

# **Pelagianism in the Formation and Reformation of the Christian Church**

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## **Part I**

By the middle of the second century, the Church had developed the Apostle's Creed which contained the foundational doctrines, or essential beliefs of the Christian Church. In the 4th century, the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ had been established at the Councils of Nicea in 325 AD, Ephesus in 431 AD, and Chalcedon in 451 AD. The doctrine of soteriology however, or the doctrine of salvation and grace had not been clearly and systematically established until Augustine and the Pelagian controversy in the 5th century in the West. These doctrines of Salvation and Grace would continue to be debated throughout church history, through the Medieval period, the Reformation, and up to the 20th century. In contrast to these Augustinian doctrines of sin and grace, the controversial doctrine of Pelagianism would reappear in many forms to challenge these doctrines.

Although the major teachings of God and Christ had been established, what had not been fully established up to this time were the questions "What did Christ accomplish in his life and death?" and "How is this work of God applied to man?" It would not be until the medieval church when the Atonement of Christ was fully developed, but the doctrine of Salvation began to be fully fleshed out with Augustine. It has been said by the great 19th century Church Historian Philip Schaff, that the history of the Church unfolds much like the writings of systematic theology. The doctrines of God and the person of Christ are built, then the doctrines of man, his condition and relationship to God.

Augustine was born in Thagaste, to African parents of Romanized Berber origins on November 13, 354 AD. He was educated in Carthage, a prominent North African city, and was considered a very great intellectual man in the Western world. He was converted to Christianity in 386 AD after the prayers of a very devout mother and the influence of an intellectual bishop by the name of Ambrose. Before his conversion, he had lived a somewhat reckless and pagan life according to his book Confessions. Augustine's Confessions are not merely his autobiography but also his first theological treatise written five years before the turn of the fifth century.

Because of his great education, Augustine saw the Old Testament scriptures, as did many educated people of this period, as a gathering of myths or "old wives tales." Manicheism rejected the Old Testament and sought reason to define Christianity opposed to revelation, and this made him very susceptible to this group because of his association with reason in general and Platonism in particular. He joined this heretical sect and made several converts during the nine years in which he remained.

After Augustine's move to Milan, he met a Christian intellectual named Ambrose. He would sit under his teaching, learning as much about Christianity as he could. Ambrose convinced him of the soundness of not only the Old Testament, but the truth of the New Testament as well, and Augustine was baptized by the great bishop in 387 AD. He moved back to North Africa after his conversion and the death of his mother Monica, where he was influenced by the people of Hippo to be their bishop.

The first great schism in the church, and the first controversy in which Augustine dealt was what is known as the Donatist controversy. Simply stated, The Donatists believed they were the only church and that the Catholic, or universal church, could not be if they disagreed with the Donatist's teachings. The Donatists held that the Sacraments could not be administered if the Bishop of the congregation was unfit. They saw that the Sacraments' effect on the church member was based on the righteousness of the Bishop administering. Augustine responded by saying that "The Sacraments are the work of God, not of men. They do not, therefore, depend on the character of the administrator." It followed because of this belief of the Donatists, building upon the early church father Cyprian's statement: "You cannot have God as your Father, if you do not have the Church as your mother," that if they were the true Church, anyone outside their walls were not Christians. The Church was pure, and therefore no one that is "unrighteous" should be allowed entrance, and definitely not administered the Sacraments of God's grace.

Augustine responded, in his intellectual style and protective position as Bishop of his congregation, by arguing with the Donatists. He stated Christ used the parable of the wheat and tares to establish that the true Church would have "Many wolves within, and many sheep without." He also pointed out that it was not right judgment for any Christian to claim another is an unbeliever and a heretic if they are willing to state the creeds and agree with the basic biblical teaching (i.e. the Apostle's Creed and the catechesis). The famous quote: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in everything, charity" came from the writings *Against the Donatists* and established the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in their ecclesiology, or doctrine of the Church throughout the Medieval period. The debate between Augustine and the Donatists is officially ended at the Council of Carthage in 411 AD, when the Donatists and their teachings are condemned by the Church.

