

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA,
No. LXVI.
AND
BIBLICAL REPOSITORY,
No. CXVIII.

APRIL, 1860.

ARTICLE I.

ROTHE'S ETHICS.¹

BY REV. C. C. TIFFANY, DERBY, CONN.

DR. RICHARD ROTHE is universally regarded, in Germany, as one of the most richly gifted theologians the nation has ever produced. Widely known as having been connected with the Theological Seminary at Wittenberg, the University at Bonn, and the University at Heidelberg; eminently distinguished for the originality of his views and the extent of his learning as displayed in his volume on "The Beginnings of the Christian Church;" and, moreover, introduced to the English and American Public, in words of the highest encomium and heartiest commendation, by the Chevalier Bunsen in his celebrated work "God and Mankind," we have thought that it might be doing a good service to present to our readers a sketch of the philosophical principles and chief topics of interest contained in his most elaborate work, *The Theological Ethics*; a work which, from its size and peculiar phraseology, we may scarcely hope ever to see translated.

As a theologian, Dr. Rothe is eminently progressive. He

¹ *Theologische Ethik*, von Dr. Richard Rothe. Wittenberg, 1845.

believes in development and growth. He is too historic to cut loose from the past; but he looks backward only to gain impulse to move on.

"Sunt quibus unum opus est, intactæ Palladis arces
Carmine perpetuo celebrare,"

but Dr. Rothe is not one of them. He reveres the past, but he believes also in a future. In the work before us he attempts, while preserving the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament, to reconstruct its formula in accordance with the scientific requirements of the present age.

Of the origin of this work, the author thus speaks in the Introduction. "I have been constrained, as it were, by an inward necessity, to express my theological views. Although it has ever been my inclination to take a place in some already existing school, I have never been able to do so. In spite of myself, I have gradually erected a theological edifice, of which I am conscious I am the sole occupant. But I have an irresistible desire to break through the limits of this scientific hermitage, and invite others to enter it, even though I thereby incur the charge of importunacy. For my system is no artificial elaboration, but a natural and necessary growth out of the depth of my nature, and it stands in the closest relation to my individual development; it is, in fact, the expression of it." We are thus prepared to expect, in this treatise on theological ethics, a discussion of human life in all its moral bearings. Nor are we disappointed. Our author proposes to himself the task of treating of "the moral," in the widest sense of the word, including in it "the whole life of the human mind, viewed as a mastery of material nature by the rational personality; and this life, not only in its individual form, but also in all the social relations of the family, science and art, church and state. For morality is, to him, the absolute dominion of mind over matter; or of reason over nature: the perfect kingdom of Christ on the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." But as morality is based upon religion, a complete discussion of the for-

mer involves, of necessity, a right view of the latter ; and hence we have, as a propaedeutic to the strictly ethical discussion, a treatise on speculative theology. This treatise is the germ of all that follows. It shows us, at once, the method which the author constantly employs, while it reveals the doctrine of God and his relation to Creation, which forms the basis and criterion of man's ethical relations. It is to this part of the work that the present Article will be devoted. To it, therefore, we now turn.

The Nature and Relative Value of Speculative Thought.

In order to show the true method of developing his theory of ethics, Dr. Rothe starts with the inquiry: What is morality? What is that quality, in any subject, which enables us to class it under the general head of moral subjects? He does not ask, with those who have written on moral philosophy among us: "What constitutes the moral quality of an *action*?" His question has reference rather to the grounds on which we ascribe a moral quality, at all. He will not identify morality with goodness, either ; but, acknowledging a moral turpitude, seeks to discover the one quality which goodness and turpitude equally share, and which entitles us to class both under the same category of "moral." To say "that is moral, of which goodness or badness may be affirmed," is no answer to him ; he still reiterates the inquiry: What constitutes a subject such that I call it good or bad ; or, in other words: On what ground can I predicate goodness or badness — on what is based my idea of good and of evil ?

This generic idea of the "moral," must be gained, before we can move a step in our investigation of moral relations. How, then, shall we gain it? Science demands that it shall be gained by a speculative method ; that it shall be developed from its original elements, and not obtained empirically ; religion demands that this idea be not borrowed from philosophy, but that theological speculation develop it. Hence arises the need of a speculative theology, if we are to have a religious and at the same time a scientific doctrine of

ethics. For real ideas—those which lie at the basis of all doctrine and practice—can only be attained in a speculative way; for speculative thought is thought in its purest form. Reflection gives us definitions, but it can never impart an organic system of ideas. Thought, in its deepest significance, is seminal, and produces its completed system out of itself. The fragmentary and disjointed products of reflection, therefore, are not thought, in its purest and strictest form. This, only speculation can be; for that alone is, in the truest sense, germinant.

