

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.]

ANOTHER CRITICISM AND ANSWER

Indeed, Bro. Ford, I am perfectly willing to "take God's own action in this case as the correct interpretation of His own words." You ask, "Was not Adam alienated from God the same day he disobeyed?" I say certainly! Again, "Is not this a result of disobedience?" Most certainly, I cannot fail to see that an alienation from God was the first (and immediate) result of Adam's transgression." Adam and Eve felt that themselves when, ashamed, they hid themselves from their God. But this is not the "threatened penalty." For, as you say, we have . . . a plain account of the execution of the threatened penalty. Certainly! But have we a plain account of Adam's spiritual alienation from God? No, for that was instantaneous, was it not? Immediately on sinning he was at variance with his God. The "execution of the threatened penalty" was sometime during the day. Therefore the plain account of the execution of the penalty, and the only such account, we find in the following three last verses of Genesis iii: "And the Lord said, Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever. THEREFORE the Lord sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." And to use your own words, "In consequence of this banishment from the tree of life, he died a physical death some nine hundred years afterward." Again I quote you: Following this disobedience, Adam was not only driven from the presence of the Lord, but was also banished from the tree of life lest he should 'eat and live forever.' . . . Hence, physical death must be more immediately connected with the banishment from the tree of life, and is thus the remote and not the direct consequence of Adam's sin. But this is the execution of the "threatened penalty" remember. Therefore, according to your own reasoning, "the execution of the threatened penalty" produced physical death, the REMOTE consequence of Adam's transgression. No, God removed Adam from the tree of life lest he should eat and avert the threatened penalty. You say, "Sin of itself could not kill the body." What does? Would Adam ever have died if he had not sinned? Certainly not! For he was allowed free access to the tree of life which could give him everlasting existence. Only one tree was forbidden!

You mistook my illustration for one of the two "similar instances" I mentioned. I merely drew a comparison between Garfield's death and Adam's. As to Garfield's wound being inflicted by another, that alters not the case, as I have read of men shooting themselves, and if you wish we'll "suppose it so."

Moses, the historian, also "kept the two events separate," viz: Adam's death blow and Adam's death. But they were none the less closely connected.

One or two questions in closing: If spiritual death were the threatened penalty, why drive Adam from the tree of life? Could not the spiritual death be enforced with the man physically alive? Will you please name some other places in Genesis or in the Old Testament in which spiritual death is spoken of? Should we not understand language as it was understood by those to whom it was spoken? Adam had, no doubt, witnessed the death of animals around him, but did he know anything

about spiritual death? If not, why would God threaten him with a penalty not understood by him? There are a few other points in your reply I should like to have noticed did space permit. With these few remarks, my dear brother, I await your further explanation. By the way, Bro. Ford, I think there is not much difference between us, only this, I am RAW, you are not.

Ever your brother in Christ,

E. C. FORD.

TRINITY P. M. JANUARY 9TH 1892

Though my Bro. writes with a fairly sharp pen, it is very evident that there is no vinegar in his ink. There is also such a manifest desire to know the truth that it affords me much pleasure to follow the examination of this subject a little further. In this second letter my Bro. admits about all that has been said in reference to Adam's alienation from God the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, and that this was the "first and immediate result of his transgression." But adds: "This is not the threatened penalty." Here, my dear Bro., you are assuming the very point in discussion. The question is simply this: Was this separation from God, which Adam suffered the very day he transgressed, spiritual death? The position taken in my answer to your query is that it was spiritual death that he then suffered.

In proof of this it has been clearly shown that men still in the enjoyment of physical life were spoken of as being "dead in the trespasses and sins," and that this death, or alienation from God, was on account of "wicked works." Col. i. 21. And that it was said of the woman that lived in pleasure, that she was "dead while she lived." I. Tim. v. 6. These are but a few of the many Scriptures that represent men, who still were living in the flesh, as being spiritually dead, or alienated from God "by wicked works." If these Scriptures do not teach this, then are they meaningless?

If it be true, then, that Adam's descendants, because of their transgressions, became sinners, and because alienated by "wicked works," and were thus said to be "dead in trespasses and sins," is it not but reasonable for us to conclude that he also, the very head of the race, should have suffered a like penalty when he transgressed the law of God, for the wages of sin is death? Thus spiritual death could be, and was, enforced "with the man physically alive."

