

The Great Fallacy of the Book

by Daniel Steele

The book's main fallacy is the invention of new definitions to suit a predetermined conclusion, leading to deception and neglect of systematic theology.

Scripture: Proverbs 12:22, John 8:32, 2 Corinthians 4:2, Ephesians 4:25, Colossians 3:9

Topics: "Theological Integrity", "Biblical Interpretation"

Description

Daniel Steele addresses the fallacy of inventing new definitions to fit predetermined conclusions in theological studies, emphasizing the danger of misleading readers and the neglect of systematic theology due to arbitrary word meanings. He warns against using deceptive definitions in theological treatises, highlighting the importance of sanctifying souls through truth rather than manipulation. Steele cautions against writers who depart from accurate definitions, comparing it to claiming the moon is made of green cheese by distorting facts. Ultimately, he urges discernment and reliance on truthful interpretations in moral and religious teachings.

Transcript

THE fallacy that underlies this entire book is the invention of new definitions to suit a predetermined conclusion. These definitions, of which the author specially boasts, thrust into English terms having other meanings, are really a source of deception to the reader, who very naturally, as he advances in the argument, forgets the novelty and retains the established definition. "The arbitrary selection of meanings for Bible words," says Joseph Agar Beet, "has been hitherto the disgrace of systematic theology.

It is one chief cause of the present comparative neglect of this all-important study, by making it appear to be nothing else but a series of unproved assertions." This jugglery with words is permissible in a professed humorist -- in fact, "juggle" and "joke" are derived from the same Latin word -- but in a grave theological treatise it is reprehensible; and where there is an intention to mislead immortal souls -- which cannot be predicated of this author -- which are to be sanctified through the truth, it is in the highest degree reprehensible.

It is a covert and adroit method of "handling the word of God deceitfully," though sometimes there is no such intention, as in the present case. We believe the author himself is deceived by his own definitions. We advise all readers to beware of the writer on moral and religious themes who takes leave of his dictionary and draws on his imagination for his definitions. You can easily prove that the moon is made of green cheese if you can smuggle milk and rennet enough into your astronomical definitions.

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