

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

A REPLY TO DR. DENNEY.

It is with deep reluctance that I answer Dr. Denney's strictures<sup>1</sup> on my review of his volume *The Death of Christ*, in the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*. Controversy is rarely congenial, and with a scholar so eminent and esteemed it is most distasteful, all the more so in view of the large agreement that underlies our sharp divergence. Had it been simply my competence to interpret Paul that was in question, I should have cheerfully left it to take care of itself, nor have obtruded on an uninterested world the impertinence of self-vindication. But the point at issue is of far graver moment, and though I dread to encroach further on time already curtailed by illness and mortgaged with pledges unredeemed, it is my duty to defend my interpretation, rather than let the case go by default. Not, of course, that I hope to convince Dr. Denney. He has that happy temperament which is not clouded by misgivings as to the soundness of his conclusions, and which airily brushes aside views that do not appeal to him as meaningless or fantastic, or things not to be taken seriously, a temper of mind which has made it hard for me to learn from him so much as I could have wished. But since many will no doubt take it for granted that so distinguished a writer must have ample justification for his strong language about me, I would remind them of facts that may prevent too blind an acceptance of his verdict. I may be permitted to add that the discussion has arisen in an unfortunate way. In a necessarily brief review I could do no more than indicate my objections, without expounding my views at length, to say nothing of defending them. And I was writing for those,

<sup>1</sup> In the *EXPOSITOR* for October 1903, republished with slight modifications in a little volume bearing the title *The Atonement and the Modern Mind* (Hodder and Stoughton: 1903).

who, for the most part, were already familiar with them from articles and reviews.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a fuller exposition may throw light on the question whether Dr. Denney has altogether caught my meaning.

I am not here concerned with Prof. Denney's attempt to commend his theory of the Atonement to the modern mind, but simply with the interpretation of the Pauline doctrine. The question on which he explicitly joins issue with me is that of the racial character of Christ's act, but he does so tacitly in reference to the doctrine of union with Christ, on which I criticised him not merely in reviewing his work on *The Death of Christ*, but also in my notice of his *Studies of Theology*. It is with these fundamental questions that I wish to deal.

The objections urged against the former view seem to be that the idea of a racial act is absurd in itself, "a fantastic abstraction"; that even were it rational, it would not be applicable to Christ's work; that Paul never meant anything of the kind, or, as Dr. Denney rather tartly puts it, "I own I can see nothing profound in it except a profound misapprehension of the Apostle"; and that it "is in principle to deny the whole grace of the gospel, and to rob it of every particle of its motive power," a sweeping assertion to which I hardly think Prof. Denney would adhere in cold blood. No wonder that I am selected as the drunken Helot of the representative view. I readily understand that with the hard common sense, that gives so much strength to his

<sup>1</sup> I much regret that I cannot refer Dr. Denney to more than I have published on the subject. He could find a sketch of my views in my *Guide to Biblical Study* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), pp. 194-219, and more briefly in my *Hebrews in the Century Bible* (T. C. & E. C. Jack: 1902) pp. 30-33: also in an article on *The Permanent Value of the Pauline Theology in Present Day Papers*, July 1900. My commentary on Colossians in the *Expositor's Greek Testament* was completed in 1898, but owing to the delay in the publication of the volume, has not yet appeared. My detailed discussions of Paulinism exist at present only in MS., or have been printed or private circulation.

treatment of these questions, and his almost fanatical dislike of mysticism, the very idea of a racial act should seem to him a fantastic abstraction. Keen-sighted as he is on many sides, he appears, if I also may practise an engaging frankness, to be colour-blind to one realm of Pauline ideas. The fact that he sees nothing profound in the conception makes me sorry, but it does not in the least disturb me. It is hardly worth while discussing the validity of our impressions: I must be content, as Kuenen said of Nöldeke, to let my denial stand against his assertion. It is more promising to discuss the question whether Paul has the conception of a racial act. This precedes the question whether he so interpreted the act of Christ. A strong case can, I think, be made out for the view that he had such a conception in relation alike to Adam and to Christ.

