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THE Bishop of Meaux, the very able and acute Bossuet, has constructed an ingenious argument from the Prophetic Promises of Christ, which is for ever to establish the Roman Church and the Churches in communion with her as the sole visible Church Catholic, while it is for ever to exclude the Protestant Churches from all share and participation of that venerable title.

His argument cannot be given with more of fairness and propriety than in his own words.

The doctrine of the Catholic Church subsists in four points: the connection of which is inviolable.

The first point is: that The Church is visible.

The second point is: that It always exists.

The third point is: that The truth of the Gospel is there always professed by the whole Society.

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imported by the term CHURCH: and, consequently, it causes also, that The Church should always be visible, and should always teach the truth.

Nothing can be more simple and more clear and more consecutive than this doctrine.

This doctrine is so clear, that the Protestants cannot deny it: and it imports their condemnation so clearly, that they have also not been able to acknowledge it.

Therefore it is, that they have thought of nothing, save to throw it into confusion.*

* La doctrine de l'Eglise Catholique consiste en quatre points, dont l'enchainement est inviolable.

L'un: que L'Eglise est visible.

L'autre: qu'Elle est toujours.

Le troisième: que La verité de l'Evangile y est toujours professée par toute la Societé.

Le quatrième: qu'Il n'est pas permis de s'eloigner de sa doctrine; ce qui vaut dire, en autres termes, qu'Elle est infaillible.

Le premier point est fondé sur un fait constant; c'est, que Le terme d'EGLISE signifie toujours, dans l'Ecriture, et ensuite dans le langage commun des fideles, UN SOCIETE VISIBLE.—

Le second point, que L'Eglise est toujours, n'est pas moins constant: puisqu'il est fondé sur les promesses de Jesus-Christ, dont on convient dans tous les partis.

De là on infere très-clairement le troisième point; que La

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The fourth point is: that It is not permitted to depart from its doctrine; or, in other terms, that It is infallible.

The first point is founded upon the constant fact: that The term CHURCH, in Scripture and thence in the common language of the Faithful, always signifies A VISIBLE SOCIETY.—

The second point, that, The Church always exists, is no less certain: because it is founded on the Promises of Jesus Christ, respecting which all parties are agreed.

Hence we clearly must infer the third point, that The truth is always professed by the Society of the Church: for the Church being only visible in the profession of the truth, it follows; that If it always exists, and if it is always visible, it cannot possibly do otherwise than always teach and profess the truth of the Gospel.

Whence, with equal clearness, will follow the fourth point: that We cannot be permitted to say, that The Church is in error, or that It has departed from its doctrine.

And all this is founded upon the Promise, which is confessed among all parties. For the same Promise which causes that, The Church should always exist, causes likewise that It should always be in the state

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To what particular Promise or Promises of Christ the Bishop alludes, he does not distinctly specify: but I conclude that he can only refer to the two following texts.

Thou art Peter: and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Vérité est toujours professée par la Societé de l'Eglise: car, l'Eglise n'étant visible que par la profession de la vérité, il s'ensuit, que, si elle est toujours, et qu'elle soit toujours visible; il ne se peut, qu'elle n'enseigne et ne professe toujours la vérité de l'Evangile.

D'où suit aussi clairement le quatrième point, qu'Il n'est pas permis de dire que L'Eglise soit dans l'erreur, ni de s'écarter de sa doctrine.

Et tout cela est fondé sur la promesse, qui est avouée dans tous les partis: puisqu'enfin la même promesse, qui fait que L'Eglise est toujours, fait qu'Elle est toujours dans l'état qu'emporte le terme d'EGLISE: par conséquent, toujours visible, et toujours enseignant la vérité.

Il n'y a rien de plus simple, ni de plus clair, ni de plus suivi, que cette doctrine.

Cette doctrine est si clair, que les Protestans ne l'ont pû nier: elle emporte si clairement leur condamnation, qu'ils n'ont pû aussi la reconnoître.

C'est pourquoi ils n'ont songé, qu'à l'embrouiller. Hist. des Variat. livr. xv. § 3, 4.

* Matt. xvi. 18.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Such is the celebrated argument of Bossuet: and such, if I mistake not, are the promises, upon which it claims to be founded †.

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. In other parts of his Work, he specially adduces these two texts. Whence I conclude, that I am not mistaken in supposing them to be here tacitly referred to.

† Bossuet, we may observe, like the rest of his fraternity, claims for the Church the prerogative of Infallibility: and, since he limits the Catholic Church to the Church of Rome and the subordinate Churches which acknowledge her as their mother and mistress, he of course claims the prerogative of Infallibility for what we may call the *Romish Church* as contradistinguished from the diocesan *Roman Church*.

May I be allowed to ask, on *what* authoritative decision of *what* Ecumenical Council do Bossuet and Trevern and other Popish Ecclesiastics claim for their Church this same prerogative of Infallibility?

If there be any such decision, it would run I suppose, in some such terms as the following.

The Catholic Church is infallible. Therefore, if any one shall assert, that the Catholic Church either has erred or con- err in defining the faith: let him be anathema.

