

A History of the Baptists

By John T. Christian

CHAPTER VI THE WALDENSIAN CHURCHES

*O lady fair, I have yet a gem which a purer lustre flings
Than the Diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of kings;
A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtues shall not decay,
Whom light shall be a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way.*

—Whittier

IT is a beautiful peculiarity of this little people that it should occupy so prominent a place in the history of Europe. There had long been witnesses for the truth in the Alps. Italy, as far as Rome, all Southern France, and even the far-off Netherlands contained many Christians who counted not their lives dear unto themselves. Especially was this true in the region of the Alps. These valleys and mountains were strongly fortified by nature on account of their difficult passes and bulwarks of rocks and mountains; and they impress one as if the all-wise Creator had, from the beginning, designed that place as a cabinet, wherein to put some inestimable jewel, or in which to preserve many thousands of souls, who should not bow the knee to Baal (Moreland, History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valley of Piedmont, 5. London, 1658).

Here a new movement, or rather an old one under different conditions, received an impetus. Peter Waldo, or Valdesius, or Waldensis, as he was variously called, was a rich and distinguished citizen of Lyons, France, in the closing decades of the twelfth century. Waldo was at first led to study the Bible and he made a translation of it which he circulated among the people. The reading of the Gospels led to an imitation of Christ. Waldo took the manner of his life from the Scriptures, and he soon had a multitude of disciples. They gave their property to the poor and began to preach in the city. When they refused to cease preaching they were expelled from Lyons. Taking their wives and children with them, they set out on a preaching mission. The ground was well prepared by the Albigenses and the Cathari, as well as by the insufficiency and immorality of the Roman Catholic clergy. They traveled two by two, clad in woolen garments, with wooden shoes or barefoot. They penetrated Switzerland and Northern Italy. Everywhere they met with a hearty response. The principal seat of the Waldenses became the

slopes of the Cottian Alps and East Piedmont, West Provence and Dauphiny. Their numbers multiplied into thousands. It is certain that in the beginning of his career Waldo was a Roman Catholic, and that his followers separated from their former superstitions.

There has been much discussion in regard to the origin of the Waldenses. It is asserted on the one hand that they originated with Waldo, and had no connection with former movements. This view is held absolutely, probably by very few, for even Comba admits that "in a limited sense their antiquity must be admitted" (Comba, *History of the Waldenses in Italy*, 12); and he also states that the Waldenses themselves believed in their own antiquity. Those who hold this view now generally state that the Waldenses were influenced by the Petrobrusians, the Arnoldists and others. Others affirm that the Waldenses were only a part of the general movement of the dissent against Rome. They were of "the same general movement" which produced the Albigenses (Fisher, *History of the Christian Church*, 272. New York, 1887). The contention is that the name Waldenses is from the Italian Valdese, or Waldesi, signifying a valley, and, therefore, the word means that they lived in valleys. Eberhard de Bethune, A. D. 1160, says: "Some of them call themselves Vallenses because they live in the vale of sorrows or tears" (Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*, 58. London, 1848). Bernard, an Abbot of a Monastery of the Remonstrants, in the Diocese of Narbonne, about 1209, says that they were called "Waldenses, that is, from a dark valley, because they are involved in its deep thick darkness or errors" (Migne, CCIV. 793). Waldo was so called because he was a valley man, and was only a noted leader of a people who had long existed. This view is ardently supported by most of the Waldensian historians (Leger, *Histoire Generale des Vaudois*. Leyden, 1669). It is certain that they were called by the names of every one of the ancient parties (Jones, *History of the Christian Church*, 308). Jacob Gretseher, of the Society of Jesus, Professor of Dogmatics in the University of Ingolstadt, A. D. 1577, fully examined the subject and wrote against the Waldenses. He affirmed their great antiquity and declared that it was his belief "that the Toulousians and Albigenses condemned in the year 1177 and 1178 were no other than the Waldenses. In fact, their doctrines, discipline, government, manners, and even the errors with which they had been charged show the Albigenses and the Waldenses were distinct branches of the same sect, or the former was sprung from the latter" (Rankin, *History of France*, III. 198-202).

