

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## The Pelagian Captivity of the Church

C. MATTHEW MCMAHON, PhD, THD

Today, many Christians are turning back to the Puritans to, “walk in the old paths,” of God’s word, and to continue to proclaim old truth that glorifies Jesus Christ. There is no new theology. In our electronic age, more and more people are looking to add electronic books (ePubs, mobi and PDF formats) to their library – books from the Reformers and Puritans – in order to become a “digital puritan” themselves. Take a moment to visit Puritan Publications (click the banner below) to find the biggest selection of rare puritan works updated in modern English in both print form and in multiple electronic forms. There are new books published every month. All proceeds go to support [A Puritan’s Mind](#).



### *The History of Heresy!*

*Error spreads from one person to another. It is like the plague, which infects all round about it. Satan by infecting one person with error infects more! The error of Pelagius spread on a sudden to Palestine, Africa, and Italy. — Thomas Watson<sup>1</sup>*

Along with Pelagius, Evangelicals<sup>2</sup> today believe that salvation is by *character*.<sup>3</sup> They believe that men, by faith, before God actually affects a change in their nature, must exercise their will towards that which is good and believe the promises of God without coercion because they are *able* to do so. This is what Pelagius believed: a notorious heretic (*heresiarch*) of the fifth century who was condemned by the councils, synods, theologians and pastors of the day, and subsequent synods and councils to that day. It may be said that the Evangelical church today is held captive by Pelagius’ heretical theology though they are unaware of it. But to assert this charge is by no means a warrant to believe it. It

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<sup>1</sup> Watson, Thomas, *The Lord’s Prayer*, (Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle: 1993), 279.

<sup>2</sup> In general, the modern term “Evangelicals” are those who have developed a more inclusivistic attitude toward liberalism, and are ecumenical in their efforts towards ecclesiastical unity. As a result of a broad churchism their theological views are akin to pleasing the masses, and are often comprised of non-compulsory sermons towards the commands of God and the repulsion of sin.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, Archer, “John Calvin, A Prophet of God,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* Volume 91 (October, 1934; 2002), 478.

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must be proven. First, it is important to outline the historical background to Pelagius' life and ecclesiastical interaction. Then, second, it will be helpful to outline and refute his doctrine, and its Semi-Pelagian subsequent affects. Thirdly, there will be an examination of Evangelicalism and its continuation of Pelagian and Semi-Pelagianism. Fourthly, there will be a brief conclusion to the findings.

## THE HISTORY OF PELAGIANISM AND SEMI-PELAGIANISM

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First, historically, Pelagius is known on the historical scene as a blue-eyed British monk, with the surname of Morgan, who's fame emerged from Rome in the beginning of the fifth century. He studied the Greek theology, especially that of the Antiochian school, and early showed great zeal for the improvement of himself and of the world.<sup>4</sup> Warfield says, "He was also constitutionally averse to controversy; and although in his zeal for Christian morals, and in his conviction that no man would attempt to do what he was not persuaded he had natural power to perform, he diligently propagated his doctrines privately, he was careful to rouse no opposition, and was content to make what progress he could quietly and without open discussion."<sup>5</sup> This, however, would not last long. Pelagius, already advanced in life, demonstrated that his exegetical skills were rather shallow, and appear in his *Commentary on the Epistles of Saint Paul*,<sup>6</sup> which was written and published in the year 409. In this work he gives the essence of his system, but it is not the result of sober exegetical work, rather, it is indirect and a result of answering the common teaching of the day to propagate something new. He labored quietly and peacefully for the improvement of the corrupt morals of Rome, and converted the advocate Coelestius, of distinguished, but otherwise unknown birth, to his monastic life, and to his views. Pelagius was the moral author of the system and Coelestius was the intellectual author.<sup>7</sup>

It was from this man, younger, more skillful in argument, more ready for controversy, and more rigorously consistent than his teacher, that the controversy came to the

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<sup>4</sup> Schaff, Phillip, *History Christian Church*, (Eerdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids: 1994), 3:597.

<sup>5</sup> Warfield, B.B. *Introductory Essay On Augustine And The Pelagian Controversy*, Nicene, Post Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, (Henrickson Publishers, Peabody: 1995), 10.

<sup>6</sup> There are three works of Pelagius printed among the works of Jerome (Vallarsius' edition, vol. xi.): viz, the *Exposition on Paul's Epistles*, written before 410 (but somewhat, especially in Romans, interpolated); the *Epistle to Demetrius*, 413; and the *Confession of Faith*, 417, addressed to Innocent I. Copious fragments of other works (*On Nature*, *In Defence of Free Will*, *Chapters*, *Letters to Innocent*) are found quoted in Augustine's refutations; as also of certain works by Coelestius (e.g., his *Definitions*, *Confession to Zosimus*), and of the writings of Julian. Here also belong Cassian's *Collationes Patrum*, and the works of the other Semi-Pelagian writers.

<sup>7</sup> Schaff, *History*, 598. The reader must note the development of Pelagian doctrine through its disciples of Faustus and Laelius Socinus in the sixteenth century.

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forefront. It was through him that it first broke out into public controversy, and received its first ecclesiastical examination and rejection.<sup>8</sup>

Pelagius soon afterwards departed for Palestine, leaving Coelestius behind at Carthage. Here Coelestius sought ordination as a presbyter, but the Milanese deacon Paulinus accused him as being a heretic, and the matter was brought before a synod under the presidency of Bishop Aurelius. Paulinus' charge consisted of seven items, which asserted that Coelestius taught the following heresies: 1) Adam was created mortal, and would have died, even if he had not sinned. 2) Adam's fall injured himself alone, not the human race. 3) Children come into the world in the same condition in which Adam was before the fall. 4) The human race neither dies in consequence of Adam's fall, nor rises again in consequence of Christ's resurrection. 5) Unbaptized children, as well as others, are saved. 6) The law, as well as the gospel, leads to the kingdom of heaven. 7) Even before Christ there were sinless men.<sup>9</sup> The principal propositions were the second and third, which are intimately connected, and which afterwards became the special subject of controversy. Coelestius returned evasive answers. He declared the propositions to be speculative questions of the schools, which did not concern the substance of the faith, and that there were a number of different opinions in the church on them. He refused to recant the errors charged to him, and the synod excluded him from the communion of the church.<sup>10</sup>

