

## The Christian.

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## REJOINDED TO BROTHER FORD.

In Bro. Ford's reply to my article he says "The writer of this book (Genesis) made no attempt to give a definition of the word die but uses it historically as when a man died the fact was simply stated. Neither spiritual life nor spiritual death was then brought to light." Very good. Here Bro. Ford and I walk hand in hand. Spiritual life and death were not brought to light in Genesis. Let us then leave Genesis as the writer left it and all will be right. Don't add to or take anything from that book.

Again he says, "Life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel. Hence we go to the New Testament for light on the subject." Right again. With all my heart I go to the New Testament for light on Adam's case, and whatever it says of Adam I use it to throw light on Genesis. Thus far I am glad to be in full accord with Bro. Ford. Let him state what the New Testament says of Adam and Adam's death and he will find me firm for it. But when he attempts to measure Adam's case by what it says of another man we may have to part. He quotes what Paul says of himself and concludes that the same must be true of Adam. Paul, he thinks, died a spiritual death; while yet physically living others could do the same, and asks, Was Adam an exception to this law? concludes he was not, and so has Adam dying a spiritual death. But the difference between Adam and Paul is the trouble. Adam and Paul were both men and both sinful men, but so different that the coat of one can't fit the other. Adam fell from a state of angelic purity. Paul did not. Sin revived in Paul, it did not in Adam, for he never sinned before; Paul was by nature a child of wrath, Adam was not.

What would we think of the man that reasons thus? The potentates of Europe rule for life. President Harrison is a potentate. Is he an exception to this law? and yet there is a greater difference between Adam and Paul *religiously* than between Harrison and these rulers *politically*. One of Worcester's definitions of the word death is a state of being under the power of death, "spiritually dead." Certainly. That is one definition, but a figurative one, and so remote that in the abridged one before me it is not given at all. Webster's unabridged gives this as its 8th or 9th definition, showing how far it is from its real literal meaning. This confirms what I said of the meaning the dictionaries give of die, the same as Genesis gives it. So of Blackstone's definition, "Death is a separation from that to which the person was formerly united." At death a man's spirit is separated from his body and reunited at the resurrection. Such is the meaning of death and resurrection.

What would we think of the lawyer who goes into court to prove the death of an absent man with a full array of witnesses to convince the jury that the man is *notoriously wicked*, and although running at large he is *spiritually dead*? Such a death is not recognized as valid in either law or gospel, although death, like other words, is often used figuratively.

Enmity to God is one consequence of Adam's sin, and physical death another. Adam made himself an enemy by that wicked work. God did not make him an enemy. But God inflicted punishment on Adam for his sin. Whether of these consequences was the penalty? Was it what Adam did to himself? or what God inflicted upon Adam? Here is a plain issue. Brother Ford says it is what Adam brought upon himself—his enmity or

spiritual death—and not what God inflicted upon him, which was only a remote consequence. I understand the penalty to be what God inflicted upon Adam and not what he brought upon himself. I endeavored in a former article to show that no law, human or divine, would be satisfied with the injuries a criminal did to himself, no matter how severe, but that law had a penalty beside, and regardless of self inflicted punishment. This fact has not been denied nor even noticed, but it is as earnestly as ever contended that in Adam's case the penalty is the enmity Adam brought upon himself called spiritual death!! Why does the law guard the condemned criminal as much against suicide as against anything else which prevents the law executing its own sentence? The reason is obvious. *The law and not the criminal must inflict the punishment.*

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (I. Cor. xv. 21-22) I understand that the human race died in Adam when he sinned—that he and his offspring fell together. Bro. Ford says no. The race did not die in Adam when he sinned and died, but died in him afterwards, when he was banished from the tree of life. I have here to notice a mistake our brother made (inadvertently of course) in quoting what was said only of the *New Covenant* and applying it generally to all time and all occasions about the children not bearing the iniquities of the fathers, etc. See Jer. xxxi. 29-34. Now about the banishment from the tree of life. It was the Lord's doing and no sin in Adam or any one else. It was not done to change Adam's state but to prevent a change. Adam was precisely the same dying sinner before as after that banishment, and yet strange, passing strange, he says, "This was the time and this the occasion that in Adam all died." I have read over and over again what Bro. Ford said of this so as not to misunderstand him. There is not a word in the Bible of anyone sinning or of anyone dying on that occasion. Yet he says it was then that "*in Adam all died*"!!

