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to the man in the furrow who . . . has waited so long' (*The Church Literacy Movement*, p. 26). Three years ago, Dr. Kenyon L. Butterfield came to China on the invitation of the National Christian Council and made a study of rural life. In his opinion the Church should launch a full-fledged programme for the evangelization of the whole village, a programme that would include a comprehensive scheme of education, a plan for the promotion of public health, a method of improving the livelihood of the people, an organization for social and recreational activities, a systematic way of helping and teaching the women in regard to their household duties, and a centre for the discovering and training of leaders. The territory of China is vast. Therefore the Church should begin its rural experiments by the creation of a few very important centres, each of which may be called a Rural Community Parish. This parish should serve as the rallying-point of a group of villages, and also a radiating point from which trained leaders would travel to the villages that are included in the parish, within a radius of three miles. In accordance with this plan the gospel would be presented as the farmer could understand it; evangelism would go hand in hand with a thorough-going education; the parish church would be a centre for social service; talented people of the villages would be trained as local leaders who would later on be able to support and maintain the Church life of the parish; a group of specially trained village pastors would be sent out for the evangeliza-

tion of the village; a large number of voluntary workers would be secured; the country church would within a definite period become self-supporting. Besides all this, a group of advisers and educators would centre their activities in the headquarters of the Rural Community Parish and sally forth to its outskirts; all phases of country life would be studied scientifically; co-operative societies would be started, and a definite plan would be drawn up for the co-operation between the National Christian Council and the missionary bodies in the sending countries. The scheme is an inspiring one. If to some extent it can be carried out, the Church in China will in the future have done what it has not been able to do thus far.

In conclusion, it may be said that the Five Year Movement is only the beginning of a truly Chinese Christian movement. Whether it realizes its aim of doubling the number of church membership or not is a matter of minor importance. At any rate the five years will soon pass away. Before this time there have been long years of preparation. And after this period, many years of hard, persistent, and unflinching labour will have to follow before China can be brought to the foot of the glorious Cross. The movement is not one limited to China. It has needed, and will need, the co-operation of Christians in other lands. It will need their prayers, their financial assistance, their representatives as missionaries, expert advisers and friends, and their continuous and unflinching interest and understanding.

God and Grace.

BY PRINCIPAL A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

1. ONE of the guiding principles of the Lausanne Conference of 1927 on Faith and Order was that differences no less than agreements among the churches were to be discussed candidly, not with a view to controversy or even compromise, but to conciliation; in other words, in order to discover how agreements might lead to the modification of differences. As regards the Church's Message to the World—the Gospel—agreement was reached, but not as regards any of the other subjects. Since the Conferences there has been further discussion in local conferences, or in literature. A theological

Committee, with scholars from all types, theological and ecclesiastical, of churches, has under the Chairmanship of the Bishop of Gloucester produced a volume of essays, *The Doctrine of Grace*, on what was felt to be a crucial issue, as the conception of Grace must and does lie at the root of the differences in the conceptions of Church, Ministry, and Sacraments. Most of the essays are content with stating the convictions on this matter of the communions which the writers represent. A Report of the whole Committee seeks to summarize the conclusions to which the essays lead, without offering any fresh

constructive doctrine. In the eleventh section four brief essays seek to indicate the line of advance from differences to agreement; so does the twelfth by the Chairman. Dr. Goudge and Dr. Headlam rightly insist that what is necessary is to dig deeper into the roots of the problem.

2. A Conference of the German section of Faith and Order on the basis of this volume has confirmed my own conviction that we have reached a stage in the movement when we should endeavour to get beyond the thesis and the antithesis of the different confessions to the synthesis. If this is to be accomplished two conditions must be fulfilled. (a) *First of all*, the churches need to be reminded of the Scripture warning: 'Remember Lot's wife'—the danger of looking backward. While the contributions of Dr. Gloubokowsky and Dr. Alivisatos are interesting and valuable as history, and are written in a conciliatory spirit, yet so close an adherence to the past bars the way to any progress in the future. A united Christendom is not going to accept as authoritative the theology of the Fathers. Unless the 'Orthodox' churches are prepared to abandon their rigidity in Faith and Order, while there may be friendly relations with them as fellow-Christians, I do not see how they can come into more organic relations with the Protestant churches. To justify intercommunion with Anglicanism even the principle of 'economy' must be invoked. The same tendency, if less asserted, appears in the representation of some of the Protestant churches. Luther and Calvin seem for many Protestants to have spoken the last word. I cannot understand how learned, progressive, German theologians feel themselves always under an obligation to justify their conclusions by quoting Luther; for some Reformed theologians Calvin still remains the master. But is not this conservatism a hindrance to the churches' meeting the needs of the world in which we think and live to-day? Let us reverence the great men of the past by being as independent of tradition and authority as they were, when they made their most valuable contribution. For instance, can we maintain that the Lutheran or the Reformed Christology, based on the Catholic dogma, has been as valuable as the teaching of the Reformers on *sola fides, sola gratia*.

