

# THE ONLY CATHAR BOOK THAT SURVIVED THE FLAMES OF THE INQUISITION

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*The Book of the Two Principles*, written in Latin by a group of Cathars in Lombardy around the year 1240, contains in part a summary made by a scribe, of a work by John de Lugio which was lost (undoubtedly destroyed by the Inquisition), plus a compilation of other authors of inferior quality. It is important to analyze this work because the Albigenses in the Languedoc, and those in Italy later, were terribly persecuted, slandered, and massacred by the Roman papacy. I bought the *Liber* (“book” in Latin), which was translated into French and commented on in a long introduction by Dr. Christine Thouzellier, a specialist in medieval studies. A copy of the *Consolamentum*, the Cathar ritual that was performed on a person before dying, was attached to the book in 1254.

We will not take into account here a small Albigensian fascicle that would have included in a book of Durand of Huesca (a Waldensian converted to Catholicism), because that book was a biased attack on the Cathars. Our interest is focused on understanding as much as possible from its own testimony, that faith which was not permitted to leave a proper legacy for future generations. Concerning the *Liber de Doubus Principiis*, we need to keep in mind that it is a fragment of a more complete work which has not yet been found. The doctrines of the Cathars are not exposed there. The book is rather an attempt to solve the problem of the introduction of evil into a divine creation, from a biblical and philosophical perspective.

Indeed, the style of argument found in the book is typical of *scholasticism*, a philosophical school that was developed in the Catholic Church in the first seven centuries of the second Christian millennium. The authors of the *Liber* thus reveal not only a remarkable knowledge of the Bible, but also of the Patristic thought, of the philosophy of Aristotle, who they quote, and of other contemporary authors.

## The Cathar dualism

The Albigenses were accused of being dualistic by believing that good and evil are two eternal principles, and that in this world evil reigns, something they would have supposedly taken from the *gnosticism* of the early Christian centuries. Thouzellier doubts, however, that a clear link between these two currents can be established, because at the present time, there is not enough documentation for it (11), and concludes that one of the three scribes who wrote the *Liber*, the first A, “would not be dualistic” (26).

Regarding authors B and C, Thouzellier believes that they present a *mitigated dualism* in opposition to Christian *monotheism*. I believe that she is wrong on this point, because the Cathar dualism did not oppose monotheism, but a *monism* which pretended that God was the creator of everything, including evil. Christine uses the term “monism” too. Unfortunately, she doesn’t maintain it consistently throughout her lengthy introduction. The fact that the scribes of the *Liber* speaks about a “good god” and an “evil god” cannot compel us to conclude that they believed that the devil was truly god. They used the term “god” as Paul used it (whom the Cathars quote in that context), when talking about the “god of this age” (2 Cor 4:4), and as the writings of both Testaments used it, regarding the pagan “gods.” Indeed, those Cathars of Lombardy referred to that “evil god” under the name of Satan, the fallen angel who would have become a demon.

## The true background of the discussion

The question few ask is why the Albigenses argued so forcefully that this world is evil? Some highlight the fact that they were horribly persecuted for their supposedly dualistic beliefs and in such a context, they could not label the world as being good. This is true. But most people generally ignore the true background. The Albigenses opposed the philosophical explanation introduced by the medieval scholastic school on the origin of evil in a divine creation. It was believed in Catholic circles that the millennium of peace announced in the book of Revelation was fulfilled in the triumph of Roman Christianity over a pagan world. This view was held sacred by the papacy, and should not be overlooked. To confront their opposition without challenging the notion of the Roman papacy as the kingdom of peace, the scholastics developed an explanation that did not satisfy the Albigenses. According to scholastics, evil did not exist, but only an *absence of good*. This led many to deny even the very existence of the devil, something that persists to this day.

But for the Albigenses, the papal crusades of extermination against them, the tortures and burnings at the stake, could not be explained as simply an absence of good. No! Evil exists, and it is an independent principle, separate from God! The devil (Satan) also exists, according to the Bible, as does the antichrist. And the condemned Cathars did not accept a cover-up of the crimes of the prince of the world represented in their days by the pope of Rome and ruler over the European kingdoms, by such a complicit explanation of “lack of good”. This is the reason why the Cathars worked so hard to affirm that evil is an active principle that rebels against God, and it was clearly perceived in the world in their day.

