

# *Estrangement Through Adam; Reconciliation in Christ*

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(-1939)

**T**he one act of disobedience, of the one man Adam, was judged on the spot, and he was made subject to death (Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:17).

No other sin was ever treated in the same manner, not even Adam's other sins. Had God done so, none of humanity would have survived. After his sin Adam and Eve transmitted by generation to the whole race of humanity, a dying life, and through death the judgment flowed down to all of their posterity.

Not even the "gospel" nor the "grace of God" can revert this "doom!" This one act, of the one man, is the one sin from which there is no escape. God judged it, putting Adam and his race under the scepter of death.

If this is so, then all of the theologians have erred fundamentally in their theories of atonement and substitution. Even we who have been liberated from much error have imbibed man's theology in this respect, if we have taught that "the first death was natural, and only the second death judicial." Surely we might have seen, if sin is not natural, then death, which is the judgment on sin, cannot be natural.

The worst phase of this error is the teaching that Christ died for this sin of Adam and removed the guilt of it from the race, leaving all men "responsible" for their own sins.

Scripture teaches that Adam alone was guilty of that first "act" of sin, but in suffering its judgment, he not only died himself, but also transmitted death to all of his posterity (Romans 5:12). Thus,

God constituted all mankind “sinners” through Adam’s disobedience (Romans 5:19). Scripture teaches that Christ died for “sins,” “transgressions,” “offenses” – not some, but all (Romans 5:16; II Corinthians 5:14; Hebrews 2:9).

We have failed to grasp fully that, first of all, Christ’s propitiation was a display of God’s righteousness in order that He might be justified. It seemed very unjust of God to constitute the whole of mankind sinners (Romans 3:23) through the disobedience of Adam. Men can no more help being sinners than they can help being born (John 3:6).

“*God Who is rich in mercy*” provided a “*Propitiatory*” in order that those who were sinners should be justified, and principally that God Who had constituted mankind sinners should justify Himself (Romans 3:26). “*In Adam*” God was estranging the world from Himself (Romans 1:28). “*In Christ*” God was conciliating the world to Himself (II Corinthians 5:19).

For years the saints have been reading in Ephesians and Colossians with the one, almost the only, thought of the “*one body*,” failing to see the other wonderful truths concerning the temple, God’s habitation, the secret economy, the universal headship of the Christ, and especially the important truth of the two humanities.

Adam is the head of the old humanity. When the “*word*” became flesh, Christ became the last Adam, the second Man; but in resurrection He became a “*vivifying Spirit*,” in contrast to a “*living soul*” (I Corinthians 15:45). As such He is the Head of a new race, “*a new creation*,” “*a new humanity*” (II Corinthians 5:16-17; Ephesians 2:15; 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10).

The cross stands between the two humanities (Galatians 2:20; 6:14-15). The old humanity was crucified in the last Adam. That was the end of “*the flesh of sin*” (Romans 8:3)<sup>1</sup> virtually, judicially. Those now in Christ are a “*new creation*,” a “*new humanity*” (II Corinthians 5:17). All mankind will eventually be “*in Christ*” (Ephesians 1:10).

When Christ died He bore the sin of the race on Himself (II Corinthians 5:14). He died at the hand of God for sin in its totality (II Corinthians 5:21). He died on behalf of sinners; His death was for their sakes (Romans 5:6). They were not responsible for being “*sinners*,” though they were nevertheless accountable to God as His creatures (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:6, 12, 16). Christ in His death accounted for their sins and offenses, but all, believers and unbelievers, shall give an account of their “*acts*,” deeds or works, apart from the question of “*sins*,” either at the “*bema*” or the “*great white throne*,” in order to procure a righteous judgment, before God, Who will right every wrong.

The Father has committed all judgment to the Son (John 5:22), Who is also “*the Savior of the world*” (I John 4:14). May we never lose sight of the “*Saviorhood*” of Christ, when dealing with the justice of His judgments!

1. We are told that mankind has a “*sinful nature*.” It is true that the word “*sinful*” occurs five times in the common version of the “*New Testament*,” but it has no equivalent in the original. Four times it is used for “*sinner*” (Mark 8:38; Luke 5:8; 24:7; Romans 7:13). Once it stands for “*sin*” (Romans 8:3). The American Revisers have corrected this mistranslation in their margin. It should read, “*the flesh of sin*,” or “*sin’s flesh*,” not “*sinful flesh*.” So we never read of a “*sinful nature*.” Why not? Is it an oversight in the word of God or an imposition on it? Away with the unscriptural words!

*The Problem of Evil and The Judgments of God*, Chapter 8: Sin in Act and in Fact by A.E. Knoch (originally from the *Unsearchable Riches Magazine*, Volume 17, 1926).

*O, the depth of the riches and of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways, seeing that all is out of Him, and through Him, and for Him: to Him be glory for the eons! Amen! (Romans 11:33-36)*

*Unsearchable Riches Magazine, Volume 27, 1937*

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