The most remote origin has been claimed for the Waldenses, admitted by their enemies, and confirmed by historians. "Our witnesses are all Roman Catholics," says Vedder, "men of learning and ability, but deeply prejudiced against heretics as men could possibly be. This establishes at the outset a presumption against the trustworthiness of their testimony, and is a warning

to us that we must weigh it most carefully and scrutinize every detail before receiving it. But, on the other hand, our witnesses are men who had extraordinary opportunities for discovering the facts; some were inquisitors for years, and give us the results of interrogating a large number of persons" (Vedder, *The Origin and Teaching of the Waldenses*. In *The American Journal of Theology*, IV. 466). This is a very interesting source of information.

Rainerio Saechoni was for seventeen years one of the most active preachers of the Cathari or Waldenses of Lombardy; at length he joined the Dominican order and became an adversary of the Waldenses. The pope made him Inquisitor of Lombardy. The following opinion in regard to the antiquity of the Waldenses was rendered through one of the Austrian inquisitors in the Diocese of Passau, about the year 1260 (Preger, *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Waldesier*, 6-8). He says:

Among all the sects, there is no one more pernicious to the church than that of the Leonists (Waldenses), and for three reasons: In the first place, because it is the most ancient: for some say that it dates back to the time of Sylvester (A. D. 825); others to the time of the apostles. In the second place, because it is the most widespread. There is hardly a country where it does not exist. In the third place, because if other sects strike with horror those who listen to them, the Leonists, on the contrary, possess a great outward appearance of piety. As a matter of fact they lead irreproachable lives before men and as regards their faith and the articles of their creed, they are orthodox. Their one fault is, that they blaspheme against the Church and the clergy,—points to which laymen in general are known to be too easily led away (Gretsch, *Contra Valdenses*, IV.).

It was the received opinion among the Waldenses that they were of ancient origin and truly apostolic. "They call themselves," says David of Augsburg, "successors of the apostles, and say that they are in possession of the apostolic authority, and of the keys to bind and unbind" (Preger, *Der Tractat des David von Augsburg uber die Waldesier*. Munchen, 1876).

A statement of the Waldenses themselves is at hand. In a Waldensian document, which some have dated as early as the year 1100, in a manuscript copy which dates from 1404, may be found their opinion on the subject of their antiquity. The Noble Lessons, as it is called, says:

We do not find anywhere in the writings of the Old Testament that the light of truth and holiness was at any time completely extinguished. There have always been men who walked faithfully in the paths of righteousness. Their number has been at times reduced to few; but has never been altogether lost. We believe that the same has been the case from the time of Jesus Christ until now; and that it will be so until the end. For if the cause of God was founded, it was in order that it might remain until the end of time. She preserved for a long time the virtue of holy religion, and, according to ancient history, her directors lived in poverty and humility for about three centuries; that is to say, down to the time of Constantine. Under the reign of this Emperor, who was a leper, there was a man in the church named Sylvester, a Roman. Constantine went to him, was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and cured of his leprosy. The Emperor finding himself healed of a loathsome disease, in the name of Christ, thought he would honor him who had wrought the cure by bestowing upon him the crown of the Empire. Sylvester accepted it, but his companion, it is said, refused to consent, separated from him, and continued to follow the path of poverty. Then, Constantine, went away to regions beyond the sea, followed by a multitude of Romans, and built up the city to which he gave his name—Constantinople so that from that time the Heresiarch rose to honor and dignity, and evil was multiplied upon the earth. We do not believe that the church of God, absolutely departed from the truth; but one portion yielded, and, as is commonly seen, the majority was led away to evil; and the other portion remained long faithful to the truth it had received. Thus, little by little, the sanctity of the church declined. Eight centuries after Constantine, there arose a man by the name of Peter, a native, they say, of a country called Vaud (8ekmidt, Aktenstrucke, ap. Hist. Zeitschrift, 1852 a. 239. MSS. Cambridge University, vol. A, f, 236-238 and Noble Leizon, V.403. For the genuineness of the Noble Lessons see Brez, Histoire des Vaudois, 1.42. Paris, 1793).

The great church historian, Neander, in commenting on this document, suggests that it may have been "of an elder origin than 1120. He further says:

But it is not without some foundation of truth that the Waldenses of this period asserted the high antiquity of their sect, and maintained that from the time of the secularization of the church—that is, as they believed, from the time of Constantine's

gift to the Roman bishop Sylvester—such an opposition finally broke forth in them, had been existing all along. See Pilicdorf contra Waldenses, c. i. Bibl. patr. Ludg. T. XXV. f. 278. (Neander, History of the Christian Church, VIII. 352).