We cannot hope to interpret Paul's doctrine of Christ's work, unless we give prominence to his parallel between Adam and Christ. Their relation to the race conditions so vitally the effects of their acts upon the race, that we should seek first of all to determine what that relation is. It is singularly fortunate that Paul has done so much to help us here in Romans v. 12-21, and in 1 Corinthians xv. The former passage is obscure and elliptical, and radically divergent views of its true interpretation may be taken. Still it yields us much that is really unambiguous, and much as to which a probable decision may be reached. It would be a disastrous error to infer from its somewhat parenthetical character that the parallel was little more to Paul than a passing illustration, by which he sets forth the greatness of Christ's work. What has suggested this has been the incompatibility of his statements with history as we understand it. But that need not disturb his most ardent admirer, for his interest was not historical but psychological. The passage is one of the most fundamental in his Epistles, and ought to be set in the forefront of any exposition of Christ's

work. In his exposition of the soteriology of Romans in *The Death of Christ* Dr. Denney simply ignores it.<sup>1</sup> I am not surprised; yet if we wish to know in virtue of what the work of Christ effected its results, it is with it that we must begin. And within certain limits we can control the interpretation of one side of the parallel by reference to the other, while much help is afforded by 1 Corinthians xv.

In spite of all that scholars have urged against the view that by the words "because all sinned" Paul meant because all sinned in the sin of Adam, I cannot convince myself that this interpretation is mistaken. It is hard to explain the words of personal sin. Even if we waive some of the objections usually urged against this view, others cannot easily be set aside. The stress throughout the passage lies not on the acts of all the individuals who constitute the race, but on the acts of Adam and Christ. "Through one that sinned," "through one trespass," "through one man's disobedience," such is the constant refrain. In fact, Paul practically says that all sinned in Adam when he says "Through one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners." He does definitely attribute the death of all to the sin of Adam in the words "by the trespass of the one the many died," with which we may compare the words "death reigned through the one," and "as in Adam all die." The most natural interpretation of *vv.* 13, 14 supports this view. They explain the thought in Paul's mind that universal death is due, not to the personal sin of those who die, but to their sin in Adam, by pointing out that in the non-legal period, when sin could not be imputed since there was no transgression, there, nevertheless, was universal death. As death was the penalty of transgression, and as in a non-legal condition transgression cannot arise, this uni-

<sup>1</sup> I do not need to be reminded that Dr. Denney has published a commentary on Romans. That did not prevent him from discussing the great passage in Rom. iii., in his *Death of Christ*.

versal prevalence of death from Adam to Moses must be explained as due to Adam's trespass. Since then it is assigned both to the sin of Adam and to the sin of all, and the latter cannot be personal sin, the only conclusion possible is that the sin of Adam is the sin of all. The aorist is therefore to be interpreted as in 2 Corinthians v. 14. Moreover, if we do not let our clue slip from our fingers in treading the mazes of this labyrinth, we are bound to give a scope to the words analogous to that which suits the parallel act of Christ. Now if Paul attributed a man's death to his personal sin, he must, in accordance with this principle, have attributed that which cancelled the death to his personal righteousness. But I think it will be granted that he assigned it to the act of Christ. I may add, as throwing light on the phrase "as through one man sin entered into the world," that Paul explains the phrase "by man came death" by the phrase "in Adam all die" (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22).

