

ART. VII.—*The Heidelberg Catechism and Dr. Nevin.*

The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism. Translated from the original Latin by the Rev. G. W. Williard, A. M. (With an Introduction by Dr. Nevin.) First American Edition. Columbus: Scott & Bascom, Printers. 1851.

THE great instrument by which God has chosen to diffuse and perpetuate his truth among men is the living voice. John Bunyan, as usual, clothes a great truth in a quaint conceit when he represents “Ear-Gate” as the principal entrance to the town of Mansoul, through which Diabolus first carried the city, and against which those valiant soldiers of the great King Shaddai, Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction “did bend their main force.” The pen and the press, powerful as they are, are mostly powerful in seconding, extending, and perpetuating the impressions of the living voice. They are utterly inadequate to the first publication of truth as to the making immediate, profound, and general impressions on the minds of men. They could never have called the world to repentance and preparation for the coming of the Son of God as did “the voice” of John the Baptist. They could never have sent out the “line” of the gospel “into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world,” within the space of a quarter of a cen-

tury, as it was "sounded forth" by the preaching of the apostles and primitive Christians. They could never have rolled up the population of Europe in one vast surge, and precipitated it upon Asia, as did the preaching of Peter the Hermit. They could never have made nor begun the Reformation, though they had a mighty and indispensable agency in extending and completing it. They could never have awakened the slumbering churches of England and America as did the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley. They could never have agitated the general mind of Britain and of this country, as we have recently seen it done by the presence and the voice of one man. The pen and the press have done and are doing great things, and will do greater still. But they cannot transcend their office. They cannot pass out of their sphere. Their power must be exerted, for the most part, upon minds and communities already attentive, thoughtful, and mature. To arouse the soul, to pour into it the vivifying power of new truth, is the peculiar work of the living voice, trembling under the vast emotions which that truth has already awaked, and transmitting those emotions, by the mysterious and irresistible power of sympathy, to other souls.

If this truth has, in any case, a special and peculiar force, it is in its application to the training of the young. Then especially is "Ear-Gate" the main avenue, and the voice the most effective, in fact the only effective instrument when truth is to be adapted to the ever changing moods of the young mind—all eager as it is for knowledge, yet impatient of protracted attention; curious of facts, yet easily wearied of abstractions; earnest and tender, yet prone to levity; deeply and keenly susceptible at once to the things of the spiritual and the sensible world. Oral instruction was the great ordinance of God for perpetuating religion in the ancient Church. "I know Abraham that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19. "These words which I command thee this day—thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt *talk* of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7. "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation." Joel i. 3.

"The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law *at his mouth*." Mal. ii. 7. Thus the whole historical and spiritual life of the Church was to be borne along from generation to generation by the living voice of parent, priest, and prophet. In what precise form this oral instruction was administered, cannot now, we believe, be determined. The religious instruction of Theophilus, (Luke i. 4,) of Apollos, (Acts xviii. 25,) and of the Jew addressed by Paul as the representative of his Church and nation, (Rom. ii. 18,) are all alluded to under the term *κατηχέω*. All had been "catechized," whatever sense was then attached to the word, in the first principles of religion. The Greek commentators of the early Church appear to have generally understood the word in these passages as implying a system of early oral instruction and religious truth. The Hebrew words (one of which signifies to *narrate*, or *rehearse*; the other to *inculcate*, literally to *sharpen*,) denote a constant and earnest oral teaching, but imply nothing as to the recipient of the instruction. *Κατηχέω*, if we look at its derivation, seems to include more, and to denote a process vocal and audible on both sides. (qu. *κατ' ἑχὼ διδασκειν*) in which the thought and the voice of the pupil give back an *echo* to that of the teacher. Such a meaning must, however, we think, rest on the *vis etymici* and not on the *usus loquendi*; though such great names as D'Outrein and Melancthon have claimed even the latter in its support. "*Κατηχέω*" (says Melancthon) signifies not simply to teach, but carries with it the idea of reading or lecturing and hearing the pupils recite what has been said;" and again, "that method of teaching in which the utterances of the master are called forth by questions is properly denoted by *κατηχέω*." That it was not restricted by the early Christian writers to its modern signification, *i. e.* instruction by question and answer, is evident from the fact that some of their writings of this sort, for example the *κατηχησεις* of Cyril of Jerusalem are composed in a continuous style, without question and answer. The communication of instruction, however, by *ερωτησεις* and *αποκρισεις* dates from a very early period, as we find a specimen of it in Justin Martyr, and it became thereafter a favourite method of solving difficult questions in religion and ethics, and of conveying Christian knowledge to the young and ignorant.

Oral instruction, at least, in a familiar way, which is the proper and universal idea expressed by *κατηχησις*,* whether by question and answer or otherwise, was held in the highest estimation in the early Church, not only as a means of holy nurture to her own children, but of recovery to the lapsed, and of conversion to pagans and others who were yet without. The fathers of the Church were general and firm in the belief that they had direct scriptural and apostolic sanction for the practice. They looked upon the *γαλα* of Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12, 13; and the *λογικον αδολον γαλα* of Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 2, as referring distinctly to familiar oral instruction† in Christian truth adapted to young and simple minds, and interpreted the *στοιχεια της αρχης των λογικων του θεου*, Heb. v. 12, and the *λογος της αρχης του Χριστου*, Heb. vi. 1, as denoting the elements of Christian doctrine imparted in the same form. Those who were under this kind of instruction (*κατηχουμενοι*) were regarded as *εν προθυροις της ευσεβειας*‡ “in the vestibule of piety.” One class of Christian ministers was specially devoted to this sort of instruction, and were called *κατηχηται*, Catechists. It has been thought by some that this was a distinct office. It might have been so in particular cases, but was, we think, generally attached to the office of pastor, and Jerome and Augustine have observed that while the apostle Paul has in other cases separated the functions of Christian ministers, he has spoken of these two together—“Pastors and Teachers.” It is altogether probable that in some of the larger and wealthier churches the office of Catechist was distinct. Some of the most venerable names of the ancient Church are enrolled among the catechists of Alexandria. Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen head the list. Pantænus was the teacher of Clemens, as Clemens was of Origen, and in both cases the pupil succeeded his master in the office of catechist. Jerome entitles Clemens *κατηχη-*

* *Κατηχησις* est familiaris per vivam vocem facta institutio in elementis Christianæ religionis. Suicer. Thes. Ecc. e Pat. Græc. Catechesis propriè est elementaris institutio Christianæ religionis, viva docentis voce tradita, et a discipulis reddita. Henr. Altingius in explic. Cat. Pal. p. m. 2.

† *Γαλα η κατηχησις*. Clem. Alex. Strom. on 1 Cor. iii. 2.

‡ Greg. Naz. Or. 40.

σεν magister,* and Origen adjutor *κατηχησιως*,† which renders it probable that in the church of Alexandria that office was a distinct one, and formed the proper occupation of those eminent men. Jerome says‡ that Origen availed himself of the great concourse of youth to him for literary instruction, to teach them in the Christian faith. According to Eusebius,§ when the entire charge of catechetical instruction was devolved upon him by Demetrius, then bishop of that church, he immediately forsook his profession of literary teacher, to devote himself wholly to that work. In such high estimation was the business of catechetical instruction then held, as to command the whole time and labour of the greatest minds of the Church.

And in the like estimation it continued to be held so long as truth was looked upon as the proper glory and power of Christianity, and *the teaching of truth* as the great means of converting souls and rearing up a holy posterity to perpetuate the Church. But when the *ecclesiastical* spirit overcame the evangelical, and the Church grew more and more worldly and material in all her institutions and instrumentalities, relying on the secular arm rather than the sword of the Spirit, and adopting the usages of paganism in order to convert pagans, and making more of a splendid ritual than of a pure faith, and magnifying church orthodoxy above vital piety, and addressing the senses by shows and music and incense, rather than the soul by the vivifying light of truth, catechetical instruction of course declined. During the proper period of Roman domination, it was almost extinct and forgotten. The peril of awakening intellect and stimulating thought is an *arcanum imperii* of all despotisms, and pre-eminently of that, the most enormous and inexorable despotism under which the prostrate intellect and soul of man ever groaned. There were occasional attempts in councils held for ecclesiastical discipline, to revive the practice

* Alexandria ecclesiasticam scholam tenuit et *κατηχησιων* magister fuit. Catal. Scrip. Ecc. Cap. 48.

† Ibid. Cap. 64.

‡ Concursus ad eum miri facti sunt, quos ille propterea recipiebat, ut sub occasione secularis literaturæ, in fide Christi eos institueret. Ibid.

§ Ecc. Hist. Lib. VI. Cap. 3.

of catechetical instruction. It was enjoined on the clergy in the Canons of the Council of Braques, A. D. 572, of Tourain 813, and of Mentz 1347. The Capitularia of Charlemagne also required it. But the spirit of the dominant Church was too strong for the edicts of princes or the canons of councils. Rubrics, breviaries, rosaries, and agends were much more to the mind of Rome than Catechisms. They amused and tranquillized the minds of men with a semblance of religion, but did not implant those fructifying germs of thought and irrepressible aspirations which always accompany truth. Images were, in her esteem, a much safer medium of instruction than books.*

Few and meagre, however, as were the catechetical productions of that dark period, they are never to be forgotten. There is a curious specimen still extant of a German Catechism composed by an unknown monk of Weissenburg, in the ninth century, containing an explanation of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and, (instead of the ten commandments,) a list of the deadly sins.† This substitution was not unfrequent during that period. The Papal Church has never faltered in her policy to abrogate the law of God that she may keep her own traditions.

As the spirit of life began to stir in the Church and resistance to Rome waxed stronger, Catechisms were multiplied. The Waldenses, in their Confession of Faith presented to Francis I., allude to catechetical instruction as in use among them. John Wickliffe composed in English several tracts under the title of *Pauper Rusticus*, intended to teach the poor the principal truths of Christianity, "without an apparatus of many books." Among these were an exposition of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.‡ Huss wrote a catechism in his prison at Constance, which is still extant among his works. And, (stirred up, it is said, by these examples,) Gerson, the learned and excellent Chancellor of Paris,

* "Gregorius Papa idola et imagines in templis collocavit, ut essent pro libris imperitæ multitudini." Sibelius, quoted by Van Alphen, Prol. ad Cat. Heid. p. 17—as if idolatry were a refuge from ignorance! This was, indeed, throwing the blind man into the ditch instead of attempting to restore his sight.

† Augusti, Versuch einer Einleit. &c., p. 33.

‡ From the decrees of the Councils of Braques, Tourain and Mentz, it appears that these were of old considered the heads of catechetical instruction.

wrote a tract, (how sweet the title!) "*de parvulis ad Christum trahendis*," and spent the last days of a life distinguished by the highest honours of genius and learning, in catechizing little children.

