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978-1-107-63207-3 - The Early Dominicans: Studies in Thirteenth-Century Dominican History

R. F. Bennett

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CAMBRIDGE STUDIES  
IN  
MEDIEVAL LIFE AND THOUGHT  
Edited by G. G. COULTON, LITT.D., HON. D.LITT., F.B.A.  
*Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, Honorary Fellow of  
St Catharine's College, University Lecturer in English*

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# THE EARLY DOMINICANS

STUDIES  
IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY  
DOMINICAN HISTORY

BY

R. F. BENNETT, M.A.

*Hulsean Prizeman, 1934*

*late Donaldson Bye-Fellow, Magdalene College  
Cambridge*

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*To*

MY MOTHER

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## GENERAL PREFACE

**T**HERE is only too much truth in the frequent complaint that history, as compared with the physical sciences, is neglected by the modern public. But historians have the remedy in their own hands; choosing problems of equal importance to those of the scientist, and treating them with equal accuracy, they will command equal attention. Those who insist that the proportion of accurately ascertainable facts is smaller in history, and therefore the room for speculation wider, do not thereby establish any essential distinction between truth-seeking in history and truth-seeking in chemistry. The historian, whatever be his subject, is as definitely bound as the chemist “to proclaim certainties as certain, falsehoods as false, and uncertainties as dubious”. Those are the words, not of a modern scientist, but of the seventeenth-century monk, Jean Mabillon; they sum up his literary profession of faith. Men will follow us in history as implicitly as they follow the chemist, if only we will form the chemist’s habit of marking clearly where our facts end and our inferences begin. Then the public, so far from discouraging our speculations, will most heartily encourage them; for the most positive man of science is always grateful to anyone who, by putting forward a working theory, stimulates further discussion.

The present series, therefore, appeals directly to that craving for clearer facts which has been bred in these times of storm and stress. No care can save us altogether from error; but, for our own sake and the public’s, we have elected to adopt a safeguard dictated by ordinary business commonsense. Whatever errors of fact are pointed out by reviewers or correspondents shall be publicly corrected with the least possible delay. After a year of publication, all copies shall be provided with such an erratum-slip without waiting for the chance of a second edition; and each fresh volume in this series shall contain a full list of the errata noted in its immediate predecessor. After the lapse of a year from the first publication of any volume, and at any time during the ensuing twelve months, any possessor of that

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volume who will send a stamped and addressed envelope to the Cambridge University Press, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4, shall receive, in due course, a free copy of the *errata* in that volume. Thus, with the help of our critics, we may reasonably hope to put forward these monographs as roughly representing the most accurate information obtainable under present conditions. Our facts being thus secured, the reader will judge our inferences on their own merits; and something will have been done to dissipate that cloud of suspicion which hangs over too many important chapters in the social and religious history of the Middle Ages.

G. G. C.

*July* 1930



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE present work owes its origin to an essay with which I was successful in winning the Hulsean Prize for 1934. The subject set for that competition was "The Early Dominicans and their Times", and I have used a shortened form of this title for purposes of publication. In this connexion, however, I should like to draw attention to the word "Studies" in the sub-heading: the following pages make no wider claims than are here suggested, and have no pretension to be a complete history of the Order of Preachers in the thirteenth century. My object throughout has been simply to investigate certain important aspects of the Order's history at the time, and to present my results side by side under various headings—indicated by the chapter-titles—without attempting to combine all together into a full narrative, or to work out a final judgment.

The expansion and partial re-writing of the original essay was largely done during the past academic year in Munich, where I was given a much-appreciated opportunity of study through the generosity of the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College in electing me to the Donaldson Bye-Fellowship for 1935–6. I should like to express here my deep sense of indebtedness to the College for their kindness. The additions and alterations have been made at the suggestion and under the general direction of Dr Coulton, to whom I also owe a very great debt of gratitude for help and advice during the past five years. I do not wish, however, to imply that either Dr Coulton or any other here mentioned is in any way responsible for errors and inaccuracies of which I may have been guilty.

I can scarcely hope that I have altogether avoided leaving traces of the two stages in which the work has been written, but must content myself with hoping that they are not too obvious and that repetitions are not too frequent. A word may be added in defence of my method of citing the *Acta Capitulorum Generalium* by dates rather than by page-references. Dr Berthold Altaner has already complained (*Theologische Revue*, 1927, p. 382)

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

that the latter method, which is customary, leaves much to be desired in that it obscures development by omitting chronological information, and suggests using both date *and* page. I have rejected this on account of its cumbrousness, which would lead to an unnecessary enlargement of the footnotes, and have decided to use dates alone because so much often depends upon them in the establishing of an argument. Since it is only at the end of the thirteenth century that the *Acta*, in Reichert's edition, occupy more than three or four pages each year, no great difficulty should be experienced by anyone who may wish to check my references.

In conclusion, it is my pleasant duty to thank the following, in addition to those already mentioned: the Electors to the Hulsean Prize, for permission to publish my work in an altered form; Professor Paul Lehmann and Professor Rudolf von Heckel, of the University of Munich, for their assistance and kindness in many ways during my stay in Germany; Herr J. Gabler, also of Munich, who put his wide knowledge of Dominican sources at my disposal; the Prior and Brothers of St Dominic's Priory, N.W. 5, for allowing me to use their library on many occasions, and for their kind hospitality; Mr Geoffrey Barraclough, of St John's College, for letters of introduction in Germany and for invaluable help with the proof-reading; and finally my parents, Mr F. R. Salter of Magdalene College, and others in Cambridge and elsewhere, for the constant encouragement they have given me.

R. F. BENNETT

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