Torquemada and The Spanish Inquisition: A History

Rafael Sabatini
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FREY TOMÁS DE TORQUEMADA.
From a Painting attributed to Miguel Zittoz.

[Frontispiece.]
PREFACE

The history of Frey Tómas de Torquemada is the history of the establishment of the Modern Inquisition. It is not so much the history of a man as of an abstract genius presiding over a gigantic and cruel engine of its own perfecting. Of this engine we may examine for ourselves today the details of the complex machinery. Through the records that survive we may observe its cold, smooth action, and trace in this the awful intelligence of its architect. But of that architect himself we are permitted to catch no more than an occasional and fleeting glimpse. It is only in the rarest and briefest moments that he stands clearly before us, revealed as a man of flesh and blood.

We see him, now fervidly urging a reluctant queen to do her duty by her God and unsheathe the sword of persecution, now harshly threatening his sovereigns with the wrath of Heaven when they are in danger of relenting in the wielding of that same sword. But in the main he must be studied, not in his actions, but in his enactments—the emanations of his relentless spirit. In these he is to be seen devoutly compassing evil in the perfervid quest of good.

Untouched by worldly ambitions, he seems at once superhuman and less than human. Dauntless amid execrations, unmoved by plaudits, sublimely disdainful of temporal weal, in nothing is he so admirable as in the unfaltering self-abnegation with which he devotes himself to the service of his God, in nothing so terrible and tragically deplorable as in the actual service which he renders.
“His history,” says Prescott, “may be thought to prove that of all human infirmities there is none productive of more extensive mischief to society than fanaticism.”

To this day—four centuries after his passing—Spain still bears the imprint of his pitiless work, and none may deny the truth of Rosseeuw St. Hilaire’s indictment that, after Philip II, Torquemada was the man who did most harm to the land that gave him birth.

The materials for this history have been gathered from the sources cited in the appended bibliography, to all of which the author acknowledges his profound indebtedness. In particular, however, are his thanks due—as must be the thanks of all men who engage in studies of the Spanish Inquisition—to the voluminous, succinct, and enormously comprehensive works of Juan Antonio Llorente, a historian of unimpugned honesty and authority, who wrote under circumstances peculiarly advantageous and with qualifications peculiarly full.

Juan Antonio Llorente was born at Logroño in 1756, and he was ordained priest in 1779, after a university course of Roman and Canon law which enabled him to obtain a place among the lawyers of the Supreme Council of Castile—i.e. the Council of the Inquisition. Having graduated as a Doctor of Canon Law, he discharged the duties of Vicar-General to the Bishop of Calahorra, and later on became the Commissary of the Holy Office in Logroño—for which it was necessary that he should prove that he was of “clean blood,” undefiled by the taint of Jew or Moor or heretic.

In 1789 he was appointed Secretary-General to the Holy Office, an appointment which took him to Madrid, where he was well received by the King, who gave him a canonry of Calahorra.
A profound student of sociological questions, with leanings towards rationalism, he provoked a certain degree of mistrust, and when the Liberal party fell from power and dragged with it many of those who had held offices of consequence, the young priest found himself not only deposed, but forced to meet certain minor charges, which resulted in his being sent into retreat in a convent for a month as a penance.

Thereafter he concerned himself with educational matters until the coming of Bonaparte’s eagles into Spain. When that invasion took place, he hailed the French as the saviours of his country, and as a consequence found himself a member of the Assembly of Notables convoked by Murat to reform the Spanish Government. But most important of all, from our point of view, is the fact that when the Inquisition was abolished, in 1809, he accepted the charge of going through its vast archives, and he spent two years and employed a number of amanuenses in copying or making extracts of all that he considered of account.

He held various offices of importance under the French Government, so that when this was finally expelled from Spain, he, too, was forced to go. He sought refuge in Paris, and there he wrote his famous “Historia Critica de la Inquisicion de España,” the crystallization of his vast researches.

It was a very daring thing to have done, and, thanks to the royalist and clerical Government, he was not suffered to remain long unpunished. He was inhibited from hearing confession or celebrating Mass—practically unfrocked—and forbidden to teach the Castilian language in private schools. He hit back by publishing “The Political Portrait of the Popes,” which earned him orders to leave France immediately. He set out in December of 1822 to return to
Spain, and died a few days after reaching Madrid, killed by the rigours of the journey at his advanced age.

