

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 78

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Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus and Reader Friends, Warm Greetings in the Name of Jesus.

Since sending out the April issue of the Circular Letter we have learned that our Sister C. Pugh of Aberdare, Glam. has passed away, we are sorry to have no details as yet owing to the fact that she did not communicate with any of us. We thank those who have communicated with us during the past month, when in isolation as most of us are a letter or a phone call from one of like precious faith can be like a refreshing drink in a dry and thirsty land.

Recently I have been able to visit our Sister May Lockett at Leamington who seemed a little better and she wished me to convey her love to all the brethren and sisters. Our Sister Audrey Bundy is back home again after her stay of nearly 4 months in Australia, she sends her love to all.

We wonder at this time what repercussions there will be as a result of the U.S.A. raid on Libya and the British involvement in it, according to one report Israeli intelligence was also used. The world seems to be living on a knife edge, but we thank God we can look forward to a future age of peace and equity after the judgements of God upon the wicked.

In this issue we have a further instalment of Bro. Brady's book "Too True To Be New," an exhortation by Bro. Leo Dreifuss entitled "Will ye also go away," and an article by a Christadelphian found in an old magazine and sent in by Bro. Phil Parry, and "Gleanings." We pray for the Welfare of you all and send our sincere love and good wishes.

Your Bro. and Sis. in Christ, Harvey and Evelyn Linggood.

"Go give of your best to the Master today,
For giving is living", the angel did say,
"And must I be giving again and again?"
My peevish and pitiless answer ran.
"Oh, no," said the angel, piercing me through,
"Just give till the Master stops giving to you."

Anonymous.

continued from April

Too True To Be New.

Therefore if God had inflicted upon Adam the punishment he incurred Adam would have been put to death immediately. And if it had been so Adam would have perished, suffering the just penalty of his disobedience, and the human race would never have existed. Thus whatever was done to deliver Adam, it is to that we and all men who have ever lived owe our very existence. But the problem was, How could Adam be saved from the results of what he had done? How could justice be upheld and yet at the same time man delivered from the awful situation into which he had fallen? How could God show His abhorrence of sin without exacting the uttermost farthing from the sinner and blotting him out for ever? In effect the same problem arises for every one of us personally when we realise that we are sinners and unworthy to live, but it has been solved for us and our part is to accept and believe in what has been done. Adam is our federal head; he represents us all and his one sin involved him and us with him in the condemnation which our failures would incur. It was a problem utterly beyond the wit of man or angel and unless supreme wisdom and mercy had intervened there could have been neither the present human race nor the great nation of immortals which is being selected from it. How the Almighty and All-wise God solved the problem is in fact the Gospel of Salvation. It was for ages a hidden mystery, concealed under types and allegories. It comprised those things which even the angels desired to look into. Its revelation, apart from what men like Abraham and the prophets were able to discern by the eye of faith, had to await the appearance on earth of the one Who was Himself the Key to the mystery, but even since then it has been hid from the wise and prudent because to them the Cross is foolishness. Here I wish to quote a paragraph from the pen of Andrew Wilson, a Scot to whom we owe much: "The parents of our race, recent from the fall and conscience stricken by the Divine rebuke, were driven from their blissful seat and filled with dismay at the threatening of death; a threatening piercing through their guilty souls, but of the nature and effects of which they could form none but the vaguest ideas. But when directed by stem Authority to apply some instrument of death to the lamb which, with endearing innocence had sported around, they heard the agonising groan, beheld the appalling sight of streaming blood, the struggling agonies and life's last throes, they gazed upon the breathless body and were told, this is death; how stricken must they have been, with horror such as no description can ever paint. When further, they had to go through that other process of sacrifice; the putting off of their own devised covering and the putting on of the robes of skin, their hands reluctant, their hearts broken and all their souls crushed down by the piercing consciousness that these revolting things were the fruit of their sin," the writer continues "let us then, in guilty silence. Behold the Lamb of God in dark Gethsemane and Calvary, that meek and purest lamb that was slain for us."

