

CHAPTER X.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE VALLENCES DURING THE
PERIOD OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

FROM the period of the twelfth century, we descend to the period of the thirteenth: and, here, Pilichdorf, and the Author of the *Index of Valdencic Errors*, and Conrad of Magdenberg, will prove usefully concurrent witnesses.

I. According to the first of these, Pilichdorf, the Valdenses, who, through the unwearied missionary labours of Peter Valdo and his Gallican Proselytes, had now, in their various offshoots, been spread far beyond the limits of their native mountains, held the following opinions.

They contended: that *They and their associates were exclusively the few Elect; while their adversaries, the corrupt Romanists, were the many called* *.

They maintained: that *The Virgin and the Saints are so filled with heavenly joy, as to be*

* Per vocatos et multos, intelligis Catholicos: et, per paucos electos, intelligis complices tuos. Pilich. cont. Valdenc. c. xiv. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 315.

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sequently, that *There is no such place or condition as Purgatory* *.

They taught: that *There is no greater benefit to be obtained by burial in a consecrated cemetery, than in any other place* †.

Agreeably to this principle, they said: that *A material Church, dedicated or consecrated by a Romish Bishop, was neither better nor holier nor worthier than any other house, since God both could be adored and ought to be adored everywhere* ‡.

In like manner, they reprobated the consecration of sacerdotal and pontifical robes, water, salt, ashes, candles, food at the time of Easter, and all other things which are consecrated by bishops and

* Item dicunt hæretici Valdenses: solum esse duas vias post hanc vitam, et non purgatorium. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxi. p. 320.

† Item dicunt hæretici Valdenses: quod non sit melius, corpus hominis defuncti sepeliri in cœmeterio, quam in alio quocunque agro vel loco. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxii. p. 322.

‡ Dicunt Valdenses hæretici: ecclesiam materialem ab episcopo catholico dedicatam seu consecratam non fore, quancunque alia domo, meliorem, sanctiorem, vel digniorem; cum ubique Deus possit ac debeat adorari et sibi servi. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxiii. p. 323.

The Valdenses, I apprehend, did not so much object to the decent setting apart of a church to the service of God, as to the superstitious notion that our prayers would be more acceptable and more efficacious when offered up in a consecrated building than when offered up privately in our closet or conjointly with our family in an apartment of a dwelling-house. Among the Romanists, a notion has always been encouraged, that God may

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unable to regard what is done upon earth; and that, *Inasmuch as they cannot pray for us, they ought not to be invoked by us* *.

In immediate connection with this dogma, they contended: that *God alone ought to be praised and honoured and invoked and served; that, Since he alone redeemed us, he alone can help us; that The merits of the Saints cannot be applied to us, because they belong only to themselves; that, Since God well knows what is necessary for us, he requires not to be moved by the prayers of the Saints; that, What he wills, all the Saints will; and, therefore, that We ought not to invoke the Saints, but God exclusively and alone* †.

They asserted: that, *After this life, there are no more than two ways to the departed; and, con-*

* Tenent Valdenses hæretici; beatam Virginem Mariam et Sanctos in patria tantis impletos esse gaudiis, quod nihil possint cogitare de his quæ in terris fiunt; et, per consequens, eos non esse invocandos a nobis, quia non possunt orare pro nobis. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xix. p. 317.

† Dicunt etiam hæretici Valdenses: quod solus Deus sit laudandus, honorandus, et invocandus, et sibi soli serviendum; et quod Sancti non orent pro nobis propter plenitudinem gaudiorum, quam habent; et quod, quia solus Deus redemit nos, ideo solus possit juvare nos; et Sancti sibi ipsis meruerunt, et non nobis; et, quia Deus per se bene scit quod nobis necessarium sit, non indiget Sanctorum precibus moveri; et, quia, quidquid ipse vult, hoc voluit omnes Sancti: ergo non oportet invocare Sanctos, sed solum Deum. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xx. p. 318.

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priests: and they rejected also the consecration of bishops, priests, churches, altars, cemeteries, baptismal water, unctions of chrism and oil, palms, branches, and herbs; saying, that *Things thus consecrated derived no particular sanctity from the words used, though the words themselves might be good* *.

