

The French Waldenses Of Provence

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Souvenirs De La Reforme²

François

Il était le plus beau des chevaliers de France,
Maniant à merveille et l'épée et la lance.
D'un soldat téméraire il avait le renom.
Une fois, il dormit sur l'affût d'un canon
Au milieu de l'armée, au soir d'une bataille.
Il aimait les plaisirs, était fier de sa taille
Se faisant admirer des dames de la cour.
Ce que voulait l'entendre il contait son amour;
Distinguer la grandeur était son vrai mérite;
Il avait du respect pour sa soeur Marguerite
Et comme elle aisément il tournait son couplet.
Il protégeait Marot, Boyard et Triboulet.
On le vit, lui si fier parmi les rois du monde,
Ramasser le pinceau qui peignit la Joconde.
Or, il advint, qu'un jour ce royal protecteur
Des lettres et des arts, se fit persécuteur,
Et contre les Vaudois une meute féroce
Déchîna ses fureurs: la chasse fut atroce,
Et villages et bourgs furent anéantis,
Ce fut l'oeuvre des grands d'écraser ces petits.
"Meilleurs chrétiens que nous," avait dit Louis Douze.
Mais la piété d'Oppède avait été jalouse,
Et le roi chevalier permit que ce baron
Fit songer sous son règne aux crimes de Néron.

L. L.

² *BSHPF*, vol. 38, p. 183.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM

For a period of more than two hundred years the French Waldenses of Provence existed as a separate and distinct group.¹ Of the existence of this group there is no doubt, but the details of this existence and the relationship of these Waldenses with their time and with the Waldenses of the Cottian Alps are difficult to ascertain. Their only connections were ancestral and spiritual.

The Waldenses of Provence are entitled to a complete and clear page in history; one principal reason is that they were the subject of a special persecution and nearly complete annihilation, one of the few groups in the modern era so subjected. Thus their importance was great in the eyes of the Church at the time, though in a negative sense.

Many studies exist on the Waldenses, both Piedmontese and transalpine. However, most authors have written only a paragraph or two, or at the most a chapter, on the Waldenses of Provence. This study has been so planned as to give a complete picture of this group, especially during their last few tragic years, which were also the last years of Francis I.

This investigation will hold closely to this special group of Waldenses except for the study of their doctrines, in which they naturally are closely associated with the other groups. Their history, before the time of Francis I, will be covered only briefly, but more fully during his reign, the period of transition from the medieval to the modern era, and a period of great upheaval.

This study may be guilty of some overlapping of other works dealing with the Waldenses, but, as far as the author is able to ascertain no attempt has been made to view the history dealing with the Waldenses of Provence as a complete unity in itself. The study presents, in chronological order, a complete coverage of the history from the founding of this colony, until its untimely disappearance.

II. REVIEW OF SOURCE MATERIAL

Owing to the numerous trials and persecutions to which the Waldenses were subjected, their documents were largely destroyed. The records of the Waldenses--and of the Waldenses of Provence in particular--are few in number and are to be found in various libraries of Europe. Some of the records are preserved in the archives of Provence, in Marseille, and in the archives of Comtat Venassin, in Avignon. Some valuable papers are preserved in the archives of the city of Geneva. Sir Robert Moreland took many writings of the Waldenses to England; most of these are now in the libraries of the universities of Cambridge and Dublin. In the United States, Harvard University Library has a very large collection of works on the Waldenses.

Among the works giving the most documentary data on the Waldenses are the two following periodicals: *The Bulletin of the Waldensian Historical Society*, and *The Bulletin of the*

French Protestant Historical Society. Valuable primary material can also be found in the work of Herminjard,² who collected the writings and letters of the Reformers of the 16th century.

The works of the older groups of Waldensian historians furnish much valuable information, even though their histories are of an uncritical nature. A few of the more important historians are: Allix, Muston, Perrin, Arnaud, Léger, Marchand, and Gilly. Among the modern writers, writing in a critical manner, are: Comba, Rivairio, Jalla, de Félice, and Gay. The works on the Inquisition offer some revealing incidents concerning the Waldenses but are restricted in scope.³

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

The term "Waldenses" is an ambiguous word with several shades of meaning. It is sometimes used to denote all opponents of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages. The chief advocate of this view is the historian Perrin.⁴ The Catholic inquisitors held a somewhat similar view by considering as Waldenses all the nonconformists who, before Luther, lived in southeastern France and northern Italy.

The word "Waldenses" seems to have had three separate and distinct origins, which through time were fused into a general term that appertains, in a special sense, to the religious group bearing this name.⁵ The followers of Peter Waldo of Lyons were known as Waldenses, as well as the "Poor of Lyons." The inhabitants of Vaud were naturally called "Vaudois," or the French word for "Waldenses." The name "Waldenses" was also applied to the sturdy people inhabiting the valleys of the Alps who sternly resisted the innovations of the Papacy. All three of the above designations are, without a doubt, accurate, but as the present writer uses the term "Waldenses" it applies to the period after Peter Waldo when it meant a religious group.⁶

There were, of course, differences among the various groups, and certainly all were not the followers of Peter Waldo, as Allix so aptly indicates.⁷ In this study the designation, "Waldenses of Piedmont," refers to the Waldenses living in the Cottian Alps, while the Waldenses who lived west and north of the alps are called "Ultra-Montane" or "Transalpine" Waldenses. The Waldenses under special investigation in this study are called "Waldenses of Provence," although they occupied only a small part of the ancient region of Roman "Provincia," namely the part that is within the valley of the Durance.⁸

In this study the word "Church," when used alone, refers to the Roman Catholic Church. The word "Reformers," when used separately, will refer to the leaders in the reform movement in Germany or Switzerland after 1517. The term *barba*, or *barbe*, a Waldensian word, means "uncle"--and applies to the Waldensian pastors; it will be used in this sense in this study.⁹

¹Muston, *The Israel of the Alps*, (London: Ingram Cooke and Co. 1852), I, 53.

²Herminjard, *Correspondence des Réformateurs*, (Geneve: H. Georg, 1866), 9 vols.

³Lea, *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1908-1911), 3 vols.

⁴Perrin, *History of the Waldenses*, (Philadelphia: Griffeth and Simon, 1847), p. 25.

⁵Muston, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶Gay, *The Waldenses*, (London: Blackwood, 1895), p. 3.

⁷Allix, *Some Remarks Upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1821), pp. 191 et. seq.

⁸Baird, *History of the Rise of the Huguenots of France*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879), I, 230.

⁹Muston, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Chapter II

ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND OF THE WALDENSES OF PROVENCE

The mountainous areas of northern Italy and southeastern France had for many centuries been somewhat independent of the dominant church. They proved to be fertile breeding grounds for new ideas and reformers. This independence centered for several centuries in and around Milan.¹ It was but natural that this spirit should grow and expand. Even with the close proximity of the Papacy, the dioceses of Italy enjoyed more freedom than did other dioceses at a greater distance from Rome.² These dioceses even enjoyed calling their priests by a special name: "Paterines."³

In the dissertation of Petrus de Marca on the primacy of Lyons and other primacies, the province of the Cottian Alps is not allotted to any diocese whatsoever, although every region in Gaul and Italy is assigned to a metropolitan see. This has afforded an opportunity for independent thinking.⁴ The Waldenses themselves refer to their own breaking away from the Church in the times of Sylvester, who was Pope in 317.⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) speaks, in his 65th and 66th sermons, of "the nonconformists who were disturbing the Latin Church."⁶

Reinerus, the inquisitor, said:

. . . these [the Waldenses] are the most dangerous of all heretics, for three reasons: first, because this sect is of the longest duration, for some say that it has continued to flourish since the time of Sylvester, others from the time of the apostles.⁷

This was disclaimed by modern historians,⁸ who point out that no records, that can be proved historically, exist before the general period of Peter Waldo concerning the Waldenses. The dispute is of no vital importance to this study, as the Waldenses of Provence appear only after Waldo, but it is of general interest that the ground was so well prepared for the reforming movement.

. . . it is unquestionable that long before Peter Waldo there were in Southern France and Northern Italy "Heretics," whose doctrines were those now professed by the Waldenses. When the "Poor of Lyons," the disciples of Peter Waldo, had to flee from that city, in 1190, they found refuge in the Piedmontese Valleys amongst a population already holding evangelical views, and indifferent to Papal excommunication, who cannot therefore have derived their faith from their French guests.⁹

Although giving a different date for the exodus from the city of Lyons, Eugene Arnaud says almost the same thing:

At the period when the disciples of Waldo emigrated to Dauphine and the Alp valleys, which was 1184 or 1185, they found a population that had been already in opposition to the Roman Church for two centuries. This was the result of the fusion of Cathari with the disciples of Pierre de

Bruis and Henri de Lucerne, who had preached in Provence and Dauphine. The Poor of Lyons fused themselves with this population and gave them their name.¹⁰

The reception of the Waldenses by the officials was somewhat different from that of the population. Alphonse II, king of Aragon and marquis of Provence, forbade his subjects, under penalty of confiscation of all their goods and of other punishments, to receive into their homes one of these "Vaudois" or "poor of Lyons," or to listen to their preaching, or to give them food, or to render them any other service.¹¹

The excommunication of the Vaudois by the Council of Verona in 1184 was the signal for the expulsion of the "poor of Lyons" into the Alp valleys and all sections of Provence, including Languedoc, where they joined the Petrobrusians and Henricians in opposition to the Roman Church.¹² The combining of these forces soon focused a great deal of attention on them and a general persecution followed. Pope Innocent III sent representatives among the dissidents to preach and try to bring them back into the fold. Several of his preaching missions were sent out in 1189, 1201, 1203, and 1206.

Finally, in 1207, after the papal legate, Pierre de Châteauneuf, was killed, the Pope (in 1209) organized a crusade to root out the rebellious heretics.¹³ This crusade was mainly against the Albigenses, but, owing to various debates between the Roman clergy and the "heretics," we find some barbes, called "Valdenses" were present. The crusade lasted several years and extended to the foothills of the Alps.¹⁴ Louis VIII, king of France, lost his life aiding the crusaders in 1226. Two years later the crusade was terminated. Many thousands had lost their lives, and vast areas of the country had been devastated.¹⁵

The Albigenses and the Waldenses fled toward Dauphine and the Piedmont valleys, but in Provence they were almost exterminated. Still such a large number remained that the Papacy created a permanent organization to deal with them--the Inquisition.¹⁶ This institution had been approved by the Council of Lateran in 1215 and was installed in Provence in 1230.¹⁷

The rules of the Inquisition were quite simple but effective. Here is a brief summary of instructions given to the inquisitors as recorded by Perrin:

It is not expedient to dispute of matters of faith before the laity.
 No person is a penitent unless he accuses others who are like himself.
 No confession or pleading of accused before the masses. . . .
 No promises of life, for confession, to be given before the people; . . .
 The Inquisitor ought always to presuppose the fact, . . .
 The Inquisitor may look into any book and pretend to find the life of the accused written therein.
 It is necessary to menace the person accused, with death, if he does not confess; . . .
 We must not think to convince the heretic with the Scriptures, or other literature, for the heretics confuse the most learned; . . .
 Moreover, care must be taken, that heretics do answer directly; . . .¹⁸

On December 5, 1248, the Council of Valence mentions the procedure to be followed against the heretics,¹⁹ but it is not until half a century later that one again hears of the Waldenses of Provence. This brings their history to the end of the 13th century, when one again finds migrations to Provence; this time it is from Italy and by invitation.

Here one finds much confusion as to the exact date because the precise year is not mentioned when the Vaudois entered their new homes. The known facts on which all writers agree are that the new group of Waldenses were brought from Italy, by invitation, to populate a land made desolate by crusades against the dissidents and by war; that the owners of the land were also owners of land in Italy on which Waldenses lived as peasants, and that they were thus well acquainted with them.

Historians give various dates between 1275 and 1495 for the above mentioned migration. One must examine the facts to see why there is this discrepancy. Poirson mentions that previous to 1545, when the Waldenses suffered a severe persecution, they had occupied this area of Provence for about 270 years, or since 1275.²⁰ "One colony of the old Waldenses had been brought, by their lords, from the mountains of Marquisat de Saluces to the district of Provence, which they had occupied for 270 years."²¹ Gilles, quoted by Gay, says simply: "Less than 150 years after the dispersion of the poor of Lyons," [1184], thus 1334 or before. Gay takes the position that it was about 1300,²² which is also the date given by Muston.²³

Jalla states that the first important group came "at the beginning of the 15th century," brought there from the high mountains of Saluces.²⁴ Castel writes that due to several reasons, such as "persecution, growth in population for which the resources of the country did not suffice," and the resulting misery, many families were obliged to leave the Italian valleys about 1316 and go to Calabre and the valleys of La Guarda and Saint Sixte, and that others—about 1400—went to Provence where they founded the villages of Mérimdol and Cabrières.²⁵

With all the above references it is difficult to reconcile the single date of 1495 given by Frossard.²⁶ This date conflicts with certain Vaudois relations with the authorities concerning which we have definite documents dated prior to 1495. This will be discussed further on. As Frossard refers to precisely the same event as Jalla²⁷ and others who give a different date, one is led to believe that Frossard simply omits the mention of the earlier migrations. He states plainly: "They were brought from the high mountains of Marquis de Saluce by the lords of Boulrier-Central and Rocca Sparviera, who had acquired in Provence the possession of a desert district north of the Durance river."²⁸

Baird fails to give any precise date for the crossing of the Alps by these peasants, but says: "The entire district had been desolated by a war a couple of centuries before the time of which we are now treating [1545]."²⁹ He does not say where, or what war it was, but seems to agree, except with regards to the date, to the same event referred to by Muston in a third migration of Waldenses to Provence.³⁰ No other historian records more than one migration to Provence, unless it be in the movement mentioned by Castel in 1316 of the Vaudois to other areas. This date would tend to agree with that of Muston, who states that some Waldenses came to Provence in 1300, while another group migrated there at the beginning of the following century (the 15th), because of persecutions which, though directed against the Vaudois of Dauphine, caused some of the Waldenses to take refuge with their fellow believers upon the banks of the Durance.

