

James A. Brown

The New Theology of Samuel Schmucker



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The New Theology: Samuel Schmucker and Its Other Defenders

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The New Theology: Samuel Schmucker And Its Other Defenders

By Rev. James Allen Brown

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth
just; but his neighbor cometh and
searcheth him” – Proverbs 18:17.

Philadelphia
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Dedication

To
All Lovers Of Sound Doctrine
Especially In The
Evangelical Lutheran Church
This Pamphlet is
Dedicated by the
Author

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking spiritual truth.

JAMES ALLEN BROWN (1821-1882) was a key conservative theologian at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. John Morris [writes](#) of Dr. Brown:

"The theological attainments of Dr. Brown were extensive, and his general scholarship universally acknowledged. His knowledge was accurate; he knew things thoroughly; his thoughts were clear as the atmosphere, and his temperament cool and calm as a morning breeze. No opponent could throw him off his guard, and he was a dangerous man to encounter in debate, unless your cause was manifestly right. He was not born within our fold, but from conviction entered it after he had attained to manhood, and heartily espousing our cause, he maintained it vigorously to the end.

"Dr. Brown possessed a moral courage that nothing could daunt... His courage in opposing the theological teaching of the man [Rev. Samuel Schmucker] who had been his own professor in the Seminary eighteen years before... deserves the highest praise.

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Introduction

IN SENDING FORTH this publication, to share whatever destiny may await it, a proper regard for the opinions and feelings of others requires a brief statement of the reasons for its appearance. Its preparation has not been to the writer a “labor of love,” but a painful task, which he could not feel at liberty to decline; and if some of the statements shall prove to be unpleasant in their character, the responsibility must rest with those whose conduct has rendered such a procedure a manifest duty. Should great plainness of speech be used, it is such as both suits the cause of truth and the writer’s taste: but it will be his endeavor to say as little that is harsh or severe as is consistent with the manly utterance of his sentiments. No one can more sincerely regret than he the necessity of this manner of appearing before the public; but with this conscientious assurance, he will proceed to the task devolved upon him, and first ask the reader’s attention to the following narration.

Certain exhibitions of important Christian doctrines by a well known divine in the Lutheran Church, and which were believed ’by many, with himself, to be unsound and of dangerous tendency, led the writer of this to feel it his duty to call the attention of the church to an examination of them. To such an examination, if conducted in a Christian spirit, no one in any Protestant church could reasonably object; much less any one in the Lutheran church, boasting her freedom of discussion, and willingness to have all her doctrines tested by the word of God. Published opinions are universally regarded as legitimate subjects of criticism, and the divines of other churches expect that their productions will be subjected to such an ordeal. Infallibility is claimed only by the church of Rome, nor can any one, without partaking of her intolerant spirit, attempt to deprive ministers or people of their right to examine what is offered for their reception. Truth can have nothing to fear from open discussion; it is only error that dreads the light, and takes refuge behind grave authority, or some other convenient shelter.

The *Lutheran Observer* was first selected as the medium for this examination, and the first of a series of articles sent to that paper for publication, a little more than a year ago. Some doubts being entertained as to the propriety of publishing these articles in the *Observer*, the matter was referred to the proprietors of the paper, by whom they were declined – not on the ground that there was no room for suspicion or fear of unsoundness on the doctrines in question, nor that the articles were in any way unfit for publication, but on the ground that it might give rise to a warm discussion, with which many readers of the *Observer*, already sick of controversy, ought not to be troubled. In a courteous communication, returning the article, it was freely and distinctly admitted, that the views published by Dr. S. S. Schmucker¹, the author reviewed, were “*sufficiently obnoxious, to call his attention publicly to them,*” and the suggestion made to “*prepare the article for the Review.*” At the same time it was decided to admit nothing whatever on the other side, or in commendation of the work containing the opinions reviewed, and thus to keep the *Observer* entirely free from the controversy. A communication from Dr. S. S. Schmucker. shared the same fate as the article of the writer.

After more than half a year’s delay, and sufficient opportunity to know that many of the ablest and best men in the church were surprised and alarmed at the views, which have been termed *New Theology*; and there being no indication of any explanation from the author, but these views circulating wider and wider, as the *Observer* was closed against the discussion, a short article was prepared for the *Review*. It will hardly be pretended, by any one acquainted with the sentiments prevailing in the church, that there was no occasion for such an article, or for any uneasiness on the subject, especially since the editors of the *Review* state over their own names, (Luth. Obs., Aug. 28,) and as a reason for publishing the the article – “*we knew that extensively in the church the writer of American Lutheranism was charged with being unsound on the subject of original sin and justification.*” Although it was not known to the writer at the time his article was written, he has since discovered that some of these charges had already been published to the world by a very highly respected minister of our own church. In preparing the article every reasonable precaution was observed not to give offence. Besides avoiding all personalities and harsh epithets, it was submitted to the revision of some of Dr. Schmucker’s own friends: and although it has been very liberally abused by such anonymous

scribblers as *Tolerance and Justice*, no attempt has been made to adduce a single sentence that is unchristian in language or spirit. But of the character of this article nothing more need here be said, as it forms a part of this pamphlet, and the reader can judge for himself.

After its appearance in the Review, the writer was further assured that all communications on the subject would be kept out of the Observer; and that if, contrary to the wishes of the proprietors, any thing should appear, equal justice would be awarded to all parties. Had this judicious decision been observed, and the discussion, after having been handed over to the Review, left there, the quiet of the church would not have been disturbed by it, and this publication might have been spared. But soon after, there appeared in a single issue of that paper, four distinct communications relating to the subject, some of these grossly personal and teeming with abuse, evidently aiming to excite prejudice and bring odium upon the writer of the article. His motives were assailed, his honesty questioned; it was insinuated he was a tool for others, that he was mentally imbecile and morally perverse; that he was a symbolist² and a radical anti-symbolist – all this, and more, the Observer sent forth to its fifty thousand readers, partly under the cloak of anonymous names, and partly under editorial sanction. The Review was also attacked and threatened with destruction for daring to publish the article, and so grave was the offence deemed, as to call forth the maledictions of at least one Conference. Unwilling to rely on truth and argument; almost everything on that side was given a purely personal character. The writer may he allowed here to say that he would sincerely regret, if the Evangelical Review should suffer from opening its pages to his article; and would still much more regret, if there should be found so much intolerance in the Lutheran Church as to proscribe a respectable Review for doing just what was designed in its establishment – affording an opportunity to discuss a question of vast importance, and in which many felt the deepest interest.

As the communications in the Observer were read by many thousands, who had not seen the Review, and consequently had no means of judging for themselves, and as it was believed that great injustice had been done the writer, he was induced to send to that paper a brief *explanation*. Through the kindness of one of the proprietors its insertion was secured, but it appeared with awful chasms ***** indicating that parts unfit for publication had been omitted, when not one syllable was left out in the gaps

filled with asterisks. Whilst this gross delusion was palmed upon the unsuspecting readers of the Observer, the fastidious editor felt “compelled by self-respect,” to enter his disclaimer against the strong language employed by the writer, whom he had allowed to be personally assailed by individuals lacking the courage to write over their own names. Self-respect in the writer decided him at once to entrust nothing more to a source, that had paid so little regard to honor or righteousness. The tardy and singular apology, that afterwards appeared, the writer confesses himself unable to appreciate, and must leave it to practical printers, and those who know something of this matter.

Whilst the Observer was acting so fair and magnanimous a part, the writer’s attention was called to a scurrilous libel in a German paper, the *Kirchenbote*, published at Gettysburg. The falsehoods contained in that piece, would have been exposed, but the editor has since published a retraction, and the writer can freely forgive an act, which it is believed would not have been committed had it not been for the interference of others. This, however, does not in the least exculpate Dr. Schmucker, who, if he had not to do with the authorship of that libel, at least aided, as the writer has positive proof, in giving it publicity, and thus made himself a party to it.

To the *disclaimer* of the author reviewed, which appeared in the Observer, no objections would have been made, had he confined himself to a simple disclaimer, and announcement of intention to reply. But in that disclaimer, pursuing the same method of controversy as his anonymous defenders, he chooses to question the writer’s honesty, or the sincerity of his motives. He says, “We are willing to *suppose* that writer sincere, and though mistaken, actuated by upright motives, and *if so . . .*” Again, “*If*, as we trust, the concern of that writer arises from his devotion to the truth,” and “without stopping to inquire into the *origin* of the objections to the passages cited in the Review.” Now it would be simply an insult to the common sense of the reader, to say that such language was not designed to insinuate, that the writer was actuated by some other motives than a regard for the truth. And why, it may be asked, so much freedom on the part of these writers to suspect and impugn the motives of others? Is it because they are so free from every taint of selfishness and insincerity, so perfectly candid and straightforward in all their movements that they may complacently sit in judgment on others; or is it because some men are so

uniformly influenced by unworthy motives, or so incapable of an open, honorable course, that they deem it impossible or improbable that others should be? No man's motives were impugned by the writer of the article in the Review, and it must excite the just indignation of all honorable minded men, to find that, instead of an appeal to truth and argument, there has been a resort to such means as the imputation of insincerity or base design. It cannot help any cause, but must create suspicion of inherent weakness, that it is constrained to the use of such means to divert attention or oppose the truth.

The writer would ask, what has he done, of what crime has he been guilty, that he should be visited with so much obloquy? Is it a heinous offence in the Lutheran Church to question the infallibility of a theological professor, or to examine the soundness of views contained in a book, put forth in the heat of controversy, and against the earnest remonstrance of friends? Must we receive, without examination or dissent, whatever is offered from certain quarters; or has any one man the right to publish and circulate what he pleases, and no one else dare inquire whether it be truth or error? If this be what is meant by American Lutheranism there is very little gained by that name. Surely the Church is not prepared to give up on the part of her ministers and people, the right of free examination, private judgment, and appeal to the infallible word of God.

But it may be said, that the writer began this controversy, and was himself the cause of all this strife. Such a charge he would deny, and assign as the true cause, the publication by others, of views, which have excited and distracted the Church. But waving this, surely there is a wide difference between a theological discussion, devoid of personalities or abuse, with the simple view of eliciting the truth, and a personal warfare, carried on with a manifestly hostile aim. The writer is not so silly as to complain of opposition to what he has written, or that all do not happen to agree with him in sentiment; but he complains, that instead of a discussion of doctrines, most of those, who have differed from him, have chosen to discuss personal matters, that have no bearing on the questions at issue. From past experience, he can hardly hope to escape the animadversions of those, whom he has been so unhappy as to offend. But sincerely desirous as he is of living on terms of amity and friendship with all, he is unwilling to purchase the good will of men by a craven silence, or by holding the truth in unrighteousness." Cherishing no evil feelings towards any man, he will

not be hindered by any power on earth, from the free utterance of his heart's deep, earnest convictions on great questions affecting the honor of the Redeemer, and the welfare of His church; and should the publication of this pamphlet subject him to renewed or increased censure; he will not be surprised "*as though some strange thing had happened unto him.*"

It is hoped that what has been said will sufficiently explain the reasons of this second appearance before the public, on this question of the New Theology. The controversy having taken so strange a turn, and Dr. Schmucker, instead of replying and explaining, as was expected from the notice given by himself, having assigned reasons why he will not enter upon the discussion, which are just so many efforts to decry the writer and excite prejudice, there seemed to be but one course left open, and that is, in accordance with the advice of many and revered friends, to publish this vindication in pamphlet form. To this there is the less objection since Dr. Schmucker has published his article as a separate pamphlet, and scattered it through the Church. To give the reader a fair opportunity of judging, the original article from the Review will be published entire, and without change, except the correction of a few typographical errors. This will be followed by a review of Dr. Schmucker's article, in the October number of the Evangelical Review.

