

CHAPTER III.

RESPECTING THE ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY OF THE
VALLENSES AND THE ALBIGENSES.

As I thus pronounce the two Communions of the Vallenses and the Albigenses to be the two Witnessing Churches of the Apocalypse; and as I further contend, against Bossuet, that the Vallenses, in a more especial manner, constitute that Visible Church which connects the Churches of the Reformation with the Primitive Church: it may be expected, that I should say something, as to their right to be considered Churches at all, in regard to their possessing or their not possessing the apostolical succession.

I readily confess, that I am not able to *demonstrate* the circumstance of their possessing an apostolical succession, either as regularly transmitted by episcopal ordination, or as less regularly handed down by the *simple* imposition of the hands of the Presbytery*.

* It may perhaps endanger the whole System of Apostolical

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Yet, though a strictly legal demonstration of this matter, in the case of two Churches subjected

Succession, if we too rigidly insist upon the absolute necessity of a transmission through the medium of Bishops *exclusively*.

In the year 558, Pelagius was actually consecrated Bishop of Rome herself, not by three Bishops, but by two Bishops and a Presbyter.

Dum non essent Episcopi qui eum ordinent, inventi sunt duo Episcopi, Joannes de Perusio et Bonus de Ferentino, et Andreas, Presbyter de Ostia: et ordinaverunt eum Pontificem. Tunc enim non erat in Clero, qui poterant eum promovere. Anastat. Biblioth. Lib. Pontifical. in vit. Pelagii I.

On this case, which, according to the amount of our requirement, may or may not vitiate the entire Apostolical Succession of at least the Western Patriarchate, it is obvious to remark: that the Presbyter Andrew either did, or did not, possess the power of transmission.

If he did: then the point in litigation is forthwith conceded. If he did not: then his concurrence and coöperation with the two Bishops was an idle and inexplicable mockery; though a mockery, which, under such an aspect, might justly be pronounced to nullify the whole transaction.

Nor can it, with any decent shew of argument, be alleged: that the Presbyter acted merely by the warrant of the two Bishops, that he possessed no inherent power of his own, and that he really *himself* did nothing whatsoever toward the transmitting of the episcopate.

For, should this ground be taken, the answer is plain.

If Andrew possessed not the right of continuing the Apostolical Succession; and if, for that continuance, the joint agency of three Bishops was essentially necessary: then the consecration of Pelagius by only two Bishops and a Presbyter was, to all intents and purposes, invalid; and, consequently, nothing could have been more strangely absurd, than for the two Bishops

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to incessant persecution or driven into the obscurity and poverty of an alpine wilderness, may well

to call in, as their officially equal coadjutor, one, whom all the while they themselves *knew* to possess no legitimate authority of transmission.

Nor yet will it very materially mend the affair, to assert: that two Bishops can transmit the succession just as well as three Bishops.

For it is quite plain; that neither the two Bishops nor the Church at large *entertained* any such opinion: because, if they *had*, they would have proceeded forthwith to the consecration without in any wise calling in the Presbyter Andrew. And it is likewise plain; that the right and power of transmission must have been fully *believed* by them to reside in the Presbyter: because, if they *had* not believed it, they would never, both Bishops and Clergy and People of the faction of Pelagius, have invited him to join in the consecration of Pelagius.

In short, from this remarkable transaction, we seem to learn: that, in the judgment of the Church of the sixth century, the Apostolical Succession was indeed deemed essential to a legitimate discharge of the Clerical Office; but that, in a case of necessity, such succession might be canonically transmitted by the hands of a Presbyter as well as by the hands of a Bishop.

From the major case of the consecration of a Bishop by a concurring Presbyter, we may turn to the minor case of the similar ordination of Presbyters themselves.

In our own church, the concurrence of Presbyters with the presiding Bishop, in laying hands upon those who are themselves about to be ordained Presbyters, is familiar and notorious.

Now here, again, the very same reasoning palpably applies.

Presbyters either have, or have not, a power of transmitting the presbyterate. If they have: then the point is conceded. If they have not: then their joint imposition of hands is an unmeaning and nugatory ceremonial.

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have been thus rendered impracticable, and thence in common fairness, cannot be rigidly demanded:

The whole transaction is rendered still more striking, by the circumstance: that, in the ordination of deacons, there is no concurrence of the Presbyters. Whence the inference seems to be: that, in the judgment of the Anglican Church, a single Bishop, *without* the concurrence of Presbyters, *cannot* legitimately transmit the higher order of the presbyterate; but that *no such* concurrence is necessary in conferring the *very inferior* Order of Deacon.

