

The **IMPUTATION** *of*
ADAM'S SIN

A Study of Romans Chapter Five: 12-19

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THE IMPUTATION OF ADAM'S SIN

One of the most controversial passages of Scripture is found in Romans 5;12. In the KJ version, this reads: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

This verse ends in five contentious words: *for that all have sinned*. It is the interpretation of these five words that has generated the controversy which has raged in Christendom since about the year 400 A.D. Up until that date it was generally agreed that death of all mankind, was the result of Adam's sin. But c. 400 A.D. Pelagius, a British monk, promoted the notion that death is the result of the personal sin(s) of each individual. From the beginning of Pelagianism right up until the present time, two interpretations or models¹ of the five contentious words have been current. The controversy has not escaped Christadelphian circles and has been the cause of divisiveness.

Model number one. (*As in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith*)

The traditional Christadelphian belief was this: Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden by disobeying the specific command of God. The result of this sin was that death passed upon himself and all of his posterity regardless of any personal sin(s) that his posterity commits. The result of Adam's sin is thus a straight-forward one-step process: Adam sinned and as a direct and immediate result, death became inevitable for all men irrespective of personal sin(s). In other words, no other factor is involved between the sin of Adam and the death of humanity.

Model number two. (*The Pelagian alternative*)

Adam sinned and a result, all of his progeny are born with an innate proneness to sin personally. Inevitably, all men sin and come short of the glory of God. Since the wages of sin is death, death is the result of personal sin(s). Thus, men do not die as a direct result of Adam's sin. Death is only an indirect result of Adam's sin inasmuch as Adam's sin wrought an innate proneness to sin in mankind. This innate proneness to sin will inevitably cause the individual to commit personal sin which, in turn, causes death. Thus, death is viewed as a two-step process. Step one is the innate proneness to sin which passed upon all men as a result of Adam's sin. Step two is the commission of personal sin(s) which results in death to the individual who commits the sin(s). In other words, there is a factor between the sin of Adam and the death of individuals and that factor is personal sin(s).

THE ISSUE STATED

The controversy boils down to this: Mankind suffers death as a direct result of the sin of Adam (Model number one, above) or mankind suffers death as a direct result of personal sin(s) (Model number two, above). Perhaps a simple diagram would put the two models in focus:

¹ A *model* is a conceptual framework, an orderly system of thought, within which one tries to explain an abstract concept.

Model #1 (*A one-step process*)

ADAM'S SIN



DEATH FOR ALL HUMANITY

Model #2 (*a two-step process*)

ADAM'S SIN



PRONENESS TO SIN,
RESULTING IN INEVITABLE
PERSONAL SIN(S) FOR ALL
HUMANITY



DEATH RESULTING FROM
PERSONAL SIN(S).

ARGUMENTS ADVANCED TO SUPPORT MODEL NUMBER TWO.

1. The five contentious words: *for that all have sinned*, are taken to mean, *because all have sinned personally*.
2. Moral actions are not transferable from one being to another. The personal act of any agent is, in its very nature, the act of the agent, solely, and is incapable of being participated in by any other agent.
3. The apostle makes no reference to infants when he discussed the death that comes to all men. Since all men inherit a proneness to sin, inevitable personal sin can be predicted in infants as their life continues.
4. Adam's posterity cannot be guilty of Adam's sin. A righteous God will not punish a man with death when there is no guilt. Men are punished by the Almighty for personal or actual transgression, not because of the transgression of another party.
5. That men should be liable unto death, which is nothing but the punishment of sin, when they have not sinned, is an open contradiction.
6. From Adam we derive a proneness to sin in consequence of which we inevitably sin personally. Men sin in their own persons and *therefore* they die.
7. Ezekiel 18 clearly indicates that God does not hold one person guilty of the sins of another. "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: 'The fathers eat sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge?', as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. *The soul who sins, is the one who will die*". (NIV verses 2-3 Italics added). Further in verse 17, the principle is stated: "*He shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live*".
8. It is neither fair nor equitable for God to punish a man with death, which is the wages of sin, unless he is guilty of committing a personal sin. The ordinary justice that governs one man's dealings with another, is a reflection of the justice of God. All members of human society hold that it is wrong to punish a man for the faults of another.
9. The Greek words *kai houtos* in Romans 5:12 should be rendered *in like manner*

(Strong 3779). There is a connection between sin and death, which existed in the case of Adam, and which applies to all who sin. Adam sinned and he died. In like manner (and so) other men have sinned and they died.