Speculation is, moreover, distinguished from reflection, in that it is *à priori* in its method, while reflection is *à posteriori*. The one is dialectically critical and empirically contemplative, while the other is constructive and germinant. The latter must have a given object, on which to work; the former produces its thoughts from itself, and develops them with inner logical necessity, thus building up an organic system of mutually dependent ideas, in every one of which the others are implicitly contained. Reflection, however, stands in a most intimate and useful correlation to speculative thought: for, while the speculative thinker is to borrow nothing, but must move onward, in his strictly logical course of thought, looking neither to the right nor to the left for direction or guidance, and while he is to seek for the error in his results, only in a departure from the strictly logical method of his speculation, yet the product of all his thought must be able to stand the most scrutinizing gaze of reflection. The ability to stand this test, is a proof of its validity; for reflection may detect an error which yet it cannot rectify. It may declare there is a fault, which speculation must make good. For the results of speculation and reflection must harmonize, as truly as those of analysis and synthesis; though like these two, the one cannot do the other's work. The reflective method might, perhaps, be compared to the electrical tests brought to bear upon the Atlantic telegraphic cable: they detect faults which a wholly different process must correct. They show that the current is broken, and this proves a defective cable; but the current must be restored by the

wholly different process of rejoining the wire indicated. And thus it is that the speculative is righted by a strictly speculative process, while reflective methods, applied to its results, may increase the nature and extent of the fault. Reflection is thus a most valuable auxiliary, whose aid, however, speculation can only call in when its process is completed; and then only to detect error, not to correct it.

Such being the nature of speculation — its task being to develop its results from their most original elements; its method being, of necessity, isolated and abstract; it is evident that no one man can fulfil its requirements, or exhaust its contents. In its completed form it must produce, in thought, the reflected image of the whole universe. From God to the minutest atom of his creation, is the range of its province. It will show all things, in their entire correlation, which correlation must be made plain by reference to the source of all things, from which it is developed; which source must be understood, in its nature, so that all proceeding from it, may be proved rational and necessary, and not arbitrary or by chance; for, otherwise, it could not be understood. To complete and perfect this formula of the universe, is the task of humanity. No one member of the race can hope to state the vast problem. No one individual may aspire to produce, from himself alone, the scientific statement of the meaning of the universe — the subjective correlative of the objective reality. But, as the attainment of this explanation, in thought, of outward things, is a necessity to man, the individual may contribute to the great result, and help to advance it, though in but a small degree. The speculative thinker, therefore, cannot cut loose from the past, or reject its results. They are invaluable to him; only, he must not depend upon them. He must grow out of them, as they grew out of what preceded them. He must begin at the beginning himself, and work out his own problem, but he will have learned much from them, before he commences his own task.

The Starting Point of Speculative Theology.

The assumption, however, that speculation, because shut up within itself, and pursued irrespective of experience, starts with absolutely no presupposition, is false. In the hand of the creature it is true, to all eternity, *ex nihilo nihil fit*. To create, in the absolute sense, belongs to the majesty of God alone. Man must have some original datum with which to begin his speculation. He must start from some one point, or he will never start at all. But if his method is to be speculative, i. e. *à priori*, this starting point cannot be the beginning, end, and entire course. That which is given to begin with, cannot be the totality of what shall result. Yet if we are to have a development, this original datum must contain implicitly, all that shall follow. It must be, like the acorn, enwrapping within itself the germ of the full-grown oak. This germ, or *ποῦ στῶ*, must be a real, original element of the consciousness, underived from anything without. It must be, not contingent, but necessary; it must be objectively given, not merely subjectively thought. Its unconditional certainty must be shown by its being the absolute condition of all thought. This datum, therefore, can be nothing else than the pure self-consciousness, distinguished from any particular thing which this consciousness may contain. For self-consciousness, and not what this makes known to us, is the necessary condition of all thought.

It may be objected, that to start with the self-consciousness and develop our speculation from it, is to produce a philosophy, and not a theology; and this objection is valid. How, then, is a speculative *theology* possible? To be speculative, it must start with a datum, which is the condition of all thought. Since this condition, then, is the self-consciousness, a speculative theology must have, as its germ, something necessarily involved in the existence of self-consciousness and conditioning it. This something is the God-consciousness. For self-consciousness is not, originally and essentially, mere consciousness of self; but is, at the same

time, a religiously conditioned self-consciousness. Man is conscious of himself, only as he is, at the same time, conscious of his relation to God. He is as immediately interwined. Within the circle of theology, which lies within the province of piety, this cannot be a controverted question; for there can be no theology without the presupposition of piety, and the recognition of its absolute validity. Those who do not recognize the religious element as an original element of human nature, cannot be convinced of it by proof. The presupposition that it is, is essential to any just understanding of the subject. For piety ceases to be piety, when proof of its reality and the reality of the object which awakens it, is necessary to establish its certainty. It cannot maintain its character and be dependent upon anything outside of itself for its validity. Its creed is: "God is as immediately certain to me, as my own self;" "I am first assured of my own existence, when I am sure of God's existence."

Speculative theology must, then, start from the God-consciousness as its datum, and from that, and that alone, develop itself, as philosophy unfolds itself out of the self-consciousness. Both these systems aim at a theoretical construction of the universe *à priori*: philosophy, by means of the idea¹ of the "me;" theology, by means of the idea of "God."

