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## THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THE BIBLE IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Active efforts are being made at the present time in various quarters for the reintroduction of the Bible into our public schools. This movement gives rise to a controversy very similar to the one which raged on the occasion of the elimination of the Bible as a text-book from the American public school system. The following brief historical consideration of that earlier struggle, therefore, seems appropriate at the present time.

The opposition to the Bible as a text-book began about 1840, especially in the large cities,<sup>1)</sup> and at the instigation of the Roman Catholic Church. According to Goodrich,<sup>2)</sup> the Catholics at this time numbered 800,000, out of a total of about 10,000,000 church-members in the United States. The Roman Catholics favored legal exclusion of the Bible from the public schools; Daniel Webster opposed legal exclusion.<sup>3)</sup>

The controversy was really due to the rise of state-supported public schools. Denominational schools wanted state support; but it became the established policy of the State not to give such support. The controversy involves the interpretation of the Constitution and the question whether the Bible is a sectarian book.

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1) Monroe's *Cyc. of Ed.*, I, p. 373.

2) Peter Parley's *Tales about the U. S.* (1883), p. 227.

3) Cheever, *Right of the Bible in Our Public Schools.* (New York, 1854.)

## SOME FACTS ABOUT THE ANCIENT WALDENSIAN (WALLENSIAN) CHURCH.

An excerpt from six (English, French, and Dutch) works of Waldensian authors, at the Public Library of Chicago, composed by *Rev. Franz Ludw. Braun*, late French Vaudois Lutheran mission pastor at Chicago.

The Gospel was brought into the glens of the Cottian Alps of Northern Italy by the disciples of the apostles on their journeys by land from Rome to Gaul (France) and Spain. The glen-dwellers gladly received it, and kept it pure and undefiled in a good heart. Their simple church-service consisted of singing psalms and preaching. They belonged to the bishopric of Turin. With the sanction of the bishop they elected their own preachers, who were married, choosing members of their own clan.

As the mountainous country could not support all the descendants of the glen-dwellers (hunters and herders), a number of them had to emigrate. Some settled in the valleys of the Po and Adige and their affluents in Northern Italy; others preferred the hilly country of the Provence in Southern France,

especially the county of Albige, whose capital is Albi. The thrift of the latter turned their section of the country into a garden-spot, unexcelled by any other section of France, and also into a seat of learning, which is clearly proved by the relics of works in the Provençal language.

Traveling Christian merchants from the far East visited these settlements, and were in the habit of resting there awhile from the hardships of travel. The simple forms of the church-service and the simple mode of life of the glen-dwellers and their descendants called forth their admiration, and they called them *καθαροί*, Cathares, or Puritans. Whether they brought manuscripts of parts of the Bible to these people has not been proved, but it is probable. Their conversation, together with what they told them of the teaching and customs prevalent in the Christian Church in the East, at any rate produced a higher state of Biblical and Church learning among those simple folk than it was found anywhere else. What may be stated as a fact, however, is that they enlightened the Cathares on the adoration of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and with regard to their pictures. There is no proof, as claimed by Catholic writers, that those travelers imported such false doctrines as were condemned by the ecumenical councils of the first four centuries of the Christian era, for example, Manichæism. Nevertheless, quite in accordance with the old adage that if you keep on lying, some of it, at least, will finally be believed, credit was given to those Catholic scribes in spite of the orthodox confessions of the Cathares, and the church council held at Lombers, near Albi, Provence, in 1167, condemned them. (Cf. Geo. Faber, *History and Theology of the Ancient Waldenses*. London, 1838.)

Though in the course of centuries there became apparent a slight disparity of cult as observed by the glen-dwellers, whose cult was very simple, and the Cathares, there was still a great difference between their evangelical cult, or church-service, and that of the Roman Catholics. Some bishops did not consider such a disparity of cults as being essential, while others in-

sisted that the Cathares should conform their simple form of worship to that of the papal Church, external conformity and internal dissension,—and still others wanted to deprive the Cathares of their old-time privilege of electing their own preachers, and of choosing them out of their own clans. In one section of the country the Cathares opposed their bishop in regard to this, in another section with respect to another hierarchical misuse of the Christian doctrine. There always was a doctrinal strife regarding Christian doctrine and practise. It was still in the days before Hildebrand became Pope Gregory VII (1015—1085) and the arch-architect of the papal hierarchy that the Catholic clergy nicknamed these people Cathares (Puritans), but perverting the meaning of the word by causing it to signify spiritually impure, unclean, teachers and believers of false doctrines. In this latter sense the German word *Ketzer* (derived from Cathares) is still in use.