In all these dates there seems to be a general agreement toward 1300, as those who hold to this date, with the exception of Gay,³¹ do not state that the towns of Mérimdol or Cabrières were founded at this time. The date 1300 also agrees with the numerous statements in the writings of the Waldenses. The records of the Waldenses easily revealed their Italian origin because of the family names and the language employed, which was a mixture of Romance and Provençal.³²

The length of their existence as a distinct group, as indicated above, agrees with the Waldenses' own statement to the Swiss Reformers in 1530 that they were in existence more than four hundred years and in Provence two hundred years.³³ Accepting 1300 as a provisional basis, one sees that it falls into place quite well, for as Gay further relates:

It was not long before they were attacked by the clergy, because we find that between March 3, 1308, and September 12, 1322, the inquisitor Bernard Gui held 930 trials and caused to perish 42 persons and that the people revolted against their tormenters and killed two of them on the 11th of February 1321 at Montelier. In 1335 Pope Bernard III had to stir up the prelates of the region to a greater zeal for persecutions . . .³⁴

There are no further records concerning the persecution that followed, for almost a century, when because of trials and difficulties many of the Waldenses returned to Italy about the year 1400.³⁵ "These Waldenses not only returned to Italy, but migrated to La Pouille, the colony from which their fathers had come."³⁶ On one occasion at least, discouraged by the annoyance to which their religious opinions subjected them, a part of the Vaudois sought refuge in their ancient homes, on the Italian side of the mountains. But their services were too valuable to be dispensed with, and they soon returned to Provence, in answer to the urgent summons of their Catholic landlords. This persecution was at the order of the Pope, who was at Avignon during the period. These Waldenses became pioneers in their new territory and built five new villages. These trials and persecutions came about the same time as a ten-year war between the Count of Provence and Raymond of Toulouse, 1389-1400. Muston describes it in these words:

At the close of the ten years' war between Louis II, Count of Provence, and Raymond of Toulouse, this district remained depopulated; and as Louis II was obliged to sell part of it in order to provide for the expenses of that war, the Seigneurs of Boulier-Central, and of Rocca Sparviera, bought from him at that time the valley of Aigues, which stretches from north to south along the soft slopes of the Leberon. But these Seigneurs already possessed, in the marquisate of Saluces, great estates cultivated by Vaudois. They engaged some of that people, therefore, to come and cultivate their new possessions likewise, and those lands were conveyed to them by emphyteosis, that is to say, upon perpetual lease.³⁷

There was a definite grant of land and large numbers of Waldenses came to settle in the district. There had also been great destruction caused by the war, and possibly only a small number had come in previous migrations. Are these the reasons why Jalla and Castel chose the date of 1400 for the migration from Italy into Provence? Others returned from Calabria to Provence from which they had originally come, thus creating a triangle of Waldensian centers.³⁸

The new migration of Waldenses brought prosperity to the country, the details of which are often found in the historical record. Monastier credits not only the fertility of the soil but also "the activity, honesty, and exemplary conduct . . ." of these people for a "prosperity without equal."³⁹ Baird gives us a picture of a land, peaceful, with industrious peasants.

By the industrious culture of the Vaudois, or Waldenses, the face of the country was soon transformed. Villages sprang up where there had scarcely been a single house. Brigandage disappeared. Grain, wine, olives, and almonds were obtained in abundance from what had been a barren waste. On lands less favorable for cultivation numerous flocks and herds pastured.⁴⁰

This is also the picture given by Poirson⁴¹ as well as other historians who describe this period. The labors of the Waldenses were rewarded by a period of quiet peace.

¹ Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, I, 816-817, 821.

² Allix, op. cit., p. 126.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gilly, *Waldensian Researches During a Second Visit to the Vaudois of Piedmont*, (London: Rivington, 1831), p. 65.

⁵ Noble Leycon, A Long Waldenses Poem containing many of their beliefs and history. Found in Cambridge manuscripts.

⁶ Gilly, op. cit., p. 44.

⁷ Allix, op. cit., p. 193.

⁸ Lichtenberger, *Encyclopedie des Sciences Religieuses*, p. 1052. See Gay, op.cit., p. 2 for a special study on this point.

⁹ Gay, *The Waldenses*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Eugene Arnaud, "Histoire des persecutions endurees par les Vaudois aux XIII, XIV et XVe siecles," *Bulletin de la Societe d'Histoire Vaudoise*, [hereafter referred to simply by BSHV], p. 17, 1895.

¹¹ Castel, *Histoire du Christianisme*, (Paris: Librairie G. Fischbacher, 1882), 3:482; Allix, op. cit., p. 285.

¹² Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 17.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gay, op. cit., p. 16; Jalla, *Histoire des Vaudois*, (Pignerol, Imprimeria Sociale, 1926), p. 54.

¹⁵ Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 26.

¹⁶ Ibid.; cf. Marx, *L'Inquisition en Dauphine*, (Paris: H. Champion, 1914), p. 1.

¹⁷ Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 26.

¹⁸ Perrin, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

¹⁹ Gay, "Esquisse d'Histoire Vaudois," BSHV, 1907, p. 15.

²⁰ A. Poirson, "Precis de l'histoire de France pendant les temps moderne," BSHPF, 1858, p.149.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Gay, "Equisse d'Histoire Vaudois," p. 15.

²³ Muston, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁴ Jalla, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁵ Castel, op. cit., p. 590.

²⁶ Frossard, *Les Vaudois de Provence*, (Avignon: Bonnet fila, 1848), pp. 13, 27.

²⁷ Jalla, loc. cit.

²⁸ Frossard, loc. cit.

²⁹ Baird, op. cit., p. 230.

³⁰ Muston, op. cit., p. 54.

³¹ Gay, "Equisses d'Histoire Vaudoises," BSHV, 1907, p. 16.

³² Muston, op. cit., I, 131.

³³ Perrin, op. cit., p. 102.

³⁴ Gay, loc. cit.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ P. Rivoire, "Les Colonies Provencales et Vaudoises de la Pouille," BSHU, 1902, pp. 27-30.

³⁷Muston, op. cit., p. 54. (The italics belong to the present investigator; the importance of this fact will be seen later.)

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Monastier, *Histoire de l'Eglise Vaudoise*, (Lausanne: G. Bridel, 1847), p. 165.

⁴⁰Baird, op. cit., p. 231.

⁴¹Poirson, op. cit., p. 155.

Chapter III

RELATIONS WITH AUTHORITIES IN CHURCH AND STATE TO 1533

From the early years of the fourteenth century until 1501 almost nothing is heard of the Waldenses of Provence. This may stem from the fact that the lords of the district were so well satisfied with their peasant subjects that in spite of their religious differences, peace was granted them. This long period of peace (or period without record of persecution) may also have been due to the gradual conformity of these honest, peace-loving peasants with the Catholic Church. This will be demonstrated later in a discussion of their doctrines and practices.

There is a record of two trials of two heretics before the inquisitor Antoine Fabri in the city of Valence in 1494. The two accused were Monet Regès and Peyronette Béraud, widow of Pierre Béraud. Their trials are reported in full by Eugene Arnaud,¹ who does not mention from what region they came. It could have been Dauphine, Provence or the Piedmont valleys, where severe persecution was raging at this time. These persecutions in Piedmont may also be the basis for the migration to Provence of more Waldenses, reported by Jalla as taking place "at the beginning of the 16th century."²

King Louis XII, during a trip through Dauphine in 1501, had his attention called to the heretics of the region.³ These heretics were the Waldenses of Provence as well as of Dauphine. They were accused of all types of crimes and religious non-conformity. However, before giving any order for their extermination, the king appointed two men in whom he had confidence to make an investigation and give him a report. The men were Adam Fumée, master of requests, and Parni, a doctor from the Sorbonne.⁴

The two investigators visited all their parishes and temples and "neither found there images or sign of the ornaments belonging to the mass, or ceremonies of the Romish Church: much less could they discover any of those crimes with which they were charged."⁵ This is a part of the report which was read by Louis XII, who is reputed to have said: "These people are better than we" and ordered the processes started against the Vaudois thrown into the Rhone.⁶ The king then ordered that the peasants be allowed to return to their properties, of which they had been deprived pending investigation. The king withdrew his army and afforded the Vaudois his protection until the end of his reign in 1515. This order of the king was dated May 27, 1502, but it went without effect until in 1508, when the Vaudois were given new promises to regain their property. This time the Waldenses were reestablished "in the same condition which they had been before 1487, because they were found not to be heretics."⁷ This date would indicate that they had been having trouble with the Inquisition before the period of Louis XII, although there are no records of such troubles.

The actions of Louis XII secured a few more years of peace for the Waldenses, but the religious awakening taking place in Germany, Switzerland, and elsewhere soon brought upon them a closer surveillance by the authorities and a renewal of persecutions.

The signal for a renewed persecuting zeal came from the Pope himself. Clement VII, when informed of the progress of the reform in France, issued a bull in May 1525 against all "Lutherans in this country."⁸ The bull was made effective in France by an order of the regent, Marie Louise de Savoie, the 10th day of June, 1525, stating that anyone knowing a "Lutheran"

could obtain his property by prompt denunciation to the proper authorities.⁹ Thus, in 1528, Jean de Roma, a Dominican friar, succeeded in getting himself named as inquisitor in the Comtat Venaissin. He proved to be a ferocious tormentor of the Waldenses. His favorite method of extracting confessions, which he himself dictated, was to fill the victim's boots with heavy grease and, after securely tying the victim, put the feet over a fire for five or six hours.¹⁰ This usually produced the desired effect, but even if the confessed heretic was not then tied and burned at the stake, he was naturally a cripple for the rest of his life.

The bull of Clement VII was having its effect in other parts of France as well as in Provence. No part of France was now safe. In 1530 two barbes, Pierre Masson and George Morel, were sent to Switzerland to get more information about the Reformation there, and on the return trip by way of Dijon, Pierre Masson was arrested, tried, and condemned to death. However, George Morel was able to get back to Provence with numerous writings and much information about the Reformation in Germany, in Switzerland, and at Strasbourg.

In July, 1531, the Archbishop of Aix was ordered by Francis I to take direct charge of the processes against the heretics. In the same year there were a great number of trials, initiated by the bishops and magistrates of the district, of these poor Vaudois, who at this period were referred to also as "Lutherans" or "Lutheran-Vaudois."¹¹ During all this time Jean de Roma did not cease his own efforts at exterminating the heresy.

In March 1532 the Vaudois sent a request to the Swiss asking them to intercede in their favor with Francis I and exposing the injustice to which they were subjected.¹² Thanks to their timely intervention, Francis I granted them some relief by ordering Jean de Roma to remove himself from the district. The letter of Francis I was dated February 1, 1533, and Jean de Roma withdrew to Avignon under papal protection. The king had made an investigation and had found Jean de Roma an unworthy inquisitor because of bad morals. It was for this reason that he was removed, not because of his cruelties.¹³

The haughty attitude of Jean de Roma can best be illustrated by an extract of a letter he wrote to the Vaudois of Cabrières, (situated in the valley of the Durance river in Provence) in February just before the king's order came to put a stop to his work: "Do not delay in coming, and seek mercy while it may be found, because if you delay coming, I doubt if you will find mercy when you do come."¹⁴ The Vaudois of Cabrières then wrote a letter to Jean de Roma dated two days later, February 3, outlining briefly their position and with a short confession of faith.¹⁵ They did not let efforts at obtaining justice stop there, but, by their legal counsel had a letter sent to the king's commission at Aix. In this letter they said:

Jean de Roma preached from the pulpit that anyone accused by him, who would not confess, would have heavy boots filled with grease put on his feet and heated so much, that he would have no flesh left on his heels.

Jean de Roma forbade, under threat of excommunication, anyone, either lawyer or anyone else, to interfere with the cases of those he had accused.

Roma collected a great number of wicked boys, that he hired and sustained to the detriment of the Vaudois. He sent the boys, day and night, into the houses where they did worse than soldiers in a conquered country.

Roma had Michellot Marre taken into custody, tied and burned under the feet, to the number of seven bundles of wood. . . .

Roma is a man of bad conduct and example, and gets so drunk from wine that he often loses

his senses. And by drinking so much he once vomited in the Church while preaching in Lagne. . . .¹⁶

Jean de Roma was not long in replying to the above letter from the Vaudois by writing a letter himself to the king's commissioners in which he defends his actions very vigorously:

I have done nothing without the consent of the proper authorities. I find in the Holy Scriptures, that charity must be so regulated that we must, to show more zeal, love God and the preservation of the faith more than the lives of all the men and women of the world.

If we can torture a simple thief, it follows that we can do likewise to a heretic who is more criminal than all the thieves in the world.

When we consider that the heretics are beyond numbering and fear nothing . . . it is necessary to use terrible and frightening remedies to bring them to repentance and obedience to the Church . . . where as if they were but a few, we would use more kindness, but we have already been too kind. . . . But due to their maliciousness and obstinacy we cannot proceed rigorously enough.¹⁷

This gives an idea of the type of men with whom the Waldenses had to contend. However, Jean de Roma was forced to withdraw from his work at Avignon, and before the end of the year, he died there, a most agonizing death after much cruel suffering from a strange disease.¹⁸ Lentolo further described his death as taking place after much suffering from sores covering his entire body.¹⁹ The sores were filled with worms and stunk so badly that no one could approach him. Even after his death no one wanted to touch his body; finally a young friar threw a rope around his body and pulled it to a hole already prepared.

The Waldenses breathed easier for a while, but there was more persecution to come to try their faith. Their faith should now be reviewed to see why such attention had been given to them.

¹Gay, "Esquisse d'histoire Vaudoise," *BSHV*, p. 17; cf. Allix, op. cit., p. 302.

²Jalla, op. cit., p. 55.

³Felice, *Histoire des Protestants de France*, p. 63; Frossard states "toward 1506," op. cit., p. 21.

⁴Perrin, op. cit., p. 36; Frossard, op. cit., p. 21.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Felice, op. cit., p. 64.

⁷Defayard, "Documents relatifs au connetable de les diquieres," *BSHPF*, vol. 41, 1892, p. 447.

⁸Gay, "Esquisse d'histoire Vaudoise," *BSHV*, 1907; *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 66.

⁹Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, pp. 66, et sqq.

¹⁰Frossard, op. cit., p. 39; cf. Jalla, op. cit., p. 74; Gay, op. cit., p. 66.

¹¹Jalla, op. cit., p. 75.

¹²Herminjard, *Correspondance des réformateurs*, (Geneve: H. Georg, 1866), II, 407. Hereafter written *CDR*.

¹³Jalla, loc. cit; cf. Frossard, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁴Herminjard, *CDR*, vol. 7, no. 405a.

¹⁵Ibid., no. 405b.

¹⁶Herminjard, op. cit., VII, p. 473.

¹⁷Herminjard, *CDR*, VII, no. 416 bis.

¹⁸Frossard, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹⁹Lentolo, *Historia delle grandi e crudèli persecuzioni fatte al tempi nostri in Provenza*, (Torro Pellice: Tipografia Alpina, 1906), p. 38.

Chapter IV

REVIEW OF THE RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND BELIEFS OF THE FRENCH WALDENSES OF PROVENCE

As stated in an earlier chapter, the Poor of Lyons, who were cast out from that city in 1185, fled into the district under study, and there found a people already opposed to the Church and ready to receive the new preachers. The Waldenses are often accused of holding views of the Cathari. This is believed because they were so much influenced by Peter de Bruys and Henry de Lausanne. This influence and background have already been mentioned, but were they Cathari preachers? Döflinger points out the following differences:

The Cathari, as we know them, rejected water baptism: the Petrobrusians¹ are charged with rejecting infant baptism and with rebaptizing those christened in infancy.

