

CHAPTER 13

“Let's get right down to business,” Mr. Dell said as he opened *Heroes of the Cross*. “We are continuing our story of the Church in the Wilderness in the chapter entitled...

ON THE TRACK OF SABBATH KEEPERS

While faithful Waldensian leaders kept their Church strong and united on Bible principles, human traditions continued to stream into the Roman Church. God's Church in the Wilderness read in Isaiah 58:1, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” They obediently raised their voices to denounce the errors that were undermining Biblical truths. Brave Christians refused to use holy water in their services or show reverence for Rome's relics. They denounced the indulgences sold by the Roman Church and they protested against the notion of purgatory.

Cory raised her hand. “I don't really understand what you just read, Mr. Dell. Can you explain the meaning of indulgences and purgatory, please?”

“Of course, Cory. Give me a minute to get my projector going and I'll show you a few pictures that illustrate some of the things we are reading about.” Opening a file in his computer, Mr. Dell found the picture he was looking for.

“Let's talk about indulgences first since they were partially responsible for the great Protestant Reformation. During the time of Martin Luther the Roman Church was reconstructing St. Peter's Basilica and needed a vast amount of money to furnish it with costly marble and gold, statues and paintings. The pope proposed a very creative way to raise money to meet the enormous costs. The wealthy German people were encouraged to buy indulgences from the pope's representative, John Tetzel, whom you see portrayed in this picture. Tetzel convinced the superstitious people that for a sum of money he would give them a piece of paper stating that their sins - past, present or future - were forgiven.”



<http://www.corkfpc.com/indulgences.gif>

“Boy, I would sure like a piece of paper like that,” laughed Jeremy.

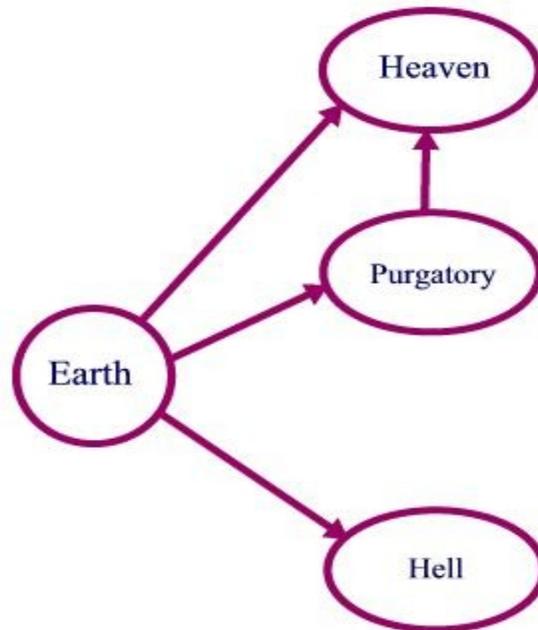
“You're not the only one,” agreed Mr. Dell. “There is a humorous story about one gentleman who showed the absurdity of that claim. Tetzal was busy selling indulgences in the city of Leipzig when he was approached by a nobleman inquiring whether indulgences would pardon future sin. Assured that they certainly would, the nobleman counted out his money and happily walked away with his special indulgence.

“Some time later when Tetzal (with a very full box of money) left Leipzig, he met that same nobleman along the road. The nobleman beat up Tetzal, thanked him for the indulgence he had given him, then took the heavy money box and headed home.”

“Served him right,” chuckled Aaron along with his classmates. “That's about how ridiculous that indulgence idea is! But what is purgatory?”

“You know that most of the Christian world teaches that when a person dies their soul goes either straight to heaven (if they are very good) or to hell (if they are very bad). However, there must have been many Catholics who weren't convinced that their loved ones were good enough to go directly to heaven, yet they didn't believe they deserved hellfire. So the church came up with a process called purgatory which allowed people to 'get better' after they died. Relatives were told that their departed loved one would be allowed to enter heaven more quickly if special prayers were made for them. The wealthy paid the priest large amounts of money for expensive masses to be said on behalf of their loved one. Tetzal even had a catchy little couplet to attract parishioners' attention: 'As soon as a coin in the coffer rings/The soul from purgatory springs.'”

