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THE ALBIGENSIAN HERESY AND THE
GNOSTIC TRADITION

by

John Stine Penman

A Thesis
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THE ALBIGENSIAN HERESY AND THE GNOSTIC TRADITION

John Stine Penman, M.A.

Western Michigan University, 1983

That the Albigensian heresy represents a resurgence of early Christian Gnosticism is the thesis of this work. The study defines Gnosticism in terms of its pattern of prevalent characteristics and traces the course of Gnosticism and its emergence as the Albigensianism of the Middle Ages. Using the finding of Hans Soderberg's La Religion des Cathares: Etudes, sur le gnosticisme de la basse antiquité et du moyen âge as a point of departure through the analysis of documents discovered since 1949, the study shows that Gnosticism and the Albigensian heresy represent a continued tradition of religious expression as a recognizable alternative to the accepted and established institutions of Christianity in the Western world.

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Last of all, I would like very much to recognize my typist, Karen Jazayeri-Nejad.

John Stine Penman

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PREFACE

A fundamental question for humankind and a particularly difficult question for Christians has been the origin of evil. The Deity, the Creator of all things, is held by Christians to be infinitely good. Yet as an infinitely good Creator He would have not created evil yet it is evident that evil exists. If God as the author and creator of all things did not create evil, whence did it arise?

Attempts to answer this paradox have produced much speculation which has been declared heretical, i.e., contrary to the teaching of the Church, the majority of Christianity. One solution is of great antiquity. If there is a creation of all things good by a god of good then contrariwise there must have been a creation of all things evil by a god of evil. This dualistic concept of the cosmos defines the realm of good as the spiritual plane, and the realm of evil, the material plane. Radical dualism has been a constant error confronting the established Church from the days of the foundation of the Christian church through the Middle Ages.

Two of the major Christian dualist movements which have confronted the Church were the early-Christian Gnostics and the Albigensian heretics of the Middle Ages, the Cathari. Both of these systems had been identified, studied and vigorously challenged by orthodox polemicists. Both of these systems

viewed themselves as the true Christian Church and as bearers of the correct interpretation and application of core doctrine. Each bears considerable similarity to the other. In fact, the points of similarity are so striking between the Gnostics and the Cathari as to warrant a detailed investigation and study.

Until the twentieth century very few primary documents were available for a careful analysis of Gnosticism and medieval dualism. This lack of sources made it all but impossible to determine filiation and points of inter-relationship; very little attention has been directed to this area of study. The question of the survival of gnostic ideas in the catharist religion had been, until the seventh decade of this century, the subject of only two studies: The Medieval Manichee by Sir Steven Runciman published in 1947 and La Religion des Cathares: Etude sur le gnosticisme de la basse antiquité et du moyen âge by Hans Soderberg published in 1949. It is a curious coincidence that the year of publication of Sir Steven's book saw the discovery of the cache of books at Nag Hammadi. Both these studies were made far in advance of the discovery of and without the benefit of the culling of the wealth of those primary gnostic sources. We are now, for example, in possession of such documents as the Gospel of Truth, heretofore known only through the condemnatory writings of Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons.

Many of the secondary documents have been openly deprecatory and antagonistic, often reflecting a slanted and prejudiced view. Often in post-reformation studies the degree of prejudice has depended upon whether the commentator remained faithful to the Roman church or not. The Cathars, for the most part, have been seen as the objects of rebuttal on the part of Church polemicists. In 1250 Sacconi stated that Jean de Lugio wrote "un grand volume de dix cahiers". Of that work only a part, the Liber de duobus principiis, exists, edited by A. Dondaine in 1939. No large collections of materials, such as the Cathar library of Robert, dauphin d'Auvergne, reported upon by de Bourbon in his Anecdotes Historiques, have been found. All have been lost, destroyed or have otherwise disappeared.

The issue which I wish to pursue is whether or not Gnosticism and the Albigensian heresy represent a continued tradition of religious expression alternate to the accepted and established practice of Christianity. The introductory part of my study presents a definition of gnosis in terms of a basic pattern of prevalent characteristics. The main part of the study will attempt to trace the course of Gnosticism and its emergence as Albigensianism in terms of ritual and cultic practice, of dogma and theology and of the social organization and life style of adepts. This Thesis will contend that the Cathari and the so-called Albigensian heresy do

represent a medieval resurgence of an earlier form of Christian Gnosticism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. HISTORICAL EXCURSUS.....	23
Marcion of Sinop.....	23
Valentinian Gnosticism.....	28
Bardesan.....	29
Manicheanism.....	32
The Archontics.....	37
Messalians, Euchites and Dancers.....	39
The Paulicians.....	46
The Bogomils.....	52
Suspected Dualists and the Cathari, The Albigensian heresy.....	70
III. THE CATHARI.....	83
Mitigated and Absolute Dualism: Theology and Cosmology.....	83
Ritual and Lifestyle.....	99
IV. NEW EVIDENCE.....	114
The Manichean Treatise.....	114
Manuscript A.6.10.....	120
A "New" Gloss on the Lord's Prayer.....	123
V. SUMMARY.....	130
VI. CONCLUSION.....	145
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	148

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1966 a Colloquium held at Messina, Italy on the Origins of Gnosticism defined the word gnosis as a "knowledge of the divine mysteries reserved for an elite". Gnosis was distinguished specifically from "Gnosticism" which was agreed upon to be the name applied to certain religious systems particularly prevalent during the Second Century, A.D. The working hypothesis of the Colloquium proposed that these Gnostic sects displayed a coherent series of characteristics. In particular, they taught in part or wholly that there exists in man, but not in all men, a divine spark called pneuma. This pneumatic spark originated in the divine spiritual realm. This spiritual element then fell into the material universe, the world of fate, birth, life, and death. Pneuma, the divine counterpart and true self of man, needs to be awakened. Through this reawakening the pneumatic particle will be re-integrated with the divine whole, thus bringing about man's salvation. The Colloquium participants further agreed that gnosis, wisdom received by revelation or spiritual illumination, is "Gnosticism" only when it maintains the "idea of the divine consubstantiality of the spark that is in need of being awakened and reintegrated." This Gnosis of Gnosticism involves the divine identity of the

knower, the possessor of this sacred secret wisdom; and the known, the divine substance of ones transcendent self. Gnosis is also the means by which one knows, thus comprehending gnosis in its function as an implicit divine faculty that is to be awakened and actualized.¹

Hans Jones, one of the Colloquium participants and a leading authority on Gnosticism, explains in his book The Gnostic Religion that the gnostics put great value on having knowledge of the divine (sophia) whereas the knowledge of faith (pistis) was of a much lesser significance.² The emphasis on sophia (divine knowledge) as the means for the attainment of salvation, or as salvation itself, and the claim to the possession of this particular knowledge articulated into ones own doctrine is an element common to gnostic thought.³

It must be understood that gnostic knowledge or wisdom is not the wisdom of classical, rational philosophy. It is a knowledge which has a religious or "supranatural meaning", a wisdom that refers to "objects of faith rather than reason". Pistis, those areas of faith of a given religious system, can be expounded in a rational, logical and totally coherent deductive

¹Ugo Bianchi, L'Origine delle gnosticisme, Colloquio di Messina 13-18 Aprile, 1966. Testi e Discuizione Pubblicati acura di Bianchi (University of Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967). pp. xxv-xxvii.

²Hans Jonas, The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958) p. 35.

³Ibid., p. 32.

manner. The inductive knowledge of the Gnostics, gnosis or sophia is a divine wisdom, the product of intuition and revelatory experience, spiritual enlightenment—an illumination. Jonas adds further that since "gnosis meant preeminently knowledge of God—and—since the character of God is one of radical transcendence, it follows paradoxically, that this knowledge of God is naturally unknowable."⁴ Gnosis is wisdom of the type not communicated by rational argument but produced by spiritual awakening.

Gnosis also has a further function in terms of salvation. As it is concerned with soteriological secrets, gnosis is not just theoretical speculation, but functions in and of itself as the salvation itself. The ultimate object of gnosis is God/union with God and the direct reception of the wisdom of God through experience of the divine. The event of gnosis within an individual transforms the knower of gnosis into a partaker and sharer in the divine essence. To know ones true self, the divine spiritual element of ones being, is to know God. The spiritual pneumatic element of ones true self is the linking, cohesive element, and the only element, by which one is bound to the divine spiritual realm.⁵

Elaine Pagels likewise regards gnosis as an intuitive

⁴Ibid., p. 34.

⁵Ibid., p. 35.

process of self-knowledge and awareness.⁶ To know oneself is to ultimately know God and to this end resolves the questions which are expressed in the famous Valentinian gnostic formula from the Excerpta Theodata:

What liberates is the knowledge of who we were, what we have become, where we were, whereinto we have been thrown, whereto we speed,⁷ where from we are redeemed, what birth is and what rebirth.

Jonas describes the main theological feature of Gnosticism as a more or less radical dualism which characterizes and governs the relationship of man with God and with the world. The type of dualism varies. Certain systems are based upon a radical dualism featuring principles of good and evil, co-existent and eternal. Other systems feature a mitigated dualism or monadic emanationist conception of the divine which describes how the spiritual element came to be "devolved" into the material universe. But, whatever the system, the true deity is absolutely transmundane. This universe is a cold, hostile and forbidding place, the product of malevolent powers who are either ignorant of the true God or who do everything possible to maintain and continue the imprisonment of the pneumatic material in this realm of darkness. The spiritual element, having been lost aeons ago when it fell from the spiritual realm, has been

⁶Elaine H. Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels (New York and Toronto: Random House, 1979). p. xix.

⁷Ibid., p. xix.

scattered throughout the evil cosmos. Like its source, the transcendent God, pneuma, is pure spirit, invisible, hidden, and unknowable.⁸

Cosmologically, the visible world, indeed the whole of the material universe, is the domain of the evil powers. marcion, one of the first Christian gnostics, likened the world to a vast prison cell filled with noxious creatures at the bottom, at which man finds himself trapped. The laws of nature rule what, as outward evidence of a universal fate, heimarmene, which has been revealed to man through the doctrine, laws and morality of the Mosaic Law, the sole aim of which is the continued enslavement of man. More often than not, the Creator God or Cosmostrator or Demiurge is identified as Jehovah the God of the Old Testament.⁹

Man is composed of flesh, soul and spirit. He is of a mundane and supra-mundane composition. The body and soul, the "sarchic" and "psychic" elements of man, are the products of archontic design and ingenuity by which means is insured the continued captivity of the spiritual pneumatic element.¹⁰ The pneuma lies buried, held captive within the often multi-layered soul component, which in turn lies within the flesh.

⁸Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 42.

⁹Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁰St. Paul differentiates pneuma--spirit, psyche--soul and sarche--flesh.

The soul material, a production of the evil hosts of the visual universe, is the source of man's violent passions and emotions which function solely as a means of preventing man from knowing the truth.¹¹

In an eschatological sense, completion is partly brought about by the release of the inner man from the bonds of the flesh and the psychic chains of negative feelings and emotions. The reascension of the true self to the realms of the divine light and glory also assures the re-ordering of the godhead which at the very beginning of the cosmic drama lost the pneuma now scattered throughout the material realm. The material realm is characterized by ignorance. The release of the splinters of pneuma is assured by Knowledge. In Gnosticism the Savior is a bearer of wisdom who reveals all at his coming into this world. He is an envoy of the Good True God. He brings wisdom not of this world and in a practical sense provides knowledge and direction for the Way out of this world. The message of Gnosticism also equips the spirit with the proper charms, formulae and secret names necessary for the ascent to the true Father. The final aim of Gnosticism is the return of all pneumatic material to the unity of the Godhead, and thus the restoration of the wholeness of the divine.¹²

Because this Messenger--Envoy--Redeemer--Savior in

¹¹Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 44.

¹²Ibid., pp. 44-45.

Gnostic thought is identified with Christ, the Church Fathers considered all gnostic groups to be Christian heretic sects. The early anti-gnostic polemicists wrote their tracts and refutations on behalf of the spiritual authority of what we now, by virtue of hindsight, recognize as the orthodox Christian church. Because the object of their polemics was inclusive against any and all gnostic groups that arose within Christianity, or had in some way adapted the figure of Christ to their teachings or had even possessed a common Jewish background, invariably many sects which laid no claim to be Christian came under attack. Therefore, any and all systems which appeared to compete with or distort the message of salvation promulgated by orthodox Christianity were closely, though not always objectively, scrutinized by advocates of the Church. As the number of gnostic documents which have survived are few, gnostic research until the twentieth century has also tended to view Gnosticism as a strictly Christian phenomenon. The discovery of a greater number of texts and the broader scope of modern research however, have shed new light on the origins of Gnosticism. Scholars have demonstrated the existence of a pre-Christian Jewish Gnosticism, of a Hellenistic pagan variety and of a whole movement outside the Hellenistic world as evidenced by the Manda people of the Middle East.¹³ The Gnostics with which this thesis will concern itself are Christian dualists

¹³ Ibid., p. 33.

who claimed an individual and personal awareness of the divine gained through a spiritual illumination which evidenced itself as a particular wisdom and an attitude toward the world. These sects believed themselves to be the true Christian church.

The teachings of the Gnostics were a direct challenge and an affront to the simple message of salvation put forth by the Christians. To treat second-century Christianity as a homogeneous community under one spiritual authority with an accepted clearly defined dogma is to read back into an inchoate group the principles later defined. Jonas argues that the great proliferation of gnostic speculation and communities forced the Church to take a theological stand on certain issues and to strive for a greater uniformity in terms of doctrine.¹⁴

Elaine Pagels in her book, The Gnostic Gospels, also devotes attention to how the Christian church met the challenge of Gnosticism by analyzing the question of spiritual authority. The brand of Christianity called gnostic differs substantially from that taught by the instituted Church over the centuries. Since I have already used the word "orthodoxy" in this discussion, I must specify, that by "orthodoxy" I mean the view of the established, or what came to be the established, view of the institutional Church, whether in its Eastern or Western branches. All Christians are in agreement on certain theological issues if they subscribe to the spiritual authority of the instituted

¹⁴Ibid., p. 137.

Church. They believe that Jesus Christ as the Son of God became incarnate, was born into the world and lived life as a human being with all that that implies. He was arrested, tortured and crucified. Through His sacrifice upon the cross, He took upon Himself the sins of the world in order to bring salvation to mankind. His victory over death was accomplished when He arose from the dead in the flesh three days after His death upon the cross. As part of His lifework as a man, Jesus of Nazareth was a wandering mendicant teacher who went about with a group of disciples whom we call the Apostles. The position of the Church is that it was to this group of men that Christ revealed the fullest exposition of His teaching. Because of this revelation, the instituted Church traces its spiritual authority to these original followers of the Master.

Pagels sees the declaration of Christ's resurrection, a man dying and then returning to life, as support for a firm claim to spiritual authority. The docetic Gnostics (Docetists), on the other hand, rejected the idea of a fleshly resurrection, or indeed rejected the idea that Jesus ever put on flesh. As an Envoy of the Good Spiritual God, Jesus was pure spirit. He only appeared to take on human flesh. His life as a man and his death on the cross were merely illusion. A pure spirit would never have deigned to put on filthy flesh, which was held to be the product of evil design and intent. Pagels also shows that the doctrine of fleshly resurrection functions not

only as a religious doctrine, but also, from a purely utilitarian political aspect, as a legitimization of the claim by the Church to a chain of succession in Church leadership extending back to the Apostles. Because the direct experience of the risen Christ was limited to the immediate circle of the Apostles, the circle of spiritual authority narrowed considerably. It placed only eleven men in a position to ordain. To Gnostics, in terms of the social order, the orthodox teaching on resurrection had a decided effect: it legitimized a specific hierarchy of persons through whose authority all others must go to approach God.¹⁵

To the Gnostics this was at best contemptuous. First, all that mattered was personal spiritual vision. Besides, many believed that Christ in his risen state, illusory as it had been, nonetheless revealed to St. Paul secrets, none of which had been revealed to the other apostles. Also, the Gnostics claimed direct access to God. The wisdom that each Gnostic initially received was more than likely and evidently wisdom of which the priests and bishops were completely ignorant.¹⁶

The rejection by the instituted Church of dual Gods, whether as two eternal principles or as a monadic dualism, also had an important effect socially and politically. Pagels notes Clement had argued that God, the God of Israel, ruled

¹⁵Pagels, Gnostic Gospels, p. 27.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 27.

all things:

He is the lord and master whom all must obey: He is the judge who lays down the law, punishing rebels and rewarding the obedient.¹⁷

God, according to Clement, delegates His authority to the rulers and leaders of earth. In the case of spiritual matters, these rulers and authorities are the bishops, deacons and priests of the Church. Pagels also found that continued acceptance of God as a being of strictly masculine qualities further restricted the number of persons who might have become members of the elite of the Church and succeed to the chain of apostolic succession. At any rate, the maintenance of a concept of a God which was wholly masculine, culturally specific and appropriate as it may have been at the time, prohibited orthodox women from ever participating fully within the Church. The spiritual success of women was of little import in the final analysis and as a direct result women were by extension prevented from full participation in society to the detriment of the Church, society and humanity as a whole.¹⁸

The Gnostics on the other hand recognized that the human body was merely a vessel which carried in it psychic material whose emotions and passions might possibly contain a spark of pneuma, the divine element. It did not matter

¹⁷Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁸Ibid., passim, p. 48-69

whether the body in question was male or female. Any person might be one of the gnostic elect. It was important only that those in the gnostic elite, that is, the illuminated ones; had attained spiritual awakening. The Gnostics therefore included women as members, teachers, missionaries, and spiritual leaders. For the Gnostics, the division of humanity into two sexes, the pleasures of sexual intercourse, reproduction, social classes, political organization, the developing hierarchy of the Church and indeed all facets of human experience were simply further barriers to keep man from the Truth.

The practical application of the gnostic vision was the adoption of a rigidly ascetic lifestyle aimed at total renunciation of the material world. The Gnostic lived a celibate life marked by a rigid calendar of fasting, prayer and non-involvement with the world. This disenfranchisement expressed itself as a contempt for government and instituted spiritual authority; for the law both ecclesiastical and social; exactly those powers and princes who owed allegiance to the "evil creator God" of the material universe. Yet many Gnostics rejected the notion that man has a free will. What any individual might do mattered little as all had been preordained. Therefore, certain gnostic sects were also notoriously libertine. One group might attempt to counter the plans of the Demiurge by refusing to continue sexual activity and the others might attempt to subvert the Cosmocrator by breaking every law of the Mosaic code which, as we have seen above, was aimed solely at the

spiritual enslavement of man.

This contempt for the developing hierarchy in the early Christian church was based on an assumption that the "self-styled" spiritual masters of what became the instituted Church were ignorant of gnosis. Since the leaders of the Church had not experienced gnosis, the Gnostics argued, these men could do little except stand in the way of spiritual progress and thereby prevent the knowledge of the true God. By extension, the rites and rituals of the Church embodied false and misleading doctrine. Gnostics viewed the bishops and their kind as ignorant men attempting to lead others to a questionable salvation, symbolized by useless and inefficacious ritual based upon ignorance of (and non-experience of) the spirit. The orthodox group was marked by leaders and the led. The Gnostics on the other hand rejected the idea that another man might be the only avenue open to salvation. Each individual had to experience the divine first hand. Upon reception of the spirit, the Gnostic possessed knowledge and wisdom, but his "spiritual authority" was binding on no one but himself. Spiritual authority over others did not exist among the Gnostics and as a result no real hierarchy evolved other than a division into the elite-elect and hearer-believer classes. As the only means of salvation for the Gnostics was spiritual illumination, the orthodox were quick to see the Gnostics as dangerously elitist. Only a few men might ever discover the pneuma within themselves. This

left little hope for the majority of mankind. To this criticism the Gnostics generally replied, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

Marcion of Sinop was one of the first Christian Gnostic challengers of the Church. Marcion's system with stark simplicity was in sharp contrast to the complexity of the gnostic system put forth by Valentinian, yet each possesses a single pervasive discernable element which Jonas calls the "gnostic principle". It is that element which makes the system above and beyond the complicated mythic systems, the extensive angelologies and speculations, "gnostic".¹⁹ We are less concerned here with the question of why one side won out over the other, or with the political ramifications and social effects the decisions of the orthodoxy produced than with the question of what is "gnostic" and how it can be identified.

First and foremost gnosticism is an attitude and a stance vis-a-vis the universe, the immediate visual world, one's self and life. The orthodox community placed man and his helpmate, woman, at the very center of a cosmos created by God. This God cares about the world and even went so far as to become one of his own creatures, a man. The essential and most important aspect of this orthodox cosmological outlook is that the Church viewed this world and the surrounding cosmos as good. The Church itself was freely open to all. If only one would believe,

¹⁹Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. xvii.

salvation was assured. With this faith came the promise of a future guaranteed spiritual success. Because any and all could include themselves as possible members of the elect, the orthodox Church became a hope-oriented community of souls, a refuge from the incomprehensible and, all too often, shatteringly negative elements of life. Evil in the world makes itself only too apparent, but most of it stems from man's own free will to choose and his wrong choices.

The Gnostics, however, regarded man as victim. They felt that the Orthodox church avoided the question of evil in this world. Blaming man's free will for evil in this essentially good creation did not meet the issue head-on. The blame was not man's but God's. The existence of evil in this world evidenced the fact that, the creator God, Jehovah, was irrational and vengeful. The senile, petulant God who terrorizes his creation with vengeful, merciless actions could not possibly be the good, kind God who is the end and source of salvation. Yes, the world and the universe are evil. This is a place of horrors. Man is a stranger here. The universe is a totally negative experience. It is sham, illusion. Man's true home, the kingdom of the good God, is removed from this world and its God is not the God of this universe.

