

ADAM AND CHRIST IN ST. PAUL.

It is not my intention in this paper to write a reply to Professor Peake. Nothing I ever read made a deeper impression on my mind than the last paragraph of Jowett's essay on *Atonement and Satisfaction*. I venture to quote a sentence or two to indicate the kind of impression I mean. "If our Saviour were to come again to earth, which of all the theories of atonement and sacrifice would He sanction with His authority? Perhaps none of them, yet perhaps all may be consistent with a true service of Him. The question has no answer. But it suggests the thought that we shrink from bringing controversy into His presence." It is not, I hope, in the temper of controversy at all that I shall try to state, as clearly as possible, with reference to Professor Peake's article, the place which ought to be taken in a representation of St. Paul's thoughts by the conceptions of a racial act, and of a mystical union.

Professor Peake holds that the interpretation of St. Paul depends upon a due appreciation and use of these ideas. The conception of a racial act he finds in Romans v. 12-21, and although he is not astonished that I pass by this passage in *The Death of Christ*, it is perhaps not an unfair inference that he would have been astonished at almost any one else who did so. Yet my reason for passing it by is obvious; it does not mention the death of Christ. Not indeed that I should deny any reference in it to that subject; on the contrary, I agree with Meyer that "the obedience of the one" by which "the many shall be justified" is specifically the obedience rendered by Christ in His death. But this conception of obedience is one to which I did full justice elsewhere, and apart from it there was (as it seemed to me) no specific interpretation of Christ's death in the passage which called for consideration. Further,

there was the fact, which I will express in Professor Peake's words, of "the incompatibility of his (Paul's) statements with history as we understand it." One may argue, of course, with Professor Peake, that this is of no consequence, since Paul's interest was not historical but psychological. That is exactly what I should do, but I should feel that, in consequence of so doing, the conception of a "racial act" was one with which I could no longer operate seriously even in the interpretation of St. Paul. For the psychological truth is one which belongs to my personal experience, whereas the "racial act" is surely one to which independent historical reality is essential. If we put the psychological truth, which we know at first hand—say the truth that the human race is one in the consciousness of sin—into a historical form incompatible with history—say the form that the progenitor of the human race committed a sin which involved all his descendants—we are guilty of a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*, and the result—the conception of the "racial act" of Adam—has no validity. This is what I meant by describing a "racial act," perhaps with needless levity, but certainly without malice, as a "fantastic abstraction."¹

A further and a serious reason for not making the passage in Romans v. 12-21 so fundamental to an exposition of Paulinism as many excellent scholars are disposed to do

¹ It may not be inappropriate to remark in passing that it is unsound as well as unwise to make Paul's testimony to Christ depend upon his idea of the inclusion of the race in Adam. *Paul knew Christ.* He knew what He had done for him, and in him, and what He was able to do for all men. He knew this at first hand in a way which is entirely independent of speculations about Adam; he preached it as he knew it, and it is the interest of the gospel to make this plain. *As for Adam, Paul did not know him at all.* Neither do we. Paul's Adam is simply the abstraction of human nature, personified and placed with a determining power at the beginning of human history. Such a figure has no reality for our minds, and I own it seems to me hopeless to seek the key to the work of Christ in the assumed "racial" action of this hypothetical entity.

is that this passage is one on which men will differ to the end of time.

This last point might be illustrated by reference to Professor Peake's own interpretation. This interpretation is dominated by the conception of the racial act, and the parallelism between Adam and Christ is worked out strictly in this sense. To what, then, does it amount? As far as I can make out, only to this: Through one man's disobedience—that is, through the racial act of Adam—every member of the human race, immediately, without any element of choice, was constituted sinful, in the sense of becoming liable to death. On the other hand, through the obedience of the one—that is, through the racial act of Christ—every member of the human race, in the same immediate way, without any element of choice, was constituted righteous, in the sense of securing resurrection from the dead. "That they—that is, all men—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." So Professor Peake himself sums it up.