I. Now, with these promises before us, it seems only reasonable to inquire: *How far the Roman Church,—the term being used to denote collectively*

Now where does any such canon of an Ecumenical Council exist?

In the eleventh century, during which no Ecumenical Council was sitting, the famous Hildebrand, who played the part of Pope by the style and title of Gregory VII, decided, indeed, that the Roman Church has never erred and never will err: but this can only serve the turn of those, who hold the individual Infallibility of the Pope; nor will it serve even their turn, unless they can produce the infallible decision which infallibly assigns to the Pope the privilege of individual Infallibility.

Nothing can be more distinct and precise than the dictate of Pope Gregory himself.

Romana Ecclesia nunquam erravit: nec in perpetuum, testante Scriptura, errabit. Dictat. Pap. Gregor. VII. in Epist. lib. ii. epist. 55. Labb. Concil. vol. x. p. 110, 111.

But, still, does the constant Romish claim of Infallibility rest *solely* upon the individual dictate of Gregory? Or does it claim to repose upon some *other* authoritative document?

Romanists often object, to members of the Reformed Churches: that *The faith of those, who reject the authority of the Latin Communion rests only upon moral evidence; while the better faith of themselves rests upon the sure foundation of absolute Infallibility.*

Where does there exist the canon of an Ecumenical Council, in which the possession of Infallibility is decreed to the Church of Rome?

both the Diocesan Church of Rome and all the various National Churches or Fragments of Churches in communion with her,—can be viewed as answering to their descriptive requisitions.

As the promises are two in number, so are they two-fold in nature.

Whatever may be the precise reference of the term *rock*, the first promise clearly imports: that *Christ would never cease to have a Visible Church upon earth.* Consequently, the first promise is a promise of *Visible Ecclesiastical Perpetuity.*

The second promise declares: that *Christ would always be spiritually present with his Church, through the medium of a succession of faithful Pastors from the time of the Apostles down to the end of the world.* Consequently, the second promise is a promise of *Ecclesiastical Purity both Doctrinal and Practical.*

That the first promise is a promise of *Visible Ecclesiastical Perpetuity*, requires no proof: though there may be a diversity of opinion, as to the character and nature of this Perpetuity, involved in the import of the word *rock*.

And, that the second promise is a promise of *Ecclesiastical Purity both Doctrinal and Practical* requires almost as little proof: for though, of course, all due allowance must be made for human

imperfection and sinfulness: yet, if any particular Branch of the Church Catholic shall have become palpably corrupt both in Doctrine and in Practice, we shall, on any intelligible principles, find it difficult to believe, that Christ has still never ceased to be *spiritually present* with such a Branch. For instance, some particular Pastor, at the head of some particular Church or some particular Ecclesiastical Communion, is clearly intended by the *Man of Sin*: because he is described, as sitting in the temple of God, or as presiding in a See of the Visible Church of Christ; because he is stigmatized, as the governing ringleader of a great collective apostasy from the faith; and because he is awfully exhibited to us, as being the *Son of Perdition*, a graphical name the very same as that which our Lord himself bestowed upon a fallen Apostle, even upon the mercenary wretch who turned away from him and who for filthy lucre's sake betrayed him to his enemies. Now, with an Ecclesiastical Community *thus* characterised; a Community, whose head and instructor is said to have come after the working of Satan himself, and is thence doomed to be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord's advent,—with *such* an Ecclesiastical Community, apostate under an apostate

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governor, to suppose that Christ has never ceased to be spiritually present, is, so far as I can perceive, a direct contradiction in terms. For, *what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols**. And how can Christ come to destroy in his anger that which he has incessantly preserved from all doctrinal and practical obliquity by the direct influence of his spiritual presence?

Matters having been brought to this point, we may now turn to the Bishop's argument, which, with parental fondness, he pronounces to be so clear, that no Protestant can controvert it.

1. With all respect for the very superior talents of Bossuet, his argument, on two several grounds, I cannot but deem sophistical.

(1.) When he speaks of the *Church*, being always visible, and always existent, and always professing the truth of the Gospel, and always incapable of departing from sound doctrine: it is clear, from the immediate context, that he exhibits himself as speaking of the *Catholic Church*.

But what is it, that he would have us to under-

* 2 Corinth. vi. 14—16.

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standing any doubt, as to what the Bishop *really* meant by the *Catholic Church*. Unquestionably he would have us understand by the title that *Exclusive Portion of professed believers in Christ, who are in communion with the Church of Rome, who acknowledge the Pope as their head upon earth, and who pronounce him to be the indubitable centre of ecclesiastical unity*. Still, however, though such is palpably the case, the sufficiently obvious remark will not therefore the less be: that, before he predicated of the Romish or Papal Church his four distinguishing points, he surely, in all fairness, ought, by something more tangible than mere confident assertion, to have satisfactorily demonstrated; both that *The Romish Church EXCLUSIVELY is the Catholic Church*, and that *The Romish Church ALONE is the particular Church to which our Lord's two promises are addressed*.

(2.) But, instead of settling these necessary preliminaries, the Bishop shews himself equally sophistical on yet another ground.

From the unvarying soundness both of her Doctrine and of her Practice, he ought, I apprehend, to have proved: that *The Romish Church, exclusively of all other Churches which differ from her, is the alone Church to which our Lord's promises are*

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stand by the *Catholic Church*, thus described and thus characterised?