We now return to L.C.Jenning's address and make good his failure to supply a reason for the death of Christ. The truth is that Jesus actually and literally suffered the death incurred by Adam. He was not compelled to do so. It was not a case of God punishing His innocent Son instead of Adam; God was not here concerned with punishing, but with saving, and at the same time transforming the minds and touching the hearts of all men in all ages who are witnesses of these soul-stirring events. It was that Jesus knowing what was at stake, voluntarily took the place assigned to Him by God, when in His foreknowledge He initiated the Plan of Salvation. When we picture Jesus at twelve years old in the Temple "both hearing them and asking them questions," He was not, as some people suppose, imparting to the doctors knowledge which He received supernaturally; He was Himself commencing to learn, how His nation's history and economy proves mankind alienated from its Creator. He would learn of its deliverance from Egypt by blood-shedding at the Passover; of the laws of sacrifice and sin offering; of the law which stipulated that every first-born had to be redeemed for an equivalent price or put to death; He knew that every soul in Israel had to be ransomed by the literal payment of a piece of money; in the history of His great ancestor Abraham He would learn how Isaac was offered up and how God saved Isaac by the substitution of a ram; in the synagogue He was accustomed to hearing the words of Isaiah which speak so eloquently of One Who was led as a lamb to the slaughter and Who bare the sin of many. From all these facts and more, Jesus would gradually come to a realisation that the human race was existing under a deferred sentence of death, having been sold into slavery by its federal head Adam. How or when He came to the realisation that He was the one Who alone could effect their deliverance we do not know; it may have come as a direct revelation to Him from God; the writer's opinion is that it

would come rather by a gradual process of learning in the way suggested. He learned obedience by the things He suffered; he probably also learned why His obedience was so vital by the same process of experience, since all the facts necessary to enlighten Him were within His knowledge. As He watched the temple services and pondered their significance, Jesus would slowly realise that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. He would quickly perceive that, as Paul says later, "The Law came in order that the offence might abound." That is to say, the law with its multitude of sins and sacrifices, illustrated and emphasised the first sin whereby Adam and all the race in him lost the right to life. From Eden onwards, the animals which were offered were only types or tokens; such offerings could not alter the legal situation resulting from the first transgression of law. When they were offered in faith, and in accordance with law, i.e. perfect and unblemished, they were accepted, in the forbearance of God, for the time then present, and the individual sinner received forgiveness. But the sin in Eden, which "brought in death as a sentence, the wages of sin, still hung over mankind as a sentence of condemnation, and this could only be met "by the penalty being paid. The Jewish law strictly laid down the principle an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life. A man by his sin had forfeited his life; only the surrender of a man's life could purchase deliverance from the claim of the law. It was because Jesus knew this that, well knowing what was to happen to Him, He set His face like a flint and went steadfastly towards His death. He said as He went "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He knew the provision of the Law, that if a man were sold into bondage to a stranger, "After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him... according unto the years (the period of his bondage) shall he give him again the price of his redemption." The period of a man's bondage was his whole life; the price of his redemption was the life paid by his brother. Jesus therefore paid with His own life the debt which Adam incurred and which was still outstanding.

