

But I venture to think that some pleading is necessary among us, though not for the Gospel, yet for the preaching of a full Gospel; nor am I sure that the value is appreciated of an accurate knowledge of the relations among divine truths, and of the service which systematic theology is capable of rendering to the expounder of Scripture; how essential it is that it go hand in hand with exegetical theology, in enabling us to expose false glosses, and to correct the hasty conclusions which superficial interpreters put upon detached passages of holy writ.

It is the great source of error in any science to build on a partial induction of data; and nothing is more characteristic of errorists in the religious world, than to take up with some favourite passage which coincides with foregone conclusions, and to answer all your reasonings from comprehensive views of the entire field of revelation, by saying they care nothing for system; as for them, they go by the word alone. But, if what they reproach as system be indeed science—be the deliberate findings of a just logic, collecting the various data, concentrating the scattered lights of Scripture—they are in fact refusing the word they deceive themselves in alleging that they keep to the word, while they are refusing those generalizations and harmonies which are the fruit of laborious comparisons of Scripture with Scripture. In standing on detached expressions, they are going by the sound of Scripture, not its sense. It is, in our opinion, the most necessary of all pulpit qualifications, to be able to assign the proper relation of doctrine to doctrine: no minute knowledge of mere words will enable us, without this, to confute plausible errors. It is not novices alone who go by the sound rather than the sense of Scripture, while ignoring the logical classification of doctrines. Take some present errors. Take, for instance, the false views of the Atonement. Nothing is more remarkable than the free and easy way in which the impugnors of the doctrine of vicarious or legal satisfaction to distributive justice have pressed into their service that class of passages which give prominence to sanctification, as a fruit of the Saviour's death. Whether Coleridge, or Maurice, or Bushnell, or Robertson (he of the broad-school):—they keep repeating the argument of which any school-boy might be supposed to perceive the hollowness, that it is the moral or subjective effect of Christ's death which has the prominence in the apostolic writings. They will have it that the purifying ascribed to Christ's blood is the *λουτρόν*, not the *λύτρον*: he died to redeem us from all iniquity. He bore our sins on the tree that we, being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness. Now, the advocate of the Atonement need feel no difficulty in answering this: he knows that sanctification is an ulterior effect, a precious and necessary effect—but still an ulterior effect—of that atoning death whose primary design is reconciliation. The thing wanting in the exegesis of these parties is a knowledge of the relation of the guilt of sin to its power. And if the illustrations which Paul himself gives, especially in the epistle to the Romans, of the dependence of sanctification on justification, and of both on union to Christ; if this, I might call it, systematic treatment of the question by the inspired apostle, do not suffice to correct their hasty conclusion, conscience itself might correct it, which, in perfect harmony with Paul's doctrine, seeks, as its primary necessity, deliverance from the guilt of sin, and with that, and only with and through that, comes to purity as well as peace. The sanctification follows the reconciliation; and it is nothing to tell us that in some passages the *λουτρόν* rather than the *λύτρον* is recognised, when we know that in order to the one the other is implied as a pre-requisite.