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PROTESTANTISM AND ROMANISM.

THE quiet of the Protestant Church has suffered no little disturbance of late, by the frequency of the transitions from its ranks, to the Church of Rome. In many instances, these defections have been on the part of men, of weight and decided depth of sanctity, earnestness and theological ability. It has been usual in such cases, to dismiss the whole matter, with but a passing notice of the fact, accompanied with perhaps a sneering expression of pity, in view of such an exhibition of extreme folly, the result either of mental imbecility, or of an hypocrisy more or less well concealed. Such has been the complacency and overweening confidence of many good men in the Protestant Church—such the ease with which they have conducted to its final resolution, much of perplexity and mystery, which engaged the prayers and spiritual travail of the Church of all ages, that should any one still be found, who unfortunately, is unable to sympathize in full measure in their confidence, he is set down as a proper subject for commiseration, or else despised as destitute of all moral principle. All this might do, and pass current

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THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

WE find in the last number of the Princeton Repertory a long article on Ursinus and the Heidelberg Catechism, (attributed to the pen of the Rev. Dr. Proudfit of New Brunswick,) in which we are called to account, not in the sweetest tone imaginable, for our article on the distinguished author of this formulary, which appears as an Introduction to Williard's translation of his Commentary on the Catechism, and which was published also in a late number of the Mercersburg Review. To make out a more full and ample case, reference is had also to our small volume, published some years since, under the title of the "History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism," as well as to the first and second of our recent articles on "Early Christianity."

First comes the unfortunate tail of the 80th question; a point, hardly entitled, in our opinion, to half a dozen pages of grave discussion in an ostensibly scientific review, and of which in the end just nothing at all is made for the reviewer's main purpose. The only show of advantage he may seem to have against us, (and it is but a thin show at best,) is found in some slight discrepancy there is, between our statement of the matter in 1847 and the representation we have made of it in 1851; this too concerning a single doubtful historical particular merely, and not changing the substance of the principal fact. In 1851 we say, of the tail of the 80th question, that it formed no part of the original Catechism as published under the hand of Ursinus himself; that it is wanting in the first two editions; and that it "was afterwards foisted in, only by the authority of the Elector Frederick, in the way of angry retort and counterblast, we are told, for certain severe declarations the other way, which had been passed a short time before by the Council of Trent." Dr. Proudfit has no historical authority to urge in opposition to this statement. But on turning to our own book published in 1847, he finds the same statement in relation to the tail of the question, namely that it did not appear before the third edition, but along with this an intimation that the whole question was wanting in the first edition; while it is added, that the Elector took pains afterwards, in view of the decrees passed by the Council of Trent, "to have the question restored in full to *the form in which it was originally composed,*" allowing the previous text to go out of use as "*defective and incorrect.*" That this representation differs some from the other, is at once evident enough. The reviewer allows, that it may be accounted for by a change

of view in regard to what was the actual state of the case, between the dates of the two statements; but goes on immediately to say, that the *progress* from the statement of 1847 to that of 1851 has been in the direction of error and not of truth; mumbling something about our having failed to explain the variation in the later version, and with no small indelicacy insinuating a charge of direct dishonesty in the whole business. The man who talks in this way, may well be held somewhat sternly to the strict proof of what he says. "We shall convince the reader," writes Dr. Proudfit, "that his progress in this respect, (we fear in others too.) has been in the direction of error and not of truth." This means, if it mean anything at all, that the light in which the point in hand is presented by us in 1847, is nearer the truth than the view taken of it in 1851. But now what is the evidence brought to uphold this assertion? We have looked for it with some interest; and at first expected indeed, (from the confident tone of the critic,) that our own former impression was about to be justified again by some proof, better than any we had been able to find for it when writing our later sketch. But we are constrained to say, that we have been altogether disappointed. Not a word is quoted from any authority, which is of any real force, to show that the 80th question "was contained in the original draft as written by Ursinus," or that the third edition restored here simply what had been omitted in the first and second. The only show of evidence for any such supposition, (beyond our own mistaken statement in 1847.) is found in a single word of the notice to the Christian Reader appended, as Niemeyer says, to both the second and third editions: "*Was im ersten truck übersehen wird, als fürnehmlich folio 55, ist jetzunder auss befehl Churfürstlicher Gnaden addiert worden.*"¹ The proof is made to lie in the word "*übersehen*," which Dr. Proudfit chooses to translate in the sense of "*omitted*." This implies, that it belonged to the first draft. "Can anything be said to be *omitted* in the printing," asks our censor triumphantly, "which was not *contained* in the manuscript copy? This very inscription substantiates, beyond a doubt, the statement of Dr. N. (1847), that in the third edition it was *restored* to the form in which it was originally composed. What shall we say then of Dr. N's. charge, in contradiction to all history, &c.—? We have no disposition to find a

¹ What was *overlooked* in the first edition, as especially fol. 55, has now been added by order of his Electoral Grace, 1563.

name for it." All this proof, however, is mere smoke. The first sense of the word "übersehen," as Dr. P. himself very well knows, is "overlooked." To overlook *may* signify to omit; an oversight is an omission; but no such term would be used to express a deliberate suppression, like that which is imagined in the case now before us. Had the addition thus accounted for been in truth part of the text as it first stood, the fact would have been stated in plain terms. Besides, the note was appended to the second edition as well as to the third; which however gave this question differently. The second then, according to this view, pretended to make good the *overseen* omission of copy in the first, but overlooked also itself the last clause, making room thus for still farther correction in the third. But again, the note refers to this novelty as one only, though the main one (*fürnehmlich folio 55,*) among several alterations found in this third edition; for as Van Alpen informs us, "the first edition was in many things different from those that followed." These other differences seem not indeed to have touched the substance of the text, but to have been confined to the form in which it was printed, the division into sabbaths, and the citations of scriptural proof. But the word "übersehen" extends to them all; and if Dr. Proudfit's exegesis is good, it must follow that the whole of these later emendations belonged in truth to the original copy as drawn up by Ursinus, and had been omitted by oversight when it was first printed—a tough hypothesis, which even the Brunswick Professor himself, we presume, will hardly care to swallow. Altogether it is clear, that "übersehen" here is *not* to be forced into the meaning of "omitted;" but that it is to be taken in its proper secondary sense of "missed" or as we say, "*wanting*;" and simply informs the reader, that the additions, or new things, found in the 2nd and 3rd editions as compared with the first were brought in to complete the Catechism by order of his Grace the Elector, who was the head at once of both Church and State, so far as the Palatinate was then concerned. This implies, that the want of the 80th question in the first edition, as well as the other matters now corrected, might be considered a defect or oversight, a sort of chasm in the text that needed to be filled in order that it might be properly complete; but it implies nothing beyond this, and instead of substantiating the point for which it is urged by Dr. Proudfit, goes very decidedly, we think, to substantiate precisely the contrary.

Dr. Proudfit's conjectural construction, then, to explain the "gradual insertion of the 80th question," falls to the ground with the airy bottom on which it is made to rest. It is at best

not very honorable to Frederick and his theologians. Their zeal for truth gave birth in the first place to this question just as it now stands; but when ready, it was held most politic to keep it back, fear prevailing over faith in the Elector's mind. Gradually, however, the pious prince mustered courage to bring it out; first, all but the tail; and then the whole figure, tail and all; cunningly accounting for its tardy appearance, at the same time, by the transparent lie that it had been "overlooked" in the first edition, left out by accident rather than design. A pretty exemplification truly of Frederick's piety and good sense. Happily for his memory, however, the apology regards a case which is as purely hypothetical as itself. The entire "*fact*," of which it pretends to be the historical construction, resolves itself, as we have said before, into sheer smoke.

Still, the blunder itself is one towards which we at least are bound to exercise some indulgence; for it is one, into which our own book of 1847 somehow fell, as we have already seen; and our "precarious" example in the case, we are much inclined to suspect, has gone farther than any other appearance of authority to throw our brother of New Brunswick out of the right track. We certainly had some ground before us in 1847, which seemed at the time to justify the shape into which our statement was thrown in writing the "*History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism*," but what it was exactly, we are now wholly at a loss to say; perhaps some expression in Van Alpen, whose work we have not had latterly within reach; most probably however, in any case, just some such misconstrued phrase or word, as we have now had under consideration from the note preserved by Niemeyer. At all events, when we came to speak of the point again in 1851, we found it impossible to verify what we said before of the original manuscript text. On the contrary, our authorities were plainly against it. Witnesses of the most respectable order, not before at hand, convinced us that our former statement was without proper foundation; a conclusion, which we saw to be required also by the inward evidence of the whole case. So we quietly receded from our earlier representation, making our statement in 1851 conformable to what we then believed, and now believe, to be the simple truth of history. The statement is given purposely in the most general terms. It does not say, that the 80th question was wanting altogether in the first edition; for the authorities are ambiguous as to that point also, (Niemeyer has it, following Van Alpen, "*vel prorsus omisa vel mutilata*"); and it decides not how or whence the question came, when finally introduced into the text. The state-

ment looks only to the tail of the thing. That, at any rate, belonged neither to the first nor second edition. The harsh anathema formed no part of the original work, "as published under the hand of Ursinus himself;" even had it been in the manuscript draft, this would remain true; it was not *published* under his hand; his judgment, in that case, must be regarded as having gone against its publication. So much latitude our statement was purposely framed to include. But the latitude need not have been put so wide. The supposition of any such keeping back of the 80th question, and more especially the anathema which forms the tail of it, is purely gratuitous, and rests so far as we are able to see on no proof whatever.