Although his “Critical History” displays at times a certain vehemence, in the main it is concerned with the sober transcription of the musty records he was privileged to explore.

The Spanish Inquisition has been the subject of much unrestrained and exaggerated writing, expressing points of view that are diametrically opposed. From such authors as Garcia Rodrigo, who laud its work of purification, misrepresent its scope, and deplore (in our own times) the extinction of that terrible tribunal, it is a far cry indeed to such writers as Dr. Rule, who dip their pens in the gall of an intolerance as virulent as that which they attack.

The author has sought here to hold a course that is unencumbered by religious partisanship, treating purely as a phase of history the institution for which Torquemada was so largely responsible. He has not written in the Catholic interest, or the Protestant interest, or the Jewish interest. He holds the view that on the score of intolerance it is not for Christians to cast a stone at Jews, nor Jews at Christians, nor yet Christians of one sect at Christians of another. Each will find in his own history more than enough to answer for at the bar of Humanity. And when achievement is measured by opportunity, each will discover that he is entitled to fling at the others no reproaches which the others are not entitled to fling at him.

If the Spanish Inquisition is here shown as a ruthless engine of destruction whose wheels drip the blood of mangled generations, yet it is very far from being implied that religious persecution is an offence peculiar to the Church of Rome.
“She persecuted to the full extent of the power of her clergy, and that power was very great. The persecution of which every Protestant church was guilty was measured by the same rule, but clerical influence in Protestant countries was comparatively weak.”

Thus Lecky, whom we quote lest any should be tempted to use anything in these pages as a weapon of unchristian Christian partisanship. Let any such remember that against Torquemada, who was unfortunately well served by opportunity, may be set the bloody-minded John Knox, who, fortunately for humanity, was not; let him ponder the slaughter of Presbyterians, Puritans, and Roman Catholics under Elizabeth; let him call to mind the persecutions of the Anabaptists under Edward VI, and the Anabaptists’ own clamour for the blood of all who were not re-baptized.
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CHAPTER I
EARLY PERSECUTIONS

In an endeavour to trace the Inquisition to its source it is not necessary to go as far back into antiquity as went Paramo; nor yet is it possible to agree with him that God Himself was the first inquisitor, that the first “Act of Faith” was executed upon Adam and Eve, and that their expulsion from Eden is a proper precedent for the confiscation of the property of heretics.¹

Nevertheless, it is necessary to go very far back indeed; for it is in the very dawn of Christianity that the beginnings of this organization are to be discovered.

There is no more lamentable lesson to be culled from history than that contained in her inability to furnish a single instance of a religion accepted with unquestioning sincerity and fervour which did not, out of those very qualities, beget intolerance. It would seem that only when a faith has been diluted by certain general elements of doubt, that only when a certain degree of indifference has crept into the observance of a prevailing cult, does it become possible for the members of that cult to bear themselves complacently towards the members of another. Until this comes to pass, intolerance is the very breath of religion, and—when the power is present—this intolerance never fails to express itself in persecution.

Deplorable as this is in all religions, in none is it so utterly anomalous as in Christianity, which is established upon tenets of charity, patience, and forbearance, and which has for cardinal guidance its Founder’s sublime admonition—“Love one another!”
From the earliest days of its history, persecution has unfailingly signalized the spread of Christianity, until to the thoughtful observer Christianity must afford the grimmest, the saddest—indeed, the most tragic—of all the paradoxes that go to make up the history of civilized man.

Its benign gospel of love has been thundered forth in malign hatred; its divine lesson of patience and forbearance has been taught in murderous impatience and bloodthirsty intolerance; its mild tenets of mercy and compassion have been ferociously expounded with fire and sword and rack; its precepts of humility have been inculcated with a pride and arrogance as harsh as any that the world has known.

It is impossible to deny that at almost any time in the history of Christianity the enlightened pagan of the second century would have been justified of his stinging gibe—“Behold how these Christians love one another!”

