

braries. It is always suggestive, always worth thinking about.—*Daniel Traister, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.*

Slavens, Thomas P. *Theological Libraries at Oxford.* New York: K. G. Saur, 1984. 197p. \$43.50 (ISBN 3-598-10563-0).

_____. *A Great Library through Gifts.* New York: K. G. Saur, 1986. 355p. \$40 (ISBN 3-598-10621-1).

Both Slavens' study of Oxford's theological collections and his lengthier treatment of the library at Union Theological Seminary (New York) were undertaken in the belief they might "provide guidelines for the development of other libraries" (p.v, *Theological Libraries*; p.ix, *Great Library*). The work treating Oxford briefly examines the accumulation of theological and church history collections held in the Bodleian, the History and Theology Faculty libraries, and thirty-one other Oxford libraries. The reproduction of the double-spaced typescript is marred by a number of typographical errors, and poor punctuation hampers clear reading. Several factual errors also detract. For example, Archbishop Laud was executed in 1645 and could not have donated manuscripts to the Bodleian up until 1650 as suggested (p.51). The marvelous, early seventeenth-century frieze in the upper reading room of the Bodleian is turned into evidence of the first librarian's narrow religion and collecting (p.49). However, the frieze included not only church fathers and Protestant reformers but also featured Wyclif, Hus, Savonarola, and scientists such as Copernicus, Brahe, Mercator, and Ortelius.

More fundamental faults prevent the work from fulfilling its stated purpose. In the absence of any conclusion, we are left with "two themes" briefly noted in the preface: the importance of starting early—in the case of Oxford, eight centuries ago—and the important development role played by gifts as well as copyright deposits and endowment funding (p.v). For obvious reasons the first "theme" does not advance academic librarianship. The second "theme" is important and dis-

tinctly relevant, but its promise is unrealized.

In recounting the development of the various libraries' theological holdings, Slavens offers a compilation of notable acquisitions accumulated over centuries. Many are gifts of splendid rarities invaluable to theological scholarship, but he does not ascribe the origins of all the important holdings. Furthermore, the overall importance of gifts to the building of Oxford's fine collections is not well demonstrated. The single numerical indication of the importance of gifts is for 1978-79. In that year, only 22 percent (£ 520,000) of the Bodleian budget was available for materials purchases (p.92). A total of 79,000 books and pamphlets were accessioned, 43,000 of which were obtained through copyright deposit and 25,000 through purchase (p.74), leaving 11,000 unaccounted. How many were in theology? Were they gifts? If so, how could that year be considered representative of the relative importance in past centuries of donations and copyright deposits?

A serious omission is the failure to explain the motivations and mechanisms of donation. We can readily deduce the motivations of alumni and faculty donors, but why do apparently unaffiliated donors give? Is there now or has there ever been a plan for systematic development and donor cultivation such as a number of leading academic libraries have instituted in recent years? A Friends group is mentioned only once as playing an unspecified role in an acquisition during the 1940s (p.67).

The listing of many collections and single items of scholarly interest, coupled with the inclusion of the Bodleian's 1980 reading regulations, points to possible use of the work as a very selective guide to theological research at Oxford. However, the lack of indexing and inadequate discussion of present access tools prevent ready use even in this manner.

Slavens' effort to describe the importance of gifts to the development of the library at Union Theological Seminary is more successful. Listed again are notable acquisitions, including many significant

gifts of materials and funds. However, by using a wider range of sources, including budgetary and other annual reports, Slavens is able to indicate the vital importance of gifts relative to purchases in Union's collection development since its 1836 foundation. As late as 1939-40, half the volumes acquired were gifts (p.267). Although comprehensive supporting statistics are not offered, the numbers and importance of gifts are convincing for an age when acquisitions budgets were quite modest. Building upon loyalties of faculty, alumni, and others, Union assembled major research collections through gifts of books, manuscripts, and archival materials. Especially successful were named collections honoring or initially assembled by members of the faculty or board of directors, such as David McAlpin. While some donors' relationships to the seminary are explained and their motivations implied, more is wanted in this area. Slavens frequently only alludes to fund-raising activities among wealthy New Yorkers and alumni. For ex-

ample, an Alumni Library Endowment Fund attracted \$10,000 shortly after its 1906 announcement by the Alumni Club, but we do not learn what prompted this or how the successful drive was conducted (p.181). In Slavens' account, too many major benefactors, such as Willis James, suddenly appear proffering cash (p.174). We know they were rewarded by named alcoves, buildings, and collections, but again, how were they identified and cultivated? Fund-raising was a major component of the seminary presidency, but how active were the librarians in this arena?

Union's experience with named collections illustrates the benefit of "sharing bibliographical achievements" (p.341), as well as the wisdom of obtaining endowed funds to continue active collecting and processing of these materials. These endowments should not be over restricted; in the late nineteenth century Union found itself embarrassed by well-endowed special collections and insufficient funds for much-needed current and reference materials (p.160-61).

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There is no substitute for general, unrestricted institutional support. Slavens hints that Union librarians have subsequently experienced difficulty handling numerous special collections encumbered with names and conditions (p.337), but the collections would clearly not be the fine resources they are today without the support of both the donors and the parent institution. The critical role of the faculty in building a fine collection for teaching

and research is also emphasized throughout this work. They actively recommended particular acquisitions (although this is too often asserted without documentation), promoted theological bibliography, and donated their own working collections. Their partnership with Union's librarians is worthy of emulation.—*Jonathan LeBreton, Albin O. Kuhn Library & Gallery, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Catonsville.*

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