

**Practica Inquisitionis Heretice Pravitatis.** Auctore BERNARDO GUIDONIS, Ordinis Fratrum Predicatorum. Document Publié pour la Première Foix, par Le Chanoine C. Douais, Professeur a l'Ecole Supérieure de Théologie de Toulouse. 4to, pp. xi, and 370. Paris, 1886.

Canon Douais, Professor of Theology at Toulouse, has rendered a valuable service to students of mediæval church history by the publication of this important document. We are not a little surprised that a faithful member of the Romish communion should be willing thus to promote investigations into the infamies of the Inquisition; but fortunately for science, he seems not to be aware of the damaging character of these documents. He seems to anticipate our surprise. After calling attention to the publication of similar documents by others (chiefly Protestants) he adds: "But let no one be astonished that I now edit the second work of this inquisitor. Far otherwise. It is of importance to everybody, particularly to the church, which has nothing to fear from the truth, that the reality of the facts be established according to authentic writers. Inspired by this thought I have worked for some years at bringing to light documents relative to the Inquisition." This is in reality by no means the first work of the kind for which we are indebted to the learned editor.

Worthy of mention are his works, on the *Origin of the Albigenses* (1880), on the *Siege of Carcassonne in 1209* (1882), on *The Sources of the History of the Inquisition in the South of France in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (1881), on *The Church and the Crusade against the Albigenses* (1882), on *The Subjection of the Viscount of Carcassonne by Simon de Montfort* (1884), three works on the Dominican order, whose members were at the head of the Inquisition, and several other works on early and mediæval French church history.

Bernard Gui was one of the most distinguished inquisitors of the 13th and 14th centuries. Born about 1261, he entered the Dominican order in 1279, studied theology at Narbonne and Limoges 1285-89, and taught theology in various places 1291-1306. After filling a number of official positions in his order he was made inquisitor at Toulouse in 1306. This position he held till 1323. His inquisitorship fell in a most important age—the early years of the Avignon abode of the papacy, an age in which heresy lifted up its head on all sides. Toulouse was the oldest and most important centre of the Inquisition. For at least two hundred years heresy had abounded in this region, and although the Inquisition had been vigorously effected for a century, and exterminating crusades had swept over this region, destroying tens of thousands of Evangelical Christians, Bernard's office was far from being a sinecure. It has been estimated that he dealt with at least six hundred and forty-seven cases during the seventeen years of his incumbency. The *Book of Sentences of the Inquisition of Toulouse*, by the same author, was published by Philip Limborch in his great work on the Inquisition (1692). The present work is now published for the first time. A large part of the volume is taken up with forms of citation for various classes of persons, forms of denunciation, of summoning witnesses and theologians to assist in making inquisition, of sentences, of absolution, etc., etc. Every possible emergency seems to have been provided for. The Inquisition of

Toulouse was certainly conducted in a most systematic way, and the chances of escaping its vigilance, or when once arrested of securing honorable release, must have been small indeed. We can scarcely conceive of anything more diabolical than the institution whose machinery we are permitted to examine.

But it is the fresh information about heretical parties that chiefly interests us. Minute descriptions of the various parties, including their doctrines and their practices, with a view to aiding subordinates in detecting them and in distinguishing one party from another, abound. The very purpose of these determinations is favorable to their credibility, for to misrepresent the parties would have been to frustrate their object; moreover, the characterization of the Waldenses, in whom we feel the deepest interest, is quite in accordance with what we know of the party from other sources, while it throws some fresh lights on certain aspects of their doctrine and polity. The account of the ministry of the Waldenses, while the information it contains is not entirely new, is of considerable value. We quote a few sentences:

“The sect and heresy of the Waldenses confesses three orders in its church, viz., deacon, presbyter and bishop. But their bishop is called *major omnium*, and is elected *major* by all the presbyters and deacons, etc., after a unanimous election and united prayer, and confession of sins, first in private and then in public, not indeed specifically but generally, some *major*, if one should be present among them, if not a presbyter, praying and saying the *Pater Noster*, lays his hand upon the head of the elect, that he may receive the Holy Ghost, and after him the rest of the deacons as well as presbyters lay their hands upon his head, one by one in order, and so, without any other form of words, and without delivering to him anything whatever (i. e., any symbol of investiture), and without any anointing, and without pontifical insignia, through prayer and imposition of hands alone, he is ordained bishop among them. To the power of the bishop they say it pertains to administer the sacraments of penance, and ordination, and the Eucharist, also to preach the gospel wherever he will, and to bestow upon presbyters the power of preaching the gospel and of hearing confession. Likewise the said *major* can absolve any that confess to him, from all sins confessed, of whatever kind. Likewise he can remit the whole penalty due to sins or part of it, although this is not commonly done. But when he does absolve from sins, he says: May God absolve thee from all thy sins, and I enjoin upon thee contrition for thy sins even until death, and that such penance be done as prayers, or fastings, or both.

“But the presbyter is ordained among them in this manner. For after he has been elected, and after prayer and confession of sins, their *major* lays hands upon the head of the presbyter to be ordained, and after him then the other presbyters there present, that he may receive the Holy Ghost. But in the imposition of hands ordination is conferred by the *major*. But to the power of the presbyters so ordained it pertains to hear confessions of sins; and while he cannot remit the penalties of sins nor celebrate [the Eucharist], yet to ordain their *major* or *majoralis*, in case all the rest should be dead, because they say that as presbyters and deacons, having left all for Christ's sake, they belong to the order and rank of apostles.

“But the deacon is ordained thus. Election and prayer and confession of sins having been accomplished as above, the *major* alone, say-

ing the *Pater Noster*, lays hands upon the head of the deacon to be ordained, that he may receive the Holy Ghost, and nothing else takes place in his case ; and being so ordained the deacon is brought into the state of those that are vowed to poverty, chastity, and obedience, nor is any one perfected in that state before the reception of the said ordination. But others who are not ordained are called believers and friends of the ordained, and from these the latter receive their support. To the deacon it pertains to minister to the bodily needs of *major* and presbyters. Yet they have not power to hear confessions."

The document contains much other information with respect to Waldensian practices and methods of work. Their well-known predilection for the Lord's Prayer is clearly set forth. The training that a Waldensian bishop was obliged to undergo during this age of persecution developed in them a degree of caution and skill in eluding the officers of the law that is truly marvellous. They were familiar with all the arts of the detective. They were familiar with all methods of disguising themselves, and with all by-paths and places of concealment. They were so skillful in framing their answers when before the inquisitors that it required the utmost care and skill to detect them. Their perfect organization, extending over a large part of Europe, gave them great facility in fleeing from one part to another, and assured them of harborage wherever they went. It is probable that the numerical strength and the influence of this party during the later middle ages has been almost universallv underestimated.

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