10. The Greek words *eph ho* (for that KJV) in Romans 5:12 should be translated by *because* (see RSV; NIV and many others). The apostle is arguing that death passed upon all men subsequently to the sin of Adam, **because** all have sinned personally and come short of the glory of God.
11. Deut. 24:16 reveals a divine principle: “The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death *for his own sin*”. (Ital. added)

FACTORS RAISED TO SUPPORT THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTADELPHIAN VIEWPOINT

Grammatical Considerations

1. Since the most controversial verse in the dispute is Romans 5:12, an examination of the text is necessary. The KJV reads: *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.* The words **and so** are from the Greek *kai houtos*. Pelagians are forced to interpret these words to mean *in like manner*. That is: just as the sin of Adam brought death to Adam *in like manner* our sin(s) bring death to us. Greek scholars are virtually unanimous in rejecting this concept in translation. *Kai houtos* is accepted as meaning *in this way, thus, in this manner* or *in consequence of which* the sin of one man passed upon all men. This is the acknowledged force of *kai houtos* by which the apostle establishes the direct connection between the sin of one man and the death penalty which is in the world. The Pelagians argue that there is no such *direct* connection between the two: Only an *indirect* connection because personal sin(s) must intervene in the scenario before death can take place. If the Pelagians are correct in arguing that there is an intervening step between Adam's and death, namely personal sin(s), then a similar intervening step must be introduced between Jesus Christ's righteousness and life, namely the personal righteousness of the believer. In other words, **both** processes must involve two-steps not just the former.
2. Let us now examine the five contentious words at the end of Romans 5:12 - *for that all have sinned*. This writer is not a Greek scholar so he must rely on those who are. In the Greek language there are two tenses that are employed to record events that occurred in the past. They are the imperfect tense and the aorist tense. The imperfect tense is used to denote an action that is continuous, repeated, habitual or recurring. The aorist tense is used to record an action which happened once in the past. The action is limited to a one-time occurrence. Grammarians call this tense a *punctiliar* tense because it expresses an action without any regard for its continuance, recurrence or frequency.²

An example of this usage would be: “The *Titanic* sank and many have drowned.” In such a case the Greek verb for *drowned* would be in the aorist

²See *The Elements of New Testament Greek*. J.W. Wenham. Cambridge University Press. p.96 and *New Testament Greek* D.F. Hudson. English Universities Press Ltd. 1960. p.49.

tense. They do not keep on drowning. Nor is the drowning a continuing action. It is a one-time occurrence. In Romans 5:12, the Greek verb which is translated by *have sinned* is in the aorist tense indicating that the sinning is a one-time event which took place in the past. It is strictly *punctiliar*. As one scholar of the Greek language has observed, "How an historical, indefinite *aorist* could be used to denote a continuing, repetitive and habitual process is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive".

A similar observation is made in *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Ray Summers; p.66-7), "The imperfect is a moving picture; the aorist is a snapshot". This one-time historical *punctiliar* event- this snapshot - is the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. The idea of a "moving picture", of all men sinning over time, is excluded by the usage of the aorist tense in this controversial passage of Scripture. This is a fatal bruise to Pelagianism.

3. Another controversial grammatical question is the meaning of the Greek words *eph ho* which comprise the first two of the five contentious words that end Romans 5:12. The KJV translate these words by *for that*. Many other versions translate the words either by *because* or *inasmuch as* (RSV; NIV; TEV etc.). Greek scholars agree that a legitimate translation of *eph ho* is *because*. The problem is not the translation of *eph ho*. The problem is the translation and meaning of *have sinned*. In view of the apostle's usage of the aorist tense, which describes a one-time event, it is obvious that a possible translation is this: Because all **did sin**. This is the exact translation by *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*: "For that (because) all did sin". We will deal with the way or manner in which all men sinned in a later section of this study.

