

ARTICLE VII.

AUGUST THOLUCK,

DR. AND PROF. ORD. OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLE-
WITTEMBERG, PRUSSIAN SAXONY.

BY PROF. ARCHIBALD DUFF, JR., MONTREAL.

It is very fitting that a memorial be erected to this venerable friend of theology in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. His life-work has been to cultivate individual laborers for the field of theology, for the science of religion, especially of the Christian religion. And such a cultivation is also the work of the *Bibliotheca*, in its gathering together the results of individual laborers, and by laying these before the world, encouraging those who produce to make earnest effort, and thus arousing theological thought in others. This is the real way to be scientific in theology. For the actual state of things in the spiritual world can be fully known only by such as recognize that God has something new, something entirely of its own kind, in each individual of his creation, and that something new can be contributed by each individual thinker. It may be fancied that individual workers at theology can differ merely as to comparatively little matters of method in working. But that is a mere fancy. Each individual soul contains a new revelation of God. Each individual who reflects on his own spiritual relations, — on his own religious consciousness, if you will, — enriches the fund of phenomena whence is to be found by generalization the complete philosophy of religion, the complete natural history of the soul and — yes — of God, the complete system of the science of religion, the complete theology. Theology is not a stereotyped thing or book. It cannot become effete. There is forever discovery going on, and the souls of the discoverers are the mines in which these discoverers search. To increase the number of searchers is at the same time to widen the field of search. And they who do increase this, work rationally for the advancement of the science, for the advancement, too, of that profession whose members must become possessed of the science in some way if they will tend well their flocks. One who wrought to this end patiently, faithfully, daily, through a professorship of over fifty years, was Dr. Tholuck. He sleeps now in the tomb; but his work is carried on — by himself. Years ago he and his most estimable wife so planned their affairs that not only all they were, but all they had, should be given to their life-work, and that the latter — their property — should continue the same work when they themselves were no more.

We need not now give a sketch of Tholuck's life. Such is already within reach of all American theologians, even one written by himself. When unable to attend the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in New York, in 1873, he wrote and sent to that assembly a short sketch, which was published at that time in the New York Tribune, and may doubtless be obtained among the published proceedings of the Alliance.

A number of brief sketches, including accounts of little incidents illustrating his daily life and his intercourse with students, have appeared in various places. The writer prepared one for the Canadian Independent Magazine of 1875. Others have been recently published in the religious newspapers by Principal Bancroft of Andover and Rev. Mr. Lawrence of Poughkeepsie, both of whom could write from extended personal acquaintance. These Articles make it unnecessary that this take a similar form. But we give a translation of a short Article in a German periodical, describing the last honors paid to the good man. The story gives a few words on Tholuck's character, by good and great Germans who knew him, and it will also serve, as it pictures the scene, to let many who have loved to live in Halle follow in imagination for themselves the funeral-train as it was marshalled in that well-known garden, so often the scene of Tholuck's walks with students; yes, marshalled in the hall beneath his own quiet study — in that hall where every Christmas the brilliant trees lighted up long tables, spread with simple gifts and Halle Christmas-loaves, one for each of a dozen or more students who might be unable to journey far away to the festival at their own homes. The funeral-train assembled there, and mourned around the bier, as they looked on and listened to the discourse of the good pastor Hoffmann. Tholuck held sittings in the little St. Lorenz church, where Hoffmann has long preached so eloquently of sin and salvation. But Tholuck's seat was scarcely ever occupied; he was seldom or never at church, save when he preached the University-sermons in the Dom. But they misjudge who suppose that all who are absent from church in Germany are godless. From the house in Mittelstrasse the procession moved out to the city cemetery, in the style so striking to a stranger, with its conducting Halloren in old-fashioned cocked hats and knee breeches, and its train of student societies, with officers in quaint student uniform, bearing their craped banners. But let us take the account as written:

“Those were memorable, but sorrowful hours which we recently spent in the old town on the Saale at the funeral of the well-beloved teacher. On Sunday Tholuck died, and on the following day he was buried. With twenty-eight members of the Leipzig branch of the Wingolf Student-Society I journeyed over from Leipzig to Halle. Professors Kahnis and Luthardt were also on the train. At five o'clock the funeral obsequies were to begin in the house, and at six the great solemn procession was to move toward the town-cemetery. I hastened to the house of mourning,

and found the coffin already closed ; but at Mrs. Tholuck's direction the carpenter opened it again to let me and the young Wingolf company look once more on the loved face. A beautiful image of peace it was, as if there stood written on his brow : ' Now I have overcome cross, suffering, fear, and need.' I can never forget the hour I spent with the sorrowing widow, hearing her narrate much that is memorable concerning the latter sufferings and the triumphant words of faith of the departed.