But how can we explain that God is the creator of this world, if what we see today is subject to so much depravity? The Patristic fathers also sought to solve this problem in their confrontations with pagan philosophers in the first centuries of Christianity. The crisis grew larger as the capital of Rome was transformed into a mostly Christian city. How could Christians then respond to the pagan accusation that with Christianity, things were becoming worse as the barbarians were invading the Roman empire? For pagans, the Christian God could not protect the very capital of the empire, as the old pagan gods did in ancient times.

Augustine of Hippo in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century tried to explain the problem not only through a denial of evil which would be rather a lack of good. He also introduced a change in Christian beliefs about the millennium of peace announced in the book of Revelation. Unlike Christians who up to that point believed in the establishment of the millennium of peace after the Second Coming of Christ, Augustine argued that the millennium began with the first coming of Christ, and that it would spread over the world as Christianity advanced with its Roman vicar at the head. In this way, Roman Christians concluded that the evils facing Rome in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century were caused by the subsistence of paganism. Thus pagans had to be completely eradicated for that kingdom of peace to be imposed.

Toward the end of the first Christian millennium and in the beginning of the second, voices began to denounce the Roman papacy as being the antichrist predicted by the Bible. It was Augustine of Hippo’s solution that prevailed again, this time within Catholic scholasticism, which sought to clear the pope of his crimes and deny that under his kingdom evil prevailed. Thus, like Augustine, they claimed that things that were called evil were rather an *absence of good*. All that remained then was to focus only on the good things that could be seen in the pope and in the church of Rome. And that is the same principle that prevails today in papal ecumenism. To cover up for itself and at the same time achieve the union of churches, Roman Catholicism today requires that the evils of the church not be mentioned, but only the good things the churches have in common.

In the first half of the first Christian millennium, Augustine of Hippo paved the way for the coming of the antichrist foretold by the Bible, not only with his theory of the millennium of peace which would

eventually prevail on the greatest empire in history, but also with his denial of evil. The scholastics did the same as the second Christian millennium began. They sought to protect the Roman papacy from dissenting accusations of being the predicted antichrist, using the same theological and philosophical devices that Augustine had relied upon in the first millennium. And this scholastic solution became, with Thomas Aquinas as its highest representative, the basis and foundation of the Catholic Church for the entire second Christian millennium. Today, a similar principle is being applied at the beginning of the third Christian millennium, as the basis and foundation of modern papal ecumenism. The most recent popes insist that we should not talk about what separates us (the bad things), but only what binds us in common (the good things).

### **How to explain the origin of evil in a divine creation?**

From the *monist* Christian perspective, only one God created the universe and this world through His Son. This was especially highlighted by the Cathar writer *A* quoting Heb 1, whom in the view of Thouzellier, was not a *dualist*. So, it cannot be said that the Cathars did not believe in the divine creation of matter. They literally stated:

“The Lord our God created and performed all things, namely heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and God founded the universe upon the Lord Jesus Christ, from heaven to earth; and all things were created by him, in him, and of him, *as many [Cathar] authorities have shown before*” (271-3). “This new creation of good beings was established by the true Lord God, for eternity, and throughout the centuries...” “I agree that the Lord our God is the ‘creator’ and ‘author’ of this creation, but not of the weak and deprived elements of this world” (Gal 4:9; Col 2:20-22).

God, according to the *Liber*, is neither the author of death, nor rejoices in the death of anyone (303). However, the *Friends of God* stated that because of subsequent corruption, “the heavens that exist now, and the earth, and all the elements, must be entirely dissolved by the heat of fire” (2 Pet 3:10) (251-3).

But how did they explain from a philosophical perspective a world as bad as the one we see today? Was it also God’s work, as their *monist* adversaries argued in their days? This question has been raised again in the modern philosophical perspective, and old approaches that were already circulating at the beginning of the second millennium not only among the Albigenses, but also among other Catholic and non-Christian authors, have been re-emerging. For many still today, the explanation of *free will* that exonerates God of the sins of those whom He created is not acceptable, nor did it satisfy some Cathars in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Albigenses agreed that God, the Supreme Being, Good and Creator, is not responsible for the evil that was introduced afterwards. But how could they exonerate God? If he does not do evil, and therefore cannot be blamed, what is evil, and how was it introduced?