AN ALTERNATIVE RENDERING

But there is another whole way to interpret the Apostle's meaning. The Greek words *eph ho* can also be legitimately translated by the English words *in whom*. The author of this study has written to the heads of the Classic Languages Departments of both the Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England asking them if the translation of the Greek words *eph ho* in Romans 5:12 by the English words *in whom* is a legitimate translation. In a letter dated November 12,1995, Professor James Diggle Litt. D., F.B.A., Cambridge University replied that *in whom* is a legitimate translation of the Greek *eph ho* in Romans 5:12. In a letter dated May 30,1995, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford University, M.A., F.B.A., Dr. H.C. stated that *eph ho* can legitimately carry the translation of *in whom*. These two letters were written without collusion between the writers.

Thus, a legitimate translation of the five contentious words is *in whom all did sin* - with the understanding that the **whom** refers back to Adam. This translation is noted as an alternative in the margin of the KJV and is carried in the *Emphatic Diaglott* as well. In other words, Paul is arguing that during the one-time event, which occurred in the Garden of Eden, all mankind sinned "In Adam" when Adam transgressed the divine command. When the Greek text was translated into Latin by Jerome toward the end of the fourth century, the words *eph ho* in Greek, were translated by *in quo*

[omnes peccaverant] (in whom all sinned) in Latin.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

This notion might seem to be somewhat far-fetched if it were not for an exact parallel which the writer to the Hebrews expounds in his seventh chapter. The divine principle is stated: Levi paid tithes to Melchisedec inasmuch as Levi was in the loins of his great grandfather Abraham when the latter paid tithes to Melchisedec, King of Jerusalem. (Hebrews 7:9-10) [Under the Law of Moses, which came into force about 550 years after Abraham, the tribe of Levi made their living by the contribution to them of a “tithes” - ten percent of their earnings - by all of the other eleven tribes. Hence, Levi is described as a “receiver of tithes” under the Mosaic system.] Despite this arrangement, Levi is described as a **payer** of tithes on the grounds that he was in the loins of Abraham when Abraham **paid tithes** to Melchisedec. Of course, Levi did not *actually* pay tithes to Melchisedec. But he was **deemed** to have paid tithes on the divine principle stated.

By an exact parallel divine principle, all mankind, humanity, sinned in Adam inasmuch as they were in Adam's loins when he transgressed in Eden.

Traditionally, Christadelphians adopted this interpretation of Romans 5:12. Brother John Thomas emphasized his understanding of the matter by citing the above principle at least thrice in his writings.³ The sense of Romans 5:12 was understood to mean “Therefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death as a result of this one transgression, in consequence of which, death passed upon all mankind, in whom (Adam) all humanity did sin”. Thus universal death is seen as a direct result of Adam's sin with no intervening action or medium at work.

The Greek tense of the verb used in this passage of Scripture is critical to an understanding of the apostle's exposition. Whether it is insisted that *eph ho* be translated by *because* or by *in whom*, does not alter the fact that the “sinning” is a one time, *punctiliar*, snapshot occurrence and not a continuing, habitual, recurring and “moving picture” series of events.

THE CASE OF BABIES AND INFANTS

This principle is verified in the case of the death of babies. Babies cannot sin personally so their death cannot be ascribed to personal sin(s). Pelagians face an insuperable difficulty when they try to fit the death of new-born infants into their theory, namely that death is a result of personal sin(s). Even Bro. Robert Roberts stumbled badly when he tried to answer this embarrassing enigma when this question was put to him during a debate. Bro. Roberts gave two reasons why babies die. The first reason was that “They are mere bits of animal organism”.⁴ The second reason was “because they are mortal”.⁵ If it is stated that babies die, *in other words*, they are mortal, a fact is observed. But to say that babies die *because* they are mortal is like

³ See *Elpis Israel* 12th ed. p.128-129; *Eureka* Vol II-B p.238-9; Vol III-A p.317.

⁴ The Roberts-Andrew debate. 1894 (123)

⁵ *ibid* (423)

saying a man is deaf *because* he is hard of hearing. This is a tautology - circular reasoning, it is no use saying that Paul did not have babies in mind when he said (according to the Pelagians) that men die because they sin personally. This is simply begging the question. Another reason advanced for the death of babies is that they are born with a proneness to sin which, in the normal growing-up period, would cause them to sin personally. A case of prospective or prophetic sin! Again, this explanation is merely begging the question. "Why babies die" is satisfactorily answered by the traditional understanding but presents an impossible difficulty under the Pelagian interpretation.