" At five o'clock a numerous assemblage of mourners, including thirty clergymen in their ministerial robes, and most of the professors and lecturers of the university, had gathered in the well-known Gartensaal, around the bier adorned with flowers and palms.

" A well-trained choir of boys from the orphan house (if I mistake not) sang, standing without, the first verse of

' Herzlich lieb hab' ich Dich, O Herr.' "

How often has that same company of lads from the Francke Orphan Institute, clad in queer black coats and tall hats, sung that same verse under Tholuck's dining-room window on Saturday afternoon, whilst the old man dropped his hands on his knee and listened !

" Then followed the funeral address of Pastor Hoffmann, for many years Tholuck's friend and pastor. His text was : " Love never faileth, although prophesying faileth,' etc. ; ' but when that which is perfect is come, then imperfect work shall cease.' As Professor Wolters [Tholuck's successor as University Preacher] afterwards said in the cemetery, it was a life-picture, painted on a golden ground, delighting and nourishing one's very inmost soul, held up lovingly and truthfully to our sight. The sermon will be published. Let me give here but a sentence or two which especially impressed themselves on my memory. He began : " Lord, now lettest thou thy servant go in peace." Thus were we at length suffered to pray on the Sabbath, as we were celebrating the great supper, and the Lord was calling to himself this servant who had led more guests to the supper than any of his contemporaries.' ' Our departed teacher was a richly gifted spirit, who had penetrated far into the mysteries of the Godhead, but still deeper into the mysteries of the human heart. To him was given a tongue which mastered not a few dead languages, but more living ones. He could speak in new tongues of the wonders of the love of God and of the mysteries of the word of the cross ; but the noblest thing of all was that he remained constant in humility.' On the words ' Love never ceaseth,' he said, as he described the character of the departed, ' Nearest to his heart were his loved students ; but who can count the other men to whom as well the wonderful memory of our sleeping friend was a treasure-house of counsel and consolation !' To the last year of suffering, with its ever increasing mental feebleness, he applied the words, ' But when prophesying and knowledge cease' ; and here he related precious incidents which confirm the text, ' Love never ceaseth.' With an earnest

prayer he closed his soul-stirring address. Then the choir began the two verses of 'Jerusalem du hochgebaute Stadt,' and were joined by the whole company.

"In a few minutes the imposing procession began to move, while the bells of all the churches tolled. First went the funeral music, then the coffin, followed immediately by the three funeral preachers, Hoffmann, Prof. Wolters, and Court-preacher Dr. Kögel of Berlin. Then came the clergy in official dress, the professors, and the whole body of the students with their banners. In front were the Wingolf, of which, as is well known, Tholuck was an honorary member. [At the first Foundation Festival of the Halle Wingolf, which is a professedly active Christian association, in July 1845, Tholuck took a hearty, enlivening part in the organization]. Then followed the Salinger Society, in whom also he took a great interest, and then the other associations. The public of Halle took also a prominent part in this last journey of their most famous and most worthy fellow-citizen. By thousands they lined the streets through which the procession passed.

