested by many learned men,) nor will they trust their people with these without the licence of their own bishops and inquisitors. This is the liberty they boast of giving to any of their religion to read the Scriptures in English; what it is worth let any man judge (*A Commentary on the Holy Bible* by Matthew Poole, preface to the first edition, p. v).

It is evident that the Rheims-Douay was produced as part of Rome’s Counter Reformation. It was yet another in that arsenal of tactics that included the awful curses of the Council of Trent and the Inquisition fires that were burning across many parts of Europe.

The Rheims-Douay was a Jesuit production (Eadie, *The English Bible*, II, p. 127).

In roughly 1850, the Religious Tract Society published *The Jesuits: A Historical Sketch*. A large portion of a chapter titled “The Jesuits in England” is dedicated to exposing the Jesuit-Douay connection. Two Italian Jesuits were chosen as prefects when the school was moved to Rheims in 1578, and the year following, Pope Gregory endowed the institution (*The Jesuits*, p. 141). The Jesuits, of course, were the most militant arm of papal power and were raised up expressly to reclaim authority over those who had left the Roman Catholic Church. They were willing to use any tactic towards this end, including deceit, treachery, and assassination.

The Jesuits were implicated in the assassination of Henry III. of France—planned the Spanish Armada—often contrived the death of Elizabeth of England—invented the Gunpowder plot—instigated the murder of Henry IV. of France—impelled the revocation of the edict of Nantz—ruined James II.—and were commingled with all the atrocities and miseries which desolated Europe during nearly two hundred years. So atrocious, extensive, and continual were their crimes, that they were expelled, either partially or generally, from all the different countries of Europe, at various intervals, prior to the abolition of the order in 1773—THIRTY-NINE TIMES—



a fact unparalleled in the history of any other body of men ever known in the world. This is the seal of reprobation stamped upon Jesuitism (William Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, p. 346).

The school that produced the Rheims-Douay was a hotbed of Catholic fanaticism. Agents went out from this school to attempt the destruction of Queen Elizabeth I and her Protestant government (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 114). William Allen, one of the translators already mentioned, said of Elizabeth I that she was “under God’s and Holy Church’s curse, given up to a reprobate mind, therefore her open enormities and her secret sins must be great and not numerable” (Eadie, II, p. 116).

**Guy Fawkes**, who attempted to blow up the English parliament in the “Gunpowder Plot,” studied at Douay. He was executed for treason on January 30, 1606.

The 1611 Translators Preface to the King James Bible exposes the duplicity of those who produced the Rheims, noting:

Now the Church of Rome would seem at the length to bear a motherly affection towards her children, and to allow them the Scriptures in their mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a Licence in writing before they may use them, and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor. ... Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the peoples understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess, that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills.

The publishers of the Rheims-Douay admitted that they translated their English version, not because they believed the people should have the Scriptures in their own tongues, or because they believed the Scriptures should be read by all men, but **ONLY BECAUSE OF THE TIMES**. Consider their own words as they appeared in the original Preface to the Rheims New Testament. We have modernized the spelling but otherwise have changed nothing in the following excerpt:

Which translation we do not for all that publish, upon erroneous opinion 1 of necessity, that the holy Scriptures should always be in our mother tongue, or 2 that they ought, or were ordained by God, to be read indifferently of all, or 3 could be easily understood of every one that readeth or heareth them in a known language: or 4 that they were not often, through man’s malice or infirmity, pernicious and much hurtful to many: 5 or that we generally and absolutely deemed it more convenient in itself, and more agreeable to God’s word and honor, or edification of the faithful, to have them turned into vulgar tongues, than to be kept and studied only in the Ecclesiastical learned languages: **NOT FOR THESE NOR ANY SUCH LIKE CAUSES DO WE TRANSLATE THIS SACRED BOOK, BUT UPON SPECIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE PRESENT TIME**, state, and condition of our country, unto which, divers things are either necessary, or profitable and medicinable now, that otherwise in the peace of the Church were neither much requisite, nor perchance wholly tolerable. ...

There upon, the order which many a wise man wished for before, was taken by the Deputies of the late famous Council of Trent in this behalf, and confirmed by supreme authority, that the holy Scriptures, though truly and Catholicly translated into vulgar tongues, yet may not be indifferently read of all men, nor of any other than such as have express licence thereunto of their lawful Ordinaries, with good testimony from their Curates or Confessors, that they be humble, discrete and devout persons, and like to take much good, and no harm thereby. Which

prescript, though in these days of ours it can not be so precisely observed, as in other times and places, where there is more due respect of the Church's authority, rule, and discipline: yet we trust all wise and godly persons will use the matter in the meanwhile, with such moderation, meekness, and subjection of heart, as the handling of so sacred a book, and sincere senses of God's truth therein, and the holy Canons, Councils, reason, and religion do require (Preface, Rheims New Testament, printed at Rheims, 1582).

Words could not be plainer. The old Romanists were still set in their ways in the 17th century. They hated the idea of the people having the Bible in their own language. They denied that God's Word should be accessible to the common man. They claimed authority to decide who could and could not read the Holy Scriptures. They looked back longingly to that long night during which the Roman church had dominated Europe. They bewailed the fact that no longer could Rome rule over the people after the former fashion. They admitted that only the special situation then forced upon them had caused them to produce an English Bible, and that situation, of course, was the multiplication of vernacular versions as an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation. They had lost dominance; thus they would change tactics and make their own corrupted vernacular Bibles filled with heretical notes, hoping thereby to hinder the reading of pure translations by Catholic people.

Thomas Cartwright, in his *Answer to the Preface of the Rhemish New Testament*, reviews the history of Rome's attitude toward the Bible and its translators, and then makes this observation:

After that, by hiding and burning the Scriptures, by threatening and murdering of men for reading of them, they cannot attain to the causing of such a night of ignorance, wherein they might do all things without controlment: there remained one only engine which Satan (with all his Angels) having framed and hammered upon his lying forge, hath furnished them of. This engine is, THE DEFACING AND DIS-AUTHORIZING OF THE SCRIPTURES, as it were the taking from them their girdle or garter of honour, by a false surmise of corruption of them, in the languages wherein they were first written.

The Rheims was filled with the most vicious sort of commentaries. John Eadie, who looked carefully into the history of the Rheims, and who was himself sympathetic to the Roman Catholic Church in many ways, made the following observation: "The Notes are purely polemical, as if the version had been made to furnish occasion for them. *No element of charity breathes in them*, no compassion for poor non-Catholics; heretics and Protestants are assailed on every page, and their sins are educed from the text, often by the most ingenious inferences, or are connected with it by an invisible film of gossamer. Fury and indignation are poured upon them, and they are overwhelmed with scathing invective, and terrible menace—exposure to the worst of penalties on earth, and unutterable retributions in the world to come" (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 129).

Consider, for example, the note in the Rheims on Matthew 13:29 – "Heretics may be punished and suppressed, and may and ought, by public authority, either spiritual or temporal, to be chastised or executed."

And on Revelation 17:6 – “But the blood of Protestants is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, man-killers, and other malefactors; for the shedding of which, by the order of justice, no commonwealth shall answer.”

### **Catholic Translations of the Bible**

The Roman Catholic Church had finally produced an English Bible, but it was not intended to be a blessing to the multitudes. The same can be said for Catholic translations into other European languages.

The Catholic Church did nothing, for example, to give its own people in Italy the Bible in their language for hundreds of years. Since the 13th century, Bible-believing Christians had been producing Scriptures in **Italian** dialects. The Catholic Church had, from time to time, sought to destroy these “heretical” Bibles, but it had done practically nothing to put the Bible into the hands of the people. An Italian translation by Antonio Brucioli, which was published in Venice in 1530-32, was placed on Rome’s index of forbidden books in 1559. Two Dominican monks, Zacheria and Marinchino, published an Italian edition of the Latin Vulgate in 1538, but it was not widely distributed. Pope Sixtus V printed an Italian translation of his Latin Vulgate in 1589, but he died the following year and its circulation was curtailed, as was that of his edition of the Vulgate itself. Pope Pius VI prefixed a half-hearted approval to Archbishop Martini’s Italian version of 1778. The following facts need to be noted in this case, though. First, this was a 23-volume Bible, which was far too expensive and bulky for distribution to the common people and was certainly not portable! Second, the pope’s “recommendation” focused chiefly on praising Martini for adding Catholic notes to the Bible. Third, the same pope, in an address to the Archbishop of Salzburg, condemned vernacular translations of Scripture! (Richard Littledale, *Plain Reasons against Joining the Church of Rome*, p. 94). Pope Pius VI also wrote against free distribution of the Bible in his constitution “Auctorem Fidei” (R.P. Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, p. 137).

Thus, as late as the end of the 19th century, the Italian Bible was practically unknown in Rome (Wylie, *The Papacy*, pp. 185-187).

The same can be said about **Scottish** and **Irish**. A Catholic writer notes: “In the Highlands of Scotland, many Celts were and are Catholics, yet, till the days of James VII, they had no version to which they could turn, and this was first provided by Protestants. Ireland has been a Catholic stronghold, yet the Irish version was made by Protestants. ... Nor were they more earnest in urging the supply of the Douay. In the south of Ireland about 1800, one Protestant family in three was provided, but only one Catholic in five hundred” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, p. 235).

Though the **Greek** New Testament published with the **Complutensian Polyglot** appeared at the same time as the Reformation editions of the Received Greek New Testament, it is important to understand that the Complutensian had a very different



Cardinal Ximenes

character and purpose. The Complutensian Polyglot (so named because it was published at Complutum, Spain, and produced at the Complutensian college), created under the sponsorship of the Spanish **Cardinal Francesco Ximenes**, Archbishop of Toledo, was published in 1522. The New Testament portion consisted of Greek and Latin, but only 600 copies were published (Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 49). In contrast, more than 3,000 copies of the first two editions of the Erasmus Greek New Testament were published, together with roughly 8,000 copies of the Elzevirs edition of the Received Text, along with thousands more copies of the Stephens and Beza editions (Bissell, *Historic Origin of the Bible*, 1873, pp. 127-129).

The Complutensian College was founded by Jesuits (*The Jesuits*, p. 53). In a prologue to this work, Ximenes exalted the Latin over Greek and Hebrew and claimed that the Roman Catholic Church alone was founded upon a solid rock.

It is important to understand that Cardinal Ximenes, “while he wished to be regarded as the patron of learning, was a determined enemy to the progress of knowledge” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 71). When attempts were made to produce a translation of the New Testament in Arabic for the evangelization and edification of Moors that were living in Spain, Ximenes strenuously opposed the project, claiming that “to put the sacred oracles into the hands of those who were but newly initiated into our religion, was to throw pearls before swine” (M’Crie, p. 71).

Instead of giving the people the life-giving Scriptures in their own tongues, Ximenes, who had great influence in Spain, published Spanish treatises on the mythical lives of the “saints.” He “contributed more than any other individual to rivet the chains of political and spiritual despotism on his native country” (M’Crie, p. 109).

In fact, Ximenes directed the dreaded Spanish Inquisition for eleven years, during which time 51,167 persons were condemned, of whom 2,536 were burnt alive” (M’Crie, p. 111). It was under these persecutions that the Protestants who attempted to translate and distribute the Bible in Spanish suffered. Ximenes also established inquisitions in Oran in Africa and in Cuba in the Americas.

More than three hundred years passed, and Protestants had produced more than 100 editions of Greek New Testaments for the blessing of the world, before another Roman Catholic edition of the Greek New Testament appeared. This was Cardinal Mai’s 1858 edition of the Vaticanus manuscript from the papal library.

Today, of course, the United Bible Societies publishes a Greek New Testament for “evangelicals” and “fundamentalists” that is largely based on the Vaticanus!

No **German** versions of the Bible were approved by the Catholic Church until the 19th century, that being the one by Dr. Allioli.

It was also not until the 19th century that the Catholic Church approved a translation in **French**. A revision of the Lefevre Bible was “used to displace the Protestant versions which were eagerly read by the Catholics” (Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, 1899, p. 213), but it was not approved by Catholic authorities and the people were discouraged from reading it. The French version of Antoine and Louis Isaac le Maitre de Sacy, which appeared in 1668 and was widely distributed by the British and Foreign Bible Society, was condemned by Pope Clement IX, and a little later by Innocent XI (Beardslee, p. 215). An approved Catholic edition of the French New Testament did not appear until 1861. It was translated by Abbe Glaire. The Old Testament was published in 1870, and the French bishops plainly stated that it was not to bless the people that they wished to print the Bible, but to counteract the dissemination of Protestant Bibles among Catholic families! Toward this end the bishops had sought the Pope’s endorsement for such a version, but he waited two and a half years before giving “a carefully guarded assent” (Beardslee, p. 215).

On the other hand, Bible-believing Christians had been producing French Scriptures for six hundred years!

Writing in 1879, Richard Littledale made the following observation: “... although there have been many translations of the Bible made by Roman Catholics into various European languages, there was, till quite lately, speaking under correction, none formally recognized and sanctioned for general use except the Douay Version” (Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 93).

## Papal Curses against Bible Distribution

**Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605)** confirmed the Council of Trent’s proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112). Trent’s ten rules regarding books prohibited anyone from reading the Bible without a license from the bishop or an inquisitor. Clement VIII modified this by declaring “the Holy Inquisition have taken away from Bishops and Superiors all power to grant any such licences” (Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 91). Thus Clement VIII went further than his predecessors, not allowing licenses to be granted for the reading of the Bible under any condition.



Pope Clement VIII

It is important to notify our readers of the harshness of the curses that poured from the lips of the popes toward those who

opposed them. Clement VIII, for example, restored and edited the “Curse from the Roman Pontifical against Those Who Interfere with Nuns.” This curse was issued against any person that attempted to remove a nun from her unscriptural vows and from her cloister:

But if any one shall dare to attempt such a thing, let him be accursed at home and abroad; accursed in eating and drinking; accursed in walking and sitting; accursed in his flesh and his bones; and from the sole of his foot, to the crown of his head, let him have no soundness. Come upon him the malediction which, by Moses in the law, the Lord hath laid on the sons of iniquity. Be his name blotted out from the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. His portion and inheritance be with Cain, the fratricide; with Dathan and Abiram; with Ananias and Sapphira; with Simon the sorcerer, and Judas the traitor; with those who have said to God, ‘Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.’ Let him perish in the day of judgment; and let everlasting fire devour him with the devil and his angels; unless he make restitution, and come to amendment. So be it! So be it! (Blakeney, *Papery in Its Social Aspect*, 1854, pp. 125, 26).

These horrible curses demonstrate the presumption and pride of the papacy, which assumes to itself prerogatives belonging solely to Almighty God.

Another curse used by Catholic authorities in the 13th century included these choice excerpts:

By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the undefiled Virgin Mary, mother and patroness of our Saviour, and of all celestial virtues, angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, powers, cherubims, and seraphims, and of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and of all the apostles and evangelists, of the holy innocents... may \_\_\_\_\_ [here was inserted the name of the victim] be damned.

We excommunicate and anathematize him; and from the threshold of the Holy Church of God Almighty we sequester him, that he may be tormented, disposed, and be delivered over with Dathan and Abiram, and with those who say unto the Lord, ‘Depart from us, for we desire none of thy ways.’ As a fire is quenched with water, so let the light of him be put out for evermore, unless it shall repent him, and make satisfaction. Amen.

May the Father, who created man, curse him! May the Son, who suffered for us, curse him! May the Holy Ghost, who suffered for us in baptism, curse him! May the Holy Cross, which Christ, for our salvation, triumphing over his enemies, ascended, curse him! May the holy and eternal Virgin Mary, mother of God, curse him! May St. Michael, the advocate of the Holy Souls, curse him! May all the angels, principalities, and powers, and all heavenly armies, curse him. ...

May he be damned wherever he be, whether in the house or in the stable, the garden or the field, or the highways, or in the woods, or in the water, or in the church. May he be cursed in living and in dying!

May he be cursed in eating and drinking, in being hungry, in being thirsty, in fasting, in sleeping, in slumbering, and in sitting, in living, in working, in resting, in blood-letting!

May he be cursed in all the faculties of his body!

May he be cursed inwardly and outwardly! May he be cursed in his brains, and in his vertex, in his temples, in his eye-brows, in his cheeks, in his jaw-bones, in his nostrils, in his teeth and grinders, in his lips, in his throat, in his shoulders, in his arms, in his fingers!

May he be damned in his mouth, in his breasts, in his heart and purtenance, down to the very stomach! May he be cursed in his reins, and in his groins, in his thighs, in his genitals and in his hips, and his knees, his legs and feet, and toe-nails! May he be cursed in all his joints, and articulation of the members! From the crown of his head to the sole of his feet may there be no soundness! May the Son of the living God, with all the glory of his Majesty, curse him! And may heaven, with all the powers that move therein, rise up against him, and curse and damn him, unless he repent and make satisfaction. Amen. So be it. Be it so. Amen (Blakeney, pp. 126, 27).

Terrible curses like this were pronounced over Bible-believing Christians for centuries by the pompous pretenders headquartered at Rome.

Pope Clement VIII “sent missionaries into the valleys of Piedmont, with a view to induce the Protestants to renounce their religion. ... These missionaries endeavoured to get the books of the Protestants into their power, in order to burn them; and on the owners concealing them, wrote to the duke of Savoy, who, for the heinous crime of not surrendering their Bibles, prayer books, and religious treatises, sent a number of troops to be quartered on them, which occasioned the ruin of many families. ... they took away the children by open force, and if the wretched parents resisted, they were immediately murdered” (Foxye, abridged, pp. 162, 163).

The following is a description of the horrible events that followed:

This was followed by a most cruel order, published on January 25, 1655, which decreed that every family of the reformed religion, of whatever rank, residing in Lucerne, St. Giovanni, Bibiana, Campiglione, St. Secondo, Lucernetta, La Torre, Fenile, or Bricherassio, should, within three days after the publication thereof, depart from their habitations to such places as were appointed by the duke, on pain of death and confiscation.

This order produced the greatest distress among the unhappy objects of it, as it was enforced with the greatest severity, in the depth of a very severe winter, and the people were driven from their habitations at the time appointed, without even sufficient clothes to cover them: by which many perished in the mountains through the severity of the weather, or for want of food. Those who remained behind after the publication of the decree, were murdered by the popish inhabitants, or shot by the troops, and the most horrible barbarities were perpetrated by these ruffians, encouraged by the Roman Catholic priests and monks (Foxye, abridged, p. 163).

During all these brutal persecutions, in which hundreds of men, women, and children were slaughtered, all of the vernacular Scripture translations and Christian books that could be found by the priests were destroyed.

The first **Irish New Testament** (at least in modern times) was published in 1602. The translator, Nicholas Walsh, was “barbarously murdered in his own house while engaged upon” the translation (Anderson, *A Brief Sketch*, p. 8). The work was completed by William Daniel or O’Donel. Most of the copies of this New Testament were “bought up, from time to time, by Romish ecclesiastics” to keep them out of circulation among the people (Anderson, p. 20). The Jesuits obtained the Irish types used for this New Testament and carried them to Doway for the publication of Irish tracts in defense of Romanism (Anderson, p. 20).

**Pope Paul V (1605-1621)** issued a Bull containing the following language: “We



Pope Paul V

excommunicate and anathematize, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by the authority of his blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by our own, all Wickliffites, Hussities, Lutherans, Calvinists, Hugonots, Anabaptists, and all other Heretics, by whatsoever name they are called, and of whatsoever sect they be; and also, all Schismatics, and those who withdraw themselves, or recede obstinately from the obedience of the Bishop of Rome; as also their Adherents, Receivers, Favourers, and generally any defenders of them:—TOGETHER WITH ALL, WHO, WITHOUT THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, SHALL KNOWINGLY READ, KEEP, OR PRINT, ANY OF THEIR BOOKS WHICH TREAT ON RELIGION, or by or for any cause whatever, publicly or privately, on any pretence or colour defend them” (Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 257).