One of the first evidences of re-awakened Christian life at the era of the Reformation, was the restoration, and that in tenfold glory and efficacy, of the noble art of catechizing. More catechisms were produced within fifty years after 1517, than in ten centuries before. Luther, in his "*brevis formula decalogi, symboli apostolici et orationis dominicæ*" (1518 and 1520) and in his "Larger" and "Lesser Catechisms" (1529) led the way. His example led to the composition of a multitude of catechisms by his followers. Buddæus* enumerates no less than twenty by the Lutherans alone; and his list is by no means complete. The Romanists, alarmed by the rapid spread of the new doctrines in this form, were compelled in self-defence to resort to the same method. This is candidly admitted by the Jesuit Possevin while urging on his own church the importance of catechetical instruction. "Some object, 'the heretics use this sort of teaching. Do you think it right to imitate them? At least, you will not deny that the word *catechizing* ought not to be used, for that savours too strongly of heretical practice.' Who can bear such trifling? Ought not a Christian rather to acknowledge his own fault than to screen his individual sin to the general peril and disadvantage?"† Fleury composed a "*Catechismus historicus*," which, bating the Romish errors and superstitions it contains, is an admirable model, as it uses the *events* of Scripture as a means of impressing its truths and precepts on the young mind—a method which might undoubtedly be used so as to render this kind of tuition more interesting and attractive to the young. Loyola and his disciples pressed with great ardour into the career of catechetical instruction. Catechisms were extensively used not only in the educational institutions of the Jesuits, but in their foreign missions. The Council of Trent‡

* Isag. Hist. Theol. Lib. Post. Cap. I. § 12.

† Epist. de necessitate, utilitate ac ratione Cath. Cat. cited by Van Alphen and Augusti.

‡ Father Paul. Lib. 8.

ordered the preparation of a Catechism, which, under the direction of the Pope, was composed, or at least completed and arranged by Cardinal Sirlet,* and was of course proclaimed as the "*lydius lapis, certissima et infallibilis norma, ad quam examinanda est omnis doctrina*"—"the touchstone, the unquestionable and infallible model whereby all doctrine is to be tried;") whereas the Protestant Catechisms followed each answer with an array of *proofs* from the Bible, implying the duty of searching the Scriptures, whether those things were so. (A striking exemplification of the genius of the Protestant and Roman Churches!) In brief, the Socinians, Remonstrants, Anabaptists, Catabaptists, and Quakers, in fact all the sects and subdivisions of religious opinion, in which the boundless and lawless mental activity of that age manifested itself, expounded their several doctrines in Catechisms. Even the Turks are reported to have felt the general impulse of *Christendom*, and to have reduced the doctrines of Islamism into this form.†

The Reformed Church, properly so called in distinction from the Lutheran, contributed its full share to the catechetical symbols of which the age was so prolific. Besides many "Confessiones," "Articuli," "Theses," "Rationes," and "Expositiones Fidei," (various titles and forms indeed, but all exhibiting a harmonious system of the Reformed doctrine,) the sixteenth century gave birth, within that Church, to the Catechism of Geneva, (by Calvin, 1536,) that of Zurich, (by Bullinger, 1559,) and that of the Palatinate, (by Ursinus, 1563.)

None of these enjoyed a higher repute, or exerted a wider or more enduring influence among the Reformed churches, than the last. It was composed by order of Frederic III., Palatine of the Rhine, Elector of the Empire, and Duke of Bavaria, in 1562. The work of preparing it was committed to Caspar Olevianus, Court-Precacher of the Elector, and Zacharias Ursinus, Professor of the Collegium Sapientiae, assisted, as some affirm, by Peter Boquin and Immanuel Tremellius. The finishing and arranging hand was undoubtedly that of Ursinus, and it has, therefore, been regarded as his work. In the Electoral

* Moreri. Sirlet.

† Hoornbeek in Van Alphen. Prol.

diploma, which accompanied its publication and ordered it to be introduced in the churches and schools of the Palatinate, Frederic declares his intention, in causing it to be prepared, to have been "that his people might be led to the right knowledge of God, their Creator and Redeemer, from his own word." He expresses his conviction that "there can be no well established order, either in church, state, or families, unless the youth are instructed from their earliest years, in true and pure religion, and constantly exercised in it." He states that he has caused this Catechism to be prepared, that the pastors and schoolmasters, throughout his estates, may have a fixed and definite form by which to conduct such instruction, and earnestly enjoins upon them to be diligent and faithful in using it to that end. We should be glad to transfer this admirable document to our pages entire. It breathes the spirit of a wise and pious prince, "ruling over men in the fear of God," and "watching for their souls as one that must give an account." That such was the true character of Frederic, the testimony even of those who were by no means friendly to him places beyond a doubt. The diploma is dated January 19th, 1563.*

Ursinus, in rapid progress and early maturity in learning, wisdom, and piety, was one of the wonders of that wonderful age. He was born at Breslau, July 18th, 1534, of a respectable family, but so far from being *pecuniary* (we borrow the quaint term from Bayle,) that he was assisted in obtaining his education both by public and private liberality: another noble son whom the Church has raised for her own service and the glory of her Lord, and an illustrious example of the wise economy of such liberality! He entered, in his eighteenth year, the University of Wittemberg, where he passed five years, the beloved pupil and intimate friend of Melancthon. He afterwards visited several foreign cities and universities, among the rest, Geneva, (where he formed a friendship with Calvin, who gave him his books, inscribed with his autograph,) and Paris, where he resided a short time to perfect himself in

* It is given entire by Van den Honert, Schat-Boek der Verklasingen over den Nederlandschen Catechismus, Voorreede, p. 9, &c., and by Niemeyer Coll. Conf. in Eccl. Ref. publ. p. 428, &c.

French and in Hebrew under the tuition of Mercier. When about twenty-four years of age, he was called to preside over the Elizabethan school in his native town of Breslau. But his "Theses de Sacramentis," which showed his opinions to be of the Reformed stamp, caused so much disturbance that he voluntarily resigned his office and left his country, "*honestissimo eunt testimonio Senatus*," declaring that exile was a welcome discharge from the intolerable labour of keeping school.* From Breslau he went to Zurich, where he resided for a while in the society of Peter Martyr and Gesner. Thus did his wanderings lead him, Θεοῦ ὑπ' ἀμύμονι πομπῇ, to intimate communion with the master minds of the Reformation, and ripened him for the great work of his life.

Just after he had completed his twenty-seventh year, he was invited to the University of Heidelberg, and in the following year, was appointed to the professorship of *Loci Communes*. In the faculty of that renowned University, he was associated with Boquin and Tremellius, and with these eminent and pious men, *und manu, concordibus votis*, laboured in the tuition of youth and edification of the Church of God. Many eminent preachers and theologians were formed under their care. In the year 1562, he was employed, as we have stated above, by order of the Elector, in the preparation of the Heidelberg Catechism. In 1571 he was invited to the chair of Theology in the University of Lausanne, whither he was inclined to go, as his health was suffering severely under his multiplied labours; but the urgent wishes of the Elector, who at the same time permitted him to choose one or more colleagues to lighten his toil, induced him to remain at Heidelberg. He thereupon took a colleague, and shortly after, a wife, being married to Margaret Trautwein, in 1572—"and yet" (apologetically subjoins Melchior Adam,) "he was none the less diligent" (why should he

* Moreri. *Dav. Pareus*.—"fatigues si terribles (i. e. de conduire la jeunesse au Collège de Sapience) que le bon Zacharie Ursin l'estimoit heureux d'avoir été exilé par les Lutheriens, puisque cet exil le délivroit de cette terrible carrière." We find this mentioned only by Moreri. But *sympathy* prompts us to insert it—the only joke we have met with of "le bon Zacharie Ursin." That he continued in this "terrible carrière" to the last "egregiè omnes partes implens præceptoris et magistri fidelis" (Mel. Adam.) is a proof of the *vis indefessa* of his principles and character.

be?) "in the education of youth and the composition of useful works." By this marriage he had one son, who was *hæres paternæ virtutis*.

In 1577 the death of the great and good Elector and the accession of his son Louis, who brought Lutheranism into the Palatinate with a high hand, were followed by a sweeping revolution in the University, and Ursinus, dismissed from his professorship, and once more an exile, betook himself to Neustadt, whither he was invited by Casimir, a younger son of Frederic, who inherited his father's attachment to the Reformed faith. This prince founded at Neustadt, the principal town of his own estates, a college named after himself *Casimirianum*, in the faculty of which Ursinus was once more associated with some of his former friends and colleagues of the University of Heidelberg. There, in the various labours of a professor and an author, he spent the last five years of his life, manfully combating the various infirmities of an over-worked system, and even from the bed to which sickness at last confined him, dictating not only a multitude of letters, but several works of considerable size, among which was his "Refutatio Jesuitarum." At last, "having fought a good fight and finished his course, he received from the heavenly Arbiter and Rewarder that amaranthine crown. For he died in the Lord, as if falling into a sweet sleep, with his friends around him, on the sixth of March, 1583, and in the forty-ninth year of his age." He left behind him a request that as he had lived without pomp, so he might be carried to his grave without it, and interred no where else but in the common and public cemetery. This wish was complied with, and a monument erected to his memory by the *Schola Casimiriana*, bearing an epitaph which presents a glowing, but not more than just picture of his great talents and virtues.

His writings were collected after his death and published in three folio volumes by his grateful pupils, Pareus and Quirin. But by far the most important work of his life and most durable monument to his memory, is his immortal Catechism. Over what a multitude of young minds has it scattered the seeds of truth! How many, while repeating its "form of sound words," have "with the heart believed unto righteousness, and with the mouth made confession unto salvation!"

His other voluminous works have been comparatively neglected. But the Catechism, translated into fourteen languages,* expounded in innumerable churches, and repeated by innumerable youth, has entered into the life-blood and circulated through all the veins of Reformed Christendom.

In no way, perhaps, has its influence been more profoundly and permanently diffused than by the unparalleled extent to which it has been used as a text book of theological instruction. Van Alphen gives a list of no less than ninety Commentaries and illustrative works of various kinds, which had been written upon it by eminent divines before his time, (1729.) A very large portion of these were originally delivered in the shape of lectures in the universities and theological schools.

The ascendancy of the Catechism in the Palatinate, the country of its birth, was, it is true, subjected to many and severe interruptions and reverses. First, by the accession of Louis and the forcible re-instating of Lutheranism, (1577,) afterwards by the disasters of Frederick, the titular and transient king of Bohemia, (1620;) shortly after and yet more terribly by the Thirty Years War in which Popery was brought into the Palatinate by the merciless Tilly at the point of the bayonet; and finally, by the accession of a prince of the Romish faith, (1686.) But the same storms which expelled it from its native seats, wafts its imperishable seeds across the sea to this western continent, to find a far wider field, and to yield, we hope, far richer harvests in the German Reformed Church of the United States.