If, then, the act of Adam is also the act of the race, it may be correctly described as a racial act. It is necessary, however, to fix the meaning of this more precisely, and show that it is no "fantastic abstraction." There is no need to discuss the strange view of Tertullian and other theologians that the soul of every member of the race was seminally present in Adam and participated in his act; that would be really fantastic. Nor does the popular view that the whole destinies of the race hung on the mere accident of an individual choice do any kind of justice to Paul's magnificent synthesis. This paltry interpretation would make the universe the sport of caprice. If Adam acts for the race, it is because he faithfully represents it. In his act there come to expression and to judgment tendencies universal in the race. It is not Paul's thought that with the act of Adam there steals into the race a subtle poison, it is rather that in his act the poison already there begins its deadly work. For he acts for us not in spite of difference

from us, but in virtue of a community of nature with us. "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy." And if the question be raised in what this identity of principle consists, I have no doubt (the phrase "sin entered into the world" notwithstanding), that it is to be sought in the possession by Adam from the first of our sinful flesh, and Romans v. 12-21 must be read in the light of vii. 7-25. When the commandment came, the sin that slumbered in it leapt to consciousness and revolt. And since he acted as every individual in his place would have acted, his act is fitly regarded as one which reveals the true character of the race. Thus it loses its individual and gains a racial significance. It transcends the narrow limits of personal experience, and becomes the august and ominous act of Man. In him the whole race is on its trial, and fails to stand the test. Thus the race is judged and declared to be sinful: "Through one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners." And if I am told that this is to make sin inevitable, I answer that we need not be afraid to call things by their right names. It was not we who placed our representative there, but that God "who hath shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon all." From the racial act and its consequences the whole element of personal choice is eliminated. The race as a race is by God adjudged to be sinful, and the penalty imposed is physical death. In this conception of a racial act I own that I see no "fantastic abstraction." It is not more fantastic than Romans viii. 19-21 or Ephesians i. 10, or the thought of the Church as Christ's bride, which is said to be "a great mystery."

But man, caught in the coils of his own earthy nature, and helpless to release himself from the grip of its folds, is not abandoned to their strangling embrace. If there is a natural order, there is a spiritual order as well; and though that order does not assert itself till the natural has

had time to display its baneful character under the stimulus of the Law, yet in the fulness of time it breaks into the world in the Incarnation of God's Son. It was not we who placed Him where He stands in history, once more it was God, who sent His Son and constituted Him our second racial Head. Over against the weak and sinister figure of the First rises the gracious and mighty figure of the Second Adam. Standing where He does, His acts, too, lose their individual and gain a racial significance. In His death the race dies and atones for its sin, is pronounced righteous by God, and therefore the physical death which fell on the race as the penalty of its act in Adam, is cancelled by the universal resurrection of the body." <sup>1</sup>

All this could be inferred from the parallel of the first with the second Man. But Paul does not leave us to inference. In 2 Corinthians v. 14, he says explicitly, "We thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died." The meaning of this can only be that all men died in the death of Christ, that His was a racial act. And this receives light from the words "Even so through one act of righteousness [it came] unto all men to justification of life." The Apostle

<sup>1</sup> There are passages in Paul which do not seem to favour a universal resurrection (e.g. Rom. viii. 11, 1 Cor. xv. 23). But his argument in Rom. v. 12-21 would go to pieces if he anticipated a limited resurrection. The whole point of it is that the last Adam cancels, and much more than cancels, the effects of the first Adam's act. One of those effects was the physical death of each individual, and universal death cannot be cancelled by a limited resurrection. Paul draws the inference explicitly in 1 Cor. xv. 22, "In Christ shall all be made alive." The use of "in Christ" here with a racial, not with its usual personal, application is very noteworthy. There is no reference in this passage to universal salvation (whether there are any such passages in Paul is irrelevant here). But it is relevant to point out that if we are determined to give "death" in Rom. v. 12-21 more than a physical significance, we shall not be able to stop short of universalism. The act of Adam involves no change in the ethical constitution of man, it simply reveals what that constitution is. There is a change in ethical status, for the nature cannot be judged sinful till it has found expression in an overt act. No effects follow from Adam's act for the individual, except that God regards him as of a sinful nature and that he is subject to physical death.

