

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL LIBRARY STRONG IN RESEARCH MATERIAL

by

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The Duke Divinity School Library is one of ten units in the Duke University Libraries and is an excellent example of a highly specialized library closely integrated into a large university system.

Historically, the primary function of the Divinity School Library has been to serve the faculty and students of the Divinity School, which offers the degrees of Bachelor of Divinity, Master of Theology, and Master of Religious Education. In the 1965-66 academic year 260 students were enrolled in these three degree programs.

Graduate instruction has become an increasingly important part of the University's program over the past two decades, however, and more and more of the financial resources devoted to the Divinity School Library have gone into its strengthening as a research collection to support work in religion at the M.A. and Ph.D. levels in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. In 1965-66 forty-three candidates for the Ph.D. degree in religion were in residence.

Finally, Duke University requires six hours of academic credit in religion of all its candidates for the B.A. degree; and its well-staffed Department of Religion not only provides this instruction but offers an undergraduate major in religion. The Divinity School Library provides the bibliographical support for this faculty and this instruction.

Although the roots of the University's collection in the area of religion reach back into its early years as Trinity College, the Divinity School Library (known then as the School of Religion Library) was not established until 1930. The initial collection consisted of the books on religion which had been assembled over the years in the Trinity College Library plus two newly-purchased private libraries from Germany, each contain-

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ing about 2,500 volumes. That of Professor Karl Holl of the University of Berlin emphasized European church history through the Reformation and was purchased in 1926, while the following year the University acquired the collection of Dr. Graf von Baudissin with its strong emphases on the Hebrew language and the Old Testament. By 1941, when the School of Religion became the Divinity School and the name of the library was appropriately changed, the collection had grown to 33,000 volumes.

A more rapid expansion of the Divinity School Library dates from 1950, when its first full-time and professionally trained librarian was appointed and when the University began substantially to increase the financial support of the Divinity Library. From 48,000 volumes in 1950 it has grown to its present size of 130,000 and is now acquiring from 5,000 to 6,000 new volumes a year. The Library currently receives more than 450 theological periodicals.

The broad strengths of the Divinity School Library conform, as one would expect, to those areas in which the University offers Ph.D. work in religion: Biblical studies, church history, historical theology, and systematic and contemporary theology. Among the more specialized strengths are the collections in Quakerism, the Reformation, the history and transmission of the New Testament text, Judaism, the history of American religious thought, medieval theology, Roman Catholicism, the 17th century Jansenist movement, Biblical and Near Eastern archaeology, mysticism, and the history and literature of Methodism.

The Methodistica collection deserves a special word. Duke University has strong ties with the Methodist Church. The Divinity School—although ecumenical in outlook—is primarily a seminary for the training of Methodist ministers, and the Divinity School Library has long had a strong Methodist collection, especially rich in American Methodistica. In 1961 the University acquired the Frank Baker collection of Wesleyana and British Methodism containing 13,500 volumes and 4,000 manuscripts and documents. This collection, one of the most distinguished ever added to the University libraries, gives Duke the outstanding Methodist collection in the Western hemisphere and one of the half dozen best in the world.

The Divinity School Library is operated by a staff of four full-time persons. The Librarian and the Reference Librarian hold graduate degrees in theology in addition to graduate library degrees. The Librarian is also a member of the Divinity School faculty with the current rank and title of Associate Professor of Theological Bibliography. The Circulation Department is in the hands of two non-professional staff members who are aided by some 15 student assistants. During the regular academic year the library provides service 84 hours a week.

As the foregoing description of the staff indicates, the Divinity School Library is a public service unit only. The Librarian is responsible for the selection of books, but all ordering, accounting, cataloging, and physical preparation of books for the Divinity School Library is done by the appropriate centralized technical processing departments in the University's General Library.

This use of the centralized technical processing facilities by the Divinity School Library is only one of the several ways in which it is integrated both organizationally and functionally into the larger library system. Another is the location of certain special types of materials in other parts of the library system, although they have been purchased by the Divinity School Library. The Divinity Library buys microcards, microfilms, manuscripts, rare books, newspapers, and maps. All of these materials, however, are assigned

84—NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

to the appropriate departments of the General Library so that they may receive the various kinds of special storage and servicing which they require. They are, of course, represented by cards in the public catalog of the Divinity School Library.

No description of the Divinity School Library is complete without reference to its most far-reaching and certainly one of its most significant services, the Henry Harrison Jordan Loan Library. Endowed in 1947 by the children of the Reverend Henry Harrison Jordan, the library lends current theological books without charge to ministers in the parish. The Loan Library, administered by the Divinity School Librarian, stocks from 750 to 1,000 titles in multiple copies and makes them available for a generous loan period without geographical or denominational limitation at no cost to the clergyman-borrower save the return postage on books.
