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Why was I made to hear thy voice,
And enter while there's room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

Isaac Watts

A naked sinner can be clothed, but a sinner covered with his own righteousness must be stripped. This is always true. We must be stripped of all that has to do with self or we cannot be clothed with that which pertains to God.

Scott Richardson



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

To testify the gospel of the grace of God.. Acts 20:24

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THE WALDENSES

DANIEL CHAMBERLIN

I know of no scripture that better introduces my subject than Heb. 11:35b-38. The faith and sufferings of the Waldenses mirror that of the Old Testament saints.

In pre-reformation church history, perhaps no name is more familiar than that of the Waldenses. For over a thousand years they were, as their famous motto states, a light shining in the darkness. Their name became a synonym for New Testament Christianity. They rightly deserve to be remembered and honored.



tians, Paulicians, Petrobrusians, Cathari, Arnoldists, Hussites, Waldenses, Lollards, and Anabaptists, have always contended for the purity of the Church, and her distinctness and separation from human government. Our fathers were men inured to hardships, and unused to ease. They presented to us, their children, an unbroken line which comes legitimately from the apostles, not through the filth of Rome...

Most everyone claims the Waldenses as their ancestors, including Protestants, Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists. Even some Romanists in ages past claimed them when it was expedient to gloss over their numbers and influence.

In 1861, C.H. Spurgeon, in a sermon entitled, *The True Apostolical Succession*, said:

...we, known among men, in all ages, by various names, such as Donatists, Nova-

Historians disagree on many of the specifics concerning the Waldenses. Even the Baptist histories are far from uniform. The enigma of the Waldenses is probably solved by understanding that the name came to describe a variety of people at various stages of doctrinal and practical development over a lengthy period of time. The fact that many of their own writings did not survive, while the false and malicious accusations of their enemies did survive, further complicates our task. We must be honest with history, and avoid revisionist history from either enemies or friends of the Waldenses.

In all fairness, we ought not to imagine that all our spiritual ancestors were just like us in every detail. We must be content to find enough agreement in the basics of the Christian faith to be considered their heirs—and that is exactly what we do find!

I. Their Origin, Name and Location

Modern historians say that the Waldenses (or Waldensians) originated with and derived their name from Peter Waldo, a merchant from Lyons (France) who became a Christian in 1160. He

was certainly a godly and influential man. He was committed to translating and distributing the Bible. He gave all he had to the poor. After separating from Romanism, he and his followers fled for their lives. Some of them moved into the valleys occupied by the Waldenses and exerted some influence on them, but there is no certainty that Waldo himself ever lived there. Even if the name came from Peter Waldo, he did not introduce New Testament Christianity to the region. The giraffe was a giraffe before Adam gave it the name!—and the Waldenses were biblical Christians before Waldo appeared. It may well be that he received his name, Waldo, from associating with the Waldenses, and not vice versa.

The name *Waldensian* was most certainly derived from the location where these people lived. The Latin word for valley is *valles* or *valdes*, and thus the Italian term *Waldensian* simply means a valley-dweller. (The French term *vandois* derives from the same Latin root.) The valleys in view are in the southwestern Alps, running through the region of Italy called Piedmont, that form the natural boundary between Italy and France and Switzerland. They are rich fertile valleys, well-fed by riv-

ing to the words of Jesus, there must be a doing of God's will. There must be in our lives that "work of faith and labor of love". Many spend far too much time praying about God's will, contemplating God's will, seeking God's will, and far too little time "doing" God's will.

In heaven, God's will is done without any hesitation or reservation. His word is instantly heeded and obeyed. On earth His word is neglected, ignored, debated and rejected. His will is done, there is no doubt about that, but certainly not done "in earth as it is in heaven." ♦

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Preachers: Bobby Amos, J.C. Fulton, Laurence Justice, Bill Lee,
Royce Smith, Doug Wilson

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noose about its neck or faggots at its feet.

