

CHAPTER IV.

RESPECTING THE OCCASIONAL DISCREPANCE OF
THE CHURCHES OF THE VALLENSES AND THE
ALBIGENSES FROM THE CHURCHES OF THE
REFORMATION.

No person I suppose, will imagine: that, in compliance with the captious and unreasonable demand of Bossuet, I should attempt to exhibit the Vallenses and the Albigenses, either as agreeing in all points great and small with the various Churches of the Reformation, or as holding opinions with which universally I can be expected to symbolise.

That some of these opinions are untenable, I readily admit: but, that they affect those primary essentials either of faith or of practice, which are indispensably necessary to the due accomplishment of our Lord's promises, I strenuously deny. The opinions, in question, involve no departure from the Gospel in any of its grand requisites: and they so naturally sprang up under the peculiar circumstances wherein the two persecuted

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Churches were placed, that they very readily may be excused and pardoned.

My meaning will be better understood by an adduction of instances.

I. The enormous corruption and determined profligacy of the Romish Priesthood, fully acknowledged and duly censured (as we have seen) by Atto of Vercelli, caused the Dissidents to feel: that it was a moral impossibility for them to receive any spiritual benefit from such instructors, with whom they too clearly saw that Christ was not spiritually present.

But they erred in carrying this feeling to the extent of maintaining, if indeed they ever really *did* maintain, the opinion: that *The efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon the personal holiness of the administrator.*

On the present point, it will be observed, I speak with considerable hesitation: for I can, in no wise, adopt the positive language of Bossuet respecting it*. That the Romanists make the efficacy of the Sacraments to depend upon the *intention* of the ministering Priest, I assuredly know: because the doctors of the Tridentine Council anathematise all who assert; that *in the administration of the Sacraments, the intention of the Priest, to do what the Church does, is not requisite*†. But I do not feel equally certain, on

* Hist. des Variat. livr. xi. § 93, 96.

† Si quis dixerit, in ministris, dum sacramenta conficiunt et

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the legitimate principle of adequate historical testimony, that the Vallenses, and their fraternal conreligionists the Albigenses, made the *personal holiness* of the administrator essential to the efficacy of the Sacraments administered.

Some speculation of this sort is, indeed, apparently laid to their charge by Reinerius and Pilichdorf; but their language is so loose, and misapprehension in regard to those who spared not the vices of the Romish Clergy was so easy, that I do not feel myself justified in adopting the confident assertion of Bossuet*.

In my doubts, moreover, I am greatly strengthened, when I recollect the positive disavowal of any such opinion on the part of the Dissidents, who, in the year 1176, were publicly examined at Lomers. This open disavowal is faithfully recorded by Roger Hoveden: and, though the Bishop of Meaux very prudently pretermits it, we may justly say that it is far too unambiguous to be rapidly set aside.

conferunt, non requiri intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit, Ecclesia: anathema sit. Concil. Trident. sess. vii. can. 11. p. 85.

* I subjoin the statements of Reinerius and Pilichdorf, that the reader may judge of their value in regard to evidence.

Quidam autem hoc dicunt tantum per bonos fieri: alii, per omnes qui verba consecrationis sciunt.—Dicunt, quod peccator sacerdos aliquem solvere aut ligare non possit, cum ipse sit ligatus peccator; et quod quilibet bonus et sciens laicus alium

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We believe: that he, who eats not the body of Christ, is not in a state of salvation; and that the body of Christ is not consecrated, save in the Church, and that it is not consecrated save by a Priest, whether good or bad; and that it is not more effectually consecrated by a good priest, than by a bad one.*

absolvere valeat et poenitentiam injungere. Reiner. juxta Coussord. cont. Vald. p. 126.

De sacramento Eucharistiae dicunt, quod sacerdotes in mortali non possint conficere.—De sacramento Poenitentiae dicunt, quod nullus possit absolvi a malo sacerdote; item quod bonus laicus potestatem habeat absolvendi;—item, quod confitendum sit potius bono laico, quem malo sacerdoti. Reiner de hæret. juxta Gretser. c. v. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 300.

Obloqueris etiam sacerdotibus Ecclesiae, dicens: Fornicarii sunt; usurarii sunt; tabernarii sunt; et alia multa vitia coniectas in eos. Respondeo: Quid ergo? Numquid ideo sacerdotes non sunt? Absit. Sicut autem bonitas hominis singularis non confert sacerdotium: sic ejus pravitas non auferit ipsum.—

Sed dicis, hæretice: Tamen dixit Christus ad discipulos; Accipite Spiritum Sanctum: quorum remisit peccata, remittuntur eis. Ergo sacerdos, qui Spiritum Sanctum non habet quando fornicarius est aut aliter criminosus, non potest absolvere. Respondeo: Etsi Presbyter criminosus charitatem non habet aut Spiritum Sanctum, ut homo singularis: nihilominus dignum est ejus sacerdotium, dignum est ejus ministerium, quoad sacramentorum efficaciam, etsi, quoad ministerium indignum.—Est ergo idem valor sacramentorum, dignitas, et nobilitas, sive a digno, sive indigno, Presbytero conferantur. Pilich. cont. Valdenses. c. xvi. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 316.