The Cathari abstained from animal food: the Petrobrusians are accused of violating fasts.

The Cathari [the perfect] rejected marriage: Peter is charged with compelling monks "by terror and torment to marry" and Henry with removing impediments to marriage and urging men and women who had lived irregularly to enter the married state. . . .²

With all the above differences, basic as they were, Peter de Bruys and Henry, who preached later than did Peter, cannot be accused of being "unchristian Cathari." By their eloquent preaching the ground was prepared for Waldo and his followers. Although Henry is reputed to have changed the teaching of Peter, from the following summary of the chief points, one can see that the doctrines lingered on and were not destroyed by him.³ They believed that the gospels should be taken literally; they were the chief authority for their faith. Henry's position on the Old Testament was not clear. He thought that as baptism presupposed faith, baptism should be reserved for adults only. Transubstantiation was rejected as well as the entire sacrifice of the mass and the Lord's supper. He preached against the ceremonies and forms of worship, going so far as to declare that church buildings were not necessary. He did not believe in singing as a form of worship. He waged a vigorous campaign against the veneration of the cross; (he lost his life to an angered crowd while burning a cross).

The main theme of the preaching of Henry de Lausanne was the unworthiness of the priests.⁴ He found the only basis for the validity of the sacraments in a priesthood which possessed a "purity of action and sincerity of repentance and belief."⁵

Peter Waldo added little to the preaching of his predecessors except the vow of poverty. This vow of poverty was approved at the Council of Lateran in Rome in 1179 by Pope Alexander III.⁶ However, he was forbidden to preach unless expressly invited to do so by the priests. This injunction Waldo and his followers proceeded to break. Waldo had parts of the Scriptures translated into the vernacular, thus making possible the expounding of the Scriptures by the unlearned. Preaching by these unlearned men naturally led to the putting forth of many erroneous doctrines. The emphasis of his preaching, after poverty, was that the Popes were as nothing and Christ the only mediator. He rejected tradition as of no importance and retained only two of the sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He also believed priests should marry. The high position of the clergy was not in harmony with his ideal, so he condemned the hierarchy along with the pilgrimages and church "fêtes."

For the details of the beliefs during this period, one must rely greatly upon Catholic sources. Vedder has made a thorough study of these doctrines and warns us about the sources in the following words:

Our witnesses are all Roman Catholic, men of learning and ability, but as deeply prejudiced against a heretic as men could possibly be. This establishes at the onset a presumption against the trustworthiness of their testimonies; on the other hand, our witnesses were men who had extraordinary opportunities for discovering the facts. Our documents, with a single exception, are not polemic, not intended for the general public, but composed for the information and direction of fellow inquisitors and administrators. Evidently the writer did not knowingly set down that which would mislead those who were trying to assist; they may have misunderstood; they did not deliberately lie,—and when we come to combine and compare the statements, the agreement is so remarkable on all matters of importance as to compell the conviction that the testimony is substantially correct.⁷⁸

A few of the major points are here summarized to give a general picture of the Waldenses' beliefs of the 13th century.

Part one, the Scriptures: They held everything preached that is not proved by the text of the Bible to be fable. Further, the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles, without the decrees of the church, suffices for salvation. The Old Testament was not rejected outright but only a few points of importance retained. They explained this by saying that when the Gospel came all old things passed away.

Part two, salvation and purgatory: They maintained that the priests had usurped power belonging to God alone in absolving sin and excommunicating. Confession to God alone is sufficient for salvation; but whenever any sinner repents, however great and many his sins he has committed, if he dies immediately, he rises to heaven. They did not believe in purgatory, thus it follows, prayers to the dead were useless. As there is no purgatory, all when they die immediately go either to heaven or to hell. Prayers for the soul avail nothing as they are absorbed in heavenly joy.

There are those on the other hand that say souls cannot enter either heaven or hell before judgment.

Part three, the church: They say the Roman Catholic Church is not the church of Jesus Christ, but is a church of wicked men, and the true church ceased to exist under Sylvester, when the poison of the temporal things was infused into the church. And they say that they themselves are the Church of Christ, because in word and act they observed the teachings of Christ, the gospels and the apostles. Any customs of the Church that they do not read in the gospel, they despise: as the feast of candles, of palms, of the adoration of the Cross, the feast of Easter. . . . They say one day is like another, therefore they secretly work on feast days.

They say that they are the successors of the apostles and that no one is saved except in their sect, considered as one of the worst errors by the Church. They preached that the Roman Church is the harlot of Babylon, and all who obey it are damned.

Part four, the mass: They did not believe the blood and body of Christ to be present except in a figurative sense. They explained by the example when Christ said, "I am the rock," it was not to be taken in a literal sense. The blessing and other duties of the mass could be performed only by

the good. Others say that the blood and body of Christ's presence in the bread and wine depends upon the condition of the priests officiating. All were counted as sinners except those of their sect. Also the consecration of the body and blood of Christ can be accomplished by any good man, even a layman.

Part five, baptism: They say that a man is then truly for the first time baptized, when he is brought into their heresy; but some say that baptism does not profit little children because they are not able to believe; there was also a difference of opinion on original sin.

In general: The Pope is the head of all errors, prelates are scribes and religious pharisees, and thus they obey God alone. They spurn council, synods and conventions. Every good layman may be a priest, an apostle; the apostles were laymen. They deride clerical tonsure. Every layman, even women should preach. They all preach everywhere, and without distinction of condition, age, or sex.

They reject the sacraments of confirmation and penance. Their chief men lay hands on their disciples, in place of the sacrament of confirmation. In no case for whatever necessity or reason, should one swear. Others say oaths are unlawful except to escape death.⁹

With such rigorous opposition, it is not strange that the Church should expand the hunt for these heretics. The Synod of Verona in 1184 imposed on the bishops the duty to search out the heretics in their dioceses and hand them over to the secular power. The fourth Lateran Council of 1215 under Pope Innocent III repeated and enforced the order and in 1299 by the Synod of Toulouse, established the Inquisition in every parish. "The Synod of Toulouse in 1234 forbade even the priests to have the Scriptures in the vernacular and commanded all who owned copies to bring them to their bishop to be burned."¹⁰

Everyone was bound to denounce heretics, the names of the witnesses being kept secret. After 1243 Innocent IV allowed torture to be applied in the trials. Guilty parties were delivered up to the civil authorities and burned at the stake. "In 1542 Pope Paul II established and Pope Sixtus V organized the Roman congregation of the Inquisition, or Holy Office, a regular court of justice for dealing with heresy and heretics."¹¹

The Inquisition, as a permanent organization, did a complete job of ridding some parts of Provence of heretics. However, with the influx of new settlers from Italy in c. 1300 to the valley of Aigues, the need of inquisitors was again felt. These settlers, coming from the Italian side of the Alps, brought along the same general principles held by the former inhabitants. The only major change, although there are no details of this period, was the addition of regular leaders, called "barbes" to the group. These barbes were the regular, trained pastors who came along with the new settlers.

The barbes were trained in schools deep within the Alps on the Italian side. They were required to commit to memory large portions of the Scriptures, and were trained to speak in three languages: Latin, Romance, and Italian. "After this they spent some years in retirement, and they were set apart to the holy ministry by the administration of the Lord's supper and by imposition of hands."¹² They were supported by voluntary contributions of the people, and were always sent forth two by two, with the younger owing implicit obedience to the older.

Thus the Vaudois of Provence became dependent upon the Waldenses of Italy for spiritual guidance. A close cooperation existed among all groups of Waldenses. As a general rule barbes were never left more than two or three years in the one place.

One other change was noticeable in the area at this time, caused by the new group of settlers. The new Vaudois coming into Provence had not schismatically separated themselves from the Catholic Church. They still retained their external forms although having their own clergy, religious services, and parishes.¹³

During the following century, or the 14th, there is no record existant of their belief in writing. Early in the 15th century, Montet¹⁴ calls attention to a manuscript in the Geneva library, dated 1404, which gives the articles of their faith in simple style. These are written in two different forms, one list containing twelve points and the other containing but seven. They are both written in the Romance tongue, used so widely by the Vaudois of the period. Both lists contain essentially the same points but divided in a different manner. A translation of the list of seven follows:

The first article of our faith is that we believe in God, all powerful, creator of heaven and earth, and that God is one in three [*loqual Dio es un en trinita*].

The second article is that we believe in the sacred trinity which has created heaven, earth, and all things visible and invisible.

The third article is that we believe that God gave to Moses the holy and true law on Mount Sinai and that those things which are written in the law and are contained in the Old and the New Testament are true and authentic, and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The fourth article is that we believe that God the Father gave His only Son from heaven to earth and was conceived of the virgin Mary for our salvation.

The fifth article is that we believe that God Himself chose His holy church.

The sixth article is that we believe in the universal resurrection.

The seventh article is that we believe in a general judgment for all sons of Adam.¹⁵

There was little change from this period until the advent of the Reformation, when outside forces influenced the Waldenses. The beliefs and practices of all colonies of Waldenses were essentially the same at this period; however, in the case of the Vaudois of Provence one can discern a lowering of the standard. The difference is not in belief but in practice. These differences may stem from two sources; isolation from the main branch and continual pressure of the authorities.

Cooperation with the Roman Church was evident in the report of the investigators of Louis XII. After a visit to the Vaudois villages of France they noted: "They keep Sunday, have their children baptized according to the primitive church, and are taught the commandments of God."¹⁶ Speaking especially of the Vaudois of Provence, Poirson declares:

They admitted all the principal beliefs of the Roman Church and with modification, six of the sacraments. They rejected hardly any of the Catholic beliefs except the worship of saints and prayers for the dead. . . . They believed the effect of the sacraments depended upon the holiness of the one who administered them, refusing to take them from the Catholic minister because they contested their virtue; but at the same time giving the power to laymen of a pure life and especially to the Barbes who served them as priests.¹⁷

In a letter written by a certain Gagnelin there is much the same opinion expressed.¹⁸ The Vaudois church had lost its purity by the introductions of errors and abuses, and their faith had undergone many alterations by the acceptance of papal beliefs and ceremonies. This change

was brought about for "fear of persecution." One author declares that their doctrines were essentially Roman Catholic, except in a few points.¹⁹ It is further stated, however, that "they turned their back to the Pope, if not the Roman Church, and believed that which their barbes taught them in defiance to the priests. From the beginning they rejected, without condition, purgatory."²⁰

The main difference of the Vaudois of Provence with those of the other colonies seemed to be a question of practice.²¹ This will be observed quite clearly in the reply of Oecolampadius to the letter of the Waldenses of 1530 as well as the recommendations of the Reformers present at the conference of Chanforans of 1532. There were several steps leading up to this important conference of Chanforans.

The Waldenses of Bohemia were the first to get in contact with Luther in 1522. Cooperation with the Reformers was first discussed at the synod of Laons in Progela in 1526. One hundred and forty barbes took part in this conference but they put off any decision, wisely waiting until they could get more complete information. With the desire to be enlightened more fully, they sent two barbes, Martin Gonin and Guido de Calabre, into Switzerland to get more information and secure as many writings of the Reformers as possible. They saw Zwingli and Farel and brought back their writings which produced a great effect in the Piedmont valleys as well as in the colonies.²²

The Vaudois of Provence were no exception to the general interest and excitement caused by the news of the reform. This group called their own synod in 1530 and met at Mérindol, with the result that they delegated their two barbes, George Morel de Freissinières and Pierre Masson de Burgogne, to go inquire further into the new doctrines about which they were hearing. They were sent with a long letter in Latin, containing an introduction and a statement of their doctrines and beliefs. In it they asked many questions on points on which they were not clear.²³ It was especially addressed to Oecolampadius.

The two barbes first went to Neuchâtel, where they visited Farel, then proceeded on to Bern, meeting Hollar. Later, on October 13, they met Oecolampadius, to whom they presented their letter and from whom they secured a wonderful letter in reply to carry back to Provence. Oecolampadius then sent them to Strasbourg to confer with Bucer, who also gave them a long reply to their letter of inquiry. From Strasbourg, they started on their way home, but only Morel completed the journey. Pierre Masson was arrested and killed at Dijon, as stated earlier.

The barbe Morel translated the replies that he had received and put them in a dialogue form for the better understanding of the simple peasants. This work is now located in the library of Dublin.²⁴ It is sometimes referred to as the first confession of faith of the Waldenses. In addition Morel freely explained to these Vaudois the new points of doctrines held by the Reformers, and produced much agitation. He also communicated his findings to the barbes of Dauphine, the Piedmont valleys, and La Pouille. This brought about a general synod for the next year, 1531. It was held in Piedmont. Here for the first time is recorded disagreement in the ranks of the Vaudois.²⁵ In discussing the report of Morel, two parties developed: the "conservateurs" and the "novateurs." And because they could not agree, they decided to hold another synod the following year. The synod was scheduled to meet at Chanforans on September 12, 1532. In the meantime, to secure more light and understanding, they invited some Reformers to be present with them. To obtain the information and give this invitation, they again delegated Martin Gonin and Guido to go to Switzerland. The barbes took part in a "colloque," or conference, held at Grandson in the month of August and succeeded in bringing back with them to the valleys Farel, Souner, and Olivetan.²⁶

The synod met as scheduled, under the majestic chestnut trees at Chanforans. (The chestnut has been called the national tree of the Waldenses.) The consultations of Ocolampadius and of Farel were read and put into discussion, the three principal points of which were:

1. The institution of public worship in place of secret meetings held until then.
2. The absolute wrong of the practice of certain Waldenses of going to the functions of the Catholic Church when they did not believe in them.
3. Recommendation for adopting the Reformers' point of view on the following points: predestination, good works, the oaths, confessions, Sunday rest, fasts, marriage of the clergy, and the two sacraments.²⁷

These three recommendations show quite clearly how the Waldenses had fallen into questionable ways concerning their religious practices.

The discussion was lively and lasted six days. The opposition showed itself only too clearly. They then prepared a short confession of faith consisting of seventeen articles reproduced in full by Léger and Monastier, of which a manuscript copy may be found in the library of Cambridge.²⁸

A summary of the seventeen points follows:

1. We believe that divine worship ought to be performed in spirit and in truth, . . .
2. That all those who have been, and shall be saved, have been chosen by God before the foundation of the world.
3. That it is impossible that those who have been ordained (elected) to salvation should not be saved.
4. That whoever establishes the free will of man denies entirely the predestination and grace of God.
5. That no work is good but that which God has commanded, and none bad but what He has forbidden.
6. That a Christian may swear by the name of God without contravening what is written in Matthew v. 34, . . .
7. That auricular confession is not commanded nor appointed by the Holy Scriptures; . . .
8. That on Sundays we ought to cease our earthly labors, from zeal for God, and love towards our servants and that we may apply ourselves to hearing the word of God.
9. That a Christian is not permitted to avenge himself in any manner on his enemy.
10. That a Christian may exercise the office of magistrate over other Christians.
11. That the Scriptures do not fix any time for a Christian's fasting.
12. That marriage is not forbidden to any one, in any condition whatever.
13. That whoever forbids marriage teaches a diabolical doctrine.
14. That whoever has not the gift of continence ought to marry.
15. That the ministers of the word of God ought not to be transferred from one place to another, unless for some great good to the church.
16. That it is not incompatible with apostolic communion that the ministers possess some private property to support their families.