It may even be said of the earliest Christians that it was largely through their own intolerance of the opinions and beliefs of others that they brought upon themselves the persecutions to which through three centuries they were intermittently subjected. Certain it is that they were the first to disturb the toleration which in polytheistic Rome was accorded to all religions. They might have pursued their cult unmolested so long as they accorded the same liberty to others. But by the vehemence with which they denounced false all creeds but their own, they offended the zealous worshippers of other gods, and so disturbed the peace of the community; by denying obedience to the state in which they dwelt, by refusing to bear arms for the Empire on the plea of “Nolo militare; militia mea est ad Dominum!” they provoked the resentment of the law. When driven, by the beginnings of persecution, to assemble and celebrate their rites in secret, this very secrecy became the cause of
further and sharper proceedings against them. Their mysteriousness evoked suspicion, and surmise sprang up to explain it. Very soon there was levelled against them the charge from which hardly any cult that celebrates in secret has been exempt. It was put abroad that they practised abominations, and that they engaged in the ritual murder of infants. Public opinion, ever credulous where evil is the subject, was still further inflamed against them, and fresh and greater disorders were the result. Thus they came to be denounced for atheism, insubordination, and subversion of public order.

The severity dealt out to them by a state hitherto indifferent—through the agnosticism prevalent in the ruling classes—to the religious opinions of its citizens, was dictated by the desire to suppress an element that had become socially perturbative, rather than by any vindictiveness or intolerance towards this new cult out of Syria.

Under Claudius we see the Nazarenes expelled from Rome as disturbers of the public peace; under Nero and Domitian we see them, denounced as *hostes publici*, suffering their first great persecution. But that persecution on purely religious grounds was repugnant to the Roman is shown by the conduct of Nerva, who forbade delations and oppressions on the score of belief, and recalled the Christians who had been banished. His successor, the just and wise Trajan, provoked perhaps by the fierce insurrection of the Jews which occurred in his reign, moved against the Nazarenes at first, but later on afforded them complete toleration. Similarly were they unmolested by the accomplished Adrian, who, indeed, so far approved of their creed as to have notions of including Christ in the Roman Pantheon; and they were left in peace by his successor Antoninus, notwithstanding that the last was so attached to
the faith of his country and to the service of the gods as to have earned for himself the surname of Pius.

With the accession of the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius, who was rendered hostile to the new doctrine not only by his own stoical convictions, but also because politically he viewed the Christians with disfavour, came the next great persecution; and persecution was their portion thereafter for some sixty years, under four reigns, until the accession of Alexander Severus in the third decade of the third century of the Christian era.

Alexander’s mother, Julia Mannea, is believed to have been instructed in the new doctrine by Origen, the Alexandrian, although her conversion to Christianity and her ideas upon it do not appear to be greatly in advance of those of Adrian, for she is said to have included an image of Christ in the group of beneficent deities set up in her lararium.²

For twenty years the Christians now knew peace and enjoyed the fullest liberty. Upon that followed a period of severe oppression, initiated by Decius, continued by Valerian and Aurelian, and reaching something of a climax under Diocletian, in the dawn of the fourth century, when the Christians endured the cruellest and most ferocious of all these persecutions. But the end of their sufferings was at hand, and with the accession of Constantine in 312 a new era began for Christianity. Constantine, upheld by the Christians as their saviour, in admitting the inevitable predominance which the new religion had obtained in rather less than three hundred years, was compelled to recognize the rights of its votaries not only to existence but to authority.

Legends surround the history of this emperor. The most popular relates how, when he was marching against
Maxentius, his rival for the throne, desponding in the consciousness of his own inferior force, there appeared at sunset a fiery cross in the heavens with the inscription \textit{EN TΟΓΤΩ ΝΙΚΑ—IN THIS SIGN YOU CONQUER}. And it is claimed that as a consequence of this portent, whose injunction he obeyed, he sought instruction in Christianity, was baptized and made public avowal of that faith. Others maintain that he was reared in Christianity by his mother, St. Helena—she who made an expedition to the Holy Land to recover the true cross, and who is said to have built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; whilst others still assert that Constantine did not receive baptism until at the point of death, and that throughout his life, whilst undoubtedly favouring Christians, he continued in the pagan religion in which he had been educated by his father.