Only two fragments of the proceedings of the synod in investigating this charge have survived; but it is easy to see that Coelestius was contrary to all this, and refused to reject any of the propositions charged against him, except the one which had reference to the salvation of infants that die unbaptized, — the only one that had a sound defense. In terms of the transmission of sin, he would only say that it was an open question in the Church, and that he had heard both opinions from Church dignitaries — so that the subject needed investigation, and should not be made the ground for a charge of heresy. The natural result was, that, on refusing to condemn the propositions charged against him, he was himself condemned and excommunicated by the synod.<sup>11</sup> Soon afterwards he sailed to Ephesus, where he obtained the ordination that he sought and was there ordained a presbyter. The Pelagian doctrines found many adherents even in Africa and in Sicily. (Augustine wrote several treatises in refutation of them so early as 412 and 415.)

Meanwhile Pelagius was living quietly in Palestine, when in the summer of 415 a young Spanish presbyter, Paulus Orosius by name, came with letters from Augustine to Jerome, and was invited, near the end of July in that year, to a diocesan synod, presided over by

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<sup>8</sup> Warfield, *Introductory Essay*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Schaff, *History*, 599.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Warfield, *Introductory Essay*, 19.

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John of Jerusalem. There he was asked about Pelagius and Coelestius, and proceeded to give an account of the condemnation of the latter at the synod of Carthage, and of Augustine's literary refutation of the former. Pelagius was sent for, and the proceedings became an examination into his teachings.<sup>12</sup> The chief matter brought up was his assertion of the possibility of men living sinlessly in this world. Soon afterwards two Gallic bishops, — Heros of Arles, and Lazarus of Aix, — who were then in Palestine, lodged a formal accusation against Pelagius with the metropolitan, Eulogius of Caesarea; and he convened a synod of fourteen bishops which met at Lydda (Diospolis), in December of the same year (415), for the trial of the case.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps no greater ecclesiastical farce was ever enacted than this synod exhibited. When the time arrived, the accusers were prevented from being present by illness, and Pelagius was confronted only by the written accusation. Pelagius escaped condemnation only at the cost both of disowning Coelestius and his teachings, of which he had been the real father, and of leading the synod to believe that he was anathematizing the very doctrines which he was himself proclaiming. Warfield says, "There is really no possibility of doubting, as any one will see who reads the proceedings of the synod, that Pelagius obtained his acquittal here either by a "lying condemnation or a tricky interpretation" of his own teachings; and Augustine is perfectly justified in asserting that the "heresy was not acquitted, but the man who denied the heresy," and who would himself have been anathematized had he not anathematized the heresy."<sup>14</sup>

Pelagius soon published a work *In Defense of Free-Will*, in which he triumphed in his acquittal and "explained his explanations" at the synod. However, the North-African synods sent a letter to Innocent I (Bishop of Rome) trying to engage his assent to their action to condemn Pelagius for his heresy. Augustine, at this same time, along with four other bishops, added a third letter of their own which they prompted Innocent to examine Pelagius' teaching. The Africans, including Augustine, asserted the necessity of inward grace, rejected the Pelagian theory of infant baptism, and declared Pelagius and Coelestius excommunicated until they should return to orthodoxy. The biblical scholar Jerome joined Augustine in condemning Pelagius, calling him a "corpulent dog ... weighed down with ... porridge." Innocent died and Zosimus replaced him, being more sympathetic to Coelestius. Zosimus sided with him. He wrote a sharp and arrogant letter to Africa, proclaiming Coelestius "catholic," and required the Africans to appear within two months at Rome to prosecute their charges, or else to abandon them. On the arrival of Pelagius' papers, this letter was followed by another (September, 417), in which Zosimus, with the approbation of the clergy, declared both Pelagius and Coelestius to be

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<sup>12</sup> Warfield, *Introductory Essay*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Warfield, *Introductory Essay*, 22.

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orthodox, and severely rebuked the Africans for their hasty judgment.<sup>15</sup> The African bishops gathered in 418 in Carthage and said, “we are aided by the grace of God, through Christ, not only to know, but to do what is right, in each single act, so that without grace we are unable to have, think, speak, or do anything pertaining to piety.” This made Zosimus waver. Ultimately Pelagius and Coelestius were condemned as heretics and they were forced into banishment. The exiled bishops were driven from Constantinople by Atticus in 424; and they are said to have been condemned at a Cilician synod in 423, and at an Antiochian one in 424. The end was now in sight. The Pelagian heresy was officially condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, one year after Augustine’s death. Then the famous second Synod of Orange met under the presidency of Caesarius at that ancient town on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, 529, and drew up a series of moderate articles which received the ratification of Boniface II in the following year and condemned this heresy and Semi-Pelagianism,<sup>16</sup> completely substantiating Augustinianism.

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It is equally important to highlight the historical nature of Semi-Pelagianism, and its most avid adherent, James Arminius. Through Arminianism, Pelagianism is kept alive. James Harmensen was born in 1560. This was his Dutch derivation, but is more well-known by his Latinized name – James Arminius. While a young teen, as a servant in a public inn, a patron noticed his wit and keen intellect for someone at such a young age, and as a result this patron decided to offer him the chance at schooling in the University of Utrecht. He supported Arminius until his death, and then another patron continued to pay for his education. Arminius was then able to attend the University of Marburg, in Hess, and then finally the University in Leyden. He was even sent to Geneva while Theodore Beza presided there, but indulged in insubordination and a spirit of self-sufficiency. He spoke privately to the other students against the teachers there and was ultimately expelled from the University. After leaving Geneva, he toured Italy and then came back to Geneva, and had a wide following of people at this time. Upon his return, as a result of his following, the people decided to make him a minister of Amsterdam.

