

chards which they passed, only prohibiting their taking any vessels or bags with them to carry fruit away? What other law ever forbade the taking of a pledge from a widow for her indebtedness, or required a pawned garment to be returned to a poor man at night? What other nation ever had laws requiring that the wages of the workman should be paid, not quarterly, monthly or weekly, but before sunset every night? What other nation ever had a law forbidding men to curse the deaf or to put stumbling blocks in the path of the blind? What other nation had a law forbidding the husbandman to reap the corners of his fields or gather the gleanings of his harvest or the scattering grapes of his vineyard, but commanding him to leave them for the poor and the stranger?

“What other people had a law which forbade the muzzling of the ox as he was treading out the corn, or which protected the birds upon their nests, and which commanded men to show kindness to beasts in distress even though they belonged to their enemies? What other nation had a law which required them to love their neighbours as themselves, and forbade them to cherish grudges against them, and prohibited malice, tale bearing and

revenge? What other nation ever had a law which gave every man an inheritance of land, and so secured it that even the king on his throne could not take it from him, and so arranged it that if he himself was compelled to part with his land, he could not sell it outright but could redeem it any time when able, and if not, at the end of the jubilee period his children could go and claim the ancient inheritance?

“What nation outside the influence of the Law of Moses ever had a law which sacredly reserved every seventh day for rest, and forbade people to require or permit their servants or their beasts to do any servile work on that day? Surely if ever there was a law which was emphatically a law for the poor, the Law of Moses was that law. We might search the records of all ages from the beginning to the present time without finding another law so favourable to the poor, so full of sympathy, righteousness and truth as this law”.

We may add the question, What other nation ever had a law with a ritual so full of hidden meanings, which have assumed new significance in the light of later events, and which in their completeness speak so eloquently of Divine foreknowledge and Divine purpose?

(Concluded)

Sin-proneness (2)

Andrew Perry

IN THE [PREVIOUS article](#) we gave an analysis of James’s statement about the nature of temptation, desire and enticement in relation to sinful human behaviour. Our objective is to explain human proneness to sin. In Romans, Paul personifies ‘sin’ as a master or ruler. If sin is comprised of wrong behaviour, why is it personified as a master? Our answer to this question will be that Paul is personifying human proneness to sin.

Romans 5

Paul’s treatment in Romans 5 of Adam’s sin is a tightly drawn argument that begins in verse 12 with the proposition that “sin entered into the world”, and concludes in verse 21 with the statement that, “as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness”.

Exactly when Paul begins to personify sin is a matter of interpretation. We shall take verse 21 as the starting point and consider that it continues here and there through Romans 6–8. We shall take the figure of *sin entering the world* earlier in Romans 5 to be a simile rather than a personification, and we shall take it to be characterising the phenomenon of sin in the world.

The AV represents the Greek fairly well in Romans 5:12-21, but the structure of the argument can be brought out more clearly if we retranslate one or two words. Verse 12 is an unfinished comparison:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death went about to all men, for that all have sinned . . .”.

The comparison is broken off because we have no finishing clause. For example, we have no clause like, “. . . *so* by one man righteousness and life came to all men”. The comparison is broken off with the supplementary thought,¹ “. . . *and so* death went about to all men, for that all have sinned”, and this thought prompts Paul to give further explanation in an extended parenthesis (vv. 13-17). The simile of *sin entering the world* is continued here with the idea of death “going about” to all men. (A similar use of the verb can be found in Acts 10:38.)

Paul’s supplementary thought is that death has passed through to all men, because all men have sinned. The AV does not use the word ‘because’, but this is the best colloquial sense of the underlying Greek. The actual phrase would be literally rendered as “upon which”, giving us the idea of a turning point. The fact that death went about to all men *turned* on the fact that men were committing sin.²

Paul proceeds to explain how this is possible where there is no law (vv. 13,14). As he concludes this explanation, he says that Adam “is the figure of him that was to come”, and this involves further qualifications as to how Adam was a type of Christ. These qualifications take up verses 15 and 16. Paul’s movement of thought can be represented in the following way:

- (A) sin and death (v. 12)
- (B) law (vv. 13,14)
- (C) the offence and the gift (vv. 15-19)
- (B’) law (v. 20)
- (A’) sin and death (v. 21).

We can see from this structure that Paul matches his uncompleted comparison in verse 12 with a full comparison in verse 21.³ In verse 12 sin and death are coupled as cause and effect, and connected to Adam. In verse 21 sin and death are again coupled as cause and effect, but not related to Adam. The comparison in verse 21 is that, just as sin has reigned unto death, *even so* grace reigns unto life, and this is by one man, Jesus Christ. The passage begins with what comes “by one man” and it ends with what can come “by Jesus Christ”. The comparison is concluded in verse 21, but because he has developed several themes between verse 12 and verse 21, Paul draws the comparison using these further ideas, and he now deploys a personification of sin in his explanations.