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1. Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799-1873) was one of the leading American Lutheran theologians of the Nineteenth Century. He was instrumental in the founding of the General Synod and Gettysburg Theological Seminary. Schmucker sought to discard the Augsburg Confession, and denied the Real Presence.↩
 2. One who holds that the elements in the Lord's Supper are mere symbols.↩

The New Theology - Article extracted from the July 1857 Number of the Evangelical Review

THAT A NEW THEOLOGY has been creeping into the Lutheran Church in this country, is a fact which can hardly have escaped the notice of intelligent readers; and it is believed that it will be an acceptable work to call attention to some of its prominent features. The question is not one of tastes, whether the new wine is better than the old, but one of truth, whether the new production is not an adulteration, or of spurious character. It is proposed, in this article, to pass some leading points of this theology under review, and to see how they accord with the teaching of God's word, and the generally received views of orthodox theologians. These points shall not be such as pertain to the mere paraphernalia of religion – symbolism or anti-symbolism, liturgy or no liturgy, American Lutheran Church or Lutheran Church in America – matters that we cheerfully leave to others; but they are points which enter into the very essence of religion, and concern the great change which every one must undergo, before he is fitted for the kingdom of heaven, and the condition of a sinner's acceptance with God. It will be conceded that the discussion is one of some consequence to the cause of truth, the honor of God, and the safety of souls: and having no other object than the furtherance of "the truth as it is in Jesus," we shall endeavor, whilst using great plainness of speech, to avoid everything that is improperly personal or offensive. We begin with:

Regeneration

In a recent publication (*“Lutheran Symbols,”* by S. S. Schmucker) there is an exposition of this fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. We hardly know where to begin our examination, for we confess that the beginning, the middle, and the end; the nature, the means, and the result, are alike to us unsatisfactory. Objection might be made, for instance, to the following statements when placed together:

“The Saviour uses it (Regeneration) for an entire and radical change, and we have no right to use it for anything else.” “Do not mistake the beginning for the completion of this great spiritual renovation;” with “ But faith presupposes regeneration.” “Faith is found only in the regenerate mind.”

Now if regeneration must only be used “for the completion of this great spiritual renovation,” and regeneration must precede faith, how could the apostle speak of “purifying their hearts by faith?” – Acts 15:9. The influence of faith in our spiritual renovation, is everywhere recognized in the Bible. That the work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of the soul, must begin before faith in Christ is exercised, is not denied; but that the work receives its “*completion*,” is a doctrine contrary to the word of God, and to all experience. Not much time, however, will be spent on this point, as more attention is asked to what is said of the nature of regeneration.

“As regeneration does not destroy, but merely restrains, the natural depravity, or innate sinful dispositions of the Christian (for these still remain in him after conversion,) it must consist mainly in a change of that *increased* predisposition to sin arising from action, of that preponderance of sinful habits formed by voluntary indulgence of our natural depravity, after we have reached years of moral agency.”

This same statement, word for word, italics and all, is to be found in more than one publication from the same author, so that it is fair to regard it as a careful expression of his theological views on this point. Nor can its meaning be doubtful. It is simply this – regeneration leaves man with his “natural depravity,” his corrupt heart, alienated affections, and rebellious will; and only changes his “sinful habits” formed after he has reached years of moral agency. It does not reach to the seat of the disease, and eradicate it from the system, but only abates its violence. It does not destroy or break the power of “natural depravity,” but “merely restrains” it, keeping it within certain bounds. According to this theory, the regenerated soul may still be

“enmity against God,” as before, only a check is placed upon the working of that enmity. To show in what condition this leaves the sinner after his regeneration, it will be sufficient to quote from the “*American Recension of the Augsburg Confession*”¹ on natural depravity. “Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards Him, and with sinful propensities: and that this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin.”

That our interpretation is not a forced or unfair one, will appear from other statements in the same volume.

“But infants have no such *increased* predisposition, no habits of sin prior to moral agency, consequently there can be no change of them, no regeneration in this meaning of the term.”

The argument is, that as infants have only *natural depravity* there can be no such thing as regeneration with them, *because* regeneration does not materially affect natural depravity. The whole force of the argument rests on the assumption that natural depravity is not affected by the work of regeneration. Again:

“If the growing child . . . becomes a confirmed sinner . . . its subsequent regeneration, if it takes place, will be the more striking, as its change of *habits* must be greater.” But, “if the child . . . resist the solicitations of its depraved nature, its continued obedience will form holy habits, and this preponderance of holy habits, when established, constitutes its regeneration.”

Exceptions might be taken to this last statement, on other grounds, but we have cited it, together with the preceding, to confirm the interpretation put upon the language of the first paragraph on this subject. In all the statements there is one view held forth, and the language is incapable of any other intelligible meaning. We are informed that regeneration leaves the *natural depravity* of the heart pretty much as it was before this change, and only produces a difference in the habits of the individual. It may be possible that other portions of this volume could be adduced to show that views contrary to these are also inculcated; but no one can blame us for taking this full and careful statement without troubling ourselves to compare, or attempt to harmonize discordant and conflicting doctrines. Truth is self-

consistent, and needs no external support, but error will not stand upright, though propped on all sides.

How such Theology accords with the Bible may be judged by comparing it with such declarations as these: And a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." – Ezek. 36:26. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." – 2 Cor. 5:17. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." – Rom. 4:16. It is quite unnecessary to multiply passages of a similar import, with which the scriptures abound; but the reader may be requested to compare the language of the book with the language of the Bible.

We may, perhaps, be assured that the language in this volume is only a scientific statement of what the Bible teaches in popular language. To sound philosophy in religion there can be no objection; nor can any one find fault with having the popular language of the Bible sometimes put into scientific form, provided its meaning is not destroyed; but we have a great dislike to "science falsely so called;" and we have no hesitation in affirming our conviction that the view given of regeneration is as shallow in philosophy as it is unsound in theology. It just as little apprehends the profound depths of man's moral and spiritual nature, as it answers the simple, obvious meaning of inspired teaching.

Or should it be said that nothing more is meant than that the regenerated sinner is not completely sanctified – that he is not entirely free from every taint of sin, the answer is plain. First, the language is too strong to admit of such a meaning; and secondly, as regeneration is employed to express the entire change undergone by the individual – not the beginning, but the completion, of his spiritual renovation – if it does not remove his natural depravity, he must die in his sins, with his heart of stone, and load of guilt. Surely it does not require very keen discernment to perceive a difference between the original, native depravity of the heart, without one single right affection towards God, and the state of the heart renewed by divine grace, into which, however, evil thoughts will sometimes enter, disturbing its peace, and, it may be, leading to forbidden acts.

“The godly man hates the evil he possibly by temptation has been drawn to do, and loves the good he has been frustrated of, and, having intended, hath not attained to do. The sinner, who has his denomination from sin as his course, hates the good which sometimes he is forced to, and loves that sin which many times he does not, either wanting the occasion or means, so that he cannot do it, or through the check of an enlightened conscience possibly dares not do: and though so bound up from the act, as a dog in a chain, yet the habit, the natural inclination and desire in him is still the same – the strength of his affection is carried to sin.”

Says another –

“The distinction between sin in a Christian’s heart, and in an unconverted man’s heart, is just the distinction between poison in the body of a man, and poison in the body of a rattle-snake. Poison in a man’s body is felt to be an irritating, destructive, disorganizing element, which gives him no rest till he has got wholly rid of it; but poison in a rattle-snake is part of its nature, which helps it to defend itself from its foes, and to obtain its prey. So in a worldly man, sin is a favorite and a dear lodger: in a Christian man sin is a hated intruder.”

These rather long quotations will relieve us from any necessity of further pointing out and illustrating the difference between the sinner, who retains his natural depravity, and the saint, who is transformed by the renewing of his mind. The one is dead in sin, the other is waked up to newness of life, and is following after holiness that he may see God.

A condition of things is described in *“Lutheran Symbols,”* where “the line of distinction between converted and unconverted, between mere formalists and true Christians would be obliterated,” and “we should have pardoned saints and pardoned sinners in the church, converted and unconverted heirs of the promise, believing and unbelieving subjects of justification.” But here we are carried a little further, and assured that so far as the *heart* is concerned, whatever may be true of the *habits*, it remains after regeneration as it was before, except in the restraint placed upon it; so that we have unregenerated sinners and regenerated saints alike in their natural depravity – children of Rod, “born, not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” without natural affection towards their Father in Heaven – or, according to the book, “without the fear of God or confidence towards Him” – a new heart with the old corruption – a new creature in Christ Jesus, with the Old Adam undestroyed. – And yet this heart, with its natural depravity undestroyed, must love God supremely, glory in the cross of Christ, and delight itself in communion with infinite purity and holiness. In that same heart, the love of

God is shed abroad, Christ is formed the hope of glory, and the Holy Spirit has his dwelling place.

But leaving these incongruities, we boldly affirm that regeneration has to do, and that chiefly, with native depravity – and that its very object is its removal. Take any fair view of original sin or natural depravity, and ask if the work of the Holy Ghost in the soul is not to remedy the evil? Is it spiritual blindness, deadness, want of all right affections towards God, with evil propensities, etc.? In the work of regeneration the soul is quickened, illumined, visited with new life and affections. That there are some remains of sin is not denied, but there is a new heart; its enmity against God has been slain, the old man is crucified, and the body of sin destroyed. Whatever change takes place in the *habits*, if not mere outside pretense, is the result of the change within – the “putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Such views of regeneration, one would suppose, must have corresponding views of natural depravity or original sin; and we turn with interest to learn what is said on this subject. – After reading it, we think no one will be surprised to hear that the author has excited the suspicions of the entire rejection of the doctrine. True, he distinctly disavows any such sentiments, or even so much as a temptation to doubt on this point; and we readily receive his disclaimer, but must confess ourselves at a loss how to reconcile the language employed with sound doctrine. Natural depravity is defined as “*disorder in the mental and bodily constitution of man.*” And we are told that “all mankind, in consequence of their descent from fallen Adam, are born with a depraved nature, that is, *their bodily and mental system is so disordered as in result of its operation to evince a predisposition to sin.*” By frequent repetition, and substitution of the word *disordered* for *depraved*, we are given clearly to understand that original sin, or natural depravity, is simply a disorder of the bodily and mental powers. Now, if disposed to be facetious, we might do as was done with Plato’s biped man, and say that a poor suffering dyspeptic, disordered in body and mind, was a very striking development of natural depravity. Still better, perhaps, would be an insane man, with a diseased body, or else one of the demoniacs of the New Testament. It is not denied that all these evils, bodily and mental, result from man’s original sin; but is that all that is involved in the doctrine in question? If natural depravity mean only this – “a disorder in the mental and bodily constitution” – then, it is very certain

that regeneration does not remove or destroy it: for regeneration does not heal bodily disorders, or repair mental deficiencies. A sound body and a sound mind are not imparted, where they did not previously exist, “by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Divine grace may be favorable to bodily and mental health: but this is not the special aim of regeneration, which is to enlighten and purify the soul, and bring it into communion with God. In all seriousness, would we ask, is natural depravity nothing more than a bodily or mental disorder? Has it nothing to do with the moral and spiritual nature of man? Is there nothing in it that is corrupting, polluting, defiling to the soul? Is it the head or the heart – the bodily and mental, or the moral and spiritual part, that is most diseased? The bodily and mental powers may have suffered sadly in the fall, but has not the *moral* nature suffered the greatest amount of evil? It is the *heart* that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and from it, as from a corrupt fountain, flow all the sins that darken the pages of human history.

Our own judgment of the danger of what, to say the least, cannot but be regarded as extremely meager and superficial views of human depravity and regeneration, will be best expressed in the language of one of the greatest lights of modern times:

We hold it of prime importance that we should have deep and adequate notions of the guilt and depravity of man; for just in proportion to our sense of the virulence of the disease will be our sense of the value of the remedy – will be the value that we set both on the sacrifice that atones and on the Spirit that sanctifies. A meager and superficial imagination of human guilt lies at the bottom of all meager and superficial views of Christianity. Extenuate this, and every thing else is reduced and extenuated in proportion. A slight hurt requires but the application of a slight and gentle remedy: and accordingly, on the system of those who look on the moral distemper of our nature as but slight, you will find, in correspondence with this, that all the peculiarities of the gospel revelation are well nigh attenuated unto nothing. – Christianity, instead of being regarded as a radical cure for a mortal disease, is but regarded as a mild and gentle remedy for a slight moral ailment."