Out of this attitude one begins to perceive a world view, a sensibility and a certain understanding of reality. To define the very principle which makes gnostic systems, "Gnostic" requires a definition of the experience of gnosis. This proves

to be impossible for gnostic spiritual knowledge was always held to be unknowable intellectually. Gnosis requires comprehension by insight rather than by logical deduction. It is better relegated to the experience and acquisition of knowledge through the emotions which produces an awareness that evidences itself as a sensibility. Upon hearing the exposition of the gnostic message, the knower immediately recognizes the element which is representative of the whole message. For the uninitiated the message appears in exoteric form as complicated mythologies, tediously intricate speculation. The Gnostic principle first and foremost causes the adherent to see the world and its creator God as totally negative.

But what is the Gnostic principle? I must return to my original statement that it is a sensibility which displays itself in Scriptural exegesis and in speculative thought by certain symbols and metaphors. These same symbols reoccur throughout the writings and teachings of Gnostic and gnosticizing sects from the first centuries of the Christian church through those of the Middle Ages. Hans Jonas presents a list of the major symbols which I summarize here as the core of the Gnostic message.²⁰

In the beginning of all things, there exists an ALIEN GOD, an UNKNOWN DEITY who is NAMELESS and the HIDDEN

²⁰Ibid., The upper case words are actually the section headings from Jonas's detailed analysis of gnostic metaphors and symbols.

from mankind. His realm is BEYOND THIS WORLD and is totally part of ANOTHER WORLD. Much of the detailed speculation on these WORLDS concerns the respective intelligences of the WORLDS, AEONS and ARCHONS. The SEPARATION OF THE SOUL from its COSMIC ORIGIN is cast into bold relief by such images as that of the STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND. The STRANGER is the pneumatic man trapped in the MATERIAL WORLD. The ALIEN GOD is the KING OF LIGHT who is opposed to the RULER OF THE KINGDOM OF DARKNESS, THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE. The LIGHT is the principle of GOOD and the DARK is the principle of EVIL. At the beginning of all things there occurred a COSMIC UPSET during which the LIGHT, which is also man's true nature, FALLS, SINKS or is CAPTURED. The process of the devolution of the divine element is seen as a MIXTURE or DISPERSAL of the LIGHT in the DARK. The FALLEN SPIRIT, synonymous with Pneuma, then finds itself UNAWARE of its true nature. The SPIRIT experiences DREAD, FORLORNESS and HOMESICKNESS since it has become BENUMBED and INTOXICATED by the NOISE OF THE WORLD. The Noise represents the evil devices employed by the DEMIURGE and his ARCHONS to keep the LIGHT enslaved. However, a MESSENGER who is either ENVOY and/or SAVIOR will bring a CALL from WITHOUT the world. This call brought to REDEEM THE WORLD is the Gnostic message of salvation whose content AWAKES the SLEEPING SOUL to its COSMIC ORIGIN. GNOSIS reminds man of his divine HOME,

brings him redemption, gives instructions on how to live in the world and how to find the way out.

This gnostic principle or sensibility is one that has maintained an extraordinary vitality and has remained within Christianity throughout the centuries thus rendering Gnosticism as a vital and viable alternative to the practice of orthodox Christianity.

At this point, a review of what various scholars have the subject of the transmission of gnostic ideas seems appropriate. Because of a dearth of materials, speculations vary on the Gnostic links between eastern and western Europe, but in essence the surveys of dualism all concur with the movement of Christian dualist heresy.²¹ Garsoian has some very serious reservations about the role of gnosticism and dualism among the Armenian adoptionist-oriented Paulicians of the eastern Anatolian ranges in so far as their being a vehicle for the transmission of heterodoxy is concerned. The number of alternative manners of Christian practice is greater than traditionally suspected. Garsoian has posited a duple movement of dualist thought through what is now modern Turkey.²²

²¹There are indeed no dearth of materials which have been directed against the gnostic movement. Jerome, Justin, Irenaeus of Lyons, Hegisippus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Lucian, Eusebius, Agrippa Castor, Phillip of Gortyna, Modestus, Musanus, Rhodon, The Bishop of Kashgar in the Acta Archalai, Serapion of Thmuis, Didymus the Blind, Philaster, Epiphonius, John of Paralos, Theodore -bar-Konai and others dealt with the heretical sects grouped under the gnostic heading.

Modern studies available approach the matter as the study of a particular heresy--Obolenski,²³ Peuch and Vaillant,²⁴ Garsoian,²⁵ Coneybeare²⁶ --or as historical surveys of all heresies--Moore,²⁷ Lambert²⁸ and Russel.²⁹ The Medieval Manichee by Sir Steven Runciman³⁰ and Dualist Heresies³¹ by Milan Loos are the two major studies available on the subject of Christian dualism. Hans Soderberg's La Religion Cathare, published in 1949, remains the sole work done on the subject of Catharism and its gnostic antecedents.³² The majority of these scholars

²²Nina Garsoian, The Paulician Heresy (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967).

²³Dimitri Obolensky, The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neomani-
cheanism (Cambridge: University Press, 1955) p. 47.

²⁴Henri C. Peuch and Andre Vaillant, "Le Traite contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Pretre: Traduction et Etude", Travaux publie par l'Institut d'etudes slaves, 21 (Paris: l'Institut d'etudes slaves, 1945).

²⁵Garsoian, Heresy.

²⁶Frederick C. Coneybeare, trans., The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1898).

²⁷Robert Ian Moore, The Birth of Popular Heresy (London: St. Martin's Press, 1975).

²⁸Malcom D. Lambert, Medieval Heresy, Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1977).

²⁹Jeffrey Burton Russell, Religious Dissent in the Middle Ages (New York and London: University of California Press, 1971).

³⁰Sir Steven Runciman, The Medieval Manichee: A Study of The Christian Dualist Heresy (Cambridge: University Press, 1947).

agree generally but they do not agree specifically on certain issues, in particular what constitutes gnosis. The definitions put forth by Jonas, Soderberg and the Colloquium of Messina³³ are those which I am following because they are a great deal more precise about the consubstantiality of the divine element and the true self of the Gnostic. Soderberg has indeed already more than amply demonstrated that the religion of the Cathari forms a very important chapter in the tradition which has gnosis at its base.

At the time of Soderberg's writing only two documents written by dualist heretics themselves were known. Both the Liber de duobus Principiis and the Ritual of Initiation³⁴ had been published in 1939. To augment the limited material available, Soderberg used polemics written by former Cathars who had returned to the Church, since they might be expected to have a somewhat accurate and objective knowledge of the dualists'

³¹Milan Loos, Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages (The Hague, The Netherlands Academia Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

³²Hans Soderberg, La Religion des Cathares: Etude sur le gnosticisme de la basse antiquité et du moyen âge. (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1949).

³³Held at Messina, Italy April 13-18, 1966 on the origins of Gnosticism produced a working definition of Gnosticism which I have attempted to utilize in this thesis.

³⁴Ed. Antoine Dondaine, Un traité neo-manichéen du XIIIe siècle: Le Liber du duobus principiis, suivi d'un fragment de rituel cathare (Rome, 1939) in Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P.

teaching. These included Moneta of Cremona,³⁵ Rainerius Sacconi³⁶ and Bonacursus.³⁷ Soderberg relied less heavily upon the works of James Capelli,³⁸ a contemporary of Sacconi. The Summa contra Haereticos of Praepositanus (Prevostin of Cremona)³⁹ apparently had not been available to Soderberg. The number of materials known has doubled since 1949. Since the Soderberg study was disadvantaged by the inaccessibility of the apologetic called "A Vindication of the Church of God",⁴⁰ the "Gloss on the Lord's Prayer" and the Liber Contra Manicheos of Durand

Evans, Heresies of the High Middle Ages. (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969) pp. 468-83.

³⁵Thomas a Ricchini, editor, Montae Cremonensis adversus Catharos et Valdenses libre quinque, I [Descriptio fidei haereticorum] (Rome, 1743) in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 308-29.

³⁶Rainerius Sacconi, Summa de Catharis et Pauperibus de Lugdano used by Antoine Dondaine in Un Traite neo-manicheen (1939) pp. 64-78; in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 329-46.

³⁷Manifestatio haeresis catharorum quem fecit Bonacursus [Vita haereticorum], in Migne, Patrologia latina, CCIV, pp. 775-777; in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 170-73.

³⁸Dino Bazzocchi, La Eresia catar: Saggio storico filosofico con in appendice, Disputationes nonnullae adversus haereticos codice inedito de secolo XIII della biblioteca (Bologna, Malatestiana de Cesena, 1919) in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 302-06.

³⁹Summa contra haereticos of Praepositanus (Prevostin) of Cremona, in The Summa contra haereticos Ascribed to Praepositanus of Cremona, eds. Joseph N. Garvin and James A. Corbett, Medieval Studies, 15 (Notre Dame, 1958).

⁴⁰Theo Venckeleer, "Un Recueil cathare: Le manuscrit A.6.10 de la Collection vaudoise de Dublin, I Une Apologie II: Un glosse

de Huesca which contains the heretic treatise reconstructed by Mlle Thouzellier,⁴¹ the correctness of Soderberg's thesis that the Albigensians were heir to an identifiable tradition might be further demonstrated by a study of these texts. This has proved to be the case. Soderberg was indeed correct.

sur le Pater", Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, 38 (1960), pp. 820-831; 39 (1961) pp. 762-785.

⁴¹Christine Thouzellier, Un Traité cathare inédit du début du XIIe siècle, d'après le Liber contra manicheos de Durand de Huesca, Bibliothèque de la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique, XXXVII, (Louvain, Bibliothèque de l'Université de Louvain, 1961) in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 496-510.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL EXCURSUS

Marcion of Sinop

Jonas has identified Marcion of Sinop (born c. 85 A.D.) as the most resolutely and undilutedly Christian of the Gnostics. The challenge of Marcion's teaching led more than that of any other system to the formulation of an orthodox creed.⁴² Not only did Marcion's system challenge the position of the Church in the early Second Century, but it continued to do so as late as 441 A.D., when Marcionite communities were the partial object of polemics by Eznik of Kolb, Bishop of Bogrewand.⁴³ Because Marcion's position in gnostic thought is very unique, Harnack, the pre-eminent Marcion scholar, rejected classifying Marcion as a Gnostic. Because Harnack viewed Gnosticism as the "acute Hellenization of Christianity",⁴⁴ he took Marcion's lack of mythological speculation, his rejection of allegorical exegesis and reading of the Old and New Testaments, and his absence of a specific claim to the possession of pneuma,

⁴²Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 137.

⁴³L. Maries, Le De Deo de Eznik of Kolb connu sous la nom de "Contre les Sectes", (Paris, 1924), p. 5, cited by Garsonian, Heresy, p. 82, note 6.

⁴⁴Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 36.

or the superior knowledge brought by the event of a "gnosis", as signs that Marcion was outside the gnostic tradition. Marcion's doctrine moreover, was based on "faith" and not on a superior knowledge.

Yet the anti-cosmic dualism as such, of which Marcion is the most uncompromising exponent, the idea of the unknown God opposed to that of the cosmos, the very conception of an inferior and oppressive creator and the consequent view of salvation as liberation from his power by an alien principle are so outstandingly gnostic that anyone who professed them in this historical environment must be counted as one of the Gnostics, not merely by classification but in the sense that gnostic ideas that were abroad had actually shaped his thinking.⁴⁵

Marcion viewed the universe as the creation and possession of its creator, a cruel and implacable God, Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. His rule is characterized by an often capricious, if not malicious, justice. This Demiurge displays himself in his creation as one "fraught with the pettiness and weakness of these miserable elements in this puny cell".⁴⁶ This God, just to the point of being cruel, the oppressor of his creation, is not the Devil or Prince of Darkness. For Marcion, He is the divine personification of the visible universe. In the Antitheses, one of Marcion's lost books, the character of the world-god was drawn solely by what man knows of the world. He is predictable, this ruler, shaper, builder and judge of an evil noxious world. His major flaw is ignorance.

⁴⁵Jonas, Gnostic Religion, pp. 137-138.

⁴⁶Tertullian, Contra Marcionem cited by Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 141.

He is, for example, completely unaware of the God of Love and Mercy who stands in opposition to him. This God of mercy in no way has any ties with this unreasonable tyrant, the petulant ruler of this miserable creation, the material realm. To say that Marcion viewed the material world negatively is to understate his vehemence. Marcion's negative vision places him squarely in the gnostic tradition because it possesses the gnostic principle, the negative view of material reality. Conversely, the Alien God, the Good Principle of Marcion's cosmic dualism, is a Kind Stranger. Man, the creation of the Demiurge, belongs to the universe, a creation of the God of the Law. The Alien God is the God of the Gospels. He is that "alien and Good God, the Father of Jesus Christ, who redeems from heavy bonds to eternal life wretched mankind who are yet strangers to him."⁴⁷ This Alien God is so completely removed from the universe that man ought not to be able to comprehend him. He saves man not from demons, death, sin, or the flesh, but from the world and its creator, and thereby makes man his child.

Man's salvation was accomplished by the blood purchase of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, even though as an incarnation-denying doceticism Christ only appeared to suffer; nonetheless, the shedding of Christ's blood negates any further claim of the Demiurge to possess man as part and parcel of his creation.

⁴⁷Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 138.

The question as to why the Alien God would send His son to suffer and die a horrible death, illusary as it may have been, in this wicked world is answered simply enough: to buy man; by which the alien Stranger to this World proved Himself the essence of Good, of Purity and of True Mercy by His sacrifice. Marcion's true believer aims for a salvation of future bliss in the realm of the Alien God.⁴⁸

Because the baptized elect believed themselves to have been purchased by the Good Alien, they deliberately pursued a lifestyle aimed at hindering the designs of the Demiurge. Fasting, eating a subsistence diet and celibacy were common Gnostic practices which aimed not at creating a new social morality but rather at opposing the Just God.

Because the Just God of the Law and all material creation were to be shunned, the writings he inspired in the Old Testament were likewise rejected. Marcion interpreted and read Scriptures literally, yet he also edited with a lavish hand. Any writings Marcion felt to be inspired by the God of the Law, whether in the Old Testament or in references to Him in what came to be the canon of the New Testament, were deleted. It has also been argued that Marcion's literal interpretation of Scripture, also places him outside the gnostic tradition. This very specific and unique interpretation of scripture surely presupposes, indeed evidences, however, that Marcion did experience and

⁴⁸Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 139.

possess gnosis.

Marcion, himself, did not lay claim to a specialized wisdom, but the application of his special view of the universe and his soteriological concepts show him to have been in possession of a unique vision of the world, humankind, and god. Marcion's New Testament consisted only of the ten Pauline letters and the Gospel according to Luke, all of which had been carefully sifted for possible Judaicizing elements. This then was the Scripture which Marcion interpreted literally in the light of his concept of two Gods. Marcion's heavy affinity for St Paul was grounded from his belief that Christ, at His resurrection, had first taught the Demiurge about the Alien God, and then imparted this same knowledge to St Paul and only to St Paul. Simone Petremont stated in her discussion of gnostic ideas in the New Testament that, "it is scarcely necessary to explain that the majority of gnostic elements and references occur in the Epistles of St Paul, the Gospel of St John and—in St. Luke."⁴⁹

Petremont's contention that the writings of St Paul lend themselves easily to dualistic interpretation leads us to take, as one of the major characteristics of gnosticizing Christian dualist sects, a strong reliance upon Pauline scripture. Petremont has showed that the Pauline Epistles, if read with a dualist intent, can be used to underscore the following major

⁴⁹Simon Petremont, Le Dualisme chez Platon, les Gnostiques et les manichéens (Paris: Fayard, 1947) p. 210.

elements of gnostic thought: (1.) the opposition of the material world and its creative force to the good kind true God who is the true source of being; (2.) gnosis as the reception and comprehension of a special wisdom which is dependent upon the inspiration of the spirit of the Good God; (3.) the evilness of the world in which the pneumatic element is confined and (4.) the listings of the powers, archons, authorities and fallen angels which provide the basis of gnostic mythological speculation.

Valentinian Gnosticism

Sometime around 145 A.D., an episcopal election was held at Rome. The losing candidate of this election was a brilliant and very original thinker, an Egyptian from Alexandria named Valentinus. Valentinus is thought to have gone to Rome during the pontificate of Hyginus (138-142 A.D.) and remained there until the episcopate of Anicetus (155-166 A.D.)⁵⁰ He represents the culmination of what Jonas calls the Syrian-Egyptian type of gnostic speculation.⁵¹ This speculation known as mitigated or monadic dualism, distinguishes itself from radical dualism by its contention that the origin of darkness (or the negative element of the universe) and the cause for

⁵⁰Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons cited by F. F. Foakes-Jackson, The History of the Christian Church from the Earliest Times to A.D. 461, 8th ed. (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927) p. 138. See also, Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, trans. by G. A. Williamson, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1981) p. 163.

⁵¹Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 174.

the dualistic rift of being lies within the godhead proper. . The development of the divine tragedy in which pneuma was lost, the necessity of salvation arising from this loss and the dynamics of this salvation are presented as a sequence of intra-divine events.⁵²

Valentinus is the only early Gnostic whose disciples are known by name: the most important of them are Ptolomaeus and Marcus.⁵³ The Valentinian school is most responsible for the characterization by many scholars of Gnosticism as a religious system displaying an almost maddeningly fertile mythic imagination.⁵⁴

Bardesan

Bardessanes of Edessa, mentioned by Eusebius in his Historia Ecclesiae,⁵⁵ had been originally a disciple of Valentinus

⁵²Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 174.

⁵³Ibid., p. 178.

⁵⁴For an extensive sketch see Chapter Eight of Jonas. It goes without saying practically that the very work intended to destroy this heresy, Irenaeus' Adversus Haereses, has preserved the Valentinian system with an almost loving attention to detail.

⁵⁵Eusebius, History of Church, p. 191. "At an earlier stage he had belonged to the school of Valentinus, but later he condemned it and refuted many of its fanciful ideas, satisfied in his own mind that he had changed to the right way of thinking. For all that, the taint of the old heresy stuck to him in the end."

although he moved eventually toward a more orthodox opinion, he remained heavily influenced by his original gnostic beliefs. Holding an important post at the royal court in Edessa, the site of the modern city of Urfa, he encapsulated in many respects what we have come to call a "renaissance man". He was a philosopher, an historian, an ethnographer, an astronomer, a poet, a Christian apologist and, as Widengren observed, a controversialist noted for his abnormally penetrating intellect. An athlete of note, Bardesan possessed an amazing skill in the Parthian national sport of archery.⁵⁶

We know very little of this man's written work other than that it was very extensive. It is ironic that his one extant work, the Dialogue on Fate, a cosmogonical poem recorded in the work of Moses bar Kepha is lacking in gnostic content.⁵⁷ Yet, we do know that as a Christian, Bardesan has to be included with the gnostic schools. Because of his great intellectual abilities, because of his political influence and possibly because of his great athletic skill, what passed for orthodox Christianity in Edessa were the teachings of Bardesan.⁵⁸

The Christianity taught by Armenian Bardesanites formed

⁵⁶George Widengren, Mani and Manicheanism, tr., Charles Kessler (New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Rhinehart and Winston, 1965) p. 8.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 11.

the basis for many theological disputes with the numerous Marcionites of the region. Moses of Xoren recorded the outbreaks of disputes between Bardesanites and Marcionites in the City of Ani.⁵⁹

The regions in which one found Marcionite and Bardesanite communities in the Second and Third centuries of the Christian era saw the cultural, religious and national situations which Jonas described as necessary for the formation of syncretistic religious movements like Gnosticism. These countries have been described as veritable "melting-pots" of sects, creeds and peoples. Major influences in the region included the Parthian and Sassanian cultures of Iran; Christian sects; observers of the Iranian national religion, Zoroastrianism; cults actively engaged in the veneration of Mithra; the worshippers of Anahid in Zervanism; a great number of actively proselytizing Jews in centers like Babylon and Edessa and even continued devotion to Ishtar of Arbela, the Mother goddess.⁶⁰

St Stephen the Syrian of Edessa (d. 373) has provided a glimpse of the syncretistic workings of a religious movement in formation around Edessa. In his refutations of Bardesan and Marcion, Stephen blames them as those most responsible for the Christian gnostic basis of the dualistic religion known

⁵⁹Runciman, Medieval Manichee, p. 27.

⁶⁰Widengren, Mani, pp. 9-10.

as Manicheanism,⁶¹ thus showing a link between three major gnosticizing sects.

Manicheanism

Mani the Persian created the religious movement which bears his name a brilliant system with some very uniquely practical aspects. Little is really known of Mani except that he first preached at Ctesiphon and later underwent martyrdom at Gundeshapur by being flayed alive (276 A.D.).⁶² Although Mani seemed the arch-heretic to the writers of orthodox polemics his aim was not to "penetrate the secret aspects of a given revelation or as in the case of most Christian gnostics to establish a minority of higher initiation within an existing church, but rather to establish a new church, to found a new body of scripture and to supply a new revelation."⁶³ The doctrine of this new "non-Christian" church as Jonas pointed out was as "syncretistic as was feasible with the unity of the central gnostic element." Mani deliberately fused Buddhist elements to Zoroastrianism on a core of Christian Gnosticism. Mani declared himself to be the fourth and final prophet in

⁶¹Obolensky, Bogomils, p. 47.

⁶²Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 208.