On this difficult question much light is thrown by the historical attestation of Jerome, who flourished about a century and a half before the consecration of Pelagius by two Bishops and a Presbyter. He tells us: that, *From the beginning, Bishops and Presbyters were, in point of Order, the same; though, in point of Church Polity, it had been deemed expedient to set one Presbyter over his brethren, in the capacity of a Bishop or Superintendent, and with the right of ordination or rather (as I gather from the context) with the special right of presidency in ordination.*

Audio, quendam in tantam erupisse vecordiam, ut Diaconos Presbyteris, id est, Episcopis, anteferreret. Nam, cum Apos. totus perspicue doceat, *Eosdem esse Presbyteros quos et Episcopos*: quis patiat, mensuram et viduarum Minister ut supra eos se tumidus efferat?—Quod autem postea unus electus est, qui cæteris præponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est: ne unusquisque, ad se trahens, Christi Ecclesiam rumperet. Nam et Alexandria, a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heracleum et Dionysium Episcopos, Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in celsiori gradu collocatum, *Episcopum* nominabant: quo modo, si exercitus Imperatorem faciat; aut Diaconi eligant de se quem indurium noverint, et *Archidiaconum* vocent. Quid nam facit, excepta ordinatione, Episcopos, quod Presbyter non faciat? Hieron. Epist. lxxxv. Oper. vol. ii. p. 259, 260.

we may nevertheless, come so near to the point, that, in concurrence with the scriptural declaration

Idem est ergo Presbyter, qui et Episcopus: et, antequam, diaboli instinctu, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis, *Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem Cepha*: communi Presbyterorum consilio Ecclesie gubernabantur. Postquam, vero, unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat esse, non Christi: in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus, de Presbyteris electus, superponeretur cæteris, ad quem omnis Ecclesie cura pertineret, et schismatum semina tollerentur. Putet aliquis, non Scripturarum, sed nostram, esse sententiam, *Episcopum et Presbyterum unum esse*: et aliud ætatis aliud esse nomen officii: relegat Apostoli ad Philippenses verba dicentis; *Paulus et Timotheus, servi Jesu Christi, omnibus sanctis in Christo Jesu qui sunt Philippis, cum Episcopis et Diaconis, gratia vobis et pax*. Philippi una est urbs Macedoniæ: et certè in una civitate plures, ut nuncupantur, Episcopi esse non poterant. Sed, quia eodem Episcopo illo tempore quos et Presbyteros appellabant, propterea indifferenter de Episcopis, quasi de Presbyteris, est locutus. Adhuc hoc alicui videatur ambiguum, nisi altero testimonio comprobetur. In Actibus Apostolorum scriptum est, quod, cum venisset Apostolus Miletum, miserit Ephesum, et vocaverit Presbyteros Ecclesie ejusdem, quibus postea inter cætera sit locutus: *Attendite vobis et omni gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit Episcopos pascere Ecclesiam Domini, quam acquisivit per sanguinem suum*. Et hoc diligentius observate, quo modo unus civitatis Ephesi Presbyteros vocans, postea eodem Episcopos dixerit.—Hæc propterea, ut ostenderemus Apud veteres eodem fuisse Presbyteros, quos et Episcopos: paulatim vero, ut dissensionum plantaria evellerentur, ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut, ergo, Presbyteri sciunt se, ex Ecclesie consuetudine, ei qui sibi præpositus fuerit esse subjectos: ita Episcopi noverint, se, magis consuetudine, quam dispositionis dominicæ veritate, Presbyteris

deem it sufficiently established for all legitimate ecclesiastical purposes.

the prophecy itself correctly or incorrectly. Under the simple aspect of testimony to a fact, had the Church in Clement's time universally understood and believed that three distinct Orders of Clergy had been appointed, that Father could never have asserted such a form of Ecclesiastical Polity to be foretold in a prophecy which announced the appointment of no more than two sorts of officers described as being Overseers and Ministers. Hence Clement seems to confirm the statement of Jerome: that the creation of superintending Bishops did not introduce a third and additional Order into the Church.

The attestation of Jerome, that Bishops and Presbyters are in point of Order the same, and that The setting of one Bishop or Presbyter over his fellows was only done for the prevention of schism, and for the better government of the Church which had hitherto been ruled (communi Presbyterorum consilio) by the common counsel of Presbyters, probably affords the true key to the remarkable language of Ignatius in his seven genuine Epistles.