means that in contrast to the judgment passed on the race through the trespass of Adam, which resulted in the universal reign of death, the race is now pronounced righteous as a race, and this justification issues in the resurrection of all the units who compose it. Thus, in virtue of the fact that "the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit," "by man came the resurrection of the dead," and in Christ all are made alive. It seems at first sight strange that in Romans v. 19 the aorist on the one side of the parallel should have a future as its counterpart. We should have expected Paul to say: "As through the transgression of one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the one the many were constituted righteous." But the eschatological interest mingles with the current of his thought (so also in verse 17), and he is looking forward to the resurrection when this justification of the race shall be made manifest to all. We need, therefore, have no hesitation in believing that it was not because he shrank from completing the parallel begun in Romans v. 12 that he wholly omits the second part of it. In a way not unusual with him, he leaves the track of his argument, to clear up a point raised by what he has just said. Had he completed it, we may feel sure that it would have run something like this: "So through one man life entered into the world, and life through righteousness; and so life passed to all men, because all were righteous." All this makes it plain that Paul's thought is not moving in the sphere of individual, but in the sphere of racial action. For while he insisted that all personally sinned, and thus by making Adam's act their own justified the treatment of it as a racial act, he certainly could not have said that all were personally righteous. And in the one act, as in the other, the element of choice on the part of men generally is wholly absent. That they belong to a race judged guilty or declared righteous, that they experience physical

death or resurrection, these are facts which happen without any reference to their individual will.

But here a difficulty emerges. If the possession by Adam of our common nature constitutes him our fit representative and confers on his deed a racial character, does not the parallel between Adam and Christ break down at a crucial point? Adam is the natural man, his essential significance is that he stands for human nature left to itself. The more perfectly he represents us, the less appropriate does it seem that we should be represented by Christ. In the consideration of this point I omit for the present any reference to the question of the relation between the pre-incarnate Christ and humanity. But can we discover other points of contact? We must not forget that the natural man is not wholly evil. The flesh, indeed, is intrinsically sinful, and it is seized by sin as its base of operations. But there is also the higher nature, which Paul identifies with the man's true self (Rom. vii. 17, 20). For the flesh, while an original, is not destined to be a permanent constituent of human nature, and is therefore an accident of the self, however closely it may seem at times to be identified with it (e.g. Rom. vii. 14). Man's condition is one of slavery to an alien power, against which his true nature chafes in vain. Now in so far as Christ represents the true essential self, He may be regarded as our representative, even though the accidental element of "the flesh" be absent.

Of course, it may be fairly debated whether Paul really made this exception, but into this extremely difficult question of the ethical constitution of Christ it is not necessary to enter. And I do not think that the term "representative" is adequate here; so that when Dr. Denney selects my words as the extreme example of the representative theory, he has read them in a sense I

did not mean to convey. It is a stronger term than representation that we need, I think it should be identification. Christ becomes so completely one with us that His acts become ours. When I say that the formula "Christ died in our stead" has a certain element of truth, but that it would be more correct to say that in Him the guilty race suffered and died, I mean that the victim of Calvary was not simply an individual, though the Son of God, but that He was humanity. To our eyes, which stop with the external, and cannot penetrate behind to the essential fact, it is Jesus who dies in our stead; and it is true that so far as He suffers, in His own individual personality, if I may put it so, what we deserved, His suffering may be correctly described as vicarious. But since He and the race are joined in indissoluble union, His acts are the acts of the race. There is, so to speak, a *communicatio idiomatum* between Christ and mankind. The interest of a merely vicarious theory is to insist on the sharp distinction between Christ and the race, my interest is to identify them as closely as possible. It is quite natural that Paul should speak in terms proper to the external fact, and he does so constantly, but this should not blind us to the principle which he detected beneath it.

