

Levi Pennington

People

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Levi Pennington Writing to the Board of Publication, February 8, 1947

Levi T. Pennington

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February 8, 1947.

Board of Publication,
2904 N. E. 50th. Ave.,
Portland 13, Oregon.

Dear Friends:--

With no desire to be unduly critical, I wish to call your attention to one statement in the Quaker Quiz, on page 4, where "the death of the infinite God" is mentioned. Such a statement naturally invites such questions as these: Is it true that the infinite God died? How long did the infinite God remain dead? How could the infinite God have come to life again -- what was there to bring Him to life again, when the infinite God was dead? How did the universe get along when the infinite God was dead? Is there any scripture to indicate that the infinite God died? And it is not enough to say that God the Son, who was infinite, died, while God the Father and God the Holy Spirit lived on, for then you have three gods, not one, and you become a polytheist.

It seems to me that this statement is based on a false conception of a mathematical nature, the idea being that it required an infinity of suffering to redeem mankind, and that therefore it took an infinite being to make such a contribution of suffering -- I heard an Oregon minister teach that Christ suffered enough on the cross to equal all the suffering of all the lost through a never-ending eternity. Well, if one is determined to put the matter thus on a mathematical basis, why did Jesus have to suffer so long? Infinity multiplied by six hours equals infinity; but infinity multiplied by one hour also equals infinity, as does infinity multiplied by any other positive quantity.

The man Christ Jesus died, that man whom John had in mind when he said, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." I do not expect anybody to make clear to a finite mind the mystery of the incarnation, nor the mystery of the triune God. But the Word says so many times that God is one that I do not believe that the statement is justified that the infinite God was ever dead. Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of men, died. But the infinite God was never dead, nor could He ever be. Should not the statement be modified?

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.