

WERE THE ALBIGENSES AND WALDENSES FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION?

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Do not think, brethren, that heresies can be produced by a few small souls. Only great men have created heresies.

St. Augustine ¹

When a religious movement comes into existence it tends to consider itself as an autochthonous phenomenon. Obviously, every reform movement has elements of newness and originality.

Martin Luther was not, at first, concerned about spiritual ancestors: "We have come to this point without guide and without a Bohemian doctor." ² Likewise, in Geneva, Théodore de Bèze stated that Calvin came "when God had appointed the time." ³ Calvin himself, when asked by Charles V how a Reformation came about, remarked that man cannot bring about a Reformation. When a church is spiritually dead it must be resurrected, and only God has the means to bring this about. The Reformers did not need to seek their origins, since, as was stated by St. Ignatius when he spoke of the orthodox Christians of his time, they have their being rooted in the Gospel. ⁴ Similarly, Beausobre wrote that there was no

¹ "Non enim putatis, fratres, quia potuerunt fieri haereses per aliquas parvas animas. Non fecerunt haereses, nisi magni homines." *Enn. in Psalm* (Ps 124: 5), *MPL*, XXXVII, col. 1652.

² Félix Kuhn, *Luther, sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris, 1883-1884), I, 393.

³ Théodore de Bèze, *Histoire des églises réformées au royaume de France* (Paris, 1883-1889), I, 1, 247. The authorship is in doubt. It was attributed to de Bèze by de Thou and Croix de Maine. In the ed. of 1889 (Baum, Cunitz and Reuss) the arguments for and against de Bèze's authorship were examined, *Hist. écl.*, III, XXI-XLIII. A more recent appraisal is by Paul-F. Geisendorf, *Théodore de Bèze* (Genève, 1949), pp. 340-345.

⁴ Alfred Rébelliau, *Bossuet, historien du protestantisme. Étude sur*

need to seek for spiritual ancestors to the Reformation.⁵

After the newness subsides, a time of critical examination leads to the conviction that there were other movements which, before their time, had attempted church reforms.⁶ There are several approaches to such an analysis. On one hand is the notion of the invisible church, which had to go underground until it gloriously reappeared in the 16th century. Another concept is that of the unbroken continuity of "truth" which, through an unmistakable link, goes back to the inception of Christianity.⁷

The relationship between Medieval sects and the Reformation is not of mere academic interest. The seeking for ancestors became a live issue and was ardently debated by historians. It became an object of numerous debates, especially in Huguenot synods.

Church history moved into the debate. Luther himself was portrayed as a church historian.⁸ While Schäfer and Jürgens

l'histoire des variations et sur la controverse au dix-septième siècle (Paris, 1909), p. 532. The quotation is from J. Lenfant, *Préservatif contre la réunion avec le siège de Rome, ou apologie de notre séparation d'avec ce siège, contre le livre de Mlle de B(eaumont)* (Amsterdam, 1723), I, 7. Another essay by Lenfant, *Le dernier siècle ou la fin du monde vers l'an 2000, d'après la prophétie des pontifs romains de saint Malachie* (Bordeaux, n.d.).

⁵ Isaac de Beausobre, *Histoire critique du Manichéisme* (Amsterdam, 1734-1739), pp. 37 ff.

⁶ Jean Carbonnier, "De l'idée que le protestantisme s'est faite de ses rapports avec le Catharisme, ou des adoptions d'ancêtres en histoire," *BSHPF*, CI (1955), 72-87.

⁷ J. Basnage, *Histoire de la religion des églises réformées . . . pour servir de réponse à l'histoire des variations des églises protestantes par M. Bossuet* (Rotterdam, 1721), I, 15 ff. Basnage stated that Albigenses and Waldenses were considered by Protestants as forerunners and as having relayed the truth to them. P. Bayle, *Critique générale de l'histoire du Calvinisme de M. de Maimbourg* (Villefranche, 1682), p. XI.; *Nouvelles lettres de M. Bayle, où, en justifiant quelques endroits de la "Critique" qui ont semblé contenir des contradictions . . .* (Amsterdam, 1715).

⁸ Ernst J. Schäfer, *Luther als Kirchenhistoriker* (Gütersloh, 1807); K. Jürgens, *Luther von seiner Geburt bis zum Ablassstreit* (Leipzig, 1846-1847).

history and dogma far too little to be able to evaluate it critically.⁹ Moreover, Luther was, like his contemporaries, much influenced by legends and local rumors.

I.

such as Harnack, were not so sure; Luther knew church use of the past, especially at the Leipzig debate (1519), others, described Luther as a church historian who had made adroit

Among the various heterodox sects that opposed Rome in the 13th century the most important were the Albigenses and Waldenses in southwest France, mostly in the area later called Languedoc.¹⁰

The Albigensian Cathari are very much in vogue today. In the last 25 years an impressive amount of documents has been found and numerous essays are being published.¹¹ The Albigenses also have a strong popular appeal. At a rapid pace, documents continue to appear which hopefully should shed new light on the enigma of Catharism.¹² Once again the question of a relationship between Albigenses and Prot-

⁹ Ad. Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Freiburg i. B., 1894-1897), III, 734. Harnack admitted that Luther knew much church history but not more than his age. L. von Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Leipzig, 1875), II, 60. Luther regretted not to have read history more: "Wie leid ist es mir itzt dass ich nicht mehr Poeten und Historien gelesen habe. Habe dafür müssen lesen des Teufels Dreck, die Philosophos." *Luther's Werke* (Erlangen), XXII, 191 ff. Schäfer, *op. cit.*, p. 10, n; pp. 24-69.

¹⁰ The term Languedoc was first used ca. 1285 when the parliament of Toulouse was the "Parlement de langue de oc." Cf. Dom C. Devic and J. Vaissette, *Histoire générale de Languedoc* (Toulouse, 1872-1893), IX, 33; X, 29. On the geographical term, see L. de Lacger, "L'Albigeois pendant la crise de l'Albigéisme," *RHE*, XXIX (1933), 272-315, 849-904; E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Histoire du Languedoc* (Paris, 1962), p. 29.

¹¹ D. Walther, "A Survey of Recent Research on the Albigensian Cathari," *CH*, XXXIV (1965), 146-177. To the works listed should now be added, E. Delaruelle, "Les Avatars du Catharisme du XIVE au XXe siècle," *Archeologia*, 1967, pp. 34-41.

