

The Princeton Theological Review

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OBERLIN PERFECTIONISM

I. THE MEN AND THE BEGINNINGS.

Oberlin College¹ had its origin in what seemed a wild dream that formed itself in 1832 in the mind of John J. Shipherd, home-missionary pastor of the little Presbyterian church in the village of Elyria, Ohio. As the scheme floated before his imagination, it was perhaps not very dissimilar to one of those communistic enterprises which were springing up throughout the country in the wake of the excitement aroused by Robert Owen. To that extent Shipherd may be accounted a brother spirit to John H. Noyes. But he had not the courage of conviction, to call it by no harsher name, which drove Noyes on in his reckless course. When he came to draw up the Oberlin "Covenant," he faltered. He provided only that "we will hold and manage our estates personally, but pledge as perfect a community of interest as though we held a community of property." By so narrow a margin Oberlin appears to have escaped becoming a decent Oneida Community: or rather, we should say, by so narrow a margin Oberlin appears to have escaped the early end which has befallen all communistic enterprises which wish to be decent; for communism and decency cannot exist together.²

Apart from this one point, the persistency of Shipherd's

¹ Compare: J. H. Fairchild, *Oberlin, Its Origin, Progress and Results*, 1871, and *Oberlin, the Colony and the College*, 1883; W. G. Ballantyne, *Oberlin Jubilee, 1833-1883*, 1884; D. L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin*, 1898.

² Cf. D. L. Leonard, *The Story of Oberlin*, 1898, pp. 87 ff. for some account of Shipherd's communistic leaning.

358. *The Methodist Book Concern: New York, Cincinnati, 1920.*

Seldom has the reviewer read a book which has pleased him so much as this volume of essays. Without exception, they are clear, keen, just, sound, and stimulating. In these days of philosophical madness and shallowness, Boston University is to be congratulated on having such a teacher of philosophy.

The titles of the essays are as follows: "Pantheistic Dilemmas," "A Study in the Philosophy styled Pragmatism," "Prominent Features in the Philosophy of Henri Bergson," "The Notion of a Changing God," "Attempts to Dispense with the Soul," "Doctrinal Values Contributed by the Reformation," "John Henry Newman as Roman Catholic Apologist," "The Truth and the Error of Mysticism," "Bahaism Historically and Critically Considered." An excellent "Index" completes and adds much to the book. Were he disposed to dissent, the reviewer would do so only with regard to the essay on "The Notion of a Changing God." This is one of the best of these nine admirable papers. It is, perhaps, the one in which the reviewer is in closest sympathy with the writer. Yet he questions whether the writer can reach his excellent conclusion from his Arminian standpoint; and that, too, though he defines his standpoint more carefully and promisingly than the reviewer has ever heard it defined.

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WILLIAM BRENTON GREENE, JR.

Creation Ex Nihilo, The Physical Universe a Finite and Temporal Entity. By L. FRANKLIN GRUBER. With a Foreword by G. Frederick Wright, LL.D., F.G.S.A. 8vo, pp. 315. Boston: The Gorham Press. 1918.

It is the praiseworthy aim of this somewhat abstruse book to prove, that the universe must be finite; that, consequently, it must have been created; and that, therefore, there must be a God. The argument is mathematical and so should be demonstrative. Not all will be able to follow it, but it should be well worth while for all to try to do so.

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EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

Breve Introducción a la Crítica Textual del A. T. por A. FERNÁNDEZ TRUYOLS, S.I., Prof. en il P. I. B. Roma. Pontífico Instituto Bíblico. 1917. Fasc. I, xii, 218. 1 Sam. i-xv; id. Fasc. II, viii, 93.

These are the first two fascicles of a series of studies on textual and literary criticism (*Estudios de Crítica Textual y Literaria*) by the same author. The first part gives a general introduction to Textual Criticism showing its importance and necessity and the cautions which it is proper to observe in the exercise of our criticism of the *textus receptus*. He adopts the four cautions of Houbigant, to-wit: (1) that emendations should not be introduced into the body of the text; (2) that they should not be more than necessity requires (*cogit*);

(3) that no one should attempt to undertake sacred criticism unless he shall have inspected diligently the nature (*indolem*) of the Hebrew language; and (4) no one should take upon himself the correction of the sacred text unless he shall have sufficiently diligently learned not only the Hebrew language but also other languages cognate to the Hebrew (*ex Hebraica natas*). He then informs us as to the actual condition of the Massoretic text, treating of the old disputes between the catholics and protestants as to its integrity and worth; and then passes on to a consideration of the voluntary or intentional variation as illustrated especially by the text of Jeremiah, Proverbs, and 1 Sam. i-xv. He then proceeds to discuss certain alterations due to the carelessness or ignorance of the copyists, treating of the division of words as found on the inscriptions and papyri, of the manner in which numbers were denoted in ancient Hebrew documents and of the language and script in which the Scriptures were written, paying especial attention to Dr. Naville's theory. Lastly, he considers the corrections of the scribes.

From the study of the condition of the text, he passes to the means to be used for the restoration of the original text. Among the external means, he considers the Hebrew manuscripts and the Samaritan Hebrew text and then treats of the Greek versions, the *Vetus Latina*, and the Peshitto. Among the internal means, he glances at the use of the context and of parallel passages and dwells upon the use of poetic parallelism and of the strophe in reëstablishing the text. Last of all, he states the principles which are to guide us in our conduct of textual criticism citing at length from Houbigant, de Rossi, Cappellus and Steurnagel.

In the second fascicle, we have a textual criticism of 1 Sam. i-xv, constituting on the whole an able and fair execution of the principles enumerated in fascicle one. We cannot at present criticize the author's work in full. In i. 5, however, we think that while the Aramaic Targums and the Peshitto, and the margin of Codex X of the LXX are doubtless explanations of the Massoretic text and the Greek LXX a translation of אפס it seems equally probable that the Latin *tristis* depends upon a reading אכם (compare the Targum of Job iii:28 where the Latin renders קרר by *moerens*).

We cannot better express the point of view of the author than by translating the concluding paragraph of fascicle one where he says: "We conclude by repeating that which we said at the beginning, that a prudent reserve in judging, modesty in propounding (changes and) a wise lack of confidence in oneself, will save the critic many slips, will be a salutary restraint in the slipping declivity on which he moves, and will contribute not a little to that which unrolls itself in that maturity of judgment, that intellectual moderation, a thousand times preferable to the ingenious and frequently strange ingenuities of a brilliant and subtle talent."

Princeton.

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