§ v.J THEIR FRAGMENTARY NATURE. [mnrxopuction.   
   
   
 important reasons why the incidents should be different ;—but rather   
 examining critically the features of the incidents themselves, and   
 discerning and determining upon the evidence furnished by them.   
 6. The circumstances and nature of our Lord’s discourses must be taken   
 into account. Judging 4 priori, the probability is, that He repeated most   
 of His important sayings many times over, with more or less variation, to   
 different audiences, but in the hearing of the same apostolic witnesses. If   
 now these witnesses by their independent narratives have originated our   
 present Gospels, what can be more likely than that these sayings should   
 have found their way into the Gospels in various forms,—sometimes, a8   
 especially in Matthew, in long and strictly coherent discourses,—some-   
 times scattered up and down, as is the matter of several of Matthew's   
 discourses in Luke ? Yet such various reports of our Lord’s sayings are   
 most unreasonably by some of the modern German critics (e.g. De Wette)   
 treated as discrepancies, and used to prove St. Matthew’s discourses   
 to have been mere combinations of shorter sayings uttered at different   
 times. A striking instance of the repetition by our Lord of similar dis-   
 courses, varied according to the time and the hearers, may be found in   
 the denunciations on the Scribes and Pharisees as uttered during the   
 journey to Jerusalem, Luke xi. 37 ff., the subsequent solemn and   
 public reiteration of them in Jerusalem at the final close of the Lord’s   
 ministry in Matt. xxiii. Compare also the parable of the pounds, Luke   
 xix. 11 ff, with that of the talents, Matt. xxv. 14 ff, and in fact the   
 whole of the discourses during the last journey in Luke, with their   
 parallels, where such exist, in Matthew.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION V.   
   
   
 THE FRAGMENTARY NATURE OF THE THREE GOSPELS.   
   
 1. On any hypothesis which attributes to our Evangelists the design   
 of producing a complete history of the life and actions of our Lord, and   
 gives two of them the advantage of consulting other records of the same   
 kind with their own,—the omissions in their histories are perfectly inex-   
 plicable. For example,—St. Matthew, as an Apostle, was himself an   
 eye-witness of the Ascension, an event holding a most important place   
 in the divine process of the redemption of man. Yet he omits all record   
 or mention of it. And though this is the most striking example, others   
 are continually occurring throughout the Three Gospels. Why has there   
 been no mention in them of the most notable miracle wrought by our   
 Lord,—which indeed, humanly speaking, was the final exciting cause of   
 that active enmity of the Jewish rulers which issued in His crucifixion ?   
 Can it be believed, that an Apostle, writing in the fulness of his know-   
 19] b2