

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Mercersburg Understanding of the German Reformed Tradition

By

JOHN WILLIAMSON NEVIN

and JOHN WILLIAMS PROUDFIT

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Editorial Reviews

"In these writings, John Williamson Nevin interprets the Heidelberg Catechism as being the best expression of the life of the German Reformed Church, as it combines reformed teaching with a deep catholic spirit, and a rational presentation of the faith with a profound mystical element. The introductions by Lee Barrett helpfully place these writings in their nineteenth-century context, and are also quite informative with regard to the composition and history of the Heidelberg Catechism."

--Randall C. Zachman, Professor Emeritus of Reformation Studies, University of Notre Dame

"Nevin's writings on the Heidelberg Catechism, including his controversy with Proudfit, are a superb case study of the catechism's reception in nineteenth-century American theology. Strikingly, Nevin finds in the catechism the heart of Mercersburg's irenic 'Catholic and Reformed' incarnational, mystical, ecclesial, and sacramental vision, in profound contrast to 'Puritan,' Princeton scholastic, Reformed Dutch, revivalist, and even Lutheran views. Skillful editing and substantive historical notes bring alive the catechism and Nevin's insights for contemporary confessional theology."

--David J. Gouwens, Professor Emeritus of Theology, Brite Divinity School

"Nevin's essays, along with the excellent introductions by Lee Barrett, are a window into the great debates in the nineteenth century over what is the key for Protestants in general and the Reformed tradition in particular. For Nevin it's all about incarnation and new life in Christ, finding expression in church, sacraments, creed, and catechism. Nevin forces us to choose: shall priority be given to the individual and culture or what is received in Scripture, creed, and catechism?"

--Peter Schmiechen, Professor of Theology and President Emeritus, Lancaster Theological Seminary

"The Heidelberg Catechism is one of the most important documents in the Reformed confessional heritage. The essays of John Nevin in this collection discuss the document's history and theology, address its reception and influence on spiritual and political life, and offer insights to how the catechism influenced topics that were the focus of Mercersburg theology. This exceptional book will be of benefit to anyone with an informed interest in this catechism."

--Annette G. Aubert, Lecturer and Visiting Scholar of Historical Theology and Church History, Westminster Theological Seminary

About the Author

John Williamson Nevin (1803-86) was an innovative and controversial American theologian. Although reared in Presbyterianism, Nevin became the premier exponent of the Mercersburg Theology of the German Reformed Church. He promoted a view of Christianity as evolving, focused on the incarnation, and centered in the sacraments.

John Williams Proudfit (1803-70) was a classicist and ecclesial historian who taught at New York University and New Brunswick Seminary. His more bibliocentric Reformed theology motivated him to passionately critique Nevin's work.

Lee Barrett is a professor of theology at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He has authored several books and articles interpreting the writings of Soren Kierkegaard, and is a co-editor of the Mercersburg Theology Study Series.
