

**DURHAM CATHEDRAL:
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED
SEPTEMBER 24, 1879**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649542512

Durham Cathedral: An Address Delivered September 24, 1879 by William Greenwell

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Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM GREENWELL

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From the Library of the
Fogg Museum of Art
Harvard University

PREFACE.

THE following account of the Cathedral Church of Durham was addressed to the members of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club and the Durham and Northumberland Archæological and Architectural Society, at a joint meeting of the Societies, held in the Cathedral, on September 24, 1879.

This will explain the form under which it appears, and, it is to be hoped, excuse the colloquial and somewhat desultory way in which the subject is treated.

It was not the intention of the author of the address, when it was given, that it should appear in any other form than that of an abstract in the Transactions of the Societies to which it was delivered.

Several of his friends, however, have thought that printed *in extenso* it might be of service as a Guide Book to the Cathedral, and supply what has been too long wanting in illustration of the Church of Durham.

To this wish he has assented, but with some reluctance, feeling how inadequate is such a treatment of a subject so important.

Some additional matter has been supplied in the notes which will help to make it more useful than it was in its original form.

Though no pretence is made to completeness, the reader may rest assured that all statements are given upon authority, and that no source of information which was available has been neglected.

The author thankfully acknowledges the assistance he has received from the Rev. J. F. HODGSON and Mr. CHARLES C. HODGES. He has also to express his many obligations to Mr. LIDDLE and Mr. WEATHERALL, the obliging and well-informed vergers of the Cathedral, who take that intelligent interest in the building which it is to be wondered should be wanting in any one who is brought into relation with the Cathedral Church, also to Mr. THOMAS ATKINSON, sub-verger, whose keen and appreciative eye has enabled him to bring under the author's notice many and important points of detail.

DURHAM,

September, 1881.

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

SINCE the publication of the last edition some very important discoveries have been made in the Cathedral, and a large work has been undertaken and carried out in one of the buildings connected with it. What had been the original termination of Carilef's Church was a question which remained doubtful, though it was generally believed to have ended with a semi-circular apse at the end of the choir, having an ambulatory running round it in continuation of the aisles. It appeared to be unlikely that when it was removed to be replaced by the present Chapel of the Nine Altars, the foundations would have been taken out, and it was believed that a small amount of excavation would lead to their disclosure. Indeed it had been determined to have an examination made which would have resulted in bringing these foundations

to light, when by an accident, the nature of which it is unnecessary to particularize, they were discovered.

By this fortunate discovery the complete design, so far as the ground plan is concerned, was made known, the foundation walls of the whole of the east end being found complete. They show that, according to a common arrangement at that period, the church had ended in three apses, the central one semi-circular both on the exterior and internally, the two side ones with a semi-circular internal termination, having the exterior square-ended. The Cathedral Church of Durham, a building of the very highest value in the history of the progress of "Norman" architecture, has thus become of still higher interest to a scientific study of the works of one of the most important eras of artistic and constructional development.

The rebuilding of the greater part of the Chapter-house (so unhappily destroyed in 1796) in memory of the late Bishop Lightfoot, has been completed. It is to be regretted that it has not been reconstructed as it stood at the time of its destruction. In place of the good fourteenth-century windows which then lighted the eastern end of the building, five round-headed windows have been placed there. They are purely conjectural, for there was nothing left in 1796 to show what had been the design of the windows then displaced, if indeed before that time any windows were there at all. But the most unfortunate mistake has been made in the vaulting of the East End. It seems extraordinary that with John Carter's drawings in existence, which show in the clearest way the plan of the vaulting, the original design should have been departed from. How much this alteration has detracted the effect, a comparison of the present roof with Carter's drawing will at once make plain. The accuracy of Carter's drawing, which no one,

acquainted with the careful work of that most painstaking and accomplished draughtsman, one would think, could have ever doubted, has been shown by the discovery of an absolutely truthful piece of evidence, the original keystone.

It is still necessary to draw attention to the condition of the Galilee. Not only is the beauty of that inimitable chapel much disfigured by the miserable seats which fill it, but the sharpness of the mouldings is disappearing day by day through the action of the fumes of the stove by which it is heated. This is caused by the quite unnecessary use of the chapel for morning prayer by the members of the University, who could be equally well accommodated in the nave.

The author is indebted to Mr. John Bilson, F.S.A., for many valuable suggestions, which he trusts have led to the improvement of some parts of the description of the church.

It is a great pleasure to have again to express my thanks to the vergers, Mr. Weatherall and Mr. Freeman, for many acts of kindness and attention to myself personally, when I have been occupied with the architecture of the church. It is fortunate that the noble Cathedral of Durham possesses in its two vergers exponents so painstaking, attentive and instructed.

Durham,
May 7th, 1897.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL:

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED IN THE CATHEDRAL, ON SEPTEMBER
24TH, 1879, TO THE BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB
AND THE DURHAM AND NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHÆO-
LOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETY,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM GREENWELL,

M.A., D.C.L., F.R.S., F.S.A.

I PROPOSE to divide what I have to say into two parts ; the first commencing with a brief relation of the introduction of Christianity into the North of England, and its development during the period before there was any religious body whatever at Durham, and from thence to the time of the Norman Conquest and the establishment of the Benedictine Order here. After that, I will give the historical accounts which have relation to the erection of various parts of the Cathedral, and at the same time endeavour to show how the architectural features of the several parts themselves agree with those accounts.

With regard to the first introduction of Christianity, I do not think there is any evidence to prove that it had taken root during the time of the Roman occupation. There is abundant testimony indeed of various kinds to show that Christianity did then exist in several parts of Britain, but I am not aware that there is anything which would enable us to say that it was established here in the North of England, at all events to any appreciable extent. There may have been isolated instances of Christians, but that they were few seems to be shown by the fact that all the inscriptions and sculptured subjects upon the many Roman stones still

in existence, down to the latest period of the Roman rule, are pagan.¹

As I proceed in my relation I shall have to bring before you a number of great figures ; men, some of them, of extraordinary eminence, capacity and religious zeal in their several times and places. The first of whom I have to speak is Paulinus (625-633), the great missionary of the North of England in the earliest time, who had been consecrated bishop to accompany Ethelburga, daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent, when she was sent as bride to Edwin, king of the Northumbrians. He preached throughout the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, in which are comprised the present counties of Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire, and south-eastern Scotland up to the Frith of Forth. There are several places well known to many of you where he taught and baptized, one of which, Pallinsburn, near the site of the well-known Field of Flodden, may possibly have got its name from him. The Derwent, the Yore and the Swale, in Yorkshire, and the Glen, in Northumberland, are rivers associated with his mission, and his traditionary well at Holystone, in the valley of the Coquet, where he baptized, is familiar to most of us. He was obliged, A.D. 633, to leave the country when, after the death of Edwin, slain in the battle of Haethfelth (Hatfield, near Doncaster),² Northumbria was conquered by Penda, king of Mercia, and Cadwalla, a king of the Britons, and in a great

¹ The few examples of the cross found are either of pagan workmanship and allusive to pagan faiths, or are at the least doubtful. One notable exception occurred at Corbridge, in the case of a silver vessel, now lost, ornamented with six squares, each containing the Christian monogram, formed of **XP**. Camden's *Britannia*, Ed. Gough, Vol. iii, p. 250. Hodgson's *Northumberland*, Vol. iii, pt. ii, p. 246. Bruce, *Lapidarium Septentrionale*, p. 342.

² Beda, *Hist. Eccles.*, Lib. ii, cap. 20.