

(2) It fears and distrusts the use of human reason in systematic theological construction, believing that sinful human reason can only distort or adulterate the pure, clear teaching of Scripture.

But by the same token, this approach is prone to adopt interpretations of individual Scriptures that have immediate emotional appeal, or that sound good, or that make sense, or that fit with previous understandings.

Example: Taking promises in Scripture in isolation from other Scriptures that qualify or condition those promises, and holding God responsible to fulfill those promises and fellow believers responsible to trust in them.

Critical Axiom: The whole of scriptural teaching concerning any given doctrine (with rare exception) cannot be found in any individual portion of Scripture. The whole truth cannot be found in any one of its parts.

6. The Organic Approach

This approach seeks to discover the teachings of individual Scriptures and to systematize these teachings into a self-consistent, coherent whole, that is itself in accord with the whole of Scripture.

The term "organic" in this context has reference to the interrelated nature of the individual Scriptures and of the individual teachings of Scripture, in somewhat the same manner in which various organs are interrelated in a living organism. In a living organism all of the organs function in such a way as to sustain the life and health of the organism. If a non-vital organ is missing or defective, the life and health of the organism is usually impaired. If a vital organ is defective or missing, the life and health of the organism is placed in jeopardy or extinguished. And if the organs fail to interact properly, the organism breaks down and usually dies.

This organic approach builds on the analogy of the constituent parts and interrelationships of a living organism. This may be seen in our use of the adjective "sound" as applied to doctrine. Sound doctrine is doctrine that is whole, not defective in any part; healthy, not diseased by the intrusion of alien matter; and organically interrelated and functional.

Example: The doctrine of the Trinity, which is grounded in the scriptural facts that God is one (i.e., a unity), and that there are three Persons who are fully God.

Example: The doctrine of the incarnate Son, which is grounded in the scriptural facts that Jesus Christ is one person, and that He has both the characteristics of perfect God and those of perfect man.

Critical Axiom: The whole of a biblical teaching is to be found in the teaching of the whole Bible.