“That sounds like a creative way to make money,” Carrie remarked.



A newly written Catholic book supported the idea that a priest had the power to change the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper into the actual body and blood of Jesus. The Church in the Wilderness strongly attacked this new heresy the papacy called *transubstantiation*.

“Whoa,” sputtered Aaron. “They really believe that!”

“I’m sure you are aware that the mass is the most important part of a Roman Catholic's worship,” Mr. Dell explained. “The faithful tell us, 'The Catholic Church teaches that everything we do in our Christian walk either leads toward the mass or springs from it.'”

“Here we see a picture of mass on the high altar in St. Peter's Basilica. After Vatican II there were important changes to the mass. In 1969 Pope Paul VI allowed mass to be said in the common vernacular – the common language. But some in the church didn't approved of that change. Today there is a strong push to bring back the Tridentine Mass – the traditional mass that existed for almost 1500 years. Those in favor of the Tridentine Mass believe that it preserves the Latin language and gives a common worship experience – identical ceremonies, words and gestures. They say that it doesn't matter which country you happen to attend mass – you will always feel at home.



http://s.ngo.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/088/cache/pope-st-peters_8847_600x450.jpg

“How many of you have attended a Catholic Mass,” Mr. Dell asked. Two hands went up.

“At the heart of the Eucharist is the wafer and wine.” Picking a book out of the bookshelf, Mr. Dell opened to a bookmarked page. “In *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* para. 1324 it says, 'The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. The other sacraments are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself.'”

“When we take part in the Lord's Supper, our church uses the unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice to *represent* or *symbolize* the body and blood of Jesus. In contrast, Roman Catholic tradition says that when the priest blesses the bread and wine by uttering the words *Hoc est corpus meus* that the host and wine are suddenly changed into the *literal* body and blood of Christ. Let me read to you from paragraph 1374 of the same book, 'In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.'”



http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_g_qXXK7DGE4/SBr99csKsAI/AAAAAAAAADmY/QF3JmP_PGis/s400/eucharist.gif

“Gross!” Hannah shuddered. “Imagine believing that you eat Jesus' actual body or drink His blood!”

“Well class,” challenged their teacher, “how would you prove from the Bible what you believe?”

The students thought for a moment. Jay took out his Bible and leafed through a few pages. “I remember our minister reading from 1 Corinthians for the Communion service. Paul is quoting Christ on the night before his crucifixion saying, 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.' Obviously Christ wasn't giving His literal body for the disciples to eat (He hadn't even died yet!) so the bread Christ broke must have been symbolic of His body.”

“Where is that text, Jay?” Carrie asked.

“1 Corinthians 11:24. And verse 25 talks about the cup which represents Jesus' blood.”

“Doesn't the Bible forbid eating or drinking blood?” questioned Emily.

“Yes, it does,” Mr. Dell agreed. “Please turn to Leviticus 17:10 where we read what God told Moses.” Waiting for the pages to stop turning, Mr. Dell read: “And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.' Since God doesn't change, I can't imagine He would want us to start drinking blood now – especially that of His Son.”

“I was thinking about this 'miracle' that supposedly happens when the priest blesses the host,” commented Ashley as she closed her Bible. “When Jesus performed a miracle you always knew that a miracle had taken place. When the water was turned into wine it was really wine – so awesome that the host commented on it. When a leper was healed his skin became smooth and soft like a baby's. Yet when the priest claims to change the wafer into Christ's body, it looks exactly like it did before. I don't know how they can call that a miracle.”

“Good point,” Carrie agreed.

“As you will see, class, the Waldenses had some of the same objections to the papal doctrine of transubstantiation,” Mr. Dell said as he picked up the Bible book and continued to read.

A Protestant poet wrote a poem showing the foolishness and falsehood of transubstantiation. It also pointed out the potential dangers of accepting unscriptural doctrines. You be the judge as to where wisdom lies in this little story.