(b) This leads me to urge, *secondly*, that the whole intellectual situation has so altered since the various communions framed their creeds or confessions, both as regards the *content* of knowledge, and the *method* of knowing that there is unreality, not to say dishonesty, in repeating the formulæ, and preserving the categories of the thought of the past.

It is true that religion as man's relation to the Eternal God may claim an essential permanence, but as it is a relation which on man's side is *in time*, the accidents of its expression in creed or ritual must vary if they are to be adapted to, and so effective in changing thought and life. I am convinced that the conception of God which lies behind many of the representations of grace is one which needs to be profoundly modified. For instance, when reading the *catena* of quotations from the Orthodox Fathers in this volume I did not feel at home; it was not always the Father in Heaven, but the God of Greek philosophy who confronted me. Even liberal theologians, who unreservedly accept the methods of modern Biblical scholarship, sometimes betray a *dogmatic*, and not *historical*, use of the Scriptures. Not only has the *content* of our conception been thus changed, but unless all modern philosophy is to be treated only as footnotes to Plato and Aristotle, the *formulation* of that content must be altered. Most of the writers in this volume recognize the vital connexion between the doctrine of grace and the conception of God, but not all recognize the need of having a conception such as will be truth for our own age. To state such a conception and to modify the doctrine of grace so that it shall be consistent with it is the aim of this essay, as a modest contribution to the cause of Christian reunion.

3. The language of religion, especially as symbolic, is more permanent than the vocabulary of theology with its abstract conceptions. I find myself much more at home in the New Testament than in the writings of the Fathers, Schoolmen, or even Reformers. The teaching of Jesus, and its development in the Pauline and Johannine literature, do give the *content* of the conception; a philosophy which might be described as *personalism*, because it makes central the conception of personality as developed in a reflective and not merely observational psychology, offers the formulation of that content. In my judgment *grace* in the rest of the New Testament is the equivalent of the *Kingdom of God* on the lips of Jesus. As regards the meaning of that phrase I must without further discussion state that for me it means *rule*, the sovereign activity of God, not *realm*, the society in which God rules, or *reigns*, the period of that rule. The spatial or the temporal condition—its range or its duration—is much less significant than its character. As historically mediated by Christ as Son revealing God and as Saviour redeeming men, that sovereign activity is saving, redemptive, reconciling. It is not a *future period of human history*, which human

effort may speed, and it is not an *ideal society on earth*, which men by their endeavours are to bring about: it is a present Divine reality, which in the future may, nay, will come to clearer and fuller manifestation, and which will make mankind a society of the saved, redeemed, and reconciled children of God. As the word *Kingdom* demands, it is God's activity which must be emphasized and man's dependence on, and submission to, God. That God's activity is not exclusive of man's (as Augustine and Calvin falsely taught) will be shown in the discussion of the conception of grace; still less can man's activity be co-ordinated with God's (as Pelagius erroneously thought, but not Arminius properly understood). These antitheses find their correction in the synthesis of a truer conception of the relation of God and man. The current use of the term *Kingdom of God* to cover any scheme of social reform is to be deplored, as it hides from us the truth, that man can work out his salvation, individual or collective, only as God is working in him, sovereignly active.

4. If we do not understand the term *Kingdom of God*, as we are so only entitled, but bound to do, its equivalence to *grace* will be obvious. We must not think of grace as only a disposition in God or a quality of life in man without the connecting activity of God for and in man, in which the disposition becomes effective, and of which the quality is the effect. We must not, as has often been done, separate from, or oppose to, one another the phases or stages of the one Divine reality. If we think truly of the relation of God and man, can we think of a Divine disposition which is ineffective or a human quality which is not an effect, and, in the kind of quality which may be called grace, an effect, of which God is cause? We must dismiss the one-sided representation of a merely *static*, or a merely *transcendent* Deity. When God wills, He acts, and He effects what He wills. Man's unbelief and disobedience may hinder the full effect, but can we think of God's grace as having no effect at all even in the unbelieving and disobedient?

(a) In their polemic against the Catholic doctrine of *infused* righteousness, the Reformers erred in isolating *imputed* righteousness. As a minor matter of the meaning of the New Testament language they were right; justification as Paul uses the term means *reckoning*, not *making righteous*. But what a false and pernicious abstraction! As if God could receive into His favour, into His fellowship as child, the forgiven sinner, and leave him without the motive, and the power of becoming holy as the Father Himself is holy. 'God is not mocked: for

whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap' (Gal 6⁷). If the initial justification were not followed by a continuous sanctification, then assuredly religion would corrupt morals—the danger which Mr. Gladstone recognized. It is one Divine sovereign activity which forgives, not as a mere cancelling of guilt, but as a restoration to the relationship to God which He wills for man, and sin disturbs, and maintains that relation in making the forgiven holy. Most of the errors which have arisen, and which have divided the Church, are due to abstract thinking of grace as a Divine favour, power, or gift separately from one another, and consequently impersonally. If we always thought of the favour, power, or gift as God's, not merely as *Divine*, detaching as it were predicate from subject, could we isolate them from or oppose them to one another?

