

THE  
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

---

JULY, 1834.

---

No. III.

---

---

REVIEW.

*Archibald Alexander*

ART. I.—*The Case of the Dissenters, in a Letter addressed to the Lord Chancellor.* Fifth edition, London.

AT present, no subject excites a deeper interest in Great Britain, than that of church-reform. The success which attended the late effort to promote a civil reform in the constitution of the empire, has not satisfied the friends of liberty and equal rights, but has rather stimulated and encouraged them, to render their work perfect, by extending the reform to the ecclesiastical establishment of the nation. It is a singular, and we believe, an anomalous fact, in the history of the world, that three different forms of Christianity should be established by law in the same empire; so that he who in England enjoys the privileges of a member of the established church, in Scotland is subjected to all the privations and inconveniences of a Dissenter; and, *vice versa*, the legitimate member of the Scotch establishment is a Dissenter as soon as he crosses the Tweed. But in Canada, Roman Catholics, who are barely tolerated in Great Britain, enjoy the patronage and favour of the Government.

ART. II.—*Tholuck's Interpretation of The Sermon on the Mount.\**

*J. N. Alexander*

IF an apology is due to any of our readers, for the frequency with which we have drawn their attention to German books, we deem it sufficient to say; first, that we present nothing which is not in our judgment intrinsically valuable; secondly, that while so much unsound and dangerous matter is let loose upon the American public from the same source, it is imperatively demanded that the bane should be followed by an appropriate antidote, produced under the same climate. But surely, no circumlocution is necessary, in introducing to our readers any thing from the pen of Dr. Tholuck. His name is already dear to believers in this country. We have learned long since to regard him as one of the few self-denying and heroic spirits of Germany, who have thrown themselves into the breach, and opposed a dauntless front to the irruptions of a deistical theology; as the friend of the doctrines of grace; as the denouncer of corrupt teachers in high places; and as the laborious, affectionate, indefatigable and eloquent preacher of the Gospel. Several of his productions have already been translated for the *Biblical Repertory*, and other works; and his commentary on the Romans is on the eve of appearing in an English dress.

The latest work of Professor Tholuck is that of which we have given the title in the margin: an Exposition, critical and doctrinal, of the *Sermon on the Mount*, with a discussion of the theological and ethical statements of that incomparable, inspired summary. By the friends of the Gospel in Germany, the Professor is thought here to have surpassed all his former efforts; and we have good reason to suppose, that in the view of the author himself, it is the capital production of his pen.

In undertaking to review a commentary, there is scarcely any medium between a general estimate of the principles of interpretation, and a minute sifting of detailed particulars. The latter would be tedious and repulsive, and we must be content to speak in general terms of this valuable exposition. It is not to be understood that our theology is that of the author, or that we assent to every statement upon which do not animadvert. We are well persuaded of the truth and value of some doctrines

\* Philologisch-theologische Auslegung der Bergpredigt Christinach Matthäus, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Begründung einer rein-biblischen Glaubens- und Sittenlehre, von A. Tholuck, Doctor der Theol. u. s. w. Hamburg, 1833. pp. 544. 8vo.

which he indignantly rejects, and we stand in dread of as many more which he steadfastly maintains. At the same time we find in all his writings a sincere reverence for the holy standard, and the actual possession, in good measure, of those cardinal Gospel truths which distinguish us from Romanists, Pelagians, Arminians and Rationalists. Yet Tholuck is a German, and not an Englishman, or an American. Never, even amidst the aridity of verbal inquiries, does he regard any object in what Bacon expressively calls a *dry light*. He soars and expatiates in the region of speculation, and is not only obscure, but sometimes transcendental. The philosophy of Germany, which we are wont to regard as a baseless vision, he cherishes as the very bulwark of the faith; and sincerely laments that the Christians of England and America are bound down to a shallow and empirical system. In the periodical work of which he is the editor, he has a special article upon this subject, in which he deplores the indifference of Americans to the transcendental philosophy, and predicts that without the latter, our boasted "common-sense" will but engender the most heartless infidelity. Such are not our views; but we do not find that these peculiarities so far taint the work before us, as to render it either useless or injurious.

There has, perhaps, been no period in the history of the church, during which the Sermon on the Mount has not been considered one of the most important products of inspiration. It is, if not the longest, certainly the most pregnant of our Lord's recorded discourses; a divine comment on the law, a divine syllabus of Christian ethics. Yet there have been few distinct commentaries upon this discourse. Among the Fathers, Augustin is the only one who has treated it separately. The exposition by Chrysostom, in his homilies on Matthew, stands next in rank to his celebrated interpretation of the Romans; and Thomas Aquinas is reported to have said, that he would not exchange this work for the city of Paris. To this we may add the comments of Theophylact, Euthymius Zigabenus, and Isidorus Pelusiota. Among the Latins, Hilary has treated the subject in a clear and nervous manner, though not without the characteristics of the school of Origen. The brief notes of Jerome cannot be consulted with much advantage. The two books of Augustin (Tom. iii. ed. Bened.) contain much that is valuable, in the midst of indistinct and hesitating views.

