

**CATHARES ET PROTESTANTS**  
**Familles Rebelles et Histoire du Midi by Michel Jas**  
**Bibliographical commentary by Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer**  
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On my last trip to the Albigenian lands in Southern France, I tried to see if I could find a Protestant book about the Cathars. I didn't find the one I'd seen about 15 years before, but everyone referred me to Michel Jas's work published in 2011 by *Nouvelles Presses du Languedoc*. That book was not currently in the museums or resorts of the area, but everyone was able to give me the reference. I later got it online. The 220-page book contains data on the history of the Albigenses, but rather than a history of that medieval faith from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the author intends to connect the genealogical and dogmatic content of those precursors of the Protestant Reformation with that of Protestants and Huguenots that appeared in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. It also traces this affiliation geographically around the same places where the Albigenses had once prospered.

What appears in the documentation of Michel Jas is striking because it proves that even if the Inquisition wiped out the reformers of the south of France in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was unable to erase the memory of many families and population groups who supported the Protestant reformers almost immediately when the opportunity arose a century and a half later. They also opened their doors to the Huguenot military rebellion in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The spirit of rejection of papal Catholicism remained dormant until centuries later, when furrows were opened to continue its opposition to Rome.

In some ways I was impressed with the author. In others he let me down. His careful analysis of the attitude of the Protestants toward the history of the Albigenses in the Protestant centuries strikes a positive note. But it is disappointing that the author shares in the current estrangement of most Protestants from that story, because they do not want to be linked to a heretical movement that allegedly failed. Michel Jas himself ends up believing that the Albigenses perished because they had placed their faith in a position that for him was outdated, rigid and immobile. But after acknowledging the demise of historical Catharism, he adds that "regional Protestantism even now is half dead" and that, "perhaps the rediscovery of Catharism" will end up shifting "the reference to Luther or Calvin" in "Protestant sensitivity" (166).

Why such claims? Jas explores the Cathars' rebellious spirit against papal authoritarianism, and their rejection of the erroneous doctrines of Catholicism. But as for the deadly decline of Protestantism, it is clear to us, reading his book, that the cause is found in the loss of the apocalyptic vision by modern Protestantism, in which the Albigenses had been grounded. In promoting ecumenism, it is clear that Michel Jas and modern Protestantism no longer accept what Protestants and Albigenses believed and taught in the days of the Reformation concerning the Roman Catholic Church as being the Great Babylon of the latter days. Indeed, God's final call to the world, "Come out of her, my people," is a death blow to modern ecumenism. And the degree of ecumenism that one accepts will be in direct proportion to belief or disbelief in that divine call and its application for our time (Rev 18:4).

**The discussion on the origin and nomenclature of the Albigenian faith**

When about 15 years ago I visited "the Cathar country"—as French people now like to call the places that the ancient Albigenses populated—I had in my hands for a moment a Protestant book on the history of the Albigenses that was available in the Museum of Montsegur. I quickly perused the book, especially on the possible Albigenian origin, and I recall seeing a presumable connection to a mystical religion of the East. That reference made me decide not to buy the book. Since we were on our way to visit my brother who was teaching at the Adventist Seminary of Collonges, I thought I could find that book in the seminary library. I was annoyed when I did not find it as I believe our libraries should have all the

important material available that is connected to our prophetic interpretation of history. I was now sorry I didn't buy it at the Montsegur museum, because we would not be passing that way again.

Michel Jas's book is a later book and definitely refutes that alleged Indian origin of the Albigensian religion. So I am now glad I passed on the other. After our first trip to the Albigensian lands I was about to publish my book *The Seals and the Trumpets*, where I confirm the role of the Albigenses in the prophetic history we profess. So I think today that perhaps God freed me at that time from introducing an unfounded theme into my book. A 1999 colloquium in Nice claimed that a Cathar council of Saint-Félix-de-Lauragais, which would have sought to "structure the Cathar heresy around a heretic who came from the East (Niquinta) at the conclusion of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century," never existed. It was a false testimony manufactured by the Inquisition in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, which in turn was recycled in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. "The texts of the Middle Ages exaggerate the breadth of heresy to better justify repression" (48).