Now this may possibly be what St. Paul ought to have said. It may even be what he would have said had he held the conception of a racial act on which Professor Peake lays such stress, and had he applied it with the same consistency to the great decisive acts of Adam and of Christ. But I venture to think that few will agree with Professor Peake in holding that this is what he does say. Whether we are to call the act of Christ by which the act of Adam is reversed a racial act or not, it was an act importing infinitely more than is here brought into view. We must not, in order that we may be justified in calling it a racial act, eviscerate or curtail it till its consequences are such and only such as affect every member of the race. We must take the act and all that it imports as it is described by the Apostle,

whether we can call it racial or not. How, then, does the Apostle describe it? He says the free gift takes its start *ἐκ πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων*: that is, it finds its motive not in the guilt of the race as impersonated in Adam, but in the multiplied offences of real men. He says that those who get the benefit of Christ's act "shall reign in life." Is the meaning of that magnificent phrase exhausted when we say that every member of the race shall be raised from the dead? He says that as sin reigned in death, even so grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life; the former disastrous state of affairs is related to the act of Adam, the latter to the act of Christ. In every case, what is related to the act of Christ is the complete Christian salvation; and the way to avoid universalism—which I agree with Professor Peake is not a Pauline thought—is not to clip the act of Christ till we can invest the whole race in all the credit of it without securing the salvation of one of its members, but to recognize that neither that act itself nor any consequence of it has any significance for any member of the race apart from the condition of faith.

The difficulty involved in representing the act of Christ in Rom. v. as "racial" comes out perhaps most clearly if we observe that it compels us to use the Pauline expression "in Christ" in two different senses. On the one hand, *the race is in Christ*. "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." But this does not mean that anybody is saved. On the other hand, *the believer is in Christ*. He cries out of his faith, I have been crucified with Christ; and although we do not find him claim that in so doing he has, like the race, atoned for his sins, his being in Christ is his salvation. Now with the utmost respect but with perfect confidence I submit that the difference between these two

conceptions of being in Christ is that the second is in contact with reality and the first is not. The second is an experience, the first has no basis in experience at all; it is a purely artificial and abstract conception which we have no means of verifying, and which certainly does not verify itself. And as we cannot find an experimental verification for it, just as little can we find a scriptural basis. I cannot admit that we find a "racial" application of the expression "in Christ" in 1 Corinthians xv. 22. It appears to me unquestionable that the correct interpretation of this passage is that given (for example) by Professor Findlay in the *Expositor's Greek Testament*: what Paul teaches is not that all men will be raised from the dead in virtue of the fact that the race has in Christ died and made atonement for its sin, but that in every case life—which includes the whole glory revealed in 1 Corinthians xv.—depends on a connexion with Christ, just as death in every case depends on a connexion with Adam. There is no eschatology either in Romans v. 12-21, or in 1 Corinthians xv., but that of the Christian hope. The other passage to which Professor Peake refers, 2 Corinthians v. 14, is equally unconvincing. To say "one died for all, therefore all died," is quite intelligible if we suppose that the one in dying took to Himself in love by God's appointment the responsibilities represented by the death of all; but if the death of the one could be properly described as a "racial" act—that is as the act of the "all" in Him—it would not be possible to attach any clear meaning to the words which are the nerve of the New Testament—One died *for* all.

It is easier, no doubt, to conceive a "racial" act in the case of Adam—easier for the imagination, that is—assuming Adam to be a real person. When Adam sinned, he was the race; and his act implicated all who in the way of nature were to owe their being to him. They were yet in the loins of their father when he forfeited the family character and