¹² M. De La Vallette, *Parallèle de l'hérésie des Albigeois et de celles du Calvinisme, dans lequel on fait voir que Louis le Grand n'a rien fait qui n'eust été pratiqué par St. Louis* (Paris, 1686).

estants is reappraised.¹³ Essays of sagacious erudition endeavor to clarify the difficult riddle which is far from solved. More information is needed on the following topics: (1) The origins of Catharism. Henri-Charles Puech of the College of France has clearly summed up the question in "Catharisme médiéval et Bogomilisme."¹⁴ (2) Religion. The question is not merely whether the Cathari were dualists but to what degree. One of the best essays on the problem has been produced by Söderberg.¹⁵ (3) The political situation. "Occitania," part of which was later called Languedoc, was at the time independent of the Capetian kings of France, who undertook to appropriate it by the sword of Simon de Montfort.¹⁶ (4) Albigensianism's coincidence with courtly love. This is a subject which has not been sufficiently elucidated as to the relationship of the troubadours and Catharism. A French specialist has again examined this problem.¹⁷

In order to establish a link between medieval sects and the Reformation, some experts have used the geographic method. A specific area where medieval heresies flourished may have had a predisposition to heretical behavior. Protestantism made impressive gains indeed in Toulouse, a stronghold of Albigensianism. In 1562 at least 20,000 Protestants were reported in that city where, already in 1532, Jean de Cahors was burned alive and, *in extremis*, remembered the

¹³ The most recent essay is by Chr. Thouzellier, *Catharisme et Valdésisme en Languedoc à la fin du XIIe et au début du XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1966).

¹⁴ Henri-Ch. Puech, "Catharisme médiéval et Bogomilisme," *Accademia nazionale dei lincei: XII convegno* (Roma, 1957), pp. 56-84.

¹⁵ Hans Söderberg, *La religion des Cathares. Étude sur le gnosticisme de la basse antiquité et du moyen-âge* (Uppsala, 1949).

¹⁶ Jacques Madaule, *Le drame albigeois et le destin français* (Paris, 1961).

¹⁷ René Nelli, *L'érotique des troubadours* (Toulouse, 1963), pp. 221-246. Also R. H. Gere, *The Troubadours, Heresy and the Albigensian Crusade* (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation No. 15628; New York, 1956). A microfilmed copy of this thesis is in the James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Albigenses.¹⁸ Jean Carbonnier used *Le manifeste des Camisards* (1703) to find the "true reasons why the people of the Cévennes have taken up arms."¹⁹ He argued that those who lived in the Cévennes were said to have held to the same religion for several centuries before the Reformation. There had been numerous Waldenses and Albigenses in that area, and the Reformation message prospered there without much difficulty. It was not a new religion that came there in the 16th century; "their aim was merely to maintain the old one which was theirs for a long time."

Then there is the social aspect of the movement. The Albigenian country was largely "Occitania" with "heretical" centers like Toulouse, Albi, Pamiers, Carcassonne, Béziers, Razès, Foix, Lavaur, etc. The people of this area were largely weavers.²⁰ Weaving was the heretics' industry *par excellence*. The workshops were laboratories of heterodox propaganda, "opera textoria." It was said that "heresy was the daughter of wool." Recently the social aspects of the Albigenses have been examined again. Social conditions among the *Perfecti* and the believers (*Credentes*) were studied by E. Delaruelle, Jean Duvernoy, and Chr. Thouzellier.²¹ There is still much uncertainty as to an Albigenian social *milieu*.²² Whether

¹⁸ Eug. and E. Haag, *La France protestante, ou les vies de protestants français* (Paris, 1846-1859), IV, 61-62. On Calvinism in Carcassonne, see Nelli, *Spiritualité de l'hérésie* (Paris, 1953).

¹⁹ *Les raisons véritables des habitants des Sévennes sur leur prise d'armes* (MS Court 35, Public University Library in Geneva), Gaston Tournier, ed., *Au pays des Camisards* (Paris, 1931), p. 269; Carbonnier, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

²⁰ Le Roy Ladurie, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²¹ Delaruelle, "Le Catharisme en Languedoc vers 1200. Une enquête." *Annales du Midi*, LXXII (Toulouse, 1960), 149-167. Thouzellier, "La pauvreté, arme contre l'Albigéisme, en 1206," *RHR*, LXVI (1957), 79-92; Jean Duvernoy, "Les Albigeois dans la vie sociale et économique de leur temps," *Annales de l'Institut d'études occitanes* (Toulouse, 1964), pp. 64-72.

²² A comprehensive summary of the social and economic aspects is in Herbert Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (Hildesheim, 1961), pp. 157-170, 519-523. See also Grundmann, *Ketzer-geschichte des Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1963), pp. 22-34; Gottfried

there was an Albigensian community or merely an esoteric underground has not been established.

The question why Languedoc was such a fertile ground for heterodox movements is often asked. It was argued that Languedoc had not, like some other areas of France, undergone monastic reforms, and thus a spiritual vacuum where alien ideas penetrated easily could result. Also, the clergy did not properly ply its ministry. The preachers were considered as "mute dogs who do not even know how to bark," by Innocent III, who wanted action, especially an "opus evangelistae."²³ The Pope wrote that some preachers did not even dare to assume the office of preaching. Since the neo-Manichaean heresy of the 13th century had a large popular following in southwest France as well as among the nobility, it should not be too surprising that Protestantism should be successful in the same area, according to a law of permanence in dissident behavior.

Another argument was that the Albigenses had not been completely extinguished in spite of the Albigensian Crusade, the destruction of Béziers, and the massacre at Montségur in 1244. The remnants of Catharism went into hiding. The flame of "truth" was kept alive in secrecy. In 1494, "multitudes" of Albigenses were reported in the Vivarais, Auvergne, and Burgundy, according to the anonymous author of the *Toulousaines*;²⁴ but by and large, the Albigenses were no

Koch, *Frauenfrage und Ketzertum im Mittelalter. Die Frauenfrage im Rahmen des Katharismus und des Waldensertums* (Berlin, 1962).

²³ Innocent III wanted the preachers to close the mouths of ignorant people; see his "Regestorum Lib.," VII, 1204, in *MPL*, CCXV, col. 359. Preachers did not "dare assume the office of preaching" (17 Nov. 1206), *MPL*, CCXV, col. 1024. Cf. also A. C. Shannon, *The Popes and Heresy in the Thirteenth Century* (Villanova, Pa., 1949). Concerning the illiteracy of Albigenses and Waldenses, referred to as *rusticani*, *idiotae*, etc., see Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermo LXV," *MPL*, CLXXXIII, col. 1093; "Sermo LXVI," *ibid.*, col. 1094; Grundmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 ff.