After the period of the Reformation, Erasmus is the first whose exposition of these chapters is deserving of notice. Luther's commentary is rather a collection of homilies than an exposition. Melancthon also wrote brief annotations. After

this epoch the commentators become so numerous that we shall not pursue the enumeration. It will suffice to say a word concerning recent works, published on the continent of Europe. The names Rosenmueller, Paulus, Kuinoel, Henneberg, Fritzsche, Olshausen, and Meyer, are well known. Among these Olshausen is distinguished for originality, acuteness, vigour, and piety. Among Roman Catholics, may be noticed Gratz and Kistemaker. Several treatises concerning this portion of Scripture have been published, by Jehnichen, Oertel, Pott, Rau, Grosse, and Jentzen; but none of these are commentaries.

The question whether the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew is identical with that contained in the sixth chapter of Luke, is ably discussed and answered in the affirmative. In opposition, also, to those who consider these three chapters a cento of aphorisms, delivered at various times, the author maintains the unity of the discourse; which, somewhat after the manner of Olshausen, he analyses as follows: (1.) The relation of the disciples to the kingdom of God, their destiny and position in the world: v. 1–16. (2.) The relation of the new to the old covenant; with a spiritual interpretation of the law, in opposition to Pharisaical glosses: 17–48. (3.) The sole motive of genuine good works; namely, respect to God, exemplified in the several instances of alms, fasting, and prayer: vi. 1–18. (4.) Cautions against attempting a divided service of God; the divine principle must be paramount: vi. 19–34. (5.) Insulated expositions to self-knowledge, wisdom towards our neighbour: with a maxim in the twelfth verse which comprehends our whole social duties: vii. 1–12. (6.) Exhortation to earnestness in seeking salvation, warning against hypocrisy—admonitions to be doers as well as hearers of these instructions.

It is an interesting inquiry, whether this discourse of our Lord was addressed solely to the little circle of the twelve apostles, or to the whole multitude who waited on his preaching. In the Roman Catholic church the prevalent opinion has been, that the sermon was intended for the apostles alone. The majority of Protestant interpreters however, rationalists as well as supernaturalists have united in the belief that it was pronounced for the benefit of Christian disciples at large. The judgment of Tholuck is, that it was addressed to all disciples and followers of Christ, but that as the church then consisted mainly of the twelve, and involved the others only in various inferior degrees of connexion, it had primary reference to the apostles. For our Lord had a special and complete argument. The reader is referred to the work itself, pages 25–32.

A controversy, equally interesting and momentous, has long existed with regard to the general import of this discourse, and the relation of its contents to the plan of mercy. That it is taken up chiefly with the inculcation of moral duties is undeniable. But the conclusion of Socinians and other Rationalists from this concession, is dangerous and appalling; for they have endeavoured to prove that the whole system of Christianity is to be sought here; that this is the key to the New Testament; that atonement and the work of the Spirit are mere appendages to the fabric; and that Christ here stands forth revealed as a divine witness or teacher, and nothing more. According to the cardinal principle of Kant, here it is that the fairest relic of the genuine Gospel, the *purior typus doctrinae Christianae*, is to be sought. In a word, because the Sermon on the Mount is a compendium of morals, the Gospel is no other than a moral code, and Jesus a moral apostle. In consistency with this, a large school of modern German theologians make bold to dissect away from the pure body of the New Testament what they call the mysticism of John and the Judaism of Paul; leaving us instead of the symmetrical, glowing, animated original, a denuded, heartless, lifeless corpse. Tholuck beautifully and triumphantly confutes their hypothesis by showing that this portion of the New Testament is a harmonious complement of the rest; that if John is mystical, Matthew is mystical no less; that the Rationalist, with these views, is more absurd than the Chubbs, Morgans, and Mandevilles of England; and closes with the unanswerable interrogatory: Why He whom we all acknowledge to have been sent as a Saviour for the whole world, (if he were a mere teacher) acted as a public instructor scarcely three years, and never exercised his office beyond the confines of Palestine?