When John the Baptist said of Jesus "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" he did not speak of Him taking away the personal sins of individuals, or of providing a way by which all sins may be forgiven. These things can certainly follow from what Jesus did but the vital fact which it is essential to understand and accept because it is the foundation stone of the Gospel, is that by His sacrifice He cleared away that which stood between man and his Creator, the sin of the world, the first sin which stands for all sin, and the condemnation it brought represents the punishment due to all sinners, for He literally bore the penalty which it incurred but which He alone could pay without perishing. Why was this? Why could Jesus suffer the penalty of sin without perishing whereas Adam or any other man who suffered death for sin would perish? There are two factors involved, The first is that Jesus was sinless; therefore He was able to suffer death, pour out His natural life in the blood which flowed from His wounds, and then rise again in the life of the Spirit; for God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption. But if Adam had borne his own penalty he would have perished eternally, for there was no ground, provision or occasion for him to rise. He had in his probation; he was a sinner, fit only for destruction and all hope gone. There is infinitely more in this simple thought alone than Christadelphians see in the whole purpose of the Atonement - that the Salvation which commenced with Adam secured the very existence of every human creature. Thus it is in a very real sense that Jesus is "The Saviour of all men (but) especially of them that believe." If the present life is worth having, and who will deny it, every human creature owes it to Jesus. A strange and yet obvious truth which has never been preached since apostolic times. And if the future life is worth hoping for it is not because we hope our sins will be forgiven at the judgment seat but because Jesus died that we might have it. "I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly. But there is another and equally vital factor in the explanation of why Jesus was able to take upon Himself the burden of sinners, death, and yet not perish. Since all men are included in the Adamic federal head and therefore, as shown in 5th, Romans, legally estranged from God, it was impossible for any man in that position, whatever his personal goodness may have been, even to escape it himself, much less find the means to deliver anyone else. To affirm, as Christadelphians do, that Jesus "was raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David and by dying abrogated the law of condemnation for those who were under condemnation and therefore for Himself" is as absurd as to imagine that a bankrupt man in a debtor's prison could by some means conjure up the wherewithal to pay not only his own debt but also with the same money purchase the release of all his fellow prisoners. Not only is the idea unsound in itself but it is foreign both to all the principles of sacrifice and redemption and to clear scriptural teaching. There is never the least suggestion that Jesus was under any form of condemnation nor in any need personally of redemption. As

we have seen, the only ground upon which even Christadelphians base the contention, a suppressed inherited sin-nature, is a complete fallacy. The truth is the very contrary; so far from being penniless, Jesus was rich (in His inheritance) but for our sakes (by giving His life) He became poor. So far from being in bondage or under condemnation, as a Son in His Father's house He was free. (Matt.17:26).

To be continued next month.

Will Ye Also Go Away ?

We read in the Gospel according to John, ch, 6, that at one time Christ had followers besides the twelve apostles. But when Jesus told them things hard to be understood, and as they realised that much faith was required to accept Christ's preaching, they went away from Him. There were only twelve left, and even one of them was a traitor, so that during much of His ministry He had only eleven really faithful followers. Christ had talked to them about the children of Israel eating manna in the wilderness. This was a type of Christ, a type of the bread of heaven giving eternal life. The manna in the wilderness merely sustained those who ate of it during this present life. But Christ revealed Himself to them as the true bread from heaven. And then He told them things which to the Jews of that time were really new. We must remember that Jesus was speaking to the Jews who only had the Old Testament as the source of inspired knowledge. Many of the things preached to them are quite evident to us who have the New as well as the Old Testament to draw on, but required even more faith from those to whom they were first preached, because of their very newness. For example in His sermon in John ch. 6, He tells them of the resurrection, which, though revealed in the Old Testament, is not dealt with there in great detail. He tells them: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." Or: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day." No doubt this saying puzzled them. It is easy enough for us to understand who can read the whole of the New Testament. But what about those Jews of Christ's day? It is true the faith required was not blind faith. There were the many miracles He did which were a sign that Jesus was indeed the Messiah sent from God. Nevertheless, some of His sayings must have appeared strange. He said himself that he would speak to them in parables, and it was only to His faithful disciples to whom He explained their meaning afterwards. Nevertheless, there were eleven faithful ones whose faith that this man who spoke to them was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, contrary to all appearances otherwise, was sufficiently strong to stay with Him through all his trials, to the last; although only Peter really followed Him to the very end, and even he denied Him then. When there were only twelve left Jesus said to them, Will ye also go away?" And Peter, always ready to let the Master know how willingly he would follow Him, quickly answered. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Those apostles showed a supreme example of faith and love for the Master. Think of it: the Jews generally thought that this was just another fanatic, another pretending to be the expected Messiah. There were several such persons at that time. There was sufficient evidence, let us be frank, for the doubters and sneerers to make the most of. After all, the Romans were still their rulers. He did not take the kingdom by force, when He had the chance. What would mere human reasoning make of this? Pure human reasoning would make us wonder at times whether there was not something in it after all in what the Pharisees had to say of him? Was this one genuine after the many recent claims by pretenders to he only followed by disappointments? Yes, that fact that Jesus did nothing at all about getting rid of the Romans by force was something which His enemies could constantly rub in. This also applied to His repeated assertion that He was the Son of God, something hard for the Jews to reconcile even today, never mind when it was first preached to them, with the Old Testament teaching about there being only one God. And then in addition to all these puzzling statements there came the one about His "being the bread of life. He truly set them a riddle when He said: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life..." Yet among all these bewildering statements and temptations from people casting doubt on Christ's claims, the apostles, at least eleven of them, had the strength of faith to hold on to Him. I wonder what we would have done under those circumstances. Would we have been as the twelve, or as the seventy whom He sent out at one time, but who left him when they realised the temptations involved? And what is more important, in which group are we now? Are we prepared now

