

## The College of Preachers, Washington, D.C.

DURING my visit to America early in 1942, I was invited to Washington to preach both in the Church of the Covenant (Presbyterian) and in the Episcopal Cathedral. The much beloved Dean, Z. B. Phillips, whose lamented death took place in the summer of 1942, and whom I rejoiced to know and love as a brother, set aside for my use a suite of rooms in the College of Preachers attached to the Cathedral ; and thus I was introduced to this remarkable Institution.

The College began as a new, and largely unorganised, agency, when fifty clergymen were gathered one spring, I think in 1927, in Washington Cathedral for study and refreshment of the spiritual life. Later in that year, and quite casually, Bishop Freeman of Washington spoke of it to his friend, Alexander Smith Cochran, whom he was visiting in Paris. Something "chimed" in Mr Cochran's outlook with the very words "College of Preachers," and he asked for details of what the Bishop was attempting by its means. In ten minutes from the first casual mention of the name, and without being asked for money, Mr Cochran offered a million and a quarter dollars to build and endow a home for the College. Mr Cochran asked no thanks, pledged the Bishop to temporary secrecy, and bade him never to refer to what he had done. "We've set ourselves to do this thing ; now let us think only of carrying it forward." Later the gift was handsomely increased, and the vision became a reality, a vision first seen by Bishop Satterlee, first Bishop of Washington, coming to fruition in the mind of Bishop Freeman, and translated into fact by the consecrated gift of Alexander Smith Cochran.

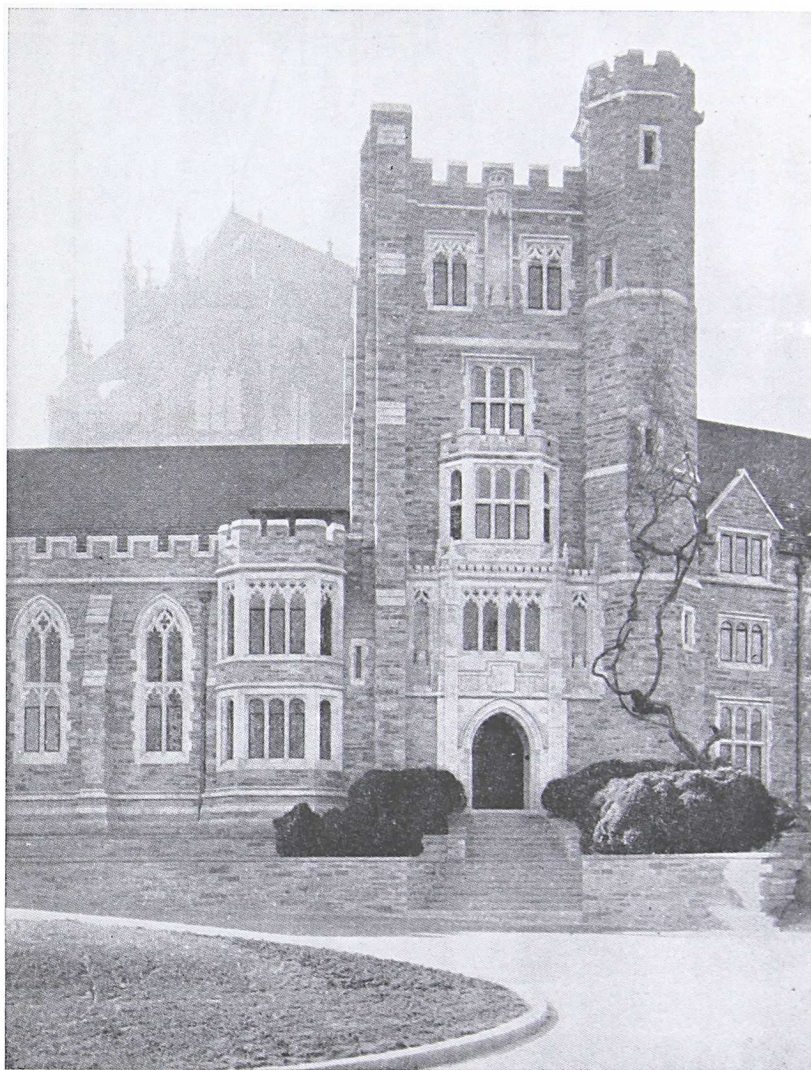
When the Bishop and his friend parted for the night (June, 1927) each of his own accord set down in writing his conception of the College. Out of these notes came a "memorandum of dedication" which ran as follows:—