Does he mean the *Entire Collective Body of those, who believe in the name of Christ and who acknowledge him as their Saviour, in whatever parts of the world they may be seated*?

Or does he mean that *Exclusive Portion of professed believers in Christ, who are in communion with the Church of Rome, and who acknowledge the Pope as their head upon earth and as the indubitable centre of ecclesiastical unity*?

If the former: then we may reasonably ask; *Why, in that case, he and his associates stigmatize so many members of the Church Catholic, a Church described under four several points as he describes it, by the somewhat inconsistent appellations of SCHISMATICS and HERETICS?*

If the latter: then we may also reasonably ask; *What proof there is, beyond their own confident assertion, that the members of the Romish Church, to the exclusion of the Churches of Constantinople and Antioch and Armenia and Egypt, not to mention the various Reformed Churches of Europe and America, ALONE constitute the Catholic Church of Christ?*

In putting this alternative, I speak not as enter-

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addressed; and thence all other professing Christians being either Heretics or Schismatics, or both, that *The Romish Church exclusively is the Church Catholic*.

But, instead of adopting this obvious and satisfactory line of argument, the Bishop exactly inverts the process: and, instead of proving his Church to be the alone true Church Catholic, from the solitary unvarying soundness of her doctrine and practice; by a singular sort of Hysteron-Proteron, he would prove the solitary unvarying soundness of her doctrine and practice, and thence her assured infallibility, from the alleged circumstance of her being the Church Catholic to the exclusion of all other Churches.

Hence, in such an unusual mode of demonstration, there is evidently this great inconvenience. The Bishop *assumes* the precise point which he ought to have *proved*; namely, *The Exclusive Catholicity of the Romish Church*: and then, for the purpose of confounding the whole race of Protestants, he, from this very assumption which of course his adversaries do not admit, argues; that *His Church must needs be infallible*, and that *Her doctrine and practice cannot but be perfectly sound*.

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No doubt, he would seek to establish his assumption upon the very terms of the first promise, by contending: that *The Rock, upon which Christ builds his perpetually existent Church, is Peter conjointly with his alleged line of successors the Bishops of Rome.*

But this is merely to build one assumption upon another assumption, to pile an ecclesiastical Ossa upon an ecclesiastical Pelion, to place (after the manner of the hindoo legend) his spiritual universe upon the horns of the bull and the bull upon the back of the tortoise and the tortoise itself upon vacuity. What proof has the learned Bossuet, that *Peter and his alleged successors the Bishops of Rome are conjointly the Rock upon which Christ promised that he would build his Church?* A man of his attainments must have known full well, that the Church of the three first centuries was profoundly ignorant of any such speculation. Some of the old writers deemed the individual Peter to be the Rock; some pronounced the Rock to be *Christ himself*; and some, which is the most ancient interpretation, asserted the Rock to be *Peter's Confession of Christ in his two-fold character human and divine, the Messiah born a true man of the Virgin and yet the essential Son of the*

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unproved and unproveable assumption), the Protestant, from the gross corruption both of religious doctrine and of religious practice (corrupt doctrine, as in the case of Transubstantiation, introducing corrupt practice) which characterises the Romish Church, infers: that Christ's second promise (the promise, to wit, that *Even to the end of the world, the Lord would never cease to be spiritually present with the Church and her Pastors to whom that promise refers*) can never have been accomplished in the Church of Rome.

With the Romanist, no doubt, the doctrines and concomitantly dependent practices of his Church will be no impediment to his believing: that *That Church is the ALONE Church, to which the promise of Christ's Perpetual Spiritual Presence relates.*

But, with the Protestant, viewing the doctrine and consequent practice of the Romish Church as he views them, the impediment is so great, that he cannot believe the Saviour to have been alway spiritually present with a Church thus circumstanced: and, thence, he cannot believe, that the two promises of Christ (the one, of *Visible Perpetuity*; the other of *Spiritual Purity*) should alike have been accomplished in the Church of Rome

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living God: but NONE of the writers of the three first centuries ever imagined or allowed, that the Rock is complexly *Peter and his fancied successors the Bishops of Rome.* The notion rests purely upon the unauthoritative speculation of a later age: and, upon that unauthoritative speculation, like the tortoise upon vacuity, rests the proof; that *The Romish Church is the alone Catholic Church*, and thence (as the Bishop's argument proceeds) that *The Romish Church is infallible* and therefore that *she has invariably been sound both in doctrine and in practice.*

2. Such being the true state of the case, if a Romanist wishes to work any conviction in a mind which is little influenced by the mere boldness of assumption that forms the true basis of Bossuet's inverted process, a Protestant will naturally invite him to demonstrate: that *The Latin Church, from its invariable soundness both in doctrine and in practice, MUST be the Church to which Christ addressed his promises.*

Meanwhile, until such demonstration shall be effected (which, even in pretence, the Protestant perceives to be impossible, save through the ridiculously inadmissible medium of *infallibility*, the medium itself resting ultimately upon a mere

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and in the several Churches in communion with her.