But why was there no retraction then in 1851 of what had been said four years before in 1817, no explanation of the discrepancy between the earlier statement and the last? Dr. P. affects to find this very suspicious. But we beg leave to say, that it would have savored of pedantry, to go out of our way, in such an article as our Introduction to Williard's Ursinus, to clear up a circumstantial point of this sort, to show how we had been led to take a different view of the circumstance in question at different times. The object of our last article required no such digression; it was enough to state in general terms the historical fact, as it appeared to us at the time. What historian does not find occasion, in successive editions even of the same work, (if he be not himself a scientific automaton,) to correct himself in many more serious respects? But what historian is bound, in every instance of doing so, to parade an officious explanation of the acknowledged discrepancy? The case calls for no such anxious and tedious pedantry.

We have said, that the circumstance thus brought into small dispute is of no conclusive account, at any rate, for the reviewer's main object. Had the 80th question been prepared in full before the issue of the first edition of the Catechism, (whether from the pen of Ursinus or from that of Olevianus,) it would be still certain that it was deliberately stricken out, so far as it failed to appear in the *original publication*, and that the concluding anathema at least, "so foreign from the reigning spirit of Melancthon and Ursinus," formed no part of this publication, but was "wanting in the first two editions" altogether. The case, however, is made stronger, when we know that the later addition was no such originally rejected article or clause; and under this view it is that we now boldly appeal to it as abundantly bearing us out in all that we have said. It is a simple matter of historical fact, that the last clause of the 80th question formed

no part of the Catechism as first published ; that it was wanting in the second edition as well as the first ; and that it “ was afterwards foisted in only by the authority of the Elector Frederick, in the way of angry retort and counterblast,” over against certain corresponding fulminations of the Council of Trent.

We have lately furnished a series of historical authorities and quotations in proof of this general fact, in reply to the challenge of some unknown minister of the Reformed Dutch Church, through the columns of the Christian Intelligencer. It is not necessary to repeat them in this place. Their weight is not impaired in the least by anything in Dr. Proudhit’s article. Rather we may say, he himself grants in truth the whole fact, which he makes a show of calling in question ; only trying to break the force of it, as we have seen, by foisting in (*pax verbo*) a perfectly untenable hypothesis for its explanation. The case is one, indeed, which allows of no dispute, and in reference to which we never dreamed of being called upon to make any defence. All writers on the Catechism agree, that the last clause of the 80th question did not belong to it as originally published, but was added to the third edition “ *aus Churfürstlicher Gnaden.*”

But granting this, as he has to do, our Brunswick critic still labors to make out his charge of historical falsification, by raising small issues in his own way, for which there is no real ground in anything we have actually said, just for the purpose, as it might seem, of diverting attention from the only question that is really in debate. Thus the word “ foist,” he tells us, must mean “ to insert by *forgery*,” because it is so defined by Dr. Johnston ;¹ as if every man of common education did not know, that the reigning *usus loquendi* of this country at least allows it a much wider signification. We never thought of *forgery*, in applying it to the Elector Frederick. Webster defines it, “ to insert surreptitiously, wrongfully, or without warrant.” This the good old Elector did. When the Catechism was first ready for publication, it was submitted to a synod of the superintendents and leading pastors of the Palatinate for examination and review ; and thus approved, it came out under the sanction

¹ Hereupon the Professor grows tragic, with solemn mien, and deep sepulchral tone, delivering himself as follows : “ Have then the Reformed Churches been teaching, preaching and expounding for nearly three centuries, a *forgery*, under the belief that it was a truth of God ? Such is the heavy charge brought against them by Dr. Nevin. Blessed be God, there is no truth in it ”—A very *affecting* stroke of rhetoric certainly.

of proper ecclesiastical authority, as well as by order of the civil power. It was the work, not simply of Ursinus nor of Frederick, but of the Church. But the addition now before us was not in that first text. It was introduced afterwards, without any action of the church, by the sole authority of the temporal prince. That he had full political right to do this, under the Erastian order of the Palatinate, we are perfectly well aware. But had he any true church right to exercise such power? We believe not. It is not for any secular prince, to make articles of faith for the church within his realm, however pious may be his intentions. Frederick then acted without proper religious warrant, when he undertook to mend the Catechism from his own will. The liberty may have been sanctioned, by the subsequent acquiescence of the church. But still in itself it was arbitrary, temerarious, and wrong; and this is just what we meant to imply, when we applied to his conduct the disparaging word now under consideration. The malediction of the 80th question *was* "foisted" into the Catechism, after its first formal publication, by the sole authority of the Elector Frederick.

But now, according to Dr. Proudfit, this can bear but three interpretations, namely, "that the clause in question was inserted after the death of Ursinus, without his knowledge, or against his consent and convictions." We say, it calls not necessarily for any of these suppositions. Certainly Ursinus, who outlived Frederick, knew of this addition made to the Catechism before it was a year old, acquiesced in it with the rest of the church, and considered it doctrinally correct. But it does not follow from this, that it was not brought in without warrant by the Elector, or that the judgment of Ursinus went in favor of the supposed improvement. He might consider the clause theologically sound, and yet not wish to see it in the Catechism. Or, even if we suppose him fully reconciled to the thing, when it took place, the general nature of the fact, as we have stated it, remains the same. It is still certain, at all events, that the clause was not from the will of Ursinus, as this appears in the first publication of the Catechism; and also, that it was added afterwards, however publicly, on the sole responsibility of the Elector.

The following passage, quoted before on the point here in consideration as a note to our article in its Review form, (not seen probably, or at least not heeded, by our present critic,) it may be worth while here to quote again:

"Frederick by no means followed passively and blindly the counsel of his theologians; but the Reformed doctrine, and along
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with it the most determined dislike towards the Roman worship, and towards all that was still retained from it in the Lutheran church, were for him a matter of strong inward and personal religious conviction, which he well knew himself how to uphold and defend from his own diligent and careful study of the Scriptures. From these, particularly from the *Old Testament*, he deduced his duty to tolerate no idolatry in his land, though it should be in never so mild and plausible a form. Hence in the *second* and *third* editions of the Heidelberg Catechism, the 80th question, by his positive order alone, and *against* the counsils and will of its authors, was made to receive the addition, then highly offensive and dangerous, 'So that the mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry;' and he obstinately refused afterwards to give up the clause, in spite of all intimidations from the emperor and the empire set before him for the purpose."—*Goebel, Churches of the Rhine, p. 365.*

This writer, it will be seen, does not hesitate to say that the addition to the 80th question was brought in *against* the counsils and will positively of Ursinus and Olevianus. Our language has been much more reserved and guarded. We have said merely that it was wanting in the Catechism as they first gave it to the world, and that it was foisted in afterwards by another will.

So says *Seisen* also, in his late *Denkschrift* (p. 204.) devoted specially to the History of the Reformation in Heidelberg. *Vierordt*, in his History of the Reformation in Baden, (p. 466.) has the same testimony. So the article on the Heidelberg Catechism in the Encyclopedia of *Ersch and Gruber*; so *Niemeyer*, as we have just seen (p. 57, 58); so *Böckel* (p. 398); and so *Henry Altling*, in his Hist. Eccl. Pal. (c. 44), who says the addition was made "ex speciali Electoris mandato."