Such was the tradition and such was the opinion of the Waldenses in regard to their origin. They held to a "secret perpetuity during the Middle Ages, vying with the Catholic perpetuity" (Michelet, Histoire de France, II. 402. Paris, 1833).

Theodore Beza, the Reformer of the sixteenth century, voices the sentiment of his times, when he says:

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 (Moreland, History of the Evangelical Churches, 7).

Jonathan Edwards, the great President of Princeton University, in his "History of Redemption," says of the Waldenses:

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. There is no one age of antichrist, even in the darkest time of all, but ecclesiastical historians mention a great many by name, who manifested an abhorrence of the Pope and his idolatrous worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of witnesses through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries, as historians demonstrate, and mention them by name, and give an account of the testimony which they held. Many of them were private persons, and many of them ministers, and some magistrates and persons of great distinction. And there were numbers in every age, who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

Then speaking especially of the Waldenses, he says:

Some of the Popish writers themselves own that that people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the Popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, the heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy In the world. It is supposed, that this people first betook themselves to this desert, secret place among the mountains to hide themselves from the severity of the heathen persecutions, which were before Constantine the Great.

The special historians of the Waldenses claim the most remote origin for them. For example, Mr. Faber says:

The evidence which I have now adduced distinctly proves, not only that the Waldenses and Albigenses existed anterior to Peter. of Lyon,; but likewise, that at the time of his appearance in the latter part of the twelfth century, they were already considered two communities of very high antiquity. Hence it follows, that, even in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Valensic churches were so ancient, that the remote commencement was placed, by their inquisitive enemies themselves, far beyond the memory of man. The best informed Romanists of that period pretended not to affix any certain date to their organization, They were unable to pitch upon any specific time, when these venerable churches existed not. All that they certainly knew was that they had flourished long since, that they were far more ancient than any modern sect, that they had visibly existed from a time, beyond the utmost memory of man (Faber, The Vallenses and Albigenses).

Sir Samuel Moreland remarks that any lapse between Claudius of Turin and Waldo "would hinder the continual succession of the churches no more than the sun or moon cease to be when their light is eclipsed by the interposition of other bodies, or more than the Rhone or the Garonne lose their continual current because for some time they were underground and appeared not" (Acland, The Glorious Recovery of the Vaudois, xxxvi).

Many pages might be used in describing the upright character of the Waldenses, but space is allowed for only a few statements from their enemies. To this end, the testimony of Olaudius Seisselius, the Archbishop of Turin, is interesting. He says: "Their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear except by compulsion [an Anabaptist trait] and rarely take the name of God in vain. They fulfill their promises with punctuality; and live, for the most part, in poverty; they profess to observe the apostolic life and doctrine. They also profess it to be

their desire to overcome only by the simplicity of faith, by purity of conscience, and integrity of life; not by philosophical niceties and theological subtleties" He very candidly admits: "In their lives and morals they were perfect, irreprehensible, and without reproach to men, addicting themselves with all their might to observe the commands of God" (Perrin, *Hist. des Vaudois*, I. v. Geneva, 1618).

In the time of the persecution of the Waldenses of Merindol and Provence, a certain monk was deputed by the Bishop of Cavaillon to hold a conference with them, that they might be convinced of their errors, and the effusion of blood prevented. But the monk returned in confusion, owning that in his whole life he had never known so much Scripture as he had learned in these few days that he had been conversing with the heretics. The Bishop, however, sent among them a number of doctors, young men, who had lately come from the Sorbonne, which, at that time, was the very center of theological subtlety at Paris. One of these publicly avowed that he had understood more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of the little children in their catechisms than by all the disputations which he had ever heard (Vccebicus, *Oratie de Waldeflibus et Albigensibus Christianis*, 4).