THE STYLE OF PAUL'S WRITING

4. While we are discussing grammar, we should deal with Paul's style of writing. It is generally agreed that Paul does not complete the argument of Romans 5:12 until he gets to the 19th verse. Verses 13 to 18 are seen to be a parenthesis and are so bracketed in the KJV. Why the apostle broke off his symmetry at the end of verse 12, is not clear. But the symmetry would require something like this: "Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through his sin, and thus death came to all, because in him all did sin, so also through one man, righteousness entered into the world, and life through his righteousness, and so life came to all who are in him by the appointed way".

Instead of completing the symmetry, the apostle introduced some explanatory clauses from verse 13 to verse 16 inclusive. In verses 13-14, he likens death to a monarch which reigns over humanity. He demonstrates that from the time of creation until the introduction of the Law of Moses around 1450 B.C., death reigned over mankind even though they did not sin in exactly the same way as Adam by breaking a specific divine personal command.

Paul then introduces a concept on which much of the argument depends. This concept is stated in verse 14: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression *who is the figure of him that was to come.*" This concept is elaborated by the apostle in I Cor. 15:45 & 47.

Adam was the "first Adam" and the "first man". The Lord Jesus Christ is the "second man" and the "last Adam". These two "Adams" sustain a unique relationship to humanity. **The whole history of mankind depends upon their relationship to Adam and to Christ.** Death comes by being constitutionally in Adam. Life eternal comes by being constitutionally in Christ. The apostle then demonstrates that Adam and Christ are two pivotal personages in the whole of human history.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FEDERAL HEADS

It is a Scriptural principle that both Adam and Christ were, respectively, the beginning of a new creation by the hand of the Almighty. Let us examine the impact

upon humanity in the case of Adam. It was not just to Adam personally that the command was given, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth". It was not just to Adam that God granted the riches and plenty of the earth. It was not just to Adam that the curse, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread". Adam is the federal head of all humanity. This is Biblically stated in Genesis 5:1-2, "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called **their** name Adam, in the day that they were created.

The entire history of mankind shows that God deals not only with Adam personally, but also, by extension, with humanity. This concept is set forth in Scripture by the little word **in**. When Paul says that **in Adam** all die, he is talking about the relationship mankind has with Adam as a result of his sin. If we argue that Adam was not our federal head, that therefore Adam's sin is not put to our account nor are we punished nor condemned on account of it, where do we find the counterpart of this in our relationship to Christ? If we hold that from Adam we receive only a proneness to sin, in consequence of which we sin personally, and *then* are condemned to death, we must argue that we receive from Christ only a proneness to righteousness in consequence of which we become personally righteous and *then* we are justified and reconciled to God. On the contrary, at baptism, we are justified on account of the righteousness of one man, Jesus Christ, someone *outside* of us personally, something that has no dependence whatever on our personal righteousness. Similarly we are condemned to death by the sin of one man, Adam, by someone *outside* of us personally, something that has no dependence whatever on our personal transgressions. The parallelism developed by Paul in Romans 5, must apply to both Adam and Christ.

MATHEMATICAL PRECISION

It is with almost mathematical precision that the apostle develops his argument in Romans 5:16-18. Paul *introduced* Adam as the federal head and the totality of the human race in verse 12. He *contrasts* the work of Adam and Christ in verses 15-17. He *compares* the work of these same two federal heads in verses 18-19. **Five times** he repeats the statement that all sinned in Adam. The argument can be set down almost mathematically:

- v.15 Through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead
- v.16 For the judgment was by one (Adam) to condemnation.
- v.17 By one man's (Adam's) offence, death reigned by one (Adam)
- v.18 By the offence of one(Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation
- v.19 By one man's (Adam's) disobedience, many were made sinners.

The apostle uses the word **one** twelve times in the Romans passage. The **one** man Adam is both compared and contrasted with the **one** man, Jesus Christ. The argument pivots on the assertion that the sin of Adam is the source of the whole business of death, condemnation and judgment which befell the whole human race. There is not the slightest suggestion, intimation, inference or implication that the Pelagian factor of personal sin intervenes, interposes or interferes with the sin of

Adam being the direct cause of death, condemnation and judgment for mankind. No other sin or reason is introduced to explain the death of the progeny of Adam. Humanity's proneness to sin and the personal sins of humans are entirely omitted from the apostle's argument. There is no introduction of personal sin(s) as some indirect or intermediate Pelagian factor between Adam's sin and the death of humanity. Surely if Pelagius' theory is correct, we should find it as an essential ingredient in this passage of Scripture. Its omission shouts of its fallacy and its lack - of Scriptural support.