* Niemeyer (Coll. Conf. Ref. Præf. p. 62,) enumerates them. Besides the original German and the immediately subsequent Latin version by Lagus and Pithopæus, it was translated into Dutch, Greek, Modern Greek, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Arabic, Cingalese, French, English, Italian, Bohemian, and Hebrew. Henry Altling (Explic. Cat. p. 6,) adds "the lingua Indica," by which he may mean the Cingalese. The same writer says, "*sed authentica est sola editio Germanica in qua omnia non rotundiora modo, sed etiam simpliciora.*" "The German edition alone is of authority, in which every thing is not only more fully but more energetically expressed," (ibid.) It is an interesting fact, which deserves to be mentioned, that many, if not most of the above translations into the languages of distant races were made under the auspices of the United States of Holland, who sent missions along with their colonies to the ends of the earth. A copy of the noble edition in Modern Greek, translated and published by order of the States General (1648) is now before us. A just monument has yet to be erected to the liberality and Christian zeal of that heroic Republic.

But no church of the Reformed family has imbibed the doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism more deeply, adhered to it more steadily, or brought a larger share of sacred learning to its defence and illustration, than the venerable Reformed Dutch Church. Her princes and fathers were the first (of foreign countries)* to adopt it as a symbol of their faith, in the Synod of Wesel,† 1568, and solemnly re-affirmed this act at the Synod of Embden, 1571, of Dort, 1578, of Middleburg, 1581, of Gravenhagen, 1586, and finally, in the National Synod of Dort, 1618-19, where the foreign‡ as well as the native divines expressed their cordial and entire approbation of its doctrines. Her temples have resounded with its exposition, and her children have been imbued with its truth for nearly three centuries. The solid bulwarks which the learning of her Altinges and Hoornbeeks, and Hommises, and Van Tyls, and a host of other eminent divines has thrown up around the Protestant faith, were erected, even to the outermost buttress and escarpment, on the outline of the Catechism. The heartiness with which she adopted it, and the predominance which her free institutions and her vast opulence and power, as well as the learning of her divines and schools, gave her, in the seventeenth century, contributed largely to the unparalleled prominence and diffusion of this, her favourite symbol. Holland was indebted to a pure and living faith for strength to stand up against the most fearful odds ever perhaps successfully encountered by a nation, and ultimately to wrest her liberties from the iron grasp of Philip II.; and she sought, with grateful ardour, to repay the debt. She poured it into the minds of the youth who resorted from far to her Universities and Schools of Theology; she taught it to the exiles from

* In varias easque florentissimas orbis Christiani provincias magno piorum gaudio et fructu introducta est, atque etiamnum obtinet: cujus primum exemplum dedere Ecclesiæ Belgicæ, Anno 1571, H. Alting, Explic. Cat. p. 6.

† Van den Honert. Schat-Boek der Verk. over den Ned. Cat. Voorreede, p. 12.

‡ Bishops Hall and Davenant were the delegates of the Church of England. "I well remember," says Trigland, "that the divines of Great Britain highly extolled that little book, and said that neither their churches, nor the French, had such a suitable catechism; that the men who had composed it had been unusually assisted by the Spirit of God at the time; that they had, in sundry other matters, excelled several divines, but in composing that catechism they had excelled themselves." Ecc. Hist. p. 1145, quoted by Vanderkemp on the Cat. Pref. p. 25.

England, Scotland, France, and Germany, whom her heroic arm sheltered from persecution; she sent it to her colonies in the East and West Indies; and, in fine, she, too, transmitted it with her emigrant children to America, to experience a freer and wider diffusion after the decay of her own liberties, and (it must be added) the decline of her own piety in the Old World.

Of the numerous commentaries on the Catechism, which we have above alluded to, that of Ursinus himself has, of course, taken precedence,* being the author's exposition of his own work. Ursinus, while occupying the chair of Theology in the "*Collegium Sapientie*," "regularly went through an annual course of lectures on the Catechism down to the year 1577."† These lectures, taken down at the time of delivery, were published after his death by his friend and pupil, David Pareus. It would appear, from a letter of Sibrand Lubbert‡ to Pareus, (dated 1591,) that some one had already published Commentaries on the Catechism, which did him great injustice. He expresses much satisfaction that Pareus had given them to the world in a correct form.

The work received, also, the fullest authentication from other disciples and friends of Ursinus, among whom were Quirinus Reuterus, (one of the editors of Ursinus,) and Bartholomew Keckermann, afterwards Professor of Theology at Dantzic. Where Pareus inserts observations of his own, he does so separately and under his own name. The only instance of this we have observed is the "*Additio Davidis Parei de Transubstantiatione et Consubstantiatione*," appended to the exposition of the 78th Question.

This "*Opus Catecheticum*," originally published in Latin,

* *Innumeris commentariis, Germanicis, Latinis, et aliarum linguarum illustrata est: quos inter Ursiniani, Explicationum Catecheticarum titulo evulgati, primas facile tenent.* H. Altingi, *Exp. Cat.* p. 6.

† *Henr. Altingi Mon. lit. et piet. cited by Van Alphen, Prol. p. 32.*

‡ An eminent theologian of that day and Professor of Theology at Franeker. He had been a pupil of Ursinus, and was so highly esteemed by him that when the Elector allowed him to choose an associate in his professorship, he nominated Lubbert; who, says Moreri, "*répondit modestement qu'il ne se sentoit assez habile pour bien remplir une place, où ce Professeur illustre avoit acquis tant de gloire.*" Moreri adds, that Ursinus could find no other whom he was willing to recommend. Lubbert himself composed a Commentary on the Catechism.

was translated into various languages, passed through a multitude of editions, and was held in high repute in all the churches of the Reformation. Pareus was (as well as Ursinus,) a voluminous writer. His Critical Commentaries on the New Testament have ranked with the best productions of that class. But none of his works have reached a circulation at all to be compared with this compilation of the lectures of Ursinus. Many wondered, he tells us,* that with such pressing occupations of his own, he should bestow so much time and labour on the work of another, whence no reward or reputation would accrue to himself. But, he adds, "I shall have fruit enough, if others derive rich fruit from hence; glory enough, if the glory, that is, the truth and purity of heavenly doctrine, be by any labour of mine, transmitted unimpaired to posterity."

There is extant a beautiful and deeply touching letter from the editor, David Pareus, to his accomplished and eminent son, Philip Pareus, from which we learn that the work had been under his hand for many years, and had been subjected to frequent and severe revision. "Even as a precious gem," he says, "is never so perfectly shapen and polished by the hands of the jeweller, but he desires to render it still more lustrous, and at every glance sees some new charm which may be added to it; so I never take this CATECHETICAL TREASURE into my hands, but I seem to hear the living voice of my preceptor again, and to learn something which had before escaped me; and I never lay it aside, but something here or there occurs to my mind which I wish to render more exact and explicit."

Along with this letter, he commits to the hands of his son a copy of the work which had received his "*ultima cura*," his "*postrema recognitio*;" and solemnly charges him, in the event of his death, (*si quid humanitus mihi accadat*,) to give it to the world in that form. This letter is dated from his "Patmos," as he terms it, (a retreat to which he had fled from the war then raging in the Palatinate,) the 30th December, 1621, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and about four months before his death. Any additions or modifications after the above date

* *Pref. and Ded. 1598.*

must, of course, be looked upon as *corruptions*. The great popularity of the work caused many surreptitious editions of it to be issued, which as Philip Pareus tells us were often interpolated and otherwise corrupted. The only editions to be relied upon as genuine are those which were published before the death of David Pareus by himself, or after it, by Philip. We have before us three editions. That of Heidelberg in 1612; that of Geneva, 1622; and that of Hanover, 1634.

Such is the work which Mr. Williard has just presented to the world in an English translation, and which we have reached by a much longer *détour* than we expected. But these introductory and explanatory remarks, will not, we think, be deemed amiss in reference to a work, the wide circulation of which in a pure form, would be an immense benefit to our churches and community, and in fact, to the great and daily increasing portion of mankind who read the English language. It is a vast and various treasure of sacred knowledge, in which profound learning and logical acuteness have contributed their maturest and noblest efforts towards the defence and illustration of Christian truth. It has other and still higher excellencies. It is not only profound but deeply practical, not only exact but warm with the breath and pulse of Christian life. It solves a multitude of doubts and difficulties which are ever afloat in the popular mind in reference to the higher and harder points (the *duvonta*) of Christian theology. The lectures which form this commentary were delivered, be it remembered, to theological classes, from which came forth not a few of the eminent professors, preachers, and authors of that day, among whom were Kimedontius, Keckermann, Lubbert, Pareus, and Quirinus. We should rejoice to see a translation which would do full justice to it, placed in the hands of every minister and theological student, and in fact, in every reading family through our country. We do not know a system of divinity which combines more (generally uncombined) excellencies, or better suited to furnish Christians of every profession and grade of acquirement with "a reason of the hope that is in them." It breathes, moreover, that fiducial and joyful spirit in which all, we think, will allow that the European cast of piety has greatly the advantage of our own, and resembles much more the scriptural and primitive

model. It is as rare to hear the language of *doubt* there, as of *assurance* here. Doubt in fact, seems to have attained, with us, to a rank among the Christian graces, as if it were an evidence of humility and sincerity; instead of being, as it certainly is, a dishonour to our Lord, a reflection on his truth, and a violation of the plain precepts to trust and rejoice in him at all times, and to offer unto him the sacrifices of praise continually. We have often been struck with the contrast at this point between the piety of undoubted Christians in Europe and our own country, and have been puzzled for an adequate cause of it. But since we have been led to look more narrowly into the genius of this Catechism, we are inclined to think that its extensive use among the Swiss, Dutch and German Churches has had not a little to do with it. One of its principal beauties is that many of the answers* are in the form of an act of faith. This, whenever faith is vital and sincere, would naturally tend to give it a confident and *appropriative* character. The same cheerful spirit pervades, as might be expected, the commentary which is the author's expansion of his own work. We would gladly welcome it to general circulation as a probable corrective to an acknowledged defect (accompanied, we gratefully own, with many admirable peculiarities) in Christian life and piety as it has been developed in our highly favoured country. Why should not the characteristic activity and liberality of American Christians be accompanied, as these qualities were in the first age, with the fulness of Christian joy?

The old English translation of this work, we may add, by Parry, (which passed through repeated editions in its day,) is a very unskilful performance, and besides, is now antiquated and extremely scarce.