⁶³Ibid., p. 206.

an historical series of avatars: Buddha, Christ, Zoroaster, Mani. Wherever Mani's message was proclaimed, he gained followers simply by emphasizing the particular aspects of his creed most culturally and religiously specific to a given geographical area.⁶⁴ If longevity is any indication of the success of a religious system, Manicheanism was very successful. It gained followers from Turkestan to Carthage. Mani's rendering of the gnostic myth showed an amazing vitality. By the fourth century, the Manichean movement had become widespread throughout Syria and Egypt. St Ephraim of Edessa, St John Chrysostom in Antioch, St Basil the Great in Paphlagonia-Cappadocia, all at one time or another, directed polemics against the Manicheans.⁶⁵

The Manicheans were especially strong in Northern Africa, where no less a churchman than Augustine of Hippo had been a cultist from 373-382,⁶⁶ and in the south of Europe especially in Gaul and Aquitaine (the Languedoc) around 373 A.D.⁶⁷ By the Fifth Century, Ramon Feraut recorded that Manicheans had been driven out of Arles and Provence to Toulouse where they continued to infest the city with heresy.⁶⁸

⁶⁴Ibid., passim, pp. 206-208.

⁶⁵Obolensky, Bogomils, p. 17.

⁶⁶See Contra Faustum by Augustine.

⁶⁷Rene Nelli, Les Cathares (Paris: Grasset, 1972) pp. 84-85.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 86.

A Milanese Manichean anathema dated about the year 600 A.D., lists as one of the dualist teachings that the Devil was a creature from the realm of darkness.⁶⁹ In 991 A.D. Gerbert of Aurillac, later Pope Sylvester II, when installed as Bishop of Reims made a profession of faith apparently aimed at contemporary dualists.⁷⁰

Obolensky claims Europe as having been inundated twice by Manicheanism; once during early centuries from which little documentation has survived and then again from the ninth through the fourteenth centuries.⁷¹ Professor Nelli has pointed out that in all probability there remained pockets of Manichean holdouts as the source and impetus for the heretical movements of the later centuries.⁷² However, I conclude that the spreading of Christian dualism from the tenth century onward is due to wandering evangelists who originated in Bulgaria and Greece. Orthodoxy and its polemicists, when confronted by Christian Gnosticism and its dualistic conception of being, invariably labeled them as "Manichean". Manicheanism is only one type of Gnosticism, this distinction was not apparent to the majority

⁶⁹Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 211.

⁷⁰Gerbert of Aurillac, Epistolae, No. 180, ed. Havet, cited by Runciman, Medieval Manichee, pp. 161-162.

⁷¹Obolensky, *passim*, p. 8.

⁷²Nelli, Les Cathares, p. 85.

of Church men. The Church propagandists invariably identified all Christian dualists as followers of Mani. But the heretics themselves, identified themselves solely as Christian and had evidently no knowledge of Mani. Because of this, many scholars still categorize all medieval dualists as "Manicheans".

Like the systems of Marcion and Valentinian, Manicheanism disdained the material realm. The dualism peculiar to Mani's teaching is of Magian (Zervanite) origin. This absolute dualism is represented by two primary principles or divine twins who at the beginning of time chose between good and evil. St Augustine wrote that Manichean dualism consisted of two primary elements, the Good God, a Principle of Light, and the Principle of Darkness, Matter.⁷³ The evil element Matter is not granted a "god-status" in Mani's system.⁷⁴

Little is actually known about the baptismal practices of the Manicheans or the Marcionites for that matter. Baptism for the majority of the gnostic cults consisted of the instilling of the Holy Spirit, whose gifts were usually conferred by a laying-on of hands, as in Acts 8:14-17. The Manichean elect, like the Marcionite elect, were enjoined from participation in the world and attempted to maintain minimal contact with this creation of the powers of the material realm. Our knowledge

⁷³Widengren, Mani, p. 43.

⁷⁴Jonas, Gnostic Religion, The analysis contained in Chapter Nine provides an excellent introduction to Mani's system. pp. 206-37.

of the social makeup of these various gnostic groups is at best sketchy, but we know the Marcionites had a catechumen stage that preceded becoming one of the elect. Epiphanius wrote that the Marcionites practiced a series of baptisms,⁷⁵ yet we know very little about the ritual other than its culmination in a transformed individual who would then follow an ascetic, celibate and vegetarian lifestyle. The Manicheans on the other hand used a ritual of oil-anointment and a laying on of hands as initiation into the ranks of the Elect or the True. Mani himself had been born into a society in which baptism was a common ritual and this early influence accounts for its importance in Mani's religious system.

The lifestyle of the elect is best described by Alexander of Lycopolis:

Since the ruin of the hyle (the flesh) is decreed by god, one should abstain from all ensouled things and eat only vegetables, whatever is non-sentient and absent from marriage, the delights of love, the begetting of children, so the divine power may not through the succession of generations remain longer in the hyle. However, one must not in order ⁷⁶to help effect the purification of things, commit suicide.

⁷⁵Soderberg, Religion des Cathares, cites Epiphanius, Pan. haereses XL, 3, 6. Soderberg further points out that Eznik of Kolb said that the multiple baptisms were penitential and that the Marcionites rejected marriage, ate no meat and caused those who succumbed to temptation to undergo a ritual purification as penance. Watery baptism was for penance, whereas the laying on of hands brought about the spiritual baptism. pp. 254-55.

⁷⁶Jonas, Gnostic Religion, p. 231.

By ensouled things, Alexander meant all beings which are the product of coition. All animals could be bearers of pneuma and by sexual reproduction, the soul material would be further split and fissioned as the engendering process took place. Multiple reincarnations were often required for the pneuma to reach a place of perfection, i.e. the body of a perfect. Therefore, once a person was perfected, sexual intercourse would run the risk of causing the pneuma to be incarnated in a less than perfect form. Once the person had become a member of the Elect or the True, his creature comforts were maintained at the subsistence level. His life proclaimed a humble poverty which included a ban even on the construction of dwellings.

The Archontics

Epiphanius recorded in the Panarion that a dualistic system was spreading from the province of Palestine as far as Greater Armenia at the same time as Mani's system was spreading in the West. This heresy had gained its first adherents shortly before the death of Constantine the Great (373 A.D.).⁷⁷ These Archontics, however, did not apparently think of themselves as Christians, but rather belonged to Gnostic groups which represent a cultic involvement with the worshippers

⁷⁷Werner Foerster, Epiphanius' Panarion, XL, 1, 1-8,2, cited by Werner Foerster, Gnosis, selection of Gnostic Texts, Vol. 1, Patristic Evidence, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1972) p. 296.

of the Great Mother.⁷⁸ They had according to Epiphanius, "fabricated a great number of books," which were syncretistic in the extreme. Epiphanius claimed that they "Pile up other books" besides their major works, (both lost), the Great Symphony and the Little Symphony. They amassed these works for no other reason than to use what they read in defense of their teachings. Like the Valentinians and the Manicheans, the Archontics possessed an intricate and well developed mythological system. They believed the god of the Jews, Sabaoth, was the evil archon creator God, and the Devil was his evil son. The Good god, on the other hand, was the consort of the Great Mother. The Archontics, did not believe in or hope for a fleshly resurrection. They held that the soul which has acquired gnosis shunned Christian baptism by water and abhorred the name of Sabaoth. Upon death as the soul ascended through the heavens, it could speak its defense before the ruling archon of each respective sphere and then would finally come to rest with the Mother and the Father of ALL.

This non-Christian dualist gnostic group is included in an outline of Christian dualism because the Archontics used a literary work other than the Pauline scriptures that have been identified as writings used by other Christian dualist

⁷⁸Widengren, pp. 9-10.

groups.⁷⁹ The Ascension of Isaiah (or Vision of Isaiah), a first century gnostic composition, remained an influence of gnosticizing sects as late as the fourteenth century. The Vision found wide usage among the Bogomils and Cathars.

Messalians, Euchites and Dancers

The Messalians, a gnostic sect active in Syria and the Middle east between the fourth and eleventh centuries, have been given a variety of names to include Choreutes, Enthusiasts, Dancers and Euchitae. Their doctrines have been preserved only in the works of their orthodox detractors.⁸⁰ Messalians in 390 called Adelphians, after their leader Adelphius, were condemned by the Synod of Side in Pamphylia. The major testimony came from on Flavius of Antioch, a cleric who, after having feigned conversion had

⁷⁹F. P. Badham and F. C. Coneybeare, "Fragments of an Ancient Egyptian Gospel used by the Cathars of Albi," Hibbert Journal, XI (1913) pp. 805-18; and Wakefield and Evans, pp. 447-449 characterize the Ascension as dating from the first century.

⁸⁰Runciman, Medieval Manichee, p. 22. The major sources for the study of the Messalians are: Micheal Psellus, Dialogus de Operatione daemonum; Maximus Confessor; and Timotheus Constantinopolitanus.

insinuated himself into the sect, obtained the requisite information and thereafter alerted the orthodox clergy to the clearly present danger. One of them, Letoius of Melitene, thereupon instigated the burning of all the heretic meeting houses.⁸¹ Nonetheless the Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium of Theodoretus and the Bibliotheca of Photius show the heretics to have still been numerous in 404.⁸² In 441 Eznik of Kolb wrote a polemic against Messalians, Zoroastrians, Pagans and Marcionites.⁸³ The Messalians remained the object of official scorn and orthodox polemics as late as eleventh century⁸⁴ when both Anna Comnena and Micheal Psellus delivered particularly virulent attacks against them.⁸⁵

The name Messalian derived from the Syriac word meaning "those who pray", referred to their advocacy of constant prayer, to the exclusion

⁸¹Garsoian, Heresy, pp. 208-09.

⁸²Runciman (Medieval Manichee, p. 23) cites Theodoretus, iv,2 (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 83) and Photius, Bibliotheca (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 103, col. 88 f.).

⁸³Garsoian, Heresy, p. 82, n. 6.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁸⁵Anna Comnena (A.D. 1083-1153) The Alexiad of Anna Comnena, trans. E. R. A. Sewter (Middlesex and New York: Penguin, 1969), p. 496: "The impiety of the Manicheans (also known as the Paulician heresy) and the loathsome character of the Massalians were united in the Bogomils, for the dogma of the latter was an amalgam of Manichean and Massalian teaching."

of all else. The Messalians understood that the only occupation, for the Christian in search of salvation was constant prayer. The only prayer the true Christian should say was the Lord's Prayer. Only those who had reached the spiritual advancement of the Messalian elect understood the true meaning of the Prayer and as a direct result knew how to correctly render the prayer.

We can discern evidence of a gnostic experience, for although the Lord's prayer is known by all Christians, the Messalian spiritual elite claimed to have experienced and received a specialized knowledge which allowed only Messalians to know the true meaning of the prayer. The Messalian doctrine of salvation taught that in each human there lived a demon (roughly analogous to the collection of demonic productions that make up the soul in the Valentinian system). The interminable chanting of the Lord's Prayer that the group practiced to the exclusion of all other activities aimed at driving out the demon so that the Holy Spirit could come in and take its place. The Holy Spirit manifested itself outwardly by ecstatic states in which the delirious members would leap into the air, whirl and dance, then genuflect and throw themselves prostrate only to leap up again

as the Spirit moved them all the while chanting their prayers over and over. Those who attained this state believed they had received the Holy Spirit, that the Savior was living within them and therefore to have discovered the divine self-identical and identified within themselves. They called themselves "Theotokoi", the God-Carriers.⁸⁶

These Spiritual Dancers had little faith in the efficacy of the ritual sacraments of the established Church. They rejected all Church rites because they believed that these practices in no way aided salvation. Baptism with water, for example, they considered ineffective for attaining the presence of the living Holy Spirit. Their baptism must be understood in terms of gnosis. This baptism was not merely symbolic but was an actual experience of salvation, resulting in the reception and application of a knowledge that only the most spiritually advanced adepts could share. Messalian baptism was first-hand experience of the Light; participation in the divine through the descent of Heavenly Fire. The eradication and total expulsion of evil from men came only through the grace of gnosis.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Soderberg, Religion des Cathares, p. 17.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 230.

Like the elect among the Marcionites and the Manicheans, the Messalian Elect followed a distinctive life-style after reaching the "perfected" state. They observed a strict poverty, wore the simple garb one usually associated with the cloistered life and led carefully celibate, ascetic lives. Both men and women could attain the rank of the elect in the Messalian sect. Because of sexual equality, because of the integrity of their movement, because of their sober piety and self-denial and because the Christianity promoted by these wandering evangelists seemed more in keeping with Biblical descriptions of the Master and his disciples, Messalianism swept throughout many orthodox monastic communities in the Middle East. The strict regimen of simple vegetarian diet, a rigorous schedule of fasting and, proper occupation of constant prayer appealed to many nuns and monks.⁸⁸ Granted, many in cloisters already followed these practices but were led into heresy by acceptance of Messalian doctrine.

In the Eleventh Century, Micheal Psellus' attack on the Messalians Dialogus de operatione daemonum was produced in the hope of stemming the growth of the Messalian movement in Thrace.

⁸⁸Obolensky, Bogomils, p. 102.

"This pernicious doctrine (Messalianism) derives its premises from Mani the Madman. From his teaching, as from a stinking fountain, the Euchitae extract their plurality of principles. Now the accursed Mani laid down that there are two principles...these wretched Euchitae add yet a third principle. Their principles consist of the Father and his two sons, the elder and the younger: they assign to the Father only supramundane things, to the younger son the heavenly things and to the elder rule over this world."⁸⁹

In his description of Messalian belief Psellus wrote that the ruler of the material world is called Sataneal, Prototokos, the first born of the Father. The younger Son is the ruler of all heavenly things, the spiritual realm. It is not too difficult to see in this younger Son all the makings of the Gnostic Savior/Envoy. Psellus identified the Messalians as Manicheans. However, the type of dualism that is being described is not Manichean which assumes an absolute duality of being. In Manicheanism Good was totally oblivious to Evil or its intentions. The Good could never recognize Evil because it was, ipso facto, incapable of even abstracting Evil. What Psellus is describing here is an example of the Syrian-Egyptian variety of dualism in that the rift between good and evil finds itself with the Father himself. He

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 184, cites Micheal Psellus, Dialogus de Operatione Daemonum (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 130, cols. 820 ff.).

experiences some upset within and Good and Evil become delineated. This particular part of the Messalian/Euchitae doctrine shows the Manicheans and Messalians, however, to be two disparate gnostic movements. The Manichean myth about war between Good and Evil principles and the Messalian myth about God and His two sons, Good and Evil, or Jesus and Satanael were similar enough to provide basis for yet another gnostic movement, the Bogomils. To clarify this point, it is necessary to leap ahead chronologically.

Anna Comnena, daughter of the Emperor Alexius had been exiled. No doubt to put her time in seclusion to good advantage, Anna, a fine scholar and historian, wrote a biography of her father which she called the Alexiad. She stated that Messalianism and the Manichean beliefs of the Paulicians were the source of a new heresy rampant at the time of her writing, Bogomilism. Anna said that these two evil doctrines, "—the impiety as it might be called of the Manicheans, which we also call the Paulicians, and the shamelessness of the Messalians,"—had resurfaced as a new movement. Anna seems to corroborate the mutual exclusiveness of the mitigated dualist Messalians and of the absolute dualist Manicheans from each other. On the other hand, even though they do have a great deal of

resemblance to each if we discount their cosmological theories, nonetheless Anna's intent was only to identify heresy and her father's role in its eradication. She identified them, and being repulsed by their doctrines, gave little inside information. We can not rely entirely on Anna as she leaves a great number of unanswered questions about the actual transmission of dualist ideas and the specific role played by the Paulicians in the proliferation of dualist heretics in the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria and Thrace.⁹⁰

The Paulicians

Since the first historical study by Rader in 1604, scholars of the Paulician heresy have regarded the Paulicians as the means by which Manicheanism moved from the Middle East, entered into Bulgaria and thence to Europe. "They have been classified as dualists in theology, and as docetists and phantasiasts denying the incarnation in Christology. This is the characterization which has qualified them as the main link in the transmission of dualism from the

⁹⁰Anna Comnena, Book XIV, vii, pp. 463-64. Anna identified Paul and John of Samosata as those who had drunk "at the well of Manes' profaneness" and had "handed on the heresy undiluted to their adherents." The traditional view, based on such works as the Alexiad and the writings of Peter Siculi, maintained that the paulicians were radical dualist and Manichean.

Persian Manicheans to the Albigensians of southern France."⁹¹ Nina Garsoian, however, is one modern scholar who doubts conclusions hitherto made about the Paulicians have been necessarily accurate. With the publication of Garsoian's The Paulician Heresy, the traditional view was amended to show that the Paulicians had its beginning with Paul of Samosata and extended to the nineteenth century. Garsoian identified two major lines of development: the Armenian-Adoptionist and the Byzantine-Dualist Paulicians.

In her reappraisal of heresy in the Byzantine Empire Garsoian argues convincingly for a multiple line of development of dualist Paulicianism, for a denial of adoptionist Paulicianism as the intermediary between early Christian dualism and Balkan-based Bogomilism and for the existence of another Paulician dualist movement based on a docetic Christology.

Dr. Garsoian's work was responsible for shedding light on the existence of the Armenian-Adoptionist origins of Paulicianism. The Armenian Paulicians followed a faith that appears, to have been in her words, "a simple-minded form of Judaic Christianity, adoptionist in Christology, obedient to injunctions against graven images and often violently iconoclastic."⁹²

⁹¹Nina G. Garsoian, "Byzantine Heresy: A Reinterpretation," Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 25 (1971) pp. 183 ff.

⁹²Garsoian, Heresy, pp. 210-11.

Infant baptism was strictly forbidden. The spiritual authority of the orthodox church was firmly rejected. Paul of Samosata, the founder of this particular movement, was deposed as Bishop of Antioch by the council of Antioch in 268, then finally forced to step down in 273.⁹³ Positing the necessity of an absolute unity of the godhead, Paul of Samosata taught that Jesus could not have been divine because this shared divinity would have infringed upon the perfect oneness of the Godhead. God had rewarded Jesus, a mere man, for his perfect purity by adopting him as the Son of God. This "adoption" occurred when the Holy Spirit, descended upon Jesus, the man, and thus rendered Him a spiritual being filled by the Holy Spirit. This major tenet of the Adoptionists assumed that any man could be likewise adopted in reward for virtue and thereby become an equal with the Son of God. Although not dualists themselves, this "gnostic" set of premises made the Armenian-Adoptionists susceptible to the teaching of other gnosticizing sects. The adoption, described as becoming co-equal with Jesus and the Holy Spirit seems to be the same self-identification/discovery of the divine sought by gnostics.

⁹³Garsoian, Byzantine Heresy, p. 95; Paulician Heresy, pp. 132 ff, 183 ff.

In 719 the Armenian Katholikos John Otzniensis, held a Synod at Dovin. The 32'nd synodal canon condemned the Paulicians because of disrespect for relics and generall iconoclasm. However, the Paulicians were not accused of holding docetic and phantasiast views of Christ, which could mean they had not as yet concluded that Christ was merely a phantasm whose works were illusary.⁹⁴

In the year 747, Constantine perceiving the Paulicians not only as a religious threat, but a political menace; moved great numbers of Paulicians to Thrace.⁹⁵ Originally the center of Paulicianism had been in Armenia, but by the middle of the eighth century the movement had made its way west into Anatolia. The Paulicians who had not been deported to Thrace built up a strong state through an alliance with the Moslems (!), the traditional enemy of the Paulician state Tephrike. Garsoian calls into question Peter's veracity. Traditionally Peter's work has been a major source for Paulician studies.

During the reign of the Heresiarch Sergius (murdered in 835) and that of his successor Karbeas,

⁹⁴Garsoian, Byzantine Heresy, p. 95.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 182.

a substantial number of Paulicians came to accept a dualist point of view. The capitol, Tephrike, was destroyed by the Basilian imperial forces finally between 871-872.⁹⁶

The destruction of their capital city notwithstanding, the Paulicians still remained strong as did their contemporaries the Messalians. In the year 975, Thomas of Antioch suggested to the Emperor John Tzmisces that due to their doubtful loyalty of the past, that more Paulicians ought to be deported and relocated in Thrace. The center for this second relocation of Paulicians was at Phillippopolis the modern city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria, which remained a Paulician center until the nineteenth century.⁹⁷

This second relocation in 975 added yet another 100,000 heretics to a land where they had been spreading their particular brand of Christianity since the Eighth century.

⁹⁶Runciman, Medieval Manichée, pp. 45 ff.

⁹⁷Frederick C. Coneybeare, trans., The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church at Armenia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898), p. cxxvi.

According to Steven Runciman, the dualist Paulicians Garsoian's non-Adoptionist Paulicians believed as a basic position that there existed both a heavenly Father and a Creator of this realm, the material world. They were docetists believing that Mary, the Virgin, had not given a fleshly body to Christ, but rather that Christ had acquired his body in the spiritual realm. His human appearance was merely illusion. Mary, Christ's means of entry into the material world, had not given him anything material; Christ was pure spirit. They scorned the whole of the instituted Church: 1. Sacraments had no value for salvation; 2. They ignored the spiritual authority of the Church and the claims of spiritual authority by the elders of the Church; 3. They disdained all Church buildings as inappropriate places of prayer; 4. They had excised the entire Old Testament from the Bible and had retained only the Pauline Epistles, the Gospels, the Epistles of James, Jude and John; 5. The Virgin Mary did not remain perpetually virgin, nor was she the Mother of God. The Heavenly Jerusalem is the "Mother of God" in that therein resides God; 6. The Body and Blood with which a Christian should feed himself is the Word which will satisfy his hunger

and thirst; 7. Christ, Himself, was the cross that saved Mankind; 8. Baptism was a spiritual experience, the descent of the Holy Spirit, could not be received by the material sprinkling of water. Christ, Himself said, "I am the living water." and 9. Veneration of the cross had no value because Christ had only appeared to die on it.⁹⁸

It is at this juncture with the transporting of all these Paulicians into the wilds of Thrace that the confluence of two major dualist movements occurs. Psellus had shown great concern about the increase of Messalian activity in Thrace in the eleventh century, in the tenth century Paulicians had been located in Thrace, in the ninth century (867) the Bulgarian Khan, shortly after his conversion had been warned via a letter from Pope Nicholas that his country was the object of Greek and Armenian heretic missionaries. Anna Comnena's record shows that the Ninth Century groups of missionaries were Messalians. The major dualist group then to emerge in this region was the Bogomils.