"At the cemetery the strains of the choir were again heard, receiving us; their song this time the first four verses of 'Jesus meine Zuversicht,' in old rhythm. The body was laid down under the bower of green lindens, while professors, pastors, and students gathered round; the marshals of the societies forming a guard of honor. Then began Prof. Dr. Wolters in the name of the University, and with Paul's words, 'Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are manifest unto God,' as text. He gave a masterly description of the life, the work, and the peculiar character of his former teacher, in later years his colleague. I will quote but one passage: 'Tholuck had this in common with Neander, that he did not found a school; but just that was the most precious gift that was given to him by God — even that he was too large-hearted and far-seeing to be the founder of a school. He had only the one aim, to lead as many souls as possible to the Master whom he served, and whom he loved above all else. Because he knew that up to the point where one finds the Lord the ways of individuals are very varied, and only from the time when he is found do they run on side by side, therefore it was his constant endeavor, from the first, in his intercourse with students, to be and to offer something to each one, in order to win the most. Those whom he has won may be counted by thousands.'

"Dr. Kögel, with wonted polished speech and captivating eloquence, laid a wreath of gratitude on the coffin in the name of the students. More beautifully it could not have been done. 'Yesterday,' he began, 'it was, by the will of God, just one hundred and fifty years since a man was laid to rest in this same churchyard, who was at first much despised, then much beloved, and now deeply revered by all Christendom. It was August Hermann Francke. His funeral text shall be our text to-day —

these words from the great supper: "And the servant came and said again to his Lord, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded." With masterly touches he depicted the time of Tholuck's awakening by the efforts of the Baron von Kottwitz, his work in Rome, his coming to Halle, his unwearied labor and influence among the student youth; and closed with the words: 'Yet there is room. Yes; in our time, in part so soured with pessimism, in part so indifferent through optimism, in part so torn by scepticism, — yes, beloved academic youth, there is room still for you in God's heart and at God's table.' One more hymn, and then they laid the weary body to rest till its glorious resurrection."

Prof. Wolters expresses, as quoted above, exactly what seems to us the great service Tholuck has rendered, and which has made him great indeed. Tholuck has been unlike such men as Ewald, who have spent their lives in constructing elaborate scientific systems, and in insisting that they alone were right, and all others very wrong. Ewald wrote a complete system of Hebrew grammar, history, and theology. Tholuck wrote some works on theology, devotional or eclectic, and not closely connected as one complete system. But he awakened and drew on to independent activity many a bright soul, many a complete system of life and thought, which God himself had planned and built. Was that not more than to force his own opinions on others, when any man's opinions and knowledge are at best fragmentary? There are now engaged in active service many of his pupils, older and younger. Of the younger may be named Prof. Besser of Magdeburg, known in America through these pages; Prof. Cremer, known by his *N. T. Lexicon*; Lic. Theol. Herrmann, one of Halle's most promising younger theologians. Amongst the elder of his pupils may be reckoned noted professors at most of the universities. Ewald's system is already superseded. His opinions will be fast forgotten. Tholuck's work goes on actively reproducing itself, spreading its influence even over men who have been simply his colleagues. For Halle University has become noted for the warm personal relations between professors and students, and much of this may be traced to Tholuck's example. We do not mean that Tholuck's work has been opposed to that of men like Ewald, as conservatism opposed to liberal thought. On the contrary, Tholuck has been, as it were, the head of the Halle Faculty, i. e. of the leading theological Faculty of the *Vermittlungs-Schule*, against which the High Church party, — the so-called Orthodox people, — led by Leipzig, have warred well nigh as much as have the most bold of undevout writers of the stamp of the *Protestantische Kirchen-Zeitung*. Tholuck has sought to train men who would be thoroughly liberal in thought, not taking recent tradition, nor yet ancient tradition, as supreme authority, and who would also be really devout men. May we not say he has been in both respects truly rational. It is a pity that the term "rational" should have come into disfavor with anybody. Nobody desires to be irrational. It is a

pity, too, that Tholuck's name should be used as discouraging what is rational. Rational he was, as those who steadily attended his courses of lectures know. True, his early attention to Oriental studies was not very deep, and soon ceased. True, his commentaries are not models of scholarship in his equipment for the work, nor yet in his results. See, for example, his effort to make the synoptic account of the last supper harmonize with that of the fourth Gospel. Yet his counsel in his lectures was steadily that an exegete be strictly rational. And at the same time his teaching—much more, however, his example, his pervading tone of mind—led his pupils to be fervently devout.

