

### 3. The Confessional Approach

This approach accepts and adopts some creed, confession, or family of creeds and confessions, and proceeds uncritically to study Scripture to find support for the doctrinal assertions of that creed or confession. By doing so, this approach tends to neglect portions of Scripture not directly connected with its creed or confession, tends to make an operative distinction between normative and non-operative Scriptures, tends to become theologically provincial, and tends to cut itself off from further light and understanding of the teaching of Scripture as a whole.

Example: The adoption of Luther's *Small Catechism* and the *Augsburg Confession*, and the interpretation of Scripture by the assertions found in these documents.

Example: The adoption of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and the interpretation of Scripture by the assertions found in that document.

Critical Axiom: Creeds and confessions may be of great help in the understanding of biblical doctrine; yet creeds and confessions must be kept subordinate to and judged by the teaching of Scripture.

### 4. The Traditional Approach

This view adopts some historical tradition or some individual's viewpoint, and proceeds to interpret Scripture in accordance with that tradition or viewpoint. In doing so, this approach tends to omit or distort those portions of Scripture whose teachings do not fit with its assumptions and views.

Example: The adoption of Menno Simons' viewpoint, and the interpretation of Scripture by the assertions of that view.

Example: The adoption of John Wesley's viewpoint, and the interpretation of Scripture by the assertions of that view.

Example: The adoption of John Calvin's viewpoint, and the interpretation of Scripture by the assertions of that view.

Critical Axiom: Theological constructs and systems are to be derived from the teachings of Scripture, not impressed on them.

### 5. The Atomistic Approach

This approach views each Scripture as a distinct entity complete in itself. It seeks to derive the meaning of each Scripture in isolation from other Scriptures and/or scriptural teachings.

As such, this approach encompasses two deep-seated attitudes:

(1) It is determined to preserve each inspired Scripture in its individual integrity, believing that each Scripture is true and fully understandable as it stands.