(b) So again if grace is God's Kingdom or rule in man, His personal relation to man, then we must think of the object of that relation no less than of the subject as *personal*. The title of Dr. Oman's great book, *Grace and Personality*, reminds us of this too often forgotten truth; Augustinianism and Pelagianism, Calvinism and Arminianism de-personalize God and man; God's sovereignty becomes a coercive force, to which man's liberty is either subjected or opposed. Man is no puppet, but a person, and God's rule is not force, but such personal activity in man as conserves, and does not repress man's freedom. This traditional opposition of God's sovereignty and man's liberty is what I may call *spatial thinking*, God and man are regarded as mutually exclusive; where God is active, man is not, where man is active, God is not. As between human persons there is not this exclusiveness; we influence one another, and retain our liberty. I hesitate about using the word influence to describe the relation of God to man, for the relation of man to God is so much more intimate than that of man to man. Man's dependence on God is more absolute than any dependence of men on one another can be. But surely the liberty the creature possesses cannot be opposed to his dependence on the Creator; God's gift to man cannot be His severance from man. As man claims independence, he loses his liberty, and enslaves himself to sin; as he recognizes his dependence, he realizes his liberty. Paul was not least, but most himself when he confessed: 'I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal 2²⁰). May we not say, that grace is according to faith? that is, the more fully man freely surrenders himself to God, the more fully does God become active in man; there is the

greatest freedom of man where there is the greatest dependence on God. I am convinced that while pantheism as the identification of God and world is false, and morally and religiously harmful, yet the prevalent deism in a great deal of Christian thinking prevents a true understanding of the relation of God and man. As grace is God's personal activity, so is faith man's, a receptivity for, and responsiveness to God; and faith is a real activity, even if it be in its beginning as its course, a human, still dependent on the Divine activity.

5. As we have advanced from the conception of the Kingdom of God to the conception of the grace of God, so to invest this Divine activity with its full content, we must advance to the distinctively Christian doctrine of God. My teacher, Dr. Fairbairn, in his teaching, did not appear to get beyond a duality, the Father and the Son; and Dr. Thomas Rees in his book on *The Holy Spirit*, and Dr. Denney in his work *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*, do not feel the need of a *Trinitarian*, or I should prefer the term *Triunitarian* conception. It is not only the teaching of the New Testament, or of the Church, but my own thought of many years that leads me to such a conception; and I have endeavoured in my volume, *The Christian Doctrine of the Godhead*, to present a complete Christian dogmatics in that form.

(a) The starting-point must be, as it was for Paul, the historical revelation of God in Christ. We have spoken of the grace of God in the preceding paragraphs without discriminating between the functions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and rightly so, as God is One, and we must not separate even what we distinguish in His one activity. It is not inappropriate to relate 'grace' more closely, however, with the Divine activity in Christ, but this is not to isolate it. Paul advances from the benediction in 1 Co 16²³, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you,' to the benediction in 2 Co 13¹⁴, 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.' From the historical

revelation he moves to the eternal reality revealed—the love of God, and to the personal experience realized—the *Koinonia*, common possession of the Holy Spirit. Is there not a correspondence which is not accidental, between this triple representation of God's activity and the triple conception of grace, as God's disposition and activity and the quality in man resulting? May we not identify the love of God with the Father, the grace of God as this love active in Christ with the Son, and the common possession of the Holy Spirit as the quality of life in man resulting from God's activity? As Christ revealed God He is Father; Christ Himself as God's love active in His grace is recognized by the faith of man as Son; and where God's love is received in His grace man experiences the presence and power of God in His Spirit.

(b) On the last special emphasis may now be laid. Christian experience and character, the Christian Church, Ministry, and Sacraments, are not a human product; but they are what they are only as the Holy Spirit continues this sovereign saving activity of God—the love of God, and the grace of Christ, in man. It must be conceived as so immediate a contact, and so intimate a communion, or common life of God and man, that we cannot in our thought objectify God as Spirit within us, as we can objectify God as the eternal reality, over all, in all, through all temporal existence or even Christ as the historical revelation of God in human personality. Hence the greater danger of depersonalizing grace as effect of the Divine activity in man, and the necessity of always in all *the means of grace* recognizing God's personal presence and power. If we fully realized that God, no other and no less, so gives Himself to us, should we dare to 'crib, cabin, and confine Him' in any way to one ecclesiastical order, one clerical succession, one sacramental system? I had intended to deal with that question also; but this essay is long enough already, and I am content to leave it to the further reflection of the reader, although by the editor's indulgence, I may be allowed to return to it on another occasion.