17. Touching the sacraments: the Holy Scriptures show that Jesus Christ has left us only two sacraments—baptism and the eucharist, or the Lord's supper; . . .²⁹

The synod of Angroyna, or Chanforans, also adopted a resolution which stated that they should cease their acts of dissimulation, which had been going on for a number of years because of fear of persecution. A letter of thanks was sent to Farel for his visit to the valleys.³⁰

With the fundamental changes which these points of doctrine brought forth, it was natural that the opposition would resist firmly. This opposition centered around the barbes Daniel de Valence and Jean de Molines, who withdrew from the assembly and went to the Waldensian brethren in Bohemia and Moravia. They thought the new regulations were not entirely necessary and claimed that these reforms would dishonor "the memory of those who had conducted the church so happily until then."³¹

They hoped to obtain a revocation of this conference with the aid of the Bohemian brethren. At first these Bohemian Waldenses were perturbed by the stories of Jean and Daniel as well as the resolutions adopted by the conference. The two barbes returned in July of 1533 with a long letter from the Bohemian believers asking for another synod to be held in Pral during August at which they would take part.³² The barbes agreed and ordered the synod to take place as requested.

The synod of Pral, after ample discussion, confirmed the decisions of Chanforans and the confirmation was communicated to the believers. "Jean and Daniel left the valleys, never to return."³³

One of the more important decisions of the synod of Chanforans was the translation of the Bible, from the original Hebrew and Greek, into the French language. This translation was urged by Farel and Sounier, but they themselves felt they had no time to translate it, when urged to do so by the barbe Gonin. They in turn asked Olivetan to perform the task, and he accepted after some hesitation. Five hundred ecus of gold were collected for this undertaking, but before it was finished and published in 1535, one thousand more was needed.³⁴ It was dated "Des alpes ce février 1535," by Olivetan who presented it to the second synod of Chanforans in September of the same year. Jean Calvin had written the preface to this historic work.

From this time forward the Waldenses of Provence as well as those of Italy and Dauphine take on a different appearance. They now have the Bible in their own tongue. Churches and chapels start to appear and the meetings are now held in public.

The resolutions adopted at the synod of Chanforans in 1532, and confirmed the following year were soon put into practice. Repentance for preceding acts of dissimulation stimulated ardent minds to give proofs of the sincerity of their love to God, and their attachment to His word. A clearer view of their duty strengthened the faith of the feeblest: a zeal, that had been languishing for some years, revived afresh in all hearts. A Christian life, not entirely new, but renovated, circulated faithfully through all the branches of the Vaudois Churches. . . .³⁵

This only irritated the clergy the more and was the signal for more tribulation to come. However, their bonds with the Reformers and renewed vigor produced by more enlightenment, gave them the courage to stand firm and present their faith boldly when asked to do so.

Much has been written on their doctrines before 1530, and although there is much disagreement among the researchers, Melia gives a list of doctrines that agreed with those of the Reformers and were at variance with the Catholic doctrines.³⁶

Even while the first conference of Chanforans was taking place, Jean de Roma was working among the Waldenses of Provence to try to root out the "heresy" or at least to enrich himself with their lands. In reply to the letter of Jean de Roma, the Vaudois of Cabrières, on February 3 of 1533, sent him a short confession of faith in the form of a letter.³⁷ It agreed in principle with the points outlined at Chanforans a few months earlier. It was, however, a little evasive in wording.

Between 1535 and 1545, many different "confessions of faith" of the Vaudois appeared, the majority of which are very similar. Sometimes they were sent from Mérindol and sometimes from Cabrières. This may be explained because the two towns were subject to different bishops. The town of Cabrières was within the Comtat Venaissin, owned at this time by the papacy. These confessions were brought forth in answer to demands of the authorities for the Waldenses to answer for their faith. One of the most comprehensive of these was their confession of faith of 1541, sent to the Parliament of Aix and also read to the king, who asked the theologians about him, "What erroneous teachings do you find?" No answer was forthcoming.³⁸ For each part at least one text of the Scriptures was given supporting it.

There is no reason to believe that after 1533 there was any difference in the various confessions of faith. The following is a summary of their confession of faith of 1543.³⁹

We believe in one God, who is spirit, Lord and creator of all things, Father of all, who reigns over all things.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son and the likeness of the Father. . . and in whom we know the Father, and who is our mediator and advocate and there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we can be saved.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is our comforter proceeding from the Father and from the law. . . .

We believe and hold that there is one holy church, which is the congregation of all the elected and faithful. . . .

We believe that the ministers of the church, such as bishops and pastors must be irreproachable in their lives as in doctrines, otherwise they must be removed from office.

We confess that the kings, princes, and governors are established as ministers of God, to whom we must obey.

We confess that the baptism of water is an external, visible sign, which represents that which by the grace of God renews a right spirit within us, and manifests a change of life declaring our faith.

We hold that the sacrament of the last supper of our Lord Jesus is a holy memory and represents the benefit we have received by His death.

We confess that marriage is good and honorable, instituted by God, forbidden to no one. . . .

We confess that those who fear God will seek to do good works.

We hold the Old and the New Testament to be the unique rule of our faith.⁴⁰

It was one of the last confessions of faith of the Waldenses of Provence.

¹As the followers of Peter de Bruys were called Petrobrusians, so also the followers of Henry de Lausanne were called Henricians.

²Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1953), I, p. 559.

³A. H. Newman, "Peter de Bruys," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, VII, p. 499.

⁴Hauck, "Henry de Lausanne," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, V, p. 228. ⁵Ibid.

⁶Clot, "Waldenses," *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, XII, p. 241.

⁷[Footnote 7 was left blank in the thesis manuscript, ed.]

⁸Vedder, "Origin and Early Teachings of the Waldenses, according to Roman Catholic Writers of the 13th Century," *The American Journal of Theology*, 4:3 July 1900, pp. 465-489.

⁹Vedder, op. cit., pp. 467-472.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, art. "Heresy."

¹²Muston, op. cit., pp. 18, 19.

¹³Ibid.; cf., Perrin, op. cit., pp. 40, 49.

¹⁴Montet, *Histoire Littéraire des Vaudois d'après les manuscrits originaux*, (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1885), p. 199.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Frossard, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁷Poirson, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁸Letter of Gagnelin to M. H. Triquets: *BSHPF*, vol. X, 1861, p. 215.

¹⁹Lichtenberger, op. cit., XII, 1055.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 49.

²²Ibid., pp. 45 et sqq.

²³Baird, op. cit., pp. 231 et sqq.; cf. Perrin, op. cit., p. 102.

²⁴Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 45; cf., Todd, *The Books of the Vaudois Preserved in Trinity College, Dublin*, (London: Macmillan Co., 1865).

²⁵Gay, op. cit., p. 46.

²⁶Ibid.; cf., Monastier, *A History of the Vaudois Church*, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1848), pp. 146 et sqq.

²⁷Gay, loc. cit.; Muston, op. cit., p. 54.

²⁸Monastier, loc. cit.; cf. Perrin, op. cit., p. 57.

²⁹Summarized from Monastier, op. cit., pp. 146 et sqq.

³⁰Herminjard, op. cit., vol. II, p. 448.

³¹Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, pp. 47 et sqq.

³²Herminjard, *CDR*, Vol. III 63, "Les frères de Bohême et de Moravia aux églises Vaudoises."

³³Monastier, op. cit., p. 150.

³⁴Gay, op. cit., pp. 50-51; de Felice, op. cit., p. 60.

³⁵Monastier, loc. cit.; cf. de Felice, op. cit., pp. 60 et sqq.

³⁶Melia, *Origin, Persecution and Doctrines of the Waldenses*, (London: James Toovey, 1870), p. 101; cf. Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, "Les conclusions d'une these de Jean F. Gay pour la license theologique a l'Academie de Lausanne: Résumé en quelques propositions les articles de foi des Vaudois avant le Reformation."

Hilgert, "Religious Practices of the Waldenses and their Doctrinal Implications to A.D. 1530," (unpublished Master's thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

³⁷Herminjard, *CDR*, Vol. VII, 467, n. 405b.

³⁸Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 242; Muston, *op. cit.*, p. 63 et sqq; Frossard, p.115.

³⁹Complete in appendix D.

⁴⁰"Confession de foi des Vaudois de Provence de 1543," *BSHPF*, 8, 1859.

Chapter V

THE FINAL PERSECUTION

After Jean de Roma, the Vaudois had not long to wait for their next tribulations. Francis I had prevented Jean de Roma from further depredations, and at about the same time gave an order that all heretics anywhere in France should be rooted out. Did this letter result partially because of the commissioners' report to the king after having been to Avignon to investigate the affair of Jean de Roma? The letter is included in full in appendix A to show that it was a type of signal for a general persecution of all nonconformists. It was given the 10th of December of 1533, the year before the "journée des placards" which was supposed to have changed the attitude of Francis I toward the Reformation.

The letter was addressed to the Parliament of Paris. The Parliament of Aix, with so many heretics within reach, could easily follow the instructions therein, which said:

For this cause we order you that you search out all those who hold this Lutheran doctrine and even those who are suspected to adhere or follow them, that you proceed against them in whatever place they may be found, without any exception; . . .¹

Whether or not this decree applied to these "Lutheran-Vaudois" is not known, but early the next year the bishops of Sisteron, Apt, Cavaillon, and others, each within their own diocese, brought persecution upon the Waldenses to such an extent that the prisons were full.² It is this same year that Duke Charles III sent Bersour, Lord of Rocheplate, to witness the trials of those who were Piedmont subjects. Several were burned the 4th of April of this year, only one escaped, and then because he was sick and paid a ransom.³ The persecutors' zeal did not miss the barbes and the school teachers during their search. "Every family was in fear of the life of each member, without thinking, nevertheless, of resistance."⁴

In spite of accusations to the contrary, the Waldenses did believe in subjection to the civil authorities, as Perrin points out from their own writings:

Every one ought to be subject to those who are in authority, to obey them, to love them, to be at peace with them, to honor them with subjection, allegiance, and promptitude, and paying what is due to them.⁵

There are three instances during this period when they did, however, show some resistance to the injustices done to them, and then only on an independent, individual basis. The first instance of resistance was in 1535. Several of the Vaudois had been imprisoned in La Roque d'Antheron without any forewarning, including the barbe George Gautier. Eusteche Marron, a young, courageous Vaudois from Cabrières de Comtat Venaissin, at the head of forty or fifty young men, freed the prisoners. He did the same thing one other time in his own community.⁶ The second instance was in 1540 and is blamed for the background of the famous decree of Mérindol. The mill of Apt was coveted by the magistrate of that town, so he denounced the owner, Pellenc, as a heretic. Pellenc was burned and his mill transferred to the denunciator. Four young men, unable to contain their indignation, went by night and burned the mill. The magistrate of Apt made his complaint to the Parliament of Aix, "which although in vacation time" (July) held an extraordinary meeting. The court ordered eighteen persons

apprehended, who were named by the magistrate. The officer who was commissioned to carry out the orders of the court proceeded to Mérindol. There he found all the houses deserted. The people were notified to appear before the court in two months from that date.⁷ The third instance recorded of Vaudois resistance was two months later when, on the date specified by the Parliament of Aix, the group of Waldenses from Mérindol was about to go before the authorities. However, before arriving they sought counsel from some advocates as to what they should do, having already addressed a petition to the court and not receiving any reply, they now felt the need of legal assistance. None was forthcoming. All aid had been forbidden them. The court had formed an order "prohibiting all clerks and notaries from either furnishing the accused copies of legal instructions, or receiving at their hands any petition or paper whatsoever."⁸ However, an advocate had the courage to tell the Vaudois not to appear, as their death had already been decided upon, "unless you wish to be burned alive."⁹ They did not go. These examples of resistance are exceptions, as will be seen later.

These high-handed methods were used in spite of the two decrees coming from Francis I that the Waldenses should not be molested but that they should abjure all their errors and repent within six months.¹⁰ Did Francis I expect to spare the "Lutheran-Vaudois" while giving orders to seek out all cursed Lutherans?

The Waldenses were persecuted severely, even after Jean de Roma left the scene. Their effort at trying to alleviate these injustices was to appeal directly to the king. The king, hoping to quiet things down, issued a decree that all would be forgiven and property returned to their rightful owners "if they abjured within six months. . . ."¹¹ The six months passed and no one abjured. The authorities were about to proceed again, but the Vaudois by urgent appeals to Francis I obtained another decree in 1536, again giving them six months to abjure. This decree was even more general than the one of 1535.¹² Still there were none who abjured.

By the same letter of grace from the king, there was pardon provided for those who renounced their religion, but there was no mention of what punishments the Waldenses should receive if they did not abjure. Thus the bishops as well as the members of Parliament were not satisfied. They continued their raids and burnings on an individual basis. The authorities in charge of the area reported to Francis I that the heretics were multiplying at an alarming rate, due to the pardon shown to them so that "the entire country was in danger of being infected."¹³

The king, upon receiving this report, required the court to repress the rebels. The following year (1539) he authorized it to look after the heretics.¹⁴ Frossard also gives two examples of letters of the king directed toward the suppression of the heresy. The dates, nevertheless, do not agree with that given by Muston. The first was dated from Fontainebleau, March 2, 1538, which directs:

. . . the Messieurs of Parliament to punish with all rigor the said heretics and those who followed them or gave them help. If they cannot be apprehended, they should be banished; proceed by taking their goods and until the ruination of their communities . . . and with rigor that belongs to you for rooting out and abolishing the said sect and errors. . . .¹⁵

The second example given by Frossard is dated May, 1540, and is in the form of a complaint that the lower judges have not entirely done their duty, and directing the court to send investigators "to inform themselves and to be prepared to judge."¹⁶

The Waldenses during this period were accused of all types of crimes in an effort to discredit them. Among other things, they were accused of making false money, of *saturnales nocturnes*, of practicing magic in addition to blaspheming.¹⁷

Near the end of the year 1539 four apostates of the Waldenses were taken into custody. Two of them, Garbille and Bérard, furnished information to the authorities about the names and location of 154 of the Waldenses. A warrant was issued for the arrest of the 154 named.¹⁸ The absurd stories told by these two men were taken as the basis of accusations against the Vaudois. Among other things they said the Waldenses were collecting guns and powder; they were expecting William of Furstenberg to come and help them; that there were in Provence and the Comtat Venaissin two thousand houses of Waldenses and Lutherans; that in Geneva there were more than 20,000 men from Provence and in Paris itself more than 50,000 heretics.¹⁹

This information was followed by the letter from the king advising action against these heretics. Those absurd stories and the "rebellion" by the young men of Mérindol who burned the mill of Apt, referred to above, furnished the background to the hasty enactment of the infamous *arrêt* of November 18, 1540, known in history as the *arrêt de Mérindol*.

