

## The Training of Candidates for Holy Orders.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### AT THE NEWER UNIVERSITIES: (b) LONDON.

THE immediate influence of London University on the training of the Clergy has developed greatly in recent years. While the University goes back to 1836, it was for many years simply an examining body, having its home in London, but with no special concern for London education rather than for that of any other part of the country or indeed of the Empire. And fear of sectarianism limited its theological side to two "Scriptural Examinations," each of four papers only, open only to those who had already taken the London B.A.

But since the reconstruction of the University in 1900 its theological side has greatly developed. No restriction has been placed on the admission to its examinations of students from all parts; these are now called external students. If any man already in Holy Orders, but without a degree, is anxious to obtain one, the London course is obvious, no residence being required. And quite recently a theological subject has been included among alternative subjects for the B.A. examination, thus meeting the interests of theological students. It may be added that if a man of fair education or ability, who does not see his way to enter another residential university, thinks of taking Holy Orders, his best preliminary step is to take the London matriculation examination (or some other exempting from it). Not only is this the first step towards taking a degree, but success in this examination affords clear proof of the student's ability and industry. Principals of theological colleges will welcome such men, who will have no difficulty in obtaining bursaries and exhibitions if needed.

But by this reconstruction special recognition has been given by the University to the various colleges and institutions of the London district, whether incorporated in the University or recognized as schools of the University, or having recognized teachers. Students of the University in such institutions, under tuition thus

<sup>1</sup> Previous articles in this series appeared in the *CHURCHMAN* for May (I, At the Older Universities, by Dr. Tait) and June (II, At the Newer Universities, (a) Durham, by Dr. Dawson Walker).

recognized, are called internal students. At the same time the Theological Faculty was first established. This is distinctly interdenominational, the schools of the University in this Faculty being Hackney and New College (Congregational), Regent's Park (Baptist), Richmond (Wesleyan), besides King's College and St. John's Hall (Church of England). And the members of the Faculty and of the Board of Theological Studies consists mainly of the staff of these colleges, the proportion of Anglicans being roughly two out of five. All members have from the beginning worked harmoniously together, without sectarian differences. Nonconformists speak with great admiration of the work of the first chairman, Dr. Robertson, then Principal of King's College, afterwards Bishop of Exeter.<sup>1</sup>

The great feature of the University on this side is the degree of B.D., which is not, as in most other universities, open only to those who have already taken a degree in Arts, but independent. The course extends for three years, and includes two examinations. The Final includes papers on Old Testament (with Hebrew), New Testament (Greek), Biblical and Historical Theology, Church History, and Philosophical Introduction to Theology, besides optional subjects. The standard is high, as with London degrees generally. There is a further examination for Honours in Theology; here the student specializes in some one subject, but may take another next year. To complete the account of the theological side of the University, there is a little known "Examination for Certificate of Religious Knowledge," open to all without matriculation, intended especially for teachers in secondary schools who desire to attain some qualification for taking the Scripture lesson. All University examinations are open to both sexes equally.

But the great bulk of theological students at both the Anglican colleges in London have hitherto not gone in for the London University course. This is largely due to the high standard maintained in the examinations; but partly also to the fact that some of the subjects are different from those of the ordinary Bishop's examination or the "Preliminary," while Bishops usually insist on these examinations quite irrespectively of how well a student may have passed University theological examinations of at least

<sup>1</sup> For history of the Faculty, see Prof. S. W. Green's *Introduction to London Theological Studies* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1911).

equal stiffness. It would be well if Bishops recognized these as exempting from their own except in certain subjects. The proportion of B.D. candidates in these colleges to the total number of students there has never been more than 10 per cent. It is hoped that in future this proportion may increase. More importance is now being attached to the possession of a degree, and here is a course ready to hand. It is hoped also that a larger number of students will have already passed the London Matriculation or the Intermediate ; such might be helped to take their B.A. with theological subjects. The importance of having an educated ministry is increasing.

At present the bulk of the students at King's College (Theological Faculty) read for the Associateship ("A.K.C."); these at St. John's Hall for the "Preliminary" or for the Durham Licence in Theology ("L.Th."). Till recently the two colleges were sharply distinguished in the matter of residence. St. John's Hall is almost exclusively residential ; King's College was till recently entirely non-residential. This has, from the student's point of view, the great advantage of economy, as he can live at home ; but has obvious disadvantages as regards all training other than that given by lectures. This need has, however, been largely met recently by the opening of a hostel in Vincent Square, Westminster, with accommodation for sixty students. It may be added that at King's there are *evening* theological classes, in which a student employed in the day-time may take a large part, not the whole, of his theological course, having to give up his employment only for the final period of preparation. Some of the best students have come through these classes.

King's is probably the largest theological college in the country ; it claims, like the S.P.G., to be as broad as the Church itself, and has always had some distinguished men on its staff. St. John's is of course like the C.M.S., distinctively Evangelical.

It is hoped that in the future there will be a larger number of men at these colleges reading for London degrees, and a larger proportion of men already possessing degrees, whether of London or elsewhere. In its libraries and institutions London possesses unique opportunities for post-graduate study and research. As it is, a fair proportion of students taking the London B.D. go on after ordination to specialize for B.D. Honours. Again, London

offers unique opportunities for the study of Pastoral Theology. It is here possible to observe religious work of all kinds, and among all classes of society. Under wise direction it might be possible for every student to obtain a systematic insight into the problems and opportunities of the Pastoral office.

I would say finally that the idea of the Bishops that a five years' course of preparation for Holy Orders (three years for a degree, and two years final theological and devotional training) should be the normal one, can be adapted to London only if applying merely to students entering at the usual age, not to older men; and even in this case only if much larger benefactions or grants from Church funds are made towards their maintenance. Otherwise two serious risks are run, greatly outweighing the advantage of a larger number of clergy having University degrees: (1) Many older men, or married men, who would make most useful clergymen, will be likely to give up all idea of taking Holy Orders. (2) The *theological* course will be likely to be cut short, coming as it does at the end, rather than the *general* course. There will be risk of having fewer clergy, more degrees, but less theology.

One idea is that, whereas at present the normal course for non-graduates is of three years—one preliminary year followed by two years' study of theology, while men of superior education may be excused the preliminary year—it would be a great gain if the study of theology could be extended over three years, the final year after the conclusion of the ordinary course being spent in the study of some branch of theology under the direction of a professor, this study taking the form of guided reading rather than of lectures. But the feasibility of even this in the case of many students is open to doubt.

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