

# THE UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE

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I.—LITERARY.

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## THE OXFORD MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The Oxford Movement in the Church of England began about 1833. It was a reaction against liberalism in politics, latitudinarianism in theology, and the government of the Church by the State. It was, at the same time, a return to Mediaeval theology and worship. The doctrines of Apostolical Succession, and the Real Presence—a doctrine not to be distinguished from the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation—were revived. And along with this return to Mediaeval theology, Mediaeval architecture was restored; temples for a stately service were prepared; not teaching halls. Communion tables were replaced by *altars*. And the whole paraphernalia of worship was changed; so that, except for the English tongue and the mustaches of the priests, the visitor could hardly have told whether the worship were that of the English Church or that of her who sitteth on "the seven hills."

It must be admitted that there was some good in the movement. The Erastian theory as to the proper relation of Church and State is wrong. The kingdom of God should not be subordinate to any "world-power." No state should control the Church. And certainly such latitudinarianism in doctrine as that of Bishop Coleuso and others called for a protest. But the return to Mediaeval theology and Mediaeval worship was all wrong.

We have no good ground for doubting the sincerity of many of the apostles of the movement. Unfortunately, more than

EXTRACTS FROM AN ELDER'S DIARY. *Edited by Rev. Joseph B. Stratton, D. D., Natchez, Miss.* Pp. 171, 12 mo. Price 75 cents. Richmond, Va. Presbyterian Committee of Publication.

This is a very commendable book. We should be pleased to hear of its being widely read by our Elders. It is praiseworthy for the following reasons: 1. It is characterized by a truly Christian Spirit. This elder seems to be trying to follow Christ. He is a business man; but his main business is to serve the Lord. The tone of the book makes it helpful to all readers even as a good elder's life ought to be to all his people. 2. The author thinks that an elder ought to *furnish himself* for the work required of the elder in the Scriptures. His simple story of his own effort to comprehend his duties, to know his place and work in the church should prove stimulating and give light to many of our elders. 3. The author thinks that the elder should really think about his work as it comes up from day to day and that he should try to *plan it well* and do it accordingly. We fancy that some of these thoughts will strike more than one of our elders as novel. He has hardly thought of his work as an elder as requiring careful planning and laborious execution.

This journal too would give to the earnest elder a thousand helpful hints about the way in which he can best serve the Master in his office.

We have wished more than once that we knew who the elder is whose Diary has been so well edited by Dr. Stratton. We would treasure the name of so good a man.

In our eyes the editor would have done well to have left out the account of one or two death-bed testimonies in which the miraculous and the natural stand side by side. Other readers, however, may find special delight in these very stories. Perhaps we are a bit skeptical in respect to such stories.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

THE GENESIS OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY: OR A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH OCCASIONED THE CALLING OF THAT VENERABLE ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES AND CHRISTIAN STATESMEN. A centennial offering to the Sabbath schools and youth of the Presbyterian church. *By F. Patton, D. D., Pastor of the Presbyterian church, Dardanelle, Ark.* Pp. 83, 12 mo. Paper cover. Price 10 cents. Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication. 1889.

This pamphlet has been before the church for several years. The Committee has, however, within the last few days, dropped another copy on our desk. No doubt these enterprising gentlemen think our readers should again be notified of the possibility of securing this useful little tract for 10 cents. And in view of the general interest, in all that pertains to the Westminster Assembly, just now pervading the church, we take pleasure in saying a word about this work.

It is a fairly reliable, instructive and useful pamphlet on the subject. For our own part, we think the author's estimate of Anne Boleyn is

rather too high; that his representations concerning the purpose and use of "prophesyings" in the time of Elizabeth wants in clearness if not in accuracy, that his portrayal of Laud's character is somewhat inaccurate. And these are by no means all of the points whereon we differ from the author in matters of detail.

The greatest defect of the work is of a negative sort. It does not make the divisions of the history according to the divisions in the objective development itself. The historian must study his subject as an organism and in his treatment regard the organic structure. The book lacks in saliency of cardinal points, a merit which we naturally expect in short treatises.

Nevertheless, many of the most interesting facts have been carefully collected and clearly told, and the book is well worth a man's reading even though he knows somewhat about the subject.

THOS. C. JOHNSON.

TALMUDIC AND OTHER LEGENDS. Facts and Fictions from Olden Times. Revised and enlarged, translated and compiled by *L. Weiss*. Second edition. Pp. 194, 12mo. New York: Press of Stettiner, Lambert & Co., 22, 24 and 26 Reade Street. 1888.

There are upwards of eighty stories in this little book; many of them from the Talmud. The author expresses, in his preface, the hope that they will aid him "in scattering, to some extent, the grains of liberality and profundity of our sages of yore, thus causing the slanderers of the Talmud and ancient Hebrew literature to blush."

We are pleased to be able to say that the collection contains many delightful stories—at once pleasing and fitted to elevate the reader morally. They naturally present the attractive side of the Hebrew character. The Jew is made to appear as the generous man, as the oppressed rather than the oppressor, and to have a large share of the other nobler qualities of human nature. Just as naturally also they are confirmatory of the truth of Judaism, as over against Mohammedanism or Christianity. They are, however, about as trustworthy, we suppose, and worth as much in the way of evidence as the stories told by some "christian" writers of our own age. For example in some of the writings of the Rev. Arthur T. Pierson there are stories in support of Christianity which have always seemed to us to presuppose a vast amount of credulity in the reader.

We make one exception, though, to this statement: Nowhere save in Baron Munchausen, *et id omne genus*, are we called upon to follow such impossible and childish imaginations as the story of "Solomon and Ash-medai;" wherein the prince of devils hurls Solomon fifteen hundred miles through the air at one throw, and does much more quite as possible.

In one respect we fear the book before us will do harm to the unthinking reader: It preaches the gospel of "Ships that Pass in the Night"—teaches that it makes but little difference what a man believes provided only he scatters kindness. This is taught in the story "Charity knows No Creed," and in "Who is Admitted to Heaven?" Indeed, the