tion. Wisely conducted systematization is entitled to be deemed an aid to discovery. It reveals where exploration is needed, and indicates the directions in which research will be successful. It is the highest form and effort of synthetic thought, and synthesis is a not less necessary and fruitful operation in scientific method than analysis.

Unfortunately it cannot be denied that there has been a vast amount of erroneous systematizing in theology, and that it has done a vast amount of harm. Doubtless much of the aversion felt and expressed to system in theology is to be traced to the imperfect, artificial, false character of many theological systems. Instead of exhibiting religious truths in their real significance and interdependence, theo­logical systems have often disguised and disfigured, cramped and contorted these truths, or even ignored and rejected them. How, then, is a true and appropriate system to be distinguished from one which is false and imperfect *?* In various respects, which can here be merely mentioned.

Thus, first, a true system is natural and not artificial. In equivalent terms, it is directly derived from the character of the matter of which it treats, and not arbitrarily im­posed on that matter from without. Every system of thought, whether true or false, must, of course, be the product of intellect, but no true system is a mere inven­tion of intellect, a mere subjective creation interposed between the mind and things ; it is, on the contrary, a representation of the real natures and relations of things. The human intellect can only construct a true system by finding in and among facts the connexions and harmonies which are actually there. But to do this may require more labour than is agreeable, or may contravene some cherished prejudice, or may not be recognized to be the sole legiti­mate procedure, and so it may devise, instead, a formula or scheme of thought suggested by some idea drawn from an extraneous source, force that scheme or formula upon things to which it is inappropriate, and so construct a sys­tem which is artificial and erroneous. Most sciences have suffered from artificial systematization of this kind, but probably none nearly so much as theology. Metaphysical philosophy has always sought to shape and modify religious and even distinctively »Scriptural truths according to its own ideas, methods, and dogmas. Paul and John have often been merely the masks through which Plato and Aristotle have taught. Hegelian divines have passed all religious beliefs, all Scriptural doctrines, through the dia­lectic devised by their master, and, whatever those beliefs and doctrines may have been before subjection to the operation of that wonder-working machine, they have always come out ground into Hegelian notions. Juris­prudence exerted a similar influence, owing to its having been the only science which was studied with zeal and success in the Latin world when theology began to be independently cultivated by the Latin Church. The Latin mind was so possessed by juristic or forensic ideas that the Latin fathers could not avoid looking at the gospel through them. This way of viewing it is still familiar. The so- called federal school of theology, long and widely influen­tial, exhibited the whole system of religious truth accord­ing to the analogy of a covenant,—a succession of cove­nants between God and man,—in other words, according to a conception which is essentially juristic and political, not intrinsically and properly religious. The making of a metaphor in this manner the basis of an entire system of theology is far from uncommon. Thus, because sin may be likened to disease or to darkness or to death, and holi­ness to health or light or life, not a few would conceive of all religious truth according to these similitudes, and do violence to the reality when it does not easily adapt itself to the moulds which they have chosen for it. Dr Chalmers, for instance, distributed all systematic theology into a study of the disease and a study of the remedy, and treated the doctrine of the Trinity merely as an appendix. At present, owing to the dominancy of physical science, there is a strong temptation to work upon spiritual facts with physical categories, and even to identify, *i.e.,* to con­found, the spiritual with the physical. Hence we hear of natural law, in the sense of mechanical or biological law, in the spiritual world.

Secondly, in a true system of theology the material and formal constituents of knowledge will be duly combined, but not in a false system. No true system of theology can be constructed simply by logical deduction from abstract conceptions, from *a priori* assumptions, from self-evident axioms. Mere reasoning from data so insufficient as these may be made plausible and imposing by being thrown into syllogistic, dialectic, or mathematical shapes, but it cannot be made truly profitable and productive. When the Wolfians had presented theology in the semblance of geometry, they had merely succeeded in dressing it in masquerade and binding it with fetters. Reason can only work effectively in theology when it is in possession of a large and close acquaintance with Divine things and acts harmoniously with the whole spiritual nature. On the other hand, without the application of logical reflexion to the truth implicitly contained in the sources of religious knowledge, without the help of definition, induction, deduction, and all the processes involved in analysis, generalization, judgment, and reasoning, we never could reach a scientific system at all. Such a system is not simply an aggregation or accumulation of the data and con­stituents of religion, but the product of all the activities and forms of thought which give to the contents of re­ligious experience the order and organization which theo­logy, as science, demands.

Thirdly, a true system is one in which unity is the result of the conciliation of all relevant principles, even although they may be apparently antagonistic, while a false system is one which bases itself on some particular principle or idea to the exclusion of others, also legitimate. In a true system unity is produced by harmonizing differ­ences ; in a false system it is produced by ignoring differ­ences. A true system of theology is one which grows out of the struggle of opposing elements and recognizes the validity and significance of all religious truth. It is not, for example, so based on Divine sovereignty that injustice is done to human liberty, or so based on free will that God’s agency is largely ignored, but it assigns to both Divine efficiency and human action their proper place, and does so, not merely by maintaining the truth of both, but also by exhibiting their relationship and harmony.

Fourthly, in a true system all the members are not merely included, connected, and classified,—they are also unified through reference to a centre. A true system must be a unity of members pervaded by a common life. In its remotest members must be traceable the pulsations of its heart. Only of late have theologians begun clearly to recognize that this characteristic of a true organic system must be taken into account in the formation of their science. Long after they were fully alive to the importance of treating of each head of doctrine or article of faith, each separate theological locus, they felt hardly any interest as to how the various doctrines, articles, or loci were to be connected. They were often content to take the order of arrangement from some external source, some creed, confession, or catechism. It was a step in advance when, although still arranging the dogmas merely in a series, they endeavoured to give each dogma its place, on the ground of its natural and intrinsic relationship to other dogmas. Theologians have, indeed, differed much as to what is the proper *seriatim* order. One, for example,