§ vi.J THEIR INSPIRATION. [zyrRopucTion.   
   
 would not be, under the same gracious assistance, brought back to the   
 minds of the Apostles, so that they should be placed on record for the   
 teaching of the Church ?   
 10. And, going yet further, to those parts of the Gospels which were   
 wholly out of the cycle of the Apostles’ own testimony,—can we imagine   
 that the divine discrimination which enabled them to detect the ‘lie to   
 the Holy Ghost,’ should have forsaken them in judging of the records of   
 our Lord’s birth and infancy,—so that they should have taught or sanc-   
 tioned an apocryphal, fabulous, or mythical account of such matters ?   
 Some account of them must have been current in the apostolic circle? for   
 Mary the mother of Jesus survived the Ascension, and would be fully   
 capable of giving undoubted testimony to the facts. (See notes on Luke   
 i. ti.) Can we conceive then that, with her among them, the Apostles   
 should have delivered other than a true history of these things? Can we   
 suppose that St. Luke’s account, which he includes among the things   
 delivered by those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from   
 the first, is other than the true one, and stamped with the authority of   
 the witnessing and discriminating Spirit dwelling in the Apostles? Can   
 we suppose that the account in the still more immediately apostolic   
 Gospel of St. Matthew is other than the same history seen from a   
 different side and independently narrated ?   
 11. But if it be enquired, how far such divine superintendence has   
 extended in the framing of our Gospels as we at present find them, the   
 answer must be furnished by no preconceived idea of what ought to have   
 been, but by the contents of the Gospels themselves. That those contents   
 are various, and variously arranged, is token enough that in their selec-   
 tion and disposition we have human agency presented to us, under no .   
 more direct divine guidance, in this respect, than that general leading,   
 which in main and essential points should ensure entire accordance.   
 Such leading admits of much variety in points of minor consequence.   
 Two men may be equally led by the Holy Spirit to record the events of   
 our Lord’s life for our edification, though one may believe and record   
 that the visit to the Gadarenes took place before the calling of Matthew,   
 while the other places it after that event ; though one in narrating it   
 speaks of two demoniacs,—the other, only: of one.   
 12, And it is observable, that in the only place in the Three Gospels   
 where an Evangelist speaks of himself, he expressly lays claim, not to   
 any supernatural guidance in the arrangement of his subject-matter,   
 but to a diligent’ tracing down of all things from the firet; in other   
 words, to the care and accuracy of a faithful and honest compiler. After   
 such an avowal on the part of the editor himself, to assert an immediate   
 revelation to him of the arrangement to be adopted and the chronological   
 notices to be given, is clearly not justified, according to his own shewing   
 23]