The second mistake that was spread for many years has to do with the origin of the name "Cathars." For many years it was believed that the name came from the Albigenses themselves who considered themselves "pure" (from the Greek *katharoi*). But that's a mistake. Michel Jas confirms that "heretics never designated themselves by that term" (47). As I have shown in my books, the papal slander against the Albigenses was that they worshipped cats, for which several legends were invented. Instead, they called themselves "Good Men" or "Good Women" or "Good Christians," referring to their religious aspirations. They also referred to themselves as "Friends of God" or "Friends of Jesus." Jas says, verbatim:

"For some years now, a rather radical review was made of what was called *Catharism*... From *katze/ket* (cat), by mockery, heretics were named as worshippers of the cat (incarnation of the devil)... They were called *ketter/ketzer*, Cathars, first in Germany, then associated with the term *Patarin* in northern Italy, and finally in Occitania, before the crusade [against the Albigenses), along with the terms [derogatory of] Arians, Manicheans, and Albigenses" (47).

But again we must ask ourselves, where did the Albigensian faith come from? Michel Jas does not speculate too much on this subject, but mentions that Protestants in the past believed that the so-called "Cathars" came from the Waldensians, something that Jas does not endorse because this is, historically, a late connection (the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century). The link between the Waldensians and the Albigenses, however, is indisputable, something that Jas accepts but seeks to marginalize because he does not agree with some points of the Albigensian faith that we will consider later. I read in another book that at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there were Waldensian names on the list of those who died in Beziers during the papal crusade. And in the introduction to the French translation of the only Cathar book that survived the flames of the Inquisition, Christine Thouzellier reports some meetings between these two faiths, in an attempt to unify their beliefs.

Others seek parallels in some Eastern Christian beliefs. But if such parallels exist, it does not necessarily mean that they had had direct contact, or that the Albigensian faith had come from an alleged Eastern bond. From the thematic perspective, the Inquisition linked the Albigenses to the Manicheans, for their alleged dualism about the eternal existence of good and evil (something debatable also about the Manicheans). But as Jas admits, Luther and the early Protestants were also accused of being Manicheans and Donatists. For this reason, Protestants in later centuries tried to reject such an accusation, and at the same time wash away the memory of the Albigenses who for them, had been slandered in the same way (46). The Albigenses defended themselves from such slander, as could be seen in *The Book of the Two Principles*. The Inquisition destroyed almost all of their writings.

### **Thematic or genealogical origins?**

The *Jehovah's Witnesses* link themselves (and others also link them) with Arius, who denied the deity of Christ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century. But there is no continuous genealogical or historical link between them. *Universalist Unitarians* link themselves with Arius, but also in more recent times with Michael Servetus in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century for his denial of the Trinity. Who do the Protestants identify with? Luther? Calvin? And with whom did they identify in the past to legitimize their faith?

It is legitimate to ask about the origin of a religion, because in the Bible we see how the prophets, Jesus himself and the apostles identified the hardening of the hearts of the people with the same spirit of other peoples of the past (Isa 1:10; Jer 23:14; Eze 16:49; Rev 11:8, etc). History matters, a fact well known to the Catholic Church which continually tries to cleanse herself of the many horrific facts she has committed in the past. Moreover, when Protestantism appeared, Catholic repressors turned to history to accuse Protestants of being a new religion. While the Catholics pretended to be able to trace themselves back to the origins of Christianity by the supposed apostolic succession, they also claimed that the Protestants were innovative and, therefore, heretics.

Again, with whom were the first Protestants identified in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century? Although Luther admired Augustine (5<sup>th</sup> Century) and to a lesser degree Thomas Aquinas (13<sup>th</sup> century), he and the other reformers did not care to chart their history genealogically or successively on other religious groups that appeared over the centuries. They simply clung to the foundation of the Christian faith, the Bible, as the only legitimizing document of the divine origin of their creed, as did the Albigenses and the Waldensians before Protestantism. They understood that the legitimization of a religion is not measured by mechanical and external succession, but by the teachings of the Bible.

