

ments, in which God Himself has expressed the interest dearest to His heart, cannot have real fellowship of heart with Him, cannot have within himself the real life of God. Actual living fellowship with God evinces itself especially in this, that among the divine demands we know how to discover the one, which forms the kernel of all the others, that which is the essential thing in God's sight.

Ver. 12. Cain was of the evil one, i.e. of the devil (ver. 8 and ii. 13). John speaks of an *ethical*, not of a *physical*, birth. Some Rabbis make Cain to have been actually begotten physically by the devil. "Slew" is a purposely chosen strong expression; it is used elsewhere of murder, but always with the additional notion of an inhuman, unnatural (brutal) deed of horror. By thus exhibiting the lack of love to brethren as something really diabolical, John makes all the more prominent the necessity of brotherly love on the part of his Christian readers. The specifically diabolical element in Cain's deed is made still more evident by the express mention of its motive. The way in which John states this motive is not exactly in keeping with the narrative in Genesis (chap. iv.); for according to the latter it was envy because of Abel's offering being acceptable to the Lord that led Cain to slay his brother. John, however, describes as the cause of the murder the diabolical hatred with which the evil man persecutes the good; the good and the evil being absolute antitheses, there is eternal enmity between

them. By "works" is meant the whole manner of acting and feeling.

Cain's conduct forms the direct antithesis of the brotherly love demanded; he appears, therefore, as the first person, who is of the devil. He is the first illustration of the fact that a man may repudiate the holy will of God in its deepest truth, and may be of the evil one, without having a clear consciousness that such is the case; and also of the fact that the most dreadful crime may result from this unconsciousness. Herein Cain is the type of a very large portion of our race, in whom the place of brotherly love is taken by hatred of one's brethren, which, under certain circumstances, becomes fratricide. John derives this crime from the fact that to the evil man goodness is the object of an intolerable repugnance. The evil man cannot endure the sight of goodness in another. Instead of finding in it some alleviation of the torture of his own wretched condition, he sees in it only the constant accusation of his own wickedness; and therefore there is kindled in him a bitter hatred of goodness, which naturally grows into a hatred of God Himself, who is absolute goodness. Sin in this form may doubtless originate also in our weakness; if we let ourselves be overcome by the latter, it becomes enmity. Delight in goodness is then transformed into hateful repugnance toward it; we are seized by the longing to root out the good. In Cain's case this hatred was doubly unnatural, seeing it was goodness in his own brother.

## The Gospels and Modern Criticism.

BY THE REV. J. M. RAMSAY, M.A., B.D., MOUNT FOREST, CANADA.

(From the Knox College Monthly for March 1893.)

IN February 1891, Professor Sanday, reviewing recent literature on the Synoptic question in the *Expositor*, mentioned Halcombe's *Historic Relation of the Gospels*, but declined to discuss it, because, as he said, it seemed to him to pursue a line of argument which could only end in disappointment. This somewhat summary dismissal was almost the only reference to Mr. Halcombe's book which I had seen, when Professor Gwilliam of Oxford wrote in quite a different strain in THE

EXPOSITORY TIMES for April of last year. Mr. Gwilliam affirmed that Mr. Halcombe had taken up a position which he had made exceptionally strong, and that to turn aside from his arguments and treat them as of no account was to evince blind prejudice rather than critical acumen. In the next number of the same magazine, Rev. F. W. Bussell styles our author's work and method "the *novum organon* of gospel criticism," and now the editor promises a complete exposition for

the coming year. May not some of the readers of *The Monthly* be glad to know its leading features?

I may begin, though Mr. Halcombe does not, with the evidence for his theory which he gets from Tertullian. In his treatise against Marcion, Tertullian writes: "The authors of the evangelical instrument were apostles appointed by the Lord Himself to the special office of promulgating the gospel, and, if there were also merely apostolic men taking part in it, the latter nevertheless wrote not independently, but as at once associates of apostles, and *in succession to* apostles.<sup>1</sup> . . . This, then, is our position. From amongst apostles, John and Matthew plant in us faith; from amongst apostolic men, Mark and Luke confirm this faith." The inference is sufficiently startling, for it appears that, contrary to the common belief, John, as well as Matthew, wrote before Mark and Luke. Other witnesses confirm to a greater or less extent this conclusion; but, of course, it is confronted especially by the explicit testimony of Irenæus, who says that John wrote his Gospel after he had gone to live at Ephesus. No less explicitly, however, does Irenæus testify that our Lord lived to old age, and that His ministry lasted for ten years. These are manifest errors; and if the common tradition on the point now in question rests, as it seems to rest, on his authority, it too may be in error.