May I not carry the exposition of this principle a step further? A new light falls on the perplexing problem of the world's pain. Since Christ and the race are one, the sufferings of humanity become His own. No act of violence or oppression, no sickness or bereavement, no horror of great darkness, no anguish of love rebuffed, nor the deeper anguish for the sin of those we love, but He endures it and keenly feels its uttermost pang. Ideally concentrated in a single experience, actually His suffering is co-extensive with the life of Man; He gathers into His own agony all our unnumbered woes. By becoming His own pain it gains a redemptive efficacy. Thus we know

that it is not meaningless, but that all our sufferings are pressed into the service of the Titanic warfare that He wages with evil, and are working together for good to all who love God.

Now all this does not mean that the race redeems itself, as that proposition would be commonly understood, and as Dr. Denney understands it. The natural man at the best cannot redress the balance of good and evil, of mind and flesh, even in himself. He cannot atone for his own transgression, or break the power of sin in his own life. Not all his plunging and struggling can free him from the web in which he is snared; each effort for victory leaves him with spent energies and a new defeat. Humanity has in it no resources for the tremendous conflict, nor did it produce the Champion who has won its battle. We cannot point to Christ (as we can to Shakespeare in the realm of poetry) as the flower of the race in goodness, to show that we can confront God with Him and prove in doing so our moral excellence. It is because He Himself has taken the initiative, and planted Himself in the race, that one with Him it can boldly approach God. It is not our sufferings that avail anything in themselves, but our sufferings transmuted into the sufferings of Christ.

Were this the occasion, I might go further still and point out that even the term "racial" is too narrow to express Paul's thought. But it lies outside the present discussion to expound his great doctrine of the cosmic sweep of the redemptive forces. I must, however, touch on the solitary argument with which Dr. Denney repels the idea of a racial act. It is that we are, to begin with, apart from Christ (Eph. ii. 12). Dr. Denney might not now urge this against my own view, after the statement I have just given of it. But he seems to me rather easily satisfied, for I think the passage is irrelevant against what he supposed to be my view, and that, whether we take

χωρὶς Χριστοῦ as parallel to the following clauses or not. If Paul means that when his readers were without Christ they were alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, he simply says that in their pre-Christian state as individuals they were so alienated. The phrase is one that might naturally be used to describe the condition of any one who was not "in Christ," an unconverted man, without raising the wholly remote question whether the person so described belonged to a race with which Christ was connected. This may quite well be the meaning of the phrase if it is parallel to the clauses that follow. But I am inclined to suggest that in this case the sense is rather different. Paul is describing his readers when they were unconverted Gentiles, and contrasting their alienation from Israel with the union now effected by Christ. If we remember this, and then read "ye were apart from Christ, estranged from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world," the clause in question gets a new light, both from the parallel clauses and the general context. This, as well as the other phrases, expresses the Gentiles' lack of a privilege possessed by the Jews. Accordingly, even though "Christ" is here a personal name, it retains very strongly a suggestion of its official meaning, they were "without Messiah." In any case the words seem wholly unadapted to the purpose for which Dr. Denney has quoted them.

But this is a mere negative result, and since Dr. Denney has not thought it worth while to treat the question seriously, I must bring forward positive arguments to show that Christ is ours to begin with. There is one passage that many might expect me to employ which I must leave aside, 1 Corinthians xv. 47. In spite of the wide acceptance of the "heavenly-man" theory, I have never been able to believe that we should translate "the second is the man