²⁴ *Les Toulousaines ou lettres historiques et apologétiques. En faveur de la religion réformée, et de divers protestans condamnés dans ces derniers tems par le Parlement de Toulouse ou dans le Haut Languedoc*

longer a threat to the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. Most of the leaders and ruling protectors had disappeared after the massacre at Montségur. True, there was a remnant of Albigenses in Pamiers according to a recently published text, the *Registre d'inquisition*.²⁵

Theologically, the debate over the relationship between Albigenses and Protestants was of some interest. Catholic historians often made light of the Protestant obsession to seek theological ancestors and to go "as far as Ethiopia" in order to do so.²⁶ Protestants tended to see in the Albigensian episode one aspect of a continuing true church. Obviously Albigensian doctrines were basically unacceptable. Catholics were not displeased that Protestants would consider the "depraved" neo-Manichaean dualists of the 13th century as their spiritual ancestors.

As soon as Luther's "immundus ille" appeared, the *Catalogus haereticorum omnium* by Bernhard of Luxemburg linked Luther with dualistic heresies and also with the Waldenses.²⁷ Similarly, Baronius accused Protestants of following and adopting medieval heresies.²⁸ In the 16th century there (Edimbourg, 1763), pp. 87, 88. The orthodox priests were urged to teach the Lord's prayer and the salutation to the Virgin, but prohibited "to grant Paradise too cheaply; they were reproached that they opened heaven for too little money," *ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁵ *Le registre d'inquisition de Jacques Fournier, 1318-1325*, J. Duvernoy, ed. (Toulouse, 1965-66). Cf. a review on this in *CH*, XXXV (1966), 466, 467. Fragments of this document, "Cod. Lat. Vatic. 4030," were known to I. von Döllinger, *Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters* (New York, 1960), II, 97 ff. The latest publication on Fournier's trials is by Duvernoy, *Inquisition à Pamiers* (Toulouse, 1966).

²⁶ Louis Maimbourg, *Traité de la vraie église de Jésus-Christ pour ramener les enfans égarez à leur mère* (Paris, 1671), p. 207. One Protestant who saw in the church of Ethiopia a forerunner of Protestantism was Pierre Dumoulin, *Nouveauté du papisme, opposée à l'antiquité du vray christianisme* (Sedan, 1627), I, 23, 29.

²⁷ Arno Borst, *Die Katharer*, "Monumenta Germaniae Historica," XII (Stuttgart, 1953), 27-34. The *catalogus* by Bernhard was published in Cologne in 1522: "Lutherus . . . quasi omnes errores Waldensium renovat," Borst, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

²⁸ Jakob Gretser (died 1625) in a translation of the *Hystoria Albigensis* by Petrus Vallium Sarnaii stated in the preface that "the

appeared several translations of orthodox defenders of the faith who dealt with medieval heresies. Their methods were recommended as an effective means with which Lutherans and Calvinists might be checked. The Jesuit Gretser, referring to Protestants as the new heretics in line with the Albigenses, suggested that they could be fought by publishing significant antiheretical writings of the Middle Ages.²⁹

The Catholic idea that methods used in the 13th century could serve as a standard in the Reformation era also had political overtones. For example, in 1569, Catherine de Medici told the Venetian ambassador Giovanni Correr that she once read a manuscript chronicle at Carcassonne in which the doctrines of the Albigenses were discussed—that they wanted neither priests nor monks, images, masses, nor churches, and, wrote the ambassador, while reading this text Catherine had the Huguenots in mind. Pius V also wanted the measures against the Albigenses during the Crusade used against the Huguenots of France. He wrote to Catherine de Medici in 1569: "It is only by the total extermination of the Huguenots that the King of France can restore the ancient faith of the noble kingdom of France."³⁰ St. Bartholomew's night was not far off.

Albigensian heretics are not different from our modern 'deformed.'" In reprint, see Pierre de Vaux Cernay, *Histoire albig.*, P. Guébin and H. Maisonneuve, eds. (Paris, 1951). See also Borst, *op. cit.*, p. 29, n. 30; Gretser, "De Waldensibus" in *Opera Omnia* (Regensburg, 1738), p. 4.

²⁹ Caesar Baronius, *Annales ecclesiastici* (Paris, 1887). "Videant nostri temporis novatores quibus praecursionibus gloriari possint, et quos se suorum dogmatum habere patriarchos exultent. . . ." *PRE*, XVIII, 382.

³⁰ V. H. Monod, "La Saint Barthélemy. Version du duc d'Anjou," *BSHPF*, LVIII (1909), 484, 505. Carbonnier, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 84, n., cites a letter by Clement XI concerning the Protestant heretics, "cette engeance des anciens Albigeois. . ." But this encyclical is probably a forgery; see Frank Puaux, "Le Pape Clément IX et les Camisards," *BSHPF*, XLIV (1895), 580, quoted by Carbonnier, *op. cit.*, p. 83, n. Innocent III suggested the same method (extermination) against the Albigenses, P. Belperron, *La croisade contre les Albigeois et l'union du Languedoc à la France* (Paris, 1942), p. 113.

Protestant historians reacted vigorously. The harsh fate of the Albigenses was often recounted, especially the horrors of the Crusade;³¹ and their teachings were not overlooked.³² The Huguenot historians Crespin and Perrin were especially interested in the theological problem.³³ Their arguments concerning dualism usually were the following: (1) There were neo-Manichaean dualists in the Middle Ages, but they were not to be identified with the Albigenses or the Waldenses. (2) The lay power of the Albigenses was from God without any connection with a humanly instituted hierarchy. (3) The accusation of dualism was mostly a calumny of their foes. One fervent apologist, Jurieu, indignantly refuted the charge of Bossuet that the Albigenses were infected with Manichaean

n. "Exterminare" is here defined as 'expelling beyond borders' (Belperron) or 'banishment' (Pius V).

³¹ These horrors are impressively described by Jean Chassanion de Monistrol en Vellai, *Histoire des Albigeois, touchant leur doctrine et religion, contre les faux bruits qui ont esté semés d'eux, et les écrits dont on les a à tort diffamés: et la cruelle et lôgue guerre qui leur a esté faite. . . . Le tout recueilli fidèlement de deux vieux exemplaires écrits (sic) à la main, l'un au langage du Languedoc, l'autre en vieil François. Réduite en quatre volumes* (Genève, 1595), pp. 29, 70-73 (a short portion of this work is in the James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich.).

³² "Les réformés cherchent à tout prix à rallier à leur cause les hérétiques du moyen âge et les considèrent comme avant-coureurs de la réforme," says Jean Aymon, *Tous les synodes nationaux des églises réformées de France, auxquels on a joint des mandemens roiaux . . .* (La Haye, 1710), I, 123; II, 284.