* Credimus: quia non salvatur, qui non manducat corpus

In the way of evidence, such an open confession is the more valuable and important, because it manifestly refers to this very allegation which they *knew* to be so frequently and so pertinaciously brought against them. As we receive the allegation, upon which Bossuet builds with so much confidence, purely from the determined and exasperated enemies of the Vallenses: so it may be useful yet additionally to remark, that not a vestige of the opinion attributed to them appears either in the *Noble Lesson*, or in the *Treatise on Antichrist*, or in the ancient *Catechism*, or in any one of the *Confessions* which have come under my own observation; though, what probably gave rise to such an attribution, we find, perhaps in all those Works, a warm reprobation of the vices and superstitions of the Popish Priests, and likewise a direct protestation against the favourite Romish Doctrine that the efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon their right sacerdotal administration *ex opere operato* as the notion is technically expressed.

The true Doctrine is that of the Church of England, which makes the spiritual efficacy of the Sacraments to depend upon the fitness or worthi-

Christi; et quod corpus Christi non consecratur, nisi in Ecclesia; et non nisi a sacerdote, sive bono sive malo; nec melius per bonum, quam per malum. Confess. Alb. apud Roger. Hoveden. Annal. par. poster. in A. D. 1176. fol. 319.

Order, they had introduced, among an unmarried Clergy, the most offensive luxury, the most undisguised debauchery, the most palpable secularity, and the most jealous and persecuting tyranny.

All this was reprehensible. But the Valdenses erred, in carrying their objection so far, as to deny the legality of *any* endowment of the Church: a notion, at once, absurd in itself, pregnant with the worst species of mischief, and involving a national profession of infidelity.

Its absurdity is evinced: both by its direct opposition, in the abstract, to God's *own* temporal arrangement of the Levitical Church, which never could have been instituted, had ecclesiastical endowments, *in themselves*, been an abomination; by its effective contrariety to the prophecy, that *Kings should be the nursing fathers of the Christian Church, and Queens its nursing mothers*; by its virtual denial, that they, who minister at the altar, should live by the altar; and by the moral impossibility (for an endowed Church is eminently the poor man's Church), that, in a quietly settled country, *any* unendowed Church could supply the spiritual wants of poverty-stricken and thinly-peopled rural districts, however it might be precariously and insultingly supported by the grudging and penurious and reluctant voluntary contributions (if I may combine together terms, contradictory in *speech*, but *not* contradictory in *practice*) of opulent and thickly-inhabited cities.

ness of the recipient*. And, as we may not obscurely gather, even from the blundering statement of Reinerius, that such also was the real Doctrine of the old Valdenses: so, in the long Confession of the Bohemian Brethren (who, according to Eneas Sylvius, adopted the Faith of the Valdenses, though they rejected the name), presented to King Ladislaus in the year 1508, we find that Doctrine distinctly stated and explicitly maintained†.

If, however, any of the Vallenses, at any time actually adopted the opinion, that *The beneficial efficacy of the Sacraments depends upon the personal holiness of the administrator*: I can only say, that they laboured under an error. At the same time, I would add: that such an error, (a venial one, after all, I trust) was an error, which, among the less educated of them, might easily spring up under the peculiar and very trying circumstances in which they were placed. As the inspired Preacher truly said: *Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad*.

II. The overgrown endowments of the Church, they perceived, had transmuted the Roman Pontiff and many of his Bishops into sovereign temporal Princes: while, throughout the whole

* Art. xxv.

† Reiner. de hæret. c. v. in Bibl. Patr. vol. xiii. p. 306. Bohem. Confess. A. D. 1508. art. xi. in Morland's Hist. of the Churches of Piedm. p. 52.

Its direct tendency to mischief of the worst kind is evinced: both by its general certainty of producing an ignorant and ill-educated Clergy, studiously selected from among the least intellectual members of a family, confined altogether to the inferior ranks of society, and by their habits unfitted to exercise any wholesome and legitimate influence over their flocks, who would be more likely to be blind leaders of the blind, than skilful dividers of the word and able defenders of the faith when attacked by heretics or infidels; and also by its totally depriving God's ministers of that fearless independence, by which with all freedom they may rebuke as well as exhort, and by which they may faithfully preach the Gospel, without, as respects poor weak humanity, the strong temptation to please the perverted humour of their dictatorial people, by handling the word of the Lord deceitfully, lest some governing children of Diotrephes should either tyrannically cashier them, or meanly starve both themselves and their families.