We heartily wish that we could speak of Mr. Williard's work, in its concrete form, with as cordial approbation as we can and do of the project which gave birth to it. But we are speaking of an authoritative exposition of the most widely received perhaps of all the symbols of the Reformed Faith; and we shall speak candidly, though not, we hope, unkindly. We feel compelled to express at once, our earnest hope and firm conviction,

* E. g. 1, 2, 21, 32, 52, 53, and many others.

that *the work, in its present form, can never go into general circulation in any of the Reformed Churches.*

The editorial and typographical execution of the work are, *ultra spem veniæ*, negligent and inaccurate. The *errata* in spelling, pointing and numbering are so frequent and material as to be a serious blemish. The classics and fathers quoted in the exposition, are sometimes cruelly handled. But more and worse than all this, *the 84th, 85th, and 95th questions of the Catechism, with the Scriptural proofs thereto pertaining, are omitted entire*; the exposition, meanwhile, jogging on as if quite unconscious that it had parted company with the text. This must, we think, be regarded as a *peccatum mortale* as it regards the present impression.

It is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Williard entered on his work with so meagre an apparatus. "The Latin copy," he says, "from which we have made the present translation, was published in Geneva in the year 1616, and is, *without doubt*, a copy of the best and most complete edition made by Dr. David Pareus, the intimate friend and disciple of Ursinus. It is, in every respect, greatly superior to another copy, the use of which we secured from the Rev. Dr. Hendron, of the Presbyterian Church, *after having made very considerable progress in the work of translation.*" Why Mr. Williard considers his own and only copy "without doubt the best and most complete," and "in every respect greatly superior" to the (not very graciously acknowledged) copy of Dr. Hendron does not appear. We are sorry to abate his good opinion of it. But, by turning back to the letter we have quoted above (p. 105) from Pareus himself, the reader will perceive that he pronounces the copy which he then sent to his son (Dec. 30th, 1621) the one which had received his *ultima cura* and the final form in which he wished his compilation of his master's lectures to go down to future ages. That edition could not, of course, have been published till 1622, about six years later than that possessed by Mr. Williard. He had, it seems, but two copies, and "secured the use" of the second, only "after having made very considerable progress in the work." He ought, we think, as we are sure he *might*, have obtained larger materials for collation.

He had, it seems, also, "the old English translation by Par-

ry," "printed in the year 1645," "which," says he, "we constantly consulted in making the present translation." He did more, however, than "consult" it. "The old English translation," he tells us, (Pref. p. iv,) "contains considerable matter which is not to be found in either of the Latin copies now in our possession. We have, in several instances, taken the liberty of inserting short extracts, changing the style and construction of many of the sentences so as to adapt it to the taste of the modern reader. Whenever this is done, it is marked by the word 'addenda.'" In this practice, (which Mr. Williard acknowledges with a praise-worthy frankness,) 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, (Parry is, we believe, unknown, save by this translation,) "changing the style and construction so as to adapt it to the *taste* of the modern reader." Especially are such "liberties" to be censured, when taken with the writings of a man who poised and pondered every word in which he spoke God's truth, with such a *religiosa diligentia* as did Ursinus.*

The instances are neither few nor unimportant in which Mr. Williard has failed to present the meaning of his author with fidelity and precision. On p. 9, Ursinus, speaking of "the testimony of the Holy Ghost," says that it is "*renatorum proprium*," which Mr. Williard renders "*being also applicable to the unregenerate*, does not only convince their consciences, &c., but also *moves and inclines their hearts* to assent to this doctrine and to *receive it as the truth of God.*" Here "the testimony of the Holy Ghost," by which, says Ursinus, "we mean a strong and lively faith, wrought in the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit," &c., by an erroneous translation, which precisely reverses the *protasis* of the proposition, is predicated of "the unregenerate!"

* "If any of his pupils imperfectly comprehended anything that was said in his lectures, or had any other doubt or difficulty to submit to him, he directed them to lay the same before him in writing, saying that he would reflect on the subject home, and give the solution at the opening of the next day's lecture. He thus relieved himself from extemporaneous responses, and furnished his students with *well-premeditated* solutions of their doubts."—Mel. Adam, vit. Urs.

On p. 230, "*dum adhuc vivebant*," is translated "when he hitherto existed," which transfers to Christ what is affirmed of "the disobedient," (1 Pet. iii. 19.) Mr. Williard was betrayed into this mistake, we doubt not, by an inaccurate copy. But, if it were so, it shows the importance (hinted at above) of larger means of collation.

In the Exp. of 2. 66, Ursinus speaking of the application of the word *sacramentum* to Christian ordinances, says, "*ista quidem satis concinna est metaphora*," which Mr. Williard (p. 341) renders, "this is, indeed, beautiful and significant!"

On p. 379, we have the words of our Lord, *do this in remembrance of me*, expounded as follows:—"This remembrance or commemoration of Christ, precedes and is taken for faith in the heart; after which, we make public confession, and acknowledgments of our thankfulness." In what possible sense can the commemoration of Christ "*precede and be taken for faith in the heart?*" The Latin is perfectly simple, thus, "*Hæc recordatio et commemoratio est primum ipsa fides in corde: deinde publica confessio et gratiarum actio.*"

In the farther treatment of the Lord's supper, p. 395, we have the following unfathomable statement: "There is, therefore, no invisible thing or action that brings to view the nature or thing signified by the sacrament." The Latin reads, "*nulla igitur res sive actio invisibilis rationem sive appellationem sacramenti tueri potest.*" This is distinct enough. Ursinus is reasoning to prove that "the sacraments were instituted to be visible testimonies and pledges of grace;" against the Romish doctrine that the body of Christ, *invisible under the bread*, is the sacrament. He therefore affirms, directly in point, that "no invisible thing or action can have the nature or the name of a sacrament;" because, as he says, in the same connection, "Sacraments or signs ought to be visible; and that does not deserve to be called a sacrament (as Erasmus says) which is not accomplished by an external sign."

But we will not fatigue the reader with farther specimens, though they might easily be multiplied.

Mr. Williard has committed a much graver error than any of those we have noticed, in ushering his work to the Christian public under the auspices of Dr. Nevin. The Heidelberg Cat-

echism surely needed no "Introduction" to the Reformed Churches; as little did the name and commentary of its author. And in introducing these, Dr. Nevin has availed himself of the opportunity to "introduce" a good many other things besides, forming, on the whole, very uncongenial company, to say the least, both for the author and the book. Besides, the damage which Mr. Williard has thus incurred is uncompensated, as far as we can see, by the slightest gain of any sort. For, in relation to Mr. Williard himself, and the execution of his work, Dr. Nevin maintains a profound silence, which is even more killing than *faint praise*.

But though Dr. Nevin carefully abstains from praising Mr. Williard or his translation, Mr. Williard abundantly praises "the excellent 'Introduction,' from the pen of Dr. Nevin, which," he tells us, "will be read with much interest, and throw much light upon the life and character of the author of these Lectures."* Mr. Williard has thus fully endorsed the statements of Dr. Nevin, and compelled us to look upon the "translation" and "Introduction," as part and parcel of the same work.

While, in fact, Mr. Williard gives whatever weight his full commendation may carry with it, to the "excellent Introduction," he cautiously limits his adhesion to the doctrines of the Commentary. "We do not, of course, intend," he says, "to be understood as giving an unqualified approval of every view and sentiment contained in these Lectures." As he has not thought it necessary thus to "qualify" his "approval" of the Introduction, the reader is, of course, left to conclude that he is entirely identified with it.

What sort of "light" is thrown by Dr. Nevin's Introduction on the Catechism and Commentary of Ursinus, as well as on his "life and character," we propose, by a brief analysis, to show.

Dr. Nevin has certainly found no lack of "characteristic perfections" in the Heidelberg Catechism. "Its very style," he tells us, "moves with a sort of priestly solemnity which all are constrained to reverence and respect;" there "runs" in it "a

* Translator's Pref. p. iv.

continual appeal to the interior sense of the soul, a sort of solemn undertone, sounding from the depths of the invisible world." "A strain of heavenly music seems to flow around us at all times, while we listen to its voice." We cannot object to these encomiums, though we are far from aspiring to understand them. If they be indeed *peculiarities* of this Catechism, to Dr. Nevin must, we think, be conceded the merit of having first discovered and brought them to light. The Catechism has been lauded by learned divines and venerable Synods, from Bullinger down to the Westminster Assembly, with commendation quite as strong and various as may safely be awarded to any merely human composition. It has been pronounced "solid, clear, logical, scriptural;" "*vix alia*," they have assured us, "*dari poterit solidior, concinnior, perfectior et ad captum adultiorum pariter et juniorum accommodatio*."* But for Dr. Nevin it has been reserved to apprehend and disclose "the priestly solemnity" of its movement and "the heavenly music which flows around" it. If these epithets, reduced to pedestrian style, mean simply the full, rich and harmonious exhibition of truth, the matter comes then within the range of our humble consciousness; and we must say, that in our plain way, we have been profoundly sensible to the same qualities in the Westminster Catechism, whose luminous and comprehensive statements have often penetrated and charmed our very soul.

Dr. Nevin commends the Catechism for "its care to avoid the thorny, dialectic subtleties of Calvinism." And again in his "History of the Catechism," he tells us that "the knotty points of Calvinism are not brought forward in it as necessary objects of belief, one way or the other."† Among these "knotty points" and thorny dialectic subtleties of Calvinism," he enumerates the doctrines of "predestination,"‡ "a limited

* See the "Judicia Theologorum, &c., de Catechizandi ratione," among the Acta Syn. Dord. Sess. XV.

† History and Genius of the Heid. Catechism, p. 131. The "Introduction" so largely consists of extracts from that work, that we are justified in viewing them as a connected exposition of Dr. Nevin's sentiments; especially, as at the close of the "Introduction," he refers his readers to the "History."

‡ Hist. and Gen. of the Heid. Cat. p. 135.

or particular atonement,"* "irresistible grace,"† "the perseverance of the saints," and more faintly, the relations of the human will to conversion and salvation. These are the "knotty" and "hard points," "the thorny dialectic subtleties of Calvinism" which the Catechism has taken "care to avoid," and in relation to which it maintains, if we are to believe Dr. Nevin, a cautiously guarded non-committal. An astonishing statement truly! Why then was it called by way of eminence "the Calvinistic Catechism?" Why attacked as such, by Romanists, Lutherans, Socinians, and Remonstrants? Why adopted by all the branches of the Reformed Church as an embodiment of Calvinism? Why was its author banished from Breslau as a Calvinist? How totally must *he* have misapprehended the character of his own work!‡ 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

* Hist. and Gen. of the Heid. Cat. p. 135.

† p. 136.