Dr. Proudfit takes pains, in his characteristic style, to show that Melancthon and Ursinus had a bad opinion of the mass, as well as of Romanism generally, and that it is *therefore* false to say that the anathema of the Catechism was "foreign from their spirit." This is small criticism, and when all is done a mere quibble. We know very well, that all the Reformers

¹ *Ebrard*, in his work on the Lord's Supper (Vol. II. p. 609), also takes occasion to tell his readers, that "the last clause of the celebrated 80th question is *not original*, but was added first in the *third* edition, *most arbitrarily* (höchst eigenhändig), by the Elector." language quite as strong, we think, as the "*foisted in*" of our own article.

were enemies to the church of Rome and denounced the Roman mass. But what then? Will it follow, that all of them were alike prepared and disposed to insert this sweeping clause of the 80th question, in a standing church symbol? Or supposing even they were so, through stress of controversial zeal, might not this itself be still, for some of them at least, a thing foreign from their own reigning spirit? Luther could be violent enough against the mass, when it suited; but for all this, we know very well that *his* spirit here was not the same with that of Zuingli; as altogether the *animus* of Lutheranism, we may say, was materially different from that of the Reformed confession. So Melancthon may say very hard things of Romanism; but it is gross wrong to argue from this, that he was not any more mild and irenic in his spirit than Luther and the other Reformers generally. We know that he was. His character is, in this respect, well settled in history, and not to be overthrown by any special pleading or quibbling, in Dr. Proudfit's peculiar vein. It is notorious too, that Ursinus, with all his constitutional earnestness, partook largely of the same quiet and pacific spirit. Dr. P. indeed allows himself to question his title to the praise we have bestowed upon him on this score; but with no good reason that we can see, in the face of our own remark, that "it is characteristic of such a soft and quiet nature to be at the same time ardent, and excitable on occasions even to passion." Then again, the reigning spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism is not a point that can be said to be now open for contradiction or debate. No one questions its decidedly Protestant character, its general opposition to the church of Rome, its Reformed or Calvinistic complexion as distinguished from high Lutheranism. But with all this, its predominant character is truly like that of Melancthon himself, full of moderation and peace, rich in gentleness and love throughout. Altogether then, we had a perfect right to characterise the harsh anathema attached to the 80th question, as "foreign from the spirit of Melancthon and Ursinus, and from the *reigning* tone also of the Heidelberg Catechism." It is not in fair keeping with the proper ecclesiastical genius of these great men; and it forms a marked exception to the method and manner of the Catechism, to its general bearing, as it comes before us at all other points.

Another specimen of our critic's special pleading, equally sophistical and unfair, is presented to us in the way he deals with certain leading features attributed by our article to the Heidelberg Catechism, particularly its *mystical* element and its sympathy with the old *catholic* life of the church. His remarks on

“mysticism,” which he takes as of one sense simply with “mystery,” and as the exclusion of intelligibility, are sufficiently illogical, not to say ridiculously absurd. And it is if possible still more absurd, to deny what we have said of the “catholic” spirit of the Catechism, by just assuming at once that this must mean sympathy with the distinguishing features of Romanism at the time of the Reformation, and then going on gravely to show that the formulary is plainly antagonistic to this system, on all proper Protestant points. As if any one in his senses could ever think otherwise of a *Reformed* symbol! This however is the very “art and mystery,” on which the reviewer mainly relies, for giving effect to his whole attack. He sees in all a covert league with Romanism, a design even to Romanize the Reformed church, by making it appear that the Heidelberg Catechism is after all more Roman than Protestant. To such end looks and runs the word “catholic;” and this again is the key to the changes rung on that other word ‘mystical.’ It is all to seduce Protestants into the arms of the “Great Harlot.” But Dr. Proudfit can see through the mill-stone of this awful “gun-powder plot,” and he will set the world right. If it be too late to save the German Reformed church from being swallowed up alive by the horrible snare (without knowing it,) he will see to it at least that the Reformed Dutch church, and all other branches of the Reformed church, be properly warned and kept out of harm’s way. So we have the cry, *Romanism! Romanism!* lustily shouted for effect. That is always sure, in such a case, to carry the popular ear. For the popular mind too, it is able to cover a multitude of sins, offences we mean against logic as well as charity and truth. “But is it really so?” asks the fanatical jealousy thus roused, rubbing its owlish eyes, and peering into the dark inane.—“Certainly,” our alarmist replies, “you may see it in this picture of the Catechism and Ursinus, as plain as the nose on your own face.”—“Where? Do in pity tell.”—“Why *there*, in what is said of the catholic and mystical spirit of the work. Do not these terms point straight towards Rome? Is she not *MYSTERY*, by apocalyptic seal? And is not she also the ‘*Catholic*’ church? But the Catechism has always been praised for its simplicity and perspicuity. It is notoriously at war moreover with Romanism; else why should it have been so fiercely assaulted by the Papists, when it first appeared? Does Rome not know her own friends? *Ergo*, this picture of the Heidelberg Catechism, both as given in 1847 and now as we have it here again in 1851, we are bound to consider insidious and false.”—So runs the argument; lame enough in

all conscience; made up of *ad captandum* clap-trap mainly; but for this very reason also, we may add, but too sure of its own currency with the popular prejudice to which it makes its appeal.

All this however does not disturb in the least the truth of our picture, taken in its own fair and proper sense. The Catechism remains still truly *Melancthonian* in its constitution; and carries in it accordingly both a catholic spirit and a rich mystical vein, beyond all that is to be found of this sort in any other symbolical book of the Reformed confession.

It breathes, we say, a *catholic* spirit. This does not mean, that it is either Roman or Lutheran in its theological mind; we know that it is neither; we speak of it always as a Reformed symbol, and judge it from the standpoint and standard of its own class. The Reformed confession includes various types of thought, receding more or less from Lutheranism and Catholicism in the Roman form. Modern Puritanism forms the extreme left of this prismatic spectrum, the greatest possible refraction, where the light of Christianity shades off finally, through the faint violet of Baptist Independentcy, into clear Unitarian negation. The Heidelberg Catechism, on the other hand, represents just the other side of the Reformed scheme, that namely by which it lies next to the original Lutheran confession, and so in felt organic connection also with the past life of the church in its universal character. This grew in some measure necessarily out of the circumstances of its formation; the fact was felt and acknowledged, when the symbol first made its appearance; and the evidence of it is still open to all, in the work itself. It has found more favor even in the Lutheran church, than any other symbol belonging to the Reformed interest; and for this latter interest itself, as we all know, it was exalted at once to a sort of ecumenical authority; a fact, of itself sufficient to attest its catholic character. This character here, however, implies more than mere liberality. Unitarianism is liberal; all indifferentism, all negative rationalism, is liberal in its own way; carries in itself just because it is negative, no positive contents for faith and life. Catholicity, on the contrary, supposes faith, truth, concrete reality, a given substance in the form of religion, a divine historical fact to be submitted to by all men, and found to be commensurate with the universal wants of the world. Such is the old force of the term, as employed to express a characteristic attribute of the church from the beginning. So understood, it carries in it necessarily the idea of sympathy and correspondence with the old life of Christianity, as this has formed the historical identity of the church through all ages, before the

Reformation as well as since; for surely this life must have comprehended in it the true and proper substance of Christianity all along, (however overlaid with corruptions and errors,) from which to be disunited, must be held to be one and the same thing with ecclesiastical death. The catholicity of the Heidelberg Catechism then involves certainly, as it ought to do, "sympathy with the religious life of the old Catholic Church." In this trait, it goes beyond all other Reformed symbols; though it is in contrast with the later forms of Puritanism mainly, that its significance comes fully into view. The Reformed faith generally in the beginning, though not just of one type here, owned the necessity of such fellowship in spirit with the historical substance of Catholicism as it had come down from other ages; and for this very reason fell in easily with the catholic soul and voice of the Heidelberg Catechism. But no such mind belongs to modern Puritanism. This has almost no sympathy whatever with the old church faith. All really churchly and catholic ideas, are for it a perfect abomination. It disowns the sacraments in their ancient sense, and scouts the obligation of the creed. In contradistinction to this system, that now affects to be not only the whole sense of the Reformed confession, (which notoriously it is not,) but the whole sense also of whole Protestantism, (which is a still greater falsehood,) we have characterised the Catechism as being in its reigning spirit historical and catholic. It is not Puritan. Modern Puritanism could not use it with hearty freedom and good-will; and those who try to bend it to this standard, are always guilty of doing it gross violence and wrong. Its veneration for the creed, its doctrine of the holy sacraments, at once place it in a different order of religious faith. It does not go on the assumption, that the truths of Christianity may be put together in any and every way to suit the private judgment of modern times;¹ but holds the form and order of the creed to be the necessary type, and indispensable condition,

¹ "Protestantism takes the doctrines of the Bible into its creed, in just such an order as it thinks *to be natural*. But the other system holds itself bound to the order of the Apostles' Creed." Thus speaks the Puritan Recorder, in its caricature not long since of our second article on Early Christianity; not aware seemingly of the abyss of rationalism, which such a confession involves. For "Protestantism" however in this case, we should read "Puritanism." This last does indeed pretend to reconstruct Christianity from the bottom, putting its parts together as to itself seems natural; but original Protestantism was guilty of no such presumption. It felt itself bound to follow the Apostles' Creed, and the decisions of the first general councils.