to follow Christ wherever He leads, whatever trials and temptations we are to pass through, to the end of our probation? Are we as the twelve, or shall we in the end turn out to be as one of those disciples who left Him, when temptation seems too hard for us? Listen again to Peter's answer: "To whom shall we go?" There is no other Saviour. If we deny Him, He will deny us. If we forsake Him, we cannot expect God to have any dealings with us. No. God's word is very definite about those who accept the Lord and then turn away. Better not to accept Him in the first place, than to accept Him, only to turn our back on Him later. But while God is against those who turn away, He does want people to be converted to consider it carefully before taking the step, rather than take it rashly at the spur of the moment. Jesus says in one of His parables to the people (Luke 14:28) "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? ...so likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." When somebody wanted to follow Jesus he even discouraged him: "The foxes have holes," he said, "the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." God does not want a rash decision; He does not compel man to serve Him. He wants man to serve Him of his own free will. But He does want us to keep with Him after having made the choice. "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." There is another point worth noting; Jesus knew from the beginning that He had a traitor among the twelve, but it made no difference. All the while during His ministry, He treated him like the other eleven. This is a great example of love. God is love, and Christ, the manifestation of God, is love also. How would we have acted, how do we act if we merely suspect somebody in our company to be plotting against us? And yet, the best we can do sometimes is to suspect. We cannot tell the future. Yet Christ had no need to suspect, He knew who was the traitor before he even committed that treacherous act. God knows beforehand what we are going to do. A solemn thought: God knows now what I don't know that I am going to do. God knows now whether you or I are going to be tempted, whether you or I are going to remain faithful, or, whether you or I are going to fall and to die as having lost the race for eternal life. But let us think of this also: suppose God knows that I am going to yield to temptation, or that through some sin or continuous had living I am going to lose the race for eternal life. It makes no difference to the present. God loves me whatever He knows that I am going to turn out. It is after I actually commit a sin and do not repent that He is going to judge me. But meanwhile it makes no difference to His love towards me, even though He knows that I shall at a later time turn away under temptation. The judgment is on sins committed, after the act when the person has shown by his acts what he is. We have a free will. We choose, and if we choose evil, it is entirely our choice, and the responsibility for the consequences is ours. Such love and foreknowledge, and yet a free choice of decision, is incomprehensible to our minds. We have a free will, we are judged by what we do, and yet God who knows our decisions before we even think about them, still loves us, even if we are going to turn out for the worst. God puts up with evil in the world now, as Jesus declared in the parable of the wheal and the tares. "Let both grow together until harvest." But remember some day harvest time comes along. Some day the judgment will be a present reality. Then we shall be judged on what we have done, when our deeds will be manifest to all. Let us then be with the faithful eleven, and keep with Jesus, abide in Him. Only if we abide in Him to the end of our probation can we be sure of the crown.

