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La Crescenta, Calif.
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Professor A.W.Spalding
Review and Herald
Takoma Park, Washington 12, D.C.

Dear Brother Spalding:

I will attempt now to answer some of the queries you propound in your recent letter of the 2nd. inst. And in doing so, I will refer to them under numbers appended to the paragraphs of your letter, listed from 1 to 8.

P. 2. Most assuredly our people were anti-trinitarians, when we (the Lacey family) accepted the 'Truth' in 1838. Atleast, that is how it appeared to us at that time.

You see, we were pretty strong 'Church Of England' members then, - my father, one of the main supporters of St John's (of course it was a state church), my mother, the organist, and practically the choir leader, and May (now Mrs W.C. White) and I, singers in the choir.

Mother, who was something of a composer of church music too, often adapted selections from 'Hymns & Tunes' - our old Church Hymnal for voluntaries (for we still remained members of the 'Church' even after we had become 'Adventists) and those 'Voluntaries' were greatly liked by the congregation: Mother was often complimented upon them!

Now we couldn't help noticing two things about the wording of the hymns in our book, as contrasted with the standard Church of Hymnal: - 1st. the obliteration of all references to the Trinity; 2nd, the weakening of the truth of the Personality of the Holy Ghost! (Perhaps the latter, chiefly in the sermons, etc, and prayers of our ministers, who always spoke of the Holy Spirit as IT: never 'HE' except when they were reading the verses in John, and then immediately afterwards they would say IT, again! I particularly remember Mother commenting wonderingly on that!)

As to point 1, compare Charles Wesley's Hymn 'Come Thou Almighty King' as printed in the Church of Hymnal Hymnbook, No 388, with ours in 'Hymns and Tunes, no. 36

Stanza 4 - "To Thee, great One in Three

The highest praises be,

Hence evermore," etc in Ch. of Eng. book

Stanza 4 - "Thou art the mighty One,

On earth thy will be done,

From shore to shore." etc in our Hym. and Tunes

(Incidentally, it is interesting to observe how our 'emender' (whoever he was) of Chas. Wesley's great hymn, cut out that reference to righteousness by faith in the latter part of stanza 2, -

Wesley - "Come, and thy people bless;

Come, give Thy word success;

'Stablish Thy righteousness,

Saviour and Friend!

Our book - "Come and thy people bless,

And give thy word success;

Spirit of holiness. (!!! - but no comment!)

could go on interminably in noting the changes (all for the worse) made in outstanding hymns of the Christian church when they were re-printed in our 'Hymnal'

Take Reginald Heber's great hymn "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty
Last line of 1st stanza "God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!"
Now in ours - "God over all, who rules eternity."
And then we omit this 4th stanza entirely, -

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name, in earth, & sky, & sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty!
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity."

One more example - Wordsworth's great hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord" which we exclude from our hymnal - for obvious reasons! See last stanza

"Alleluia! Lord, to Thee,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Three in One, and One in Three,
Join we with the heavenly host,
Singing everlastingly
To the blessed Trinity."

I am glad to note that, in our Church Hymnal, issued in 1941, the great truth of the Trinity has been, in a measure, restored. See, for instance Nos. 9, 205, 487, 649 to name but a few, casually observed.

June 6. I have been hindered, and I see I must be briefer!

P. 2 (continued) I have J.H. Waggoner's "Atonement" - bought it indeed in 1889; but had not studied it very carefully. All I know is, that, as a student herein Heidelberg College, I gathered the idea that when Christ died, it was the 'God-Man' who died for us; and that we therefore have a Divine Sacrifice for our sins, which of course would not be the case, if it were merely Christ's human nature that suffered death on the Tree. In the process of the years this mystery has crystalized itself in my own mind as follows:-

When Christ died, His human nature died when his heart was literally broken by His soul-anguish under the weight of all the sin of the world. D.A. 772. Physicians tell us that a 'piercing ~~EMERGENCY~~ shriek' is uttered at the moment of heart-rupture! See Geikie's Life of Christ, chap. 63, and notes. But He died as GOD, when He 'laid down His life' John 10:15, 17, 18. 'for the sheep.' And this phase of His Dual Death followed that 'loud cry' immediately, after He had said 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit!' and having said this, He gave up the ghost' or 'expired.' An insoluble mystery, of course! But so also, is the Incarnation! 'The Word', 'God Only-Begotten', 'becoming flesh and tabernacling among us' (John 1:1, 18 R.V. Margin, 14) - think of Him, between the moments of conception and birth, and indeed till He was 12, one 'who is over all, GOD blessed for ever!' Romans 9:4. The two mysteries are quite insoluble, but we accept them by faith as divinely revealed truths.

Thus one is saved from accepting merely a human sacrifice on Calvary! The statements from the Testimonies must be read in the light of Scriptural teaching. 1 Thes. 5:19-22.

P. 6 in your letter. It was Elder W.W. Prescott who stressed especially the 'Personality' (not as well as Father) of the 'GOD' the eternal I AM, in his at conferences and camp-meetings in Australia. It was your humble servant who taught the Personality of the Holy Spirit (not Cornorality - a very different thing, as I know you understand!) but that the Holy Ghost was not a mere influence, but a distinct Person, even the Third Person in the Godhead, and should therefore be spoken

He, Him, His, Himself, if we would be truly reverent! Just as Jesus did, in John 14-15. Now of course that was merely introductory, and almost incidental, the main emphasis being put, as I well remember, upon the various phases of His ministry in our lives. We had a good time in those studies, and among the most interested ones were Sr. Marian Davies (who had charge of the production of the 'Desire of Ages,') and Elder A.G. Daniolis, and Sr A.T. Robinson, who was a sister of Elder W.V. Barnsworth. We were tremendously interested when, in due time, that statement appeared in the 'Desire of Ages' page 671, 'the Third Person of the Godhead'; also the references to His personality in 8T 61, 62; and the further statement in Series B No. 7 Testimonies For the Church, page 63, 'There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers - the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit - etc' Since which time the doctrine of the Trinity has been established among us - although, apparently, not fully accepted by all!

Now your questions: 'Did all the fathers sin?' Well, 'sin' is perhaps too strong a word. But they certainly 'all' held inadequate views on both the 'Eternity of the Son' (and therefore His essential Deity) and the 'Personality of the Holy Ghost.' (And why do we not more generally speak of Him in that way, as does our Authorized translation, and the Early Writings of Sr White, until she came under the influence of her husband and other of the pioneers? And by the way: Is not the first chapter of Elder J.H. Waggoner's otherwise good book on 'The Spirit of God: Its (sic) Offices and Manifestations to the End of the Christian Age' very painful reading?)

'And if so, did they repent?' Not so as you could notice it, I fear. The attitude of some of those pioneers to the preaching of 'Righteousness by Faith' in 1838, illustrates pretty well their reactions to any 'New Light' that might come to them! Nevertheless they were wonderfully used of God in laying the foundations of our Message.

'How prove the unity of the faith in our succession if our pioneers were Arians, and we are Athanasians?' Well now, the answer is obvious - to you, as well as to the rest of us; so, let us leave it there!

P. 7 in your letter. Your questions regarding my 'part in this movement' seem to relate to discussions of the 'Son' rather than on the 'Spirit' what I have said above will show that my interest, and any contribution the Lord has used me to make to the Truth as we now hold it, have been in the realm of the latter, rather than of the former phase of doctrine.

Sincerely your brother in the Message,

H. Camden Lacey