The Bogomils

About the same time that the great number

⁹⁸Runciman, Medieval Manichee, pp. 50-51.

of Paulicians were being re-located in Thrace, Cosmas, a Bulgarian priest was writing a polemic to be delivered against dualist heretics numerous in the Balkans.⁹⁹ He charged that in the days of the Tsar Peter there lived in the land of Bulgaria a priest called Bogomil (loved of God) who in reality was Bogunemil (not loved of God) who was the first to sow heresy in the land of Bulgaria.¹⁰⁰

Then, sometime between 976-1025, Euthymius, a Constantinopolitan monk, sent a letter to some compatriots in Acmonia. It described the trial of one John Tzurilas who had been charged with unlawfully assuming monastic dress, with forcing his wife into a convent against her will and with living unchastely while hypocritically appearing to lead an ascetic life of self-denial. John had been preaching for at least three years prior to the writing of Euthymius' letter and John had gained not just a few adherents. This heresy had two names: in the Theme of Opsikion they were called the Phundagiagitae and in the Theme of Cibyrrhaeot, the Bogomils.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁰¹Obolensky, Bogomils, pp. 174-77.

Euthymius the Monk wrote to his friends that the name Phundagiagitae, (derived from the Greek and latin words, phunda meaning "bag")¹⁰² was given them because it was customary for them to carry as their sole possession, other than the clothing on their backs, a distinctive bag which ordinarily contained a copy of the Gospel and what few meagre alms they might have collected.¹⁰³

Euthymius stated that the heretics called themselves Christians yet he was sure that they engaged in debauch.¹⁰⁴ Recalling them from their error was most difficult. They taught that there were eight heavens. The Devil had created the visible realm and its own particular heaven. These same heretics rejected the Old Testament, the priesthood of the Church and the cult and adoration of the Saints, and they disdained all the prayers of the Church and its sacraments. In particular baptism, the eucharist and marriage were targets of contempt. These early Bogomils included the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospels in their canon of Scripture. They appeared to be wandering

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 177, n. 1. Obolensky cites Patrologia Graeca, 121, cols. 48-57.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁰⁴A polemical propagandistic device with little evidence available to support the charges of immorality.

evangelists living the life of mendicants.

Euthymius also said that when the Phundagiagitae worship, the service would be commenced by the presiding person saying: "Let us adore the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit." The assembled congregation then would respond, "It is meet and just." The gathering then would begin to repeat the Pater Noster over and over, the whole while making repeated genuflections and prostrations, continually bobbing up and down. It is not very difficult to perceive the Messalian influences in terms of ecstatic exercise on the practices and beliefs of the bag-carrying Bogomils.

Sometime during the reign of the emperor Alexius Comnenus (1116-1118) it came to his attention that a man named Basil the Macedonian had returned to Constantinople teaching this heresy called Bogomilism. Alexius invited Basil, the Bogomil to the imperial palace on the pretext of learning the great truths that Basil had acquired in Bulgaria. What the unfortunate Basil did not know was that his audience with the emperor was being copied word for word by secretaries hidden behind a curtain. In her Alexiad Anna Comnena intended "to expound the whole Bogomilian heresy, but modesty...forbids (her from doing that)". However, Anna referred those who wished to know more to seek out the Dogmatic Panoply of Euthymius Zigabenus. What Anna does say gives some idea of the growth of the Bogomil heresy. "From all over the world, the emperor summoned Basil's disciples and fellow mystics, in particular

the 'Twelve Apostles'." Anna Comnena states that the heresy had grown worldwide, but we can also see that the heretics organized their own hierarchical structure in accordance with Scriptural precedence.¹⁰⁵

The most definitive information available on the Bulgarian Bogomils even today is the polemic of Cosmas the priest. In the early 970's, Cosmas wrote that the Bogomils believed that the Devil had created the material world and that "the Devil is the creator of man and all God's creatures and because of their extreme ignorance, some (of the Bogomils) call him a fallen angel, others the unjust steward."¹⁰⁶

Euthymius the Monk reported the very severe excision of the canon of the Bible among certain of the Byzantine Bogomils; although some of them very "liberally" permitted usage of the sixteen Books of the Prophets and the Psalms. The scripture generally accepted by all later Bogomils was emphatically Pauline, by which is meant the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse.¹⁰⁷ The only other literature known to have been used by the Bogomils were the Ascension of Isaiah possessed by the Archontics and The Secret Supper, the Interrogatio Johannis which purports to be a

¹⁰⁵Comnena, Alexiad, trans. Sewter, Book XV, ix, pp. 499-500.

¹⁰⁶Obolensky, Bogomils, p. 122.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 212.

dialogue between Christ and John at a Last Supper in heaven. Heretic exegesis of scripture was grounded in the basic assumption that God the Father displayed himself through two sons, one good and one evil, each with his own particular realm of influence. All of Christ's miracles were interpreted in an allegorical sense.

Cosmas also reported that since the heretics believed all matter to be Devil-created, Christ would never have had any contact with material substances. Therefore, because the sacraments of the Church centered around bread, wine and water, the rites had no efficacy for the attainment of true salvation.

They paid no reverence to the Virgin Mary, the incarnator. The heretics did not observe the feast days of the saints and being iconoclasts they were very much opposed to the reverring of icons and thought that the cross was merely an instrument of torture and murder.

The Bogomils believed that the orthodox Church was a false church and therefore heretical.¹⁰⁸ They rejected the hierarchy of the orthodoxy, the elaborate ceremony and the rich vestments worn by the priests. In contrast to the elaborate liturgy of the established Church, the Bogomils used only the Lord's Prayer. The Balkan Bogomils made a repetition of prayer four times a day and four times a night.¹⁰⁹ The Bogomils

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 135

believed that only those who had been baptized, the elect class, possessed the right meaning and knowledge of the Pater Noster. This possession of this specialized knowledge received through revelatory experience obligated the spiritually baptized ones to pray, continually.

The elect learned this knowledge of the Pater through a long arduous process of prayer, self-denial, fasting and adherence to a strict code of conduct—all subject to the scrutiny of both the Bogomil masters and the community at large. Initiation into the sect consisted of two periods of instruction. The first level of initiation, involving simple Bible study little by little was tempered with Bogomil secrets aimed at drawing the candidate away from the orthodox position. The saying of prayers and the observation of fasts served to purify the individual from the "taint" received by association with the orthodox Church.

Cosmas apparently did not know, or for some reason chose to remain silent, about the Bogomil consolamentum as in all other aspects of Bogomil life and religious observance he provided many details. Euthymius Zigabenus is still therefore the major source for information on the Bogomil initiation rituals.¹¹⁰ The first initiation ceremony consisted of holding

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 217.

¹¹⁰ A translation into French and a commentary on the sermon can be found in: Henri C. Peuch and Andre Vaillant, Le Traité contre les Bogomils de Cosmas le Prêtre: Traduction et Etude, Institut d'études slaves, 21 (1945). An English translation of the sermon is contained in: Edward Peters, Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), pp. 108-17.

the New Testament over the catechumen's head while the prologue of the Gospel of John was recited. The Holy Spirit was invoked and the Lord's Prayer chanted by all those in attendance. The culmination of this first level of initiation served notice to the community at large that the individual had now embarked upon a spiritual venture entailing a rigidly disciplined life of renunciation, prayer and obedience.

The second level of initiation required a much longer and more demanding period of probation which may have lasted as long as fifteen years.¹¹¹ The candidate for what amounted to ordination in the Bogomil Christian movement fasted during daylight hours and always abstained from meat, wine and milk products. The initiate was to avoid all sexual involvement including conjugal relations. The individual embarking upon such a spiritual venture was permitted to possess only a single garment. Because this second degree of initiation was aimed at spiritual perfection, the individual and his activities were scrutinized more closely than ever by all the members of the community.

When it had been decided that the individual had accomplished the necessary conditions of his "novitiate", he was required to proclaim his faith and to agree never to reveal the innermost secrets of the sect. It is for this reason that knowledge of the Bogomil consolamentum is sketchy. It is

¹¹¹Peuch and Vaillant, Bogomiles de Cosmas, p. 252, note 6.

thought that the ceremony had a double aspect: one of execration and the other of purification. Elements of execration were aimed at the orthodox church and its sacraments. The initiate was spit upon in burlesque of the sprinkling of water in the orthodox baptism ceremony. This also corresponded to a display of contempt for the demon supposedly residing in the man soon to be replaced by the Holy Spirit.¹¹² Then using sponges the candidate was washed with filthy water to wipe out all traces of the watery baptism.

This exorcism and expunction of the effects of the orthodox sacrament of baptism were then followed by purification. The candidate faced East and once again a copy of the New Testament was placed upon his head as in the first ceremony. Then all the presiding officials, both male and female (both sexes could be of the elect) placed their hands upon the kneeling candidate while chanting a hymn of thanksgiving for the fidelity displayed by the newly elect to the rules and beliefs of the sect.¹¹³ It is apparently with this laying on of hands that they believed the actual teliosis was affected. At some point during the spiritual baptism the initiate was re-clothed in the distinctive black robes which made the Bogomil elect so readily identifiable.

¹¹²This was purported to be a Messalian belief.

¹¹³Euthymius Zigabenus, Panoplia Dogmatica, in Peuch and Vaillant, Bogomils de Cosmas, p. 254.

In terms of their conduct Cosmas said, "--they seemed like sheep. They are pleasant ("doux") and humble, silent and one identifies them ("les voit") by their hypocritical fasting; they do not swear, or laugh loudly or joke in a gross manner, they avoid bringing attention to themselves and on the whole outwardly cannot be distinguished from true Christians."¹¹⁴ The Bogomils let it be known that they lived better lives than the Orthodox. "We pray to God more than you [the Orthodox], we practice vigils and prayers and we do not live as you do in a nonchalant manner."¹¹⁵ This spiritual oneupsmanship only further exacerbated the orthodox defender Cosmas who listed the further errors of the Bogomils. "These heretics cut up crosses and make tools out of them--they do not venerate icons but call them idols--the heretics turn away from them [relics] and they make fun of us [the orthodox] when we prostrate ourselves before them. They refuse to render honor to the saints and at the same time they outrage the miracles of God which are brought about by the relics of the saints through the power of the Holy Spirit. Heretics claim the miracles are not brought about by the will of God, but that it is the Devil who does them to seduce men."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴Peuch and Vaillant, Bogomiles de Cosmas, p. 55.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp. 58-9.

The Devil as Satanael, the first-born of the Father, is the creator of the visible universe.¹¹⁷ Cosmas angrily demanded, "What do they indeed imagine? That it is not God who has made the heaven and the earth and the whole visible world."¹¹⁸ Then Cosmas states that the heretics "read constantly the words of the Savior and the Apostles."¹¹⁹ Apparently the complicity of the Jews in the murder of the Son of God showed the basic evil nature of the God of the Jews and that his revelation, the Old Testament or Jewish Bible, had been completely rejected by the Bogomils.¹²⁰ This God of the old dispensation and the giver of the Decalogue is Mammon. It had also been recorded that the Law of Sinai had been given to Moses by Satanael.¹²¹

Cosmas alludes to the gnosis possessed by the Bogomils who claim to know the very "depths of the Scripture".¹²² By the power of their gnosis, they had the ability to remit sin and to know "beforehand what transpires in heaven". Cosmas' anger at the Bogomils spiritual pride in contrast to their

¹¹⁷Ibid., pp. 190-91.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 58.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 59.

¹²⁰Ibid., pp. 172-73.

¹²¹Ibid., p. 173.

¹²²Ibid., p. 161.

outward humility is evident. Cosmas held that the Bogomilian sureness of their possession of spiritual grace and a superior science to be absolute proof of pride. The earlier Phoundagiagitae Bogomils had maintained that it was they, alone, to whom had been accorded the "knowing of the mysteries of God, inasmuch as this gift is refused to others who know only thru parables."¹²³

Those who possessed the gnosis of the Bogomils were held to have the Holy Spirit residing within them and were called the Theotokoi, God-carriers. The carrying of the Word of God in ones breast caused ones wisdom to be further increased as one poured out revealed teachings. Further, because the event of gnosis rendered these God-carriers immortal, they did not die but were changed as in a dream, disposing of with no effort of their garments of flesh and receiving the incorruptible and divine robe of Christ, possessing with Him the same body and the same form as He.¹²⁴ Since the Bogomils, like the Gnostics, the Manicheans, the Marcionites and the dualist Paulicians had a docetic view of Christ, they rejected the concept of the resurrection of the physical flesh.¹²⁵ The goal of the Gnostic was the transcendence of the flesh and the material bonds it forged for the spirit.

¹²³Ibid., p. 161.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 162.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 202.

The Bogomilian myth taught that God had had two sons; the first-born son of god Satanael and the second-born son, Christ. Satanael allowed pride to get the better of himself, rebelled against the Father and thence fell from heaven. When Satanael fell, he lost the "-ael" from his name and thus as Satan, he separated the elements, created man and all the creatures in this the visible universe. The soul of man was a heavenly being, tricked into aiding Satan, in his production of the material realm. This angel was then forced into the fleshly prison of the human body. In this mitigated dualist myth, Christ as the envoy from without the world is sent by God the Father to redeem the "souls" of men and thereby gather all divine material back to its place of origin, the Father.¹²⁶

Sometime during the eleventh century a schism occurred in the Bogomil church and a number of sectarians adopted a new position on the subject of creation. This new Bogomil church held that the principles of Good and Evil were coequal and coeternal; separate and each the ruler of its own realm.¹²⁷ This new church was the Church of Drugunthia or Dragovitsa. Like the mitigated Church this new radical dualist ordo demanded

¹²⁶Wakefield and Evans, p. 719, note 32.

¹²⁷Soderberg (*Religion des Cathares*, p. 48) cites Johann J.I. von Dollinger, Beiträge zur Sektengeschichte des Mittelalters (Munich, 1890), vol. 1, p. 242, note 1.

an ascetic, celibate lifestyle for its "priesthood", the perfected ones. Not only did they refrain from sexual relationships but they also abstained from those foods that were obviously the product of coition: meat, eggs, dairy products. Both ordos actively proselytized and sent missionaries out into Bosnia, Dalmatia and Western Europe. By the year 1218 the spread of Bogomilism had been quite extensive and so successful that in Bosnia, where the Bogomils had become known as Patarines, the state religion of Bosnia was the mitigated dualism of the Bulgarian order. However, by the fourteenth century a certain decline of the Patarine practice had evidenced itself.¹²⁸ With the conquest of the area by the Turks, the Bogomil movement for all intents and purposes disappeared.

The Bogomil movement had direct connections with the Cathari of Western Europe and Italy. The De heresi catharorum, an anonymous work of the thirteenth century chronicles the development of a schism amongst North Italian cathares during the years 1150-1200. A serious disagreement had arisen as to which consecration ought to have been recognized, the absolute dualism of Dragunthia or the mitigated dualism of Bulgaria.¹²⁹ This disagreement came about in Lombardy because a Bogomil

¹²⁸Wakefield and Evans, pp. 16-17.

¹²⁹Ibid., pp. 160-67. They translate the edition of Antoine Dondaine, "De Heresi catharorem in Lombardia," Part 1 of "La Hierarchie cathare en Italie," Archivum fratrum praedicatorum, 19 (1949): 306-12.

bishop, Papa Nicheta, had traveled West from Constantinople for the express purpose of preaching against the consecration of ordo of the mitigated Church of Bulgaria. This Nicheta is thought to be the same bishop who had reconsecrated many Languedoc Cathars, Albigensians, and a contingent of representatives of the various Italian churches at St. Felix de Caraman in 1167.¹³⁰

Anselm of Alessandria likewise attested to the connection between the Italian Cathars those in Languedoc and the Bulgarian, Dragovitsian and Sclavonian Bogomils. Anselm anachronistically blamed Mani for teaching dualist heresy in Bulgaria, Dragunthia and Philadelphia. But, Anselm wrote that Greek merchants out of the rich city of Constantinople learned the heresy while they visited in Bulgaria and had then brought it back with them to Byzantium. They set up a leader called "Bishop of the Greeks". Meanwhile, some French men when journeying to the Holy Land as Crusaders, also learned this heresy and established a Bishop of the Latins. These French crusaders upon return to their homeland established a Bishop of France. The Sclavonian Bogomils had also learned the heresy from merchants travelling upon the Eastern trade routes.¹³¹ Because the French had been originally converted

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 691, note 12.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 168.

by Bulgarian Bogomils, members of the sect were known as Bulgarian heretics.¹³² By "the French" Anselm meant the people of the northern part of France, because he described the creation of the Bishops of the peoples of the South: Carcassonne, Toulouse, Albi and Agen.¹³³ Anselm writing in the year 1266-67, also related the story of the schism in the Italian Church that had arisen with the visit of Papa Nicheta.

It has been stated above that the first actually known date of Cathar and Bogomil interaction was 1167 and since we have shown that the Bogomil and Cathar religious movements are for all intents and purposes one and the same and since the Bogomils were fervent evangelizing missionaries, it is more than probable that dualists had been preaching in western Europe much earlier than the year 1167. How and when the dualist heretics arrived is not clear and the resolution of this problem is further complicated by the habitual perjury practiced by and endorsed by the heretics.

They were encouraged to lie to the authorities. Perjury under interrogation was commonly practiced so heretics appear to hold orthodox views. Cosmas, Euthymius Peribletos and Euthymius Zigabenus all accused the Bogomils of displaying great hypocrisy because they openly practiced orthodox Christianity but observed

¹³²Ibid., p. 690, note 10. Words such as "Bulgari," "Burgari" and "Bougres" all gained the meaning of "heretic" in popular usage.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 168-69.

the ritual fasts and prayers of the Cathari in private. The dualist leaders encouraged their congregations, "Save yourselves by any means. Simulate the faith by trickery and fraud of those who have imprisoned you and save yourselves from the danger and death with which they menace you."¹³⁴

The basis for this practice, seemingly at odds with the strict morality and ethics of the movement, was apparently grounded in the attitude which defines the gnostic principle of the Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Archontics, the Massalians, the Neo-Paulicians, the Bogomils and the manicheans toward the cosmos: that the cosmos is the creation of an evil god/principle and his demonic followers. They condoned lying to followers of the Devil, the orthodox Church, which they saw as devoted solely to the glorification of an evil, malicious, conceited and cruel god whose main attribute is ignorance. The sacraments, the prayers, the clergy, the theology, the false ethical values are all grounded in evil and corruption. The Church of this world controls man's spirit rather than frees it. Since ecclesiastical courts served the Evil one, a heretic to the orthodox, wishing to subvert the intentions of the Creator God, was indeed obliged to lie.

Because the habit of pretending to be orthodox persisted either out of idealism or out of fear (one could be hung or

¹³⁴Peuch and Vaillant, Bogomiles de Cosmas, p. 156, note 2, cites Euthymius Zigabenus', Panoplia Dogmatica.

burned for heresy), many early dualist groups in the West were difficult to identify. The scarcity of documents suggests that the majority of heretics learned the secret aspects of their faith orally. The "duality of God" had to have been one of those secret teachings and probably remained secret until eventually more and more persons had become hearers or accepted the "heretification" ceremony; the cosmology of dualism then became common public knowledge.

Nevertheless, one important common thread running through the teachings of the gnostic cults is the belief that the true spiritual element in man is a fragment of the realm of the spirit, the realm of light. The lifestyle of the sect members who had received the awareness in themselves of the divine element exemplified the Gnostic principle. Disdain for the material realm evidenced itself in Marcionism and all the subsequent manifestations of dualism. Loathing for and rejection of the physical world had been accomplished by the adoption of monastic garb, severe fasting, vegetarianism and the cessation of all sexual activity. That matter is evil forms the basis for the belief that Christ never actually put on a physical human body, or died and was raised. The Gnostics taught that since the orthodoxy had not been in possession of gnosis, the Church could not be the true Christian church. The heretics call the established Church and its baptism by water and its eucharist celebrating a dubious sacrifice are

the real heresies. They are part and parcel of an evil plot to hide the Truth. Because the Gnostics possessed wisdom which they received in a spiritual baptism, a reception of power, grace and knowledge that comes forth with the awareness of ones unity with the Divine; the knowing ones claimed to be the only real Christians. They and only they were empowered to understand the true meaning and message of the Scriptures.

Suspected Dualists and the Cathari, The Albigensian heresy

The movement of heresy westward from Bulgaria resulted in the organization of Dualist Christian churches in Bosnia, and Yugoslavia, in Italy and in southern France. The earliest documented French Cathars are recorded around 1145. There are relatively few recorded outbreaks of heresy in Western Europe prior to the year 1000. We are therefore in possession of many documents dating from the turn of the millenium which tantalize us with the possibility of dualist groups but there is never quite enough information to substantiate their presence in Western Europe.

In the year 1000 a certain Leutard ended his evangelistic career by drowning in a well. Ecclesiastical authorities called him a madman, but Leutard's influence remained strong until 1015. That he sent away his wife and he destroyed the cross and image of the Saviour raises the possibility of an instance of ascetic practice common to the Gnostic tradition or the

violent iconoclasm of the Bogomils.¹³⁵ Around 1022 Ademar of Chabannes reported the presence of "Manicheans" in Aquitaine¹³⁶ yet he provided no specific details of the sect.

