

Querist's Column.

[All matter intended for this column should be addressed to E. C. Ford, Port Williams, Kings County, N. S. Questions touching the meaning of scriptures will be gladly received.]

MY REPLY TO BRO. CRAWFORD.

In the last CHRISTIAN appears an article from the pen of the esteemed editor, objecting to the position taken in my answers to Bro. Ernest Crawford, on the subject of life and death. These objections will be considered as briefly as possible and in the same kindly spirit in which they are written.

Obj. 1.—“Giving to the word *die* a meaning it has not in all this book” of Genesis. The writer of this book made no attempt to give a definition of the word *die*, but used it historically; as when a man died, the *fact* was simply stated. Neither spiritual life nor spiritual death was then brought to light. Life and immortality is only “brought to light through the Gospel.” II. Tim. i. 10. Hence, we go to the New Testament for light on this subject, and there find that man both dies and lives spiritually, *while he is alive physically*; and this, too, because of sin. “For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Rom. vii. 9. Here sin, which “is the transgression of law,” is said to be the cause of death, and it must be spiritual death, for it is spoken of those yet living in the flesh.

Now if men become “alienated from the life of God,” Eph. iv. 18, and that “by wicked works,” Col. i. 21, and thus become “dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph. ii. 1, I would ask, Was Adam an exception to this law? If not, then when he transgressed the law of God, “sin revived and he died,” and was thus “alienated from the life of God,” and that “by wicked works.” Hence, when we speak of that which befell Adam the day he ate the forbidden fruit, as death, we are using the word strictly in harmony with the New Testament, where life and immortality is brought “to light through the Gospel.”

As to “the meaning the dictionaries” give, I would say that one of Worcester’s definitions of the word death is, “state of being under the power of sin, or spiritually dead.” And so great an authority as Blackstone, in defining being dead in law, declares “that death is a separation from that to which the person was formally united.” He further argues that, being thus dead, he is said “to pass from death unto life, “in the act of being pardoned by law.” Thus it will be seen that I am using the words death and die, not only in the light of New Testament Scriptures, but also in the light of the highest authority as to the meaning of words.

Obj. 2.—“Making a consequence of sin the penalty of law.” Our dictionaries tell us that a consequence is “that which follows any cause.” Hence, whatever the penalty of the sin of Adam may have been, it was a “consequence” of his sin. Milton uses the word in this sense when he says: “Shun the bitter consequence, for know the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” But taking the word in the sense in which it is used by Bro. Crawford, the question is, Which is the penalty, and which the consequence? Was being “alienated from the life of God” the day he transgressed His law, the penalty, and physical death and all our woes consequences? or *vice-versa*? If Adam was not spiritually dead after he transgressed, and while he was yet alive physically, it would be interesting to know in what condition he was. Surely he was not alive to God, for he had alienated himself “by wicked works.” None can fail to see that his spiritual condition was that of death. This being so, when did he thus die? But one answer can be given to this question, viz.: the day he sinned and was “alienated from the life of God.”

Obj. 3.—“The attempt to sever the human race from what was threatened to Adam for eating.” Would it not be as well to show that the race was immediately involved in this threatened penalty? There is no such intimation in the text. Whatever influence for evil sin has had in the world, and how-

ever much we may have suffered on account of it, no one of Adam’s children was even held *morally responsible* for his sin, any more than my son is held accountable for my sin. “The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” Ezek. xviii. 20. Anything that would effect Adam physically must necessarily be felt by the race. Thus, when he was driven from the tree of life, “lest he should eat and live”—*physically*—“forever,” as a *consequence* of his sin, the race is involved in this banishment, and in the physical death which follows as another consequence.

But, says Bro Crawford, “whoever heard of the race having access to the tree of life and being driven from it?” My brother has furnished me with the answer to this question. “The race was in the loins of Adam when he ate, as truly and in the same way as Levi was in the loins of Abraham.” This being true, the conclusion is easy, that when Adam was driven from the tree of life the race was necessarily banished in, or with him. This was a physical consequence of an act that had a physical effect on Adam. According to the Scripture no such results could follow spiritually, for “the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.” “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Obj. 4—This is simply an effort to make it appear that Adam was *nine hundred years* dying, while God said he should die “in the day” he ate of the forbidden fruit. It appears like taking a liberty with the word of God, not warranted by the circumstances, to supply “details” where God has given none. If there was no such thing as spiritual death, or death of the soul, while the man was yet living in the flesh, then we might be justified in supplying “details.” But the truth of this is not denied. Nor can there be any reasonable doubt, as has been demonstrated, that Adam died this death the day he sinned. How much labor and confusion it would save to admit that God meant spiritual death, or death of the soul, the worst of all deaths when He said, “the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” For this death he surely did die that *very day*.