³³ Jean-Paul Perrin, *Histoire des chrétiens albigeois* (Genève, 1618): "Quant aux croyances vaudaises aussi bien qu'albigeoises sont purs de ce manichéisme que les moines chroniqueurs leur ont si odieusement attribué . . . et n'ont fait . . . les uns comme les autres, que proclamer par avance les principes réformateurs du protestantisme d'à présent," in Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, p. 236. Mornay (Philippe de) *dit Du Plessis-Mornay, Le mystère d'iniquité, c.à.d. l'histoire de la papauté . . . où sont aussi défendus les droits des empereurs. . . .* (Saumur, 1611), pp. 318-321, 732. There are several editions, differing slightly, of Crespin's work: Jean Crespin, (1) *Actes des martyrs déduits en sept livres. . . .* (Genève, 1565); (2) *Histoire des martyrs persécutés et mis à mort pour la vérité de l'évangile. . . .* par Crespin et S. Goulart (1597); (3) *Histoire des martyrs persecutez et mis à mort pour la vérité de l'évangile depuis le tems des apostres jusques à présent* (1619).

heresy, and labeled it a "black and enormous calumny."³⁴

Philip Duplessis-Mornay, sometimes referred to as the "Huguenot Pope," saw in the Albigenses the opponents of a wicked Papal institution, and he too was anxious to exempt the Albigenses from the charge of Manichaeism. According to him, the Albigenses were in the lineage of the early church and the true remnant. A similar view was held by Perrin, who detected no vestige of Manichaeism.

When the Albigenses of the 13th century were correctly branded as dualists, their opponents spoke of two types of dualism: the mitigated and the radical. Albigensian Cathari believed in two principles, as explained for example by one of their bishops, Jean de Lugio in the *Liber de duobus principiis* (ca. 1254). The mitigated dualists (Monarchians) believed that Satan (evil) was first created good by the good God but was corrupted by freedom of choice and became a demon. The radical dualists, on the other hand, considered Satan as being always evil. Satan was wicked from the beginning. For the mitigated, there was only one principle: a good God. For the radical, there were two principles: good and evil.³⁵

But whether mitigated or radical, the Albigensian Cathari were dualists in filiation with the Bogomils, the Paulicians of Thrace, and the Manichaeans of the third century; some trace them back to the Gnostics of the second century. To these Cathari, our material, sensuous world was not created by God. Evil has but a borrowed existence. The world is an illusion, and matter (including the human body) is despicable. These teachings were, of course, abhorrent to Protestants as well as Catholics.

³⁴ Pierre Jurieu, *Lettre (sic) pastorales adressées aux fidèles de France qui gémissent sous la captivité de Babylon (sic) où sont dissipées les illusions de M. de Meaux* (Rotterdam, 1686), III, 217 ff.

³⁵ On dualism in general and in its later developments, U. Bianchi, *Il dualismo saggio et etnologico* (Roma, 1958); Söderberg, *op. cit.*; Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee. A Study of Christian Dualism* (Cambridge, Engl., 1947); M. Cazeaux-Varagnac, "Exposé sur la doctrine des Cathares," *Revue de synthèse*, LXIV (1948), 9-14; Nelli, *Le phénomène cathare* (Toulouse, 1964), pp. 17-64.

What appealed to Protestants was the Albigensian effort to recreate the purity of the early church, to do without a visible hierarchy; they denied purgatory, the crucifix, prayers for the dead, invocation of the saints, and transubstantiation.³⁶ Protestants appreciated that Albigenses used the Scriptures: the Albigenses did not use the Old Testament. They used but a few books of the New Testament, especially the Gospel of John. Their rites were generally well known owing to the Provençal Ritual of Lyons (published in 1886) and a Latin Ritual (published in 1939 by A. Dondaine). Public service practically did not exist. Their rites consisted in simple ceremonies: the Lord's prayer (*traditio orationis sanctae*), and spiritual baptism, the *Consolamentum* (*praedicatio ordinantis*: imparting of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands). The rites were extremely simple, reminiscent of customs in the Early Church.³⁷

The rejection of transubstantiation was considered particularly significant and in harmony with Protestant views. On the other hand, the Albigensian concept of the divinity of Christ was considered incompatible with Christian doctrine. Moreover, neo-Manichaean Catharism has been presented as a resurgence of Arianism by Y. M. J. Congar. While Congar's approach is not new, it seemed necessary to insist that these heretics were especially marked by their "Arianism." Accused of denying the eternal divinity of the Son of God, they were

³⁶ Nelli, *ibid.*, p. 148. According to Nygren one difference of concept between the medieval and Reformed doctrine of grace was that the former regarded grace as essentially a means for man's meritorious ascent to God; J. S. Whalen, *The Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge, Engl., 1955), p. 65.

³⁷ One of the most significant discoveries of recent times on Catharist documents was made by Antoine Dondaine. He discovered a Latin MS containing the basic teaching of absolute (radical) dualism practiced by the Albigenses. Its author was Jean de Lugio of Bergamo, vicar of a Catharist Bishop; the text was written *ca.* 1254. It is the *Liber de duobus principiis*, (Roma, 1939); on Albigensian rites, cf. *ibid.*, p. 34. Nelli, *Ecritures cathares* (Paris, 1959) contains Catharist sources translated into French such as the *Liber de duobus principiis* and the *Interrogatio Ioannis*, a Bogomil eschatological text.

thus linked with the early Christian heresy. Neither were the Waldenses free from such an accusation. The Waldensian historian Jean Léger refers to both Albigenses and Waldenses and mentions the calumny of making them "arriens" (*sic*).³⁸ Albigenses were said to have come in contact with the Arian Goths in Languedoc.³⁹

II.

The question of an Albigensian ancestry was not as important to Lutherans as it was to French Protestants. The arguments for continuity and spiritual ancestry were discussed in several national French synods. In 1572 at the synod of Nîmes, with a strong representation from Languedoc, it was decided to write a history on the Albigenses, authored by Comerard.⁴⁰ At the synod of Montauban in 1594, the idea of apostolic continuity was again debated. An important step was taken at the national synod of La Rochelle in 1607, where the pastor of Nyons (Dauphiné), Jean-Paul Perrin, was commissioned to write a history of the Albigenses. The synod called for documents to be submitted to Perrin. It was also stated that such a history should not merely describe the persecution of the Albigenses; their teachings and rites were to be carefully examined as well. Other Protestant synods also were interested in the historical relationship of

³⁸ Jean Léger, *Histoire générale des églises évangéliques des vallées de Piémont ou Vaudois* (Leyden, 1669), pp. 126, 128. Neo-Manichæan Catharism has been referred to as a resurgent Arianism by Y. M. J. Congar, "*Arriana hæresis* comme désignation du Néo-manichéisme au XIIe siècle," *Revue des sciences philosoph. et théolog.*, XLIII (1959), 449-461. The idea was not new; it was discussed by R. Manselli, *Bulletino dell'istituto storico per il medio evo*, LXVII (1955), 233-246; and by von Döllinger, *op. cit.*, I, 91. On the Arian issue and the Albigenses, cf. Thouzellier, "Controverses vaudoises," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen-Age*, XXXV (1961), 153, n. 37.