A Roman Miracle

*A pretty maid, a Protestant, was to a Catholic wed;
To love all Bible truths and tales, quite early she'd been bred.
It sorely grieved her husband's heart that she would not comply,
And join the Mother Church of Rome and heretics deny.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*The priest was struck real dumb - he looked as pale as death.
The bread and wine fell from his hands and he did gasp for breath.
"Bring me my horse!" the priest cried, "This is a cursed home!"*

The lady replied, "Begone; 'tis you who shares the curse of Rome."

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

The Waldenses also contended with Rome over the correct day of worship. Early in her history the Church of Rome began making the transition from Sabbath sacredness to Sunday worship. We don't know for sure how many Waldenses or their brothers kept the seventh-day Sabbath, but we do know that for many years certain groups of the Waldenses protected and obeyed the fourth commandment as given by God.

Blair, in *History of the Waldenses*, Vol. 1, p. 220 says, "Among the documents we have by the same peoples, an explanation of the Ten Commandments dated by Boyer 1120.... Observance of the Sabbath by ceasing from worldly labors and from sin, by good works, and by promoting the edification of the soul through prayer and hearing the word, is enjoined" (quoted in *Truth Triumphant* 259).

You will remember that Peter Waldo fled to Bohemia for safety when exiled from France. There, faithful Christians studied the Holy Scriptures and brought their lives into obedience to it. Erasmus, the famous editor who compiled the *Textus Receptus*, said that as late as 1500 there were people in Bohemia who kept the seventh-day Sabbath.

Such "stubbornness" created in the Rome Church a hatred toward Sabbathkeepers. King Alphonse of Aragon issued the following decree in 1194: "We command you in imitation of our ancestors and in obedience to the ordinances of the church, that heretics, to wit, Waldenses, Insabbati and those who call themselves the poor of Lyons and all other heretics should be expelled away from the face of God and from all Catholics and ordered to depart from our kingdom" (quoted in *Truth Triumphant* 260).

Dr. Wilkinson then quotes Bernard Gui, an infamous member of the Inquisition that tried to stamp out truth during the Dark Ages, as saying: "Ensavates [Insabbati] was the name given to the Vaudois" (*Truth Triumphant* 260, 261). But why would King Alphonse want to expel the Waldenses from his kingdom? Perhaps the explanation of their heresy can be found in the following quote by Gui from *Manuel d'Inquisiteur* Volume 1 p. 37. He said, "For centuries evangelical bodies, especially the Waldenses, were called Insabbati because of Sabbath-keeping."

An historian, Goldastus, (A.D 1576-1635) says, "They were called Insabbatati, not because they were circumcised, but because they kept the Sabbath according to the Jewish law" (*Deutsche Biographi artilce*, "Goldast" 9, 327).

All who refused to follow Rome's traditions were labeled as heretics. Rome knew she had to silence the influence of Sabbathkeepers so she resorted to calling the Waldenses various names such as Henricians, Paulicians and Insabbatati. Yet the Waldenses were unconcerned about protecting themselves against slander and name-calling. They remembered that angry King Ahab called Elijah "he that troubleth Israel" and Joseph's jealous brothers disdainfully calling him "this dreamer." No doubt the Waldensians remembered that even Jesus was labeled as one who "hath an unclean spirit."

Because the papacy could not refute the Waldenses' beliefs by the Bible they sometimes resorted to outright lies to excite fear and disdain against the hard-working and pious people of the valleys. On one occasion, King Charles II ordered several Waldensian children to come to his court. Although it seemed like an unusual request, twelve children and their mothers were selected to go to the palace. Carefully, the king examined the children. He saw before him healthy, lively youngsters with clear eyes, strong bodies and delightful personalities. The king then explained that he had been told that Vaudois children looked like monsters with one eye in the middle of their forehead, four rows of black teeth and similar deformities. Because of their visit he now knew the truth for himself.

Even with some setbacks, Rome's influence steadily spread from country to country. Most of the time she was successful in bring the people under her power, but that was not always the case. Ethiopia stands out in history as a nation that stood against the mighty Church of Rome.