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<sup>15</sup> Warfield, *Introductory Essay*, 23.

<sup>16</sup> In the meantime, while the Pelagian controversy was at its height, John Cassian, of Syrian birth and educated in the Eastern Church, having moved to Marseilles, in France, for the purpose of advancing the interests of monkery in that region, began to give publicity to a scheme of doctrine occupying a middle position between the systems of Augustine and Pelagius. This system, whose advocates were called Massilians from the teachings of their head, and afterward Semi-Pelagians by the Schoolmen, is in its essential principles one with that system which is called Arminianism. Faustus, bishop of Priez, in France, from A.D. 427 to A.D. 480, was one of the most distinguished and successful advocates of this doctrine, which was permanently accepted by the Eastern Church, and for a time was widely disseminated throughout the Western church also, until it was condemned by the synods of Orange and Valence, A.D. 529.



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After serving as minister for some time, he was then called to the University of Amsterdam to teach on the condition that he would adhere to the *Belgic Confession*. Arminius pledged loyalty to the confession when entering the professorship. One of the Belgic articles asserts the following: “Article 16 – We believe that, all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest Himself such as He is; that is to say, merciful and just: merciful, since He delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.” It was this kind of teaching, solid reformed teaching after the manner of Calvin, and Turretin to come, that Arminius gave allegiance to, even though he really did not believe it. He was a scandalous, double-minded shadowy individual.

After a year or two he was *found* to be a scandalous man. It was his practice to teach the doctrines of grace in alignment with the *Confession* in class, but then distributed private confidential manuscripts among his pupils.<sup>17</sup> By this “double-mindedness” he was able to continue in his popularity, while at the same time he was infecting the students under him of the same errors of “Arminianism” which he really believed.

The States General of the Netherlands sent deputies of the Churches to question him on this, and to discover whether the rumors were true. This would involve an open debate and discussion, and then the consequences of the discussion would be taken back to the National Synod to be discussed further as to what ecclesiastical action should take place. Arminius denied the “rumors” about this (in reality this was simply a lie to cover up his scandal) and he agreed to meet with the council on one condition: if they found anything wrong, they would not report him to the Synod. What ploy was this? The deputies, in view of his subtle refusal, refused, themselves, to pursue this discussion believing that Arminius was not being honest and forthright with them, or agreeing to this under a guise of integrity. Instead, sometime later, they summoned him to council with Classis, a reformed theologian. He declined and would not subject himself to an open synod. This was his continued position from that time forward. His strategy was to win over the *secular* men of the state and university to gain enough backing before going “public” on his “new and radical” views. This is important to note since Arminianism, like its father Pelagianism, is the secular man’s salvation. When heresy arises it is never frank and open as it is growing. Such heretical groups are almost never honest and candid as a party until they gain strength enough to be sure of some degree of popularity: as With Pelagius, so with Arminius.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> This is attested by Samuel Miller, Thomas Scott, and by many Dutch writers on the subject of the time.

<sup>18</sup> See also the historical evidence behind Arius, Amyraut, Socinians, and the Unitarians.

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Arminius' goal was to unite all Christians, except the papists, under one common form of doctrinal brotherhood. If this was truly the case, why was it so difficult for him to be "tried" theologically in an open forum? His agenda and motives prove that his goal is true, but not for the good of the church. In his views (which are unorthodox and heretical) he agreed substantially in the five doctrines set forth by his predecessors in a more refined manner. He died in 1609 before he could ever be brought openly before a public Synod. Most hoped that with the death of Arminius that Arminianism would die quickly. Unfortunately, his infectious doctrine had overwhelmed too many younger students and a group called the Remonstrants arose soon after.

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In 1610 the Remonstrants organized into a body and set forth a "Remonstrance" to the States General of Holland, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands. The word "Remonstrance" means "vigorously objecting or opposing." These men were persuaded that they ought to continue Arminius' teaching in a precise and ordered form. Their goal was to solicit the favor of the government, and to secure protection against the ecclesiastical censures to which they felt themselves exposed. They vehemently tried to raise up a man named Vorstius, a hero to their newfound party, to be given the chair of theology at Leyden. When King James I found this out (the same King James of England) he exhorted the States General by letter not to admit such a man to the chair holding such errors and being an enemy of the Gospel. Vorstius was prevented, barely, but another, Episcopius, rose up soon after. Arminianism was spreading at this time quite rapidly.

As much as it may be deplorable to some that the State involves itself in the affairs of the church today, in days of old the practice was quite different. Prince Maurice of Orange, the prince of the day for the region, was opposed to the work of the Remonstrants and desired a National Synod against them. As a result of Prince Maurice's determination to rid the Netherlands of Arminianism, on November 13, 1618, a national council commenced in the city of Dordrecht (also abbreviated as "Dort" or "Dordt".) The synod consisted of 39 pastors and 18 ruling elders from Belgic churches, and 5 professors of the University of Holland. There were also delegates from Reformed churches throughout the region. At least 4 ministers and 2 elders from each province attended the Synod: men from France, Switzerland, the Republic of Geneva, Bremen and Embden, as well as varied deputies of the Belgic church, some English Puritans such as Joseph Hall and John Davenant, and delegates from Scotland. With such a sublime gathering, Joseph Hall was compelled to say that, "There was no place upon earth so like heaven as the Synod of Dordt, and where he should be more willing to dwell."

The Synod of Dordt convened to examine the Arminian's *Remonstrance* as well as their Christian walk. Both their doctrine *and* life were "on trial." (Both were exceedingly important since such scandal had already befallen Arminius and these men were

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propagating the same teachings.) It is regrettable, but the Remonstrants thought themselves ill-treated as a result of this, and did not attend the meetings except to submit their propositions in the form of 5 articles at the beginning. The council was held for over a year.

