

# 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](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VI.

RICHARD ROTHE'S YEARS OF AUTHORSHIP:<sup>1</sup>

BY REV. SAMUEL OSGOOD, D.D., NEW YORK CITY.

WE gave, in a previous Article, an account of Rothe's four years of ministry in Rome, with a short sketch of his previous life and education, such as would prepare our readers to interpret intelligently his conspicuous career as a thinker and author. At the end of September 1828, we found him, on his return from Rome, at Wittenberg, once more among kindred and friends, ready for new service at this familiar post, where he had labored more than two years (1820-1822) as a seminarist, and he was now to serve in that same seminary as professor for nine years (1828-1837). From Wittenberg he went to Heidelberg, where he remained in the university twelve years (1837-1849), and which he left for a time to be professor at Bonn (1849-1854), but to which he returned, much to his satisfaction, after five years absence, for the remainder of his life (1854-1867). To many readers, and especially to a limited circle of scholars, the particulars of these nearly forty years of academic life, with his personal friendships and discussions, his private correspondence and his theological and ecclesiastical miscellanies, have undoubtedly great interest, and all the minute detail of Nippold's careful and elaborate work will be most welcome to them. But our business is now with Rothe as a thinker; and we care to give now only such facts as may bear upon the development and import of his characteristic thought.

<sup>1</sup> Richard Rothe, Doctor und Professor der Theologie und Grossh. Bad. Geh. Kirchenrath zu Heidelberg. Ein Christliches Lebensbild auf Grund der Briefe Rothe's entworfen von Friedrich Nippold. Zweite Band. Mit Namen und Sachregister über beide Bände. pp. xvi. 677. Wittenberg: Verlag von Hermann Koelling. 1874.

It is evident that his literary life moved in a most eventful period of modern history. From 1828 onward for forty years we trace now a new and remarkable transformation not only of scientific, political, and theological opinions, but of the very constitution of government and society. What was coming when he returned from Rome to Wittenberg he did not know nor presume to say; but he evidently had within his experience and conviction the seeds of thought that were virtually prophecies of things to come. After those four years of life in Rome, with that constant spectacle of a false theology, carried out into a false social and political as well as ecclesiastical order, he could not be content to spin fine theories of philosophy or religion; and the two great masters of the dominant thinking, who were then near the end of their career — Hegel, with his absolute reason, and Schleiermacher, with his ideal Christ, — must have appeared to him dreamers of fond dreams, after the break of day had come and the bell had rung for work, or the signal had been given for the battle. There was the old despotism, a substantial and aggressive fact, and the new thought ought to be quite as substantial and aggressive. He felt probably the great issue between the old times and the new, more than he was able to say; and he undoubtedly had a presentiment of the new protest against Romish absolutism, which had tried to speak itself out in the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century, and had been repressed by the empire of Napoleon, and also by the dread of all liberal opinions that came with the reaction against Napoleon and the whole policy of the Holy Alliance. In France and England, the elements of reform were stirring, and the English Reform Bill and the French citizen king were proof that the comfortable middle classes were not willing to let the old aristocracy crush out their life. In England, too, thoughtful scholars were apparently conscious of the rising social agitation, and within all the asceticism and extravagance of the Oxford reaction against the new utilitarianism, we may discern a yearning for a more godly order of life, and an unwillingness

to give up the Romish rule, without accepting the catholicity that was the origin of its power. Germany felt something of the same movement. The states, that were not allowed to come together in hearty patriotism were permitted by the ruling powers to unite in a commercial league, and with this domination of the new commercial spirit we may discern a priestly reaction, very much like the Oxford Tractarianism; and Hengstenberg started his noted Church Journal in 1827, about the time when Pusey became canon of Christ Church Cathedral, and entered upon the career which, in so many respects, resembles that of the high church German Lutheran. Throughout Christendom the great questions turned, not so much upon rival schools of opinion as upon rival powers of society and government. Rothe brought from Rome to Germany the essential principles that were to shape his life, and give him his peculiar power as a teacher of his country and his age. He not only opposed the Roman priesthood, but the idea of an exclusive priesthood itself. He was the apostle of the laity, the prophet calling all men to be Christian men, and to build the state itself upon such foundations of faith and virtue that there would be no need of an exclusive priesthood or a separate church rule.

Rothe did not begin his work in the Wittenberg Seminary with any startling paradoxes, but went patiently through his appointed round of service. He read lectures (1) upon the history of Christian church life on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from eleven to twelve o'clock; (2) upon distinguished speeches and sermons of ancient and modern times on Thursdays from eleven to twelve o'clock, Fridays from ten to eleven, Saturdays from eleven to twelve. Every fortnight, also, he held a discussion from two to three o'clock; every month a catechetical exercise on Wednesday from three to four o'clock, and every three weeks a pastoral consultation on Friday from two to three, and a homiletic conversation on Thursday from two to three, besides another weekly exercise at a convenient hour. So far as the hours of service were concerned he did not regard his duties as

oppressive, but he found himself severely tasked in his preparation for his lectures on church life, because he had not previously given the subject any thorough investigation. He spoke, however, with great satisfaction of the opportunity to study this subject thoroughly, and he hoped that under the spur of necessity he might learn more in two years thus than in ten years of plodding routine.

He does not find the religious life and thinking of Wittenberg quite to his liking. He complains of the want of fresh personal experience in preaching, and of the habit of putting formal rules of composition in the place of direct resort to the fountain head of Christian life. Devout as he is, he writes to Bunsen that he cannot bear the usual way of separating Rationalist from Orthodox believers, and he insists upon the duty of comprehending all who are practically Christians within the same generous fellowship, instead of regarding only a single aspect of opinion or life. He says that in his own case he appreciates persons of both classes, and has constant intercourse with them. He does not like the spirit that prevails, and is not ashamed to confess to Bunsen that he misses the genial fellowship and hearty devotion of his Roman years, and that he sometimes sighs for the poverty of that typical Babylon, Rome. There is too much smoke and torch-light, and too little sun-light, in the pulpit he says; more of the flickering meteor than the constant sunshine. The Roman leaven is all the while working within him, and he wrote in 1832 to Bunsen that he was learning constantly to appreciate the influence of his life at Rome. He will soon try to show the results of his experience and his studies by a treatise upon Episcopacy in its relation to the church of the first three centuries. He has been hard at work now for four years, but he hopes to bring together the result of his not unblest labor, and to connect the separate problems with the whole, to which they belong, and to consider them in their root.

He tells Bunsen that his present theology may seem to him much secularized; yet he must speak very plainly, and

not be misunderstood. History has taken a sudden start since they last met together, and most of the objects of spiritual life have taken a new position. Political history has, since July 1830, won for him sense, understanding, and charm. He cannot take the radical side, nor be content to remain indifferent. He must beg to be excused from taking sides with the so-called Christian civil rights doctrine of Hengstenberg and his party, in the *Church Journal*. In Rome he had held the cheerless view of history which broke the heart of Niebuhr, but now he saw the signs of actual development of life under all this ferment in which his friends discerned only scum and dregs.