The Catholic clergy called the original glen-dwellers (in German: *Klammlleute, Klammler, Engtaeler*), in the Cottian Alps, Wallenses or Waldenses, from the Provençal *valde—valdes*, meaning narrow valley, glen (French, *vallée, val, vau—Vaudois*). In the course of time this nickname, like the nickname Lutherans given by the Catholic clergy to the followers of Luther, became an honored name, especially after the blood of Waldensian martyrs had been spilled. During the reign of Pope Gregory VII the doctrinal strife became more intense, and his papal decree of celibacy was strenuously opposed by the Waldenses, finally resulting in a secession of the Waldensian from the Roman Catholic Church and in the excommunication of the former by the pope.

The original glen-dwellers, as well as their descendants, the Cathares of Northern Italy and Southern France, never believed in doing mission-work or making proselytes. This is the main difference between them and the "Beggars," the followers of Peter Waldus, of Lyons, who were called Waldensians. They were excommunicated as heretics by the Catholic Church in 1185.

## PETER WALDUS.

About in the middle of the twelfth century there lived in Lyons, France, a rich merchant, who had many traveling agents, and who was also an alderman, or member of the city council. His name was Peter. For business reasons, and imitating the custom of the learned profession, he adopted a surname, or family name, and called himself Waldus after the place of his birth and childhood (French, Vaudois), as he was a glen-dweller's son, born at Vaudra (Glenville; German, Klammweiler). When, one day, at the meeting of the City Council, a member suddenly died, having received an apoplectic stroke, the case made a deep impression upon Peter Waldus; he bethought himself of his soul's welfare with great seriousness. In order that he might be properly prepared if death should take him unawares, he hit upon a scheme which, as he had been taught in the Catholic Church, would assure him eternal salvation, but which had hitherto been unheard of. He parted with all his riches in this way: One third of his entire possessions he gave to his wife to support his family, another third to the poor, and the last third he spent to pay for the translation of the Latin New Testament into the Provençal vernacular. He himself took the vow of poverty and made all his agents do the same thing, in consequence of which they were called "Poor Men," "Beggars." This act called forth the admiration of the people, and the poor sent up many supplications to God to bless their benefactor. He was, of course, in great favor with the Church; the doors of the monasteries were opened to his agents, the "Beggars," to give them shelter. His favorite notion was to reestablish in the Church the mode of living of the first century of the Christian era. This, too, was praised as a good work. Twice he asked the pope to permit his agents to preach (lay-preaching), that they might propagate his views among the people. His agents had written to him of the simple life of the Wallensians and the Cathares. Then he conceived the idea of forming a union with those simple Christians, already separated and

banned by the Catholic clergy, and thus reestablishing the mode of life of the Christians of the first century. He applied for a colloquium, or disputation, with the Wallensians and Cathares. It took place, and both parties agreed in all doctrines (Peter Waldus, very likely, yielded in the hope of final success) except in that regarding the Sacrament. Peter professed: "Sacramentum fit per sacerdotis sanctitatem"; the Cathares, on the other hand: "Sacramentum fit per jussum Dei et per Verbum divinum." The Catholic historian who gives an account of that colloquium refrains from commenting on it in the least.

The colloquium plainly showed how firmly Peter Waldus still clung to the false doctrines of the Catholic Church, and that the original Waldenses still had the Biblical conception of a Sacrament. Believing, nevertheless, that a union with the Wallensians had been effected, Peter may have ordered his agents (after 1170) to name their converts Waldenses, or Vaudois, thus giving his followers his own name. Thus it happened that in some Alpine valleys two distinct Waldensian congregations existed independently of one another, one formed by the original glen-dwellers, the other by the followers of Peter Waldus. At the time of the Reformation they finally merged,—not before, as claimed by Catholic authors.

The French Vaudois of the Alpine valleys insist that they are descendants of the glen-dwellers, Wallensians, and not of the followers of Peter Waldus, who, in France, were called Vaudois.

The inhabitants of the Swiss Canton Wallis (French, Vaud), mostly descendants of the Vaudois, expelled from France after the recall of the Edict of Nantes, 1689, call themselves Walliser, Wallenser, Vaudois; their forefathers had chosen the name Wallis, Vaud, when their part of the Canton Bern was formed into a distinct canton.

In three valleys of the Cottian Alps in Northern Italy, close to the state line of France, French has been both the mother-tongue, and the language used in the churches, for more

than two hundred years. Whether they are descendants of emigrants of France, led by General Arnauld after the recall of the Edict of Nantes, 1689, or of the original glen-dwellers, has not been proved beyond a doubt. Strange it is that in the Waldensian settlement in the Black Forest, Germany, where General Arnauld is buried, the same names are found as in the French settlements in the Cottian Alps; *e. g.*, Favre = Taber; Cluett = Glueth; Byros = Beirat; Grillé, Grilli, Griglio = Grille; Carpentier = Zimmermann; Bosio, Bossué = Busse; Combe, Comba = Combe.

The public Confessions of the ancient Wallenses are: 1) Confession at Lombers, 1165; 2) Treatise on Antichrist, 1120; 3) Noble Lesson, 1100; 4) Confession to the French King, 1536. They are found in an English translation in Geo. Faber's *History and Theology of Ancient Wallenses* (London, 1838).

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