The scope of the Sermon on the Mount is well stated to be, *a representation of the Christian moral law in its general outlines*. Here again we are encountered by one of the most important disputes which has stirred the mind of the Christian world. Are we to consider Christ as a new legislator? The well known dogma of the Catholics was, that Christ here addresses us first as communicating *consilia evangelica*, and then as an original lawgiver; (v. 20.) and the Council of Trent (Sessio 6. Canon 21.) pronounced this decree: *Si quis dixerit Christum Iesum a Deo hominibus datum esse ut redemptorem, cui fidant, non etiam ut legislatorem, cui obediant, anathema sit*. "The Socinians and Arminians," our author observes—"went still further. While the Catholics said that Christ gave a more profound interpretation of the Old Testament pre-

cepts and subjoined his *consilia evangelica*, the Socinians alleged, that what Christ placed in contrast to the laws of the Old Testament, must be regarded, not as *expository* of the latter, but as *supplementary* and *emendatory*; not merely opposed to *pharisaical misinterpretation*, but to the *Mosaic precepts themselves*; not as *counsels* but as *commands*. And they added, as may be seen in Wolzogen and Vorstius, that the words *επρεθη τοις αρχαιοις*, are not to be taken ablatively, (as some Catholics and all Protestants did) "it was said *by* them of old time," that is, by the Rabbins; but datively, "it was said *to* them of old time," that is, it was enjoined on the contemporaries of the Moses. It was incumbent on these forerunners of modern Rationalism, who restricted the whole redemption of Christ to his prophetic office, to contend for Christ's dignity as a lawgiver.

"We find similar views of this discourse among the Arminians, particularly in Limborch. The Lutheran and Reformed churches, on the other hand, with the exception of a few such men as Calixtus, Pfaff, and Baumgarten, defended the position that Christ here simply develops more profoundly the law of the Old Testament, in opposing himself, not to Moses, but to the Jewish interpreters, and that he is therefore not to be considered as a new legislator, although he interprets and confirms the existing code, and awakens the heart to repentance." p. 38.

In giving his own answer to this question, Tholuck distinguishes. He maintains that the *germ* of every Gospel precept is undeniably found in the ancient law, but he also sustains the position that Christ's injunctions are contrary to the glosses of the Jewish teachers. So far all is well; but we think it unwarrantable when he says that "particular ethical precepts of the Old Testament stand in direct opposition to the highest requisitions of morality." The reference which he makes is to the case of divorce. He further represents the Sermon on the Mount as a continued exhortation to repentance, and as tending to produce a sense of guilt, misery and spiritual need.

And having now given a brief account of the introductory part, we are perplexed with regard to the method which shall be pursued in our remaining strictures. A critical commentary admits of no analysis. We cannot even detail the results of the author's labours. The only alternative is to speak of his general plan, and to illustrate it by one or two specimens. And here we are warned by a fable, significantly quoted by Tholuck from *Jedu Paul*, who compares a certain class of reviewers to one who when asked to describe a human being, produced some finger-nails and a lock of hair.

For an example, we select the exposition of a passage which has given rise to controversy in every age of the church, namely Matt. v. 33-36. I *say unto you*, swear not *at all*, &c. The reference is here to Lev. xix. 12. and Exod. xx. 7. The addition, "but shall perform unto the Lord thy vows," is not in the Law, though it is contained in Numb. xxx. 3. and Deut. xxiii. 22. Probably it was appended by the Scribes, in order to restrict the precept to promissory oaths. The spirit of our Lord's interpretation is this: "Formerly, such an honouring of God's name was required, that it was forbidden, under a penalty, to swear *falsely* by his name. I require such a veneration, that you must not swear even truly, and not merely not by God's name, but by any other object of reverence, since hereby the fear of God will be indirectly impaired. Instead of such oaths, use simple affirmation."

The form ὁμῶσαι is not, with Beza and Georgi, to be taken for the imperative, but as the infinitive, dependent on λέγω, which is equivalent to κελενω. Ὀλως is the same with the adverbial phrases, το ὅλον, τὰ ὅλα, τοῖς ὅλοις, and answers to παντη, παντως, &c. it denotes the entireness as opposed to particular parts. See 1 Cor. v. 1: vi. 7: xv. 29. The question is important, what are the particulars to which the word here stands opposed? Are all occasions of even true oaths here meant? and are we to understand the prohibition—"I command you, in no conceivable case, to swear a true oath"? Were this the meaning, the reference to *forswearing* would lose its force. Or does the adverb refer to all the different *kinds* of oaths, as if Christ said: "I forbid, not only oaths by God, but every kind of oaths, even by creatures"? That is, implicitly, every oath whatever. The true force seems to be, "I forbid, not only *in specie*, false-swearing, but *in genere* all swearing." The extent of the prohibition is not wider than that of James v. 12. Now, though the universality of the rule is admitted, the biblical scholar calls instantly to mind numerous cases of allowed exception to such general laws: see vv. 39, 41, 42. Luke vi. 30. Col. iii. 20. In all these cases we must apply the Canon, that "Christ's moral precepts are to be interpreted according to the analogy of the Spirit."\*