³⁹ Le Nain de Tillemont (Sébastien), *Vie de Saint Louis, roi de France* (Paris, 1847-1851), I, 52-55; Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, 481, n. 1.

⁴⁰ Aymon *op. cit.*, I, 123; Carbonnier, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

the "Church of the Wilderness" and the Protestant churches, such as Saint Maixent in 1609 and Privas in 1619.⁴¹

In dealing with spiritual ancestors, the synods took their task seriously. A commission was appointed to examine carefully the documents, and financial assistance was to be granted to Perrin. His manuscript was ready in 1612 and was finally published in Geneva in 1618.⁴² Perrin's book did much to strengthen the idea of connections between Catharism and Protestantism. Other attempts at understanding and interpretation were made. The most famous work, much cherished by the Huguenots, was the celebrated *History of Martyrs* by Crespin. Crespin's idea was that the Albigenses and the Waldenses were the recipients and the guardians of apostolic teaching and practice. That particular thought in Crespin is attributed to Perrin. Thus the conviction that the Albigenses were spiritually related was still more firmly rooted in the minds of French Protestants. In fact, the two medieval movements were compared to the two branches and the two lamps (Rev 11: 4).⁴³

One area of disagreement was the difference between Albigenses and Waldenses: "Albigenses and Waldenses have never been distinct." Yet they were part of the "Church of the Wilderness," a favorite expression. One of the most determined as well as prolific defenders of the Albigenses was the pastor of the Huguenot church in London, Peter Allix (died 1717), in *Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Church of the Albigenses* (London, 1692). For him there was no difference between the Albigenses and Waldenses. Both were rooted in the primitive apostolic

⁴¹ Aymon, *op. cit.*, I, 313, 361, 404; II, 87; Carbonnier, *op. cit.*, pp. 78, 79. Other synods were held at Tonneins in 1614 and Vitry Charenton in 1623. At Montauban in 1594, the concept of apostolic succession was debated.

⁴² Perrin, *op. cit.* This work was followed by his *Histoire des Vaudois* (Genève, 1618). On Perrin, cf. the article by H. Böhmer in *PRE*, XX, 799-840.

⁴³ Crespin, *op. cit.*, I, 56.

church and, like Basnage, Allix tended to believe what was favorable to the Albigenses and reject the unfavorable aspects.⁴⁴ On the other hand, De Beausobre argued that the Albigenses were not forerunners of Protestantism; they attempted reforms of their own and cannot be considered as patterns of the 16th-century Reformation.

Matthias Flacius Illyricus (died 1575), considered the most learned Lutheran scholar, examined thoroughly in his *Catalogus Testium Veritatis* those preceding witnesses who opposed the errors of the papacy.⁴⁵ Flacius was the first scholar to investigate the Waldenses in a scholarly way. He considered the Cathari as belonging to the Church of God, but he well realized the difficulties in analyzing them. He considered the Waldenses as the witnesses from whom the Albigenses proceeded. Thus the Cathari belonged to the genuine lineage of witnesses.

Waldenses and Albigenses were discussed not only in religious circles. The rationalistic author of the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Pierre Bayle, stated "that never before were the Waldenses discussed as much as today." Bayle

⁴⁴ Peter Allix, in defending Albigenses and Waldenses, does not necessarily identify them with the Reformation: "I know well that the strength of our defense does not depend on the justifying of these churches. Let the Albigenses be Manichaeans, as the Bishop is pleased to call them; the grounds of the Reformation remain just and firm." Allix, *The Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses* (London, 1692), Preface. Basnage, *op. cit.* I, 102. Allix, while not denying the charge of dualism, sees a connection in the perpetual succession and a conformity of 'symbols' with Protestants; cf. also Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, pp. 531, 532.

⁴⁵ *Catalogus testium veritatis qui ante nostram aetatem pontifici romano atque papismi erroribus reclamationum* (Lugdunum, 1597), I, 533, 537. This is a later edition of the work which had appeared under the title: *Catalogus testium veritatis qui ante nostram aetatem piorumque virorum de corrupto ecclesiae statu poemata* (Basel, 1556). Flacius listed about 400 witnesses who, since apostolic times, tried to react against the evil ways of the church before Luther. On Flacius, cf. the article by Kawerau in *PRE*, VI, 82-92; Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit* (Erlangen, 1859-1861; reprinted in Hildesheim, 1964).

referred to a work where De La Vallette compared the Albigenses with Calvinism. ⁴⁶

It has been established that Albigenses and Waldenses lived at the same time but were far from agreeing on doctrine. In fact, can Albigenses and Waldenses be assimilated? Though both movements have often been put in a common category they disagreed on doctrine. They existed roughly in the same area, but it was mere co-existence. They were not only far apart in doctrine, but they also frequently debated their views. The Waldenses were, theologically, the sharpest opponents of the Albigenses. They had a common enemy, the papacy, whom both considered the Antichrist. In recent years the two movements were examined by A. Dondaine and also by Chr. Thouzellier. ⁴⁷ It is true that in the 13th century many documents refer to the Albigenses and Waldenses together, such as the 258-volume manuscript in the Doat collection. ⁴⁸

In 1661 a collection of Waldensian tracts belonging to Archbishop James Ussher was acquired by the University of Dublin. This collection was described in 1920 by Mario Espositio, who listed all the documents as being Waldensian. ⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Bayle, *op. cit.*; De La Vallette, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ Dondaine, "Aux origines du Valdésisme. Une profession de foi de Valdès," *Archiv. Fratr. Praedicator.*, XVI (1946), 191-235. Thouzellier, "Controverses vaudoises-cathares à la fin du XIIe siècle (d'après le livre II du 'Liber Antiheresis' MS Madrid 1114 et les sections correspondantes du MS BN lat. 13446), *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge*, XXVII (1950), 137-227. Koch, "Neue Quellen und Forschungen über die Anfänge der Waldenser," *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXII (1958), 141-149. The best listing is in A. A. Hugon and G. Gonnet, *Bibliografie valdese* (Torre Pellice, 1953); it lists 3500 items and is being revised.

⁴⁸ The *Fonds Doat* contains copies by professional scribes who, by order of Jean de Doat, appointed by Louis XIV's minister Colbert in 1669, copied the documents then in existence; the collection is in the MS division of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (it is neither indexed nor classified).