But what happened in the middle of that story that spanned more than a millennium? How can we explain the interruption of the teachings of the Bible for so many centuries of the Middle Ages? Unfortunately Michel Jas does not resort to the Bible's apocalyptic guidance and anticipation to explain that break with the past, although he acknowledges that both Albigenses and Protestants did turn profusely to that apocalyptic outline to explain the historical shift. God had anticipated an abandonment of the original faith, which Paul called "apostasy" based on Daniel's prophecies (2 Thess 2). The Apostle John amplified this prediction (Rev 18). The full restoration of truth, according to these prophets, would come at the end (Rev 12:17; 14:6-12).

We Adventists emphasize the prophetic history of the "remnant" which, between the First Coming and the Second Coming of Christ, would suffer tribulations and would be even overcome by the antichrist (Dan 7:25; Matt 24:29; Rev 6:9-10; 12:13-15; 13:7, etc). But in the last days, that remnant would be noted for keeping God's commandments and the faith of Jesus (His truth) and confirmed by the testimony of Jesus who is the Spirit of prophecy (Rev 12:17; 14:12; 19:10). Still, we also see the importance of charting the history of our faith from the days of Christ to the present day. For this reason Leroy Froom spent 15 years in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century searching history for testimonies about *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. His four volumes are to this day impressive, a source of information appreciated even by many non-SDAs. He also traced the story of belief in conditional immortality sustained by numerous Christians over two thousand years of existence. All this is relevant, without denying that the most important thing is to base ourselves on the Bible as our only source of faith and belief.

It is striking, in this context, that E. G. White emphasized that there were always those who kept the true Sabbath (the fourth commandment) throughout history. This shows that for God too, history matters. To prove the existence of Sabbath keepers over the centuries, the Adventist Church also prepared a monumental book in 1982 entitled, *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*. And so we could mention other books that underpin our faith with testimonies found in history. So more than a genealogical or

ecclesiastical legacy, what counts is that divine truth was never truncated. There were always faithful standard bearers who kept the original faith throughout the Christian era.

There was, however, a widespread rupture produced by medieval apostasy. Michel Jas recognizes that “the degeneration of the Church,” for the first Protestants, “began according to them very soon: from the apostolic period, given the difficulties of the Apostle Paul related to the churches of Galatia and Corinth” (46). By emphasizing *Sola Scriptura*, the reformers in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century parted with every apostate tradition that was not founded on Scripture. For this reason, the Huguenot historian Jacques Lenfant stated that “the Reformation has no need to seek origins, since it has its archives in the Gospel” (47). That’s why it was easy for Protestants to avoid falling into the trap of wanting to “attribute some imaginary genealogy” (46).

However, the genealogical bond that Jas seeks for the Albigenses with the Protestants who appeared a century and a half later in the Languedoc, and which developed around the same territory as their Albigensian ancestors, does indeed exist. It shows that the persecution and extermination of the alleged heretics by the Roman papacy could not completely erase the footprint left in the minds of their descendants from generation to generation. Jas recalls that the inquisitors attacked the alleged heretics first, and then their children. But history shows us that God keeps this generation in a thousand ways, to prevent the divine version of the gospel from being extinguished. When a door is opened in the search for freedom, it is immediately welcomed by the descendants of those generations who had been crushed.

God oversaw the same thing in the development of ancient generations. He traced the wickedness of the fathers upon their children, until the third and fourth generation, and sometimes until the tenth generation (Exod 20:5; Deut 23:2-3,8). But he also extended his mercy to thousands who repented, whose benevolent genealogy can also be followed today through biblical history (Ex 20:6). The ten tribes of Israel who were declared to be no longer God’s people, and whose carnal genealogy succumbed completely, are promised to reappear again in those who had been heathen, and therefore were not God’s people, but would become part of spiritual Israel by conversion to the gospel (Hos 2:23; Rom 9:25). Also the last remnant of the divine seed is pictured as coming from the original church that was persecuted over the centuries (Rev 12:17).