It was directed against the nineteen people who had not appeared as ordered. The decree stated that:

. . . the men were to be burned and that the wives and children were to be banished and that all goods belonging to their children, wives, servants, or families was to be confiscated for the Lord of the region, and that no one was to give them aid or help of any kind, nor to receive the banished into their home or give any comfort. If any help was received from sympathizers, their goods were also to be taken away from them. As the village of Mérindol was a refuge and retreat of heretics, the court ordered all the houses and buildings to be demolished and burned and the place made uninhabitable, so that no one may be able to rebuild except by permission from the king. All trees and other vegetation were to be cut down for a distance of 200 paces around. . . .

Published in judgment in the Parliament of Provence sitting at Aix, the 18th day of November 1540.²⁰

The people of the sixteenth century lived in an age of cruelty. The decree of Mérindol shocked them. Baird describes it thus:

A more atrocious sentence was, perhaps, never rendered by a court of justice than the *arrêt de Mérindol*, which condemned the accused without a hearing, confounded the innocent with the guilty, and consigned the entire population of a peaceful village, by a single stroke of the pen, to a cruel death, or a scarcely less terrible exile. . . . Neither the presence of many Roman Catholics among them, nor the virtues of the inoffensive inhabitants, could insure the safety of the ill-fated Mérindol at the hands of the merciless judges.²¹

The news of the decree soon spread. The story exists, told by Lentolo, that ten or twelve days after the passing of the decree there was a banquet at Aix at which the principal men of the district were assembled, including members of Parliament and bishops. A "shameless" woman present at the dinner asked the president of the court of Provence, "Well, Monsieur de Chassanée, when are you to execute the decree of Mérindol?" The president made no reply, but a young nobleman present asked, "What decree?" The woman explained the content of the decree fully to an attentive audience. As she finished, the youthful d'Allen said, "Is this a fairy

tale you are recounting or a decree from the Parliament of Women?" Another nobleman present, Monsieur de Sevas, who knew about the decree, assured d'Allen that it was a decree, as stated, of the court of Aix, which he would be wise not to call the "Parliament of Women."

Another nobleman, the Seigneur of Beaujeu, exclaimed, "No, it is impossible to believe anything so barbarous." And so the argument went forward until many were in an angry mood. The Seigneur of Beaujeu replied with indignation, "It is atrocious! I have had to do with the inhabitants of Mérindol and nowhere have I met with such decent people." He was then accused of protecting heretics and speaking against the men of the Church.²²

A few days later, d'Allen spoke with the president Chassanée, who suspended the execution of the decree. One author claims the court itself wrote to Francis I for instructions in the affair.²³

The president Chassanée is credited with reasoning with the clergy concerning the decree. He was fearful that it would displease the king that they had made a decree so severe upon his subjects. The bishop was reputed to have replied, "If the king finds it bad at first sight, we will make him find it good; we have the cardinals with us, notably the cardinal de Tournon, for whom we could not do anything more agreeable."²⁴ This statement was a remarkably accurate prophecy.

Francis I did not find it good at first sight, and upon learning of the aforementioned decree, he immediately ordered William de Bellay, lord of Langes, to investigate. De Bellay had been the ambassador of Francis I to the Protestant princes of Germany. Perrin says De Bellay then sent two trusted and honest persons "to inquire into the life and religion of the said Waldenses."²⁵ Most authors agree the report was most favorable to the Waldenses; fortunately the report is still in existence. It set forth in simple terms a story of cruelty and exaction to which the villages had been subjected for many years. They collected the opinions of their neighbors, Roman Catholics, respecting their industry and behavior. The report also stated how they had moved there more than two hundred years previously.

These Waldenses formed a population of about 18,000 souls. They came from Piedmont and from Dauphine into Provence where they have lived for nearly three hundred years. When they arrived, the country was uncultivated and subjected to brigandage; but, once cleared by their hands, they received abundant harvest. A land which, before their arrival rented for four ecus, now brought three or four hundred. They built Mérindol, Cabrières and twenty other villages.

They were peaceful people, of good morals, liked by their neighbors, faithful to their promises, paying their debts, taking care of the poor, and charitable to strangers. One could not induce them to blaspheme or swear in any manner; they did not take an oath when called into justice. They were known especially because when they were in company, if anyone spoke lasciviously or blasphemously, they immediately withdrew.

We have nothing to reproach them unless it be that as they go by the town and markets, they do not visit much the churches, and if they do enter, they pray without looking at the saints. They pass in front of the cross and the images without any mark of reverence. They do not have masses said, either "liberal" or "de profundis"; they do not go on pilgrimage to gain pardons. When it thunders they do not cross themselves, and we cannot see them bringing any offering either for the living or for the dead.²⁶

It was the above related facts concerning their religious practices that had angered the clergy. They pressed the president Chassanée to proceed against the heretics, offering to pay the expenses themselves of an armed force necessary to eliminate the heresy. Chassanée resisted their urgings.

To Francis I, the report of William du Bellay seemed so favorable to the Waldenses that he granted them a letter of pardon, but on condition that they repent within three months. The letter of pardon was dated the eighth day of February from Fontainebleau. It was considered very liberal but it took back with one hand what had been given by the other. For example:

. . . we give . . . grace, pardon and remission to the Waldenses and free them of all penalties and offenses and of all punishments and condemnations that we could do either against their goods by any judgment given or to be given on condition nevertheless that in three months, after reception of these letters, that they repent, abjure, and renounce all errors and false doctrines into which they had fallen. . . .²⁷

These letters, which came to the court in the month of March, were not published until the month of May. This left less than a "fortnight for the Waldenses to avail themselves of the pardon pre-offered." Nevertheless the Waldenses did not take advantage of the offer. Instead, two deputies of the Waldenses presented themselves, and offered on the part of the inhabitants to abandon their peculiar tenets, "as soon as these should be refuted from the Holy Scriptures."²⁸

The members of the Parliament, who had originally urged the decree of Mérindol, were persistent and little inclined to give up the pursuit. They took advantage of the requirement of the letter of Francis I that the Vaudois had to abjure to obtain the promise therein. Therefore they were about to put an army into the field to force abjuration or execute the terms of their decree when Cardinal Sadolet interceded on behalf of the Vaudois.²⁹

The Waldenses, after hearing of the decree of pardon from the king, hastily drew up their confession of faith dated April 6, 1541.³⁰ This confession of faith was based upon the Scriptures, point by point, and was presented to the bishop of Carpentras as well as to the king. It was read to the king, as pointed out above, who declared himself well satisfied. "But his unsettled and shallow mind could not remain faithful to the impressions received."³¹

Cardinal Sadolet continued to work for the protection of the Waldenses and even protested to the Pope against persecuting such Christians as these while sparing the Jews. However in c. 1542 he disappeared from the scene, being called to Rome. It was on July 31 of this same year that the bull making the Inquisition a part of the Papacy was promulgated. This was a declaration of war on the "new spirit" of the century by the creation of the Roman congregation of the Inquisition or the "Holy Office."³²

In addition to the good impression made upon the king by the doctrines, he received about this time a respectful remonstrance from the Protestant princes against the persecution going on in France. This letter was drawn up by Melanchthon.³³

The bishops of Provence, not making much headway against the heretics by persecution, resorted to sending out doctors of theology to convert the Waldenses. But a strange thing happened--the theologians themselves were converted. Several accounts of the experiences of the theologians are given by different historians. De Felice refers to three who

were converted.³⁴ Frossard gives an extensive dialogue between the preachers and the people of Mérindol, men and children.³⁵ The bishop of Cavaillon, Vesembecius, visited Mérindol three times himself with no greater accomplishment than the conversion to the Waldensian doctrine of some of the priests who accompanied him.³⁶ One doctor of theology confesses, after having questioned several *catéchumènes*, "I have learned more from these children than the many times I have listened to the theologians at the Sorbonne."³⁷ Muston gives a somewhat different version, which is worth repeating here.

The bishop of Cavaillon having arrived at Mérindol, sent for the "bailli," whose name was Maynard, and for the principal persons of the place, and without touching upon any question of doctrine said to them: "Abjure your errors, whatsoever they may be, and I will hold you as dear as I now hold you guilty: if not, then tremble for the penalty of your obstinacy." "Would your grace," said the bailli, "be pleased to tell us the points we are required to abjure?" "It is needless," said the bishop, "a general abjuration will satisfy us." "But according to the decree of the court," said they, "it is upon our confession of faith that we ought to be examined." "And what is that?" said the bishop's counsellor, who was a doctor of divinity. The bishop presented it to him, saying, "See! The whole thing is full of heresy." "In what place?" said Maynard. "The doctor will tell you," replied the prelate. "I would need two or three days to examine it," remarked the theologian. "Very well! We will come back next week."

Eight days after, the doctor of divinity went to his bishop. "My Lord," said he, "I have not only found this paper conformable to the Holy Scriptures, but, moreover, I have learned to understand them better during these two or three days, than during all the rest of my life." "You are under the influence of the devil," said the prelate. . . .³⁸

The counsellor withdrew and was replaced by a doctor of the Sorbonne, recently arrived from Paris. About a year later we find the former in Geneva, where he embraced Protestantism. The bishop of Cavaillon returned to Mérindol with the doctor of the Sorbonne. Now occurs the famous scene of the bishop, with his suite, discussing religion with the children of Mérindol. . . . the prelate gave the children a few pieces of money, recommending them to learn the "Pater" and the "Credo." "We know them," said the children. "In Latin?" "Yes; but we cannot give the meaning of them but in French." "What is there need of so much knowledge?" said the bishop; "I know many doctors who would be at a loss to give the meaning of them. . . ."³⁹

The third visit of the bishop was just as fruitless as the two former ones. The prelate called upon the Waldenses to give their conclusive reply. "Our reply," they said, "is, that our errors ought to be pointed out to us." The bishop replied that "public report was a sufficient inculcation of the heretics." To this remark the Waldenses replied, "And was it not to ascertain if these reports were well founded that the investigation was appointed?" The bishop, being thus embarrassed, withdrew, and with this episode the Waldenses gained another year of peace.⁴⁰

The anger of the priests and prelates was stirred up all the more. With renewed effort, they were able to get permission from Francis I to execute the decree of Aix or Mérindol. Once again the Reformers of Switzerland and Germany intervened by their ambassadors and obtained the concession that a new investigation would be made by two commissioners sent by the king.⁴¹ The result was that with the report of the two commissioners, Francis I ordered that the entire affair be taken out of the hands of the Parliament of Aix and turned over to the Parliament of Paris. His order is dated June 14, 1544.⁴² Baird gives the month of October and reverses the order of the two above-mentioned events, putting the transfer of authority before

the investigation.⁴³ This is rather difficult to accept on its face value, for events moved at a rather rapid pace again.

In the meanwhile the president of the court of Aix, Chassanée, died and was succeeded by Jean Maynier, Baron d'Oppède. This was unfortunate for the Waldenses, as Chassanée had been a restraining influence on the court as well as on the prelates. Now with both the influence of Cardinal Sadolet and that of Chassanée removed, the opposition to the Waldenses would be more united. The Waldenses still had their supporters among the clergy, but none in high positions. Frossard relates the confession of a doctor of theology, named Bassinet, who had been persecuting the Waldenses.

I must admit, he said, that I have often hurriedly signed several processes against those so-called heretics. At any rate I must declare before God that I have not had any peace of mind (*je n'ai point eu de repos en ma conscience*) since the secular judges, by my report and judgment, and also from the reports of my colleagues, have condemned to death those that we have declared heretic. The reason is that since a short while I have been searching the Holy Scriptures, and I have found several points of the Lutherans in harmony with them. In any case, to maintain the honor of our Holy Mother Church, of our Holy Father, the Pope, and of our order, it seems to me that we must not continue as we have in the past. . . .⁴⁴

This example is rather an exception, as the zeal of the priests for persecution only increased.

After receiving the order from the king taking the authority for pursuing of the Waldenses out of their hands, d'Oppède with the leading figures quickly sent one of the officers of the court at Aix, named Coutin, to Paris to obtain a revocation of his order. The order of the king was not published, awaiting the action of their appeal. Coutin was also to tell the king that the Waldenses of Provence were now in open rebellion, that they had several thousand troops in arms and were ready to take the city of Marseille. The alleged purpose of the rebellion was to set up a republic fashioned on the model of the Swiss cantons.⁴⁵

Those false accusations are often given as the reason why Francis I permitted further persecutions of the Waldenses.⁴⁶ Modern writers as well as some older historians disagree, pointing out several other reasons. One of the principal reasons was the influence over the king of Cardinal Tournon, who sought the destruction of all heretics. Another reason was that the king at this time was very ill, and Cardinal Tournon, with the aid of several other bishops, prevailed upon Francis I to sign the order as a means of salvation.⁴⁷ The third and principal reason as given by some authors is that in September of 1544, Francis I and Charles II had signed an agreement, terminating their fourth and last war by the treaty of Crespy. One of the points of their agreement was to root out the reform movement within their respective states.⁴⁸ Some writers contend that the king wanted to exempt the Waldenses from this agreement, but that the king signed the order revoking his former order taking the affair away from the Parliament of Aix, and also a new order permitting the court to proceed against the heretics according to the decree of Aix of November 1540,⁴⁹ without knowing it. All these reasons may have contributed their share of influence. The clergy obtained all they sought by the new order signed the first day of the new year, 1545.