The Cathar attempts in the *Liber* of the two principles to explain this conundrum may not satisfy us, nor may the scholastic attempts of the time with its classic denial of evil. But what we cannot understand is that the papacy became so angry with them for their belief, that they annihilated with bloody fury more than a million of their followers who had spread across Europe. What the papacy did to them was bona fide genocide, intended to prevent anyone from ever stating again that this world is evil, or that the millennium of peace had not begun with the papal kingdom. The real reason for that persecution was that the papal majesty and authority was questioned to such an extent that, in order to prevail, the popes decided to wipe out the dissidents.

On the other hand, it is necessary to keep in mind that the *Book of Two Principles* is not complete, so we do not have all the explanation that the Lombard Cathars gave to this problem. The book also shows us

that when it comes to creation, the origin of evil, and predestination, there was no unanimity among those Friends of God. These *Friends of Jesus*, or *Good Men*, or *Good Christians*, as they used to call themselves to highlight their noble aspirations, seem not to have had a central organization. So their differences were tied to the local leader and his followers. For this reason they had meetings to try to reconcile their beliefs, as many churches do today, under certain fundamental principles. They also had meetings with the Waldensians for the same purpose, who had also been accused of being dualists half a century before John de Lugo (82).

To answer to the enigma of a God-created world that now appears evil, the *Liber* suggested that there were three divine modes of creation or divine workmanship. 1) The mode that God adds to the essences [Latin *essentias*] that were very good, as in the case of Christ's virgin birth. 2) The mode that God adds to evil essences which are under the dominion of Evil so that they can be saved. 3) The mode which allows God to tolerate evil until it is destroyed, "for the advantage of their glory and dishonor of their very wicked enemy" (241-3).

The *Cathars* knew that according to the Bible, God had created an angel who later became a demon. But in seeking a rational response, some of them, as can be seen in the *Liber*, tried to explain the origin of evil by saying that God's creation was not entirely perfect. This fact, however, does not mean that God was guilty of Lucifer's sin, because to make someone completely perfect, God would have had to make another God equal to him, something impossible and meaningless. The *Friends of God*, therefore, understood that the king of Babylon and the king of Assyria symbolically represented the angel Lucifer, who coveted being like God (Isa 14:12ss; Eze 31:8-9), precisely because he had not been made equal to God. Although not all the *Friends of Jesus* agreed with this argument, some found in that inferiority a reason for the existence of evil. In this way, they ended up falling into a predestination equivalent to that of many Christians today, the heirs of sixteenth century Calvinism.

### **Predestination – Free will - Salvation**

Continuing with this argument found in one section of the *Liber* about a presumable cause for evil, those who reasoned so declared that by logic, no one was created with natural or absolute free will, not even the angels of God. They were created with the power to do evil, but since evil was yet unknown, the first angels created by God had no precedent to help them avoid it, and thus fell into it unaware and became demons. And so they will finally be destroyed. The other angels who came later received the power both to do good and to avoid evil, upon learning of the fall and punishment of the former angels. And thus they were able to escape the curse. In short, those who don't have the knowledge and power of God to be saved, as well as discernment between good and evil, like the little children, can have free will to do what they have no experience (391-405).

What did Jesus come here for? To do good and save men who are under the dominion of the fallen angels. Why could the Son of God do good? Because according to the *Liber*, He could not choose evil, for He received from God the power to do the good that the evil angels did not have (John 5:19,30). In order to do good, every creature needs like Jesus to receive the power of the true God. By his death, he reconciles and frees the spirits subjected to the power of evil, that is, subjected to the god and prince of this world, the devil. People can be saved because the Son of God gives them the power they need to do good.

### **Creation**

Against the prevailing radical *monism*, the *Liber* denied that God created everything. They said He did not create evil. To do this, the scribe attached a significant number of biblical passages to show that the word "all" has its limitations. Among these limitations is evil, which God did not create. In the view of the *Liber*, evil exists independently of God. And if God didn't create evil, who did it? The answer was:

*the second principle* that we find in this world that is evil and was incarnated in the devil. That evil principle operates contrary to the principle of good that is represented by God.

Good and evil are known for their effects, declared the Cathars whom we are studying. Since what they could see in this world was the kingdom of evil, some *Albanenses* in Lombardy presumed that this visible world was the work of the evil god (always in reference to the fallen angel, the devil). And they came to the conclusion that the visible creation of Genesis was the work of that evil god, while the good God would have created the invisible world.

