

ARTICLE III.

NOTES ON DR. RIDDLE'S EDITION OF ROBINSON'S HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS: BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO A COMPLETE HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS.

BY THE REV. CHARLES LEAMAN, OF THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSION PRESS,
SHANGHAI, CHINA.

[Concluded from Vol. xlv. p. 465.]

THE GOSPELS ARE METHODOICAL ANNALS.

HAVING thus indicated the arrangement of a complete harmony, as compared with that of Robinson's, let us examine into the results as to the chronological order of the several narratives. Robinson remarks in his introduction to his notes: "In the arrangement of the Harmony, made solely according to the probable sequence of the events, and without assigning any preference to the order of either evangelist, this unexpected result has been brought out, namely, that the *order of both Mark and John remains everywhere undisturbed*, with the exception of four short passages in Mark and of three in John; in all of which cases the reasons for a change of order are obvious." On this the editor remarks, "The deviations from the chronological order in Mark may be reduced to *two*,"—Levi's feast and the supper at Bethany. "In John the deviations indicated above scarcely deserve the name, if the first passage [the supper at Bethany, John xii. 2-8] is in chronological position. If there was an informal trial before Annas, John xviii. 25-27 follows verse 24, and John xx. 30, 31 is merely a comment of the evangelist."

Thus the chronological character of John is complete, even to single verses that involve chronology, and that of Mark really so, as in the only *two* passages mentioned by the editor "the reasons for a change of order are obvious," and do not in the least affect the methodical and chronological character of his record.

In the arrangement of many, perhaps most, recent harmonists, Luke's narrative is found to be more chronological. In considering the chronological character of the Gospels, it is only fair to give the narratives the benefit of the more chronological arrangements. It is found in this way, as shown particularly in the arrangement given above, that the real and necessary changes which have any reference to chronology in Luke's narrative are only four, as follows: (1) Draught of Fishes, v. 1-11; (2) Levi's Feast, v. 29-39; (3) True Disciples, viii. 19-21; (4) Incidents at the Last Supper, xxii. 19-23. Of these four, (2) is the same as in Mark, and (4) can be easily understood, and is satisfactorily explained by Robinson. So, there only remain *two* passages, and in these the reasons for the changes are apparent, and are not worth naming as in any way affecting the chronological order or methodical character of Luke's narrative. All the necessary changes in Luke's record seem to be for the same general reason as that for the arrangement of Levi's feast in all the Synoptists; that is, Luke, being led on by the more general current of association in the events, either anticipates, as in Levi's feast, or returns to mention an important event which occurred earlier than the last mentioned.

If the visit to Zacchæus be accepted, as in the above arrangement, then it makes another change for the same reason just given; that is, after connecting events with the journey to Jerusalem in a general way, he returns to mention a particular and important circumstance which occurred earlier than the last mentioned. At most, then, there are but four necessary and easily accounted for breaks in the current of Luke's narrative, and, if the visit

of Zacchæus be accepted, only five passages. But Andrews says of Luke, that he cannot see "by what principle he is governed in his arrangement." And Robinson says, "The Gospels, and especially the first three, can in no sense be regarded as methodical annals." But no one, certainly, will suppose that the four, or at most five, passages mentioned above, so easily understood, affect in the least the chronological or methodical character of Luke. Therefore Luke may be placed with Mark, as practically chronological; and Luke's object to write "in order," seems abundantly verified by an impartial harmony of all the Gospels, since there are no more changes than these given which can be forced on the narrative as necessary, and of these, there are none which declare against this most methodical annal.

In Matthew there are five minor changes, which present no difficulties and, like those in Mark and Luke, do not affect the chronological or methodical character of Matthew.

(1) Matt. xxi. 17-19. The account of the fig-tree, which is given all together, at the close of the second day, in place of giving the order in time, as by Mark.

(2) xxvi. 6-13. The feast at Bethany, the same as in Mark.

(3) xxvi. 31-35. The prophecy of the dispersion of the disciples, which, as in Mark, is but read in its connection, as shown above.

(4) xxvi. 69-75. The story of the denials, which he relates all together, as the others, and so does not necessarily refer to chronology.

(5) xxvii. 3-10. The repentance of Judas, which most likely occurred in the connection given by Matthew, that is, after our Lord's condemnation before the chief priests and council, in that morning hour, when he saw Jesus about to be bound and sent to Pilate. But in the harmony it does not read so smoothly in that place, and, for the reason above, it may be conveniently left in the place given by

Robinson, if it only be understood that Matthew is chronological, and Robinson is not.

MATTHEW IV. 24-XIII. 58.