After the Synod convened in 1619, they gave the following censure by unanimous decision – for they seriously and responsibly examined the Arminian tenants, “condemned them as unscriptural, pestilential errors,” and pronounced those who held and published them to be “enemies of the faith of the Belgic churches, and corrupters of the true religion.” They also deposed the Arminian ministers, excluded them and their followers from the communion of the church, suppressed their religious assemblies, and by the aid of the civil government, which confirmed all their acts, sent a number of the clergy of that party, and those who adhered to them, into banishment.<sup>19</sup> They did not treat them as reprobate, but as those under ecclesiastical discipline.

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## PELAGIAN AND SEMI-PELAGIAN THEOLOGY

Pelagius' theology, contrary to some modern attempts at subtly, is not difficult to ascertain. “The essence of the theology of Pelagius was the ethical development of man, as the Greeks taught it, resulting at last in perfection, and attained simply by his own natural powers.”<sup>20</sup> Calvin, more blatantly, says, “Yet this timidity could not prevent Pelagius from rising up with the profane fiction that Adam sinned only to his own loss without harming his posterity. Through this subtlety Satan attempted to cover up the disease and thus to render it incurable. But when it was shown by the clear testimony of Scripture that sin was transmitted from the first man to all his posterity (Romans 5:12), Pelagius quibbled that it was transmitted through imitation, not propagation.”<sup>21</sup> The tendency to sin is man's own free choice, Pelagius insisted, and not inherited from Adam. Following this reasoning, there is no need for divine grace; man must simply make up his mind to do the will of God.<sup>22</sup> Pelagius himself said, “This I stated in the interest of free will. God is its helper whenever it chooses good; man, however, when sinning is himself in fault, as under the direction of a free will.”<sup>23</sup> Pelagius believed that the moral aim of life was sinless perfection and believed that such perfection could be reached without the

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<sup>19</sup> See Thomas Scott where he points out in his introductory essay to Dort's articles this fact, *The Articles of the Synod of Dort*, (Sprinkle Publications, Harrisonburg: 1993), 2ff.

<sup>20</sup> Wylie, J.A. *History of the Scottish Nation*, (Ages Software, Albany:1997), 328.

<sup>21</sup> Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2:1:5.

<sup>22</sup> Sandin, Robert, *Christian History: Augustine, One of the Best Teachers of the Church: Augustine on Teachers and Teaching* (Logos Research Systems, 1996 (electronic ed.))

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Augustine, *On the Proceedings of Pelagius*, ch. 5, in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, First series, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–1987 [= 1886–1889]), 5:185.



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aid of special or added grace. The logic he used was that biblical commands such as, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect,” (Matthew 5:48), imply “the ability on the part of the hearer to obey the commandment.” Moreover, Pelagius taught that sinners die for their own sin, not for the sin of Adam. The only remedy for sinners is justification by faith.<sup>24</sup> Pelagius said:

We distinguish three things, arranging them in a certain graduated order. We put in the first place “ability;” in the second, “volition;” and in the third, “actuality.” The “ability” we place in our nature, the “volition” in our will, and the “actuality” in the effect. The first, that is, the “ability,” properly belongs to God, who has bestowed it on His creature; the other two, that is, the “volition” and the “actuality,” must be referred to man, because they flow forth from the fountain of the will. For his willing, therefore, and doing a good work, the praise belongs to man; or rather both to man, and to God who has bestowed on him the “capacity” for his will and work, and who evermore by the help of His grace assists even this capacity.<sup>25</sup>

The key tenets of Pelagius’ doctrine of sin are summed up by Coelestius: “The sin of Adam injured only him, not the human race” and “the law leads to the kingdom, just as the gospel does.”<sup>26</sup> In other words, Pelagius espoused that in following biblical commandments, “if we *should* we *can*.” *The Racovian Catechism* (which prevails among the English and American Unitarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) lays out Pelagius’ doctrine by embracing the following points: 1) Adam’s sin affected himself alone. 2) Infants are born in the same moral state in which Adam was created. 3) Every man possesses ability to sin or to repent and obey whenever he will. 4) Responsibility is in exact proportion to ability; and God’s demands are adjusted to the various capacities (moral as well as constitutional) and circumstances of men.<sup>27</sup>

The differences between Augustinianism and Pelagianism are apparent. In relationship to original sin Augustinianism teaches that by the sin of Adam, in whom all men together sinned, sin and all the other positive punishments of Adam’s sin came into the world. By it human nature has been both physically and morally corrupted in every faculty of their being. Every man brings into the world with him a nature already so corrupt, that it can

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<sup>24</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, (University of Chicago Press; Chicago: 2003), 1:313–314.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in Augustine, *A Treatise on the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin*, ch. 5 “Pelagius’ own account of the Faculties, quoted” (NPNE, 5:219).

<sup>26</sup> Pelikan, Jaroslav, *The Christian Tradition*, 1:314–316.

<sup>27</sup> Hodge, A.A. *Outlines of Theology*, Index created by Christian Classics Foundation. (electronic ed. based on the 1972 Banner of Truth Trust reproduction of the 1879 ed. Christian Classics Foundation, Simpsonville: 1997), 97-103.

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do nothing but sin. This does not mean that men are as bad as they can be, but that they are totally and completely affected in every area of their being – mind, emotions, will, body and spirit. The propagation of this quality of his nature is by concupiscence. Pelagianism teaches that by his transgression, Adam injured only himself, not his posterity. Men are not sinners because of Adam. Men are sinners because they sin. In respect to his moral nature, every man is born in precisely the same condition in which Adam was created. There is therefore no original sin.

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In relationship to free will Augustinianism teaches that by Adam's transgression and sin, the freedom (*liberium arbitrium*) of the human will has been entirely lost. In his present corrupt state man can will and do only evil. Pelagianism teaches that man's will is free. Every man has the power to will and to do good as well as the opposite. It therefore depends upon his own actions as to whether he is good or evil. Man, then, becomes the measure of himself.