When one Presbyter was placed authoritatively both over other Presbyters and over a whole Church, such is the pride of human nature, that a strong disposition to resistance, or (to say the least) a strong inclination to undervalue and depreciate the novel Superior even though apostolically appointed, would be very apt to shew itself. In fact, from the charge of St. Paul to Timothy, whom he had appointed Bishop or Overseer of the Church of Ephesus, we may learn, not equivocally, that this was really the case: for, when he directed him to command and teach, he would scarcely have said *Let no man despise thy youth*, unless he had anticipated a spirit of resistance and insubordination. 1 Tim. iv. 11, 12.

Under such circumstances, Ignatius, who, like Timothy and Titus and Clement and Polycarp, had received his supervisal

of the assured existence of precisely two Witnessing Churches during all the middle ages, we may

esse majores, et in commune debere Ecclesiam regere. Hieron. Comment. in Tit. i. 5. Oper. vol. vi. p. 198, 199.

The statement of Jerome seems to be confirmed by the very early testimony of Clement of Rome.

This Father, who flourished in the first century, incidentally gives us a very distinct account of the Ecclesiastical Polity which had then been established. In each Church there was a presiding Bishop with his subordinate Presbyters and Deacons, after the model of the High-Priest and the Priests and the Levites of the Hebrew Church. This arrangement was of apostolical institution. But still, while in the Church Catholic there were thus three divinely appointed Classes of spiritual officers, Clement, in a mode which cannot be misunderstood, intimates, that there were only two Orders.

Preaching through countries and cities, says he, the Apostles appointed the first-fruits of their conversions to be BISHOPS and MINISTERS over such as should afterward believe, having first proved them by the Spirit. Nor was this any new thing: seeing that, long before, it was written concerning BISHOPS and DEACONS. For thus saith the Scripture in a certain place: I will appoint their OVERSEERS in righteousness, and their MINISTERS in faith. Clem. Rom. Epist. ad Corinth. i. § 42. Chevallier's Translat.

Here, we may observe, no more than two Orders are specified, the word Bishops being plainly used as equipollent to the word Presbyters: and all possibility of misapprehension is avoided by the circumstance of Clement's affirmation, that the appointment of these two Orders was foretold in a prophecy which announced the appointment of exactly two descriptions of spiritual officers. I will appoint their OVERSEERS (ἐπισκοποι) in righteousness, and their MINISTERS (διακονοι) in faith. In point of evidence, it matters nothing, whether Clement applied

I. Let us begin with considering the case of the Vallenses.

authority from the immediate hands of an Apostle, would naturally write, to the Churches which he addresses, with this impression full upon his mind.

Take, for example, his address to the Magnesians.

It is your duty not to despise the youth of your Bishop, but to yield all reverence to him, according to the power of God, the Father. As also I perceive your holy Presbyters do, not considering his youthful appearance, but, as men prudent in God, submitting to him; and not to him indeed, but to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bishop of us all. It becomes you, therefore, to be obedient with all sincerity, in honour of him whose pleasure it is that ye should do so.—Some call a Bishop by the name of his office: yet do all things without him. But such men appear to me void of a good conscience: since they are not gathered together firmly, according to God's commandments. Ignat. Epist. ad Magnes. § 3, 4, Chevallier's Translat.

Ignatius, I take it, speaks to the following effect.

If Bishops, who often may chance to be younger men than several of the subjected Presbyters, have been introduced, for the express purpose of avoiding schism, and for the greater uniformity of ecclesiastical government; what benefit can be derived from this apostolical ordinance, should matters be transacted without any regard to them, and should they be viewed in any other light than that of the delegated representatives of him who is the true Shepherd and Bishop of our souls?

This, so far as respects the episcopate, is the very clear and very reasonable argument of Ignatius: and hence arose his saying, which might seem to have passed into a sort of proverb; *Let no one do anything, which belongs to the Church, separately from the Bishop*. Ignat. Epist. ad Smyrn. § 8. Unless the authority of the Bishop were respected, he might just as well never have been appointed at all. With this key, thus fur-