THE COMPLETION OF VERSE TWELVE

We have mentioned that the apostle digressed at the end of verse 12 and engaged in a parenthesis (verses 14 to 18) in order too illustrate his point. His argument is finalized and clinched when he comes to verse 19 which reads: "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Herein is the work of the two federal heads (Adam and Christ) of the two respective creations, summarized: Death through Adam and life through Christ.

The pith of Paul's assertion in verse 19 hinges on the word **made** (*kathestemi* in Greek). Strong(2525) gives this dictionary definition: To place down (permanently); to designate, constitute, convoy, appoint, conduct, make, ordain. Liddell and Scott devote one quarter of a page to indicate its English meaning: To ordain, appoint, establish; to bring down to a place and set there; to bring into a certain state. The Vulgate translation into Latin is *constitutio* (constitute).

Paul clinches his argument by stating that by the disobedience of Adam, many were *constituted* sinners. He does not say that many were made *sinful*. He uses a noun, not an adjective. The apostle is arguing that, as a result of Adam's sin, humanity was set down in the rank of sinners; they were placed in the category of sinners; they were regarded as, and deemed to be sinners, even before they committed any personal transgression.

Now as soon as one interprets Paul's concept in this manner, immediately a cry is raised that Jesus Christ is declared to be a sinner!! Verse after verse is cited to show that our Savior was a lamb without blemish; that he was sinless - without personal sin; who did no sin neither was guile found in his mouth - etc. Somehow it must be explained how all humanity were constituted sinners (including Christ) by the disobedience of Adam, and yet Jesus was devoid of personal transgression.

In what sense were all mankind deemed to be sinners? If we want to know in what sense all men in Adam are deemed and regarded as sinners, we must find out how all men in Christ are deemed and regarded to be righteous. The answer is by *IMPUTATION*.

IMPUTATION

It is admitted that nowhere in Scripture is our relation to the trespass of Adam expressly defined in terms of imputation. But the concept of imputation is a concept which frequently occurs in the sacred text. Lev. 17:4; Psalm 32:2 are O.T. examples. N.T. examples are II Cor. 5:19; James 2:23; Romans 5:13 and Romans 4:22. When the Psalmist states in 32:2, "Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth **not** iniquity", this is proof that the Lord **does** impute iniquity in certain cases.

Romans 4:22 is an excellent example of how imputation works or functions. First of all - a definition: To *impute* means to invest with honour or office; to ascribe honour or virtue to; to attribute, clothe or confer; to bestow on something or somebody as due or appropriate. A good example of *imputation* is the usage of paper money by governments. A dollar bill is a piece of paper measuring approximately six inches by 2½ inches. The piece of paper has no intrinsic value of its own. But, by a careful printing process, the government *imputes* value to the paper even though it has no value of its own.

The Scripture says that Abraham had righteousness *imputed* to him on account of his faith. (Rom. 4:22) Abraham was not really and *intrinsically* righteous. But he was deemed and accounted righteous and was clothed with righteousness by the Almighty even though he lacked personal sinlessness all of his life. The apostle uses this example to demonstrate how those in Christ have His righteousness *imputed* to them as well, by the same element of faith in God's wondrous plan of salvation. Well God knows our feeble frame. He knows that we can never attain righteousness on our own. But God is willing, nay anxious, to *impute* the righteousness of Jesus Christ - to deem us to be righteous, to confer righteousness upon us - in the appointed way at our baptism. We are not *really* subjectively or morally righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ upon us. But we are deemed and accounted to be righteous nevertheless. God credits us with righteousness even though we fall far short of actually being righteous. This is not to say that personal righteousness and an acceptable walk in Christ, is not required after baptism.