Brother Leo Dreifuss

The Doctrine Of Original Sin Shown To Be Unscriptural

Jas. M. Brown

We Christadelphians call the doctrine of Original Sin - "Sin In The Flesh." Dr. John Thomas taught:-

"It (sin) represents that physical principle of the animal nature which is the cause of all its diseases, death and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "which has the power of death;" and it is called sin because the development or fixation of this evil in the flesh was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh" that is, flesh

full of sin, so that sin in the sacred style came to stand for the substance called man.” (Elpis Israel, pp.115).

This statement of Dr.Thomas is replete with errors and absurdities. It is not true that “all diseases, death and resolution to dust,” are the result of Adam’s sin. Disease is the result of violating the laws of health, and natural death is but the result of the complete loss of vital power in the blood. Thousands of accidental deaths occur annually, and innocent persons are executed, not because Adam sinned, but because they are the victims of circumstances, or are unjustly slain. Original sin has nothing to do with such “resolution to dust.”

Moreover, it is not a fact that sin was fixed in the flesh by Adam’s transgression. There are no fixed principles and no organs in the flesh now besides those put in Adam’s and Eve’s bodies by their Creator. The building up and breaking down processes, styled in Physiology *anabolism*, and *katabolism*, operated in their bodies, precisely as they do now in all Natural Bodies. Their bodies were renewed by the air they breathed as well as by the proteins, carbohydrates and fats that were so necessary to their well-being; and metabolic equilibrium, or perfect health, was maintained by them so long as the laws of health were strictly obeyed. It is quite contrary to reason to assume that eating good, ripe fruit resulted in disease.

If Adam’s sin fixed what Bro. Thomas calls the “evil principle” of sin in the flesh of all human beings, the race would break the law as naturally as it partakes of food, and takes rest in sleep, or any other natural act. And as no one can be blamed or censured for what is transmitted in the flesh and blood, the race could not be judged or condemned for such fixation of “sin in every part of its flesh.” Fortunately, the wise Creator did not fix sin in Adam’s body, and He made it impossible for any one to fix a sin in the flesh of his progeny.

He made the race for great possibilities for good or evil, He knew it would need training the right way, for every normal human being may be improved by being brought up in the Way of Righteousness. So God gave the First Man a law, or rule of conduct, and told him what would be the consequence if he broke it. After what theologians style “The Fall of Man” occurred, God did not show any displeasure towards Adam’s children because of Adam’s sin. One of them committed murder as men and women do now. The others were righteous. No evil principle of sin was fixed in their flesh. Hence Abel and Seth were righteous, and Cain wicked.

If the fixation of sin in the flesh is what causes men to sin now. What caused Adam and Eve to sin? Did they have sin fixed in their flesh before they broke the law? If not, how did they break it? Is it not clear that they allowed their own thoughts to become inordinate, and thus enticed by their own persistent wishful thinking, they sinned? It is perfectly clear. Hence the monstrous dogma of the fixation of sin in the flesh, is false and contrary to the truth of the Scripture as well as to enlightened reason. Many accept the dogma that the sentence propounded on Adam “defiled and became a principle of his being and was transmitted to all his posterity.” (Original Birmingham Statement of Faith. Article V). If this assertion be true, God not only defiled Adam, but permitted all human beings to be defiled by the sentence. Then when they had sin and death fixed in their body, and were defiled, why ask them to obey the law since they could not have done so by reason of being defiled? God is made responsible for defiling the whole race, according to this creed announced in the Temperance Hall Statement of Faith. Now, how did God save the race from the result of this defilement? Listen; “teach” said Bro. Thomas, as “Jesus Christ, when upon earth, was Deity manifested in sinful flesh in the nature that sinned in Eden.” (Christadelphian, Oct. 1869, pp. 286).