Of all the groups identified as possible dualists, the heretics of Orleans in 1022 display docetic doctrines, disdain the material world and put great emphasis on inner spiritual and very specialized scriptural knowledge. The only element that would clearly identify the heretic canons burnt at Orleans as genuine adherents of Bogomil doctrine would be a clear profession of dualism. It is missing. Yet, the documents show that the accused at Orleans denied that the world had been created by the Father. If they claimed the cosmos was not the creation of their God, and since they accepted that there was a Father, and if some entity or power other than God the True Father created the universe, then it follows that they believed God and the Creator are not the same and we can safely suspect them of dualism.¹³⁷

¹³⁵Raoul Glaber, Les cinq livres de ses histoires, II.Xi, xii, ed. Maurice Prou (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire, 1 [Paris, 1866], pp. 49-50. Ibid., p. 72.

¹³⁶Ademar of Chabannes, Chroniques, III.lix, ed. Jules Chavañon (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire, 20 [Paris, 1897], pp. 184-85. Trans. in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 184-85.

¹³⁷Paül, a monk of Chartres, Vetus Aganon, vi.iii, in Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Pere de Chartres, ed. Benjamin-

The "Manichean" heresy reported by Ademar in 1022 and the heresy in Arras Cambrai sometime in 1025 were both reputed to be the work of heretics from Italy.¹³⁸

Around 1028 in the small Italian village of Montfort near Turin, a group of apostolic ascetic Christians under the leadership of a man named Gerard was examined by Bishop Aribert for heretical beliefs. Gerard had identified the Savior as he "who knew you from the beginning in the loins of Adam". It is tempting to see this as an oblique reference to the Bogomil soteriological theory of transducianism or reincarnation. These ascetics, like their more readily identifiable Gnostic counterparts, maintained perpetual chastity after having been initiated into the sect. They never ate meat. Like the Messalians and the Bogomils, they chanted prayers constantly both day and night. Communist and evangelistic, these Christians identified themselves as apostolic primitive Christians and they claimed to possess a special wisdom. The reception of the Holy Spirit had evidenced itself as the "devout comprehension of the Sacred Scriptures."¹³⁹ This group indeed shows itself to be gnostic

Edme-Charles Guerard (Collection des cartulaires de France, Vol. I; in Collection de documents inedits sur l'histoire de France, ser. I: Histoire politique [Paris, 1840]), pp. 109-15. Ibid., pp. 76-81.

¹³⁸Paul Fredericq, "Acta synodi Atrebatensi episcopo celebrata anno 1025", Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis Neerlandicae, 5 vols. (Ghent, 1899-1902), Vol. I, pp. 2-5. Cited in Wakefield and Evans, p. 82.

¹³⁹Nicola Zanichelli, ed., Landulphi senioris, Mediolanensis historiae libri quatuor II.27, ed. Alessandro Cutolo, in L. A. Muratori,

because a specialized wisdom had to be attained for salvation. Moreover, the interview with Gerard casts light on the early dissemination of dualism in Europe. Gerard said that his church was world-wide and that even as he was talking to the bishop in Monfort, wandering evangelists were spreading the Word. Gerard and his people did not know where the creed originated, but they believed that their church was spread all over the known world.

Later, in the years 1043-48, heretics suspected of being dualist were discovered at Chalons-sur-Marne.¹⁴⁰ Anselm described them as Manicheans, which we take to mean that they were radical dualists although not necessarily followers of Mani.

At the same time Wazo of Liège found it necessary to plead for tolerance for suspected heretics.¹⁴¹ Since heresy and vegetarianism were becoming generally connected, Wazo wrote that just because a person was pallid and suffered from anemia did not necessarily make him a heretic. Some apparently did not heed Wazo's cautionary message, for Henry

Rerum italicarum scriptores (Bologna, 1890), new ed., vol. 4, pt. 2, pp. 67-69. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-89.

¹⁴⁰*Hegrigeri et Anselmi Gesta episcoporum Leodensium*, II.62-64, ed. Rudolp Koepke, *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, *Scriptores*, 8, pp. 226-28. Details of an outbreak of dualist Christianity at Chalons-sur-marne are cited in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 89-93.

¹⁴¹Wazo had striven to impress upon his flock the necessity to quicken unto life rather than to "do unto death." Pallor was not evidence of heresy. See Wakefield and Evans, p. 93.

III ordered the execution of a group of vegetarians for heresy. This group of people rounded up and captured by Godfrey, Duke of Lorraine, were all hanged at Goslar simply because they had refused to eat meat.¹⁴²

In 1114 Guibert of Nogent wrote about the two heretics, Clement and Evrard Bucy who lived on a manor near Soissons. Through preaching the brothers had gathered together a rather large following among the peasantry of the region. Clement taught a number of doctrines which we recognize as dualistic. Since they had a ceremony known as "the Word of god"; possibly we have reference to a ceremony like the Bogomil baptism ceremony with its emphasis on the "Word of God". As we saw above, the Bogomil baptism instilled the Holy spirit within an individual and the imparted gnosis caused one to bear the Holy Spirit within oneself. In its implicit faculty as gnosis, the experience supplied the correct understanding and comprehension of scripture. Guibert directed the reader to the work of St. Augustine, where they would find those very manichean heretics described.¹⁴³

¹⁴²Ibid., p. 671, note 16. These men were hanged actually because they refused to kill a chicken.

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 101-04. This translation of Guibert de Nogent: Histoire de sa Vie (1053-1124) III.xvii, ed. by Georges Bourgin (Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et l'enseignement de l'histoire, [Paris, 1907]), pp. 21-25, recounts that the brothers had learned their knowledge secretly by word of mouth and that they rejected the concept of virgin birth, child baptism, the mass, marriage and begetting of offspring, foods that were the product of coition and all of the Scriptures except the Acts of the Apostles. Guibert wrote that

In 1118 Pope Calixtus called a Council at Toulouse for the purpose of anathematizing heretics, followers of the monk Henry who had been spreading heretical doctrine and dissent against the Church from his home in Lemans all the way to the Mediterranean coast.¹⁴⁴ Sometime prior to 1131, Henry joined forces with Peter of Bruys and together the two taught an antimaterialistic philosophy which was heavily iconoclastic and defiantly opposed to the Church, its teachings and rituals. Peter met a violent end in 1131 when he was burned upon the same crosses which he had desecrated and vandalized in the region around Saint-Gilles. Although neither professed

they also engaged in perverse orgies and that children from such unions were murdered and their bodies compounded into some sort of a psychoactive substance which would be consumed ritually by the sectarians. Most important of all, Guibert state, "If you will reread the various accounts of heresies by Augustine, you will find that this resembles none more than that of the Manicheans."

¹⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 107-15. Wakefield and Evans cite from Actus pontificum Cenomanis in urbe degentium, ed. G. Busson and A. Ledru (Archives historiques du main, [Le mans, 1901]), pp. 407 and 437-38. Henry, "hair cropped, beard untrimmed, tall of stature, quick of pace,--glided along the ground barefoot as winter raged; easy of address, awe-inspiring in voice, young in years, scornful of ornate dress"--captured the attention of the people. Henry was violently anti-materialistic, anti-clergy and anti-orthodox. Henry saw himself as the bearer of true Christianity and claimed to draw his commission from God. He denied that children who died before the age of understanding would not attain salvation; that chrism and oil would effect baptism, that priests in a state of sin could perform the sacraments; that an ecclesiastical ceremony was necessary for marriage; that priests have power to bind or loose; that the clergy should have any material possessions, not even the ring, mitre and pastoral staff; and that churches of wood and stone should be constructed. From Raoul Manselli, "Il monaco Enrico e la sua eresia," Bulletino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano, 65 (1953), 44-63, passim. Wakefield and Evans, pp. 116-17.

dualist doctrine, Henry and Peter most surely prepared the regions in which they worked for the coming dualist missionaries.¹⁴⁵

In 1145 Bernard of Clairvaux undertook a journey to Toulouse to combat the effects of Henry and Peter of Bruys.¹⁴⁶ While at Toulouse, a city stirred up by the monk Henry and already since the ninth century infected with dualist heresy, Bernard received a disturbing letter from the Premonstratensian Abbot Eberwein von Steinfeld. Heretics had come to light in Cologne and had been brought before the ecclesiastical court for examination. These men expounded the greater part of their belief in accordance only with the words of St Paul and Jesus Christ. These heretics believed that they, and they alone, were the True Church of Christ. Because they were persecuted in the world as had been the apostles and martyrs of the early Church, because they led an apostolic life, because they had no possessions, because they had placed themselves in opposition to the things of this world and because they

¹⁴⁵Petri Venerabilis...Epistola sive tracatus adversus petrobrusianos haereticos: Praefatio in Migne, Patrologia latina, 179, pp. 719-24. Peter of Bruys taught that infant baptism had no value, that building churches was unnecessary, that the cross should be broken, burned and execrated as the instrument of torture which murdered Our Lord; that the sacrament of the mass was valueless because the blood and flesh were not ever truly present, and that prayers and alms offered on behalf of the dead were useless. Ibid., pp. 118-21.

¹⁴⁶A denunciation sent by Bernard of Clairvaux to Alphonse Jordan, count of Toulouse, and a report on Bernard's journey to Toulouse by Geoffrey of Auxerre are cited by Wakefield and Evans, pp. 122-23. Bernard condemned Henry as an apostate and a hypocrite who spent his evenings resting from preaching in the company of wantons and adulteresses.

concerned themselves only with things of the world to come proved them in their own eyes to be the true Christian church. The Church of Rome was too comfortable and at peace with the world. They said that Rome had been led astray by men who deliberately corrupted the teachings of Jesus. These heretics were vegetarians and celibates. These heretics received the Holy Spirit through a laying on of hands. This was the Baptism of the Spirit ordained by Christ which invalidated the Baptism of Water instituted by John the Baptist. Any ritual that was represented by material substances was now valueless.

Eberwein described them as divided into three distinct groups depending upon which level of initiation into the sect one had attained. At the first level were hearers. The second-level Believer class was allowed to be present at prayers. The Elect or Perfect, those who had received the spiritual baptism, knew how correctly to say and interpret the Lord's Prayer.

Eberwein closed his letter to Bernard with the warning that these heretics had adherents all over the world and, shocking as it may have seemed, many were members of the hierarchy of the Church of Rome! These people, before being burned at the stake, told the courts that their belief had "lain concealed from the time of the martyrs even to our own day and has thus persisted in Greece and certain other lands." They apparently had said little of a dualist nature in their public teachings. Bernard could find little wrong with them

outwardly except that he was convinced they lived in sin if they occupied the same dwellings with members of the opposite sex while claiming to be celibate.¹⁴⁷

In 1145 the Church of Liège sent out a warning that the "newly discovered errors of ancient enemies", dualism, had been found at Montwimers. There a baptism that involved laying-on of hands was practiced. The heresy was reputed to have become common in every city in France.¹⁴⁸

Less than two years later in 1147, reports sent from the city of Perigeux told of apostolic vegetarian Christians who performed their prayers with hundreds of genuflections, a practice reminiscent of the Messalians and the Bogomils. Popular belief said that these heretics were so insidiously versed that they could teach even the most rude rustic how to become a sage of great wisdom in only eight days time.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷Wakefield and Evans, pp. 126-32.

¹⁴⁸Wakefield and Evans, pp. 139-40 cite this letter of "introduction" to the Pope of a man named Amery who had been rescued from burning at Montwimers. Amery was to meet with His Holiness in order to "make amends to God and to His Holy Church, and that he may fulfill the solemn promise made to the blessed apostles when he was in danger of his life." The heresy of which Amery was alleged to be a part had claimed adherents throughout "The Gallic realm."

¹⁴⁹Wakefield and Evans, pp. 138-39 note Heribert the monk's report on an outbreak of heresy stating that the heresy had found its way into all levels of society. Heribert speaks of superior wisdom and knowledge as major characteristics. He also cites instances of the heretics' ability to work magic.

By 1165 the dualist Christian church had attained such success particularly in the Languedoc region of Southern France that there the Bishop of Albi and the Goodmen of Albi, Cathar perfects, held public debates. The debate at Lombers is of special interest to us because the whole of the exchange was based upon the subject of spiritual authority. The Goodmen depicted their orthodox detractors as hypocrites with a love of costly garments, jewels and sumptuous display, not at all in keeping with the true message of Christianity. The Goodmen also revealed that they would never under any circumstances swear an oath. This refusal to take an oath underscores the strongly anti-feudal sentiment expressed by the dualists. The refusal to swear oaths strongly undercut feudal contracts, all based on a sworn oath of fealty. The members of the established non-dualist church declared the Goodmen to be "ravening wolves" and then had the last word by declaring all the Cathari heretic through the agency of Gaucelin, Bishop of Lodeve, at the behest of the Bishop of Albi.¹⁵⁰

Yet for the all the apparent freedom they had to practice their faith, the Goodmen at Lombers refused to discuss its principles. They would entertain no talk of baptism, preferring to answer only questions about their interpretation of the Holy Scriptures which they, like Marcion and all the others in the Gnostic tradition, had severely curtailed.¹⁵¹ Ambiguous

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 189-90.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 190: "...They did not accept the law of Moses,

responses seem to have been the main mode of Cathar defense. They said, for example, that their ritual of baptism could be effected by "any good man." Did this mean that only the Perfects could perform the rite or that any moral man could baptize? Documents mention no dualist tenets until the year 1178.

Most likely suspected heretics were still employing dissimulation and lying as a means of protecting their faith. The harsh treatment of heretics included beatings, brandings, hanging and incineration in such diverse areas as England, what is now Germany, France and Italy. Reprisals by authorities became severer as heresy began spreading everywhere. The Cathar Church had become sufficiently large by 1167 to warrant a council of heretical leaders.

Papa Nichetas of Constantinople and several heretical bishops met for a dualist council at St Felix-de-Caraman. Nichetas installed several new bishops in his ordo, and he encouraged those present to return to their respective churches and preach a radical dualism. Sicard Cellerian of Albi, Marcus of Lombardy, Robert of Sperona of the French Church of Italy were there and among those who saw the council install bishops for Toulouse, Carcassonne and the Val d'Aran.¹⁵²

the Prophets, the Psalms, the old testament but only the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, the seven canonical Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles and the Apocalypse."

¹⁵²Peters, Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe, pp. 121-23.

The council held at St Felix-de-Caraman had a most important item of theology on the agenda. At that time there were two distinct types of Christian dualist churches, one mitigated and the other absolute. Papa Nicheta had traveled the great distance from Constantinople to encourage all those present to adopt the radical dualist position. Sacchoni in the year 1250 wrote that only the Church of Concorrezzo at Bagnola, Vicence, Florence and the Spoleto valley remained mitigated as did the Church of Bulgaria. The absolute dualist position had been adopted by the Italian Albanenses, the Church of France, the Church of Languedoc at Albi, Toulouse, Agen and Carcassonne. At Byzantium, the Church of Sclavonia, the Latin Church of Constantinople, the Greek Church of Constantinople, the Church of Philadelphia in Romania and the Dragovitsan Church of Bulgaria had become united by the adoption of the radical dualist view of creation.¹⁵³

Yet as extensive as the dualist church had become, certain aspects of their teaching remained unknown to outsiders until the year 1178.¹⁵⁴ In that year two men in Toulouse were questioned because they were suspected of being able to change themselves into "angels of light" and because they had preached "false doctrines". When examined on various aspects of Christian doctrine they appeared to be in possession

¹⁵³Wakefield and Evans, pp. 329-46.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 194-95.

of sound Christian principles. Yet, witnesses were produced who had heard these two brothers preach two gods and not one. One of these gods was good and the other evil. The men had disparaged the eucharist and condemned marriage. Roger de Hovden wrote that the two managed at first to avoid detection and to sound like orthodox Christians through dissimulation. By a rather interesting usage of the word "all", for example; they could without compromising their faith say, "I believe in God the Father, creator of all things". Intent was the deciding factor in Cathar morality. "All" for the Cathar meant either all things good or all things evil, not both together. The "all" of which the Cathar spoke was the spiritual "all."¹⁵⁵

The Gnostic character of Catharism is displayed by the brothers' claim to possess a wisdom which gave them the true and right understanding of the Scripture. The brothers also refused to swear oaths thus sharing the antipathy felt by all Perfects for legal agreements, instituted government, Church and society.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 514: "All that is evil cannot be the same as "ALL" that is good, nor can it arise from the same source; therefore two separate principles and sources must be postulated."

CHAPTER III

THE CATHARI

Mitigated and Absolute Dualism: Theology and Cosmology

The Lombard who wrote the "De heresi Catharorum" informs us that in the very early days Cathars had begun to increase in number, after Bishop Mark received his consecration from the Ordo of Bulgaria. Originally all the Italian Cathars had been the product of the Bulgarian Church and the Bogomils.¹⁵⁶

They followed the mitigated dualist tradition which Jonas has identified as the Syrian-Egyptian form of dualism.¹⁵⁷ Only after the tour of Europe by Papa Nicheta did most of the Italian Cathars become reconsecrated in the absolutist Ordo of Dragovitsa.

The mitigated dualists believed in and preached only one good God, creator of all the angels and the four elements. Lucifer had been one of this party

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁵⁷Jonas, Gnostic Religion, pp. 236-37. "The Iranian type stems from an adaptation of Zoroastrian doctrine which explains how the dark came to enslave the light. This is based upon the concept of two principles, distinct from one another. In contrast to this absolute dualism, is the mitigated type or Syrian Egyptian. The mitigated type proposes that evil is a result of a devolution of the good sphere. The material plane is a result of emanation from the divine realm."

of good angels. Some even taught that Lucifer was the elder son of God.¹⁵⁸ Lucifer or (Satanael, as the Bogomils called him), was led astray through conversations with some sort of fabulous evil spirit, described as a Monstre du Chaos looking in part like a man, a fish, a bird and a beast all at the same time!¹⁵⁹ After this conversation, Lucifer returned to heaven to work his mischief, a revolt against the true Father. Lucifer and his cohorts, being only partly successful were then thrown out of heaven. Immediately they attempted to differentiate the amorphous four elements which God, the Father, had created. Lucifer was now known as Satan in this drama, having lost the -el from his name. When Lucifer/Satan began to encounter difficulties with the separation of the primal elements out of chaos into form he found it necessary to beg

¹⁵⁸ Mircea Eliade, *The Two and the One*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 83-84. This myth apparently was passed to the Bogomils somehow from some Iranian source. This belief was shared by the Ebionites and seems to have been prevalent in Zervanite traditions.

¹⁵⁹ Wakefield and Evans, p. 165. The "De heresi catharorum in Lombardia" Part 1 of "La Hiérarchie cathare en Italie," pp. 306-12 records "...that there was a certain evil spirit having four faces: one of a man, the second of a bird, the third of a fish and the fourth of a beast. It had no beginning and remained in this chaos, having no power of creation. They say that Lucifer, while yet he was good, came down and beholding the spectacle of this evil spirit, was filled with wonder and was led astray by the conversation and the prompting of this evil spirit."

some assistance from God the Father. God chose one of his good and faithful angels, whom Satan seized and imprisoned the body of Adam, an evil device constructed by Satan. Then, Lucifer/Satan created Eve and his evil plan to keep the Good imprisoned in the Evil body began to succeed. The physical body ingeniously created by Satan caused the Good Angel imprisoned therein to conceive lust for the woman Eve. Since Eve was created from Adam, the angel in Adam was split between Adam and Eve. The imprisoned angelic material wept bitterly at its misfortune. Adam and Eve were no longer aware of their divine origin.¹⁶⁰

Moneta related a somewhat different narrative in which Lucifer, Prince of this World, was cast out of heaven on account of his pride. Shortly after his expulsion, Lucifer cunningly wheedled his way back into heaven and seduced a group of gullible angels into leaving. When they had reached the material plane, Satan forced them into the bodies of Adam

¹⁶⁰"De Heresi catharorum," in Wakefield and Evans, p. 165: "He returned to heaven and there seduced others.--Lucifer and the other evil spirit wished to separate the elements, but could not. Thereupon they begged from God a good angel as assistant, and--with the aid of this good angel--they separated the elements. And, they say, Lucifer is the God who, in Genesis, is said to have created heaven and earth and to have accomplished this work in six days.--Lucifer fashioned the body of Adam from the clay of the earth and into that body by force pressed the good angel. Lucifer made Eve, in order to cause him to sin through her."

and Eve. Bonacursus learned that the sectarians believed also that after the Devil had created Adam's body from the dust of the earth, he imprisoned an Angel of Light in Adam. Soon after the creation of Eve, the Devil as a serpent seduced Eve with his tail, thus fathering Cain. The angel in the material body of Adam lusted after Eve and so Adam lay with her. Abel was born of this union and Cain, the Son of Satan, murdered him.¹⁶¹

From these forgoing accounts we can see how dualists accounted for evil as primary force in the material realm and how the divine material, the pneumatic substance which makes man's true self one with the divine, came to be "devolved" into its present condition. The mitigated dualists believed that as flesh is born of flesh so is spirit born of spirit. In the act of copulation both parents donate a "quantity" of spiritual substance that will engender the new spirit, just as the new being is engendered. Apparently dualist apologists were undecided about the actual origin of men's souls. Some had believed that all

¹⁶¹Wakefield and Evans, pp. 317-23. *The Monatae Cremonensis adversus Catharos et Valdenses libre quinque I (Descriptio fidei haereticorum)*, I.v.1, II.i. 1-2 ed. Thomas A. Ricchini (Rome, 1743), pp. 2-6, 63-5, 109-12, 389-97, *passim*, Book II, present a full exposition of the system promulgated by the "heretics who assert that there is one creator," i.e., mitigated dualists.

the "souls" in the world had originated from one Good soul (the good angel imprisoned in Adam), whereas others believed that the sum total of souls that existed in the world had been created all at once, then were little by little secreted into mortal bodies by the will of God.¹⁶² Those who held to the simultaneous creation of all spiritual entities destined for salvation said that those spirits who fell initially had been ill-prepared for salvation at the time of their incarnation and had therefore been condemned to pass from human body to human body until they reached a body in a state of Perfection. This type of reincarnation is a specific variant known as "transducianism" and was first described by Tertullian.¹⁶³ Because the coital act led to a further dispersal of the spiritual element, a vow of chastity was one sure means of bringing about the salvation of the world. Both Moneta of Cremona and Bonacursus attest that the mitigated dualist Cathars attributed all events recounted in the Old Testament to the actions of the Devil, who is in actuality the Lord of the Old Dispensation. Bonacursus stated that the dualists

¹⁶²"De Heresi catharorum," in Wakefield and Evans, p. 166.

