

EDITORIAL

A JOURNAL FROM THE RADICAL REFORMATION has been and continues to be an attempt to recapture the spirit of honest inquiry found among those called radicals, and worse, “heretics.”

In case after case that charge of heresy could not be substantiated by an appeal to Scripture which was the radicals’ response and defense. “Show us from Scripture where our view is wrong,” was a fervent, yet unanswered plea to those who hold to orthodox views in theology.

This JOURNAL has tried to address four primary areas in which there is a serious difference of understanding on doctrines.

The first concerns God. Can we accept the biblical descriptions, or must we insist that words which have always meant one thing now must mean something else? The Bible clearly speaks of but one God, the Father, yet overwhelmingly orthodoxy has insisted that He consists of three Persons, who are yet one. Is God a person in the sense we would expect the word to be used, or must it take on a new meaning in this instance?

The second area grows out of the first. “Who,” or even “What,” is Jesus? Orthodoxy’s answer is that he is God, some would say “God Incarnate,” yet the Bible most frequently calls him the Son of God. But here “Son” is said by orthodoxy not to mean “son” in the sense of begotten. Yet again the Scriptures use that very word regarding the Son. He was begotten in time.

Nicea, orthodoxy’s first attempt to explain him, was adopted overwhelmingly, yet the explanation didn’t satisfy and for another 150+ years attempts were made to explain what still remains unclear and leaves one wrestling with the meaning of words.

Did he die, or did he not die? That simplistic question is at orthodoxy’s jugular. Can God die, or can God not die and remain God? Was the universe “Godless” for those days and nights Jesus was in the tomb — or was he not in the tomb? Was his resurrection only a farce to fool Christendom, if he was not dead? Paul speaks to that issue of Jesus being dead and reminds us that we would still be in our sins if Christ hadn’t died. But how could he die if he was God? And so the questions circulate and recirculate, attempting to explain what is inherently inexplicable.

The third area this JOURNAL seeks to redress is conditionalism. That man has an immortal soul is something that admittedly came from Plato and was of Greek thought and origin. Many in orthodoxy have given this doctrine very little stress and admit its weakness. It is the nature of the soul to be the whole of man. His future rests upon the condition of God’s grace and mercy through Jesus, God’s Son. That the soul separates from the earthly body cannot be substantiated from Scripture. Man’s soul does not fly away at death to be with the Lord, or to burn in an eternal hell, which is also not found in Scripture.

The fourth area of concern is the generally held opinion that man's eternal reward is in heaven. This tragically misses the fact that Christ and eventually God, Himself, will descend to a renewed earth to spend eternity with his "changed" children in his Kingdom, the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached as Gospel, a doctrine almost universally ignored in Christendom.

This leads into what some consider a fifth area of concern and that is the history of those from the Radical Reformation onward who have held to these understandings. They were not all of the same understanding, but theirs was a search for truth. They include Servetus, the Socinians, the Polish Brethren, even through the early years of this country.

This JOURNAL asks how these truths which seem obvious in the Bible have become so distorted and lost. These are the same questions asked by those Radical Reformers, who searched for truth, no matter where it might take them.

Some of them went to the stake, some to imprisonment and torture, and others to loss of family and banishment — all because they wanted their understandings to be supported and undergirded by Scripture. That remains our point. "Show us from Scripture our error." We invite that. We challenge those daring to read this to honestly consider the Bible, which we (again the charge against us is being simplistic) believe to be the inspired words of God.

Join us as the search for the biblical message continues.