With respect to these long-enduring tenants of a region geographically marked out as situated

ished by Jerome, let us read those numerous statements of Ignatius which some have deemed so extravagantly high-church: and the whole, I think, will appear natural and consistent. They are little more than sermons upon St. Paul's text to a newly-appointed Bishop; *Let no man despise thy youth: for they all bear upon the point, that The authority was not to be undervalued, but to be acknowledged and revered.* With the same key also, we may open the full drift and purpose of the Apostle's wise admonition to the youthful Prelate, touching the very delicate matter of dealing with his subject Presbyters; many of whom, no doubt, exceeded him in age. *Rebuke not a Presbyter: but admonish him as a father.* 1 Tim. v. 1. As if he had said, in the tone and manner of Jerome: *Execute thy official duties meekly, especially toward those who are older than thyself: for, though Presbyters, by a custom henceforth to be introduced into the Church, are subjected to thee; yet know, that thou art greater than thy Presbyters, rather by this ecclesiastical custom than by the verity of the Lord's disposition, and therefore that thou oughtest to govern the Church in common with them.*

Jerome, I am aware, has been cited, as saying in another place, that Bishops and Priests and Deacons constitute three distinct Orders. If he really made any such declaration, he would, so far as I can perceive, directly contradict himself. But, in truth, his language, when cited to this effect, is given in a somewhat mutilated form, the commencement and the termination of the sentence being alike omitted. When given in full, it will be found to speak, not of Orders in the ecclesiastical sense of the word, but only of different degrees of rank with reference to the many mansions which our Lord declares to exist in his Father's house.

Si autem non sunt plurimæ mansiones, quomodo, et in Veteri

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point of immediate government, they were ruled by inferior Bishops, the suffragans of the Archbishop of the entire Province*.

Accordingly, when they became completely separated from the Roman Church and entered upon their predicted function of one of the two Apocalyptic Witnesses, they still retained that primitive form of Ecclesiastical Polity, which ordains the authoritative government of the Church to be vested in Presbyters, employing Deacons as their subordinated assistants, while they themselves acknowledge the superintendence of a Bishop or General Overseer.

Of this, a remarkable instance occurred about the year 1450. Commenius, a Bohemian Bishop, who wrote in the year 1644, has stated: that *The Bohemian Separatists, in their anxiety to have their Pastors ordained by Prelates in regular succession from the Apostles, sent three of their Preachers to a certain Stephen, Bishop of the Vaudois; and this Stephen, with others officiating, conferred the vocation and ordination, upon the three Pastors, by the imposition of hands*†.

A century afterward, there were still Bishops in the Valdensian Church: for, in a Confession of Faith, presented in the year 1544 to Francis I. King of France, we find the following Article. *This point is held among us as firmly determined, that*

* See above, book iii. chap. 4.

† Gilly's Excurs. to Piedm. p. 74.

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between the Cottian Alps and the Adriatic Sea, we have the express testimony of Jerome: that, at the beginning of the fifth century, they were regularly organised under Bishops, and thence, of course, under a body of inferior Clergy also; though he laments, that those Bishops should have opposed themselves, to what *he* esteemed the orthodoxy of the age, and to what *they* esteemed its unscriptural and corrupt innovation.

At a later period, in the ninth century, they constituted a part of the provincial flock of the holy Claude, Archbishop or Metropolitan of Turin. Whence, from the known ordinary constitution of the Church, we may be morally sure, that, in

Testamento et in Novo, alium ordinem Pontifex tenet, alium Sacerdotes, alium Levitæ, alium Janitores, alium Ediliti? Hieron. adv. Jovinian. lib. ii. c. 15.

Does Jerome here speak of Porters and Churchwardens constituting two additional apostolic Orders?

Certainly, to depart from the divinely-appointed model by the entire rejection of Bishops, save only in a case of palpably overbearing necessity, would, I think, be unwarrantable and presumptuous and not improbably in the event dangerous. Yet, when the departure *had* occurred, I cannot, with some, undertake to say, that, in such circumstances, the transmission of the Apostolic Succession was an ecclesiastical impossibility. I would rather, until better informed, express myself as in the text. A transmission of the Apostolic Succession, by the simple imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, they themselves having previously received the imposition of hands, and so backward to the very beginning, is rather to be deemed *less regular* than roundly to be pronounced *invalid*.

*the Bishops and the Pastors ought to be irreprehensible in their doctrine and in their morals**.

Agreeably with these historical notices, the venerable Peyrani, when asked by Dr. Gilly in the year 1823, whether, in the Vaudois Church, there had not formerly been Bishops properly so called, readily answered: *Yes: and I should now be styled Bishop, for my office is virtually episcopal; but it would be absurd to retain the empty title, when we are too poor to support the dignity, and have little jurisdiction save that which is voluntarily submitted to among ourselves: the term Moderator is, therefore, now in use with us, as being more consistent with our humiliation*†.

