

Pelagius Chapters

Reconstructed by Rev. Daniel R. Jennings,

Synopsis: In December of 415 a second synod was held against Pelagius in Diospolis at which certain sentences were read from a book he had written. The synod was investigating whether or not Pelagius had strayed into heresy with what he had written.

After examining his book the synod declared him to be orthodox, finding no fault with his theology. In order to fully understand Pelagius' statements, since the complete book is lost, one needs to read his explanations of them in the Synod in Diospolis. These fragments of the book in question are from Augustine of Hippo's "On The Proceedings Of Pelagius" and Jerome's "Against The Pelagians".

"No man can be without sin unless he has acquired a knowledge of the law."

"All men are governed by their own will, and every one is submitted to his own desire...[The Scriptures show this for in the Wisdom of Solomon we see 'I myself also am a mortal man like unto all; and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth,' ...and] 'For all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out there from: wherefore I prayed and understanding was given to me; I called, and the Spirit of Wisdom came into me.'"

"[In the Psalms we read] 'He loved cursing, and it shall come upon him; and he willed not blessing, so it shall be far removed from him.'"

"[In Ecclesiasticus we read] 'He hath set fire and water before thee; stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt; before man are good and evil, life and death, and whichever he liketh shall be given to him.'"

"In the day of judgment no forbearance will be shown to the ungodly and the sinners, but they will be consumed in eternal fires."

"the Christian ought to be careful not to have evil thoughts."

"The kingdom of heaven was promised even in the Old Testament."

"A man is able, if he likes, to be without sin."

"Even women ought to have a knowledge of the law,"

"Women also should sing unto God."

"The servant of God should utter from his lips no bitterness, but ever that which is sweet and pleasant"

"A priest or doctor ought to watch the actions of all, and confidently rebuke sinners, lest he be responsible for them and their blood be required at his hands."

"A priest or doctor should flatter no one, but boldly rebuke all, lest he destroy both himself and those who hear him."

"All are governed by their own free choice."

[It is written in the one hundred and fourth Psalm,] "Let sinners cease to be in the earth, and the wicked be no more." And in Isaiah, "The wicked and sinners shall be burned up together, and they who forsake God shall be consumed."

"Except a man have learned, he cannot be acquainted with wisdom and understand the Scriptures."

"He that has not been taught, ought not to assume that he knows the law."

"A Christian ought to be so patient that if any one wished to take his property he would let it go with joy."

"The bravery of dress and ornament is an enemy of God."

"We must love our enemies as we do our neighbours"

"We must never believe an enemy."

The hundredth heading runs thus: "A man can be without sin, and easily keep the commandments of God if he chooses,"

"We ought not to commit even light offences."

"We must not even think an evil thought,"