of all sound doctrine; a true *regula fidei*, the force of which must extend with real plastic power to every other article of evangelical belief to make it really orthodox and right. "No Protestant doctrine can ever be held in a safe form, which is not so held as to be in truth a living branch from the trunk of this primitive symbol, in the consciousness of faith."*

The Catechism, we say again, makes room largely for the *mystical* interest in religion, as well as for that which is merely logical and intellectual. We doubt whether Dr. Proudfit has the idea at all which this term is employed to express, by such writers for instance as Neander or Ullmann, when applied to the subject of the religious life under the opposition now stated; for it is not easy to understand otherwise, how it could be so grossly caricatured as we find it to be in his hands. The Catechism is not made up of riddles certainly, transcendentalisms or far fetched Delphic oracles. Its "*mystik*" is not mystification, mysticism in the bad sense. But what then? We may say the same thing, with just as much force, of the Bible. Is there then no mystical element here? Are its propositions of so much force only, in general, as may be felt through the medium of the logical understanding? The Old Testament is throughout mystical, the letter symbolizing the spirit, the face of Moses covered

* Dr. Proudfit puts on a show of surprise over the following declaration, found in one of our late articles: "However much of rubbish the Reformation found occasion to remove, it was still compelled to do homage to the main body of the Roman theology as orthodox and right; and to this day Protestantism has no valid mission in the world, any farther than it is willing to build on this old foundation." If he can really think that the truth of this statement is set aside by a couple of exclamation points, we have only to say that we pity his theological and historical knowledge. Let any one take the trouble merely to read the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, or even the Catechism only of the Council of Trent, and if he have a spark of ingenuous feeling in him, he will be heartily ashamed of the ignorance and prejudice that too commonly reign among Protestants with regard to this point. The great body of our divinity, God be praised, is not of yesterday, but has come down to us as a rich legacy from former times, though the Roman Catholic church. The same may be said of the ethical wealth, which is embodied in our modern civilization. How much of all, pray, do we owe to the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Paulicians? Take away the old Catholic trunk, and there can be no worth nor life in any Protestant doctrine. The mission of Protestantism most certainly, if it be from heaven and not as its enemies tell us from hell, is to build on the foundation already laid, and not to lay a new one for its own use. The article of justification by faith, for instance, is sound and good, if it be rooted in a heartfelt submission to the objective mysteries of the Apostles' Creed; whereas without this, as among our more unsacramental sects generally, it must be regarded as only a pestiferous delusion.

with a veil "which is done away in Christ." Christ's parables are mystical, resting on real and not simply notional analogies between the world of nature and the world of grace, which neither thought nor language can fully fathom, which can be *felt* only in the profoundest depths of the soul. The same may be said of his miracles. To a truly contemplative faith, they mean immeasurably more than they at once outwardly express. His teaching partook largely of the same character. "The words that I speak unto you," he said himself, "they are spirit and they are life." They are pregnant with a sense which goes far beyond either grammar or logic; missing which altogether, having no organ for it indeed, our rational exegesis too often turns them into mere "flesh that profiteth nothing." The sacred writers of the New Testament generally show more or less of the same quality; but most of all he who leaned on Jesus' bosom, and whom the ancients compare with the eagle soaring towards the sun. Without some sense for the mystical, no interpreter can understand or expound St. John. Who has not felt the force and beauty of the celebrated picture applied to him by Claudius: "Twilight and night; and through them the quick gleaming lightning. A soft evening cloud, and behind it the big full moon bodily!" Does this imply unintelligibility, or the opposite of clear simplicity? According to Dr. Proudfit's scheme of thinking, it does; but listen to Olshausen, to say the least quite as competent a judge: "The thoughts of John have the greatest simplicity, and along with this a metaphysical spirituality, they carry in them logical sharpness, without having proceeded from the standpoint of mere reflection. Born from the depth of intuition, they are still far from the cloudiness and confusion of mysticism; expressed in the plainest language, they unite in themselves the depth of genuine *mystik*; with the clearness and precision of genuine *scholastik*. Where indeed the intuitive powers are wanting, or lie still undeveloped, the depth of John however clear must appear to be darkness; but for such standpoint also the Gospel of John was not written."¹ Now we

¹ *Bib. Comm.* Vol. II. p. 24.—Take the following passage also to the same point from Schaff's *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 344: "With Paul, John possesses in common depth of knowledge. They are the two apostles, who have left for us the fullest and most developed schemes of doctrine. But their knowledge is of different sort. Paul, trained in the school learning of the Pharisees, is an uncommonly sharp thinker and skilful dialectician, exhibiting the Christian doctrines for intellectual comprehension, proceeding from ground to consequence, from cause to effect, from the general to the particular, from propositions to conclusions, with

do not pretend to make the Heidelberg Catechism of one character here, with this sacred composition ; we only make use of the example, to show the absurdity of the criticism that has been so pompously paraded against the whole idea of a mystical element in the Catechism, as well as to illustrate in what general sense we and others have attributed to it such a quality, and are disposed to vindicate for it the same honorable distinction still.

Let it be kept in mind, that we speak of it relatively to its own class. It is a *Reformed* symbol and must be judged of from the bosom of this confession. What we have said before of the genius of the Reformed confession, as being naturally unfavorable to the mystical element and disposed to move rather in the line of mere logical reflection, is too well established as a fact to be unsettled at all by the flimsy dialectics brought to bear upon it by Dr. Proudfit. It is acknowledged by all respectable writers on comparative symbolism. Not to speak of Zuingli, we find in Calvin here a spiritual nature very different from that of Luther. He is more rigorously rational and dialectic. This does not of itself imply reproach ; for if the Bible abounds in one of the elements now contrasted, it abounds in the other likewise. If John is mystical, Paul is no less logical, with the same title to inspiration. There is a sound rationalism in religion, as well as a sound mysticism ; though both terms, nakedly taken, carry in our language commonly a bad sense. This very fact, however, shows how possible it is for the right in either case to run into wrong ; and we are reminded by it, at the same time, that each tendency is exposed naturally to its own abuse, and not to that of the other. Thus it is, that the logical interest in religion, as we find it represented by the Reformed confession since the days of Zuingli and Calvin, though in itself a very good and necessary side of our common Christianity, carries in itself always notwithstanding a dangerous liability to become rationalistic. Not as if danger lay only on this side, and all was security on the other. But the danger of one side is not just that of the

true logical evidence and precision—a representative thus of genuine scholasticism (*Scholastik*) in the best sense of the word. The knowledge of John is intuition and contemplation. He sees his object with the soul (*Gemüth*), he takes in all as a single picture, and represents thus the deepest truths without proof, as an eye-witness, in their immediate originality. His knowledge of divine things is the deep reaching gaze of love, which always directs itself to the centre, and from this outwards embraces all points of the periphery at one glance. He is the representative of all genuine mysticism (*Mystik*)."

other. The constitutional leaning of the Reformed church is, not towards bad mysticism, but towards bad rationalism. Now what we have said in relation to the Heidelberg Catechism is simply this, that it goes beyond all other symbols of its own confession in a proper combination of the mystical element with the merely rational, in the business of religious instruction. This by no means denies to it the common quality of the Reformed theology, logical clearness and precision; but on the contrary assumes this rather to be the reigning character of the work. "The Heidelberg Catechism," we expressly say, "has regard throughout to the lawful claims of the understanding; its author was thoroughly versed in all the dialectic subtleties of the age, and an uncommonly fine logic in truth distinguishes its whole composition. But *along with this* runs, at the same time, a continual appeal to the interior sense of the soul, a sort of solemn under tone, sounding from the depths of the invisible world, which only an unction from the Holy One can enable any fully to hear and understand. The words are *often* felt, in this way, to mean much more than they logically express. The Catechism is no cold workmanship merely of the rationalizing intellect. It is full of feeling and faith."

It is not easy, of course, to prove or exemplify for the merely logical understanding the presence of a quality, which addresses itself wholly to a different organ. To be apprehended at all, it must be felt. We may appeal again, however, to the sympathy in which the Catechism stands with the theory of religion embodied in the Apostles' Creed, and its palpable disagreement here with the spirit and genius of modern Puritanism. In the view of the creed, all religion rests in the acknowledgment of the mystery of the incarnation and its necessary consequences, historically considered, in the felt living sense of these supernatural realities, submitted to as actually at hand in the world by faith. The system includes the idea of the church, as the medium of salvation, and of divine sacraments carrying in them objective force and power. But this churchly and sacramental side of religion, involves of itself the force of what we now speak of as the mystical interest in proper conjunction with the merely intellectual or rational. Puritanism, in its modern shape, may be said to lack it altogether. It deals with religion as a matter of purely individual opinion and private experience. It turns it objectively into a mere abstraction. With the Heidelberg Catechism, on the contrary, it is regarded as a living concrete power. The catechumen is set down in the bosom as it were of the new creation, as a divine supernatural fact, and is

taught to give his responses accordingly, not simply from the standpoint of outward reflection, (as in the case for instance of the excellent Westminster Catechism,) but from the condition of faith; the things being treated as of actual validity for him, as a member of the church by baptism, in virtue of what the church is for all the purposes of salvation by the constitution of its own glorious Head. Some have made this very feature an objection to the Catechism. But it agrees with all ecclesiastical antiquity, and falls in too with the general tone and style of the New Testament.

