

The Training of Candidates for Holy Orders.

II.

AT THE NEWER UNIVERSITIES: (a) DURHAM.

THE chief purpose of this paper is to offer some account of the present activities of the University of Durham, more especially with reference to the work of preparing candidates for ordination. To do this only, speaking in bare outline of lectures and examinations, would be to give a very meagre and misleading impression of all the thronging associations that gather round the name of Durham. As Oxford, to her sons, does not recall textbooks and examinations, but rather herself, "steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age," so Durham, to those on whom the magic of her spell has fallen, must always stand for her own unique combination of natural beauty and historic appeal. The Cathedral and Castle crowning the wooded hill, the winding streets of ancient houses that climb toward them, the river that lies so deeply between its precipitous banks,—all unite to form a picture of abiding charm. And the charm is heightened by the crowding memories of the older days.

For, if anywhere in England the present stands rooted in the past, it is at Durham. Before the Norman Conquest, Durham had become successor to the ecclesiastical and civil powers of Northumbria, exercised respectively from Lindisfarne and Bamborough, and the congregation of St. Cuthbert had brought the body of their saint to rest here after the wild days of the Danish invasions. Then under successive Bishops Cathedral and Castle gradually grew to their present form. William of St. Carileph, Flambard, Pudsey, Fox, Tunstall, Cosin, Butler,—all have left their impress, on one or both of these great adjacent buildings. It was under William of St. Carileph that the Benedictines were established here, in what was to become one of their most famous dwelling places.

Not that Durham has merely been a home of monastic and peaceful seclusion. Throughout the Middle Ages the Castle played the part of an important fortress; more than once it has endured a siege, and the streets of the city have witnessed scenes of massacre

and warfare. The Castle has been held in the grip of a Scotch General, and the Cathedral has been in turn an "internment camp" for Scottish prisoners.

It is interesting to note that, amid all these wild doings which were perhaps inevitable in a city that was really a frontier fortress against invaders from the North, Durham has been consistently and continuously associated with the work of education.

Before the end of the thirteenth century the Benedictines of Durham, true to the great ideal of their order, had taken steps to establish Durham College in Oxford, an institution which lasted with growing energies till the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1540. In connection with this latter event a scheme was propounded for founding a College in Durham itself, which College was to form a part of the new Cathedral foundation. The scheme was not carried out, nor was a later one for founding a College in Durham during the days of the Commonwealth. It was in the early days of the nineteenth century that the Dean and Chapter seriously took in hand the work of founding and endowing a University.

The scheme was outlined in an Act of Chapter in 1831; it was authorized by Act of Parliament in 1832, and the new University received its Charter in 1837. The Constitution, in the first instance, was modelled on that of Christ Church, Oxford, so that the Dean and Canons were the supreme governing body and the Bishop of Durham the Visitor.

The following eighty years of the University's history have been a period of intermittent, but, on the whole, continuous progress. At the beginning, the Castle, which had been made over by the Bishop for the use of the University, sufficed to accommodate the undergraduate body. In 1846 it was found necessary to open a College for Students of more humble means, and Hatfield Hall was founded. The year 1870 was marked by two events: the founding of the Non-Collegiate Students at Durham and the taking of the Newcastle College of Medicine into the corporation of the University. The following year witnessed the founding of the College of Science at Newcastle, now known as the Armstrong College. In 1895 Women Students were admitted to the Degree of the University. After an interval of ten years there was a period of renewed development in Collegiate bodies, St. Chad's Hall being founded

in 1904 and St. John's Hall in 1909. About the same time, in 1908, an Act of Parliament was passed reconstituting the University in the most drastic manner, under a Chancellor and a Senate of thoroughly representative character.

The most recent stage of the University's development has been the opening of its Degrees in Divinity, which had previously been limited to clerical members of the Church of England, to all candidates of whose academic fitness the University should be satisfied.

The bare recital of these facts in such brief outline as our space allows may serve to bring Durham's present activities into relation with her ancient past. The provision she has made, and is making, for ordinands is now the topic that claims our immediate attention.

From the beginning the study of theology has had a foremost place in her scheme of work. In 1833 the title of L.Th. was instituted, which had special reference to the preparation for Orders. It is of interest to note that Bishop Walsham How was one of those who came to Durham to take the L.Th. Course. In 1864 it became possible to obtain Honours in this Course by the addition of further subjects to the Pass Course. This "Honours" L.Th., however, came to an end in 1908, when the Honours School of Theology in the Arts Course was inaugurated.