The second major controversy with which Augustine would have to deal as Bishop, was the problem of Pelagianism. Many scholars compare this dispute against Pelagian with Martin Luther and the 16th c. Reformation, much because of the arguments that were used in the theological arguments such as Original Sin, Justification by Faith alone, and the depravity of man; not to mention that Luther was an Augustinian Monk before his reformation.

Pelagius was a British monk, a very zealous preacher who was castrated for the sake of the kingdom and given to rigorous asceticism. He desired to live a life of perfect holiness. In Christian history, he has come to be the archheretic of the church, but in his early writings he was very orthodox and sought to maintain and uphold the creeds of the early church. He came from Rome to Carthage in the year 411 AD, while Augustine was away during the Council of Carthage. He taught the people of North Africa a new emphasis on morals and the rigorous life of living the Gospel, because he was shocked by the low tone of Roman morals. He thought that the teachings of Augustine, which he had heard in Rome, cheapened grace and gave men the ability to live a life that they pleased, without much respect for the commands of God.

The problem with his reputation in history has been his doctrine of soteriology. According to orthodox theology, he makes fatal errors in this theology of salvation: "Self acquired virtue is the supreme good which is followed by reward," or as a basic thesis: "Justification by the person's own good works." The debate between Augustine and Pelagius began when Pelagius took issue with a quotation from Augustine's Confessions: "Command what thy will; and grant what thou commandest." This meant that we needed to ask God for ability to do what God commands (this implies that God gives us the desire to do this, thus preceding our actions). We will see this Augustinian teaching later in history during the reformation when Luther writes similarly in his Bondage of the Will to Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. Luther says, "We cannot come to Christ, unless the Father gives us that ability," relying on the writings of Paul in Ephesians Chapter 1,2 and the Book of John Chapter 6.

The objection Pelagius had against Augustine was "How could God command us to do anything if we were unable to do what he commands?" Pelagius responded by saying: "God does not command us to do anything that we cannot do...If I ought, then I can." This problem hinges around his understanding of Original Sin. Original Sin is stated, "Adam is created mortal and would have died even if he had never sinned." Augustine said, "Adam was created good and upright, he was happy and in communion with God...Adam would not have died if he had not sinned but that he was on trial, and when he failed his depravity was communicated to his offspring throughout history so that the Old and New Testaments speak of man's depravity from Genesis to Revelation." (Genesis 6; Psalm 51; Jer. 17:9; John 6:44; Matt. 15; Eph.1; Romans 3:11-23).

Augustine argued to Pelagius that Adam was "posse peccare," "posse non peccare." He had the ability to sin and the ability to not sin, but since the fall in his disobedience, death came through Adam in his sin (Gen.3; Romans 5:12-21). Adam was on trial and chosen by God to represent the human race, therefore because of his failure and disobedience to God, Adam's offspring are born in sin (Ps. 51), with the inability to not sin. Man still has freewill (*liberium arbitrium*), but his will is in bondage to the sinful nature and he cannot do what is godly, only that which fallen man desires, which is never focused godward (Romans 8:9; 1 Cor. 2; John 6:44). Augustine wrote, "Adam fell into a state of total and hopeless ruin, of which the proper ending is eternal death." Many Church theologians will agree with this doctrine, and these Augustinian doctrines will be repeated in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, and John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Original sin, according to Augustine was not the first sin committed by Adam in the garden but the consequence of his disobedience, or the lack of good, the condition of sinfulness that is common to mankind since the fall- an inherent, inherited sinful corruption and condition that makes it impossible for man to not sin. It was the loss of *libertas*, which was the loss of true moral liberty as defined by Augustine.

Pelagius argued with Augustine that God would not command us in the Law to live a particular way if he did not also give us this ability. He wrote to Augustine that Adam represented Adam only and that man cannot be placed on trial because of someone else. "Adam's sin merely set an ill example, which [man] has been quick to follow. Hence they almost all need to be set right...but after baptism, man has full power and duty to keep the divine law." This belief logically brings Pelagius to the conclusion that justification in vicarious atonement cannot be true either, because another man cannot represent the punishment of someone else's sins. Man is responsible for the keeping of the law and his resistance to sin by himself. The obvious sinfulness in man in the fallen creation must have an ability to not sin, it is only that they tend to sin because we are born in a society where evil prevails. Men are born innocent, but the society that is evil seems to prevail upon them causing them to be bad. Augustine asked him, "How can society be evil when made up of men that are not fallen, because society should not be evil, but good if men are born good."

