§ vu.] FORMAL HARMONIES. [INTRODUCTION.   
   
 21. If I understand plenary inspiration rightly, I hold it to the   
 utmost, as entirely consistent with the opinions expressed in this   
 section. The inspiration of the sacred writers I believe to have con-   
 sisted in the fulness of the influence of the Holy Spirit specially raising   
 them to, and enabling them for, their work,—in a manner which dis-   
 tinguishes them from all other writers in the world, and their work   
 Jrom all other works, The men were full of the Holy Ghost—the books   
 are the pouring out of that fulness through the men,—the conservation   
 of the treasure in earthen vessels. The treasure is ours, in all its rich-   
 ness: but it is ours as only it can be ours,—in the imperfections of   
 human speech, in the limitations of human thought, in the variety   
 incident first to individual character, and then to manifold transcription   
 and the lapse of ages.   
 22. Two things, in concluding this section, I would earnestly impress   
 on my readers. First, that we must take our views of inspiration not,   
 as is too often done, from & priori considerations, but ENTIRELY FROM   
 THE EVIDENCE FURNISHED BY THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES: and   
 secondly, that the MEN were INSPIRED; the BOOKS are the RESULTS OF   
 THAT INSPIRATION. This latter consideration, if all that it implies be   
 duly weighed, will furnish us with the key to the whole question.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION VII.   
   
 IMPRACTICABILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A FORMAL HARMONY OF THE   
 . THREE GOSPELS. °   
   
 1. From very early times attempts have been made to combine the   
 narratives of our Three Gospels into one continuous history. As might   
 have been expected, however, from the characteristics of those Gospels   
 above detailed, such Harmonies could not be constructed without doing   
 considerable violence to the arrangement of some one or more of the   
 three, and an arbitrary adoption of the order of some one, to which   
 then the others have been fitted and conformed. An examination of   
 any of the current Harmonies will satisfy the student that this has been   
 the case.   
 2. Now, on the supposition that the Three Gospels had arisen one out   
 of the other, with a design such as any of those which have been pre-   
 viously discussed (with the exception of ¢) in § ii. 3, such a Harmony   
 not only ought to be possible, but should arise naturally out of the   
 several narratives, without any forcing or alteration of arrangement.   
 Nay, on the supplementary theory of Greswell and others, the last   
 written Gospel should itself be such a History as the Harmonizers are   
 in search of. Now not only is this not the case, but their Harmonies   
 27)