

Biblical Theology Without Apology

A Final Word from the Editor,
Leo Van Dolson

With this first issue of the JOURNAL OF THE ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY we have accepted the challenge of bringing into focus a biblical theology without apology. "Biblical theology" I am sure you understand. But "without apology" may take a word or two of explanation.

First of all, we say "without apology," because some persons in recent years, convinced that our unique Adventist understandings of the Bible are not well accepted by theologians of other faiths, have become somewhat apologetic about our message. But rather than being apologetic, we believe we should thank God for the unique message he has given us, based as it is in the three angel's messages of Revelation 14:6-12 and directed to a truly global mission—a mission that includes the education of scholars rather than intimidation by them! As humbly, and yet as clearly as possible, we need to let others (including other scholars) know that we believe we are not merely another evangelical denomination. Our reason for existence is our belief that God has given us insights into Bible truths that set us apart as distinct, truths that other Christians have not yet acknowledged, but which they need to acknowledge.

Second, we say "without apology" because we recognize that the message which we believe God has entrusted to us is vital to the practical, everyday needs of people living in the last moments of earth's history. Unfortunately, all Adventists do not seem to appreciate this fact. The world about us has adopted a set of values corresponding to those "in the days of Noah." Many even in the church, influenced by these immoral values, are challenging those aspects of our theology that condemn the lifestyle they are adopting. Part of our challenge in the Adventist Theological Society, as some of the writers in this issue of our JOURNAL point out, is to take our unique,

God-given understandings of truth and make them as plain and as meaningful as possible to our fellow believers, without in any way seeming to apologize for doing so.

Third, we say "without apology," because we have attempted to do a thorough job in applying correct methods of interpretation (hermeneutics) to the scriptures we discuss. We do not expect that everyone will agree with all the viewpoints expressed in our articles, nor do we want our readers to conclude that the articles represent "official" positions of the Society. But we offer the articles believing they represent thorough-going Bible study, worthy of serious consideration.

And we'd like to add that it is our sincere desire to maintain a positive attitude, free from attacks against any individual or segment in our church.

These are our ideals. If we do not quite measure up, please be patient with us. Like all new organizations, we'll have our growing pains. But we do pray that God will use us to present our Adventist biblical theology without any apology.