We will not enter into the details of Rothe's course at Wittenberg, nor give a list of his various instructions in his new office of Ephorus, or leader of the devotional exercises of the seminary. We can see in all his correspondence and his teachings the working of the same ruling convictions and purposes. He is peculiarly impressed by the death of Schleiermacher, and in his letter to Hahn, February 22, 1834, he expresses his great comfort in the dying theologian's witness of his faith, by receiving the communion upon his death-bed, and giving it to his family and friends with prayer. His studies appear to be drawing together towards a practical point, and all his devotional expositions of scripture, his elaborate lectures upon catechising and upon preaching in the different ages of the church, are helping on the memorable work which first gave him his place in Germany as an original thinker. We refer to "Die Anfänge der Kirche und ihrer Verfassung," or "The Beginnings of the Church and its Constitution." We must not forget, however, his previous treatise, his Exposition of Romans v. 12-21, in which he sets forth essentially the same views of New Testament exegesis as afterwards appeared in his dogmatic lectures.

Rothe published the first volume of his work on the Origin of the Church, at Wittenberg in 1837, and announced his intention to add a second volume forthwith, but he did not do this, although he probably carried out his essential idea in

his great work on theological ethics some years afterwards. He aimed in this work to show, that the original constitution of the Christian congregations was very early substantially transformed by the establishment of the church, and that the church was constituted by the episcopate, the bishops' organization. This change took place, according to the result of his researches, about the year seventy after Christ. He maintained, that the destruction of Jerusalem had destroyed the last vestiges of the Jewish state, taken away the ground common to the Christian congregations, and made a new base for Christians a question of existence itself. Thus, in his opinion, the Catholic church rose; and he puts its date much earlier than has been usual with Protestant scholars outside of the episcopal ranks.

Of course, so bold a position brought Rothe at once into collision with the theological leaders around him, who accused him of going over to the Catholic side. Yet this charge was unfair, for it is not Catholic doctrine to maintain that the Catholic church is not the organization which answers to the really Christian life, and that the Catholic church, having reached the fulfilment of its purpose, began immediately to dissolve itself because of the inherent contradiction in itself. The vice of Catholicism was the separation of the religious life from the moral, or of the church from the state, the devotional life from secular virtue. Thus he was led to make the paradoxical statement, that the church is gradually to dissolve into the state, and that the state can exercise the three functions of society which the church especially claims for its jurisdiction — the functions of instruction, worship, and discipline. He thought that worship would in time be regulated, like the fine arts, as a part of civilized society and an essential of public education.

It thus appears that, strict supernaturalist and earnest devotee as Rothe was, he looked upon Christianity no longer as an ecclesiastical, but as a moral and religious matter, and as of purely human character and bearing. Christianity, in his view, must bring the grace and truth of heaven to bear directly

upon earthly interests, and in time transform human society, especially the most universal, natural, and necessary form of human life, the form of the state. He did not think that this end would be at once or soon reached, yet he was confident that it was coming, and that Christian influences will work, and indeed are working, more effectually in the state and more fully in the church. He was sure that, since the Reformation, Christianity had been proving its power more and more in the secular life of Christendom, and less and less in the history of the church. As the state was unsecularizing itself, the church was secularizing itself, and in time it would appear in its true light as the provisional habitation for the Christian spirit, until the true state would be built up as its proper dwelling-place.

It is not easy for us Americans to enter into the excitement which this book of Rothe's on the Origin of the Church, made in Germany, for with us the proposition that he maintained is less popular than that which he assailed, and no writer or speaker would be listened to here with any patience who should venture to maintain that the state is to perform the functions of the church. We are more and more excluding all religious affairs from government control, and the most strait-laced partizans of national religion ask little more than a mere recognition of Christianity in our national constitution. Yet, if we give to Rothe's definition of the state the comprehensiveness in which he probably held it, and regard the state as our entire civic society, the whole national community, we can accept his essential idea, and allow that religion instead of being under the control of a non-national hierarchy, is to be left to our own free citizenship, and is to pervade as far as possible all our legislation, whilst its own church order and worship are to be under the jurisdiction of the different bodies of believers. We must allow that with us the state has already under its control two of the three functions of society that have been claimed by the church, and that instruction and discipline depend more here upon secular arrangements than ecclesiastical rule, whilst the

greatest ethical question that has ever been decided upon this continent, was decided by the nation, and not by the church, when the emancipation of our slaves was proclaimed by the President and confirmed by the people.

In Europe, however, the state of affairs is different, and Rothe's doctrine, that the church is to be merged in the state, can mean only that the state, as such, is more and more to control the administration of religion, and in time to be the church, or Christianity organized. This is virtually the policy of Germany now, and of all the great monarchies of Europe. Even where freedom of belief is allowed, the state generally controls the administration of religion so far as to require allegiance from its ministers and to secure their support. The English church began upon this foundation, and liberals and conservatives agree in claiming for the church the dignity and strength of the nation. Here opens the great issue between Rome and the nations. The religious question of the age turns not upon doctrine or ritual, but upon authority, and we are asking eagerly, not so much what shall be said or done in matters of faith, but who shall have authority to say or do it. The nations are sovereign says our modern civilization. The Pope is sovereign says the Roman tiara, and its organs throughout the world.

No wonder, then, that Rothe, who has been among our recent philosophers, the head and front of the heresy of nationalism, should be singled out for assault by the champions of ultra-montanism. Bishop Ketteler of Mayence, in his memorable book on "The Catholics in the German Empire," in the section upon freedom and authority (1873), denounces the idea of national independence as wholly pagan, and utterly opposed to personal liberty. He writes thus: "Paganism, the absolute monarchy since the Renaissance, the French Revolution, the modern state of Liberalism, are all children of the same spirit, the last is only the highest potency of this system. Paganism, the Renaissance, even the French Revolution were, after a manner, too pious to restore perfectly the absolutism of the state. Wherever there is a spark of religion or of faith in a

Supreme Being, there absolutism in its full development is stopped by regard for God and for the law of God. First now, liberalism is able to form the complete absolutism by the three kinds of confederates which it has found." Nippold asks who these three confederates are who seem so alarming to Baron Ketteler, who is, in his view, less a bishop than an aristocrat in his wrath against the modern state right, and he finds his answer in these words: "1. The Hegelian philosophy, which sets up the state as the present God, or, what amounts to quite the same thing, the modern materialism or positivism to which the state is the highest form of nature and the highest natural power. 2. The Protestant theology represented by Rothe, which goes so far as to maintain that in the present development(!) of Christian consciousness, the church, as a peculiar institution, has no longer any object, and the state alone must fulfil its mission. 3. The whole materialist tendency of the times. These are the most powerful conspirators of liberalism in the realization of the modern state."

