

Requests and Replies.

Is Meyer right (*Com. on Matt.*, Eng. tr., vol. i. p. 56) in attributing to Epiphanius the theory that Luke gives the genealogy of Mary?—J. H. B.

IN reply to the enclosed question, I would say: The attributing to Epiphanius (along with Luther and Calovius) of the theory that Luke gives the genealogy of Mary (in Meyer, 6th edition; corrected in the 8th edition of B. Weiss) is misleading, if not positively incorrect. It seems to be intended to agree with the parallel comment in Luke (Eng. tr., vol. ii. p. 16), where Epiphanius's theory is stated to be that Mary was an *heir*, and, according to Num. xxxvi., would have married in her own tribe. I have not been able to verify this statement, which I do not question. It appears, however, that Epiphanius certainly did not regard the genealogy of Luke as Mary's, from the fact that he gives the names of her parents as Joachim and Anna. See Migne's edition, vol. xlii. p. 727; *Adv. Haer.* lib. iii. tom. ii.; *Haer.* lxxviii. There was, in Epiphanius's day, notoriously a desire to

make out that Mary *as well as Joseph* was descended from David.

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The Discovery of the 'Logia.'

P.S.—If I may be permitted an inquiry of my own, where can I obtain additional information as to the startling discovery in Egypt reported in the April number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES? The discovery of the *Logia* ought to have appeared everywhere in the cable despatches, but the only reference I have seen was the above.

B. W. B.

I KNOW nothing further, except that there is no contradiction, but a practical admission, of the truth of the telegram.

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Grace.

A NEW TESTAMENT STUDY.

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I. The Word.

GRACE is the consecrated watchword of the evangelical faith, and expresses the very genius of the gospel. The Greek word for it, the curious in such matters tell us, is found one hundred and fifty-five times in the New Testament; and kindred words on the sacred page are like the stars in an Eastern sky for brightness and multitude. He who knows grace may be said to know the core of the Bible. This brightest of themes is therefore worthy of profound and loving study. It is wise to begin with the word. Ruskin says that a chief part of culture consists in finding out the exact meaning of words. This true saying applies most of all to the great master words of Scripture.

The English word *grace* has in it no self-

revealing light. It comes to us from the Latin *gratia* through the French *grâce*. The Latin *gratia* helps us a little, not by its obscure etymology, but by its associations. 'What a man receives from God is called *gratia*,' an old writer says, 'because he receives it *gratis*, and because it makes him *gratum*.' But the Greek *χάρις* (*charis*) is 'sun-illuminated.' Its root is *χαίρειν*, 'to rejoice,' and it is almost the same as *χαρά*, 'joy.' The dictionary meaning of *χάρις* is 'that which gives joy.' Indeed, the word is translated 'joy,' in the Epistle to Philemon, ver. 7, and twice 'pleasure,' in Acts xxiv. 27 and xxv. 9. Grace, then, is gladness. Grace and gladness are twins of the same birth, according to the family register of the Greek language.

The Greeks were passionate idolaters of the beautiful in form and colour. To them more than to any other race do the poet's words apply—

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

It was their creed that 'the whole world without art would be one great wilderness.' As beauty was with them the chief creator of gladness, they naturally gave the name of grace to every striking embodiment of beauty; they called the beautiful the graceful, and the goddesses of beauty 'the graces.' From them we have borrowed our use of these words.

As the Greeks thus moved the meaning of *χάρις* backward from the effect to its cause, so the Romans, and we after them, have moved the meaning forward from the cause to its effect. We thus speak of *grace before meat*, that is gratitude or thanksgiving. *Gratitude* is the *gratia-habitus*, or grace-habit: the habit grace creates in every heart it subdues. Here, also, we find the explanation of the 'Action Sermon' on Scottish Communion days, a phrase that has puzzled some learned writers. It is a shortened and Anglified form of *actio gratiarum*, the giving of thanks. In several New Testament texts *χάρις* means thanks.

All the words and phrases of the family of grace have a delightful sense, because the root-idea of gladness is in them all; as, for example, *gratuity*, *congratulate*, *grateful*, *gratitude*, etc. The only exception I can remember at present, is the popular phrase, '*a bad grace*,' which is a flat contradiction in terms. 'His Grace,' as applied to our dukes, is infelicitous, if not irreverent, for it seems to ascribe an attribute of God to a poor man. The phrase, 'Her Gracious Majesty,' however, is becoming.

Grace, then, is that which, in all its parts and outgoing, begets joy.

The great 'parables of grace' in Luke xv. amply justify and illustrate this explanation. The returning prodigal had many sorrows, all of which were his own sins in their rebound. But grace made him glad. Everything about it brought him joy at once, and only joy; the welcome, the kiss, the shoes, the calf, etc. etc. And it made all in

the house glad, except the sullen, solitary elder brother, who knew not the genius of grace. But the grand lesson of the parable is this: 'there is joy in the *presence* of the angels of God.' That joy must be in the heart of God Himself. With Him, also, it is more blessed to give than to receive. As sin to its last particle is sorrow, so grace to its last particle is gladness. It radiates gladness all round, to the giver as well as to the receiver. The father pardoned as if very joy made him pardon, as if he cared only for giving and forgiving; and thus to the elder brother he seemed the greater prodigal of the two. 'As to full breasts,' says Leighton, 'it is a pleasure to God to set mercy forth.'

The word *grace* thus signifies that movement of God towards sinful man which gives joy, and only joy, to God, and only joy to man. For wherever you find grace, there you must find gladness.

The religion of grace, rightly understood, can therefore never be a sad or gloomy thing; the want of it, or a fraction of it, or the perversion of it, easily may. True, the Bible handles many sad and gloomy things; but grace created none of them, and its aim is to destroy or heal them all. It has a virtue to turn even sorrow into sacred joy. A gloomy religion of grace is a contradiction, possible only to those who confound the disease and the remedy. Only a little child or a delirious patient blames his physician for the sores he comes to cure.

The mere word *grace* might revolutionise many a man's religion. Rabbi Duncan one day, in deep religious despondency, was singing to his sick soul a lullaby of Greek texts, one of which had our word *χάρις*. '*Χάρις*,' he said, 'that means joy; the exercise of grace gives joy to God; then why should I deny God that joy?' We read in Arabian fairy tales how some evil spell has turned the palace into a desert. But at last the right word is spoken, and lo, the spell is straightway broken; and the desert becomes a paradise again. So it was with Dr. John Duncan under the word *χάρις*. This one word has power to break most of the evil spells that bring a nightmare upon the soul. 'He sent His word, and healed them.'