Besides these changes, the reasons for which are apparent, there is still this large portion which presents no marks of a chronological order when arranged in the harmony. This portion extends from Jesus' first circuit in Galilee, before the formal calling of the twelve (iv. 23), to the beheading of John (xiv. 1), a period of eight or ten months between Jesus' first and third circuits in Galilee, or from about the time of Matthew's call to the death of John the Baptist. In fact, it may be said it covers the important and vigorous part of Jesus' Galilean ministry.

In relating the events of this period, Matthew seems to have followed more the topical method of arrangement. Robinson says: "Matthew and Luke manifestly have sometimes not so much had regard to chronological order, as they have been guided by the principle of association; so that, in them, transactions having certain relations to each other are not seldom grouped together, though they may have happened at different times and in various places." This is true of Luke as Robinson evidently viewed his narrative and harmonized it, but it is not true of Luke at all as harmonized above, and is only true of Matthew in this passage in which he has adopted the topical method. In the use of this topical method he is controlled more by association of ideas than of time, but he always writes as one perfectly familiar with the events and their order in time and place, as an eye-witness, not fearing that he shall be called in question as to anything concerning his narrative. When he states a time he is confident, and the harmony shows that he is not contradicted by any of the others. And moreover, even in this position, his narrative becomes important in the arrangement of the harmony as to time, as most manifestly in the arrangement of Levi's feast, so that, notwithstanding that

all the Synoptists, even Matthew himself, relate it in connection with his call, yet, from Matthew's unerring account and peculiar method, we can separate it, and fix it in its chronological order, without difficulty and without a reasonable doubt (see Harmony). So it is evident that time and place have their influence on him in the association of the events, but he is chiefly influenced by the wonderful person of the Lord, and the wonderful character of his ministry during this period under consideration. As John is impressed by the divinity of Christ, and tells of God manifest in the flesh, and Mark of the gospel of the Son of God, and Luke of the wonderful Healer, so Matthew, especially in this peculiar portion, tells of Jesus' wonderful teachings and powers and the opposition to him. These seem to form the three heads of Matthew's narrative, in this portion, with the events under each, which association of ideas, place, and time, the latter probably least of all, brings to his mind.

The whole of this portion, however, is intensely natural and convincing, which is partly from the methods as showing the absolute independence of Matthew's account. But it brings about a great divergence from the others in the order of the events. Still it is not difficult to harmonize this portion with the other Gospels. Indeed, no portion of the harmony is more easy or certain than this. Matthew at points regulates the harmony, fills it out, and gives it a beauty and transparent truthfulness that is beyond comparison; and without Matthew's independent and topical method, it is hard to see how the accounts could be otherwise so naturally and effectively harmonized.

THE PROGRESS OF THIS PORTION OF THE NARRATIVE.

Then Matthew naturally introduces the Sermon on the Mount, which was addressed to the crowds thus gathered (v. 1–viii. 1, inclusive).

Then he relates the wonderful miracles which were done by our Lord, beginning after the sermon with, “And behold,”—The Healing of a Leper, The Healing of the Centurion’s Servant, The Healing of Peter’s Wife’s Mother, and many others. Jesus then crosses the lake, stills the tempest, heals the two demoniacs of Gadara, and returns to Capernaum. Then Matthew relates the healing of a paralytic, with which he mentions his own call which was associated with it, and then passes on to tell of the feast he himself gave, although much later than the call, and then, afterwards, to relate important events which occurred at the feast or were associated with it: the disciples of John come; Jesus goes with Jairus to heal his daughter; by the way he heals a woman; going from thence he heals two blind men, and a dumb man possessed with a devil. The narration of this wonderful flow of healing power (viii. 2–ix. 34) brings Matthew to our Lord’s third circuit in Galilee, after which he sent out the twelve with particular instructions (ix. 35–xi. 1).

These wonderful events are related in succession, notwithstanding they occurred at different times and various places on sea and land, yet all nearly connected with Capernaum, the centre of Jesus’ ministry. All these events from Levi’s feast on (ix. 10–xi. 1) are in their chronological order, and by relating them Matthew is brought in his narrative to the close of this period under review, to just before or about the time John was beheaded.

Having thus related our Lord’s first popularity, his wonderful sermon to the crowds gathered, and his wonderful works by sea and land, down to the close of this remarkable period, Matthew then returns to describe the effect on John in prison, when he heard of the rumors of Jesus and his mighty works in that early part of his ministry, shortly after the Sermon on the Mount. John is

depressed in spirit and sends disciples to inquire of Jesus. Then the disciples of John went their way, and our Lord began to give instructions and reflections concerning John and his ministry. He then naturally passes to reflections on his own ministry and its reception by Capernaum and the other cities, "where most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." His words probably are more of the nature of prophecy than a reflection on the apparent attitude of those cities at that time, which then no doubt was apparently favorable.