Shall we now explain the precept in its most absolute sense, or may we restrict it? This grave question must be decided on the following grounds: (1) the nature of an oath; (2) the connexion of the passage, and (3) the parallel declarations of the New Testament. As to the first, an oath is the expression of

\* See Bergpred. p. 162.

religious feeling; he only can call on God as a witness who believes in God. The pious man, falsely accused, looks to God, as the witness of his innocency: and what the Christian thus inwardly and lawfully feels, may he not utter? The case of Paul is in point: see Rom. ix. 1. 2 Cor. ii. 17. xi. 10. passages which have not the formality of oaths, but which fully exemplify the manner in which a mental appeal is verbally expressed. In the Old Testament oaths are expressly enjoined. Ex. xx. 10. Deut. vi. 13. x. 20. They are badges of true worshippers. Is. xix. 18. lxxv. 16. Jer. iv. 2. Ps. lxxiii. 12. Nay, God himself swears: Is. xlv. 23. Heb. vi. 13. 16.

As to the *connexion* of the passage, the obvious end of our Lord (says Tholuck) is to secure a higher reverence for God, than was enjoined even in the Old Testament. Now this reverence is not impaired by solemn, but by trivial oaths; hence we gather the scope of the text. As to the *parallel expressions of the New Testament*, there are a multitude which militate with the absolute prohibition. Paul appeals to God as a witness, Rom. i. 9. Phil. i. 8. 1 Thes. ii. 5. 10. 2 Cor. xi. 11. 31. Gal. i. 20. 1 Tim. v. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 31. 2 Cor. i. 23. In the last of these, as G. Vossius long ago remarked, God is invoked as an avenger, which, however, is involved in every oath. Add to this, notwithstanding the objections of De Wette, Pott, and Flatt, the fact that Christ himself made use of the oath. For in reply to the formal adjuration of the High Priest, Matt. xxvi. 63, our Lord answers, *Thou sayest it*; and hereby took the oath in the regular Hebrew form, according to which the judge pronounced the formula, and the witness confirmed it by his *Amen*.\* We are therefore constrained to the opinion, that the words must not be taken in their widest and most absolute meaning, but as restricted by other principles of revelation. The only oath which Christ forbids simpliciter, is *such a one as militates with reverence for God*.

The author next proceeds to examine the enumeration which follows, viz. by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, by the head; and compares this with James v. 12. which some have used to prove that Christ here intended to forbid these oaths by creatures exclusively. But the very argument of our Saviour against these, evinces that the oath by the Most High was forbidden; namely, that the former involve the latter; the reasoning is *a minori ad majus*. It must be borne in mind, that the Israelites held these minor oaths as less binding. In Matt. xxiii. 16—18. they are found to have been considered entirely nugatory. The

\* See Maimon. de jurejur. c. 11. § 10. Selden. de Syn. II. 11. p. 830.



Talmud expressly teaches that oaths ‘by the heavens,’ and ‘by the earth,’ and ‘by the prophets,’ are not binding, even should the person in the act of swearing think of God; herein revealing the germ of Jesuitical casuistry. And when we learn from Maimonides, that oaths of this kind were not admitted at the tribunals, but only used in common parlance, we are strongly induced to think that our Lord had special reference to the ordinary intercourse of men.

To appreciate the reason here given by Christ, we must glance at the manner of swearing. All ancient nations swore not only by God, but by creatures, and especially by such as had some sanctity, such as sacred symbols, cities, groves, and fountains; by the most remarkable natural emblems of God, such as the sun, the earth, or the elements; by the most valuable members or possessions, as the head, the beard, the hair, the breast, the sword, or the graves of ancestors. The very grammatical construction of the formula in most languages indicated that in case of falsehood the swearer threw himself beyond the protection of God. To render this the more impressive, the person swearing was wont to lay his hand upon some consecrated object; as the Greeks, Romans, and some early Christians, on the altar; the Greeks and Germans on the judge’s mace; the Scandinavians on the bloody ring of their god *Ullr*; the people of the middle age on the relic-box, the missal, the mass-bell, the gospel; the Jews on the Law or the phylacteries; and the Mohammedans on the Koran.\* When an oath was taken by any creature, there was a kind of implied personification. Now our Saviour teaches that whatever is sublime, valuable, or significant in the creature, is derived from the Most High, *quia nulla est pars mundi*, says Calvin, *cui Deus non insculpserit gloriæ, suæ notam*. And as the glory of all things is the glory of God, an oath by the creature is an oath by the Creator, and therefore should never be used in common life. The argument, when fully carried out, is profound, but the Divine Teacher so expresses it, as to command the assent of his humblest hearers. Hebrew poetry had represented heaven as God’s throne, and the earth as his footstool;