Other *Friends of God* called *Garatienses* (followers of his first bishop Garattus), disagreed with these philosophical theories, and openly denied them in behalf of a more definite *monistic* view. “You, the *Albanenses*,” they declared, “are unable to show by the testimony of the divine Scriptures, that an evil god is the creator of heaven, earth, and all visible things, as you preach daily in public” (363). Therefore, the *Garatienses* offered a different explanation. They stated that there is a single Creator God of both the visible and the invisible world.

According to the *Liber*, that one God formed the four elements of this visible world, namely heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them, from which man and woman come. How did they explain their subsequent corruption? By the fact that Lucifer, created by God, corrupted those four elements by becoming a demon. Marriage for them was established by the true God, and it is good, provided that through it, God can fulfill his purpose of restoring his kingdom.

But the *Garatienses* were criticized in turn by some *Albanenses* (followers of bishop Albano) for requiring celibacy for preachers and for refraining themselves from eating the good things that the good God would have created such as meat, eggs and cheese. If all that God did was good—as the *Garatienses Friends of Jesus* claimed—why then did they refrain from all that?

Some deduce also today that among the *Good Christians* of Lombardy were some who did not believe in an *ex-nihilo* creation, that is, made out of nothing. But we must admit that the *Liber* is not a complete work, and that many deductions come from those who try to understand them today, since we do not have all the deductions they made on these subjects. Referring to the creation of man and woman, these Cathars of Lombardy proved that God did not create from nothing. As a matter of fact, man was formed from pre-existing matter, from the dust of the earth. Nor did the Son of God come from nothing, but was formed in his incarnation by the Holy Spirit and Mary. Some infer today that according to the *Liber*, God made the universe and this world through his Son from a pre-existing matter. I don’t see this so clearly, but if this was so, matter would have been eternal for them, or at least created before the living creation of the universe.

Since God’s creation was not perfect (according to the Cathar deduction of Lombardy that everything that God creates is inferior to him) (307-9), God would have added to the essences of that imperfect creation an order or power to perform good works in Christ Jesus (making sinners fit for salvation and good deeds) (259). In other words, the dualism for which the *Good Men* would have been condemned in Lombardy did not depart from the biblical parameters. What we find is a problem in explaining the bad things that exist in this world from a metaphysical perspective, and the role that God and the devil played in it. But all Cathars accepted that God is not the creator of evil.

It is striking to recall in this context that the Inquisition burned an old lady alive, because in the interrogation she said she could not believe that God had made the mosquitoes or the wolves. What is wrong with this testimony? Will mosquitoes and bad wolves be on the new earth? Even lions will be harmless according to the Bible (Isa 11).

## **Eternity of evil as cause and effect**

The *Liber* states categorically that evil had an origin, and that it will be destroyed by the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. It clearly states that “the true Lord God must destroy that power [of evil] together with all the evil powers which every day act against Him and His creatures. Thus, the Lord our God went to great lengths not only to destroy that mighty one (Satan), but also all the powers and restraints that hold the creatures of the good Lord captive when they submit to the empire of the evil one.” The *Liber* quotes Ps 52:5; 10:15-16; 37:9-10; Prov 14:32; Heb 2:14; Luc 1:52; 1 Cor 15:24,26, and many more passages of both Testaments to affirm this (315-319).

However, one of the proposals compiled in the *Liber* suggests that both good and evil are eternal. To reach this conclusion, the scribe enters a cause-and-effect dialectic. It begins by stating that the ultimate effect of evil is eternal hell, and offers several biblical passages taken from the *Latin Vulgate* (329-331). If the wicked will never stop being destroyed, it is because evil will remain forever.

Evidently, these Cathars of Florence were rid of several erroneous Catholic doctrines, but were not free from the doctrine of eternal hell that came from a symbiosis of Greek paganism with Christian beliefs. Nor have subsequent Protestants and Evangelicals to this day escaped that spurious Catholic doctrine. So neither Protestants nor Catholics today can deny the well-founded Cathar reasoning. If the hell to which the devil and his angels (along with all who submitted to them) will allegedly be cast is eternal, then evil is also eternal. [This deduction fades, of course, when we better read the biblical texts that speak of a hell of eternal consequences, but not of physical burning that will never cease].