¹⁶³Nelli, Les Cathares, p. 98; Soderberg, Religion des Cathares, p. 155.

reject the entire Old Dispensation, but Moneta wrote that some of the mitigated dualists retained the Prophets, the Psalms and the Book of Solomon.¹⁶⁴ The author of De heresi catharorum said that many of the Cathars remained skeptical and undecided about the Prophets because it was abundantly clear that the prophecies found in the Old Testament were not always true. Yet the Cathars said that sometimes as in the case of the foretelling of Christ's coming, the prophets had been under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but then unwittingly.¹⁶⁵

The mitigated dualist Church of the Italian Sclavini believed that St Mary, St John the Evangelist and Jesus Christ were three angels who "appeared to appear" in the flesh. They were illusory manifestations of pure Spirit. Christ, for example could not have put on evil flesh; he could not have eaten or drunk nor could he have been crucified or been buried; let alone raised to life. Everything that Christ did had been merely an illusion, thereof.¹⁶⁶ Some, on the other hand, thought Mary had been a true human being and that Christ did receive human flesh from her, but these also believed that Christ in no way could have ascended into heaven in the flesh. These particular beliefs further supported the rejection

¹⁶⁴Wakefield and Evans, pp. 172-73.

¹⁶⁵"De heresi catharorum," in Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁶⁶"De heresi catharorum," in Ibid., p. 167.

of matrimony. A fleshly resurrection meant that spirit would be trapped in matter (the fleshly body) even if it could rise to spend that time in Heaven. Rising to an eternal reward in the flesh was illogical and not even probable.

Their abhorrence for the material realm was so great that many of the mitigated dualists believed John the Baptist had been doing the bidding of the Devil when he instituted the rite of baptism with water. This had been done deliberately to hinder the work of the coming savior. They conceded that John the Baptist spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but one had to understand that the Holy Spirit used John as if the Holy Spirit were speaking through a tube. Part of their plan for salvation involved a number of unwitting participants such as the Prophets, John the Baptist or the Virgin Mary who functioned solely as passive instruments of this manifestation of the Good, the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷

Bonacursus also documents the dualist rejection of the Old Testament, their docetic concepts of Christ and their disbelief in a bodily resurrection. He also shed some light on other teachings: the Son of God was not co-equal to the Father; the dualists held no trinitarian concept of the Good God. The physical cross stood for no less a symbol of evil than the mark of the beast, so vividly described in the Apocalypse.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 167. Apparently who ever wrote the "De heresi catharorum" may have read Irenaeus as Irenaeus used the same simile, "as though speaking through a tube."

The mitigated Cathars like their Bogomilian counterparts were vegetarians and possessed a keen contempt for the eucharist and baptism practiced by the Church of Rome. Baptism by water was the work of the Evil ones. The true baptism was a baptism of the spirit which was brought about by a laying on of hands as had been done by the Apostles. The belief that the material elements of the eucharist, could in any way bring a person to salvation with a God that was all spirit seemed absurd to the heretics.

Some of the mitigated dualists, Bonacursus said, believed that the Devil made himself visually apparent. The sun is the Devil, Eve is the moon and during their monthly conjunctions, many claimed, their fornications still took place. The visual beauty of the cosmos overwhelms and distracts man from truth. For example, all the stars were in actuality demons created by the Evil One. Eve apparently had been somewhat of a cosmic trollop who consorted with these astral demons and mothered giants who once walked the earth.¹⁶⁸

The mitigated Cathars' soteriological belief had at its core the responsibility of the individual by his free will to make decisions. The mitigated Cathars believed that freedom of choice for ethical decisions was a determinant in the degree of salvation for which the soul material trapped within the body might hope. The souls that followed Satan out of heaven

¹⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 171-72.

did of their own volition; they had not been "set up" through some predestined plan. Therefore, because they had willingly followed Satan out of heaven, because they had rebelled against God and because they had consented to this evil act and, even though they too had been forced into human bodies nonetheless, they were still to be condemned for eternity. Those who did not consent to leave and were sent by God to assist the Evil Creator and then were forced into bodies, these are the souls of the Perfects. When a perfect dies his soul would, it was presumed, go to the earthly paradise; that is, the heaven associated with the material plain. On Judgement Day, these perfected souls will all pass to the heavenly paradise having bided their time in the earthly paradise. The only way a person could be assured of salvation is either after death to have his soul pass into the body of one who will be perfected or to have become perfected while still alive.

Rainerius Sacconi wrote about the radical dualist Albanenses of Italy whose beliefs were representative of the entire Cathar church during the years 1200-1230 A.D. These radical dualist tenets were those of the Churches of Languedoc and Toulouse. The main feature of this particular system which Rainerius described is a duality of principles, coeternal and coequal yet separate. Rainerius learned the system from an old man named Belesmanza who said that he had originally been consecrated in the mitigated Cathars church of Bulgaria. Belemanza like many other Cathars had undergone a re-consecration

in an "absolute" ordo.¹⁶⁹

Belesmanza and his followers believed in two principles, each of which manifested itself by creating its own angels and its own realm. The Good principle reigned supreme in the Spiritual realm while the Material world was the domain and personification of Evil. The ultimate manifestation of Good is the Heavenly Father, the creator of the celestial realm. We are dealing with mirror images: analogous to the Heavenly Father is the King or Lord of Darkness, the Prince of this World, Lucifer who manifests evil as Satan, son of the Evil God. Every good has a corresponding evil in opposition to it.

The Good is so pure and incapable of evil that the Good cannot even be conscious of the existence of Evil. Good cannot even abstractly consider evil. Evil on the other hand according to this "neo-" Manichean myth cannot comprehend good except to destroy and capture the beautiful light which glows from the spiritual realm of Goodness. Satan, creator of matter, was manifested as the Devil, rose an Angel of Light and entered Heaven most easily because defense would have necessarily entailed a sort of aggression against the attacking force of evil. Good is that good. Evil attacked the good realm because evil is demanding, rapacious,

¹⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 337 ff. Recounts the beliefs of Belesmanza.

selfish, covetous and the embodiment of every other negative emotion and impulse. After the initial division into the good and evil realms, (mind we are talking about two realms which are infinitely separated, yet also had evolved from another form beyond or outside of the space of time which is identified as infinite...) the Devil as an Angel of Light led souls out of heaven. The Devil did not carry off one third of all soul material that easily. The Good when it perceived that it was losing one-third of itself to the forces of darkness began to manifest itself as the universal collection of all soul material. This soul material which is likewise the very essence of the Good also manifested itself as the Primordial Man. Christ is a hypostasis of the Primordial man as is the Archangel Micheal as is the universal collection of souls. This Savior who is at once the hypostases of Primordial Man and All Soul Material is also the Spiritus Adae, the soul of Adam which the Devil forced into the human bodies which he devised while manifested as God of the Old Testament.¹⁷⁰

The absolute dualist conception of the drama of the soul like the mitigated version has the deliverance and re-collection of all lost soul "material" as the means of salvation. The Savior will save Himself by the "re-collection" of Himself. The Savior, Christ who is the Logos which had been made

¹⁷⁰Soderberg, pp. 89 ff.

flesh by the hypostatic mechanics just described, did not in actuality acquire human substance but only a "semblance of humanity" from his Mother, the Virgin Mary, also a manifested emanation from the spiritual realm. In short she too was of angelic essence.

According to the belief of the Church of Drugunthia and the Italian sect of Desenzano under the episcopate of Marchisius and Amizo the "angels" that were led astray had a triple composition while in heaven. They had a spiritual element (pneumatic element) surrounded by a soul element both of which had been encapsulated by a heavenly body form. These angels were forced into the bodies of Adam and Eve. The Devil "took the best and left the rest," because he substituted a material body and a material soul element (the emotions) as a substitute for the heavenly soul and heavenly body. The heavenly soul and heavenly bodies which are the rightful belongings of the Lost Angels (trapped spirit) are still in the realm of the Good God, the garments and crowns reserved for the saved.¹⁷¹ If the soul/spirit does not complete penance in one body; that is, does not reach the body of one perfected in the Cathar sect, the soul/spirit must be reborn in subsequent bodies until it does reach the body of a Perfect. Only then is salvation assured.

Sometime in the years 1176-1190 Bonacursus wrote that

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

he customarily identified the heretic ordos by whether they believed that the Devil created the elements (radical absolute dualism) or whether God the Father created the elements, then allowed the Devil to separate the amorphous chaotic mass of the four elements and form the material world.¹⁷² Although the details vary both systems saw the world as negative and a thing to be shunned. Those heretics invested in an absolute dualist order also believed that the actions of Christ and the Virgin Mary were merely illusion. All the patriarchs of the Old Testament were ministers of the Devil. This Evil One, Satan, was the sole inspiration for the Old Testament, the Law. Yet, certain passages of the Old Dispensation were deemed non-satanic in origin by some of the radical dualists. These books included Job, Psalms, the Song of Solomon, the Book of Jesus, Ben-Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezechial, Daniel and the Twelve Prophets. Belesmanza said that the radical Italian dualist Albanenses believed that the world would never end, that the "future" Last Judgement had already been made and it would never be made again. Everything has been pre-destined. There is no such thing as human free-will. Freedom of choice is an alien concept because what we choose means little because Hell, eternal punishment and eternal fire are being meted out right now in this material world which is the very lowest

¹⁷²Ibid., p. 171. "For some of them say that God created all the elements; others say that the devil created these elements; but their common opinion is that the devil divided the elements."

plane of existence. Hell is no where but here and will never be anywhere else.¹⁷³

John of Lugio was one of the younger members of the radical dualist Albanensian sect of which Belesmanza had been the leader. John and a group of peers split from the original group and developed a more rarified form of the radical dualist message. The older Albanensians maintained a doctrinal form which was nearly identical with the French Albigenians. Rainerius of Sacconi identified John of Lugio as the author of the Book of Two Principles. The system that John described exists only in fragmentary form today, a mere fraction of what was once a "large volume of Ten quires".¹⁷⁴

John accepted two principles but rejected entirely the idea that the Good God could manifest himself as the Trinity. Belesmanza's group had believed that God was superior to his Son who was likewise superior to his Holy Spirit, but that the Good God still manifested Himself as triune. The good creatures and their creator the Good god are eternally co-existent. The evil creatures are likewise mutually co-existent. Because of this there is no such thing as a creation from nothing. That anyone should believe that a creation could take place "ex nihilo" is absurd. As it says in scripture "If I have not charity, I am nothing.", therefore that absence

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. 511-89.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., p. 343.

of charity is simply a state of evil. Creation is change from one state to another. As matter or spirit is by definition eternal and infinitely existant, "nothing" could not be the source.

Both the good god and the evil god possess realms which are mirror images of each other. Both creations are complete with heavens and earth. All good creatures are completely pure and totally free of evil. Evil and the evil principle are identified in scripture by many names: malice, iniquity, cupidity, impiety, sin, pride, hell, death, columny, vanity, injustice, perdition, confusion, corruption and fornication to cite a few. Malice, evil intent, is the root of all evil actions. The Good never has any fore-knowledge of the course of the eternal seige of evil against itself which has continued ever since the very "beginnings" of eternity. Evil never emanates from the Good God.

Salvation means that the soul has reached its true home which is the realm of the Good Father. This is to be attained by the soul's transfer from body to body until it reaches the body of one perfected in the Cathar sect.

John of Lugio believed that a much larger portion of the Old Testament is a product of the inspiration of the Good principle. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Joshua and John the Baptist had acted as agents of the true God. John believed that Jesus Christ was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary, suffered, was crucified, died and had been buried

and then arose from the dead on the third day. With a single exception. All these events happened in another world. One must understand that the human race has already lived out its existence in that other world. All the souls of that world descended into Hell upon their death. Hell is this, the lowest level in the material realm, the domain of the Principle of Evil. The material realm is the place where souls undergo purification. When Christ descended into Hell, those three "days" are detailed in the biblical descriptions of Christ's 33 years on earth. Therefore, each day actually represented 11 years. Christ's form on earth had to be illusory because He Himself had descended into Hell only in spirit form. While walking through the lowest form of existence, Christ was not flesh.

The mitigated dualism of the Cathars displays the same contempt and hatred for the material realm that had been displayed by the Bulgarian heretics from whom they had received their beliefs. Absolute dualism has been shown to be Mani's dualistic vision with the emphasis on Christianity. Like all the other gnosticizing groups, the Albigensians held to the belief that man's true self, his real nature, his spirit originated with the true God and fell from grace and glory, is imprisoned in the flesh and needs to be reawakened so as to bring about salvation. The man appraised of this knowledge feels himself to be a stranger, in a strange land. One feels like an alien.

Ritual and Lifestyle

Initiation and a Gloss on the Lord's Prayer

The initiation of a cathar believer was accomplished through a series of rituals.¹⁷⁵ Like the Bogomils, the French and Italian Cathars observed ceremonies which consisted of two major parts, both aimed at the instillation and reception of the Holy Spirit. Those who accomplished the arduous discipline and regimen of daily prayer, fasting and renunciation became Theotokoi, God-carriers.¹⁷⁶ This was manifested through a laying on of hands and permitted the believer to attain true salvation. Prior to the ceremonies the catechumen underwent a probationary period of purification, a process that lasted for at least a year. During this time the individual received instruction in the Cathar doctrines and trained himself or herself in the rigorous asceticism that characterized the Cathar movement as a whole. When the initiate was considered sufficiently advanced in his quest he was then given the right and obligation to say the Lord's Prayer, a responsibility

¹⁷⁵The most important act in the religious life of the Cathar perfect was the consolamentum, the spiritual baptism. Since the spiritual baptism imparted a specialized knowledge or gnosis, the main result of such an experience imparted the true meaning of Scripture to the initiate. Therefore, all cathar rituals of initiation- or more aptly "completion"-contain a gloss on the Lord's prayer. The particular gloss referred to in this section is taken from a translation of the Ritual in Latin which Dondaine published in 1939 and which is translated in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 469-72.

¹⁷⁶Obolensky, p. 216.

which would be conferred in a short ceremony. It was usually decided whether the person concerned could also experience spiritual baptism, the consolamentum, which would render him a member of the true Church of Christ. If he required more training and purification, the consolation process might be put off for years, sometimes as many as fifteen as we saw among the Bogomils.

The French and Italian Cathars, like the Bogomilian perfects, abhorred the orthodox practice of baptism by water. Their ritual had the members of the congregation place their hands upon the initiate while the Gospel book, most usually that of John, was held over the head of the consoled one and the Lord's prayer was recited. At this point they believed the teliosis was effected, the individual was released from the powers of evil, his true soul forgiven and purified of the transgressions which had caused its fall from the heavens in the very beginning of all things. His soul, likewise forgiven sins committed in this particular incarnation, regained its guiding spirit onto the path of salvation.¹⁷⁷

After the consolamentum the person would continue in imitation of the apostles in as total a renunciation of the material world and yet still permit survival. Subsistence living was the norm, yet ritual suicide was not encouraged as has been alleged. The new perfect was always to return good

¹⁷⁷Wakefield and Evans, pp. 465 ff.

for evil. If trial and persecution were to be his due, he was to suffer it and gladly without protest, as was the duty of all good Christian men. The speaking and swearing of oaths, like the telling of lies and killing of any living creature, was considered mortal sin; contracts, legal agreements and the business of government were held to be tools of the evil ones to bind man and blind him to the truth. Sexual relationships of all kinds were expressly forbidden because reproduction merely produced more physical bodies to keep the splintered spiritual substance enslaved and entombed. Lust and sex prevented the salvation of the universe and the reordering of the God-head. To accomplish this, the eating of meat, eggs, cheese and milk was also forbidden because consumption continued the demand for production of livestock whose bodies might also be the tombs in which some degraded soul material was spending this particular incarnation.

The ritual of the consolamentum was widely reported on by orthodox polemicists. Being heirs of the Bogomilian message the French and Italian Cathars in their liturgy emphasized those elements common to gnostic imagery. The Latin ritual, one of the few documents available published in 1939 consisted of a gloss on the Lord's prayer read to the initiate prior to bestowing on him the right and obligation to say the prayer. Unfortunately, the very first part of the ritual is lost but the remainder commences with this gloss. Its recitation came after the public declaration and description of the spiritual

attainment evidenced by the initiate that qualified his acceptance as a perfect. The Gnostic elements of dualism, alienation, the consubstantiality of man's true self and the Good God, the necessity of gnosis for salvation and the sustaining of the true way and the real truth and the true life by wisdom of a secret, sacred kind are all present.

At its very outset the gloss posits dualism when it was revealed to the initiate that "Our Father" means our Father, the One who is in Heaven, to distinguish Him from the Father of the Devil, who is a liar and also the Father of the evil ones, namely those who are utterly deprived of the mercy of salvation.¹⁷⁸ By "hallowed be thy name" the Christian recognizes that the name of God means the "Law of Christ" which is the institution of the New Law and the replacement of the old Dispensation.¹⁷⁹

"Thy kingdom come" shows the believer's expectation of the manifestation of the spark pneuma inside himself. Because the "kingdom" is the source of the pneumatic--because Christ had said, "For lo, the kingdom of God is within you" and, as we have seen from Pagles, the event of gnosis is a process of individuation and self-realization plus identification with the divine--we understand that the Kingdom of God does manifest itself within the knower. To the glossist the Kingdom of God

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 469.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 469. "By the 'name' of God is meant the law of Christ, as if one were to say: May thy law be confirmed in thy people."

also meant the people who would achieve salvation, which shall be accomplished by their being led out of the Land of the Enemy.¹⁸⁰ The identification of the Kingdom with the divine source and the interior spiritual condition and the person and the collection of people who attain to the kingdom is that exact same mystic stance of the identity of the known, the knower, the source and the experience being identical as shown in the definition of classical Gnosticism. The Land of the Enemy is the very material realm in which we find ourselves. It is shown that the Prophet Joel had pleaded with the true God, "Spare, O spare thy people and give not thy inheritance to reproach that the heathen should rule over them. Why should they say among the nations, Where is their God?" (Joel 17:21). The heathen in the Gnostic perspective would be a native of the land of the enemy, that is to say one who did not possess gnosis. The main attribute of the non-gnostics, and of the evil God or evil principle itself, was ignorance of the real God and His Truth. The quotation from Joel is a plea for revelation; the true God's revelation to the seeker assures salvation.

The supplication that God's "will be done on earth as it is in heaven" expressed the hope that the will of God shall move in his people who yet cling to an earthly nature just as His will moves within the divine realm. The earthly

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 469.

and the heavenly elements are contrasted and juxtaposed, thus once again emphasizing the dualistic ground of the Cathar system. Christ, the avatar from without, the representative of the alien good God and personification of the Divine realm and idealization of man's true self, came to do the bidding of the unknown God and thereby institute His Kingdom, "I came not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me, the Father" (John 6:38).

The "supersubstantial bread,"¹⁸¹ is a metaphor for the Law of Christ, Spiritual Wisdom, or Gnosis. From Isaiah, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name" (Isa. 4:1). This means in part that the true Christian partakes of a particular wisdom and through the "eating of his own Bread" will also "clothe himself" in his own interpretation of the scripture. David in Psalms, "I am smitten as grass and my heart is withered because I forgot to eat my bread" (Ps. 102:4). "Forgetting to eat ones bread" places one by the same metaphorical interpretation into a state of "hunger," ignorance. Ignorance among the Gnostics meant that ones true self, the very link with the divine, had forgotten the truth of its origin. From the Book of Wisdom, "Thou didst feed thy people with the food of angels and gavest them bread from heaven prepared without labor, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every

¹⁸¹Ibid., p. 778, note 8.

taste" (Wisd. of Sol. 16:20). Being fed with the food of angels is the reception of gnosis, the experience of divine wisdom and the possession of a spiritual certainty. It reveals itself, this "heavenly bread," as a right and true understanding of the scripture and is a sure claim to a position of spiritual authority, which as we have seen is the very issue at stake in instances of heresy. That this bread contains all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste, indicates the universality of the wisdom bestowed by divine illumination. When it says in the Bible, "Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house" (Isa. 58:7), a Gnostic would read this as a plea for divine wisdom. Give wisdom to the seekers, Lord and please bring those who are adrift and still search, home. "Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread of heaven. For the true bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world" (John 6:32-33). Moses (the Pentateuch and the Old Testament) did not give this divine revelation (the bread from heaven) but the Father (the true God) gives the true wisdom which came down to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. As will be recalled the Gnostics believed and understood that the Spirit could manifest itself as Savior, Redeemer, Knowledge and Wisdom, the Experience of Itself, Avatar, Envoy-Messenger, the totality of itself; all of which in turn can be personified as the Christ who manifests Himself within the Christian when he comes to recognize

his true identity through this mystic process of self identification with the divine. Jesus as the personification of the divine spiritual realm, the sum of all pneuma, is also the personification of the sum total of spiritual wisdom which we have seen referred to as the "bread of life," "the true bread" and a "supersubstantial bread". To be a member of the elect meant that one had to "eat this bread;" possess the true meaning of the scripture revealed in the light of gnosis. By keeping to the spiritual intent of the New Testament meant attaining salvation via a revelation from the true Father, not from the God of Moses and the Old Testament. Life everlasting will be indeed that because time is a creation of evil. The temporal life in which the Christian finds himself demands sources of strength in order to fulfill the Law of Christ so that the initiate had to understand that the petition, "Give us this day" brought attention to the fact that the Spirit had to endure the horrors of the Material world and all that that implied.