The Relations of Speculative Theology,

1. TO RELIGION. Piety demands this speculative procedure. Its highest interests cannot be subserved without it. And this is so, not because it is not immediately and completely certain of its own reality and sure foundation, but that it may fully comprehend itself. Originally, at the very outset, it feels the truth; but it must not only feel it,

¹ Strictly speaking it is incorrect to say that either philosophy or theology start with an *idea*. The feeling or consciousness which is the starting-point is not yet an idea; it becomes such only by a matured process of thought.

it must also understand ; it must feel after it, if haply it may *find* it. Speculative theology aims to satisfy this want of the understanding. Its relation to religion is equivalent to the relation of philosophy to the intellect. The one is the development of what is contained in the other. It is the tree, not potentially in the seed, but, in actual, full growth. As piety in its complete form, and when true to its rightful claims, concerns itself not only with the heart and feelings, but permeates the whole nature, leavens the understanding and the will, and modifies and directs the powers of perception and of action, speculative theology is a necessary demand of piety. It springs immediately out of a religious interest ; for it insures an understanding of what is acknowledged as fact, and gives to it an adequate expression in ideas. Piety, however, has an absolute authority over speculative theology, just as facts have a control over the science which explains them. The former proves a rule and measure for the latter. As that is a false science which rejects or perverts known facts, so that is a false theology which overlooks or disturbs the interests of piety. Speculation to be speculation, must indeed develop itself from its original idea ; but its completed process must agree with the religious consciousness. Thus (as before stated), while independent of facts in its method, it must correspond to them in its results. And while a true speculation, starting from a true datum, cannot err, any particular speculation may ; and so its results must be compared with facts, in order to prove its truth.

2. To DOGMA. Speculative theology will differ with every different form of religion, notwithstanding the strenuously strict nature of the speculative process ; for, in every such religion there is a different starting point, which must affect the whole subsequent movement ; and a different test, by which the result must be tried. There is, therefore, a special Christian speculative theology, and even this will vary in differing parts of the church. It is in this diversity of sentiment that we discover the origin of speculative theology and the immediate impulse to its attainment. For, while a dogma satisfies all, there is no need or occasion for any fur-

ther development of it. Protestantism first gave a chance for it to exist; and when it arises, it is a sign that the church is beginning to change its form; for its peculiar province is, to extend and develop the dogma, to get greater fulness; and in this good sense, therefore, speculative theology is essentially heterodox. Not that it will take away any vital function of doctrine; not that it will add anything foreign to the body; but in that it will develop the dogma yet further, and so will change its form. It cannot, therefore, be bound by the dogmas of the church.

3. TO THE BIBLE. Wholly different, however, is the relation of speculative theology to the holy scriptures. These, being the authentic expression of the pious Christian consciousness, in its original purity and fulness, must be recognized as an authoritative canon. In the Bible, the speculative theologian must be able to show the germ of all his constructions, and all the links of his system. But while this is true, he must not mistake the sharp scientific expressions of his speculation for contradictions of that which is only expressed in general and popular language by the sacred writers. If, however, a real difference appear between the two, the speculative theologian must acknowledge himself at fault, and immediately begin to search for his error; since no such difference could have appeared, had he reasoned rightly. Still, the speculative process must be carried on, without even a side glance at the scriptures, until it is completed, or coming at all under their authority, save in its results. Like a boy with a difficult problem to solve, he must first work it, and then look to the key only to ascertain if the answer is right. It will be seen that this reference to the Bible and the church confessions, as expressions of its truth, takes away the *individual* character of the speculation. And this is especially evident when we consider that the speculation presupposes such an individual religious consciousness in the speculative thinker as reflects in itself the general religious consciousness of the church.

The Relation of Theological Ethics,

1. TO PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS. Theological ethics are thus distinguished from philosophical ethics, in that the latter proceed from the moral consciousness as such, while the former grow from the moral consciousness considered as a religiously limited possession of the individual, and from the historically given ideal in the Redeemer, of which the former is the reflection.

2. TO DOGMATIC THEOLOGY. Theological ethics are also distinguished from dogmatic theology, in that they belong to a different and yet equally important department of theology: the former is a part of speculative theology; the latter, a part of historical theology. They are distinguished from each other, not by their subject matter, but by the different mode of its scientific treatment. The object of dogmatic theology is to reduce the various dogmas of the church, separately and historically given, to an organic and scientific system. But, while this procedure includes speculative elements, this only shows that dogmatics presuppose speculative theology, and not that the two are identical. Theological ethics, on the contrary, has nothing to do with church teaching, but must proceed in a purely speculative manner. It forms an integral part of speculative theology, which divides itself into two chief divisions: first, theology, in the narrower sense; second, cosmology; which last is subdivided into ethics and physics, corresponding to the moral and natural worlds. With ethics, speculative theology completes its course.

3. TO BIBLICAL ETHICS. Theological ethics, even as evangelical, cannot, without explanation, be declared identical with biblical teaching. The Bible contains no doctrine of morals as such. There is, throughout both the Old and New Testaments, a religious doctrine which is the norm of theological ethics. In this sense, theological ethics represent biblical teaching. They are not, however, a transcript of the same.

The Basis of Theological Ethics.

A scientific construction of the doctrine of morality can only be accomplished after we have obtained a clear idea of what morality is. To apprehend this idea is, therefore, the indispensable prerequisite to a thorough ethical treatise. And if it be true, as we have before remarked, that this idea can only be gained in the earlier portions of a speculative theology, where it may show itself unsought, then we are compelled to begin this course of speculative thought; for we have no such system to refer to; and hence arises our necessity, first of all, to construct speculatively, from a theological point of view, theology in its narrower sense, and then cosmology to that point where it passes beyond the realm of physics and enters that of ethics.

