

unity go forth, because from Rome alone can come the absolute destruction of the ancient unity." "The worship of Rome was a part of my being. The great unity, the one life of the world, had twice been worked out within her walls." "Why should not a new Rome, the Rome of the Italian people,—portents of whose coming I deemed I saw,—arise to create a third and still vaster unity, to link together and harmonise earth and heaven, right and duty, and utter, not to individuals but to peoples, the great watchword Association—to make known to free men and equals their mission here below?"

How far were Mazzini's aims realised? Let us recall the further history of his life, his imprisonment and exile, his long-continued labours, the doubt that at one time assailed him as to whether the idea for which he was giving his life might be,

after all, but "*his* idea, and his country an illusion." In his own life he was obliged to bear the evils against which he fought for others. He had sacrificed the intellectual career for which he was fitted, he was obliged to live apart from his parents, an exile from his country; and we cannot be surprised to hear that he felt his life an unhappy one. But he never despaired of the ultimate success of his aims. When, however, at last the longed-for unity of Italy drew near, he saw most plainly that it would come in a form repugnant to his republican ideals, and by means which he scorned.

In the end, much has been gained for Italy. Yet of all those who by various means helped forward the making of the new kingdom, Italy perhaps owes her greatest debt to the man whose rectitude never faltered in her service.

Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ROTHE, D.D.

CHAPTER III. 9-12.

"Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain was of the evil one, and slew his own brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

VER. 9. It is so impossible for him that doeth sin to be aught else than of the devil (ver. 8), *i.e.* it is so impossible for him to be begotten of God, that he who is begotten of God doeth no sin; yea, he cannot sin (2 Cor. v. 14). In the word "whosoever" there is implied the (inner) necessity of this effect of being begotten of God. In connexion with the expression "is begotten of God," one might suppose (seeing that in the Greek it is the perfect that is used) that the new birth spoken of *here* is represented as being already perfect and complete. But here, at least, that is not the case. It is evident from ii. 29 that the perfect may be used even in instances where the new birth is not thought of as being already complete. What is spoken of is not a being *born* again, but a being *begotten* again. Here the context does not admit of the thought of such a completed new birth, for the reason assigned, "His seed abideth in him,"

expressly presupposes that the new birth is not yet fully accomplished, and that the new man is as yet but spermatic or embryonic. "His seed" is the seed of God, the seed whereby God has begotten him anew. Just as man is begotten again by the Holy Spirit (*viz.* the Spirit of Christ, John iii. 3 ff.), so this "seed of God" is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit; it is not, however, the Spirit of Christ, but that of the man himself, in whom no doubt, in such a case, the Holy Spirit of Christ really dwells. By "seed of God" is meant that which is ethically begotten in the regenerate person in the act of conversion, which is the commencement of the actual new birth; it is the rudiment of a real (not merely approximate), good, or holy (human) spirit, which is called the "seed of God," inasmuch as the divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4), *viz.* in the "Holy Spirit" of Christ, is actually immanent in it, and inasmuch as it is something effected by God in

man. As being real and actual spirit this is indissoluble, and therefore it is rightly said of it, it abideth in him (in the regenerate man). For this very reason it is also true of the regenerate person that he *doeth no sin*. For if in all that he does this good spirit is the agent, that which he does is never sin. It would not be Johannine to understand by the "seed of God" the word of God, and more especially the gospel (so many of the older expositors, cf. Matt. xiii. 23; James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23). For, according to John, it is not the word of God as such, but the Spirit of God, which is the principle that begets the children of God (John iii. 6 ff.). John, however, is not content with asserting that he who is begotten of God doeth no sin, but he advances a step further, and asserts that he *cannot* sin. The impossibility of which he speaks here is naturally an inner, ethical impossibility. For, the new birth being a birth that derives from God, the existence, which is due to the new birth, is an existence deriving from God a divine existence, which, in accordance with its very idea, cannot act in a sinful manner. We are now able to see what is the nature of the sinning which John denies on the part of the regenerate. From the reasons adduced by him in support of this denial, it only follows that the regenerate man can never sin with *his real, proper self*, with his proper, essential personality, and that therefore his sinning can never be a sinning in the full and proper sense of the word; it is always only an overpowering of his real personality by the might of evil, it is always only a sin of weakness.

John takes this "being begotten of God" in an altogether literal sense. He who is begotten of God has really received in himself a seed of divine existence, which abides in him, and cannot be destroyed. It is really the new germ of a life, which is as essentially a divine life as the life, upon which we enter through the first birth, is a life of sense. No doubt it begins as a mere germ, but the seed is of such a kind that it cannot be destroyed; it abides in him, in whom it has been implanted in the new birth. It forms the real centre of his personal being; it is his true, proper ego; such an one cannot sin, because he himself, his personality, is begotten of God. Sin finds a place in him only inasmuch as his personality is not yet strong enough over against sin; it occurs in him as the result of weakness. This statement has frequently been misused, more especially by

certain fanatical sects. It has been made to mean: seeing that the real personality of the regenerate man cannot sin, sin in his individual life does not concern the regenerate man himself, it is something foreign to him. John is not the advocate of this Satanic spiritualism; for wherever there is indifference towards sin, there can be no talk of a new birth. If the inmost personality has really been begotten again, it cannot bear itself indifferently towards sin, but must inevitably oppose it. This so-called merely letting sin alone is a positive love of sin. We should rather use the statement of the apostle for the purpose of most stringent self-examination. Wherever sin is aught else than a sin of weakness, our new birth is merely apparent.

Ver. 10. The children of God and the children of the devil can, with certainty, be recognised by this, whether they sin or do not sin. *Children of the devil*—this is not a mere Hebrew figure of speech. John is thinking of an ethical filial relationship. With the prominence which he now gives to *brotherly love* he is preparing the way for the transition to the more special form of his exhortation to do righteousness, which engages his attention up to the end of the chapter. In his opinion brotherly love and the doing of righteousness are identical. He cannot conceive of this doing of righteousness otherwise than as brotherly love. Brotherly love is the real kernel of Christian righteousness; the latter manifests itself in the former (Gal. v. 14; Col. iii. 14); it is the fundamental demand of the Christian law of life (ii. 9-11; Rom. xiii. 8-10). We should not allow anything to pass with us for real righteousness, which is not essentially brotherly love. However admirable in other respects any ethical act may be, if it is void of brotherly love, it is not yet righteousness. The brotherly love spoken of here is such a love to one's neighbour as springs from the consciousness of the inner, living kinship between us and him, and from the natural impulse which is associated with this consciousness.

Ver. 11. The reason is assigned why he that does not love his brother cannot be of God. The reason is this, that that which God causes to be proclaimed to us from the beginning (cf. ii. 7), and therefore as the essential element of His will, is the demand to love the brethren. Whosoever is unwilling to keep that one of God's command-

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.

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(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