The application of this doctrine (regeneration) to the case of children is too important to be passed over in silence. – Something has already been said in the pages of the Review on this general subject. But we have nothing now to do with the doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration*. Our difficulty lies quite in another direction, and to our mind is of a far more serious character. We are content to let others dispute about the efficacy of Baptism, whilst we keep silence; but we cannot altogether hold our peace when the possibility

of regeneration is denied to our little ones. As the Bible was not given to gratify our curiosity, it says less in regard to infants than one could wish; but it contains enough to satisfy all proper demands; and most Christians are agreed in receiving from it assurance of the salvation of those who die in infancy – salvation purchased by the blood of Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit. How this application is made it is quite beside our present purpose to inquire; it is enough perhaps to know that it is the work of Him who possesses infinite wisdom and omnipotent power, and who is not limited to the modes which our feeble powers can comprehend. Our author makes bold to deny the possibility of infants being regenerated: “*Of regeneration, in the proper sense of the term, infants are incapable.*” “But infants have no such increased predisposition, no habits of sin prior to moral agency; consequently there can be no change of them, no regeneration, in this meaning of the term.” This is the only use of regeneration which our author allows, and, besides, we do not know what it could mean in some *improper* sense. One point is clear enough: the author maintains that infants are incapable of regeneration. This doctrine carried out to its logical and necessary conclusion would be horrible, and it might be a sufficient refutation to put the author’s own language into syllogistic form. He admits that children have natural depravity. Now –

- “This natural depravity disqualifies its subjects for heaven.”
- “Of regeneration, in the proper sense, . . .infants are incapable,”
- *Ergo* – – – – – ? – – – – –

Let others draw the conclusion. Denying to them the capability of regeneration, it may be asked, what final disposition is made of those who die in infancy? for it can hardly be supposed that they are to be excluded from a place in heaven. Here is a solution of the difficulty: “At death their corruptible nature shall be transformed into an incorruptible, and their mortal into an immortal one; and they, liberated from their moral disease, be ushered into the blissful presence of Him who said, ‘Suffer little children, etc.’” (Pop. Theology and Luth. Manual.) This escapes the revolting conclusion hinted at above; but it is not free from some small difficulties. First of all, many will regard it as quite a new version of the Apostle’s language, and perhaps a new view of the resurrection, to be told that, _“at death_,” ’the corruptible becomes incorruptible, and the mortal,

immortal." The corruptible, mortal nature must mean the bodily part, and with the corpse of the infant lying before us, to hear that "*at death*" this became incorruptible and immortal, would contradict all the evidence of our sense. It is not enough to say that the Bible teaches no such doctrine – it is simply absurd and contrary to the plainest facts. The Bible refers this great change to the period of the resurrection – then, and not till then, will the mortal put on immortality.

As to any change effected in the spiritual part, at death, or by death, we are very much in the dark: but there is no reason to think that death itself effects any change in the moral character either of infants or adults. If regeneration be impossible during the life of an infant, and possible at death, we should like to know why. It would seem that it must be owing to some new power then received by the Holy Ghost, or by the soul of the infant, or else death must possess the great regenerating power. The first of these is little short of blasphemy – the second has no support either from the Bible or from reason – and the third denies to the Holy Spirit his office as the regenerator of our souls. The Master says – "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Can we, for such theology, give up the old-fashioned orthodox notion that the Holy Spirit, in regeneration, does give a new heart, and that this new heart can be given to children as well as to those of riper years?

Before leaving this point we desire to cite a few authorities to show that the denial of the possibility of infant regeneration has not been the commonly received view among standard theological writers. The views of our Lutheran divines are well known to be the very opposite, but as their authority might be disputed on the score of Symbolism, or leaning towards the sacramental system, we will call in those of a different school that happen to be at hand.

JONATHAN EDWARDS says – "The Scriptures give ground to think, that some infants have the habit of saving grace, and that they have a new nature given them."

DWIGHT says – "It will not be denied that some persons are *sanctified from the womb.*"

DICK says – "As infants are not fit subjects of instruction, their regeneration must be effected without means, by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit on their souls."

DR. A. ALEXANDER says – “How solicitous should parents be for their children, that God should bestow his grace upon them, even before they know their right hand from their left; and when about to dedicate them to God, in holy baptism, how earnestly should they pray that they might be baptized with the Holy Ghost – that while their bodies are washed in the emblematical laver of regeneration, their souls may experience the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.”

Again – As infants, according to the creed of all reformed churches, are infected with original sin, they cannot, without regeneration, be qualified for the happiness of heaven. – Children, dying in infancy, must therefore be regenerated without the instrumentality of the word.”

Alluding to one who had advanced the notion “that children, before the exercise of reason, are incapable of regeneration,” he says, “*but this is a new theory, contrary to all the sound doctrines of your church as well as mine... The doctrine referred to above, that infants are incapable of being regenerated until they are capable of attending to the word, is, in my opinion, fraught with consequences subversive of our whole system.*” – Letter to Bishop Meade.

To these may be added one of the most profound thinkers our language can boast. Opposing the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, Coleridge says – “Observe, I do not deny – God forbid! – the possibility or the reality of the influence of the Spirit on the soul of the infant. His first smile bespeaks reason – the Light from the Life of the Word – as already existent; and where the Word is, there will the Spirit act,”

These may suffice to show what some other men have thought, and how far they were from denying that infants may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, But still more decisive is the divine word, where it says, (Luke 1:15) – “And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” The comment of Matthew Henry is too good to be omitted. “Observe,” says he “it is possible that infants may be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, even from their mother’s womb; for John Baptist, even then was filled with the Holy Ghost... Who then can forbid water, that they should not be baptized, who for aught we know... have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, and have received the seeds of grace sown in their hearts.”

It would be a very easy task to multiply citations from standard authors, and to bring passages from the Bible, against the views inculcated in this

volume on the subject of regeneration, but we must content ourselves with what has been already adduced, only adding our entire dissatisfaction with very much that is said on the nature, the subject, and the agency of this great work. In our judgment it comes short, immeasurably short, of what the Bible teaches, and is fraught with the most dangerous consequences. We leave this subject to consider another, and kindred, one –

Justification

Not one word need be said to show the importance of this doctrine, or how necessary it is that correct views of it should be maintained and defended. It is the doctrine so carefully elaborated by Paul, and guarded by him against mistake or abuse. After being long buried or obscured it was again brought to the light and clearly unfolded by the reformers. The reformation was contained in that doctrine; it marks the point of separation between Romanism and Protestantism, and was truly styled by Luther, “*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*.”²

The substance of this fundamental doctrine may be considered as embraced in these two points – First, that the *ground* of the sinner’s justification before God is not any righteousness or merit of his own, but the merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ; and, secondly, that the *condition* of receiving this is not any virtue or morality on the part of the sinner, but faith alone, to the exclusion of everything else as a necessary part in the work of justification. This is the view that we understand to be taught in the word of God, and in the confessions of evangelical churches. It is hardly to be supposed that any one would be found in the Lutheran church, directly, and in so many words, opposing the doctrine. The question with us is, not whether this be so, but whether views have not been taught and extensively promulgated, that are in direct conflict with any correct understanding of the doctrine, and which, if suffered to prevail, will undermine the very foundations of our faith? The very thought of such a thing should excite our vigilance, and lead us to look to the priceless legacy handed down by Apostles and Reformers.

It is true that in the volume already quoted (“*Lutheran Symbols*,”) we are told, “faith is the only condition of pardon” – and this some may consider as sufficient to remove all suspicion even of erroneous teaching.

That this doctrine is repeatedly affirmed, it is not at all denied. But there are other views inculcated which it will be found difficult to reconcile with this truth, or to free from the charge of being another gospel. We read that “Baptism in adults, is... a *condition* of obtaining those blessings purchased by Christ,” etc. Pardon of sins, or justification, we suppose, is among the blessings. Again, “the actual pardon of individuals by God, depends on their possessing the moral fitness required by him.” And, “no sinner is morally qualified for pardon, until he has been regenerated, and has *consecrated himself to the service of God.*” And still more explicit – “*Without a new birth, an entire moral renovation, in which the rebel lays down the arms of his rebellion, and the slave of sin is delivered from the dominion of his depraved habits, and becomes an obedient servant of Christ, loving holiness and delighting in the service of God, it is IMPOSSIBLE for him to obtain pardon or to be justified.*”

Here, instead of faith as the simple and sole condition of pardon or justification, we have, after regeneration, or “*an entire moral renovation,*” *humble submission, victory over sin, obedience to Christ, love of holiness, and delight in God, or the things of God. It will not be said that these are not made conditions of pardon, when we are assured that without them “it is impossible to obtain pardon.”*

Let this exposition of justification by faith be submitted to the test of:

1. The Word of God.

Rom. 3:28. – “*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*”

Rom. 4:4 – 6. – Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”

Rom. 3:21. – “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested. . . Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.”

Acts 10:43. – “Through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”

It is needless to multiply quotations, which might be increased almost without number. These passages clearly teach that salvation is of grace, and that it is apprehended by faith, without any regard to works of obedience. All the best commentators are united in interpreting the language of inspiration as excluding, not only from the ground (*causa efficiens*,) but also from the condition (*causa instrumentalis*) of justification, everything except Christ and faith in him.³ Sinners are not said to be justified by submission, or obedience, or love, or delight in God, but by faith. “Whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “He that *believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life.” “And by him all that *believe* are justified from all things. . .” It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that *believe*.”

2. The Confessional Writings of the Church.

These, it is believed, are considered orthodox and sound on this subject, and they give no doubtful utterance.

Apology, Art. IV. – On Justification.

“By faith alone in Christ, not through love, not on account of love or works, do we obtain the remission of sins, although love follows faith.”⁴

Formula of Concord, Part. I – On Justification.

“Accordingly, we believe, teach and confess, that our justification before God is this; that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any regard to our antecedent, present or subsequent works, worth or merit.”⁵ “We believe, teach, and confess, that faith alone is the medium and instrument by which we apprehend Christ.”

“We reject and condemn the following: ‘That faith has the preeminence in the work of justification; nevertheless that reformation and love pertain also to our justification before God, not being indeed the principal cause of our justification, but that our justification before God would be incomplete without this reformation and love. That faith does not justify without good works: so that good works are required as necessary to justification, and that without their presence man cannot be justified.’”

Formula of Concord, Part. II. Art. III. – On Justification.

"We hold that neither renovation nor sanctification, virtues nor good works, as a condition, or part, or cause of justification, should, under any pretext, title or name, be intermingled with the article of justification, as necessary or requisite to it; but that justification by faith stands alone in the remission of sins, out of pure grace, solely on account of Christ's merits – which, blessings are offered to us in the gospel, and by faith alone are received, appropriated and applied.

"Thus too must be preserved the order between faith and good works, between justification and renovation or sanctification. For good works do not precede faith, nor does sanctification precede justification."⁶

These citations, which might be greatly enlarged, leave no room to doubt as to how the reformers apprehended the doctrine under consideration, and how unwilling they were to mingle anything else with faith as a condition of pardon. – Next might be adduced the sentiments of more recent divines from the Reformation downward to the present time, but this would unnecessarily prolong our article, and consume the reader's time. One only will be introduced. The truly judicious and sound Dr. A. Alexander says, speaking "of the special office of faith in a sinner's justification" – "in which neither love, nor any other grace has any part, although they are the effects of faith. When love is confounded with a justifying faith, it is very easy to slide into the opinion that, as love is the substance of evangelical obedience, when we are said to be justified by faith, the meaning is, that we are justified by our own obedience. . . The next step is – and it has already been taken by some – that our obedience is meritorious, and when its defects are purged by atoning blood, it is sufficient to procure for us a title to eternal life. Thus have some, boasting of the name of Protestants, worked around, until they have fallen upon one of the most offensive tenets of Popery."