We have already indicated the religious consciousness, and for us the evangelical consciousness, as the point from which theological speculation must start. In this, no proof is needed, it being the surest of all things. This particular Christian consciousness, as well as the general religious consciousness, is, in its essence, a God-consciousness; so that its very first object is God. Out of this object it develops all other objects as lying implicitly in it; i. e. it knows all things by means of a knowledge of God. Inclosed in this consciousness we have, not only a feeling or an intimation, but also a *thought* of God. Originally, this thought is not a completed one, but it exists in the form of a mere vague conception. This vagueness, however, does not disparage the truth of the content of the conception, though it does show the incompatibility of the form to the substance, and thus, at the same time, indicates the propriety of developing it into a clear idea of God. Now in the vague notion of God, he is conceived, on the one hand, as the Unconditioned, or the Absolute, and yet, on the other, as partaking of a multitude of positive characteristics, by which he is conditioned, the Infinite. These two conceptions, which are equally valid, contradict each other. They would not, however, contradict

each other, nor would the latter appear to be a limitation of the divine nature, were these characteristics seen to be conditioned only by the Absolute itself. But this can only be made manifest by means of the dialectical mode of procedure. These different characteristics may be seen as absolutely related, when conceived as implicitly contained the one in the other. For this end, however, we must gain such an idea of God as shall contain, as its essential constituents, both these conceptions (of absoluteness and infinity), so seemingly contradictory. But this can be gained only in a speculative theology.

The dialectical process can meet the demand only by getting rid of all those ingredients¹ in the thought of God, which contradict the substance of the idea. We, therefore, must begin with the thought of the Absolute, the primal and essential conception, and proceed from that.² On a closer analysis we discover the idea of *Aseität*, or that God is *causa sui* (*a se*), included in that of absoluteness. So the eternity of God is only his absoluteness viewed in the light of his self-origination (*aseität*). The unity of God is also included in his absoluteness, for the Unconditioned can only be conceived of as One. A number of Absolutes destroys the very idea of the Unconditioned; since we could only conceive of these as standing under relation to each other, or, in other words, as conditioned. By means of this procedure, we necessarily attain to the thought of God as the Absolutely Pure Being, i. e. the absolutely predicateless Being. Further than this, we cannot carry the negative process, for nothing remains, beyond pure being, but pure non-being. We must not, however,

¹ If in the course of the exposition upon which we are now entering, the phrases used may seem awkward and unintelligible, the writer can only plead as an excuse, the author's mode of thought, so foreign to the English mind, and consequently so difficult to be expressed in English phraseology. Indeed, Dr. Rothe often coins new German words for his own especial use.

² The thought of the absolute originally arises from reflection on the existence seen in the world. In this province we find every individual existence conditioned in a causal way through others, both in regard to its existence and the mode of its existence. The necessary reaction against this is the thought of something conditioned by itself — of an existence absolutely *causa sui* — standing in relation to all else as cause and not as effect.

conceive of this absolute pureness as a particular condition. Nothing is predicated in this thought but absolute simplicity of being, a self-identity in form and content—the indifference-point, as it were—between subject and predicate. But these are mere negative predicates. God is so far only conceived as pure existence, not as something existing. Yet in this relation we call him, most properly, the Absolute Being. In this thought is the thought of the absolute Substance; the idea of substance, being that of the substratum which forms the basis for all the predicates of being. Thus God as Absolute Being, is, for us, the absolutely hidden God, since thought is discriminating, and here God is conceived, as without distinction. Indeed this God—the God of the pantheist—must be one hidden to himself; unconscious, because unrevealed, even to himself. Here God is nothing, in the sense of *not anything*, nothing separated or distinct. And yet, while this is, for our thought, purely negative, the object is not negative and empty, but contains a fulness of being, although as yet undistinguished. It is, as it were, the solution, before the string is put into it, around which it may crystalize into tangible shape. It contains all as possible, though nothing as actual. The idea of possibility, however, is the idea of potence. Positively expressed, then, the absolute being, which is yet nothing (that is, as above, no-thing definite), is Absolute Potence. So the positive expression, for the negative formula: “God is absolute, pure being,” is: God is the Absolute Potence, the Absolute Power. But this Absolute Potence can only be thought of as actualizing itself, and that in an absolute way. In this actualization, however, God does not lay aside his absolute being, but merely re-asserts it. In the very act of removing his potentiality, he posits it anew; and only thus is he conditioned through himself, or *causa sui*. The meaning of the proposition that God, as pure being, i. e. as Absolute Potentiality, actualizes himself, is this; that he brings out *in actu*, what is in him *in potentia*. In this process, he must lose his absolute simplicity of existence, and distinguish the content of his being from its predicateless form. He thus becomes an object to

himself, as well as subject; in other words, becomes conscious of himself, or thinks. This involves a consciousness of himself, as something set and something thought. Hence as actualized potentiality, God distinguishes himself as *real* and *ideal*; and these two not separate, but thoroughly interpenetrated, and completely coincident and equivalent. Thus God is the absolute unity of the *real* and *ideal*, of being and thought. This, however, is the essential idea of *spirit*; and so God, in actualizing his potentiality, determines himself as Spirit. For spirit is not merely thought, nor is it merely being, but the absolute unity of the two. It is analogous to art. All the ideas in the world are not art. All the existence is not. Art is the idea embodied in a form which perfectly expresses it. So spirit is the complete identity of thought and being.

