

(3) A dichotomy develops between what man is and what he should be. Wickedness may be tolerated in open areas so long as it is asserted not to exist in private areas. Hard to illustrate but the practices that were not right in the monastic society could be tolerated in the light of what they did to make practices right in the inner beings of the members.

(4) The God-consciousness of the individual believer is not adequate for forming life judgments and determining the path of activity: an ordered life is needed and the more strict the ordered life the more likelihood of attaining the desired end of enjoying God.

In many areas monasticism served the church well and it still has strong appeal. It tends to deny the individual freedom in the spirit and in life and eventually renders our decisions, etc., mechanistic. While there are many virtues, the weaknesses make it a questionable option save in very special circumstances or under unique situations of stress.

2. The Pelagian Answer

Pelagius (d. ca. 424 AD) is one of those enterprising and interesting parties who show up in the heretical lists of the church. Of Anglo-Saxon background he viewed the church as the group of adult-baptised believers who were moving in the direction of perfectionism. He argued for the Trinity and for a real body in the Person of Christ but his view of grace made it unnecessary for salvation and, in fact, a liability in that it tended to make man dependent on something exterior to himself. A fellow-thinker, Celestius (Coelestus), published similar ideas in Africa and while Pelagius drew the fire of Jerome, Celestius drew the attack of Augustine. The Council of Ephesus in 431 condemned both the teachers and their teaching

a. Summary of Pelagian ideas

As with all summaries this one is much too brief and probably not so fair as it should be but I think it catches the capsulized ideas in good form:

(1) There is no Adamic sin and man has a free will with which he can do either good or evil.

(2) Salvation is obtainable to all through the mere process of keeping the law.

(3) The Law being largely a Judaic document, Christianity is a new and expanded version of the law and the teachings of Jesus, et al, must now be kept for deliverance.

(4) The Christian must choose the right model. The "real" Christian chooses to model himself