THE COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE THEOLOGICAL FACULTY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER WITH SOME REFERENCE TO ITS ORIGINS AND HISTORY.

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THE Faculty of Theology in the University of Manchester has now been in existence for a quarter of a century. It was established by an ordinance adopted by the Court of the University on May 5th, 1904. The former federal constitution of the Victoria University, binding together the Owens College at Manchester, the University College at Liverpool and the Yorkshire College at Leeds, had been dissolved only in the previous year. A new Charter had just come into force continuing the Victoria University with a revised constitution as an independent university in Manchester, with the title of the Victoria University of Manchester.

This momentous change, which opened the way for the establishment of the Universities of Liverpool and Leeds, had also a direct bearing upon the formation of the Theological Faculty at Manchester. For a previous attempt to found such a faculty had been abandoned in 1890, mainly as the result of the opposition or indifference of the representatives from Liverpool and Leeds. In neither of these cities were there many theological institutions, whereas in Manchester there were already six denominational colleges in existence. This fact not only made a University Faculty of Theology possible and desirable there, but proved a determining influence in the framing of its constitution.

In conformity with the terms of the will of John Owens, the founder of the Owens College which was incorporated with the Victoria University of Manchester in 1904, the Charter of 1903
stipulates that it shall not be lawful for the Court “to adopt or impose on any person any test whatever of religious belief or profession in order to entitle him or her to be admitted as a Professor Teacher Student or Member of the University or to hold any office therein or to graduate thereat or to enjoy or exercise any privilege thereof.” From the outset therefore the principle was clearly established that the only kind of theological faculty which could be contemplated must be an entirely free and open one. Such faculties had already been founded in connection with the Universities of London and of Wales; but the teaching recognised by them was to be obtained only in certain affiliated colleges. The faculty at Manchester was the first entirely free faculty in the kingdom in which theological instruction formed a part of the regular curriculum of the University itself. Over and above any instruction given and received in the affiliated colleges a substantial part of the course required for a Manchester degree in Theology consists of lectures given in the University buildings by professors and lecturers appointed by the University as members of its own teaching staff.

There are at present eight theological colleges recognised by the University: the Manchester Baptist College; Egerton Hall (Anglican); the Hartley Primitive Methodist College; the Lancashire Independent College; the Moravian College, Fairfield; the Unitarian College; the United Methodist College; and the Wesleyan College, Didsbury. There is nothing in the constitution of the Faculty to prevent the recognition of colleges representing other religious bodies. Provided that they were willing to accept the regulations a Roman Catholic or a Jewish College would be as eligible for recognition as are those already recognised.

In view of the fact that the establishment of Theological Faculties is contemplated in some other modern Universities a brief account of the Manchester Faculty may be of interest.

The courses of lectures are classified as follows:—

A. Lectures delivered within the University buildings by Professors and Lecturers of the University.

B. Lectures delivered elsewhere than in the University buildings by Lecturers of the University. Each of these courses is open not only to the members of the affiliated college where it is delivered, but to any other students of the Faculty as well.
C. External Courses, delivered elsewhere than in the University buildings by others than lecturers of the University, but recognised by the Faculty for the purposes of the Certificate in Theology or the B.D. Degree.

There are lectures of Class A provided on every subject required for the B.D. Degree, with the exception of the History of Doctrine and Apologetics. All the lecturing on these two subjects is given in one or other of the recognised Colleges, where also there are delivered lectures on many of the other subjects on the Syllabus. A large choice of lectures is thus offered to each student. While, on the one hand, denominational susceptibilities are not violated, on the other, students have ample opportunity of hearing lecturers of other denominations than their own, appointed by the University solely by virtue of their intellectual qualifications. Most of the students in the Faculty are preparing for the Christian Ministry. It cannot but exercise a beneficent influence upon the future relations between the various denominations which they hope to serve that an increasing number of their younger ministers should have been trained together in such a cooperative school of Theology as Manchester provides.

Candidates for the B.D. Degree must be either graduates of other Faculties, or of other recognised Universities, in which case their course for this degree can be completed in two years; or they must have passed the Intermediate Examination in Arts at Manchester, in which case their B.D. course must extend over at least three years. The subjects for the Final Examination are divided into three groups: (I) Philosophy and Doctrine; (2) Comparative Religion and Ecclesiastical History; (3) Old and New Testaments. Candidates choose one of these groups as their principal field of study, and must take all the papers set upon each of the subjects specified in it, together with certain other subjects selected from each of the other two groups. By this ingenious scheme provision is made for the satisfaction of each student's dominant interest, be it philosophical, historical, or linguistic and literary. At the same time concentrated specialisation in one department of the scientific study of religion is balanced by less detailed investigation of other portions of the vast realm of modern Theology. Successful candidates are not placed in any class list, but may be awarded distinction in their selected group.

The degree of D.D. may be conferred upon applicants who are
either Bachelors in Divinity of Manchester of at least four years' standing, or of other approved Universities who have pursued for at least two years a course of study or research at the Victoria University. It is granted after the submission of published work together with a thesis, if these be adjudged to have attained the high standard required for the Doctorate of the University.