inheritance. This is the sense in which many theologians have read Romans v. 12 ff., and in this sense Adam's act may fairly enough be called racial. But it is not on this that Professor Peake bases his view. Indeed he explicitly rejects this view. "Adam acts for us," he says, "in virtue of a community of nature with us." And again, "He acted as every individual in his place would have acted." It is thus that his act is racial. I own that from these premises I should have drawn exactly the opposite conclusion. I should have said with the Apocalypse of Baruch: *Non est ergo Adam causa, nisi animae suae tantum: nos vero unusquisque fuit animae suae Adam.* Adam, in short, is nothing real, but an abstraction for human nature. And surely it is very difficult to extend the conception of a racial act on *this* basis to the work of Christ. Did *He* act "as every individual in His place would have acted?" Can we point to Him, as we can point to Adam, and with the whole human race in our minds, say, *Ex uno disce omnes?* The question answers itself. The old humanity *was*, in a sense, in Adam; the new humanity—that which is in Christ—has first to be created in Him; and that new creation is not the condition or the presupposition of Christ's work; it is its fruit. Whenever we realize that Adam is but the abstraction of sinful human nature, personified, we see that the attempt to assimilate the relations of humanity to Adam and to Christ respectively is an attempt to prove that the old sinful race bears the same relation to its own logical shadow as the new redeemed race bears to its Redeemer. We see also how unsound it is to argue that "the interest of a merely vicarious theory is to insist on the sharp distinction between Christ and the race," while the interest of a theory operating with the conception of racial acts is "to identify them as closely as possible." Discounting the biased "merely," it is the interest of the vicarious theory, as much as of the other, to insist on the identity. There is no

salvation, all Christians are agreed, except through union with Christ. The question at issue is where that union comes in. If the death of Christ is a racial act, it comes in antecedent to it and as a condition of its atoning efficacy. According to St. Paul and common Christian belief it comes in subsequent to it, and is the result of its atoning efficacy. I once quoted before in the EXPOSITOR, but venture to quote again, the glorious lines of St. Bernard, which put with the moral passion which alone justifies mysticism the final truth in the matter :

*Propter mortem quam tulisti
Quando pro me defecisti,
Cordis mei cor dilectum
In te meum fer affectum.*

Here the union with Christ comes in its true place: it is the death of Christ *for* men, which appealing to them as an irresistible motive draws them into a union closer and ever closer with Himself.

Having said so much on the first point, on which I am quite conscious of the difference between the reading of St. Paul which approves itself to Professor Peake and that which has just been given, I pass gladly to the second, on which I believe we are far more at one—I mean the idea of Christian union with Christ. It is possible to consider this without raising the question of race relations of Christ at all; for that “being in Christ” with which we are here concerned is not the state of the race but the experience of the believer.

I do not, indeed, think it helps us to understand the Christian’s union to Christ to contemplate a pre-incarnate relation of Christ to men, such as Professor Peake finds in Hebrews ii. 11–17, or “a universal headship of the race,” such as he finds in 1 Corinthians xi. 3. He thinks we may press the words in the last passage—“the head of every man is Christ”—in this sense. But “man” in this passage does not refer to the race

at all, but to man as opposed to woman. Paul had taught at Corinth as elsewhere that in Christ there is neither male nor female, and he found Christian women in Corinth acting on that principle in a way which he did not approve. They seemed to be carrying out the Divine life of the Gospel on lines which defied the equally Divine constitution of nature, and in vindicating this last Paul uses the peculiar analogy that woman is to man as man is to Christ and as Christ is to God. Many have agreed with his conclusion, but did anybody ever repeat his argument? To show that I had no *animus* in using an expression which Professor Peake seems to have felt unkind, I will say frankly that the Apostle himself employs here a whole series of fantastic abstractions, with the result that his argument has never weighed with any man in the world, and still less with any woman. And he was conscious himself that it would not when in verse 16 he practically threw it overboard, and appealed to the authority of universal Christian custom.

We cannot however, but agree as to the words in which Paul describes union to Christ. He speaks of a Christian as "a man in Christ." He says, "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." He says again, "To me to live is Christ"; and "when Christ, our life, shall appear." As men in general are said to live and move and have their being in God, so from the first of his Epistles to the last Christian men, for St. Paul, live and move and have their being in Christ. To refer only to his earliest Epistles, Paul has confidence *in the Lord* toward the Thessalonians; he charges and entreats them *in the Lord Jesus Christ*; they stand *in the Lord*; he gives them commandments *through the Lord Jesus*; church rulers are those who are over them *in the Lord*; the Christians departed are *the dead in Christ*. To illustrate the place which union with Christ has in his mind would be to tran-

scribe everything he has written about the Christian life. So far it is not possible to disagree.