This same need to analyze the development of the woman’s offspring that materializes in Christ and his followers, and the offspring of apostate genealogies is projected as a backdrop of the millennial judgment to occur once this world is destroyed. “I saw thrones,” John said, “and those who received authority to judge sat upon them” (Rev 20:4; see 2:26-27). It will be a privilege to have access to the complete records of heaven, the often invisible links that united many children of God over the centuries, and whose positive influence was perpetuated throughout history (Ps 56:8; Neh 13:14,22,31). “Then ye shall return, and see that there is a difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God, and him that serves him not” (Mal 3:16-18).

### **Three Albigensian thematic links to Protestantism**

Michel Jas highlights three undisputed links between the Albigenses and the Protestants who came later, in addition to faith in the Bible as the only foundation of their faith. He gives no further links because he limits them to his personal beliefs and to the current Protestantism he professes. For instance, he mentions in a youtube video that unlike traditional Protestantism, the Albigenses did not baptize children [<https://campusprotestant.com/video/nos-freres-cathares/>]. But it is true that these three links considered below, are unanimously manifested in all dissidents of Catholic Romanism.

**Protestants.** “Beyond its sacramental and confessional diversity”—our author tells us about the Protestantism of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century—“there is a radical distancing from the Roman Church, common to

each of her eras and in all her tendencies” (97). It is “a general trend, a predisposition, a diffuse and popular pre-Protestantism that precedes the [later] precise doctrinal structures.” He finds this portrait of Protestantism “in the triple rejection that the Reformation unanimously opposed Catholicism” in the formula of “a man, a woman, and a thing..., namely: the pope, Mary, and the sacrifice of Mass” (98).

“Pre-Protestantism begins with a deep disappointment” in the papal claim to equate itself with God, taking an arrogant and infallible stance. Luther thus wrote to Pope Leo X: “O Leo, my Father, do not listen to those sirens who tell you that you are not a man, but something equivalent to a God” (Wittenberg Letter, September 1520). And from there they also rejected to some extent, the concept that the church reigns on earth.

*The second rejection* had to do with Marian worship, and with it the cult of all saints and the veneration of all relics. For Protestants, “Marian and saints worship contradict, betray, and deeply denaturalizes strict monotheism” (100). Augustine warned against this in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, when pagan relics were infiltrating Christianity. He also saw that the introduction of pagan relics was causing Christians named as saints to be revered and to prayed to as if they were gods.

*The third point* of Protestant convergence is found in “the rejection of the transubstantiation of the Mass (miracle concerning the manipulation of nature and repetition of the saving sacrifice), as well as in the abandonment of the exuberant or mysterious ceremonies that accompany it, until the aberration of indulgences... Protestantism distrusts the apparatus and spectacle of pompous ceremonies, of too striking decorum” (100-101). “The same critical, spiritual, and austere connotations undergird the triple rejection by which the Cathars invested themselves in the Middle Ages” (101).

**Albigenses.** In their rejection of papal authority, the Cathars opposed more radically than anyone else the concept that the church reigns here on earth. That was perhaps the most sensitive point for the Roman papacy, because the *Friends of Jesus* declared that he who reigns on earth is the prince of this world, Satan and his antichrist the pope. This is the reason why the inquisitors slandered them of being dualist, for presumably pretending that there are two eternal gods, one of good in heaven, and one of evil on earth. “There are two churches,” the Albigenses said, “one who flees and forgives (Mat 10:23), the other who possesses and skins.’ One Christianity reigns, the other does not.” “What prevails among them [the Albigenses] is the fact of feeling themselves ‘in the world, without being of the world’ (Jn 18:36-37)” (101).

Unfortunately Jas, like most historians today, seems to accept the indictment of the Inquisition as valid with regard to the alleged Cathar dualism, though in a later youtube video, *Nos Freres Cathars* (2017), he implies that their dualism is not absolute, and that their oppressors showed a tendency to exaggerate and defame. He concludes by saying that for everyone who is persecuted as the Albigenses were, this world will always be bad, but this fact didn’t prevent them from affirming that good will overcome. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gewGwukRY2A>]. In addition, we cannot forget that the only book found of the Albigenses in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century shows how they rejected that wicked accusation.