II. The promises of Christ, however, cannot fail.

Therefore, since, in the apprehension of a Protestant at least, they have *not* been jointly accomplished in the Romish Church; we must seek some other Church or Churches, in which they *have* been jointly accomplished: for, unless we can effect the object of such a search, we shall be compelled to own that the promises of Christ have *failed* of their accomplishment*.

* I do not object to the mode, in which Bossuet puts this point.

Nommer quelques docteurs, par-ci par-là, et temps en temps, que vous prétendiez avoir enseigné votre doctrine; quand le fait seroit avoué, ce ne seroit rien: car c'étoit un corps d'Eglise qu'il falloit montrer, un corps où l'on prêchât la vérité, et où l'on administrât les sacrements; par conséquent un corps composé de pasteurs et de peuples; un corps à cet égard toujours visible. Voilà ce qu'il faut montrer, et montrer par conséquent dans ce corps visible une manifeste succession et de la doctrine et du ministère.—La difficulté restoit toujours de nous montrer une Eglise et une Société de pasteurs et de peuple où l'on trouvât la saine doctrine toujours conservée jusqu'au temps de Luther. Hist. des Variat. livr. xv. § 6, 11.

But the Bishop is not content with *thus* putting the point.

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1. Now, that all who profess the name of Christ appertain not to that Church which *alone* is interested in the promises of Christ, is acknowledged, or rather indeed stiffly maintained, by none more vehemently than by the Romanists themselves.

Hence, of *all* persons, *they* can have no right to object, if, to the exclusion of various other professed Christians, some one particular Church is pointed out, as the depository and proprietor of Christ's promises; for, in truth, they make precisely this exclusive claim on behalf of *their own* Communion; contending, that the promises have

He advances a step *beyond* it: and, with a considerable measure of triumph, propounds, to the French Protestants, a question which he evidently deems altogether unanswerable.

Mes frères, donnez gloire à Dieu. Quand on a commencé votre Réforme, y avoit-il, je ne dis pas quelque Eglise (car il est déjà bien certain qu'il n'y avoit aucune), mais du moins y avoit-il un seul homme, qui en se joignant à Luther, à Zuingle, à Calvin, à qui vous voudrez, lui ait dit en s'y joignant: *J'ai toujours crû comme vous; je n'ai jamais crû ni à la messe, ni au Pape, ni aux dogmes que vous reprenez dans l'Eglise Romaine?* Mes chers frères, pensez-y bien, vous a-t-on jamais nommé un seul homme qui se soit joint de cette sorte à votre Réforme? En trouverez-vous quelqu'un dans vos annales, où l'on a ramassé autant qu'on a pû tout ce qui pouvoit vous justifier contre le reproche de la nouveauté, qui étoit le plus pressant et le

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not been accomplished in the great General Body of professed Christians to which collectively they systematically refuse the name of the Catholic Church, but that they have been fulfilled in their own Communion *alone* upon which *alone* they would confer the title of the Church Catholic.

Therefore, on their own avowed and cherished principles, no valid objection can lie to the bare abstract production of a single Church, which, still on their own principles, may be alleged as the true depository of Christ's promises.

In reality *all* parties are agreed: that *Those pro-*

plus sensible? Donnez gloire à Dieu encore un coup: et, en avouant que jamais vous n'avez rien ouï dire de semblable, confessez, que vous êtes dans la même cause que les Sociniens, et que tout ce qu'il y a jamais eu d'hérétiques. Troisième Avertissement, sur les Lettres de M. Jurieu, § 30.

An answer to this question is promptly afforded by the address of the Vallenses Clergy to the leading Reformers in the year 1530.

Sumus qualescunque doctores cujusdam plebis indigne et pusillæ.—In omnibus tamen vobiscum convenimus: et, a tempore Apostolorum, semper de fide, sicut vos, sentientes, concordavimus: in hoc solo differentes; quod, culpa nostra, ingenique nostri pigritia, scriptores, tam rectè quam vos, neutquam intelligimus. Scultet. Annal. Evangel. Renovat. in A. D. 1530. p. 161, 163.

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mises have NOT been accomplished in EVERY Society which claims to itself the name of CHRISTIAN.

Whence it plainly must follow: that, if *accomplished, the promises can ONLY have been accomplished in some PARTICULAR Church or Churches, to the EXCLUSION of all other Societies which may make a profession of Christianity.*

Such, therefore, confessedly on *all* hands, being the case, the simple question is: *Whether the promises have been fulfilled in the particular Romish Church or in some other particular Church.*

But, as I have just hinted, the whole conduct of the Romish Church, as respects both doctrine and practice, has, through all the middle ages, been uniformly such (save only, as the dreary uniformity has been varied by regularly progressive deterioration down to the crowning Council of Trent), that the most profuse credulity must be beggared in the attempt to believe: that, *With the Romish Church, through all the middle ages, and through the whole course both of her teachings and of her doings, the holy and pure and merciful Redeemer never ceased to be spiritually, and therefore approvingly, present.*

Consequently, the claim of the Romish Church being thus, of plain necessity, set aside, we stand bound to produce some other Visible Church

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whose claim may be more satisfactory: lest, otherwise, the promises of Christ himself should seem to have failed in their accomplishment.