Yes, Adam was *nine hundred years dying* after God had said "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This suspension of threatened punishment has already been so fully explained, and there are so many cases in the Bible to illustrate God's merciful dealings with those he threatened to punish, that further explanation seems unnecessary now. I have been over seventy years dying, though under the same sentence as Adam, and can only account for the continuance of this vapory life by the fact that the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, and now lives holding the keys of hades and of death. I can rejoice in seeing Adam's life lengthened by the merits of the same Person even should this be among the details complained of.

Can Bro. Ford see no mercy at all extended to Adam, nothing but the worst of all death executed in all its vigor in that *very day*? He says "How much labor and confusion it would save to admit that God meant spiritual death, or the death of the soul, the worst of all deaths, when He said the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. For that death surely he did die that *very day*." I am happy to think that Bro. Ford is so much better than his opinion thus expressed and hope that no reader will judge of his feelings as the foregoing paragraph would indicate. He seems to think it would make quick and easy work to admit that God meant spiritual death, etc. But this I can't admit. The Lord did not put "spiritual" there and we must not. His own words must be heard at any cost. Remember what a shorter word than *spiritual* did just about that time.

What President Benton and Genennius said on the rendering of *the day* is all right, it meant the same day of course. I did not overlook the mental

agony of Christ which made His physical death the more dreadful, but showed that He could not take away Adam's sin, called the sin of the world, only as the sacrificial Lamb of God or by suffering physical death. Bro. Ford does not think that Christ suffered what He calls spiritual death, that is "*enmity to God*," though His mental agony was so intense. We can have some idea of His physical death, although we cannot judge of the intensity of His mental agony. We know this that without shedding of blood there is no remission.

I have now a proposal to make Bro. Ford. I think it is fair and just. Will he tell us how many times the Bible says that Adam died a spiritual death for eating that fruit? He has told us this a great many times in his short article (I wish I could make mine as short). If this is a Bible truth surely he can read it in Bible words. Will he kindly do this, giving chapter and verse? Will he quote some of the places? He says it is not in Genesis. Well, try the rest of the Bible and let us have chapter and verse which either says this or its equivalent, *Adam died spiritually that day*. I hope from the bottom of my heart he will not write it again till he quotes the words from the Bible. Is this fair or not? He says the writer of Genesis did not say spiritual death. Well, that writer tells us Adam did die. He also tells what the Lord told Adam.

Bro. Ford mentions Milton. Well, Milton understood death in the penalty to be the same death mentioned everywhere else in Genesis. He makes Eve say:

"But what if God have seen  
And death ensue? then I shall be no more!  
And Adam, wedded to another Eve,  
Shall live, with her enjoying, I extinct."  
Book ix. 820.

So Isaac Watts understood and thus expressed it:

Death was the threatening, death began  
To take possession of the man  
His unborn race received the wound, etc.

So understood the large majority of poets, commentators and theologians of the present and past centuries.

In Dr. Jenkyn's admirable work on the Atonement, he says: "Even if the argument from analogy failed us in proving the justice in suspending a threatening, there is one fact in the history of sinners that is boldly prominent and is presenting itself at every turn. It is the fact that the original penalty threatened to our first parents has been actually suspended. Had it been literally executed there would have been no human race now existing. The penalty threatened to Adam was 'In the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die.' Adam did eat of the forbidden tree, he was spared, he did not die, his penalty was suspended, his punishment was remitted. Was such suspension just? On what principle can it be justified? We reply that it was suspended on the principle of public justice, which made honorable provisions that the *spirit* of the divine constitutions should be preserved without adhering to the letter of it."

Adam's sin was grievous. He broke the known command of his wise and good Creator to follow and obey his worst enemy. By this he fell from God's favor and began a course of sin which made all who pursue it worse and worse. Still God did not forsake him, but pitied and cared for him. Even made coats of skin to cover his fallen children and pointed them to a Redeemer by whom they and their seed could be saved. Rejecting that Redeemer and continuing in sin makes men's case worse than Adam's.

The Antediluvians were worse sinners than Adam, because they persisted in doing wrong, they waxed worse and worse and were punished with death. Who would argue that it was *spiritual death*? They had as much of that as Adam had, but that would never satisfy law. They heard of