Probably there would be less inclination than there is to think of disagreement on this subject if all who used such terms as mystical and moral tried to make clear to themselves what they meant by them, and in particular if they considered whether they are able to give a Christian meaning to mystical when they use it simply in contrast with moral. Professor Peake himself, if I read him rightly, never makes the contrast absolute. The conception of a moral union with Christ is one which he recognizes; though it does not seem to him to cover the language of St. Paul, it has a legitimacy within limits. But when he brings into view what he calls the mystical union, he does not seem to feel the necessity of demonstrating any relation between it and the other. The whole emphasis is laid on the contrast. He speaks of "a moral union merely." He says, "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." He refers to a passage (1 Cor. vi. 17) in which the context "definitely excludes the thought of a moral union." A union is intended in it far closer than anything implied in that name.

It seems to me not quite fortunate that all the emphasis should be laid on this side, and I cannot help regretting that the word "mystical" should have been naturalized in Christian theology in such an ambiguous relation to "moral." It is far more appropriate to describe what has not yet reached the moral level than what in some perfectly undefined way has transcended it. It may be piously said, Calvin tells us, provided it come from a pious heart, that nature is God. There is a mystical union of creation with the Creator, and great poets like Wordsworth, or great philosophers like Spinoza, initiate us into it; they reveal

the mystery, and it enters into our intellectual being. There is a mystical union of every stone with God. The stone has its being in Him. Its nature is grounded in His. The physical and chemical laws which enter into the constitution of it, and in virtue of which it holds its place in a universe, are His laws. You can have no relation to it whatever which is not a relation to Him. The term mystical seems to me appropriate enough to describe this kind of union, but for that very reason not so appropriate when we ascend from the world of nature into the world of personality. We may speak of nature still, if we please; but when two persons, two moral natures, are to enter into union with each other, then their union, no matter how intimate and profound it may be, must at the same time be personal and moral. We may call it mystical, if mystical for any reason seems to us an expressive or felicitous term—if there is an ardour, an intimacy, a depth in the emotions it excites to which our ordinary ethical language fails to do justice, and to which justice is done by this impalpable name; but we must not forget that personality lives only in a moral world, and that its most intense and passionate experiences are moral to the core. I entirely agree with Professor Peake that the words “he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit” are very striking, and that “they do not readily lend themselves to anything but a personal identification.” Granting the propriety of the term, I entirely agree also that “it is difficult to see how a mystical union could be better described than by this daring sentence.” But is not the act in which one person in trust and love “identifies” himself with another, the most purely “moral” of all conceivable acts? Is it not the kind of act which, in its motives, its essence, its fruits, most completely manifests the moral nature? Is there anything in it, or about it or due to it, which is not moral? If the identification of one person with another is the type of a mys-

tical union, surely the contrast of mystical and moral is one which ought to disappear. I feel quite at liberty to say this in spite of St. Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians vi. 17. There is a physical basis for the loftiest human affections, but that does not justify us in bringing down either the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage, or the union of the believer and the Lord, from the moral to the physical world.

The language of "personal identification," to use Professor Peake's expression, is undoubtedly the key to all that has been called mystical in St. Paul. But the language of "personal identification" is the language of love; it is the language of moral passion, and except as the expression of moral passion it has no meaning and no truth whatever. That is why I feel that the contrast of mystical and moral is false, and that it is essentially misleading to speak of a mystical union as opposed to a moral one, or to one which is "merely" moral, or "no more than" moral. When a man abandons himself in faith to the love of God in Christ, when he identifies himself with Christ bearing his sins in His own body on the tree, when he casts himself on Him to die with Him and live with Him, to die with Him and have Him henceforth as his life, he does an act in which there is no element that is not moral, and that has none but moral issues; and this is the act in which he is "mystically" united to Christ. The mysticism of Paul stands in no relation of contrast to morality: it is nothing but morality aflame with passion. Hence I think Professor Peake is unfair to himself in the sentence quoted above—"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 moral ends, as a union with Christ in the strict sense at all." If the condition so described has been produced in any sinful man by the love of Christ, and by his own response, in love and faith, to Christ, then that man

is experiencing everything that Paul experienced when he spoke of being "in Christ" or of having "Christ live" in him. These are not expressions for a truth transcending morality, they are the passionate expression of moral truth.