God, in thus determining himself as Spirit, determines himself to a process of development. For this distinction, in himself, of ideal and real, is essentially an unfolding act, the unfolding of all contained in the absolute Spirit. This, however, in its nearer idea, is the idea of Nature. So that God, as Spirit, determines himself as Nature. For Nature is not something made. It is from *nasci*, and is distinguished from derivatives of *facere*, in that it is a development from within outward, and not something created by means of outward force brought to bear upon it. Nor does it include the idea of materiality. The divine Nature is a biblical idea. The Nature of God is his instrument of revelation.

But God, in that he determines himself as object, at the same time determines himself as subject; for the one involves the other. Thought and determination demand a thinker and a determiner. This thinking is self-consciousness, which, in its perfected form, is reason. The determining is self-activity, which, in its perfect form, is freedom. So that God, in objectifying himself, determines himself, under the form of absolute Nature, to *absolute reason* and *freedom*. The self-consciousness and self-activity, in this their absolute form, constitute absolute Personality; and only in personality does the divine nature become truly *organism*, because here,

first, the particular characteristics are all blended into one bearing the characteristics. While then Personality is, as it were, the completing of the divine nature, it is as well a new, peculiar form of existence. For that alone is true personality which receives all, that else were separate and particular, into itself as the form of itself, and not merely as a determination or characteristic joined to it. It is thus a new self-contained form of being. This distinction between nature and personality is seen in man; who, though the last link in the chain of nature, is yet above and distinct from it, belonging no more to the sphere of material nature, but existing a self-contained being in another sphere. But personality does not wholly absorb nature, or remove it. The two mutually demand each other. The divine nature only has true existence when it results in divine Personality. But it lies also in the idea of divine Personality, to have the divine Nature as its cause. Both must have real existence, or neither can exist. God as absolute spirit, must have both: he must be *ἐν καὶ πᾶν*. As, in *nature*, the content of God's being was *realized*, so, in *personality*, we have its *perfected* form. The relation of the two is that of mutual action and reaction; and hence we have the LIVING GOD. The union of nature and personality constitutes God a Person. Personality is the idea of which person is the realization, but it is realized only in and through nature; just as, in art, the thought is realized only in and through the material, the union of both being what, alone, neither one could be, viz., art. As Person, then, God is the Revealed God. Here, then, must end the development of the idea of God, for here the idea is completed. In the Revealed God we have the many and the one conjoined, the general and the particular organically united; and, with this, the content of the God-thought of the pious consciousness is exhausted. It is only necessary to remember that the process of development here described is an absolute process, to keep clear of the erroneous and dangerous thought that God is not, always and from eternity, complete—the "I AM." In the absolute process, time is necessarily excluded; there can be no such thing as succession in time, in the Ab-

solute Being. The succession is logical; only, we represent it to our minds as temporal, because we cannot rid ourselves of this mode of conception. But the absolute process is wholly beyond the sphere of time, and is not to be confounded with temporal affairs.

The result of this dialectical process shows, therefore, that God only truly is, when he exists in the three modi, of Being, Nature, and Personality. These modi, of course, are eternal; and are objectively existing, not merely subjectively conceived. This threefoldness, however, is not the church doctrine of the Trinity, and is not advanced as such. Rothe disclaims any such identity. He criticises the expression "three persons" as conveying either a tritheistic idea, or no idea at all. He thinks that his representation gives a real threefoldness and a real unity; whereas, the church dogma must sacrifice the one or the other. He does not acknowledge a biblical doctrine of an *immanent* Trinity. The germs of it are in the scriptures; but the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is only the *revealed* Trinity, or God as related to the world. The true doctrine, to him, is: God exists in the three eternal modi of Being, Nature, Personality, correlative, the one impossible to be thought without the other, in the absolute Person.

Having thus discovered the three eternal modi of God, in his existence as Person, we come to a group of divine attributes, which arise from that relation of God to himself, which we have seen must necessarily exist. As these attributes rest in the relation in which God's personal self-consciousness stands to the three modi of his existence, they divide themselves into three classes, corresponding to these modi and dependent upon them. Taken altogether, in their unity, they constitute God's self-knowledge, or idea of himself. Of these modi, the Being of God is reflected in the divine self-consciousness as All-sufficiency; i. e. God, as *causa sui*, is conscious of himself as the One all-sufficient. The divine Nature stands, in the self-consciousness, as blessedness; the divine self-activity (which, together with the self-conscious, constitutes the divine personality) is reflected, in

the self-consciousness, as majesty ; i. e. so far as God, in his self-consciousness as pure soul, finds himself possessed of a nature, or spiritual body, as it were, so far is he happy ; and so far as he is conscious of himself, in his activity as self-active and free, so far is the consciousness that of absolute majesty. All-sufficiency, blessedness and majesty are thus the three absolute and immanent attributes dependent on the divine existence. The relative and transeunt attributes, those which arise from God's relation to the world, are but narrower modifications of these. God can have attributes only as he has relations. For attributes are not mere modes of working, nor are they essential determinations of being ; but they are the revelation of the specific immanent determinations of a being, as shown in its relation with another being. The relative attributes are, indeed, the first which we perceive, but they have their ground in the deeper relation of God to himself. Thus those attributes which depend upon the divine Being may be called, especially, the *absolute* attributes ; while those which arise from the divine nature divide themselves into *moral* and *natural* ; as nature divides itself into ethics and physics.