"The supreme end and purpose of the Christian religion is the enfranchisement and enrichment of the human soul. To interpret to men the mind of the Master ; to give them an understanding of the deep and satisfying values of life ; to teach them to rightly employ the means necessary to salvation, is the high and holy privilege of the Christian ministry. To this end the College is founded, in sure confidence that the bulwark and sustaining strength of a nation is in an abiding and an unchanging practice of the Christian religion. The College is designed to give its students a comprehensive and broadly catholic vision of the history and unity of the Christian Church from its inception. To give unfailing emphasis to those secure and unfailing teachings of the Master that secure to the Christian ministry its power and continuing usefulness, through (a) Its sacramental office in the priesthood ; (b) Its edifying and inspirational office in the prophethood ; (c) Its comforting and consoling office in the pastorhood."

In a later letter, Mr Cochran wrote of the College as having one purpose, "to strengthen, stabilise, and deepen the spiritual life of the Christian ministry," and "to contribute something to the whole Church in America." Again and again he urged the Bishop to seek for a finer unity in the Church ; he wanted the College to be, "not a new kind of seminary, nor necessarily a post-graduate school, but a place of retreat and spiritual refreshment to the clergy who felt the need of re-emphasising the real spiritual values of their ministry."

Mr Cochran built and endowed the College of Preachers in memory of his mother, and as the Chapter's tribute runs, "to the end that the Word of God and the Gospel messages of love, light, grace, peace, and good will may be the more fully and widely proclaimed to the people of America."

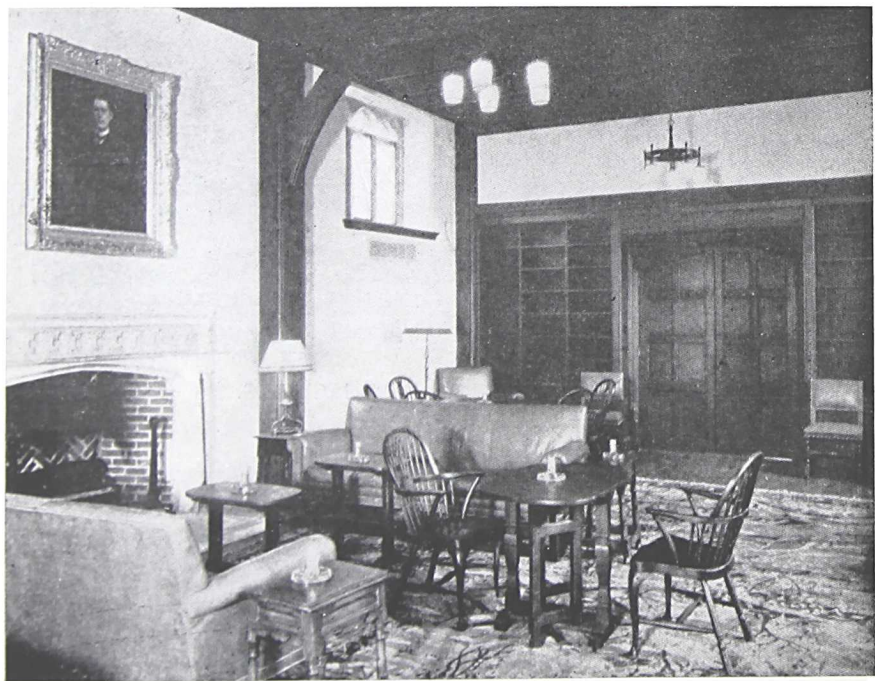
Thus far the vision ; the illustrations will show the distinction and beauty of the building which clothed the vision. The building comprises about fifty suites of rooms (bedroom, sitting-room, bathroom), a Warden's House, Refectory, Library, Cloister Walk and Garth, Common Room, accommodation for members of the Staff, and for servants, clerical offices. What struck me most about the College was its dignity and restfulness, indeed its entirely fitting adequacy to the work it attempts.