They reprobated the indulgences of the prelates of the Church, together with pilgrimages to the thresholds of saints and the year of jubilee: and this they did, as we learn from the counter-reasoning of Pilichdorf, on the ground of rejecting the whole system of human meritoriousness, more especially as it appears in its worst form of supererogation †.

be better worshipped in one place than in another; a fancy, which runs directly counter to our Lord's own decision as to the nature and principles of genuine christian service. See John iv. 20—24. Clement of Alexandria well teaches us: that a church is, not the building, but the worshippers. *Οὐ γὰρ τὸν τῆς οἰκίας, ἀλλὰ τὸ τὸ θεοσεβούμενον τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν, ἐκκλησίαν καλεῖ.* Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. vii. Oper. p. 715.

* Item reprobant Valdenses hæretici consecrationes vestium sacerdotalium et pontificalium, aquæ, salis, cinerum, candelarum, ciborum tempore paschali, et omnium aliorum quæ per episcopos et sacerdotes consecrantur; et etiam consecrationes episcoporum, sacerdotum, ecclesiarum, altarium, cœmeteriorum, aquæ baptismalis, chrismatis et olei unctionum, palmarum, frondium, et herbarum; dicentes, illas res, taliter consecratas, nihil omnino singularis sanctitatis ex illis verbis percipere, licet verba in se sancta sint et bona. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxv. p. 325.

† Item reprobant hæretici Valdenses indulgentias prælatorum

All images and the worship of them they utterly abominated : and, for this, as Pilichdorf admits, they seemed to have authorities from Scripture ; though, ludicrously enough, he is quite satisfied,

Ecclesiæ, peregrinationes ad limina sanctorum, et annum jubileum.—Nunc etiam advertamus merita sanctorum Dei : quia, sicut, exigente divina justitia, per peccatum mortale, perdit homo gaudia cælestis regni, et meretur pœnam æternam : sic, exigente divina clementia et misericordia per opus meritum factum, postquam, per veram contritionem, confessionem, satisfactionem, pœna illa æterna intransitoriam fuerit mutata, meretur illius temporalis pœnæ diminutionem et cælestis præmii salutem et accidentalem augmentationem. Sed, quia beata Virgo Maria nunquam aliquam pœnam meruit, et tamen infinita opera meritoria in ferventissima fecit charitate, ideo solummodo adeptæ est augmentationem præmii et non pœnæ diminutionem. Et illa secunda pars cessit in thesaurum Ecclesiæ : unde multorum peccatorum et multarum peccatricum pœnam dimiuit meritum beatæ Mariæ : et de illo thesauro dantur indulgentiæ. Similiter, sancti Apostoli, martyres, et multi perfecti justî, etsi prius peccatores fuerint, tamen ita sufficienter in hac vita penituerant, quod nullius pœnæ obnoxii permanserunt, etiam cum adhuc in hac vita mortali fuerint : et sic adepti sunt, eorum operibus meritoriis, solummodo præmii augmentationem : et illud totum cedit in Ecclesiæ thesaurum. Et sic patet, quomodo Ecclesiæ thesaurus non potest exhauriri. Et hujus thesauri dispensator noluit esse ipse Christus Dominus solus : imo commisit ipse prælatis Ecclesiæ, secundum tamen plus et minus. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxx. p. 328, 329.

To this wretched unscriptural trash, the views of the enlightened Valdenses, by the very necessity of Pilichdorf's argument, stood directly opposed.

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regard, except in so far as they might be confirmatory to their own sect : for they admitted only the authority of the New Testament ; and this they observed to the very letter *.

General confession they made no account of †.

Miracles, performed in the Church of God through the merits of the saints, they utterly rejected ‡.

They said : that *The Pope is the head of all heresiarchs* §.

All Religious Orders of Monks and Sanctimonials they reprobated : saying, that *They are vain and superfluous* ¶.

They maintained : that *All the words of the Mass, and all the preparations appertaining to the Mass, beyond the simple words of consecration, are of error* ¶¶.