Look only at the sacramental doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism, the light especially in which it presents the mystery of the Saviour's presence in the holy eucharist. Dr. Proudfit, for some reason, avoids this point, only transiently touching on what he takes to be our disposition to lay too much stress on the mystical view of this sacrament. We have been a little surprised indeed, that in undertaking to vindicate the *innocence* of the Catechism against our representations, he should have taken no notice of what we have said of its differing from the Lutheran doctrine of the sacramental presence, on the question of mode only, and not at all on the question of fact. Some have pretended heretofore to deny this, and to make us out guilty of a serious error for asserting in favor of the old Reformed faith anything better than the rationalistic conception so common in modern times. We take it to be of some account, so far as this point is concerned, that Dr. Proudfit does not venture to make any open capital of the matter, however well suited it might seem at first view for his general purpose. This amounts in the circumstances to a sort of quiet acknowledgment, that here at least we have the advantage of the cause he represents; that the participation of Christ's glorified body in the sacrament, through the miraculous intervention of the Spirit, was held by the Reformed church generally in the sixteenth century; and that it is plainly taught, over and over again, in the Heidelberg Catechism. Dr. Proudfit knows too, that it is taught in the Confession of the Reformed Dutch church, in terms that shut out every sort of ambiguity. Does the Dutch church, at the present time, still hold fast to this part of her proper hereditary faith? Does our critic, Dr. Proudfit himself, regard it as anything more than a figure of rhetoric? We presume not to answer either of these questions. One thing is certain however; namely, that the sacramental doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism is not in conformity with the present reigning *Puritan* standard, and that it is distinguished from this precisely by its mystical element, by

its acknowledgment of a real mystery of grace in the holy sacrament, which was universally owned by the ancient church, but which Puritanism now sees fit to reject.¹ This distinction, however, implies a great deal more than itself nakedly considered. It may suit a certain style of theology, to conceive of the sacramental doctrine of the old Reformed faith as a sort of outward accident only, in no organic connection with its general system, and capable of being dissevered from it with gain rather than loss. But in its own nature, as we may easily enough see, the case is of a very different character. The doctrine in question must of necessity condition materially the whole system or scheme to which it belongs; and nothing therefore can be more precarious, than to think of measuring and trying this by another system, that is not conditioned in its constitution by any such doctrine whatever. It is in vain to affect little or no regard for the point here brought into view, as though it were after all a small matter that the old idea of sacramental grace has been so widely lost in the religious thinking of the present time. Unless we take the ground that the universal ancient church was out of its senses on this subject, and that original Protestantism labored also with regard to it under the most perfect delusion, we must see and feel that the modern error is something more than a single dead *fly* merely, causing the ointment of the apothecary to stink. It reaches far into the very life of faith and piety; and it is hard to say which class of persons most deserves indignant

¹ Dr. Proudfit dislikes our use of the word "mystery." It is painful, he says, to hear it brought forward so much, in connection with the church and the sacraments. It is a favorite term with Romanists, the proper badge indeed of the Papacy; "for which very reason," if we take his word for it, "the Reformers eschewed both the word and the thing." Could we well have however, we ask in return, a more palpable apology for laying stress on the word, at the present time, than just such a barefaced attempt in the bosom, not of New England Congregationalism, but of the Reformed Dutch church, to kill and root out from Protestantism the whole glorious idea which the word represents? It is not true, that the Reformers eschewed either the word or the thing. Will it be pretended, that Luther made no account of the *mystery* of the holy eucharist, that he looked upon it as a mere "supper," in the low rationalistic sense insinuated (note p. 117) by Dr. Proudfit! And is it not just this unmystical view that Calvin stigmatizes as profane! The sacraments have always been mysteries for the faith of the church, and must remain so as long as there is any true faith in the world. The church itself is a mystery. All the articles of the creed are mysteries; not simply in the sense of unfathomable doctrines, but in the sense of gloriously awful supernatural realities, historically present for faith in the bosom of the world under its natural form. Of all this, Puritanism, we are sorry to say, seems now to have almost no sense whatever.

reprehension and rebuke ; those who wantonly discard the mystery of the sacrament altogether, as it was once universally received, or those who condescendingly profess to make still some account of it, and yet the next moment turn round and shake hands with the first openly unbelieving class, as being after all of one mind with it mainly in its virulent opposition to every churchly idea, and as having no power apparently to see any danger whatever in the contrary direction. Only think of the distinction between Pedobaptists and Anti-pedobaptists, the whole significance of which turns on the old idea of sacramental grace, sinking in the estimation of the first into the character of a mere secondary circumstance ; or of American Lutheranism betaking itself for support and backing, in its unsacramental tendencies, to a tribunal which holds the mystery of the holy catholic church for a figment, and charges the Apostles' creed with wholesale heresy !

But our critic finds another string to play his *ad captandum* strain upon, for the ear of popular prejudice particularly in his own church. We have made it a merit of the Heidelberg formula, that it takes care "to avoid the thorny, dialectic subtleties of Calvinism." This statement he affects to find "truly astonishing." Was it not called by way of eminence the Calvinistic Catechism ; and so attacked by its enemies ; and so received by all branches of the Reformed church ? "Why was its author banished from Breslau as a Calvinist ?" Nay is it not called by Dr. N himself a *Calvinistic* symbol ? This and much more we have to like declamatory purpose ; on the strength of which then the ground is boldly taken, that there is no truth in our assertion, that the hard knotty points in question are all brought out with marked prominence in the Catechism, and that it is the very height of temerity to represent it as avoiding them in any way whatever.

Now of all this we must be allowed to say in plain terms, that it is either very ignorant or else very dishonest. In the first place, does Dr. Proudfit really need to be informed, like the merest tyro in church history, that the term *Calvinistic*, as used in the sixteenth century, in opposition to the term "Lutheran," and as of one sense frequently with "Reformed," is not just of the same signification with this term as now popularly understood in its relation to Arminianism ? In our time, it carries in it at once a reference to the doctrine of the divine decrees, and is taken for the most part in no other sense ; whereas, in the age of the Reformation, its reference was most immediately to the doctrine of the holy sacraments. As distinguished from Luth-

eran, it had regard mainly to the proper Reformed view of the Lord's supper, as classically explained and defended by the great Genevan Reformer in his Institutes and other writings. In this sense only Melancthon, in the latter part of his life, was looked upon as a sort of *Calvinist*. In this sense it was notoriously, that Ursinus came under the reproach of *Calvinism*, in his native city Bresslau. In this sense the Palatinate became *Calvinistic* or Reformed in the year 1562; and in this sense mainly the Heidelberg Catechism was afterwards known and spoken of as a *Calvinistic* symbol.¹ It was not Lutheran. It went with Calvin, in opposition to Luther, on the mode of the eucharistic mystery.

In the next place, we ask again, does Dr. Proudfit really need to be informed, that the confessional distinction expressed by the title "*Reformed*," as opposed to Lutheranism, was not originally by any means synonymous with a formally professed allegiance to Calvin's theory of the decrees, much less with a full acknowledgment of all the knotty points of this theory as it was first published in his name. "The Protestants in Holland, Bremen, Poland, Hungary, and the Palatinate," says the historian Mosheim, speaking of the Reformed church in the sixteenth century "followed indeed the French and Helvetic churches in their sentiments concerning the eucharist, in the simplicity of their worship, and in their principles of ecclesiastical polity; but *not* in their notions of predestination, which intricate doctrine they left undefined, and submitted to the free examination and private judgment of every individual. It may farther be affirmed, that before the Synod of Dort, no Reformed church had obliged its members, by any special law, or article of faith, to adhere to the doctrine of the church of Geneva relating to the primary causes of the salvation of the elect or the ruin of the reprobate."² It is admitted by Mosheim, at the same time, that the

¹ We have heard of cases, in which advantage has been taken of this very amphibology, to draw both the members and the property of German congregations into the fold of Presbyterianism. "You are *Calvinistic*; that is the very title by which you hold your corporate rights; this however is *our* title; so you belong to us, the only distinction between us being that you are German and we are English; which is at an end, of course, as soon as you pass from the use of one language to the other." Many an honest German has been puzzled out of his own ecclesiastical identity by this logic; which possibly his English neighbor also, no wiser than himself, has used upon him with perfectly good faith.