\* *Staudlin* has a special treatise on Oaths, Gött. 1824. *Malblanc* is still better. See the literature of the subject in *Fabricius*, biblioth. antiquaria. p. 427—432. On the oaths of the Greeks and Romans, *Valknaer*, Opusc. ed. Lips. T. 1. On the oaths of the Northern nations, *Grimm*, Rechtsalterthümern Th. II. Concerning Jewish oaths, see the Tract. Shebnoth, with the annotations of *Maimonides* and *Bartenoras*, in *Surenhusius*, P. iv. also *Maimonides*, Constitutiones de jurejurando, edited by *Dithmar*, a scholar of *Surenhusius*, Leyden, 1706. *Zeltner*, de jur. vet. Heb. Jena, 1693. *Hattermann* de formulis juram. Jud. Rost. 1701. *Sebast. Schmid*, Fasc. disp. disp. xi. On Mohammedan oaths, *Millius*, de Muhammedismo, Lugd. Bat. 1743, p. 113.

Jerusalem was the centre of the Theocracy; and so truly was the head of man the work and possession of Jehovah, that not even the colour of a single hair was subjected to human power.

Tholuck then proceeds, as his manner is, to the history of the various interpretations. Through this we cannot follow him closely, but we may give some specimens of the rich store which he has provided. In the early church, it must be owned, the opinion that every oath was unlawful prevailed widely. One of the oldest authorities is *Justin*, in *Apol. I. c. 16*. About the beginning of the third century, *Basilides* died as a martyr, because he refused to swear.\* *Irenaeus* confirms the same, but with a limitation in the case of weak brethren.† So also *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen*, and *Cyril* of Alexandria. *Basil* peremptorily forbids the oath; so do *Theodoret*, and above all, *Chrysostom*, *Isidore* of Pelusium, *Theophylact*, and *Euthymius*. In the Latin church *Hilary*, upon this place, and *Jerome*. The passages in which the apostle Paul makes use of an oath, are regarded by these fathers as simple expressions of earnestness; excepting only *Theodoret*, who admits an oath in *2 Cor. xi. 10*. *Chrysostom* rests his opinion solely upon the explicit prohibition of the text.‡

It was not until after the fifth century that it was thought heretical to refuse an oath; the practice obtained among various separatists, such as the Cathari, the Albigenses, and the Waldenses. In later times among the reforming sects of Russia, such as the Raskolniks, the Duchoborges, and the Philippones. Within the Catholic church we find *Erasmus* longing for the time when swearing and divorce shall be needless; a wish on which *Beza* animadverts, as an “anabaptist error.” The Reformers were guided into a sound way of thinking on this head. The Anabaptists rejected all oaths, and of the Quakers this was a characteristic. *Barclay’s* language is remarkable: “the question is not, what Paul or Peter did, but what their own Master taught to be done, and if Paul did swear, (which we believe not) he had sinned against the command of Christ.”§

In later times, *Kant* has treated the command of Christ as absolute, and represented oaths as superstitious and absurd; as if (says he) it were left to the witness to choose whether God should punish him in case of falsehood, or not.|| *Pott* and

\* Euseb. hist. vi. 5.

† Iren. adv. haer. ii. 32. Clem. A. Strom. vii. p. 861. Orig. ad Jer. hom. 5. Cyr. de ador. p. 212.

‡ For heathen opinions consult *Tamblichus*, Vit. Pythog. p. 126. See also *Epicetetus*, Enchir. c. 33. 5. *Diog. Laert.* iv. 7.

§ Apology, Prop. 15. § 12.

|| Religion within the bounds of mere reason. 2d A. p. 240.

*Nitsch* coincided in this view of the command. *Staedlin* considers the command as absolute, but regards the oath as allowable in the present state of society. The same interpretation of the text is adopted by *Gutbier*, *Augusti*, *Paulus*, *Henneberg*, *Fleck*, and others, none of whom, however, feel themselves at all bound by the positive precepts of Christ. *Olshausen* and *Stirm* have held the strange opinion (already maintained by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Bucer*, and *Pellican*.) that the prohibition is absolute, but that it is directed to Christians, with reference to the ideal world of "the kingdom of heaven," and is not intended to regulate the intercourse of believers with the world. This is ably opposed by Tholuck, who denies that there is any thing necessarily evil in a solemn oath, or that our Saviour can be considered as the legislator for a non-existent state of things.