Here, then, we have God existing as Person with attributes, and here the immanent life process of God is perfected. Here the demand of his absoluteness is met. He is perfect in himself, and has no need of anything from without to be, in its highest sense, God blessed for evermore. But at this point Rothe proceeds to show the inherent necessity of the act of creation ; and, as he has been accused of pantheism on account of this part of his work, he interposes, in his lectures on this subject, a disclaimer of any such intention, showing the distinction between his theory and the pantheistic doctrine. Pantheism, he says, cannot be predicated of a system which represents God as perfect, complete in himself, before any trace of a world appears ; for that system requires a universe for its existence. Pantheism, moreover, is the denial of the personality of God ; but here we have God as Person. And indeed, a system of speculative theology, which has piety for its presupposition, would deny

itself, were the personality of God shut out of it. For piety can only exist where there is a mutual interchange of love, and this is impossible save between persons. If it be objected that absoluteness and personality mutually exclude each other, the one suffering no limit or distinction, the other involving both; the reply is, that the presupposition on which this theory is based is false. It is true that personality presupposes something from which the person distinguishes himself; but this something is not without, but within. There can, indeed, be no subject without a corresponding object; but this corresponding object must be inward, if the subject is to be truly person. The beast distinguishes himself from an outward nature; he knows he is not the food he eats. But this is only a negative consciousness, which does not raise him to the dignity of personality. This, only self-consciousness can do. Man is person, not in virtue of distinguishing himself from external nature, but by his self-distinction, wherein he makes himself object to himself by *self-consciousness*, not a consciousness of *something without*. The Absolute Being may, therefore, be personal; since the distinction, from which personality springs, presupposes no other existence and consequently imposes no limit from without, nor takes away the independence of the Deity.

Notwithstanding the completeness of the Deity in himself, the All-sufficient, Blessed and Majestic One, who, before the mountains are brought forth, or ever He forms the earth and the world, is God from everlasting to everlasting, our author proceeds to demonstrate the necessity inherent in Him to create. This necessity is a moral, not a physical one; but this does not lessen its stringency. Creation is an absolutely necessary, because it is an absolutely free, act. For freedom and necessity are identical in God. What his omnipotence makes possible, if it be in accordance with his nature, his benevolence makes necessary. The necessity to create arises, therefore, in this wise. God's positive thought of himself includes, by logical necessity, the negative thought of what is not himself; or, in stricter philosophical phrase, the thought of the *me* involves, of necessity, the thought of

the *not me*. For affirmation and negation are absolute cor-relatives; every affirmative has, as its unavoidable echo, a corresponding negative. For an affirmative is an affirmative only by means of the thought of the negative which stands opposed to it. Thus: $a = a$ means a cannot be thought as *not-a*. This principle is equally involved in the perfecting of the self-consciousness. This consciousness, which declares I am myself, or $I = I$, involves the negative proposition $I \succ \text{not-I}$, or I cannot conceive myself as *not-I*. And this principle obtains, in all its force, of God as person. He cannot be self-conscious without thereby involving the thought of his *not-me*. But this necessity to think, does not involve the necessity to posit, set, or make real, God's opposite; although in God, on account of his absoluteness, to think and to set must, as we have seen, be conceived as essentially involved the one in the other. On the contrary, God's absoluteness demands that He have full power over His thought, to make it real, or to leave it only ideal. He must relate himself to it in some way; but that may be positively or negatively, so far as absoluteness is concerned. God has physical ability to determine himself arbitrarily in regard to it, but he has no such moral ability; for the absolutely Perfect One can only do what is best. His perfect freedom secures the necessity of the best action. What he will do, therefore, depends upon what will be the result. Now were God to relate himself affirmatively to this negation, he would introduce a pure contradiction to himself; for, in its original form, it is the pure opposition to God. This, God would not do; though, even in this form, it would be no limit to his absoluteness, since he has it absolutely in his power. He must relate himself to it negatively. He will not refuse to make it real, but he will set it negatively, as it were: give to it existence, not as his opposite, but rather as his double; or, to follow more closely the idiom of our author, God sets his *not-me*, but takes away that in it which is contradictory of Him; from a *simple not-me*, a contradiction, he makes it *his own not-me*, a reflexion. Thus it becomes something correspondent to, not opposed to, him; his true image, distinct

from him, but in which he may be manifested; his other self: "Sein wahres Du." This process of distinguishing his own personality from its shadow — the not-me — by making that real, is the process of creation. For the not-me of God is the universe, which he creates in order that His life and being may be manifest therein. Thus the world must always be distinct from God; though, at the same time, it perfectly corresponds to him. Pantheism is, consequently, excluded; for two things may be in each other, and yet not be the same; indeed, where there is no distinction, there can be no unity, but only simplicity.

