THE DIALOGUE ON MIRACLES

Monk.—They were taken outside the town, and were together put into the fire near the Jewish cemetery. After the flames had taken strong hold of them, in the sight and hearing of a great crowd, Arnold placed his hand on the heads of his dying disciples, and exhorted them: "Stand fast in your faith, for this day you shall be with Laurence," and yet they were very far from the faith of Laurence. There was a maiden among them, beautiful though a heretic, and she was drawn from the fire by the compassion of some who promised that they would provide her with a husband, or if it seemed better, would place her in a nunnery. She consented to this in words, but when the heretics were now dead, she said to those who had charge of her: "Tell me, where does that seducer lie?" and when they pointed out to her where Master Arnold lay, she slipped from their hands, veiled her face with her robe, and threw herself upon the body of the dead man, and with him went down to burn for ever in hell.

CHAPTER XX.

Of the Waldensian heresy in the city of Metz.

A few years ago, under the learned bishop Bertram, the Waldensian heresy sprang up in the city of Metz in the following way. On a certain feast the bishop was preaching to the people in the cathedral, when he saw two of the devil's servants standing in the crowd and cried: "I see the devil's messengers among you. See, there are the men," pointing to them with his finger, "who in my presence were condemned at Montpellier and cast out of the city for their heresies." They replied bodily to the bishop, and they had in their company a scholar, who barked at him like a dog attacking him with every kind of insult. When they left the church, they gathered a crowd round them, and preached their errors to them. Some of the clerks present said to them: "Sirs, does not the Apostle say, How shall they preach, except they be sent (Rom. x. 15)? We should like to know who sent you hither to preach," and they replied: "The Holy Spirit." Now the bishop was unable to use force against them, owing to certain powerful citizens, who befriended them in hatred of the bishop, because he had expelled from the church a certain dead usurer, their relative. In truth they had been sent out by the spirit of error, and by their preaching the Waldensian heresy was planted in that city, and to this day is not wholly extinguished.

Novice.—Alas! that there should be even to-day so many heresies in the church.

Monk.—They are the fruit of the fury and malice of the devil.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the heresy of the Albigenses.

In the time of pope Innocent, the predecessor of the present pope, Honorius, during the strife between Philip and Otto, the rival kings of the Romans, the envy of the devil caused the Albigensian heresy to sprout forth, or to speak more strictly, to ripen. So great was its strength, that all the wheat of the faith of that nation seemed changed into the tares of error. Abbots of our Order with certain bishops were despatched to root up the tares with the harrow of Catholic teaching; but by the resistance of the enemy who had sown those tares, they had little success.

Novice.—What was their error?

Monk.—Their leaders had collected some points from the Manichaean dogma, and some of the errors which Origen is said to have written against Periarchon, and very many which they had fashioned out of their own heads. They
follow Manichaeus in believing that there are two sources of life, a good God and a wicked God, i.e. the devil; and they say that the wicked God created all bodies, and the good God all souls.

Novice.—Moses makes it certain that God created both soul and body, when he says: *The Lord God formed man, i.e. the body, of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* (Gen. ii. 7), i.e. the soul.

Monk.—If they received Moses and the prophets, there would be no heretics. They deny the resurrection of the body; they mock at any benefit coming to the dead from the living; they say that there is no profit in going to church, or in praying there; and in these things they are worse than Jews or Pagans, who believe them all. They have repudiated baptism, and blaspheme the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Novice.—Why do they endure such severe persecutions from the faithful, if they expect no recompense for them in the future?

Monk.—They say that they look forward to the glory of the spirit. One of the aforesaid abbots, who was a monk, seeing a certain knight sitting on a horse and talking to his ploughman, and thinking him to be a heretic, as indeed he was, drew near to him and asked: "Will you tell me, good Sir, whose field this is?" and when the other answered that it was his, he continued: "And what do you do with its fruits?" "Both my family," he said, "and I live upon them, and I bestow some part of them upon the poor." When the monk went on: "What advantage do you hope to gain from such alms?" the knight made this reply: "That my spirit may walk in glory after death." The monk asked, "Where will it go?" and the knight said: "In accordance with its merit. If it has lived a good life, and won this reward from God, it will, when it leaves my body, enter into that of some future Prince or king, or of some other illustrious personage, in which it will find happiness; or if it has lived ill, it will enter the body of someone both poor and wretched, in which it will find suffering." The fool believed, as the other Albigenses do, that, in accordance with its merit, the soul will pass through different bodies, even those of animals and reptiles.

Novice.—What a foul heresy!