The truth probably lies midway. During the early years of his reign Constantine not only pursued a middle course, according religious liberty to all sects, but, himself, whilst leaning strongly towards Christianity, retained his imperial dignity of High-priest of the polytheistic Roman cult, and the title “Pontifex Maximus,” which later—together with so much else of pagan origin—was appropriated by the Christians and bestowed upon their chief bishop. But in 313-14 he refused to celebrate the \textit{ludi seculares}, and in 330 he issued an edict forbidding temple-worship, whilst the Christian Council of Nicæa, in 325, was held undoubtedly under his auspices.

From the very moment that the new religion found itself recognized and invested not only with civil rights but actually with power, from the very moment that the Christian could rear his head and go openly and unafraid abroad, from that very moment do we find him engaging in persecutions against the votaries of other cults—against pagan, Jew, and heretic. For although Christianity was but in
the beginning of the fourth century of its existence, not only had it spread irresistibly and mightily in spite of the repressive measures against it, but it was already beginning to know dismemberment and divisions in its own body. Indeed, it has been computed that the number of schisms in the fourth century amounted to no less than ninety.

Of these the most famous is that of Arius, a priest of Alexandria, who denied that Christ was God Incarnate, accounting Him no more than divinely inspired, the first and the highest of the sons of men. Although already denounced by the Synod that met at Alexandria in 321, so great had been the spread of this doctrine that the Oecumenical Council of Nicæa was convoked especially to deal with it. It was then condemned as heretical, and the Articles of Faith were defined and set down in the Nicene Creed, which is recited to this day.

Other famous heresies were the Manichæan, the Gnostic, the Adamite, the Severist, and the Donatist; and to these were soon to be added, amongst others, the Pelagian and the Priscillianist.

Perhaps the Manichæans’ chief claim to celebrity lies in the fact that the great St. Augustine of Tagaste, when he abandoned the disorders of his youth, entered Christianity through this sect, which professed a form of it vitiated by Sun-worship and Buddhism.

The other heresies—with the exception of the Pelagian—were, in the main, equally fantastic. The Gnostic heresy, with its many subdivisions, was made up of mysticism and magic, and founded upon Zoroastrian notions of dualism, of the two powers of good and evil, light and darkness. To the power of evil it attributed all creation save man, whose soul was accounted of divine substance. The Adamites claimed
to be in the state of original innocency of Adam before the
fall; they demanded purity in their followers, rejected
marriage, which they urged could never have come into
existence but for sin, and they expelled from their Church all
sinners against their tenets, even as Adam and Eve had
been expelled from Eden. The Severists denied the
resurrection of the flesh, would not accept the acts of the
apostles, and carried purity to fantastic lengths. The
Soldiers of Florinus denied the Last Judgment, and held it as
an undeniable truth that the resurrection of the flesh lay
entirely in reproduction.

The Pelagians were the followers of Pelagius, a British monk
who settled in Rome towards the year 400, and his heresy
at least was founded upon rational grounds. He denied the
doctrine of original sin, maintained that every human being
was born in a state of innocency, and that his perseverance
in virtue depended upon himself. He found numerous
followers, and for twenty years the conflict raged between
Pelagians and the Church, until Pope Zosimus declared
against them and banished Pelagius from Rome.

From Constantine onwards Christianity steadily maintains
her ascendancy, and her earliest assertion of her power is to
bare the sword of persecution, oblivious of the lofty protests
against it which she, herself, had uttered, the broad and
noble advocacy of tolerance which she had urged in the
days of her own affliction. We find Optatus urging the
massacre of the Donatists—who claimed that theirs was the
ture Church—and Constantine threatening with the stake
any Jew who should affront a Christian and any Christian
who should become a Jew. We find him demolishing the
churches of the Arians and Donatists, banishing their priests
and forbidding under pain of death the propagation of their
doctrines.
The power of Christianity suffered one slight check thereafter, under the tolerant rule of Julian the Apostate, who reopened the pagan temples and restored the cult of the old gods; but it rose again to be finally and firmly established under Theodosius in 380.

Now we see the pagan temples not only closed, but razed to the ground, the images broken and swept away, their worship, and even private sacrifice, forbidden under pain of death. From Libanius we may gather something of the desolation which this spread among the pagan peasant-folk. Residing at a distance from the great centres where doctrines were being expounded, they found themselves bereft of the old gods and without knowledge of the new. Their plight is a far more pathetic one than that of the Arians, Manichæans, Donatists, and all other heretics against whom there was a similar enactment.

