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EDITORIAL.

ADAM'S DEATH.

The discussion in THE CHRISTIAN, on the penalty of Adam's sin, I do hope will result in good to both readers and writers, and in injury to none. The kind spirit manifest on both sides I trust will continue, and as this is a matter of opinion rather than of faith, its proper discussion can increase our knowledge of the Bible and the great subject of man's salvation, while an honest diversity of opinion need not disqualify us for the service of God nor the exercise of brotherly affection for each other. Our opinions often change on important subjects by further examination, and we are glad of the change. In the unity of the Spirit there is one faith, though there may be different opinions.

To me it would be very pleasant to agree in opinion, as I do in faith, hope and love with Bro. Ford, whom I so highly esteem for his works sake, especially his general management of the *Querist Department* of THE CHRISTIAN, but having objections to his views, and those of other excellent brethren with him on this subject, I deem it a duty and a privilege to state these objections for all to consider, hoping that truth, on whatever side it may be found, will prevail, and God be glorified thereby. I know nothing of Bro. Ernest Crawford's starting this matter, and have not rendered him the least assistance since; though I think it a proper matter for examination.

As space in this paper is small, I will only offer some objections to the views set forth:

Obj. I. Giving to the word *die* a meaning it has not in all this book nor in general use. *Died* and *die* are used in Genesis over fifty times, and in every other place with the meaning the dictionaries give them, and as they are generally understood among men. I object to giving them a different meaning here. I know that in the New Testament different meanings are often given to these words, and it may be a few times in the Old. Other words as well as these are sometimes used figuratively, but words that express law are used in their plainest meaning. I know of no greater cause of error and confusion than to deny to words in which God declares His laws their plainest meaning. Jesus wisely asked the crafty lawyer not what the law meant but "What saith the law?" When God mentioned tree to Adam He meant tree, eat He meant eat, and when He said die He meant die. How can law be understood or obeyed if not expressed in plainest words?

Obj. II. Making a consequence of sin the penalty of law. Every evil doer is corrupted in mind by what he does and to the extent of his known crime. A thief is corrupted by stealing, and a murderer by his crime has his enmity to law and justice increased, but what law, human or divine, would be satisfied with the corruption of its violator? Every just law has its penalty independent of the injury the sinner does to himself. And the Adamic law is not satisfied, or in any way honored by the corruption and alienation of its transgressor; he must suffer death no matter what injury he did to himself; law and justice as well as himself are interested in his crime and both must be satisfied.

Obj. III. The attempt to sever the human race from what was threatened to Adam for eating. Holding that threatening to be alienation from God and not physical death, and denying that infants are alienated from God but admitting that they die a physical death in Adam—they seem to contend that it was when Adam was driven from the tree of life that the race was in him and died rather than when he ate the fruit. Bro Ford says in his letter, "I

this banishment the race is necessarily involved, for if Adam could not eat thereof and live, neither could his descendants, hence physical death is more immediately connected with banishment from the tree of life, and is thus the remote and not the direct consequence of Adam's sin." Further on when speaking of "as in Adam all die" his remarks are to the same effect.

Will our brother tell us how the race was necessarily involved in this banishment from the tree of life and how physical death was more immediately connected with it than with Adam's eating the forbidden fruit. Who ever heard of the race having access to the tree of life and being driven from it? The race was in Adam when he sinned and for that sin "all die." This was before the banishment, Adam was not banished to change his condition but to prevent a change. He was the same guilty dying sinner before as after his expulsion from Eden.

If it was not the sin of eating the forbidden fruit that caused the physical death of Adam and also of the human race then no one has told us or can tell what the sin was that caused the death of all. Nor will any reasoning set aside the fact that whatever death was meant in the penalty, that death passed upon all men, that it reigned even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Although all did not sin as he did, yet all must suffer death as he did. 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 when Melchizedec met him (Heb. vii; 10). And the race shared the consequence of his sin in the same way that all the passengers in a burning ship in mid-ocean sink along with the guilty wretch who set her on fire. Thus the innocent can share the consequence of sin along with the guilty.

