The inductions of theology, even in its systematic or non-historical departments, often require to be very careful and comprehensive in order to be conclusive. Theories or doctrines like the Christian dogmas of the Trinity, incar­nation, and atonement were only arrived at through the labours and controversies of many generations of theolo­gians. It could not be otherwise. These dogmas, simple as they may seem to a superficial glance and untrained eye, are in reality very complex organisms of thought, only capable of being formed by a long process of evolution. They are theories inclusive of many theorems. They com­prehend a number of directly constitutive propositions and a still greater number of propositions subordinate and subsidiary to these. Every proposition which they involve should be the expression of real and relevant facts. As wholes they ought to combine a multitude of particulars of different kinds, and even of kinds the harmony of which is far from obvious and needs confirmation. Whoever intelligently accepts any one of these dogmas must, by necessary implication, reject a host of hypotheses regarding its subject, as either inadequate or positively erroneous. Inasmuch as they are not consistent with or are contrary to the dogma, he is logically bound to repudiate them, and yet he is only logically entitled to do so if his proof of the dogma have been so comprehensive and complete as to include their separate and collective refutation. The establishment of the whole truth is only possible through the disproof of all the opposing errors. How the inductive method is applied in theology, however, will be better understood by the examination of a particular exemplifica­tion of it than by a general description ; and, perhaps, as regards at least form, a more careful or elaborate exempli­fication could hardly be pointed out than that exhibited in Dr Crawford’s treatise on the atonement. An examination of it will show how very complex in reality may be a doctrine which is very simple in appearance, and how com­prehensive, therefore, must be the inductive procedure necessary to establish it and to warrant the rejection of the hypotheses which must seem to one who accepts it to err by excess or defect or to be absolutely false.

The inductions of theology, like those of other sciences, are seldom or never mere or pure inductions. They would be useless if they were. The examples of pure induction given in treatises on logic may serve their purpose, the illustration of the nature of ratiocination, but they are not reasonings of a kind which can increase positive know­ledge. The abstraction of induction from deduction may be needed to exhibit its distinctive formal character, but it is fatal to its practical efficiency. In all reasoning meant to increase our knowledge of objects, induction must receive from deduction some measure of assistance and guidance. This certainly holds true in theology. In regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, for example, the most difficult questions involved turn largely on the signi­fication and application of the terms employed in its ex­pression. These terms must be somehow defined, and definitions once introduced cannot fail to be used to some extent as principles of deduction. They are often largely so used by those who are quite unconscious of making any use of them, and who have no suspicion that the course and character of their reasonings are modified by them. Definitions often secretly introduce a great amount of hypothesis and deduction into reasonings imagined to be exclusively inductive. Further, principles of deduction are directly and explicitly introduced. The truth of the catholic doctrine, or indeed of any doctrine, of the atone­ment, for example, cannot be proved purely by induction. It is necessary to start with some assumption as to the authority of the Scriptures, or at least as to the authority of those whose teaching is contained in the Scriptures. That assumption itself should, it is true, be proved by a process of apologetical and critical reasoning which is in the main inductive. It cannot, however, any more than the doctrine of atonement, be proved by a purely or ex­clusively inductive process, *i.e*., without some co-operation or participation of deduction; and, once proved, it becomes a principle of which a deductive use is made. Every parti­cular statement of Scripture is read and interpreted in the light of it. So far as this is the case, deduction underlies all the inductions of doctrine based on the statements of Scripture. Of course, the dogmatic theologian, in so far as he founds on Scripture, is bound not to presuppose more than he is prepared to prove as a Christian apologist or Biblical critic and interpreter. The assumptions made in systematic theology ought to be the firmly ascertained results of its subsidiary sciences. And the less assumed the better, as the relevancy of the reasoning employed will be so much the more widely acknowledged. Every addi­tional assumption diminishes the number of persons who will grant the principles on which the argumentation pro­ceeds. When, for instance, a doctrine like plenary inspira­tion is assumed as the basis of an argument for the atone­ment, the number of persons who can be benefited by the argument must be few. Those who will grant plenary inspiration are not likely to require to be convinced of the truth of the ordinary doctrine of the atonement ; they are almost certain to be already convinced. On the other hand, a man may have loose or vague views of inspiration, and yet it may be possible to satisfy him that the doctrine of the atonement is well founded. The proof of the doctrine of the atonement may receive support and con­firmation from the proof of the doctrine of plenary inspira­tion, but ought not to be made dependent on it.

Scientific method has not only to ascertain the facts and data of science, and to discover its laws, but also to dis­tribute and co-ordinate its contents. And this last is like­wise an important function. Science is system. To exclude system from science is to suppress and destroy science. The spirit of system is in itself nothing more than the spirit of order and unity. Without unity and order—that is, without system—there is no science ; instead of it there can be only confused ideas, isolated opinions. It is absurd to condemn either system or the spirit of system in theology or any other science. To systematize is an intellectual necessity; to systematize aright is a happy achievement and an immense boon; it is merely systematizing erroneously which is evil. Theology, by professing to be a science, pledges itself to systematize in a scientific manner. By claiming to be the science of religion it undertakes to exhibit the truths of religion in their proper relationship to one another, in their organic unity and essential interdependence. Thus to proceed is necessary to it, not only as a consequence, but also as a means of the development of its constituent dogmas, for no doctrine can be truly and fully evolved in isolation, but only in connexion with kindred doctrines and through the general growth of the science or system to which it belongs. Increase of insight into any one truth brings with it clearer views of all contiguous and related truths, and the collec­tive light thus gained illumines each particular to which it extends. To apprehend more distinctly the relations between either facts or theories is to understand better the facts or theories themselves. To comprehend any single doctrine aright we must study, not merely its special data, but those of allied doctrines, trace its connexions with those doctrines, and view both it and them as parts of an organic and harmonious whole. Hence the endeavour to systematize the contents of science should not merely follow the formation of its separate doctrines, but likewise accompany and participate in the process of their forma-