2. Accordingly, the Church, which I would produce, is that of the Vallenses or Valde or Vaudois.

From the apostolic age itself down to the present, that venerable Church has been seated in the Valleys of the Cottian Alps. There it has never ceased to profess one and the same unvarying Theological System, thus faithfully reflecting the sincere unadulterated Gospel of primitive Christianity: and there, both ecclesiastically and morally, the practice of its members has happily corresponded with their religious profession. This very remarkable Church forms, in the *first* instance, the chain of connection, between the Primitive Church and the Church of the Albigenses; for the rise of the Albigensis or Paulician Church was itself not earlier than about the middle of the seventh century: and, in the *second* instance, it similarly forms the chain of connection, between the Primitive Church and the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century.

Thus, in a Visible Church, the promises of *Perpetuity and Purity*, as made by our blessed Saviour,

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have been punctually fulfilled : nor, in the abstract, can any objection be made to this arrangement, which does not equally apply to the arrangement that selects the Roman Church as the depository of the Promises ; for, according to *neither* arrangement, nor indeed according to History, have the promises been fulfilled in that *whole* Collective body, which indifferently distinguishes itself by the common name of *christian*.

Some objections, however, have been made to the proposed arrangement, which it may be proper briefly to notice and to answer.

1. In general, the Romanists object : that *The Valdenses, whatever might be their antiquity, were a mere handful of sectaries, separated from the Catholic Church, and therefore out of the legitimate pale of Christian Communion.*

Respecting this objection, the latter part of it is obviously founded upon a mere begging of the question : the assumption, to wit, that *The Romish Church exclusively is the Catholic Church of Christ.*

And, as for the former part of it, namely, *The paucity of the secluded Vallenses at least during many ages : so far from occasioning any difficulty, it, in truth, is an actual corroboration of the opinion.*

The voice of Prophecy, as interpreted by the

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Romanists themselves, distinctly states : that *The real Catholic Church, or the Church of real Catholic Christians, should, during a certain disastrous period, be reduced within very narrow limits, and should be driven to preach the Gospel in a state of great affliction or depression ; while the wide extent of the Visible Nominal Church should be occupied by a new race of usurping Gentiles, the determined enemies of the now grievously contracted Spiritual Church Catholic*.*

Accordingly, the Romish Bishop Walmesley, who wrote under the fictitious name of *Pastorini*, very rightly, in the abstract, thus understands the sacred oracle of the treading down of the Holy City.

The churches consecrated to the true service of God, are, at this time, so far diminished in number, or so little filled on account of the general apostasy and degeneracy of mankind, that all these churches are here represented by St. John as reduced into one single church or temple. The faithful ministers of God are also become so few, as to be represented as officiating at one altar in this church : and all the good and zealous Christians make up so small a number with respect to the whole bulk of mankind, that they are shewn to St. John, as collected in this one

* Rev. xi. 1—3.

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temple paying their adoration to God. There is, therefore, given to St. John a reed or a small measuring rod, as sufficient for the few inconsiderable measures he has to take : and he is told to measure the temple of God and the altar and them that adore therein, that the small size of both temple and altar may appear, and the little compass in which are comprised those who are there adoring God. But, for the court which is without the temple, that is the great multitude of those, who, for want of the spirit of religion, enter not the temple, but stand in the court without the temple, St. John is told, not to measure them, but to cast them out or to banish them from the neighbourhood of the temple, because it (the court) is given to the Gentiles.*

* *Pastorini's Gen. Hist. of the Christ. Church.* p. 325, 326. This severe trial of the Church occurs, according to *Pastorini*, during the reign of the expected Antichrist.

The whole account of that terrific personage, agreeably to the received notions of the Romanists, as given at considerable length by *Roger Hoveden*, is extremely curious : and, in many points, purely by a following out of the declarations of prophecy, he is exhibited as bearing a most ominous resemblance to the Sovereign Pontiff in the plenitude of his power.

Antichrist, we are told, will be born from a father and mother, like other men : not, as some fancy, from a virgin. Yet the Devil will descend into the womb of his mother : so that the

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Thus, with whatever mistakes in regard to a singular sort of *literal* interpretation of the temple and the altar, Bishop Walmesley, very correctly in the abstract, views the oracle, as declaring,

child, born from her by the joint coöperation of the man and the fiend, shall be altogether evil ; whence he is fitly styled *The Son of Perdition*. When arrived at full age, he will send his nuncios and his preaching through the whole world : and his preaching and his power shall be eminently catholic, reaching from north to south and from east to west. Many wonderful miracles he will perform, so as, if possible, to seduce the very elect into error. Against real Christians, he will stir up an universal persecution : and he will labour to corrupt the faithful by the three modes of terror and bribery and miracles. Riches, in abundance, he will give to those who believe in him : and those, whom he cannot seduce either by bribery or by terror or by miracles, he will cruelly, in the sight of all, put to various deaths of marvellous torture. Then every faithful Christian, if he shall refuse to deny his God, will perish, either by the fire of the furnace, or by the sword, or by some other mode of torment. This dreadful persecution will continue, through the world, during the space of three years and a half. Antichrist, moreover, will sit in the temple of God, that is to say, in the Holy Church itself, inflicting martyrdom upon all sound Christians : and he will become very great ; because in him shall be the Devil, the head of all evil. But, lest he should come without warning, and thus deceive and ruin the entire human race, two prophets, *Enoch* and *Elijah*, will be sent into the world,

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that the true Catholic Church of Christ, would, during a predicted season of calamitous depression be reduced within narrow limits, and that the great bulk of those, who made a profession of

who, through the same term of three years and a half, will strengthen and prepare the faithful servants of God.