Its involution of a national profession of infidelity is evinced: by its actual basement upon the unhallowed principle, that nations, as such, ought to uphold no religion nationally, but that they ought impartially to view all modes of faith with philosophic indifference, deeming them alike equally false or equally true or equally unimportant; a principle, in the working of which, the

individual members of a nation may indeed peradventure be Christians, but the *nation itself* is assuredly of *no religion*, and thence neither recognises the authority nor looks for the support and blessing of the Deity.

1. Perhaps it may be asked : *If the system of Non-Endowment be condemned as practically inefficacious, how, then, did Christianity do, previous to its establishment as the religion of the Empire?*

Under the aspect of a *pervadence of the world both universal and complete*, the true point now under consideration, I readily answer : that *It did very ill*.

Its pervadence, agreeably to the eloquent declamation of Tertullian, was, no doubt, in some sort, *universal* : but, in the way of leavening the whole mass, it was not *complete* ; nor, under *such* circumstances, without a standing miracle, either could it or can it be *thus* complete. During the first ages, the chief spread of Christianity was in populous cities, or in commercial districts, or in regions where men were numerous congregated together. It might, indeed, as Pliny states, partially penetrate into the *villages and fields* of Asia Minor* : but, in the *rural* tracts, from the very necessity of things as they then stood, it made small progress. Accordingly, though Tertullian,

* Neque enim civitates tantum, sed vicos etiam atque agros, superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est. Plin. Epist. ad Trajan. lib. x.

now familiar superinduced sense of *Gentile Idolaters*, purely from the notorious circumstance, that the Pagans or Rustics held to their ancient idolatry long after the Gospel had, as Tertullian speaks, widely and generally pervaded the camp and the forum and the small trading islands and the crowded boroughs and the densely populated cities.

Now, as God, in his moral administration, usually works by second causes alone, it requires not the gift of prophecy to foretell : that the universal introduction of what now is called *The Voluntary System*, by turning the whole predication of the Gospel into a matter of individual buying and selling through the agency of which the poor must either personally pay the expense of a stated minister or go without him, would rapidly transmute the people of rural districts into a new race of *Pagani* ; or, at least, that that fate could only be avoided by the introduction of a spurious Christianity, wherein, through the ghostly terrors of delusive superstition, an artful Priesthood might extract, from the wretched Peasantry, the hard-earned product of their labour. Where the machinery of superstition or fanaticism is not employed, still the most honest and the most zealous Divine cannot (save when he possesses an independent private fortune, which is rarely the case with the Clergy) subsist without an extrinsic provision of food and raiment : and, though the

in one place of his *Apology*, describes the jealous *Pagans* as lamenting that Christians should be in the *fields* as well as in the castles and the islands* : yet *he himself*, even in his declamatory boast of universality, is totally and remarkably silent in regard to their spread among the *rustic* population of the Empire.

We sprang up but yesterday, says he : *and we have filled every place that belongs to you : cities, islands, castles, boroughs, places of general assembling, the very camp itself, tribes, decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum* †.

Why does not the orator include *the country* in his enumeration ? Clearly, because *the country* formed no part, or at least no considerable part, of his *every place*.

In fact, that the inhabitants of rural districts long remained idolaters after Christianity had penetrated into perhaps every town of the Empire, is abundantly clear from the very name of *Pagani* in its acquired or ecclesiastical sense. The word *Pagani* itself simply means *Villagers* or *Countrymen* or *Peasants* : and it acquired its

* Obsessam vociferantur civitates ; in agris, in castellis, in insulis, Christianos : omnem sexum, ætatem, conditionem, etiam dignitatem, transgredi ad hoc nomen, quasi detrimento, morient. Tertull. Apol. adv. Gent. Oper. p. 801.

† Hesterni sumus, et omnia vestra implevimus : urbes, insulas, castella, municipia, conciliabula, castra ipsa, tribus, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum. Tertull. Apol. Oper. p. 874.

promise of perpetuity, made by Christ to his Church, can never fail ; yet, if deprived of a regular standing ministry, which, by reason of an endowment, can offer the Gospel to the poor without money and without price, and which at the same time is ever ready to superintend their wants and to aid their distresses and to manage their little matters of business, Christianity, in rural districts, would rapidly become either totally extinct or altogether degenerate.