‡ See his Exposition and "Miscellanea Catechetica" passim; from the latter of which might be compiled an elaborate demonstration of the Five ("knotty") Points of Calvinism. We would particularly refer the reader to No. 4 of that collection, consisting of a long letter on Predestination and the questions involved in it, addressed to a friend who was perplexed on these points. He assures his troubled friend that it is as clearly revealed as any other truth in the Bible, and that it is attended with no difficulty, "provided only we read the Holy Scripture without prejudice and without bias, and with the sincere desire not of reforming God after our own fancies (*non reformandi Deum ad nostras phantasias*), but of learning of him from himself, and of ascribing all glory to him and transferring it from ourselves to him. Thus," he adds, "have those things become easy to me which appeared difficult, so long as I depended on the authority of men, who neither profited themselves nor me!" He clearly presents the doctrine with its adjuncts in that aspect in which it is so beautifully expressed in the XVII. Article of the Ch. of England; "The godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort." All the Five Points of (what is called) Calvinism protrude themselves in this long and admirable letter. The author tells his friend at the close, "*totam noctem impendi huic scriptioni, summa cum difficultate*." It is dated Sept. 11, 1573.

commendation! How superfluous the labour of Coppenstein in "*ex-calvinizing*" it, since it contained no Calvinism at all! How utterly, in fact, has it been misunderstood, by friends and foes, in that age and in all succeeding times, till the "light" has been "thrown upon it" by the Introduction of Dr. Nevin!

The reader has but to take this work into his hand and read over Questions 1st, 2d, 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; aye, and guarded too, by the author, in armour of proof against all assailants. We will promise him from our own experience, not only a full satisfaction of his doubts, (if he has any,) on this particular question, but a most edifying and delightful improvement of his time. The Heidelberg Catechism "avoiding" Calvinism! Verily, the temerity of mere assertion "can no farther go." If its Calvinism was strong enough to satisfy the Calvinists of that day, and the "hard-handed Puritans"* of England, a hundred years later, we certainly think it may satisfy us.

Dr. Nevin commends "the broad, free character which marks the tone of its instructions. It is," he says, "moderate, gentle, soft." Rather questionable praise, we think, for "a form of sound words"—and certainly not more questionable in itself than in its application to the Heidelberg Catechism, which, after all Dr. Nevin has said of its "freedom from controversial," "polemical" and "party prejudices," really wears a more hostile and warlike front towards error and errorists than other Reformed symbols. For example, the Westminster Catechism confines itself to the simple and direct statement of truth,† whereas the Heidelberg Catechism repeatedly connects with such statement, a specification of the opposite error.

Prominent among its "characteristic perfections" is "the

* "Early Christianity," No. II.

† So does the Catechismus Genevensis (by Calvin.) The nearest approach which it makes to a hostile demonstration in any direction, is where it declares any departure from the command of Christ, in the doctrine and celebration of the Sacraments, to be *summum nefas*.

mystical element," "the rich mystical element that is found to enter so largely into its composition," "the rich vein of mysticism which runs every where through its doctrinal statements."* Here is another occult quality of which its author and his early expounders never appear to have dreamed. Ursinus himself makes short work with *μυστηριον* by a very brief explanation of its classic derivation and use, and its scriptural and theological application, in his exposition of the 66th Question. He nowhere else uses the word, as far as we remember, even in reference to the Lord's supper. But Dr. Nevin has found a "rich vein of mysticism entering largely into its composition," "running every where through its doctrinal statements." What is this? Dr. Nevin has thought proper to enlighten us. "The mystical element," he says,† "is that quality in religion, by which it goes beyond all simply logical or intellectual apprehension, and addresses itself directly to the soul, as something to be felt and believed, even where it is too deep to be explained. The Bible abounds with such mysticism. It prevails, especially, in every page of the Apostle John. We find it largely in Luther. It has been often said that the Reformed faith, as distinguished from the Catholic and the Lutheran, is unfriendly to this element . . . and so is ever prone to run into rationalism. And it must be confessed that there is some show of reason for the serious charge." A very serious charge indeed! That "the Reformed faith as distinguished from the Catholic and the Lutheran, is unfriendly to an element" with which "the Bible abounds," and which "prevails in every page of the Apostle John!" But it is satisfactory to know that the Heidelberg Catechism being "the product of the Reformed Church in the full bloom of its historical developement" has eliminated this hostile quality and thus "surmounted the force of the objection now mentioned;" in other words, has approximated to "the Catholic and Lutheran" systems. It seems difficult to conceive again why it was then so "fiercely assaulted" at once from Lutheranism and "from the Church of Rome itself!"‡

But as for the existence of this "mystical element," this "quality which goes beyond all intellectual apprehension" in

* Intro. p. 15 and 16.

† Int. p. 15.

‡ Int. p. 16.

the Heidelberg Catechism, it is sufficient to oppose to the assertion one plain declaration of Ursinus himself from innumerable others. It occurs in the Prolegomena to the Catechism No. IV. § 7—"Instruction must be short, *simple*, and *perspicuous*," ("*brevis, simplex et perspicua*") on account of the ignorance and infirmity of learners." And *herein*, he says, *lies the great necessity and value of catechetical instruction*. How totally then must the worthy author have failed of his own aim and conception of a good Catechism, if he has made one which is pervaded "through all its doctrinal statements" with "that quality which goes beyond all intellectual apprehension!" How ill adapted would such a Catechism be to impart that "true *knowledge* of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, without which" (Ursinus tells us in § 3 of the same chapter) "no one that has attained to years of discretion and understanding can be saved;" (sustaining the assertion by John xvii. 3.) This whole No. of the Prolegomena is occupied with the demonstration of the necessity of a clear, solid and intelligible communication of the doctrines of Christianity. It has ever been deemed an extraordinary merit of this Catechism, that it was "*ad captum tam juniorum quam adultiorum accommodatus*." Hear what Bullinger says of it,* after stating that he had read it with great eagerness and many thanks to God. "*Ordo libelli dilucidus est, et res ipsæ sincere verissimeque propositæ. Plana sunt omnia, piissima, fructuosissima, succinctâ brevitate comprehendentiâ magnas res et copiosas*." So far were the ablest men of that day from detecting "the rich mystical element, going beyond all intellectual apprehension" which Dr. Nevin has discovered, "running everywhere through its doctrinal statements."

That it "addresses itself directly to the soul" is perfectly true. So do all the Reformed symbols; because they speak that "word of God which *pierceth* even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit." But they "address the soul" none the less "directly" because they address it *through* the intellect. "How many things are necessary for thee to *know*?" (says the

* In a letter written 1563, the same year in which the Catechism was published. It is quoted by Van Alphen. Oec. Cat. Pal. Prol. p. 40.

Heidelberg Catechism, (Q. 2). Again, "Whence *knowest* thou thy misery?" (Q. 3.) "What is true Faith? (Q. 21.) Ans. True Faith is not only *a certain knowledge*, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word, but also an assured confidence, which the Holy Ghost works *by the gospel* in my heart," &c. Here every thing is rational, (in the true sense,) manly, intelligent, and eminently free from the "mystical element," by Dr. Nevin's own exposition of it. The Reformed creeds, and those who ministered them, sought not to stupefy and overcloud the human intellect with "mysticism," but to quicken and invigorate its faculties by the vital beams of truth, and to call them forth to their highest and noblest exercise, in the contemplation of the sublime verities of revelation. They therefore opened wide to them the Bible. Their first and most earnest labour was to make it speak in the vulgar tongue of every race. They invited all men to come to its light, and to search into its truths, in a spirit at once reverential and free. In a word, they "fed the souls of men with *knowledge* and *understanding*," not with "doctrinal statements going beyond all intellectual apprehension!"

We dismiss this point with simply remarking that these words, "mystery," "mysticism," "*mystical*," (Rev. xvii. 5,) have been great favourites with the Papal Church. In fact, there have been wise and good men not a few, (and the Reformers among them,) who thought they could read on her brow, written by the finger of God, the name of "MYSTERY."* For that very reason, the Reformers eschewed both the word and the thing. They looked upon it as a sort of bandage which Rome tied over the eyes of men, when she wanted to put her hand into their pockets, or her "hook into their noses." When they spoke of "mysteries," it was of "the mysteries of God" and "of the kingdom of God;" the "deep things of God," and not the inventions and impostures which men have covered over with the veil of *mystery*. Nor do we know any

* It is painful to observe Dr. Nevin's fondness for this word; to hear him for example, frequently (even in the course of this Introduction) allude to the sacrament under the name of "the awful mystery." It brings to one's mind Bellarmine's "*tremenda mysteria missæ*," and the like Romish misnomers of "the Lord's SUPPER."

sense in which any of them (and Ursinus as little as the rest) would have accepted the compliment which Dr. Nevin has here paid to the Heidelberg Catechism. With historical "mysticism" they certainly had little sympathy; and as little, we believe, with that "quality" in a certain school of modern German philosophy, which "goes beyond all intellectual apprehension." The independence of the logical and intuitional consciousness was not yet brought to light. They speak as if they thought it necessary (in all things intelligible) to be understood in order to be "felt and believed."

But it soon becomes apparent in what direction this deep current of "mysticism" is wafting us. "The mystical element of the Catechism" (says Dr. Nevin, p. 15,) "is closely connected with the Catholic spirit," "its sympathy with the religious life of the old Catholic Church." This too, is numbered "among its characteristic perfections!" If by "the old Catholic Church" Dr. Nevin means the old (Roman) Catholic Church, (and we can understand the author of "Early Christianity" in no other sense,) what are we to make of its direct antagonism to the Papal Church and doctrine, in every one of the "*præcipui articuli*,"* in which the fathers of the Protestant Church made the "controversy" with Rome to consist. To select a few examples;—see its pointed condemnation of the claim of Rome to be "the only true Church, out of which there is no salvation," in Q. 54; of the Romish doctrine of good works in Q. 91, and in its whole treatment of the doctrine of justification; of the mass, Q. 80; of the power of the keys, Q. 83, 84, 85; of the use of images, Q. 96, 97, 98; of the invocation of saints, Q. 30, 99, 100, 102; and of enforced celibacy,† in the treatment of "marriage" in connection with Q. 109. This compliment of "sympathy with the old Catholic Church" appears simply ludicrous when we pass out of the Catechism into this "exposition of its true meaning,"‡ and see the author, with the whip of small cords in his hand, laying about him vigorously and with a will, at "schoolmen," "Papists," "monks," and

* See the "Epilogus" to the Confess. Augustana. Hase, Libri Symbol. Ecc. Evang. p. 45.

† And of "penance" and "extreme unction" in the Expos. of Q. 68th.

‡ Dr. Nevin's Int. p. 19.

"mass-mongers." A strange manifestation of sympathy, indeed! And still the question recurs, how came it that the Catechism was so "fiercely assaulted at the time of its appearance, (as Dr. Nevin tells us it was, p. 16) from the Church of Rome?" She generally knows her friends, even her secret friends, too well to make them the objects of her "assaults."

Dr. Nevin, however, is determined to divest the Catechism, not only of all the "knotty" "hard points of Calvinism," but of all bristling manifestations of hostility towards Rome. He therefore sets himself to dismantle one of the *propugnacula* of the Reformed faith, in the following style.

