

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RISE OF THE FRENCH VALDENSES IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

It cannot but have struck the cautious inquirer, that every notice respecting the Vallenses of Piedmont, down to the present point, relates exclusively to the *Vallenses in their own Country* or at most to the *Vallenses occasionally penetrating into their own immediate Italian Neighbourhood*.

The circumstance is remarkable: but, so far as I am aware, no allusion to the *Vallenses out of their own Country* or to the *Vallenses out of their own immediate Neighbourhood* occurs, until we reach the days of Peter the rich Vallensic Merchant of Lyons. Then, for the first time, through the institution of that peculiar Class of the Leonists which was denominated *The Fraternity of the Poor Men of Lyons*, the Vallenses, who had hitherto testified against apostolic corruption only in or near their own Alpine Valleys, became missionaries upon a large scale and to a wonderfully great extent*.

* The individuals, who appeared at Arras in the year 1025 and

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I. Such being the case, there has hitherto been a marked and somewhat curious difference of

who professed to be pupils of Gandulph, have sometimes been adduced as affording a specimen of missions, undertaken by the Vallenses of Piedmont, more than a century prior to the time of Peter the Valdès. But the sole ground for such an opinion is the circumstance, that they came from the borders of Italy. Doubtless they came from that region: but this does not prove them to have been Vallenses. They were evidently, I think, a band of missionaries, not from the Cottian Alps, but from the lowlands of Lombardy: in other words, they were not Vallenses, but (as such religionists were afterwards called in France) Albigenses.

I subjoin, in brief, the account of the matter from the Acts of the Synod of Arras: and, if the intelligent reader compares it with what has already been said respecting the Albigenses or Paulicians, he will probably agree with me in regard to the true classification of these missionaries. They finally, when matters were fully explained to them, signed a confession drawn up by the Bishop of Arras.

Anno dominicæ incarnationis 1025, Domino Gerardo Ecclesiam Kamaracensis seu Attrebatensis urbis regente, contigit, ut idem Præsul per aliquot dies stationem in sede Attrebatensi facere deberet. Ubi, cum de ecclesiasticis functionibus satis pro opportunitate temporis tractaret, relatum est ei, quosdam ab Italiæ finibus viros eo loci advenisse, qui quandam novæ hæreseos sectam introducentes, evangelicæ atque apostolicæ sanctionis disciplinam pervertere tentabant, et quandam justitiam præferentes, hac sola purificari homines asserebant, nullumque in sancta Ecclesia aliud esse sacramentum, per quod ad salutem pervenire potuissent.—

Quenam est, inquit (Episcopus) doctrina vestra, lex, atque cultura: quisve auctor est disciplinæ vestræ?

At illi referunt: se esse auditores Gandulphi ejusdam ab

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character between the Albigenses and the Vallenses. Though, in doctrine, they mainly sym-

Italiæ partibus viri, et ab eo evangelicis mandatis et apostolicis informatos, nullamque præter hanc Scripturam se recipere, sed hanc verbo et opere tenere. Verum—ad notitiam Episcopi pervenerat, illos sacri baptismatis mysterium peius abhorre, dominici corporis et sanguinis sacramentum respicere, negare lapsis penitentiam post professionem proficere, Ecclesiam adnullare, legitima connubia execrari, nullum in sanctis confessoribus donum virtutis spectare, præter apostolos et martyres neminem debere venerari.—

Lex et disciplina nostra (aiebant), quam a magistro accepi-mus, nec evangelicis decretis nec apostolicis sanctionibus contraire videbitur, si quis eam diligenter velit intueri. Hæc nam-que hujusmodi est: mundum relinquere; carnem a concupis-centiis frænare; de laboribus manuum suarum victum parare; nulli læsionem querere; caritatem cunctis, quos zelus hujus propositi teneat, exhibere. Synod. Attrebat. Act. in Dachser. Spicil. vol. xiii. p. 2, 3, 4.

Through the usual veil of misrepresentation, it is easy to read here the true doctrines of the Albigenses. We learn also from the narrative the additional important matter, that they held, what indeed was then also held by their examiners themselves, the doctrine of Justification through faith in the alone merits of Christ.