### **The Society for the Propagation of the Faith**

**Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623)** established the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, which later was designated the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Extirpation of Heretics. It was a brilliant scheme to encourage the persecution of separatist Christians. Those who aided this “Society” were promised a plenary indulgence, or forgiveness of sin, by the pope, and thus encouraged its membership grew rapidly and included people from all ranks of society.

All ranks, from the noble and the prelate to the peasant and the pauper, pressed forward to enrol themselves in it ... The societies in the smaller towns reported to the metropolitan cities; the metropolitan cities to the capital; and the capitals to Rome, where, in the words of Leger, ‘sat the great spider that held the threads of this mighty web’ (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 135).

The tentacles of this society spread across Italy and France.

They had their spies everywhere, who, among other information, ascertained in what Protestant families disagreement existed, and hither would the propagandists repair, stirring up the flame of dissension in order to separate the husband from the wife, the wife from the husband, the children from the parents; promising them, and indeed giving them, great advantages, if they would consent to attend mass. Did they hear of a tradesman whose business was falling off, or of a gentleman who from gambling or otherwise was in want of money, these ladies [members of the Society] were at hand with their *Dabo tibi* (I will give thee), on condition of apostacy; and the prisoner was in like manner relieved from his dungeon, who would give himself up to them. To meet the very heavy expenses of this proselytising, to keep the machinery at work, to purchase the souls that sold themselves for bread, regular collections were made in the chapels, and in private families, in the shops, in the inns, in the gambling-houses, in the streets—everywhere was alms-begging in operation (Wylie, p. 136).



The chief objective of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Extirpation of Heretics was to turn people to Roman Catholicism.

Another “fixed object of the Propaganda was the extirpation of the entire race [of Waldenses]” (p. 139). In January 1655, during the reign of **Pope Innocent XI** (1644-1655), an edict was issued by the Marquis de Pianezza, whose wife had been the head of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Turin, requiring all the Waldenses in a wide area bordering the city to leave within three days and to sell their lands to Roman Catholics within twenty days. To refuse brought the death penalty. Those who rejected the Waldensian faith and turned to Rome were exempted. It was the depth of winter in a mountainous country, and the authorities knew that the decree would probably be a death penalty for many of the exiles. None of the Waldensians turned to Romanism, though. “Their enemies were amazed when they saw the whole community rise up as one man and depart.” Four months later the same Marquis de Pianez led an army of 15,000 men to the Waldensian valleys in the mountains, and these Christians were viciously destroyed for their “crime” of refusing to bow to Roman Catholic authority.

From the awful narration of Leger, we select only a few instances; but even these few, however mildly stated, grow, without our intending it, into a group of horrors. Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against the rocks; or were held between two soldiers and their quivering limbs torn up by main force. Their mangled bodies were then thrown on the highways or fields, to be devoured by beasts. The sick and the aged were burned alive in their dwellings. Some had their hands and arms and legs lopped off, and fire applied to the severed parts to staunch the bleeding and prolong their suffering. Some were flayed alive, some were roasted alive, some disembowelled; or tied to trees in their own orchards, and their hearts cut out. Some were horribly mutilated, and of others the brains were boiled and eaten by these cannibals. Some were fastened down into the furrows of their own fields, and ploughed into the soil as men plough manure into it. Others were buried alive. Fathers were marched to death with the heads of their sons suspended round their necks. Parents were compelled to look on while their children were first outraged, then massacred, before being themselves permitted to die. But here we must stop. We cannot proceed farther in Leger’s awful narration. There come vile, abominable, and monstrous deeds, utterly and overwhelmingly disgusting, horrible and fiendish, which we dare not transcribe. The heart sickens, and the brain begins to swim. ‘My hand trembles,’ says Leger, ‘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.’

The authors of these deeds, thinking it may be that their very atrocity would make the world slow to believe them, made bold to deny that they had ever been done, even before the blood was well dry in the Valleys. Pastor Leger took instant and effectual means to demonstrate the falsehood of that denial, and to provide that clear, irrefragable, and indubitable proof of these awful crimes should go down to posterity. He travelled from commune to commune, immediately after the massacre, attended by notaries, who took down the depositions and attestations of the survivors and eyewitnesses of these deeds, in presence of the council and consistory of the place. From the evidence of these witnesses he compiled and gave to the world a book, which Dr. Gilly truly characterised as one of the most ‘dreadful’ in existence. The originals of these depositions Leger gave to Sir Samuel Morland, who deposited them, together with other valuable documents pertaining to the Waldenses, in the Library of the University of Cambridge (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 143, 44).

Again we remind our readers that these were not mere rampages; they were organized religious persecutions. A priest and a monk accompanied each party of soldiers, overseeing the destruction of the precious literature and Scriptures that had provided the spiritual strength of the people.

In 2005 I had the privilege of examining the Waldensian documents that were collected by Morland in the 17th century and deposited at the University of Cambridge. The greatest treasure of the collection is a 14th century Waldensian New Testament in the Romaunt (Provençal or Occitan) language that predated French. Its small size and vernacular language identifies it immediately as a missionary Bible used by “dissidents” in contrast to the large, ornate Catholic Bibles in Latin. It is a hand-sized volume and was written in clear black writing with the chapter numbers and book titles in red. It is embellished somewhat (though not extravagantly) with artistic designs in yellow, red, purple, and green. The volume, which was rebound at the library in 1972, does not contain the entire New Testament. I do not know if it was ever a complete New Testament but it is obvious that some of it has been lost. Currently it has the following books in this order: Matthew (beginning with chapter 8), a small part of Luke, John, 1 Corinthians, Galatians-Philippians, 1 Timothy 3-6, part of 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews 11, Acts, James (one page), 1 Peter, and 2 Peter (chapter 1 and part of 2). It has some marginal cross references and was thus intended as a study Bible. Following the Latin tradition, “God” is omitted in 1 Timothy 3:16.

The Inquisition continued during the papacy of **Urban VIII (1623-1644)**. In the Canary Islands, for example, Edward Bland was arrested in 1642 for having a Bible in his house (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 175).

Inquisitors in the Spanish dependencies had the authority to search ships and to confiscate vernacular Scriptures and “heretical” books. As we have seen, this was officially called *visitas de navios*, or examination of ships arriving.

During **the Irish rebellion in 1641**, in which English and Scottish colonists were massacred in Ulster, Roman Catholics burned English Bibles, including the King James Bible. “Accordingly in that horrid rebellion which the Irish Roman Catholics raised in that kingdom, A.D. 1641, among other instances of their hatred of the protestant religion, which they gave, this was one, their tearing, burning, wallowing in the mire, and cursing the English Bibles, of which they burnt no fewer than one hundred and forty at one time, saying, when they were in the fire, that it was Hell-fire that burned” (John Lewis, *The History of the English Bible*, 1818, p. 336). “Thousands were murdered, not a few burned in their own houses, while Irish ecclesiastics were seen encouraging the carnage” (*The Jesuits*, p. 182).

During the days of **Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667)** and **Pope Clement IX (1667-1669)**, persecutions continued to rage against separatist Christians and Bible translators. “De Sacy and other Port Royalists made a new version of the New Testament [in French] from the Vulgate, and it was printed by the Elzevirs at Amsterdam, 1667 A.D. Being thrown

into prison by the Jesuits, he translated the Old Testament in prison, and finished his work on the eve of his liberation, 1668 A.D.” (Robert Cust, *Essays on the Languages of the Bible*, 1890, p. 79).

In his history of the Spanish Inquisition, Henry Lea wrote:

It is difficult for us to estimate the horror which, as the inquisitors boasted, the Holy Office cast over the population. They relate with pride that in Spain men cited to appear, even on matters not pertaining to the faith, but ignorant of the cause, were known to take to their beds and die of sheer terror. How much greater, then, they ask, must be the horror of the accused, suddenly arrested and cast into the strictest and most secret prison, not to mention what followed? ... Nor was there any alleviation in the fact that the tribunal was papal and not Spanish [referring to the Inquisition outside of Spain], for there was nothing to choose between them ... There were the same confiscation and impoverishment of families. There were the same travesty of justice and denial of rightful defence to the accused. There were the same secrecy of procedure and withholding from the prisoner the names of his accuser and of the witnesses. There was the same readiness to accept the denunciations and testimony of the vilest, who could be heard in no other court, but who, in the Inquisition, could gratify malignity, secure that they would remain unknown. There was even greater freedom in the use of torture, as the habitual solvent of all doubts, whether as to fact or intention. There were the same prolonged and heartbreaking delays during which the accused was secluded from all communication with the outside world. A careless speech overheard and distorted by an enemy—or perhaps invented by him—sufficed to cast a man into the secret prison, where he might lie for four or five years, while his trial proceeded leisurely and his family might starve. It would probably end in his torture, to make him confess if he denied the utterance, or to ascertain his intention if he admitted and sought to explain it. If he succumbed in the torture he was subjected to a humiliating penance, to wearing the habitello and to infamy—probably also to confiscation. If his endurance in the torture-chamber enabled him to ‘purge the evidence,’ as the legalists phrased it, he was discharged with a verdict of not proven, with nothing to make amends for his sufferings and wasted years. Such was the fate which hung over every citizen and it was felt acutely (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, pp. 97, 98).

### **The Waldenses Brutally Tormented**

It was during the days of Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667) that the Waldenses suffered one of the most brutal persecutions in all the annals of church history. This is described by J.A. Wylie:

On the 25th of January, 1655, came the famous order of Gastaldo. This decree commanded all the Vaudois families domiciled in the communes of Lucerna, Fenile, Bubiana, Bricherasio, San Giovanni, and La Torre—in short, the whole of that rich district that separates their capital from the plain of Piedmont—to quit their dwellings within three days, and retire into the Valleys of Bobbio, Angrogna, and Rora. This they were to do on pain of death. They were further required to sell their lands to Romanists within twenty days. Those who were willing to abjure the Protestant faith were exempted from the decree.

Anything more inhuman and barbarous under the circumstances than this edict it would not be easy to imagine. It was the depth of winter, and an Alpine winter has terrors unknown to the winters of even more northern regions. How ever could a population like that on which the decree fell, including young children and old men, the sick and bed-ridden, the blind and the lame, undertake a journey across swollen rivers, through valleys buried in snow, and over



mountains covered with ice? They must inevitably perish, and the edict that cast them out was but another form of condemning them to die of cold and hunger. ... Cold were the icy peaks that looked down on this miserable troop, who were now fording the torrents and now struggling up the mountain tracks; but the heart of the persecutor was colder still. True, an alternative was offered them; they might go to

mass. Did they avail themselves of it? The historian Leger informs us that he had a congregation of well-nigh 2,000 persons, and that not a man of them all accepted the alternative. ...

The Vaudois of the other valleys welcomed these poor exiles, and joyfully shared with them their own humble and scanty fare. ... Their enemies were amazed when they saw the whole community rise up as one man and depart.

Greater woes trod fast upon the heels of this initial calamity. A part only of the Vaudois nation had suffered from the cruel decree of Gastaldo; but the fixed object of the Propaganda was the extirpation of the entire race, and the matter was gone about with consummate perfidy and deliberate cruelty. ...

On April 17th, 1655, the Marquis de Pianezza departed secretly at midnight from Turin, and appeared before the Valleys at the head of an army of 15,000 men. ... At last the blow fell with the sudden crash of the thunderbolt. At four o'clock on the morning of Saturday, the 24th 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 Pandemonium had sent forth its fiends to riot in crime and revel in blood, they could not have outdone the soldiers of the Propaganda. 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. Alas! what sounds are those that repeatedly strike the ear? The cries and groans of the dying were echoed and re-echoed from the rocks around, and it seemed as if the mountain had taken up a wailing for the slaughter of their children. ... 'The earth resembled a furnace ... from the smoke of towns, villages, temples, mansions, granges, and buildings, all burning in the flames of the Vatican.'

The soldiers were not content with the quick dispatch of the sword, they invented new and hitherto unheard-of modes of torture and death. No man at this day dare write in plain words all the disgusting and horrible deeds of these men; their wickedness can never be all known, because it never can be all told.

From the awful narration of Leger, we select only a few instances; but even these few, however mildly stated, grow, without our intending it, into a group of horrors. Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against the rocks; or were held between two soldiers and their quivering limbs torn up by main force. Their mangled bodies were then thrown on the highways or fields, to be devoured by beasts. The sick and the aged were burned alive in their dwellings. Some had their hands and arms and legs lopped off, and fire applied to the severed parts to staunch the bleeding and prolong their suffering. Some were flayed alive, some were roasted alive, some disemboweled; or tied to trees in their own orchards, and their hearts cut out. Some were horribly mutilated, and of others the brains were boiled and eaten by these cannibals. Some were fastened down into the furrows of their own fields, and ploughed into the soil as men plough manure into it. Others were buried alive. Fathers were marched to death with the heads of their sons suspended round their necks. Parents were compelled to look on while their children were first outraged, then massacred, before being themselves permitted to die. But here we must stop. We cannot proceed farther in Leger's awful narration. There come vile, abominable, and monstrous deeds, utterly and overwhelmingly disgusting, horrible and fiendish, which we dare not transcribe. The heart sickens, and the brain begins to swim. 'My hand trembles,' says Leger, '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.' ...

The authors of these deeds, thinking it may be that their very atrocity would make the world slow to believe them, made bold to deny that they had ever been done, even before the blood was well dry in the Valleys. Pastor Leger took instant and effectual means to demonstrate the falsehood of that denial, and to provide that clear, irrefragable, and indubitable proof of these awful crimes should go down to posterity. He travelled from commune to commune, immediately after the massacre, attended by notaries, who took down the depositions and attestations of the survivors and eye-witnesses of these deeds, in presence of the council and consistory of the place. From the evidence of these witnesses he compiled and gave to the world a book, which Dr. Gilly truly characterised as one of the most 'dreadful' in existence. The originals of these depositions Leger gave to Sir Samuel Morland, who deposited them, together with other valuable documents pertaining to the Waldenses, in the Library of the University of Cambridge.

Nowhere did these awful tidings awaken a deeper sympathy or kindle a stronger indignation than in England. Cromwell, who was then at the head of the State, proclaimed a fast, ordered a collection for the sufferers, and wrote to all the Protestant princes, and to the King of France, with the intent of enlisting their sympathy and aid in behalf of the Vaudois. [These letters were written by the famous poet John Milton.] Milton's pen was not less gloriously occupied when writing in behalf of these venerable sufferers for conscience' sake, then when writing 'Paradise Lost.' In token of the deep interest he took in this affair, Cromwell sent Sir Samuel Morland with a letter to the Duke of Savoy, expressive of the astonishment and sorrow he felt at the barbarities which had been committed on those who were his brethren in the faith (J.A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, pp. 137-148).

## **The Waldenses Finally Driven from Their Mountains**

It was during the reign of **Pope Innocent XI (1676-1689)**, after centuries of barbarous persecutions encouraged by various popes, that the Waldenses were finally dislodged from their mountain valleys. When France's Louis XIV was near death, he was told by his Catholic confessor that to atone for his sins he must destroy Protestantism in that country. In January 1686, he revoked the Edict of Nantes, under which the Waldenses had enjoyed

a measure of protection for a short time, and issued a proclamation that all Waldenses must immediately cease to hold religious meetings, destroy all church houses, and turn all their children over to Catholic authorities to be trained in the Catholic doctrines. Article number eight of this edict said, "All Protestant foreigners settled in Piedmont are ordered either to become Roman Catholics, or to quit the country within fifteen days."

An army of fifteen to twenty thousand men was sent to fulfill this edict. Roughly 3,000 Waldenses were massacred. The remainder, amounting to between 12,000 and 15,000, were placed in various jails and prisons and fortresses, where they languished for almost a full year.

James Wylie observed:

We know not if ever before an entire nation were in prison at once. Yet now it was so. All of the Waldensian race that remained from the sword of their executioners were immured in the dungeons of Piedmont! The pastor and his flock, the father and his family, the patriarch and the stripling had passed in, in one great procession, and exchanged their grand rock-walled Valleys, their tree-embowered homes, and their sunlit peaks, for the filth, the choking air, and the Tartarean walls of an Italian gaol. And how were they treated in prison? As the African slave was treated on the 'middle passage.' They had a sufficiency of neither food nor clothing. The bread dealt out to them was fetid. They had putrid water to drink. They were exposed to the sun by day and to the cold by night. They were compelled to sleep on the bare pavement, or on straw so full of vermin that the stone floor was preferable. Disease broke out in these horrible abodes, and the mortality was fearful (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 174).

Of the roughly 14,000 that were imprisoned, only 3,000 were left alive when they were released 11 months later in December 1686. These emaciated Christians were forced to leave the area at once, even though it was the depth of winter.

It was at this season that these poor captives, emaciated with sickness, weakened by hunger, and shivering from insufficient clothing, were commanded to rise up and cross the snowy hills." One hundred and fifty died the first day. That night they camped at the foot of Mt. Cenis. The next morning they saw sign of an approaching winter storm and begged the officer in charge to allow them to remain where they were until the storm passed. "With heart harder than the rocks they were to traverse, the officer ordered them to resume their journey. That troop of emaciated beings began the ascent, and were soon struggling with the blinding drifts and fearful whirlwinds of the mountain. Eighty-six of their number, succumbing to the tempest, dropped by the way. Where they lay down, there they died. No relative or friend was permitted to remain behind to watch their last moments or tender them who needed succour. That ever-thinning procession moved on and on over the white hills, leaving it to the falling snow to give burial to their stricken companions. When spring opened the passes of the Alps, alas! What ghastly memorials met the eye of the horror-stricken traveller. Strewed along the track were the now unshrouded corpses of these poor exiles, the dead child lying fast locked in the arms of the dead mother (Wylie, *History of the Waldenses*, p. 176).

In 1693, a Catholic cardinal named Pasquier Quesnel, together with a number of other theologians, issued 101 *Moral Reflections on the New Testament*, five of which proclaimed that it was good and scriptural for all men to freely read the Bible. This was issued in 1693 in France. Consider the five that dealt with Bible reading:

No. 79. It is useful and necessary at all times, in all places, and for all kinds of people, to study and learn the spirit, holiness, and mysteries of the Sacred Scripture.

No. 80. The reading of Holy Scripture is for all.

No. 82. The Lord's Day ought to be hallowed by Christians with pious reading, and above all of Holy Scripture. It is dangerous to attempt dissuading Christians from this reading.

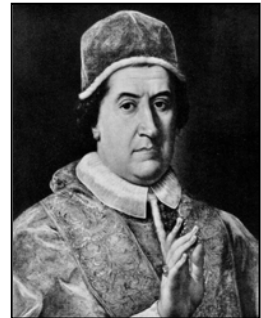
No. 84. To take the New Testament out of the hands of Christians, or to keep it shut against them, by taking away the means of understanding it, is to close Christ's mouth to them.

No. 85. To forbid Christians the reading of Holy Scripture, especially of the Gospels, is to forbid the use of light to the children of light, and make them undergo a sort of excommunication (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 21).