We are not disposed to raise the cry of Romanism at everything which does not happen to accord with our own notions, whether it be found among those who are distinguished by the label *Old Lutheran or American Lutheran*; but it will be difficult to point out any important difference between the paragraphs quoted from the "*Lutheran Symbols*," and the Romish doctrine of justification. Hagenbach says ("*History of Doctrines*") – " Roman Catholics and Protestants agreed in ascribing to God the

justification of the sinner, but differed in this, that the former confounded the act of justification with that of sanctification, so as to represent both as the one act of making just, while the latter separated the one from the other, asserting that the justification of the sinner before God . . . is antecedent to his sanctification. . . Both Roman Catholics and Protestants admitted, that it is *faith* which justifies the sinner, but there was this great difference between them, that the former maintained that, *in addition* to faith, good works are a necessary condition to salvation, and ascribed to them a certain degree of meritoriousness, while the latter adhered rigidly to the proposition, "*sola fides justificat.*"

Our author seems to employ regeneration as synonymous with sanctification, (the contradiction of natural depravity undestroyed, and sanctification, in the same heart, we do not attempt to reconcile) and teaches that this complete moral transformation must precede justification, or the forgiveness of sins. How there could be a more complete exchange of the Protestant for the Romish creed on the doctrine of justification, we are at a loss to conceive.

Now, if in defense of this exposition of justification by faith, it should be said, that all this is included in faith, we deny it. We deny that the faith by which the sinner is justified includes a whole catalog of moral qualifications and religious duties. We deny that any such view of faith is authorized by the word of God, by sound philosophy, or by the standard writers on theology: and we maintain that it is utterly subversive of the most precious doctrine in the Bible – the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ to every one who believes on him. It is not incumbent on us here to go into a discussion of the nature of saving faith. Suffice it to say that faith is faith, and not obedience, or love or delight in God, or any other distinct grace or virtue. Nor does the Bible say being justified by obedience, or love, or delight, or good works, but "*being justified by faith, we have peace with God.*"

Or should the defense be set up that submission, obedience, love, etc., are the necessary accompaniments of faith, the answer must be clear. If it be granted that they are not constituent parts of faith, that they *succeed*, and not *precede* the forgiveness of sins, no objection will be made; but exactly the same may be said of all good works, and with just as much propriety might it be said that without them it is impossible to obtain forgiveness. The question is not what are the fruits of faith, or what will a pardoned sinner

do, but how may a guilty sinner be justified before God? And to say that without first obtaining the victory over his sins, and becoming obedient to Christ, and loving holiness, and all that, he cannot be pardoned, is just to contradict the inspired writers, and cut off the sinner from all hope. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us ‘not before our pardon or justification, but after it.’” “*Quum impossibile sit diligere Deum, nisi prius fide apprehendatur remissio peccatorum.*” – (Apol. Conf.)

If any one imagine that we are contending about words, or that there is no great difference between the views as set forth in the paragraph quoted from the “*Lutheran Symbols*,” and what is to be found in the Bible and standard authorities, we venture to think that he does not understand the subject. Small as the difference may, perhaps, appear to such a one, it amounts to just this, whether the sinner will come to Christ to be saved from his sins, or first get rid of his sins himself, and then come to be justified and accepted. Says Coleridge:

“To many – to myself formerly – it has appeared a mere dispute about words; but it is by no means of so harmless a character, for it tends to give a false direction to our thoughts, by diverting the conscience from the ruined and corrupted state, in which we are without Christ. Sin is the disease. – What is the remedy? What is the antidote? Charity? Pshaw! Charity in the large apostolic sense of the term, is the health, the state to be obtained by the use of the remedy, not the sovereign balm itself, – faith of grace – faith in the God-manhood, the cross, the mediation, and perfected righteousness of Jesus, to the utter rejection and abjuration of all righteousness of our own. *Faith alone is the restorative...* Faith is the source – charity, that is, the whole Christian life, is the stream from it. . .”

Such a view of justification, even were it possible, would deprive the penitent believer of all peace of conscience and solid comfort: as it would lead him, instead of confiding in the all-sufficiency of Christ to cover all his sins, to be prying into his own imperfect and broken obedience to settle the question of his standing before God. If his sins will only be forgiven as he subdues them, and loves and serves Christ, he must be in continual doubt, as to whether his love and service are sufficient to render him a fit subject for divine mercy. The only ground of solid peace and comfort – the only position in which we can maintain a firm and stable footing against the rigorous demands of divine justice and the disquietudes of our own consciences, is, discarding all merit of our own, and all conditions of pardon, save faith in Christ alone.

The influence too, of such doctrine on the pulpit, or the preaching of the gospel, must be most paralyzing. Just suppose that when the Philippian jailor came trembling to Paul, and asking, "What must I do to be saved?" instead of answering, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," he had said, unless you become entirely changed, conquering every one of your sins, obeying and serving and loving Christ, you cannot be forgiven! Carry this doctrine to the heathen world, and what would be the result? Apply it to any conscience-smitten, burdened soul, and you at once close the door of hope, and give over to despair. It would be like mocking a sick man in his agony, by telling him to get better and then go to the physician.

The plainest reader, unaccustomed to theological discussions, cannot fail to perceive how directly opposed is this theory of the conditions of pardon or justification to the sentiments and devotional literature of the Church. When the gospel is preached, and sinners are invited to come to the Saviour, the Church unites in the invitation, singing –

"Let not conscience make you linger, Nor of *fitness* fondly dream; All the *fitness* he requireth, Is to feel your need of him.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden. Lost and ruined by the fall, If you tarry till you're better, You will never come at all: Not the righteous – Sinners Jesus came to call."

And when the sinner, burdened with guilt, and ready to perish, is constrained to flee for refuge to Christ, instead of looking to his own virtues or acts, as having anything to do with the conditions of his pardon and acceptance, he looks to Christ, and says:

"Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me, And that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot – To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come!

How very different from this, if the view set forth in the "*Lutheran Symbols*" prevail, must be the language addressed to penitent sinners, and how difficult the manner of their approach to Christ!

Much more might have been said on all the points that have been touched, and the bearing of these doctrines upon each other, and the whole system of truth more fully considered; but we have endeavored to avoid saying too much. The writer has no leaning towards Symbolism, and no motive to oppose those who take to themselves the name of American Lutherans. A vindication of the truth has been his only aim. The truth can have nothing to fear from open discussion.

The high source whence these views have emanated, the favorable opportunity enjoyed for inculcating them, the zeal manifested in propagating them abroad, all combine to give them importance. We have ventured to apply to them the term *New Theology*. All who examine this theology with care, comparing it with the word of God, and the long received doctrines of the whole evangelical church, will, we think, unite in pronouncing it *new*. It differs very widely from the theology of the reformers, the old English divines, and modern standard authors in Germany, England and America. If it does not lay another foundation “than that is laid,” it builds upon this foundation wood, hay, stubble. Whether the Church will, after due examination and reflection, retain this New Theology instead of the old, is very doubtful. Indeed we feel the most confident assurance, that the Church will yet, and ere long, so far as these great doctrines are concerned, hearken to her Redeemer, saying: “*Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*”

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1. Schmucker, S. S. *The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession*↩
 2. Roughly, “On this article the church stands or falls.”↩
 3. E.g. Olshausen on Romans 3:21 – 31. – “This important point is, in fact, _‘the purely objective nature of justification_,’ which the expression *actus forensis* is intended to affirm, so that justification does not depend upon the degree of sanctification, but entirely upon the purpose of God in Christ Jesus; by the passive and active obedience of Christ, the sin of all has been expiated, and the obedience of all fulfilled in him. God, then, regards no more men in Adam, but in Christ, from whom, in the work of conversion, the germ of the new

man is transmitted to the individual. Thus only does the gospel become, in truth, good news, since thus the salvation of man does not depend upon his own unstable conduct (on which supposition, as the Roman Catholic church believes and requires, a constant *uncertainty* must remain in the man's mind here below, whether or not he be in a state of grace,) but on the contrary, by the unchangeable purpose of God, which man apprehends in faith, the instability of his own character is corrected." ... "On man's side, no merit, no righteousness is presupposed, but simply a living faith in the merits and righteousness of Christ; these faith takes up into itself, and thus everything which is Christ's becomes man's." ←

4. "Sola fide in Christum, *non per dilectionem, non propter dilectionem aut opera* consequimur remissionem, etc." ←
5. Credimus igitur absque ullo respectu praecedentium, praesentium, aut cousequentium nostrorum operum, dignitatis, aut meriti." ←
6. "Teneamus, ut neque renovatio neque sanctificatio. . . tanquam forma, aut pars aut causa justificationis aut sub qualicumque praetextu, titulo aut nomine. . . inmiscantur. . . et sola fide recipiantur, apprehendantur nobisque applicentur." ←

Reply To Dr. Schmucker's Article.

AS THE REPLY OF DR. SCHMUCKER had been heralded with considerable "flourish of trumpets," it was looked for with no small degree of interest. His friends expected that he would explain all misunderstandings, remove all difficulties, and make an "end of controversy." Whether their expectations have been met, and the Observer's promise, of "a full and satisfactory reply" fulfilled it, is not for the writer to say, further than that some of them have expressed great disappointment, and not a little dissatisfaction. He does not deign to make a regular reply, but assigns four reasons why he "declines the formal discussion of the article" – doing, no doubt however, what he considers his very best, under this plea of not replying. These four reasons are sufficiently curious, and the whole article should be preserved as a rare specimen of theological disputation. The writer may be allowed to say, in advance, that a more disingenuous and unfair production it has never been his lot to examine; and most sincerely does he regret the course taken by Dr. Schmucker, not because the harsh epithets and bitter invectives of that performance disturb or frighten him, for these prove nothing, except the spirit with which they were written – but because such a course can add nothing to the reputation of the author, or the welfare of Zion, and it imposes the necessity of saying in reply, what should have no place in such a discussion. If therefore this examination should have more that is personal than is desirable, or under ordinary circumstances warrantable, the cause and the justification will both be found in the peculiar character of the production examined.

Before proceeding to the main points, there are some minor and incidental matters that require a passing notice. The author tells us he "felt it a sacred duty to publish '*American Lutheranism Vindicated*,' in order, in connection with the Definite Platform, to turn back the tide of symbolic or Old Lutheran encroachments." He might have awarded the writer at least

the same degree of conscientiousness, or sense of “sacred duty,” and not have ascribed his strictures on that production to “contracted bigotry” and “unamiable recklessness.” He seems to think the “refutation of this work a difficult undertaking,” because two writers chose to notice different parts of it, and supposes they had “recourse to one of the most approved principles of Political Economy, the division of labor.” Why only these two are referred to, in this “division of labor,” is not known, since these are not the only writers, who in the Review or elsewhere, have taken exceptions to “the unanswerable arguments” of that book; but it may be due to the cause of truth, and to that other writer, just to say, that these two had no consultation or agreement whatever, in the matter, nor did the one know anything of the labor of the other, until it was completed. This, together with the fact, that Dr. Schmucker has been pleased to style the writer a “self-constituted critic,” may be a sufficient reply to the charge, industriously circulated, of his being a tool for others. There is nothing unnatural in the partiality of the author for his own production, a kind of parental fondness noticed even by the old heathen philosophers, but Dr. Schmucker must not be surprised if others should think much less of a volume, abounding in inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and fundamental errors.

Some of these have already been pointed out, and the author’s colleague in the Seminary is constrained to offer as an apology for the numerous and gross blunders in the book, the “*unfortunate inattention and haste, the traces of which so surprisingly abound on its pages.*” (Ev. Review, January 1857. p. 344.) As the other writer is abundantly able to answer for himself, nothing; more need here be said in his defense: but if Dr. Schmucker was so deeply concerned “for the peace of our Zion,” it would have been better shown by never starting this unhappy controversy.

It is alleged against the writer that:

“his charge of fundamental heresy, when, in the same book, we reiterate and avow the entire articles of the Augsburg Confession on the disputed doctrines, savors too much of contracted bigotry, to require a serious refutation.”