Whatever may be the final judgment of scholars, as to Rothe's view of the origin of the Catholic church organization about the year seventy of our era, there can be no doubt of the value of his researches into the history of that age, and of the emphasis which he gave to the destruction of Jerusalem as giving Christianity a new status in the world, by making over the power of the old temple to the new church, and freeing Christians from their dependence upon the old Jerusalem. The question of the origin of episcopacy has not been set at rest by his studies; and such new illustrations as come from the recently discovered Syriac version of the shorter Epistle of Ignatius (1845) weaken his argument for the existence of the episcopate at the date named, and confirm the objections of Baur, in his vigorous little volume that was published the year after Rothe's work appeared (1838), whilst thorough-going Episcopalians are not content with Rothe's early date for the constitution of bishops, but find it in the New Testament itself. Every year is throwing new light upon the

whole subject, and showing the intimate relations between the history of the church and the life and culture of the nations. It is coming especially forward into clearer light that Christianity was not merely, or mainly, a theology, or even a morality, but a positive and powerful community in close connection with the civilized world, and gradually rising into a sense of its position in the Roman empire, which was in turn to be its enemy, its rival, and its convert. Every point of agony becomes a centre of consciousness and care; and the frightful persecution of the Christians by Nero made Rome the sensorium of feeling before it became the seat of the new faith. The persecution gave to Christendom a mighty unity, and the faithful, who were no longer confounded with the Jews, in whose synagogues they had been often found, stood forth now as a peculiar people, and the blow of Vespasian against Jerusalem finished the work of consolidation begun by Nero. This buffoon-assassin made Christians one people, as never before, by striking at their life, whilst Vespasian and Titus opened to them a kingdom older than Rome by sweeping the city of Jerusalem from the earth, and making its temple, its law, its prophets, and its altar the spiritual heritage of the church. So Rome gave almost at once the cross and the crown. The martyr church was the church triumphant.

Nippold has some scholarly and profound observations upon the place of Rothe's treatise among church historians, and he regards him as having rendered original and important service. He confesses to feeling a great disappointment at the recent tendencies of church historians, and thinks that many writers seem to forget that the field is new in opportunity, and it is not well to try to do Mosheim's work over again. As the Catholic habit is to date the beginning of the great apostasy from the sixteenth century, so the Protestant usage is to date the rise of the anti-Christian spirit somewhat later—in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the critical school has tended to construct all history on the basis of a philosophical system, and to define the history of the

church as the movement of the self-evolution of the idea of the church, — a tendency which not only puts the moral interest behind the logical, but subordinates the significance of personality to abstractions. It is not enough to meet the former kind of one-sidedness by the practical view, and to meet the second error by the method of Neander and his plea for personal piety; but the subjective morality of the practical church historians needs objective depth, and the earnest individualism of the Neander school needs an enlargement of its ascetic sphere. Nor is it enough to bring these two tendencies together under the leading of providence, as Baur has done, unless we show in the connection of different movements the constant organized development in a living judgment without being hampered by Hegelian categories. Rothe can teach future church historians in each of these three particulars. No one has brought out more intensely the idea of the moral in church history, no one has affirmed more emphatically the prerogative of individual forms of religion; none of all the writers — in full independence of Baur; yes, even in firm opposition to him — has more nobly brought to universal recognition the intended fulfilment of a uniform idea upon the complicated paths of history. Hence his value to our age and to the extreme parties to whom he is an enigma. He is ever true to his faith in Christ, and upon that rock his whole world of contemplation rests, and there standing, he judges the present and the past. This faith in the power of his Lord allows him to distinguish clearly between the spirit of Christ himself and the passing, temporary form of its imprint.

Yet giving all consideration to this praise of Rothe's comprehensiveness as a church historian, and allowing that he appreciates the ethical, the personal, and the universal movements within the divine kingdom, we must in strict justice deny to him the possession of certain qualities that make a complete historian of religion. He was too private and individual in his nature, too subjective in his thinking, and too retiring in his ways of life, perhaps too strong in his Ger-

manic predilections, and in his anti-priestly prejudices, to appreciate heartily, or even justly, the affections, tastes, passions, and aspirations that band men into enthusiastic fellowships, make stated and magnificent worship a delight, and conformity a privilege. He has all of the dislike of pageantry and priestcraft that is so characteristic of our New England Puritans, without the disposition which many of them have shown to estimate fairly the circumstances and dispositions which have given the old church its power. He is as fastidious and individual in his tastes and ways as our Puritan idealist Emerson, quite as impatient of official assumption and dogmatic rule, yet hardly as ready as Emerson to allow to these things their place, and to see the root out of which they honestly grew. He could hardly say heartily with our Concord transcendentalist :

“I like a church, I like a cowl;  
I love a prophet of the soul;  
And on my heart monastic aisles  
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles;”

whilst he could cordially repeat the closing words :

“Yet not for all his faith can see,  
Would I that cowed churchman be.”

Rothe had a positive antipathy to all official religion; the idea of wearing any professional dress in the pulpit seemed to him absurd, and he shrank from the offer of the post of Protestant prelate in the Baden church, as if the very suggestion were an absurdity. He was almost a Quaker in his aversions to formal service, and he desired that no robe of office should be put upon him when his body was to be prepared for the grave. He had a right to his own likes and dislikes; but it is not easy to see how his disposition to merge the church into the state would help out his notions of simplicity, and save him from official parade. The state, as such, is full of form and ceremony, and seldom tends to carry simplicity into its own offices, or into its administration of religion. In Germany the policy of the state is eminently assuming and grand, full of titles and pageantry. The

bureaucracy is as pompous as any ecclesiasticism, and with less ground in antiquity and reason for its claims. It is probably for this very cause that he disliked Prussia, and he could not bear the kind of official pride and military grandeur, that was supplanting the old German simplicity and heartiness. He had little of the clanship that delights in the insignia of leaders, and joins in the war-cry or the wassail of the tribe; nor did he have much of that form of the mystical sentiment that finds its life in church seasons and ceremonials. Mystical as he was in his personal piety, and so devoted to the person of Christ, as to be unable to separate his own thought and feeling from the grace and truth of Christ's presence, he was strangely destitute of the mysticism that lives and breathes in the church universal as the actual body of Christ, and his religion was mainly that of a private man, or an individual citizen, who looks to Christ for light and peace, and who, by direct relation to Christ, seeks to put himself into right relations with all men. He wished to be a Christian man among Christian men, and the ideal state was to be the commonwealth of Christian manhood. This is well; yet it is not the whole of the matter.

We can see pretty satisfactorily what attractions the invitation to the University of Heidelberg had for him, and why, in September 1887, he removed to that place. The work there was hard, for he was to be at once professor of theology and director of the new seminary for preachers; but he evidently liked the literary and religious atmosphere then in that community, which seemed more desirous to rise into the new freedom and culture of Christendom than to harden in an old routine. He had a great deal to do to bring up the department of theology to its proper level. The number of the theological students, notwithstanding the great fame of his colleagues in instruction, had dwindled to fourteen and in the summer of 1888 the new seminary of preachers, which looked to him for direction, was to be started. Yet with all these burdens for him, Heidelberg was full of attractions; and when overwhelmed by excessive cares, he left it awhile for Bonn,

he returned to it with delight, as to his true home and last resting-place. We can understand something of the secret of this attraction. He was glad to return to his own Alma Mater, as every scholar is, and he was eminently a college man, with far more of the spirit of the classmate and genial companion than of the clergyman or the professional man in his disposition. Moreover, as we have hinted, Heidelberg was friendly to his school of thought, and before he accepted the invitation, he was assured by the minister of state, Winter, that he need not be afraid that the heresies of his book, which had been sent for inspection in advance of publication, would create any alarm. The situation, too, on the banks of the Neckar, so near its confluence with the Rhine, and in the midst of a region so charming in nature, scenery, and historical associations, could not but be pleasing to him. The position, besides, was favorable in its intellectual suggestions for a mind so comprehensive and progressive as his. The Grand Duchy of Baden, to which the ancient city of Heidelberg was annexed in 1802, bordered on Germany, France, and Switzerland, and therefore, added to its German birthright a cosmopolitan outlook, whilst the peculiar combination of Catholic and Protestant elements in its population, the co-existence of a Roman Catholic archbishop at Freiburg, and a Protestant prelate at Carlsruhe, gave him opportunity for developing his views of the future reunion of Christendom. That little state, of less than a million and a half of souls, with his large sense of fellowship with Germany and the whole world, was the home for him, and his peculiar mind seemed, like the choicest vines, to ripen its precious fruit in that soil and that exposure to the sunshine and the dew.