After describing the inhabitants of the valleys of Fraissiniere, he proceeds:

Their clothing is of the skins of the sheep—they have no linen. They inhabit seven villages, their houses are constructed of flint stone, having a flat roof covered with mud, which, when spoiled or loosed by the rain, they again smooth with a roller. In these they live with their cattle, separated from them, however by a fence. They also have two caves set apart for particular purposes, in one of which they conceal their cattle, in the other themselves when hunted by their enemies. They live on milk and venison, being, through constant practice, excellent marksmen. Poor as they are, they are content, and live in a state of seclusion from the rest of mankind. One thing is very remarkable, that persons externally so savage and rude, should have so much moral cultivation. They know French sufficiently for the understanding of the Bible and the singing of Psalms. You can scarcely find a boy among them, who cannot give you an intelligent account of the faith which they possess. In this indeed, they resemble their brethren of other valleys. They pay tribute with a good conscience, and the obligations of the duty is peculiarly noted in their confessions of faith. If, by reason of civil war, they are prevented from doing this, they carefully set apart the sum, and at the first opportunity they send it to the king's taxgatherers (Thaunus, *Hist. sul temporis*, VI. 16).

The first distinguishing principle of the Waldenses bore on daily conduct, and was summed up in the words of the apostle: "We ought to obey God rather than men." This the Roman Catholics interpreted to mean a refusal to submit to the authority of the pope and the prelates. All of the early attacks against them contain this charge. This was a positive affirmation of the Scriptural grounds for religious independence, and it contained the principles of religious liberty avowed by the Anabaptists of the Reformation.

The second distinguishing principle was the authority and popular use of the Holy Scriptures. Here again the Waldenses anticipated the Reformation. The Bible was a living book, and there were those among them who could quote the entire book from memory.

The third principle was the importance of preaching and the right of laymen to exercise that function. Peter Wnldo and his associayes were preachers. All of the early documents refer to the practice of the Waldenses of preaching as one of their worst heresies, and an evidence of their insubordination and arrogance. Alanus calls them false preachers. Innocent III., writing of the Waldenses of Metz, declared their desire to understand the Scriptures a laudable one, but their meeting in secret and usurping the functions in preaching as only evil. They preached in the highways and houses, and, as opportunity afforded, in the churches.

They claimed the right of women to teach as well as men, and when Paul's words enjoining silence upon the women was quoted, they replied that it was with them more a question of teaching than preaching, and quoted back Titus 2:3, "The aged women should be teachers of good things." They declared that it was the spiritual endowment, or merit, and not the church's ordination which gave the right to bind or loose. They struck at the very root of the sacerdotal system.

To the affirmation of these fundamental principles the Waldenses, on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount, added the rejection of oaths, the condemnation of the death penalty, and purgatory and prayers for the dead. There are only two ways after death, the Waldenses declared, the way to heaven and the way to hell (Schaff, History of the Christian Church. V. Pt 1.502-504).

The Waldensian movement touched many people, through many centuries and attracted converts from many sources. Many Roman Catholics were won over and some of them doubtless brought some error with them. Moreover, the term Waldenses is generic, which some, having overlooked, have fallen into mistakes in regard to them. The name embraced peoples living in widely separate lands and they varied in customs and possibly somewhat in

doctrines. There was a conference between the Poor men of Lombardy and the Waldenses. The Italian and French Waldensos probably had a different origin, and in the conferences they found that there were some differences between them. It is possible that some of the Italian Waldenses (so-called) practiced infant baptism (DbUinger, *Sektengerchichte*, II 52); There is no account that the French Waldenses, or the Waldenses proper, ever practiced infant baptism. As early as the year 1184 there was a union of the Poor men of Lyons, as some of the followers of Waldo were called, and the Arnoldists, who rejected infant baptism.

The Confessions of Faith of the Waldenses indicate that they did not practice infant baptism. There is a Confession of Faith. which was published by Perrin, Geneva, 1619, the date of which is placed by Sir Samuel Moreland, i D. 1120 (Moreland, *History of the Churches of Piedmont*, 30). That date is probably too early; but the document itself is conclusive. The twelfth article is as follows:

We consider the sacraments as signs of holy things, or the visible emblems of invisible blessings. We regard It as proper and even necessary that believers use these symbols or visible forms when it can be done. Notwithstanding which we maintain that believers may be saved without these signs, when they have neither place nor opportunity of observing them (Perrin, *Histoire des Vaudois*, I. xii., 53).