from heaven," since the balance of clauses would be disturbed, as the first clause cannot well be translated otherwise than "The first man is of the earth, earthy." *Ἀνθρώπος* in the second clause can as little be separated from *ὁ δεύτερος* as from *ὁ πρῶτος* in the first, and we must translate "the second man is of heaven." On the clause so translated we cannot safely build the theory in question. I may be permitted to diverge from the discussion of Paul's doctrine, to point out that Dr. Denney's assertion seems to be in conflict with the Epistle to the Hebrews. A careful scrutiny of Hebrews ii. 11-17 reveals, I think, that the author regarded the *pre-incarnate* Son as the brother of men, who, because He was already their brother, sharing a common origin with them and not disdainful to own His kinsfolk in their misery, took on Him their flesh and blood and was "made in all things like His brethren." Returning to Paul, we must remember the cosmic significance he assigns to Christ. All created beings, even in the highest orders, were created in Him, and find in Him their centre of cohesion. I will not press this, since it might seem too general, just as passages like "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" are too narrow. But I think we may press the words "the head of every man is Christ" (1 Cor. xi. 3), for they appear to assert not only Christ's universal headship of the race, but a headship "to begin with." Indeed, it would not otherwise be easy to account for the position assigned to Him as "the second man" or "the last Adam." Paul lays great stress on the fact that it is as *man* that Christ achieves His work (Rom. v. 15; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 47). Why this man should do what no other has achieved, is explained by the fact that He is the Son of God. But the capacity in which He acts is that of spiritual Head of the race. The fact of His spiritual nature necessitates the development in Romans v. 12-21 from parallel to contrast. For Adam is just the mere natural man, the passive

victim of his nature. But Christ is a life-giving spirit, whose vitalizing energies are communicated to those with whom He has become one. And so there rings through the passage that great "much more"; so, while one side of the parallel is interpreted in terms of representation, the other is interpreted in terms of identification.

Were I formally expounding Paul's doctrine, it would be necessary at this point to come to close quarters with the crucial problem, and ask precisely in what did he conceive the redeeming work to lie, what it was that gave the acts done or experiences endured a redemptive quality, and what were the effects produced by them. But this lies outside my special purpose. I will simply say that Dr. Denney would do well to bring out as clearly as possible the difference between his "substitution" theory and theories which commonly go by that name; and I must express my horrified dissent (if it is not rude to say so) from his estimate of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*.

And now I must come to the second great question at issue between us—that of union with Christ. I am thankful that we can start from the common ground that Paul has much to say of union with Christ. But while I, with many others, believe that this union is of a mystical character, Dr. Denney affirms that the New Testament knows only a moral union. He is afraid that we may lose ourselves in soaring words, and thinks that the idea of a mystical union approaches the region of the unintelligible. Well, "the race of flame soars high," and I am not frightened of soaring words. In truth no other words will do. There are elements in Paulinism of which one cannot write adequately, unless he writes with rapture. Nor must we be deterred by dread of the unintelligible. With the irrational we can, of course, make no terms. But when a great speculative genius speaks of the dim and darkly

guessed regions, where personality has its roots, and where our spirits know the thrill and shock of contact with the Divine, we must expect the facts he reports to us to be largely beyond our comprehension. When Dr. Denney urges further that our death to sin and resurrection to a new life with Christ, is something we have to realize in the course of our Christian life, I am entirely at one with him. Here again, what is ideally concentrated in a single experience is actually achieved in a process. "Therefore" in Colossians iii. 5 is very instructive in this respect. But it is desirable to expound Paul's doctrine in its absolute form first, and thus disengage the principles in it, in a pure and not in a mixed form. Moreover, the fact that the union only gradually becomes complete is quite irrelevant to our present question whether it is moral or mystical.

It strikes me in the first place as strange that if Paul meant a moral union merely, he should have hit upon such a term as "in Christ" to express it. Our word "union" is itself rather ambiguous, but I should not describe the fact that my will was in harmony with Christ's will, that I passed the same moral judgments and sought the same ends, as a union with Christ in the strict sense at all. I could have precisely the same moral harmony with any of my fellows, but I should not dream of expressing this by saying that I was "in him." As Dr. Denney explicitly mentions the phrase "in Christ," and yet affirms that nothing more than a moral union is meant, it would be wasted labour to discuss this further. But there are other phrases where this interpretation seems not simply unlikely but impossible. When Paul says, "I have been crucified with Christ," he *may* mean no more than that he has passed through an experience similar to that of Christ. But when he proceeds, "And it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me,"<sup>1</sup> it needs some very strange exegetical spectacles to