What does this mean? It means that Jesus was Deity. This Deityship impossible, in that Deity of the Bible cannot associate Himself with sin. Yet Bro. Thomas’ reasoning would have it that Jesus, miraculously begotten, was what the Bible repudiates for God who cannot lie (Titus 1), in that The Deity associates with sin in Jesus, who, as Bro. Thomas maintains “Was sinful flesh.” And what was He when born? “Sinful flesh” said Bro. Thomas. What is “sinful flesh”? “Flesh full of sin,” is Bro. Thomas’ reply. Here a miracle was performed to produce Jesus as is supposed to be the main thought, but a mightier miracle still prevails according to Bro. J. Thomas, in that Holy spirit is made to beget sinful

flesh in the womb of Mary. Thus a corrupt thought begets a system of thinking which brings into being equally as inconsistent as ever Rome invented, or Calvinistic Presbyterianism upheld to be divine truth, and exposes to view the dread fact that Bro. Thomas and R. Roberts argued us back into the doctrinism of Churchdom by reason of use of terms alleging a supposed opposition to what Rome and Protestantism really teach, while these same terms by their very plausibility involve the deceived, to a greater depth of inconsistency, than previously. Hence a miracle was performed for the purpose of producing one who, although "Deity," was "flesh full of sin." In what was this miraculously conceived "Deity" better than any other of those whom God defiled? He was not a particle better, for he was "sinful flesh." And what was this "sinful flesh (flesh full of sin) produced for? "For the condemnation of sin in the nature that sinned in Eden." How was sin condemned in Jesus' body? By crucifying Him on the cross? Who crucified Jesus? The Jews and Romans. Did they act in accordance with God's design in doing this? They did, according to Bro. J. Thomas who wrote:- "Who was the High Priestly Offerer in the crucifixion? The Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9/14), upon the principle that what one doth by his instruments, he doth by himself." (Ambassador , for April 1868. pp. 117).

Here is Bro. Thomas teaching in his own recorded words which, when analysed by critical minds bring to the light that Bro. Thomas as certainly as yet (at the time of his writing above) hardly free from the taint of Calvinism, and that this taint appears in his written works, which, if imbibed by us may as well do its fell work of hurrying us back again into the bosom of Mother Rome.

Here the Thinker will stop short to consider how it may be a murder might be acceptable to God as a sacrifice for sin, it being apparent that sin personified in the persons of His murderers, made Jesus a sacrifice to their sin, this being the meaning of that spoken by Peter in Acts 3/13, saying, "Whom ye delivered up and denied him in the presence of Pilate", while Christadelphians with millions more misread Acts 2:23, as meaning "God delivered him up to be crucified," the meaning here being plain enough that God by His foreknowledge had given Jewry His Son to be their Saviour, knowing that people would kill Him through their wickedness. In this their cup of iniquity was brought to the full, with the result that, that murder has not yet been requited for by Israel. If then, Calvary was Jesus' sacrifice for sin, Jewry did not sin in murdering Him, the fact being that Jewry, with God, co-ordinated to effect this (so called) sacrifice and so we have a reasoning which, analysed to the logical limits, denies all the previous life of Jesus prior to Calvary to have been anyway a sacrifice in itself in preparing Him for the Saviourship of the World. To go further in reasoning - if Calvary were, of itself the cleansing of the world as the sin of Adam had been alleged the defilement of the world, then substitutional salvation must be the substance of the teaching of the Bible.

Thus there faces every sincere mind the factor that sin in the flesh and sin by the flesh are at the Cross-Roads so far as meeting at one table is concerned. Either system requires a different and opposite Christ, Sin-in-the-flesh that of a substitutional one, that of a Sin-compounded-flesh made Saviour, versus one who never permitted sin to defile Him, that He might compound righteousness with His flesh, in becoming one in mind with the Deity. (See Hebrews 1:5; John 1:14). Such two opposite Christ's cannot sit together at the one table. It but becomes a Table of Devils' at which Jesus who offered Himself to God at the Jordan as having fulfilled all righteousness, must withdraw Himself with His Own who, understanding His Sacrifice having been completed to become the Lord Christ at the Jordan, in Spirit of the Word of God; afterwards shewed Himself to a traditionalised and therefore poisoned minded people as the Christ of God, who was willing to even give His life-blood as a testimony before them of His love for that people. Jesus by His life under the Law, brought to light the only redemptive factor involving salvation for everyone, consisting in such dying to self as the only way to truth, that must become ones' Life, to live in Spirit to God, thus Paul could well say in Romans 8:8, "So, then, they that in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, so being that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Herein Paul gives the lie to the dogma of Sin in the flesh.