5. Let us be humbled. We are not "the greatest generation." We are pigmies among the giants in our history! We pale in comparison to these humble people who, generation after generation, walked with God. They lived simply, but their influence was great. Perhaps we should be preparing to shine their shoes in heaven—what a happy task that would be! O for their mantle to fall upon us! Where is the God of the Waldenses? But, where are the Waldenses of God? They were subject to like passions as we. Therefore, let us rise to the occasion and serve our own generation by the will of God (Ac. 13:36)!

May God help us not to squander our spiritual legacy, but to be heirs of whom our forefathers would not be ashamed! ♦

GOD'S WILL

BILL LEE

In the process of delivering what is commonly referred to as The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave unto us the model prayer. Within the words of this prayer we have the manner in which we are to pray. Among the words of this example of prayer, we have the following; "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

There are several things in these words which demand our attention. First, God's will is done in heaven. God's will is perfectly done in heaven. Jesus said we are to pray for the same to be true "in earth". The truth, though not stated, but certainly implied, is that God's will is not now done "in earth as it is in heaven". We know that God's will is done in earth, for none can successfully resist His will. But his will is done in heaven without any human or angelic resistance. In and upon the earth, His will is done in spite of resistance and opposition.

Jesus said we are to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven". The inference seems to be that when His kingdom does come,

then His will shall be done "in earth as it is in heaven". How we ought to long for the coming kingdom when God's will is perfectly done in earth without resistance and opposition. As the song writer has said, "What a Day That Will Be!"

But there is something within the words of our text that ought to be noted and emphasized. Note the word "done". As I read these words I cannot help but wonder - just how many would actually like to see God's will "done". Much today is said about the will of God, but much is also said about the will of man. Much is preached today about the will of God, but much is also preached about the will of man. Many pray for God's will to be done, but then set about to do their own will without any regard at all for God's will.

Jesus did not say we are to pray for God's will to be sought after, believed, or preached. He said we are to pray for His will to be "done". Preaching the will of God is not sufficient. Believing the will of God comes short of Jesus' words. Praying about God's will for our lives is inadequate. Accord-

ers, described by Orchard as "an earthly Eden." Many writers, including Jonathan Edwards (Congregationalist), take these valleys to be the provision spoken of in Revelation 12:6, a place in the wilderness prepared by God where His people should feed. Andrew Fuller and others also identify the Waldenses and the Albigenses as the two witnesses of Revelation 11.

Biblical Christianity is known to have flourished in this region from the early days of church history. During the pre-Constantinian Roman persecutions, Christians fled to the mountains of the Alps and Pyrenees to survive. The Waldenses themselves said their ancestors had been in the valleys since the days of the apostles. Presbyterian historian Robert Baird says, "the Waldensian churches never belonged to Rome" (Introduction to Perrin's *History*, p. vi). Edwards says they "never submitted to the church of Rome" and "in every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of Rome. ... God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many witnesses through

the whole time (vol. 2, p. 596-597). Muston (*Israel of the Alps*) affirms that "it is not they who separated from Catholicism; but Catholicism which separated from them, in modifying the primitive worship." In 1819, two historians appointed by the King of the Netherlands reported to him, "We have now seen that the Baptists who were formerly called Anabaptists, and in later times Mennonites, were the original Waldenses, and who have long in the history of the church received the honor of that origin. On this account the Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the apostles, and as a Christian society which has preserved pure the doctrines of the Gospel through all ages." (quoted by Christian, vol. 1, p. 95)

The antiquity of the Waldenses is further testified by many who were not at all favorable to their cause. Sesselius, the Romanist Archbishop of Turin at the time of the Reformation, maintained that the Waldenses originated in the Alps with a man named Leo in the days of Constantine. A monk named Belvedere said that the "heresy" of the Waldenses had **always** been in the valleys (Orchard, p. 257).