The author of this language cannot be so ignorant of the teachings of church history as not to know that the most dangerous and destructive heresies have been propagated by men professing the most orthodox creeds. Such reasoning may suit some men, but will avail but little with the well

informed and reflecting. The not deigning to make a formal reply would have looked more like real indifference or contempt for the article in the Review, had not so much zeal been shown in various ways, to divert attention, even to the publishing of a pamphlet, with a false title, and sending it where the Review had not gone. As it is, the impression cannot now but be made, that Dr. Schmucker hoped to escape, by decrying the writer. This device however will not succeed, and he may be assured, that his well meant blows have fallen harmless. The writer is not to be turned aside from the real points at issue. He may say what he deems necessary to his own vindication from such personal assaults, but his chief anxiety will be to bring out and defend the truth.

What is to follow will be divided into two parts – an examination of the reasons assigned for not entering upon a “formal discussion” of the article in the Review, and some further notice of the disputed points, with what Dr. Schmucker has said in defense of his views.

I. Dr. Schmucker’s Reasons for Not Discussing Our Article

The reasons assigned for not discussing our article are – the writer’s “glaring misapprehensions and consequent misrepresentations” – “his manifest want of acquaintance with Lutheran Theology” – his being confused and unsystematic” – and “the spirit of the article,” not being “such as became him, under the circumstances of the case.” As these reasons have no logical connection, the author, it is hoped, will excuse the writer’s logic, if he should choose to consider them in a different order from that in which they are stated.

1. “The spirit of Rev. B’s article is generally thought not to be such as became him, under the circumstances of the case.”

Dr. Schmucker says “*the spirit of Rev. B’s article is generally thought not to be such as became him, under the circumstances of the case.*” How he obtained this general opinion of the church, his readers are not informed,

nor is it known, unless perhaps he assumes the right to think for the church; but the writer may be allowed to say, that very many have thought quite differently, and some of Dr. Schmucker's warmest friends have commended the *spirit* of the article. It is natural, that the author reviewed should not be particularly pleased with the spirit of the review, since it did not seek to commend his opinions. But "*de gustibus non disputandum,*" and this point must be left for others to decide. Had Dr. Schmucker however, shown a little better spirit himself, his objection would have come with more grace, and might have had quite as much force. The spirit of his article may be judged from a few specimens. It extends over only some ten pages, and yet in this narrow compass there is found room for such terms as these – "*contracted bigotry*" – "*want of ability or disposition*" – "*self-constituted critic*" – "*cloudy reviewer*" – "*reviewer's obtuseness*" – "*volunteer champion*" – "*unamiable recklessness*" – "*victim of delusive prejudice and self-confidence.*" These are rather harsh terms for a dignified theological professor to employ towards one, who simply ventured to question the soundness of some views he had published; and it is to be feared that they will do as much damage to their author, as to the individual to whom they are so liberally applied. Strong arguments and soft words would have been more effective, as well as more to the credit both of the author's head and heart. He seems to have forgotten his own counsel, in "*American Lutheranism,*" p. 16, and where he introduces the Leyden Cobbler to prove, "who is wrong in the argument, by seeing *who gets angry first.*"

But no doubt he regards the provocation as very great, and perhaps justifying such a departure from his usual smooth and courteous manner. What he means, by "the circumstances of the case," is not so clear; but perhaps it refers to the relative age, position, attainments, etc., of the reviewer and the reviewed. He is vastly indignant, that a mere preacher of the gospel, with "scanty leisure for theological study," should presume to call in question the views of a learned professor of theology. "Some apology may be found," he admits, for the writer's "want of acquaintance with Lutheran Theology," in his "training in another denomination." It was very kind in the author to furnish some apology for these deficiencies, but the writer is unwilling to avail himself of any advantage to which he is not fairly entitled, and he can claim less in this respect than has been awarded him. As this is not the first time, that Dr. Schmucker has resorted to such a mode of controversy, it may be well just to state simple facts, and allow the

reader to determine on whose side the strength of this argument lies. The writer was honorably graduated in a Lutheran College – Dr. Schmucker was *not*. Dr. Schmucker *did* study theology under the influence of “another denomination” in one of her theological Seminaries – the writer *did not*. The writer had been endeavoring to preach the Gospel some twelve years in the Lutheran Church, when he ventured on a review of some of Dr. Schmucker’s opinions, a period, he believes somewhat longer than that author had been preaching, when he attempted to write a work on theology, and which contains some of the opinions reviewed. The facilities for theological investigation are quite as great in the Lutheran Church, of this country, at the present time, as they were thirty-five or forty years ago. Such allusions, it is felt, are entirely out of place in a doctrinal discussion, but since Dr. Schmucker has seen fit to introduce them, the reader must determine with how much propriety on his part. And as to his *’preaching the gospel before the writer was born,’* he should also remember, that the Reformers had been in heaven some centuries, and their memories embalmed in the hearts of all Protestant Christendom, before he undertook the thankless task of traducing them before the Church and the world, as the authors of *“superstitious and truly dangerous errors.”* (Am. Luth. p. 34.) _“The atrocious crime of being a young man_” is a charge that has been so often preferred, and so often met, that one would scarcely have expected to meet it again in this discussion; but in default of something better, men are often compelled to resort to very stale and foolish substitutes for argument.

Some other things are jumbled together under this head, that will be more fitly answered in another place. The writer does not exactly understand what Dr. Schmucker means in representing him as having “undertaken to denounce,” but begs to assure him, that he has left this work entirely to himself and friends; and if he can produce from the article in the Review, a single denunciatory sentence, it will be retracted. But before leaving this point, and even at the risk of being considered less amiable, the writer must venture to assure Dr. Schmucker, that he knows of nothing, in his talents or attainments, that warrants him in assuming such a lordly superiority over his brethren; nor has he been able to discover, in his writings, any such depth of research, or profundity of thought, as to make him regard it as a presumptuous act, even for him, to undertake the task of reviewing them. The following language, in “American Lutheranism,” is recommended to the careful consideration of the author: “The disposition

occasionally evinced, to frown down discussion by invective and denunciation, is not only illogical, as it proves neither the affirmative nor negative of the disputed question; but in this free country, where we acknowledge *no popes*, and in the judgment of free Americans, who think for themselves, it must always reflect unfavorably on its authors.”

2. “Because the entire article of Rev. B. is confused and unsystematic, showing that he has studied *Belles Lettres* more successfully than Logic or Hermeneutics”

Another reason assigned is – “Because the entire article of Rev. B. is confused and unsystematic, showing that he has studied *Belles Lettres* more successfully than Logic or Hermeneutics. Thus he has but two captions in his article... but in reality, he discusses three topics.”

The writer had occasion to introduce, incidentally, natural depravity, without any design of entering into a proper discussion of that topic; but Dr. Schmucker is so severely logical, that he thinks it a sufficient reason for not discussing an article, because it is divided into two parts instead of three. This is more than “amusing,” it is ludicrous – ludicrous in the extreme. Suppose the writer had undertaken to discuss only one topic, justification, and had introduced depravity and regeneration to illustrate the subject, would it be necessary to make *three captions*? Or would he not dare, without offence to the author’s logical sense, to discuss sanctification, unless he should make *four captions*, depravity, regeneration, justification and sanctification? The author seems to be rather vain of his logic, but if it answers him no better purpose than it has in the writing of “*American Lutheranism*,” or his article in the Review, it must be of very little service. But more upon this subject by and by.

What particular application is intended by the charge of “no discrimination between the facts of a doctrine, and different philosophical explanations of it: no clear perception of the difference between its fundamental features, and its collateral aspects,” we are not informed. Perhaps these sounding words were only designed for the amusement of the reader, or to impress him with the amazing penetration and discrimination of the author. Most persons, however, will likely agree with the editors of the Review, (Luth. Observer, August 28,) in regarding the points discussed, as “fundamental in the Christian system.” If the author wishes to shield his

views under the specious and imposing name of *philosophy*, the less of such philosophy the better.

The writer's "mode of interpretation" is found fault with for "wresting passages from the context, and considering them apart from other portions of the work." He is not aware that any unfairness was used, and believes that all the passages quoted were given in their fair, legitimate import; but this objection comes with ill grace, since Dr. Schmucker has not only pursued such a "mode of interpretation" for years, in regard to the writings of the Reformers, but in this very article containing the charge, in almost every instance, the quotations are garbled, mistranslated, or perverted. Of this the reader can satisfy himself by examining the authorities referred to or cited.

What is said, under this head, about Pelagianism and some other isms, shows either that the author has mistaken the meaning of these terms, or else was willing to impose on his readers. Who ever heard, that power of choice, or freedom of the will, was synonymous with Pelagianism? Nor is the use of other terms more happy. It would be well for the author, before he compares different and conflicting statements in his works, with different statements in the Bible, to be sure of one thing – that he is inspired or infallible, so that a contradiction is impossible. Having first satisfied ourselves of the inspiration of the word of God, we assume that the writers cannot contradict themselves; and if he can substantiate such a claim, then his writings are entitled to the same deference in their interpretation as the Bible; but if he cannot, it may be lawful to assume the possibility of error, of inconsistency or contradiction. The writer, however, must be allowed to deny that Dr. Schmucker, or any other, can convict the "inspired servants of God," "and even the blessed Saviour himself" of such errors as he alleges.

Whilst on this subject of "confusion and want of system," it may be just as well to notice one or two other points introduced by the author, in a different connection. He admits the "reviewer may be a faithful preacher of the Gospel of Christ, and a successful co-worker" with others, but at the same time, labors to show that he is "*cloudy*" and "*obtuse*," and lacks "either the ability or disposition," to comprehend what others have written on the subjects of regeneration and justification. Perhaps Dr. Schmucker does not regard clear views of sin, regeneration and justification, as very important to the faithful and successful preaching of the Gospel. It is said, that he is fond of preaching on War, Slavery, the Laws of the Universe,

Natural Theology, and kindred topics; leaving to humbler intellects the treatment of sin, repentance, faith, justification, and other Christian doctrines. It is very much doubted, however, whether the church generally will agree with him, in holding, either that the “scanty leisure” of ministers does not afford them opportunity to study these fundamental doctrines, or that a clear understanding of them is not necessary to those, who are expected to be continually preaching them.

Since he has referred the question to others, as to whether the writer’s confusion arose from “want of system in his own mind,” or obscurity in the author’s “representations of truth,” he will allow the introduction of a single witness on this point. Dr. W. J. Mann, who is not particularly suspected of any want of comprehension, or of systematic mental training, says in his late work, (“Lutheranism in America,” p. 52.) – “*We have vainly endeavored to understand the views which Dr. S. S. Schmucker entertains in regard to the doctrine of the Sacraments. Formerly, we thought we knew what the reverend Doctor means, but since the appearance of the ‘American Lutheranism Vindicated,’ we find ourselves completely in the dark.*” Upon the subjects of regeneration and justification. Dr. Schmucker is at least as confused and inconsistent as he is upon the Sacraments: but this will appear hereafter.

3. “his manifest want of acquaintance with Lutheran Theology”

The next reason is, “his manifest want of acquaintance with Lutheran Theology” This charge is based on the fact of the writer’s quoting a few standard authorities, that were not Lutheran. Dr. Schmucker says,

“Were not the subject too grave a one, it would be purely amusing to behold a man step forward as volunteer champion of orthodoxy in the Lutheran Church, adducing as authority to sustain his positions, *not Lutheran*, but Calvinistic divines: to find him cite, not the illustrious Lutheran Theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century; but the high-toned Calvinist Edwards, the Congregationalist, Dwight, and Dick and Chalmers, and even the erratic opium-eater, Coleridge!”

Now the writer, in his article in the Review, stated distinctly his reasons for citing these authors. Lutheran authorities were at hand, lying on his table when the article was written, and would have been adduced, but for the

reasons stated – their well known views on the subject under discussion, and their liability to the charge of Symbolism.