The new order, granting the Parliament full authority to proceed according to their former decree, was kept secret so that the king would not revoke it, and to keep the helpless Waldenses from learning of their impending fate.⁵⁰ The Baron d'Oppède in the meanwhile

succeeded in having himself named the *lieutenant du roi en Provence* on the 26th of February. Thus all power was in his hands. Still they awaited the opportune time. It came in early April when Count de Grignon, governor of Provence, was summoned by the king and sent on a diplomatic mission to Germany.⁵¹ The civil and military administration now fell into the hands of the Baron d'Oppède. Since d'Oppède plays such an important role during the next few years it would be well to see what the historians' record of this man is, and the motives for his zeal. One author declares him to be of Jewish descent:

He was poor, of Jewish descent, a man of doubtful integrity, of unquestionable selfishness, infatuated with self-conceit, like all men of little minds, and disdainful of people of low rank with a pride all the more contemptuous because he himself was but a miserable upstart. The apostasy of his grandfather seemed to irritate him all the more against the religious steadfastness of the Vaudois. . . .⁵²

Another author calls the baron "a hard-hearted, avaricious man, irritated, moreover, . . . because a lady," the Countess de Cental, who had vast properties in the region and who obtained much revenue from the labor of the Waldenses, had refused to marry him.⁵³ "Maynier resolved to exterminate these unhappy peasants in order to ruin the fortune of the Countess" who was escaping him, and at the same time to increase his own holdings.⁵⁴ He was president at Aix and possessed nothing beyond the very small Baronerie d'Oppède, a very small village only a short distance from Cabrières. He had increased his holdings by ejection of several Waldensian families. He hated the people of Cabrières because they received and cared for the peasants dispossessed at his hands.⁵⁵

The period of waiting was at an end. The Baron d'Oppède was ready to act. He waited only until a "certain captain Paulain, Baron de la Garde," who was in Piedmont, and who was soon to conduct a body of veteran troops to Roussillon, should pass through Provence, in order to employ the troops in the intended campaign.⁵⁶

These troops arrived in Provence the second week of April, and on the 15th, d'Oppède summoned the court of Aix to meet even though it was a Sunday. The king's advocate, named Guerin, formally insisted that the king's order be put to execution. Accordingly four commissioners were named to direct the campaign, and d'Oppède, as the king's lieutenant, in the absence of the governor, to take direct charge and to execute justice.⁵⁷

D'Oppède immediately ordered all men capable of bearing arms in the cities of Aix, Arles, and Marseille to join the expedition. He also directed the troops under de la Garde to join them, doing so in the king's name. Maynier also wrote to the warden of Apt to take up arms and seize upon all the heretics of the neighborhood.⁵⁸ He informed, secretly, the vice legate at Avignon to unite his soldiers and to direct them toward Cabrières.⁵⁹

THE MASSACRE

There are now a great number of conflicting accounts of the details of the campaign. All the writers agree on the dates and the major events, but the minor details vary according to each one's viewpoint. On April the 13th, the troops led by the commissioners left Aix and proceeded to Pertuis, just north of the river Durance. From there they continued north and west to the village of Cadenet. Here the troops met with other groups of soldiers under the Baron de

la Garde and a third group led by Maynier himself assisted by his sons-in-law. It was on Wednesday the 15th, and a council of war took place.

From Cadenet the main force, led by Paulain, as ordered by Maynier, proceeded toward Cabriette, Peypin, Lamotte, and St. Martin, all villages on the land of de Cental, a Roman Catholic noblewoman. Frossard names a fifth village, Cabrières d'Aigues.⁶⁰ The villages were all burned and the inhabitants killed. The Countess de Cental had protested and asked for judges instead of soldiers. The peasants offered to abandon the country and leave all possessions if they could be spared. The villagers were instructed to lay down their arms and retreat to the village of la Tour d'Aigues. Judges were promised to be sent later, to separate the guilty from the innocent. The peasants were about to do as instructed, but were followed and killed without mercy.⁶¹

A second column proceeded toward Mérindol by the way of Lourmarin, Villelaure, and Treizemines, led by Maynier. These villages were deserted by the Waldenses, so all the homes were set afire. On the south side of the river, La Rocque and St. Etienne de Juson suffered the same fate as the other villages at the hand of volunteers coming from Aix.

On the 18th of April the combined forces arrived at Mérindol, the ostensible object of the entire campaign. The town was deserted. One young man remained, named Maurice Blanc, of less than average intellect. He tried to pay a ransom to a soldier and thus secure his life. Instead Maynier paid the soldier two gold crowns agreed upon and had Maurice tied to a tree and used as a target by a group of brutal soldiers. As he expired, pierced by the arrows, he is reputed to have exclaimed: "Lord God, these men are snatching from me a life full of wretchedness and misery, but Thou wilt give me eternal life through Jesus Thy Son."⁶² The town of Mérindol was burned and plundered and the trees and vegetation were cut down for a distance of two hundred paces around. Those hiding were carefully sought out and either killed or sold as slaves. Many were cast down upon the rocks from a cliff. One woman was caught and raped while clutching her babe to her breast.

Leaving the area and the town of Mérindol completely desolate, d'Oppède with his army presented himself on the 19th of April before Cabrières. This large town of the Waldenses was in the Comtat Venaissin, territory of the Pope. D'Oppède found the town shut up--it was a walled town--with a few men to defend it against the combined hordes of d'Oppède and the army coming from Avignon led by the papal legate. One author says sixty men were the only defenders.⁶³ The army from Avignon was equipped with artillery, and Maynier had the walls bombarded, seeding to make a breach, all day long the 19th, a Sunday. The attack continued all through the night, but as there was little success, d'Oppède stopped the firing.

The leader then sent a note to the defenders, promising that if they would open the gates and lay down their arms, they would receive immunity of life and property and a judicial trial. They in turn asked only to be able to go to a foreign land, where they could pray to their Lord as they saw fit. The lord of Cabrières helped make terms for his vassals and promised to take their case to Parliament. An agreement was reached and Cabrières surrendered. The arms were laid down, but no sooner were the gates of the town opened than the terms of the capitulation were violated by Maynier and the soldiers. There took place a massacre much worse than in any other village thus far.

The sixty defenders were led to an adjacent meadow, securely bound, and there cut to pieces. The women and children were shut up in a barn, which was set on fire. One soldier, moved by pity, opened a door for them to escape, but the others drove the helpless victims back

with their pikes. The worst was reserved for the church of the town. Eight hundred persons of both sexes had found refuge there; it was reserved for the rabble of Avignon, belonging to the vice legate's army, to bring about the worst butchery yet. Those hiding in the church perished to the last one.

Similar proceedings took place at Le Coste on the 22nd day of April. No one was spared. Many of the inhabitants of the villages had fled to the woods and into the caves that were numerous in the region. Often fire was set at the entrances to the caves, suffocating all hiding within. The number that perished in the woods, fields, caves, and mountains was large, as d'Oppède had given a severe order that anyone giving any kind of assistance to the heretics should suffer the penalty of death. This order resulted in many starving to death. One author gives the following example:

A poor woman, ready to die of hunger, asked a morsel of bread at the door of a farm house. "It is forbidden," they said. "If men forbid you, God commands you," she cried. But that cry did not save her, and the Church of Rome was able to reckon one triumph more.⁶⁴

What became of the unfortunate who succeeded in making their escape from the towns before the arrival of the soldiers?

Assembled upon the wild brows of Leberon, they prayed God to enlighten their enemies and entreated from Him the strength which they needed, that they might not be tempted, in consequence of their misery and calamities, to abandon their faith or to adopt any evil course. Their calamities were not yet, however, at an end, for after the regular troops came the marauders.⁶⁵

This pillage continued for seven weeks.⁶⁶

On the 3rd of May, d'Oppède returned to Aix after having burned twenty-one villages, massacred 4,000 Waldenses, and condemned 225 prisoners to death as well as sending 600 men to the galleys.⁶⁷ The name of the Waldenses had nearly disappeared from Provence. Many were able to make their way back to the Piedmont valleys and others to Geneva, where they were warmly received.⁶⁸ The entire region was left as deserted and uninhabited as it had been early three hundred years before the arrival of the Waldenses.⁶⁹ Other writers state that after a short while, a few of the inhabitants were able to return to Provence and slowly resume their way of life, maintaining the faith of their fathers.⁷⁰

Calvin, on learning of the massacre of these believers one Sunday as he was leaving the pulpit, became pale and exclaimed that each one of the dead Waldenses was worth many proselytes. He later wrote about the massacre to a friend: "It is with a broken heart that I address you and not without tears which gush forth in such abundance that I cannot speak."⁷¹

His affection did not stop there; he traveled around Switzerland seeking material help to alleviate the suffering of the refugees from Provence as they arrived in that land.

¹Herminjard, II, 115; "Francois Ier au Parlement de Paris, de Lyon, 10 Decembre 1533," in appendix A.

²Muston, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

- ³Fargues, *Histoire du Christianisme*, (Paris: Librairie G. Fischbacher, 1936), p. 274; cf., Muston, op. cit., p. 55; Monastier, op. cit., p. 151.
- ⁴Ibid.
- ⁵Perrin, op. cit., p. 30.
- ⁶Fargues, op. cit., p. 275.
- ⁷Muston, op. cit., p. 57; Fargues, op. cit., p. 275.
- ⁸Baird, op. cit., p. 255.
- ⁹Muston, loc. cit.; Baird, loc. cit.; Fargues, op. cit., p. 274.
- ¹⁰Frossard, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
- ¹¹Ibid., cf., Muston, op. cit., p. 55, 56; Baird, op. cit., p. 235.
- ¹²Frossard, op. cit., pp. 46-47.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 49.
- ¹⁴Muston, op. cit., p. 56.
- ¹⁵Frossard, op. cit., p. 50.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 48; cf., Perrin, op. cit., pp. 30 et sqq.
- ¹⁸Muston, op. cit., p. 56; also mentioned by Jean Calvin in a letter to Pierre Viret; Herminjard, *CDR*, Vol. II, pp. 227-228.
- ¹⁹Herminjard, loc. cit.
- ²⁰Frossard, op. cit., pp. 53-58, see appendix B.
- ²¹Baird, op. cit., p. 237.
- ²²Lentolo, op. cit., p. 97; cf., Muston, op. cit., p. 58. Frossard, op. cit., pp. 63, et. sqq.
- ²³Muston, op. cit., p. 58.
- ²⁴De Felice, op. cit., p. 60.
- ²⁵Perrin, op. cit., p. 37.
- ²⁶De Felice, op. cit., pp. 61 et sqq; cf. Perrin, op. cit., pp. 37-38; Baird, op. cit., p. 240; Muston, op. cit., p. 58; Frossard, op. cit., p. 90 et sqq.
- ²⁷Frossard, op. cit., pp. 93-96; complete letter in appendix C.
- ²⁸Baird, op. cit., p. 241.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Muston, op. cit., p. 59; cf. de Felice, loc. cit.; Baird, op. cit., p. 241, gives 1542; Frossard gives it complete except for text, op. cit., pp. 114-115.
- ³¹Muston, loc. cit.
- ³²Bonnet, "La Tolerance du Cardinal Sadolet," *BSHPF*, V. 35, 1886, p. 529.
- ³³Baird, loc. cit.
- ³⁴De Felice, op. cit., p. 62.
- ³⁵Frossard, op. cit., pp. 74, et sqq.
- ³⁶Gay, *Histoire des Vaudois*, p. 67.
- ³⁷De Felice, loc. cit.; cf, Perrin, op. cit., p. 35.
- ³⁸Muston, op. cit., p. 61.
- ³⁹Ibid.; see also Frossard, op. cit., p. 127, et sqq.
- ⁴⁰Muston, op. cit.; p. 63; cf. Perrin, op. cit., p. 35.
- ⁴¹Gay, op. cit., p. 67.
- ⁴²Ibid.; cf. Muston, op. cit., p. 63.
- ⁴³Baird, op. cit., p. 239.
- ⁴⁴Frossard, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
- ⁴⁵De Felice, op. cit., p. 64; Baird, op. cit., p. 244; Muston, op. cit., p. 63.
- ⁴⁶Baird, op. cit., p. 244
- ⁴⁷De Felice, loc. cit.
- ⁴⁸Poirson, op. cit., VI, 169.
- ⁴⁹Muston, op. cit., pp. 63-64; cf. Poirson, op. cit., p. 170; Jalla, op. cit., p. 78.

⁵⁰ Jalla, loc. cit.; Baird, loc. cit.; Muston, op. cit., p. 65.

⁵¹ Baird, op. cit., p. 245.

⁵² Muston, op. cit., p. 56.

⁵³ Monastier, op. cit., p. 158.

⁵⁴ Poirson, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵⁵ Frossard, op. cit., p. 158.

⁵⁶ Muston, op. cit., p. 65; cf. Monastier, op. cit., p. 159; Baird, op. cit., p. 245.

⁵⁷ Muston, *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Frossard, op. cit., p. 169.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172; Muston, op. cit., pp. 66-71.

⁶² As reported by Crespin in Baird, op. cit., p. 247. This statement is reported by most authors but varies greatly.

⁶³ De Felice, op. cit., p. 64.

⁶⁴ Muston, op. cit., p. 70.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Baird, op. cit., p. 249. ⁶⁷ As the figures vary from author to author, an approximate average is given here.

⁶⁸ For the writers treating especially this part of the Waldensian history, consult: Baird, op. cit., pp. 234-250; de Felice, op. cit., pp. 59-66; Frossard, op. cit., pp. 159-191; Lentolo, op. cit.; Monastier, op. cit., pp. 157-161; Muston, op. cit., pp. 65-71; Gay, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

⁶⁹ De Felice, op. cit., p. 65.

⁷⁰ Baird, loc. cit.; Muston, loc. cit.

⁷¹ Letter of Jean Calvin to Joachin Vadier, *BSHPF*, 1868, p. 259.

Chapter VI

HUMAN JUSTICE

Neither the dead nor the fugitives could bring a complaint to the courts of justice. The only persons remaining to seek justice were the property owners. The Countess of Cental led out in accusing the Parliament of Aix of injustices by instituting a process with the Parliament of Paris.¹

D'Oppède did not give up so easily. He proceeded to send the commissioner de Lafond to Paris, where, aided by the Cardinal de Tourmon, he thwarted the efforts of the Countess of Cental and other ruined lords from obtaining any judgment. No justice whatever was secured during the reign of Francis I. D'Oppède not only halted the sought-for processes, but obtained from the king, by falsehoods and misrepresentations, a further decree, mingled with little mercy, against the surviving Waldenses.² Thus the pleas for justice resulted in an order for suppressing the few miserable survivors all the more. It said in part:

Francis, by the grace of God, King of France, Count of Provence. . . . several times previous have we exhorted the ones holding to this erroneous sect of Waldenses to abjure errors and to hold to the pathway of the Christian religion and faith, whereby we promised to pardon from all offenses by the letter of February 8, 1540 [1541] and May 17, 1543, to which they have not obeyed. Now by the letters granted the first day of January past, we ordered you to proceed to the execution of the aforementioned sect by rigorous methods . . . and in so doing you found that the inhabitants had armed themselves and retired with their families, goods, and animals into the woods, mountains, and fortified places and left the houses and villages, and holding the fortified places by force . . . and preventing the execution of the decree. . . .

WE HEREBY ORDER YOU

Against those and also against their accomplices and adherents holding the field, outlaws from justice, if they do not present themselves and abjure, renounce and submit on the day that you will set for them . . . if not willing to submit to the Holy Church that they shall be EXTERMINATED from our kingdom, lands and fiefdoms or any other punishment you think fitting. . . .