All these events and reflections about John and his own ministry (xi. 2-30) are given by Matthew in their chronological order, yet the whole passage is inserted by him after the sending of the twelve, when the harmony shows, as regulated by Luke's record, that the whole passage belongs to the earlier part of the Galilean ministry.

Having thus given the effect on John in prison and Jesus' reflections in connection with it, Matthew continues his narrative by relating the effect on the Jews and the great and persistent opposition our Lord met from the Pharisees and his own countrymen. And first, in regard to the Sabbath observance on various Sabbath days (xii. 1-21). And afterwards, against the very spirit of Jesus' work (xii. 22-37), when also they seek a sign (xii. 38-45). Matthew gathers up these incidents from this period of our Lord's ministry, and relates them with the rebukes from our Lord to the several parties; and while still contending with the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus' own mother and brethren come, probably trembling for his mental state and the danger his life was in (xii. 46-50).

Matthew then, after giving the wonderful piece of instruction derived from the incident of Jesus' mother and brethren coming, then introduces the wonderful parables which our Lord spake "on that day" (xiii. 1-53). He then adds still another effect of our Lord's ministry on his own countrymen, and their second remarkable rejection of him, which occurred just before the third circuit, at

the close of this period Matthew is recording. This method of narration brings him now again, the second time, to the close of the period, and ends all he has to say about it. He tells the story after the manner of a man in full possession of the facts as an eye-witness, and in a natural and easy way; and while, from the force of personal knowledge of the facts, he follows partly the chronological order, and is influenced also by associations of time and place, yet only so far as to secure a general topical arrangement, which (see analysis below) is most prominent, and controls the whole progress of the record during this period.

The progress of the narrative is easily understood when it is remembered that Matthew, as an eye-witness, a man acquainted with the world, "a publican," is giving an independent account of the ministry of our Lord as it most powerfully affected him, and that in this account he gives in detail the diabolical opposition of the Jews, together with the skilful replies of Christ, bringing into relief the turn which these transactions gave to our Lord's ministry, from the call of Matthew himself to the death of John.

ANALYSIS OF THIS PECULIAR PORTION OF MATTHEW.

A more particular analysis of Matthew's record of this period would be as follows:—

The Galilean Ministry from the First to the Third Circuit.

First. The wonderful preaching.

(1) The Sermon on the Mount to the multitude gathered from all quarters on the first burst of his manifested glory.

iv. 24—viii. 1.

(2) The wonderful parables to the multitudes who came to him by the sea. xiii. 1—53.

(3) The third circuit, wonderful compassion for the multitudes, and organized work of preaching, and sending of the twelve.

ix. 35—xi. 1.

Second. The mighty works by sea and land on the living and the dead. viii. 2-ix. 34.

Third. The effects of this wonderful ministry of powers.

(1) On John in prison, and the accompanying reflections. xi. 2-19.

(2) On the cities where most of his mighty works were done, and the accompanying reflections. xi. 20-30.

(3) On the Pharisees and scribes.

(a) In regard to the Sabbath. xii. 1-21.

(b) In regard to the spirit of his work. xii. 22-37.

(c) In regard to the signs of his work. xii. 38-45.

(4) On his mother and his brethren. xii. 46-50.

(5) On his own countrymen. xiii. 54-58.

And it might be added that Matthew continues his narrative from this point, and relates the results in John's case, which is a prophecy of the end in our Lord's case. In consequence of which our Lord does not go up to the Passover A. D. 29, which occurred about or shortly after this time, and the remainder of his ministry in Galilee to the feast of Tabernacles is more retired and cautious.

This portion of Matthew (iv. 24-xiii. 58) is the only real unchronological portion, worth a serious consideration, in any of the four Gospels, and this is far from being unmethodical, and it is far from being difficult to understand on what principle he has written this portion. On the contrary although not chronological, yet this may be said to be precisely the most methodical portion of all the records, and to demand especially in its order our careful and devout attention. For without a clear understanding of his method of writing, as clearly shown by the harmony, a correct understanding of our Lord's life cannot be had, and the full force of the testimony of the four

Gospels in the harmony, especially of the' peculiarly convincing character of Matthew's record, cannot be adequately understood.

THE RESULTS.