The danger of contrasting mystical with moral is that it leads people to speak of union with Christ as a thing to be believed and talked about apart from the passionate moral experience in which it was realized in St. Paul. Everybody who has read "good books" will know what I mean. The language of the Apostle about union to Christ, when taken up at a moral temperature lower than his, does not express a truth of the gospel which a "merely moral" union fails to reach; it expresses nothing at all but the mental and moral deadness of those who can handle holy things without feeling them. Professor Peake thinks I have an "almost fanatical hatred of mysticism": in the legitimate sense of the word, I hope not. But one may be excused if he feels a certain amount of impatience when words of Scripture which live and move and have their being in moral passion—which are born of that passion and serve only to express it—are read as if they belonged to another than the moral world, and expressed truths of that other world to which a union with Christ that is "no more than moral" is a poor and insignificant thing. Of mysticism in this sense I am still thankful to find nothing in the New Testament.

There is something paradoxical in the fact that this way of representing union to Christ should appear to any one to be prejudicial to moral interests—disastrous, as Professor Peake puts it, "in the sphere of the Christian life." I cannot conceive it possible that Christians should differ, if they understand each other, about the place of gratitude in their life, or about its power as a motive. To give it a central place, to make it an all-pervading motive, is not to be guilty of Deism, or of accepting the notion of an absentee

Christ. From such modes of thought I dissent as heartily as Professor Peake. But for the simple reason that the Christian life is a moral life, it must be conceived as produced not mechanically, but through motives. It is not the mechanical outcome of union with Christ; it is the process in which that personal identification of the believer with Christ which alone is the truth of such union, and which is itself a great moral act, is morally expressed and realized. And the all-embracing motive under which it proceeds, and by which it is morally generated, is the sense of obligation to Christ. Christ is present all the time, present clothed in His gospel, making for ever a *moral* appeal to man, and calling forth uninterruptedly a *moral* response—the response of a “personal identification” of the sinner with the Saviour who has suffered and died for him. There is no real truth in the idea of a mystical union—no truth, I mean, for the verification of which we can appeal to experience—that is not covered by this reading of the facts; and I cannot understand why gratitude, which is the psychological co-efficient of this in the sphere of motive, should be supposed inadequate to the effects which it actually produces. Everything in the Christian life has to be produced by motives, and if it is a weak motive to say “I am not my own, I was bought with a price,” and to say so in presence of Christ who bought us with His blood, what motive is strong? Professor Peake speaks of men “whose 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”; and he adds, “yet it is men like these that the gospel cleanses and saves and keeps.” But how does the gospel do this? Must we not say that it does it morally, by intensifying the sense of guilt in such men, by deepening their consciousness of what Christ has done for them, and by making their

gratitude a strong cord that cannot be broken, and that binds them for ever to their Lord? We delude ourselves, consciously or unconsciously, when we appeal to a union with Christ which has any other contents than these. To reduce it to the simplest expression, we are saved by grace, and the correlative of grace is gratitude. That is why I still hold that the fundamental doctrine of St. Paul is justification by faith; for faith is the acceptance of grace as what it is, the surrender to it on the unconditional terms which it prescribes. It is only a formal objection to this to say that the fundamental doctrine in theology is the doctrine of God. Of course it is. But what is the Christian doctrine of God? I hope Professor Peake will not be scandalized if I quote St. Paul once more, and say it is this: God as He is revealed and preached in the gospel is He who justifies the ungodly. And it is the abandonment of the sinful soul to this God in unbounded gratitude which morally unites it to Christ and launches it on all the hopes and joys of the new life.

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