Nascetur ex patris et matris copulatione, sicut et alii homines; non, ut quidam dicunt, de sola virgine. Sed tamen in peccatis totas concipietur, in peccato generabitur, et in peccato nascetur. In ipso suæ conceptionis initio, Diabolus simul introibit in utero matris: et, ex virtute Diaboli, confovebitur et contuebitur in ventre matris: et virtus Diaboli erit semper cum illa. Et, sicut in matrem Domini nostri Spiritus Sanctus supervenit, et eam sua virtute obumbravit, et divinitate replevit; ut de Spiritu Sancto conciperet, et quod nasceretur divinum esset et sanctum: ita quoque Diabolus in matrem Antichristi descendet, totamque eam replebit, totam circumdabit, totam tenebit, totam interius et exterius possidebit; ut, Diabolo per hominem coöperante, concipiat, et quod natum fuerit totum sit nocivum, totum malum, totum perditum. Unde et ille homo *Filius Perditionis* appellatur: quia, in quantum poterit, genus humanum perdet, et ipse in novissimo perdetur.—Per universum mundum mittet nuncios et prædicatores suos. Prædicatio autem ejus et potestas tenebit a mari usque ad mare, ab oriente usque ad occidentem, ab aquilone usque ad septentrionem. Faciet ergo signa multa, miracula magna et inaudita:—ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi.—Excitabit enim persecutionem sub omni celo supra Christianos et omnes electos.

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Nor was this view of the matter at all peculiar to that Prelate. A celebrated Abbot of the Cestertian Order, Joachim of Calabria, in his conversation with our own lion-hearted Richard at Messina, held, at the latter end of the twelfth century, much the same language.

Certain wicked nations, called Gog and Magog, says he, shall rise up and destroy the Church of God, and shall subvert the race of Christians: and then shall be the day of judgment. But, in the time of this Antichrist, many Christians, sojourning in caverns of the earth and in the solitudes of the rocks, shall preserve the Christian Faith in the fear of the Lord, until the consummation of Antichrist. And this is meant by the saying of St. John: that the woman fled into the wilderness of Egypt, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

* Surgent quædam gentes iniquæ, quæ dicuntur Gog et Magog; et destruunt Ecclesiam Dei; et subvertent gentem christianam: et tunc erit dies judicii. Sed, in tempore hujus Antichristi, multi Christianorum in cavernis terræ et in solitudinibus petrarum morantes, Fidem Christianam in timore Domini servabunt, usque ad consummationem Antichristi. Et hoc est, quod dicit: *Mulier fugit in solitudinem Ægypti, ubi habet*

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Christianity, would fall away into such a grievous apostasy that they would justly be deemed unworthy of being reckoned among the faithful followers of the Lamb.

Eriget itaque se contra fideles tribus modis: id est, terrore, et muneribus, et miraculis. Dabit, in se credentibus, auri et argenti copias. Quos enim muneribus corrumpere non poterit, terrore superabit: quos autem terrore non poterit, signis et miraculis seducere tentabit: quos nec signis nec miraculis, in conspectu omnium, mirabili morte cruciatos crudeliter necabit.—Tunc omnis, fidelis Christianus qui inventus fuerit, aut Deum negabit; aut, per ferrum, sive per ignem fornacis, seu per serpentes, sive per bestias, sive per aliud quodlibet tormenti genus interibit, si in fide permanserit. Hæc autem tam terribilis et timenda tribulatio, tribus annis et dimidio, in toto mundo manebit.—Sed etiam in templo Dei sedebit Antichristus, id est, in sancta Ecclesia, omnes Christianos faciens martyres: et elevabitur, et magnificabitur; quia in ipso erit omnium malorum caput Diabolus, qui est rex super omnes filios superbiæ. Sed, ne subito et improvise Antichristus veniat, et totum simul humanum genus suo errore decipiat et perdat, ante ejus ortum duo magni prophete mittentur in mundum, Enoc et Elias, qui contra impetum Antichristi fideles Dei divinis armis præmuniant, et instruent eos, et confortabunt, et præparabunt electos ad bellum, docentes et prædicantes tribus annis et dimidio. Roger. Hoveden. Annal. par. poster. in A. D. 1190. fol. 389.

This is followed by a strange document purporting to be a direct communication from our Lord to St. John, and duly fabricated upon genuine popish principles.