In relationship to grace, Augustinianism teaches that if man, in his present state, wills and does anything good, it is merely the work of the grace of Christ in him working that good. It is an inward, secret, and wonderful operation of God upon man. It is a preceding as well as an accompanying work. By preceding (or regenerating) grace, man attains faith, by which he comes to an insight of good, and by which power is given him to will the good. He needs cooperating grace for the performance of every individual good act. As man can do nothing without grace, so he can do nothing against it. It is irresistible. Since man by nature has no merit at all, no respect at all can be had to man's moral disposition, in imparting grace, but God acts according to his own free will. Pelagianism teaches that although by free will, which is a gift of God, man has the capacity of willing and doing good without God's special aid, yet for the easier performance of it, God revealed the law; for the easier performance, the instruction and example of Christ aid him; and for the easier performance, even the supernatural operations of grace are imparted to him. Grace, in the most limited sense (gracious influence) is given to those only who deserve it by the faithful employment of their own powers. However, man can still resist it.

In relationship to predestination and redemption Augustinianism teaches that from eternity, God made a free and unconditional decree to save a few (though this number may not be "few" in number) from the "mass of perdition" that was corrupted and subjected to damnation. To those whom he predestinated to this salvation, he gives the requisite means for the purpose. However, on the rest, who do not belong to this small number of the elect, He leaves them in their sin, and actively decrees to damn them for it. In terms of redemption, Christ came into the world and died for the elect only. Christ does not offer atonement for those whom He does not save. Pelagianism teaches that God's decree of election and reprobation is founded on prescience. In other words, those

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that God would foresee that they would keep His commands, He predestinated to salvation (which is really based on works). Others, whom he did not foresee would come to faith, He left to damnation. In terms of the atonement, Christ's redemption is a general atonement for all men. However, only those people who have actually sinned need his atoning death. All, however, by his instruction and example, may be led to higher perfection and virtue.<sup>28</sup>

Pelagianism took a more subtle form in the teachings of James Arminius. Arminius, the most popular of his kind, is known as a *Semi-Pelagian*.<sup>29</sup> It is impossible to call him a *Semi-Augustinian* because his doctrine is not a mild form of Augustine's teachings, but a modified form of Pelagius' thoughts. The modifications are slight but important. Semi-Pelagians believe that the Fall in the Garden *did* affect all of Adam's progeny, *but not fully*. Men are sick in sin, not dead in sin. Augustine taught that men are dead in sin following Romans 1-3 and Ephesians 2. They are "somewhat alive" and never completely dead rendering their "free wills" quite *able* to choose either good or evil (following Pelagius). Semi-Pelagians also believed in a general atonement (like Pelagius) but that all men needed this atonement (modified Pelagianism). Though Christ died for all men making a way for them, the efficacy of His death is not applied until man, by his own free will (the *liberium arbitrium*) chose to accept this atonement. Men are free, and not necessarily bound to anything but their neutral will and desires that can choose either good or evil.<sup>30</sup>

In opposition to Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, Augustinianism follows the biblical exposition of the doctrine of man.<sup>31</sup> There are two aspects to understanding sin that must be noted. The first is in terms of *original sin* (the first sin of the Garden) and the second is the consequence of that original sin called *total depravity*. The Westminster Shorter Catechism in question 15 asks, "What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?" This question revolves around the first sin committed – *Adam's* original sin. The answer is "The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6-8)." The consequence of eating this forbidden fruit was breaking covenant with God. Adam

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<sup>28</sup> Wiggers, G.F. *Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism*, Translated by Rev. Ralph Emerson, (np, nc: nd), 268–270.

<sup>29</sup> Cassian of Marseilles was a Semi-Pelagian of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century; but he was not a popular fellow and did not gather a large following. Another, named Bolsec, lived in Geneva around 1552 and propagated Semi-Pelagianism. He taught the same doctrines but was not heeded because of his immoral lifestyle. A third man by the name of Corvinus attempted to stir Holland in 1560 with the same ideas, but it never came to a full fruition until Arminius.

<sup>30</sup> Arminius, James, *The Works of James Arminius*, vol. 3, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids: 1991), Translated by Nichols, 190.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that Augustinianism and Calvinism are synonyms.

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transgressed the law of God and plunged all humanity into sin. This sin is imputed to all his progeny and is also labeled as the imputation of “original sin”.

As a result of the imputation of sin, all men are infected with sin and corrupt in every faculty of their being. This is called *total depravity*. The effects of sin are biblically evident and questions 18 and 19 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism state the biblical picture clearly: that the sinfulness of that estate where man fell into consists in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it (Rom. 5:19; Rom. 3:10; Eph. 2:1; Psa. 51:5; Matt. 15:19-20). Total depravity, then, is a label for the complete misery that men fell into. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever (Gen. 3:8, 24; Eph. 2:3; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:41).

Total Depravity is not absolute depravity or utter depravity. Men are not as vicious as they could be. In Genesis 20:6, for example, Abimelech is restrained by God’s hand to not touch Sarah, Abraham’s wife. Men have a certain limitation to sin that God places upon them. He will allow them to go only so far (1 Thess. 2:16). But, due to the imputation of Adam’s original sin to all his posterity, men are unable to please God whatsoever, and are rather, prone to evil in every area of the faculty of their being. The Synod of Dordt says, “a corrupt stock produced a corrupt offspring.”<sup>32</sup> Turretin asserts, rightly, that there is a “universal disorder in their nature...”<sup>33</sup> He says, “Men are not only destitute of righteousness, but also full of unrighteousness.”<sup>34</sup> William Ames affirms that from the fall there is the “...corruption of the whole man...”<sup>35</sup> William Perkins defines this, “Original sin, which is corruption engendered in our first conception, whereby every faculty of the soul and body is prone and disposed to evil.”<sup>36</sup> Perkins continues to explain that men’s minds received from Adam: 1) *Ignorance*, namely a want, or rather a deprivation of knowledge in the things of God, whether they concern His sincere worship, or eternal happiness. 2) *Impotency*, whereby the mind of itself is unable to understand spiritual things, though they be taught. 3) *Vanity*, in that the mind thinketh

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<sup>32</sup> *Articles of the Synod of Dordt*, Head of Doctrine 3/4:2.