We are able to trace the course of Rothe's thoughts during his first term of service at Heidelberg (1837-1849), and these twelve years seem to have matured his convictions and to have brought out his most characteristic views. His university sermons show the progress of his religious thought and experience; and, as a whole, they go more into the nature of Christianity, and make less of church seasons and

institutions, and rest more upon personal trust in Christ, with bolder and more analytic treatment of the various subjects. During this period his great work on Theological Ethics was produced, and came in part as the necessary sequel to his "Anfänge," and in part from the requirement of his office as Professor of theology. The first two volumes (pp. xiv, 430, and 485) were published in 1845, the third and last volume (pp. vi, 1125) in 1848. For many years it was almost impossible for the few American scholars who had heard of the fame of this work to get hold of a copy, and it was for a time out of print. In 1867 the author began the publication of the second and revised edition, and sent forth two volumes under his own name (pp. xxiv, 552, and 494), and after his death the three other volumes were edited by Professor Holtzman (vols. iii. and iv., 1870, pp. xv, 526 and 1, 399; vol. v., 1871, pp. vii, 543). Of this second edition, three volumes were fully prepared for the press by his own hand, and the last two volumes were edited from his various manuscripts by Holtzman. This edition has about five hundred pages more than the first, but the additions appear to be mostly in the earlier portions, and to have had all the advantage of the author's careful personal revision. Add to this work his "Zur Dogmatik" (Gotha, 1863, pp. vi, 356), his "Dogmatik," edited by Schenkel, in two parts (Heidelberg, 1870, pp. x, 315, and viii, 352), and "Die Stille Stunden," edited by Friedrich Nippold (Wittenberg, 1872, pp. x, 378), and we have the most important materials for estimating the extent and value of his literary life. We can do no better service now than to try to present directly the leading ideas of his great work upon ethics, and treat incidently of his other books.

Before entering upon this task we must not wholly set aside his personal history, although we can consider it now only as the thread upon which his pearls of thought were strung. During his twelve first years at Heidelberg, he had many disappointments from his own serious illness, the frequent sickness of his wife, the death of his father, and of

many cherished friends. The work of two offices then was evidently too much for him, and this seems to have been the principal reason for his removal to the University of Bonn in 1849, and his stay there five years. There has been a great deal of discussion as to the usefulness of Rothe during this interval ; but there is no reason for looking upon this period of his life as in any respect a failure, although he evidently was never fully at home in those Rhine provinces. He was earnest and faithful as university preacher and as professor, and Dr. Winckel's hearty letter upon this subject is but one of many documents cited by Nippold in proof of Rothe's great efficiency at this post. He liked his college associates in the main, and with some of them he had intimate fellowship, especially with Dorner, whose going away was a sad trial to him in 1852. Yet he felt himself out of place, and the rising strifes in politics and religion made him less at ease as the years went on. He cared nothing for the old controversies of the sixteenth century, and the revival of the disputes between Lutherans and Calvinists, and even between Protestants and Catholics, seemed to him as absurd as the masquerades of the nursery, in which children put on the old-fashioned clothes of their fathers and forefathers. He did not like the constant wire-pulling for party and sectarian purposes, and the attempt of the extreme theologians to bring stringent dogmatic tests to bear upon thought and fellowship was to him very offensive. The use of what he calls Prussianism, or an excessive disposition to make Prussia the main thing, and to lose the grand Germanic heart and nationality in a narrow and exalting provincial pride and policy, was very offensive to him. He went so far even as to say, that German union could never come from Prussia, and he probably was right in his estimate of the Prussians of that day. Moreover, he longed for the freer atmosphere and the more ideal life of Southern Germany, and he had enough of the utilitarian, dogmatic, spirit of the Rhenish provinces of that day, to move him to yearn for a more congenial sphere.

He returned to Heidelberg in 1854 to take the place of

Ullmann in the university, who had accepted the office of Protestant prelate at Carlsruhe, which Rothe had declined. He was now in his fifty-fifth year, and, of course, in the maturity of his powers and his experience. His delicate health gave him little assurance of long life, and probably few of his friends anticipated that he still had fourteen years of activity and usefulness before him. This period presents itself in two signally contrasted portions — seven years of comparative retirement followed by seven years of public activity, with not a little excitement. It is not strange that he was charged with inconsistency, and that the theosophic hermit of 1854–1861 seemed to throw off his consistency of character in becoming the man of affairs, the statesman, and the reformer, in 1861–1867. But we need not go far now to enter into any questions of psychology in order to understand the change. The fact is, that his life for years had been one of virtual martyrdom, and the illness of his wife had, during his residence at Bonn, greatly troubled his tranquillity and kept him from society and public life. Her sickness became so severe, and her nervous system was so utterly shattered at Heidelberg, that his intense solicitude and constant watchfulness secluded him from the world, with no time or heart for anything beyond his home and his daily tasks. The death of his suffering wife in 1861 changed his whole career, and left him free to follow the turn of his mind, and to give his rich learning, his original intellect, his fervent faith, and humanity to the community in which he lived, and to the age in which he was called to be a leader. Nippold calls the last seven years of his life the time of harvest; such indeed it was.

We have no space to give to the condition of things in the state and church of Baden, and to the particulars of Rothe's course as a theologian, a preacher, and a councillor of the realm. The whole interest of the closing years of his life turns upon his personal convictions, and his personal relation to the great question of his day — the relation of Christian faith to modern culture. He evidently retained to the last

his positive evangelical belief, and had less and less love for ecclesiastical polity. He expressed, years before, when he resolved to come back to Heidelberg, in a letter to Umbreit, the whole spirit of his subsequent life, when he said that he would come purely as a Christian layman. He was appointed, by the Grand Duke, a member of the upper church council in 1861, and in 1863 he was called to a seat in the first chamber of state. He still continued to preach on especial occasions, and he kept up his labors as professor to the last year of his life, giving from twelve to fifteen hours a week to his lectures. He preached for the last time at Heidelberg, at Easter in 1865, and we have the sermon in full in the second volume of Schenkel's collection, where we find only one sermon of a later date, and given at the Baden anniversary of the Gustavus Adolphus Union, September 12th, 1866. Achelis, who is not a wholly devoted admirer of Rothe, gives us a very interesting, and pathetic account of that last sermon in the university church, of the crowded assembly, the intense attention of the people, the preacher's great simplicity and fervor, and the unmistakable impression of his words. "What had been heard a hundred times, without much thought about it, was brought by Rothe's preaching directly home to the spiritual perception, and it put to shame every empty phrase in spiritual things. What it means to have a Saviour, what it means to be reconciled with God, what it means to believe in the living Christ, and the like, all this came before our souls so powerfully, so overwhelmingly, and so blessedly, that many a vow of fidelity to Jesus went up to heaven from hearts deeply moved during his sermon."

