INTRODUCTION. ] THE THREE GOSPELS. (cn. 1. § vir.   
   
 contain the most violent and considerable transpositions :—they are   
 obliged to have recourse to the most arbitrary hypotheses of repetition   
 of events and discourses,—and, after all, their Harmonies, while some   
 difficulties would be evaded by their adoption, entail upon us others   
 even more weighty and inexplicable.   
 3. Taking, however, the view of the origin of the Gospels above   
 advocated, the question of the practicability of Harmonizing is simply   
 reduced to one of matter of fact :—how far the three Evangelists, in   
 relating the events of a history which was itself one and the same, have   
 presented us with the same side ofthe narrative of those events, or with   
 fragments which will admit of being pieced into one another.   
 4, And there is no doubt that, as far as the main features of the   
 Evangelic history are concerned, a harmonious whole is presented to us   
 by the combined narrative. The great events of our Lord’s ministry,   
 His baptism, His temptation, His teaching by discourses and miracles,   
 His selection of the Twelve, His transfiguration, His announcement   
 of His sufferings, death, and resurrection, His last journey to Jeru-   
 salem, His betrayal, His passion, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection,—   
 these are common to all; and, as far as they are concerned, their narra-   
 tives naturally fall into accordance and harmony. But when we come   
 to range their texts side by side, to supply clause with clause, and   
 endeavour to construct a complete History of details out of them, we at   
 once find ourselves involved in the difficulties above enumerated. And   
 the inference which an unbiassed mind will thence draw is, that as the   
 Evangelists wrote with no such design of being pieced together into a   
 complete History, but delivered the apostolic testimony as they had   
 received it, modified by individual character and oral transmission, and   
 arranged carefully according to the best of their knowledge,—so we   
 should thus simply and reverentially receive their records, without   
 setting them at variance with each other by compelling them in all   
 cases to say the same things of the same events.   
 5. If the Evangelists have delivered to us truly and faithfully the   
 apostolic narratives, and if the Apostles spoke as the Holy Spirit   
 enabled them, and brought events and sayings to their recollection, then   
 we may be sure that ifwe knew the real process of the transactions   
 themselves, that knowledge would enable us to give an account of the   
 diversities of narration and arrangement which the Gospels now present   
 to us. But without such knowledge, all attempts to accomplish this   
 analysis in minute detail must be merely conjectural: and must tend to   
 weaken the Evangelic testimony, rather than to strengthen it.   
 6. The only genuine Harmony of the Gospels will be furnished by   
 the unity and consistency of the Christian’s belief in their record, as   
 true to the great events which it relates, and his enlightened and in-   
 telligent appreciation of the careful diligence of the Evangelists in