Pelagius was much like Socrates in his teaching of education and knowledge being the foundation of righteousness. Moral problems can be solved and evil can be done away with through education, Pelagius would say. Augustine responded that we would only end with sophisticated, educated crooks and that man is by nature sinful and fallen and only God's Grace can make the evil heart of man good. Augustine defined evil, rather than ignorance, as the absence of the good, the godly. Pelagius said that Christ came to educate man and bring him knowledge of God and his condition. His death was only an example of the evil-ness of sin, rather than a vicarious atonement where Christ's righteousness is applied to His people.

In 418 A.D. a conference was held in Carthage of North Africa and Pelagius was condemned at the Council of Carthage, which was a territorial council rather than an ecumenical one. In the course of the controversy there were three different popes residing. This was a significant moment that strengthened the papacy when the Bishop of Rome stepped into a territorial council and placed his stamp of approval on Pelagius' condemnation.

Augustine wrote that mankind is a mass of sin. He was what theologians in the Church have called a true Pauline theologian, one Protestant theologian from Princeton even said that Augustine "gave us the Reformation of the 16th century, because of his strong emphasis on the grace of God in salvation." He built his foundation on the Apostle Paul when he had written "there is none righteous, no not one...no one who seeks after God or does good..." from his letter to the Romans in the New Testament. The great commandment of God according to Christ was "To love the Lord thy God with all thy strength, mind, and heart, and love one another as yourself." Augustine believed that the most gross and heinous of sins was unbelief, not merely "To hate the Lord thy God with all thy strength, mind and heart, and to hate another even though you love yourself." He explains meaning that if man was sinful, and the great commandment was this, then to not keep this great commandment with the absence of good was the great evil of

mankind, proving his inability to truly to do good and honor God. Augustine wrote that many see heinous sins and crimes as merely murder, adultery, and other outwardly visible sins, but that the greatest and most heinous of crimes is that which is not visible, namely unbelief or the dishonoring of God's commandments. It was not God's fault that man sinned against him, because man was tested in a perfect environment in the garden in perfect circumstances but with mutability, the ability to change: posse peccare the ability to sin if he chose to do so, his nature at this point in time being neutral. Man is now born with a condition which prevents him from fully obeying God (or the loss of libertas: moral liberty), thus doing the ultimate good and keeping the great commandment; therefore, only God by his grace can provide the ability to not sin. God provides this grace to a certain number of people within the Church as he did to Israel, a particular nation in the Old Testament (Deut. 7:7).

Augustine seems to establish that God does command what man cannot do. Augustine taught that because of this inborn nature and freewill to do only that which is evil and not godly, then man was by nature an object of wrath, as Paul had taught in the letter to Ephesians (Chapter 2), and in his letter to the Romans (Chapter 3 and 8). Christ came to "set the captives free" by living a perfect life in sinful man's stead, and dying, taking the wrath of God upon himself although innocent, and applying his righteousness to a particular people. Augustine wrote: "...man's good deserts are themselves the gift of God, so that when these obtain the recompense of eternal life, it is simply grace given for grace."

Augustine has been called the theologian of grace in history because of his writings in soteriology, and the establishing of an orthodox position on God's giving of grace to sinful man. He never denied man's freewill, he established it. He denied that according to the Apostle Paul and Christ's teaching, he was unable to be totally free in righteousness; thus, he had no ability to live perfectly righteous. Man was still free, but free to do only that which is evil. By the grace of God, in the infusion of love by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5), the enslaved will chooses that which is pleasing to God, "not only in order that they may know, by the manifestation of that grace, what should be done, but moreover in order that, by its enabling, they may do with love what they know." According to Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, a tree is either good or evil at root. You know the tree by the fruit it bears, or to make this a human analogy: that which is born of flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Paul wrote that man is at enmity with God, fallen and under the wrath of God, children of the devil. Augustine concludes his arguments for his statement "Command what thou desirest; and give what thou commandest," by stressing that if Pelagius disagrees with him, he has to disagree with the teachings of Christ. Christ taught that "no man can come to him unless it is given by the father," "be perfect as my father in heaven is perfect," "The Spirit gives life, the flesh profits nothing...without me you can do nothing" (John6; Matt.5).