It is now, at this early date, that for the first time we come across the title “Inquisitor of the Faith,” in the first law promulgated to render death the penalty of heresy. It is now that we find the great Augustine of Tagaste—the mightiest genius that the Church has brought forth—denouncing religious liberty with the question, “Quid est enim pejor, mors animæ quam libertas erroris?” and strenuously urging the death of heretics on the ground that it is a merciful measure, since it must result in the saving of others from the damnation consequent upon their being led into error. Similarly he applauded those decrees of death against any one pursuing the polytheism that but a few generations earlier had been the official religion of the Roman Empire.

It was Augustine—of whom it has been truly said that “no man since the days of the Apostles has infused into the Church a larger measure of his spirit”—in his enormous fervour, and with the overwhelming arguments inspired by
his stupendous intellect, who laid down the principles that governed persecution, and were cited in justification of it for nearly 1,500 years after his day. “He was,” says Lecky, “the most staunch and enthusiastic defender of all those doctrines that grow out of the habits of mind that lead to persecution.”

So far, however much persecution may have been inspired by the Church, its actual execution had rested entirely and solely with the civil authorities; and this aloofness, indeed, is urged upon the clergy by St. Augustine. But already before the close of the fourth century we find ecclesiastics themselves directly engaged in causing the death of heretics.

Priscillian, a Spanish theologian, was led by St. Paul’s “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?” to seek to render himself by purity a worthy dwelling. He preached from that text a doctrine of stern asceticism, and forbade the marriage of the clergy. This at the time was optional, and by proclaiming it to be Christ’s law he laid himself open to a charge of heresy. He was accused of magic and licentiousness, excommunicated in 380 and burnt alive, together with several of his companions, by order of two Christian bishops. He has been described as the first martyr burnt by a Spanish Inquisition.

It must be added that the deed excited the profoundest indignation on the part of the clergy against those bishops who had been responsible for it, and St. Martin of Tours hotly denounced the act. But this indignation was not provoked by the fact that men had suffered death for heresy, but by the circumstance that ecclesiastics had procured the execution. For it was part of the pure teaching of the early Church that under no circumstances—not as judge, soldier, or executioner—should a Christian render
himself the instrument of the death of a fellow-creature; and it was partly through their rigid obedience to this precept that the Christians had first drawn attention to themselves and aroused the resentment of the Roman government, as we have seen. Now, whilst at no time after the Church’s accession to power was this teaching observed with any degree of strictness, yet there were limits to the extent to which it might be neglected, and that limit, it was considered, had been exceeded by those prelates responsible for the death of the Priscillianists.

The point, apparently trivial at present, has been insisted upon here, in view of the important and curious part which it was destined to play in the procedure of the Inquisition.

The Church had now come to identify herself with the State. She had strengthened her organizations; she had permeated the State with her influences, until it may almost be said that the State had lost its capacity for independent existence, and had become her instrument. The civil laws were based upon her spiritual laws; the standard of morality was founded upon her doctrines; the development of the arts—of painting, sculpture, literature, and music—became such as was best adapted for her service, and, cramped thereby into confines far too narrow, was partly arrested for a time; sciences and crafts were stimulated only by her needs and curbed by her principles; the very recreation of the people was governed by her spirit.

And yet, whilst influencing the State in its every ramification so profoundly that State and Church appeared welded into one disintegable whole, she kept herself independent, unfettered, and autonomous. So that when that great Empire of the West upon which she had seemed to lean was laid in ruins by the invading barbarians, she continued upright, unshaken by that tremendous cataclysm. She
remained to conquer the barbarian far more subtly and completely than he had conquered. Her conquest lay in bringing him to look upon her as the natural inheritor of fallen Rome. Soon she entered upon that splendid heritage, claiming for her own the world-supremacy that Rome had boasted, and assuming dominion over the new nations that were building upon the ruins of the shattered empire.
CHAPTER II
THE INQUISITION CANONICALLY ESTABLISHED

For some seven centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire persecutions for heresy were very rare and very slight. This, however, cannot be attributed to mercy. Although some of the old heresies survived, yet they were so sapped of their vitality that they were no longer openly flaunted in defiance of the mother-Church, but were practised in such obscurity as, in the main, to escape observation.