In his book, *The Perfect Heresy: The Life and Death of the Cathars*, Stephen O’Shea seems to become aware after writing his book, of the existence of *The Book of the Two Principles*, where they prove that they were not dualists believing in two eternal gods. Because in spite of that, he kept that dualistic qualification of the Cathars in his book, just for the fact that this is what most people believe about them. Anyway, his book is an extraordinary source of information about the crusades, though mostly based on the documentation left by the Inquisitors. Both Jas and O’Shea recognize the trend of the Albigensian oppressors to exaggerate and slander their enemies.

It is true that *The Book of the Two Principles* strongly emphasizes the contrast between good and evil. But the same could be said of some biblical passages if they are considered out of context. Paul spoke of the “god of this century” (2 Cor 4:4), and Jesus spoke of the “prince of this world” in reference to Satan (as that book specified), who reigns in the children of men (John 14:30; see Matt 20:28; Luke 22:25). And this does not imply that Jesus and the Apostles believed in the eternity of Satan. As a matter of fact, there are authors who conclude that the presumed Albigensian dualism must be judged within the biblical parameters. And *The Book of the Two Principles*, proves that Lucifer was an angel who fell from heaven, became a demon and will be destroyed in the end of the world (see our commentary in another document).

Today most historians (Catholic, Protestant, and agnostic) express contempt for the Albigenses based on the dualism they supposedly professed. These historians accept the testimony of the Inquisitors, without concern that the Inquisitors also accused Luther and other reformers of being Manichean dualists, and condemned many Protestants to be burned at the stake as being sorcerers and witches. That false accusation could not persist because the Inquisition was unable to crush the Reformation. The same happened with the Waldensians, who were classified as heretics on the same level as the Albigenses. But Waldensians survived and could vindicate their Christian beliefs. Besides that, the *Friends of Jesus* constituted a greater threat to the supremacist dreams of the papacy, because they became numerous and were represented throughout most of Europe.

In other words, modern historians who continue identifying the Albigenses as being dualists do not take into account the Cathar rejection of that false accusation, and take the Inquisitorial denunciation for granted. Especially Catholic apologists today try to minimize the horrible cruelty of their church. This is the background of their attempt to vindicate the Inquisitorial condemnation which looked for a motive to justify its crime.

The Albigensian condemnation as being dualists sounds like a veiled justification for the wild repression they suffered from the Roman papacy. But isn't the Roman claim of a pope who arrogantly intends to take God's place on earth more aberrant? If an execution were to be performed to eradicate a presumed heresy, would it not have been more justified to execute the papal prelates that sought to forgive sins, required the veneration of presumed saints and virgins, supplanted the Word of God by tradition, and so many additional heresies from the biblical perspective, which were introduced by the Roman Catholic Church over the centuries?

Jas acknowledges that “there was internal debate among the Cathars and Protestant diversity” (96), as there are today in many churches and creeds. So we cannot attribute to all Albigenses what a few might have believed at any given time. Jas also reminds us of what we have already seen, that “the first Lutheranism was denounced as being Manichean” (99). But *The Book of the Two Principles* proves that all the Albigenses believed in only one supreme and eternal God, and that Lucifer who became a demon will finally be destroyed along with all who submitted to his kingdom. Let us not forget that those who refuse to read in history what they don't like will end up being condemned for repeating it. That is the apocalyptic picture we find in the Bible, where we are assured that this world will not pass without a dramatic and final confrontation (Rev 12-18).

*The second rejection* was manifested among the *Friends of Jesus* or *Good Men* against Marian idolatry. They rejected Mary's appointment as “Mother of God,” because Christ came in human flesh (1 John 4:2), which for them implied that Jesus was divine. “One of the hallmarks of Catharism in comparison with other Christian dissidents of the Middle Ages is precisely their total rejection of both the churches and the images, relics, and any kind of secondary piety that might divert the believer away from the one true God: the Father of Jesus Christ and giver of the Holy Spirit.” The despised Cathars also stated that “the representations of the virgin and the saints are useless to cause miracles; in any case these cannot come

from God, 'for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God' (Cor 15:50)." Here Jas wonders whether such a concept should necessarily be interpreted as a disenchantment with monotheism (102).