In Romans 5:19, Paul reasons: "By the obedience of one (Jesus Christ), shall many be made (constituted) righteous. This is just another way of saying that the righteousness of Jesus shall be imputed to us in the appointed way. That it is righteousness of *Christ* that is imputed to us is repeated by the apostle in I Cor. 1:30. Here we have a divine principle affirmed. The righteousness of one man can be imputed to another man even though personal righteousness and holiness are lacking in the individual to whom righteousness is imputed or reckoned. It is not a transfer of moral character. It is a matter of constitution, status and reckoning.

WHAT IMPUTATION MEANS

This exact same divine principle is set forward by the apostle in the case of Adam. The sin of Adam is imputed to his progeny even though personal sin and transgression are lacking in the individual to whom sin is imputed or reckoned. If

the imputation of righteousness is allowed by Pelagians, there should be no problem in allowing the imputation of sin either.

When it is affirmed that the sin of Adam is imputed to us, let us be clear what this does **not** imply. It does not imply that we are morally responsible or that we are criminally guilty of Adam's sin. What it does mean is simply this: Because we were "in the loins of Adam" when he sinned, his sin is counted as our sin. Therefore we are constituted sinners. We are deemed to be in a state of sin and we are accounted as having the status of sinners. "Constituted sinners" cannot be forced to express anything more than a deemed and divinely-reckoned relationship to Adam's sin.

Just as justification is term of status or relationship and operates in the absence of personal righteousness, so condemnation is also a term of status and relationship and operates in the absence of personal trespasses(s). In the case of the imputation of Adam's sin, the basis of imputation is our involvement and relationship to Adam's predicament and operates in the absence of personal sin(s). It is the state and status, not the act, that is imputed to Adam's descendants.

In summary we can say this: Whatever divine principles are at work in the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to ourselves, are exactly the same divine principles that are at work in imputing the sin of Adam to ourselves. **If this is not the case, then the whole parallelism between the one man - Adam, and the one man - Christ, is destroyed.**

FAIRNESS

One of the principal planks in the Pelagian platform is the matter of *fairness*. The Pelagian argument goes like this: God is a God of justice, fairness and equity. It would violate the justice and fairness of God to punish one man for the sins of another. Since it is a divine principle that the wages of sin is death, to inflict death on Adam's progeny because of Adam's personal transgression, runs contrary to the justice of God.

By arguing in such a fashion, Pelagians are caught in their own trap. According to their human concept of fairness, God is certainly unfair in inflicting the progeny of Adam with both a proneness to sin and mortality (which Pelagians admit is the case). For Pelagian fairness to prevail, every descendant of Adam should begin life in much the same condition as Adam was before the Fall. The new-born child should start off with a neutral slate -with no bias toward sin and no inevitability of death. Only after the child's first sin, would it be fair to inflict death upon it. But this is not the way it is. Babies die before they have committed personal sin(s).

Pelagians cannot have it both ways. They cannot insist that God is unfair to inflict death on Adam's progeny because of Adam's sin, and in the same breath see no unfairness in admitting that God has inflicted the human race with an innate proneness to sin which inevitably leads to death.

Pelagians must explain the fairness of God in visiting an inevitable proneness to sin with the result that all humans are caused to sin and consequently to die (according to their theory) for a reason that they are not responsible for introducing.

The subject of **FAIRNESS** should not be abandoned without understanding the way the Almighty operates in this present evil world. In many cases, “the sins of the fathers” have been visited upon the children.

1. Exodus 34:7: Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth *generation*.
2. Deuteronomy 23:2: A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord.
3. Joshua 7 relates the case of the sin of Achan. Achan had “took of the accursed thing” by stealing spoils which the Israelites were commanded not to steal. Because of this one act by one man, “the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel”. The Lord said unto Joshua, “Israel hath sinned and **they** have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for **they** have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and **they** have put it even among their own stuff”. Here we have a case wherein the sin of one man was visited upon the whole nation. All doubt is removed about the principle here involved when we read in Joshua 22:20 “Did not Achan, the son of Zerah, commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell upon **all the congregation of Israel**? And that man perished **not alone** in his iniquity”. (Emph. added) This is an insuperable difficulty for Pelagians who rely upon concepts of human “fairness” to support their notion.
4. Melchisedec -Hebrews chapter 7. The writer argues as follows: “Levi, also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him”. This is a very enlightening concept. The verb actually used is in the passive voice. It does not mean that Levi actually paid tithes. What it **does** say is that because Levi was in the loins of Abraham, the latter was paying tithes for himself and all his progeny, including Levi, at one and the same time. In exactly the same way, it is Scriptural to say that the whole of humanity was in the loins of Adam when Adam sinned and transgressed and so mankind came under the condemnation of the law and its penalty.
5. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” Galatians 3:13. This principle is quoted from Deuteronomy 21:23 which reads, “...for he that is hanged is accursed of **God**”. From human reasoning, here is a case of downright unfairness. Through no fault of the victim, a person is involuntarily hanged on a tree and, as a result the curse of God is placed upon him.
6. The Jews who suffered the convulsion and debacle that befell Jerusalem and the Temple at the hands of the Roman general, Titus, in A.D. 70, could blame the catastrophe on the sins of their fathers 40 years earlier when they cried, “His blood be upon us and on our children”. (Matt 27:25)
7. Deut. 23:3, “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of