**Pope Clement XI (1700-1721)** did not say amen to Quesnel's propositions. Far from it! He issued a "Constitution" in Rome in 1713 in which he called these principles "false, scandalous, pernicious, seditious, impious, rash, offensive to pious ears, shocking, captious, blasphemous, and heretical." Consider the words of this condemnation:

The suffrages of the aforesaid cardinals, and of other theologians, having been heard, as well by word of mouth as exhibited to us in writing, and in the first place,—the direction of the Divine light being implored, private and public prayers also being appointed for the same end,—WE DECLARE, CONDEMN, AND REPROBATE RESPECTIVELY, BY THIS OUR CONSTITUTION, PERPETUALLY IN FORCE FOR EVER, ALL AND SINGULAR, THE PROPOSITIONS BEFORE INSERTED, AS FALSE, CAPTIOUS, ILL-SOUNDING, OFFENSIVE TO PIOUS EARS, SCANDALOUS, PERNICIOUS, RASH, INJURIOUS TO THE CHURCH and its practice,—neither against the Church alone, but also against the secular power, contumacious, seditious, impious, blasphemous, suspected of heresy, and savouring of heresy itself, and also favouring heretics and heresies and even schism, erroneous, approaching to heresy, often condemned, and again even heretical, and manifestly renewing various heresies, and chiefly those which are contained in the famous propositions of Jansenius, and, indeed, being received in that sense in which they were condemned. COMMANDING ALL THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST, OF EITHER SEX, NOT TO PRESUME TO THINK, TEACH, OR PREACH CONCERNING THE SAID PROPOSITIONS, otherwise than contained in this the same our constitution; so that, WHOSOEVER SHALL TEACH, DEFEND, PUBLISH, OR TREAT, EVEN IN DISPUTATION, PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY, UNLESS IT MAY BE TO IMPUGN THEM, OR ANY OF THEM, CONJOINTLY OR SEPARATELY, SHALL BE SUBJECT, 'IPSO FACTO,' AND WITHOUT ANY OTHER DECLARATION, TO ECCLESIASTICAL CENSURES, AND THE OTHER PUNISHMENTS DECREED BY LAW AGAINST THE PERPETRATORS OF SIMILAR THINGS.

We command, also, the venerable brothers, the Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops, and other ordinaries of places, also THE INQUISITORS OF HERETICAL PRAVITY, THAT THEY MAY, BY ALL MEANS, COERCE AND COMPEL GAINSAYERS AND REBELS WHATSOEVER, by censures, and the aforesaid punishments, and the other remedies of law and fact,—and aid, even, of the secular arm being called in for this purpose, if necessary (Bull "Unigenitus," cited from Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspects*, pp. 76, 77).



Pope Clement XI

For century upon century, this was the official papal response to the proposition that the “reading of Holy Scripture is for all.” There were always some within the Catholic Church that did not support the persecutions against the Bible and Bible-believing people, just as today there are Catholics who do not accept certain Roman doctrines and practices. Individual opinions, though, do not represent official Roman Catholicism. We must understand that the Catholic Church is not merely a congregation of individuals; it is an institution that claims to be *THE* church of Christ. It must be judged on the basis of its official dogmas, particularly the dogma and traditions of the papacy. If the papacy is false, the Roman Catholic Church is false, because the papacy is its very foundation. The popes claim to have inherited apostolic authority, to be the vicars [representatives] of Christ on earth, to be supreme over all pastors on the earth. If this is proven false, the Roman Catholic Church is proven false. It is these claims that the popes have exercised throughout history that have resulted in so much pain and bloodshed. The modern popes sit in the seat of their wicked forefathers. They do not use the same tactics, for they don’t have the power at this point in history to do so, but they have not renounced the blasphemous claims of the papacy.

**Pope Benedict XIV (1740-58)** confirmed the Council of Trent’s proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112). This pope issued an injunction “that no versions whatever should be suffered to be read but those which should be approved of by the Holy See, accompanied by notes derived from the writings of the Holy Fathers, or other learned and Catholic authors” (D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 479).



Pope Benedict XIV

The papal bulls forbidding the free distribution of the Bible and in favor of persecuting Bible believers were republished in 1832 in Dublin by Peter Dens, and in the *Moral Theology of Alphonsus Liguori*, during the first half of the twentieth century in England. Liguori was an influential Roman Catholic leader who claimed that the papal bulls were authoritative worldwide even if they were only published in Rome (Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspects*, p. 79).

Writing in 1792, British historian Robert Robinson made the following observation on Rome’s attitude toward the Bible:

There is no article to which the Spanish clergy have ever paid more attention than that of books. Those of hereticks have been destroyed. Others have been forged. The records of councils have been garbled, and mutilated; histories have been corrupted; and such books as are permitted to be read by the people are all prepared to keep them in ignorance, and to lengthen out the present tragi-comical farce. The same policy prevails in all their foreign settlements, and so expert are the examiners of books in the two offices of the inquisition at Mexico, and at Lima in Peru, that their brethren the inquisitors in old Spain have been improved in the art by their maxims. ... Hence the miserable state of literature in Spain (Robinson, *Ecclesiastical Researches*, pp. 267, 68).



Rome eventually lost the battle against the printing press in much of Europe following the Protestant Reformation, but it continued to control the publication of Bibles and sound Christian material in Catholic nations for centuries thereafter.

It was not until 1808, for example, that the first book was printed in Catholic-controlled **Brazil**! Printing had been prohibited for three centuries by the Catholic authorities. “Nothing can mark more emphatically the deplorable state of darkness and ignorance in which this fine country had been kept by the government, than this simple fact” (Goodrich, *A Pictorial History of America*, p. 166).

The vernacular Bible was still being forbidden in **Spain** at the end of the 18th century. Granville Sharp (1735-1813), a noted English abolitionist and Hebrew lexicographer, donated a Spanish New Testament to the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society during its early years. This New Testament had been printed at Venice, in 1556. Sharp gave the following interesting bit of information: “Several years ago, I presented this Castilian Testament to an eminent Spaniard, a merchant of Bilboa, who was delighted with it during his temporary abode in London; but, just before his departure for Spain, he returned the book, being afraid to carry it with him, lest it should be discovered by the searchers of his baggage, and occasion the forfeiture of all his goods” (M’Gavin, *The Protestant*, 1846, p. 173). M’Gavin comments: “Such was the hostility known to exist by this Spaniard among his countrymen, against the word of God, that he durst not carry home a copy in his own language.”

## Papal Bulls against Bible Societies in the 19th Century

It was during the reign of **Pope Pius VII (1800-1823)** that the modern Bible society movement began. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in March 1804. Its purpose was “to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment.” Other societies were soon created for the same exalted purpose. Germany (1804); Ireland (1806); Canada (1807); Edinburgh (1809); Hungary (1811); Finland, Glasgow, Zurich, Prussia (1812); Russia (1813); Denmark and Sweden (1814); Netherlands, Iceland (1815); America, Norway, and Waldensian (1816); Australia, Malta, Paris (1817); etc.



Pope Pius VII

One of the societies began distributing a Polish Bible in **Poland**. Instead of praising the Lord that the eternal Word of God was being placed into the hands of spiritually needy people, the pope showed his displeasure by issuing a bull against Bible Societies on June 29, 1816. This was specifically directed to the Archbishop of Gnezn, Primate of Poland. The pope expressed himself as ‘shocked’ by the circulation of the Scriptures in the Polish tongue, which he characterized as a ‘most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined;’ ‘a pestilence,’

which it behooved him ‘to remedy and abolish;’ ‘a defilement of the faith, eminently dangerous to souls.’ Note the following excerpts from this papal bull, and remember that the pope is speaking of the distribution of a Polish Bible *which contained no notes or commentaries*:

We have been truly shocked at THIS MOST CRAFTY DEVICE, BY WHICH THE VERY FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION ARE UNDERMINED; and having, because of the great importance of the subject, conferred in Council with our venerable brethren, the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, we have, with the utmost care and attention, deliberated upon the measures proper to be adopted by our pontifical authority, in order to remedy and abolish this pestilence as far as possible. In the mean time we heartily congratulate you, venerable brother, and we commend you again and again in the Lord, as it is fit we should, upon the singular zeal you have displayed under circumstances so dangerous to Christianity, in having denounced to the apostolic see THIS DEFILEMENT OF THE FAITH, SO EMINENTLY DANGEROUS TO SOULS. ... whence it becomes an episcopal duty that you, first of all, expose the wickedness of THIS NEFARIOUS SCHEME, as you have already done so admirably, to the view of the faithful, and openly publish the same, according to the rules prescribed by the Church, with all the erudition and wisdom which you possess; namely, ‘that THE BIBLE PRINTED BY HERETICS IS TO BE NUMBERED AMONG OTHER PROHIBITED BOOKS, CONFORMABLY TO THE RULES OF THE INDEX; (sect. 2, 3) for it is evident from experience that THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHEN CIRCULATED IN THE VULGAR TONGUE, HAVE, THROUGH THE TEMERITY OF MEN, PRODUCED MORE HARM THAN BENEFIT’ (Rule iv.). And this is the more to be dreaded in times so depraved, when our holy religion is assailed from every quarter with great cunning and effort, and the most grievous wounds are inflicted on the Church. It is therefore necessary to adhere to the salutary Decree of the Congregation of the Index, (June 13th, 1757,) that NO VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE IN THE VULGAR TONGUE BE PERMITTED, EXCEPT SUCH AS ARE APPROVED BY THE APOSTOLIC SEE, or published with annotations extracted from the writings of holy Fathers of the Church (Bull of Pius VII, June 29, 1816, Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 20).

This pope called the free distribution of Holy Scripture a “crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined.” How confused he was, for it is not true religion that is undermined by the distribution of Scripture, but false.

Also in 1816 Pius VII rebuked Archbishop Buhusz of Mohilev in **Russia** because of his endorsement of a newly formed Bible society there (Latourette, p. 448). The papal brief, dated September 3, 1816, declared that “if the Sacred Scriptures were allowed in the vulgar tongue everywhere without discrimination, more detriment than benefit would arise” (Melancthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Versions Compared*, p. 236).

Pius VII even prohibited *Catholic Bible Societies*. In 1817, he opposed a Catholic society that had been formed in Regensburg, **Bavaria**, by Michael Wittmann (Latourette, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe*, p. 159). “In 1813 the Roman Catholic Bible Society founded in England by a bishop and others was bitterly opposed by Catholics, and soon came to an end” (Jacobus, p. 236).

In 1818, an edition of the Italian Bible without notes was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books (Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 93).

Pius VII issued another bull on September 18, 1819, this one addressed to Irish bishops on the subject of the circulation of the Scriptures in the Irish schools. He spoke of this as a sowing of tares, and said that the children were thereby infested with the fatal poison of depraved doctrines. He exhorted the Irish bishops to endeavour to prevent the wheat being choked by the tares.

The prediction of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the parable of the sower, that sowed good seed in his field, but while people slept, his enemy came and sowed tares upon the wheat, is, to the very great injury indeed of the Catholic faith, seen verified in these our days, particularly in Ireland; for information has reached the ears of the sacred congregation, that 'Bible schools,' supported by the funds of the heterodox [Protestants] have been established in almost every part of Ireland, in which, under the pretence of charity, the inexperienced of both sexes, but particularly peasants and paupers, are deluded by the blandishments, and even gifts, of the masters, and infested with the fatal poison of depraved doctrines. It is farther stated, that the directors of these schools are, generally speaking, Methodists, who introduce Bibles, translated into English by 'the Bible Society,' and abounding in errors, with the sole view of seducing the youth, and entirely eradicating from their minds the truths of the orthodox faith. Under these circumstances, your Lordship already perceives with what solicitude and attention pastors are bound to watch, and carefully protect their flock from the snares of wolves, who come in the clothing of sheep (Bull of Pius VII, September 18, 1819, Charles Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 20).

The Bible Societies of that day, it must be understood, distributed Scriptures without note or comment. Thus, there were no Protestant or anti-Catholic commentaries in the Bibles that so frightened the Irish bishops and the pope. It was the Bible itself that they considered a danger to their religion.

The scarcity of Bibles in places where the Roman Catholic Church held power is testified by a Catholic writer, Melancthon Jacobus, as follows:

The great Catholic powers that colonized the New World were Spain and France. They neither provided adequately [Bibles] for their own settlers, nor at all for the natives. When the government of **New Orleans** was taken over in 1803, 'it was not till after a long search for a Bible to administer the oath of office that a Latin Vulgate was at last procured from a priest' (Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, I, 245). In **Canada** then 'the Bible was in general a book at once unknown and forbidden' (Canton, II, 57), while in **Quebec** itself, as late as 1826, MANY PEOPLE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (Canton, II, 61). In that same year, at the anniversary of the American Bible Society, attention was directed to **South America**, where fifteen millions of people, professedly Christian, and under Christian influence for about three centuries, were almost entirely without the Bible. At Cordova, the ancient seat of the Jesuits, books of all kinds were prohibited by the Inquisition, except missals and breviaries (Canton, II, 82). ... IT WAS 1831 BEFORE THE FIRST BIBLE WAS PRINTED IN SPANISH AMERICA, AND THE VERSIONS PUBLISHED BY THE CLERGY RANGED FROM TWENTY-FIVE TO A HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO DOLLARS IN COST (Canton, II, 347) (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, p. 235).

Thus, even when Catholic authorities in Spanish America finally printed some Bibles, they were priced far beyond the reach of most of the people.

The attitude of Catholic leaders in this period is expressed in a pastoral charge made by Bishop John Milner, Vicar Apostolic of the midland district of England, and a very

influential Catholic leader. The charge was dated March 20, 1813, and it addressed the spread of Bible societies and the error of what he called “Biblio-mania” —

Of late years, you know that numerous societies have been formed, and incredible sums of money raised, throughout the united kingdom, among Christians of other communions, for the purpose of distributing Bibles gratis, to all poor people who are willing to accept of them. In acting thus, they act conformably to the fundamental principles of *their* religion, which teach that the Bible contains all things necessary for salvation, and that it is easy to be understood by every person of common sense. But who could have imagined that Catholics, grounded upon quite opposite principles, should nevertheless show a disposition to follow the example of Protestants in this particular, by forming themselves also into Bible societies, and contributing their money for putting the mysterious letter of God’s word into the hand of the illiterate poor, instead of educating clergymen, even in the present distressing scarcity of clergy, to expound that word to them? ...

When our Saviour Christ sent his apostles to convert the world, he did not say to them, Go and distribute volumes of the Scriptures among the nations of the world; but, Go into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

It is notorious that not one of the nations converted by the apostles or their successors, nor any part of a nation, was converted by reading the Scriptures. No: they were converted in the way appointed by Christ, that of preaching the gospel, as is seen in the Acts of the Apostles, Bede’s History, &c.

THE PROMISCUOUS READING OF THE BIBLE IS NOT CALCULATED, NOR INTENDED, BY GOD, AS THE MEANS OF CONVEYING RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION TO THE BULK OF MANKIND: for the bulk of mankind cannot read at all; and we do not find any divine commandment as to their being obliged to study letters. ...

In conclusion, then, my dearly beloved brethren, I am confident you will not encourage or countenance the distribution of Bibles or Testaments, among the very illiterate persons of your respective congregations, as proper initiatory books of instruction for them (Bishop Milner of Castabala, 1813, John quoted from M’Gavin, *The Protestant*, p. 166).

This confused bishop failed to quote the full commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples. The commission has three aspects: proclaiming the gospel, baptizing those who believe, and thoroughly instructing them — “*teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:18-20). This latter task cannot be fulfilled without making the Scriptures available to the people, for the Scriptures contain the doctrine of Jesus Christ that He gave by His Holy Spirit to the apostles (John 16:12-14). The Scriptures contain all things that the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded. The apostles completed the New Testament Scriptures and taught their hearers to search the Scriptures and to study the Scriptures and to know the Scriptures (Romans 15:4; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:15-17; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). Instead of having mercy upon the weak condition of illiterate people and providing them with education and then giving them the blessed Scriptures, this Roman Catholic bishop wanted to leave them in their illiteracy and give them more priests to lead them into man-made traditions.

**Pope Leo XII (1823-1829)**, in taking the baton from Pius VII, did not miss a step in the papal race against the free circulation of Scripture. He issued a bull to the Irish bishops,

May 3, 1824, in which he affirmed the Council of Trent and condemned Bible distribution.

It is no secret to you, venerable brethren, that a certain Society, vulgarly called The Bible Society, is audaciously spreading itself through the whole world. After despising the traditions of the holy Fathers, and in opposition to the well-known Decree of the Council of Trent, this Society has collected all its forces, and directs every means to one object,—the translation, or rather the perversion, of the Bible into the vernacular languages of all nations. From this fact there is strong ground of fear, lest, as in some instances already known, so likewise in the rest, through a perverse interpretation, there be framed out of the Gospel of Christ a gospel of man, or, what is worse, A GOSPEL OF THE DEVIL (Bull of Leo XII, May 3, 1824, Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 21).

The same bull exhorted the bishops to “be persuaded, that IF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES BE EVERYWHERE INDISCRIMINATELY PUBLISHED, MORE EVIL THAN ADVANTAGE WILL ARISE THENCE, on account of the rashness of men” (Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspects*, p. 136).

“The Irish bishops publicly avowed their concurrence with the pope’s views, and charged their flocks to surrender to their parish priests all copies of the Scriptures received from Bible Societies, as well as all publications disseminated by the Religious Tract Society” (Elliott, p. 21).

In an Encyclical Letter dated May 5, 1824, Leo XII described the Bible Societies as institutions that were “strolling with effrontery throughout the world, contemning the traditions of the Fathers” and “labouring with all its might to translate, or rather pervert, the Holy Bible into the vulgar [common] language of every nation” (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, II, p. 648).

At a discussion at Carrick-upon-Shannon, **Ireland**, in 1824, the Roman Catholic priests expressed themselves as follows: “Mr. M’Keon said, ‘THE SCRIPTURES OF THEMSELVES, UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY SUCH NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS, LEAD DIRECTLY TO EVERY SPECIES OF FANATICISM AND INFIDELITY. The Catholic Church opposes their indiscriminate circulation.’ Mr. Browne says: ‘Infidelity most assuredly would follow the indiscriminate reading of the Scriptures, were the people deprived of the fostering care of their Pastors [Priests]. WE MAINTAIN THAT THE PEOPLE ARE TO RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTION FROM THE PRIESTS, and that it is the duty of the Priest to promulgate the word of God to the flock committed to him. ... THERE NEVER WAS AN INSTANCE WHERE THE PEOPLE WERE ALLOWED THE INDISCRIMINATE USE OF THE SCRIPTURES, THAT REVOLUTION AND DISORDER DID NOT ENSUE.’”

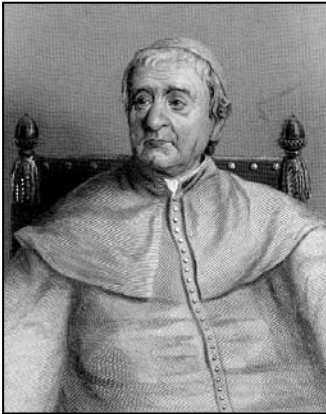
On March 26, 1825, Leo XII published the Index of Prohibited Books and mandated that the decrees of the Council of Trent be enforced against distribution of Scriptures (Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, p. 137).

The Archbishop of Dublin, Ireland, told the Committee of the House of Commons in 1828 that Clement XI’s bull *Unigenitus* was still in effect. This bull, as we have noted

already, condemned the precept that the reading of Scripture is for all men, labeling such a precept “blasphemous.” The Archbishop Dr. Murray said, “Is the bull *Unigenitus* received in Ireland? It is” (Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, p. 133).

Though **Pope Pius VIII (1829-1830)** “reigned only one year, he found time on May 24, 1829, to condemn Bible Societies” (David Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 480). This pope affirmed the prior decrees and condemned the free distribution of Scripture (Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, p. 137).

**Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846)** ratified the decrees of his predecessors, as well as those of the Council of Trent, forbidding the free distribution of Scripture. On January 7,



Pope Benedict XIV

1836, a decree was passed which expressly called for obedience to the declarations of Trent. The pope republished the Index of Prohibited Books at Rome in 1841, attaching the fourth rule of Trent’s decree on books. In his encyclical of May 8, 1844, Gregory XVI stated: “Moreover, we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, delivered in former times by apostolic authority, AGAINST THE PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, READING, AND POSSESSION OF BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TRANSLATED INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE” (Wylie, *The Papacy*, p. 182). This encyclical was delivered against Bible societies in general and mentioned in particular the Christian Alliance, which was formed in 1843 in New York for the purpose of distributing Scriptures. An excerpt from this encyclical demonstrates the attitude of the 19th-century popes toward mass distribution of Scripture

without note or comment:

Venerable Brothers, health and greeting Apostolical:—

Among the many attempts which the enemies of Catholicism, under whatever denomination they may appear, are daily making in our age, to seduce the truly faithful, and deprive them of the holy instructions of the faith, the efforts of those Bible Societies are conspicuous, which, originally established in England, and propagated throughout the universe, labor everywhere to disseminate the books of the Holy Scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue; consign them to the private interpretation of each, alike among Christians and among infidels; continue what St. Jerome formerly complained of—pretending to popularize the holy pages, and render them intelligible, without the aid of any interpreter, to persons of every condition—to the most loquacious woman, to the light-headed old man, to the wordy caviler; to all, in short, and even by an absurdity as great as unheard of, to the most hardened infidels (Encyclical against Bible societies, Gregory XVI, May 8, 1844, cited from D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 478)

This haughty pope disdained the distribution of the Scriptures to women, old men, and infidels. It appears that he had never read Romans 10:17 — “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” How does the “hardened infidel” become a believer? By hearing the Word of God! The pope placed the Bible societies at the top of the list of

“the enemies of Catholicism.” This alone is proof of Rome’s total apostasy. Consider another excerpt from the pope’s encyclical against the Bible societies:

Hence the warning and decrees of our predecessor, Innocent III., of happy memory, on the subject of lay societies and meetings of women, who had assembled themselves in the diocese of Metz for objects of piety and the study of the Holy Scriptures. Hence the prohibitions which subsequently appeared in France and Spain, during the sixteenth century, with respect to the vulgar Bible (Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, pp. 478, 79)

Gregory was warmed by the memory of his persecuting predecessor, Innocent III. In this encyclical he proceeded to remind his hearers of the prohibitions against vernacular Scriptures issued by other popes, including Pius VII, Benedict XIV, Clement XI, Pius VI, Pius VII, Leo XII, and Pius VIII.

Gregory added the following admonition, “You are consequently enjoined TO REMOVE FROM THE HANDS OF THE FAITHFUL ALIKE THE BIBLES IN THE VULGAR TONGUE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PRINTED CONTRARY TO THE DECREES ABOVE MENTIONED OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS, and every book proscribed and condemned, and to see that they learn, through your admonition and authority, what pasturages are salutary, and what pernicious and mortal” (Ray, p. 481).

On May 25, 1845, this same pope issued another Encyclical that reaffirmed Trent’s decrees against Bible distribution. “The pope then goes on to attack the Jansenists and Quesnelists, who held the Protestant doctrine respecting the reading of the Bible, and observes, that their audacity is rebuked in the solemn judgments passed against their doctrines, with the applause of the whole Catholic world, by two popes,—viz. Clement XI., in the bull ‘Unigenitus,’ and Pius VI., in his constitution ‘Auctorem Fidei,’—that very Pius VI. who wrote to Martini on his translating the Bible, and who is so often ignorantly quoted as a friend to the free circulation and reading of the Holy Scriptures” (Hereford, 1845, cited by Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, pp. 137, 38).

It was 1831 before the first Bible was printed in **Spanish America**, and the versions published by the clergy cost from \$25 to \$132, far out of reach of the common man (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles Compared*, p. 235).

“The following extract of a letter from the Rev. J. Spaulding, a Protestant Missionary, under date of September 23d, 1837, **Rio Janeiro**, in South America, will furnish a true specimen of what exists, and always has existed, when the circulation of the Scriptures depended on the Church of Rome. From generation to generation, it may be truly said, such has been her practice. ‘The Bible, to an astonishing and almost incredible extent, is a new book, and a real curiosity in this country. An elderly lady, who in other respects appeared quite intelligent, said, “she had lived so many years in the world, and never heard of it till lately.” A gentleman, a Catholic, and with no great faith in Missionary operations, remarked to me, that he did not suppose there were four hundred Bibles in the Brazils—among a population of at least five millions. What is this but an awful famine of the word of God! And what an awful fact, that this famine, which carries moral death and

ruin wherever it goes, has continued from generation to generation” (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 23).

In 1838, Nicholas, the Bishop of **Quito, Ecuador**, became concerned because a missionary was circulating some Bibles and gospel tracts. The bishop’s zeal to keep the Bible out of the hands of the “faithful” led him to issue the following proclamation on February 8, 1838, as republished in the *Western Christian Advocate* of Cincinnati, Ohio:

Since the extinction of the tribunal of the Inquisition, it devolves upon the Bishops to take cognizance of matters of faith; which sacred deposit is confided to them ... In this character, however unworthy, I cannot fail to guard against encroachments upon the Catholic religion within my diocese ... It is proved by the annexed testimony that MR. ISAAC WHEELWRIGHT, CONTRARY TO THE PROHIBITIONS OF THE HOLY ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HAS PROMOTED THE GENERAL READING OF THE BIBLE WITHOUT NOTES IN THE SPANISH LANGUAGE, and has circulated a tract entitled, ‘A Few Words to the Wise,’ the object of which is to show, that the sacred Scriptures are to be understood according to men’s private judgment, and not according to the exposition made by the holy Fathers, as saith Father Scio, in his original work. ... The accompanying papers impugn these pernicious maxims, and will convince the supreme Government, that THE CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLES AND TRACTS ALLUDED TO OUGHT TO BE PREVENTED. They will also inflame its zeal to cut up by the roots this crying enormity (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 23).

Rome’s attitude toward Bible distribution is plain from the following testimony by J.A. Clark, Pastor of the Protestant Episcopal Church of St. Andrew, Philadelphia, writing from **Rome**, March 24, 1838:

The Bible in Rome is a strange and rare book. The only edition of it authorized to be sold here, is in fifteen large volumes, which are filled with Popish commentaries. Of course none but the rich can purchase a copy of the sacred Scriptures. Indeed very few of the common people know what we mean by the Bible. The question was proposed the other day by one of my fellow-lodgers, to the lady from whom our lodgings are obtained, and who may be considered as a fair representative in point of intelligence and religious information of the middle class of society in Rome, ‘if the people generally had a copy of the Bible in their houses?’ The reply was, ‘O yes, all the religious people have.’ She also added, that she had a very fine copy of the Bible, and immediately went to fetch it. When produced, it proved to be a Mass-book, with here and there a passage of Scripture accompanied with Romish glosses. When it was more fully explained to her what we meant by the Bible, she replied, ‘O yes, I know what you mean: that book is in several of the libraries in Rome, and some persons who are very religious have also a copy of it.’ This plainly shows in what estimation the Bible is held in the very centre of Roman Catholicism (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 23).

Catholic apologists want to argue that Rome never withheld the Bible from people, but the evidence of this is overwhelming.

“*Der Wahrheitsfreund*, the **German** organ of the Roman Catholic Church, edited by the Rev. Mr. Henni, a German Priest, and published in Cincinnati, says, in the 29th number, under date of February 7th, 1839: ‘Bible Societies have in thinking Christians produced a just suspicion, that their zeal, which may please hypocrites, has for its foundation some secret, sinister intentions. However that may be, so much is incontrovertibly true, that those very persons, and those very nations, which have the cheapest Bibles, can least agree



with regard to religion, and are most hostile to each other; and that THIS UNLIMITED READING OF THE BIBLE HAS ORIGINATED AND DOES STILL ORIGINATE, ESPECIALLY IN OUR FANATICAL AMERICA, THE MOST ABSURD ABORTIONS OF PHRENZY, AND EVEN SCENES OF HORRIBLE CRIME. This is the verdict of experience, the judgment of the whole cultivated world. ... [After eulogizing the decrees of the Council of Trent respecting the restriction of Bible reading, the article concludes as follows:] The whole really reasonable and religious world calls aloud with Christ, 'Do not cast pearls before swine.' It was and is only presumption which interpreted the Bible privately, which printed it privately, which distributed it promiscuously: pride only did this, and does it now, in order to get power" (Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, p. 22).

The distribution of Bibles, motivated by love for God and man, and accomplished at great sacrifice of time and money, was slanderously characterized as an act of pride by 19th-century Catholic authorities.

"In 1840 the Bishop of Bruges, in **Belgium**, described the British and Foreign Bible Society as 'a society hostile to God and the Holy Church.' The Church holds heretical Bibles in abhorrence, 'and utterly detests them'" (Cust, *Essays on the Languages of the Bible*, p. 75).

Catholic persecution against the Bible during Pope Gregory XVI's reign was not limited to Catholic lands. Bibles were even burned by Catholic authorities **in America**. This occurred on October 27, 1842, at Champlain, New York. Following is a firsthand report by four citizens of that district:

About the middle of October, a Mr. Telmont, a missionary of the *Jesuits*, with one or more associates, came to Corbeau in this town, where the Catholic Church is located, and as they say in their own account given of their visit, 'by the direction of the bishop of Montreal.' On their arrival they commenced a protracted meeting, which lasted several weeks, and great numbers of Catholics from this and the other towns of the county attended day after day. After the meeting had progressed several days, and the way was prepared for it, an order was issued **requiring all who had Bibles or testaments, to bring them in to the priest, or 'lay them at the feet of the missionaries.'** The requirement was generally complied with, and **day after day Bibles and testaments were carried in; and after a sufficient number was collected, they were**



Bibles burned in Champlain, New York 1842

**burned.** By the confession of Telmont, as appears from the affidavit of S. Hubbell, there were several burnings, but only one in public. On the 27th of October, as given in testimony at the public meeting held there, Telmont, who was a prominent man in all the movements, brought out from the house of **the resident priest, which is near the church, as many bibles as he could carry in his arms at three times, and placed them in a pile, in the open yard, and then set fire to them and burned them to ashes.** This was done in open day, and in the presence of many spectators (Dowling, *History of Romanism*, pp. 612, 613).

Bible-believing Christians were still suffering under Rome's Inquisition in the mid-19th century. In the **Portuguese** island of Madeira, for example, violence was poured out upon those that dissented from Rome. Many were imprisoned. Some were beaten and otherwise mistreated. In 1843, Maria Joaquina Alves was arrested and cast into prison. She was the mother of seven children, the youngest of which was a nursing infant. After languishing in prison for a year, Maria was condemned to death in May 1844, for "maintaining that veneration should not be given to images, denying the real existence of Christ in the sacred host," and in other ways rejecting Catholic doctrine, and for "expounding these condemned doctrines to different persons" (Dowling, p. 614). After Protestants in other lands interceded in the behalf of the persecuted Christians in Madeira, Maria Alves and about 600 other victims of papal persecution were permitted to escape to Trinidad, in the West Indies, "whence the larger number of them have since been assisted to settle in the United States."

**Pope Pius IX (1846-1878)** issued an encyclical letter in November 1846 in which he denounced all opponents of Roman Catholicism, among which he included "those insidious Bible Societies." He said the Bible societies were "renewing the crafts of the ancient heretics" by distributing to "all kinds of men, even the least instructed, gratuitously and at immense expense, copies in vast numbers of the books of the Sacred Scriptures translated against the holiest rules of the Church into various vulgar tongues..."

What a horrible crime! Distributing the Scriptures freely to all people!

Pope Pius closes his encyclical by giving blasphemous praise to Mary: "Let us have recourse to the intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, our most sweet mother, *our mediatrix, our advocate, our firmest hope, the source of our confidence, and whose protection is most powerful and most efficacious with God.*"

This same pope issued another encyclical in January 1850, which further condemned the Bible societies.

Nay, more; with the assistance of the Biblical Societies, which have long been condemned by the holy chair, they do not blush to distribute holy Bibles, translated into the vulgar tongue, without being conformed to the rules of the Church. ... Under a false pretext of religion, they recommend the reading of them to the faithful. You, in your wisdom, perfectly understand, venerable brothers, with what vigilance and solicitude you ought to labour, that the faithful may fly with horror from this poisonous reading; and that they may remember that no man, supported by his own prudence, can arrogate to himself the right, and have the presumption, to interpret the Scriptures otherwise than as our holy mother the Church interprets them, to whom alone our

Lord has confided the guardianship of the faith, judgment upon the true sense and interpretation of the divine books (Wylie, *The Papacy*, p. 188).

Persecution continued under Pius IX. In 1849, Count Guicciardini and several other Protestants in Florence, in central **Italy**, were arrested “for no offence whatever but that they wished to read the word of God, and hear it preached” (Dowling, *The History of Romanism*, p. 730). Guicciardini was imprisoned for reading the Italian Diodati Bible (J.A. Wylie, *History of the Papacy*, book 1, chap. 5, footnote 18). After being imprisoned for some time in a loathsome cell, in which the stench and the vermin made it almost impossible even to sleep, Guicciardini was banished from Italy. In the spring of 1852, Rosa and Francesco Madiari were arrested in Tuscany, in northwest Italy, “for no other crime than that of reading and inviting others to read with them the blessed word of God, and to love and trust in that Saviour whom it reveals.” After several weeks of imprisonment, their trial was conducted in June. One of the charges was that the Madiaris had given a 16-year-old boy “a prohibited copy of the Bible, in French and in Italian” and that they had taught their 20-year-old servant girl how to read so she could understand the Diodati Bible. For these and similar “crimes,” Francesco Madiari was sentenced to 50 months imprisonment at hard labor, and Rosa, to 45 months imprisonment. They were also fined 300 livres. After several months of cruel imprisonment, the Madiaris were released and banished from Italy, but though they regained their freedom, Francesco’s mental and physical health was permanently broken.

On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX issued the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, which proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. In 1899 the Pontifical Press published a book entitled *Manual of Indulgences*, which proclaimed: “The Virgin Mary, immaculate and always pure, never required to expiate even the shadow of an imperfection, having been always more holy than Cherubim and Seraphim.” Thus the Vatican press was busy publishing books glorifying Mary, but it was doing nothing to publish the Holy Scriptures.

Writing in 1903, Alexander Robertson, who long resided in Italy, made the following observations:

On May 18, 1849, some three thousand copies of the New Testament, according to the Martini version, were seized and destroyed in Tuscany. Priests have told me that even they were not allowed to possess a Martini Bible without the Papal consent, and that the very fact of applying for such consent would bring them under suspicion, and so damage their prospects in the Church. Therefore, they said, ‘WE HAVE NO BIBLES.’

A daily newspaper in giving an account of a discussion being carried on between a layman and a clerical in regard to the falsification of the Ten Commandments by the Church, which omits the Second Commandment entirely, and divides the Tenth Commandment into two to make up the number, relates the following dialogue:

Layman. ‘Go and get a Bible.’

Clerical. ‘A Bible, and where?’

Layman. 'What! In a country of Catholics you cannot find a Bible! What kind of Catholics can you be?'

Clerical. 'I suppose the priest may have one.'

Layman. 'But the priest has not a genuine one. Go and get a Diodati Bible.'

Clerical. 'And who has such a thing?'

The newspaper commenting on this, says: 'Do you understand, O reader? IN A VILLAGE OF THREE THOUSAND INHABITANTS NO BIBLE COULD BE FOUND. And yet you call yourselves Catholics, religious people, believing people!'

Students are not taught the Bible in the Papal seminaries. They have many text-books—Alfonso de Liguori's especially—but no Bible. Count Campello, ex-Canon of St. Peter's, was trained in the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, the highest training college in Rome (to which once only men of noble birth were admitted, but into which now not one such can be induced to enter), and yet DURING ALL HIS YEARS OF STUDY HE NEVER EVEN SAW A BIBLE (Alexander Robertson, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, 1903, pp. 211-215).

Bibles were also being destroyed by Roman Catholic authorities in **South America** during the reign of Pius IX. The following is an eyewitness account of the burning of Spanish New Testaments in **Chili**:

Soon after my arrival in this place, some persons informed me that the New Testament had been taken from them as a proscribed book, and that several copies were to be burned in the public square on the following Sabbath. Letters had been received, I was further informed, FROM THE POPE HIMSELF, cautioning the bishops and priests against spurious editions of the New Testament printed in England, and circulated gratuitously in South America, for the purpose of creating divisions and heresies in the church. ... the clergy resorted to the old objection, that ALL EDITIONS OF THE BIBLE AND TESTAMENT WITHOUT NOTES ARE PROHIBITED BY A DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT.

On Sabbath evening, the time fixed for the sacrilegious conflagration, a procession was formed, having the curate at the head, and conducted with the usual pomp, the priest kneeling a few moments at each corner of the square, and placing a large crucifix upon the ground. During the afternoon a fire had been kindled for the purpose, I was told by several bystanders, of burning heretical books which ridiculed the mass and confession; and among the number was mentioned the New Testament. A guard of soldiers prevented me from examining them separately, but I stood sufficiently near to discover that the greater part were copies of the New Testament issued by the American Bible Society. As the flame ascended, increasing in brightness, one of the clergy shouted 'Viva Deos' (Let God reign), which was immediately echoed by the loud acclamations of a large concourse of people. ...

The Scriptures burned were of the approved Spanish version, translated from the Vulgate by Spanish Roman Catholic bishops. Further, they were New Testaments, so the plea that the Apocrypha was excluded could not be urged. They were portions of their own acknowledged word of God, because in the vulgar tongue and without popish notes, solemnly committed to the flames! (John Dowling, *The History of Romanism*, 1853, p. 625).

When the wife of an Anglican clergyman died at Rome during the reign of Pius IX, the following epitaph was prepared by her husband for her tombstone: "To her to live was Christ, to die is gain. ... She is gone to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense, till the day break, and the day dawn," etc. This was submitted to the Roman Catholic

editor and was struck down. An appeal was made to Pius IX himself, and he confirmed the censor's decision on two grounds: First, "it was unlawful to express the hope of immortality over the grave of a heretic." Second, "it was contrary to law to publish in the sight of the Roman people any portion of the Word of God" (Wylie, *The Papacy*, p. 188).

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875) was a textual editor who traveled widely and was well informed about Bible work in Catholic lands. In 1851 he gave the following testimony:

Our reformers, as I have already remarked, stated the Church to be a *keeper* of holy Writ. The Church of Rome has shown herself to be so in a peculiar sense. She has made herself such a *keeper*, as if the Scripture had been a criminal, or a dangerous lunatic. SHE HAS KEPT IT AWAY FROM THE PEOPLE. ...

All the circumstances of the transmission of Scripture to us *in our tongue*, show how Rome has *kept it back* from us as much as possible; and this is what she *still does* in countries where she has sway, and this she would do here if she could.

By the system of the confessional, the priests of Rome find out *who* possess the Scriptures in their own tongue, and these are made to endure persecutions like to those of Diocletian. That Rome continues her hostility to Scripture, witness the persecutions now carrying on in Tuscany--where every family tie is broken to obtain accusations;--witness the encyclical letter of the present Pope; and the public burning of Bibles in the square of the capitol under his predecessor. But why need I turn to things in distant lands, when the spirit of Rome showed itself in this very town, and in this very year, by the endeavour which the popish priesthood made to prevent Christian ladies from reading the English Bible to emigrants? ...

"Thus is Rome a keeper of holy Writ, in the sense of keeping it back from the eyes of men. But I say further, that as a witness of holy Writ she has become a false witness. She allows things to go forth in which Scripture words are perverted to false ones. ... At Rome, near the Vatican, stands the church of 'our Lady, the mother of grace.' In the porch is this inscription, 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of MARY, that we may obtain mercy.' I asked, 'How dare you thus alter and pervert the Scripture?' 'Oh!' the answer was, 'this is no perversion; it is only putting our Lady's name instead of the word that describes her: our Lord said to our Lady, No grace shall flow forth to any one except *through thee*.'