"Opposition to the Eucharistic miracle appears as a constancy of dualist radicalism. No other heretical movement of the Middle Ages so fundamentally rejected transubstantiation." This is seen in "the last vestiges of this religion in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, according to the index of the lost records of the Carcassonne Inquisition" (102-103). In 1595 Pastor Chassanion declared that "it is easy to see what the Albigenses rejected: the intercession of the saints, the prayers for the dead, and purgatory, because they saw that such things were no more than human inventions, and not articles of faith founded on the Holy Scripture." Chassanion also regarded as "a slander without foundation" the supposed Albigensian peculiarities as "the Pythagorean transmigration of souls, the rejection of the books of Moses, baptism of children, the sacrament of the altar, marriage, and the uniqueness of God" (103).

Another Protestant historian of the sixteenth century emphasized that "the Albigenses condemned the ambitious and cruel tyranny, traditions, superstitions, and idolatry of the Roman church, which they regarded as contaminated, spat from the doctrine of the devils, Babylon, mother of fornications and abominations, murderer of the saints, and Pope Antichrist; they detested mass and worship of the host by the priests, as well as purgatory, idolatrous and superstitious prayers; they taught that salvation and eternal life should not be obtained by any means other than Jesus Christ" (103).

"It is on the negative side that Protestantism was able to join Catharism. The reformers of the first generations were not ashamed to associate the Reformation with Catharism, reducing them to a common denominator, the denial of Catholic superstitions" (104). To the question of their enemies, where was your Church before Calvin or Luther? Protestants answered with another question: "Where was the Church of Rome in the time of the apostles?" On the positive side, it is emphasized that both the Albigensian pre-reform and the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century "valued biblical language" (107).

### **Genealogical and geographical links between the two Reforms**

What is new to me is that there were some vestiges of the Albigenses in 1329 with four who were condemned to the flames, and throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> Century until the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century in the lands of the south of what now belongs to France. The Albigensian studies into that time period continue to increase. Moreover, there are evidences of an Albigensian subsistence in more recent times, as they can be found in the records of the Inquisition at Carcassonne. There is mention of a condemnation of Cathars in surrounding places, which took place in 1335, another in 1340, in 1352, in 1364, and between 1352 and 1400 in Carcassonne itself, and even in 1422 in relation to a heresy accused of being Docetist (with a dualist tendency), in an unspecified place (72).

The condemnation of the Inquisition in Carcassonne resumed in 1531 and 1547, this time against Protestants. Also one of the inquisitorial books contains the mention of convictions for the crime of heresy from 1324 to 1328 and from 1536 to 1552, as if there was no change of centuries (73). At that time, the Spanish Catholic kings reorganized the Holy Office of the Inquisition, and established one of their courts in Barcelona, little known until recently and which is currently being investigated. This inquisitor court of Barcelona detected Protestants in its territory who were persecuted and convicted in 1539, 1552, and especially after 1560.

Of the 354 people convicted by the Holy Office of Barcelona from 1539 to 1598, between 29 and 32% of the names had names that previously belonged to Occitan Cathars who had been condemned more than a century and a half earlier. These 354 convicted people witness to an integrated, peaceful, but regularly

persecuted Protestant population. Two years before the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre, that court in Barcelona was working on a list of 1,200 heretics covering the entire upper section of the country (82-86).