⁴⁹ Dondaine, "Durand de Huesca et la polémique anticathare," *Arch. Fratr. Praedicator.*, XXIX (1959), 228-276. J. Ussher, *Gravissimae*

In 1960 one of these documents was identified as an Albigensian text, because of an expression in the Lord's Prayer.⁵⁰ In documents that have recently been published, the opposition between the Albigenses and the Waldenses is brought into sharper focus. Around 1300 the Cathari were attracted doctrinally by a group of Poor Men of Lyons (Waldenses). The founder and leader of the "Catholic Poor," Durand of Huesca, was a former Waldensian converted to Catholicism. The mission of these "Catholic Poor" was to lead the Waldenses into Catholicism. In 1964 a document directed against the neo-Manichaeans was published; it is one of the rare sources giving an insight into the Albigensian teachings by an opponent who refuted them in debate, and with the use of Bible texts.⁵¹

III.

One significant debate on Protestantism's forerunners took place in the 17th century when French Protestantism was not faring well; the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was about to occur. One of the most eloquent voices to enter the debate on Protestantism was that of the bishop of Meaux, J. B. Bossuet (died 1704). In his *Histoire des variations des*

quaestiones de ecclesiarum christianarum . . . successione et statu (Paris, 1613), pp. 225, 310; Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, 237, n. 1.

⁵⁰ Mario Esposito, "Sur quelques manuscrits de l'ancienne littérature religieuse des Vaudois du Piémont," *RHE*, XLVI (1951), 131-143. The distinction of the Albigensian document was in "Un recueil cathare: Le MS A.6.10," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, XXXVIII (1960), 815-834. The text was identified by the expression in the Lord's Prayer: "panem nostrum supersubstantialem." Moneta already stated that this expression was used by the Cathari, not the Waldenses. See Moneta of Cremona, *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses . . .* (Roma, 1743), p. 78.

⁵¹ Thouzéllier, *Une somme anticathare* (Louvain, 1964). Debates between Albigenses and Waldenses are also in "Un traité cathare inédit d'après le 'Liber contra Manicheos,'" *Bibl. de la RHE*, Fasc. 37 (1961). Debates in Pamiers and Montreal were described in Chasanson, *Histoire des Albigeois* (Genève, 1595), pp. 70-73. Later debates are in Duvernoy, *Inquisition à Pamiers* (Toulouse, 1966), *passim*.

églises protestantes (Paris, 1688),⁵² Bossuet challenged and denied that there was any relationship between medieval sects and Protestants. Bossuet nevertheless made an important contribution; he differentiated clearly between Albigenses and Waldenses: the Albigenses were of foreign (Eastern) origin; the Waldenses came into being only in the 12th century on French soil and could not be accused of non-Christian concepts. Protestant apologists answered both these arguments in detail. By the time Bossuet's essay appeared, it had become a favorite Protestant argument that Protestantism had not broken out miraculously but pre-existed in several medieval heterodox movements. What disturbed Protestant defenders particularly was that Bossuet seemed to deny any relationship between the Protestants and the medieval attempts at reform. Especially Basnage was irked by Bossuet's essay (Book XI) which refutes the "obvious relationship and the ancient and pure forerunners."⁵³

One basic argument which can be seen in all reform movements is that they saw in the church of Rome an apostate church that followed tradition rather than Scripture. They refused to consider that priestly intercession was necessary. The Albigenses denied the legitimacy of the Church of Rome, and saw in the Pope the Man of Sin.⁵⁴

The Roman Church fought the heretics in various ways. The Church forbade the use of the Gospels, a use which had

⁵² The best account on Bossuet is by Rébelliau, *op. cit.*

⁵³ Basnage, *op. cit.*, I, 15, ff.; Allix, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

⁵⁴ The "number of the Beast" was used by one side and the other. Ph. Du Plessis-Mornay, *Le mystère d'iniquité* (Saumur, 1611). Mornay applies the number 666 to the pope; so does Elie Benoist, *Histoire de l'Edit de Nantes, contenant les choses plus remarquables qui se sont passées en France avant et après sa publication, à l'occasion de la diversité des religions* . . . (Delft, 1693-1695), II, 231; this also contains a bibliography of other essays on the topic. In the articles of the national synod of Gap, 1603, it is stated: "Le pape est proprement l'antechrist et le fils de perdition . . . la bête vêtue d'écarlate que le Seigneur déconfira"; Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, p. 8, n. 3. On 666, cf. *infra*, p. 201.

been specifically prohibited by certain councils⁵⁵ because such use of the Gospels might lead to a critique of the Church and the rejection of the sacraments, the intercession of the saints and purgatory. Another charge laid against the heretics was that in espousing poverty they opposed the hierarchy of the Church because of its wealth, and also because of Church ordination, which seemed incompatible with the ideal of poverty so common in many lands. The Albigensian heretics set up a counter church made up of "good men" (*bonshommes*): the perfect ones (*perfecti*) and the believers (*credentes*). The Albigenses had their own esoteric organization over which the Roman Church, of course, had no control. Another criticism was that lay preaching and the ideal of poverty were somehow linked to dualism.⁵⁶ The Church laid its greatest stress on fighting this last point: dualism was the core of heresy. However, the charge of dualism was not always laid against the Albigenses in the beginning. For example, Bernard of Clairvaux did not accuse the Albigenses of being Manichaeian. In the 12th century the main concern of the Albigenses seemed to be about apostolic succession and ordination, the rejection of the Old Testament, and extreme simplicity of worship. Later on, the charge of dualistic

⁵⁵ The council of Toulouse, 1229, forbade the reading of the Old and New Testaments. Only a psalter, breviary or a book of hours was permitted: Mansi, *Conciliarum Sacrorum* (Reprint; Graz, 1961), XIV, col. 197. On the Bible, cf. Hans Rost, *Die Bibel im Mittelalter. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Bibliographie der Bibel* (Augsburg, 1939). That Bible passages were used in "Occitanie" is attested by the *Evangelium Colbertinum*, H. J. Vogels, ed., *Bonner biblische Beiträge* (Bonn, 1953). Still indispensable is S. Berger, "Les Bibles provençales et vaudoises," *Romania*, XVIII (1889), 353-422.

⁵⁶ These views of the Albigensian Cathari are found in a document edited by J. N. Garvin and J. A. Corbett in the *Summa contra haereticos*, ascribed to *Praepositinus of Cremona*, "Medieval Studies," XV (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1958). The *summa*, dated *ca.* the end of the 13th century, examined the Albigensian views in comparison to orthodox concepts (ch. I-IX, XIV; the Pasagini are discussed in ch. V-XIII; XV-XX). On this document, see a review by Borst, *ZKG*, 4. Folge, LXX (1959), 166-169.

heresy became increasingly insistent.⁵⁷ As far as Protestants are concerned, they did not consider the Albigenses as their forerunners because they were dualists, but because of their anti-clericalism. There is also a positive common denominator: the urge to follow Scripture, to live and believe according to the Gospel.