Ethiopia's first introduction to Sabbathkeeping took place when the queen of Sheba visited King Solomon to learn the secret of his great wisdom. The Ethiopian tradition says that along with a child fathered by Solomon she brought back to her country the religion of Israel. For thousands of years the Ethiopian people faithfully worshiped on the seventh-day Sabbath.

With the rise of Mohammedanism around AD 600 the rest of the world forgot the Ethiopian Christians living in the northeast region of Africa. It wasn't until the early part of the sixteenth century that Muslim warriors attacked Ethiopia. The king quickly sent a message to Christian Portugal asking for their assistance and in 1541 troops arrived to help their fellow Christian believers. Imagine, however, the surprise of the Catholic Portuguese to find out that this "Christian" nation observed the Jewish Sabbath!

The war with the Muslims ended well for Ethiopia and they resumed their quiet life. But Satan was plotting to bring that Sabbathkeeping nation under his control. Less than a hundred years after the Portuguese left, Jesuit missionaries arrived in Ethiopia. Using threats of captivity, torture and death they convinced Emperor Susenyos to convert to the Roman Catholic faith. In 1622 the king proclaimed that Catholicism was the new state religion of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, this announcement did not immediately affect the common people. They continued with their traditional Sabbath worship, while only the king, his servants and nobles followed the new Roman religion. However, things changed dramatically when a law was passed that required everyone to work on the seventh-day Sabbath. For many years the people had compromised by keeping both Saturday and Sunday as rest days, but they were unwilling to give up Saturday sacredness. The people and their ministers rebelled.

The protests that followed caused a bitter civil war and many died while maintaining their loyalty to God's Commandments. One of the emperor's sons, Facilidas, protested to his father about the atrocities: "These people are not pagans; they are not Muslims. Why are we killing our own people; some of them are even our relatives?" The king realized his error in persecuting his subjects over a matter of conscience. He stepped down as the ruler and appointed Facilidas to lead the nation. Under Facilidas' leadership the people were again allowed the freedom to choose how and when they would worship.

Ethiopia's experience has a note of caution for the student of history. Rome brags that "she never changes". Her anger toward the Waldensians and those who kept God's holy Sabbath reminds us that another storm of persecution is coming. Revelation 12:17 tells us, "And the dragon (that's Satan) was wroth with the woman (that's God's true church), and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God (including the fourth one), and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." We ask: Are we ready to stand as strongly for truth, and as firmly against error, as did the Waldenses and the Ethiopians?

“I went to school with a man named Abel Belai,” Mr. Dell laid down the Bible book and looked at his class. “He told me that when he was a little boy in Ethiopia it was common for people in the smaller villages to have two days of worship – Saturday and Sunday.

“I found it very interesting how worship changes were brought into his remote area. Abel said that Sabbath was a solemn day, often with fasting (which of course the children didn’t like), while Sunday was celebrated as a feast day with games, songs and lots of delicious food. As you can imagine, the children dreaded Sabbath, but they couldn't wait for Sunday to arrive. As the years went by the people began to lose their love for the Sabbath and placed their loyalty with the fun, 'party day' of worship. Today, Sabbathkeeping has slowly been erased in almost all of the smaller villages in Ethiopia.”

“That’s pretty sneaky!” commented Emily. “I don’t think I would like Sabbath very much either, if it was always a fast day. I don’t like being hungry!”

“That’s why we need to learn self-control now,” commented Mr. Dell. “We are told that a time is coming when those who keep the Sabbath will not be allowed to buy and sell. That means that they will experience hunger if they stay loyal to God. We need to be practicing now to endure hardships like good soldiers of the cross.”

“Well, I'm going to start practicing self-discipline now,” decided Emily. “I want to be like the Waldenses we’ve been reading about. They were loyal to God even under difficult conditions.”

B.G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness* (Teach Services, Brushton, New York, 1994) Chapters 15, 16

J.A. Wylie, *History of the Waldenses* (Pacific Press Publishing Assoc., Mountain View, California, 1977)

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, Nampa, ID, 1971) Chapter 4

Revelation 13:17

Charles Chiniquy, *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* (Chick Publications, Ontario, CA , 1985)