the Lord; *even to their tenth generation* shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever". (Ital. added). If the length of a generation is about 40 years, then an Ammonite who lived 400 years after this edict, suffered the penalty incurred by his ancestors. Pelagians cannot avoid the fact that the actions of one party adversely affect another party and that this principle has divine sanction.

EZEKIEL 18

One cannot help but notice that the Scriptural evidence for the Pelagian theory is sparse indeed. Most of the support for Pelagianism is found in human reasoning, which, unless it can be founded on Scripture, is virtually always faulty. Pelagians lean very heavily on Ezekiel 18 for Scriptural support for their theory. On the surface, Ezekiel 18 seems to lend credence to Pelagianism; "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel". (Ezek 18:2-3) This injunction from God seems to nullify the concept that the "sour grapes" eaten by Adam could cause his children's teeth to be set on edge; that is: that death of the children would be the result of Adam's sin.

Ezekiel is not talking about whether the actions of one party affect the position of another party **in this life**. Ezekiel is talking about whether a person's **eternal salvation** is dependent upon or can be governed by the actions of someone else. Ezekiel argues emphatically that one's eternal salvation is not affected by the actions of another party.

That the subject of Ezekiel 18 concerns **eternal matters** can be demonstrated by an examination of verse 21: "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, **he shall not die**". It is perfectly obvious that the prophet is dealing with **eternal** life when he says, "he shall not die" that is, he shall not remain dead eternally.

Ezekiel 18 cannot be used to substantiate the Pelagian theory.

PELAGIANISM AND JESUS CHRIST

Being a Trinitarian, Pelagius felt it necessary to develop a theory which would exempt "the second person of the Godhead", Jesus Christ, from a connection with sin in any shape, manner or form. Any theory that involved Christ with sin in any possible sense, was anathema to Pelagius. The Pelagian theory was ideally suited to achieve this goal. Since all are agreed that Jesus did not sin personally, then he was not under taint from Adam including the death that passed upon all men. Therefore, by allowing himself to be **put** to death, his sacrificial death was undergone entirely **for us**.

Pelagianism is a misinterpretation of Scripture and a special pleading for a doctrine which has profound implications. Pelagians believe that they are honouring Christ by exempting him from any taint of sin whatsoever. Whereas the truth is that he was our forerunner and tempted in all points like as we are, yet without personal sin(s). Jesus was clothed with the same sinful flesh as those he came to save.

In this essay, it is argued that the sin of Adam was imputed to all his posterity including all babies and including the baby born of the virgin Mary. Before we go on, let us get one thing clear and that is what we mean by repeating that Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity. What the Bible teaches is that, because we were in the loins of Adam when he sinned, his sin is counted as our sin. We are born into a state of sin and we are deemed and counted as having the status of sinners. As the apostle says, "By one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made (constituted) sinners." (Romans 5:19). We do not mean that new-born babes are personal transgressors or that they are criminally culpable of personal sin(s).

There are a number of Scriptures which indicate that Jesus had the sin of Adam imputed to him.

1. Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me". Under the Mosaic Law, when a woman conceived and bear a child, she was deemed to be unclean for several days. (Lev.12) and an atonement was required for her uncleanness. Does not this requirement indicate that the child born of the woman had some kind of an involvement with sin? The involvement could not possibly be personal sin so it must be imputed sin. At the birth of Jesus, Mary offered the sacrifice of two birds according to the law of Moses. This indicates that Mary was unclean at the birth of Jesus just the same as any other mother in Israel and an offering was required as the law demanded.
2. Romans 6:9, "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him". The apostle is here implying that, during the days of his flesh, death **did** have dominion (mastery, NIV) over him. Death is the wages of sin. What sin was responsible for the dominion of death over Jesus? It certainly was not personal sin. The only possible explanation is that the sin was the imputed sin from Adam.
3. II Cor. 5:21, "For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin.." There is no difficulty in understanding what "*who knew no sin*" means. Paul means that Jesus never committed any personal sin(s). The first part of this verse simply means that Jesus was the recipient of the imputed sin of our first parent.
4. Hebrews 9:12, "Neither by the blood of bulls and goats but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*" (KJV) The end of the sentence *for us* is not in the Greek Manuscripts but is added to the English text by the translators. As has been often pointed out, the verb *having obtained* is in the middle voice - a tool of grammar that the English

language lacks. The middle voice is a verb form in which the subject acts directly or indirectly upon itself. It is reflexive in meaning. What the apostle is saying is that Jesus, by his own sacrifice, obtained *in himself* eternal redemption. It was by the shedding of his own blood that he, himself, obtained eternal salvation. This statement has no meaning unless Jesus required deliverance from the dominion of death. Pelagians admit that Jesus required "redemption" - which they equate with a change from mortality to immortality. What they are forced to explain is what the shedding of his own blood has to do with this transformation.

4. Hebrews 7:27, "Who (Jesus) needeth not daily , as those high priests, first for his own sins and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself." This is a very embarrassing verse for Pelagians to explain in accordance with their theory. Several times, the writer to the Hebrews emphasizes the word **himself** many times: Heb. 2:14; 5:3; 9:7; 9:14; 9:25-26. Some Pelagians deny that Hebrews 7:27 applies to Christ. But this cannot be sustained. The apostle is contrasting what the Mosaic high priests did *daily* with what the Lord Jesus Christ did *once*. In both cases, the offering included "his own sins" as well as the sins of the people. The only sin that Jesus could offer for, on behalf of himself, was the imputed sin of Adam.

CONCLUSION

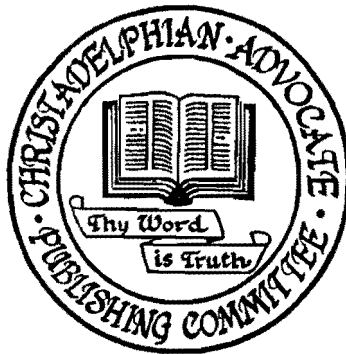
In this short essay (which is by no means exhaustive) we have tried to show the error of Pelagianism. Pelagians often try to buttress their theory by stating the one cannot separate Christ from his divinely-appointed work. It is pointed out that "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners" (I Tim.1:15). The implication is that, since Christ committed no personal sins, he, himself was in no need of salvation. His only need was redemption" - that is - to be rid of his mortal body and be clothed with immortality.

We have attempted to show that Jesus, by virtue of the imputation of Adam's sin in himself, was born down in the human pit like the rest of us. He was just as much in need of deliverance from the condemnation to death which passed upon all men as a result of Adam's sin, as the rest of humanity. His sacrificial death on the cross achieved this deliverance for himself and for us. Jesus was therefore, in every sense, a forerunner - a representative of mankind and not a substitute.

It is quite possible to examine the position of Jesus Christ as a man "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4) apart from the work assigned to him by his father. After all, his ministry lasted for only three years +, - only about 10% of his life. It does not seem reasonable to argue that his position in regard to life and death cannot be examined Scripturally, before the beginning of his ministry at age 30. This is especially true inasmuch as his lineage and birth are given singular prominence in Scripture.

We believe that the statement in the original Christadelphian Statement of Faith of 1877 is correct: "In Adam's sentence, all mankind are involved, in consequence of their being physically derived from his physically-affected being". Jesus Christ was one of the "all mankind" involved in the condemnation that resulted from Adam's sin. Failure to recognize this teaching of Scripture, leads directly to viewing the sacrifice of Christ as substitutionary - a sacrifice which was wholly undertaken for us since (according to Pelagianism) there was nothing *intrinsic* about the nature of Jesus Christ that required a sacrifice at all.

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