Crespin and Perrin attempted to describe and defend the Albigenian doctrine. They denied neo-Manichaean dualism. They sometimes used unconvincing arguments, mostly that the charge of Manichaean heresy was a calumnious forgery. Other Protestant historians dwelt on positive aspects such as the evangelical emphasis, the attempt to revive the practices of the Early Church, and the rejection of non-biblical Roman Catholic practices. Charles Schmidt was not impressed by Protestant historians such as Basnage, Mosheim, and Schroeck, who insisted that the charge of dualism was a mere calumny.⁵⁸

The Waldenses, on the other hand, easily found a connection of ideas with the Reformers. At the synod of Laus (Val Cluson) in 1526, 140 Waldensian "barbes" were in attendance.⁵⁹ They decided to send two from their midst to Switzerland and Germany to examine the new evangelical teachings. They also sent two "barbes," Daniel de Valence and Jean de Moline, to Bohemia to meet the *Unitas Fratrum*. There were several reasons why a contact was deemed necessary at this time. One was to examine the teachings of the Reformers. Then there was also much concern about Waldensian care-

⁵⁷ For a discussion on Bernard of Clairvaux' appraisal of heretical practices, notably the Cathari, cf. Grundmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 ff. Bernard's statements are in "Sermo 65," *MPL*, CLXXXIII, col. 1090. Cf. also opinions on Catharist views in Eckbert von Schönau, Evervin von Steinfeld, etc. See Grundmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 25.

⁵⁸ The best monograph on the Albigenses in the last century was by Ch. G. A. Schmidt, *Histoire et doctrine de la secte des Cathares ou Albigeois* (Paris, 1849). The statements on Protestant opinions are in vol. II, pp. 286, 287.

⁵⁹ Gonnet, "Le premier synode de Chanforan de 1532," *BSHPF*, IC (1953), 201-221.

lessness, for many attended mass and confessed to priests. Finally, there was a yearning to come out of the underground and preach the Gospel in the open with the other Reformed churches.

In 1530 two "barbes," Georges Morel (Maurel) and Pierre Masson, went to Berne, Basel, and Strassburg. They were particularly well received by Oecolampadius of Basel, to whom they submitted a long Latin document containing a comprehensive statement of the Waldensian beliefs and practices.⁶⁰ Oecolampadius answered their questions at length and gave them a letter of recommendation to Martin Bucer in Strassburg. Bucer also received them well and answered their questions fully.

A significant and important result of this contact with the Reformers was a decision to call a conference inviting some of the leading reformed ministers to the Waldensian valleys. The synod was held at Chanforan in the Valley of Angrogna in September, 1532. Two French leaders, Farel and Saunier, came. There is some doubt about Olivétan's attending the meeting at that time.⁶¹ Herminjard and Meyland believe that Olivétan was at that first meeting. Delarue and Gonnet reject the idea. Olivétan later on was in the valleys for the purpose of preparing a French translation of the Scriptures. At the synod of Chanforan a short "Confession of Faith"

⁶⁰ The account of the voyage and the letter to Oecolampadius is in J. H. Todd, *The Books of the Vaudois. The Waldensian Manuscripts* (London, 1865), pp. 8-21: Latin text submitted to Oecolampadius. Barbe Morel's document to Oecolampadius and his answer are also in *Zwei historische Untersuchungen*, in A. W. Dieckhoff, *Die Waldenser im Mittelalter* (Göttingen, 1851), pp. 363-369.

⁶¹ The account of the synod is best in Gonnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-221. On Olivétan's presence at the first synod, see A. L. Herminjard, *Correspondence des réformateurs dans les pays de langue française* (Genève, 1866-1897), II, 425, 448-455. He states that Olivétan was at the first Chanforan synod, a view shared by H. Meylan, "Louis Olivier dit Olivétan," *Silhouettes du XVIIe siècle* (Lausanne, 1943), pp. 53-65. But this is rejected by Delarue, "Olivétan et Pierre de Vingle à Genève," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, VIII (1946), 105-118.

was drawn up. Olivétan came to the valleys to supervise the Bible translation finished in February, 1535. This Bible was printed in Neuchâtel by Pierre de Vingle and was a gift to the French evangelical churches.⁶²

IV.

To sum up: The controversy over the spiritual and historical ancestry of the Reformation was particularly live in the later 16th century. If Protestants and Catholics clashed over religious and political issues in fratricidal wars (the Wars of Religion in France and the Thirty Years' War in Germany, not to mention other civil wars), they also clashed in theological debates. The controversy over theological filiation proved particularly exasperating. The polemics over the "adoption" of spiritual forerunners continued into the next century. Cardinal Richelieu also took part in the debate, not only because Protestantism continued to be a major political problem, but also because he aimed at bringing the Protestants of France back into the Catholic Church.⁶³ Between 1642 and 1660 there was a slackening in the polemics on both sides. But the debate was sharply revived by the bishop of Meaux, J. B. Bossuet, whose participation is best described by Alfred Rébelliau, *Bossuet historien du protestantisme*. The dualistic

⁶² A few months after Chanforan Daniel de Valence and Jean de Molines returned from Bohemia with a message from the *Unitas Fratrum*, in June, 1533. That year another synod was held in Chanforan. Olivétan was in the Valleys in the spring of 1533 and stayed at least until 1535 to work on the Bible translation; the preface of that translation is dated: "Des Alpes, ce 12 février 1535." From there Olivétan went to Neuchâtel to supervise the printing of the Bible translation; Gonnet, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 219.

⁶³ Armand du Plessis, duc de Richelieu, *Les Principaux poincts de la foi de l'église catholique défendus contre l'écrit adressé au roi par les quatre ministres de Charenton* (Poitiers, 1617); and especially, Richelieu, *Traité qui contient la méthode la plus facile et la plus assurée pour convertir ceux qui se sont séparés de l'église* (Paris, 1651).

teachings of the Albigenses were an embarrassment to some.⁶⁴ Protestants either rejected the idea as a monstrous calumny or they admitted grudgingly that there were some elements of dualism. Between Waldenses and Protestants there was no major theological impediment. Fundamentally, religious ancestry is not based on confessional identity.

One basic issue of the controversy was a differing understanding of the nature of the church. For the Protestant the true church is not determined by age nor identified by its hierarchy, but by the rules of faith and whether they be founded on Scripture. The Catholic argument based on antiquity was sometimes dismissed by Protestants as a kind of "fetishism."