"A great deal of offence, as is generally known, has been taken with the unfortunate declaration, by which the Roman mass is denounced, at the close of the 80th question, as being 'nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and an accursed idolatry.' But it should never be forgotten, that this harsh anathema, so foreign from the spirit of Melancthon and Ursinus, and from the reigning tone also of the Heidelberg Catechism, forms no part of the original work as published under the hand of Ursinus himself. It is wanting in the first two editions; and 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."

We have here given Dr. Nevin's statement on this subject *entire*, without omitting or italicising a word, that there may be no possibility of unfairness. We now beg the reader to compare it, statement by statement, with the following passage from his "History and Genius of the Heidelberg Catechism," (p. 54, 1847,) which we transfer from his pages to our own with the same scrupulosity. "One remarkable distinction characterized the first edition, as compared with all which have been published since. The 80th Question, in which the Roman mass is denounced as an 'accursed idolatry,' was not suffered to make its appearance. In the second edition, it is found in its place, only the *accursed idolatry* is still suppressed. Finally, however, as in this same year the decrees of the Council of Trent came out anathematizing all who would not own the

mass to be divine, the Elector took pains to have the question restored in full to the form in which it was originally composed, while the previous text was allowed to go out of use as defective and incorrect. This gave rise, subsequently, to no small controversy and reproach."

The comparison of these passages brings to light two entirely irreconcilable discrepancies.

1. The "Introduction" states that the passage in question "is wanting in the first two editions." The "History," that "in the second edition it is found in its place, only the 'accursed idolatry' is suppressed."

2. The "Introduction" affirms that it "forms no part of the original work as published under the hand of Ursinus himself." The "History" states that in the first edition, the whole 80th Question was not suffered to make its appearance; in the second it is found in its place, only the "accursed idolatry is still suppressed, but that, finally, the Elector took pains to have the Question RESTORED in full to the form in which it was ORIGINALLY COMPOSED, while the previous text was allowed to go out of use as defective and incorrect."

How widely then, has Dr. Nevin changed ground between 1847 and 1851! We shall convince the reader presently, that his progress, in this respect, (we fear in others too,) has been in the direction of error and not of truth. We might quote him against himself, for he has given us the right to do so, by referring us to the "History" at the close of the "Introduction." But a "historian" who makes opposite statements of facts in the space of four years, without a syllable of retraction or explanation, is an authority so precarious that we cannot bring ourselves to rely upon it. Nor need we. A brief statement of unquestionable facts will put this matter in its true light.

The Catechism was first published in German, (as we have seen,) in January, 1563. Three successive editions were issued during that year. The first did not contain the 80th Question. The second contained it, with the exception of the last clause, "and an accursed idolatry." The third contained it entire as it now stands, closing with the declaration—"Und ist also die Mess im grund nichts anders, denn ein Verläugnung des eini-

gen opffers uñ leidens Jesu Christi, und ein vermaledeite Abgötterey."

To this third edition was appended the following notice,

"An den Christlichen Leser.

Was im ersten truck übersehen, als fürnemlich folio 55, ist jetzunder auss befehl Churfürstlicher Gnaden addiert worden, 1563."

"To the Christian reader.

What was overlooked (or omitted) in the former edition, as, especially, fol. 55, has now been added by order of his Electoral Grace, 1563.

On the 55th folio stood the 80th Question.* The Catechism containing the 80th Question in this complete form, was translated, the same year, 1563, into Latin, and shortly afterwards, successively, into the numerous European and Asiatic languages we have mentioned above, all carrying with them the 80th question, precisely as it now stands in the popular editions in use in the Reformed Churches.

These are the facts in the case which no man will contest.† Now for the charge of Dr. Nevin, that "the unfortunate declaration, by which the Roman Mass is denounced, at the close of the 80th Question, forms no part of the original work as published under the hand of Ursinus himself, but was afterwards foisted in, only by the authority of the Elector Frederick."

"To foist. To insert by forgery." Such is the whole definition of Dr. Johnson. 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.

We will take the phrase in its largest latitude. It can bear but three interpretations, viz., that the clause in question was inserted after the death of Ursinus, without his knowledge, or against his consent and convictions.

* Köcher, Cat. Gesch., p. 250.

† The reader is referred to the following authorities:—Van Alphen Oec. Cat. Pal. Prologus, p. 29, &c., Köcher Cat. Geschichte der Ref. Kir. p. 250. Augusti. Versuch einer hist. krit. Ein. in die beyden Haupt. Kat. p. 115, &c., Niemeyer Coll. Conf. in Ecc. Ref. Praef. p. 57, &c. The latter presents the historical argument in its fullest and at the same time its briefest form. He printed both the German and Latin copies in his collection from the editions of 1563.

It was not inserted *after the death* of Ursinus. The whole question stands precisely in its present form in Niemeyer's copies, both German and Latin, printed from editions of 1563.* Ursinus died in 1583, twenty years afterward. It was not, therefore, inserted *after his death*.

It was not inserted *without his knowledge*. He expounded his own catechism throughout, year by year from 1563 to 1577, (fourteen years.) The work before us consists of these "Expositions." It could not have been inserted therefore, *without his knowledge*.

It was not inserted *against his consent and convictions*. Let the reader but look through his "Explicatio" of this question, and of the whole subject from Q. 75th to 80th, and see how he sustains every position and clause in it, *and this among the rest*, from the nature of things, from Scripture, and from the fathers, and he will be satisfied that not only his mind but his heart was in it. Let him read his "Theses de Sacramentis"† and he will receive yet more abundant proof.‡ We will not tire him with citations, but content ourselves with *one* which of itself will banish all doubt. In the year 1569, (six years after the publication of the Catechism) Ursinus *added* to the exposition of this 80th Q. eight "discrimina" in support of its doctrine, in which he re-asserts and proves it, *clause by clause*, and deduces from the whole the following conclusion. "*Hæc discrimina ostendunt, missam Papisticam in fundamento nihil esse aliud, quam abnegationem unici sacrificii Christi et horribilem idololatriam.*" "These *discrimina* show that the Popish Mass, at bottom, is nothing else than a denial of the one sacrifice of Christ and a horrible idolatry." A repetition, almost word for word, of the passage in question! It could not, therefore, have been inserted *without his consent and against his conviction*.§

* Collectio, &c. p. 411 and 448, Kæcher says too, that he had *before his eyes*, while writing his "Catechetische Geschichte," a copy of the edition of 1563, in which the 80th Q. stood entire. See Cat. Gesch. des Ref. Kir. p. 251. 1756.

† Bound up with the edition of 1622.

‡ We have not the entire works of Ursinus within our reach, But Van Alphen says (Oec. Cat. Pal. Prol. p. 30) in reference to this 80th Q.—"In operibus Ursini non tantum legitur integra, sed etiam quod ad singulas partes explicatur et asseritur. Vide illa Tom. I. p. 285."

§ See these "*discrimina*," Lat. ed. of 1622, p. 541. Williard's Tr. p. 421.

But we will go further. *It was contained in the original draft as written by Ursinus*. Else why was it said to have been "*omitted*," (übersehen,) in the *notula* appended to the third impression? Can any thing be said to be *omitted* in the printing which was not *contained* in the manuscript copy? This very inscription substantiates beyond a doubt, the statement of Dr. Nevin (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. Nevin's charge—in contradiction to all history, (his own "History" included,) that it was "*foisted in afterwards*, only by the authority of the Elector Frederick?" We have no disposition to find a name for it. It is sufficient for us to have demonstrated "*the innocence of the Heidelberg Catechism.*"

Having thus far dealt with *facts*, shall we offer a probable conjecture as to this *gradual* insertion of the 80th question? It was a bold declaration of the truth of God. The previous questions, (75 to 79) had contained a full statement of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. This ("What is the *difference* between the Lord's Supper and the Popish Mass?") merely presented it *in contrast* with the corrupt and idolatrous substitute of the Papal Church. The Elector had to encounter the hostility of the imperial throne and of the Popish princes. Even his Lutheran brethren were disaffected by the Calvinistic features of the Catechism. He was overawed for a moment by the manifold perils of his position, and thought perhaps that the positive statement of the *truth* was enough, without holding up the *opposite error*. In the first edition, therefore, "*the 80th question was not suffered to appear.*" In the second, he gathered more courage, and "*it is found in its place, only the accursed idolatry is still suppressed.*" In the third, he *encouraged himself in the Lord his God*, and let the whole truth come out; in fact, "*took pains*" (ashamed it may be of having so far yielded to the fear of man) "*to have the question restored in full to the form in which it was originally composed,*" saying, that "*even if it should come to the shedding of blood, it would be an honour for which, if my God and Father should so please to use me, I could never be sufficiently thankful in this world or the next.*"

For the words of this noble confession, we are indebted to Dr. Nevin* (the Dr. Nevin, we mean, of 1847,) as well as for the picture of his calm heroism at the Diet shortly after, where he was called to account for his Catechism, and "witnessed a good confession" before the Emperor and Princes, saying "in conclusion, he would still comfort himself in the sure promise of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, made to him as well as to all saints, that whatever he might lose for his name in this life, should be restored to him a hundred fold in the next."†

"The unfortunate declaration," Dr. Nevin tells us, gave "a great deal of offence." To whom? Not to the Reformed Church. "The evidence of this, we have in the free, full response with which it" (the Catechism) "was met, on the part of the Church, not only in the Palatinate, but also, in other lands. It was, as though the entire Reformed Church heard and joyfully recognized her own voice in the Heidelberg Catechism." We are indebted to Dr. Nevin ("Introduction," p. 14) for this glowing description of its hearty and general approval; which is fully sustained by other authorities. Buddæus, (himself a Lutheran) tells us that even the Lutherans praised it.‡

To the Papal Court and Hierarchy, the whole symbol, and pre-eminently this declaration "gave" no doubt "a great deal of offence;" for it fell upon them with the awful force and majesty of truth. To them it was, indeed, "an unfortunate declaration," for it and other like utterances of God's truth by the preachers, writers, and creeds of the Reformation, broke the spell by which Rome had long held the nations entranced in her "strong delusions," and was at least "the beginning of the 'end' of her power.

It was "so foreign from the spirit of Melancthon," says Dr. Nevin. Now, Melancthon understood his own "spirit" as well

* History, &c. p. 65.

† Hist. & Gen. of the Heid. Cat. p. 66, 7. See also the account of his truly blessed death in this same work, p. 69.