Pelagianism is officially condemned in April 418 AD by Western Emperor, Honorius, and exiling the adherents of this doctrine. In May the Council of Carthage proclaimed that Adam became mortal by sin, that children should be baptized for the remission of original sin, that grace was necessary for right living, and that sinlessness is impossible in this life. The Churches stating this doctrine and condemning internationally through the known world the teachings of Pelagius issued a circular letter. Pelagius dies sometime before 420 AD, but his teaching did not die with him. It continued to be propagated by his students posthumously. Because of the

continuation in the Church of these teachings, the final, official condemnation of Pelagianism came in 431 AD at the Third General Council in Ephesus. Pelagianism was therefore condemned by official Church councils in the East and the West and has been condemned by more church councils in history than any other heresy.

In the subsequent history after Pelagianism is "officially" condemned, it continues to thrive in small sects within the Orthodox body of Christ. There were those within the orthodox church who believed that Pelagianism was a heresy, but they did not agree fully with Augustinian Soteriology. These "Semi-Pelagians" as they were called, rejected Augustine's doctrine of predestination and irresistible grace. They thought that these two doctrines denied human responsibility. In 529 AD, a man named Caesarius (c. 469-542), a monk in Southern France and later a Bishop of Arles, held a synod in Orange, which was later approved by Pope Boniface II (530-532) (which is the great significance of this small synod). This synod formally ended the Pelagian controversy, but practically Pelagianism would continue in the form of Semi-Pelagianism.

Semi-Pelagianism, which becomes popular in the 6th century, states: Grace is an external prerequisite for salvation, contrasted with pure Pelagianism which stated that man has ability to obtain salvation without a prerequisite of grace. Semi-Pelagianism is a synergistic soteriological system and states that man cooperates with the grace that God gives before his conversion, and he has the power to choose grace, which is in disagreement with Augustine. The Semi-Pelagianists, in order to line themselves with Christ's and Paul's clear teaching on the sinfulness of man, wrote that man was not dead in his natural state, merely sick and he needed some form of Grace and help from God as a prerequisite for salvation. However, even though man is fallen and sick, he still has an island of righteousness within him to choose the help of God. To agree with classical predestinationism (because this was the official position of the Church as this time and a clear teaching in the writings of Paul) they stated that God had prescience, or foreknowledge, of who would choose this grace, and that God on this basis would in time and space regenerate or justify these people.

In 529 A.D. the Catholic Church condemned Semi-Pelagianism at the Council of Orange as being heretical. Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace was adopted as the anthropology of the Western Church. The most important leaders of the Church remained true, for the most part, to the Augustinian anthropological system for two or three centuries after Augustine. They stood with Augustine in his classical position that God could not have chosen men based on their decision for good, because they would never have chosen the good, being unable to do so. This system of Augustinian doctrine came to be known as Semi-Augustinianism because it denied the doctrine of absolute or particularistic predestination. Pope Boniface emphasized the declaration, after giving his approval: "Even the beginning of a good will and of faith is a gift of prevenient grace, while Semi-Pelagianism left open a way to Christ without grace from God." Thus the Church was obligated to hold to this doctrine of prevenient grace as it had been established. The Semi-Augustinian doctrine was best represented at the close of this period by Gregory the Great who represented the moderated Augustinian system.