* Item dicta sanctorum nihil curant, nisi quantum pro secta eorum confortantia retinent : sed tantum Novum Testamentum ad literam observant. Ind. error. Vald. p. 341.

† Item confessionem generalem nihil advertunt. Ind. error. Vald. p. 341.

‡ Item miracula, quæ fiunt in Ecclesia Dei Sanctorum meritis, omnino alijciunt. Ind. error. Vald. p. 341.

§ Item dicunt : Papam esse caput omnium heresiarcharum. Ind. error. Vald. p. 340.

¶ Item improbant omnes Religiones, tam monachorum quam sanctimonialium, dicentes esse superfluos et inanes. Ind. error. Vald. p. 341.

¶¶ Item dicunt : omnia verba Missæ, et omnia præparamenta ad Missam spectantia, esse de errore, præter verba consecrationis. Ind. error. Vald. p. 340.

that he can dispose of them all and solve every apparent difficulty *.

To oaths of every description they objected †.

II. The Author of the *Index of Valdentic Errors*, subjoined by Gretzer to the Work of Pilichdorf, has contributed some important additional notices.

In the beneficial potency of the sign of the cross, the Valdenses had no faith : for they were wont to declare, that *They would venerate, neither the very cross upon which Christ hung, nor the crown of thorns, nor the nails, nor the spear, nor the garment without seam, even if they could behold the really genuine articles themselves ; inasmuch as the veneration of all such things is vain and useless, being merely contrived by the priests for the sake of filthy lucre* ‡.

To the sayings of the Saints they paid no

* Item reprobant heretici imagines et earum venerationem. Et videntur habere pro se multas auctoritates diversarum Scripturarum, quæ postea adducuntur et solventur. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxxiii. p. 329.

† Item dicunt Valdenses heretici : quod omne juramentum, quantumcunque judicialiter et veridicè factum, sit peccatum et reprobatum. Pilich. cont. Vald. c. xxxvii. p. 331.

‡ Item, de signo crucis, nihil credunt : asserentes, quod nec venerunt illam crucem in qua Christus pependit, nec spineam coronam, nec clavos, nec lanceam, nec tunicam consutilem, si viderent : quorum omnium venerationem dicunt esse vanam et inutilem, et quod sacerdotes invenerunt propter lucra. Ind. error. Vald. ad calc. Pilich. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 341.

III. Various other matters of less moment have been omitted : and if there should be any doubt as to the import of the last specified particular, it is effectually solved by their own explanatory language as reported by Conrad of Magdenberg.

They blaspheme, says he, the Priesthood of Christ, styling the Presbyters in the Church of God, by way of mockery and derision, GOD-MAKERS. Nevertheless, the Priests themselves make not God : but only, through the words of consecration instituted by Christ, under the species of bread and wine mixed with water, they make our Lord Christ to be corporeally present who was not corporeally present before, the Holy Spirit operating the transubstantiation of this oblation so as to make God *.

Conrad is here speaking of the *Beghards* or *Pighards* or *Picards*. But this was the name, by which, from the circumstance of their abounding in the neighbour province of *Picardy*, the Valdenses were wont to be styled in Germany †.

* Blasphemant insuper sacerdotium Christi, presbyteros in Ecclesia Dei, *Deifices*, quasi Deum facientes, illusivè seu derisorie nominando. Cum tamen non Christum faciant sacerdotes ; sed, per verba consecrationis a Christo instituta, sub speciebus panis et vini aqua misti, Christum Dominum nostrum esse præsentem faciunt corporaliter ubi corporaliter non fuerat prius, Spiritu Sancto hujus oblationis transubstantiationem deificè operante. Conrad. de Mont. Puell. cont. Beghard. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 343.

† See Thuan. Hist. lib. vi. § 16. vol. i. p. 221.

<div>CHAP. X.] AND ALBIGENSES. 423</div> <div>Consequently, there can be no doubt touching the specific religionists, to whom he alludes. As for his language, it is useful to let a Romanist himself exhibit the blasphemous heresy of the Transubstantialists in all its naked deformity.</div>	
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