On the other hand, we find oaths, as well as military service, strongly defended even in primitive time. *Tertullian* says, the Christians never swear *per genios Caesaris*, but *per salutem Caesaris, quae est augustior omnibus geniis—et pro magno id juramento habemus*. *Novatus* caused his adherents to swear by the body and blood of Christ that they would never leave him. The canons of the oldest Councils do not absolutely forbid swearing, but only swearing by creatures, and perjury. *Athanasius*, though apparently averse to oaths, swears before Constantine. *Rudius Junicus*, *Nestorius*, and others, abjured their errors before Councils. In the fourth century, *Vegetius Renatus* says of Christian soldiers: *jurant per Deum et Christum et Spiritum sanctum et per majestatem imperatoris*. In the fifth century, the oath appears to have been so fully recognised, that *Hilary*, in his eighty-eighth epistle to *Augustin*, names among the errors of *Pelagius*, that he denied the lawfulness of oaths: and *Pelagius* avows the same opinion, in his epistle to *Deometriadus*, c. 22. The influence of *Augustine* upon the Catholic church was great in this regard. In his estimation, the prohibition of the text seems absolute, while the expressions of Paul contravene such an exposition. Many indeed (says he) suppose, that the latter are not oaths, because Paul does not say *per Deum*, but *testis est mihi Deus; ridiculum est hoc putare. Tamen propter contentiosos aut multum tardos, ne aliquid interesse quis putet, sciat etiam hoc modo jurasse apostolum; 1 Cor. xv. 31.*: where the very formula commonly used in Grecian oaths is employed.\* And upon Gal. i. 20: *qui dicit ecce coram Deo, jurat utique.*

\* Comp. Serm. 181. c. 5. in 1 John i. T. V. ed. Bened. p. 599.

He explains the absolute form of prohibition, by supposing that as frequent swearing gives occasion for perjury, our Lord used this strong and universal expression to cut off this occasion.\* The sinfulness of the oath, he however denies, as in his exposition of 1 John i. Nay, he says, (c. 9.) "So far as concerns my own case, I make use of the oath; but, as it seems to me, compelled by great necessity. When I perceive that I am not believed without an oath, and that he who hears me cannot be profited by what he believes not, then, deeply weighing and pondering the reasons, I say with the utmost reverence, *Coram Deo*, or *Testis est Deus*, or *Scit Christus sic esse in animo.*" In these views most Catholics concurred, and subsequently most Protestants, including even the Socinians.

The interpretations of those who admit the lawfulness of civil oaths are then rehearsed. Among them there are some which are very surprising. Most agree that oaths are not absolutely forbidden, but they are less explicit in clearing the passage of its grammatical difficulties. *Erasmus* supposes the ordinary methods of swearing to be proscribed. *Luther* supposes Christians alone to be intended. *Calvin* expounds ὅλως as indicating the kinds of oaths; *neque directe neque indirecte jurare per Deum*. *Flacius* and *Glassius* allow a synecdoche, *totum pro parte*. *Rosenmueller* supplies a disjunction: "*plane non jurare, nempe in convictu quotidiano, vel etiam per creaturas.*" *Zuinglius* renders the verb by *dejerare* or *adjurare*. *Socinus*, *Grotius*, *Episcopi* and *Wolzogen*, refer the whole to promissory oaths. But our enumeration already threatens to be tedious and must close here.

The learned and laborious author chooses another outlet from the difficulties of the passage; the soundness of his interpretation we shall submit to the determination of the reader. It is as follows: the word ὅλως admits of being rendered "in general," (*im allgemeinen*,) or by the still more analogous *im Ganzen*, "on the whole," which signifies not only the totality of all the parts, but also a mere generality. And this is justified by the citation of various Greek phrases, and especially, a passage from Aristotle's *Politics*, (II. 2. § 4.) Applying this to the case before us, the sense will be, "I say unto you *in general*, (but without determining in every particular case) swear not."

From this specimen, although it does but partial justice to the original extended exposition, the reader will perhaps be led to form the right conclusion respecting the faults and excellencies of Tholuck's manner. That in which most labour is bestowed

\* See Aug. on Ps. 88. De Mendacio. c. 28. Comp. Wisd. 23, 9.

is the history of interpretations, ancient and modern, which is so complete as to furnish almost an index to all that one could desire to consult. In many respects this is highly desirable, yet we confess that where a passage is simple, or even in difficult places, where the different expositions naturally fall into a few classes, this parade of bibliography, or rather "Litteratur," is both needless and vexatious.

