

the *Esquisse* consists in a popularising of some of the most subversive views previously enunciated by the German disciples of Kant, Hegel, and Schleiermacher, and by certain English evolutionist philosophers.

We have not space to go more fully into M.

Bois' criticisms, but the adherents and the opponents of M. Sabatier will both find these worthy of their attention.

J. A. SELBIE.

Maryculter.

Grace.

A NEW TESTAMENT STUDY.

BY THE REV. JAMES WELLS, D.D., GLASGOW.

III. The Doctrine of Grace.

GRACE in God, grace through Christ, grace with man; grace in its fountain, in its channel, in its receiver: these three ideas make up the whole of Christianity, and they shall guide us in our present study.

We must not forget, however, that this whole subject is essentially a unity, which one cannot divide as the schoolboy divides his school map into counties; one can only divide it as the schoolboy divides the sea into bays. Still, the student's progress is helped by well-marked stages along his path. Grace in God is the theme of this article.

We are often told that grace is not a Divine perfection that contradicts any other Divine perfection. It is not at strife with justice, for ours is a religion of law and conscience. One text will be enough here. 'Even so might grace reign *through righteousness* . . . by Jesus Christ our Lord' (Rom. v. 22). 'Sovereign grace' is a favourite phrase with many, but it needs careful explanation. Some controversialists, in their ultra-orthodoxy, leave the impression that sovereignty somehow limits and lessens grace; while others, in their ultra-liberalism, speak as if grace and sovereignty were opposed to each other. We believe in a sovereignty that does not narrow grace, and in a grace that does not destroy sovereignty; for we believe in righteous grace and holy love. Our idea of a sovereign should be borrowed, not from modern kings, who reign without ruling, but from the old-world monarch, who had the lives and properties of millions at his disposal, and was worshipped as a present god. Such a sovereign is not subject to any will but his own, he does just what he wills, and because he wills it. In

speaking of God as a sovereign, we purify the idea from every defiling stain, from every suggestion of the capricious and the arbitrary. God does what He wills; but He always wills to act like Himself, and in harmony with His revealed will. Trace the grace in any man to its last fountain, and you cannot get beyond the words of Christ: 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . . Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.'

The strongest statements in the Bible concerning this side of God's sovereignty come from the lips of Christ: 'No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father.' 'All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out' (John's Gospel, vi. 65 and 37). If we go back to Christ, we shall not be offended by the frankest statement of God's sovereignty. Nor shall we be distressed by the apparent contradiction between God's part and man's part in salvation.

Further, earnest Christians everywhere ascribe all the grace in them to the will and power of God. Instinctively and generously they shrink, as Paul does, from halving the praise of any achievement of theirs between God and themselves, and haste to say, 'Yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me.' They all confess, 'What is good in us is God in us.'

Let us now go over the ridge of this subject, and survey its other side. Grace is not sovereign unless it be sovereign-like in its munificence and style, and free from the narrowness that always cleaves to a mere citizen or slave. It must be a right royal and king-becoming thing; for in all

ages it has given princes their most prized titles. God's grace must be godlike; it must, therefore, be both righteous and exceeding great. We must, therefore, dismiss the idea of jarring attributes, and do equal justice to both sides of divine sovereignty.

History and exegesis shed their consenting lights upon our study. The old world stories offer us countless and interesting illustrations of sovereign grace. 'I give as a king,' said Alexander the Great, 'and so give a city for a mean service.' One day he overtook a soldier sinking under a bag of gold, and cried out, 'Friend, do not be weary yet, try and carry it quite through to thy tent, for it is all thine own.' That was sovereign grace, according to the measure of a man. 'These are not royal gifts,' said Julius Cæsar reprovingly, when asked for small favours. The historian says that no music was so charming to his ears as the request of friends and the supplications of the needy. 'This placed Cæsar among the gods,' adds Marcus Aurelius. De Quincey tells us that the free gifts of the Cæsars baffle belief; that the story of them might fill volumes; and that even Nero is known to have given away during his short reign at least nineteen million pounds sterling, the purchasing power of which would be equal to one hundred millions in our day. Themistocles fled to Artaxerxes, his rival in arms, who pardoned him in sovereign fashion. He gave him all the revenues of Magnesia for bread, of Lampsacus for wine, of Myos for other provisions, and over two hundred talents into the bargain. Sovereign grace in earth's sovereigns always suggests unequalled bountifulness. Shall it suggest less in God? The idea of sovereignty should always enlarge our idea of grace.

He who tries to exegese grace will be profoundly impressed with the vast array of the teeming pregnant phrases and images by which its sovereign copiousness is set forth. Here are a few specimens. John in his Gospel (chap. i. 16) speaks of the *pleroma* of Christ, out of which we receive grace. The capacious and platonic mind of John Howe delights in this mystic word. It means, he tells us, a self-fulness not derived; a pure plenteousness that leaves no room for anything alien from its own nature; a boundless fund as of light in the sun; immeasurable, unfathomable, eternal grace. Paul enlarges John's phrase, for, in Col. i. 19, he speaks of the whole *pleroma* dwelling in Christ. He positively revels and exults in this

