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 CHAPTER I.   
   
   
 ON THE THREE FIRST GOSPELS GENERALLY.   
   
 SECTION I.   
   
 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THREE FIRST GOSPELS.   
   
   
 1. On examining the four records of our Lord’s life on earth, the first   
 thing which demands our notice is the distinctness, in contents and   
 character, of the three first Gospels from the fourth. This difference   
 may be thus shortly described.   
 2. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, in relating His ministry,   
 discourses, and miracles, confine themselves exclusively to the events   
 which took place in Galilee, until the last journey to Jerusalem. No   
 incident whatever of His ministry in Judea is related by any of them \*.   
 Had we only their accounts, we could never with any certainty have   
 asserted that He went to Jerusalem during his public life, His time   
 was come to be delivered up. They do not, it is true, exclude such a   
 supposition, but rather perhaps imply it (see Matt. xxiii. 37; xxvii. 57,   
 and parallels ; also Matt. iv. 12 as compared with iv. 25,—Matt. viii. 10,   
 xvi. 1); it could not however have been gathered from their narrative   
 with any historical precision.   
 3. If we now turn to the fourth Gospel, we find this deficiency   
 remarkably supplied. The various occasions on which our Lord went   
 up to Jerusalem are specified ; not indeed with any precision of date or   
 sequence, but mainly for the purpose of relating the discourses and   
 miracles by which they were signalized.   
 4. But the difference in character between the three first Evangelists   
 and the fourth is even more striking. While their employment (with   
 the sole exception, and that almost exclusively in Matthew, of the   
 application of Old Testament prophecies to events in the life of our   
 Lord) is narration without comment, the fourth Evangelist speaks with   
 dogmatic authority, and delivers his historical testimony as from the   
 chair of an Apostle. In no place do they claim the high authority of eye-   
 witnesses ; nay, in the preface to St. Luke’s Gospel, while he vindicates   
 his diligent care in tracing down the course of events from the first, he   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 2 An exception to this apparently occurs, if we adopt the remarkable reading   
 « Judea,” Luke iv. 44. But it is to be pressed, as it does not imply   
 any journey to the capital.   
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