‡ Isag. Hist. Theol. p. 341. "Catechismus Heidelbergensis... magnâ non tantum a reformatâ Ecclesiâ addictis, consensione receptus, sed et a nostratibus interdum laudatus est." The Catechism was libelled, he adds, by a Jesuit of the Palatinate, and defended by the illustrious James Lenfant, in a book entitled "L'innocence du Catechisme de Heidelberg démontrée contre deux libelles d'un Jesuite," &c.

as most men. Let him express it for himself. In an address from the University of Wittemberg to the Elector Frederic, Duke of Saxony, we meet with the following expressions, and more like them. "*Missarum perniciosus et impius abusus.*" They are numbered "*inter gravissima omnium et maxime horribilia peccata.*" "*Meræ imposturæ ad fraudem et fallaciam propter quæstum excogitatæ;—unde impuri sacrificiû occasione corradendæ pecuniæ,*" &c. (Mere tricks, devised to deceive and ensnare for the sake of gain—whence impure priests take occasion to scrape up money," &c.) The profanation of the Lord's Supper by the Corinthian Church is called to mind, and the judgments which followed it, and it is added, "Wherefore, since we far more unworthily, and by utterly abominable practices, pollute a most holy ordinance, there is no doubt but we are yet more dreadfully punished with wars, pestilence, and infinite disasters, the greatness of which is before our eyes; and not only so, but (what is still more sad and more to be dreaded,) with that blindness, and as it were frenzy, of a reprobate mind, which are daily observed in the ministers and defenders of the *Mass.*"

To this document stands subscribed the name (*clarum et venerabile!*) of "Philippus Melancthon."*

"So foreign" adds Dr. Nevin, "from the spirit of Ursinus." Now we may suppose the reader pretty well satisfied by this time "what manner of spirit" Ursinus "was of" in this matter. However, we will give him one more manifestation of it.

In his exposition of the 78th Question, he says of the worship of Christ's body in the bread as performed in the mass, "this is that fearful idolatry which is practised in the Popish mass, which, without doubt, is so detestable to God that it would be better to suffer death a thousand times than once to commit it." *Hæc est ipsa illa horrenda idololatria, quæ in missa Papistica exercetur, quæ haud dubiè tam est detestabilis* Deo, ut satius sit mille mortes oppetere, quam semel eam committere.* Lat. Ed. p. 431. Cf. Williard, p. 399.

* Sententia Academiæ Wittembergensis ad Principem Frider. Duc. Sax. Elect. (Luth. Op. Tom. II.)

† Mr. Williard translates "detestabilis" "displeasing." *Displeasing* is not a translation of *detestabilis*.

We are sorry to strip the brow of Ursinus of one of the laurels with which the eloquent and somewhat poetic eulogium of Dr. Nevin has adorned it. But the truth must be told. We fear he is hardly entitled to all the *μαλθακοὶ λόγοι*, the epithets of "moderate," "gentle," "soft," "quiet soul," (Int. p. 16,) with which Dr. Nevin has somewhat profusely bepraised him. There is reason to fear that he regarded the abominations of Popery with even more than a *holy* indignation. We commend him to the charitable judgment of the reader in this matter, while we subjoin a single passage for his consideration. But he will excuse us for dropping it into a foot-note, and leaving it modestly covered over with the veil, (however thin to learned eyes,) of its original Latinity. It may dissipate some of the saintly hues in which Dr. Nevin has drawn him; but, one thing is certain: it will leave him no longer entitled, either to praise or censure, on the score of "sympathy with the old (Roman) Catholic Church." The letter below was addressed "to a gentleman of Breslau who had just come back from Italy."*

In fact, if Dr. Nevin is looking for "sympathy with the religious life of the old Catholic Church" in any such sense† as he means, we do not know "to which of the saints" (in the Protestant calendar at least,) he "will turn." "In Luther," he says above, (Int. p. 16,) "we find largely" that "mystical element" which "is closely connected with the Catholic spirit of which we have just spoken." Luther too, we insist, must have the privilege of speaking for himself. Hear then his voice: "*Quid ergo sequitur?—Missas quas sacrificia vocant, esse summam idololatriam et impietatem.*" And shortly after, "*Quare concludimus, constanti fiducia, Missarum usum sacrificiorum idem esse quod negare Christum.*"‡ "What then follows? That the masses which they call sacrifices are the height of idolatry and

* Zach. Ursini Epistola ad amicum (Patricium Vratislaviensem) ex Italia reversum. Gratulor tibi felicem reditum ex cloaca Diabolorum, et precor, ut prosit tibi balneum quod post illam ingressus es. Quod si opus est, etiam pumicem huic schedæ inclusum tibi mitto, quo fricatus redeas nobis lautus sat comode," &c.

† For the exposition of that sense, we refer the reader again to "Early Christianity" in the September and November numbers of the Mercersburg Review.

‡ Luther de abroganda Missa priv. Op. Tom. II. p. 260.

impiety. Wherefore, we conclude with unshaken confidence that the use of the sacrifices of the masses is nothing else than to deny Christ." A startling approximation that, to the "harsh anathema" in the 80th Question! The next page completes the resemblance—"tanta impietatis novissimæ execramenta."*

Luther too shakes off Dr. Nevin's compliment of "sympathy" &c., in the same rude way as Ursinus: "That dragon's tail," (the mass) "hath drawn after it many abominations and idolatries."†

Calvin declares that "if all the angels of heaven should come to the mass, they could not purify it from its pollutions by their holy presence."‡

This feeling and conviction then, and the severity with which it is expressed, were common to all the Reformers. It was this that made them Reformers. It was not with them a matter of temperament, but of faith. The stern soul of Calvin, the fiery vehemence of Luther, the tranquil Ursinus, the serene and philosophic Melancthon, were all equally terrible in denouncing the impieties of the mass. They thought and spoke of it differently from what we do, because they knew more of it. They had emerged from the unfathomable pit of Romish corruption, and they fled, and called other men to flee for their lives. Luther said at his table, "I would not take a thousand florins for the advantage of having gone to Rome. If I had not been there, I should always have thought that I was speaking too strongly. . . I confess that I have often been too violent, but never towards the Papacy. To speak against that, a man ought to have a tongue on purpose, whose words should be thunderbolts."||

A milder age followed the stormy period of the actual Reformation, abounding in "Irenica" and "conditions of peace." The works and lives of such men as Junius,§ Paræus, John

* Luther de abroganda Missa priv. Op. Tom. II. p. 261.

† "Cauda ista draconis traxit multas abominationes et idololatrias."

‡ "Ne omnes quidem Angelos, si Missæ intersint, posse eluere ejus sordes sua sanctitate." Epist. qui liceat participare cultui Romanæ Synagogæ. Op. Calv. Tom. IX. p. 205.

|| Michelet. Vie de Luther, Tome II. p. 103.

§ Polyander asked Junius shortly before his death which of his numerous works was his own favourite. "My Irenicon," said the good man, "for in all the rest I wrote as a theologian, in that as a Christian."

Turretine and Werenfels, form a most interesting feature in the Church History of that period. The various branches of the Protestant Church felt a strong affinity towards each other. The Churches of England and Holland held across the channel, "*junctas manus, pignus amicitiae*." Good and great men in the several Protestant communions, earnestly sought to bring about a "Christian alliance." But the works written by men of this stamp (and even for this express object) uniformly maintain "that there can be no sound agreement betwixt Popery and the profession of the Gospel, no more than betwixt light and darkness, falsehood and truth, God and Belial; and therefore no reconciliation can be devised betwixt them." We cite the exact words of Archbishop Usher.* The meek and pacific Bishop Davenant goes still farther. "The Roman Church" ("being," as he elsewhere says in the same letter, "in doctrine a false, and in practice an idolatrous Church,") "is no more a true Church in respect of Christ, or those due qualities and proper actions which Christ requires, than an arrant whore is a true and lawful wife unto her husband. You would not think, I am sure, in that sense, of calling that strumpet a true Church."† "*Sane non possumus, salva conscientia, cum iis consociari*," says John Turretine,‡ the very embodiment of the pacific and comprehensive spirit. And all these peace-makers spoke the same language.|| Without exception, however, they admitted (as did also the earlier and sterner Reformers,) that there were persons of sincere piety within the communion of the Church of Rome.§ Why, then, do they, with one voice, proclaim the impossibility of a reconciliation with the Papal Church, consistently with a good conscience? One, from their

* Sum and Substance of Chris. Rel. p. 413, fol. 1678.

† Letter to the Bp. of Exon. Life, pref. to Comm. on Col. p. 36, 37.

‡ De Artic. Fundamentalibus. Dilucid. Joh. Alph. Turretine. Vol. III. p. 63.

|| Even the Romanists admired these men. See Moreri's eloquent tribute to "l'illustre Alph. Turretin" and Werenfels (Sam.) whom he pronounces "*Théologiens du premier ordre et animés à l'envi d'un esprit de prudence, de charité et de concorde*." Dict. Hist. "Werenfels."

§ Arch. Usher thinks that "even a Pope may be saved. For some, (in likelihood) have entered into and continued in that See ignorantly. Wherefore, they may possibly find place for repentance," &c. He is remarkably cautious in handling that point. Sum and Subst. &c. ibid.

many reasons, and generally the first and foremost was the perpetual sacrilege and idolatry of "the Roman Mass."

What, then, is the Roman Mass? To answer this question, we shall not go to "Morse & Co.* (albeit with us decidedly respectable authority,) but ascend, at once, to a source of information which Dr. Nevin at least will admit to be august and indisputable—the Council of Trent.

The nine "Canons of the Mass" (passed by the Council of Trent, at its 22d Session, Sept. 17, 1562,) ordain the following among other "*Capita doctrinae Missae*;"† that the Mass is not a commemoration of a sacrifice, but a true and proper sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offered up to the Father by the hands of the priest; that Christ instituted the apostles and their successors as priests, thus to offer up his body and blood; that this offering up of the body and blood of Christ is a propitiation for sins not only of the living, but of the dead; that this sacrifice is rightly performed to the memory and honour of the saints; that it is rightly performed with such ceremonies, vestments and outward signs as the Church ordains; that it is rightly performed when the priest sacramentally communicates alone; that it is rightly performed when the words of consecration are uttered in an unknown tongue, and in a low voice."

The nine Anathemas corresponding to the Canons, ordain that whosoever shall speak in opposition to any doctrine or usage contained in any one of these Canons is anathematized and damned. ("*Anathemate fulminari, lit. thunderstricken with a curse, et damnandum esse*.")

Here then, a mortal and a sinner clad in vestments and muttering (in a low voice and an unknown tongue) formulæ of purely human (and most of them of heathen) invention, pretends to offer up to God the person of his beloved, and now glorified Son; the overpowering splendour of whose presence is such that his own beloved Apostle at the first glance, "fell at his feet as it were dead," (Rev. i.); who saith of himself, "I live for evermore!"—of whom his inspired Apostle testifies, "he hath by one offering perfected for ever them that are sancti-

* "Early Christianity," Merc. Rev. Sept. 1851.