These are but specimens of the perverted use which Rome makes of fragments of Scripture to support her delusions; and how are the people, without Bibles, to detect the imposture? ... Where Scripture is thus withheld, what a state of uncertainty must rest on every mind as to what God has taught, and what He has not! I may illustrate this:--I was once on a jury, when the counsel for one of the parties, with a most unaccountable misapprehension, told us that it was a very plain case, for the words of a certain Act of Parliament were, 'It shall be lawful': the judge quietly corrected the statement, which only led to the counsel twice repeating the assertion. The judge handed us the Act of Parliament, saying, 'Gentlemen, this is a question of *fact*, and therefore wholly within *your* province; you can see whether the word *NOT* is in the sentence.' We read the clause, 'It shall *NOT* be lawful,' and thus saw that the counsel (from whatever cause) was misleading us. Had we not been able to refer to the Act, I am sure that some of the jury would have credited the strenuous assertions of the counsel more than the correction of the judge. This would be our condition, had we not the Scripture open before us: how could we know whom we ought to believe as to the truth of God? (Samuel Tregelles, *A Lecture on the Historic Evidence of the Authorship and Transmission of the Books of the New*

*Testament*: a lecture delivered before the Plymouth Young Men's Christian Association, October 14th, 1851, London: Samuel Bagster, pp. 83-91).

On December 8, 1864, Pius IX issued a *Syllabus of Errors*, in which he again condemned Bible societies, lumping them together with Communism, secret societies, and other evils, labeling them “pests of this kind” (Kenneth Latourette, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe*, p. 276).



A dispatch from the British consul in Rome to the Earl of Clarendon in England, dated Feb. 8, 1866, warned that “travellers visiting the Pope’s dominions should be very careful not to bring forbidden books.” It described these as “those condemned by the Congregation of the Index, books on religion or morality in general, political and philosophical works of every description

and more especially Italian religious tracts published in London.” The dispatch continues, “But above all travellers should be careful not to bring English, Italian or other Bibles with them, the Bible being strictly prohibited by the Roman Church.”

Pius IX had himself and his fellow popes proclaimed “infallible” at the **Vatican I Council in 1870**. This Council “ratified generally the decrees of Trent on Revelation, and renewed a curse on all who ‘shall not receive as holy and canonical all the books of Holy Scripture with all their parts, as set forth by the holy Tridentine Synod [this included the Apocrypha], or shall deny that they were divinely inspired’” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 237).

At Vatican I a pageant was held in which the Catholic authorities professed their submission to the pope. As the various groups of priests approached the papal throne in their turn, they bowed low, and the cardinals kissed the pope’s hand; the patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and bishops kissed his right knee; and the abbots kissed his foot (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, V, p. 62).

Following is an excerpt from the declaration of Vatican I:

We teach and declare that by the appointment of our Lord THE ROMAN CHURCH POSSESSES A SUPERIORITY OF ORDINARY POWER OVER ALL OTHER CHURCHES, and that THIS POWER OF JURISDICTION OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF, which is truly episcopal, is immediate;

to which all, of whatever rite and dignity, BOTH PASTORS AND FAITHFUL, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, ARE BOUND, by their duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, to submit not only in matters which belong to faith and morals, but also in those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world, SO THAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MAY BE ONE FLOCK UNDER ONE SUPREME PASTOR through the preservation of unity both of communion and of profession of the same faith with the Roman pontiff. **THIS IS THE TEACHING OF CATHOLIC TRUTH, FROM WHICH NO ONE CAN DEVIATE WITHOUT LOSS OF FAITH AND OF SALVATION.**

And since BY DIVINE RIGHT OF APOSTOLIC PRIMACY THE ROMAN PONTIFF IS PLACED OVER THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, we further teach and declare that HE IS THE SUPREME JUDGE OF THE FAITHFUL, and that in all causes the decision of which belongs to the Church recourse may be had to his tribunal, and that NONE MAY REOPEN THE JUDGMENT OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, THAN WHOSE AUTHORITY THERE IS NO GREATER, NOR CAN ANY LAWFULLY REVIEW ITS JUDGMENT.

IF THEN, ANY SHALL SAY THAT THE ROMAN PONTIFF HAS THE OFFICE MERELY OF INSPECTION OR DIRECTION, AND NOT FULL AND SUPREME POWER OF JURISDICTION OVER THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, not only in things which belong to faith and morals, but also in those which relate to the discipline and government of the Church spread throughout the world: or assert that he possesses merely the principal part, and not all the fulness of this supreme power; OR THAT THIS POWER WHICH HE ENJOYS IS NOT ORDINARY OR IMMEDIATE BOTH OVER EACH AND ALL THE CHURCHES AND OVER EACH AND ALL THE PASTORS AND THE FAITHFUL; LET HIM BE ANATHEMA.

We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed; that the Roman pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, IS POSSESSED OF THAT INFALLIBILITY with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore SUCH DEFINITIONS OF THE ROMAN PONTIFF ARE IRREFORMABLE OF THEMSELVES, and not from the consent of the Church. But if any one—which may God avert—presume to contradict this our definition: LET HIM BE ANATHEMA.

The First Vatican Council placed the pope on the same level with Almighty God and bestowed upon him prerogatives that belong solely to the Lord Jesus Christ—who alone is supreme judge of the faithful and who alone can infallibly define doctrine. To claim infallibility is to exalt oneself to the level of God and the Holy Scriptures. The proclamations of Vatican I, therefore, were yet another attack upon the perfection and sufficiency of the Word of God.

A fascinating incident that occurred at the First Vatican Council illustrates Rome's relationship with the Bible:

A curious thing happened at the so-called Ecumenical Council, held in the Vatican in 1869-70, at which the infallibility of the Pope was decreed. Dollinger and Dupanloup, in supporting their arguments against the insensate proposal, wished to refer to some passages of Scripture; but NO ONE HAD A BIBLE IN THE WHOLE COUNCIL, nor could one be procured for them within the bounds of the Church, so one had to be borrowed from the Protestant chaplain of the Prussian Embassy! (Alexander Robertson, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, 1903, p. 216).

“At the time **Rome** was made the capital of Italy in 1870, a papal law required that copies of the Bible found in the possession of visitors to the papal city be confiscated” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 727).

“That this hostility to the Word of God is not confined to the occupant of the Vatican, but pervades the entire body of the Romish clergy in all parts of the world, is evident from the RECENT WELL-AUTHENTICATED INSTANCES OF THE BURNING OF BIBLES BY PRIESTS IN BELGIUM, IN IRELAND, AND IN MADEIRA. Not less significant is the fact, stated in evidence before the Commissioners of Education, that among the four hundred students attending the College of Maynooth, there were not to be found more than ten Bibles or Testaments; while every student was required to provide himself with a copy of the works of the Jesuits Bailly and Delahogue” (Philip Hardy, *Ireland in 1846-47*, p. 33, cited by Wylie, *The Papacy*, p. 183).

Richard Littledale, writing in 1879, testified that he had “known of a bonfire to be made of Anglican Bibles and Testaments by Roman Catholic clergymen at a mission in Kingstown, **Dublin** (Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 92).

Spain and the Roman Catholic Church gained control of the **Philippine Islands** in 1610 and retained control for 288 years, until the end of the Spanish-American war in 1898. During these centuries, the Filipino people were not given the Bible and were not allowed a free press. “Since Protestant America took over the control of the Islands ... THE FILIPINOS HAVE BEEN GIVEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR HISTORY, AN OPEN BIBLE, A FREE PRESS, public schools, the right of public assembly, free speech, popular self-government, sanitary methods of living, modern means of transportation, and the proclamation of the Gospel, untainted by pagan practices and superstitions. During the forty-five years of Protestant occupation, more has been done for the civilization and evangelization of the Philippines than during the nearly three-hundred years of Spanish Catholic domination” (Walter Montano, *Behind the Purple Curtain*, p. 101).

Roman Catholic F. Curci, who translated the Gospels and Acts, gave this testimony in 1879: “THE NEW TESTAMENT IS OF ALL BOOKS THAT WHICH IS LEAST STUDIED AND READ AMONGST US, insomuch that THE GREATER PART OF THE LAITY, even such as are instructed and practising believers, DO NOT SO MUCH AS KNOW THAT SUCH A BOOK EXISTS IN THE WORLD, and the majority of the clergy themselves scarcely know more of it than they are obliged to read in the Missal and Breviary” (Curci, *Avvert. Prelim. in N.T.*, xi, cited in Littledale, *Plain Reasons*, p. 94).

How was the Bible faring during these days in the very heart of the pope’s territory? Mr. H. Hobart Seymour, a Church of England minister, visited **Rome**; and in a book entitled *Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome* he recorded his experiences.



A Catholic professor of theology in the Collegio Romano told Seymour “that it is a great mistake, and, indeed, a calumny against the Catholic Church, to say that she is opposed to the full and unrestricted use and circulation of the Scriptures.”

Seymour replied: “Having resided many years among a Roman Catholic population in Ireland, I had always found that the sacred volume was forbidden to them; and that SINCE I CAME TO ITALY, AND ESPECIALLY TO ROME, I OBSERVED THE MOST COMPLETE IGNORANCE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, and that it was ascribed by themselves to a prohibition on the part of the Church.”

The following is the dialogue that ensued:

He at once stated that there must be some mistake, as the book was permitted to all who could understand it, and was, in fact, in very general circulation in Rome.

I said that I had heard the contrary, and that it was impossible to procure a copy of the holy Scriptures in the Italian tongue in the city of Rome,—that I had so heard from an English gentleman who had resided there for ten years,—that I looked upon the statement as scarcely credible,—that I wished much to ascertain the matter for my own information,—THAT I HAD ONE DAY RESOLVED TO TEST THIS BY VISITING EVERY BOOKSELLING ESTABLISHMENT IN THE CITY OF ROME,—that I had gone to the book-shop belonging to the Propaganda Fide,—to that patronized by his holiness the pope,—to that which was connected with the Collegio Romano, and was patronized by the order of Jesuits,—to that which was established for the supply of English and other foreigners,—to those who sold old and second-hand books,—and that IN EVERY ESTABLISHMENT, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, I FOUND THAT THE HOLY SCRIPTURES WERE NOT FOR SALE; I COULD NOT PROCURE A SINGLE COPY IN THE ROMAN LANGUAGE, OF A PORTABLE SIZE, in the whole city of Rome; and that when I asked each bookseller the reason of his not having so important a volume, I was answered, in every instance, *e proibito*, or *non é permesso*,—that the volume was prohibited, or that it was not permitted to be sold. I added, that Martini’s edition was offered to me in two places, but it was in twenty-four volumes, and at a cost of 105 francs (that is, four pounds sterling); and that, under such circumstances, I could not but regard the holy Scriptures as a prohibited book, at least in the city of Rome.

He replied by acknowledging that it was very probable that I could not find the volume in Rome, especially as the population of Rome was very poor, and not able to purchase the sacred volume; and that the real reason the Scriptures were not at the booksellers, and also were not in circulation, was, not that they were forbidden or prohibited by the Church, but that the people of Rome were too poor to buy them.

I replied that they probably were too poor, whether in Rome or in England, to give one hundred and five francs for the book; but that the clergy of Rome, so numerous and wealthy, should do as in England, namely, form an association for cheapening the copies of the Scriptures.

He said, in reply, that the priests were too poor to cheapen the volume, and that the people were too poor to purchase it.

I then stated, that if this was really the case,—that if there was no prohibition against the sacred volume,—that if they would be willing to circulate it,—and that really and sincerely there was no other objection than the difficulties arising from the price of the book,—that difficulty should at once be obviated. I would myself undertake to obtain from England through the Bible Society, any number of Bibles that could be circulated; and that they should be sold at the lowest possible price, or given freely and gratuitously, to the inhabitants of Rome. I stated that the

people of England loved the Scriptures beyond all else in this world; and that it would be to them a source of delight and thanksgiving to give for gratuitous circulation any number of copies of the sacred volume that the inhabitants of Rome could require.

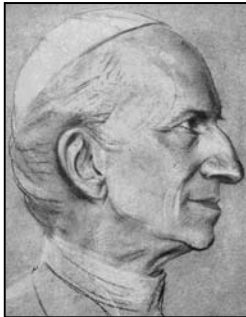
He immediately answered, that he thanked me for the generous offer but that there would be no use in accepting it, as the people of Rome were very ignorant, were in a state of brute ignorance, were unable to read anything; and therefore could not profit by reading the Scriptures, even if we supplied them gratuitously.

I could not conceal from myself that he was prevaricating with me—that his former excuse of poverty, and this latter excuse of ignorance, were mere evasions; so I asked him whose fault it was that the people remained in such universal and unaccountable ignorance. There were above five thousand priests, monks, and nuns, besides cardinals and prelates in the city of Rome; that the whole population was only thirty thousand families; that thus there was a priest, or a monk, or a nun, for every six families in Rome; that thus there were ample means for the education of the people, and I asked, therefore, whether the Church was not to blame for this ignorance on the part of the people?

He immediately turned from the subject, saying, that the Church held the infallibility of the pope, to whom it therefore belonged to give the only infallible interpretation of the Scriptures (Seymour, *Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome*, pp. 132-135).

Thus we see that in the late nineteenth century the Bible was an unknown book among the citizens of Rome. This was directly the fault of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and was in open rebellion to the express will of Almighty God.

**Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903)** allowed the publication of *The Holy Gospels* in Paris in 1886. This was a French edition of the Gospels that had been produced by Henri



Lasserre. It instantly found wide circulation among the French people, because, as Lasserre noted in the preface to his work, “The most part of the children of the Church know the Divine Scriptures merely by fragments, without logical or chronological order, reproduced in the prayer-book at mass on festival days or Sundays.” BEFORE TWELVE MONTHS HAD PASSED LEO “SUDDENLY TURNED HIS BACK ON ALL HIS FORMER UTTERANCES IN FAVOUR OF THE WORK AND ITS AUTHOR, AND ORDERED ITS INSTANT SUPPRESSION AND WITHDRAWAL. IT WAS PLACED ON THE INDEX EXPURGATORIUS” (Alexander

Pope Clement XI Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, p. 161).

In 1893, Leo issued an encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*, which appeared to reverse the policy of his predecessors, by permitting the reading of the Bible. “But, as all in Italy knew at the time, the Encyclical was insincere, and immediately on its issue secret instructions were given to the priests to do all in their power to prevent the sale of the Bible, and also its distribution gratis amongst the people by travellers. The priests, especially the younger men, started a Bible hunt, which, though much less effective than they hoped, yet diminished the circulation of the Bible in Italy for a time. It was in the

autumn following the publication of the Biblical Encyclical that I saw, what I had never seen before in Italy, New Testaments and portions of Scripture, chiefly the Gospels, which had been given to peasants in their homes and in the fields, collected and burned in front of the village church” (Alexander Robertson, *The Roman Catholic Church in Italy*, pp. 211, 212).

By 1897, Leo XIII openly reversed his insincere 1893 policy with an “Apostolic Constitution” that stated: “All versions of the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the Bishops, with annotations taken from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 237).

### **The Bible among Roman Catholics in the Early Twentieth Century**

The Bible remained an unknown book among great numbers of Roman Catholics in the early 20th century. During the papacy of Leo XIII, the condition in Catholic **Brazil** was as follows: “A traveler across Brazil in 1902, who enquired carefully into the subject, found in a thousand miles bishops and priests in plenty, BUT NOT A SINGLE COPY OF THE SCRIPTURES IN ANY LAY HOME; nor had most of the residents ever heard of the Bible, though they were able, willing, and anxious to buy a copy when it was shown to them” (Jacobus, p. 235).

During 1902, PUBLIC BONFIRES WERE MADE OF BIBLES in **Austria, Fiji, Pernambuco, and Peru**, and “the Archbishop of Sucre in **Bolivia** ‘actually suggested that capital punishment should be meted out’ to a man circulating them” (Jacobus, p. 236).

The condition existing in Roman Catholic **Ireland** during the reign of Leo XIII is described by Hamilton Magee, who was Superintendent of the Dublin Mission for many decades:

Roman Catholic Ireland is virtually a land without the Bible. In England and Scotland, the Roman clergy indignantly deny that such is the case, but they dare hardly say so with the same vehemence in Ireland itself. There is no such thing known in Ireland as any real effort on the part of the clergy to have the Word of God circulated among their flocks in any version whatever. Messrs. Duffy, of Dublin, and other publishers issue the Douay Scriptures (with the usual ‘Notes’), but the priests do not encourage their general circulation as far as the peasantry are concerned, and the price is practically prohibitive. The sale of these copies is said to be considerable in the Colonies. Our colporteurs seldom, almost never, find a Bible or a New Testament in the homes of the people. Any copies found in their cabins may (almost with certainty) be traced to an outside Protestant agency. Strictly speaking, the special personal permission of the priest is necessary before any Roman Catholic may dare read the Bible. The people (the older people especially) who have not been brought under the influence of more liberalizing ideas look on the Bible as an ‘uncanny’ book which they had best let alone (Hamilton Magee, *Fifty Years in the Irish Mission*, 1903, pp. 210, 211).

The Catholic attacks upon the Bible continued under the reign of **Pope Pius X (1903-1914)**. On February 22, 1903, “another PUBLIC BURNING OF BIBLE was made in



Pope Pius X

Pernambuco, and another was planned but forbidden by the state officers, so that the bonfire was private, in the back of the church. Letter of W.H. Cannada published in the *Baptist Argus* of November 5, 1903, at Louisville” (Jacobus, p. 236).

In 1905, Sidney Collett, author of *The Scripture of Truth*, gave the following commentary on the ignorance that was prevalent in Catholic lands because the free distribution of the Bible was hindered:

In every country where the Bible is freely circulated and read there is knowledge, intelligence, prosperity, and power; while in those countries from which the Bible is largely excluded (whether due to heathen or Romish influences) the exact reverse is the case. The present condition of South America, Spain, and Portugal, speak eloquently on this point. In **Spain**, that priest-ridden land, out of a population of about seventeen millions, twelve millions can neither read nor write; in **Portugal**, with a population of seven millions, not one million can read; while in **South America** there are, generally speaking, no settled governments, no inventions, no men of letters—indeed, there is scarcely anything indicating progress or enlightenment which ever originates there (Collett, *The Scripture of Truth*, p. 44).

A diligent search was made between December 1907 and February 1908 to determine how many Bibles were available in Catholic **Ireland**. “In the booksellers’ shops of Athlone, Balbriggan, Drogheda, Mullingar, Wexford, and Clonmel, not a Bible, or New Testament, or scrap of Scripture of the [Catholic] Church’s authorized version, could be found—a shop assistant at Mullingar, saying: ‘I never saw a Catholic Bible.’ In Waterford, with its population of some 27,000 people, only one shop had the Douay Bible; in Galway, two shops had it for sale, but at a price beyond the reach of most people; whilst they did not keep the New Testament at all. Then in Cork, with over 76,000 inhabitants, there are twenty-four Roman Catholic booksellers, of whom twenty did not keep the Scriptures, two of them asking the would-be purchaser if the Douay New Testament, of which they knew nothing, was ‘a new monthly publication’? Lastly, in Dublin itself, out of four large Roman Catholic publishing and bookselling establishments, only one had the Scriptures, whilst the answer given to an inquiry for a New Testament at the depot of The Catholic Truth Society was, ‘We don’t keep it.’ The conclusion arrived at by the commissioners who ransacked the booksellers’ shops in Ireland for Bibles, was ‘that IN NINE TENTHS OF THE CITIES, TOWNS, AND VILLAGES OR IRELAND A ROMAN CATHOLIC COULD NOT PROCURE A COPY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE OR NEW TESTAMENT’” (Alexander Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, pp. 166-167).

