

of God's grace will be broken. In that day, if you are outside of Christ, you will be plunged into the burning fires of Hell. God does not will it. He has

done all that He can do to prevent it. Only you can decide the issue. And that decision will emerge from the source of your faith.

OLD ADAM'S CHILDREN

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"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Romans 5:19.

One of the lost teachings of the Bible in our day is that of the total depravity of man. Now the doctrine of total depravity does not mean that all men are equally bad, or that there is not some good in all men. Rather it refers to the fact that all men are sinful by nature, and therefore are lost from God. In popular parlance this thought is expressed by referring to men as "Old Adam's Children." While this thought is inherent throughout the Bible, it is clearly set forth in Romans. In our study of this epistle we have seen that whereas all men, as "Old Adam's Children," are lost, they may become the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. Once again this twofold truth is set forth in Romans 5:12-21. Therefore, let us examine it as we consider, first, the comparison; second, the contrast; third, the conclusion.

First, note the comparison. In Romans 5:14 Paul refers to Adam "who is the figure of him that was to come." Thus he compares Adam to Jesus Christ. The word "figure" renders a Greek word (*tupos*) meaning "type." In the Biblical sense it refers to a type, or person or thing, prefiguring a future person or thing. In this sense Adam is called a "type" of Jesus, setting forth the idea

that each has exercised a signal influence upon the human race. From the Biblical record we learn that the influence of the former was destructive, while that of the latter was constructive.

Nevertheless each is compared to the other, since each is regarded in the Bible as the federal head of a given race of men. Since this is true then each of these races partakes of the nature of the one from whom it is descended. Of no other two people in the Bible is this claim made. Now the heritage in question is not physical but spiritual. Those who are descended from Adam partake of his spiritual condition. Those who are descended from Christ share in His spiritual condition.

Now this comparison between Adam and Jesus hinges on two words used by Paul in Romans 5:19, *disobedience* and *obedience*. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." If you should examine these two words in the Greek text, you would find that each is built upon the word for "hear." In short, both Adam and Jesus heard the voice of God. Prefixed to each word "hear" is a preposition which gives the manner in which each heard. For instance, the word for "disobedience" means "to hear alongside." It means either a failing to hear or a hearing which is characterized by inattentiveness or carelessness. When you

refer back to the record of Adam's original sin in Genesis 3 you see that Adam carelessly heard God's warning about his dying if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Despite the expressed will of God Adam disobeyed God.

On the other hand the word "obedience" as used of Jesus means "to hear under." The idea is that of a willing and attentive listening to God's authority and will. The word might be better translated as "submission."

So what do we find? God made Adam in His own image, as a living soul whom God intended to live forever. To insure this He expressed His will by which Adam should live. But Adam, when he heard God's will, *heard alongside*. In other words he knew God's will but chose to go alongside it rather than to walk in it. He deviated from the path. He transgressed God's will, which the Bible defines as sin.

Jesus, on the other hand, heard God's will that He should become the redeemer of lost men. And even though it meant death on the cross, He *heard under* or submitted to God's will. This is expressed in Hebrews 10:7 where Jesus is pictured as saying, "Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God."

So both Adam and Jesus are the federal heads of two peoples, those characterized by disobedience and those characterized by obedience in regard to the will of God. The words "federal heads" simply mean that each transmits to his descendants the characteristic quality of his life. Now

Second, consider the contrast. In Romans 5:15 Paul says, "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." So the comparison actually is a contrast. Because of Adam's disobedience he died, both

physically and spiritually. The spiritual aspect is uppermost in the mind of Paul. In short, Adam reached after life and found death, because he reached at the command of Satan instead of that of God. Now the Bible teaches that all men as the natural descendants of Adam have also received his heritage of physical and spiritual death.

Why through Adam and not through Eve? A careful study of Genesis 3 reveals that Eve sinned in ignorance, but Adam's sin was a deliberate sin of knowledge. God's will was expressed directly to Adam (Gen. 2:16f.), while Eve heard it second-hand from Adam (2:18-23). So when Satan tempted Eve she had only Adam's word for God's will. But Adam, when faced with the fatal choice, deviated from God's will despite his first-hand knowledge of it. When Eve sinned, she alone died. But when Adam sinned, the race died with him.

Now this latter word is made clear in Romans 5:14. ". . . death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression . . ." The point here is not that those from Adam to Moses were not lost. They had in their consciences and moral judgment the law of God (Rom. 1:19-2:15). Rather Paul is simply emphasizing the fact that his present readers stand in the same relation to God as did Adam. In the Mosaic law they have the same first-hand expression of God's will as did Adam. Hence their disobedience to God's will is equal to his.

So let us turn from the racial aspect to that of the individual. As a natural descendant of Adam you were born with a sinful nature. The Bible teaches that infants and idiots dying in such condition are saved by God's grace in Christ Jesus. But when you reached the age of understanding right from wrong, you became responsible to God for both

your sinful nature and deeds. Therefore you are lost. Paul says in Ephesians 2:1 that you are dead "in trespasses and sins."

By contrast we understand Paul's words in Romans 5:15, ". . . much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." Though your sin is both inherent and deliberate, God willed that you should be saved. Not through your own deeds of righteousness, but through God's grace. The "gift by grace" means salvation through the work of God's grace. So when Jesus submitted to God's will that He should die for your sins, He became the expression of God's grace for your salvation. As Adam, in the will of Satan, reached for life only to receive death by his fall, so did Jesus, in obedience to God's will, reach after death and thereby received life through His resurrection from the dead. And by your submission to Him you become a new creation (II Cor. 5:17), a new race; inheriting from Jesus, the head of such race, the fruit of His obedience, eternal life. Now

Third, note the conclusion. In summary, outside of Christ you, through the natural birth, are a child of Adam. As such you are under the penalty of original sin, and are lost from God. In Christ you, through the spiritual birth, become a child of God, having received His righteousness as the gift of God's grace. This we see in Romans 5:17. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Note the twice-repeated word "reign." In your soul two powers are seeking to reign as the king of your life. One author refers to these as five kings struggling for rule in your life: King Sin, for sin reigned (5:21); King Death, for death reigned (5:14); King Grace,

for grace reigned (5:21); King Jesus, for Jesus reigns (5:17); kingly saints, as we reign by One, Jesus Christ (5:17).

Do I hear you say in response to the gospel call, "I do not want to be tied down. I want to live my own life." By this you mean that you want to remain as a child of Adam, with no obligation to God. Now the only way that you can live your own life is to be able to reign as a king in life (5:17). You cannot do this as a child of Adam. For as such you are under the reign of sin and death. The only way for you to be king is for you to submit to the reign of grace, the reign of Jesus. For Paul says that "they which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (5:17). When you submit your life to the reign of Jesus Christ by grace unto righteousness, then He gives it back to you as abundant life. Thus you become a child of God, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:17). You are no longer under the tyrannical reign of law, sin and death. You are under the reign of "grace through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (5:21). Under the Lordship of Jesus Christ you "shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (5:17). Then, and only then, can you live your own life, the life that God intends for His children.

But note that in Romans 5:17 Paul says that you must "receive" this abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness." God will not thrust it upon you. He respects your personality and will too much to do that. It was by Adam's free-will of disobedience that you became a disobedient child of Adam. It is by your free-will through Christ's obedience that you may become an obedient child of God. And your will is expressed in the free exercise of your faith.