

to come and dwell in the heart from which Satan has for the moment departed. There is a temporary aversion to sin, but there is no yearning after holiness. In short, an attempt is being made to occupy an untenable position; not that of serving both God and Mammon, but that of renouncing the devil without becoming the bond-servant of Jesus Christ.

Sooner or later the result of such attempts is always the same. Unless we place ourselves constantly under Divine protection, unless we habitually keep our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, we may renounce the devil, but he does not renounce us. He watches his opportunity and comes back again with sevenfold subtlety and violence, and quickly has us more completely in his power than before. He enters in and takes up his *permanent* abode with us (*κατοικεῖ*), and we are in a far worse condition than we were at first. And perhaps it is not our old sin which at once begins again,—*that* might startle us and bring us to better things,—but new forms of sins, less conspicuous perhaps, but just as fatal, beset us.

As the Jews, when they were cured of the worship of idols, took to the worship of the letter of the Law and to covetousness, which is idolatry; or as a man who has conquered intemperance in drink falls a victim to pride and intemperance in language and conduct.

The experience of thousands has proved that forces which are quite sufficient, even singly, to induce a man to abandon some sinful course, are unable, even when combined, to keep him in the right way. Self-respect, the love of a wife or a child, the influence of a friend, a severe illness,—any one of these may have power to drive out the demon that has possessed him for months or years. But they are powerless to protect him from the renewed and persistent assaults of untiring spiritual foes. It is only when Christ through His Holy Spirit is made a welcome tenant that the liberated soul is secure. Safety from Satan's tyranny can never be won by merely shaking off his bondage. It can be made sure in no other way than by abiding under the sway of Him whose *service* is perfect freedom.

Mr. Halcombe and the Four Gospels.

BY THE REV. F. W. BUSSELL, M.A., BRASENOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

So long as the present interest in the history and criticism of the sacred books continues, so long shall we value any novel hypothesis which may explain or reconcile the relation of the Four Gospels, the most important point in such a study. Especially may we be grateful if, with novelty, we get absolute conviction in the proposer, and absolute clearness in the proposal. An idea to strike must be bold and clear, and capable of the briefest statement. These needful qualities are united in Mr. Halcombe's theory, to which an able, judicious, and impartial article of Mr. Gwilliam of Hertford College, Oxford, called attention in the April number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. "A method," says the learned critic, "which yields a sensible interpretation of the contents of ancient documents, while treating them as being what they profess to be, is certainly deserving of the most attentive consideration." And this method is no hasty guess or assumption, but the result of labours of twelve years, singularly patient and self-restrained. It

would seem as if Mr. Halcombe were one of those rare characters who can follow out the Baconian advice in all its severity, can throw aside all early conceptions and prejudices, and can begin inquiry on the gravest questions with a mind open to receive the message of minute induction. His work and his method may be styled the *novum organon* of gospel criticism. His long and painful analysis and comparison of the various parts of the story, as told by the several narrators, has led him to the novel and startling result which he now asks to have considered. If he sets forth on his mission with any other equipment besides industry and impartiality, it is perhaps with a profound dissatisfaction with the common excuses and apologies offered by the orthodox for the "fragmentariness" of the Gospels. He is determined to see if their mutual relation cannot be made intelligible and instructive, instead of a constant difficulty. He himself expresses, in a kind of Algebraic formula, his own position, as WORD; the ordinary view

as ORDW—a collocation of letters to which it is impossible to attach any meaning. That is to say, he rearranges the order, and instead of an outlandish name, finds sense and method. Instead of regarding St. John as the last, he makes him the first of Evangelists; and maintaining firmly the *completeness* of this narrative on its own particular lines, sees in the three others an attempt to narrate what might be termed, for the sake of contrast, the exoteric side. Under this plan the problem of repetition and omission (seemingly so capricious) becomes perfectly clear. Thus his work resolves itself into a patient search for the rules of repetition; he asks, Is there any underlying reason or plan in such? he muses on the emphasis of Irenæus on the “quadri-form” character of the Gospels, and wonders if together they do not form a *connected* whole; to use his own simile, rather a quadrangle of uniform plan, than four detached and disunited buildings. (Perhaps the most fascinating part of his work is where he lays down his new rules for repetition and omission in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.) So then he arrives at a conclusion more satisfactory than they can who gloze over difficulties (created, as he thinks, by their own initial assumption) by theories of “accident,” “independent writing,” or “essential fragmentariness.”

Tertullian supplies him with the valuable tradition that apostolic gospels precede non-apostolic; and thus regarding John and Matthew as united, instead of extremes, he is led further to give the first place to John.

On this position the whole question turns. “Yes, the *Synoptists presuppose John*.” To deny this precedence is as if one should write a word with the capital letter omitted, like playing meaningless counter-subjects on a fugue before the enunciation of the theme. “As a general rule, St. John’s narrative or statement will be found to be the fullest, and to give the facts most personal to our Lord, and most intrinsically important” (*Fourfold Gospel*, p. 28). St. John, “it is quite clear, wrote on a broad but well-defined principle of selection. Everything should be deemed foreign to his thesis, ‘that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God,’ he avowedly excludes from his narrative” (*Hist. Rel. of Gospels*, p. 54). Thus John and Matthew are consciously complementary, and together form a continuous history, one representing the ministry at Jerusalem, the other at Capernaum. In Mr. Halcombe’s own words, “Documents I. and II. (= John and Matthew) ap-

pear to represent a complete history in two volumes. Document III. (= Mark) is a fresh and expanded edition of selected portions of Document II. (= Matthew); Document IV. cannot be better described than in terms suggested by the preface of the writer (= Luke) as a supplemental and explanatory treatise.” Such is, briefly and clearly expressed, the whole sum and substance of his several treatises on this subject, the result of his twelve years’ labours, and of his patient analysis. Nothing can be added to the statement, save by way of comment, support, or illustration.