<sup>33</sup> Turretin, Francis, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1992) 1:638.

<sup>34</sup> Turretin, *Institutes*, 1:637.

<sup>35</sup> Ames, William, *The Marrow of Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House: 1983), 120.

<sup>36</sup> Perkins, William, *The Foundations of The Christian Religion, A Golden Chain Concerning Salvation and Damnation*, (John Legate, Cambridge: 1608) Chapter 12.

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falsehood truth, and truth falsehood. A natural inclination only to conceive and desire the thing which is evil.<sup>37</sup>

Total depravity renders men incapable of doing good. Ames says, "Bondage to sin consists in man's being so captivated by sin that he has no power to rise out of it...rather he would wallow in it."<sup>38</sup> But what exactly is bondage? Ames says that, "The beginning of spiritual death in the form of conscious realization is spiritual bondage."<sup>39</sup> The Synod of Dort is comprehensive in its answer, "...all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation."<sup>40</sup> Unlike Pelagius who taught that man is *good*, and unlike Semi-Pelagianism that taught that man is *sick*, Augustinianism, along with the Bible, teaches that man is *dead* in sin. Christopher Love says, "...he is spiritually dead. For example, you know a dead man feels nothing. Do what you will to him, he does not feel it. So a man who is spiritually dead does not feel the weight of his sins, though they are a heavy burden pressing him down into the pit of hell. He is a stranger to the life of godliness, past feeling, given over to a reprobate sense, so that he does not feel the weight and burden of all his sins."<sup>41</sup> The Canons of the Council of Orange (which met to condemn the beginnings of Semi-Pelagianism) condemns, "anyone [that] denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?"<sup>42</sup>

The Scriptures abound with references to man's estate as one being dead in sin, and in bondage to it: Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:10-18; Isaiah 64:6; Ezek. 11:19; Col. 2:13; Ephesians 2:1,5. Three main points may demonstrate the biblical position succinctly: 1) Fallen men cannot do or work any good before the eyes of God (Matthew 7:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:3; John 15:4-5; Romans 8:7-8). 2) Fallen man cannot comprehend or apprehend the good of the Gospel, or of the Scriptures (Acts

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ames, 119.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> *Articles of the Synod of Dordt*, Head of Doctrine 3/4:3.

<sup>41</sup> Love, Christopher, unpublished sermon, *Man's Miserable Estate*, [www.apuritansmind.com/ChristopherLove.htm](http://www.apuritansmind.com/ChristopherLove.htm).

<sup>42</sup> *The Canons Of The Council Of Orange*, AD 529.



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16:14; Ephesians 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:12-18; John 1:11; John 8:43; Matthew 13:14; 1 Cor. 1:18, 21; 1 Cor. 2:14). 3) Fallen man does not desire or have any desires towards that which is good in the eyes of God (Matthew 7:18; John 3:3; John 8:43; John 15:5; John 6:64-65; Ezek. 11:19; Ephesians 2:1,5). As John Owen states, "But it will be objected, and hath against this doctrine been ever so since the days of Pelagius, "That a supposition hereof renders all *exhortations, commands, promises, and threatenings*, — which comprise the whole way of the external communication of the will of God unto us, — vain and useless; for to what purpose is it to exhort blind men to see or dead men to live, or to promise rewards unto them upon their so doing? Should men thus deal with stones, would it not be vain and ludicrous, and that because of their impotency to comply with any such proposals of our mind unto them; and the same is here supposed in men as to any ability in spiritual things."<sup>43</sup>

## THE PELAGIAN AND SEMI-PELAGIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH

The Evangelical Church at large is currently held captive by Pelagius' teachings. Not only had Pelagius infected the church in his time, but his doctrines also stretch through the centuries through other schismatic forms. Pelagius has infected the teachings of men in all theological colors through the centuries. For example, the Neo-orthodox theologian Emil Brunner, following Barth, says, "Original sin does not refer to the transgression of Adam in which all his descendants share; but it states the fact that Adam's descendants are involved in his death, because they themselves commit sin."<sup>44</sup> The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that, "while Adam and Eve rebelled and fell from grace, their sin was not passed on to their descendants except in regard to temptation and morality."<sup>45</sup> Process Theology teaches that salvation is, at best, the achievement of "self-fulfillment or self-integration."<sup>46</sup> Liberation theology teaches much the same. Gustavo Gutierrez, a preeminent Latin American Liberation theologian, said, following Karl Rahner's view of original sin, "persons are saved if they open themselves to God and to others, even if they are not clearly aware that they are doing so."<sup>47</sup> Feminist theology says the same when Dorothee Soelle writes, "According to a Christian understanding of the world, sins are not particular things we do as individuals – the infringement of sexual norms, for example. They are structure of power that rule over us, something to which we are subjugated, from which we have to be liberated. It is not primarily a question of the

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<sup>43</sup> Owen, John, *The Works of John Owen*, (Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle: 1994), 3:356.

<sup>44</sup> Brunner, Emil, *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption*, Dogmatics vol. 2, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press: 1952), 104.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, David L., *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology*, (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids: 1992), 111.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>47</sup> Gutierrez, Gustavo, *A Theology of Liberation*, rev. ed. (Mary-knoll, New York, Orbis Books: 1988), 25.

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violation of individual commandments.”<sup>48</sup> Charismatics, Success Theology, The Vineyard Movement, New Age theology and those who advocate a Theology of Hope, all agree on this issue – Adam’s sin does not come down to affect us as inherently evil beings. Rather, it is retranslated into a theology of oppression, sickness, need, or like ideologies.