Gregory's moderated Augustinianism would be one of the greatest influences on Medieval Theology and the majority of the Medieval Church, but the strict Augustinianism had its

adherents in Bede, Alcuin, and Isidore of Seville. These who held to the stricter Augustinian teaching would hold to irresistible grace and predestination. These doctrines would be repressed during the early Medieval period, and would become prominent again in the Gottschalk controversy in the 9th century, again repressed and would return in the teachings of Wycliff and Hus, precursors to the Reformation.

## Part II

In the Reformation of the 16th century, these Augustinian doctrines of grace would be proclaimed from the rooftops by an Augustinian monk named Martin Luther. Luther's greatest argument was that Rome had turned from the true teachings of the Augustinian soteriological system and had become Pelagian. Although Rome condemned Luther as an heretic in 1521 he continued that it was not he who had turned from the teachings of the orthodox church, but rather the majority of the church herself. He claimed he was returning to that which was truly the teachings of the orthodox Catholic Church. Contrary to what many Protestants and Catholics alike believe about Martin Luther, he did not want a serious Reformation of the Church in the sense of a drastic change in the Sacraments, Liturgy or even the Papacy. He foundationally wanted to return to the teachings of Augustine, particularly on his doctrines of grace in salvation. What began in the selling of indulgences by a man name Johann Tetzel and what Luther saw as the selling of salvation, became the biggest schism the Christian Church ever underwent.

After the Diet of Worms in 1521, and the Reformation had begun, the movement became limited in 1524 when Luther's cause became a party rather than him becoming a German National leader. The first of the separations of the Reformation were by the Humanists, who had an admired leader named Desiderius Erasmus. Erasmus could not agree with Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone that was the conclusion of his Augustinian soteriology. Erasmus believed that Luther denied free will and challenged Luther in the fall of 1524.

Luther began his debate with Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, a monk who has been called an "impeccable Latinist" and a "man of letters" because of his great intellectual ability. Erasmus was convinced that the church of his day was superstitious, corrupt and full of error, but because of the Church's power at this time in history, he dared not to leave the church but wrote many treatises against some of the practices. A popular phrase has been coined "that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched." Because of his mastery of the Greek language, Erasmus published a Greek Testament in 1516. It was the reading of the Greek, rather than Latin translation that brought Luther to many of the doctrinal conclusions as a teacher in Wittenberg, Germany. Erasmus brought about a great renaissance in this period because of the return to the sources or ad fontes of early Christian and Greek literature that he translated.

Much like Pelagius of the fifth century he desired a great revival of morals and ethics in the Church. On this Luther and Erasmus were agreed, the Church had lost its moral bearings and was in need of improvement. Erasmus believed that Classical Humanism and education would bring this reformation and that men were ignorant of the original sources of philosophy and theology; the Church needed to be taught. Luther disagreed that education was the problem. He said it went deeper into the explanation of the heart of man and the corruption with which even those within

the Church are capable of without God's grace. Luther had experienced, as an Augustinian monk, that he was miserable thinking that God could ever justify him because of his knowledge of sin. He said by joining the Augustinian cloister that although he withdrew from society in hopes of escaping the evil influences of the world, he found that the evil was within his heart.

Many Church historians have compared Luther's debate with Erasmus of Rotterdam with Augustine's letters to Pelagius from 412-416 AD. Much of Augustine's views are established by Luther and many of Pelagius' views are set forth by Erasmus. *De Servo Arbitrio*, or the Bondage of the Will, is the name of the book that Luther wrote against Erasmus. The style of the book is very Medieval in tone; sarcasm and very colorful language is used in "name calling," in contrast to the loving letters of Augustine who showed a different respect and tone in his writings to Pelagius. Luther considered *The Bondage of the Will* his greatest theological achievement in his life.

In a writing to Spalatin in 1516, Luther had remarked he considered Augustine the greatest exegetical writer and Jerome second. Erasmus believed it was in the opposite order and he followed Jerome's teaching of Paul in interpreting justification by works against which Paul writes. It was actually a condemnation of justification by outward ceremonial observance. Luther believed the Apostle Paul taught that any effort or contribution man makes toward his own salvation is works righteousness, and therefore under condemnation. He agreed wholeheartedly with strict Augustinian soteriology, because Augustine magnifies the grace of God. If a person is changed, then and only then, will good works follow.