² Eccles. Hist., Cent. XVI, Sect. III, Part II, Chap. II, (Maclaine's Translation).

greatest part of the Reformed doctors, in the countries now mentioned, fell by degrees of their own accord into the Genevan system; a fact "principally owing, no doubt, to the great reputation of the academy of Geneva, which was generally frequented, in this century, by those among the Reformed who were candidates for the ministry." Along with this tendency, however, went from the beginning also an endeavor in different quarters to qualify the rigors of the original system; whilst in some branches of the church at least, it was distinctly understood and avowed that this side of Calvinism formed no part of the public faith whatever. Such particularly was the case with the German Reformed church. The *Confession of Sigismund* (Niemeyer, p. 650, 651) expressly rejects the idea of unconditional decrees. The *Repetitio Anhaltina* (Niemeyer, p. 638, 639) carefully refuses to acknowledge any other cause or principle of election than what we find in the express word of the Gospel itself; according to which the preaching of repentance and grace is universal or for all, and the number of the saved is determined only by the fact of their obedience and faith; the predestination referring mainly to Christ, and God's immutable purpose to save in him, and by him, *sine prosopolepsia*, all that fly to him for redemption and cleave to him perseveringly to the end. The *Declaration of Cassel*, issued by the General Synod of Hessa, a. 1607, professes (art. 6) to believe and teach on the high mystery of election all that is written of it in the bible; "and beyond this," it adds, "we believe and teach nothing; but refrain rather from the hard terms employed by some others, that might be an occasion to the simple either of despair or of carnal security, and hold ourselves to such terms as may serve with men the purposes of firm consolation and true godly living: And to be still more explicit, our confession here is just the same with what Mr. Luther has drawn out from God's word in his Preface to the Epistle to the Romans."¹ Universally, we may say, the relation of the German Reformed church to the Lutheran was such as to involve, almost as a matter of course, this moderate view of predestination and its kindred points. It was not here in any special sense, that the two confessions in Germany felt

¹See HEPPE's late work "*Die Einführung der Verbesserungspunkte in Hessen von 1604-1610*," (a contribution to the history of the German Reformed church from original documents.) p. 74, 78. Here we have, according to Heppe, the doctrine of Luther and Melancthon in regard to predestination, "as the same is found also in the Heidelberg Catechism;" while on the sacraments the Declaration gives us Melancthonian Calvinism.

themselves divided. Both professed to rest on the same basis of the original Augsburg Confession. It was only when it came to the mode of the mystery, which both acknowledged in the Lord's supper, that they could not agree.

This explains the general character and posture of the Heidelberg Catechism. It is primarily the leading standard symbol of the German Reformed church. It is Calvinistic; but the force of this distinction lies mainly in its doctrine of the sacraments; while on the subject of the divine decrees, it falls in rather, as far as it goes, with the Melancthonian view, avoiding however the more knotty points of the matter altogether. This does not imply certainly, that it goes for Arminianism or Pelagianism, or that it expressly contradicts the points it refuses to teach. Dr Proudfit appeals to its universal reception among the Reformed churches, to prove that it must have contained all that the Synod of Dort, for instance, or the Westminster Assembly, held to be essential here to full orthodox belief.¹ But this is absurd. Such universal reception shows just the contrary; namely, that it did not contain all that might be exacted by the more rigorous Predestinarians; since in that case, how could it have suited the more moderate class, the Melancthonian spirit in particular of the German church from which it took its rise. It suited all, just *because* it stopped short of determinations in regard to which all were not of the same mind. In this view, it is not to be measured by the full theological system even of its own authors. It was not by any means necessary, that they should put into such a formulary, intended for public and general use, all the details of their own belief, as they might see fit to bring them forward in the lecture room or pulpit. It is evident, on the contrary, that this was avoided with deliberate purpose and design. The authors of the work have taken pains to hold their own theological convictions as it were in check, in order that the text might be more general, and in this way true

¹"How must the Dutch, German, and Swiss Reformed churches be amazed to find that they have been expounding from their pulpits, and teaching to their children, for almost three centuries, a Catechism in which doctrines which they have ever deemed vital and precious forms of evangelical truth, are 'avoided' and 'not brought forward as necessary objects of orthodox belief!' How incredibly strange that the Westminster Assembly never detected this Laodicean latitudinarianism, but blindly gave it their earnest commendation."—Why not go into hysterics at once over the deplorable thought, that all Christendom has been using for many more centuries the creed and the Lord's prayer, which yet labor here under still more dismal latitudinarianism.

to the objective church life with which they were surrounded. This we know was not by any means prepared, in the Palatinate, to accept what may be called extreme Calvinism, on the subject of the decrees; and from everything of that sort, accordingly, the Heidelberg symbol was made carefully to abstain.

"The Catechism," says *Ebrard*, "is known to follow the course of the Epistle to the Romans (with omission of Rom. ix-xi). The misery of man, redemption, and thankfulness, form the three main divisions. The disposition is throughout anthropological and soteriological, not speculative. If it has been rightly observed, that the Reformed theology rests on one speculative principle, that of dependance upon God in the predestinarian sense, let us take good care not to confound theology and the church; let us bear in mind, how just this Heidelberg Catechism, with its wholly anthropologico-soteriological view of the material principle of faith, has found such vast circulation in the Reformed church as a book of instruction, and wrought with so much effect on the practical church life. The predestinarian theory was tolerated in the Reformed church, and taken up as an organic member into her spiritual life; but it is one of the essential peculiarities precisely of this church, that with genuine catholicity she has tolerated side by side different schools and modes of apprehension. One who should identify the predestinarian system with the spirit of the Reformed church, would deal with her as the Flaccian party have done with the Lutheran. Along with Calvinism in the strict sense, is found in the Reformed church the more lax Zuinglianism, (I speak not now of the sacramental doctrine, but of church life generally,) and thirdly the Palatine or German Reformed churchdom. Here breathed Melancthon's spirit. Predestination, as all know, is nowhere taught in the Heidelberg Catechism with so much as a single word; the whole view has proceeded as it were out of Melancthon's heart."¹

Seisen, in his History of the Reformation in Heidelberg, takes the same view of Melancthon's relation to the church of the Palatinate, and to the Catechism; and says of this last expressly (p. 205) that the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination enters not formally into its teaching.

Vierordt, (*Hist. of the Reformation in Baden*, p. 467), disposes of the matter in the same way, with the somewhat dry and curt remark: "The doctrine of absolute election is not express-

¹ *Dogma vom h. Abendm.* Vol. II. p. 603, 604.
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ed in the Heidelberg Catechism ; and only in later times have some tried to extract it artificially out of the 32nd question."

But a truce with authorities. The Catechism is before us, and may safely enough be allowed to speak for itself. What is the amount of our representation? Not that the general idea of election is wanting in its religious scheme ; much less that it is excluded or contradicted. Not that it refuses absolutely to serve as a basis for the theology of Dort or Westminster, if any think it necessary to carry out the Reformed doctrine in that way. Nothing at all of this sort ; but only, that it does not bring into view the more knotty points of Calvinism, that it takes care to avoid its thorny dialectic subtleties, that it stops short of certain hard positions in regard to which the Reformed church itself has not been of one mind, not urging them as " necessary objects of belief." And can there be any intelligent doubt on this subject? Dr. Proudfit does indeed make a show of triumphantly proving the contrary. But it is at best a very empty show, as any child may easily see that will take the trouble of examining his references. "The reader has but to take this work into his hand," he tells us, "and read over questions 1st, 2nd, 7th, 8th, (but if we would complete the enumeration, we must include by far the greater portion of the Catechism—we will only add therefore the 21st,) with the author's own exposition, and he will see these same 'hard, knotty points,' unfolded as rich life-germs of truth to all the uses of christian comfort and sanctification." This is so very loose and wide, as at once to convict itself of being totally without force. Strange indeed, if the Catechism should so seem with the character here in question, and the best theological eyes have failed to see it for so long a time! The questions here referred to say not a word in form of any of the hard points, now under consideration. The exposition of Ursinus goes occasionally farther than the text explained ; but this by no means authorises the idea, that the text in every such instance formally teaches what is thus brought in by the lecturer ; for what we have asserted is, that the formulary itself has not been carried out by the authors here to the full length even of their own convictions, that these were held in check rather for the purpose of making it more true to the general objective life it was formed to represent. It is not true indeed, that Ursinus does commit himself in his exposition to the hard extremes of Calvinism, in the way intimated by Dr. Proudfit. The references given in support of the assertion, prove nothing of the sort, and can hardly be said to have any relevancy whatever to the question in hand.*

* The topic of Predestination he handles in form under the 54th question,

But we look not now to this. What we have to do with is the explicit formal teaching of the Catechism itself. Were there a question as to the actual sense of any part of its text, as in the case for instance of what is said of the mystical side of the Lord's supper, all would depend on the author's own commentary. But where no part of the text is brought forward for interpretation, it is idle to fetch in any such help. The most that can be made of the author's exposition in that case, is that he considered the text a fair and fit basis for the use made of it in this way. We have not questioned the practicability of building on the Catechism a rigorous scheme of the divine decrees; nay, we have expressly said, that it could not have been endorsed by the Synod of Dort, if this body had not supposed its own theological system to be fairly involved in it so far as it went. But for all this, it would be ridiculous to pretend that all the determinations of the Synod of Dort are formally taught in the Heidelberg Catechism. And so we say, the hard points generally of metaphysical Calvinism are not there. To prove the contrary, it is not enough to get at them by derivation and roundabout construction. We must be pointed to some plain and direct teaching of the text itself. Where is the formal and explicit enunciation of these hard points to be found? In what terms are they made to challenge attention and regard? What questions bring them distinctly into view? Not the 1st, 2nd, 7th, 8th, or 21st certainly, to which we are referred by Dr. Proudfit; nor any others, we presume, on which he is likely soon to lay his discriminating finger.