II. The case of the Albigenes or Paulicians, which I next proceed to consider, is somewhat more difficult than that of the Vallenses: it shall, however, be fairly and distinctly exhibited.

While in Armenia, the Church of the Paulicians, as described by Peter Siculus, was evidently, so far as *form* is concerned, episcopal. Constantine acted as the first Bishop: Simeon was the second: and, after him, are enumerated many others in regular succession, among whom is specially mentioned the famous Sergius or Tychicus‡.

When the Paulicians in a body, or at least a considerable part of the Paulicians, migrated from

* Gilly's Excurs. to Piedm. p. 74.

† Gilly's Excurs. to Piedm. p. 73, 74.

‡ See above, book ii. chap. 1.

Asia into Europe, we still find them subsisting under an Episcopal Polity. In Bulgaria, they had an Archbishop or Patriarch : and, when they passed into Lombardy, we read of their Bishop named *Mark*, who first received his ordination from Bulgaria, but who is said to have afterward received a new ecclesiastical mission from Nicetas the Paulician Patriarch of Drugaria *.

Descending to the time of Reinerius, who during several years of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was one of their members, we find their form of Ecclesiastical Polity marked out very distinctly by that writer. Their Clergy consisted of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons : but the Order of Presbyters they divided into two classes, that of the seniors, and that of the juniors †.

All these are simple historical facts : but, when

* Vetust. Auctor. in Vignier. Hist. Eccles. in A. D. 1023. apud Usser. de Eccles. Success. c. viii. § 18.

† Ordines Catharorum sunt quatuor. Ille, qui est in primo et maximo ordine, vocatur *Episcopus*. Ille, qui in secundo, vocatur *Filius Major*. Qui in tertio, *Filius Minor*. Qui in quarto et ultimo, vocatur *Diaconus*. Cæteri, qui sunt sine ordine, vocantur *Christiani* et *Christianæ*. Officium Episcopi est, semper tenere prioratum in omnibus quæ faciunt, scilicet in impositione manus, in fractione panis, et in incipiendo orare : quæ quidem servant, Filius Major absente Episcopo, et Filius Minor absente Majore. Reiner. de hæret. c. vi. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 304.

Probably the junior Priests of the Cathari were simply coadjutors (as we should say) curates to their seniors.

where, pursuant to the fashion of the times, he had preached, what (according to Peter Siculus) afterward became a special abomination to the Paulicians, the superstitious worship of the Virgin and the Saints and the Cross.

Agreeably to the habits of that period, a Deacon, when returning from captivity, and when travelling homeward, would obviously, in his progress, resort to the houses, not so much of the Laity, as of the Bishops and Presbyters, bringing with him his letters of commendation or introduction *. Hence the natural presumption is, that Constantine was a Cleric and not a Laic.

With this presumption, both his subsequent conduct, and the ready acceptance of him by his numerous proselytes in the capacity of their Bishop or Ecclesiastical Governor, perfectly correspond. In the seventh century, lay-teaching, I should suppose, would be a thing unheard-of and unknown. The early heresies, commonly, perhaps universally, originated with speculative Clergymen : and, in this manner also, I apprehend, originated the so-called heresy of the Paulicians. Constantine himself, by his very language, seems to intimate as much. Shewing to his people the sacred volume which he had received from the Deacon, he exclaimed : *Ye are Macedonians ; I am Sylvanus, sent to you by Paul*. In these words,

* See Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. c. 22.

we come to the point of *apostolical succession*, we rest purely upon conjecture.

It is recorded, that the Church of the Paulicians originated with Constantine, a native of Armenia and an inhabitant of Mananalis.

This is all that we *positively* know, as to the ecclesiastical character of Constantine, the first Bishop of the Paulicians, and in their *separate* line the head or commencement of their succession. He may have been a Bishop, or he may have been a Presbyter, or he may simply have been a Layman. On the point of his ecclesiastical character, Peter Siculus is silent. Hence we can resort to nothing more than probabilities deduced from the facts which have been recorded.

The facts, then, and the probabilities, are the following.

Constantine, while residing at Mananalis, hospitably entertained a Deacon, who was returning home from his captivity in Syria : and, in consequence of his receiving from this Deacon the four Gospels and the fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, with which, though a Christian (such was the lamentable darkness of the age and country), he was previously unacquainted, he forthwith collected a Church out of his neighbours, many of whom had hitherto been Manicheans.