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Denney dilutes it into "my life is no longer mine; it is Christ who lives in me." (*Death of Christ*, p. 151.)

distort this into a moral union. Even if the language is exaggerated, since emotion is at white heat, the actual fact must be on the lines of the expression, though it may lag behind it. And at its lowest valuation a mystical union must be meant, in which something analogous to the substitution of Christ for his own personality had been effected. Even clearer, perhaps, is 1 Corinthians vi. 17. The words "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," are themselves very striking, and do not readily lend themselves to anything but a personal identification. In fact it is difficult to see how a mystical union could be better described than by this daring sentence. The context, however, definitely excludes the thought of a merely moral union. Paul is showing that impurity is inconsistent with the Christian life. So close is the physical union in the case involved, that two bodies coalesce into one, and where one of the participants in the act is a Christian, he is guilty of making the members of Christ the members of a harlot. The Apostle proceeds to point out that the coalescence of Christ and the believer into one spirit is just as intimate as is the coalescence of the two physical organisms into one body and one flesh. The parallel shows quite clearly that a union is intended far closer than anything implied in the term "moral union." There are other passages which are much more naturally interpreted of mystical than of moral union, such as "your life is hid with Christ in God" or "Christ who is our life." When once the mystical sense has been demonstrated, it then holds the field for all the cognate passages, and they are very numerous.

It is necessary to keep distinct the racial and the individual experiences, though it is not always easy to discover to which a passage may refer. The racial experiences are those of Eden and of Calvary. In Eden the race sinned, was pronounced guilty and doomed to physical death. On Calvary the race suffered and died for its sin, broke free

from its claim and its power, was justified by God, and secured the ultimate reversal in the resurrection of its sentence of physical death. But in the case of the individual we pass into the region of personal choice. Physical death and physical resurrection are, it is true, individual experiences, which happen whether we will or not. But whether we stand with Adam and remain on the level of the natural, or whether we become one with Christ, die with Him to our old life and rise into the new, that is a matter for personal decision.

It is only when the sinner believes in Christ that the racial experience of Calvary becomes his personal experience. The act of faith does one thing for us, but that one thing includes all. It vitally unites us to Christ, so that we reproduce His redemptive experiences. We share His character, His status before God and His destiny. It is not necessary to follow this out in detail. I must say, however, how emphatically I disagree with Dr. Denney's statement, expressed with characteristic vehemence in his Commentary on Romans (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, ii. 575), that justification by faith is the fundamental doctrine. If we are speaking of Theology in general, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine; but if we are speaking of the soteriology of Paul on its personal side, the fundamental doctrine is union with Christ. It is because a man is "in Christ" that God pronounces him righteous. One would sometimes imagine that Paul never said anything on the subject, but that God justifies the ungodly. Why we should want to give the enemy more cause to blaspheme than they have at present I have never been able to discover, but the statement that God pronounces a man righteous when as a matter of fact he is a sinner, is not calculated to reassure those whose faith in the morality of Paulinism has been undermined. To speak quite frankly, while Paul uses the phrase, it does not accurately express his doctrine. The

use of it in a quite popular and not a scientifically accurate way is easy to understand. The man who comes to God is a sinner, and in response to his faith God justifies him. I could myself quite well speak of this in popular language and say that God had justified the ungodly. But what really happens is this. The sinner believes on Christ; this act of faith makes him one with Christ; as one with Christ he is a new creature, who has died to his old life, the man who now stands before God's bar stands there in Christ, and therefore is righteous and shares Christ's status before God, so that God can and does pronounce him righteous. The phrase which best expresses Paul's actual doctrine is "to be justified in Christ" (Gal. ii. 17), which reappears in a negative form in Romans viii. 1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." To me the place assigned by Professor Denney to justification by faith shows very impressively how a lack of sympathy with an author (in this case with his mysticism) may throw out of focus the whole presentation of his teaching.