No one can fail to observe that the author goes to work without undue prepossessions, without systematical attachments, and with a conscientious desire to enucleate the kernel of simple Gospel truth. Sworn to no master, and too bold to be afraid even of violating the analogy of faith, he advances opinions which are strictly his own. And it is but just to say, that his views are generally such as we suppose would commend themselves to the majority of American Christians. The system of morals which he deduces from this heavenly discourse, is pure and lovely, infinitely remote from ascetic punctiliousness, and from the subterfuges of a licentious casuistry; while at times he opens to view a new prospect into fields of philosophical speculation, illustrative of the divine truths under discussion, and so beautiful that we are forced to admire, even when we do not feel convinced. The speculative bias, and glowing temperament of the author are ever and anon betraying themselves, even amidst the fetters and frigidity of verbal criticism. There is a fervency, an animation, a heart, about the whole production; and this ardour is by no means fanatical, or merely sentimental, but pure and well founded; in consequence of which the work is relieved from dulness, and the reader, when he has closed it, is still sensible of the moral savour and fragrance for which we often sigh in the perusal of ethical treatises. There are, it is true, diversions into the upper regions of mystical dimness, in which we must suffer our author to soar alone; yet this is the characteristic of the age and nation, and in a higher degree of the individual, and the smile with which the American student will peruse these passages cannot but be respectful and benevolent.

After all, we are not disposed to concede to Dr. Tholuck the praise of distinguished acumen, or discriminating judgment in its highest degrees. When he has at great length kept us in suspense among these glosses of fathers, schoolmen and Reformers, we are somehow disappointed with his own conclusions. And it is not in the precise development of a sentence that we think he most shines. Others among his countrymen excel him in this; there are many who unfold the dogmatical fruits of exegesis far more satisfactorily: but there are none whose expositions are warmed by a more pervading principle of affectionate

piety, and none who happily touch the heart's chords in a greater number of keys, or with richer modulation. Often he is penetrating, and sometimes eloquent, and from his pen the unrivalled language which he uses comes with impressive melting earnestness.

If we were called upon to select the most valuable part of this volume, we should certainly indicate the exposition of the Lord's Prayer. This is highly laboured, and might be advantageously translated and published in a convenient form. It forms a whole of itself, and is easily separated from the body of the work. An Introductory Essay contains, first, the history of various comments and expositions; secondly, a discussion of the time, place, and intention of this inspired model; thirdly an investigation of its alleged identity with certain Jewish or Persian forms; and lastly, a survey of its scope and contents.

In no part of the work, however, does the peculiar genius of Tholuck manifest itself more strikingly, than in the pages which he has devoted to the subject of *Marriage and Divorce*. (Matthew v. 31, 32.) Upon this theme, he speaks with stern and inflexible rigour concerning the licentiousness of modern laws. He regards marriage as a sacred and indissoluble union. He adds, (p. 240.) that the connexion remains "even beyond the grave; whence the Christian Church every where regarded second marriages as of doubtful propriety, and the Apostle enjoins that, at least, the presiding officer of the churches\* should not enter a second time into wedlock." The physical and psychological reasoning of Tholuck upon this whole subject, are among the most singular and at the same time visionary specimens of German philosophizing which we remember to have ever seen. Our limits forbid our even glancing at these. It is admitted that second marriage is explicitly allowed in 1 Cor. vii. 39; yet, our author gathers from the counsel in verse 40, and the directions elsewhere given,† that the avoidance of repeated wedlock was viewed as a higher excellence. He cites the instances of heathen epitaphs, in which it was recorded in praise of a Roman matron, that she lived *univira, innupta*. *Tertullian* (as is well known) denounced all second marriages as wicked, and all but adulterous, and in all the observations of Tholuck (who is himself a widower) we perceive a strong leaning towards the same opinion.

There is something quite remarkable in the vicissitudes of opinion in the Church upon this subject of marriage and divorce. Some early writers, especially *Augustin*, explained the passage

\* Der Leiter der Gemeinden.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2. 12. v. 9.

so as to make idolatry and even covetousness a just reason for divorce. *Epiphanius*, *Clement* of Alexandria, *Chrysostom* and others, give even a greater latitude of meaning to our Saviour's exception. The Roman law, even under Christian emperors continued to be very lax on this point. Separations *communi consensu* were prevalent until the time of *Justin*. Restrictions resembling those of ancient Rome were introduced by *Constantine*; according to which the occasions of legitimate divorce were as follows: on the part of the husband, homicide, poisoning, sacrilege; on the part of the wife, adultery, poisoning, and the trade of illicit indulgence. Under *Theodosius II.* fourteen sufficient causes of divorce were enumerated.

In the Romish Church the basis of all legislation on this subject has been the position that marriage *quoad vinculum* is dissoluble only by death, while the Greek church added conjugal infidelity. But separation *quoad thorum et mensam* was allowed under various pretexts. The Reformers returned very much to simple explication of the Scriptural precepts. *Luther* gives three causes, one of which is physical, and besides this adultery and malicious abandonment. *Calvin* coincides with *Luther* in this particular. *Melancthon*, *Bucer*, and *Zuinglius* give a much wider range to the passages of the New Testament. But we cannot pursue the subject.