THE COLLEGE OF PREACHERS.  
(Washington Cathedral in background).



THE REFECTORY—COLLEGE OF PREACHERS.



THE COMMON ROOM—COLLEGE OF PREACHERS.

For many months in the year it houses groups of ministers drawn from the whole of the States in companies of forty to fifty, each group spending four to five days together. Each conference has its own subject and appointed leader, past titles being, "Teaching the Life of our Lord," "The Preacher and Church History," "Present Day Expository Preaching," "The Fruits of the Spirit," "Pastoral Ministry and Confirmation Instruction," "The Christian Ideal of Family and Home." In addition to set lectures the ministers are helped in the arts of sermon writing and delivery, each having to preach a sermon and to hear views on it expressed by their brethren and by the members of the staff; there are opportunities of fellowship and of discussion of problems; and it needs little imagination to see what a boon this College is to hard worked and often lonely clergymen, and what reviving of interests, outlook and equipment it can bestow. Conferences for laymen are also held from time to time, to give opportunity to discuss their professed religion and the application of their vows of Baptism and Confirmation to their daily living. And those who attend these conferences are the guests of the Cathedral. No wonder that one Bishop wrote after attending a Conference: "the Conference with practical unanimity felt that Providence had supplied an instrument in the College of Preachers by which the work of Evangelism could be promoted."

I venture to express the hope that some day Scotland will be blessed with such an institution. I do not know anything that would so revive ministers and the ministry; and on their continual reviving much of the welfare of Scotland and its Church depends.

J. HUTCHISON COCKBURN.

#### THE THANKSGIVING.

When opportunity arises for a revision of the *Book of Common Order*, 1940, it is to be hoped that careful consideration will be given to the desirability of separating the Prayer of Thanksgiving from the Intercessions in Morning and Evening Service. Many Ministers must feel that the linking of these two diverse acts of prayer unduly strains the attention of the congregation, and prolongs the prayer beyond a reasonable length. We believe that if the opinion of the people in the pews were consulted most of them would agree that our prayers are much too long. Intercessions, to be at all adequate, must be fairly considerable. The unhappy result, however, is that in many cases too little prominence is given to the note of thanksgiving; or, as sometimes happens under pressure of time, this vital element of Christian worship is omitted altogether. It would be well to return to the arrangement embodied in *Euchologion*, that pioneer of all our modern service books, published by the Church Service Society in its early days. There the Thanksgiving occupies a distinct place by itself as a separate prayer.

In the *Book of Common Order* presently in use the Thanksgiving follows, quite appropriately, the recitation of the Creed (or the Gospel if the Creed be omitted). Then might follow the Anthem (for which in the present book no place seems to be suggested) or some other act of praise. It seems peculiarly fitting that the reading of the Gospel and the solemn affirmation of the "things most surely believed among us" should culminate in a joyous thanksgiving echoed, thereafter, on wings of song in the Anthem, the most carefully fashioned act of praise of which the congregation is capable; or in some other great hymn of praise. Then would follow the Sermon.

But what of the Intercessions? The balance and spiritual sequence of the service would be greatly improved by postponing the Intercessions to a later place in the service, viz., after the Sermon and the Offering. Presumably the Sermon results in a quickening and stirring of the minds of the worshippers, and thereafter the Offering, where proper recognition is given to it, calls up a vision of the mission and task of the Church militant to which we are all solemnly pledged. This would facilitate a return to John Calvin's practice of offering the Great Prayer of Intercession from the Holy Table, the visible focal centre of fellowship and prayer, with all its hallowed associations. It would also set the Sermon more obviously at the very heart of the Service, as in the ancient rites and in conformity with our Reformed tradition.