Herein, in his devoutness, lay what we may call the second main characteristic of Tholuck's life-work. He studied students—studied their individual gifts, and cultivated them systematically. Herein he was soundly rational. How else can good theologians be made? How else any sort of good workmen? But he was also soundly rational—yes, soundly reasonable—in being fervently devout, and in leading others to be so. To study each student and to work earnestly to develop each was to recognize that the Great Spirit had plans, and that a man must find them out if he would have success. This was indeed to be truly devoted to God. Again, to be fervently devout was to recognize in his whole feeling and bearing the reality of the great Creator Spirit. And what is more reasonable? What is more like God himself, who is the most reasonable of all beings, and the giver of all human reason? The Faculty of Theology in Halle, whose character he influenced for nearly half a century, contains some leading examples of thoroughly rational methods in investigating and teaching. Who that has followed Prof. Riehm's lectures on Isaiah, the Psalms, Genesis, Job, has not thought him quite ready to sacrifice any hoary tradition, if reason seemed to require it? And other men are there of like mind; yet all looked up to Tholuck as to a foster-father. All felt quite free in his sight to do what they thought right. Singularly, however, that Faculty might also be called a fervently devout one. Prof. Riehm, whom we have named above, is a remarkable illustration of this. A Sunday-school was long led by him, and every Sunday-school man has an introduction to his heart. The little missionary society is always sure of Riehm's help at the opening and closing exercises of the Semester. An earnest address, really a sermon, is not too much for him to contribute on each occasion. I could tell of other instances that equal this, and of one that goes far beyond it (if such an expression could be used) in both respects, strict rationality and earnest devoutness. I refer to Prof. Besser, who was emphatically a pupil of Tholuck.

Ernest Renan says in his address on Spinoza, delivered at the unveiling of the monument at the Hague, Feb. 21, 1877 (see *Contemporary Review*, April 1, 1877): "Since the days of Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, no

life had been witnessed so profoundly penetrated by the sentiment of the Divine (as Spinoza's). In the twelfth, thirteenth, sixteenth centuries, rationalistic philosophy had numbered very great men in its ranks, but it had had no saints. Occasionally a very repulsive and hard element had entered into the finest characters amongst Italian free-thinkers. Religion had been utterly absent from those lives not less in revolt against human than divine laws, of which the last example was that of poor Vanini. Here, on the contrary, we have religion producing free-thought as a part of piety." Some may be surprised on reading these words here, and may wish to modify them. We will not deny saintliness to a man in whom others see it as they gaze upon him. But the quotation concerning Spinoza expresses correctly what Tholuck's work has really been. He has, indeed, trained men to think freely, faithfully, to reason rigidly as a part of piety. He has taught them too, while busy thinking, investigating, to be ever very humble, very childlike before God.

Is any one dissatisfied with this characterization, and ready to say, — Tholuck himself said rationalism was dying, and warned us against certain schools as being rationalistic? True it is that undevout reasoning must die out, but undevoutly rational is not synonymous with rational. Moreover, men find that undevout reasoning is self-contradictory, and must die out.

One more remark, — Tholuck's life-business seemed to be to find how he himself and all he had might serve to the carrying out of God's ends. It was an illustration of the highest kind of free-will, a subordination of one's own entire conduct to God's way, as being a supremely good way. In like manner, the sovereign of a constitutional monarchy exercises the highest freedom in the realm by finding out the *vox populi*, and executing it; that is, by choosing most gladly to subordinate all his own power to the righteous wish of his country. So Tholuck was a king. With royal grandeur he studied the plans of God which underlie men's lives, and submitted all his own life to the work of carrying out these plans. This third characteristic is really one with the former two; and the three are really common to every true Christian. So that Tholuck was but a bright example for every Christian.

Let me close with a short sketch of Tholuck's Student-Home, established and sustained by Professor and Mrs. Tholuck with their own property; in fact, permanently endowed by them with this property.

