Professor Friedrich August Gottreu Tholuck (1799–1877) became a central figure in three areas: the neo-Pietist awakening, the defence against the emerging Bible criticism, and missions to the Jews, a triad that was representative of this research tradition. As noted, the Pietist awakening had its roots in Philipp Jakob Spener’s Pietism, and he constructed his theology in such a way that an appreciation of the Jews is intrinsic to Pietist theology after him. To Spener, the conversion of the Jews was an urgent matter, and so he urged the German universities to put greater effort into teaching Oriental languages.\(^1\) In Halle especially, intensive missionary work was carried out among the Jews.\(^2\) As this revival grew cold, however, so did its missions, leading to the closing of the main base, Institutum Judaicum in Halle, in 1792.\(^3\) The new Pietist awakening in early nineteenth-century Prussia meant not only the reappearance of revivelist Christianity but also a renewed interest in the Jews.

Tholuck was a product of this revival. A man of exceptional linguistic ability—by the age of seventeen, he knew nineteen languages—Tholuck arrived in Berlin to study Oriental languages and, through the Orientalist von Diez, came into contact with the neo-Pietist movement.\(^4\) Here he met Baron von Kottwitz,\(^5\) the ‘patriarch’ of this movement, who became Tholuck’s spiritual father and later also a fellow worker.\(^6\) Through him,
Tholuck got involved in work among Jews, for example becoming the founding editor of the missionary paper Der Freund Israels.8

With his learned Bible expositions and polemic against Schleiermacher, among others, Tholuck became the leading theologian of the awakening. None of his texts was more influential than Lehre von der Sünde und vom Versöhnner, oder: die wahre Weihe des Zweiflers (“Guido and Julius; or Sin and the Propitiator Exhibited in the True Consecration of the Skeptic”). As Clark puts it, this text was “as important for the awakening in Prussia as Spener’s Pia Desideria had been for the pietist movement 150 years earlier”.9 A novel, it contains letters between the two heroes Guido and Julius, revolving around repentance and faith. Numerous references to the works of classical literature and theology, including documents of other religions, as well as of modern philosophy and theology, show a man of great learning. It was thus well suited to his audience, which probably consisted mainly of educated Prussians—yet with a very clear agenda to present the gospel of the awakening. The novel was also directly aimed at countering the message of de Wette’s famous theological novel, Theodor oder des Zweiflers Weihe (“Theodore, or the Skeptic’s Conversion”). Published anonymously until the third edition, Tholuck’s book was printed in nine editions in the course of the century and was translated into five languages.

Although Judaism is not a major motif in the book, a few references may intimate some of Tholuck’s thinking. According to him, Israel—in its stubbornness constantly refractory to the loving God until it is humiliated by the irate God—is an image of proud humanity. The Law is a means through which God impresses on people the consciousness of standing under a Lord,10 and Judaism and Christianity are regarded by Tholuck as having revelation in common.11 Returning to the idea of divine economy, he suggests that the destiny of the Eskimos, the devastation of Palestine and the fact that “Japheth lives in the tents of

7 Ibid., 166–169.
9 Ibid., 129.
11 Ibid., 69.