Luther saw Original Sin and the fallen nature of man to be the heart of the gospel. He saw that the Law was not made so that man could conform to it out of his own power and follow Christ's example rather than Adam's, but that the Law led a man to Christ because he was unable to live it perfectly. If he had been speaking to Pelagius rather than Erasmus, he could have responded to his claims that "if God commands, then I do have the ability to obey." Luther said you cannot understand grace, or the God of grace, without understanding the inability of man; the corruption of his heart, the desire for evil, the running from God or that which is holy in which man engages.

Erasmus wrote that man comes to salvation because independently of God he performs some action that elicits reward. On this basis, salvation comes to man through God's response to what man has done. Erasmus tried to stress the smallness of the power, but in reality sets himself up as Pelagian in every way doctrinally. Luther responds by writing that by having a high opinion of the natural powers of man, one must also hold a low opinion of the moral demands of God's character.

Luther sums his arguments up by saying that the ultimate reason why any form of Pelagianism, pure or Semi-Pelagianism, cannot be true: fallen man in his natural condition can do nothing but sin, he is a member of Satan's kingdom and in all his actions under Satan's sway. His reason (*ratio*) is blinded; his will (*volutas*) is hostile to God; he wants only to sin, and his choice (*arbitrium*) is thus always sinful. No possibility of merit exists for him; therefore, all that he does is sinfully motivated and deserves the just judgment of God. The idea of a meritorious act is an idea of an independent act which is in no way necessitated by God for man or performed by God

in man, but is carried out by man acting in some sense apart from God, and there is no such action in God's universe, because all events are necessitated by His immutable, Sovereign will. This consistent application of Original Sin and the inability of man concludes in Augustine's and Luther's doctrine of predestination.

## Epilogue

The theology of Augustine and Luther compared to Pelagius and Erasmus are founded upon the teaching of Original Sin, whether it is truly a reasonable or natural doctrine, and more importantly, whether it is a revealed Biblical doctrine taught by Christ and His Apostles. None in these debates deny the importance of Scripture to be their foundation for not only the doctrine of Original Sin, but also the only foundation for the truth of the Christian religion. It is the interpretation of this foundational, Scriptural teaching to be so hotly debated and important in the history of the Church.

What is built upon this foundation of Original Sin, is that if it is a Biblical doctrine, then how can man have free will and a choice to follow Christ, but at the same time be sinful and what are the effects of this sinful condition? Augustine or Luther did not deny free will; only that man had free will to do that which he desires. Because he is corrupt and fallen in nature, he has no desire for that which is godly, and therefore, his will is in bondage to his fallen nature. If Original Sin is not true and not Biblical, and if the Bible is not true then all these arguments in Church history were for nothing. If the Bible is not true, this thing called the Church is not true either, except in the sense of power that it has had in history.

As one historian has noted: "If we do not remember the past, we are doomed to repeat it." This applies in the Christian Church where beliefs are written down, stated, debated and concluded throughout Christian history. It is important as people in the Church, or those studying the history of it, remember that these issues are not "hair splitting" and nonsensical sophistry, but touch deep down in the feelings and understandings as people. The religioso homo, or man the religious, is who we are as people. If we do believe the Scriptures and desire to know the God who is revealed in them, it is most important to understand that which He has written. It is not merely an intellectual debate at stake if Christ was who he said he was. Damnation and eternal life are the consequences of the achieving or disregarding of His salvation.

If he was who he said he was, the God of the universe, then it would behoove us to not only listen to him, but give our lives to understand and interpret correctly each doctrine and truth that is presented in these Holy Scriptures. Christ prayed in John 17, in what is known theologically as his "High Priestly Prayer." In it he prays to the Father:

"All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name-the name you gave me-so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they

may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message."