Though we can discern this (A)-(B)-(C)-(B’)-(A’) structure, there is an equally important di-

vision in Paul’s argument at verse 18, marked in the AV by putting verses 13-17 as a parenthesis. This division is important because Paul returns in verse 18 to the business of completing the comparison he started in verse 12. We should see verses 18-21 as a kind of recapitulation of his previous points, but a recapitulation designed to show the comparison intended in verse 12. We can see this if we again set out the structure:

- “Wherefore, *as by* . . .” (v. 12)
- [Intervening points]
- “Therefore then *as by* . . . *even so by* . . .” (v. 18).

What verse 18 gives us is the comparative object: “. . . *even so* by the righteousness of one the gift of grace has come upon all unto justification of life”. This is the essential contrast with verse 12. By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; but, by the righteousness of one man, a gift of grace has come upon all to give life:

- “Therefore *as by* the offence of one *judgment came*⁴ upon all men to condemnation; *even so* by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life” (v. 18).

If we now ask, ‘How did judgement come upon all men?’, we get an explanation in verse 19:

- “For *as*⁵ by one man’s disobedience many were *made sinners*, *so* by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous”.

The judgement that came upon all men is that many were *made sinners*. What does this mean? One proposal is that by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners in that they were made

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1. The reason why commentators do not translate the passage as a complete comparison is because the word order is not right. The finishing clause of a comparison is indicated in a precise way in Greek, and Paul uses the correct word order several times in Romans 5 (vv. 15,18,19,21), so we are compelled to treat verse 12 as an unfinished comparison.
 2. See 2 Corinthians 5:4 and Philippians 3:12, 4:10 for uses of the expression where a *turning point* is highlighted.
 3. This structure is marked out by the particular Greek words used by Paul at the beginning and end of the passage.
 4. The AV has italics here, but it has taken the words from verse 16, because there they are linked to condemnation.
 5. The use of the same Greek expression here as in verse 12 ties this comparison to verse 12 as an explanation of verse 12.

in such a way that they would tend to sin. Another (incorrect) view is that men were made sinners by their participation in the disobedience of the first man, that is, they share a kind of collective guilt for that original sin.⁶

The actual Greek word translated “made” here conveys the sense of appointed to a functional position; for example, as in, ‘Who *made* you a ruler over us?’ (Acts 7:27,35; Lk. 12:14), or ‘Every high priest is *ordained* to offer gifts’ (Heb. 8:3; 5:1).⁷ In the following verses it is used in behavioural contexts:

“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so *is* the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell” (Jas. 3:6)—the tongue has the *position* of being a fire or world of iniquity among the members of the body;

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world *is* the enemy of God” (4:4)—an adulterer has the *position* of being a friend of the world;

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they *make* you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:8)—the qualities of kindness and godliness *make* a person fruitful.

So, when Paul says that by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, he does not mean men shared the guilt of Adam’s sin, and were thereby born sinners, but rather he means that Adam’s disobedience had the effect of putting men into a position of committing sin. We can express this by saying that Adam’s sin had the effect of making men *prone to sin*. The comparison is that by one man (Jesus) many will be put into a position where they will only act in a righteous way, and by this they will live.

In a sense, at this point Paul has completed the comparison started in verse 12, and we can

see this because he now returns to mentioning the Law. He broke off his comparison in verse 12 to mention the universality of death and sin. He then went on in the succeeding verses to prove how this was possible before the Law came into existence (vv. 13,14). Now, having returned to (and completed) his initial comparison, he is able to add a supplementary point:

“Moreover the law entered,⁸ that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (v. 20).

We can see, then, that sin has entered as a *phenomenon* because many have been made sinners, and death has entered alongside as a corollary. Consequently, both “sin” and “death” are reigning as monarchs over man. These effects came about as a result of Adam’s sin.

Conclusion

In Romans 5 Paul talks about behavioural sin in general, or, more abstractly, as a phenomenon, for example, in verses 13 and 20. When he says that “sin entered into the world” he is not referring to Adam’s sin in particular, and saying this is the first sin (Eve sinned first); rather he is saying that sin in general entered the world through Adam. If we ask how sin entered through one man, Paul’s answer is that by Adam’s disobedience, many were *made* into sinning creatures. The phenomenon of sin began with Adam. The strength of man’s bias towards sin leads Paul to personify sin in terms of power, that is, a reign. A corollary of this is that death also entered the world. In the next article we will follow Paul’s personification of sin through into Romans 7.

[\(To be concluded\)](#)

6. This is the notion of ‘original guilt’.

7. See also Matthew 24:45,47; 25:21,23; Luke 12:42,44; Acts 6:3; 7:10; Titus 1:5.

8. Note that, as “sin entered”, so too the Law “entered”.

Sacred Russia

“Our country was called ‘Sacred Rus’ from time immemorial . . . it stressed the special role that Russia undertook as the custodian of historic Christian values”.

President Vladimir Putin, 21 August 2001, at Strata

“Having fulfilled the mission of his ‘sacred Russia’ to put down rebellion, to plant the Greek cross on the dome of St. Sophia [in Istanbul], and to prostrate Europe at his feet, [the Russian Autocrat] will next address himself to the work of establishing his dominion over the east”.

John Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 420