The same classification, I think, must be adopted also in the case of those, who appeared in the diocese of Treves in the year 1101. They were of the Albigensic, not of the Vallensic, stock.

Irodii, quod Trevericæ Diocesis appenditum est, fuerunt eo tempore (A. D. 1101.) hæretici, qui substantiam panis et vini, quæ in altari per sacerdotes benedicuntur, in corpus Christi et sanguinem veraciter transmutari negabant; nec baptismi sacramentum parvulis ad salvationem proficere dicebant; et alia

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bolised; whence, ultimately, without any mutual repulsion and without any serious difficulty, they coalesced together into one undistinguishable race of antipontifical religionists: yet, while the Vallenses long remained obscurely quiescent in the deep recesses of their native Valleys, the Albigenses were the very Pelasgi of evangelical reform*.

After these extraordinary individuals had emigrated, under the name of *Paulicians*, from Asia into Europe, we find them speedily branching out from one end to the other of that latter continent. Their ecclesiastical establishments, for Reinerius is unwilling to decorate those establishments with the name of *Churches*, sixteen in number, reached, in the twelfth and at the beginning of the thirteenth century, all the way, from Thrace and Bulgaria, to Gascony and the Pyrenees†: their

perplura profitebantur erroneæ quæ memoriæ tradere nefas duxi. De his quatuor obliti sunt ei: quorum duo Presbyteri; reliqui vero duo erant Laici. Presbyterorum unus, *Fredericus*: alter, duobus vocabatur nominibus, *Dominicus Willelmus*. Laicorum vero alter, *Durandus*: alter dicebatur, *Halmericus*. Histor. Trevir. in Dachser. Spicil. vol. xii. p. 243.

* What Herodotus means by saying, that the Pelasgi never changed their place of residence, I know not. Certainly, from the universal evidence of antiquity, they were the very pink of ramblers. Herod. Hist. lib. i. c. 56.

† Sunt sedecim omnes Ecclesiæ Catharorum. Nec imputas mihi, O lector, quod eas appello *Ecclesias*, sed potius eis qui se ita vocant. Reiner. de hæret. c. vi. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 304.

theological schools, thronged with students, were so numerous, that Reinerius estimates forty and one in the diocese of Padua alone, attempting not to count those of Germany and Provence*: and, of themselves, we hear, at Orleans, at Arras, at Treves, and even (though their first effort to obtain a settlement there was unsuccessful) in England.

But, until the days of Peter Valdo, the mountaineers of the Cottian Alps seem never to have moved from their secluded Valleys, save peradventure to mingle, in domestic efforts at proselytism, with the lowlanders of Turin or Vercelli. Hence their name occurs not in France, nor (I

* In omnibus vero civitatibus Lombardiæ, et in Provincia, et in aliis regnis et terris, plures erant scholæ hæreticorum quam theologorum, et plures auditores, qui publicè disputabant, et populum ad solennes disputationes convocabant, in foro et in campis prædicabant et in tectis: et non erat, qui eos impedire auderet, propter potentiam et multitudinem fautorum ipsorum. Inquisitioni et examinationi hæreticorum frequenter interfui: et computatæ sunt Scholæ hæreticorum, in diocesi Pataviensi, quadraginta et una; in loco, qui dicitur *Clenmaten*, fuerunt decem Scholæ. Reiner. de hæret. c. iii. p. 299.

He then, in Germany and elsewhere, specifies no fewer than forty-one places where there were Schools of these heretics, without determining the number of the Schools themselves.

How wonderful must have been the zeal and activity of these Cathari or Paulicians, when in the whole world, as Reinerius assures us, the number of their associated members of both sexes fell short of four thousand. Ibid. c. vi. p. 304.

country and people whence his family originated and where he had lived prior to his settlement, and himself communicating to his french converts the name which he had received from his own piedmontese descent and connection.