God or Christ's existence do not depend on whether we believe it or not. If the Holy Trinity has truly revealed himself in the Scriptures, then we can believe in an accurate, infallible Scripture to man. If He truly exists then all of our unbelief as people will not make him not exist (in fact it would affirm the condition of Original sin in which the Bible speaks). Conversely, if He does not truly exist, then all our belief will not make him so in reality. The Bible would be merely a nice historical record of a liar named Christ who said he was God, and although he did seemingly good things for people, in reality he would be the devil. No man has had such impact on history, and if he were not the Son of God as he claimed, he is a liar and has caused over half of the Western world to be deceived by his false teachings.

If we are to believe these Scriptures as truth, then as Christians we need not only to study the documents and writings theologically of the church, but make it our chief business to get it right. Because if Christ is true, then the salvation of which he speaks is of eternal importance. It is not merely a matter of hermeneutics, but a matter that touches real lives and real people in the real world.

### **Appendix I** **The Teachings of Pelagius**

1. Adam was made mortal and would have died whether he had sinned or had not sinned.
2. The sin of Adam injured himself alone, and not the human race.
3. Newborn children are in that state in which Adam was before his fall.
4. Neither by the death and sin of Adam does the whole race die, nor by the resurrection of Christ does the whole race rise.
5. The law leads to the kingdom of heaven as well as the Gospel.
6. Even before the coming of the Lord there were men without sin.

### **Appendix II** **The Synod of Orange**

Excerpts from The Synod of Orange

1. The sin of Adam has not injured the body only, but also the soul of man.
2. The sin of Adam has brought sin and death upon all mankind.
3. Grace is not merely bestowed when we pray for it, but grace itself causes us to pray for it.
4. Even the beginning of faith, the disposition to believe, is effected by grace.

5. All good thoughts and works are God's gift.
6. Even the regenerate and the saints need continually the divine help.
7. What God loves in us, is not our merit, but his own gift.
8. The free will weakened in Adam, can only be restored through the grace of baptism.
9. All good that we possess is God's gift, and therefore no one should boast.
10. Unmerited grace precedes meritorious works.
11. Even had man not fallen, he would have needed divine grace for salvation.
12. When man sins, he does his own will; when he does good, he executes the will of God, yet voluntarily.
13. The love of God is itself a gift of God.

**In opposition to Semi-Pelagianism it was stated:**

1. Through the fall free will has been so weakened, that without prevenient grace no one can love God, believe on Him, or do good for God's sake, as he ought.
2. Through the grace of God all may, by the co-operation of God, perform what is necessary for their soul's salvation.
3. It is by no means our faith, that any have been predestined by God to sin, but rather: if there are people who believe so vile a thing, we condemn them with utter abhorrence.
4. In every good work the beginning proceeds not from us, but God inspires in us faith and love to Him without merit precedent on our part, so that we desire baptism, and after baptism can, with His help, fulfill His will.
5. Because this doctrine of the fathers and the synod is also salutary for the laity, the distinguished men of the laity also, who have been present at this solemn assembly, shall subscribe these acts.

**Appendix III  
Views of the Imputation of Sin**

Views	Romans 5:12	Adam	Humanity	Modern Adherents
<b>Pelagian View</b>	People incur death when they sin after Adam's example.	Sin affected Adam alone.	No one affected by Adam's sin.	Unitarians
<b>Federal View<sup>2</sup></b>	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin.	Adam alone sinned but human race affected.	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed.	Presbyterians and others holding to Covenant theology.
<b>Augustinian View</b>	Sin is imputed to humanity because of Adam's sin.	Humanity sinned in Adam.	Depravity is total; sin and guilt are imputed.	Reformers and later Calvinists.

## **Appendix IV**

### **Comparison between Erasmus and Luther**

#### **Erasmus**

- Christianity is essentially morality with a minimum of doctrinal statement loosely appended.
- Man can keep the Law of Christ if educated to do so, he has within himself the power.
- Christianity needed a return to "apostolic simplicity" of life and doctrine, this could be brought about by education and eliminating superstitions and abuses that had crept into the Church over the centuries.
- His attitude was that what one believes about the mysteries of the faith does not much matter; what the Church lays down may safely be accepted, whether right or wrong; for the details of a churchman's doctrine will not affect his living as a Christian in this world, nor his eventual destiny in the world to come.
- Peace in the Church was of more value than any doctrine.