Roman Catholic apologists would doubtless point out that Pius X authorized **the Society of St. Jerome** to publish the Gospels and the book of Acts in Italy. Alexander Robertson, a scholar who diligently researched Rome’s relation to the Bible at the turn of the century, gives the full picture of this interesting event:

With a great flourish of trumpets the book was announced, many Protestants believing that the Church was at last favourable to Bible circulation. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' I suppose those Protestants who praised the enterprise never read the preface, which so depreciates, almost vilifies, the Gospels, that if not deterred from reading them, anyone might well be prevented from setting any value upon them when read. It says, for example, that the most recent and most reliable researches have given a mortal blow to the false idea of the first Protestant Reformers, that one can go back to the pure Gospel of Jesus, for the pure Gospel has never existed; that the Gospels, which presuppose and lean upon the Divine teaching of the Church, are only an episode in the uninterrupted history of ecclesiastical tradition; and that if the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were to raise their heads out of their graves, they would be the first to marvel at the function, and at the work the Protestants attribute to them. However, as—in spite of the preface, and in spite of the notes, which an Italian said to me simply obscure and contradict the text—the book was to a certain extent circulating, and as it was not damaging the sales of the Gospels of the British and Foreign Bible Society and other Bible Societies, as it was hoped it would do, the infallible Pope Pius X, who had sanctioned and approved the St. Jerome Society and its publication, now, like his infallible predecessor LEO XIII, REVERSED HIS DECISION AND CONDUCT, DISSOLVED THE SOCIETY, AND HANDED OVER ITS PLANT AND BOOKS TO THE JESUITS, to share the fate of Lasserre's Gospels (Alexander Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, pp. 161, 162).

As we have seen, persecutions had been poured out upon Bible believers and upon Scripture distribution in **Mexico** from the early 16th century. As late as 1817 the Inquisition prosecuted Don Jose Xavier de Tribarren for reading prohibited books (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 297). The formal Inquisition was discontinued in 1820, but the persecutions did not cease then. In fact, incidents of persecution continue to be reported today, at the beginning of the 21st century.

A curious instance of the strictness with which the laws against prohibited books were enforced is afforded by an episode, in 1806, of the Louisiana Purchase. As this rendered necessary a delimitation of the boundary between Mexico and the United States, Carlos IV ordered an investigation and report from the viceroy, who employed Fray Melchor de Talamantes to make it. He found it necessary to consult the works of Robertson and Raynal, but these were in the Index and he applied to the Inquisition, through the viceroy, for the requisite license, saying that, although the books were detestable, the information they contained, and especially their maps, were important for the public service. The request was refused and, as a compromise, a formal commission was given to two calificadores, Fray Jose Paredo and Fray Jose Pichardo, to examine the dangerous books and report to Talamantes such information on the subject as they might find (Lea, *The Inquisition in the Spanish Dependencies*, p. 274).

Mexican persecutions in more recent days are described as follows:

In an open letter, addressed to the Archbishop of Mexico and printed as a large poster, the Protestants recounted the sad facts relating to a long line of Protestant martyrs in Mexico, beginning in 1821, when a fanatical crowd, instigated by a priest, brutally attacked a whole congregation. In 1872 John Stephens, a missionary, was assassinated by the Catholics. Others—PASTORS AND BIBLE COLPORTEURS—were martyred in 1881, 1887, and 1902. Again in 1921, 1923, 1925, 1926, and 1928 pastors and members of evangelical churches were murdered. ... Romanists set fire to the church in Gloria, together with nine evangelical homes, resulting in seven people being killed. ... In Jalapa de Diaz, a Protestant church was half destroyed, and the women were attacked by the crowd, led by the priest, Jose R. Angulo. Details are also given of the attack made on the Protestants while meeting in a general

convention in Toluca on July 14, 1946. In each one of these incidents the hand of a Roman priest can be detected.

The violent Catholic attack against Protestants which flared in the Mexican town of San Felipe de Santiago on July 9, 1946 ... in a full story *Tiempo* (Mexican news magazine corresponding to the *Time Magazine*) recorded ['Intolerance,' *Tiempo*, August 9, 1946, pp. 6-7] that on Wednesday, July 31, two agents of the Federal Judicial Police, Marcos Fernandez Ocana and Leopoldo Arenas Diaz, were sent to San Felipe de Santiago, Mexico. They had been sent there to investigate acts of religious intolerance that had been committed throughout that vicinity by Catholic fanaticism. They were accompanied by two evangelists, Francisco Vazquez and Cesareo Antonio, who were to appear on a case dealing with the same matter.

The news of the arrival of these four persons provoked the alarm of the parish priest and the mayor, Pedro Juarez, both accomplices in the reported acts. These two men decided to give the visitors a worthy reception. For this purpose they gathered together the people of the town, most of them indigenous, and served them liquor until they were drunk. In short, when the agents arrived at the town square, Pedro Juarez, the mayor, wheedled them into coming with him to the city hall. There they were tied and then tortured.

Marcos Fernandez Ocana was tortured most fiendishly. His hairy skin was wrested from his body with a machete and, while he was still alive, his eyes were plucked out with a nail. Then his ears were clipped, some teeth loosened with stone blows and his body clubbed until his bones were broken. ... Although their ears were clipped, their bones were broken, and they were in a state of agony, the two evangelists escaped death. The desire to prolong as much as possible the torture of the Protestants permitted the federal troops to arrive—at noon on August 1—to rescue the victims (Montano, *Behind the Purple Curtain*, pp. 92-94).

In the first half of the 20th century, Roman Catholic persecutions against the Bible continued in **Peru**. Writing in 1950, Walter Montano made the following observation:

This indicates that Peru, after four centuries since Rome has been enthroned here, is still a land where religion is imposed upon the people by force. It is not a personal experience. The spirit of the Inquisition still runs rampant not only in Peru but in all Latin America. One must acknowledge the beliefs of the Catholic Church, whether or not he believes them, or else he is excommunicated. ... Coinciding with the adoption of the Atlantic Charter, the Roman Catholic Church's recrudescence of persecution against freedom lovers was increased. The dignitaries of the Church, followed by thousands of fanatical people, marched in processions to the main square parks where THEY HAD PILED UP ANY NUMBER OF 'PROTESTANT BIBLES' AND BURNED THEM in a special ceremony, condemning at the same time all the heretics, as well as 'lifting up the zeal of the Catholic Action' to fight against 'all the evils that oppose the true Church' (Montano, *The Purple Curtain*, pp. 110-112).

Alexander Robertson wrote:

In a book on Peru recently published, by Miss Geraldine Guinness, we are told that in every town and village in Peru some zealous cura has collected the Bible Society's Gospels and Testaments and burned them in the plaza. In Callao and Arequipa colporteurs were imprisoned; in Tiahuanaco one was stoned and left for dead on the roadside; and in **Bolivia** a native worker was murdered. In December 1907 Bibles and Testaments were collected by the priests and burned at Santa Cruz, in the **Madeira Islands**; and at Laibach, in **Austria**, the same thing happened a few years ago, and indeed it has often happened to my knowledge in out-of-the-way Austrian villages (*The Papal Conquest*, 1909, p. 163).

Catholic persecutions against the Bible also continued in the twentieth century in **Quebec**. An article in *The Gospel Witness and Brethren Missionary Herald* in the 1940s reported that the Union of Regular Baptist Churches had given out thousands of copies of the New Testament in French to Roman Catholics in Quebec and North Ontario. These Scriptures had no notes or comments. "In every parish where we have worked, we have found without exception that THE PRIESTS ORDERED THEIR PEOPLE TO BURN THE BIBLE. Some priests have taken copies of the New Testament into the pulpit and told their people that it was a 'filthy book,' fit only for the fire; they have commanded them, at the peril of their souls' eternal salvation, not to read the Word of God! The Archbishop of Montreal warned all 'the faithful' in that great city that there was 'an attack on the faith and customs of our population in Quebec'" (Montano, p. 113). The Cardinal-Archbishop of Quebec wrote an official communique, issued over his signature, in which HE COMMANDED ALL FAITHFUL ROMAN CATHOLICS TO "BURN THE BIBLE" (Montano, p. 114).

**“By 1967 a Roman Catholic cardinal was one of the editors of the United Bible Societies (UBS) Greek New Testament. This is Carlo Martini. He is the Archbishop of Milan, and his diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million ‘laity.’”**



## **PART IV**

# **The Roman Catholic Church Supports the Critical Text**

The invention of movable type in the middle of the 15th century marked the beginning of the end of Rome's ability to control distribution of the Bible. It had never been able to stop all "unauthorized" Bible translation and distribution, of course, but it made a royal effort and severely limited distribution of the Word of God in the common languages of the people.

When copies of Scripture had to be painstakingly written out by hand, they could not be mass produced and distribution was slow and difficult and extremely expensive. Even a portion of Scripture was of immense monetary value. Historian Thomas Armitage tells us that in 1274 the Abbot of Croxton paid for a "fairly written Bible in nine volumes" the sum of a little over 33 English pounds and 6 shillings. One pound being 20 shillings, the Bible cost the Abbot 666 shillings. The full yearly wage for a university scholar was only 50 shillings, and in that day two arches of the London bridge cost only 25 pounds, or 500 shillings (Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, I, p. 314)!

The printing press changed that. Thousands of copies of a book could be made in the time it formerly took to make one. As we have seen, Rome continued to do everything in its power to halt the progress of the printed editions of the Scriptures and of sound Bible teaching, but the dark clouds had begun to roll back.

From the mid-15th century to the end of the 19th, the light shown brighter and brighter as countless copies of Scripture spread throughout the world on the wings of missionary activity. With the founding of the modern Bible societies in 1804, the Bible spread even faster. An estimated one-half billion copies of the Bible, New Testament, and other Scripture portions were circulated by the Bible societies during the 19th century alone. The Scriptures were distributed in hundreds of languages during that century. The Bible library maintained by the British and Foreign Bible Society, at the end of its first 100 years (1904), contained 9,849 volumes representing 610 languages (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 203). Dr. Olaf Norlie, writing in 1934, estimated that two billion Scriptures had been published since the invention of printing.

Rome was forced to change its tactics. In what we consider to be one of the most blatantly hypocritical actions in history, the Roman Catholic Church—after anathematizing Bible translation in the vernacular languages for hundreds of years, after putting Bible translators and distributors and readers to death and tormenting them in unspeakably cruel ways for hundreds of years, after cursing the Bible societies

# THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Edited by

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in cooperation with the

Institute for New Testament Textual Research,

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under the direction of Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

throughout the 19th century—in the 20th century joined hands with the Bible Societies to promote the Bible. What kind of Bible? The critical Greek text and translations of the Scriptures based thereupon.

It is extremely important to note that the Roman Catholic Church has never given its approval to the Authorized English Version or to the Received Greek New Testament. The first “Protestant” Bible to receive the Catholic Church’s imprimatur (Latin meaning “let it be printed”) was the Revised Standard Version (RSV, 195), which was based, of course, on the critical Westcott-Hort type of Greek text. The RSV was approved by Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston, Massachusetts.

**The Driebergen conference of Bible societies**, held in June 1964, was attended by Roman Catholics. Consider three of the recommendations that came out of this conference: (1) “to prepare a ‘common text’ of the Bible in the original languages, acceptable to ALL Churches, including Roman Catholic”; (2) “to explore the possibility of preparing a

‘common translation’ in certain languages, which could be used by Protestants and Roman Catholics alike”; (3) “that the Bible societies should consider translating and publishing the Apocrypha when Churches specifically requested it” (Andrew Brown, *The Word of God among All Nations*, p. 122).

In 1965, “the **Second Vatican Council** set its seal of approval on this form of co-operation” (Brown, p. 122).

No time was wasted in pursuing this goal. In 1966, the Catholic Church established the **Vatican Office for Common Bible Work**. That same year it was announced that the British & Foreign Bible Society had reached an agreement to work with the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conference of Tanganyika to produce a revision of the Swahili Bible that would include the Catholic apocryphal books. That was also the year in which the American Bible Society’s Today’s English Version New Testament first appeared and gained almost immediate acceptance by the Roman Catholic Church. It received the imprimatur (official approval of publication) of Boston’s Cardinal Richard Cushing.

In 1969, the **World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate** was formed with the goal of coordinating the work of ecumenical Bible translation projects jointly conducted with the United Bible Societies.

By 1967, a Roman Catholic cardinal was appointed as one of the editors of the United Bible Societies (UBS) Greek New Testament. This was **Carlo Martini**. He is a Jesuit and is the retired Archbishop of Milan. His diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million “laity.” He is professor of New Testament Textual Criticism at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He is also president of the Council of European Bishop’s Conferences.



Carlo Martini

By 1976, in the one decade following Second Vatican Council, more than 130 inter-confessional translation projects had been undertaken and more than 50 inter-confessional translations of the N.T. completed. The inter-confessional Bibles include the apocryphal books. It is also a requirement that translations prepared and published by the Catholics in these joint endeavors include Catholic notes and comments.

By 1981, there were over 200 interconfessional translation projects in progress. Also by that year over 500,000 copies of the Good News Bible, with the apocryphal books, had been published and distributed by the American Bible Society.

By 1982, one Vatican secretariat sponsored more than a hundred full-time scholars in cooperation with the United Bible Societies in translation projects.

By 1984, the pace had quickened. Out of a total of 590 United Bible Societies translation projects, as many as 390 had Roman Catholic participation.

In 1986, the United Bible Societies presented a copy of the new Italian interconfessional Bible to the pope. (For more on this see *Unholy Hands on God’s Holy Book: Report on the United Bible Societies*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.)

## **Why Does Rome Support the Modern Critical Text and Translations?**

The principal and simplest explanation of why the Roman Catholic Church changed tactics so dramatically in the 20th century is that it was forced to do so. In the early part of the century, an authority on Rome’s tactics testified: “That the Roman Church seems to tolerate the Bible at all anywhere, is due to the fact that she has to pay deference either to Protestantism or to an enlightened opinion; for where these do not exist it does not

hesitate to condemn and destroy it, and to persecute and even murder those who disseminate it” (Alexander Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, p. 163).

The Roman Catholic Church has demonstrated what it will do when it has the ability. The past fifteen centuries provide irrefutable evidence of this. The Roman Catholic Church grants men liberties of speech and religion only when it is forced to do so, but the times have changed. Rome can no longer control the kingdoms of this world as it once did.

Her time will come again, briefly, during the last hours of this sin-sick age. She and her daughters will join hands with the Antichrist for a few hours, before she is destroyed. The Bible of Revelation describes this amazing scene (Revelation 17-18).

There is more to the matter than this, though. It has been one of Rome’s age-old tactics, not only to change the Word of God and to add to the Word of God, but also to corrupt the Word of God and to diminish its authority by setting up conflicting texts. **Thus, the modern critical Greek texts and the multiplicity of translations thereof play right into the hands of Rome.**

**FIRST, THE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT HAS RESULTED IN THE WEAKENING OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY.** The Roman Catholic Church in the first millennium not only introduced glosses and corruptions in the form of heretical notes and omissions and additions to the text, it set up a competing standard by putting its imprimatur upon a different type of text than that used by apostolic churches of the first centuries. This is precisely what we see in the 20th century. The introduction of the critical Greek text as a challenge to the Received Text, and the multiplicity of modern English translations as a challenge to the Authorized Version, has greatly confused and weakened biblical authority. The one authoritative “thus saith the Lord” has been replaced by a multiplicity of “older and better manuscripts say” or “some manuscripts read” or “my version says.” This has played right into the hands of Rome for it has weakened the authority of the Bible. The man who preaches from the modern texts and versions can preach with authority only in generalities; he cannot preach with authority in specifics because there are conflicting readings. This is a serious matter.

The critical text is not founded upon faith in God’s promise of preservation but upon the shifting sand of human theorizing. Thus, it can never be settled. Those who have adopted the critical text and the versions translated from it can never have a final authority because their Bible is never sure and settled. The very concept of dogmatism in biblical study and preaching has been diminished by the multiplicity of versions, and I believe this is plainly evident in the passivism and relativism found among modern version proponents. Modern versions have played a significant role in creating an environment conducive to end-time ecumenism. Rome has benefited from this because the only sure defense against its errors is a solid faith in the Bible as the perfect and

sufficient Word of God. Those who are loosened from the anchor of absolute biblical authority begin drifting toward Rome's rocky shores.

The modern critical text is intimately associated with the influx of modernistic theology in the 19th century. It is a text that is founded upon a stream of end-time apostasy. This is evident in a number of ways. It can be seen in the men who developed the textual theories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The founders of modern textual criticism were overwhelmingly of a modernistic bent. It can also be seen in the textual theories themselves and in the theological nature of the critical Greek text. It can also be seen in the theology of a majority of the men involved in the new translations.

The historical hour that produced the Westcott-Hort Greek text and the English Revision of 1881 was an hour in which end-time apostasy was blossoming. Modernism and Darwinian evolution had been widely adopted among theologians. The Tractarian Movement had brought a Romanizing leaven into the Church of England. Dr. M.R. DeHaan contrasted the King James Bible with the modern versions by labeling the former as "the production of an age of faith" and the latter as "the production of an age of doubt" (*Bible Versions and Perversions*, 1962).

Dr. James H. Sightler gave the following summary in a message before the Dean Burgon Society in 1990:

The AV 1611 was born in an age of belief. There was no Unitarianism, no Higher Criticism, no Socialism, and no Darwinism. The English language had entered a golden period. There were classical scholars writing whose books would be used of the Lord 120 years later to help bring about the conversion of Wesley and Whitefield. By 1881 the Anglican church had been seriously damaged by Arianism, Socianism, apathy, unbelief, Socialism, Darwinism, and worst of all, had had to accommodate itself to the Oxford movement with its Catholicized ritual. By 1881 the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Oxford Press had felt it expedient to publish a 39-volume *Oxford Library of the Fathers* which was a paean to the founders of the Catholic church and which was edited by none other than Philip Schaff. True piety was unacceptable; spiritual deadness was the order of the day. **The mid-nineteenth century was the worst possible time for translation of the Bible.** The result—that is the English Revised Version of 1881 and its descendants, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, the Version—was entirely predictable.

Historian J.A. Froude wrote in great detail of the wretched spiritual climate in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Froude's father was an Anglican parish minister, and an older brother, Richard Hurrell Froude, was a leader in the Oxford Movement. Thus, J.A. was in a position to have first-hand information about the religious situation in England. The twin evils of Rationalism and Romanism had devastated the Church of England.

'Mysteries' which had been dismissed as superstitions at the Reformation, and had never been heard of, were now preached again by half the clergy, and had revolutionized the ritual in our churches. Every county had its Anglican monasteries and convents. Romanism had lifted up its head again. It had its hierarchy and cardinals; it was a power in Parliament and in the London

salons. The father confessors were busy in our families, dictating conditions of marriages, dividing wives from husbands, and children from parents.

By the side of the revival of Catholicism there was a corresponding phenomenon of opposite and no less startling kind. Half a century ago any one who openly questioned the truth of Christianity was treated as a public offender and was excommunicated by society. Now, while one set of men were bringing back medievalism, science and criticism were assailing with impunity the authority of the Bible; miracles were declared impossible; even Theism itself was treated as an open question, and subjects which in our fathers' time were approached only with the deepest reverence and solemnity were discussed among the present generation with as much freedom as the common problems of natural philosophy or politics.

**Both these movements began within a short distance of one another, and were evidently connected. ...**

... at present there is scarcely a clergyman in the country who does not carry upon him in one form or other the marks of the Tractarian movement. ... The Church of England has not only admitted Catholic doctrine but has rushed into it with extraordinary enthusiasm (James Froude, *Short Studies about Great Subjects*, 1883, pp. 163, 164, 218).

Another Anglican gave the following testimony:

Fifty years ago [1837] there were not five hundred Roman priests in Great Britain; now there are two thousand six hundred. Fifty years ago there were not five hundred chapels; now there are fifteen hundred seventy-five. Fifty years ago there were no monasteries at all in Britain; now there are two hundred and twenty-five. There were even then sixteen convents, but now there are over four hundred of these barred and bolted and impenetrable prisons, in which fifteen thousand English women are kept prisoners at the mercy of a celibate clergy, who have power, unless their behests are obeyed, to inflict on these hapless and helpless victims torture under the name of penance. Fifty years ago there were but two colleges in our land for the training of Roman Catholic priests—i.e. of men bound by oath to act in England as agents of a foreign power, the one great object of which is avowed to be the dismemberment of our empire and the ruin of our influence in the world; now there are twenty-nine such schools (H.G. Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, 1891, pp. 2, 3).

It was in this pot of end-time theological confusion that the stew of the critical Greek text and the modern translations was cooked up.