In addition to the course for the B.D. Degree the Faculty provides a shorter and simpler course for a Certificate in Theology, the gaining of which furnishes evidence of sound training in the subjects taken. These are similar to those studied in the course for the Degree, but it is possible to obtain the Certificate without knowledge of Hebrew, though Greek is required. Attendance at a certain number of lectures at the University or the recognised Colleges is necessary, and the Course can be completed in two years after the passing of an Entrance Examination.

It is also possible to obtain a Certificate in Biblical Knowledge, which is granted to those who successfully pass an examination. For this Certificate it is not necessary to show knowledge of Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, nor is attendance at any lectures necessary. The course of study requisite to obtain it will afford an useful equipment for any man or woman who desires to be able to teach the Bible in Day School or Sunday School on modern lines.

Arrangements were made in the Summer term of 1929 for an appropriate commemoration of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Manchester Theological Faculty, to take place at the beginning of the Session 1929-30. Early in the Vacation the Faculty found itself with tragic suddenness bereft of both its Professors, by the death of Dr. J. N. Farquhar on July 17th and of Dr. A. S. Peake on August 19th. Those with whom rested the responsibility of decision were agreed that it would have been the wish of these deeply lamented leaders that the projected celebrations should not be abandoned. Accordingly they took place upon the appointed dates. The Secretary of the Faculty, Principal Brewis, is to be congratulated upon the success of the arrangements, for which he was mainly responsible.

The proceedings opened with a reception on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 9th. As originally planned this was to have been followed by a public lecture, which the doyen of the Faculty and its most noted theologian, Professor Peake, had consented to
deliver on its origins and history. In place of this lecture three addresses were given, dealing with the same subject, by Sir Alfred Hopkinson, who had been Vice-Chancellor of the University when the Faculty came into being, Dr. Robert Mackintosh of Lancashire College, its senior member, and Dr. MacLachlan, the Principal of the Unitarian College.

Sir Alfred Hopkinson gave his audience an illuminating account of the delicate negotiations which fixed the lines upon which the Faculty was started, with many intimate reminiscences of those who had taken a leading part in the project, prominent among them Dr. Maclaren and Bishop Moorhouse. He enlarged with telling force upon the incompleteness of the work of any University which failed to provide for research and teaching upon that most powerful of the spiritual forces which had moulded the history and achievements of mankind, Religion. He insisted that it was a duty owed by a University to the Community whose welfare it sought to serve that it should do what it could to provide for those who intended to become the accredited teachers and Ministers of Religion the opportunity of that free and full scientific study of all its aspects and departments which only a fully constituted University Faculty of Theology could supply.

Dr. Mackintosh, who followed, reminded his hearers of the debt the Faculty owed to the advice of such men from other Universities as Dr. Davidson and Dr. Fairbairn who had served on its Advisory Committee. He paid a tribute, in moving words, to the immense services, first and last, of Dr. Peake, to whom, indeed, the whole celebration was, in a very real sense, a memorial. He recalled the names of distinguished graduates of the Faculty, among them Dr. MacLachlan, Principal Brewis, Professor Waugh, E. J. Price, L. W. Grensted, H. Bulcock, W. S. Davies. He concluded with a strong personal plea for a central group of Theological lecture-rooms at the University. If the Faculty was to do its best work there must be, in his opinion, less duplicating of lecture courses in the affiliated Colleges, and as a consequence more opportunity for specialised teaching than hitherto.

Dr. MacLachlan, after referring to the strong opposition that had been raised to the formation of the Faculty, and the gloomy forebodings of its critics, quoted some words of Professor Peake, spoken in 1922.
"I became the first Dean of the Faculty, and I believe I have not been absent from any of its meetings during its existence. I may perhaps claim to speak with authority on its working. We have not had a single division at the meetings of the Board which has followed Sectarian lines." Dr. Peake had then quoted Sir Alfred Hopkinson as having said that there was no Faculty in the University so harmonious as the Faculty of Theology, not excepting the Faculty of Music. Dr. MacLachlan commemorated among past teachers of the Faculty scholars with names so widely known and honoured as those of Rhys Davids, Moulton, Hogg, Adeney, and Allen, and paid a tribute to the strong support Professor Tout had given to the enterprise from the beginning, whilst busy with the building up of the Manchester School of History which his labours were to make famous.

On October 10th Dr. F. C. Burkitt delivered the public lecture on Twenty-Five Years of Theological Study which is printed in extenso in this BULLETIN. Following this was a dinner presided over by the Chancellor of the University, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, at which, among other guests, there were present representatives sent by the Theological Faculties of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham, and Wales. The speakers, in addition to the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, included the Dean of the Faculty (the Bishop of Middleton, Dr. Parsons), Principal Grieve, Dr. Goudge, Professors Canney and Stocks, and the High Sheriff of Lancashire (Mr. C. Sydney Jones). Thus was brought to a conclusion a fitting commemoration of a notable enterprise.