Reynerius, who in the 1200's was a Waldensian for 17 years, then apostatized and became a fierce opponent and inquisitor, wrote:

Among all sects that either are or have been, there is none more detrimental to the Roman Catholic Church than that of the Leonists (that is, the poor men of Lyons—the Waldenses), and that for three reasons. The first is, because it is the sect that is of the longest standing of any; for some say it has existed continually since Pope Sylvester, whereas others since the time of the apostles. The second is, because it is the most general of all sects; for scarcely is there any country to be found where this sect has not been embraced. The third is, because, while all other sects frighten their hearers by the abominable nature of their blasphemies against God, this sect has a great appearance of godliness, since they live righteously before all men..." (Brakel, vol. 2, p. 39).

Mosheim, a Lutheran, writes,

"The true origin of that sect which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists ... is hidden in the depths of antiquity,

and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained. ... They are not entirely in an error when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, Petrobrussians and other ancient sects, who are usually considered as witnesses of the truth in times of general darkness and superstition. Before the rise of Luther and Calvin, there lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe, particularly in Bohemia, Moravia, Switzerland and Germany, many persons who adhered tenaciously to the following doctrine, which the Waldenses, Wyclifites and Hussites had maintained... [i.e. the purity of the church, or regenerate membership]." (vol. 2, pp. 127-128)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) wrote in his *Ecclesiastical Sonnet XII*:

But whence came they who
for the Savior Lord
Have long borne witness as
the Scriptures teach?
Ages ere Waldo raised his
voice to preach
In Gallic ears the unadulterated Word,

ers from Laos. In these classes Bro. Paul systematically teaches these men Bible doctrine. It is not our desire to make preachers out of anyone but rather to teach "faithful men who shall be able to teach others also," II Timothy 2:2. Bro. Paul has informed me that as he teaches these men, he is very impressed with their dedication, interest and desire to learn the truth of God's Word. He also has expressed his appreciation for the questions these men ask as he teaches. Their questions manifest a growth in knowledge as well as being a good indication they are giving serious thought to the things they are hearing. I know from personal experience that many of the preachers in the villages know the doctrine they have heard from others is not truth, but they simply do not know what truth is. They many times remind me of the Ethiopian eunuch who confessed he could not understand what he was reading unless some man should guide him, Acts 8:31. I am so thankful they have Bro. Paul Brown to guide them as they study and read God's Word.

The Lord willing I, along with my wife Janice and Ricky Cash, a pharmacist from here in Grenada, will make another trip to Thailand in the near future. We are scheduled to leave the U.S. on May

17 and to return on June 2. We look forward to once again being with Bro. Paul and Susan, as well as having the opportunity to visit the various villages. During this time I will preach on every opportunity available and then assist Janice, Susan and Ricky as they do medical work. We are so thankful to have Ricky Cash with us on these trips. Ricky has made over a dozen trips with us to Thailand at his own expense and is always an invaluable help in the medical work in the villages. The Lord seems to always supply just what we need. We do ask for your prayers as we make this trip.

Also I ask for your prayers for this work as a whole and especially for Bro. Paul Brown and Susan, as well as those who work closely with them. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the churches and individuals who assist us financially in this work. Without your help Bro. Paul and Susan simply would not be able to do all of things they do in this work of the Lord. I will close this report by reminding you; "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Hebrews 6:10. ♦

Bill Lee

Thailand Mission Report

In each issue of The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator we want to bring you up to date on our mission work in Thailand. I will personally write some of these reports and Bro. Paul Brown will write other reports. Our objective in giving these reports is to keep you current on what is going on in this mission work and also to ask for your prayers for this work of the Lord He has entrusted unto us at Central Baptist Church.

Since 1997 we have been actively involved in mission work among the Hilltribe people of northern Thailand.

During this time we have seen the salvation of many, as well as the establishment of churches in the villages

found in the mountains and jungles of northern Thailand. Over the years this mission work among the Hilltribes has also led to mission work in Burma and Laos. There are even plans now to go

into China in the near future.