Probably the most important act of his closing years was his speech at the first session of the Protestant Union at Eisenach, June 7, 1865. Nippold does not give us this speech, but on turning to the Leipsic Illustrated Calendar, where we saw an account of it at the time, we find Rothe's mild, earnest face looking out upon us from one page, and on another page an abstract of his speech, with the editor's remark, that what the pope's encyclical with the syllabus was for ultramontaniam

the year before (1864), that is Rothe's speech for liberal Christianity—for liberal Protestantism now. He maintained that the church must now not seek to be a clergy church, but a congregation church; not a hierarchy, but a people's fellowship, and that the time had come for a union between Christian faith and modern culture. He was especially earnest in his conviction that each needed the other, and that modern culture was a very poor dependence, unless it added to its intelligence and refinement the pure ethical principle and positive faith of the living Christ. Modern culture, he declared, has begun to feel that what it has most at heart is not literary and aesthetic interests for their own sakes, nor even political interests in the old sense, but rather moral aims. It has begun to see further, that moral aims only in religious ideas have their sufficient foundation. Yes, that even modern culture itself is only an effect of Christianity, and hence is essentially Christian. Therefore has it, in part at least, again an eye and heart for Christianity, and also the church, as the oldest and most conspicuous organ of Christianity, is once more an object of attention and recognition.

Think as we may of the merits of this Protestant union, or of the wisdom of Rothe, supernaturalist and evangelical as he was, mixing himself up with that medley of devotees and free-thinkers, there can be no doubt that deep and honest conviction led him there, and that his presence had a power that has not yet ceased to be felt in Germany and, in fact, throughout Christendom. The union of Protestant thinkers of all shades of opinion must come, and has come; and here, in America, every year is bringing all earnest Christian thinkers together, and if no formal organization unites them, they are finding each other out in the press and in public opinion. The pope has thrown down the gauntlet, and Protestant Christendom has taken it up in a very serious and telling way. No Christian man of any degree of intelligence or common sense can remember Rothe's stand for faith and freedom at Eisenach in 1865, the year after the encyclical

and the syllabus, and think of what has happened in Italy, France, and Germany since that day, without a strong fellow-feeling with that little champion of the human mind, and a decided conviction that he struck hard at the gigantic old oppression with weapons as simple, and heart and hand as true, as were those of the shepherd boy who brought Goliath of Gath to the ground. The world moves; and it is too late in the day to make war upon the human mind, either upon its reason, its conscience, or its will. Rothe began the last year of his life, 1867, apparently in good health and spirits. In the freshness and variety of his labors, the last term of his academic service need not shrink from comparison with any previous one, and he was probably too busy at this time to carry on his usual copious correspondence. Nor was he allowed to have another vacation with leisure for letter writing, since his death was almost simultaneous with the close of the term. The particulars of his death have been fully stated in several forms and need now no minute description. It is only necessary to recall the fact, that he suffered much pain, and probably from an unskilful surgical operation, and that he died in saintly faith and charity, asking his friends to say no harsh word regarding any of his opponents. He said to his friend Zittel, "Say to all friends, to all who take any interest in me, that I die in the faith in which I have lived, and that this faith within me in nothing wavers, but only becomes ever firmer and deeper." As he was passing away, nature herself seemed to keep tender watch over her cherished interpreter, and the Eternal Spirit breathed peace into his body and soul. He slept quietly, without any sign of pain upon his face. A soft, evening breeze passed over the wooded mountains, the last light of day glimmered through the dew upon the trees, and the heavens were without a cloud. The life of the world around was as restless as ever, and the trains of cars whirled by with the shrill whistle of double locomotives, whilst in the street carriages passed on one after another. In the dying man's room there was everything to please the taste and

rest the eye with beauty and order. Everywhere harmony, everywhere proofs of the finest aesthetic sense. The pictures, books, even the writing-table and secretary, all bore their silent witness to the loveliness of the life now passing away.

There is great comfort in the assurance that to Rothe the immortal life was a present reality, and an earthly as well as heavenly fact, to an extent never surpassed, if equalled, among the gifted souls of our day. He entered into his Master's promise "he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." His spirit, conscious of eternal life, has never ceased to live and breathe among his friends on earth, as well as among the saints in heaven. His works are all alive with himself, and this charming, loving, truthful, biography gives the private, affectionate side of a life that had already spoken and written its universal, philosophical, historical, and devotional convictions into books that have become part of the culture of our time and the heritage of our race. This biography gives us the man; and the ethics, the dogmatics, the sermons, and the Still Hours give us the moralist, the theologian, the preacher, and the sage. We can only give an outline of his leading ideas, that may be instructive to readers not familiar with his works, and may not be an unwelcome remembrance to scholars who have studied them for years.

We begin with his Theological Ethics, and take the liberty to work into our sketch our impressions of the thought and spirit of the man, as expressed in his other productions. He starts with the principle that there are two ways of thinking, which differ in their origin and nature; the empirical reflective, and the speculative thought. The empirical reflective thought takes its motive from the surrounding material world, wherefore it is called the *a posteriori* and analytic thought; the speculative thinking takes its motive from that which we bring to the examination of the external world, from that in which we live and move and have our being, and therefore it is called the *a priori* and synthetic thought. For the correctness or the incorrectness of speculative thinking, the empirical reflective thinking has to take the proof and con-

trol, so that we must submit our speculations to the test of experience in all its just bearings. Speculative thinking takes its departure from the immediate fact of personal consciousness, and in the pious or religious thinker, self-consciousness is at the same time the consciousness of God, both in one; the speculative thinking proceeding from self-consciousness is philosophy; the speculative thinking proceeding from the fact of the consciousness of God is theosophy. In any one point whatever, these must of necessity meet together.

Piety, of course, does not depend upon theological speculation, but it is a matter of religious feeling, with its evidence in itself. Yet piety needs the light of religious thought in order to carry the true spirit into the understanding and the will; whilst, on the other hand, religious thinking needs the confirmation of pious feeling. The most elementary, immediate, and reasonable idea of God is of the simple, absolute being; or of the absolute, the unconditioned, the self-existent, the self-sufficing; and since a plurality of the unconditioned is unthinkable, then God is one. The absolute being is not mingled with any relative, non-absolute, temporal, finite contingent being. Therefore, God must be thought of as the eternal. He must be thought of as in substance and form without defect, as containing within himself all determinations of form, that is as the perfect being. Because that which answers to its true and just idea and measure is good, so the absolute being, because it answers to the idea of absolute being in an absolute way, is good; that is to say, God is good.

As we cannot think without applying the principle or category of ground and consequence, we cannot think of the absolute being except as caused, and as having the cause in itself; or as self-existent or self-determined. In our devotional contemplation of God, we have unquestionably the assurance of his incomprehensibility, and this assurance is confirmed by our reasonable thought concerning him. We must be willing to regard him in this sense as without predicate, as pure potency; and to be content to apply to this idea

of the hidden God the most indefinite and appropriate of names and to call him the divine essence, like *το θεον, το θεως θεον*, godhead, deity. Piety demands this negative conception of God, because it is essential to piety that the idea of God should transcend all positive thought, or pass all understanding. Prior to any conception or definition of personality, we have this idea of absolute being, and within it we have the sum and substance of all possible realities. Real possibility is nothing else than power, potency. God is the absolute potency, and as such, the absolute power cannot be thought as resting; it must actualize itself. In actualizing itself, the absolute power, which is God, is the oneness of becoming and being, or of existence and substance; the oneness of becoming and being is life; God is life. The idea of a course of time does not come in here, but is to be excluded. The priority of the mode of the being of God as pure potency before the mode of the life, or the self-generating process of God is purely logical.