Moving into modern culture today, most Evangelicals follow the Arminian schematic for systematic Theology, and are Pelagian in many of their tenants, though they think they believe what the church “has always believed.” There is no sector of Evangelicalism that has been safe from this trend. It reaches from Presbyterian pulpits across the land, to Charismatic, to Interdenominational, to Baptist, and to every other heresy spinning off from orthodox Christianity. Most of the most popular preachers of the day are infected with traits of Pelagianism: turn on the “Christian radio” stations today for five minutes and you will hear heresy blaring across the airwaves.

The following are direct quotes and instances taken from sermons, books, lectures, seminars, and the like that demonstrate, briefly, the trend in modern Evangelicalism which follow Pelagian tendencies and doctrines. Bob Coy, pastor of Calvary Chapel of Ft. Lauderdale said, “We can determine to walk outside of God’s sovereignty...” “God will accept us because we believe...”<sup>49</sup> This is blatantly denying the *total* depravity of man and appeals to Arminius’ modified Pelagianism. Chuck Smith, Coy’s non-denominational “leader” of the Calvary Chapel movement, said, “We believe that Jesus Christ died as a propitiation (a satisfaction of the righteous wrath of God against sin) “for the whole world.”<sup>50</sup> This again, follows Pelagius’ doctrine and the further Remonstrance teaching of Arminius. It is a contemporary echo of the 18<sup>th</sup> century preacher John Wesley when he said, “*God so loved the world* — That is, all men under heaven; even those that despise his love, and will for that cause finally perish. Otherwise not to believe would be no sin to them. For what should they believe? Ought they to believe that Christ was given for them? Then he was given for them.”<sup>51</sup> Following this Semi-Pelagian trend, on June 24, 2001, Dr. Norman Geisler similarly declared false and misleading views of salvation from the pulpit of Calvary Chapel in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Dr. Geisler declared that the orthodoxy found in the Reformed position of salvation deemed the Sovereign LORD over

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<sup>48</sup> Soelle, Dorothee, *Choosing Life*, (SMC Press, London: 1981), 39-40.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Sun Sentinel* weekly column on Religious Issues

<sup>50</sup> Smith, Chuck, *Calvinism, Arminianism & The Word Of God, A Calvary Chapel Perspective* (Calvary Press, online at [www.calvarychapel.com/library/smith-chuck/books/caatwog.htm](http://www.calvarychapel.com/library/smith-chuck/books/caatwog.htm)). This quote is characteristic of the blatant Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian teachings of the Calvary movement who combine both a modified Pelagianism and a Vineyard movement *charismata* to their theological system as a whole.

<sup>51</sup> Wesley, John, *Wesley’s Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, (Schmul Publishers, Salem: 1976) Page 219

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mankind's destiny as a "divine rapist." At the end of his diatribe, a Calvary Chapel pastor instructed potential converts "Jesus has taken nine steps toward you, now *you have to take a step toward Him.*"<sup>52</sup>

Billy Graham, the famous "evangelist" said, "I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ."<sup>53</sup> Again, the tendency to deny the fall in this type of phraseology speaks for itself. In September 1993, Graham held a crusade in Columbus, Ohio. In a pre-Crusade television interview, Graham said (speaking of the people of Columbus, Ohio): "You're too good, you don't need evangelism. ... In fact, that's what kept us from coming [to Columbus] for so long."<sup>54</sup> Curtis Mitchell, who documented Graham's invitational preaching, says the following is a typical use of words by Graham, "I am going to ask you to come forward. Up there – down there – I want you to come. You come right now – quickly. If you are with friends or relatives, they will wait for you. *Don't let distance keep you from Christ.* It's a long way, but Christ went all the way to the cross *because He loved you.* Certainly *you* can come these few steps and give your life to Him..."<sup>55</sup> Similar expressions of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagian theology can be found in contemporary authors and books such as, *What Love is This?* by Dave Hunt, and *Chosen But Free* by Norman Giesler.<sup>56</sup>

Many charismatic leaders today have infected Evangelicalism for the worse with Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian theology. Robert Schuller, a modern Pelagian following the same theological views as Charles Finney<sup>57</sup> said, "Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem."<sup>58</sup> He says, "The Cross will sanctify your ego trip,' just as it did for Jesus."<sup>59</sup> Schuller wrote, "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make

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<sup>52</sup> Sunday Evening Service, Calvary Chapel, Ft. Lauderdale, June 24, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> May 31, 1998 television interview with Robert Schuller, as reported in the May-June 1997, *Foundation* magazine.

<sup>54</sup> September 1, 1993, *Columbus Dispatch*.

<sup>55</sup> Mitchell, Curtis, *Those Who Came Forward* (The World's Work Ltd., 1966) Page 32. Emphasis mine.

<sup>56</sup> For a worthy rebuttal of Hunt's and Geisler's Semi-Pelagian theology see James White's works, *The Potter's Freedom* and *Debating Calvinism*.

<sup>57</sup> Finney said, "Moral depravity is sin itself, and not the cause of sin," Finney, Charles, *Finney's Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1976), 172. Men are then born righteous and only become sinners as they sin. Schuller is following behind Finney, who is following Pelagius.

<sup>58</sup> Schuller, Robert, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation* (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 74-75.

