Besides mystical theology, Boehme was indebted to the writings of Paracelsus. This circumstance is not accidental, but points to an affinity in thought. The nature-philosophers of the Renaissance, such as Nicolaus Cusanus, Paracelsus, Cardan and others, curiously blend scientific ideas with speculative notions derived from scholastic theology, from Neoplatonism and even from the Kabbalah. Hence it is customary to speak of their theories as a mixture of theosophy and physics, or theo­sophy and chemistry, as the case may be. Boehme offers us a natural philosophy of the same sort. As Boehme is the typical theosophist, and as modern theosophy has nourished itself almost in every case upon the study of his works, his dominating conceptions supply us with the best illustration of the general trend of this mode of thought. His speculation turns, as has been said, upon the necessity of reconciling the existence and the might of evil with the existence of an all-embracing and all- powerful God, without falling into Manichaeanism on the one hand, or, on the other, into a naturalistic pantheism that denies the reality of the distinction between good and evil. He faces the difficulty boldly, and the eternal conflict between the two may be said to furnish him with the principle of his philosophy. It is in this connexion that he insists on the necessity of the Nay to the Yea, of the negative to the positive. Eckhart’s Godhead appears in Boehme as the abyss, the eternal nothing, the essenceless quiet (“ Ungrund ” and “ Stille ohne Wesen ” are two of Boehme’s phrases). But, if this were all, the Divine Being would remain an abyss dark even to itself. In God, however, as the condition of His manifestation, lies, according to Boehme, the “ eternal nature ” or the *mysterium magnum,* which is as anger to love, as darkness to light, and, in general, as the negative to the positive. This principle (which Boehme often calls the evil in God) illuminates both sides of the anti­thesis, and thus contains the possibility of their real existence. By the “ Qual ” or torture, as it were, of this diremption, the universe has qualitative existence, and is knowable. Even the three persons of the Trinity, though existing *idealiter* beforehand, attain reality only through this principle of nature in God, which is hence spoken of as their *matrix.* It forms also the matter, as it were, out of which the world is created; without the dark and fiery principle, we are told, there would be no creature. Hence God is sometimes spoken of as the father, and the eternal nature as the mother, of things. Creation (which is conceived as an eternal process) begins with the creation of the angels. The subsequent fall of Lucifer is explained as his surrender of himself to the principle of nature, instead of dwell­ing in the heart of God. He sought to make anger predominate over love; and he had his will, becoming prince of hell, the kingdom of God’s anger, which still remains, however, an in­tegral part of the Divine universe. It is useless to follow Boehme further, for his cosmogony is disfigured by a wild Paracelsian symbolism, and his constructive efforts in general are full of the uncouth straining of an untrained writer. In spite of these defects, his speculations have exercised a re­markable influence.

Schelling’s *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom* (1809) is almost entirely a reproduction of Boehme’s ideas, and forms, along with Baader’s writings, the best modern example of theosophical speculation. In his philosophy of identity Schelling (*q.v.*) had already defined the Absolute as pure indifference, or the identity of subject and object, but without advancing further into theogony. He now’ proceeded to distinguish three moments in God, the first of which is the pure indifference which, in a sense, precedes all existence—the primal basis or abyss, as he calls it, in agreement with Boehme. But, as there is nothing before or besides God, God must have the ground or cause of His existence in Himself. This is the second moment, called nature in God, distinguishable from God, but inseparable from Him. It is that in God which is not God Himself, it is the yearning of the eternal One to give birth to itself. This yearning is a dumb unintelligent longing, which moves like a heaving sea in obedience to some dark and in­definite law, and is powerless to fashion anything in permanence. But in correspondence to the first stirring of the Divine existence there awakes in God Himself an inner reflective perception, by means of which- -since no object is possible for it but God— God beholds Himself in His own image. In this, God is for the first time as it were realized, although as yet only within Him­self. This perception combines, as understanding, with the primal yearning, which becomes thereby free creative will, and works formatively in the originally lawless nature or ground. In this wise is created the world as we know it. In every natural existence there are, therefore, two principles to be distinguished—first, the dark principle, through which this is separated from God, and exists, as it were, in the mere ground; and, secondly, the Divine principle of understanding. The first is the particular will of the creature, the second is the universal will. In irrational creatures the particular will or greed of the individual is controlled by external forces, and thus used as an instrument of the universal. But in man the two principles are consciously present together, not, however, in inseparable union, as they are in God, but with the possibility of separation. This possibility of separation is the possibility of good and evil. In Boehme’s spirit, Schelling defended his idea of God as the only way of vindicating for God the con­sciousness which naturalism denies, and which ordinary theism emptily asserts. This theosophical transformation of Schelling’s doctrine was largely due to the influence of his contemporary Baader (*q.v.*). Baader distinguishes, in a manner which may be paralleled from Boehme, between an immanent or esoteric process of self-production in God, through which He issues from His unrevealed state, and the emanent, exoteric or real process, in which God overcomes and takes up into Himself the eternal “ nature ” or the principle of selfhood, and appears as a Trinity of persons. The creation of the world is still further to be distinguished from these two processes as an act of freedom or will; it cannot, therefore, be speculatively constructed, but must be historically accepted. Baader, who combined his theo­sophy with the doctrines of Roman Catholicism, has had many followers. Among thinkers on the same lines, but more or less independent, Molitor is perhaps the most important. Sweden­borg (*q.v.*) is usually reckoned among the theosophists, and some parts of his theory justify this inclusion; but his system as a whole has little in common with those speculative constructions of the Divine nature which form the essence of theosophy, as strictly understood.

Besides the books mentioned under Mysticism, and those referred to under individual authors, Baur’s *Die christliche Gnosis in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1835) and Hamberger, *Stimmen aus dem Heiligthum der christlichen Mystik und Theosophie* (1857), may be mentioned. (A. S. P.-P.)

Oriental Theosophy

The term “ theosophy ” has in recent years obtained a some­what wide currency in a restricted signification as denominat­ing the beliefs and teachings of the Theosophical Society. This society was founded in the United States of America in the year 1875 by Madame H. P. Blavatsky (*q.v.*), in connexion with Colonel H. S. Olcott (d. 1906) and others. The main objects of the society were thus set out: (1) To establish a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity; (2) to promote the study of comparative religion and philosophy; (3) to make a sys­tematic investigation into the mystic potencies of life and matter, or what is usually termed “ occultism.” As regards the first object the mere fact of joining the society and becoming an “ initiated fellow ” was supposed to involve a certain kind of intellectual and social brotherhood, though not implying anything in the nature of an economic union. This latter aspect of the fraternity was to be satisfied by the contribution from each fellow of five dollars by way of initiation fee. The society’s theory of universal brotherhood was, however, of far wider scope, being based upon a mystical conception of “ the One Life ”—an idea derived from and common to various forms of Eastern thought, Vedic and Buddhist. It implies the necessary interdependence of all that is—that ultimate *Oneness* which underlies and sustains all phenomenal diversity, whether