† Pet. Soav. Pol. Hist. Conc. Trident. l. VI. p. 520, 1.

fied." A sinful creature offers up in sacrifice his CREATOR; in the face of his own words, "No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down of myself." And this horrible mockery is gone through, not only to make a propitiation for the sins of the living, but to reverse the doom and alter the eternal state of the dead; nay more, and (if possible) worse, that human nature which "the Mighty God" (Is. ix. 6,) assumed into an unspeakable union with his own, is offered up in sacrifice "to the memory and honour"* of dead men whom Rome is pleased to call saints; some of them persons under whose crimes the very earth trembled while they lived upon it—men who would have been hanged in any country under the government of laws: and this unutterable rite is what Rome has made out of "the Lord's Supper;" that sweet and happy festival of grateful commemoration and holy communion in which the Redeemer, to bring to mind himself, and to show forth his death, took bread and blessed it and said, This is my body; and took the cup saying, This is my blood, his actual person being then before their eyes, and within the reach of their hands, his breast supporting the beloved disciple, his voice speaking to them, his mouth eating and drinking along with them. And Rome has not only thus turned the table into an altar, and the feast into a sacrifice, and the blessing into a muttered and unintelligible consecration, and the affectionate memorial into a fearful immolation, and "the broken bread" into a wafer, and taken away the "cup of blessing" from those to whom Christ gave it, saying, Drink ye *all* of it, and changed the words which Christ spake to his disciples that his peace might abide in them, and that their joy might be full—words, O how full of kind explanation even of their unexpressed doubts and difficulties, (John xiv. 8, 9; xvi. 19,) and clear, deep revelations of truth and grace, into words of which they cannot understand a syllable, doubly concealed as they are by an *unknown language* and a *low tone*:† but when she has thus changed "the Lord's Supper" into her own "Mass," if any man speak a word‡ against jot or tittle of the new rite which she has thus brought

* "In memoriam et honorem sanctorum,"—Hist. Concil. Trident.

† "Summissa voce," "non lingua vulgari."—*Ibid.*

‡ "Si quis dixerit" is the sole prefix to every anathema.—*Ibid.*

into the place of that which Christ bequeathed to us, she excommunicates him from the Church on earth, (*her Church*, blessed be God!) and dooms him to eternal fire in hell—aye, and gives him a foretaste of it too, in present and material fire, *wherever she has the power.*

This, reader, is "the Roman Mass."* To see how desperately many, even of the Roman bishops and clergy, struggled step by step, against the *horribile decretum*, you have but to look into the debates which preceded its passage in the Council. But the Pope, through his legates, was inexorable. The canons (curses and all) were at last passed *by a plurality of votes*; and Rome, on that day, branded on her own brow the mark of an idolatrous and apostate Church, which will cleave to her in the sight of God and man till she is herself "consumed by the breath of the Lord, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming."

Will it be believed that Dr. Nevin has, within a few weeks, applied to this mixture of "abominable idolatries" the title of "the tremendous sacrament of the altar;" and in reference to the Papal Church and power in general, has held the following language: "The Papacy itself is a wonder of wonders.† There is nothing like it in all history besides." (That is undoubtedly true.) "So all men will feel who stop to think about it in more than a fool's way. History, too, *even in Protestant hands*,‡ is coming more and more to do justice to the vast and mighty merits of the system in past times. . . . Think of the theology of this old Catholic Church,§ of its body of ethics,|| of its canon law. The Cathedral of Cologne is no such work as this last. The dome of St. Peter is less sublimely grand

* Can we wonder that Luther said of it, "It is incomprehensible that such an impious abuse is daily endured by God." (*Inæstimabile est tantum impietatis abusum quotidie a Deo ferri.*)—Op. II. p. 250.) Or that Melancthon ascribes to it the "wars, pestilence, and infinite disasters" which afflicted Germany in his day? It seems, even now, that no country in which it is performed *by authority* can have either liberty or peace.

† Cf. Rev. xiii. 3; "all the world wondered after the beast."

‡ These italics are ours.

§ "The old Catholic Church" is, then, "the Papacy." Cf. above, p. 58.

|| This "body of ethics" has been admirably expounded by one of her own most gifted members, Pascal. See his "Lettres Provinciales."

than the first. . . . 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!*"*

When Dr. Nevin chooses to expatiate in this strain from his theological chair at Mercersburg, and in contrast with "the vast and mighty merits of the Papacy," to discourse of "Protestant myths," and dilate on the "vast errors and monstrous diseases of Protestantism;" nay, even to indulge in bitter sneers at "plenty of Bibles" as the means of reforming and saving the world, while he extols "the Papacy" as "the power of order and law, the fountain of a new civilization," &c., &c.; much as we may wonder and grieve at the strange and sad spectacle, it is not for us to interfere. But we cannot permit him, on the plea of "introducing" a Catechism which we all revere, and an exposition which bears the stamp of long and wide approval, to come, in his *mystical presence*, into the sacred arcanum of theology, and, by a few quiet postulates, unlock the very citadel of the Reformed faith, and deliver up the key to the Romanists.

We do not hesitate to say that by the process through which he has made the Heidelberg Catechism to pass in this "Introduction,"† the strongest contrapositions which can be framed in words must speedily blend into each other. A man may reason that

"Black's not so black, nor white so very white,"

till he has lost the power of distinguishing them. He may eventually persuade himself that "darkness is light, and light darkness." He may even bring his understanding to embrace the monstrous absurdity, that Popery is "early Christianity."

But, while we deplore that he should thus bewilder himself, it would be treason to Christian truth, to allow him volun-

* Mercersburg Rev., Nov. 1851. "Early Christianity," over Dr. Nevin's initials. See also the previous No.

† The reader may see the same process applied to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England in Tract No. 90, of the Oxford series.

tarily an opportunity of extensively bewildering and misleading others by misrepresenting and (we must use the right word) *calumniating* a manual so clear in the doctrine and so instinct with the life of Protestant Christianity as the venerable Heidelberg Catechism. It is, says Dr. Nevin, "a Calvinistic Catechism," yet it "avoids" Calvinism; it is "throughout decidedly Protestant,* yet it manifests great "sympathy for the old Catholic Church;" it does indeed contain one "harsh anathema," but that, "it should ever be remembered," is a forgery! Suffer Dr. Nevin thus to "go about the bulwarks" of this ancient creed, knock off the "hard, knotty points of Calvinism," and spike the tremendous ordnance that utters its thunders from the 80th Question—and he will soon *make* the Catechism what he *calls* it, "moderate, gentle, soft"—quite harmless towards Popery and every other error; itself in fact, "a city broken down and without walls."

But we forbear. *Adstat Typographus.* The reader, no doubt, is weary, and so are we. Enough we think, has been said to convince him that Mr. Williard's work, executed, and especially "introduced" as it is, cannot hope to be received with affection and confidence by the Reformed Churches; with some measure of which they would surely have welcomed it, even with its present imperfections, if it had come before them unattended by the "Introduction" and the "Translator's Preface."

An adequate translation of this noble "Body of Divinity" must therefore be still considered a *desideratum*. Can we look to Mr. Williard to supply it?

If he will return, affectionately and cordially, to the faith which shed such unfading glory over the early annals of the German Reformed Church; if he will look more to Heidelberg and less to Mercersburg; and, taking this "Opus Catecheti-cum" in that final and condensed form in which Pareus bequeathed the Lectures of his venerated teacher to future times, "consulting" meanwhile the Latin much more "constantly" than "the old English translation," above all, retrenching inexorably, all "addenda" and "extracts" whether "short" or

* "Hist. and Gen." &c. p. 130.

long from apocryphal sources—will re-produce the work in English with as close an imitation as possible, of the terse and elegant conciseness of the original—he will perform a work,

Οψιμον, οψιτελεστον, ου κλεος ουποτ' ολειςται;—

a service for which (long after the crotchets of Dr. Nevin have passed into oblivion,) future generations of enlightened Christians will “rise up and call him blessed.”

SHORT NOTICES.

The Eldership of the Christian Church. By the Rev. David King, LL.D. Glasgow. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1851.

The reputation of this work is already established. It has special reference to the duties and qualifications of Ruling Elders.

Select Discourses of Sereno Edwards Dwight, D.D., with a Memoir of his Life. By William T. Dwight, pastor of the Third Congregational Church, Portland. Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 47 Washington Street. 1851.

The memoir, prefixed to this volume, will excite commiseration in behalf of its subject, who, for the greater portion of his life, was weighed down by bodily sufferings such as few men have been called upon to endure; and these discourses, we think, will greatly elevate and extend his reputation for ability and research, as a theologian.

Lays of the Kirk and Covenant. By Mrs. A. Stuart Menteath. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 285 Broadway. 1852.

This stirring volume is full of the genuine spirit of the Scottish Covenanters. The most affecting incidents in the heroic struggles and sufferings of Scotland's ecclesiastical history are the themes of separate poems, which evince not only cordial sympathy in the cause they celebrate, but very considerable poetic talent.

The Heavenly Recognition; or, an Earnest and Scriptural Discussion of the Question, Will we know our friends in Heaven? By the Rev. H. Harbaugh, A.M. Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston. 1851. pp. 288.

This is a work interesting from its subject. Those who have

friends in heaven will be disposed to receive with pleasure, any scriptural argument in favour of a doctrine which their hearts yearn to have placed beyond reach of doubt. Few Christians indeed, we believe, ever seriously question a doctrine which is not only so congenial with their feelings, but which the Bible every where implies.

The Authority of God; or, the True Barrier against Romish and Infidel Aggression. Four Discourses. By the Rev. J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, D.D., President of the Theological Institute of Geneva. With an Introduction, written for this edition. Author's complete edition. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1851.

These discourses had their origin in the Popish Bull establishing a Romish hierarchy in England, and in the denial of the inspiration and infallible authority of Scripture, by Professor Scherer, of Geneva. They are characterized by all the logical force, zeal for sound doctrine, and vivacity, of their celebrated author, and are peculiarly adapted to the exigencies of the times.

The Royal Preacher. Lectures on Ecclesiastes. By James Hamilton, D.D., F.L.S. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1851.

Dr. Hamilton is one of the most popular modern theological writers. He is a man of learning, of genius, and of a delightful temper, as well as of fervent piety. These Lectures abound in examples of ingenious exposition, and of rare eloquence, and their whole tendency is for good.

Stray Arrows. By the Rev. Theo. Ledyard Cuyler. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1852.

A collection of the fugitive pieces of their prolific and sprightly author.

Sacramental Meditations and Advices. By the Rev. John Willison, Dundee. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1851.

A reprint of an excellent old work.

Confessions of a Convert from Baptism in Water to Baptism with Water. From the Second English Edition. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, No. 265 Chestnut street.

The Converted Unitarian. A short Memoir of E—— E——, a patient sufferer, who entered into rest August 13, 1825. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, No. 265 Chestnut street.

There is such a general similarity in the exercises of Christians, not only in their strictly religious feelings, but in their struggles after truth, that few methods of instruction or conviction are more effectual than the truthful delineation of the progress of any soul from error to sound doctrine. The two books