

But should any one object to this explanation, there is another which I would offer. The "leaders" may be regarded as ministers, on which supposition Art. ii. declares that to the Presbytery or Synod belonged the right to determine, with certain limitations, what minister should be settled in a particular congregation. Leger tells us, as we shall afterwards have occasion to mention, that such was the prerogative of the Presbytery, or Synod. It cannot be denied that ministers may fitly be called "leaders;" and, all things considered, this latter explanation appears to me the correct one; yet it is one from which Prelacy receives no countenance.

I would farther call attention to the fact that according to Art. ii., to the pastors in their Presbyterian capacity, as associated with ruling elders, belonged the right of determining who should be received into their number, the entire preliminary examinations of candidates for the ministry being conducted by them, and no saving clause being inserted in the "Discipline," to the effect that to the bishop pertained the prerogative of conferring "holy orders." Even if Episcopalians could prove that in the ancient Vaudois church the Moderator alone imposed hands in the ordination of candidates for the ministry, which, possibly, was the case, still it would not follow that he did so as a Prelate, or that he acted in any other capacity than as the organ of a constituted court.

Observe, also, how clearly the parity of the ministers of the word is set forth in Art. ii., "He that is last received," &c. How distinctly, also, is the office of the ruling elder recognized in the extracts we have made! We may add, that the yearly Synod, called in the "Book of Discipline" "the General Council," was a customary among the Waldenses as among ourselves. In the month of September each year, as we learn from Leger, the pastors and the deputed ruling elders met to treat of their ecclesiastical affairs. Certainly the bishop is kept grievously in the shade, so far as the "Book of Discipline" is concerned, and we do not wonder that Ackland is forced to say, inconsistently with some of his own positions:—"The Synod presided over by the Moderator, has *always* possessed the chief authority in the Waldensian church. It was composed as at present, of all the pastors, and a portion of elders deputed by the people."

We have thus, with the design of determining the question touching the church government of the Waldenses in remote times, carefully scrutinized all those ancient writings which seem to have a bearing on the subject; and the result of our investigation is this, that while in the Vaudois church, there were pastors or parochial bishops equal among themselves, and ruling elders who were associated with the pastors in government, there are no traces of the existence of a diocesan bishop. We might still further fortify our position by mentioning the fact that although we have lists of many of the most eminent ministers who flourished among the Waldenses in distant times, yet we never find one of these honoured men characterized as having held the office of a prelate. How strange, that while humble pastors are held in remembrance, no list of bishops has been preserved; nay, that not one is noted as having enjoyed the distinction of wearing the mitre!

Corroboration of our opinion might also be derived from a critical inspection of certain documents which throw light upon the tenets of the Bohemian Waldenses, who harmonized, to a great extent, with the genuine Vaudois of Piedmont; but my limits forbid such an extended survey.

A brief summary of the conclusions at which we have arrived in reference to the constitution of the Vaudois church I would now offer; although it will be impossible for me to present all the evidence necessary to prove the correctness of these conclusions.

1. In the Vaudois church the mere pastor had no superior; all the pastors were of equal official authority.
2. Ruling elders were united with the pastors in the government of the church.
3. Deacons, to attend to the poor and the temporalities of the church were, when required, appointed, just as in modern Presbyterian churches.
4. Colloquies, or meetings of Presbytery, were held twice a month in different parts of the valleys.