We have carefully and extensively documented this in the book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* (Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143. fbns@wayoflife.org).

## **SECOND, THE MODERN CRITICAL TEXT EXHIBITS SOME OF THE SAME TYPE OF OMISSIONS AND CORRUPTIONS AS THOSE LONG ACCEPTED BY ROME.**

The Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate of the fourth century contained errors derived from Origen and other Bible corrupters. One writer says: "It is certainly a remarkable circumstance that so many of the Roman Catholic readings in the New Testament which in Reformation and early post-Reformation times were denounced by Protestants as corruptions of the pure text of God's Word, should now be adopted by the revisers of our English Bible. Some of the watchmen of Zion may possibly see in this circumstance an

indication of the re-ascendancy of popery...” (*The Excellence of the Authorized Version*, Trinitarian Bible Society).

We saw in Part II that the Jerome Vulgate and the translations that were based on it contained some of the same type of omissions and corruptions found in the Greek manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics. To emphasize this, the following comparison demonstrates that some (but by no means, all) of the key omissions found in the modern versions are also found in the Roman Catholic Douay Version that was translated from the Latin Vulgate. The version we have used for this comparison is a reprint of the 1820 Dublin edition by Richard Coyne. It contains the recommendation of J.T. Troy as follows: “I certify that the sacred Text of the New Testament in this Edition of it, is conformable to that of former approved Editions; and particularly to that of the Douay English Version sanctioned by me, and published by R. Cross, in the year 1891.” It also contains a rescript of Pius VII, dated April 18, 1820, which warns of reading “vicious books” that assail “our holy religion” and urges the faithful to read only “the Editions approved by the Church.” I have also checked this against the 1582 Rheims that appears in the 1841 Hexapla.

### **The Catholic Douay and the Modern Versions against the Received Text and the KJV**

MATTHEW 5:44 — “bless them that curse you” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 6:13 — “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 9:13 — “to repentance” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 12:35 — “of the heart” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 13:51 — “Jesus saith unto them” and “Lord” is omitted in the Douay and many modern versions.

—— 15:8 — “draweth nigh unto me with their mouth” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 16:3 — “O ye hypocrites” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 20:7 — “whatsoever is right receive” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 20:22 — “baptised with Christ’s baptism” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 25:13 — “wherein the Son of Man cometh” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 28:2 — “from the door” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 28:9 — “they went to tell his disciples” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

MARK 2:17 — “to repentance” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 6:11 – “more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 9:49 – “every sacrifice shall be salted” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 10:21 – “take up the cross” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 11:10 – “in the name of the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 13:14 – “spoken by Daniel the prophet” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

LUKE 2:33 – “Joseph” is changed to “father” in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 2:43 – “Joseph and his mother” is changed to “his parents” in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 4:8 – “get thee behind me Satan” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 9:54 – “even as Elijah did” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 11:2-4 – “Our ... which art in heaven ... Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth ... but deliver us from evil” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

JOHN 4:42 – “the Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 11:41 – “where the dead was laid” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 17:12 – “in the world” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

ACTS 2:30 – “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 7:30 – “of the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 16:7 – “Spirit of Jesus” is added in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 16:31 – “Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 17:26 – “blood” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 20:32 – “brethren” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 23:9 – “let us not fight against God” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 24:15 – “of the dead” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

ROMANS 1:16 – “of Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 1:29 – “fornication” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 11:6 – “But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 14:6 – “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 – “for us” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 6:20 – “and in your spirit, which are God’s” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.



- 7:5 – “fasting” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 10:28 – “for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 15:47 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 2 CORINTHIANS 4:10 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 5:18 – “Jesus” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- GALATIANS 3:17 – “in Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 4:7 – “of God ... through Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- EPHESIANS 3:9 – “by Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- COLOSSIANS 1:14 – “through his blood” is missing in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 – “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 1 TIMOTHY 1:17 – “wise” God is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 2:7 – “in Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 3:16 – “God was manifest in the flesh” is changed to “which was manifest in the flesh” in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 4:12 – “in spirit” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 6:5 – “from such withdraw thyself” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 2 TIMOTHY 4:1 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- TITUS 1:4 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- HEBREWS 1:3 – “by himself” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 3:1 – “Christ” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 7:21 – “after the order of Melchisedec” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 10:30 – “saith the Lord” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 11:11 – “was delivered of a child” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- JAMES 3:12 – “fountain both yield salt water and fresh” is changed to “neither can salt water yield sweet” in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 5:16 – “faults” is changed to “sins” in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 1 PETER 1:22 – “through the Spirit” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 2:2 – “grow unto salvation” is added in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 4:1 – “for us” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 4:14 – “on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.
- 2 PETER 2:17 – “for ever” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

1 JOHN 4:3 – “Christ is come in the flesh” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 5:13 – “and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

JUDE 1:25 – “wise” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions. Further “by Jesus Christ our Lord” is added in the Douay and most modern versions.

REVELATION 1:11 – “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 2:13 – “thy works” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 8:13 – “angel” is changed to “eagle” in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 16:17 – “of heaven” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

—— 21:24 – “of them which are saved” is omitted in the Douay and most modern versions.

This is not an exhaustive list.

We have also shown in Part II that the Vulgate was continually changing. In fact, its unsettled condition was one of its chief features. The Douay, for example, was translated from the Clementine edition of the Vulgate, which was made in 1592, and it contained more than 3,000 alterations from the text of the Sixtus Vulgate that preceded it. These alterations were not only word changes, but “whole passages had been omitted or introduced” (Jacobus, p. 13).

The reader is referred to Part II and also to the section in Part III covering the Douay for more about the Vulgate.

**TODAY THE CATHOLIC LATIN VULGATE HAS COME FULL CIRCLE AND HAS BEEN CONFORMED TO THE MODERN CRITICAL GREEK TEXT**, which, in turn, favors the type of manuscripts that textual critics tell us are like those used by Jerome. “The new Latin Vulgate, authorised by Pope Paul VI in 1965, was issued by the Vatican and published by the German Bible Society (a member of the UBS), in 1979, WITH A CORRECTED LATIN TEXT WHICH ‘CONFORMS’ TO THE SAME UBS THIRD EDITION OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT” (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome?* p. 201).

I have no doubt that some will try to downplay the association between the Catholic versions and the modern versions, and will claim that I see a significance in this only because of my “bias” for the Received Text and the English Authorized Version. The fact is that many textual critics have observed this connection and have found it to be highly significant.

During the first half of this century, the well-known Presbyterian scholar B.B. Warfield saw the connection between Catholic Bibles and the modern versions. He stated:

I HAVE BEEN SURPRISED, IN COMPARING THE REVISED TESTAMENT WITH OTHER VERSIONS, TO FIND HOW MANY OF THE CHANGES, WHICH ARE IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE, HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED BY THE RHEMISH TRANSLATION, which now forms

a part of what is known as the Douay Bible. ... And yet a careful comparison of these new translations with the Rhemish Testament, shows them, in many instances, to be simply a return to this old version... (Warfield's *Collection of Opinions*, II, pp. 52, 53).

Warfield said that many of the changes in the modern Bibles are "important," and we concur; but he also believed that the changes are valuable, and in this we believe he was wrong.

Warfield was so impressed with the association between Catholic Bibles and the modern versions that he thought it demonstrated the worthiness of the former. He said the similarity between the Catholic and the modern versions "leads us to think that possibly there were as finished scholars three hundred years ago as now, and nearly as good apparatus for the proper rendering of the original text" (Ibid.).

We think, contrariwise, that the similarity between the Catholic versions and the modern versions demonstrates the corruption of the latter!

William Moulton, in his *History of the English Bible*, 1878, also noted the similarity between the Catholic texts and versions and the modern translations: "IN THESE AND MANY OTHER INSTANCES THE RHEMISH TESTAMENT AGREES WITH THE BEST CRITICAL EDITIONS OF THE PRESENT DAY" (Moulton, pp. 184, 85). These so-called "best critical editions" were the critical Greek texts that paved the way for the Westcott-Hort text of 1881 and upon which the modern translations are based. Moulton worked with Westcott and Hort on the New Testament committee for the English Revised Version.

Andrew Edgar, in his *Bibles of England*, 1889, made a similar observation, noting the similarity between the Catholic Vulgate and the modern versions. After listing 12 examples in which the 1881 Revised Version follows the Vulgate, he comments:

IT IS CERTAINLY A REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT SO MANY OF THE CATHOLIC READINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IN REFORMATION AND EARLY POST-REFORMATION TIMES WERE DENOUNCED BY PROTESTANTS AS CORRUPTIONS OF THE PURE TEXT OF GOD'S WORD, SHOULD NOW, IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, BE ADOPTED BY THE REVISERS OF OUR TIME-HONOURED ENGLISH BIBLES. Some of the watchmen of Zion may possibly see in this circumstance an indication of the re-ascendency of Popery in Protestant churches. *There is no cause for alarm on the subject* (emphasis added) (Edgar, p. 347).

We could not disagree more. We believe a man has to be inflicted with spiritual blindness NOT to be alarmed that Catholic readings that were rejected by God's people for hundreds of years are now accepted into our Bibles. Those who support modern textual criticism see no problem with this. It appears to us, though, that these men do not see the issue of Bible texts and translations through the eyes of faith. *When they look at the history of the transmission of the text, they see man more than God.* I have read at least a couple hundred books by modern textual scholars and translators, and rarely do they even mention divine preservation. Edgar gives the typical viewpoint as follows:

We need not be surprised either to find that when Stephen and Beza astonished and confounded the world of their day by the unearthing of old and lost Greek manuscripts of the New Testament which presented many points of difference from the Vulgate, they had not lighted on either the oldest or the most incorrupt versions that had been stowed away in times of ignorance (Edgar, pp. 347, 48).

This sounds reasonable, but it leaves one very important element out of the picture: GOD!!! Where was God when the editors and translators of the Reformation era were producing Bibles for the world? God had promised to preserve His Word. Why, then, did He not guide the Bible-believing men of that most important era? Why would He allow them to have only a corrupted edition of the Bible to distribute to the ends of the earth? For our part, we are convinced that God did guide them, and the biblical text they passed on to the next generation was indeed that pure text of Scripture that had been received from the apostles. Contrary to statements by many modern textual critics, the term "Received Text" was not merely an advertising blurb; it was a statement of conviction. It expressed the conviction among men of God in that era that this was the Greek text received from the apostles. They knew about the sort of textual omissions and changes that appeared in the Westcott-Hort Text at the end of the 19th century. They knew about the Vaticanus manuscript. They had examples of its readings, but they rejected that type of text as corrupt, and they were right.

We believe the modern versions exhibit many of the same type of omissions and changes found in the old Roman versions because they all follow similarly corrupt Greek manuscripts and share a faulty view of the transmission of the biblical text. Many of these corruptions can be traced back to the first four centuries after Christ's ascension. We do not think it is insignificant that one of the old manuscripts chiefly preferred by modern textual editors and translators was found in the Vatican library in the keeping of Rome. That is the very last place one should look if he is searching for the pure Word of God. Rome has never accepted or authenticated the Greek Received Text or the Authorized English Bible, but it has accepted the modern versions and the critical Greek text. That speaks volumes to those who have ears to hear.

**“This is the sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care. ... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, SUBSISTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHICH IS GOVERNED BY THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER and by the bishops in communion with him.”—*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church***

## **PART V**

# **Has Rome Changed?**

Some who read this might think what Rome did in the past is irrelevant since it no longer persecutes after the same fashion, no longer condemns Bible societies, etc. Our answer is this: though the Roman Catholic Church has changed in a great many superficial ways and though it has changed tactics, it has not changed at its heart. Consider the following evidence:

### **Rome's Doctrines and Claims Have Not Changed**

According to its most recent and authoritative statements, such as the Second Vatican Council, the *New Catholic Catechism*, and the official statements of Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Roman Catholic Church has not changed its doctrinal position. We have documented this in the book *Evangelicals and Rome* (Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061).

The Roman Catholic Church still claims to be the one true church of Jesus Christ. It still claims that its traditions and dogmas are equal in authority to the Scripture. It still claims sole authority to interpret the Scripture. It still claims to have an infallible pope, who is the head of all the churches.

These unscriptural, pompous claims were at the heart of Rome's persecutions against Bible believers of centuries past. Rome has been forced to change its tactics, but it has not changed its heart.

The following statements from the Second Vatican Council could not be plainer:

This is the sole Church of Christ which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter's pastoral care. ... This Church, constituted and organized as a society in the present world, SUBSISTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, WHICH IS GOVERNED BY THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER and by the bishops in communion with him (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 8).

This holy Council first of all turns its attention to the Catholic faithful. Basing itself on scripture and tradition, it teaches that THE CHURCH, A PILGRIM NOW ON EARTH, IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION. ... [Christ] is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself ... affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it, or to remain in it (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 14).

It is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help towards salvation, that the fulness of the means of salvation can be obtained. IT WAS TO THE APOSTOLIC

COLLEGE ALONE OF WHICH PETER IS THE HEAD, THAT WE BELIEVE THAT OUR LORD ENTRUSTED ALL THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT, IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH ON EARTH THE ONE BODY OF CHRIST into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the people of God (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Decree on Ecumenism, 3).

God's only-begotten Son ... has won a treasure for the militant Church ... HE HAS ENTRUSTED IT TO BLESSED PETER, the key-bearer of heaven, AND TO HIS SUCCESSORS WHO ARE CHRIST'S VICARS ON EARTH, so that they may distribute it to the faithful for their salvation. ... The merits of the Blessed Mother of God and of all the elect ... are known to add further to this treasury (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Apostolic Constitution on the Revision of Indulgences, chapter iv, 8).

Consider what Pope John Paul II said about papal supremacy. In May 1981, he made the following statement to Catholic Charismatic Renewal leaders that were gathered in Rome:

Your choice of Rome as the site of the conference is a special sign of your understanding of the importance of being rooted in that Catholic unity of faith and charity which finds its visible center in the See of Peter (*National Service Committee Newsletter*, June and July, 1981).

Consider what John Paul II said in a speech to the cardinals at the Vatican:

In his speech to the cardinals in the Sistine Chapel at Rome the new pope ... spoke of his calling 'by the mysterious and fatherly will of God to the serious responsibility of being the Supreme Pontiff,' and referring to the problems and dangers of this age, he said, 'The ship of the church must not fear, because IT IS PILOTED BY CHRIST AND BY HIS VICAR.' Later in his address he saluted 'the priests and faithful of the diocese of Rome, to whom we are bound by our succession to Peter, and by the unique responsibility of filling the chair of the diocese of Rome, which presides in universal love' ("Rome and Unity," *Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly Record*, Oct.-Dec., 1978, pp. 14-15).

Consider what he said while visiting the World Council of Churches:

Pope John Paul II emphasized on a visit here to the World Council of Churches that the way to Christian unity must be through recognition of the Papacy. The pope asserted that 'TO BE IN COMMUNION WITH THE BISHOP OF ROME IS TO GIVE VISIBLE EVIDENCE THAT ONE IS IN COMMUNION WITH ALL THOSE WHO CONFESS THAT SAME FAITH, with those who have confessed it since Pentecost and with those who will confess it until the day of the Lord shall come. THAT IS OUR CATHOLIC CONVICTION AND OUR FIDELITY TO CHRIST FORBIDS US TO GIVE IT UP.' At a Mass earlier in the stadium of Lugano, Switzerland, the pope told a predominantly Catholic crowd that 'THERE CANNOT EXIST A LOCAL CHURCH (WHICH) DOES NOT NOURISH A SINCERE AND PROFOUND COMMUNION WITH THE SEE OF PETER' ("Pope says Christian unity must come through him," *The Christian News*, July 1, 1985, p. 14).

Consider a speech that John Paul II gave in November 1986:

'THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH GATHERS IN UNITY AROUND THE SEE OF ROME.' This was the caption above the message of Pope John Paul II given Nov. 9, 1986, and printed in the official Vatican Newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. The pope once again spelled out very clearly the Roman Catholic heresy concerning papal position and authority. Pope John Paul II said, 'For this reason, the festivity of today takes on profound theological-dogmatic importance, because it clearly brings out the fact that the Christian communities, which come together in the

churches to hear the Word of God and to offer the Eucharistic Sacrifice, are on the authentic path of the Truth PRECISELY TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY ARE IN DOCTRINAL AND DISCIPLINARY COMMUNION WITH HIM WHOM CHRIST HIMSELF SET AS FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH, PETER, AND HIS SUCCESSORS' (*Foundation* magazine, November/December 1986).

These speeches leave no doubt that John Paul II, the most popular and influential pope in modern history, believed himself to be the successor to a Peter who supposedly has been given supreme power over all churches. In the previous speeches John Paul II spoke of himself as the Supreme Pontiff, as co-pilot with Christ, as Christ's vicar, as the successor to Peter, and he claimed that the visible center for Christian unity is the "See of Peter"—the Vatican and the papacy.

## **Rome's Attitude toward the Council of Trent Has Not Changed**

As we have seen in these studies, the Council of Trent was a Catholic council held from 1545-1563 with the objective of destroying the Protestant Reformation. This council denied every Reformation doctrine, including Scripture alone and grace alone. Trent hurled 125 anathemas (eternal damnation) against Bible-believing Christians, including the following:

*FOURTH SESSION: DECREE CONCERNING THE CANONICAL SCRIPTURES:* "If anyone does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts [the 66 books of the Bible plus 12 apocryphal books, being two of Paralipomenon, two of Esdras, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Sophonias, two of Macabees], as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate Edition, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, LET HIM BE ANATHEMA."

*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that all works done before justification, in whatever manner they may be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; that the more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 7).

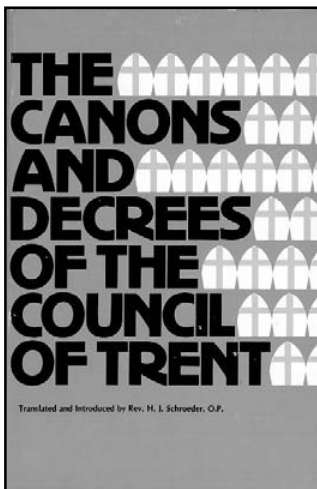
*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 11).

*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 12).

*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that the justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not the cause of its increase, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 24).

*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that the good works of the one justified are in such manner the gifts of God that they are not also the good





merits of him justified; or that the one justified by the good works that he performs by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and in case he dies in grace, the attainment of eternal life itself and also an increase of glory, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 32).

*SIXTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING JUSTIFICATION:* "If anyone says that the Catholic doctrine of justification as set forth by the holy council in the present decree, derogates in some respect from the glory of God or the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, and does not rather illustrate the truth of our faith and no less the glory of God and of Christ Jesus, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning Justification, Canon 33).

*SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM:* "If anyone says that in the Roman Church, which is the mother and mistress of all churches, there is not the true doctrine concerning the sacrament of baptism, let him be anathema" (Canons on Baptism, Canon 3).

*SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM:* "If anyone says that baptism is optional, that is, not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema" (Canons on Baptism, Canon 5).

*SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON BAPTISM:* "If anyone says that children, because they have not the act of believing, are not after having received baptism to be numbered among the faithful, and that for this reason are to be rebaptized when they have reached the years of discretion; or that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be baptized in the faith of the Church alone, let him be anathema" (Canons on Baptism, Canon 13).

*SEVENTH SESSION, CANONS ON CONFIRMATION:* "If anyone says that the confirmation of those baptized is an empty ceremony and not a true and proper sacrament; or that of old it was nothing more than a sort of instruction, whereby those approaching adolescence gave an account of their faith to the Church, let him be anathema" (Canons on Confirmation, Canon 1).

*THIRTEENTH SESSION, CANONS ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST:* "If anyone denies that in the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist are contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ, but says that He is in it only as in a sign, or figure or force, let him be anathema" (Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, Canon 1).