We also find an interesting deduction in one part of the *Liber*. If the effect of good is eternal—it is argued—then its cause should be also “eternal.” That scribe makes the same deduction with regard to evil. For him the antiquity of the devil is seen in Rev 12:9, where we are told that “the ancient serpent” called the devil and Satan was expelled from heaven. That scribe of the *Liber* does not deny that the devil had a beginning. He simply states that “the essences of reality” that caused his fall, are eternal “or ancient,” and those essences had no beginning (331-3). To suggest that these essences were ancient would show that this Albanensian scribe was not quite sure of their eternity, or that he understood the word eternity as something that happened very far away in the past. But from this statement, some have wondered today whether that scribe believed in the eternity of matter (which for the Cathar was created by God as inferior to God Himself and therefore was a virtual cause of evil when God created Lucifer from that matter) (see Eze 28:13).

Let us insist here that this philosophical approach has nothing to do with the accusation of believing in two eternal gods, one good and another evil. And although the Albanenses sometimes used the term “god” to speak of the principle of evil as in 2 Cor 4:4, that did not necessarily imply that they understood by that term an eternal existence of evil as a person. For the Albanensian scribe, the names of the devil and sin “designate the supreme principle of evil or its effects” (333). So, not even in that extreme approach of some *Good Men*, can we see a dualism of two equal and eternal gods. No! Divine creation—as understood by the Albigenses—will be free from evil in both cause and effect, and the redeemed will live forever in the kingdom of God. Notwithstanding, though evil will be destroyed, its effects will endure in the eternal hell.

## **Presumed Marcionism**

One of the scribes of the *Liber* dared to say that in the conquest of Canaan, it was the evil god who required the Israelites to destroy even children who have not free will (319). He did not believe that the

God of the Old Testament was evil. He simply discriminated between some isolated passages of the Bible on the basis of his view of what is good and what is evil, as coming from the good God or the lower evil god (the devil). Thus, when God tells David that because he had committed adultery with the Hittite's wife, and tells him that He would "arouse evil," and make David's wives sleep in the sunlight with another, the Cathar interpreter deduced that a good God could not have done that for himself (339). Nor would that good God send an evil spirit to torment Saul, or another evil spirit to king Abimelech and the inhabitants of Shechel. Neither would that good God command the lying spirit to deceive the prophets of Ahab. For "the Lord, our God, sent a spirit of truth, as the Christ declared it in the gospel," not a spirit of lies (John 16:13) (353-5).

Of course! They claimed that in no way would God do this evil work in person, but they later clarified the issue by saying that God allowed or tolerated the work of the evil god (or devil) and of his henchmen. According to the Bible, what God does is simply not prevent the wicked from doing evil things (263-269, 407-9).

With regard to the New Testament, this scribe also believed that the Father (good God) did not kill His Son, because no good father would do this to his son. Rather he concluded that this was the work of the evil god, namely the devil (351-3). Some modern theologians reason similarly today, considering it horrendous that a father would sacrifice his son, in the case of God, as a payment for our sins. However, this deduction vanishes when we know that the Son is equal to the Father, as much God as His Father, and gave His life willingly, without compulsion, for sinners.

No one can deny that according to the Bible many people were involved in the death of Jesus such as the devil, Pilate, and the Jewish leaders (Acts 4:28; Heb 2:14). For this reason, the *Liber* later affirms that the Father also participated in the death of His Son, not actively by killing Him, but *allowing* and *tolerating* this to happen for the salvation of His people (259-269).

With many biblical texts from the Old and New Testaments, the Lombardian Cathars intended to prove that many things God does are rather permissions, tolerances, to achieve the redemption of His people at the end. Although the evil god (the devil) is the author of evil and performs evil deeds, the Bible says in both Testaments that God Himself does it, by the fact that He does not prevent this to happen (compare, for example, 2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chr 21:1). And the *Liber* gathers biblical passages to prove it (Eze 31:8-9, who interprets the king of Assyria as the figure of the devil; Isa 45:6-7; 54:16; Ps 102:26; Job 40:15, etc). That is not necessarily Marcionism, even if sometimes the terminology employed could be misinterpreted in this way by a careless reader.