Fresh schisms, on the other hand, do not appear to have sprung up during that spell. Largely this would be due to the clear formulation of the Catholic theology by the various œcumenical councils held in the years that followed upon the Christian emancipation, and by the intellectual breadth of these doctrines, which were entirely adequate and all-sufficient to the intellectual capacity of the time. But this state of things could only have endured at the cost of arresting man’s intellectual progress. A certain restraint and curb undoubtedly was exerted, but definitely to check the imaginative and reasoning faculties of man has never been within the power of any creed, and never can be. It was in vain that the Church sought to coerce thought and to stifle the learning that struck at her very foundations and discovered the error of the cosmic and historical conceptions upon which her theology was based; in vain that she entrenched herself within her doctrines, and adhered rigidly to the form she had adopted.

Upon this uncompromising rigidity of the Catholic Church much censure has been poured. The present aim is a cold survey of certain features of history, and in such a task all
polemical matters should be avoided. Yet it may be permissible to say a word here to elucidate rather than to defend an attitude that has been unduly abused.

It is admitted that the unyielding policy of the Church was one that militated seriously against intellectual evolution, and on that account it is to be deplored. But let the unbiassed mind consider for a moment the alternative. The admission of error is the commencement of disruption. Where one error is admitted, a thread is drawn from a weft whose threads are interdependent for the stability of the whole. Who has yielded once has set up a precedent that will be urged against him to make him yield again, and yet again, until he shall have yielded all, and, having nothing left, must suffer an imperceptible effacement.

When all is considered, there is an indisputable dignity in the attitude of a Church which, claiming that what she teaches rests not upon human knowledge but upon divine inspiration, refuses to cede one jot of her doctrines to man’s discoveries; holding—and incontestably, so long as the premise is admitted—that however certain may appear the truths which human subtlety has disclosed, however false may appear the doctrines to which she owes her being, it still remains that the former are human and the latter divine of origin. Between the two she proudly holds that there is no disputing; that error possible to man is impossible to divinity; that man’s perception of error in the divine tenets of the Church is no more than the manifestation of his own liability to err.

The Church of Rome realized that either she must be entirely, or entirely cease to be. And it is matter for unprejudiced consideration whether the spectacle of her immobility is not more dignified than would have been that of her yielding up her divinities one by one to the expanding
humanities, and thus gradually undergoing a course of dismemberment which must in the end remove her last claim to existence. In the attitude she assumed she remained the absolute mistress of her votaries; had she departed from it she must have become their abject servant.

Dr. Rule invites his readers to notice attentively that “no Church but that of Rome ever had an Inquisition.” But he neglects to carry the consideration to its logical conclusion, and to add that in no Christian Church but that of Rome could an Inquisition be possible. For it would be impossible to offend heretically against any Church that accommodates itself to new habits of thought in a measure as these occur, and gives way step by step before the onslaught of learning.

The Church of Rome presented her immutable formularies, her unchangeable doctrines to the world. “This,” she announced, “is my teaching. By this I hold. This you must accept without reservations, in its entirety, or you are no child of mine.”

With that there could be no cavil. Had she but added the admission of man’s liberty to accept or reject her teaching, had she but left man free to confess or not her doctrines as his conscience and intelligence directed, all would have been well. Unfortunately she accounted it her duty to go further; she used coercion and compulsion to such an extent that she imbued her children with the spirit of the eighteenth-century Jacobin, exclaiming, “Be my brother, or I kill you!”

Unable by intellectual means to stem the intellectual secession from her ranks, she had recourse to physical
measures, and revived the fiercely coercive methods of the first centuries.

A serious heretical outbreak had been occurring in Southern France. There, it would seem, all the schisms that had disturbed the Church since her foundation were gathered together—Arians, Manichæans, and Gnostics—to which were added certain more recent sects, such as the Cathars, the Waldenses, and the Boni Homines, or Good People.

These new-comers deserve a word of explanation.