Now the scriptures declare plainly and repeatedly that death passed upon all men, and that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, etc. As in Adam all die, etc. Believing this to be the same death threatened to Adam, I can see physical death passing on Adam the very hour he ate, and also on his children as soon as they are born, and a merciful Father through "the seed of the woman" sparing Adam and his children from day to day till they might learn not how to evade death but how to meet and conquer this enemy through Him who has met and conquered death. But if I believed the penalty not to be physical death but to be alienation from God, then I must believe that little children are God's enemies contrary to all that Christ and His apostles have said of them. But I feel glad to learn that although death comes upon us through Adam's sin nothing but our own sin can make us enemies of God.

Obj. IV. To the reason given for denying to the word *die* its current meaning, and the one it bears in every other part of Genesis. This should be carefully examined as it is the main if not the only pillar on which the theory rests. Every advocate, I remember, uses it as an end of all strife, an argument as unanswerable as demonstration itself. Here it is: *Thou shalt surely die* did not mean death in its ordinary sense. FOR ADAM DID NOT DIE THAT DAY BUT LIVED OVER 900 YEARS AFTER, AND THEN DIED.

Although this argument is used by excellent men, I cannot regard it as very reverential or sound. It appears like an attempt (unintentional of course) to limit the Holy One to a line of conduct to which He has not bound Himself. In threatening evil-doers, He leaves Himself honorable scope for the exercise of mercy, but with them no scope is allowed in Adam's case. What the Lord threatened Adam must be carried out to the letter, and since he lived 900 years instead of dying that day, death must mean something else. Would they

contend that the Lord meant something else, when He said to Hezekiah "thou shalt die and not live" because Hezekiah did live fifteen years after? (Isa 38) But, says one, the cases are not parallel. But they are parallel in this respect and the law that would bind the Lord in one case would bind Him in the other. The Lord whom it pleased to lengthen Hezekiah's life fifteen years beyond the specified time, could and did lengthen Adam's 900 years beyond the day he sinned. His way, which is so much higher than ours, he was pleased to explain in the 18th chapter of Jeremiah, and to illustrate in many cases in the Bible. He has not dealt with Adam nor with us according to our deserts. "But," says one, "we are told why He lengthened Hezekiah's life, but we are not told why He lengthened Adam's." This does not change the facts, but only shows that in Hezekiah's case details are given, but are not given in Adam's. The entire history of the first 1,600 years of time is given in eight or nine chapters, leaving no room for details. Other objections to the theory must remain for future examination, so that the reader may see the views I, in common with many others, hold on this subject. And let it here be noticed that in consequence of the extremely brief history of the fall, much of what we hold respecting it must be inferred from the few historical facts given, and from New Testament teachings. So that after all our efforts to have these inferences fairly drawn, and well confirmed by gospel light, we are liable to err, and should not be too positive in our conclusions. I feel therefore a desire to have my positions strictly tested by the word of truth, and hope that Bro. Ford will leave no stone unturned in their examination.

I will begin this synopsis by the following reasons for holding the Adamic penalty to be physical death.

1st. Every reference to Adam's sin I remember in the New Testament speaks of it as the cause of physical death.

2nd. Every sacrifice for sin had physical death in it, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission.

3rd. Jesus the great sacrifice for sin, takes it away by suffering the most dreadful physical death. He saves us by His own blood.

I understand that the sentence, "Thou shalt surely die" or as the margin gives the Hebrew, "Dying thou shalt die," passed on Adam and Eve on the very day they ate that fruit. That in the morning they were an innocent living pair, and in evening they were a guilty dying pair. That they received the death wound that would never leave them till their bodies went back to the dust. And that Cain had also the death wound as soon as he was born. That Abel had the same and that all of Adam's offspring has the same, from birth till death, and that like Adam they only live from hour to hour by Divine permission.

It may be that Adam offered sacrifice. Both his sons did. Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, and what is still better he offered it by faith, and best of all God accepted his sacrifice, testifying of it that he was righteous. Still though righteous, the sentence for him was out, "dying thou shalt die." It may be that God accepted the life of the lamb instead of the life of His true worshippers, while by faith they looked to the Lamb of God. On the very day that man had sinned, deliverance was intimated through the seed of the woman, who in the New Testament is called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In another place He is called, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Not the sins of the world, but the sin of the world. That sin which brings all the world into the grave shall be taken away, when all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth unto the two resurrections John v: 28, 29.