Monk.—The errors of the Albigenses spread to such an extent that in a short time it had infected more than a thousand towns, and if it had not been cut back by the swords of the faithful, I think it would have corrupted the whole of Europe. In the year of our Lord 1210, a crusade was preached against the Albigenses throughout Germany and France, and in the following year there arose against them from Germany, Leopold, Duke of Austria, Engelbert, then provost, and afterwards archbishop of Cologne, and his brother Adolphus, Count of Altenberg, William, Count of Julich, and many others of all ranks and dignities. The same thing took place in France, Normandy and Poitou; and the preacher and leader of them all was Arnold, abbot of Citeaux, afterwards bishop of Narbonne.

When they came to the great city of Beziers; which is said to have contained more than a hundred thousand men, they laid siege to it; and in the sight of them all the heretics defied in an unspeakable manner the book of the sacred gospel, and then cast it from the wall towards the Christians, and sending arrows after it, cried: "There is your law, miserable wretches!" But Christ, the author of the gospel, did not suffer such an insult to be hurled at Him unavenged. For some of His followers, burning with zeal for the faith, placed ladders against the wall, and like lions, after the example of those of whom we read in the book of the Macca-bees (2 Macc. xxi. 11), fearlessly climbed the walls, and while the heretics were stricken with panic from on high and fled, they opened the gates to the others, and so gained possession of the city.

When they discovered, from the admissions of some of them, that there were Catholics mingled with the heretics, they said to the abbot, "Sir, what shall we do, for we cannot distinguish between the faithful and the heretics." The abbot, like the others, was afraid that many, in fear of death, would pretend to be Catholics, and after their departure, would return to their heresy, and is said to have replied:
THE DIALOGUE ON MIRACLES

"Kill them all; for the Lord knoweth them that are His (2 Tim. ii. 19)" and so countless numbers in that town were slain.

By the Divine favour, they also gained possession of another large town, near Toulouse, called The Beautiful Valley, from its position. When the people there were examined, and all the rest had professed themselves willing to return to the faith, there remained four hundred and fifty, whom the devil hardened in their obstinacy; and of these four hundred were burnt at the stake, and the others hanged on the gallows. The same thing took place in the other cities and forts, the wretched folk often giving themselves up to death of their own accord. When the people of Toulouse were brought into the same straits, they promised all submission, but not honestly as was afterwards clear. For the treacherous count of S. Egidius, the prince and leader of all the heretics, after surrendering all his property in the Lateran Council, to wit, his lands and farms, his towns and castles, and after most of them had been occupied by right of war by the good Catholic, Simon de Montfort, betook himself to Toulouse, from which city he still harasses and attacks the faithful even to this day.

It was only this year that Dom Conrad, cardinal bishop of Porto, who was sent as legate against the Albigensians, wrote to the chapter of Citeaux that one of the Toulouse nobles had perpetrated so horrible a crime in hatred of Christ and in an attempt to bring confusion upon our faith, that it ought assuredly to anger even the very enemies of Christ themselves. He had committed an abominable and disgusting outrage by the high altar of the cathedral, and others, heaping madness upon madness, insulted the Crucifix upon the altar with indescribable villainy; and after this they dragged down the sacred image itself, and cut off the arms, showing themselves far worse than the soldiers of Herod, who spared the dead Saviour, and would not break His legs.

Novice.—Who would not stand stupefied before the amazing patience of God!

Monk.—For the Lord is long suffering, but He will in no wise let thee go (Ecclus v. 4). He, who punished so terribly in the neck and throat the people of Damietta, because after their victory they had tied a rope round the neck of a crucifix and dragged it through the streets, will by no means clear such blasphemers as these. Before the hosts of the Lord came against the Albigenses, as we have related above, they had invited Miralimomelitus, the king of Morocco, to come to their help; and he crossed over from Africa into Spain with so incredible a host that he looked to overrun the whole of Europe. He even sent a message to pope Innocent that he intended to stable his horses in the portico of St. Peter's, and to plant his standard on the church. This indeed was partly carried out, though not at all in the way he had intended. For because God abases the proud, at that very time, in the year of grace 1212, on the 16th day of July, 40,000 fighting men of his army were slain; while he himself fled to Seville, and died there of grief. His principal standard was captured in the fight, and sent to Innocent, who set it up in St. Peter's to the glory of Christ.

Let this be enough about the Albigenses.

Novice.—If there had been learned men among these heretics, perhaps they would not have strayed so far.

Monk.—When learned men begin to fall into error, they are driven by the devil to display even greater and more grievous folly than the illiterate.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of the heretics burned at Paris.

At the same time as this outbreak of the Albigensian heresy, it happened in the city of Paris, which is the fountain of all knowledge and the well of the Holy Scriptures, that the persuasion of the devil instilled a strange perversity of intellect into several learned men. These were their names: Master William of Poitou, a subdeacon who had read the classics in Paris and had studied theology there for three