II. At present, in tracing downward, from the apostolic age, the Vallenses of Piedmont, I am concerned only with the ultimate italian origin of the Valdenses of France: for let us not, in defiance of all evidence, imagine with the interested Bossuet, that the Valdenses or Vallenses or Leonists, in point of their final theological pedigree, sprang only from Peter of Lyons in the twelfth century. The native french Valdenses, no doubt, might justly acknowledge him as their local founder; and, under this aspect, Reinerius classes the Poor Men of Lyons (who were also, no less than a much more ancient sect, denominated *Leonists*) as a race of modern heretics: but, a Vaudois himself, he was nothing more than the planter of a new shoot, the parent stock of which is to be sought in the Cottian Alps of northern Italy.

On this point, the point, I mean, of the italian theological origin of the Valdenses of France, Conrad of Lichtenau, Abbot of Ursperg at the commencement of the thirteenth century, is as full and decisive, as can reasonably be desired.

In the year 1212, he tells us, two new Religious Orders, that of the *Minor Friars* and that of the *Preaching Friars*, were instituted: and the object

believe) in any country beyond their own, until after the commencement of Peter's ministry about the year 1160. As far as hitherto has been discovered, it first, in french or rather in english story, appears in the year 1179: for Walter Mapes, the facetious Precentor of Lincoln and Archdeacon of Oxford, mentions, that, in that year, he conversed at Rome with certain Valdesians, so called from their Primate Valdès of Lyons; who, Frenchmen themselves in point of origin, and having recently been proselyted by that eminent Valdensian, wished, in the simplicity of their heart and the honesty of their purpose, to obtain, from Pope Alexander III., a licence to act as missionary preachers of the Gospel*.

A new impulse, however, was now to be given to the exertions of the primitive Vallenses (those oldest of all heretics, in the judgment of the Inquisitor Reinerius) to promote the cause of pure and undefiled religion: and, through God's providence, the honoured instrument was the individual noticed by Mapes, Peter the rich merchant of Lyons; himself denominated *Valdès* from the

* Vidimus in Concilio Romano, sub Alexandro Papa III. celebrato (A. D. 1179.), Valdesios, homines idiotas illiteratos, a primate ipsorum Valde dictos, qui fuerat civis Lugduni super Rhodanum. Gualt. Map. de Nugis. Curial. distinct. i. c. 31. ex MS. in Biblioth. Bodleian, apud Usser. de Eccles. Success. c. viii. § 12.

of their institution was, to meet two sects, which, *having long since sprung up in Italy*, still, when the Abbot wrote, continued to exist. These two sects, or rather these two branches of one and the same sect, were known by the names of *The Humiliated* and *The Poor Men of Lyons*: the former, I suppose, being the more stationary and domestic Vallenses of Piedmont; while the latter, professedly and decidedly a Body of Missionaries bent upon carrying the primitive doctrine of the Alpine Valleys to the very ends of the earth, were evidently no other than the french proselytes of Peter the Valdo, though described as being, through him their Vallensic Founder, of italian origination*.

* Eo tempore, mundo jam senescente, exortæ sunt duæ Religiones in Ecclesia, cujas, ut aquilæ, renovatur juvenus; etiam e Sede Apostolica sunt confirmatæ: videlicet, *Minorum Fratrum* et *Prædicatorum*. Quæ forte, hac occasione, sunt approbatæ: quia, olim duæ sectæ in Italia exortæ, adhuc perdurant; quorum alii *Humiliatos*, alii *Pauperes de Lugduno*, se nominabant. Quos Lucius Papa quondam inter hæreticos scribebat, eo quod superstitiosa dogmata et observationes in eis reperirentur. In occultis quoque prædicationibus, quas faciebant plerumque in latibulis Ecclesiæ Dei et Sacerdotio derogabatur.—Cæterum dominus Papa, in loco eorum, exurgentes quosdam alios, qui se appellabant *Pauperes Minores*, confirmavit.—Hi tamen, postea attendentes, quod nonnunquam nimis humilitatis nomen gloriationem importet, et de nomine pauperatis, cum multi eam frustra sustineant, apud Deum vanius inde gloriantur, maluerunt appellari *Minores Fratres* quam *Minores Pauperes*. Alii, videlicet *Prædicatores*, in locum *Humiliatorum*

With the *french* Valdenses, however, we are not at present quite immediately concerned. Our object just now is simply to connect the

successisse credantur. Conrad. Abbat. Ursperg. Chron. in A. D. 1212. apud Gretser. Proleg. in Script. cont. Valdenses. c. v. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 291.