In a superficial reading, some have inferred that the *Friends of Jesus* did not believe in the Trinity. However, I couldn't detect such a claim. On the contrary, the *Liber* mentions the three persons of the Deity, but it denies that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same person (353). The book also emphasizes the earthly human condition of Christ, but this fact cannot force us to conclude that the Lombardian Cathars did not believe that Jesus was God in human flesh. On the contrary, they clearly affirmed what the Bible says: the Son was begotten by the Holy Spirit. In addition, they also affirmed that God created the whole universe and the world through His Son Jesus Christ. And this fact did not prevent them from stating that "darkness is not created, in a proper and absolute sense, by the Lord our God, nor by his Son Jesus Christ, but in an improper and relative sense" (271-3). They also stated that at the incarnation, God did not make Jesus from nothing, but begat him from Mary and the Holy Spirit (247).

## **Persecutions**

Anyone seeking biblical evidence to strengthen the faith of those who suffer under the yoke of the prince of this world, called the devil and Satan in the Bible, need only read the last chapter of the *Book of Two*

*Principles*. This chapter (and actually the whole book) shows us the depth of knowledge that the *Friends of God* had of the Bible. They offer for consideration “the evils that the prophets, the Christ, and the apostles once endured by doing good for the salvation of souls, and forgiving” their enemies” (409).

They could see in the Bible “how the disciples of Christ in the last time must bear numerous scandals, tribulations, persecutions, sufferings, pains, and even death by false Christs, false prophets, and by evil, seductive men.” The Bible thus showed them “how [the Lord’s disciples] should forgive their persecutors and slanderers and pray for them, doing good to them, without even defending themselves personally, as true Christians are seen doing today, fulfilling the holy scriptures for His own good and honor.” Likewise, they could also see that “the wicked and sinners always accumulate to their own misfortune, the sins of their fathers” (409-411).

Also appearing in the *Liber* are passages from the books of Daniel and the Revelation that point out the horrible work of the “little horn” and the apocalyptic beast or antichrist that would persecute those who would be faithful to the Word of God (Dan 7:21-22,24-25; 8:9-12,23-25; Rev 13:5-7). The authors of the *Liber of Duobus Principiis* did indeed believe that the persecutions they were suffering under the Roman papacy had been foretold by Christ and the apostles, and that they should remain faithful until death to receive the crown of eternal life. God Himself suffers, according to the *Liber*, from the nefarious work of the prince of evil. But He tolerates this evil work that makes Him suffer, in view of the final triumph of good and for the salvation of his people (407ss).

## Conclusion

The deep knowledge of the Word of God held by the Friends of Jesus is impressive. The index of biblical texts offered in the French translation by Thouzellier, contains in small print and in two columns, eleven pages of biblical texts. If there is one book that the Albigenses assiduously and regularly read, it was the Bible. All their writings are imbued with biblical texts. That a few of them had a hard time seeing the true God in some passages of the Bible that today theologians interpret as being *anthropomorphisms* (divine adaptation to human language and understanding), does not deny the fact that they believed in the whole Bible as their only source of faith and truth. The *Liber* rightly interpreted those *anthropomorphisms* as permissive acts of God for not preventing evil on certain occasions to do its calamitous work, because the Lord has a broader purpose that will be understood later.

What to say about the supposed Albigensian dualism? If by dualism we understand belief in the real existence of evil, and of its dominance in the world, then many like us are likewise dualistic as well. That’s what the Bible says. And this fact does not compel us to accept all the attempts of some *Good Christians* to explain the creation and origin of evil through a deductive logic, nor the explanation given by the scholastics of their days representing the Catholic thought. Therefore, the conclusion reached by many historians today is that the Albigenses were good people, good medieval Christians, and their dualism as a rule did not go farther than the limits imposed by the Bible. They sought to side with the one true good God, and his Son Jesus Christ, and to be faithful to the Word of God, even unto death.

The Albigensian connection with Protestantism three centuries later, was seen in the acceptance of the Bible as the only supreme norm of faith and behavior, in the rejection of the papal pretension of being the Vicar of God and of the Son of God on the earth, in the denial of the transformation of the bread and wine in the Mass into the flesh and blood of Christ, and in their condemnation of the veneration of saints and virgins of the Roman Catholic Church. For this reason the Albigenses are to be considered not only as true and authentic medieval Christians, but also as authentic Protestants three centuries before the appearance of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

Make a youtube tour for the Albigensian castles in the following page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rt39AUHmd2U&list=PLzgDpfk23Lvc3u9qdlfICAS4Wo2bGWjj>