Catholic apologists sometimes asked this question: "Where was your church before the Reformation? Show us a people who before Calvin and Luther had the same beliefs as you. . . . Let us see the uninterrupted link which binds you to the Church of the first centuries and through her to the apostles and to Jesus Christ. This conjunction should exist. But it is impossible for you to point to such a link. You are introducing a new movement; you have a beginning. It is possible to assign to your movement a precise date; and this simple fact condemns you."⁶⁵ A similar objection was made by certain Church Fathers against the heretics. In a sense, the

⁶⁴ Nicetas, Bogomil "Bishop" of the radical branch of dualists in Constantinople, attended the Albigensian Council at St. Félix-de-Caraman in 1167 where the leaders were of the mitigated type. Eventually they adopted the radical type. In 1946 Dondaine published the "Notitia" containing the proceedings of that council: "Les Actes du concile albigeois de St.-Félix de Caraman," *Studi e Testi*, CXXV (1946), 324-355. Doubts are expressed about the genuineness of the "Notitia" by Y. Dossat, "Remarques sur un prétendu évêque cathare du Val d'Aran en 1167," *Bullet. philolog. et hist.*, (Paris, 1957), 339-347. See also Thouzellier, *Un traité cathare inédit* (Louvain, 1961), p. 20.

⁶⁵ Dumoulin, *op. cit.*, I, 28, 29; Rébelliau, *op. cit.*, p. 345; Jean-Baptiste Dantecourt, *Remarques sur le livre d'un protestant, intitulé Considerations sur les lettres circulaires de l'assemblée du clergé de France, de l'année 1682 . . .* (Paris, 1683).

Catholic objection was true. The idea of the "newness" in the Reformation is best expressed in the Genevan Calvinistic motto: *Post tenebras lux*. Luther, while admitting some analogy with Huss, maintained his independence in doctrine. Sometimes Protestants used the weak retort: "Where was your church before the time of the apostles?" A better approach was that while Catholicism was obviously older it had also changed considerably along the centuries. If Catholicism had not deviated from the pristine position, "Protestants would still be part of it."⁶⁶ Instead, Catholicism was now the Babylon of Revelation and true Christians were urged to "come out of her."

One argument linking Protestants to medieval forerunners was that of the invisible church. It was often used not only in debate or in publications, but it was discussed at national synods, such as Gap in 1603. The true church does not put its trust in visible institutions. The Protestant concept of authority and infallibility resides in the lawful convening of the faithful, as in a synod. Only God is infallible. He may convey truth through His Spirit in leading to a true understanding of Scripture. Catholics argued that a relative constancy in their church was the mark of their genius in contrast to Protestants, who were subdivided the moment they came into existence. And while Protestants reproached Catholics for being in error on many points, the Catholics pointed to still more errors among Protestants; as many as 1400 were listed in the *Theomachia calvinistica*.⁶⁷ It was true that some Protestants had an excessive admiration for such leaders as Luther and Calvin. They came very near to canonizing them, or at least they considered their catechisms as well as their persons as divinely inspired.⁶⁸ On the other

⁶⁶ Aubert de Versé, *L'avocat des protestants* (Paris, 1686), p. 32.

⁶⁷ François Feuarent, *Theomachia calvinistica sedecim libris profligata, quibus mille et quadringenti hujus sectae novissimae errores diligentur . . . refelluntur* (Paris, 1604).

⁶⁸ "On a comme canonisé parmi nous sa liturgie et son catéchisme." This veneration appears expressed in various synods. By contrast the

hand, some admitted that their leaders often erred: "Would it not be the greatest of all miracles," wrote Basnage, "if they had never erred?"

Another conviction held by medieval groups and Protestants was to identify the Pope as the Antichrist. The charge was hurled back and forth. For example, the Protestant Du Plessis Mornay applied to the Pope the number of the Beast of Revelation, 666. The Catholic Florimond De Raemond retorted that the number 666 could be found in the name of Du Plessis Mornay rather than in that of Paul V. Such a debate seemed to some an indication that the controversy had lost momentum, replacing essential concepts with peripheral nonessentials. Henry IV's minister, Sully, suggested to the synod of La Rochelle (1607) that they should refrain from debating on Antichrist, while Jurieu thought that the identification of the Antichrist was extremely important.⁶⁹

Obviously the Reformation was a *new* movement. It had the genuine elements of renewal. It was a part and a generator of a revolutionary age: it brought "light after darkness." As von Hutten expressed it, "The spirits are awake: it is a luxury to live"; Erasmus declared, "I anticipate the near approach of the Golden Age"; and Harnack wrote, "None can survey the history of Europe from the second century to the present time without being forced to the conclusion that in the whole course of history the greatest movement

Waldenses had few teachers; the Albigenses do not seem to have had any. Matthieu de Larroque, *Considérations sur la nature de l'église, et sur quelquesunes de ses propriétés* (Quevilly, 1673).

⁶⁹ Du Plessis-Mornay, *op. cit.*; Florim. de Raemond, *L'Anti-Christ* (Lyon, 1597), VIII, 260-599. On 666 cf. also Benoist, *op. cit.*, II, 231. It was "une affaire si importante que, dans toute la réformation, il n'y en a pas une seule qui le soit davantage"; Jurieu, *op. cit.*, III, 253, 254. Cf. also H. Böhmer, *Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1946), pp. 172-275. Sometimes the Albigenses were assimilated with the Antichrist; cf. Borst, *op. cit.*, pp. 113, 214. Crespin, *op. cit.*, I, 43-67, discusses the "Persécution de l'église sous l'antéchrist de Rome."

and the one most pregnant with good was the Reformation of the XVIth century.”⁷⁰

However, there is a common denominator between the Reformation of the 16th century and the attempts at reform in the preceding centuries. The common denominator is seen in the Protestant spirit which has its roots in Scripture and refuses to be subjected to a church which, in the Protestant view, has deviated from the original pattern.

Since its inception, the Christian church has been in constant need of reform (*ecclesia semper reformanda*). There was always a Protestant mood. Regardless of theological differences, the Albigenses and Waldenses are part of the Protestant lineage. There is a common denominator in refusing to accept the dogmatism of a church that has deviated, in their opinion, from the scriptural pattern; they aimed, in their own way, to obey God rather than man.

⁷⁰ Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (New York, 1901), p. 268. Harnack also discussed and defended the divisions among Protestants: “Our church is not the particular Church in which we are placed, but the ‘societas fidei,’ which has its members everywhere, even among Greeks and Romans,” *ibid.*, pp. 276, 277.