Nor will the marginal reading, “dying thou shalt die,” change the matter one iota. President A. R. Benton, an undoubted Hebrew scholar, says of this passage: That “there is no shadow of authority for rendering ‘in the day,’ etc, by after the day,” and quotes Gesenius as rendering this passage. “In the day” (when) thou eatest thereof, just as in Gen. ii. 4—“in the day when God created the heavens and the earth;” and adds that “in the septuagint, it is literally, ‘in the day in which,’ implying it was on the very day.”

Bro. Crawford offers three “reasons for holding the Adamic penalty to be physical death.” 1st, Adam’s sin the cause of physical death. This, no one denies, but as before shown, it “is the remote and not the direct consequence.” 2nd, “Every sacrifice for sin had physical death in it.” True, but the *object* of every “sacrifice for sin” was to *deliver the sinner from spiritual death*. 3rd, “Jesus, the great sacrifice for sin, takes it away by suffering the most dreadful physical death.” Whatever force there may be in this is intensified by the fact that, great as His physical sufferings were, the sufferings of His soul, or His spiritual sufferings, were even greater. No one thinks it was physical sufferings that caused Jesus “to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood,” and that caused Him to say, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” and that caused Him to make that last, loud cry, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” And did not Isaiah say, in reference to His spiritual sufferings, “He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.” Thus, while His physical sufferings and the grave were necessary in order to the redemption of the body from the grave, the sufferings of His soul were equally necessary to redeem the *soul* from the thralldom of spiritual death.

Trusting that this discussion may at least do no harm, and in the most kindly spirit, I am, as ever yours,
E. C. FORD.

Port Williams, March 19th, 1892.

Correspondence.

On Monday, the 7th inst., word came to us over the wires that Bro. John B. Wallace was dead, with a request to come and attend his funeral. Leaving home on Tuesday morning by early train we reached West Goro just as the people were gathering to pay their last sad respects to one whom they had known so long and loved so much. The very large gathering of friends and brethren told more plainly than words can express how large a place our beloved Bro. Wallace had in the hearts of the people. Everyone feels that they have lost a friend and brother, and the whole church is in mourning for one in whom they had so much confidence, and who has gone in and out before them for so many years.

But as another pen than mine will give the readers of THE CHRISTIAN a sketch of the life and work of our departed brother, I will add but little more at this writing. The news of the untimely death of Bro. John B. Wallace will carry sadness to many hearts who knew and loved him, not only for his works’ sake, but for his real worth; and the heartfelt sympathy of the brotherhood will go out to Sister Wallace and the children in this the hour of their deep affliction; and many prayers will go up to the widow’s God, and to the Father of the fatherless, that they may be sustained as they pass thus under the rod.

Words of comfort and encouragement were spoken to a large and sympathetic congregation from II. Tim. iv. 6-8. We laid the earthly remains of our dear Bro. Wallace close by the home of the church he loved so well, and near the spot where he begun his life-work and where he preached his first and his last sermon, to await the last trump, when the righteous shall come forth to see the King in His glory.

“Rest, weary head!
Lie down to slumber in the peaceful tomb;
Light from above has broken through its gloom;
Here, in the place where once thy Saviour lay,
Where He shall wake thee on a future day,
Like a tired child upon its mother’s breast,
Rest, sweetly rest!”

At the request of the brethren I remained with them over the following Lord’s day, preaching each evening and twice on Lord’s day. Considering the condition of the roads and weather, these meetings were well attended, and we trust the brethren were helped in their day of adversity and that good seed was sown into good hearts.

The church in West Goro is giving Bro. Hiram Wallace an earnest call to come and take charge of the work in those parts, and we hope our brother will be able to see his way clear to respond to this invitation so heartily expressed. There is a good work to be done in Hants Co., and no time should be lost in doing it.

“Truly, the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.” Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His harvest.

Sincerely yours,

Port Williams, N. S.,
March 19th, 1892.

E. C. FORD.

Miscellaneous.

TO CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORERS.

The Christian Endeavorers in the Church of Disciples on West Fifty-sixth street, New York, send greeting to the young Disciples of Christ everywhere:

We cordially invite you to meet with us in our Sunday-school at 9 30 a. m.; in our church services at 10 45 a. m.; in our Christian endeavor meeting Lord’s day at 7 p. m. and in the mid-week prayer and conference meeting on Wednesday evening at 8 o’clock, whenever you are in New York.

You are also invited to make the Church of Disciples, No. 323 West Fifty-sixth street, your headquarters during the great convention, July