Given the 18th day of August the year of grace 1545 and of our reign the thirty-first, and signed by the king, . . .³

The reason that the Waldenses were found to be holding out from justice in fortified places was this; the men of the court of Aix, seeing the great destruction that they had wrought, "fearing, with reason, the punishment of their crime if viewed in its proper light," they attempted to cover the injustice by initiating the forms of a judicial proceeding. Naturally the remaining Waldenses, knowing the danger to which they were exposed, did not respond when called before the judges.⁴

While some historians claim that the decree of January 1, 1545, was signed by the king without his knowing it, the above decree, mentioning the decree of January 1, would seem to prove otherwise. Was the king so sick and weak at this time that he did not know what he was

doing? Was the Cardinal of Tournon in complete control of the king? As a further proof that the decree of January 1, 1545, was not signed in ignorance, there is another letter written by Francis I in reply to the letter of protest of the Swiss Reformers about the massacre of April 13-22. The letter is dated June 27, 1545, and says in part:

. . . you have nothing to say concerning the manner in which we think best to punish our guilty subjects. And moreover we want to inform you that the Waldenses and the other heretics that we have punished, held such errors that we do not think any prince of Germany would want to tolerate them within their borders.⁵

Some historians contend that the king, on his deathbed, was grieved by the crime committed against his loyal subjects in Provence. It is further believed that the king extracted from his son, the future King Henry II, a promise to obtain justice for the Waldenses of Provence.⁶ It will be shown how well this promise, if it existed, was carried out by the young king.

The massacre of the Waldenses of Provence brought about a universal indignation. The king complained that his orders were surpassed, according to one author, but his two above-mentioned letters would not indicate any remorse or indignation on his part.⁷ Neither were the ruined lords able to obtain any justice, or even a hearing, until after the death of Francis I, March 17, 1547.

Henry II, upon taking the crown, no longer retained the Cardinal de Tournon as an intimate councillor. This provided the opportunity for the ruined lords, and especially the Countess of Cental, to renew their complaints for legal action, not only from the lords but also from former friends of d'Oppède who felt they had not received their share of the spoils. This latter group was supposed to include the advocate general Guerin, who had worked in secret.⁸

At this period Henry II was seeking better relations with the Protestant states and thus felt constrained to permit the trial to take place. Their trials were further helped by councillors of the king who had replaced the Cardinal de Tournon and Count de Grignan, for whom they were reputed to have had a real hatred.⁹

The Baron d'Oppède, the Baron de la Garde, Guerin, the advocate-general, the second president de Lafond, and the other commissioners were called to make themselves prisoners voluntarily and come to Paris.¹⁰ They obeyed. One author says the councillor of Francis I, Count de Grignan, barely escaped being put on trial and then only by the protection of the duke of Guise, for which protection the count is supposed to have paid dearly.¹¹

The grand council was called to take charge of the affair, but as the accused contested its authority, the trial was transferred to the grand chamber of the Parliament of Paris.

The trial took place as a result of the letter to the king, Henry II, dated March 17, 1550.¹² In this rather long letter is given a complete review of the details and wrongs committed by the named defendants.

The trial took place the next year, 1551, and required fifty consecutive sittings. One strange thing about the trial was that no Waldenses were present, nor were any represented. The advocate-general Aubrey did such a splendid work of pleading for justice for the wronged parties that he was accused of being a lawyer for the Waldenses themselves.

Further interest was attached to the trial by the lawyer Reynaud, who came representing Cardinal Farnese, legate of Avignon, asking the court not to take notice of the happenings concerning Cabrières, as it was a town within the Comtat Venaissin, land belonging to the Pope. This point was not allowed, and after other formalities the trial began.

Aubrey was the first to speak. He did so eloquently and clearly for seven days, after which the public expected a severe verdict. The result was not as was expected; it was neither severe nor did it result in a general condemnation. The advocate for d'Oppède was the next to speak. D'Oppède's actions were declared completely legal and just, and when he was to speak for himself his first words were a quotation from the Scriptures: "Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me" (Ps 7:8).¹³

During the detention of the Baron d'Oppède in Paris, the clergy ordered prayers said for his deliverance, both in Paris and in Provence. As he was freed without any punishment, his return to Provence and his reinstatement as president of the Parliament was acclaimed by special holidays and feasts, with much celebrating and singing of psalms of praise in the churches. Not only the populace took note of his deliverance, but the Pope, Paul IV, honored him publicly for his works "that he had accomplished for the extermination of the heresy."¹⁴

All the accused were reinstated in their respective positions except Guerin, who was condemned to the gallows, but for an offense totally different--that of irregularities in the service of the king,¹⁵ the killing of several thousand persons not being sufficient for his condemnation.

Nevertheless, the honorable president of Aix enjoyed his position and honors for but a few short years. He soon became sick and was seized by an "excruciating pain in the intestines,"¹⁶ causing his death by a "disease as strange as it was painful."¹⁷

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. (Luke 2:20-21)

¹Frossard, op. cit., p. 195.

²Baird, op. cit., p. 251; Frossard, loc. cit.

³Frossard, op. cit., pp. 195-200; complete in appendix F.

⁴Baird, op. cit., p. 250.

⁵Complete in appendix E, *BSHPF*, vol. 40, 1891, pp. 202-203.

⁶Monastier, op. cit., p. 161; Frossard, op. cit., p. 201; de Felice, op. cit., p. 66.

⁷De Felice, loc. cit.

⁸Frossard, op. cit., p. 204.

⁹Baird, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 245, Honore de Tributis and Bernard Badet.

¹¹Ibid., p. 251.

¹²Frossard, op. cit., pp. 209-221.

¹³De Felice, op. cit., p. 66.

¹⁴Frossard, op. cit., p. 276.

¹⁵De Felice, loc. cit.; Frossard, op. cit., pp. 273-275.

¹⁶Baird, from de Thou, op. cit., p. 252, a footnote.

¹⁷Frossard, op. cit., p. 279.

Chapter VII

SUMMARY

The following facts emerge from among the many points covered in this study:

1. The Waldenses have an indefinite origin before the time of Peter Waldo, but their movement becomes precise and discernible thereafter.

2. The crusades and the Inquisition nearly eradicated those Waldenses living in Provence, who opposed the church during the 13th century.

3. The direct descendants of the group here studied migrated from the valleys of Italy, for various reasons, and at more than one period in history.

4. The precise dates for the early migrations are not known. Four general periods are apparent:

- a. After the expulsion of the "Poor of Lyons" from that city, c. 1185.
- b. A group coming from the Piedmont valleys, c. 1300.
- c. Another group coming somewhat before 1400 and by invitation.
- d. A fourth movement in 1495 due to persecution in the Piedmont valleys.

5. The history of the Waldenses appears more clearly during periods of persecution, which briefly fall into four periods:

- a. The first half of the 13th century.
- b. About 1400.
- c. About 1500 or the early years of Louis XII.
- d. During the latter years of Francis I.

6. Their religious beliefs and practices underwent a major change upon contact with the Swiss Reformers.

7. The Protestant Reformation resulted in increased attention being given to the Waldenses and led to their severest persecutions.

8. The Waldenses suffered their greatest persecutions during the reign of Francis I, and if the persecutions were not directly attributable to him, he was responsible at least, because of his lack of leadership at a crucial time.

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Appendix A

FRANCIS I TO THE PARLIAMENT OF PARIS (LYON, DECEMBER 10, 1533)³

De par le Roy

Nos ameéz et feaulx! Nous avons entendu le contenu aux lettres que par ce porteur avons acceptez. Nous sommes très-marris et desplaisans de ce que en nostre bonne ville de Paris, chef et capitale de nostre Royaume, et où y a Université principale de la Chrestienté, cette maucdite secte hérétique Luthérienne pullule, où plusieurs pourront prendre exemple; à quoy de tout nostre pouvoir et puissance voulons y obvier, sans y espargner personne qui soit. Et pour ce voulons et entendons que telle et si grifve punition en soit faicte, que ce soit correction aux maudits Hérétiques, et exemple à tous autres.

A cette cause, nous vous mandons et très expressement enjoignons, que vous commitez aucuns d'entre vous, pour toutes choses laissées, curieusement et diligemment eulx enquérir de tous celx qui tiennent icelle secte Luthérienne, et qui en sont suspects et véhémentement suspicionnez, et qui y adhèrent et les suivent, afin que vous procédez contre eulx, sans nul excepter, par prise de corps, en quelque lieu qu'ils soyent trouvez, et contre les fugifits, (par) adjournement à trois briefs jours, prise de biens et établissement de commissaires. Et quand à ceulx que avez fait constituer prisonniers, qui sont chargez de blasphèmes, procédez à leur punition selon l'exigence des cas.

Et, au regard des Hérétiques, nous excripvons à l'Evesque de Paris ou à ses vicaires, qu'ils commettent deux de nos conseillers tels que adviserez, pour faire et parfaire le procez d'iceulx hérétiques, sans préjudice de sa jurisdiction en aultres choses, ny quelque chose que nous avons par cy-devant escrit--d'autant que attendre que icelny délict pullule, à faute d'avoir eu le soin et cure de l'extirper dey le commencement, il est besoin que tout promptement par gens d'autorité et vos officiers cela soit exécuté, qui vous porront de jour à autre rapporter en quel estat seront les matières, por en avoir vostre advis et conseil. Si voulons que à ce que dessus soit par nos procédés réellement et de fait par main forte et armée, si mestier est, et que nous envoyez en diligence mémoires nécessaires pour avoir de nous toutes provisions requises, tant par lettres missives que patentes, pour faire accomplir et exécuter ce que dessus. D'autre part vous envoyons, et aussi audit Evesque de Paris ou à ses vicaires, le vidimus des Bulles qu'il a plu à nostre Sain-Père le Pape nous octroyer, pour extirper icelle secte Luthérienne de nostre Royaulme.

Nous avons fait par ci-devant expédier lettres patentes sur le fait de Prescheurs, qui ont vien aydé à augmenter la dicte secte. On nous a dict qu'elles vous avaient esté présentées, toutefois que n'y avez donné aucun ordre. Pareillement avons entendu que le Docteur qui a presché certaines propositions, dont avez fait informations de vostre part, et le Recteur de la sienne, et que vous aviez enfoyé quérir pour parler à vous,-- quand fut à la salle du Palais, quelqu'un de nostre dicte court vint parler à luy, qui fut cause qu'il s'enfuyt.

Nous, à cette cause, vous mandons et enjoignons vous informer de celluy qui est cause d'icelle fuitte et qui parla au dict Recteur et le saisissez et constituez prisonnier, et nous mandez qui il est, afin que nous vous mandons ce que en voulons estre fait. Il a assez monstré en ce faisant, qu'il est fait suspect d'estre du nombre des Hérétiques. Si nous prions que à tout ce que dessus vous marquez et entendez diligemment, et vous nous ferez service, en ce faisant, très agréable.

³ Herminjard, vol. III, p. 115.

Donné à Lyon, 10 jour de décembre 1533.

Francois
Bayard

Appendix B

DECREE OF DEFAULT GIVEN TO THE PARLIAMENT OF AIX AGAINST THE CITIZENS OF MÉRINDOL⁴

Sur la demande du profit et utilité des défauts obtenu par le procureur du roi, de mander en cas de crime de lez-majesté divine et humaine contre . . . (suit une liste de dix-neuf condamnés, parmi lesquels on remarque des noms de famille encore existantes, comme les Mainard et les Pallenq). Retirés et demeurant au dit Mérindol de dit cas et crimes ajournés à trois briefs jours, non comparus ains défailants. Vu les charges et information faites à larequête du procureur général du roi, ordonnance de prise de corps, et é faute de ce ajournement à trois briefs jours dévoués contre les accusés et défailans, du parlement et exploit du dit ajournement à trois briefs jours, les défauts obtenus par le procureur général contre les accusés, les lettres patentes du roi adressantes à la cour pour prendre contre Vaudois et Luthériens et autres sectes contraires et dérogoires à la foi et religion chrétienne, et vu lettres patentes du dit Seigneur du 16e jour de juillet MDXXX et du dernier mai MDXXXI, par lesquels il faisait pardon et grâce aux chargés, accusés, et suspects d'erreurs, hérétiques se désistant des dites erreurs et les abjurant dans six mois après la publication des dites lettres. Le recollement des témoins examinés et les susdites informations, autres charges et informations et procès produits par le susdit procureur général por faire apparoir que notoirement ceux de Mérindol tiennent sectes Vaudoises et Luthériennes réprouvées et contraires à la sainte foi et religion chrétienne; scellent et retirent gens étrangers et fugitifs chargés et diffamés d'être de telle secte et iceux entretiennent et favorisent; qu'en lieu il y a écoles d'erreurs et fausses doctrines des dites sectes; gens qui dogmatisent les dites erreurs et fausses doctrines et ont impreimé et vendent livres pleins de telles fausses doctrines. Et aussi que ceux de Mérindol au terroir ou ont rocher ont bâti des cavernes et spelonque, oï ils retirent et cachent eux, leurs complices et leurs biens, et se font forts. Autres informations prises par le juge d'Apt pour faire apparoir qu'après que Collin Pallenq, dit du plan d'Apt, comme sectateurs des dites sectes fut ces jours passe's condamné et brûlé, et ses beins confisqués au roi, en haine de ce plusieurs gens du dit Mérindol, leurs complices et adhérens, on grande assemblée comme de six à sept vingt hommes armés d'arquebuses, hallebardes, épées et autres harnais, ont rompu le moulin que était audit feu Collin Pallenq et Thomas Pallenq frères, battu, outragé le meunier et icelui menacé et tous ceux qui prenaient les biens de ceux de leurs sectes. Le tout considéré, la cour a dit et déclaré, dit et déclare les dits défauts avoir été obtenus et pour le profit d'iceux, que tous les dessus dits accusés et ajournés sont vrais defailans et contumaces, déchus de toute défense et atténueant, et convaincus des cas et crimes à eux imputés de servir, maintenir et suivre sectes et doctrines hérétiques improuvées et contraires à la foi et religion chrétienne et aux saintes prohibitions du roi, et d'être retireurs, réceptateurs, receleurs et fauteurs, des gens chargés et diffamés de tenir telles doctrines et sectes damnées et repoussées et réprouvées, pour la réparation desquels cas a condamné et condamne les dits, etc., habitans de Mérindol à estre brûlés et ards tous vifs; à savoir, quant aux Barbaroux et Favier en la place publique du dit Trouves, quant au dit Thomas Pallenq, en la place publique d'Apt, et quant aux autres en la place des Jacobins de cette ville d'Aix, et à faute de les avoir seront exécutés en figure et en peinture, et au regard des femmes, enfans, serviteurs ou famille de tous ces dessus défailans et condamnés; la dite cour les à défiés et abandonnés à tous pour les prendre et représenter à justice afin de procéder contre eux à l'exécution des rigueurs et peines de droit, ainsi qu'il appartiendra, et au cas qu'ils ne puissent être pris ou appréhendés dès maintenant les à tous

⁴ Frossard, op. cit., pp. 53-56.

bannis et bannies, du royaume, terre et seigneurie du roi avax interdiction et prohibition d'y entrer ni venir sous peine de la hard et du feu, et déclare tous et chacun, les biens des dessus dit condamnés et bannis, de leurs femmes, enfans, serviteurs et familles, être acquis et confisqués au dit seigneur, qu'ils n'ainent à recevoir ni receler les dits condamnés, les femmes, enfans, serviteurs et familles ni leur bailler aucune faveur, aide ou confort en manière que ce soit, sous peine à ceux qui feraient le contraire de confiscation de leurs biens et autres peines arbitraires, et au surplus attendre que notoirement tout le dit lieu de Mérindol est la retraite, spelonque, refuge ou forts de gens tenant telle secte damnée et reprovée, la cour a ordonné et ordonne que toutes les maisons et bastides du lieu abattues, démolies et abrasées, et le dit lieu rendu inhabitable, sans que personne y puisse réédifier, ni bâtir, si ce n'est par le vouloir et permission du roi; semblablement que le château, spelonque, repaire et fort étant es rochers et bois du terroir du dit Mérindol, seront ruinés et mis en telle sorte que l'on n'y puisse faire résidence et que les lieux soient découverts, et les bois où sont les dits forts coupés et abattus deux cents pas à l'alentour, et davantage fait prohibition et défense de bailler à ferme ou arrentement, ni autrement, les héritages du dit lieu à aucun du surnom et lignées des susdits condamnés.