In order to accomplish more thoroughly his work of cultivation of individual students, Dr. Tholuck had long wished to have a few living in his own house. I have heard him describe his longing, in a little address at one of the opening feasts in the little Home. Supper over, a finer provision than usual having been made for the occasion, and Dr. and Mrs. Tholuck having partaken of the meal with the students, the good old gentleman sought out and read a passage in the handsome Bible presented at

the founding by Emperor William for the Home's devotional services. Then he told us of his longing to gather a few young spirits about him; and how at last the way had been made plain; the house next his own, viz. Mittelstrasse 10, purchased, and furnished with beautiful neatness, yet plainly. Mr. Inspector Besser, Lic. Theol., Privat Docent in Theology in the University was engaged to take charge, and the house opened in 1871, to the great joy of Tholuck. The original students who were to enjoy its benefits were selected by Dr. and Mrs. Tholuck, the evident principle of selection being to take such as would likely become very useful men, and would be furthered in becoming so by residence in the house, the pecuniary means of the student not being considered. Such as were able to pay and chose to come were charged about the same as they would pay for like boarding comforts elsewhere in the town. Poorer men were charged less, and according to their means. The same principles have guided in the selection of new residents as the previous ones left, each leaving after a residence of one or two years. The students have no lectures or classes in common in the house, save that once a week an evening is occupied by a meeting for theological discussion, the Inspector presiding, and each student taking his turn in opening the discussion by an Essay on the subject for the evening. In one session the theology of the New Testament was discussed; on each evening the theology of one particular writer. In another session the Formula Concordiæ was taken up, its various doctrines being carefully described and criticised on successive nights. In another session the subject was Dogmatic Theology; in another, the John question, each student discussing on his evening one of the subordinate questions arising as part of the discussion of the whole question. Let me say that the methods followed were strictly rational, and no favor was shown for any traditional doctrine which could not stand the rigid test of reason. In addition to these studies, a meeting for reading some Hebrew text was also held in some sessions. The Inspector, besides presiding at these, conducted the morning devotions, when fifteen minutes were usually spent in a rich exercise of reading, song, and prayer.

Each man has a study to himself, and nearly every one a bedroom to himself. Light and fuel are furnished, also the light German breakfast of coffee and a little roll or two, and supper of a plain sort. All other meals, and washing, every man has to provide for himself. Tholuck's library became at once, and is to remain always, the library of the house, or the nucleus of a larger. Each resident has free access to the garden. A man and his wife are provided by the Tholucks to do all house-work and serve the students as they may desire.

Seven students and the Inspector are all the house accommodates. Thus far one of the number has been almost always some one of the American or English students attending Halle University. The wisdom of the Tholucks in providing thus for a little cosmopolitan influence among

the German residents is evident. They have desired to enlarge the accommodation, and this especially of late, while opportunity for securing neighboring property has been rather convenient. Knowing this, a large number of men in Britain, who knew and loved Tholuck, leading men of all denominations have formed a committee to endeavor to secure an enlargement of the institution as a fit monument to Tholuck's memory. Nothing could be more appropriate as an honor to him and his work, and as a memento of what he and his work were. For he himself has chosen to perpetuate that work even after his death by this institution. He has chosen, too, one may say, thus to extend his life; since when he is gone, all that he *had* remains supporting this house.

A considerable sum of money has been collected in Britain for this purpose during the past two years, and has been forwarded to Mrs. Tholuck by Rev. Mr. Paton of the Nottingham Congregational Institute. The small sum that was sent to Halle on the occasion of Tholuck's jubilee to aid in establishing a Tholuck Scholarship in the University, belonging entirely to the University, and yielding annually a small income for some student who may be elected to receive it, can hardly be said to render this memorial out of place. A movement has been planned for raising a fund in America, to be added to that just sent from Britain for this Memorial House. This plan will be carried out ere long, although it has been decided to defer it for a while on account of the heavy financial depression in the country.

It is intended that the fund thus collected be sent to Halle in part as a sort of foundation of a German fellowship for men who may be chosen by competitive examination or otherwise, from time to time, for the benefit by different Theological Seminaries which may take part in forming the fund. Such a student will receive at a very low rate all the privileges of residence in the house in the midst of a group of active German Theological students. God bless Tholuck's memory to us, and send success to this plan. May many other men undertake a like work of educating scientific theologians, and carefully trained Christian teachers, with their own means, and this during their own life, not merely by bequests.