Bro. Paul Brown, a missionary sent out by Central Baptist Church, along with his wife Susan, is faithfully serving the Lord in Thailand. What a blessing it is to the Hilltribe people to have Bro. Paul and Susan working in their midst. Through them, and no doubt because of their faithfulness, dedication, love for the Lord, as well as for the people in each of the villages, this work of the Lord is reaching many with the gospel of Jesus Christ. As they travel from village to village they are a great encouragement to the



people as Bro. Paul preaches the gospel in the church services and Susan presents the gospel in her lessons in classes with

the children.

Bro. Paul is also busy with preacher training classes with groups of preachers from Thailand and also classes with preach-

Their fugitive progenitors explored
Subalpine vales, in quest of
safe retreats
Where that pure church survives,
though summer heats
Open a passage to the
Romish sword,
Far as it dares to follow.
Herbs self-sown
And fruitage gathered from
the chestnut wood,
Nourish the sufferers then;
and mists that brood
O'er chasms, with new-fallen
obstacles bestrown,
Protect them; and the eternal
snow that daunts
Aliens, is God's good winter
for the haunts.

We may truly say that the Waldenses never needed reformation.

II. Their Beliefs and Practices

In the core of their beliefs the Waldenses were one with the Novatians, Donatists and other primitive Christians. The two oldest documents that testify to their beliefs date from the early 1100's. Both are included in Morland's history. (I will be glad to furnish a copy to anyone interested.) First is the *Confession of Faith of 1120*. Though some have challenged the

accuracy of its date, we should not brush off lightly the fact that Morland himself, who was commissioned by Cromwell, was convinced of its authenticity. Second is the *Noble Lesson*, something of a history of the faith from the beginning of time to about 1100.

The most basic foundation of their beliefs was the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. No bishop or council or tradition could trump the Holy Scripture. Many Waldenses memorized the four gospels and the epistles, as well as large portions of the Old Testament. Christian says that some memorized the whole Bible! (vol. 2, p. 76).

What Bible did they memorize? Brother Max Nunley wrote a scholarly article about the origins of the Waldensian Bible, showing it was the Italic Old Latin, from the traditional text or *Textus Receptus*. (I would be happy to furnish a copy of this article to anyone interested.)

The two old documents mentioned above prove without a doubt that the Waldenses were sound in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in the gospel. They held tenaciously to the necessity of regeneration before baptism and

church membership. They held that Roman Bishop Sylvester, under Emperor Constantine, opened the floodgates of worldliness into Christianity. They nicknamed him *Heresiarch* (Christian, vol. 1, p. 73). They opposed all the superstitions that Rome had added. Pope Lucius III formally anathematized them in 1184.

J.M. Cramp describes their distance from Rome (p. 79-80):

They held the Pope to be Antichrist, and they regarded the Church of Rome as the mystical “Babylon” spoken of in the Book of the Revelation, “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” They maintained that the true Church consists only of believers. They pleaded for the translation of the Scriptures into all modern languages, that men might read “in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.” They derided the ceremonies of Romish worship—the holy water, the incense, the bowing and kneeling, the ringing of bells, &c.—and taught that God is to be worshipped with “pious affections.” They read and studied the Divine Word continually, so that many of them

could repeat large portions of it from memory, and all were skilful in illustrating and defending their sentiments by appropriate quotations from Holy Writ. They denied the authority of bishops, the validity of the numerous distinctions of rank among the clergy, and the lawfulness of ecclesiastical titles. They denounced tithes. They declaimed against donations and legacies to churches or monasteries. They rejected councils. They abhorred image-worship and the reverence paid to relics. They did not believe in transubstantiation. They would not confess to the priests, saying that confession was to be made to God only. They laughed at dedications, consecrations, exorcisms, blessing of salt, spices, and candles, and other superstitious rites, regarding them as fitter themes for ridicule than for reasoning. They would not pray to any saints. They held purgatory to be a fable, and they knew that it was a profitable one to the priesthood. They mocked at penances, indulgences, and all such trumpery. In a word, they acknowledged no authority in the Church but that of

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and Ecolampadius in Basel, who influenced them to embrace infant baptism and church-state ecclesiology. About 1560 they began receiving aid from Calvin and Beza. What gains they by that alliance may have made in soteriology were offset by losses in ecclesiology. The loss was irrevocable.