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Hence, even by the shewing of the Romanists themselves, it appears: that the reduction of the sincere Church within very narrow limits, and the circumstance of its true members being driven to profess the faith in mountainous deserts and solitudes, while their enemies are mighty and numerous and triumphant, afford no just ground for denying the title of *The Genuine Church of Christ* to the Vallenses and the Albigenses. Accordingly, their claim, to this very effect, produced no small wrath among the Pontificals; who,

locum paratum a Deo, ut ibi pascant eam diebus mille et ducentis et sexaginta, Joachim. Curacens. apud Roger. Hoveden. Annal. par. poster. in A. D. 1190. fol. 389.

It is remarkable, that Joachim undesignedly describes, as with the hand of a painter, both the very seats and the very location of the Vallenses. Their seats were the wild rocky solitudes of the alpine wilderness: their location was in the desert bordering upon the spiritual Egypt.

In fact, they were almost irresistibly led to apply the prophecy to themselves. *The Vaudois, says Henri Arnaud, are descended from those refugees from Italy, who, after St. Paul had there preached the Gospel, abandoned their beautiful country, and fled, like the woman mentioned in the Apocalypse, to these wild mountains, where they have to this day handed down the Gospel, from father to son, in the same purity and simplicity as it was preached by St. Paul.* Preface to the Glorious Recovery, p. 14.

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reprobating their opponents as manifest and inveterate heretics, put in precisely the same claim on *their own* behalf: for the Vallenses and the Albigenses asserted themselves *alone* to be the *real* Catholic Church in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; and they viewed the Roman Church, which they identified with the apocalyptic Harlot, as no real or sincere Church of Christ, but purely as a Synagogue of irreclaimable Malignants*.

* Dicunt, quod Romana Ecclesia non sit Ecclesia Jesu Christi, sed sit Ecclesia Malignantium:—et dicunt, quod Ipsi sint Ecclesia Christi; quia Christi doctrinam, Evangelii et Apostolorum verbis et exemplis, observant.—Tertius error est: quod Doctrinam evangelicam pene nullus servet in Ecclesia, præter eos.—Quintus: quod Ipsi sint Ecclesia Jesu Christi. Sextus: quod Romana Ecclesia sit meretrix in Apocalypsi. Reiner. Opusc. de Hæret. c. v. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 300.

Valdensis heretice,—per vocatos et multos, intelligis Catholicos: et, per paucos electos, intelligis complices tuos. Pilich. cont. Valdens. c. xiv. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 316.

Dicunt: Papam esse caput omnium hæresiarcharum.—Item, vocant nos Christianos vulgariter alienos, et se notos: quasi Deus non nos, sed tantum ipsos, noscat, quoad probationem.—Item dicunt: quod Illa secta sit vera et unica fides catholica, extra quam nullus possit salvari. Refut. Error. Valdens. ad calc. Pilich. cont. Valdens. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 340, 341.

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(2.) A much more serious objection is preferred by Bossuet, which, if it could be substantiated, would immediately be fatal to the arrangement here proposed.

He contends: that *The Albigenses, and their predecessors the old Paulicians, were Manichæans; who, through a long succession of ages, handed down the impious heresy of a paganising Orientalism; and who, therefore, cannot, without great want of prudence, be claimed by the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century, as a branch of their theological predecessors**.

And he further contends: that *The Valdenses, instead of being a remotely ancient Community who had ever held much the same sentiments as those which generally distinguished Protestant Orthodoxy, were, in truth, only the comparatively modern disciples of Peter Valdo who flourished between the years 1160 and 1179, or at the most cannot be deemed earlier than the time of Peter de Bruis who lived during the first quarter of the twelfth century; and, originally, differed little or nothing, in point of doctrine, from the Church of Rome, being rather a sort of Donatists, than, in absolute strictness of speech, a sect of Heretics†*.

* Hist. des Variat. livr. xi. § 7—10.

† Hist. des Variat. livr. xi. § 2, 72, 73, 80.

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Now, even if he could establish the first of these two positions; namely, that *The Paulicians and Albigenses were Manichæans*: he would not affect my proposed arrangement itself, unless he could also establish the second; namely, that *The Valdenses were a mere modern sect, differing originally but little from the Church of Rome*: for the true alleged line of Perpetuity and Purity, from the apostolic age downward, is with the Valdenses, not with the Albigenses.

But I trust, that not one of the Bishop's positions is tenable. I trust, that the Paulicians and Albigenses will be found, upon sufficient historical evidence, to have *not* been Manichæans: and I also trust, that, upon sufficient historical evidence likewise, the Valdenses may be distinctly shewn, to have tenanted their Alpine Valleys from the age of primitive persecution, and to have always held a system of doctrine and practice, the same, in all grand fundamentals and essentials, as that of the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century.

The *proof* of these matters will, of course, form the main part of the following Inquiry.

III. Meanwhile, some few preliminary remarks may be found not altogether useless.

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1. Usher and Mezeray and Allix, influenced (I suppose) by the conflicting evidence, valid or invalid, which lay before them, have stated: that, *In the south of France, two entirely different classes of religionists, the one composed of what sound Protestants would deem pious orthodox believers, the other consisting of the relics of emigrated oriental Manichæans, were, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from the town of Albi, alike denominated Albigenses*.