The latent possibility in the purely absolute being of God is set forth in the self-generating process of God, as possibility, as somewhat, that is, thought. Then this which is set forth or thought as something possible in the absolute being, is made real in the narrower sense of the term (not merely logically or subjectively); it is set forth so that it has existence. The absolute unity of thought and existence, of the ideal and real, is spirit. Since the divine substance from its pure potentiality actualizes itself, the result is the absolute spirit. The actual being of God, therefore, is his spirit-being; God is in act the absolute spirit. Here we hit the difficulty of most scientific thinkers who do not accept this idea of spirit because it cannot be presented in material form, and because spirit is immaterial. With most persons thought ends where conception, or presentation in material forms, fails, whilst the truth is, that "the one great and distinguishing foundation of thought is the recognition, that things in the same degree in which they are material are not real, not actual; that the more visible, the more tangible they are, so far they are the

more unreal. In the idea of spirit here stated lies the root of my realism. It is the idea of spirit from which idealism and realism are distinguished. To this latter is spirit, and, in general, the true, the essential being, not mere thought or thinking, but at the same time substantially existence. To the former, on the contrary, true being is only thought and thinking."<sup>1</sup>

Our author carries out his subtle processes of reasoning in this way, and applies his elementary principles of pure being to the nature of God and the origin and constitution of the universe and of mankind, in the remarkable Introduction to his Ethics, which fills two hundred and four pages of the first volume of his first edition, and is expanded into four hundred and seven pages of his second edition. It is hard reading, yet it well rewards the most careful study; and the more we study it, the more fully are we convinced that the author is not playing with his own fancies or dreams, or with the reader's patience, but that he wrote as he was inwardly moved by the force of great and imperative convictions. He knows very well that he is dull, and unintelligible to many worthy and intelligent persons, who cannot make head or tail of his system, but he says that he is no more responsible for making his speculative theosophy than Beethoven was responsible for his symphonies. The symphonies were not made, but they grew, or were born. So it was with his theosophic system; and, humble and truthful, sensitively alive to all pretension, and shrinking from all obtrusion of himself, he repeatedly makes this statement, and insists that he wrote from necessary convictions and from irresistible impressions. In fact, he was, in the true sense of the word, a seer, and he belongs to the peculiar and memorable class of thinkers of modern times who are headed by Jacob Boehme, whom he resembled, not indeed in his visions of the spiritual world, but in his intuitions of spiritual truth. He is very modest in his claims; yet it is impossible to resist the impression that he takes his principles more from what

<sup>1</sup> Rothe's Theol. Ethik. (2d edition), sec. 29.

he regards as insight than from reasoning, and that what he calls speculative theology is not arbitrary theorizing, or mere argumentation, but intuition. He derives speculation not from *speculum*, a mirror, but from *specula*, a watch-tower; and so he aims not to see things in the mirror of his own notions or fancies, but from the watch-tower of clear and broad observation. He claims to be thoroughly a realist, and quite as much so in his thoughts of God as in his views of nature, life, and divine revelation. This being so, whether we agree with him in his ideas or not, we cannot help giving a certain respect to his studies and conclusions. An earnest and devout thinker, with such learning and sagacity, cannot be regarded lightly; and the regard for him deepens when we remember, as we must, that there are so many diversities of gifts, and that God is always raising up men with peculiar spiritual powers to help our frail and erring race by their vision and faculty divine. It does not do for the generation that is so eager to run wild at the marvellous quavers of a new soprano singer, or at the speed of a new race-horse, to take it for granted that there is to be nothing new in spiritual gifts, and that religion and religious men are stereotyped dulness, while all nature and life are full of spirit and movement. With entire readiness to take Rothe's views for what they are intrinsically worth, and not to turn away from him as a thinker and a man on account of his peculiar traits, even if they sometimes amount to eccentricities, we can take an impartial look, if it be only a passing glance, at his ideas of God and creation.

He affirms that the highest ontological antithesis is not between being and thinking, but between being as thought of, or as ideal, and being as set forth, or as existing or real. Accordingly, we recognize in God as the Absolute Spirit two formal determinations — the thinking determination, which has its causality in consciousness, and the positive determination, or activity. In its perfection thought is reason, and activity is free-will. The unity of the two as the absolute reason and the absolute will is the absolute ego or the absolute

personality. What is in (Gehalt) the divine being becomes by the divine personality what is for it the absolute, spiritual, organic nature, the divine nature, the means and instrument of its absolute efficiency. This divine nature is what it is by inward development; but its own inward becoming in contrast with that which is merely made from without. With theosophists, not excepting that original Catholic thinker, Baader, the "nature of God" has become a current expression. "As the absolute unity of the divine personality and the divine nature, God is the absolute person; since the unity of the personality (the ego) and of a nature belonging to it constitutes the person." Here three ideas are to be distinguished — personality is the unity of the reason and the will; person is the concrete unity of the personality and of a nature belonging to it; personalness is the disposition to be a person. Only as person is the absolute spirit thinkable. As the absolute spiritual person is God, the revealing, outspoken, nameable God, the Logos. Thus we have a certain Trinity in God, as the absolute potency, the hidden God, the divine nature and the divine personality — a Trinity of modes, a Trinity not of empty abstractions, but each of them, in Rothe's judgment, a true, real being of God, and all uniting in one absolute person. He says that he can in strict truth call himself a Trinitarian, but that he does not care to do so, because he does not hold the old church doctrine upon that subject, and he cannot regard the Athanasian Creed as anything less than tritheism. His dogmatics contain a full description of this subject, with a criticism of modern German theologians and their definitions, which is more acute than satisfactory, especially in comparison with his old friend Dorner's luminous statement of the divine nature and manifestations.

Greater interest than ever before now attaches to Rethe's views of the origin of the universe, and what seemed in 1845 and 1848 visionary speculation, will be read attentively from its bearing upon the recent theories of evolution. God from his own essential being is moved to create the universe. As

pure potency, indeed, he is transcendent, or above the world, but as divine person he is immanent in the world. The meaning of immanent is that the creature is by the divine indwelling to be divinized, or made like God, but not deified, or made identical with God. Because he is love he must make the universe. Love is a forth-going attribute in the immanent being of God, and demands the existence of a world. God does not put forth his absolute causality, or make himself in the universe; but his creative work is only to be regarded as his relative or conditioned act. He brings forth the world, therefore, as but primitive, unfinished, and gradually to be perfected. "Had God been able and willing to produce nothing better than what is actually now within our experience, he never would have begun to create." He begins with creating the material world, and only gives the necessary conditions for the coming of the personal, creaturely spirit; since spirit, he affirms, must grow or exist under moral conditions, or by self-determination. As spirits thus mature their proper life, God has his habitation with them, and his immanence has its blessed consummation in the world of perfected personal spirits. He is cosmically in the world of angels or of perfected spirits. Angels are pure spirits, immaterial, yet persons, and therefore uniting a personality (ego) and a spiritual organism (ensouled body) belonging to it; finite in time and space, but as pure spiritual substance not limited in their movements by time and space, and partaking of the nature of God. "As already perfect spiritual creatures the angels stand above man in his present imperfect state; in himself, however, and regarded in his perfection, man stands above the not earthly angels who preceded him, as a later step of creation, which had them for its pre-requisite. Since heaven is a created existence and consequently finite, it is substantially an existence in space, and therefore there is a complex of heavens."<sup>1</sup> Rothe maintains that God is always Creator, and that, although he finishes the creature, he never finishes creation. His creative work must be