"Forgive us our debts" is a plea not to be charged with sin of omission or commission as the Christian labors to observe God's Law. "[When] we forgive our debtors" reminds that the perfect will always forgive those who persecute the followers of the true One.

"Deliver us from evil"; meant evil both diabolical and carnal. The diabolical evils of this world wound the heart. These evils, the promptings of the devil, surface as sin, evil thoughts, hatred, anger and so forth. Carnal evil manifests

itself as hunger, cold, thirst, physical pain, in short the entire range of oppressive force displayed by the cosmos against man. However, evil first and foremost is the Devil, the source of all malice.

"For thine is the kingdom" brings attention to the "kingdom" and Home of the True Christian. The true Father also is the very Power which will bring the faithful to salvation. "Glory, praise and honor are directed to the one true God who will reign over all divinely-created and spiritual beings forever.

After this explanation of the Lord's prayer, the believer then acknowledged repentance of all his sins and forgave all sins he had suffered at the hands of others. If the believer was not yet considered ready for the Consolamentum the ceremony would end at this point with a short penitential ritual known as the Service. The initiate promised to keep the prayer through a life of chastity, humility and the pursuit of truth.¹⁸²

If the consolamentum was to be conferred, the initiate would be accompanied by the elder of the Cathar house in which he lived. The prayers would be recited seven times and then the soon-to-be-consolated-one would address the group of perfects as "Brothers and Sisters in Christ". His petition to the perfects asked that they pray that God have mercy upon him. The elder would then direct a prayer to the true

¹⁸²Ibid., p. 473.

Father who alone has the power of forgiveness.¹⁸³

The sermon preached to the "prior" (the consoled one) and the assembled perfects who would effect the spiritual baptism through a laying on of hands emphasized the necessity of leading the remainder of ones earthly life in chastity and humility. The sermon and the ritual that ensued further cited scriptural instances of the imposition of hands to prove that this was the one true baptism instituted by Christ and that only through it could one receive the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of the true Father. This imposition of hands had been practiced by the Apostles and therefore should be done by any who claimed to be part of the true church of Christ. The details of the consolamentum are not known, but it is known that like in every other Gnostic sect thus far considered the most important ritual means for attaining a state of perfection is a baptism through the laying on of hands.¹⁸⁴

Three other rituals practiced by the Cathars were the Service, the melioramentum and the breaking of Bread.¹⁸⁵

The sectarians would gather once a month to observe the Apparellamentum or Service. This monthly meeting brought together all the perfected ones. The name "Service" was derived

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 474.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 477.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 476.

from the designation of the sequence of confession and prayer recited during the meeting.

The melioramentum, a ritual greeting and showing of respect by the believer to the perfect, has also been called the adoration of the perfects. In its short form the believer prostrated himself three times or made three genuflections, to the perfect, each time saying "Bless us; have mercy upon us." In its complete form, the believer would say, "Bone Christiane, benedictionem Dei et vestram, orate dominum pro nobis, quod Deus custodiat nos a mala morte et perducatur nos bonum finem vel ad manus fidelium Christianorum."¹⁸⁶ "Pray God that we come to a good end and we do not die an evil death." To come to a good end meant that the believer had been consoled. To die an evil death meant a death without benefit of consolation and therefore without salvation.

The Catharist perfects also practiced a ritual of the blessing bread which has been reported by James Capelli, Rainerius Sacconi, Anselm of Allesandria and Bernard Gui.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶Soderberg, p. 236.

¹⁸⁷Bernard Gui, a Dominican friar, (1261-1331), was the author of the Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis (the conduct of the inquisition of heretical depravity) which is a summation of advice and instruction from some twenty-four years as an inquisitor. He sentenced some 930 individuals to appropriate punishment in line with the dictates of the Church. See Wakefield and Evans, pp. 373-445.

Capelli explained that the Cathars doubted the transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ since they believed that when Christ broke bread and blessed it, the bread had only betokened his body; it was not the actual flesh of which he spoke.¹⁸⁸ Since Christ had commanded, "do this whensoever you shall eat for a commemoration of me.", the Cathars performed a ritualistic breaking of bread and recited the Lord's Prayer at every meal. At each repast after the food to be eaten had been served, the elder of the house, the ancianus, would break the bread, give thanks and then say the Lord's prayer. Rainerius wrote that they performed this daily ritual at both the morning and evening meals. Customarily all would stand during the rite.¹⁸⁹ Bernard Gui made note of the fact that the presiding member of the group of diners always wore a cloth of purest white at his or her neck while performing the rite of breaking bread. Bernard never really indicated whether the napkin at the throat is of liturgical and ritual significance or simply the outward evidences of a certain fastidiousness of table deportment. What we may at a distance perceive to be a ritual garment may have been nothing more than a napkin upon which to wipe ones messy fingers.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 373-445.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 331.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 382.

The Cathars observed another major sacramental process, penance. Anselm of Alessandria listed four major types of penance and their correlative offenses and detailed the severity of purification which the errant one had to endure.¹⁹¹

The first and most serious sins, openly and deliberately committed mortal sins, demanded the most severe penance. The guilty person would have been immediately commanded by his superior that he or she follow a three-day period of withdrawal and total renunciation. During this period, the "ad trapassandum", the penitent would eat or drink absolutely nothing. He would then be obligated to follow three forty day fasts sustained only on bread and water. These three fasts were in addition to the other three regularly observed forty day fasts on bread and water which each Cathar perfect observed every year. Since every perfect ordinarily fasted three days per week and since the obligatory fasting observances were doubled through the penance exacted, only seventy-one days of the year permitted the individual wine, oil, fish or shellfish. This type sin incurred the loss of the right to perform the laying-on of hands. The sinner could never hope to again maintain any priority or position of spiritual authority in the community. The severity of punishment exacted would seem to have effected the driving away of the fallen rather than their redemption.

¹⁹¹Ibid., p. 367.

The second type of sin, a mortal sin which had been committed in private, demanded an immediate purgation through twenty-seven non-consecutive days of total withdrawal. Upon completion of this period of no food and drink, those who had imposed the penance would decide as to whether the sinner might be reconsoled. He could be reconsoled but he lost all claim to any position of authority. He would have been barred from conferring the consolamentum except in an emergency. In other words, the penitent might perform an imposition of hands with the intent of effecting the consolamentum on a critically ill or injured believer when no other perfect was available.

The third type of offense was more a sin of persistent temptation to commit a mortal sin. That is to say a perfect that found a yearning to commit wrong besieging himself would immediately subject himself to a seven day non-consecutive total abstinence, no water. If he or she were in office at the time of the temptation, the penance exacted a loss of office. However, when the perfect regained his spiritual equilibrium, he might once again enjoy a position of priority.

The most simple sins required expiation through three day fasts on bread and water.

It seems appropriate at this point to add that each Cathar perfect fasted on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, during which time he could have only bread and water. The elect fasted during Lent, the Monday after Pentecost to the Feast

of St Martin (June 29), and the period between the Feast of St Martin (November 24) and Christmas on bread and water.¹⁹²

¹⁹²Ibid., pp. 367-68.

CHAPTER IV

NEW EVIDENCE

The Manichean Treatise

The "Manichean Treatise" recapitulated by Durand de Huesca and retrieved by the masterful scholarship of Mlle Thouzellier¹⁹³ is thought to have been composed sometime before the years 1218-1222, the period usually accepted for the composition of Durand's polemic against the Cathars. Like the other documents and line of reasoning attributed to the dualists, this treatise supports its position through scriptural citations which readily lend themselves to a dualistic interpretation. This special interpretation peculiar to these dualists is derivative of that certain knowledge, the product of inspiration which we have identified as gnosis.

At first glance the Treatise appears to contain a profession of monotheism, but the context of the piece becomes clearer when it is remembered that radical dualism posited two Principles, each creator of its own particular realm, each realm with its own heavens and earth. The tract sets its aim on the Creator of the Invisible realm which is the world yet to come. "The God who made the world and all things therein dwelleth not in temples made with hands." He is a spiritual entity

¹⁹³Christine Thouzellier, "Un Traité cathare inédit du début du XIIIe siècle," trans. in Wakefield and Evans, pp. 494-510. All references to chapter "headings" are to those used by Wakefield and Evans.

and not part of the material universe.

The polemicist points out that most men have paid little attention to the other world because they have been so much overwhelmed by the corruption of this world. So at the very beginning of the treatise a constant Gnostic theme has been posited. Men have been lulled to sleep by the noise and corruption of this world and therefore have been prevented from knowing of the true world and their true selves. This the material world came from nothing, "ex nihilo," and will surely return into nothing. However, we are assured by the writer, that our "faith is rested upon the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." His dualistic stance poses this world against that world; the visible material against the invisible spiritual; the present state of things against the state of things yet to come.

The "children of this world" marry but those who are worthy of that world which is yet to come, the Perfects, do not. The polemicist points out that the "princes of this world" do not possess the wisdom of the true world which has been identified above as gnosis. Gnostic speculation has identified the archons, the evil cohorts of the forces of darkness as being synonymous with the princes and powers of the temporal world, in short the instituted political, social, economic and ecclesiastical authorities, that which is called the "System" in modern parlance.

In the fourth part of the Treatise, the two worlds are

once again compared. The world, its illusion and ephemeral pleasures can blind and keep the seeker ignorant of the truth. Scriptural citations are called into play to support this theme. "Adulterers, know ye not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God? Whoever then will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God." Paul had said, "For the fashion of this world passeth" in the pursuit of spiritual truth. The major characteristic of the world is ignorance and therefore, like John exhorted the believer, "Love not the world." Like its creator the temporal, material universe is seated in wickedness, evil and darkness. Because it is lacking in love, because it is not to be loved and because it is not a possession and creation of the True Father, it is surely also not a belonging of Christ. It seems almost superfluous to repeat that this material realm, a product of "nothing", is completely devoid of charity, the divine love which is the essence of the spiritual realm. The Kingdom of Christ on which the Perfect sets his aim is that perfect Kingdom which is yet to come. The Present Kingdom, the material universe, has an iniquitous King whose children shall at the end of all time be cast into outer darkness. Lest we forget, the polemicist reminds us once again that the spiritual kingdom possesses both an heavenly and an earthly plain within its realm.

The Devil as Lord of the material universe engendered the "children of this world" through lust and blood. The Cathar

apologist accounts for the apparent admixture of good and evil in a realm which had up to this point been seen as totally and irrevocably evil by likening this realm to a garden in which both wheat and tares grow. The wheat according to the parable represents the good, (pneuma,) and the weeds are those who are ignorant of the truth. When the Good God as Creator made "that which is within and that which is without", the Father did not create the flesh. For this particular dualist the Father did create the psychic element (the without) and the pneumatic soul element (the within).

That time is an ingenious invention of the evil ones is proved by Paul's sentence. "the days of this world are evil." The polemicist again states that the works of this world are evil. The world hated Christ because He had come into the world and had testified that this world was evil. He, the Light of the world, had come into the world, yet people chose to remain ignorant of Him. Sin in part is a choice to be aligned with the world of time, flesh and matter. Now Paul had written, "Christ being come as an high priest of the good things to come, entered by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands." This affirmed that Christ came as Envoy/Avatar of the Good God and that his Church is of the spirit and not man-made. This particular scriptural citation provided the basis for the disdain with which the Cathars regarded the church buildings of the Roman church. That the majority of dualist heretics have been iconoclasts

was to have been expected because of the extraordinary hatred expressed by these people toward things material.

The twelfth section of the Treatise clarifies the introductory portion of this polemic by defining exactly what the writer has meant by "ALL". The word "ALL" can mean two different things. It can either signify all things good or all things evil, but never both. That is to say that there can never be an absolute conjunction of good and evil which could be represented by "all". Therefore, depending upon the referrent plane, one could speak of either the Good God or the God of Evil as the creator of ALL things.

The concept of nothingness and the creation from nothing is covered in the thirteenth section of the Treatise "Nothing" when juxtaposed to "Something" is the state of non-being contrasted with true being. The source of true being is pure Love. "An idol is nothing in the world". "If I have not charity, then I am nothing." Nothing is that which was made outside the provenance of the Good God. Now as the spiritual realm is the true reality yet to come, the material realm is simply Satan's creation which was made "ex nihilo", out of "nothing". The orthodox Church which has its center at Rome believes that its God created out of nothing and nothing according to the Cathars is simply ultimate absence of pure love, charity. It is also shown that the good creation may be called both "visible" and "invisible" as the world to come will mirror this the evil creation, only the spiritual realm of that to

come will be totally good. This evil world has most deceitfully lulled the spirit to sleep. "Oh senseless men of learning, who has bewitched you into incomprehension of these things?" By this we are to also understand that the wisdom sought is not to be gained through study or scholarship. That accumulation of knowledge only impedes the process of true wisdom which is gnosis. Because of this, Matthew called the leaders of this world, "Blind leaders of the Blind."

The Gnostic claim for spiritual authority is made by the polemicist when he most exasperatedly demands, "What can be plainer in Holy Scripture? But why do I labor longer to reprove you, you heretics? (We must not lose sight of the fact that the Gnostics believed the Church of Rome to be "heretic" to the true Christian Church.) Have I not heard that Christ came in judgement so that seeing, you see not and hearing, you hear not and do not perceive?"

However, not being put off by the seeming impossibility of his task, the writer devotes the sixteenth section of his work to a further discussion of the two worlds. This material realm is a place of service to strange gods in a land which is also strange. For, "Lo! there is a strange God, there is our land and a land not ours." The true self finds itself an alien in the material realm. The writer uses the image of sheep lost and scattered throughout the darkness as a means of explaining how the spirit is scattered throughout the cosmos. Salvation shall have been attained upon the recollec-

tion of all lost souls as surely as the process of a shepherd returning the lost sheep to his folds. Salvation on the macro-cosmic level is to be completed only after all the particles of divine light and spirit have been returned to the heaven of their origin. This heaven is the heaven of the spiritual realm wherein dwells justice and is the one place that God the Father deemed worthy of his throne.

The Savior, bringer of salvation, is the very Son of Man who came to seek that which had been lost, for the Son of Man had been sent to find the lost of the House of Israel. Like a shepherd seeking his lost and straying sheep, Christ as avatar of the Good God will reclaim the lost scattered throughout the evil realm. The Good men are like strangers and aliens who find themselves living in strange countries among enemies.

Manuscript A.6.10

An Apology: A Vindication of the Church of God

The "Vindication of the Church of God," the first document in Ms. A.6.10 an apologetic written about the year 1250,¹⁹⁴ emphasizes the Cathar church in practice rather than its dogmatic aspects. The opening Chapter asks, "what is the Church?" The answer, in keeping with the anti-materialistic stance of gnosticism is that the church is not made of stone or wood,

¹⁹⁴The entire ms. is translated by Wakefield and Evans; The "Vindication of the Church of God," pp. 596-606; "A Gloss on the Lord's Prayer," pp. 607-30.

but that rather it is the assembly of holy and faithful men. The Church is the collection of the spiritual ones. As Paul said, "Each one is the temple of God, the place of the Holy Spirit." The holy unblemished Church is the true chamber of the Holy Spirit.

All sins are pardoned by prayer due to the power received of Jesus Christ. The practice of the true Church should be confined to and based upon only that which is to be found in the Scriptures. Prayer is an on-going occupation because as St James wrote, "the continuing prayer of a just man availeth much."

The just man, that is the Perfect, refrains from all killing nor does he consent that others may kill. The true Church and its just ones fervently refrain from all uncleanness. They abstain from sexual relationships because of St Paul's exhortations. They also believe theft, robbery and covetousness to be sinful and wrong.

The true Christian refrains from lying, the bearing of false witness and furthermore is forbidden to swear oaths. To speak the truth requires that one simply say what is in ones heart. To the writer of the apologetic, the Roman church habitually practices perjury and apparently supports it when it is politically expedient. One must always refrain from blasphemy and cursing because at the Judgement Day ones words will be there to accuse the wicked who habitually curse. Those who have used their words to bless and praise their fellow

man will be blest likewise.

To break even the least of the commandments is to break them all, because the sin of a perfect is a sin against the Spirit. The very least transgression is a renunciation of the totality of the Law of Life. One must seek to follow Jesus Christ through a perfect imitation of Him. To be a member of Christ's Church is to be a member of His body and therefore one must strive to remain holy, pure and chaste. To walk in the revealed Light is to have fellowship with Him.

The members of the true Church suffer persecutions, tribulation and martyrdom in the same manner that Christ suffered in the desire to redeem and save his Church. The writer points out that since the Roman Church is never persecuted for its goodness or justice and since the Church of Rome kills those who refuse to condone its sins and evil actions, Rome could not possibly be the Church of Jesus Christ the Savior.

The remnant closes with some commentary on the subject of what sort of baptism is the true baptism. A baptism of the spirit effected by a laying-on of hands is the only proper baptism. The Roman Church knows that this is so and its preposterous claim that baptism by water effects a spiritual awakening is contrary to scripture because, John the Baptist had promised, "He that shall come after me shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit." The laying on of hands is a spiritual baptism. The material baptism of the wicked Roman Church is grounded in the material substance, water. Likewise, Rome insists on

baptizing small children who do not possess a knowledge of the difference between good and evil. Neither do children possess the intellectual maturity or the awareness of themselves as spiritual entities to undergo the true baptism. The writer explains further that the reason John the Baptist baptized with water was to prepare peoples' faith and understanding for the baptism of the spirit that was yet to come.

A "New" Gloss on the Lord's Prayer

The "Gloss on the Lord's Prayer" contained in the same document as the "Vindication of the Church of God" attempts to describe the relationship between God who is the divine spiritual element and His creation which has manifested itself as the material realm. It will necessitate a change of perspective on the part of the reader as the system thus described is properly identified as mitigated dualist. The cosmology is emanationist as the divine spiritual element is understood to have devolved into the material. The whole of creation, both the material and the spiritual realms, are described as a heirarchy of just seven substances. There are likewise two major divisions within the heirarchy; the celestial and the terrestrial.

Of the heavenly substances, the highest is God, who as Father of all substances, is also the most pure. He is pure Charity. He resides in Heaven which is the primal substance Charity. From Him, the heavenly substances Lights or Charities

emanate directly. The next level of substances produced by the Lights, or Charities are the Visitations or Mercies which are surrounded by the Spirits.

However, the spirit having fallen from heaven into the terrestrial realm took the material form of the "people of God" in exile who are further characterized by the material substances of Lives further defined by the baser elements of Souls which are in turn governed by Hearts which are contained within Bodies. Curiously this is one of the few extant cosmological schemes which exist written by the dualists themselves from this particular period.

Like the other gloss on the Lord's Prayer cited above, a detailed exposition of each phrase of the prayer is presented and with only a superficial reading the parameters as set forth by Jonas which describe gnosis and Gnosticizing sects are indeed quite evident.

The "people in exile" are the true Christians, partakers and bearers of the Spirit, the divine essence, which has somehow fallen or been captured in the material realm. The Spirit has been trapped in the substance, Lives which by the schema are a product of Souls which are in turn ensnared within Hearts and Bodies. As will be recalled the Colloquium at Messina had agreed that Gnosis was a knowledge directed at salvation derived from an awareness that one carried within oneself the Spirit of God that had somehow fallen from the divine spiritual realm. This spirit, consubstantial with God the Father, revealed itself also as man's true self. We of course, grown

sensitive to the theme, immediately recognize this spirit as pneuma. It is the awareness and discovery of and the knowledge of and derived wisdom from this discovery of pneuma that is the goal of the true Christian.

The prologue to the gloss is unfortunately in fragmentary form yet is sufficiently complete to emphasize that the "captive ones and the lost among the strange nations" will be led out of the "land of the enemy" by the Master who is Jesus. Jesus is once again seen in the typically gnostic role of Saviour/ Redeemer who has gone into the land of the adversary, the material realm, for the express purpose of leading forth the people, that is to say; the captive spiritual essence held bondage by the forces of evil.

"Our Father who art in heaven" is He, the Holy Father of Lights or Charities and likewise as primal source is the Father of Mercies or Visitations and of Spirits. The Charities of God are also comprehended and experienced as Lights because these are the "substances" that illumine. God the perfect essence of Charity resides in the seventh Heaven.

"Hallowed be thy name" reminds the Perfected one that it is only he who can say the Lord's Prayer. Because those who are ignorant of the wisdom imparted by the Spirit of God do not truly know God, they blaspheme the name of God when they undertake to say the prayer without true understanding. One is much reminded of the Kabbalistic tenet that to truly know God one must know the names of God. This Name of God

which has so often been profaned by the "Unknowing" is a manifestation of the true Father, one of the emanations known as a Visitation of the Father.

The total congregation of Visitations manifest themselves as the Son of God. The Visitations also act as the very chords of Charities which bind the spirit in fragmented form to the Father of all substances, He who is pure Charity and the Father of all.

The "Kingdom to come" is the Kingdom of the Spirit to which all the fallen spirit will be returned. Because Jesus is a manifested emanation of the Father, Jesus Christ is mystically also that Kingdom. Christ having been sent as avatar/envoy/redeemer/savior demonstrated the way for man by his descent from heaven. His mission as manifestation of the Father is "to do His will and to teach his brethren what the will of the Father is." In this chapter it is clearly expressed that both the spiritual and the material realm have a heaven and an earth. The earth in which the will of God must be done is the "earth of Life" which is under the power of heaven. All that is prayed for in the Lord's Prayer will transpire in the "spiritual earth," not on the "earthly earth".

The "people in exile", the true Christians, bearers of the spirit, hunger for "daily bread" which is knowledge and wisdom given by divine revelation. Jesus as the "Living Bread" fed the "hungry". That the prayer asks for a "super-substantial bread" clarifies that the hunger of which is spoken

is indeed a spiritual hunger. It is charity which is that "supersubstantial bread" which feeds and nourishes via the divine visitation, the divine vision, gnosis. Jesus as envoy is the bread which sustains the spirit which sustains the life which in turn supports the soul which preserves the heart and keeps the body.