In 1544 the Waldenses, in order to remove the prejudice which was entertained against them, and to make manifest their innocence, transmitted to the king of France, in writing, a Confession of Faith. Article seven says of baptism:

We believe that in the ordinance of baptism the water is the visible and external sign, which represents to us that which, by virtue of God's invisible operation, Is within us, the renovation of our minds, and the mortification of our members through (the faith of) Jesus Christ. And by this ordinance we are received into the holy congregation of God's people, previously professing our faith and the change of life (Sleiden, *'The General History of the Reformation*, 347. London, 1689).

Other writings of the Waldenses likewise convey no idea of infant baptism. There is a "Treatise concerning Antichrist, Purgatory, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacraments," which Bishop Hurd makes of the thirteenth century. There is a passage which condemns the Antichrist since "he teaches to baptize children in the faith, and attributes to this the work of

regeneration, with the external rite of baptism, and on this foundation bestows orders, and, indeed, grounds all of Christianity" (Moreland, Churches of Piedmont, 148).

A Catechism emanating from the Waldenses of the thirteenth century makes no allusion to infant baptism. It says that the church catholic, that is, the elect of God through the merits of Christ, is gathered together by the Holy Spirit, and foreordained to eternal life (Gilly, Waldensian Researches, I. lxxii. London, 1825), which is not consistent with infant baptism.

The Noble Lessons say: "Baptize those who believe in the name of Jesus Christ" (Moreland, Churches of Piedmont, 112).

There is a Liturgy, of great antiquity, which was used by the Waldenses. The Office contains no Directory for the baptism of children. Robinson says of it that it has not:

The least hint of pouring or sprinkling on the contrary, there is a directory for the making of a Christian of a pagan before baptism, and for washing the feet after. Thus the introductory discourse of the presbyter delivering the creed, runs thus: "Dear Brethren, the divine sacraments are not properly matters of investigation, as of faith, and not only of faith, but also of fear, for no one can receive the discipline of faith, unless he have a foundation, the fear of the Lord . . . You are about to hear the creed, therefore today, for without that, neither can Christ be announced, nor can you exercise faith, nor can baptism be administered." After the presbyter had repeated the creed, he expounded it, referring to trine Immersion, and closed with repeated observations on the absolute necessity of faith, in order to a worthy participation of baptism (Robinson, Ecclesiastical Researches, 473, 474).

The Roman Catholics soon came into conflict with the Waldenses on the subject of baptism. The Lateran Council, A. D. 1215, pointing to the Waldenses, declared that baptism "in water" was profitable as "well for children as adults" (Maitland, Facts and Documents, 499). There is a long list of such Roman Catholic authors. One of them said: "I paid great attention to their errors and defenses." Some of these authors are here quoted. Enervinus of Cologne writes to St. Bernard a letter in which he says of the Waldenses:

They do not believe in infant baptism: alleging that place in the Gospel, Whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved (Mabillon, Vetera Analecta, 111. 473).

Petrus Cluniacensis, A. D., 1146, wrote against them, and brought this charge:

That infants are not to be baptized, or saved by the faith of another, but ought to be baptized and saved by thou own faith . . . And that those who are baptized In infancy, when grown up, should be baptized again. . rather rightly baptized (Hist. EccI. Madgeburg, cent. XII C. v.834).

Eckbert of Sebonaugh says:

That baptism does no good to infants, because they cannot of them-selves desire it, and because they cannot confess any faith (Migne, CXCIV 15).

Pictavius, A. D. 1167, says:

That confessing with their mouths the being of God, they entirely make void all the sacraments of the Church—namely, the baptism of children, the Eucharist, the sign of the living cross, the payment of tithes and oblations, marriage, monastic institutions, and all of the duties of priests and ecclesiastics (D'Archery, Veterum aliquot Scriptorum Spicilegium, II.).

Ermengard, A. D. 1192, says:

They pretend that this sacrament cannot be conferred except upon those who demand it with their own lips, hence they infer the other error. that baptism does not profit infants who receive it (Migne, CCIV. 1255).

Alanus, a monk of the Cistercian order, was a voluminous writer and his leaning and abilities obtained for him the title of Universalis. He died in the year 1201. He says that the Waldenses taught that:

Baptism avails nothing before years of discretion are reached. Infants are not profited by it, because they do not believe. Hence the candidate is usually asked whether he believed in God, the Father omnipotent. Baptism profits an unbeliever as little as it

does an infant. Why should those be baptized who cannot be instructed? (Migne, CCX. 346).