The accuracy of this division I have been led to doubt: and, from the best examination of witnesses which I have been able to accomplish, I am finally induced to believe; that no more than a single class of religionists in the South of France was distinguished by the name of *Albigenses*; and that the perpetually self-contradicting charges of Manichæism, brought against this single class by writers of the Church of Rome, are entirely unsubstantiated and thence unworthy of the least credit.

This *one* class, for there was *only* one class (whatever minor subdivisions there might be of the *same* class), consisted of the innocent descendants, either natural or theological, either hereditary or proselyted, of the innocent Paulicians.

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Previous to the thirteenth century, though the number of associated Cathari, whom I take to have been the natural descendants of the oriental Paulicians, scarcely amounted to four thousand, they had Churches planted all the way from Thrace to Gascony: and their proselytes, whom they called *Believers*, were a multitude, the tale of which could not be calculated*. What finally became of their more eastern european Churches or Communities, it is not very easy to say. Their grand Ecclesiastical Settlement was in the South of France: and, after the murderous crusade of Simon de Montfort, those, who escaped the sword or the flames, with the exception of some poor wandering individuals, were finally absorbed into and united with the ancient Church of the Vallenses.

2. As for the Vallenses or Valdenses, the religionists, *properly* so called, tenanted, from a most remote period, the Alpine Valleys of Piedmont: whence they obviously derived their name, which is equivalent to the english *Valesmen* or *Dalesmen*.

There was, however, a French Branch of the old Italian Tree, which, as a Branch, could claim

* Reiner. de Hæret. c. vi. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 304.

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only a comparatively modern origin. These Gallican Valdenses were the proselytes of Peter of Lyons in the twelfth century: and, as the wealthy merchant either by birth or by descent was a Vallensis; he, at once, both received *himself*, and communicated to his *disciples*, the name of *Vaudois*, from the primeval Mother-Church of Italy.

The circumstance, of there thus being both *Italian or Proper Vaudois* and *French or Improper Vaudois*, has led to a want of precision, in *sorting*, if I may so speak, the *Albigenses of Southern France* and the *Vallenses subsequent to the time of Peter the Valdo*. Hence, the Valdenses have been mistaken for Albigenses: and the Albigenses have been mistaken for Valdenses. The two, in short, have been, more or less, perpetually jumbled together.

No doubt, the confusion has arisen from the humour of later writers: who, in consequence of the name of *Albigenses* being finally lost in the name of *Valdenses*, have been led, when treating of an earlier period, to call, by the general name of *Valdenses*, all the dissidents from the Roman Church in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Such was the phraseology of the Jesuits Gretser and Mariana: but its incorrectness has been very justly pointed out by Bossuet, who himself accu-

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rately distinguishes the Valdenses from the Albigenses*. This distinction is systematically

* Dr. M'Crie has fallen into the same error: and, as his Work on the Reformation in Italy relates to a comparatively modern period, most probably his mistake has originated from the same cause.

In the twelfth century, says he, those Christians, known in History, under the SEVERAL names of *Vaudois*, *Waldenses*, and *Albigenses*, as the hereditary witnesses for the truth against the corruptions of Rome, penetrated through the Alps into Italy. Hist. of the Reformat. in Italy, chap. i. p. 4.

If I rightly understand Dr. M'Crie, this passage involves yet another mistake.

His language would imply; that the *Vaudois* OR *Albigenses* sprang up in France, and thence migrated into Italy. Accordingly, he adds, in immediate consecution; *As early as the year 1180, they had established themselves in Lombardy and Puglia, where they received frequent visits from their brethren in other countries.*

Whereas, in regard to the Albigenses (as they came finally to be denominated in France from the town of Albi), the course of their migration was *precisely the reverse*: and they had appeared in Italy at least as early as the very beginning of the eleventh century: for an emissary of theirs from Lombardy had made numerous and important converts at Orleans, both laic and clerical, in the year 1017. While, in regard to the entirely distinct *Vaudois* or *Valdenses*, the *disciples of Peter the Valdo* did indeed spring up in France and were themselves native Frenchmen: but the *proper Vaudois* or *Valdenses*, one of whom

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preserved throughout the whole of the present Work.

Sherburn-House, May 26, 1836.

was the Lyonesse Peter, were always, from the most remote antiquity, Italians of Piedmont; though some of them, from the circumstance of their dwelling also in the Valleys on the western side of the Cottian Alps, might be deemed inhabitants of France.

In consequence of this error (which, however, so far as the *Vaudois* are concerned, he afterward corrects, or apparently corrects, by stating that they had for centuries fixed their residence in Piedmont), he has fallen, I apprehend, into yet another error.

He ascribes the rapid spread of the Reformation of the sixteenth century throughout the Milanese, among other causes, to the circumstance of its bordering upon Piedmont, the ancient land of the *Vaudois*. Ibid. chap. iii. p. 128, 129.

The real cause was: that the Milanese had been prepared for the doctrines of the Gospel by the numerous Churches of the *Paterines* or *Albigenses*, which in the middle ages had been planted through the whole of Lombardy, and which (to the amount of sixteen, as Reinerius testifies) formed a chain that extended from Bulgaria to the Atlantic.

I may add, that Dr. M'Crie similarly confounds the *Valdenses* and the *Albigenses* in his later Work on the Reformation in Spain, chap. i. p. 28.