§u.] INDEPENDENCE OF ONE ANOTHER. [inrropuction   
   
 such borrowing would imply verbal coincidence, unless in the case of   
 strong Hebraistic idiom, or other assignable peculiarity. It is incon-   
 ceivable that one writer borrowing from another matter confessedly of   
 the very first importance, in good faith and with approval, should alter   
 his diction so singularly and capriciously as, on this hypothesis, we find   
 the text of the parallel sections of our Gospels altered. Let the ques-   
 tion be answered by ordinary considerations of probability, and let any   
 passage common to the three Evangelists be put to the test. The   
 phenomena presented will be much as follows:—first, perhaps, we shall   
 have three, five, or more words identical ;—then as many wholly distinct :   
 then two clauses or more, expressed in the same words but differing   
 order :—then a clause contained in one or two, and not in the third :—   
 then several words identical:—then a clause not only wholly distinct   
 but apparently inconsistent ;—and so forth ;—with recurrences of the   
 same arbitrary and anomalous alterations, coincidences, and transposi-   
 tions. Nor does this description apply to verbal and sentential arrange-   
 ment only;—but also, with slight modification, to that of the larger   
 portions of the narratives. Equally capricious would be the disposition   
 of the subject-matter. Sometimes, while coincident in the things   
 related, the Gospels place them in the most various order,—each in turn   
 connecting them together with apparent marks of chronological se-   
 quence (e. g. the visit to Gadara in Matt. viii. 28 ff. as compared with   
 the same in Mark v. 1 ff. Luke viii. 26 ff. and numerous other such   
 instances noticed in the commentary). Let any one say, divesting   
 himeelf of the commonly-received hypotheses respecting the connexion   
 and order of our Gospels, whether it is within the range of probability   
 that a writer should thus singularly and unreasonably alter the subject-   
 matter and diction before him, having (as is now supposed) no design   
 in so doing, but intending, fairly and with approval, to incorporate the   
 work of another into his own? Can an instance be any where cited of   
 undoubted borrowing and adaptation from another, presenting similar   
 phenomena ?   
 8. I cannot then find in any of the above hypotheses a solution of   
 the question before us, how the appearances presented by our three   
 Gospels are to be accounted for. I do ‘not see how any theory of mutual   
 interdependence will leave to our three Evangelists their credit as able   
 or trustworthy writers, or even as honest men: nor can I find any such   
 theory borne out by the nature of the variations apparent in the respec-   
 ~ tive texts.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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