Since, after the Gospels have been carefully and impartially harmonized, John is found to be unquestionably chronological; Mark, in all but two easily understood passages; Luke, with but five exceptions at most, which, like the two in Mark, do not affect the general chronological or methodical character of his narrative; while Matthew needs no change of importance except in that large portion just considered, which is shown to be peculiarly methodical, and is easily understood, and with certainty harmonized;—it remains to ask, How has so satisfactory and complete a result been reached, and what principles governing the harmony does it establish?

The most natural and simple method of harmonizing, and the one which largely governed the early harmonists, was the simple task of putting together passages from each that had verbal correspondence, and very early this caused interpolations into the Gospel text. This simple method has had to give place in these last days, as in everything else, to the more scientific and impartial examination of the subject, even though the results when faithfully obtained, on account of the peculiar character of the Gospels, may not be materially different in either method, and in some points the later results may not be so satisfactory as the older.

There can be no question but that Robinson worked on the scientific method, sufficiently guarded only by his devoted spirit, and sincere conviction that the Gospels are

of a true and reliable harmonizer. He says: "Yet, as there are no marks nor evidence, internal or external, by which to arrange them differently, it seems hardly advisable, on mere conjecture, to abandon the order in which they have been left us by Luke himself." Robinson, being governed by this main principle, in arriving at a true harmony, was led to, and has left us, a result, which the editor in the revision has rightly, if not too greatly, revered, of which he justly says: "His main positions are retained, because they are still unshaken." But Robinson's arrangement would have been more satisfactory if he had strictly carried out this excellent rule which he lays down, and had had more regard for the chronology of Luke. For of a large portion of Luke's peculiar passage, he says it "contains absolutely no definite narration of time or place, nor anything, indeed, to show that the events happened in the order recorded, or that they did not take place at different times and in different parts of the country." Hence he proceeds to make a probable order for the events in Luke, because they are not so written as to make it impossible to change his order. But the evident tendency of the later harmonists is to regard Luke's order and Matthew's also, as well as Mark's and John's. So that now the time seems to have arrived when the following principles controlling a complete harmony of the Gospels can be set forth.

And, first, it may be remarked that, in order to a proper and complete harmony, the best revised text is most desirable. Says Dr. Riddle: "The tendency to harmonize has introduced many minor corruptions into the Greek text; happily we now have sufficient authorities to remove them. The Revised Version has this as its crowning merit, that it presents better than any other known version the coincidences and divergences of the Gospel nar-

For the harmonizing of the Gospels with such a text, either in the Greek or English, the following rules should be observed:—

THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED.

(1) The current of any of the narratives cannot be interrupted arbitrarily, on the caprice of the critic, or by his endeavor to accommodate the given order of any of the Gospels to his peculiar theory. As self-evident as this seems to be, and as well known as it is, yet, in view of the common forgetfulness of it in all departments of criticism, as well as in this, it is necessary to call attention to it.

(2) The current of any of the narratives cannot be interrupted by any supposed exegetical tact or critical acumen of the student. However excellent and valuable that may be, yet of itself it cannot be allowed to weigh against any single one of the narratives. This, again, might be thought by some too commonplace and well understood to mention; yet it is a fruitful source of error, even in this simple matter of harmonizing the Gospels; and in these times it needs especially to be emphasized, when critics are disposed to exalt themselves above all that is called the word of God, or is inspired. Moreover, it is not supposable, nor is it true, that, by any amount of exegesis or criticism at this late date, a familiarity with the events of our Lord's life and the order of their course can be attained, at all comparable with that of any one of the evangelists who have left us these records, after having carefully traced out all things from the first, in the full glow of the apostolic age, in full communion with all those who were eye-witnesses of all that our Lord spake and did.

(3) Nor can taste, judgment, or conjecture, of itself or from any extra-Gospel testimony, interfere with or supersede the arrangement of any of the inspired records.

Of the Gospels, Dr. Robinson remarks: "There is often in them no definite note of time; and then we can pro-

ceed only upon conjecture, founded on a careful comparison of all the circumstances. In such cases, the decision must depend very much upon the judgment and taste of the harmonist; and what to one person may appear probable and appropriate may seem less so to another." This use of taste and judgment is all well, if confined to a careful comparison of all the circumstances given in the several Gospels, and not allowed to interfere with the flow of any or all of the narratives. But if it is meant that taste and judgment are to be devoted to the vivisection of any one or all of the narratives, and the rearrangement of them in any supposed new chronological order, then no doubt the best taste and judgment is to defer to and accept the taste and judgment of the evangelists.