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people aware of their lost and sinful condition” (cf. Romans 1:18-3:20).<sup>60</sup> He also states that he wants to “persuade you the reader, that you can if you think you can...by realizing the amazing possibilities inherent in the mind.”<sup>61</sup> Following Schuller as a man he admires, Rick Warren’s popular Christianity also exposes him for Pelagian tendencies. His wife, Kay, speaking about a conference they attended which included Schuller as a speaker, said, “We were captivated by his [Schuller’s] positive appeal to nonbelievers. I never looked back.”<sup>62</sup> Warren says, “...anybody can be won to Christ if you discover the felt needs to his or her heart.”<sup>63</sup> Warren says that all people need to do is whisper a sweet prayer to Jesus and they “*will*” be saved, “quietly whisper the prayer that *will* change your eternity: “Jesus, I believe in you and I receive you.”<sup>64</sup> Mountains of Pelagian ideas blatantly haunt the ministry of T.D. Jakes. He says, “Scripture teaches that receiving Christ as your personal Savior does not necessarily make you a son of God, but if you choose to do so, the power (authority) and right to do so is present. ... Just being saved does not make you a son of God, ...only those who are willing to be led by the Spirit actually realize and manifest the sonship of God.”<sup>65</sup> Bill Hybels, the pastor who made popular the Willow Creek Seeker Movement said, “We are a love starved people, with *broken parts that need the kind of repair that only he can give long-term*. We need to bring our *brokenness* out into the light of his grace and truth.”<sup>66</sup> This is Semi-Pelagian. Men are not broken in sin, or simply have broken heart. They are dead in Sin (Ephesians 2:1-2). Bill Bright, former leader and founder of the Navigators and Campus Crusade for Christ, formulated the recognizable “Four Spiritual Laws.” He says,

*Law 3: We Receive Christ by Personal Invitation.* Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him.” (Revelation 3:20) Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us the kind of people He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of will.”

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<sup>60</sup> Schuller, Robert, *Christianity Today*, A Letter to the Editor, October 5, 1984.

<sup>61</sup> Smith, *Handbook*, 189.

<sup>62</sup> Stafford, Tim, *A Regular Purpose-Driven Guy: Rick Warren’s Genius is in Helping Pastors See the Obvious*, (Christianity Today, November 8, 2002).

<sup>63</sup> Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Church*, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids: 1995), 219.

<sup>64</sup> Warren, Rick, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 58. Emphasis his.

<sup>65</sup> Jakes, T.D., *PFO Quartely Journal*, “The Harvest,” 46-47.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Dr. G.A. Pritchard <http://www.reformed-churches.org.nz/resources/fnf/a47.htm>.

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Not only is this horrible exegesis of Revelation 3:20 (which is often used by preachers to refer to sinners when it actually refers to the church) but Bright presses the fact the “we” must receive Christ, and “we” must turn to “personally invite” Christ into our lives. This blatantly contradicts the teaching of the Bible where the Spirit of God must first change the heart in order to make men spiritually renewed so that they may come to Him as a result of grace, not personal power (cf. John 3:1-3). The major ecumenical movement known as *Promise Keepers*, by their very name, asserts ability to fallen men to “keep promises.” Officially they say, “Since the disbelief and disobedience of Adam and Eve, all humans have failed to obey God’s two major laws summed up by the Lord Jesus Christ. We have failed to love God with our whole being and we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. People have become slaves to selfishness and are alienated from God and one another.”<sup>67</sup> Where is sin in all of this? They use terms like “disbelief”, “disobedience”, “failed to obey”, “slaves to selfishness”, “alienated”, but not “sin.” It sounds more like psychological doubletalk at the expense of offending someone, than a theological stance on the doctrine of sin. Truly Evangelicalism is nothing like the Christianity of old. Instead, it has toppled over in veneration to Pelagius, and then Arminius after him.

## CONCLUSION

Many more quotes could be given that display the Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian theology of modern Evangelicalism across the world board. It would be a waste of space to continue to quote men like Max Lucado, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, Louis Palau, anyone appearing on the Trinity Broadcast Network, and others who spout off Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian doctrines each Sunday morning, and corrupt the airwaves with their various degrees of horrible theology. John Owen rightly states that the church of Jesus Christ “cannot wrap in her communion Augustin and Pelagius, Calvin and Arminius.”<sup>68</sup> This is an impossibility. One cannot be bedfellows with Reformed Orthodoxy and hold to Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian teachings. Pastors must choose whom they follow – Paul or Pelagius? When they preach a sermon, they are practically choosing their theological roots by what they say in the pulpit. They may not use the same word or phrase, but their meaning is quite the same, and sometimes just as strong as Pelagius or Arminius of old. Instead of wrestling with these ideas, Evangelicals today simply follow the crowd at chow time. They eat what their pastors give them without any recourse to study what is being said or check if their pastor is right. Instead, because of a *charismata* that is easier to feel than exegesis is to study, they are falling headlong into the abyss of Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian doctrine which is another Gospel,

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.promisekeepers.org/faqs/core/faqscore22.htm>.

<sup>68</sup> Owen, *Works*, 10:22.



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or no Gospel, altogether. Entire Christian universities and theological schools have been given over to this blatant kind of religious humanism. John Owen rightly said in his day, "Many at this day will condemn both Pelagius and the doctrine that he taught, in the words wherein he taught it, and yet embrace and approve of the things themselves which he intended."<sup>69</sup> However, though Owen said this four hundred years ago, it is more true today than it was at his time. But there has been a change. It is not that men deny Pelagianism, for most pastors have no idea what Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism is at all. Rather, they simply believe the doctrines of Pelagius and Arminius at the expense of even knowing in which theological camp they are historically bound. Truly, the Evangelical church today is captive. It is impossible to deny the overwhelming degree that the church is under the Pelagian captivity of old.

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No man but Pelagians, Arminians, and such, do teach, If any shall improve their natural abilities to the uttermost, and stir up themselves in good earnest to seek the grace of conversion and Christ the wisdom of God, they shall certainly and without miscarrying find what they seek. 1. Because no man, not the finest and sweetest nature, can engage the grace of Christ, or with his penny of sweating earn either the kingdom of grace, or glory, whether by way of merit of condignity or congruity. Rom. 9:16: So then, it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. I Tim. 1:9: Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. Eph. 2:1-5, Titus 3:3-5, Ezek. 16:4-10.

—Samuel Rutherford<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Owen, *Works*, 5:370.

<sup>70</sup> The following text as a whole can be found at *A Puritan's Mind*, [www.apuritansmind.com/SamuelRutherford/SamuelRutherfordPreparationsBeforeConversion.htm](http://www.apuritansmind.com/SamuelRutherford/SamuelRutherfordPreparationsBeforeConversion.htm)