<sup>1</sup> Ethik, Sect. 48.

without beginning, and although the universe had a beginning, its creation, by successive acts of God, was in time and space, and time and space had no beginning, but they originated without beginning in God. This is paradoxical language, but Rothe apparently insists upon the fact of the existence of time and space as from God, yet without beginning, or as conditioned by him without beginning. Very much as the theologians have affirmed the generation of the Logos without beginning. Of course, time and space are not declared by Rothe to be *generated* without beginning, and therefore divine; but they are creatures without beginning, and therefore are forever not God. The attributes of God in his relation to creation and the world are the transient attributes; that is, infinity and immensity, goodness, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence. His providence, or government of the world, is his continual creative activity directed towards the still incomplete world. The work of preservation cannot be distinguished from the creation and government of the world, in which it is included; yet what the pious sense demands, is the referring of our own existence to the divine causality, and therefore the preservation of the world is comprehended within the divine providence. So, too, the development of the world, in all its steps, elements, and persons, is to be connected inseparably with the divine plan. To believe less than this would be to exclude the omniscience and omnipotence of God, and to acknowledge fate and chance in their stead. To believe more, would deny the freedom of the creature and all choice between alternatives.

Rothe regards the primitive creature, pure matter, as so little to be confounded with mass or stuff, or with the palpable or perceptible, that it is not conceivable in any formal way, although clear to the thought. It is the conditioned or the non-self-existent, the non-absolute, without the predicates that belong to God. Space, the empty forms of finite things, and time, the empty form of finite existence, are to be regarded as belonging in their unity to pure matter. All creation by God is in time and space successively, and the origin of each

successive creature is conditioned by the preceding step, but it is caused entirely by God in continued creation. Thus the idea of the inherent power of evolution in nature and spontaneous generation is excluded. "Pure matter is differentiated by God creatively, so that both determinations comprised together in pure indifference (undistinguishableness), time and space are drawn to each other, and thereby mutually determined by each other, and thus brought together in inward unity. Space determined by time is extension; space reaching out in atoms divided from each other — time determined by space — is motion. These two are immediately reunited together, and therefore in the way of mere indifference, and this their synthesis is the aether."

Atoms are points of space separated from each other without any continuity or relation. They are indivisible, because they are not anything material, but mere points of space. They are merely mathematical points, something in space without any dimensions. The aether is the immediate and uncombined unity (indifference) of extension and motion, an infinite oscillation of the infinite multiplicity of atoms found in absolute unrest. Unrest is motion in the not material (*stofflich*), abstract, empty form of existence, motion without determination or tendency. Aether and atoms are imponderable and indemonstrable. Only the aether atoms are actual atoms, and the corporate atoms, or those that are found in actual substances, are molecules. "The aether is again differentiated by God, and the result of the new determination of extension by motion is attraction and repulsion — the motion determined by extension is gravitation. These two are again brought together or integrated by God, and their synthesis is the mechanical, that is, astronomical, nature, the world-mechanism or the structure of the universe."

Mechanical nature is again differentiated by God, and we have form, repulsion, and attraction on one side, and gravity on the other — atoms drawn towards each other and mutually determined by each other. Repulsion and attraction are determined by gravity; that is, atoms moved by gravity, become

matter (*stoff*); gravitation determined by repulsion and attraction is force. These are integrated by God and the result is elementary or chemical nature. First from this step of creation the worlds proper, or the spheres of creation, begin. For them all the aeons (space and time), the aether, and the world-mechanism form the necessary foundation, indeed, the common ground."

The creative process of differentiation and integration continues, and the result is successively the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms in all their unities and varieties. Man comes last in the succession. The organs of consciousness and activity are brought together in the human body. The human soul is their bearer, as the causality which produces them as its subject. The soul is the true personality (*ego*). The idea of the *ego* is the unity of consciousness and activity, as its own; that is, the unity of self-consciousness and self-activity. This unity is to be carried out, not, as in earlier stages, by the direct creative power of God, but by the human soul itself, so that this reconciliation can only gradually come to pass, and the consciousness and the activity be elevated to the reason and moral freedom of the true personal life. Here opens the practical problem of morality, the evolution of the true wisdom and virtue by the creature's self-determination, the development of his proper, personal being in the earthly relations in which he is placed. "God, in this turning point of the process of creation, takes the personal creature for a co-working causality in this effort, and puts its prosecution into his own hand." "The good (the absolute, real being), as creaturely, is thinkable only as moral; that is, only as, on the one hand, freely ordained by God, but, on the other hand, as come also by self. Since an actually real being is only a being *causa sui*. The moral good is that which answers to its own idea by power of its own self-determination."

Rothe's system of ethics starts from this definition of man as the crown of creation, and as capable of knowing and loving the supreme good, and develops itself in three parts

thus: 1. Construction of a doctrine of the moral, as that which is grounded in the self-determination of man, carried out in its reality and fulness, or the doctrine of the moral good; 2. Construction of a doctrine of the moral power suited to the solution of the moral problem, or the doctrine of virtue; 3. Construction of the doctrine of the specific form of moral production for the solution of the moral problem, or the doctrine of duty. These three doctrines have essentially the same ground, and complete each other by their different points of view. This general division of the subject is taken essentially from Schleiermacher, yet we may see glimpses of it more or less distinctly in the old Greek moralists Plato and Aristotle.

In setting forth what is the morally good, we are not to be deterred from presenting the true ideal by the fact of existing sin, which the Christian consciousness recognizes as standing in the way of this ideal. The moral process begins with the principle of moral agency, or self-determination in its relation, on the one hand, to nature (including man), and, on the other hand, to God. Thus we have what is usually called severally the *moral* and the *religious* relation; but what Rothe regards as the true morality, or ethics, comprehends both relations. Our language does not allow us words to express the contrast presented in the German language by *das sittliche* and *das moralische*, and with us the same word "moral" is used in the two senses, and sometimes expresses what is called mere morality, or worldly decorum or prudence, and again it expresses the high principle that rests in the supreme good. He regards that as the true morality that establishes true relations between nature and God, and carries into natural and human interests loyalty to the supreme good. He uses the word "ethical" for the "moral" in this comprehensive sense.

