INTRODUCTION. ] MATTHEW’S GOSPEL. [cu. m. § v.   
   
   
   
 SECTION V.   
   
 IT8 STYLE AND CHARACTER.   
   
 1. The Gospel of Matthew is written in the same form of diction   
 which pervades the other Gospels, the Hebraistic or Hellenistic’ Greek.   
 This dialect resulted from the dispersion of the Greek language by the   
 conquests of Alexander, and more especially from the intercourse of   
 Jews with Greeks in the city of Alexandria. It is that of the LXX   
 version of the Old Testament ; of the apocryphal books ; and of the   
 writings of Philo and Josephus. In these two latter, however, it is not   
 so marked, as in versions from the Hebrew, or books aiming at a   
 Hebraistic character.   
 2. Of the three Gospels, that of Matthew presents the most complete   
 example of the Hebraistic diction and construction, with perhaps the   
 exception of the first chapter of Luke. And from what has been above   
 said respecting its design, this would naturally be the case.   
 3. The internal character of this Gospel also answers to what we   
 know of the history and time of its compilation. Its marks of chrono-   
 logical sequence are very vague, and many of them are hardly perhaps   
 to be insisted on at all. When compared with the more definite notices   
 of Mark and Luke, its order of events is sometimes superseded by theirs.   
 It was to be expected, in the earliest written accounts of matters so   
 important, that the object should rather be to record the things done,   
 and the sayings of our Lord, than the precise order in which they took   
 place.   
 4. It is in this principal duty of an Evangelist that Matthew stands   
 pre-eminent ; and especially in the report of the longer discourses of our   
 Lord. It was within the limits of his purpose in writing, to include all   
 the descriptions of the state and hopes of the citizens of the kingdom of   
 heaven which Jesus gave during his ministry. This seems to have   
 been the peculiar gift of the Spirit to him,—to recall and deliver down,   
 in their strictest verbal connexion, such discourses as the Sermon on the   
 Mount, ch. v.—vii.; the apostolic commission, ch. x.; the discourse   
 concerning John, ch. xi.; that on blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,   
 ch, xii.; the series of parables, ch. xiii.; that to the Apostles on their   
 divisions, ch. xviii. ; and in their fulness, the whole series of polemical   
 discourses and prophetic parables in ch. xxi.—xxv.   
 5. It has been my endeavour in the following Commentary, to point   
 out the close internal connexion of the longer discourses, and to combat   
 the mistake of those critics who suppose them to be no more than col-   
 lections of shorter sayings associated together from similarity of subject   
 or character.   
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