Even more disastrous is the result in the sphere of the Christian life. Its motive power he seems to find in gratitude. As we contemplate the mighty work Christ has done for us, our hearts are filled with thankfulness to Him, and this keeps us loyal to His will. It is no concern of mine to depreciate this motive; I recognize its value and remember the place it filled in Paul's own life. In the storms which beat us it is well to have all our anchors out. But I also have no doubt that this anchor by itself will not hold us. It may suffice for some. A man with a sensitive conscience and a deep sense of guilt, of a grateful temper and endowed with high moral character, might feel so overwhelmed with gratitude as to live a holy life for the future. But this combination is rare. The gospel has not to save a mere aristocracy of

character. It calls the sinful, the degraded, the debased, the morally callous and the emotionally unresponsive, the men of strong passions, and paralysed will. Their sense of guilt is but feeble, they appreciate only very faintly what sacrifice Christ has made for them; their gratitude is but a wisp of straw to check the mad career of their desires. Yet it is men like these that the gospel cleanses and saves and keeps. I marvel at the doctrine which teaches that Christ alone redeems, and leaves the redeemed to keep themselves. Dr. Denney may insist that this does not represent his view, but he certainly uses language that exposes him to the charge of a kind of Deism in this particular sphere.<sup>1</sup> I confess quite frankly that gratitude, though I trust it plays its part, is not in my own personal life a force on which I should dare to stake my moral career; and, if so, what of the millions whose circumstances have been so much less fortunate than my own? If there is one thing which experience in the Christian life forces upon us it is this, that what saves us from being sucked into the black whirlpool is not that we hold so fast to Christ that the swirling waters cannot pluck us from Him, but that He holds us with His strong grip. It is because we are one with Christ, that His resources meet all our needs. We have died His death to sin and the law, the flesh has been crucified with its passions and desires. Omit from Paul's doctrine our mystical union with Christ, and all you have is a fatally eviscerated Paulinism. And I would rather stand with Paul, confessing that all I have I owe to Christ,

<sup>1</sup> See *The Death of Christ*, p. 143 (with the gibe in the footnote at "theologians in love with the 'mystic union'"), pp. 178, 179. No doubt Dr. Denney may urge that he traces back the Christian life to Christ, since His death creates the gratitude that inspires it. It is curious to find so vigorous an opponent of Ritschlianism putting so onesided an emphasis on the impression made on us by the historical Christ. I do not think many Christians will accept the notion of an absentee Christ, and I should much regret to think that Dr. Denney really held a view which *some* of his language seems to involve.

not simply forgiveness and justification, but the power to lead a new life, dwelling in the secret place of the Most High because my life has been hid with Christ in God, than claim anything for my own nerveless hands and unsteady feet, even though it be but the strength that comes from a gratitude, which He has Himself inspired.

And now as confirming the results already attained, let me suggest, in a few words, how Paul reached his individualistic and his racial doctrines. His theology is in the main the creation of his own experience. His life of happy innocence, when as a child he knew nothing of sin, was rudely destroyed by the coming of the Law. At its touch, the spell which held sin in a charmed slumber in his flesh was broken; he realized the austere moral order under which he lived, and his own disharmony with it. And though his better self strove to fulfil its behests, the lower nature was too powerful. From this tragic schism of his being he had been released by Christ. In his death with Him, his old tyrant Sin had been condemned and executed, and the flesh which was Sin's fortress had been crucified, while he had escaped into the freedom of the Spirit, where no external law was able to follow him. These experiences supplied him with much of his doctrine of Sin and Salvation, and his doctrine of the two Adams largely originated in the same way. He was not content till he had tracked the principles he had discovered to their source. His own experience was the key to the philosophy of history and the clue to the riddle of the universe. His own heart was the mimic theatre in which he saw enacted the long and colossal conflict of good and evil. Seeking the one in the many he generalized his personal into a great racial experience, finding in the latter an interpretation of the former.

ARTHUR S. PEAKE.