We learn that the true substance of man is with the Father which by our prior definition of gnosis and Gnosticism we recognize as pneuma. It is further revealed that the Son had been sent to speak for the Father who had sent the "supersubstantial bread", Charity. The polemicist goes on to say that the reception of Charity is the bond of perfection and yet the Charity is also the Perfection itself. As with gnosis, the experience is the knowledge and the reception of the knowledge all at the same time. This alone proves that the Cathar concept of perfection is the very Gnosticism which we have been tracing from the early Christian era to the Middle Ages.

The debts for which the Perfected one begs to be forgiven are the unresisted influences of the evil realm which is chiefly characterized by its ignorance of God. Government, the evil princes of this world, incites blood lust, disorders lives, mingles together all such things as blood-murder, theft, dissimulation and corruption; defiles souls and causes the forgetfulness of the good things of God. Indirectly the forces of evil are responsible for the continuing rebirth of unrealized souls. Government furthers mayhem, murder, disorder and chaos through

its constant use of marauding armies.

To be truly forgiven a man must forgive all who have transgressed against and persecuted him. If he refuses to forgive his debtors, he cannot expect to be forgiven the debts which he likewise owes to God.

To stand against temptation is to possess wisdom and temptation can be resisted by imitation of the Savior. Since Christ as man had been tempted by all things material and evil, He stands before man as the example that the lure of evil impulses can be withstood. The true path is shaped by the rejection of all useless and inefficient behavior. Temptation to err and go the way of ignorance is strong but God has promised us that none will be tempted beyond our ability to withstand the ordeal. Erotic heat, for example, is a human test which can through its allure draw us away from things spiritual. To resist this temptation one need only pattern oneself upon the example of labor and patience shown to us by the Prophets. Through enduring temptation we shall receive the Crown of Life, promised us by God. The glossist understands there to be two types of temptation: one of Life which is a tempting of the soul to God and the other of Death which is a turning to the Devil. Therefore for this mitigated dualist, there is such a thing as free will. The choices that man makes do matter.

The captive "people of God" are surrounded by evil and most surely wish to escape from its influence. However,

without wisdom escape is impossible as evil is ignorance of God. The Kingdom of God is the Spirit of the first form, Charity. God's power is derived from the life of the spiritual realm, that is of the first form; lived within the spirit of the first form. Charity as pure love. The glory of the Father is the Glory of the spiritual realm. This glory is the soul of David and the souls of his sons made manifest. The Kingdom and the Power and the Glory manifest themselves also as the Spirit and the Life and the Soul through the Ages as Visitations of the Spirit which as we have also seen manifest themselves as God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The paucity of historical documents makes it exceedingly difficult to prove an historical lineation between all of the above mentioned outbreaks of heresy except between the Bogomils and the Cathars of Italy and France. However, the unmistakeable similarities in terminologies of ritual practices, lifestyles and morality and dogma along with supporting scriptural arguments shows the gnostic interpretation and understanding of Christianity maintained an extraordinary vitality from the earliest beginnings of the Christian faith through the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries.

As the majority of these heretical movements maintained a dualist theology, more often than not the charge of "Manicheanism" was brought against them by orthodox polemicists and heresy hunters. This epithet "Manichean" was used so extensively by polemicists and detractors of heretical groups that the word "Manichean" was often used synonymously for heretic where indeed there was little evidence to support the charge of dualism let alone followers of Manicheanism. It is thought that in many instances the charge of Manicheanism was levelled on the basis of Augustine's extensive report on his Manichean "experience" in "Contra Faustum".

That the dualist heretics were Christians first and foremost is constantly denied by the orthodox polemicists, but most strongly and zealously emphasized by the heretics themselves. The heretics believed themselves to be the True Christian Church and that the Roman Church and her priests and communicants were false heretics themselves, spiritual authority being a constant issue. If there are Manichean elements present in the Catharist movement of Western Europe and its related movements, those elements are the same elements of Christian gnosticism which were adapted by Mani whose intent was not to revitalize or even reform a given religious movement, but rather to institute a new revelation, a new way and a new faith based upon himself Mani as the ultimate culmination of a series of avatars consisting of Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Mani. Mani was not a Christian, so it seems inappropriate to call groups Manichean who insist that they represent a return to true primitive Christianity. This is not to deny that certain speculations may be identified within Catharism as Manichean, but as they are Manichean in species they are likewise in a generic sense Gnostic due to origin.

By Gnostic we mean one who is the recipient of gnosis. This is an individual who lays claim to a special comprehension and understanding derived through a direct experience of the sacred; an experience of illumination which is non-rational in character, yet at the same time effects the assured salvation

of the one who has the experience. It is likened to the descent and reception of the power and grace of the Holy Spirit which is expressed as an understanding or special comprehension of the articles of faith more likely than not outside of the accepted teachings of the orthodox view. The Christian Gnosticism is expressed by a special view of man, the world and the relationship to the Divine in terms of a more or less radical dualism which is developed into a cohesive structure founded heavily in the writings of the New Testament. To the Christian Gnostic the Envoy sent into this material realm by the Good Transcendent God to redeem the lost spirits who fell from the Realms of Light and are trapped by the Evil Creator and his forces is Christ Himself. The wisdom He brings is this same gnosis in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Gnosis is characterized time and again as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, a baptism instituted by Christ as distinct from the baptism of John the Baptist, a rite grounded in the material substance water and therefore lacking in any value for the attainment of salvation. The special knowledge peculiar to gnosis demands a particular canon of scripture which often as not included an entire rejection of all documents which referred to the Old Dispensation or the law, that is to say the revealed word of the God of the Old Testament, who was identified as the evil Creator of this material realm. This view is maintained by the early Christian Gnostics and every

other heretical group we have considered. The correct structure of scripture according to the Gnostics comprehends the writings of St Paul and St John the Evangelist, both of whose theologies display an ambiguity which is open to dualistic interpretation. We are therefore of the opinion that the rejection of the Old Testament or some radical change in accepted exegesical rendering of scripture to be evidence of a gnosis; a knowledge or wisdom received via spiritual experience leading the individual to the practice of Christianity as expressed by the groups herein under consideration.

The concept of gnosis is implicit in the very specialized interpretation of scripture. When Marcion, the neo-Paulicians, the Bogomils or the Cathars, not forgetting the large number of Protodualist groups reject the Old Testament or heavily edit scripture to excise all Judaic references which they view as influence of the evil Creator, they are acting upon received non-rational wisdom; they "KNOW" what is correct. For example the heretics at Orleans in 1022 reject the Old Testament and are accused of seeing the Devil as an "angel of light". One hundred and fifty years later in Toulouse two men are accused of being able to "turn themselves into angels of light." The men at Toulouse are particularly insistant that they possess the "right understanding" of the articles of Faith. In both instances the sectarians receive their wisdom as an inspiration of the Spirit by an imposition of hands. In the earlier case

the heretics are said to be in possession of some secret doctrine which they do not reveal, but by 1178 in Toulouse the secret doctrine of the Duality of God had evidently become common knowledge. We suspect that the accusation that the heretics at Orleans worshipped the Devil as an Angel of Light or an Ethiopian and that the men from Toulouse could change themselves into angels of Light represents a misunderstanding on the part of the polemicists in regard to gnostic cosmological and soteriological speculation.

Gnosis also provided a point of reference for a return to a primitive, evangelistic Apostolic Christian life. The evident reformist return to founding principles is assuredly one of the most striking elements of the way and belief and life led by the ascetic Cathars. As the vehicle for the written transmission of Christian gnostic doctrine was the New Testament, we can assume that the oral doctrine was transmitted through preaching and secret teaching divulged to catechumens as they underwent initiation. The "Gloss on the Lord's Prayer" is an example of this. The transmission of mythology and cosmology we can surmise to have been maintained through such documents as the Apology. The only major literary connection between the early Christian Gnostics, specifically the Archontics, and the Bogomils and the Cathars besides the New Testament is the Ascension of Isaiah.

So it remains that the main written lineation evidenced

is the New Testament. One finds that for most Cathar thinkers, only the New Testament deserved attention. Their whole system is based solely upon scripture.

All the sacraments practiced by the heretic groups were simple and starkly primitive because they are patterned after the accounts in the Gospels. All the sacraments of the Roman church were rejected. Water baptism of infants was replaced by a spiritual baptism of adults, evidenced and effected by the imposition of hands. The eucharist of bread and wine was replaced by a simple ceremony of breaking and sharing bread before meals in private homes. The sole prayer recited was the Lord's Prayer which only the Elect, the recipients of Gnosis, knew how to say properly or were permitted to recite. Penance consisted of confession one to another. There were also simple "adoration ceremonies" which believers performed as a mark of respect to those who carried within them the Holy Spirit.

The laying on of hands resulted in visionary experience. This inspiration of the Divine resulted in the "perfection" of the individual who was considered to have attained assured salvation and was regarded as a vessel within which the Holy Spirit resided, the "theotokoi". This elect formed a clergy class who practiced an ascetic life of renunciation characterized by vegetarianism founded on an abhorrence of violence and killing, even of flesh for food purposes. All dairy and egg products were taboo. The elect also followed a strict regimen of fasts during which time they consumed only bread and water.

The morality of the elect demanded abstention from all sexual activity and reproduction because they had been instituted by the Evil Creator of this Universe. One of the major themes carried with the gnostic tradition is that of the fissioning and re-fissioning of divinely originated spiritual essence through sexual reproduction and the constant rebirth into new bodies of souls who have not as yet reached the bodies of perfected individuals.

The Elect class were supported by a Believer class while the rest of humanity were regarded as sinners, the material men. The members of the elect began as members of the hearer-believer class who at any time might elect to undergo the initiation process or remain unbaptized until death-bed.

In a micro-cosmic sense man recapitulates the structure of the Church in his make-up. The core of the church is the pneumatic elect surrounded by the psychic believer element both of which are surrounded by the flesh-oriented mass of non-believers. Man has a divine spirit which comes from the Good God surrounded by the psychic soul and the flesh body, both of which come from the Evil Creator of this Realm. That is to say, man has a body from the earth, an animal soul breathed in by the Archon and an Immortal Spirit, the pneumatic essence, whose place of origin is the realm of the transcendent Good God of that World and Age, both yet to come.

Christ is that Envoy sent by the Good God from that

world without of the Universe. All that Christ did while on earth was merely illusory because His essence being purely Good would not permit Him to experience anything peculiar to the material realm such as crucifixion; birth; death; resurrection, and most assuredly not in the flesh; eating; drinking and so on. By extension all material representations of Christ were abhorrent. The cross and material Churches were condemned. The anti-materialism of these gnostic-groups demanded a strict iconoclasm. The cult of the Virgin and Saints likewise faded into insignificance on the basis of these docetic views. The idea of the Incarnation was repellent because the dualist heretics did not see how the God from the realm of Good could put on evil matter. The sacraments of the Roman Church were despised as they are clearly celebrated with elements from the material realm such as oil, water and so forth.

The dualist speculation sees man as a three-fold creation constructed by the malevolent God of the Jews who made this material Universe which is the plane the farthest removed from the Divine, the true source of Being, the regions of Light and Truth, the domain of the Alien God, the Principle of Goodness and Unqualified Charity. The Archon or Prince of this World makes man and deliberately or inadvertently (if he is ignorant of the existence of the Good God) incorporates into Man the particles of the Divine substance pneuma which have fallen from the realms of light. Salvation will result when all the

pneuma has been returned to the source of all being. It falls to the messenger from without to effect this process. The messenger is sent by the God of Good out of pure Mercy and Charity. The messenger is Jesus who comes to redeem the world. It is not the sacrifice of Christ which has import for salvation, but rather His part as the Envoy from the Good God, a messenger who comes to tell mankind what is the truth and how to regain the guiding spirit for salvation.

The foregoing summary of Christian gnostic concepts is not meant to imply that each group believes all the above details but rather as a summation in general of the beliefs of all the groups under consideration. The beliefs peculiar to each group have been sketched in the discussion of each particular group which once again brings us to the problem of the Paulicians.

F. C. Coneybeare in his book The Key of Truth which forms the basis of Nina Garsoian's thesis shows the original Paulicians to be Adoptionist and based those rituals upon a tri-partite baptism with water. They are emphatically non-dualist which is evidence by the sole Paulician document in the possession of scholars, the Key of Truth. However, in that so many polemicists report dualist Paulicians Garsoian concedes the possibility of Byzantine-based Neo-paulicians or "Proto-bogomils." Coneybeare points out that the Adoptionist theology of the Paulicians assumes the descent of the Holy Spirit upon

The one undergoing baptism and that in a sense seeing as the Bogomils and Cathars and other baptism-of-the-spirit-oriented groups seek the baptism characterized by a descent of the Holy Spirit, they are in a sense Adoptionist. He sees all of the early Christianity prior to the institution of the one of the Trinitarian concept to have been "Adoptionist" in essence. Therefore he feels that the emphasis on spiritual baptism alligns all these groups practicing apostolic Christianity as a return to the essential adoptionist pre-trinitarian concept of Christianity, their dualism not with-standing. Also Coneybeare sees that the similarity of names, Paulicians and Publiciani, adult baptism and iconoclasm form a point of possible filiation between Paulicians and Cathars.

Anna Comnena reported that the Bogomils were a combination of the Paulicians and the Euchitae, so if Anna does not lie and we are not prepared to doubt the veracity of that lady; we must assume by a combination that Anna and the erudite Euthymius Zigabenus meant that some of the doctrine of the Bogomils came from the Messalians or Euchitae and some from the Paulicians to produce that "deus ex machina", the neo-Paulician. That is to say, what was absent in Messalian belief was supplied by the Adoptionist Paulicians and vice-versa. Therefore, the question of dualism is somewhat resolved as a syncretic religious movement does not require two or more movements with exactly the same beliefs for its components.

One must agree with Garsoian that the original Paulician stance is such that an extraordinarily profound mutation had to occur if the Thonraki Paulicians are to be considered as a link between the dualist Christians of Asia Minor and those of Western Europe. Those Adoptionist Paulicians viewed the Father as superior to the Son, the Son to the Spirit. They practiced a water baptism of adults characterized by a descent of the Spirit which consisted of immersion in any body of water whether tank, pond or horse trough with three sprinklings of water. The fact that all the rest of the groups practice a baptism of Fire characterized by imposition of hands points up one major difference. They likewise did not require their elect to follow a life of celibacy, but rather followed the dicta of their beloved St Paul that encouraged the clergy to be happily married, well adjusted fathers and husbands. It seems almost excessive at this point to repeat that the Thonraki were not dualist either.

Some later European heretics present another problem in that none of them are specifically accused of holding dualist beliefs, yet the beliefs they hold strongly point to dualist and gnostic concepts; that gnostic sensibility seems ever present. The first is Leutard. He was an extreme and violent iconoclast. He preached evangelistically and sent his wife away. He directed his followers not to pay tithes. All of this is reminiscent of concepts held by those in the dualist tradition. Furthermore there is Leutard's disquieting vision, bees boring

into his body and all. However, if the poor fellow was not mad and in possession of some sort of spiritual enlightenment, where did he get the scriptural basis for his arguments? He experienced a vision with physical sensations not uncommon to those who practice meditation, but then visionary experiences do not teach one how to read. If he was a peasant, it seems a safe enough assumption that he did not know how to read or write. Yet if his preaching was eloquent enough to make an impact of some fifteen years duration, he must have had a source of information and support other than the written word. Then, there is the added problem of his suicide which leads us to believe he was not capable of directing his experience in a positive manner. With the evidence presented it would appear that Leutard experienced a state of psychosis which totally disrupted and destroyed his life leaving him no choice but suicide.

The heretics at Orleans in 1022 show themselves to be in complete agreement with every element of Bogomil, Neo-Paulician and Cathar groups with the exception of a firm statement of dualism. The denial of the creation by the Father though strikes us as sufficient evidence for dualist tenets. This heresy at Orleans came either from Perigord or Italy. The fact that the evangelist from Perigord carried a bag is somewhat reminiscent of the Balkan Bogomils called "Torbeshi" who carried the Gospel of John and what alms they collected in a distinctive sack. This group at Orleans has its own

interpretation of scripture which follows upon an initiation into their sect characterized by imposition of the hands.

The heretics of Arras Cambrai learned their heresy from the Italians in whose country there was a great deal of Balkan-based missionary activity. These reject the Old Testament and are ascetics who believe in a baptism by the Spirit. As has been seen these are two of the major elements common to Christian dualist groups.

The claim of the heretics of Monforte in Italy to hold to both the Old and New Testament may be an instance of perjury on the part of the heretics which Puech sees as a common enough practice amongst dualist heretics when being questioned by the Church authorities. He quotes Euthymius Zigabenus as saying the Bogomils taught their followers, Sauvez vous par tous les moyens, c'est a dire: Simulez avec ruse et fraude la foi de ceux qui voius apprenent et sauvezvous ainsi du danger et de la mort dont ils vous menacent. This practice of dissimulation would be later practiced by the Cathars at Toulouse in 1178. These Italians are part of a world-wide movement indicating we suppose wandering evangelists. They also claim that the creed they hold originated in very ancient times.

The heresy of Clement of Bucy has an oral tradition and this heresy is already spread throughout the Latin world. These heretics are docetic by which we mean they reject the death of Christ and the resurrection of the flesh. They are

evangelistic and are ascetic. They reject meeting houses, the sacraments of the Church and the Old Testament. The apostolic Christian life they lead and the foregoing lend an air which is almost unmistakeably dualist. That they derive a secret knowledge from their peculiar form of baptism implies a gnosis which definitely places them in the Christian dualist tradition.

It is likewise very tempting to identify Henry as a possible fore-runner of the Cathars. His life is apparently one of ascetic poverty. He likewise rejects the Old Testament, bases his wandering evangelism on the New Testament, he rejects the writings of the Fathers of the Church, his philosophy is anti-materialistic and is openly iconoclastic. We doubt the charges of pederasty and seduction of young women directed against Henry. His encouraging his "believers-class," his followers, to marry is still in keeping with the Cathar principles as it was not wrong for the hearer-believer class of the faithful to be married although every effort was directed at becoming a perfected Christian. Peter of Bruys, often linked to Henry, possessed many beliefs reminiscent of the Christian dualist groups under discussion. However, he believed that God was everywhere as an argument against building churches seems contradictory to dualist precepts in that the Good God of the world to come who is the goal to be attained for true salvation has nothing to do whatsoever with this material realm created by the powers of evil.

Those heretics identified by Eberwein and those who came from Perigeux also appear to be within the dualist tradition. Those at Liege in the year 1145 are evidence of "the newly discovered errors of ancient enemies". Since they rejected the ceremony of the imposition of the hands as performed by the Roman church, it seems that they must have practiced this ritual themselves and by their disclaimer of the Church's right to perform this sacrament we assume they meant to say that only they possessed the correct understanding and meaning. By ancient errors we are suggesting the Church polemicist meant dualist. As this heresy is identified as being prevalent throughout France, it seems safe to identify it as Cathar.

The gnostic elements of Cathar Christianity are evidenced by their exegesis of Scripture, their mythological speculations on cosmology, their maintenance of a dualist theology, their conception of man, their insistence on the import of correct understanding derived from a visionary experience of the sacred in their baptismal rite, their ascetic lifestyle, their docetic Christology, their iconoclasm, their contempt for the instituted Church of Rome and the social order of feudalism.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

That the Albigensian heresy represents a medieval resurgence of Christian gnosticism and represents a viable alternative to accepted Christian practice has been the subject of this thesis.

An attempt has been made to trace the historical course of Christian gnostic groups and identify teachings and practices of these various sects and movements on the basis of the definition propounded at Messina for classical Gnosticism--gnosis as a "knowledge of the divine mysteries reserved for an elite." The definition of gnosis further specifies that there exists in man, but not necessarily all men, a divine spark which fell into the material world, a spark which is man's true self and which needs to be awakened. Man's salvation comes with his realization of this truth. The experience, the wisdom and the awareness of the possession of this knowledge are all part and parcel of GNOSIS.

Less analytically I have attempted to instill a sensitivity to the major issues and themes recurrent in gnostic theological speculation: a cosmic dualism which identifies the principle or personification of evil as the God of this material universe; as often as not the Lord God Jehovah of the Old Testament

is that same evil Archon who created the earth to keep the spirit enslaved; the Good God is spiritual and absolutely transmundane; among Christian gnostics, Jesus Christ is a "spirit" being who is an avatar/emanation/messenger/bearer of gnosis/the gnosis itself. These have been identified under the heading of "gnostic principle". A rejection of icons and material church buildings, insistence upon a baptism of the spirit characterized by a laying on of hands, and extreme asceticism demanding sexual abstinence and subsistence level vegetarianism mixed with rigorous fasting, a total abhorrence for the Church of Rome and society, ridicule for those who believe in a resurrection of the flesh, the denial that any part of the divine realm might become incarnate, and long, involved speculations to teach these beliefs are some of the elements that identify the extraordinary anti-materialism which underlies the stance these gnostic and gnosticizing sects maintained toward the world.

Soderberg demonstrated in 1949 that the Cathari did represent a reemergence of a gnosticism not unlike ancient Christian gnosticism and that both absolute and mitigated dualism had survived through the centuries. My thesis has attempted to examine and analyze several documents that were not available to Soderberg in order to support or modify his conclusions. I believe that I have amply demonstrated that the three documents, the unedited thesis retrieved from Durand de Huesca, the Gloss and the Apology all demonstrate the existence and the permanence

of the gnostic vision through the centuries. These documents lend further support to the contention that the Albigensian heresy is heir to a traceable tradition of alternative Christian practice.

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