

CHAPTER XI.

THE FALSEHOOD OF THE ALLEGATION, DEMONSTRATED FROM THE DIRECT TESTIMONY OF HISTORY.

WHEREVER they went, the Albigenses, with no light hand, denounced alike the unscriptural errors and the personal profligacy of the Popish Clergy: while the Roman Church itself they pertinaciously stigmatised, as the blood-thirsty Harlot of the Apocalypse, or as the Synagogue of Satanic Apostasy to which the Papal Man of Sin, Antichrist ruling over Antichristianism, enacted the part of a head and ringleader.

In return, the Priesthood liberally bestowed upon them the name of Manichæans; described them, as very monsters of secret wickedness; terrified the silly populace, with idle tales of their worshipping Lucifer under the specious form of a male cat; and, what was a far more serious matter than these nonsensical and malignant imperfections, wherever they could catch them, burned them alive without evincing the slightest measure of compassion or compunction.

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THE VALLENGES

[BOOK II.]

strange tale devoutly true. But can any one believe, that the quick-sighted Prelate of Meaux, assuredly no ordinary man, after perusing the clear and valuable narrative of Roger Hoveden, could, *actually* and *bona-fide*, have been persuaded, that the Albigenses were cat-worshipping and devil-worshipping Manichæans*?

* I may here remark, that the tales, associated with witchcraft, have evidently been borrowed from the older fictions respecting the Albigenses; and they rest, I suppose, upon equal trust-worthiness of evidence. If the Albigenses had their infernal orgies; the witches had their diabolical sabbaths: if Lucifer visited the Albigenses under the form of a cat, which Bossuet's witnesses assure us was the case; he presented himself, as we all know, to the witches, under the aspect of the very same respectable animal: if the Albigenses worshipped the devil; the witches were not a whit behind them in selling their souls to the prince of darkness and in adoring him as a present and potent deity. In short, the witches were the plagiarised Albigenses of an age not very remote from that, in which, without the least fear of sorcery before our eyes, we ourselves securely expatiate. In the reign of Charles II. when some shrewd doubts upon the subject began to creep in, honest Joseph Glanvil, himself a Fellow of the Royal Society, set his face like a flint against what he deemed the growing Sadducism of the times: yet, though in the very title of his book, as some other clerks on other topics have also done, he claims a decided victory over the sceptics; still, in despite of his learned and ingenious *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, witches themselves, with the belief in their existence, have totally vanished out of the land, and our faith is no longer required to be shewn by the strenuous vexing of black cats and the resolute tormenting of old women. I have certainly done my best to send the cha-

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All this huge overgrown mass of grotesque absurdities, Bossuet, with most imposing gravity, affects to believe: though a man of *his* talents and acuteness (would that I could likewise say, of *his* honesty and fairness) must have slyly laughed in his sleeve, at the solemn mockery of professing to establish a charge of Manichæism on the authority of the very extraordinary witnesses whom he has called into court.

To demonstrate the correctness of such a view of his management, nothing more, I suppose, can *now* be necessary, than to mention the names of Peter Siculus, and the Actuary of Orleans, and Bernard the Saint, and Peter the Venerable, and Reinerius the Apostate, and Radulph the Ardent, and Radulph the Smooth, and, though last not least, Alan the Great, yclept *The Universal Doctor*, that erudite etymologist of the crabbed word *Catharus*, and that immortal immortaliser of the Infernal Catus or the Luciferian Boar-Cat.

That Bossuet secretly laughed at his ragged regiment of witnesses, is, in truth, sufficiently clear from his deliberate suppression of *really valuable* evidence, when it came indeed immediately to his hand, but when unluckily it was fatal to the whole edifice of dirt and darkness which he was so industriously constructing. I say not, that an inferior artist of the Roman School might have been unprepared, through the profuse credulity of ready malice, to hold each

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In exact accordance with the opinion which I have avowed relative to the determined ascription of Manichæism to the Albigenses, speak two very honest old historians, with whose Works it is not my good fortune to be acquainted, but whose testimony has very judiciously been adduced by Archbishop Usher.

I. While the paradoxes of Bossuet are still sounding in our ears, we may profitably listen to William Paradin, the Annalist of Burgundy.