But, if the logic of Dr. Schmucker sustains his conclusion, it proves more than he might wish – it would prove his own “want of acquaintance with Lutheran Theology;” for he habitually cites some of these very same authors, and but seldom supports his views by the “illustrious Lutheran Theologians.” To satisfy himself on this point the reader need only look into the index of the “Popular Theology,” or the preface to “American Lutheranism,” p. 7. Besides, Dr. Schmucker’s students assure the writer, that these are the very authors recommended by him in the Theological Seminary, and that their names will be found in notes taken from his lips!! The writer is not ashamed to confess his profound reverence for such men as Edwards, and Dwight, and Alexander, and Dick, and Chalmers, and even the erratic opium-eater, Coleridge: and how Dr. Schmucker will look his students in the face, when again recommending them, after having sneered at them, it is not easy to conceive. Whether he will add to his reputation, either in theology, or in liberality of views, by such contemptuous treatment of these names, is more than doubtful. Desperate indeed must be the cause that requires recourse to such means of defense.

But what makes the case still stronger, is the well known fact, of which Dr. Schmucker cannot be ignorant, that the “illustrious Lutheran Theologians” differ from him on the very points upon which he complains of their not being cited. As Dr. Schmucker has all of a sudden fallen in love with these divines, he will be gratified with the assurance, that although the writer’s leisure may have been more scanty than his own, he has found time to acquaint himself slightly with the views of some of these great men, and that next to the Bible, he owes to them his dissatisfaction with the meager and superficial theology of the author. The achievements of the distinguished theologians of the Lutheran Church in the old world, must excite the admiration of all who know what they have done, and make us feel that American Lutheranism is advancing “*non passibus acquis.*”

4. “glaring misapprehensions and consequent misrepresentations”

The writer’s “glaring misapprehensions and consequent misrepresentations” is the other reason assigned for not discussing the article. Upon this point

not much need be said here, as this involves the very matters in dispute, and which will occupy the second part of this new discussion. But it may be well to remind the reader that some of “the divines and intelligent laity of our Church,” and “distinguished theologians of other churches,” have made the very same “misapprehensions.” Whether it is to be set down to the score of “*obtuseness*,” or “persecution,” or something else, the fact is indisputable. Dr. Schmucker himself tells us of Dr. Schaff, whose ability is acknowledged in both hemispheres, charging him with “denying the *reality* as well as the guilt of natural depravity.” Dr. Mann, as will be seen hereafter, understands Dr. Schmucker as having taught the view of justification set forth by the writer in the Review: and did the writer feel himself at liberty to use private letters, he could easily prove that very many of the leading divines, at least in this section of the Church, agree with him in his apprehensions or misapprehensions of that book. It will be remembered by many that some two years ago, when the writer had occasion to offer some strictures on the so-called “Definite Synodical Platform,” he was met by the same cry of misapprehension, obtuseness, prejudice, bigotry, etc.; but it is a little significant that the parts objected to disappeared in future editions. It is quite likely that those who live, will see a similar expurgation of the works containing the paragraphs reviewed in this pamphlet; and should these discussions accomplish no other good than to purify our church literature from such excrescences, the writer will not consider his labor altogether in vain.

II. Dr. Schmucker’s Defense of His Own Views

Having disposed of Dr. Schmucker’s reasons for not discussing our article in the Review, it remains to notice what he has said in explanation or defense of his own views. Natural depravity, or original sin, was introduced into that article only incidentally, and limited to one or two paragraphs; but as Dr. Schmucker finds fault with the arrangement or division of subjects, and bestows considerable labor on this point, the writer will gratify him by making three captions instead of two.

1. Natural Depravity, or Original Sin.

Some exceptions were taken to presenting natural depravity simply as “a disorder of the mental and bodily constitution,” because it left out of view the *moral* element of our being. It must be very clear to every one who reads the article, that the objection was not to calling sin a disorder or a disease, but a disease only of “the mental and bodily system;” and yet Dr. Schmucker labors hard to make his readers believe, that the objection is to the use of the word *disease*, and that the writer was “evidently unacquainted with the fact, that the representation of natural depravity under the figure of a disease, is authorized by the best Lutheran authorities, and is also often met with among writers of other denominations!!!” Surely he must have counted largely on the *gullibility* of his readers in making this representation, or supposing that any one in the least acquainted even with the Bible or Hymn Book could be “unacquainted” with so common a truth. But to see how deliberately he has misrepresented and perverted the entire paragraph on this subject, the reader is requested to turn back, and read it over. He will find in it the following language: “In all seriousness, would we ask, is natural depravity nothing more than a bodily or mental disorder? Has it nothing to do with the moral and spiritual nature of man? Is there nothing in it that is corrupting, polluting, defiling to the soul? Is it the head or the heart, the bodily and mental, or the moral and spiritual part, that is most *diseased*?” The point of the objection is very clear, and Dr. Schmucker’s learned references might have been spared: but they may, nevertheless, serve a good purpose, in showing how little he agrees with the very authors to whom he refers.

He asks “does *mental* philosophy denote the science which discusses a *part* of our *mental* faculties, and omits the will and affections?” The writer answers, *no*; but *moral* philosophy *does* denote something, and *it* discusses our *moral* faculties. Were he disposed to imitate the example of Dr. Schmucker, in this controversy, he might refer him, “for better information,” to numerous authorities, ancient and modern, who observe and insist on the distinction between mind and morals, or the mental and moral in our nature. But every intelligent reader knows that this distinction is observed by the best authors, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian. What meaning does Dr. Schmucker attach to *moral* constitution, *moral* powers, *moral* philosophy, *moral* character – forms of expression as current, and well understood, as any in the language? Or does he ignore these terms? If you ask what was Byron’s *mental* constitution, would any

one understand by it his *moral* character? Or if it should be answered that his mental powers were of the highest order, would it be understood that he exemplified the most exalted *morality*? Do we not daily hear of those who are receiving *mental* without *moral* training? Indeed, this distinction is so common, and so well understood, that it seems a useless expenditure of paper and ink to point out or illustrate it. "Disorder of the mental and bodily system" may be insanity, idiocy, frenzy, delirium, hypochondria, or something of like kind; but sin is a *moral disease*. And this distinction, grounded in the nature of man, and observed by standard writers, Dr. Schmucker is the less excusable for neglecting, since, as a theological professor, he has chiefly to do with the moral side of this subject.

But he pretends that his views accord with the best authorities, and that his definition is sanctioned even by our Symbolical Books!!! ("a mode of definition adopted even by the Form of Concord.") He is, however, very careful, and for good reasons, not to quote the passage, but contents himself with a simple reference to Muller's S. B., p. 520. For the convenience of the reader the passage will be quoted, and then it can be seen how much truth there is in the allegation.

"We believe, teach, and confess, that original sin is not a superficial but so deep a corruption of human nature, that nothing sound or uncorrupt remains in the body and soul of man, his internal and external powers (*in corpore et anima hominis, atque adeo in interioribus et exterioribus viribus.*") Neither *anima* in Latin, nor *sede* in German, corresponds with our English word *mental*, as every scholar knows; and Dr. Schmucker will need to be careful of his reputation in Hermeneutics, if he makes many such exhibitions of his skill in that department.

The authorities cited by Dr. Schmucker happen to be against him and with the writer, on this point. Thus, the Form of Concord calls it "*lepra quadam SPIRITUALI*," (a kind of spiritual leprosy.) His own quotation of two words ("*moralische Krankheit*") from Reinhard is quite sufficient from that author. It will hardly be maintained that *moralische* means either mental or bodily. That this corruption is especially in the soul, Baumgarten Says is proved by the *moral* nature of sin (*'natura morali peccati,*) by the testimony of the sacred writings, and the necessity of *spiritual change*." Nor is he more fortunate in his reference to the great work of Dr. Julius Müller, "*Lehre von der Sunde*." Müller says, "according to universal usage, it is the *religious* term of *moral* evil."¹ – " In distinction from all other creatures,

man is the subject of *moral* evil, of wickedness, it has taken possession of his spirit.² “The inmost nature of sin, the evil in evil, is of an entirely spiritual nature.”³ These authorities, in common with all orthodox theologians, represent sin as a moral evil, and natural depravity as a *moral* disease.

It may be interesting and gratifying to the reader to have presented in connection, so that he can take them in at a single glance, the views of some of the “illustrious Lutheran Theologians” on this subject.

The FORM OF CONCORD styles it “a deep, evil, horrible, fathomless, unsearchable and unspeakable corruption of the whole nature, and of all the powers of man, especially of the noblest and most eminent faculties of the soul, in the understanding, the heart, and the will.”⁴

CHEMNITZ – “a corruption or depravity that is inherent in our very nature or substance, and as a spiritual poison infects, corrupts, and diffuses itself far and wide through all the members of our whole substance or nature.”⁵

GERHARD – “a poison that has pervaded all the powers of man.”⁶

QUENSTEDT – “a horrible corruption and depravity of human nature, and of all its powers, excluding all from the favor of God and eternal life, and subjecting them to temporal and eternal punishments, unless they are born again of water and the Spirit, or obtain through Christ the remission of sins.”⁷

BAUMGARTEN – “a defective, irregular, unrighteous, disordered condition and disposition of the whole nature.”⁸

HOLLAZ – “a deep corruption of the entire nature.”⁹

MULLER – “a moral disturbance, an innate propensity to evil, that, as the radical evil, is fast rooted into the very nature of man.”¹⁰

Here may be added, though older than any of them, the article on original sin, as agreed upon by Lutherans and Reformed, at the Marburg Conference, October 4th, 1529. This article was subscribed by Luther, Melancthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brentz, Agricola, OEcopolampadius, Zwingli, Bucer, and Hedio. It reads as follows: –

“*Credimus, quod peccatum originale sit nobis innatum, et ab Adamo in nos propagatum. Et quod sit tale peccatum, quod omnes homines damnationi obnoxios faciat. Ita, quidem, ut nisi Jesum Christum nobis sua morte et vita subvenisset, omnes homines propter originale peccatum damnati fuissent, nec in regnum Dei, et ad aeternam felicitatem pervenire potuissent.*” – We believe that original sin is innate in us, and propagated in us from Adam: and is such as to subject all men to condemnation: so that, indeed, unless Jesus Christ had interposed for us by his life and death, all men would have been condemned on account of original sin, neither could they have entered the kingdom of God, or obtained eternal life.”

Compared with these, Dr. Schmucker’s exhibition of the subject must appear, to say the least, very feeble. He tells us that “the word *disorder* literally implies an abnormal or a confused state so that now his definition as explained will be –”original sin, or natural depravity, is an abnormal or a confused state of the bodily and mental system.” This may suit some tastes, but the writer must be allowed the privilege of expressing his very decided dissent. There is something in natural depravity far darker and more hateful than is conveyed by such forms of expression. The language is not in harmony with our standards, with the teaching of our best theologians, nor with the words employed by the Holy Ghost.

If he does not differ from standard orthodox divines, why not employ language in its common and etymological meaning, so as not to give rise to the charge, among ministers of his own and other churches, of unsoundness in the faith?

He knows very well, or ought to know, that at the present day, the most accurate writers, as well as the masses, employ the word *mental* as not only not comprehending what is *moral*, but very frequently in express contradistinction from that term. He knows too, that there is a theory of human nature, and not without its adherents in the land, which denies to infants any *moral* character whatever. He must be aware that his language seems to many to favor this view; and that when he says their bodily and mental system is so *disordered*, as in result of its operations to evince a *predisposition to sin*,” he is thought to inculcate the idea that children, when born, have no character, either for good or evil. If he entertains such views, he should not lack the courage to avow it; and if he does not, he should use such terms as would put his meaning beyond the reach of doubt, or of controversy. Our language is not so barren, that a man, who knows what he believes, cannot express his belief; and unless Dr. Schmucker adopts the sentiment, that the chief use of language is to conceal one’s opinions, he

ought to give the church a clearer statement of what he believes and teaches on this subject.