The only reason known to man for driving Adam from the tree of life is that given by God himself, "lest he should eat and live forever." It would appear an act of mercy, that man having sinned, thus bringing so much evil into the world, should not be permitted to live forever in this sinful state, particularly when God knew how He would ultimately redeem all men from the grave, to which they must necessarily go on account of Adam's banishment from the tree of life.

We do not go to the Old Testament for light on the subject of life and death. "Life and immortality is brought to light through the Gospel." II. Tim. i. 10 It is to the New Testament we go for light on all these things. Indeed, without this we could understand but little as to the spiritual condition of man, either in this world or the world to come. We could never have known what God meant when He said the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, but for the light that has been thrown back on those words by the New Testament. So with very many of the sayings of God in the Old Testament; they are best understood in the light of the Gospel. This subject of life and death is no exception. The hope of the resurrection from the dead is the joy of the Christian; but we look in vain for more than a hint, and that but divinely given, in the Old Testament, for light on this blessed hope. "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" is the doom of the

finally wicked; but this too, we learn from the Gospel. From this it will be seen that there is no force in the fact that the Old Testament throws but little light on the subject of spiritual death, for it also gives but little hope of the resurrection from the dead. Is it not altogether gratuitous to say that Adam had witnessed the death of animals, and hence understood the nature of physical death? It would be hard to prove that this was true. Would it not be more in harmony with the circumstances to conclude that Adam was an inspired man, and by the aid of the spirit could give suitable "names to all the cattle and all the birds of the air and to all the beasts of the field," by which, also, he could understand the nature of death as spoken in Gen. ii. 17. This is the position taken by President Milligan and seems much more reasonable than the unwarranted conclusion that Adam had seen animals slain, by which he had learned the nature of death.

In conclusion let it be noted that the New Testament makes but small account of physical death. "Fear not them who kill the body" are the words of our Lord, "but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Paul speaks of it as a "departure" and as "being absent from the body," etc. It is the death of the soul against which we are warned in the Gospel, that we suffer not that everlasting separation from God, which is the "second death."

Yours fraternally,

E. C. FORD.

Port Williams, Jan. 2nd, 1892.

Home Mission Notes.

J. M. Hoffman's meeting at East St. Louis, Mo., additions 121.

Clements and Swartz's meeting at Le Roy, Ill., additions 106.

O. L. Cook's meeting at Hartford, Kan., additions 82.

J. W. M. Goodwin's meeting at Newton, Kan., additions 50.

Bro. Gilbert's meeting at Fulton, Mo., additions 81.

M. Morgan's meeting at McKeesport, Penn., additions 114.

J. H. Johnston's meeting at Bluefield, Va., additions 67.

W. H. Bruff, formerly pastor of the Methodist Protestant Church in Uniontown, Pa., was recently immersed by J. C. B. Stivers, pastor of the Christian Church in that city.

The evangelistic work of J. V. Updike during the year 1891 has doubtless been the most remarkable, in numbers, of any of which we have record. It is extremely rare that he writes a word for the paper, hence there will be great interest in the following:

"Report of work for the year 1891: Travelled 12,000 miles; held meetings in four States—Ohio, Iowa, Kansas and California; preached 417 times; 2,000 additions the result of the meetings; have advertised our literature and colleges everywhere and in every way I could. The Lord willing, I commence the work for 1892 at University Place, Des Moines, Ia. I ask the prayers of all God's people for continued success in winning souls to Christ."—Standard.

Bro. Mabley of Arkansas says: "We have 40,000 communicants in this State, this is double the number of four years ago."

THE CHRISTIAN is printed so early that some of the monthly receipts are not in time to be acknowledged. Next month we hope to have good reports from Bros. Devoe and Cooke, of meetings held in Digby Co.

We rejoice with the Summerville church over their good meeting. We congratulate Bros. H. and W. Murray on the success of their efforts.

When at Back Bay, Bro. Gordinier organized a Sunday-School; it has since doubled its numbers.

The great philanthropist, Earl Shaftesbury, wrote in his diary: "Let no one ever despair of a good