Publié en jugement au parlement de Provence séant à Aix, le 18ème jour de novembre MDXXXX.

Appendix C

A LETTER OF FRANCIS I

François, par la grâce de Dieu, roi de France, comte de Provence, Forcalquier et terres adjacentes, à nos amés et féaux, les gens tenans notre Cour du parlement au dit pays de Provence, séant à Aix, Salut et dilection. Comme nous ayons entendu qu'aucuns dévoyés du bon chemin assemblés en quelques endroits de nos dits pays de Provence, à ils continuent en leurs erreurs par la séduction d'aucuns malins esprits, à quoi est le besoin donner bonne et salutaire provision, afin que ce venin ne procède plus avant: savoir nous faisons que nous enclinant plus volontiers à miséricorde et clémence qu'à rigueur de justice, et voulant plutôt essayer par la voie de douceur et de remontrance, de retirer et redresser les dits dévoyés à la voie du salut que par rigoureuses punitions, les faire tomber en désespoir: attendu même à grande multitude de ceux que l'on dit être touchés en ces fautes et erreurs, et que l'on peut espérer que par la bonté de Dieu, notre Créateur, ils se réduiront plutôt à la voie de salut que d'être hors de la congrégation des bons chrétiens et fidèles, et demeurer continuellement en la crainte de la rigoureuse justice tant de Dieu que des hommes; nous, à ces causes, avons donné et donnons par les présentes, grâce, pardon et rémission en tant qu'à nous est, aux dits Vaudois, et les avons quitté et quittons de toutes peines et offenses et de toutes punitions et condamnations qu'on leur pourrait faire tant en leurs biens en vertu des jugements donnés ou à donner, pourvu toutefois que dans trois mois, après l'insinuation de ces présentes à eux dûment faites, ils fassent abjurations et rénonciation solennelle, et telle qu'elle est requise à tous erreurs et fausses doctrines, lesquelles ils sont tombés par ci-devant. Dont ils se départiront entièrement, et promettent vivre catholiquement et fidèlement, ainsi qu'il est requis et nécessaire à tous bons chrétiens et catholiques, vivant selon la loi de Dieu et de l'Eglise; et, à cette fin, et pour entendu s'ils voudront user de notre présente grâce et miséricorde, voulons qu'ils puissent venir ou envoyer par devers vous jusqu'à tel nombre de personnes qui sera par vous avisé et ordonné en pleine sûreté, tant pour aller déjoumer que pour retourner, sans ce que durant le dit temps il leur puisse être donné aucun destourbier ou empêchement en leurs personnes et biens, en quelque manière que ce soit, et où ils n'en voudraient user, et demeurant en leur obstination, vous en ferez faire telle punition que verrez au cas appartenir, et de ce faire, vous avons donné et donnons pour autorité commission et mandement spécial, par ces présentes. Par lesquelles, mandons et commandons à tous nos justiciers, officiers et sujets, soient gens de guerres ou autres qu'à vous, vos commis et députés, ils prêtent et donnent toute l'aide, faveur, assistance dont ils seront par vous et vos dits députés requis.

Donné à Fontainebleau, le Sème jour de février, l'an de grâce 1541, et de notre règne le 27ème, ainsi signè par le Roi, comte de Provence.

Bayard

Appendix D

CONFESSION OF FAITH BY THE VAUDOIS OF PROVENCE, 1543⁵

Nous croyons qu'il n'est qu'un seul Dieu, qui est esprit, souverain créateur de toutes choses, père de tous, qui est sur tous et par toutes choses, et en nous tous, lequel on doit adorer en esprit et vérité, et non pas figures et choses visibles; auquel seul nous attribuons et donnons gloire de nostre vie, nourrissement, ventement, santé et maladie, prospérité et adversité, l'aymant comme autheur de toute bonté, le craignant comme celluy seul qui peult faire vivre et mourir, le priant comme celluy seul qui congnoist les cueurs.

Nous croyons que Jésus-Christ est le Fils et l'image du Père, et qu'en luy habite toute plénitude de divinité; par lequel nous congnoissons le Père, lequel est seul nostre médiateur et advocat, et n'y a point d'aultre nom soubz le ciel donné aux hommes auquel il nous faille estre sauvé, au seul nom dequel nous invoquons le Père, et ne usons d'aultres occasions que de celles qui sont contenues en l'Esriture sainte, ou en celles concordantes en sentences.

Nous croyons que le saint Esprit est nostre consolateur procédant de Père et du Fils, par l'inspiration duquel nous faisons prières estans par luy renouveler, lequel faict toutes bonnes oeuvres en nous, et par luy avons congnoissance de toute vérité.

Nous croyons et tenons qu'il est une seule sainte Eglise, qui est la congration (sic) de tous les esleus et fidèles qui furent dès le commencement du monde et seront jusqu'à la fin, de laquelle notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ est le chef, laquelle est gouvernée par la seule Parolle et conduite par le saint Esprit, en laquelle tous bons chrestiens doibvent converser, car elle prie pour tous sans cesse, et d'icelle la prière est agréable à Dieu, hors laquelle nul ne peult estre sauvé.

Nous tenons que les ministres de l'Eglise, comme évesque et pasteurs, doibvent estre irrépréhensibles tant en vie qu'en doctrine, autrement qu'on les doibt déposer de tal office, et en substitute d'aultres en leurs lieux, et que nul ne doibt présumer cest honneur, sinon celluy qui est appelé de Dieu, comme Aaron hourrissant le troupeau de Dieu, non point pour occasion de gaing déshonneste, et non point comme aiant Seigneurie sur le clergé, mais estant de courage l'exemplaïre du troupeau en parolle et conversation, en charité et en foy et chasteté.

Nous confessons que les roys, princes et gouverneurs sont establis et ordonnez ministres de Dieu, auxquels on doibt obéïr, car ils portent le glaive pour la deffence des innocens et punition des malfaiteurs; pour ceste cause, sommes tenus de leur paier tribut, de laquelle puissance nul ne doibt présumer de s'exempter, ce qui est deffendu en l'exemple de nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, qui a voulu paier tribut sans entreprendre jurisdiction et seigneurie temporelle, seulement pauvreté et le glaive de la Parolle du Père.

Nous confessons que le baptesme de l'eau est ung signe visible et extérieur, lequel nous représente ce que par la vertu de Dieu invisible et extérieur, lequel nous représente ce que par la vertu de Dieu invisible ainsi occurante est dedans nous, scavoir est rénovation d'esprit et mortification de nos membres en Jésus-Christ, par lequel aussi nous sommes receus en la sainte congration du peuple de Dieu, et protestant et déclarant de icelle nostre foy et chongement de vie.

Nous tenons que le saint sacrement et la table ou Cène de Nostre Seigneur Jésus-Christ est use sainte mémoire et actions de grâces des bénéfices que nous avons receue par sa mort et passion, qu'on doibt faire ensemble en foy et charité, et d'esprouver

⁵ *BSHPF*, vol. 8, 1859, pp. 508-509.

soy-mesme, et aussi manger de ce pain et boire de ce calice participant du corps de Nostre Seigneur et communicant en son sang, tout ainsi qu'il est escript en l'Escripture sainte.

Nous confessons que le mariage est bon et honorable, saint et de Dieu institué, lequel ne fault deffendre à personne, s'il n'y a empeschement par la Parolle de Dieu.

Nous confessons que ceux qui craignent Dieu enqueront les choses qui luy plaisent, pour faire bonnes oeuvres, lesquelles il a préparées affin qu'on chemine en icelles, qui sont charité, joye, paix, patience, bñignité, bonte, foy, débonnaireté, atrempance, et autres, oeuvres contenues en l'Escripture Sainte.

Au contraire, nous confesson qu'il se fault donner garde des faulx prescheurs, desquels le but est de révoquer le peuple de la vraye adoration qui appartient au seul Dieu, et enseignent de soy appuyer aux créatures et fier, et aussi délaisser les bonnes oeuvres qui sont contenues par le discours de l'Escripture Sancte, et de faire celles qui sont inventées par les hommes.

Nous tenons pour le seulle reigle de nostre foy le Vieil et Nouveau Testament, et nous accordons en la générale confession de la foy avec tous les articles contenus au Symbole des Apostres.

Appendix E

FRANCIS I, THE VAUDOIS AND THE CITIZENS OF BERN⁶

A noz très chers et grans amys les Burgmaistre, Advoyers, Couseillers et Communaultez de Surich, Berne, Basle, Schaffhuse et Sanet Gal.

Françoys par la grâce de Dieu roy de France.

Très chers et grans amys, nous avons receu voz lettres, par lesquelles nous faictes scavoir le grans regret et desplaisir que ce vous a esté d'entendre les cruelles et horribles persécutions qui ont esté faictes contre les Vaudoys, gens innocens et très saintement révérens la religion christienne.

Très chers et grans amys, nous vous avons, plusieurs foyz, fait entendre que nous ne vous empeschons aucunement en fait de vous subjectz ny de vostre manière de vivre, mais nous sommes tousjours monstrés voz amys en ce que nous avon peu, nous meslant seullement de l'administration et gouvernement de noz subjectz, comme ung bon prince doit et est tenu de fère. Et trouvons bien estrange que vous veuillez mesler du fait de noz dits subjectz et de la justice que nous leur administrons, appelant cruaulté la pugnition que nous faisons faire de ceulz qui ont commis plusieurs rebellions et désobéissance à l'encontre de nous, faisans entreprise sur l'une de principales villes de frontière et qui sont contrevenans à la loy que se observe et que nous voullons estre observée en nostre royaume. Et ne voyons pas que, en cella, ils suyvent la vérité évangélique dont vous dictes qu'ilz font profession. Et davantage nous vous voullons bien advertir que lesds. Vaudoys et autres hérétiques que nous avons fait pugnir, tenoient telz erreurs que nous pensons certainement qu'il n'y a prince en Germanye qu'il les vousist tollere en ses pys. Et quant à nous, nous ne sommes pour les souffrir ès nostres.

Vous prians que quand vous nous escriper par cy après, vous ne veuiller poinct user de telz et si estranges termes, comme cuaultés et horribles pugnacious, affin que nous n'ayons occasion de vous fère rudde responce. Et nous esbahissons, veu votre prudence accoustumée, que vous nous ayer voullu escripre une si légèrè lettre.

Et atant nous priérons le créateur, très chers et grans amys, vous avoir en sa très sainte et digne garde.

Esript a Toucques le XXVIIe jour de juin, mille cinq cens guarante cinq.

Françoys
de L'Aubespine

⁶ BSHPF, vol. 40, 1891, pp. 202-203.

Appendix F

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF AUTHORIZATION BY THE KING CONCERNING THE EXECUTION OF THE DECREE AGAINST THE "LUTHERAN" VAUDOIS⁷

François, par la grâce de Dieu, roi de France, comte de Provence, Forcalquier et terres adjacentes, à nos amés et féaux les gens de notre cour de parlement de Provence commis pour exterper la secte vaudoise et luthérienne qu'aucuns descendans des pays de Luseme auraient depuis semé et fait pulluler en aucunes contrées et villages de notre comté de Provence, nomément es lieux de Mérindol, Cabrières, etc., et terres des seigneurs de Cental, Janson et autres compris es informations sur ce faites, nous eussions ci-devant par plusieurs fois fait inciter et exhorter les errans tenant la dite secte de s'en départir, abjurer les erreurs et tenir la voie et chemin de la foi et religion chrétienne, leur donnant grâce et remettent toute offense, peine et condamnation par eux encourues en faisant abjuration par la forme et dans le temps contenu en nos lettres patentes sur ce expédiées à Fontainebleau, le Sème février 1540, et à St. Germain -en-Laye, le 17ème mai 1543, auxquelles et autres précédentes ils n'auraient tenu compte obéir, au moyen de quoi par autres lettres données au dit Fontainebleau, le 1er jour de janvier dernier, nous aurions mandé que vous procédassiez à l'exécution de la dite secte par les moyens et rigueurs y contenus. . . .

NOUS VOULONS ET VOUS MANDONS:

Contre eux et aussi contre les dits habitans au dit lieu, de leurs complices et adhérens tenant les champs et rebelles à justice, s'ils ne se présentent et font abjurations, renonciations, et soumissions en icelles au jour que par vous leur sera préfix et ordonné, et ce par les condamnations et rigueurs des susdites et autres voies contenues es dites lettres, édits et ordonnances sur ce fait et aux arrêts sur ce par vous donnés contre ceux du dit Mérindol, de manière qu'ils vivent dorénavant sous l'obéissance de la Sainte Eglise et comme le font nos autres sujets, ou à faute de la faire soit EXTERMINES de nos royaumes; terres et seigneuries et en soit faite telle punition que vous verrez en cas appartenir, en mandant expressément à nos avocats et procureurs généraux en notre dite cour d'en aire les poursuites et diligences nécessaires et à vous de punir leurs négligences, dissimulations et intelligences si aucuns y en a, et en outre à notre bien aimé et féal conseiller, cousin le Seigneur de Grignan, chevalier de notre ordre et lieutenant-général en notre pays et comté de Provence, et aussi à notre amé et féal conseiller et premier président, seigneur d'Oppède, notre lieutenant en l'absence de notre dit cousin au dit pays, vous donner et é vos commis et députés en cette partie aide, confort, main-forte et armes, si métier est. . . .

Donné le 18ème jour d'août l'an de grâce 1545 et de notre règne le trente-unième, ainsi signé par le Roi, comté de Provence, le cardinal de Tournon, Mes. François de Lafond, second président de Provence, et autres présens Berthelot, leus et publiées en jugement au parlement de Provence séant à Aix, à la requête du procureur général du Roi, le 19ème d'octobre l'an 1545. Extrait des registres.

Signé Boisseny

⁷ Frossard, op. cit., p. 196.