truth. He has identified his intellect with the subject, and thought himself, as far as possible, into God's thoughts about it. Each remembrance of grace awakens kindred joy in his soul, which evidently kindles at the first touch of his theme. In his eagerness to do justice to his subject, he seems to use all the wonderfully copious stores of the Greek language. It is often not easy to unravel the conspiracy of phrases and metaphors in some of his fullest utterances. The grammarian grows bewildered among them, and sometimes gives up the task in despair. 'There is a divine confusion in this passage,' Godet somewhere says, 'as in the luxuriance of a tropical forest.' In 1 Tim. i. 14 Paul says that the grace of Christ was *overfull twice over*, *ὑπερπεπλήσασε*; for the idea of surplus or overplus is in both the verb and the preposition. It is as if he would say, 'I had more grace than I knew what to do with; grace was poured wholesale upon me; it was far beyond my telling.' In Titus iii. 6 he says of grace: 'Which He shed on us abundantly,' *πλουσιῶς*. The phrase suggests the downpouring of Oriental sunshine and showers. In 1 Cor. xvi. 3, *χάρις* means liberality; abundance freely bestowed is the essence of grace. In Eph. ii. 7 we find 'the exceeding riches of His grace,' *τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον*. Our highest conception of abundance in things is riches; in speech, the hyperbole, the figure of exaggeration, that which surpasses the superlative. He unites these two feelings of abundance here. He writes as if greatly afraid of doing wrong to the vastness of grace, and under the feeling that it was too big for language and logic; as if only the language of extravagance were the language of sober truth. So far, he is like the widow whose oil Elisha had blest, when she had fetched every available vessel and had filled it. But, when he has filled all the vessels of his soul and speech, he perceives that the plenty outside is far greater than the plenty inside his vessels. In Eph. iii. 8 he tells us that he was called to preach (literally to angel well, or angel forth) 'the unsearchable riches,' *τὸν ἀνεξίχνιστον πλοῦτον*; that is, literally 'untrackable' riches; riches so extensive that you can find no track to guide you in exploring them; riches amid which you are lost and confounded; a labyrinth for which there is not a long enough clue. This is a wealth 'that passeth knowledge'—all sorts and degrees of knowledge. We also read often of abounding and superabounding grace (Rom.

v. 17 and 20; 2 Cor. ix. 8, etc.). We may believe that this oft-recurring idea of victorious abundance is an echo of Christ's saying in the Gospel of John (ix. 10), 'that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.' In all these texts, the Greek root is the same: *Περισσεύω*, to be over and above, to be enormous, to have a super-plus, to run over the edges all round. The exact image here seems to be that of an ever-advancing tide, of which each wave outruns and buries the preceding: overflow surpassing outflow, and surrounding all previous rounds. Grace superabounding—abounding over what? The right answer seems to be, over sin, over our needs, over our widest conceptions, even over its past self; grace outracing itself in the hearts and lives of men. Language halts far beneath the conception, and the conception lies far beneath the reality. For what can you say of the infinite but that it is infinite? The very word implies that it is without *fines* or bounds, and that you cannot therefore *define* or measure it. Michael Angelo's criticism of works of art was *Amplius*: he ever wished something greater than the greatest he saw. *Amplius* is the apostle's idea as he reviews his utmost efforts to display the generosity of grace.

Even reason teaches us to expect immense magnificence of conception in a revelation from God. The doctrine of grace fully satisfies that just expectation.

When both sides of 'sovereign grace' are fairly presented, it is found that the doctrine of grace practically unites all evangelical Christians. Some of them have keenly opposed Calvinism because it seemed that many controversial Calvinists failed to do justice to the fulness and freeness of God's grace. Devout Arminians, when relieved from their honourable anxiety on that score—when persuaded that Calvinists erect a palisade around the fold, but not a barricade across the door—are usually ready to admit the truth contained in the phrase, 'the sovereignty of God.' They certainly admit it in their prayers and hymns, and in all their noblest moods. A Calvinist preaching on the mysteries of election, God's decrees, and the perseverance of the saints, could not do better than close with Charles Wesley's hymn—

He wills that I should holy be:
Who can withstand His will?
The counsel of His grace in me
He surely shall fulfil.

Stoicheiolatry.

GALATIANS IV. 1-10.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM KEAN, B.D., ST. PETERSBURG.

'THAT the *στοιχεῖα* have no reference to Gentile idolatry is quite clear, for ver. 10 describes unmistakably the Jewish economy to which the Galatians had turned back.' So Olshausen. But he is put to great straits in his endeavours to expound the *τοῦ κόσμου* of ver. 3; and he makes no attempt to expound on the Judaizing theory, the 'serving of those who in their nature are not gods' of ver. 8.

The Fathers mostly took *στοιχεῖα* as meaning the elements of nature, in which sense it occurs in Heb. v. 12, and as therefore referring to Gentile idolatry, the worship of nature and its elements. But this view taken as exclusive, forces us to do as most modern commentators have done, to regard the apostle as turning to, and addressing, according as his argument leads him, each of the

three classes separately into which the members of the Galatian churches were divided: Israelites, Gentile proselytes, and Gentiles converted directly from heathenism.

But in a passage which has no distinctive forms of address, one would prefer to think that the apostle was addressing his readers *en bloc*. From this point of view let us try to realise the state of things against which the apostle contended, and the nature of his argument.

Among the members of the Galatian churches there were no doubt pure Israelites. There were no doubt Gentiles also, some of them Jewish proselytes, and some of them converts direct from heathenism. The Gentiles most probably far outnumbered the true Israelites, and the latter