Let us turn now from external to internal evidence. Is it possible that John and Matthew were published before the other Gospels? "As a matter of fact, St. John and St. Matthew not only cover between them all but certain exceptional portions of the historical area of our Lord's ministry, but from their point of view they practically exhaust the whole subject of His doctrinal and moral teaching. . . . Both writers, moreover, appear to be so absorbed in the contemplation of the divinity and majesty of Him of whom they write that they cannot condescend to matters of detail, or to circumstantial accounts even of the ministerial labours in which He was so continuously engaged." The Gospels of Mark and Luke, on the other hand, are ministerial, as became the ministers of apostles; *i.e.* they give the narrative a historical rather than a personal turn, adding details of time, place, and circumstances, and directing attention to the actors in the scenes described who did not belong to the immediate circle of Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Westcott's *Canon*, 5th ed., p. 346, note.

But which of the apostolic Gospels was written first? The priority is to be assigned to John on many grounds; in fact, everywhere his is the Gospel of beginnings. He furnishes us with the framework of the history, and fills in certain parts. Matthew simply fills in other parts of the framework thus supplied. John always gives more facts of primary importance than his companion, even more than all the other Gospels put together. "As St. John is concerned only with the internal and spiritual, so St. Matthew treats only of the external and the practical. The one has to tell of the secrets of the new birth, the other of the outward manifestations of its reality. Whilst the one is continually carrying the mind back to the secret springs of action, the other persistently carries it forward to the results of such action as tested by a final judgment."

It has already been noted that the ministerial Gospels treat their great subject after the more historical fashion, but we have not thereby completely elucidated their relations to the apostolic Gospels. It appears that the incidents repeated by Mark are these recorded by Matthew, rather than by John, because his point of view is much less akin to John's than to Matthew's. But he omits many historical statements and many references to prophecy which were already fully enough recorded by Matthew, as well as the teaching of Christ, which lay outside of his point of view. Moreover, he arranges afresh the incidents recorded by Matthew in chap. iv. 12 to chap. xiii. 58 of his Gospel, because in that section Matthew did not narrate in order of time.

But why does Luke's narrative traverse again to a large extent the same ground? To this question his own preface, rightly understood, supplies the answer. Slightly paraphrased, what Luke really says is, "Inasmuch as many [teachers less well-informed than those by whom thou wast thyself taught] have essayed to rearrange [cf. Westcott, *Introduction*, p. 190], in the form of a consecutive narrative, those things which were accomplished in our midst, even as they who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the *logos* related them in their *paradoses* [see 2 Thess. ii. 15], it seemed good to me also, having accurately tracked out everything from the beginning, to write to thee, most excellent Theophilus, in chronological sequence, that thou mightest have additional assurance of the reliable character of the *logoi* [cf. Acts i. 1], concerning

which thou wast instructed." It seems that authentic records of the Gospel facts, viz. our Gospels, or *logoi*, or *paradoses*, of John, Matthew, and Mark, had been prepared, and had been handed over to the Church for use in catechetical instruction. Concerning their character, Luke's friend had been well instructed; but certain teachers, misunderstanding especially the relation of Mark to Matthew, had sought by rearranging to harmonise them. Some would take one Gospel, some another, as the basis of the harmony, and thus the credibility of all would be called in question. To obviate this evil, Luke "proposed to give a fresh version of the gospel history, and especially to show the true chronological sequence of all those incidents as to the historical order of which the authorised *logoi* had left room for difference of opinion." It is, then, because Mark rearranged Matthew's narrative where it did not follow the order of time that Mark and Luke agree so largely in respect to the sequence of the events they both narrate. In order that his rearrangement may be understood, Luke repeats again every incident that Matthew and Mark had not recorded in the same order, and he always agrees with Mark. In a few cases of nearly contemporary events, Matthew and Mark seem to have agreed in an order not strictly chronological; and in these cases also Luke repeats and rearranges, unless the right order had already been given by John. Elsewhere, Luke does not repeat incidents recorded in the same order by his two predecessors, save where it is necessary to keep his narrative in touch with theirs. Though one object of Luke was to certify to the chronological order, he, as the last of the four evangelists, naturally explained whatever statements of the others had been found obscure, and supplemented them wherever, from his point of view, they needed it. In respect to single incidents, since his point of view is nearer to that of Mark than to that of Matthew, it is naturally the narratives of the former that he selects for expansion. In respect to periods, we may refer to the section of our Lord's life between the close of the Galilean ministry and the last visit to Jerusalem. Of this period Matthew and Mark say nothing, because, from their point of view, John has dealt fully enough with it in his chapters, vii.-xi. To Luke, however, this period was full of interest; without a full account of it our Lord's ministry

could not be thoroughly comprehended; accordingly he devotes several chapters to it. John has already given the outline. Apart from his work, Luke would have been compelled to speak of the visits to the feasts of tabernacles and dedication, and of the visit to Bethany, which occurred at this time; but, as matters stand, he contents himself with filling in John's framework by means of a large number of incidents to which the previous writer has not referred. And, more generally, "the most fully developed aspects of Christ's teaching, the widely embracing character of His offers of mercy, the application of His teaching to matters of everyday life, the detailed instructions which He had given to the apostles as to the actual duties and trials of their future ministry, the relation in which the Jewish people, and especially their rulers, would stand towards the kingdom to be founded, many predictions of Jesus as to the future course of events, many historical and political facts which would be unknown to non-Jewish readers,—all these congenial subjects were left for Luke to deal with."