I mean not to say, that such would absolutely be the case in *every* rural district : because, occasionally, a truly devout proprietor might stand in the gap, and stay the moral pestilence. But such, or something similar, would, in the very way of cause and effect, be most *generally* the case.

As for the Vallenses, who fled to the alpine mountains to escape persecution, *they* will form no exception which can be universally reduced to a practical account. *They* were animated with all the vehement spirit of a small body under actual suffering : but no such spirit would pervade rural districts in general, if, without any individual persecution, a regular stated ministry were suddenly withdrawn ; and the result would be a speedy declension into something, which, to say the very least, would not be genuine Christianity.

2. It has sometimes been said : that, if ecclesiastical endowments were abolished, we should

be blessed with a much more spiritual Clergy ; because no one *then* would enter into the ministry, as a mere profession, or from consciously mercenary motives.

But this is a great delusion. It does not follow, that, what would cease to be a temptation to *some*, would cease to be a temptation to *all*. The Clergy might be lowered in rank by such an expedient : but it is not equally clear, that they would be raised in spirituality. To men of an inferior class, who had no prospect of legitimately elevating themselves in any other manner, an unendowed and unestablished Church would the more become a matter of artful and interested speculation simply because it *was* unendowed and unestablished. In that case, the cheap talent of a depraved and noisy oratory would, in the way of barter, be regularly brought to the oppidan market, mere grimace usurping the seat of genuine scriptural piety : and, while the prospect of turning the penny, by collecting large audiences in chapels let out for regular rents (which, of course, the slighted poor would be unable to pay), would be duly calculated by the ill-taught trader in his own lungs ; the thinly-peopled country, which, in the way of an income, would furnish nothing worth the speculatist's attention, would be turned over to the cheerless prospect of a resuscitated Paganism.

Meanwhile, in towns, which might penuriously

Christianity, to suit the ever-varying taste of the day, would be constantly present ; a temptation, which might indeed be resisted at the expence of starvation or of insolent dismissal ; but yet a temptation, which ought not deliberately and systematically to be *imposed* upon any who undertake the awful function of Ministers of Christ.

Nor is this all. On yet another account, nothing can be more idle than to say : that spiritual pastors, and none save spiritual pastors, would enter into the Priesthood of an unendowed Church. The taking of such a step does not altogether depend upon a young person's *own* choice, however both zealous and disinterested *he* may be. A *parent's* consent must be previously asked and obtained : and, with no prospect before him save that of *eleemosynary dependence* (for, of course, under a voluntary system, there can be no such being as an *independent* Divine, unless indeed he be a man of sufficient private fortune, and thence not relying for his bread upon the meagreness of lay liberality), a prudent father would be very apt, to withhold his consent, and to refuse to his son the expensiveness of an education necessary to qualify him for becoming a competent religious instructor of others ; unless, indeed, the voluntary system

tion, upon whom the ends of the world are come ! Here, even while the living authority of an Apostle subsisted, we behold, painted to the life, the genuine workings of coarse tyrannical Voluntarism !

purchase the services of those who might wish to sell them, what would be the inevitable operation of such a system ? The fancied more spiritual ministers, who had confidently pushed themselves forward into publicity, while modest worth sensitively shrank into the background, *must* please the humour of their wayward and tyrannical congregations, or *must* lose their bread : the *legitimate* evangelical places of the teachers and the taught would be exactly *inverted* : the diotrophic lovers of preëminence, like their recorded predecessors when the infant and persecuted Church was *compelled* to depend upon voluntary contributions, would readily, when their slightest whim was thwarted, treat the successors of St. John, as their spiritual forefathers treated the holy Apostle himself * : and thus a temptation of faithlessly adulterating the Gospel, as the Gospel has evidentially been delivered down from the times of Primitive

* How vivid is St. John's picture of a Church, which, during the rampancy of Paganism, could not subsist otherwise than on what, in modern nomenclature, is called the Voluntary Principle.

I wrote unto the Church : but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preëminence among them, RECEIVETH US NOT. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words : and, not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and CASTETH THEM OUT OF THE CHURCH. 3 John 9, 10.

Well may we say, that Scripture is written for our admoui-

contemplates the existence of a Clergy, who may either dispense entirely with all theological attainments, or who, somewhat incomprehensibly, are theologians by instinct, and thence require not any preparatory education. Yet, if Tertullian could say, that *Men are made Christians, not born Christians* : we may perhaps say, with equal truth, that *Men are made Theologians, not born Theologians* *.

3. But sometimes another ground also is taken by the modern admirer of the voluntary scheme : and then it is urged ; that, in all trades, wants create their own level ; and that the demand will always produce the requisite supply.