2. Regeneration.

Upon this topic the author evidently feels himself vulnerable, and labors hard by various shifts to cover his weak points, and divert attention, either to the writer, or to something not at all in dispute. It may be best to settle, first of all, the charge preferred against the writer of unsoundness, because he said – “regeneration has to do, and that chiefly, with native depravity – and that its very object is *its removal*.” The words “*its removal*” are arrayed by Dr. Schmucker in capitals, and alleged to be “*in conflict with our best authorities, and with the word of God itself*.” The particular portion of the word of God is not mentioned, and Dr. Schmucker perhaps forgot, that the writer had employed the exact synonym of the Bible – “*I will TAKE AWAY the stony heart out of your flesh*.” Now if this is heresy, Dr. Schmucker may make the most of it, but he should be careful not to quarrel with the words of the Holy Ghost.

As to the writer’s maintaining that infants or adults “*must he wholly sanctified in this life*,” he was at some pains, in the article, to point out and illustrate the “*difference, between the original native depravity of the heart, without one single right affection towards God, and the state of the heart renewed by divine grace, into which however, evil thoughts will sometimes enter, disturbing its peace, and, it may be, leading to forbidden acts*.” This distinction Dr. Schmucker might have found on the very same page in Baumgarten, from which he has made a partial quotation. There these words occur –

*“Vocantur reliquiae, quia NON EODEM MODO supersit peccatum originale, quo antea adfuit.”*This is called remains, because original sin does not exist in same manner as it did before."

Dr. Julius Müller says, –

"Certainly in such a life the *dominion of sin* has been broken; the personal will is, with full inward purpose, devoted to the Divine Will; this unity is the strictly impelling and determining principle;¹¹

And if the author will pardon the writer for again quoting from a despised Calvinist, Dr. Chalmers says, –

“We mistake Christianity, if we think that it only provides an expiation, to do away the guilt of our original depravity. It provides a regenerating influence to do away its existence. It does something more than demonstrate the evil malady of our nature. It will not be satisfied with any thing short of destroying it. For this purpose it brings a new and a powerful element into living play with the original elements of our constitution; and with these it sustains a combat that may well be denominated a war of extermination.”

The writer, after carefully reviewing what he has written, finds nothing to modify or retract; nor anything that needs long parentheses to explain; but he is willing to leave it just as it is, to the candid reader. He has used no language stronger than is to be found in the Bible, or than has been used by writers of acknowledged orthodoxy, and even those whom Dr. Schmucker quotes.

As some readers may hesitate about the word “*destroy*,” and Dr. Schmucker seems inclined to strain its meaning, it may be proper to observe that it does not, in its etymological, or scriptural, or popular signification, mean *annihilation*. Etymologically (*destruo*) it means to pull down, to overthrow – scripturally it means to overthrow, to break the power of, to ruin, Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:6 – and popularly we say, ‘the frost destroyed the fruit,’ when only injured; and ‘the hail destroyed the field of grain,’ though some of it be left remaining. Webster says – “an army is *destroyed* by slaughter, capture, or dispersion.” And in its etymological, scriptural, and popular sense, most Christians will agree with Paul, when he says, “our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed*.”

Dr. Schmucker cites a number of authorities to prove, what was admitted, and what no intelligent Lutheran doubts – that sin still remains in the believer, after his regeneration; and that the work of the Holy Ghost in sanctification is not perfected until death. About this there was no dispute; but the real point was, whether those were regenerated at death, who were incapable of regeneration during life. The writer said – “As to any change effected in the spiritual part, at death or by death, we are very much in the dark: but there is no reason to think that death *itself* effects any change in the moral character either of infants or adults. If regeneration be impossible during the life of an infant, and possible at death, we should like to know why.” What fault does any one find with this? Dr. Schmucker knew

perfectly well, that every writer he quotes on this point, holds to the capability of infant regeneration. He knew also that they were speaking of the complete sanctification, or entire deliverance from all sin, of those who were already regenerated. It must be very gratifying to Old Lutherans, to find him quoting, as one of “our best authorities,” Luther saying, “*Baptism removes the guilt of natural depravity.*” He might have gone a little further, and in the very same paragraph, Müller, S. B., p. 83, quoted, – “He (Luther) has ever clearly taught, that Holy Baptism extirpates and removes the entire guilt and hereditary debt of original sin,” and “that the Holy Ghost, given through Baptism, begins daily to mortify and *blot out* the remaining evil desires in us, and puts into the heart a new light, a new mind and spirit.” And two pages on, Müller’s (S. B.) p. 85, he would have found that Luther taught in regard to original sin that “we need the constant light and operation of the Holy Spirit, through which, it is mortified and removed (*”ausgefegget und getödtet werde.”*)

Here, perhaps, will be as convenient a place as any other, since Dr. Schmucker objects to Calvinistic authorities, to introduce a few Lutheran divines on the subject of infant regeneration.

CHEMITZ says – “Although we may not fully understand, or be able to explain, the manner of the Holy Spirit’s, influence and operation in infants, who are baptized, yet the fact, and that it does take place, is from the word of God certain.”¹² “Nor is it by any means to be conceded that infants, who are baptized, are without faith.”

GERHARD – “We are not solicitous about the mode of their faith, but rest in this simplicity that infants do truly believe,”¹³

HOLLAZ – “That the understanding of infants is imbued with the saving knowledge of God, in their regeneration by the Holy Spirit, through baptism, and their will endued with reliance upon Christ, we do not doubt.”¹⁴

The writer does not consider it necessary to say how far he agrees with these authorities. Dr. Schmucker complained that Calvinistic, and not Lutheran theologians had been adduced on this subject, and the reader may now decide how well they agree with his dogmatic assertion, in regard to infants, – “*they neither have, nor can have, any religious views or feelings, or actions at all.*” Such sentiments, the “illustrious Lutheran Theologians” would scout, as bald rationalism; and perhaps even those who do not favor baptismal regeneration, will wonder where the author obtained this absolute

knowledge, in regard to the powers of the infant soul, or of the Holy Spirit to work upon it.

The reader may now prepare to look at something that is really amusing – one of the author’s grand exploits, and which proves, that when in a strait, he can use the *sliding scale* quite as dextrously as logic. The writer had quoted, from the works of Dr. Schmucker, a passage, to show how he disposed of those dying in infancy, after denying the possibility of their regeneration. That passage teaches that “*at death* their corruptible nature shall be transformed into an incorruptible, and their mortal into an immortal one.” . . . The writer said – the corruptible mortal nature *must* mean the bodily part,” and objected to the statement “as quite a new version of the apostle’s language – a new view of the resurrection – and a contradiction of all the evidence of our senses.” The case was so plain, and the absurdity so gross, that not even a child could fail to perceive it, or mistake the writer’s meaning. But Dr. Schmucker cries out – “On the glaring mistake of Rev. B., in representing our statement, that the corruptible and mortal nature of children is changed at death, as a quotation from 1 Cor. 15; whereas the apostle is there speaking of the *body alone*, and our sentence is neither marked as a quotation, nor intended as one, and his there charging our sentence as being a novel explanation of that text, we will not dwell. Now Rev. B. made no such”glaring mistake,” as to represent that “statement” as a quotation from 1 Cor. He knew very well that Paul had never written such nonsense, and his veneration for the apostle is too great even to hint such a slander. But as Dr. Schmucker had made use of the same terms as the apostle, (and evidently from him,) accommodating them to his own purpose, the writer called it *a new version* (‘a turning’ Webster) of the *apostle’s language*” The amusing part, however, is how Dr. Schmucker gets over, what he evidently saw was, a case of stubborn fact. Some ingenuity must be employed and, the *sliding scale* is called into requisition. Mark how admirably it is managed. He begins with “the corruptible and mortal nature,” italicizing the word “*nature*.” This of course can only apply to the *body*, for the *soul* is neither mortal nor corruptible, in the only sense in which corruptible can be here employed. But as he proceeds, he quietly slides out “*corruptible and mortal nature*,” and slips in instead, “*depraved nature;*” and as this would not still do, he makes another slide, and substitutes for “*depraved nature*” – “*all that remains living and conscious of them*,” and then puts in apposition to this, or as a substitute, “*their soul*,”

and completes this part of the game by telling us that, at death, this “is wholly delivered from every taint of sin by the Holy Spirit of God.” He does not however forget the very important part of a skillful performer, to divert attention, whilst managing these slides, by repeating, “glaring mistake” – “evidently not acquainted with the fact.” . . . and when the feat is done, to avoid detection, he points “the reviewer for better information,” to numerous great authorities, who hold the very orthodox conclusions, to which he, by this sliding process came!!! “*Risum teneatis, amici?*” If Dr. Schmucker will, just for his own credit as a theologian, and that of the church, erase that statement from his publications, and give us something scriptural and sensible in its stead, the writer will not be severe. But in the meantime, that no one may mistake in the matter, and that Dr. Schmucker may by no possibility pervert the writer’s meaning, he will just say, (1) that “the corruptible and mortal nature” can only mean the bodily part, – and (2) that to teach this becomes incorruptible and immortal *at death*, is (a) to oppose the plain language of the Bible, (b) to inculcate a new view of, or deny the resurrection, (c) to contradict the clearest and most positive testimony of our senses.

The “*psychological definition*” parenthetically developed, of Dr. Schmucker, the writer is unwilling to mar by any attempt at dissection. It will be left a complete whole, as a curious specimen of theological and literary workmanship. The author is constrained himself reluctantly to confess “*that the original may be obscure.*” This it seriously to be regretted on a subject of so much importance, and especially as this “*psychological definition*” constituted a part of that pamphlet, called the “*Definite Synodical Platform;*” but it is hoped that the very brief and unimportant parentheses, added by the author, will make it more luminous. If pastors are sometimes “cloudy” or “obtuse,” theological professors ought not to leave their readers in the dark, when examining into the nature of regeneration.

The exposition the author has given of this subject, in his article in the Review, is much more to the writer’s taste: but it is in irreconcilable conflict with the other statement. No ingenuity can harmonize such “a *radical change,*” as is there described, with a mere change of “*sinful habits,*” formed by the individual, after having reached years of moral agency.” The one will not explain or illustrate the other. They are opposite and contrary statements, and will no more blend in one harmonious whole, than water and oil will form one homogeneous mixture. For instance, the author tells

us that his definition of regeneration as a *radical change* is one, which “as the etymology of the word implies, affects the root or source of human thought and action;” but he comes right after, and ignores what he has just said, by affirming that “it must consist mainly in a change of that *increased predisposition* to sin ARISING FROM ACTION, of that preponderance of *sinful habits* formed by voluntary indulgence of our natural depravity, after we have reached years of moral agency.” Now it will hardly be denied that “the increased predisposition to sin arising from action,” “the sinful habits formed by voluntary indulgence,” is an after-growth, something that has grown out of, and grown upon, this root of natural depravity. And as he makes regeneration “consist mainly” in a change of this after-growth – “that increased predisposition” – “the sinful habits” – how can it be a “radical change,” or one that truly “affects the root and source?” The root of sin, and the “sinful habits” “*formed*” afterwards, are different and distinct, as the root and branches of a tree are different; and whatever has to do “mainly,” or chiefly with the latter, cannot with reason or propriety be said to have to do primarily, or extensively with the former. If regeneration has regard “mainly to the natural depravity, or root of sin, then the” “sinful habits,” or all that grows out of this root, will be affected by it, as anything at the root of a tree affects its entire growth; but if it has regard “mainly” to the mere “habits formed,” the root may not be seriously affected. And this “radical change,” we are told, so far as natural depravity (the real root of sin – the *erbsünde* is concerned, “*merely restrains*” it. The author has been at some pains to illustrate and confirm this view, so as to leave no doubt about his meaning in this connection.

It is now time that the writer should endeavor clearly, and in as few words as possible, to state and illustrate the chief and original points in debate upon this subject. So much that is collateral has been introduced, that the reader will require a fresh and precise statement.