The explanatory and supplementary purpose is clearly apparent in every part of this Gospel, save chap. viii. 4-21, and chaps. xi. 14, xiii. 21. In the former place Matthew and Mark are fuller, contrary to custom, than Luke; while not only is the latter quite unconnected with its context, as indeed Schleiermacher has already remarked, but the testimony of Matthew and Mark would place not a few of its incidents after viii. 21. If, however, we place the whole section here, it falls naturally into the connexion, and becomes explanatory of and supplementary to the corresponding sections of Matthew and Mark. We conclude that at a very early period it was by some means misplaced.

I have expounded this theory without note or comment, and I do not intend to criticise it now. Many objections may be raised. Some of them the book answers; of others it ought, I think, to have taken notice; but none of them seem to me fatal. On the other hand, the positions taken are supported by evidence of every kind, the evidence of subject, of variations, of additions and omissions, of repetitions, of arrangement, of construction; and there is appended a most minute analysis of parallel narratives which is intended to confirm the theory upheld in the book. Moreover, the theory is not without its recommendations.

We have had lately several modifications of old theories of the Synoptists, such as Wright's "oral" theory, Wendt's "documentary" theory, and Marshall's theory of an Aramaic fundamental gospel. These have been quietly received, though they do not tend very greatly to settle our faith.

This new theory, at first sight very startling, places the authenticity of John on an unassailable foundation, and makes the other Gospels, miscalled Synoptic, to be not mere fragmentary collections, but deliberately planned and carefully executed productions.

## The Gospels and Modern Criticism.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR WRIGHT, M.A., FELLOW AND TUTOR OF QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

MR. HALCOMBE is hard on modern criticism. He never has a good word for modern critics. The Bishop of Durham he has singled out for special attack. The rest, though they are numerous and hold widely divergent opinions, he groups together and condemns without distinction.

Mr. Halcombe forgets that he is a modern critic himself. He has spent years of patient toil on the Gospels, like a critic. He has sedulously marshalled, analysed, and interrogated his facts, like a critic. He has startled us with his conclusions, like a critic. And if a modern critic is not merely one who writes at the close of the nineteenth century, but one who ruthlessly disintegrates books which the Church has always held to be perfect, Mr. Halcombe's treatment of St. Luke's Gospel makes him a very modern critic indeed.

In attempting to state briefly a few of my reasons for not agreeing with him, I have no desire to snatch a victory for the moment. My wish is to help others, if possible, in arriving at truth on this important question. I desire to do full justice to Mr. Halcombe's ability, his industry, and his earnestness, but I am unable to accept his conclusions, and I say so with sincere regret.

Mr. Halcombe's main contention is, that the Gospels were written in the following order: John, Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Now in putting St. John first, Mr. Halcombe does not stand alone. Schleiermacher advocated the same view in the early part of this century. But not even his influence had any appreciable effect on Christian belief. The common sense of the Church refused to give way. But Mr. Halcombe contends that this was the second century order, and appeals to Tertullian to support him. We will not stay to ask why we should prefer the opinion of a third century Montanist to the testimony

of the Fathers of the Church. If Mr. Halcombe's supporters had recollected the golden rule, "Verify your references," they would have been met by a more serious difficulty. Tertullian's order, according to all the manuscripts and editions which I have consulted, appears to be: John, Matthew, Luke, Mark.

Here is the Latin text: "Denique nobis fidem ex apostolis Johannes et Matthæus insinuant, ex apostolicis LUCAS ET MARCUS instaurant."

And here is Mr. Halcombe's translation: "This then is our position. From amongst apostles, John and Matthew plant in us the faith; from amongst apostolic men, MARK AND LUKE confirm this faith."

And again: "Let the Gospels, as placed by Tertullian—John, Matthew, MARK, LUKE—be represented by the letters W O R D."

Their meaning in this order (he argues) is plain to every child; but the common order, O R D W, or the order adopted by modern critics, R O D W, is hopelessly unintelligible.

Mr. Halcombe is fond of rearrangements. He has transposed St. Luke viii. 22-xi. 13 and xi. 14-xiii. 21, but he has written a volume to justify himself in doing so. He has discovered that the Muratorian fragment on the Canon has been tampered with by the seventh century translator, who put St. John's Gospel last, whereas the second century author had put it first; but he has given some good, if not convincing, reasons for thinking so. I cannot find, however, that he has anywhere told us on what authority he has altered the current text of Tertullian. Until he does this, I must suppose the editors of Tertullian to be right. And if so, W O D R will be as unintelligible as any of the other permutations.

Meanwhile I will give my own account of this question of the order of the Gospels.