INTRODUCTION. ] JOHN’S GOSPEL. (cu. v.   
   
   
 very nature and purpose of the apostolic office, and with the promise   
 specially recorded that the Spirit should bring to their minds all things   
 which He had said to them, will fully account for there arising, late in   
 the apostolic age, so copious and particular a report of these inner and   
 personal discourses of our Lord.   
 9. That such a report should be characterized in some measure by the   
 individual mind which has furnished it, was to be expected, on any view   
 of spiritual guidance. But that this individuality has in any con-   
 siderable degree modified the report, I think extremely improbable.   
 Taking the cireumstances into consideration, the relation of John to his   
 divine Master, the employment and station from which he was called,   
 and the facts also which have been noticed respecting the sayings   
 reported by all in common, I think it much more probable, that the   
 character and diction of our Lord’s discourses entirely penetrated and   
 assimilated the habits of thought of His beloved Apostle; so that in his   
 first epistle he writes in the very tone and spirit of those discourses ;   
 and when reporting the sayings of his own former teacher the Baptist,   
 he gives them, consistently with the deepest inner truth of narration   
 (see note on ch. iii. 31), the forms and cadences so familiar and habitual   
 to himself.   
 10. It belongs to the present section of our subject, to enquire how far   
 it may be supposed that John had seen or used the three other Gospels.   
 I confess myself wholly unable to receive the supposition that any of   
 them, in their present form, had ever been seen by him. On such a sup-   
 position, the phenomena presented by his Gospel would be wholly inex-   
 plicable. To those parts of it which he has in common with them, the   
 reasonings of the former part of this Introduction will apply. And   
 though these are not so considerable in extent as in the case of the three   
 Gospels, yet they are quite important enough to decide this question.   
 The account and testimony of the Baptist in ch. i.;—the miraculous   
 feeding in ch. vi. ;—the whole history from ch. xii. 1, in its subject-   
 matter, will come under this description. Let any common passages be   
 selected, and tried by the considerations above advanced, ch. i. § ii—   
 and our conclusion must be that the report is an independent one, not   
 influenced or modified by theirs. Of those parts of his Gospel which are   
 peculiar to himself, I will speak in another section.   
 11. It is, however, an entirely distinct question, how far John had in   
 his view the generally-received oral teaching from which our three   
 Gospels aro derived. That he himself, answering so strictly to the   
 description in Acts i. 21,—laying so much weight as he does on tes-   
 timony, ch. i. 19; xix. 35; xxi. 24,—bore his part, and that no incon-   
 siderable one, in the Apostles’ witness to the facts of the evangelic   
 history,—I take for granted. It will follow that he was aware of the   
 general neture and contents of that cycle of narratives and discourses of   
 56]