The Cathars, like the Gnostics, were dualists; indeed, their creed was little more than a development of Gnosticism. They believed that the earth was the only hell or purgatory, that it was given over to the power of the devil, and that human bodies were no more than the prisons of the angel spirits that fell with Lucifer. In heaven their celestial bodies still awaited them, but they could not resume these until they had worked out their expiation. To accomplish this a man must die reconciled with God; failing that, another earthly existence awaited him in the body of man or beast, according to his deserts. It will be seen that, saving for abundant Christian elements introduced into this faith, it was little more than a revival of metempsychosis, the oldest and most fascinating of intelligent beliefs.

The Waldenses, or Vaudois, with whom were allied the Good People, were the earliest Protestants, as we understand the term. They claimed for every man the right to interpret the Bible and to celebrate the sacraments of the Church without the need of being in holy orders. Further, they denied that the Roman Church was the Church of Christ.

These sects were known collectively as the Albigenses, so called because the Council of Lombers, convoked to
pronounce their condemnation, had been held in the Diocese of Albi in 1165.

ST. PETER THE MARTYR PREACHING.
From the Painting by Berruguete.

Photo by Anderson.

Pope Innocent III made an attempt to convert them; with this aim in view he sent two monks, Peter de Castelnau and one Rodolfe, to restore order amongst them and induce them to return to submission. But when they murdered one of his legates the Holy Father had recourse to those other less legitimate measures of combating liberty of conscience. He ordered the King of France, the nobles and clergy of the kingdom, to assume the crusader’s cross, and to proceed to
the extirpation of the Albigensian heretics, whom he described as a worse danger to Christendom than the Saracens; and he armed them for the fray with the same spiritual weapons that John VIII had bestowed upon those who went to war in Palestine in the ninth century. Upon all who might die in the service of the Church he pronounced a plenary indulgence.

It is not the present aim to follow the history of the horrible strife that ensued—the massacres, pillages, burnings that took place in the course of the war between the Albigenses under Raymond of Toulouse and the Crusaders under Simon de Montfort. For over twenty years did that war drag on, and in the course of it the original grounds of the quarrel were forgotten; it passed into a struggle for supremacy between North and South, and thus, properly speaking, out of the history of the Inquisition.\(^{10}\)

Now, for all that the title “Inquisitor of the Faith” was first bestowed by the Theodosian Code, and for all that persecutions against heretics and others had been afoot since an even earlier date than that of Theodosius, Innocent III is to be considered the founder of the Holy Inquisition as an integral part of the Church. For it is under his jurisdiction that the faculty of persecuting heretics, which hitherto had belonged entirely to the secular arm, is now conferred upon the clergy. He dispatched two Cistercian monks as inquisitors into France and Spain, to engage in the work of extirpating heretics; and he strictly enjoined all princes, nobles and prelates to afford every assistance to these emissaries, and to further them in every way in the work they were sent to do.\(^{11}\)

Himself, personally, Pope Innocent directed his attention to the Paterini—a sect which rebelled against the celibacy imposed upon the clergy—who were gaining ground in Italy.
He invoked the secular arm to assist him in their apprehension, imprisonment, and banishment, in seizing their possessions, which were confiscated, and in razing their houses to the ground.

In 1209 he assembled a council at Avignon, under the presidency of his legates, wherein by his directions it was ordained that every bishop should select such of his subjects, counts, castellans, and knights as might seem to him proper, and swear them to undertake the extermination of all excommunicated heretics.

“And to the end that the bishop may be the better enabled to purge his diocese of heretical pravity, let him swear one priest and two, three or more laymen of good repute in every parish to report to the bishop himself, and to the governors of cities or to the lords and bailiffs of places, the existence of any heretics or abettors of heresy wherever found, to the end that these may be punished according to the canonical and legal dispensations, in all cases suffering forfeiture of property. And should the said governors and others be negligent or reluctant in the execution of this divine service, let their persons be severally excommunicated, and their territories placed under the interdict of the Church.”

In the year 1215 Pope Innocent held a further council at the Lateran in which he extended the field of ecclesiastical activity in persecution. He issued an injunction to all rulers, “as they desired to be esteemed faithful, to swear a public oath that they would labour zealously to exterminate from their dominions all those who were denounced as heretics by the Church.”

This injunction was backed by a bull which menaced with excommunication and forfeiture of jurisdiction any prince