*THIRTEENTH SESSION, CANONS ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST:* "If anyone says that Christ received in the Eucharist is received spiritually only and not also sacramentally and really, let him be anathema" (Canons on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, Canon 8).

*FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE:* "If anyone says that in the Catholic Church penance is not truly and properly a sacrament instituted by Christ the Lord for reconciling the faithful of God as often as they fall into sin after baptism, let him be anathema" (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 1).

*FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE:* “If anyone denies that sacramental confession was instituted by divine law or is necessary to salvation; or says that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Catholic Church has always observed from the beginning and still observes, is at variance with the institution and command of Christ and is a human contrivance, let him be anathema” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 7).

*FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE:* “If anyone says that the confession of all sins as it is observed in the Church is impossible and is a human tradition to be abolished by pious people; or that each and all of the faithful of Christ or either sex are not bound thereto once a year in accordance with the constitution of the great Lateran Council, and that for this reason the faithful of Christ are to be persuaded not to confess during Lent, let him be anathema” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 8).

*FOURTEENTH SESSION, CANONS CONCERNING THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE:* “If anyone says that God always pardons the whole penalty together with the guilt and that the satisfaction of penitents is nothing else than the faith by which they perceive that Christ has satisfied for them, let him be anathema” (Canons Concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon 8).

*TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:* “If anyone says that in the mass a true and real sacrifice is not offered to God; or that to be offered is nothing else than that Christ is given to us to eat, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 1).

*TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:* “If anyone says that by those words, Do this for a commemoration of me, Christ did not institute the Apostles priests; or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer His own body and blood, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 2).

*TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:* “If anyone says that the sacrifice of the mass is one only of praise and thanksgiving; or that it is a mere commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross but not a propitiatory one; or that it profits him only who receives, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 3).

*TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:* “If anyone says that it is a deception to celebrate masses in honor of the saints and in order to obtain their intercession with God, as the Church intends, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 5).

*TWENTY-SECOND SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS:* “If anyone says that the canon of the mass contains errors and is therefore to be abrogated, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 6).

*TWENTY-THIRD SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRAMENT OF ORDER:* “If anyone says that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood, or that there is no power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord and of forgiving and retaining sins, but only the office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel; or that those who do not preach are not priests at all, let him be anathema” (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 1).

*TWENTY-THIRD SESSION, CANONS ON THE SACRAMENT OF ORDER:* "If anyone says that the bishops who are chosen by the authority of the Roman pontiff are not true and legitimate bishops, but merely human deception, let him be anathema" (Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass, Canon 8).

*TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION, DECREE ON PURGATORY:* "Since the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, following the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught in sacred councils and very recently in this ecumenical council that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful and chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar, the holy council commands the bishops that they strive diligently to the end that the sound doctrine of purgatory, transmitted by the Fathers and sacred councils, be believed and maintained by the faithful of Christ, and be everywhere taught and preached."

*TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION, ON THE INVOCATION, VENERATION, AND RELICS OF SAINTS, AND ON SACRED IMAGES:* "The holy council commands all bishops and others who hold the office of teaching and have charge of the cura animarum, that in accordance with the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, received from the primitive times of the Christian religion, and with the unanimous teaching of the holy Fathers and the decrees of sacred councils, they above all instruct the faithful diligently in matters relating to intercession and invocation of the saints, the veneration of relics, and the legitimate use of images, teaching them that the saints who reign together with Christ offer up their prayers to God for men, that it is good and beneficial suppliantly to invoke them and to have recourse to their prayers, assistance and support in order to obtain favors from God through His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our redeemer and savior; and that they think impiously who deny that the saints who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven are to be invoked, or who assert that they do not pray for men, or that our invocation of them to pray for each of us individually is idolatry, or that it is opposed to the word of God and inconsistent with the honor of the one mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, or that it is foolish to pray vocally or mentally to those who reign in heaven."

Pope Pius IV (1559-1565) issued a summary of the decisions of the council under the title of **Pope Pius's Creed**. We will quote part of this creed, which has ever since been regarded as an authoritative summary of the Catholic faith:

I profess also, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law ... namely, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony, and that they confer grace. ...

I profess likewise, that in the mass is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that, in the most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ...

I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful.

Likewise, that the saints reigning together with Christ, are to be honoured and invoked; that they offer prayers to God for us; and that their relics are to be venerated.

I most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, and of the mother of God, ever virgin, and also of the other saints, are to be had and retained; and that one honour and veneration are to be given to them.

I also affirm that the power of indulgences was left by Christ in the church, and that the use of them is most wholesome to Christian people.

I acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman church, the mother and mistress of all churches. And I promise to swear true obedience to the Roman bishop, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

I also profess, and undoubtedly receive all other things delivered, defined, and declared, by the sacred canons and general councils, and particularly by the holy Council of Trent. And likewise, I also condemn, reject, and anathematize, all things contrary thereto, and all heresies whatsoever condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church.

This true Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved...

These proclamations and anathemas were fleshed out in the murderous persecutions vented upon Bible-believing Christians by Rome, and the solemn fact is that the Council of Trent has never been annulled.

The Second Vatican Council of the mid-1960s referred to Trent dozens of times, quoted Trent's proclamations as authoritative, and reaffirmed Trent on every hand.

The *New Catholic Catechism* cites Trent no less than 99 times, by my own count.

At the opening of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII stated, "I do accept entirely all that has been decided and declared at the Council of Trent." Every cardinal, bishop and priest that participated in the Council signed a document affirming Trent.

Consider a few examples of how that modern Council looked upon Trent. These are excerpted from *Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*:

"THE DOGMATIC PRINCIPLES WHICH WERE LAID DOWN BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT [REMAIN] INTACT..." (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, chapter ii, 55).

"Therefore, FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT and of Vatican I, this present Council wishes to set forth authentic doctrine of divine revelation" (Constitution on Divine Revelation, prologue, 1).

"[Christ] is substantially present there through that conversion of bread and wine which, AS THE COUNCIL OF TRENT TELLS US, is most aptly named transubstantiation" (Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, c6).

"For under this form (LEAVING INTACT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, by which under either species or kind there is received the true sacrament and Christ whole and entire), the sign of the eucharistic banquet appears more perfectly" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, chapter ii, iii, b).

"In this way the liturgical norms of THE COUNCIL OF TRENT HAVE IN MANY RESPECTS BEEN FULFILLED AND PERFECTED BY THOSE OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, General Instruction on the Roman Missal, foreword, 15).

"THIS SACRED COUNCIL ACCEPTS LOYALLY THE VENERABLE FAITH OF OUR ANCESTORS in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death; and IT PROPOSES AGAIN THE DECREES OF THE SECOND COUNCIL OF NICEA, OF THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE, AND OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT" (Constitution on the Church, chapter vii, 51).

“The Fathers of the Council, CONTINUING THE WORK BEGUN BY THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, confidently entrust to superiors and professors in seminaries the duty of training Christ's future priests in the spirit of that renewal promoted by the Council itself” (Decree on the Training of Priests, conclusion).

The Roman Catholic Church still affirms the Council of Trent. The changes that occurred in the 20th century were largely window dressing. Rome remains the same blasphemous institution that hurled curses upon those who believe the Bible and who place their faith exclusively upon Jesus Christ and His Atonement. It still makes the same pompous claims to be the “mother” of all churches. It still claims to have authority to rule over all churches and to make laws equal in authority with the Scripture. It still claims its papacy is the rock upon which the church is founded.

As stated earlier, we must understand that the Catholic Church is not merely a congregation of individuals; it is an institution that claims to be *THE* church of Jesus Christ. It must be judged on the basis of its official dogmas, particularly the dogma and traditions of the papacy. If the papacy is false, the Roman Catholic Church is false, because it is the very foundation of the same. The popes claim to have inherited apostolic authority, to be the vicars [representatives] of Christ on earth, to be supreme over all bishops and pastors on the earth. If this is shown to be false, the Roman Catholic Church is shown to be a blasphemous and false institution. It is these claims that the popes have exercised throughout history and that have resulted in so much pain and bloodshed. The modern popes sit in the seat of their wicked forefathers. They do not use the same tactics, because they don't have the power at this point in history to do so, but they have not renounced the heretical claims of the papacy.

## **Rome's Goals Have Not Changed**

Furthermore, Rome's goals have not changed. The Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, which launched the Roman Catholic Church into the ecumenical movement, plainly stated that the unity of Christians could only be achieved on Rome's terms. Consider the following statements:

“The Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, namely, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered” (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, chapter iii, 22).

“The term ‘ecumenical movement’ indicates the initiatives and activities encouraged and organized, according to the various needs of the [Roman] Church and as opportunities offer, to promote Christian unity. ... The results will be that, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesiastical communion are overcome, ALL CHRISTIANS WILL BE GATHERED IN A COMMON CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST, INTO THE UNITY OF THE ONE AND ONLY CHURCH, WHICH CHRIST BESTOWED ON HIS CHURCH FROM THE BEGINNING. THE UNITY, WE BELIEVE, SUBSISTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS SOMETHING SHE CAN NEVER LOSE” (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Decree on Ecumenism, chapter i, 4).

“...ECUMENICAL ACTIVITY CANNOT BE OTHER THAN FULLY AND SINCERELY CATHOLIC, that is, loyal to the truth we have received from the Apostles and the Fathers, and in harmony with the faith which the Catholic Church has always professed” (*Vatican Council II—the Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Decree on Ecumenism, chapter iii, 24).

Words could not be plainer. In spite of the fact that some dramatic changes have been made since the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church remains the same unscriptural institution it always has been. It is not possible to believe the previously quoted Vatican II pronouncements and think otherwise. Yet, the lie that Catholicism is becoming more evangelical, more biblical, and more spiritual continues to be propagated with blind perseverance. It is this lie that is being used to encourage ecumenical relationships between Catholics and Protestants. The same lie has become a clever tool for persuading Catholics to stay in the Roman Church when they are converted or when they begin doubting unscriptural Catholic doctrines.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

# Appendix 1

## Directory for the Inquisitors

The following is from the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, published in Rome, in October 1584, by the command of the Cardinals Inquisitors General. It was dedicated to Pope Gregory XIII. This translation by J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, New York, 1838.

"All believers in Christ, by the necessity of salvation, are subject to the Roman Pontiff, who carries the two swords, and judges all, but he is judged by no man. We declare, say, define, and pronounce, that subjection to the Roman Pontiff is necessary to salvation" (pp. 34, 35).

"He is a heretic who does not believe what the Roman Hierarchy teaches. A heretic merits the pains of fire. By the Gospel, the canons, civil law, and custom, heretics must be burned" (pp. 148, 169).

"He is a heretic who deviates from any article of faith" (p. 143).

"Confessors must not absolve those who keep books which are condemned.. He who writes books of heresy shall be adjudged a heretic. He who retains prohibited books shall be deemed a favourer of heretics" (pp. 92, 93).

"They who bury persons knowing them to be excommunicated, or their receivers, defenders, or favourers, shall not be absolved unless they dig up the corpse; and the place shall be deprived of the usual immunities of sepulture" (p. 104).

"A heretic may be accused and condemned after death" (p. 146).

"The property of heretics after their death shall be seized" (p. 151).

"For the suspicion alone of heresy, purgation is demanded" (p. 156).

"Magistrates who refuse to take the oath for defence of the faith, shall be suspected of heresy. It must be required of temporal lords to expel heretics. The church may demand the aid of the secular power against both things and persons" (p. 159, 176).

"Wars may be commenced by the authority of the church. Indulgences for the remission of all sin belong to those who are signed with the cross for the persecution of heretics" (p. 160).

"The Pope can enact new articles of faith. The definitions of Popes and Councils are to be received as infallible" (p. 168).

"Every individual may kill a heretic" (p. 175).

"All persons may attack any rebels to the church, and despoil them of their wealth; and slay them, and burn their houses and cities" (pp. 176, 177).

"Persons who betray heretics shall be rewarded. But Priests who give the sacrament or burial to heretics shall be excommunicated" (p. 178).

"They who favour their relatives who are heretics, shall not receive for that cause any milder punishment" (p. 180).

"The penalty of perpetual incarceration may be mitigated by the Inquisitors" (p. 181).

"Those who are subject to a master or governor, or prince, who has become a heretic, are released from their fidelity. A wife may separate herself from her excommunicated or heretical husband. Children of heretics are discharged from parental authority" (p. 182).

"Heretics may be forced to profess the Roman faith" (p. 193).

"The crime of heresy is not extinguished by death" (p. 196).

"The testimony of a heretic is admitted on behalf of a Papist, but not against him" (p.198).

"A whole city must be burnt on account of the heretics who live in it. Whoever pleases may seize and kill any heretics" (p. 199).

"Witnesses in a cause of heresy may be forced to bear testimony, and they sin mortally if they abscond" (p. 204).

"A heretic, as he sins in all places, may everywhere be judged" (p. 207).

"A person contracting marriage with a heretic shall be punished, because it is favouring a heretic" (p. 210).

"Heretics must be sought after, and be corrected or exterminated. Heretics enjoy no privileges in law or equity" (p. 212).

"The goods of heretics are to be considered as confiscated from the perpetration of the crime. All alienations of property by heretics before their condemnation are invalid. Inquisitors are not bound to restore the price of the property which is seized in the hands of those who purchased from heretics" (p. 213).

"Prelates or Inquisitors may torture witnesses to obtain the truth" (p. 218).

"The Pope has power over infidels. The church may make war with infidels" (p. 352).

"Monks and Priests who contract matrimony shall be suspected of heresy" (p. 367).

"Those who are strongly suspected are to be reputed as heretics" (p. 376).

"He who does not inform against heretics shall be deemed as suspected" (p. 383).

"He who marries a person unbaptized, and deserts her to marry a baptized woman, is not guilty of bigamy" (p. 383).

"Inquisitors are not bound to give a reason to Prelates concerning things appertaining to their office" (p. 542).

"An Inquisitor and his associate may mutually absolve each other from excommunication" (p. 553).

"An Inquisitor may force the governors of cities to swear that they will defend the church against heretics" (p. 560).

"An Inquisitor may proceed against temporal lords who deny the assistance required by him, or who do not obey him as they ought" (p. 562).

"Inquisitors, to seize heretics or their favourers, may demand the aid of the civil authority" (p. 585).

"Inquisitors may have a prison for the guilty, and for those who are accused to them, there to be detained or punished" (p. 585).

"Prelates and Inquisitors may put any persons to the question by torture" (p. 591).



"It is laudable to torture those of every class who are guilty of heresy. Common fame and one witness are sufficient to justify the torture. Common fame alone, or one witness alone, authorizes the torture" (pp. 594-599).

"Inquisitors may coerce witnesses to swear that they will testify to the truth, and should frequently examine them" (p. 600).

"Inquisitors may lawfully admit perjured persons to testify and act in cases concerning the faith" (p. 605).

"Inquisitors may lawfully receive infamous persons, and criminals, or servants against their masters, both to act and give evidence in causes respecting the faith" (p. 606).

"Inquisitors may allow heretics to witness against heretics, but not for them" (p. 612).

"Inquisitors may torture witnesses to obtain the truth; and punish them if they have given false evidence" (p. 622).

"Inquisitors may cite and coerce the attendance of witnesses, and also persons charged with heretical pravity in different dioceses" (p. 626).

"Inquisitors must not publish the names of informers, witnesses, and accusers" (p. 627).

"Prelates and Inquisitors are bound to force those who are suspected to abjure the heresy imputed to them" (p. 637).

"Penitent heretics may be condemned to perpetual imprisonment" (p. 641).

"Inquisitors may provide for their own expenditures, and the salaries of their officers, from the property of heretics" (p. 652).

"Prelates or Inquisitors may confiscate the property of all impenitent heretics, or of persons relapsed" (p. 662).

"Prelates and Inquisitors must deprive heretics, and all who believe, receive, defend, and favour them, and their sons to the second generation of every ecclesiastical benefice and public office" (p. 669).

"All persons, who are bound by any debt of homage or fidelity, or any other covenant, or contract, however strongly made, to any person who has manifestly fallen into heresy, are not held to fulfil it, but are totally absolved from it" (p. 675).

"Inquisitors enjoy the benefits of a plenary indulgence at all times in life, and in death" (p. 679).

## Appendix 2

### Peter vs. the Popes

The Roman Catholic Church claims that its popes have inherited the seat and authority of the apostle Peter. That this is a gross error is evident by a simple comparison of Peter's life and teaching with the lives and teaching of the popes:

**1. There is no evidence that Peter was the bishop at Rome, and there is no evidence in the New Testament that there was anything special about the congregation at Rome**, but the popes rule in Rome, claim that Peter was the first bishop at Rome, and claim that it is the "mother church." Peter's first epistle was written from Babylon, not from Rome, and the popes' claim that "Babylon" stands for Rome is mere conjecture. The biblical evidence that Peter was not the pastor or bishop at Rome is overwhelming. Paul wrote TO the church at Rome in A.D. 58, but though he mentions 27 people by name, he does not mention Peter. That would have been an inexcusable affront if Peter had been the pope at Rome. Later, Paul writes FROM Rome to the churches of Galatia, the church of Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, as well as to Philemon, but not once does he mention that Peter is in Rome. In 2 Timothy 4:16 Paul said that no man stood with him and all forsook him when he answered his charges. Where was Pope Peter? The fact is that Peter was not a pope and he was not the bishop at Rome.

**2. Peter was married** (Matthew 8:14), but the popes are forbidden to marry.

**3. Peter said Holy Scripture is the sure Word of God and to this alone we are to give heed** (2 Peter 1:19-21), but the popes say we are also to heed their uninspired traditions.

**4. Peter warned of false teachers who would make merchandise of God's people** (2 Peter 2:1-3), but the popes have made massive sums of money by selling their religion, by their masses and their prayers for the dead and their indulgences and their pilgrimage sites and countless other things.

**5. Peter had neither silver nor gold** (Acts 3:6), but the popes have massive amounts of both.

**6. Peter said baptism is a figure, a symbol, and that it is not water that saves us, but the resurrection of Jesus Christ** (1 Peter 3:21), but the popes say that baptism itself brings salvation and that it is not merely symbolic.

**7. Peter refused to allow men to bow down to him** (Acts 10:25-26), but the popes have accepted honor and bowings and kissings and have allowed themselves to be treated almost as gods.

**8. There is no hint in the Bible that Peter had a throne**, but the popes have at least two--one at St. Peter's and one at the Lateran Palace.

**9. Peter taught that salvation is strictly through the free righteousness of Jesus Christ** (2 Peter 1:1), but the popes claim that their sacraments are also necessary for salvation.

**10. Peter taught against hierarchicalism**, warning the pastors against "being lords over God's heritage" (1 Peter 5:1-4), but the popes have set up a system of ecclesiastical lordship over the churches, and have added many offices that are never mentioned in the New Testament (e.g., cardinal, archdeacon).

**11. Peter taught that the only priesthoods in the New Testament dispensation are the High priesthood of Jesus Christ and the general priesthood of all believers** (1 Peter 2:9), but the popes say that their "church" has a special priesthood that is ordained to distribute sacraments.

**12. Peter taught that Jesus Christ is the rock upon which the church is founded** (1 Peter 2:4-8), but the popes say that Peter was the rock.

**13. Peter taught that men are born again through the Word of God** (1 Peter 1:23), but the popes say that men are born again through baptism.

**14. Peter taught that Christ has "once suffered for sins" (1 Peter 3:18), and "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24)**; but the popes say that Christ is sacrificed anew in each mass and that having Jesus Christ and his cross is not enough, that a believer also needs the Roman Catholic Church and its sacraments and priesthood.

**15. Peter taught that the believer has a living hope, that he has an inheritance reserved in Heaven, and that he is kept by the power of God** (1 Peter 1:2-5); but the popes say that a believer cannot know for sure that he has a home in Heaven.

**16. Peter taught that the believer is not to be a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or a busybody in other men's matters** (1 Peter 4:15); but the popes have been all of these things.

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