thought or being, or both, and then from this primary and necessary datum evolves syllogistically or dialectically a whole philosophy, which includes a whole theology. Such speculation may be safely pronounced futile and delusive. It can never reasonably vindicate its choice of a starting- point, for the absolute first of existence and thought can only be that to which the worlds of fact and experience, of matter and of mind, refer us as their ultimate explana­tion. It ascribes an extravagant power to mere formal thinking. It is only consistent with exclusive idealism and exclusive rationalism, both justly discredited species of philosophy. It makes theology wholly dependent on a philosophy which must be false, since pure reason cannot, as it assumes, spin out of its own essence or out of any single datum the whole system of truth.

There is, however, a theology which claims to be at once speculative and independent of philosophy. Such was the , theology which Rothe sought to elaborate in his *Theological Ethics.* In the “ Introduction ” to that work he has fully explained his method. It is, as there represented, the very same method with that of speculative philosophy, but it starts from a different point,—not from pure self-conscious­ness, but from the religious self-consciousness or God-con­sciousness. Its primary datum is, according to Rothe, as immediately certain as that of speculative philosophy, the pious man being just as directly sure of God as the natural man is of his own self. Out of this datum it must evolve all its conclusions by an inward logical necessity, and construct an entire theological system of such a nature that every single thought implicitly supposes the whole. Speculative theology thus conceived of needs but a single fact, the datum from which it starts, and that fact must be a self-evident one, given immediately in and by con­sciousness ; all the rest is a succession of inferences de­ductively obtained. The facts of religion presented in nature, history, and Scripture not only need not but ought not to be taken into account by it, although at the close of its labours its success must be tested by the con­formity or nonconformity of its results with those facts.

“This system of a priori thought,” says Rothe, “to be success­ful as a speculation, must be an absolutely corresponding and constant image of the reality; but the speculative process itself takes no thought whether there be such a reality existing, or how the ideas which it constructs are related to it ; but, without looking either to the right hand or to the left, it follows only the course of logical necessity, until it has accomplished the whole circle of its ideas, and constructs a complete system. Then first the specu­lative thinker looks out of himself, in order to compare the system of thought which he has independently constructed with the objective reality, and to assure himself of his correctness by such a comparison; but in so doing he is slipping out of the region of speculative into that of reflective thinking. The necessity of such a verification, indeed, he acknowledges unconditionally, but he dis­tinguishes clearly between the speculation itself and that reflective critical process by which alone such a verification can be realized. With reference to the empirical reality around him, he acknowledges that his speculation is incorrect if his system of thought is not there reproduced, but he still persists that he has to complete his speculative labour without any direct reference to it. He concludes rather, from a clear want of correspondency, that he has speculated incorrectly, and can look for his error in nothing else than in his departure from a strict adherence to the laws of logic. Forthwith, then, he destroys his laboriously constructed system; but if he again proceed to construct another, he must proceed in the very same manner as before, i.e., by looking solely into his own thoughts, as though there were no world around him.”

Rothe, it will be observed, cannot be charged with hav­ing made theology dependent on philosophy. He repre­sented theological speculation and philosophical speculation as starting from different data, as running parallel to each other, and so as throughout distinct. But this was to avoid one extreme by falling into another. It was virtu­ally to deny the unity of thought, and to assume an in­credible dualism in the universe of speculation. A theo­logy absolutely separated from philosophy must be even more unsatisfactory than one wholly dependent on it. Then, the method itself proceeds on assumptions unsup­ported by evidence, yet far from self-evident. It assumes, for instance, that a system of ideas generated *a priori* will be a counterpart of reality, although it is neither incon­ceivable nor improbable that the characteristics of real existence may be incapable of being determined by the mere logic of necessary thought. Reason should not thus be credited with the extraordinary power of comprehend­ing reality without requiring to apprehend and study it. Another assumption is, that a complete and self-consistent system can only be reached by an exclusively *a priori* procedure, whereas it is far more likely that such a system will only be attained by a combination of different pro­cesses. Again, the primary datum of theological specula­tion as understood by Rothe—the idea of God—is assumed to be immediately given and immediately certain. But the idea of God is not immediately given or immediately certain. The piety which chooses to affirm so is a piety capricious in its affirmations ; the speculation which starts from such a foundation starts from an assumption easily shown by psychology and history to be erroneous. Rothe went even farther astray. He represented not only the bare consciousness of God but the Christian, yea, the evangelical God-consciousness, as a simple and primary datum of consciousness. This was utterly arbitrary. It was to treat as an original apprehension what is indubit­ably an acquired experience. No *a priori* system—no properly deductive system—can be reasonably imagined to have such a starting-point. For these and other reasons, theological speculation of the kind advocated by Rothe may be rejected.

Still another species of theological speculation, however, has been attempted and commended,—one which seems more modest, and claims to be more distinctively Christian. It is the method advocated and exemplified in the *Schrift- beweis* of Von Hofmann. He, instead of starting like Rothe with the religious consciousness, chose to start from a real concrete fact, what he calls the Christianity of the Christian,—a Christianity which he supposes to have acquired in the Christian a separate standing of its own, in virtue of which, and independently even of Scripture, it is self-evident certain truth sustained and authenticated by the Spirit of God. From this fact or experience, expressed in its simplest and most general form, as a personal re­lationship or fellowship between God and man through Jesus Christ, Hofmann would deduce the whole theological system by a process of “ thinking within ” the central fact, so as logically to evolve from it its manifold wealth of contents, and would refrain on principle from looking out­wards, and taking into account the religious facts presented by history, experience, or Scripture. Now, in this system also, speculation is in excess. Such a speculative deduc­tion of facts from facts as is contended for is impossible. Facts are not so involved in one another that they can be evolved from one another by mere thinking, and still less so that from one fact a whole system of facts can be thus evolved. From a single bone, indeed, of an animal which he has never seen or heard of a naturalist may in thought correctly construct the whole skeleton, but not by think­ing within or from the one fact before him, but by making use of all the knowledge he has acquired of the structure of animals, of the relations of bones to bones. Dr Hofmann himself was quite unable to carry out the method he contended for. His so called speculative argu­ments are mere semblances of what they profess to be. Instead of the contents of his system being really “de­rived ” from the simplest expression of the fact of Chris­tianity, new propositions are constantly borrowed from the known contents of Christianity, and added from without