To give reality to His not-me in this manner, corresponds to the divine perfection; for it is to impart of the divine blessedness to others. And herein we perceive a new distinctive element (*bestimmtheit*) in God, which is no mere attribute, but an immanent essential determination which connects the absolute and relative attributes together, viz. the necessity of a self imparting to others, or, more distinctly, Love. This, of course, is a moral, not a physical necessity; and yet an absolute necessity of the absolute personality. It springs from personality. Only a person can love. The All-perfect One must, therefore, create, for He must love. To love, in the highest sense, a something, without the self-consciousness, is necessary; for, love is not love to self, but an imparting of self to another. Thus, again, while the necessity for the creation is shown to be immanent in God, it is shielded from the fatalistic necessity of pantheism, in that it is the moral necessity of a free person. For, nothing is more free, and at the same time more necessary, than love. Just in proportion as love is only a relative necessity, is it wanting in fulness and truth; and yet only the free personality is capable of the sentiment.

God is thus necessitated, by his love, to create. He creates, by an act of his personality, through his nature, as the instrument of his working. The act of creation is not a purely absolute act. It must have relativity. For an *absolute* act of the Absolute One would produce an Absolute. The product would be, not *another than* God, but a *second* God, which is a con-

tradiction. God's not-me is only conceivable as a relative existence; and such an existence can only arise through an act which is not purely absolute. Hence God cannot create a world which is immediately complete, nor create by an act which immediately realizes its aim. The creating of God must be conceived as a number of creative acts, a successive series of gradually increasing manifestations of Him. And that is what we find in the universe. For proof of it, we have not to refer to the moon and stars above us. Our own world, in its various eras, shows its gradual completing.

Since the creation is the setting of the Divine not-me, God must set it as that which He himself is. But, as we have seen, God is only something determinate, in that He is nature and personality, or Spirit. As divine being or essence (*wesen*) — the first of the three modi of his existence — he is neither active or thinking, and can have no relation. As mere Being, therefore, he must forever remain without the universe; only as divine nature and personality can he be manifested in creation; his essence is always separate and distinct from it; and thus, again, the *immanence* of pantheism is excluded.

On the one side, then, the universe is necessarily related existence,— finite; on the other side, it must be correspondent to God,— infinite. It must, therefore, be an infinite world of finite existence. This infinite finite universe God makes real, or sets, as correspondent to His Nature and Personality, i. e. as Spirit; for spirit alone cannot be interpenetrated by spirit. Only in a spiritual world can God have cosmical existence. This spiritual world is the heavens, and this alone is the adequate realization of the creative thought; all else is merely scaffolding for its erection. But while God must, on the one side, think this infinite finite universe as complete; he must, on the other, think it as incomplete; and this antinomy is only solved by the thought of the creation as an infinite, but organic, multiplicity of particular circles of creation, each successive circle more perfect than the one preceding; thus causing the cosmical existence of God to become more and more adequately correspondent to his real existence, though

never attaining to absolute completeness: each creation perfectly finished; but the creation never finished.

Though the different circles of creation are varied, they will yet correspond, specifically, to each other. The one begins where the other ends; and all together compose one great organism of the spiritual world. Thus the creation, the longer it continues, is the more glorious; and since each new creation is developed into greater unity with God, and yet in perfect harmony with the preceding creations, the whole creation, as one, is developed into greater oneness with God. The culmination of the several world-spheres is also the culmination of the separate persons of those spheres. Each world-sphere has its centre individual; and these form, as it were, the axis of the whole spiritual world.

Though each creature has a beginning, we may not speak of the creation as beginning. Time is a product of the divine creation, and so this cannot be begun in time. As the creation is a free self-determination in God, no interval can be conceived between the thought and the act. He always creates.

The world being in existence, we have, from the relation of God to it, a new class of divine attributes, the relative and transeunt. They are divided into the *essential* and the *hypostatic*, according as they refer to the divine existence in general, or to the modi of his existence. These *essential relative* attributes are *negative* in their signification. Thus God's relation to the world cannot, conformably with the idea of Him, change or limit God in his existence. He does not become finite thereby, i. e. He is *infinite*. This infiniteness in relation to the world, is His *immensity* and *unchangeableness*. Of the positive essential relative and transeunt attributes, we have only the divine goodness; that is, the divine love modifies itself, in relation to the world, to *benevolence*. The hypostatic relative and transeunt attributes are divided according to the two modi of nature and personality. The relative attribute of the divine nature is *omnipresence*; i. e. the *absolute* working of the nature of God in relation to this world. The relative attributes of the divine personal-

ity are, on the side of the self-consciousness, Omniscience : on the side of self-activity, Omnipotence. These two are the concrete forms of Omnipresence.

The creative activity of God, applied to the already existing world, is His Government ; and this is administered on an eternal world-plan. This world-plan is the idea of the world-government in its completed form. More nearly defined, it is the action of the goodness of God by means of his omniscience and omnipotence, or omnipresence. Thus the world-government is part of the creative activity of God.

The first act of creation is the setting of the not-me as the pure absolute not-me of God, i. e. as the simple opposition of spirit. This is no other than *matter*. The idea of pure matter can only be negatively expressed. It is the direct opposite to spirit. This pure matter is infinite ; for every limit of it is a limit to the not-me in itself considered, which is a contradiction of its essential idea ; for, were the Not-me merely relative, it would be no pure opposite to the Absolute Existence. There is, therefore, no end to matter as such. An end can only be predicated of *material things*, the forms of matter. The infiniteness of matter is the real cause of the infiniteness of creation. And so we see, at the outset, that the relation of God to matter is that of pure opposition.

