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to

L. E. Froom

May, 1, 1968.

[excerpt]

I am increasingly fearful that you have lost sight of the thrust of 1888. Last term we did a Seminar in Prophetic Guidance on the 1888 Conference and discovered much more on Righteousness by Faith than on Christology.

[excerpt]

L. E. Froom to

W. Alexander

May 24, 1968.

In 1888 Waggoner was faced with an articulate and militant minority at the Conference, that clung to the Arian or semi-Arian concept, which denied the complete equality of Christ with the Father—of the 'same substance,' and possessing 'all of the same attributes,' etc. They denied that the Holy Spirit is a Person (only an influence) and thus repudiating the Three Persons of the Godhead, or Trinity.

That disparity and limitation would alter Christ's entire efficacy as the all-sufficient Source of the requisite Righteousness that each of us must receive by faith. That Arian-slanted concept maintained that He is a derived Being, lower than the Father, and not comprising 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily'—not God in the highest sense. Dr. Waggoner had broken with his own father (J.H.) over this issue—and of course with Smith, who was first straight Arian, then Semi-Arian, and continued to hold the latter view until his death in 1903.

Waggoner knew that he first had to establish the complete-Deity-of-Christ concept, as the Second Person of the eternal Godhead, and as 'all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,' and of the 'same substance' as the Father, etc. Until that was established He was not in a position to present true and efficacious Righteousness by Faith, vested in such a transcendent Christ. That was the underlying, initial problem he had to deal with at the Minneapolis Conference. That is the simple, historical, attested fact. The Arian-oriented 'some' would not subscribe to the complete-Deity concept. Hence some 'rejected,' and their subsequent opposition persisted for decades. It was pronounced on the part of some in the Columbia Union and in Washington Missionary College...

The main 'thrust' of 1888 was most assuredly to stress Righteousness by Faith—but specifically Righteousness by Faith in Christ as 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily'—not in a derived, limited constricted, subordinate, and accountable Christ that could not, because of His very limitations, provide the requisite Righteousness. It was just that simple, and actual—according to all the facts as disclosed to me. That misconception had to be straightened out first."

[end of excerpt]