What, then, is the general signification which we should give to the term *?* There is room for difference of opinion, and especially as to whether God or religion should be regarded as the object of the science. Is theology the science which treats of God*?* or is it the science which treats of religion *?* The latter view is now, perhaps, the more current. In addition to intrinsic reasons, the critical and sceptical spirit of the time is in its favour. Many speak of theology as a science of religion because they disbelieve that there is any knowledge of God to be at­tained. Dr Martineau, in his lecture on *Ideal Substitutes for God,* protests against this tendency, and contends that the older view of theology, as the doctrine or rational apprehension of *God,* ought not to be abandoned, seeing that the new “ science of religions,” *i.e.,* “ the systematic knowledge of what *men have believed and felt* on things sacred to them,” can be no proper substitute for the old “theology.” We may admit, however, that the protest is essentially true,—that a knowledge of man’s religious opinions, emotions, and actions can never supply the place of a knowledge of God, that, when from religion its objec­tive basis, the reality and apprehensibility of God, is taken away, the study of it can have merely the psychological interest which belongs to mental disease and illusions,— and yet prefer the definition of theology as “ the science of religion ” to its definition as “ the doctrine of God.” The latter seems much too narrow. Even Christian dogmatics is about as much occupied with man as with God. The doctrines of sin and of the church, for example, are not doctrines regarding God. Then, although the new “ science of religions ” is not a substitute for the old “ theology,” it is still a science, or at least a very interest­ing and important branch of knowledge, which yet cannot be brought under the definition of theology approved by Dr Martineau,—the definition immediately yielded by the etymology of the term. The science of religion is a very different thing from the “science of religions.” It is far more comprehensive. The “ science of religions ” is but one of the latest offshoots of the science of religion ; the old theology is its main trunk or stem. Theology, when viewed as the science of religion, has not to do merely with the religious consciousness and its states. It must aim at the complete comprehension of religion, and, unless religion be a delusion and disease, this can never be attained by treating religion merely as a subjective or psychological process to which there are no corresponding objective realities manifested either through nature or revelation. We have no right to assume that it is thus without a real and rational foundation in fact; on the contrary, we are bound to inquire whether it has external grounds and real objects or not, and, if it have them, what they are. We must endeavour to ascertain and expound its objective grounds as well as its subjective contents. Thus the definition of theology as the science of religion in no way excludes what is implied in the definition of it as the science conversant about God and Divine things. It includes more than the latter definition, but does not exclude anything contained therein.

The definition of theology as the science of religion has been objected to by Dr Charles Hodge on two grounds:@@1— first, that the word religion is ambiguous, having both an objective sense and a subjective sense, and that its .ety­mology is doubtful ; and, second, that to define theology as the science of religion “ makes theology entirely inde­pendent of the Bible. For, as moral philosophy is the analysis of our moral nature and the conclusions to which that analysis leads, so theology becomes the analysis of our religious consciousness together with the truths which that analysis evolves.” As to the first objection, the word

religion has, it is true, more significations than one, and consequently may be ambiguously used, but in point of fact it is not so used in the definition in question, in which religion is understood in its generic meaning, and as inclusive both of subjective and of objective religion. Theology has to treat of both, and if it treat of them aright it will not confound them. “ The etymology of the word religion is doubtful.” Very true. But is no word to be employed in a definition if its etymology be doubtful ? That would be an extremely hard law. In definition we have only to do with the actual meaning of terms; we have nothing to do with their origin or history. As to the second objection, it has to be remarked that the definition does not make theology entirely independent of the Bible. It does not make Biblical theology in any degree independent of the Bible. It does not imply that the Bible is not the sole perfect standard by which truth and error, health and disease, are to be separated in the religious consciousness of individuals and the religious history of the race. It only implies that all religious phenomena whatever are to be studied by the theologian, just as moral philosophy cannot leave any moral pheno­mena unstudied. Moral philosophy, in treating of vice as well as of virtue, does not thereby equalize vice and virtue ; and no more does comparative theology, when it treats both of Christianity and heathendom, assume that the former has no superiority over the latter. It is merely a part of the task of moral philosophy to analyse the moral consciousness ; it is an equally essential 'part thereof to inquire into the foundation of rectitude, and to determine objective moral distinctions and relations. In like manner theology has much more to do than merely to analyse the religious consciousness ; it has also to treat of the grounds and objects of religion. If some reduce it to a mere analysis of the religious consciousness, and overlook or deny that there is an objective religious revelation in nature and Scripture as well as a religious susceptibility in the mind of man, this is no logical consequence of the statement that theology is the science of religion. There needs, perhaps, no other proof that the definition to which Dr Hodge objects is of some use than to consider for a moment his own definition. “ Theology is the science concerned with the facts and the principles of the Bible.” Is theology, then, not concerned with the facts and prin­ciples of the physical world, the human mind, and history, so far as these are disclosures of God’s nature and ways *?* How can theology start from the Bible when it needs to be proved that there is a revelation from God in the Bible ? And how can this be proved unless it is known from other sources than the Bible that there is a God ? If there be such sources, theology must have to do with them ; it can have no right to neglect anything by which God may be known or by which light may be thrown on the relations between God and man. It is a service to theology so to define it as to leave no room for asserting that it is only conversant with the Bible.

Theology, then, is the science of religion. What does this definition imply as to the relation of theology to religion *?* It implies, first, that theology presupposes and is preceded by religion. This is but an instance of the general truth that experience must precede science, and that science must be founded on experience. The im plicit use of principles is always prior to their explicit development. Speech is a great deal older than gram­mar ; men reasoned long before Aristotle taught them how they reasoned ; and just as there must be speech before grammar, and reasoning before logic, so must there be religion before theology. Secondly, that theology is the science of religion implies that theology must not only succeed religion, but must evolve out of it a system of

@@@1 Systematic Theology, vol. i. pp. 20-21.