To bring the case down to particulars. Where do we find the supralapsarian scheme presented in the Catechism? Where is the election of a certain number of mankind to everlasting life set forth as the root and principle of redemption, preceding in the order of nature the predestination of Him by whom it was to be accomplished? Which question is it, that limits the atonement to the range of this election, making it to have no reference to others, in spite of what is said of the Saviour's sufferings

as a sort of appendix "naturally growing out of the doctrine of the church." This of itself is enough to show, that it is nowhere to be found directly and explicitly in the Catechism itself; for no one will pretend that it lies in this question, otherwise at best than by remote theological involution, or that the question is not easily capable of being so taken as to avoid entirely the idea of absolutely unconditional decrees. On the fall of man, quest. 7, he distinctly rejects the supralapsarian view, making Adam's sin to have been the object only of God's foreknowledge, which did not involve the necessity of what actually took place.

in Quest. 37, as being of vicarious force, in body and soul, for "the sins of *all mankind*?" Where is it taught that grace is irresistible, or that the issue of it is not conditioned by the human will? What question affirms the absolute predestination of a given portion of the human race to perdition? Where is the doctrine of the decrees directly defined or asserted in any shape?

These are some of the *hard points*, which we say the Heidelberg Catechism has taken care to avoid; and Dr. Proudfit's rhodomontade to the contrary is worth just nothing at all, till he shall condescend to come to the written text of the formulary itself, and quote question and line in proof of his bold contradictions. His course, in the whole matter, is by no means honorable and fair. It is very well known, that these hard points of Calvinism have been of mere or less fluctuating authority, for the general system so called, from the beginning. In the Synod of Dort itself, the supralapsarian hypothesis could not stand.* And what a tendency there is with our Calvinistic bodies generally in these latter days, to mollify greatly, if not absolutely to throw away, much that belongs to the system in its full metaphysical glory, is on all sides sufficiently clear and well understood. We seriously question, indeed, whether even Dr. Proudfit himself is prepared deliberately to subscribe to all the "thorny dialectic subtleties" now in consideration—supralapsarianism for instance, and an atonement for a part of the human family only and not for the whole. And yet he falls upon our assertion that the Heidelberg Catechism avoids these subtleties

*Speaking of the beginning of the 17th century, (Ecc. Hist. sect II, part II, chap. II), Mosheim tells us: "There was not any public law or confession of faith that obliged the pastors of the Reformed churches, in any part of the world to conform their sentiments to the theological doctrines that were adopted and taught at Geneva. And accordingly there were many, who either rejected entirely the doctrine of that academy on these intricate points, or received it with certain restrictions and modifications. Nay, even those who were in general attached to the theological system of Geneva, were not perfectly agreed about the manner of explaining the doctrine relating to the divine decrees. The greatest part were of opinion, that God had only *permitted* the first man to fall into transgression, without positively *predetermining* his fall. But others went much farther, and presumptuously forgetting their own ignorance on the one hand and the wisdom and equity of the divine counsels on the other, maintained that God, in order to exercise and display his awful justice and his free mercy had decreed from all eternity the transgression of Adam; and so ordered the course of events, that our first parents could not possibly avoid their unhappy fall."

and knotty points, as though it were tantamount at once to saying, that it has nothing to do with the Calvinistic system in any shape; over against which false accusation, (a mere man of straw thus set up by himself,) he then proceeds to fight lustily, with notes of admiration and other such artillery, till he has to his own satisfaction fairly demolished it, proving effectually that Ursinus was no Pelagian, and that his Catechism is not guilty of "Laodicean latitudinarianism" on the doctrines of grace! As if there were no intermediate ground to be thought of now in the case, between the formal teaching of the extreme points of Calvinism, and a lukewarm indifference to the proper evangelical substance of the system! What then are we to make of the Augsburg Confession? What must we think of Melancthon, not to speak of Luther himself the great coryphaeus of the Reformation? Must the whole Lutheran theology be branded as Pelagian and Laodicean, because it refuses the hard points of Geneva? So it would seem, with *a fortiori* consequence, from Dr. Proudfit's logic; for this theology positively disowns, in the case of some of these intricate knots, what the Heidelberg Catechism at worst but passes over with modest and discreet silence.

We cherish all proper regard for the Reformed Dutch church, and have no wish to abridge in the least its right to carry out the Calvinistic scheme in its own way; but we must earnestly protest, at the same time, against every attempt to convert this liberty into a yoke for the neck of the German church, such as from the beginning it has never yet been willing to accept or bear. The two bodies are closely related in their past history, and have much of a common genius, the kindly sense of which may not soon be extinguished, we sincerely trust, on either side.¹ But with all this they are not now, and never have been of just the same theological constitution and complexion. On the high points of Calvinism, in particular, the German Reformed church has always refused to go even so far as the Belgic Confession or the Decrees of the Synod of Dort, and much less to the *ultima*

¹This ecclesiastical consanguinity is often recognized, and pleasingly acknowledged, in the peculiar sort of home feeling, which the delegates of one body experience when taking part in the synodical sessions and proceedings of the other. On the Dutch side the relationship is best understood, in the nature of the case, by the true Dutch element still found in that church; as distinguished from the large infusion of foreign life, (more or less Puritanic,) which has already gone far to undermine the old spirit.

thule of supralapsarian predestination.* The platform of our faith here is wide and free. If any choose to be extreme predestinationists, they have full liberty to follow their particular inclination. But they are not allowed to narrow the platform itself to any such tight measure. Any attempt to do so, would be met at once by an overwhelming protest, from all parts of the church. There is a difference here between the Dutch and German churches, with all their close historical relationship, which it is very important always to bear in mind; a difference that grows mainly out of another relationship on the German side; that, namely, which this bears at the same time to confessional Lutheranism. It is not easy to understand or feel the full force of this, (as we have learned experimentally) without

* See on the character of the German Reformed church, and its relation to Lutheranism and Calvinism, an interesting article by Dr. H. HEPPE, published in Ullmann's *Studien und Kirtiken*, July 1850. With Calvin, the absolute decree forms the generative principle of all theology. His system turns on it as a pivot, from beginning to end, in a way intrinsically fatal at last even to his own doctrine of the sacraments. The Reformed Confessions generally, as we have before seen, were not willing to follow it out to its proper metaphysical end. "Almost all of them," according to Heppe, "take the *infralapsarian* view, (which cuts the life-nerve of Calvin's system,) and at the Synod of Dort, Gomar found himself, with his supralapsarian theory, in the position almost of a separatist. Only three Confessions present Calvin's dogma in its pure grain, the *Consensus of Geneva*, the *Helvetic Formula* of 1675, and the *Westminster Confession* of the Puritans. The first was not subscribed probably even by Zurich, among all the other Swiss churches. The second must be regarded as a posthumous work of the schools, which in a very short time passed into practical oblivion. So that neither the one nor the other document is of any force in evidence of what was the reigning consciousness of the Reformed church; and the Westminster Confession remains thus the *only* symbol of full predestinarianism,—proof enough, that such Calvinism, arraying itself against the idea of a historical and sacramental church and resolving all into the *decretum Dei absolutum*, carries in it no proper power of life." But now in direct opposition to the abstract principle of Calvinism, the German Reformation roots itself from the start in the historical and objective idea of the church. Out of this grew the Melancthonian tendency as one side of the general movement, over against high Lutheranism as we have it in the Form of Concord; the result of which was the German Reformed church, established as a common interest in the Palatinate, in Hesse, and in Brandenburg. This was Calvinistic in its sacramental doctrine, and fell in more or less with Calvinism also at other points; but it never gave up its distinctively German construction of theology. The Elector Frederick most distinctly professed to abide always by the Augsburg Confession, and the doctrinal views of Melancthon. The Heidelberg Catechism is *soteriologically* constructed, and follows Melancthon's method and spirit throughout. Of predestination in the Calvinistic sense, we hear not a word. Such, we say, is the view taken of the whole case, in this article by Heppe.

being in the bosom of the German Reformed church itself, and sharing in its actual theological life. No other branch of the Reformed church in this country can be said to understand Lutheranism, or to have any natural ecclesiastical sympathy with its proper genius and soul.³ Now this affinity we have just as little right to ignore or forget, as we have to lose sight of the other. When the sense of it is lost, the constitutional life of the German Reformed church will be also at an end. Let the Dutch church understand this. Our Calvinism is not just that of the Synod of Dort; and we are not willing to admit of course, in the face of all past history, that the Heidelberg Catechism must be rigorously construed by any such rule. In all this however we quarrel not with the Dutch church, which has full right certainly, as we have said before, to carry out her confessional system in her own way; all we ask is, that the German church may be considered free also to stop short here, as she has ever done, with the simple text of the Catechism itself, leaving the hard points that lie beyond without symbolical determination, for theology to solve and settle afterwards as it best can.