I will not review here the abundant information that our author brings us showing that the Protestant Huguenots often settled in the same houses and places where two centuries earlier the Cathars met, and sometimes with the same names. All the information Jas brings makes us think that, although permanently persecuted and very weakened, an almost uninterrupted underground faith persisted throughout the Languedoc. The anonymous manifesto of 1703, *Manifesto of the Protestants* on their takeover, printed in Holland and distributed in the Cévennes, announced: "The peoples of Cévennes have always remained in the religion they profess, several centuries before the Reformation. His country was once full of Waldensians and Albigenses if there is to be a distinction between each other. It seems from various acts that they professed the same religion as the current reformed..., their zeal rekindled at the beginning of the Reformation. In less than anything, this country was reformed, and it has been since" (89-90).

Also the information that Michel Jas brings us gives proof of an emptying of people from the southern cities of France after the repression of the papal crusades to exterminate them, and for the Inquisitorial task of almost infinite patience to annihilate them through all imaginable methods of torture. The instruments of torture can be seen today in Carcassonne where there was an Inquisition court. "Between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries, many cities in the South had declined by half. Doubtless, this tragedy must have erased the unfortunate evidence of Cathar extinction—which in spite of this it was reconstituted vigorously around the Autier brothers in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The entire South, as in Europe at large, were affected by a demographic decline, and particularly in certain areas such as the Corbieres (the decrease... came according to the cities from 35% to 70%" in some villages (115). "Demographic displacement explains and makes heretical displacement more complex too" (116). And it was repopulated from west to east, and from north to south.

The fight against the Protestants then, which had spread to many places in France, led the kingdom of France to produce the gruesome massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in 1572. This extermination spread south again, and from 1549 to 1560 many southern Protestants emigrated to Geneva (131). Some 1,600 to 1,800 condemnations fell upon the Huguenots in the south from May 25 to December 17, 1562. More than 10,000 patronymic names can prove today the sanguineous link between the ancient Albigenses who were prosecuted and the subsequent Protestants in the same territory that once belonged to the Friends of God.

It should not be forgotten that since the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, "the father's name is put into genitive and becomes hereditary." And "towards the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, the nobles add to their name of baptism and/or to the name-nickname inherited, the place of fortified residence" (145). Hence the patronymic connection can be easily established today. "The study of the patronymic names of the south allows us to see (with many other coincidences), that in the western Languedoc, a rural aristocracy of more or less important members of plebeian lineages, opted two centuries apart, twice for heresy. It can be said that Cathar homonymy is more important among Protestants in these regions than in the populations that determined to stop, or at least slow, the Reformation" (147).

To this are added "the Occitan Cathar sources of the Montreal Colloquium. The southern Protestants retrieved there manuscripts that presented an opposite view to what the Catholic chronicles of the Middle Ages had given, perhaps in Montreal which was occupied by the Huguenots... These recovered and mistranslated originals were dispersed when their discoverers were dispossessed from their belongings and of their properties, as well as from their libraries and manuscripts. Thanks to these very different authors..., the history of the *Montreal Colloquium* fueled the Protestants' depiction of their history. This allowed the churches that came from the Reformation, until the Protestant orthodoxy of the mid-19<sup>th</sup>

Century, to identify Albigensianism as strong as Waldensianism, by direct or indirect reference to the Chanforan colloquium” (150).

## Conclusion

Jas reflects several times at the end about how many today know the struggles of the past suffered by so many men of faith. Noting the scarcity of interest in all this history he concludes that Protestantism is now half dead. It is evident that Protestantism lost its original fighting spirit, a reason to justify its existence. And in our view, the ecumenical trend of Jas expressed at the end of his book, forms part of that loss of vitality that so many like him suffer in the Protestant world. Only an apocalyptic revival like that of the Albigenses and historical Protestants can revitalize today’s Protestantism. This would help them to see the deception of modern ecumenism, and discover the plot that the devil conceals as he seeks to unite the world in the final apostasy predicted by the Bible.