I have seen certain Histories, in which both the Albigenses and their Princes stand excused of the allegations so frequently brought against them. The vices and errors of Manichæism, with which they were said to be stained, were purely fictitious.

tharistic cat of Alanus Magnus and the clerical *bestiola* of the Actuary of Orleans after the familiar *delicia* of the witches: and, if I do not absolutely venture to style my tractate *Bossuetismus Triumphatus*, I am not without hopes, that in future we may be allowed to doubt, notwithstanding the positive asseveration of Peter of Vaux-Sernay, whether it was an article of faith with the Albigenses, that John the Baptist was one of the larger devils, that Christ and Satan were brothers, and that the good God had two wives, hight *Colla* and *Coliba*, by whom he became the happy parent of a numerous and hopeful family. Petr. Vallisarn. Hist. Alb. c. ii. If any curious inquirer wishes to see a caricature of the persecuted Albigenses, let him read the second chapter of the History penned by Peter of Vaux-Sernay.

This same Monk, I may observe in passing, is one of Bossuet's cherished witnesses, on whose credit we are invited to believe that the Albigenses were rank Manichæans.

Through sheer malice, such enormities were imputed to them by their enemies. They did none of the things, whereof they were falsely accused: though they did indeed, somewhat too freely, reprehend the vices and corruptions of the Prelates.*

II. In a precisely similar strain, speaks Bernard Girard, the Historiographer of France.

The Counts of Toulouse and Cominges and Bigorre, and even the King of Aragon himself, espoused the party of the Albigenses. These sectaries were tainted with bad opinions: but that circumstance did not so much stir up against them the hatred of the Pope and of the great Princes, as the freedom of speech with which they censured the vices and the dissolute manners of the said Princes and Ecclesiastics; for they were accustomed to reprehend the life and actions of the Pope himself. This was the chief matter, which stirred up an universal hatred against them: and it moreover was the cause, that many nefarious opinions, from which they altogether dissented, were fictitiously ascribed to them. The Clergy of France, in short,

* Gulielmus Paradinus, quasdam se historias vidisse, ait; in quibus Albigenses eorumque Principes eodem modo excusantur: quod hujusmodi, scilicet, vitia et errores afficta illis fuerint et malitiosè imposita; nec quicquam illi fecerint eorum quorum falso accusarentur, præterquam quod vitia et corruptelas Præsulum liberius reprehenderint. Paradin. Annal. Burgund. ad A.D. 1209. lib. ii. p. 247, 248. apud Usser. de Eccles. Success. c. x. § 15.

falsely accused the Albigenses of all sorts of heresies, merely because they exposed and reprehended their vices. Hence also they stirred up the King Philip-Augustus against them: insomuch that that Prince desired Pope Innocent III, to interpose his authority, and to reduce the Heretics to good order.*

In the mouth of a Romanist, though an honest Romanist, the *bad opinions*, with which the Albigenses are here said to have been *really* tainted, were evidently no other than the doctrines subsequently held by the Reformed Churches of the

* Eorum partes secuti sunt Comites Tolosæ, Convenarum, Bigerronum, et Carmanii, ipseque Rex Tarraconensium. Et, quamvis pravis imbuti fuerint opinionibus, non hoc tamen tantum Papæ et magnorum Principum odium in eos concitabat, quantum libertas orationis, qua dictorum Principum atque Ecclesiasticorum vitia et mores dissolutos culpæ, ipsiusque Papæ vitam et actiones reprehendere, consueverunt. Hæc præcipua res fuit, quæ universorum eis conflavit odium, quæque effecit, ut plures nefariæ affingerentur eis opinioniones, a quibus omnino fuerant alieni. Rex Augustus, a regni sui Clericis excitatus (qui Albigenses, ob hoc, omnis generis hæresium insimulabant, quod ipsorum vitia insectarentur et assuarent), Innocentium III. Pontificem rogavit, ut suam his vellet auctoritatem interponere et hæreticos ad frugem bonam reducere conaretur. Girard. Histor. Franc. lib. x. apud Usser. de Eccles. Success. c. x. § 15.

The theological abuse, poured upon these Princes by the monastic historiographer of Vaux-Sernay, for resisting, on behalf of their oppressed subjects, what he humourously calls *The business of Jesus Christ and The affair of the Faith*, is in the highest degree amusing and characteristic. In the same spirit, if the pious Crusaders devoutly burn the Albigenses alive:

sixteenth century: while the many nefarious opinions, which through sacerdotal enmity were falsely ascribed to them, but from which they themselves altogether dissented, were, no less evidently, the various fantastic dogmata of the Manichæan Heresy.

nothing can be more proper and more humane and more christian. But, if, in reprisal, the Albigenses simply hang, NOT BURN, that unnatural rebel and odious persecutor Count Baldwin: Peter incontinently breaks forth; *O unheard-of cruelty! O deed worse than that of the first murderer Cain!* Petr. Vallisarnens. Hist. Albig. c. cxxxiii. Cain is brought in to enliven the Monk's exclamations: because, without a shadow of evidence even by his own shewing, the death of the traitor Baldwin is charged by him upon the pretended orders of his brother Count Raymond.