It only remains, to notice briefly the criticism bestowed by Dr. Proudfit on Mr. Williard's translation itself. We have had no opportunity to compare this with the original text, and can therefore say nothing positively as to the ability and fidelity with which it has been executed. But it is easy enough to see, from the face of such evidence as we have before us, that the general criticism of the Brunswick Professor is exceedingly unfair.

He affects to call in question the worth and sufficiency of Mr. Williard's Latin text, (the Geneva edition of 1616) without any good reason that we can see whatever. He takes the translator solemnly to task, at the same time, for venturing out of his copy, in a few instances, to bring in short extracts from the "old English translation by Parry;" although these extracts, (three in number, we believe, and amounting in all to perhaps two pages of matter,) are carefully noted in the text itself as *addenda*, with

³ It is remarkable, that no other Reformed church, (if we are rightly informed,) keeps up any ecclesiastical correspondence with any part of the Lutheran body in this country. A high wall of separation is made thus to shut out this whole confessional interest, which is yet glorified again in history, when it suits, as the main wing of the Reformation. What is thus excluded too, is especially the idea of Lutheranism in its true original shape. By giving up its own glorious confessional life, the system (then known as "American Lutheranism") propitiates indeed some Puritan favor; but it falls at the same time into the predicament of a characterless Pelagian sect, with which no church fellowship is to be desired.

due warning given of the fact besides in the Preface. In these extracts some alterations are made in Parry's antiquated style, "to adapt it to the taste," Mr. Williard says, "of the modern reader." Now only hear Professor Proudfit on this point: "In this practice, we must remind him that he has departed from all the just principles which ought to guide a translator. We cannot well conceive a larger 'liberty,' than for a translator to 'insert short extracts' from unknown sources, changing the style and construction so as to adapt it to the *taste* of the modern reader!" The word *taste* italicised, to convey the perfectly gratuitous and we will add *ungentlemanly* insinuation, that the case may include some theological accommodation, instead of the mere fashion of language, the actual "foisting in" of a new sense with sinister purpose and regard.¹ Miserable balderdash!

But there are instances not a few of bad translation in the book, according to our critic. We can only say, not having the original at hand, that the book does not read like a bad translation; on the contrary it runs very clearly and smoothly, more so than translations do commonly, and makes at all events very good sense. Dr. Proudfit quotes a few specimens in proof of his charge; but they are after all of no very considerable account; and we know not how far they may be attributable to variations in the original text. We pretend not however to say that the translation is exempt from errors. That could hardly be expected in the first edition of so large a work. All we wish to say is, that Dr. Proudfit's criticism here is chargeable with gross exaggeration.

So as regards the typographical and general editorial execution of the work. It is declared to be unpardonably negligent and inaccurate! This accusation at least, we feel at liberty bluntly to contradict. Typographical errors may indeed be found; but they certainly need some hunting. They are not at once patent. Pages need to be gone over, somewhat microscopically too in many cases, to find them. Then as for the general style of the book, it may easily enough be left to speak for itself; as it has already in truth won in its own favor, on all sides, the highest commendation and praise. Seldom do we meet with a religious

¹ It is a little queer, that one ground of offence with Williard's work at first in a certain quarter, we are told, was that it did *not* contain a portion of matter found in Parry's book, which is not from Ursinus at all. The omission was set down for a wilful *suppressio veri*, and evidence of a dreadful conspiracy with Mercersburg to murder the proper life of the Heidelberg Catechism!

work of like size, for common popular use, in the case of which the outward costume both of paper and type is less open to any fair reproach.

But three whole questions, the 84th, 85th and 95th, are left out altogether; "the exposition meanwhile jogging on, as if quite unconscious that it had parted company with the text." Nine readers out of ten, we presume, would infer from the way in which this is brought forward by Dr. Proudfit, that these questions were dropped, commentary and all, (the fault perhaps of Mr. Williard's bad Latin copy,) while the worthy translator nevertheless went straight ahead with his work, having no sense seemingly of the *hiatus valde defendus*, by which these parts of the catechetical text were thus summarily annihilated! But what is the actual amount of the ominous omission in the end? Why this simply, that these three questions themselves do not appear in their proper place, at the head of the sections or chapters of exposition to which they belong; while in truth no part whatever of the exposition itself is broken or wanting in any way. It all comes thus to an easily intelligible oversight of the press, which is a blemish certainly for this first impression of the work, but by no means such a damning sin as it might appear to be from the ambiguous form of Dr. Proudfit's charge.

It is plain enough after all, however, that the criticism of Mr. Williard's work forms but a small part of the real object of Dr. Proudfit's article; the main purpose of it is to assail the Mordecai sitting at the gate, our Introduction namely on the life and character of Ursinus. In what spirit, and with what sort of effect, this has been done, we have now tried to make in some measure apparent. The article is sufficiently ostentatious and ambitious; it is ushered in with quite a historical dissertation on the subject of catechetical instruction, abounds in sophomorical scraps of Latin, (the author being a professor of the dead languages,) and makes a wonderful parade throughout of doing up its work in a smashing wholesale way. But in all this there is a great deal more show than substance. The historical introduction is but little to the point; the sophomorical scraps of Latin prove nothing; and what affects to be smashing argument resolves itself, on near inspection, into empty smoke or something worse. The argument consists for the most part in creating false issues, by pushing qualified statements out to an extreme sense, by exaggerating and caricaturing points of controversy, in one word by setting up men of straw; over whom an easy victory is gained, the weight of which is then pompously employed to crush what has been thus misrepresented and abused. Dr.

Proudfit finds it an easy task to show that the Heidelberg Catechism has no sympathy with Romanism, is not made up of unintelligible mystification, and falls in with the general Augustinian theory of salvation in opposition to every sort of Pelagianism; and this he plays off as an overwhelming contradiction to our statement, that the Catechism stands pre-eminent among Reformed or Calvinistic symbols for its catholic historical spirit, for its sense of the mystical interest in religion in connection with the intellectual, and for its moderation and reserve in not urging the Calvinistic system to its metaphysical extremes. The logic certainly is both easy and cheap.

We are glad to understand, that the first edition of Mr. Williard's book is already off his hands, and that the demand for it is such as to call for a second. The circulation is of course so far mainly within the German church. It would be a pity if the present *Introduction* merely should stand in the way of its being favorably received in the Reformed Dutch church, as Dr. Proudfit seems to think it should and must do. We beg leave therefore to suggest a simple remedy for the evil. Let a separate edition be engaged for the special use of this venerable sister denomination, carefully revised and with the *Introduction* left out. Or if preferred, let *another* *Introduction* be drawn up, either by Dr. Proudfit himself or by somebody else, calculated for the meridian of New Brunswick, and conformed in all respects theologically to the reigning Puritan standard of the present time. Let it roundly affirm, that on the subject of the decrees the formal teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism falls not a whit behind the determinations of the Synod of Dort, that it owns no sympathy whatever with the catholic ideas of the ancient church, that it eschews religiously the whole mystical interest in religion and moves only in the sphere of the logical understanding, that it has in it no inward relationship whatever to Lutheranism, that the true key to its sense and spirit should be sought rather in New England Puritanism, that it is unchurchly and unsacramental throughout, acknowledging no objective grace, no mystery at all, (just as little, be it whispered, as Art. XXXV of the Belgic Confession,) in the holy sacraments, on a full par thus with the universal sectarian rationalism of the day. Let this be the standpoint, we say, of the new *Introduction*, got up for the special use and benefit of the Reformed Dutch church; and if the Dutch church generally should choose to be satisfied with it, the world at large, we presume, will not feel it necessary to make any objection

J. W. N.