It would be easy to give copious extracts of an interesting character from this volume, which abound in very striking episodes, and eloquent bursts of genius; but we should thereby encroach too much upon space which it would be better to occupy with matter more nearly concerning the body of our readers. *Tholuck* is ranked, and justly, among the evangelical and orthodox divines of his country; yet we must never forget, that the system of Christian doctrine which we are accustomed to derive from the Scriptures never shines forth "full-orbed" in any German work. On the profound themes of the Divine Sovereignty, the mediatorial work, and even the method of justification, we find a defect of that clearness and fulness which forcibly impresses us in the English theologians, and which always raises the student far above any doubt as to the precise belief of his author. The language of abstractions and vague sentiment is so natural to a philosophical German, that we could scarcely find one among the evangelical party who does not become obscure and intangible when he advances into the more recondite portions of revelation.

This must even be the case, so long as the inductive method of philosophising is neglected; so long as the school of *Locke*, *Newton*, and *Reid*, is branded with the characters of empiricism

and shallowness; and so long as the vagaries of transcendentalism are regarded as venerable or even safe. Some idea of what we mean may be obtained by any reader who will drop his plummet into the fathomless speculations of Coleridge; though even these are clear and satisfactory when compared with the German depths of darkness. Nay, Kant himself, impracticable as his theories are to every English or American mind, may be said to be logical and convincing, when compared with those who have succeeded him in public regard. The idealism of *Fichte*, if our information is correct, baffles all analysis, and the dreams of *Schelling* and *Hegel* are little else than the vision of an excited imagination, disguised in the garb of philosophical nomenclature. Will the reader bear with us when we say (by way of specimen) that *Fichte* maintains the external world to be the mere creature of the active *Ego*, which has power to picture in itself the image of the universe; so that the outward world is nothing but the limit of our existence, on which thought operates, and that God himself is only the moral order of the universe. As might have been expected, there were multitudes in Germany who could not swallow this. And we beg to be understood as by no means suspecting Professor Tholuck of any such opinions; while we believe that the general principles of his philosophy are equally remote from what is regarded among us as safe and reasonable. One of *Fichte's* colleagues complained to the Saxon ministry, and the work in which the doctrine appeared was confiscated, in 1796 or 1797.

*Schelling* went even beyond this, and maintained a theory of *universal identity*. Rejecting all aid from experience (for Germans consider this as the capital error of English thinkers) he was unwilling to give it a place as even introductory to philosophy. Having with *Fichte*, taken for granted that the subjective *Ego* (we ask pardon for the jargon, but we give it as we receive it) produces the objective *non-ego*, *Schelling* mounted to the *primitive absolute*. That is, he regarded the primitive and infinite *Ego* as the source of all reality and all knowledge. Arrived now, (as *Degerando* well observes) at a degree of abstraction altogether unheard of before, he was able to take a bird's eye view, still more vast, of all science. Pantheism became the fashionable theology or rather a-theology of the day.

Nothing, surely, can be further from our intention than even to hint that Tholuck symbolizes with these sublime visionaries. Yet we presume he would not regard the *method* of philosophizing the "high priori road," with the indignant contempt which every American thinker must experience when such metaphysical "charlatanerie" is attempted to be palmed upon him. Again



we say, however, that Professor Tholuck regards these *dogmas* as untenable. And in the volume before us, no trace is found, on any page, of these or any similar theories, so that the object of our digression will have been accomplished, if the reader shall, with us, feel the necessity of a sober investigation of revealed truth, and an abhorrence of that falsely called philosophy which too often ends in turning the truth of God into a lie. To conclude, we do not hesitate to say, that (so far as our knowledge reaches) no work of equal value to the mere interpreter has ever appeared on the same subject.

---

ART. III.—*Bodily Affections produced by Religious Excitement.*

MR. EDITOR—The following letter, it will be perceived, was not originally intended for the press. Nevertheless, the brother to whom it was directed, is so much interested in its contents, and so convinced of its adaptedness to do good, that he cannot refrain from offering it for a place in your miscellany. He differs from the respected writer in one respect. He does not think that such facts as are detailed, ought to be consigned to “oblivion.” They are highly instructive, and ought to be recorded, and remembered for the benefit of the coming generation. He who gives such a simple and striking picture as is here exhibited, of the scenes in question, is a benefactor of the Church of God.

H. A.

*Thomas Cleland*

*Dear Brother*—I have, since your communications came to hand, been so much engaged, in one way or another, that I have had no leisure to attend to your request respecting the revivals of 1800–3. And even now, I feel too much at a loss, and unprepared to do any thing more than to state a few facts, and to give a brief sketch of what fell, mostly, under my own observation. I was not in the ministry at that time, but recollect distinctly, the scenes and passing events of the day. I do not write this for the press, but for your own eye, allowing you the privilege of making what use of it your superior judgment may dictate.