Even in our material organization we are to keep the true moral purpose, and never allow mere nature to get the better of our proper personality. In our diet and our social habits we must not reverse the order of creation, but remember that

God has lifted us up from the sphere of matter, and given us moral sense and freedom. Even when we abdicate our prerogative of personality we must not yield our moral principle, but simply accept the fact of natural law in reason and conscience as in sleep, which is a sinking back into the process of vegetation, and drawing, like the plant, elements from universal material nature. When the human personality thus wisely and rightfully determines material nature, the result is the morally good, and there comes to pass a unity of the ideal human personality, and of a real material nature; and since the unity of the ideal and the real is spirit, so the creaturely spirit is generated, in whose hand is placed the prosecution of the creative process of God. This work is essential to the true immortality of man; for the immortal element of man is not the natural soul as such, but the person, and there must be true personal life in order to constitute immortality. In this respect Rothe comes very near, if he does not reach, the doctrine that, a purely animal life in man is necessarily mortal, and has no claim to the hope of the Christian in any way.

The moral process as religious brings man into direct relation with God, and calls him to that piety whose essence is the real communion of man with God. This piety is not brought by irresistible agency, and it is no magical rapture that surrenders moral agency, but the result of man's free and faithful obedience to God. In the kingdom of God, as in the earthly kingdom, the true subjection is perfect freedom; and the truly moral man serves God freely in submitting his reason and his will to the truth and power of God in consciousness and activity. True piety, as Christian, has its essential effectiveness in morality, and of no other school of piety given in history can this be said. Thus man becomes the true personality, and he rises above the mere individuality which designates each member of the family of brutes from the others. The beast has feeling, sense, impulse, and force; but man as a moral being in his proper personality has shame, moral sense, mercy or moral impulse, free-will, and, when

religion possesses him, his conscience adds to these four qualities, four others, religious feeling, religious sense, religious impulse, and religious power. Following his conscience he stands in true relations with the outward world, alike in his receptivity and his spontaneity, or his openness to impressions from nature and society, and in his exercise of his faculties upon them.

Then the sphere of moral activity opens upon us alike as knowing or exerting the intellectual powers, and as forming or using the faculty of will. As we consider this twofold moral function in individual and universal relations, we are led to recognize the more susceptible and the more intellectual functions of the mind, and the more receptive and the more vigorous movements of the will. True morality, perfect culture, unites the two former exercises of the mind in the idea that comprehends beauty and truth. It unites also the two spheres of the will, the receptive and the productive, into the original, which is the counterpart of the idea, to which grace and utility, in their penetration and unity, belong in their peculiar way. Religious morality illustrates the same phases, and appears as individual and universal alike in its intellectual and its active aspects.

The moral good, of course, cannot be found and carried out except in an actual community which secures the union of individual and universal perceptions and purposes. The moral community secures the fellowship of art, of science, of society, and of public spirit. These fellowships are carried out in historical connections; and men mature their minds and hearts by living in families, tribes, and nations, and they all tend to the fellowship of religion, or to the church, which stands for the kingdom of God. In this divinely human society, morality has its consummation, and the true man becomes more a child of the great family of God and a brother of mankind.

In treating moral good in the concrete, Rothe enters into the great subjects of sin and salvation in the light of this elementary principle. In his view, sin is the abdication of the

true moral power and the abandonment of the supreme good for the senses and the world of nature. Salvation comes through Him who arrests this process of corruption, and by his own divinely human life offers divine grace to sinful men in such fulness as to regenerate his consciousness and will, and place him in communion with God and his kingdom. He holds strong views of the supernatural origin and character of Christianity; presents Christ as the Son of God by the miracle of his birth, as well as by his life of obedience; and regards the Christian ages as the continual evolution of the plan of creation. In his way, he is a Millenarian, and connects the consummation of the divine kingdom with great changes in the natural universe, with much emphasis upon the idea that each soul belongs to the race, and all true souls enter as a whole into the new heaven which is to transfigure our earth. With all his thorough supernaturalism, he does not depart for a moment from his ethical strictness, but he ascribes even to the supernatural Christ the highest moral process, and with his divine nature he works out obediently the humanizing of God and the divinizing of man.

We can only say of the two other parts of Rothe's Ethics, the Tugendlehre and the Pflichtenlehre, that they carry out the cardinal principles of his system—all virtue consisting in receiving the supreme good genially and wisely, and in acting it out with originality and strength; all duty being the law of life, which is to be followed in accordance with moral good, and in service of virtue with regard to ourselves, our fellowmen, and to God. Throughout the whole work, of more than twenty-five hundred pages, the same philosophy and faith prevail, and everywhere the Ethics is theological or rooted in divine truth and love, and the theology is ethical or calling for thoughtfulness and obedience.

Rothe's dogmatics, with all their wealth of learning and illustration, find their characteristic principle in his Ethics, and his views of the consciousness of sin and the consciousness of grace are essentially a development of his previous work. As we have hinted before, all that he has written bears the

mark of the same same original thought and character. He is unique as a theologian and as a man, always the same severe thinker, the same exacting moralist, and the same evangelical believer. To say precisely where his thought differs from that of his predecessors or his associates, in sacred studies, would require more critical examination and elaborate comparison than we can at present give; yet there need be little hesitation in pointing out the grounds upon which his peculiar claims to honor rest.

There can be no doubt that he deserves the first place in modern literature among the reconcilers of morality with faith. He follows, indeed, in the path opened by Schleiermacher; but he differs signally from him in having a more positive Christian faith, in urging more profoundly and persistently his peculiar idea of moral good, in bringing the sense of duty into harmony with the sense of dependence, and in his broad and stringent application of ethics to the whole round of life. The spirit of his thinking illustrates, as no other man's has done, the remarkable aphorism in the preface to his fourth volume: "Christian ethics is, in the peculiar sense of the word, a history, statistic and politic, of the kingdom of God. By means of character the inward kingdom of God is brought out." Again he says, "Christian ethics presupposes thought, not the Christian dogmatic, but Christian faith." Again; "The divine life—its law must be in the world-morality; that is, the deliverance from the yoke of the law, to the freedom of morality, the perfect law of freedom. This is done by the using of faith in an individuality more universal or special." Again; "The relation of conscience to the law and word of God is also a main point in Christian ethics—especially the history of the development of conscience in the faithful, through the word, the spirit, and the knowledge of God,—but not merely in the general way so often pointed out." Such expressions illustrate the inestimable value of Rothe's labors, and show his power to meet the great religious need of the better class of free thinkers, by reconciling their sense of duty with the claims of faith, and

the dignity of virtue with the need of divine grace. If Marcus Aurelius could have studied Christianity under as wise a teacher, he might have found in this devout Christian a deeper moralist than his master Zeno, and perhaps anticipated Constantine as defender of the faith, instead of being its bitter persecutor.

We need not carry out our summing up of Rothe's peculiar merits, nor show in detail his generous recognition of the claims of our modern culture, our art, our science, our government and civilization, within the kingdom of God and Christ. He has his limitations and infirmities, and he is sometimes eccentric in his thinking as in his way of life, somewhat of a hermit in his theosophic retirement, and unmindful of the value of institutions and usages that are essential to mankind. But before we criticise his failings, we must appreciate his virtues, and allow that he may have seemed strange to the mind of our time, because this mind is estranged from God. With his earnest study, his close observation, his keen logic, his profound insight, his lowly piety, his gentle and brave humanity, he gave himself without reserve to meditation upon God and the supreme good; and his life, which moves within the limits of our century, and is a widening and rising power, is a noble proof that this nineteenth century has not ceased to belong to the ages of faith and of love. Richard Rothe deserved the name of sage and hero and saint.