#### **Luther**

- Christianity was a matter of doctrine and first and foremost, because true religion was first and foremost a matter of faith; and faith is correlative to truth.
- Faith is trust in God through Jesus Christ as He stands revealed in the gospels.
- Concerned foremost with doctrine. He said, "Others who have lived before me [reformers] have attacked the Pope's life; I am not concerned with his life, but his doctrine.
- The denial of free will is the foundation of the Biblical doctrine of grace, and a hearty endorsement of that denial was the first step for anyone who would understand the gospel and come to faith in God.
- The person who has not yet practically and experimentally learned the bondage of his will in sin has not yet comprehended any part of the gospel; for this is the "hinge on which all turns."

## **Appendix V**

### **The Council of Trent on Authority**

"The holy, ecumenical and general Council of Trent...keeps this constantly in view, namely, that the purity of the Gospel may be preserved in the Church after the errors have been removed...It also clearly perceives that these truths and rules contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, have been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself...Following, then, the example of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with the same piety and reverence all the books of both Old and New Testaments-for God is the author of both-together with all traditions concerning faith and morals, for they come from the mouth of Christ or are inspired by the Holy Spirit and have been preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic Church.

## **Appendix VI**

### **Luther's Doctrine on Justification by Faith Alone**

Justification by Faith or Sola Fide was the "material" cause of Luther's Reformation and the former reformations of Wycliffe and Huss, as well as the subsequent Reformations in Calvin and Melancthon. The "Formal" cause was Sola Scriptura or Scripture alone, which is very intimately related and connected (although different), for it is the basis of authority for Sola Fide.

Justification by Faith is something Luther and the Roman Church would have agreed upon (still do today). However, the Romanists would have denied that Justification is by Faith Alone. The Romanists believed that the righteousness of Christ was infused into a person's soul causing them (and giving them the ability) to do good works and accomplish the righteous requirements of God. This Romanist teaching was a Pelagian doctrine (or more accurately Semi-Pelagian). A synergistic, salvific method meant that God and man "work together" to achieve the salvation of the individual.

Luther, from his studies as Doctor and teacher at the University of Wittenburg was hired in 1508 to teach the Bible to students. Through his studies of Romans (specifically Rom.1:17; Chap. 4), Galatians and the Psalms, it was revealed to Luther that Justification is not the infusion of a righteousness from God to man, but a declaration of righteousness based on the righteousness that Christ achieved alone for his people by living the perfect life according to God's holy Law, and dying the perfect death on behalf of sinners. His righteousness alone is imparted to God's people through regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

Luther taught that "Regeneration precedes faith"-meaning a person is regenerated by the Holy Spirit that enables the person to desire and have faith in a Holy God, whom before they were dead to(Eph. 2) and hated (Rom. 3; 8). Upon regeneration, a person then trusts Christ alone and his righteousness is imparted to their souls; they are then declared righteous by God for Christ's sake (basically, they are 'clothed' in Christ's righteousness, covering their unrighteousness).

The Great Schism that has been between historic Protestant and Catholic churches since the Reformation, has been between Justification by faith alone (Protestantism), and Justification by faith plus works (Catholicism, see Vatican Council II, 1962). The Reformers said that "Upon the

this teaching the Church and the individual stands or falls." If it is anything other than Justification by Faith alone, it is another gospel and therefore no gospel at all and under the wrath and judgment of God.

The Reformers believe in works but they occur "post salvation" said Luther, so that a person is "Justified by Faith alone, but faith that is not alone". We are saved not by good works, but unto good works. This means that the works that we produce (which are evidenced by the fruits of the Spirit) are evidence of our justification. Luther said it was heresy to say that any amount of works could be added to justification that only Christ's righteousness could accomplish.

Many critics say that Paul in Romans 4 contradicts James 2, but Luther believed Paul was saying a "man is justified by faith or believing God and it is credited to him as righteousness". James is describing that faith without works is "dead faith" meaning "no works: no salvation is evident in the person." This can be compared with Christ's teaching in Matthew 7: "you will know the tree by the fruit it bears."

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