truths entitled to be called a science. Science is know­ledge in its completest, highest, and purest form. Theo­logy, therefore, by claiming to be the science of religion, professes to be the exhibition of religious facts and prin­ciples in their most general and precise shape, in their internal relationship to one another, in their organic unity and systematic independence. The principles of causality and of unity in the human mind impel it to seek law and order, explanation and connexion, as regards the pheno­mena of religion no less than any other species of pheno­mena ; they impel it, in other words, to perfect its know­ledge of these phenomena, and can allow it no rest until it has attained to the system and science of them. Theology is the scientific system of them, and as such is a necessity to the thoughtful religious mind. It is no accident that in every age and nation thoughtful men have reflected on their religious convictions, and sought to trace them to their grounds, and to harmonize and systematize them, or that the Christian church has anxiously studied and debated for centuries problems concerning God, Christ, sin, salvation, &c.,—no accident, but the necessary conse­quence of those fixed laws of human nature by which man ever seeks, once that his intellect has been truly awakened, to define and complete his knowledge. Conscious that his religious experience, however vivid, involves much which requires to be cleared up ; perceiving that the religious history of his race presents many apparently contradictory facts, many perplexing problems *; aware* that the Bible is no more a system of theology than nature is a system of mechanics or chemistry,—man cannot, as a rational being, do otherwise than endeavour by the investigation of the whole phenomena of the case to verify, analyse, combine, and co-ordinate his notions as to spiritual things, so as to work them up into a comprehensive, consistent, firmly established, adequately certified, naturally organized whole, a scientific system.

But how may man hope to succeed in his efforts to arrive at a scientific understanding of his religious beliefs, feelings, and practices*?* How may he educe and elaborate from the phenomena of religion a system of theology entitled to be called science ? Only, it is obvious, by following a truly scientific method. What then is a truly scientific method in theology *?* And what is implied in following it *?* To these questions a comprehensive, al­though necessarily brief, answer must now be given.

A right method in theology, as in all other sciences, is such a use of reason on appropriate facts as will best attain truth. It implies, therefore, as an essential condition, a right relation of reason to religious truth or fact, and to the evidence for it. What the right relation is may, perhaps, be defined with substantial accuracy in the following propositions. (1) Religious truth, like all other truth, is “ above reason ” in the sense of being not created by but manifested to reason, but is not “ above reason ” in any special sense which withdraws it from the cogniz­ance of reason. The truths of all science are the dis­coveries but not the creations of science, and they have been discovered because they existed, because they are the equivalents of a reality which is independent of science. In regard alike to mathematical, physical, mental, and religious truth, reason has only power to seek it, and to find or to miss it ; it has no power to make it or right over it, but must accept it as something presented or given to it, and to which it is bound to do homage and yield submission. In this sense all truth is above reason and revealed to reason. In this sense reason stands to re­ligious truth in the same relation as to physical truth, and to Christian truth in the same relation as to the truth in natural religion. Reason is simply the instrument or faculty of apprehending the truth manifested or revealed to it, and it can in no case apprehend truth without the aid of the appropriate manifestation or revelation. Unless Christ had lived and taught, reason could never have known His character and doctrine ; but no more could it have known Dante and his *Divina Commedia,* Shakespeare and his creations, Napoleon and his achievements, unless these men had appeared in the world and accomplished in it their work. Without Christ the truth in Christ could not be known, but, Christ being given, that truth comes under the cognizance of reason, ceases to be in any special sense above reason, and affords to reason material for science. By truths above reason are sometimes meant truths which cannot be fully apprehended by reason. Such truths are, however, in no way peculiar to religion. In all regions and directions reason finds that its range of vision is limited, and that its knowledge and science are bounded by nescience and mystery. Truths of special revelation are sometimes represented as above reason in the sense that reason can have no other evidence for them than that of testimony and external authority. But what truths of Scripture have thus been revealed to reveal no­thing, and are thus devoid of intrinsic light, of natural affinity to reason, of self-evidencing power *?* If there be any such, it must be admitted that they cannot in them­selves fall within the province of science, although the testimony and assent to them may. Where reason stops science must end. (2) Reason in its investigation of religion must be completely free, *i.e.,* subject to no other laws than those which are inherent in its own constitution. In regard to most sciences there is no need to insist that the method of science is one in which reason is free, because all who occupy themselves with these sciences acknowledge it. But in regard to theology it is other­wise. All who call themselves theologians are by no means disposed to admit that reason, in its search for religious truth and in its efforts to construct theological science, must be absolutely free ; on the contrary, many of them hold that the church or the Bible, tradition or the common sense of humanity, must be allowed to have a co-ordinate or even superior jurisdiction. The proposition laid down implies that, if any view of this kind be true, theology is essentially different from science, and it is vain to speak of scientific method in theology. It implies that all claims to religious authority must be based on and con­formed to reason, and that all the deliverances of every professedly religious authority must be submitted without reserve or restriction to the reason of the theologian before he can make a scientific use of them. This leads us to another proposition. (3) The only ascertainable limits of reason in the investigation of religious truth, as of other truth, are those which are inherent in its own constitution; and in the search of religious truth, as of all other truth, reason ought to go as far as it can go without violation of the laws of its own constitution. Reason has its limits in its own laws. It is the business of psychology and logic to discover what these laws are. When they are known the powers of reason are known, because reason can never claim to be irrational. It is useless, however, to attempt to mark off the external or objective boundaries of rational research. Human inquiry has, no doubt, external bound­aries beyond which it will never pass, but all apparent boundaries of this kind recede as they are approached. There is even absurdity, self-contradiction, in the very attempt to draw any line separating the knowable from the unknowable. To know it one must have already done what we affirm to be impossible,—known the un­knowable. We cannot draw a boundary unless we see over it. Reason cannot investigate too deeply any matter whatever, cannot possibly go too far, so long as it remains reason. Its own laws, the laws of evidence