INTRODUCTION. ] LUKE’S GOSPEL. (cu. rv.   
   
   
 SECTION VIII.   
 THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE TWO FIRST CHAPTERS.   
   
   
   
 1. If the view maintained above of the probable time of the publica-   
 tion of the Gospel be adopted,—and its later terminus, the publication of   
 the Acts two years after Paul’s imprisonment at Rome began, is, I think,   
 beyond question,—I cannot see how any reasonable doubt can be thrown   
 upon the authenticity of this portion of the narrative. For there were   
 those living, who might have contradicted any false or exaggerated   
 account of our Lord’s birth and the events which accompanied it. If   
 not the Mother of our Lord herself, yet His brethren were certainly   
 living: and the universal reception of the Gospel in the very earliest   
 ages sufficiently demonstrates that no objection to this part of the sacred   
 narrative had been heard of as raised by them.   
 2. The “accurate tracing down” of Luke forbids us to imagine that   
 he would have inserted any narrative in his Gospel which he had not   
 ascertained to rest upon trustworthy testimony, as far as it was in his   
 power to ensure this: and the means of ensuring it must have been at   
 that time so ample and satisfactory, that I cannot imagine for a moment   
 any other origin for the account, than such testimony.   
 3. If we enquire what was probably the source of the testimony, I   
 answer, that but one person is conceivable as delivering it, and that   
 person the Mother of our Lord. She was living in the Christian body   
 for some time after the Ascension ; and would most certainly have been   
 appealed to for an account of the circumstances attending His birth and   
 infancy. :   
 4. If she gave any account of these things, it is inconceivable that   
 this account should not have found its way into the records of the   
 Lord’s life possessed by the Christian Church, but that instead of it   
 a spurious one should have been adopted by two of our Evangelists,   
 and that so shortly after, or even coincident with, her own presence in   
 the Church.   
 5. Just as inconceivable, even supposing the last difficulty sur-   
 mounted, is the formation of a mythical, or in any other way unreal   
 account of these things, and its adoption, in the primitive age of the   
 Church. For the establishment of this I refer to the late Professor   
 Mill’s able tract, On the Mythic Interpretation of Luke i. ;—in which   
 he has stated and severally refuted the arguments of Strauss and the   
 rationalists.   
 G. I infer then that the two first chapters of this Gospel contain   
 the account given by the Mother of our Lord, of His birth, and its   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 prefatory and attendant circumstances ; of some of which circumstances   
 48]