He thus claims to propose an entirely simple, yet systematic arrangement, which is to solve the difficulties of harmonists, and which is the fruit, not of preconceived notions, to which facts are compelled to agree, but of the most minute examination of these facts. Such a theory explains omission and repetition; e.g. the episode of Lazarus is elsewhere left out, because already adequately treated by the protevangelist. The following words in the newest pamphlet (*The Fourfold Gospel*, pp. 30, 31) are worthy, on all accounts, of quotation at this point:—

“When we have once realised that the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew are primary representations of two sides of a common subject, we are at no loss to see that there is this great difference between them. St. John does, St. Matthew does not, treat his particular side of the subject exhaustively.

“This comparative incompleteness of St. Matthew’s Gospel would of itself be sufficient to account for, and almost necessitate, the existence of St. Mark’s and St. Luke’s narratives.

“Broadly speaking, the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke are, as a matter of verifiable fact [to this process I have already alluded as the most interesting part of Mr. Halcombe’s studies], simply editions of St. Matthew, abridged in one direction, expanded in another. Thus, to a considerable extent, they both stand to St. John’s Gospel in the same relation as St. Matthew’s does; either of them would contribute a second, though a very imperfect second, to St. John’s first volume. But in their case this relation is not, as in St. Matthew’s case, an original one, but merely a *derived* relation necessarily consequent upon the extent to which they are reproductions of St. Matthew” (p. 31).

All the steps at this point in the process are full of interest; the single and happy change of St. Luke’s

order (xi. 14–xiii. 21, inserted after viii. 21); the demonstration that in each section of the fourfold narrative each of the writers is true to his *general* character; St John's eyes concentrated on the Divine Person of the Lord; St. Matthew's, too, concerned with the Teacher and His doctrine; St. Mark, amplifying accessories, giving details of circumstance and effect of teaching on the hearers, and rearranging the sequence of time; St. Luke, careful (*Fourfold Gospel*, 35 and 15) to bear out St. Mark's arrangement of events, silent where St. Mark is in absolute agreement with St. Matthew. For St. Matthew confines himself to oral teaching of the Lord in a certain period of His ministry, assumes in his readers a broad knowledge of the general facts (how natural in an early historian of such a life!), and scarcely deigns to chronicle lesser details or maintain strict order. As time goes on, it becomes necessary to supplement and make vivid the narrative by adding further details of personal reminiscence, correcting the sequence. But yet a third narrative is needed and forthcoming to clear away suspicion, it may be, of discrepancy and incompatibility between the two former.

But it will be seen that all this harmony of the three so-called Synoptists depends absolutely upon the earliness and undoubted pre-eminence and completeness of St. John's narrative. When Mr. Halcombe is proving so logically the relation of St. Mark and St. Luke to St. Matthew, and gaining the sympathy of critics in the *Literary Churchman*, the *Christian World*, the *Church Review*, *John Bull*, and the *English Churchman*, we must not forget

that this solution may only be accepted by those who go the entire length of his conviction. It rests absolutely on the priority of St. John: "The Synoptists presuppose the so-called Fourth Gospel," and we are perhaps insensibly led by a desire to accept the relations of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as set forth in Mr. Halcombe's publications, to go on further to embrace his novel and revolutionary theory as to the date of St. John's Gospel.

"The Synoptic Gospels are all alike *acephalous*, or without beginning. Read alone, they would therefore convey an . . . erroneous impression of their subject. Experience and common sense alike forbid us to suppose that any historian would write the second volume of a history on the chance of some one else at a future day writing the first."

It is then to the task of proving the priority of St. John that Mr. Halcombe's future efforts will be directed (see chap. x. of *Hist. Rel.*). He projects a collection by various authors of essays upon such subjects, to give from different points of view the same general principle. The acute and anonymous critic in the *Guardian* (1891) has noted difficulties which should be cleared. It remains for those to be removed. It is on the *positive* value of the theory as explaining the attitude and mutual relation of Matthew, Mark, and Luke that Mr. Halcombe should repose, and all who are attracted to such a lucid exposition of their harmony will do well to bestow further attention on the great principle upon which this harmony rests—the priority of St. John's Gospel.

The Early Narratives of Genesis.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR H. E. RYLE, B.D., CAMBRIDGE.

VI.

THE GENEALOGY OF THE SETHITES.

THE Genealogy of the Sethites is contained in chapter v. The reader will observe at a glance how widely this genealogy differs from that of the Cainites (iv. 16–24) both in the general treatment and in the style and language. The compiler of the book here returns to the priestly narrative, as the critics term the literary source from which he drew the opening section of the Book of Genesis (i. 1, ii. 4 a).

We notice the same orderly grouping of the subject-matter that we remarked upon in that section. We find a return to the use of the Divine Name "Elohim." We find that in vv. 1–3 the language is based upon chap. i. 27. We find that the Hebrew words for "generations" (ver. 1), "male and female" (ver. 2), "beget" (ver. 3), are characteristic of this source of the narrative in other portions of Genesis. Elsewhere in the Pentateuch it is the same hand that introduces bare and formal

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