Over time, the Waldenses compromised step by step and became what their forefathers would have repudiated. As Orchard put it, “Alas! how is the gold become dim!” It is with the pre-reformation Waldenses that we identify!

Conclusion

We can say with the Psalmist, *thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name* (Ps. 61:5). We are heirs to a rich spiritual legacy! We should learn much

from these pre-reformation giants.

1. Let us be unbending in our loyalty to the Word of God. Let us truly be people of the Book, both in doctrinal fidelity and in practical obedience.
2. Let us like the Waldenses give ourselves to the propagating of true religion “up and down the world.” What a joy to be accused of such a thing!
3. Let us be very cautious with the help that comes from Geneva! We must maintain pure ecclesiology as well as soteriology. Error in one will eventually impact the other.
4. Let us be ready to suffer for the sake of Christ our Savior. We must not simply like Christianity when it “walks in silver slippers,” but also when it has a

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(Recommendatory Letter to Perrin's *History*, p. 6) states that the vicious measures against the Waldenses "really almost transcend belief" but are true and "attested by so many unimpeachable witnesses." "If all the demons of the pit had been let loose upon the valleys of Piedmont, we could scarcely have expected the perpetration of greater enormities than were now exhibited by the emissaries of Rome." John Milton (1608-1674) wrote of that barbarian butchery:

Sonnet XVIII: On the Late Massacre in Piemont

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones

Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,

Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,

When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones;
Forget not: in thy book record their groans

Who were thy sheep and in their ancient fold

Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd

Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubl'd to the hills, and they

To Heav'n. Their martyr'd

blood and ashes sow

O'er all th' Italian fields

where still doth sway

The triple tyrant; that from these may grow

A hundred-fold, who having learnt thy way

Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

Only eternity will reveal the vast number who sealed their faith with their blood. Of the 50 million religious martyrs of the Dark Ages (mentioned by Plumer and Carroll), at least tens of thousands were of Waldensian stock. But like the bush that Moses saw burning, they were not consumed. God always preserved His seven thousand in Israel that did not bow to Baal!

V. Their Corruption

Those who wear the name of Waldenses today are a far cry from their faithful and courageous ancestors. They are a mere shell of what once was. What happened? On the eve of the Reformation, they were greatly reduced and weakened by persecutions. The majority joined with the German Anabaptists. Those who remained in the valleys assimilated into the Reformation. In 1531 they asked for advice from Bucer

the Lord Jesus Christ; and they refused to obey any laws relating to religion which were not to be found in the New Testament.

According to Perrin, Bishop Vesembecius (late 1400s) before resorting to violence against the Waldenses sent a monk to convince them of their errors.

"But the priest withdrew in confusion, saying, he had never in the whole course of his life made such progress in the holy scriptures, as he had done in those few days that he had conferred with the Waldenses."

So the Bishop sent a whole group of doctors to confound them with hard questions.

"But one of them upon his retreat openly acknowledged, he had learned more doctrine necessary to salvation by hearing the answers of the little children of the Waldenses in their catechism, than by all the theological disputes which he had ever had in Paris." (p. 35)

Some debate has arisen

over the question of infant baptism among the Waldenses. This confusion is due to (1) the fact that some who remained in the established church to avoid persecution were in their own minds sympathetic to the believers-only position of the Waldenses; and (2) the fact that the post-reformation Waldenses began to adopt the practice of infant baptism due to Protestant influence, and later Protestant historians assumed that it had always been the case. However, many careful historians have proven that the Waldenses immersed believers only. (For example, see William Jones' *The History of the Christian Church*; W.A. Jarrel's *Baptist Church Perpetuity*.) Their most ancient documents, as well as their fierce Roman opponents, speak with clarity on this issue. There is no real debate at all!

In soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), some writers (such as Hassell), claim that the Waldenses were of the free-will bent (i.e. Arminian). However, there is much evidence to show that they had some concept of sovereign grace. Article 7 of the 1120 Confession states that Christ "died for the salvation of all those that believe," wording which no freewill ever used! The *Noble Lesson* concludes with these lines:

May it please the Lord which formed the World,

That we may be of the number of his Elect to dwell in his Court for ever.

Praised be God. Amen.

Brakel, a Dutch Reformed theologian in the 1600's (vol. 2, p. 39) refers to the Romanists who declared that "prior to the time of Zwingli and Luther there had been very many who adhered to the same doctrine—which they refer to as heresy—and that Zwingli, Luther and Calvin had by renewal brought this doctrine to light." Jones quotes Lindanus, a Catholic bishop in the mid-1500's who accused Calvin of being "the inheritor of the doctrine of the Waldenses" (vol. 2, p. 90). Jarrel quotes A.A. Hodge saying, "The Lollards, another name for the Waldenses, the followers of Wickliffe, in the fourteenth century, were all of the general school of St. Augustine" (p. 166). James Durham (Scottish Presbyterian, 1658, *Exposition of Revelation*, p. 634) shows that the Romanists claimed that "the Calvinists now are the same called Waldenses before." Obviously, we should not hastily write off the Waldenses as Arminians!

In some non-essentials,

the Waldenses held some peculiar ideas. (Of course, they might think some of ours peculiar!) For example, they abstained from all manner of oaths, refusing even to say "in truth" or "for certain." Perhaps they overreacted to the false swearing of Romanists and nominal Christians. We should at least appreciate their commitment to truthfulness and the letter of the Sermon on the Mount!

In practice, the Waldenses were eminently holy. Their bitterest enemies bore witness to their piety (cp. Reynerius quoted above). But these enemies often charged them with the grossest of evils, knowing these accusations were false, in hopes of stirring up local opposition and keeping others from joining their ranks. Of course they could not substantiate these outlandish charges. The Waldenses held one another to a high standard and exercised church discipline when necessary, especially against pastors who fell into sin. Luther said he at first hated the Waldenses, until he understood the piety of their faith (Perrin, p. 38).

III. Their Outreach

The Waldenses were committed to the Great Commission.

Their influence stretched all over Europe. They eagerly circulated Bibles and read them to the illiterate. Reynerius, their friend-turned-enemy, described the typical Waldensian peddler who after selling articles to ladies in splendid homes, tells them about a richer jewel—the word of God—which he would open and read as occasion permitted! The business of these traveling merchants was undertaken only to make known the teaching of the Bible. (See Cathcart's *Baptist Encyclopedia*, p. 1201.) Their enemies charged them with "going up and down the world preaching" (Allix, p. 297). Today one can visit the old stone building in the Valley of Angrogna known as the College of the Barbes, where many of these missionaries were prepared, especially in memorizing scripture and sermons. They were sent out in pairs, an older experienced missionary training a younger one. Some of them reached as far as Oxford, England. Some were discovered and martyred on their first journey.

The success of their labors speaks for itself in the large numbers of converts and in the drastic measures taken by the Romanists to stop them.

IV. Their Suffering

The Waldenses suffered deprivation, often living in poor conditions and worshiping in caves to avoid persecution. And persecution repeatedly came from the powers subjected to Rome. Some of the persecutions shortly before and after the Reformation were especially cruel.

For example, in the inquisition of the 1200s, false accusers were encouraged to come forward, being promised one third of the property of anyone they implicated who was convicted of the crime. Knowing that justice would never be done and that some of the accused would even be denied a trial, these accusers took evil advantage and their false accusations ran rampant. For example, prostitutes made false accusations, and enriched themselves thereby. So vicious was the rage against the believers, anyone giving them even a drink of water was subject to arrest.

Moreland's history includes graphic illustrations of some of the physical violence against the Waldenses in the massacre of 1655. Only those with a strong constitution should look at that section! Samuel Miller