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The way I may not always see,
But this I know: God cares for me.
It matters not what seems to be,
Since this is true: God cares for me,

Though tempests rage on land and sea,
I'm safe because God cares for me.
From doubt and fear He keeps me free;
My surety this: God cares for me.

Selected.

Gleanings.

The Tree Of Knowledge.

Genesis 2: 9

The Bible says that this tree was the Tree of Knowledge (of good and evil) and I believe it. It is not called the Tree of Physical Change, and Adam did not experience a physical change. His was a mental change, something to do with knowledge. We read in other parts of Scripture concerning "knowledge of good and evil," and concerning the "opening of the eyes", and these occurrences amply explain what happened to Adam. For instance, Deuteronomy 1:59, "Your little ones... which in that day had no knowledge "between good and evil." They did afterwards know. How is shown by Isaiah 7:16, "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good..." Knowledge is a mental, not a physical process. A child at school attains to knowledge without the necessity of a surgical operation. At home it duly learns what is good in the sight of its parents, and what is not. So with the opening of the eyes. Saul on the way to Damascus had his eyes opened (yet physically shut). We have had our eyes opened. We once imagined that "heaven was our home," for example, and we are still physically the same.

The above on the Tree of Knowledge gives us some room for thought. So I thought I could add some Scriptures that would verify and help us to discriminate between things that differ.

The first thought that came to my mind, many years ago, when contending for the natural creation, was "In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened," were they created blind? The evidence, "in the day," proved what we contend. When the woman saw (mental) that the Tree was good for food, pleasant or a delight to the eyes (literal sight), and a Tree to be desire to make one wise," etc., there we have the three lusts, or the three means which are natural and right in their place. They are also the three means whereby sin can be committed if law forbid. James shows how lust, or desire when conceived brings forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished brings forth death all in the natural order. There is no doubt that the Scriptures explain themselves - God is His own interpreter, as we have seen in "thou shalt surely die" having an exact parallel in Shimei (I Kings ch. 2 vs 56,57), and a further one is observed in Luke 24:31, "and their eyes were opened". The people were no more blind than Adam and Eve. It was their understanding that was at fault, being open to the consequences either for good or evil. In verse 45 we have the answer; "Then opened He their understanding." Have not we experienced the same thing? Have not the Scriptures and other things been dark to us, and suddenly have seen a truth which had previously "been hidden? Thus we see there is the natural sight and blindness and the Spiritual Sight and Blindness. When the difference is seen the right understanding can "be applied. "Open thou my eyes", says David, "that I may "behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119 v 18), but better expressed, shall I say in Ephesians 1:18, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened." (R.V.), "having the eyes of your heart enlightened"). One Could go on, but I leave you to take up your concordances and look up words regarding the "opening of the eyes", for you will get much profit from your study. Jesus

opened the eyes of the literally blind as well as the eyes of their understanding. May we not be as the Pharisees who say we see and our sin remaineth, but like the literally blind man saying, “ Once I was blind and now I see “, in the spiritual sense and be among those who shall see the King in His Beauty.

F. J. PEARCE.

Foreknowledge

“And we all know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Romans 8:28-50)

“Whom he foreknew” - certain ones are special subjects of God’s foreknowledge - before they were born - marked off beforehand (predestined). For what? What destiny? To be conformed to the image of His Son.” But there are two phases to this. 1). Conformity of character. 2). Conformity of nature. The first depends largely on ourselves; the second entirely on God.

Conformity of character is our responsibility. Paul omits this for the sake of his argument, to stress, not in the first place of works, but Grace. So there are four stages, three of which are gone.

Predestinated, called, justified. The fourth is certain so far as God is concerned, so certain indeed, that the past tense is used. That depends on us; being morally free we make our “Calling and Election sure,” so it is obviously not sure.

J B

Taken from a 1954 circular letter.