About the same time the existing system was instituted by which the work of preparation for the L.Th. and the passing of the examinations pertaining to it, might be done at certain Theological Colleges taken into connection with the University. At present the L.Th. is almost entirely taken by such students, and the theological work done at Durham itself falls into two main departments: (a) the Honours School of Theology, (b) the Pass Degree in Arts, followed by the course of study prescribed for the Diploma in Theology.

There is no need to burden this article with the details of these Courses. They are set forth in the pages of the University Calendar and are easily accessible to all. We are concerned now with their broader outlines and underlying intention. The candidate for Honours is committed to a three years' course of study. The first year is classical, and may be taken either in the Honours School or the Pass. The remaining two years are devoted exclusively to theological work of which the Biblical portion forms the backbone, the student being required to take at least two other subjects,

chosen from the field of Dogmatics, Church History, Biblical Criticism or Apologetics. In the Biblical portion of this course a considerable portion of the Greek Testament is prescribed for special study, and a knowledge of the prescribed Old Testament books in Hebrew is required from all.

The classical portion of the Pass Degree covers two years. The student who successfully completes this, enters for a third year on the course for the Diploma in Theology. This latter is not limited to Durham men. It is open to graduates of any University in the British Empire, who may reside for three terms at Durham and attend the lectures there. The backbone of this course, as in the case of the Honours School, is its Biblical work, which involves not only general knowledge of the Bible in English, but special study of selected portions of the Old Testament, and of the New Testament in Greek. The two other necessary subjects are Systematic Theology and Church History. Students may add to these a prescribed course of either Hebrew, or Ethics, or Apologetics, or Comparative Study of Religion, or Liturgiology. As this course is practical, in the sense that it is directly preparatory for Ordination, it involves attendance at Lectures on Pastoral Theology and Classes in Elocution.

It should be noted in passing that this Diploma Course, with its period of three terms' residence and instruction, must be undertaken by all Candidates, other than Durham men, for the degree of B.D.

This outline sketch may suffice to indicate the general character of the preparation which Durham offers to ordination candidates. It is possible, of course, that during the period which follows the conclusion of the War, the Bishops may for a time modify their requirements. Before the War began it was becoming increasingly clear that what they wished to secure was graduation in Arts followed by a distinctively theological course of training. It was hoped, and confidently expected, that this requirement would be satisfactorily met by either of the Durham Courses as above described. Should the Bishops, temporarily and in the case of Service Candidates, be inclined to waive the necessity of graduation in Arts, the Diploma Course alone, or some course resembling it in main outline, may possibly be accepted as a sufficient preparation. In case the Bishops should formulate this, no doubt provision to meet

it can and will be made. Such schemes, however, will probably be limited to the present emergency, and when more settled conditions are reached the ideal of University graduation followed by special theological preparation will not be allowed to disappear.

There is, indeed, one point on which a clear difference of opinion on the part of responsible authorities has emerged. It is held by some that the University graduate who is seeking theological preparation should leave his University in order to find it; that he should go to some College, remote from the stir and bustle of University life, and there, in the special "atmosphere" which that College provides, should concentrate himself wholly on the preparation for the ministerial life. It is held by others, that a man may well be required to withdraw from the claims and responsibilities of ordinary College life, but that it is in every way disastrous both to him and to his preparations to withdraw him wholly from his University and from all the aids to theological study which the University with its professorial and tutorial system may well afford. In other words, that all that should be required of him is that he betake himself to some Society or College—within his University—which is founded and equipped for this special purpose of ordination preparation. It is held that in this way he will, on the one hand, be in an "atmosphere" wholly conducive to the preparation for his future work, while on the other hand he will not lose the aid and stimulus which the wider air of the University, with all the richness of its fuller academic and social life cannot fail to impart.

It need hardly be said that the opinion of Durham is strongly in favour of this latter view. Provision is made there for the work of more immediate preparation for Orders. And if sacred associations can constitute an "atmosphere" suitable to such preparation, where, indeed, could it more fittingly be found than beneath the very shadow of the great Cathedral, with its memories of Bede, of Cosin, of Butler, of Lightfoot and of Westcott; in lecture rooms where teaching has been given—to name teachers honoured and still living—by Sanday, Robertson and Plummer? No Durham student need ever leave Durham to find a suitable place of preparation for the work of the sacred ministry; for to him it may be said: "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

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