Now he, who thus coarsely argues, must needs be ignorant of that very condition of man, upon which the Gospel is specially founded. Fallen man acutely perceives, when his *bodily* frame is disordered, or when the security of his *property* is endangered : hence the demand for physicians and for lawyers will always ensure a full supply of those very necessary and important individuals. But the precise spiritual disorder of fallen man, the precise actual insecurity of his *alienated condition*, is an insensibility to his true state and a thorough hatred of the divine remedy prescribed : hence, the greater the necessity of *religious* ame-

* *De vestris fuimus : fiunt, non nascuntur, Christiani. Tertull. Apol. Oper. p. 844.*

<div>588</div> <div>THE VALLENSIS [BOOK IV.</div> <div><p>loration and <i>religious</i> security, the less will be the demand for it; and, consequently, where it is most of all required, as either by literal Pagans or virtual Pagans, there will be no demand for it whatsoever. In our lapsed state, in short, religion must be brought home even to our doors: for an indifference to, or a dislike of, the true remedy, is inherent in the very nature of our disease; or rather, we may well say, constitutes the very disease itself.</p><p>Nay, such is the absurdity of the present speculation, I may add: that, on the voluntary principle, various cases may easily be supposed to occur, where there might really be an honest demand associated with the moral impossibility of such demand producing any adequate supply. A rural district, seeing the benefit of oppidan Christianity even as degraded by the whims and humours of tyrannical democratic intervention, sincerely wish for a Cleric whose business it shall be to go in and out among them as one that devotes himself to the care of their souls. On the voluntary scheme, how is the demand <i>here</i> to produce the supply? The Clergy, no more than the Laity, can subsist upon air: neither, like the Israelites in the wilderness, do they enjoy the miraculous privilege, that, through forty long years of ministerial labour, their clothes should not wax old upon them, nor their shoes wax old upon their feet. Hence, the <i>demand</i> may be made:</p></div>	<div>CHAP. IV.] AND ALBIGENSIS. 589</div> <div><p>but poverty, on <i>both</i> sides, forbids the <i>supply</i>. Of the poor man, more especially of the poor man in the country, the peculiar proprietary Church is, specially and solely, the regularly endowed and parochially established Church. Let such a Church be swept away by the simulated friends of the poor: and, in the very way of cause and effect, those friends shew their friendship, by tearing remorselessly from them the bread of life, and by dashing unrelentingly from their lips the cup of salvation. Justly may we say, that like the Jews of old, <i>they please not God, and are contrary to all men</i> *.</p><p>III. There is yet another error of the old Vallesens and Albigenses, which, before the subject be dismissed, may very briefly be noted.</p><p>Profane swearing of the most offensive description, such as detestable colloquial oaths by God's teeth or by God's blood or by God's wounds or by the sacramental Pix and Ousel, prevailed, they well knew, to an awful extent, among the adherents of the Papacy: while yet no person, on that account, thought the worse of these daring blasphemers. <i>Those, who will curse and lye and swear</i>, says the ancient author of the Noble Lesson, <i>are said and reckoned to be good and loyal men</i>.</p><p>This the Vallesens and Albigenses justly abhorred. But, when, by a misinterpretation of our</p></div> <div><p>* 1 Thessal. ii. 15.</p></div>
<div>590 THE VALLENSIS AND ALBIGENSIS. [BOOK IV.</div> <div><p>Lord's precept, they deemed <i>all</i> oaths, even though taken in the fear of God and for the promotion of truth before the lawful authorities, to be utterly prohibited; and when they thence proceeded to the conclusion, that every oath of every description was to be utterly rejected by a christian man; then, however innocently, they erred.</p><p>Yet, surely, these errors, much as we may wonder that, with honest and good men of such generally sound judgment, they should have prevailed (if, indeed, they all <i>did</i> prevail), affect not the grand essentials of either faith or practice: for even the worst of them, that, which, by asserting what is now called the <i>Voluntary Principle</i>, at once undermines religion and unchristianises every nation (<i>as a nation</i>) which adopts it, might be held without, on the part of those who held it, any consideration or perception of its <i>true</i> character and consequences; and I need scarcely say, that the error, as maintained in simplicity of heart, differs widely from the same error, as entertained to serve the purposes of faction, or as inculcated in the spirit of envy and hatred and malice and all uncharitableness, the very spirit, in short, of the opposing Antichrist.</p><p>On the whole, therefore, we may safely and reasonably view the old Vallesens and Albigenses, notwithstanding such minor errors, as the appointed channel in which Christ's promises to his sincere Church were destined to be fulfilled.</p></div>	