But creation is no mere production of creatures ; it is the positing of a development of new ideas out of God, occasioned by the relation of that which is already existing to him. But while a development, it is yet real creation ; since the cause of it lies, not in the creature, but in God. Thus the creation is essentially a multiplicity of progressively developing grades of creative existences ; and, in this way, it becomes nature. This progressive development is constant. There is no jump in the chain, and its process is as follows : God directs his thought toward the creation already existent. He makes the thought of this the object of his thought ; i. e. he reflects upon it, and this reflection is,

a. An analyzing of the thought which appears, in the consciousness, as simple unity.

b. A relating of the elements of the thought thus analyzed,

so that they mutually determine each other, (and from this process arise more concrete and higher determinations of thought).

c. These must be, again, brought together in the unity of the consciousness. Thus: to say that God thinks, or takes into his thought, the already existent creation, is to affirm —

1. That He separates, in His consciousness, the elements contained in the thought, but which are not yet distinguished from each other. He relates these to each other; and from this process a new course, of more perfect and concrete single thoughts of creation, arise. This is the analytic process.

2. He does not let these newly born thoughts stand separate, but combines them into ideas. Thus the product of the new thoughts is the product of new and higher ideas combined to unity, i. e. of new and higher grades of creative existence.

So far, we have merely been engaged with the *thought* of God. But what is thought must be brought into *being*, for the divine creation is both thinking and realizing, and the described theoretic process must have a corresponding practical reality. Thus every higher grade of creation recedes from mere matter, and, until creation is raised to that point which corresponds to the creative idea, i. e. to spirit, the creative work of God cannot cease.

We have traced to this point an outline of Dr. Rothe's theory of the existence of God and his relation to the universe, because so far new principles and new applications of old principles are constantly brought to light, and to grasp them is essential to any clear view of his method. To comprehend this method, in its most fundamental features, is the necessary prerequisite to a full understanding of the doctrine of ethics, which is based upon the results, theological and cosmical, achieved by it, and to parts of which we may, in some future Numbers of this periodical, call attention. It were interesting to proceed further, and trace the ingenious and philosophical course of thought which seeks to explain the whole sphere of Physics to that point where Ethics

properly begins. But to do so would be to attempt, in a language foreign to the author, a condensation of what is not too easily comprehended in the full statement of the original. It is not essential, either, to the comprehension of the ethical treatise, save in certain particulars, which may be singled out when needed.

In regard to the general features of the Book, it may be sufficient to state, as a reply to objections which may be made to its highly abstract character, that it attempts the same problem which Dr. Hickok considers in his *Rational Cosmology*, and is the most ripened product of the speculative method as applied to theology. What Hegel attempted to do for Philosophy, Rothe has tried to accomplish for Theology, though he is far more in harmony and sympathy with Schelling, especially so far as we can judge as yet concerning his later Philosophy of Revelation. The whole subject of the legitimacy of this mode of thought, has occupied the attention of reading men, to a very great extent, since Sir William Hamilton's *Essays* have been published, and Mr. Mansel, in his recently published *Bampton Lectures on the Limits of Religious Thought*, has brought the question prominently before us. We may not shirk an investigation as to its value; and a glance at its results may aid us in forming an opinion. Should any agree with Mr. Mansel, in his adoption of the Kantian philosophy, so ably applied by him to the problems of theology, and regard the structure which Rothe has reared, as a "castle in the air," without solid foundation, and untenable as a refuge from unbelief, still it is interesting and profitable to see what may be done, in the pantheist's chosen province, to refute his chilling and morally disastrous creed. We may war against pantheism by seeking to remove the ground on which it rests, as Kant, Hamilton, and Mansel have done; or we may meet it on its own chosen arena, and contend for victory with its own weapons. Rothe has chosen the latter course; and, though we may consign him and his opponent, alike, to the region of the unconditioned, as to a place intangible by reason of the darkness which, alone, may be felt, yet, let us rejoice that even there,

a vigorous intellect and an earnest soul is contending for the Christian faith. Not that the work before us is a polemic against pantheism, or any heresy. It is the product of positive and independent thought ; its negative results are not, however, on that account, the less valuable.

That this delineation of so peculiar and original a course of thought has been, in all respects, successful, is too much to hope. If, however, it does not correctly express the leading features of the system examined, to those used to the peculiar phraseology and mode of thought of modern German philosophical writers, it is not because a conscientious and painstaking endeavor has not been made.

ARTICLE II.

COMPARATIVE PHONOLOGY; OR THE PHONETIC SYSTEM OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES.

BY BENJAMIN W. DWIGHT, CLINTON, N. Y.

[Continued from Vol. XVI., p. 722.]

A Brief View of the Sanskrit Consonants, in their relations to the Other Classical Languages.

THE different classes of consonants, in the Sanskrit, are as follows :

(1) Gutturals. These are k, kh, g, gh, and n pronounced like our nasal n in ng and nk, as in sing and sink. This nasal n is found only before gutturals: as in the middle of a word, or at the end of a word in place of m, if that word is succeeded immediately by one beginning with a guttural. K is represented, in Greek, by κ, and in Latin by c (k) and q: as in Sansk. kapâlas, the skull; Greek, κεφαλή; and Lat. caput. Kh is represented, in Greek, by χ: as in Sansk. nakhas, a nail; Gr. ὄνυξ stem ὄνυχ (the o being euphonic); and