Michel Jas’s ambivalent attitude toward the Albigenses can be linked also to his final pessimism. Sometimes he views Catharism in a positive way, and then, in an attempt that seems to us as an excessive objectivity for the benefit of the history critics, his retrospective gaze becomes negative. While sometimes he brings Cathars closer to Protestants, at other times he tries to push them farther apart. But we were glad that he was now highlighting the close relationship between Albigenses and Waldensians. He comments that both shared manuscripts of the Bible, and serviced each other, although as in later Protestantism, there were different positions regarding certain subjects. All, however, had in common the principle that Luther would later establish in Latin of *Sola Scriptura* [<https://campusprotestant.com/video/nos-freres-cathares/>]

Our author agrees with Anne Brenon who wrote: “Catharism was the only movement that rejected any possibility of commitment to Rome and to present itself as contrary to the Church, in the legitimacy of an apostolic affiliation. It was also the only one unable to evolve, precisely because of the absolute character and completed of his doctrine of revelation and salvation.” And Jas adds that “the only thing that could be transmitted from Catharism to the Reformation was memory.” But, is not their willingness to give their lives as a testimony to their faith a memory worthy of transmission? Did this testimony not encourage and invigorate the Reformation in Southern France?

An equally pessimistic reflection leads Jas to recognize that “the memory of historical Protestantism is today weak. The family identification that was strong for one or two centuries..., is not today more operational. There are other memories and other integrations that are at play” (166). Which memories?, we ask. Secularism? Ecumenism that puts the past into oblivion? Jas believes that “Protestant memory would surely have to reinvent itself today or at least recover” if Protestantism wants to revive.

Then, Jas surprises us by leaving the door open at the end to say that “the rediscovery of Catharism” may end up supplanting the memory of Luther and Calvin (168). What aspect of Catharism does he think is necessary to revive Protestantism? “His rebellious identity, without meaning to start the war again.” Southern France, according to him, revealed a “vocation to debate and insubordination” (165-166).

I don’t think Luther or Calvin should be put aside. But if the *Friends of Jesus* must be rediscovered to bring new life to Protestantism, it will be to regain their fidelity to divine revelation and its prophetic message without compromise with the apostate religion of Rome and the world. I conclude with E. G. White’s statements about the Albigenses that history today fully confirms.

“In every age there were witnesses for God—men who cherished faith in Christ as the only mediator between God and man, who held the Bible as the only rule of life, and who hallowed the true Sabbath. How much the world owes to these men, posterity will never know. They were branded as heretics, their

motives impugned, their characters maligned, their writings suppressed, misrepresented, or mutilated. Yet they stood firm, and from age to age maintained their faith in its purity, as a sacred heritage for the generations to come” (*GC* 61).

“Century after century the blood of the saints had been shed [see Rev 6:10]. While the Waldenses laid down their lives upon the mountains of Piedmont ‘for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ’ [see Rev 6:9], similar witness to the truth had been borne by their brethren, the Albigenses of France. In the days of the Reformation its disciples had been put to death with horrible tortures. King and nobles, highborn women and delicate maidens, the pride and chivalry of the nation, had feasted their eyes upon the agonies of the martyrs of Jesus. The brave Huguenots, battling for those rights which the human heart holds most sacred, had poured out their blood on many a hard-fought field. The Protestants were counted as outlaws, a price was set upon their heads, and they were hunted down like wild beasts” (*GC* 271).

“With the flight of the Huguenots a general decline settled upon France. Flourishing manufacturing cities fell into decay; fertile districts returned to their native wildness; intellectual dullness and moral declension succeeded a period of unwonted progress” (*GC* 279). “But a blind and inexorable bigotry chased from her soil every teacher of virtue, every champion of order, every honest defender of the throne; it said to the men who would have made their country a ‘renown and glory’ in the earth, Choose which you will have, a stake or exile. At last the ruin of the state was complete; there remained no more conscience to be proscribed; no more religion to be dragged to the stake; no more patriotism to be chased into banishment.”--Wylie, b. 13, ch. 20. And the Revolution, with all its horrors, was the dire result” (*GC* 279).

You may visit in youtube video the story of the Albigenses told from the very place they lived, with their old castles and refuges they chose to protect themselves.

English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt39AUHmd2U&list=PLzgDpfk23LvC3u9qdllefICAS4Wo2bGWjj>

Spanish

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZcf2qE2EL0&list=PLzgDpfk23LvDbJoV-2IM8LtQWLxhlkkmM>