Summary

1. Dr. Schmucker alleges that "regeneration merely restrains the natural depravity, or innate sinful dispositions.

The writer maintains that it does much more, that it strikes at the very root of it, that “its object is its removal,” which it begins to accomplish. If “regeneration merely restrains the natural depravity,” it does nothing more than unregenerate men are doing every day, when, from any motive or influence whatever, they restrain their evil passions and dispositions. One of “the illustrious Lutheran Theologians,” Quenstedt, describes it thus – “*Neque enim in objecto spiritualitor bono cognoscendo et appetendo in homine vires antiquas expoliuntur, sopitae suscitantur, infirmas roborantur, aut ligatae saltern solvuntur, sed plane novae et aliae vires aut facultates ipsi conferuntur atque induuntur*” – In discerning and seeking after spiritual good, it is not the polishing of the old, or the arousing of the slumbering, or the strengthening of the weak, or the loosening of the fettered powers in man, but clearly the endowing and bestowing upon him new and different powers or faculties.” “The high-toned Calvinist, Edwards,” in harmony with the Lutheran Quenstedt, describes regeneration as imparting, “as it were, a new *spiritual sense*, or a principle of new kind of perception or spiritual sensation, which is in its whole nature different from any former kinds of sensation of the mind, as tasting is diverse from any of the other senses.” The Bible represents it, as being born again; becoming new creatures] being renewed in the spirit of the mind; being made partakers of the divine nature.”

2. Dr. Schmucker alleges that regeneration “must consist mainly in a change of that increased predisposition to sin arising from action, of that preponderance of sinful habits formed by voluntary indulgence of our natural depravity, after we have reached years of moral agency.”

The writer maintains that it consists chiefly or primarily, and so “mainly,” in a change wrought within the soul by the Holy Ghost; and that the change of the *sinful habits* is only the result of a far deeper change in the very depths of the soul. In regeneration there is the imparting of a new spiritual life, and this, like every other form of life, works from within, outward. The stream cannot rise higher than its source, or the branches have life that is not in the root: neither can regeneration affect the “*sinful habits*” except as it does it

through a change wrought in the naturally depraved heart. The change of habits is only a reformation, but regeneration is the “being born again,” “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” And in accordance with this the Saviour said, “*Either make the tree good, and his fruit, good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt.*”

In perfect harmony with what the writer maintains, Melancthon says, in the Apology – “For this reason are we regenerated and receive the Holy Spirit, that the new life may have new works, new affections, the fear and love of God, and the hatred of sin This regeneration is as if the beginning of eternal life, as Paul says, (Rom. 8:10,)”If Christ be in you the spirit lives.”¹⁵

3. – Justification.

On this subject the author has said but little, and there is no occasion for saying much in reply. There was no room for the kind of skill shown in disposing of the other topics, and he seemed to think the less said the better for himself. He cites a few passages from different works, to show that he has elsewhere, and sometimes taught orthodox views; and then without any attempt to explain the passages reviewed, or even so much as an allusion to them, asks, “will it be believed that our cloudy reviewer insists on it, that we teach justification in part by works, and that mainly on the ground of his own erroneous supposition, that we use the word regeneration as including sanctification!!” That the writer understood him to use “regeneration as synonymous with sanctification” is not so strange, when his language in American Lutheranism is considered, where he insists on its including “the *completion* of this great spiritual renovation;” and when it is considered that many others have understood his language in the same way. But the objections to what he has written on justification, Dr. Schmucker knows very well, do not rest on this understanding of his use of terms, but on distinct and fully quoted passages. If the author did not choose to reply, or explain what had excited the astonishment of his readers, he should at least have refrained from assigning a false reason for the objections of the writer.

It does indeed seem strange and almost, incredible, that the professor of Dogmatic theology, in a Lutheran Seminary, should expose himself even to the slightest suspicion of writing what is unsound on the great cardinal doctrine of the reformation. But it is useless to deal in surmises or

probabilities. It is a simple question of facts, and there is no denying or concealing; the truth, that Dr. Schmucker has made use of language, which has subjected him to this charge, and that not by the writer alone, but by those whose discrimination and candor will not be questioned. Whether the obnoxious passages, which have given rise to this charge, are the result of real unsoundness on the part of the author, or whether they are the result of carelessness, or of running into an opposite extreme whilst combating a contrary error, or of some other cause, the writer does not pretend to say. But it would have been much better for him, to let his readers know what he did mean by these passages, especially as the charge is before the world in more than one publication. In the work already alluded to by Dr. J. Mann, p. 46, he says, “We are astonished to see that the Rev. Dr. Schmucker seems to favor on this point the Romish doctrine of cooperation on man’s part, as necessary to his salvation; for we cannot give any other interpretation to the following extract from his”*American Lutheranism Vindicated*,” p. 125. (Here follows the same passage quoted by the writer in the Review.) He adds –

“The only inference which must necessarily flow from these words is clearly this, namely, that the sinner must be sanctified before he can be justified.”

And this charge is not confined to a few, but as the editors of the Review have declared, is made “extensively in the Church;” and Dr. Schmucker will be very much mistaken, if he thinks to meet all objection to his views, by the cry of “cloudy reviewer.” When such charges come from different quarters, and from men who can at least understand “plain English,” the suspicion will be raised of cloudiness somewhere else.

The case is so plain a one, and the whole matter confined to so narrow a compass, that there is neither room nor occasion for much argument or illustration. Dr. Schmucker has pointedly contradicted himself, and written what is beyond all controversy, contrary to sound doctrine. If any one doubts the truth of this allegation, let him compare his language – “justification takes place *at the moment*, when the sinner first attains a living faith in the Redeemer – whenever the returning sinner exercises the FIRST ACT of *living faith*, he is justified” – with the following:–

“WITHOUT A NEW BIRTH, AN ENTIRE MORAL RENOVATION, IN WHICH THE REBEL LAYS DOWN THE ARMS OF HIS REBELLION, AND THE SLAVE OF SIN IS DELIVERED FROM THE DOMINION OF HIS DEPRAVED HABITS, AND BECOMES AN OBEDIENT SERVANT OF CHRIST, LOVING HOLINESS AND DELIGHTING IN THE SERVICE OF GOD, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO OBTAIN PARDON OR TO BE JUSTIFIED.”

The point is the *condition* of a sinner’s pardon or justification. Dr. Schmucker distinctly affirms that without certain things on the part of a sinner, “it is impossible for him to obtain pardon or to be justified.” If the sinner cannot be justified without them, they must be conditions of his justification. They are not the accompaniments or the fruits of justification, but the moral or spiritual requirements, which must previously exist, or without which the pardon will not be granted. The reader is requested to examine carefully this catalog of requirements, and see if anything is wanting to make out the description of an experienced Christian – of one, who by faith has obtained the victory over sin, and finds his delight in the things of God. “Loving holiness and delighting in the service of God,” are characteristics of God’s own, true children; and none except a citizen of Zion will be found possessed of such heavenly traits of mind. And yet we are assured by Dr. Schmucker that without such things, the poor, penitent sinner, ready to perish, cannot obtain pardon or be justified.”

The writer confesses himself at an entire loss to account for this statement coming from such a source. But he is not willing to stultify himself by endeavoring to believe that it is orthodox, or according to “the form of sound words,” simply because it emanated from a professor of theology. Of nothing has he a clearer conviction, than that it is opposed to the true doctrine of justification by faith, as set forth by the great apostle to the gentiles, and as it is received and taught among all evangelical Protestant denominations. It would be a very easy matter to cite authorities on this subject, but they are unnecessary, as Dr. Schmucker has himself, in other places, shown the unsoundness of the statement under review. A single authority, in addition to those already cited in the article in the review, will be here adduced, and with this the discussion will be closed. *Chemnitz* says – Christ has, by his sufferings, merited for us not only the forgiveness of sins, but also this, that on account of his merits there is given to us the Holy Spirit, that we may be renewed in the spirit of our mind. These benefits of the Son of God we say indeed are united, so that when we

are reconciled there is, at the same time, given a spirit of renewal. Yet we do not on this account confound, but distinguish these things, so that we may accord to each its own place, order and peculiarity, as we have learned from the scriptures, viz: that reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins *precedes* and *_afterwards follows_* the commencement of love or of new obedience."¹⁶

What more the writer considered necessary to a fair understanding of this discussion has now been said. It has not been a controversy of his own seeking; but one to which he was led in the first instance by a regard for the truth; and which he could not afterwards abandon, without the sacrifice of both truth and honor. He expects no personal gain from this discussion, but may perhaps incur the censure of those whom he would be glad to conciliate as friends. Nor has he any personal animosities to gratify, but earnestly wishes to be at peace with all men, and especially with his brethren in the faith. But he will not be intimidated or silenced by sneers and denunciations from any quarter. He commits the matter again to the candid judgment of his readers, and is willing to abide by their decision. Anxious only for the truth, and ready to be convinced whenever in error, his prayer is for that wisdom which “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

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1. " . . im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch die religiöse Bezeichnung des sittlich Bosen ist."↵
 2. “Das sittliche Uebel, das Bose, hat der Mensch vor alien Naturwesen voraus; in Geiste selbst. . . hat es seinen Sittz.”↵
 3. “. . das innerste Wesen der Siinde, das Bose im Bosen, ganz spiritieller Natur ist.”↵
 4. " . . intima, pessima, profundissima, (instar cujusdam abyssi,j inscrutabilis et ineffabilis corruptio totius naturae, et omnium virium, imprimis vero super iorum et principalium animae facultatura, in mente, intellectu, corde, et voluntate."↵
 5. “. . corruptio sen depravatio. . . liaeret in ipsa natura seu substantia nostra, et tanquam spirituale veneaum infecit, persuasit et diffusum est

- longe lateque per omnia membra totius substantiae seu naturae nostrae.”↵
6. “. . . veneni instar omnes liominis vires pervaserit.”↵
 7. “. . . liorreudam humanae naturae, omniumque virium corruptionem et depravationem, omuesque excludens a gratia Dei et vita aeterna, et subjiciens aeternis et temporalibus poenis, nisi ex aqua et Spiritu renascantur, sive per Christum remissionem peccatorum consequantur.”↵
 8. “. . . der mangelhaften, uoordeutlichen, uurechtmassigen unrichtigen Verfassung und Einrictitung der ganzen Natur.”↵
 9. “. . . totam naturam humanam intime corrumpens.”↵
 10. “. . . eine sittliche Störung, ein Hang zum Bosen augeboren, dass – als das radikale Rose – in die menschliche Natur selbst eingewurzelt ist.”↵
 11. “Allerdings ist in einen solchen Leben die Herrschaft der Siinde gebroclien; der persbnliche Wille ist dem gbtlichen Willen mit innerer Entschiedenheit zugewandt; diese Einheit ist das eigentlich treibende und bestimmende Princip.”↵
 12. “Licet nec satis intelligamus, nec verbis explicare possimus, qualis sit ilia spiritus S, actio et operatic in infantibus, qui baptizantur: esse tamen et fieri ex verbo Dei, certum est.” “Nequaquara concedendu in est, infantes qui baptizantar sine fide esse.”↵
 13. “Nos non de modo fidei solliciti sumus, sed in ilia simplicitate acquiescimus, quod infantes vere credant.”↵
 14. “Quin tamen intellectus infantum in regeneratione per baptismum a spiritu S, imbuatur notitia Dei salutari, et voluntas eorum donetur fiducia in Christo, nulli dubitamus.”↵
 15. “Ideo regeneramur et Spiritum Sauctum accipimus, ut nova vita habeat nova opera, novos affectus, timorem, dilectionem Dei, odium concupiscentias Haec regeneratio est quasi inchoatio seternae vitse, ut Paulus ait (Rom. 8:10:) *’Si Christus in vobis est, Spiritus vivit’*”↵
 16. “Christus enim sua passione meruit nobis non tautum remissionem peccatorum, verura etiam hoej quod propter ipsius meritura datur nobis spiritus S. ut renovemur spiritu mentis nostrae. Haec beneficia filii Dei dicimus quidem conjuncta, ita ut quando reconciliamur, simul etiam detur spiritus renovationis. Sed propferea non confundimus ilia sed distinguimus, ita ut cuique suum locum, ordinem et suam proprietatem

tribuamus, sicut ex scriptura didicimus, ut scilicet, reconciliatio seu remissio peccatorum praecedat et postea sequatur inchoatio dilectionis seu novae obedientiae.”↩

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