

II. The Limitations of Systematic Theology

A. Limited to propositions reasonably deduced from Biblical data.

It must be recognized that a valid system of theology must be based only on the Bible. Here arguments from analogy are worthless. They can only suggest questions to investigate. Philosophical or rational attempts to explain eternal things can be useful by raising questions that may be taken as a basis to search the Scripture to see whether it gives an answer to them, but cannot be taken as a basis on which to build any solid proposition of systematic theology.

B. Limitations caused by recognition of purpose of Bible

1. Practical nature of Biblical writings

It must be recognized that the Bible's purpose is fundamentally practical rather than theoretical. A man who was born with no sense of sight would need a revelation from others to enable him to understand his environment or to accomplish the necessary tasks of life. This information would inevitably include a certain amount of information that did not have a direct bearing on his life, but this might be quite incidental. Any attempt to explain to him the beauty of a sunset or the variations of color in a masterpiece would be useless. The purpose of the Bible is primarily to show the Christian how to conduct himself in this life, and how to know God, without whom life is meaningless. It was not written in order to give him an understanding of all the principles of the universe. It should be recognized that there may be very important principles of the divine being that have no direct importance for human life on this earth, and that are not touched upon in the Bible.