Stephen de Borbone was a monk of the Dominican order. He died about the year 1261, but probably wrote the account here given about the year 1225. The manuscript of his book is in the Library of the Sorbonne and only a part of it is in print. He says:

One argument of their error is that baptism does not profit little children to their salvation, who have neither the motive nor the act of faith, as it is said in the latter part of Mark (Dieckhoff, Die Waldenser im Mittelalter, 160).

Moneta, a Dominican monk, who wrote before the year A. D. 1240, says:

They maintain the nullity of the baptism of infants, and affirm that

none can be saved before attaining the age of reason.

Rainerio Sacconi, A. D. 1250, published a catalogue of the errors of the Waldenses. He says:

Some of them hold that baptism is of no advantage to Infants, because they cannot believe (Coussard, contra Waldenses, 126).

One of the Austrian Inquisitors, A. D., 1260, says:

Concerning baptism, some err in saying that little children are not to be saved by baptism, for the Lord says, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Some of them baptize over again (Preger, Beitrage sur Geschichte der Waldesier)

David of Augsburg, A. D. 1256-1272, says:

They say that a man is then truly for the first time baptized, when he is brought into this heresy. But some say that baptism does not profit little children, because they are never able actually to believe (Preger, Der Tractat des David von Augsburg die Waldesier).

A more influential line of contemporary witnesses could scarcely be found. "It is almost superfluous to point out the striking agreement between these teachings of the Waldenses," says Professor Vedder, "and the sixteenth

century Anabaptists. The testimony is unanimous that the Waldenses rejected infant baptism" (*American Journal of Theology* IV. 448). If the Waldenses were not Baptists there is no historical proof of anything.

It is equally clear that, the form of baptism was immersion. This was, at the time, the practice of the whole Christian world. The great Roman Catholic writers affirm that immersion was the proper form of baptism. Peter the Lombard, who died A. D. 1164, declared without qualification for it as the proper act of baptism (Migne, CXCII. 335). Thomas Aquinas refers to immersion as the general practice of his day, and prefers it as the safer way, as did also Bonaventura and Duns Scotus. These were the great doctors of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle ages. Mezeray, the French historian, is correct as to the form of baptism when he says: "In baptism of the twelfth century, they plunged the candidate into the sacred font, to show what operation that sacrament had on the soul" (Mezeray, *Histoire de France*, 288). And the contemporary writers, Eberhard and Ermengard, in their work "contra Waldenses," written toward the close of the twelfth century, repeatedly refer to immersion as the form of baptism among the Waldenses (Saeae Gretscher, *contra Waldenses*. In *Trias scriptorum contra Waldenses*, Ingoldstadt, 1614; also in *Max. Bibl. Patr.* XXIV. And finally in Gretscher's *Works* XII.) Wall also remarks of these people: "As France was the first country in Christendom where dipping of children was left off; so there first antipaedobaptism began." (Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, I. 480). They denied infant baptism and practiced dipping.

Mabillon, the great Roman Catholic historian, gives an account. at much this date, of an immersion which was performed by the pope himself, which occurred in the Church of St. John the Evangelist. It is said that the pope blessed the Water and

then while all were adjusting themselves in their proper places, his Holiness retired into an adjoining room of St. John the Evangelist, attended by some acolothysts who took off his habits and put on him a pair of waxed trousers and surplice and then returned to the baptistery. There the children were waiting—the number usually baptized by the pope.

After the pope had asked the usual questions he immersed three and came up out of the baptistery, the attendants threw a mantle over his surplice, and he returned" (Mabillon, *Annales ordinis sancti Benedicti*, I. 43). Even the pope in those times practiced dipping.

Ever' institution has its vicissitudes, and after progress comes decline. On the eve of the Reformation everything was on the decline—faith, life, light. It

was so of the Waldenses. Persecution had wasted their numbers and had broken their spirit and the few scattered leaders were dazed by the rising glories of the Reformation. The larger portion had gone with the Anabaptist movement. Sick and tired of heart in 1530 the remnant of the Waldenses opened negotiations with the Reformers, but a union was not effected till 1532. Since then the Waldenses have been Pedobaptists.