

6. Some criteria notes

What
Standards
Are Used
To
Determine
A Doctrine?

As to what makes the doctrine orthodox or not there are a number of criteria points. To most of us in the Protestant camp we are prone to say that if the teaching summarizes the Scripture in adequate fashion it is orthodox if it does not do so, it is something else. Yet in our own groups there is enough doctrinal divergency to make us see that it is not always that simple. From our point of view the Biblical character is very important, the agreement of the teaching with the "historic" process is less weighty...and the authority of the collect Christian group even less weighty than that.

Yet there are some aspects of these things that should be considered privately. For the moment let us note that the Scripture should be the test of all doctrinal formulations and, if it is necessary that it be so, the statement go beyond what is uniformly agreed on in Scripture, it should be regarded as local opinion and have only questionable force on the church. This over-simplification will at once relieve us of the doctrines about the Virgin (beyond her initial character) and will also deliver us from pronouncements on a particular form of baptism being an essential for the spiritual character of the fellowship. Most of us will quickly see the accuracy of the former but will be filled with fears about the latter...it is always easy to see divergent doctrines in other groups.

This does not mean that a teaching must be forsaken or is necessarily wrong but it does mean that one must think through the criteria that are used to render teachings. It is certainly more than just the Scriptures...and thereon hangs a tale.-...

B. Some Critical Definitions

Definitions:

- Revelation
- Doctrine
- Theology
- Dogma
- Creed
- Polemics
- Apologetics
- Historical
Theology

Although it is very hard to use terms in consistent fashion, we feel it necessary to offer some definitions in the hope of a fuller understanding for the subject material of the course. The terms are defined in agreement with their use in this course and while it is hoped the definitions will be agreeable with other classes in BST it is not guaranteed that every teacher will say the same thing the same way

1. Revelation and the History of Revelation

- a. Revelation is Divine self-disclosure in significant mode (meaning that one can get a grip on it)

REVELATION