In point of habits and character, the Abbot, like Pope Lucius III. before him in the year 1184, appears to have somewhat confounded the *Humiliated* with the *Poor Men* properly so called. For he describes the *Minor Friars*, as being specially opposed to the *Poor Men of Lyons*; whom we positively know to have been a body of missionaries: while he exhibits the *Preaching Friars*, as being specially opposed to the *Humiliated*; who, though (as he speaks) they may sometimes have thrust their sickle into another man's harvest, do not seem, at least before the time of Peter Valdo, to have been distinguished by the characteristic of extensively bearing the Gospel beyond the limits of their native Valleys. The important part of his testimony, however, is this. He explicitly tells us: that, *In point of ultimate origination, the two sects, into which the Valdenses were divided, sprang up, at a remote period, in Italy.* OLIM duæ sectæ IN ITALIA exortæ. This statement at once agrees with, and confirms, my own view of the matter. The *Poor Men of Lyons*, through the active proselytism of Peter Valdo, sprang up in France; but then Peter himself was one of the *Humiliated* of Italy: so that the ultimate theological pedigree of each branch alike was Italian, not French.

Such an account of the matter, thus happily preserved by Conrad, will explain what Reinerius meant; when, in one breath (as it were), he speaks of the Leonists as being the *oldest* of all heretical sects; and yet, under the name of the *Poor Men of Lyons*, asserts them to have had for their founder an individual who flourished *not more than seventy years* before himself. It will also account for the singular fact recorded by him: that

disciples of Peter the Valdo with the *italian* Valdenses; that is to say, the *modern* Leonists (as Reinerius speaks) with the *ancient* Leonists: and the testimony of the Abbot of Ursperg fully accomplishes that object.

For the matter stands thus.

That the *Poor Men* of Lyons were the *prose-lytes* and disciples of Peter the Valdo, we all know.

Yet Conrad of Lichtenau, we see, distinctly tells us: that these *Poor Men* or *Leonists* or *Valdenses*, when viewed as a sect and when consi-

the *Poor Men* of Lyons, or the *French* Valdenses, were wont to journey into Lombardy, and there visit their Bishops,

Item peregrinantur: et ita, Lombardiam intrantes, visitant Episcopos suos. Reiner. de hæret. c. v. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 301.

The distinction, in short, between the *French* and the *Italian* Valdenses, is specifically drawn by himself in his *Summa*.

Nunc dicendum est de hæresi Leonistarum, seu Pauperum de Lugduno. Dividitur autem hæresis in duas partes. Prima pars vocatur *Pauperes Ultramontani*; secunda vero, *Pauperes Lombardi*: et isti descenderunt ab illis. Reiner. Summ. de Cath. et Leon. in Marten. Thesaur. Anecd. vol. i. col. 1775.

By the *Lombard* or *Cismontane* Valdenses, Reinerius can only mean, as our modern geography speaks, the Valdenses of *Piedmont*. He uses, I apprehend, the term *Lombard*, in its ancient and larger and proper sense. The Kingdom of *Lombardy* extended, from the *Adriatic* Sea, to the *Cottian Alps*: thus including both *Turin* and the still more westerly country of the *Vallenses*. See Gibbos's *Hist. of Decline*, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 147, 148.

dered in reference to their ultimate theological origin, had already sprung up and had long existed in Italy, *previous* to their becoming celebrated in France under the auspices and tutelage of the *piedmontese* merchant Peter.

III. Thus, I am willing to hope, the *Vallenses*, in their present settlements through the valleys of the *Cottian Alps*, have been clearly traced, from the very times of the *Primitive Church*, down to an age when their existence can no longer be doubtful.