Now, so far as probability is concerned, I should gather from these facts, that Constantine was either the Bishop or the Presbyter of Mananalis :

we may suppose him, at once to open his commission, and to answer objections. *You ask me, how I come to preach so differently from my clerical brethren : you demand my authority for so doing. The reason is this. You are just as ignorant of the Gospel, as the Macedonians of old could be, before the saving knowledge of Christianity was carried to them by the ministration of Paul and Sylvanus. Now I have received light from the word of God himself ; from the four Gospels and from the Epistles of St. Paul, which I have unexpectedly obtained, and which I have diligently studied. Therefore, I no longer preach to you, as I have hitherto done, the superstitious veneration of the Saints and the Cross and the Virgin. But, a new Sylvanus, sent to you a new race of Macedonians, by Paul himself, whose Epistles I hold in my hand ; I now call upon you to turn from all such vanities to the pure worship of the living God through Christ the only Saviour and Mediator. Ye, brethren, have been blind, as well as myself : but, henceforth, the glorious light of the Gospel shall shine upon you.*

I am quite ready to allow, that this is conjecture, save only the recorded address of Constantine : *Ye are Macedonians ; I am Sylvanus, sent to you by Paul*. But it is a conjecture, which falls in with the history more naturally than any other supposition as to the anterior character sustained by Constantine.

III. After all, should what has been said be

unsatisfactory, I hesitate not, so far as the Vallenses and Albigenses are concerned, to refer the matter, under all existing circumstances, to the plain will and over-ruling providence of God.

Man, in all ordinary cases, is *bound*: God, in the course of his overpowering moral dispensations, no less than in his more palpable interpositions through the agency of miracles, is *free* *.

We know, that God himself bestowed the name

* On the supposition, that *The Albigenses and the Vallenses had, in their Communities, no Apostolical Succession, either less regular or altogether regular*; which supposition, however, is incapable of *evidential* establishment: I should say that we have *here* a case directly in point to the present statement.

From the Condition of the dominant Church, whether in the East or in the West, during the long and dreary period of the middle ages, it would have been impossible for any Society of serious and enlightened Christians, circumstanced as the supposition makes *them* to be circumstanced, to have obtained at least an *episcopal* transmission of the Succession: nay, so far as respects the French Valdenses, two attempts, as we have seen, were actually made, without success, to obtain the papal sanction and authority.

How, then, by the hypothesis, would such Communities be situated?

Inevitably, they must either remain within the awfully predicted Church of the Apostasy, and thence, under the soul-destructive guidance of the Man of Sin, partake of all its idolatrous and heretical abominations; in order that they may enjoy the privilege of an Apostolical Succession: or else they must relinquish the privilege of an Apostolical Succession; in order that they may worship God, in separate assemblies, with a pure and scriptural worship, unstained by the idolatrous and

of *Candlesticks* or *Churches* upon two Communion, which are described as prophesying in sackcloth against the paganising corruptions of the dominant Church throughout all the middle ages: we know, that the two Communion of the Vallenses and the Albigenses discharged this precise function during this precise period: and we further know, that it is vain to seek out any *other*

heretical abominations of the awfully predicted Church of the Apostasy.

This is the alternative: and which part of it is to be chosen by these seven thousand men, who resolve not to bow the knee to Baal?

Truly, unless I altogether mistake, the Spirit of God himself has answered the question: and has thus, still on the supposition now before us, decided in favour of the course taken by the two Communities of the Vallenses and the Albigenses.

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven: and God hath remembered her iniquities.

To such of the Lord's people as are within the mystical Babylon, the unconditional command, we see, is to COME OUT.

This command must, at all hazards, be obeyed: and, when weighed against the duty of implicit obedience, every ulterior ecclesiastical consequence, and every difficult and curious question which may be raised upon it, are but as dust in the balance.

Thus, even on an extreme supposition, which yet can never be verified, I should say, that the Vallenses and the Albigenses stand fully vindicated: and thence, even according to the course of God's providential dispensation, I should say, that they stand recognised by *himself* as two most amply commissioned Churches, whose office was to prophesy in sackcloth against the degenerate votaries of a new form of Paganism.

two visible Communion, which, during that precise period, discharged that precise function.

Such being the case, I cannot but think, that we have the very highest moral evidence as to the identity of those two Communion with the two Witnessing Churches of the Apocalypse. And, if this be admitted, who shall dare to refuse the name and character of Churches to two Communion, which God himself has declared to be Churches, however they originated, and however they were politic?