Taste and judgment may be used in those places where there is no testimony from the narratives themselves to determine it, and when they do not interfere with the order of any of the narratives. Such questions as: the departures to and from Galilee; the adjustment of the apparent divisions in Luke's peculiar portion with the distinct notices of time in John; the determining of the place in John where the festival of Tabernacles closes and Dedication begins; the place in John for the institution of the Supper; and the appearances of the Lord to the women,—these may allow conflicting judgments among judicious students and readers, and so a choice between the several results is allowable, in these and all similar cases, "and what to one person may seem probable and appropriate may seem less so to another."

But in all these, and in every case, strict regard must be had for the order of the several records, and in no case can they be interfered with simply from taste or judgment. To proceed to dismember any one of the narratives

the order in which they are recorded by all or any one of the evangelists is in general *sufficient* and *decisive* in regard to the question whether the events occurred in that order. In all cases it is believed that the best and most probable result is secured by following strictly the given order of the several narratives, and in this way the most general, if not the universally accepted, arrangement will be reached. The cases are few where the decision must be left to taste, judgment, and conjecture, and where they occur, although positive statements may be impossible, yet even in these instances, we think, in the most part, they can be adjusted so as to give general, and in some cases universal satisfaction, and so a practical solution be obtained.

(4) In no case, therefore, can results be accepted, that arise from caprice, exegetical tact, critical acumen, taste, judgment, or conjecture, simply for their own force or excellence, nor, unless founded on a careful and judicious comparison of all the circumstances and suggestions in each and all the records, made in strict loyalty to the chronological and methodical character of each and all the Gospels.

(5) It may now be set forth, as established, that where John's record testifies to the chronological position of an event, no testimony from the Synoptists, or otherwise, can supersede it. This now seems to be established beyond reasonable question, and it is of great importance in settling various questions in the harmony; as, the chronological order of the feast at Bethany, the episodes in Peter's denials, and the whole of the trial, indeed, in that early morning. John's whole record is a certain guide to the chronology of the harmony, and even his omissions help largely to determine vexed questions,—as his omission of quite all of the formal, and vigorous, and long Galilean ministry fixes that ministry, with but little doubt, between the end of chapter five and chapter seven verse 2.

(6) A direct chronological notice in any of the four

records is sufficient to fix the order of the harmony; as, the single notice of Matthew is sufficient to fix the order of Levi's feast, against not only the order of his own record, but that of the other two Synoptists.

(7) None of the Synoptists are to be considered of superior authority, but each alike must be followed implicitly, when he definitely states a point of chronology. Matthew and Luke are no less reliable than Mark or John when they make a specific statement in regard to time, place, or the order of an event. Of Luke, Dr. Riddle remarks, that, "among New Testament writers, he is most exact in his use of verbs referring to travelling." Matthew's narrative of the Galilean ministry is peculiar to himself, but in all his record there is none of the Gospels more reliable when he makes a specific statement in regard to the time or order of an event.

(8) Each of the four records is a reliable and independent witness, and, as such, is to be faithfully and implicitly followed in every specific statement; plain suggestion, and good and necessary inference, in regard to the chronological order of the events, as well as in other respects. This may the more implicitly be followed, as now, even at this late date, after all the discussions of centuries, no instance can be found in all the harmony where they can be shown to contradict each other. Even the feast at Bethany and the visit to Zacchæus are only apparently inconsistent to the careless reader; but that these instances only show independence, and thus increase the confidence to be placed in the several accounts, and exhibit the safety of faithfully following them, we have seen above.

There must be a thorough confidence in the reliability and independence of the several records in regard to the

the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the apostles whom he had chosen."

(9) It may be laid down, therefore, as a rule for harmonizing the four records, that the suggestions must be followed which arise from taking the several narratives in their natural sense. This rule, simple, self-evident, and primitive as it may seem, yet needs to be emphasized and borne in mind throughout the harmony. But especially is it of importance in deciding upon those less clear suggestions to chronological order in the departure to and from Galilee, the sending of the seventy and their return, the various trials in that early morning, with the accompanying denials of Peter, and also the appearances to the women. For the correct solution of these, and such like questions, there must be a quick sensitiveness to the every suggestion of each and all the narratives, taken in their natural sense, as appealing to the common understanding of men, as being independent and reliable witnesses of chronology and order, as well as all else to which they testify.

(10) It may therefore, from all the above, be laid down as a positive and binding rule on all harmonists, throughout all the harmony, that without a positive statement, or good and reliable inference from the records themselves, no extra-Gospel testimony, however ancient or excellent, can be allowed to interfere, in the least, with the current of any of the narratives; but each and all the records, unless changed from their own evidence, must remain in the harmony in the order in which they have been left us by the inspired evangelists. This binding rule is a necessary consequence from the principle of change in the order of any of the records laid down by Dr. Robinson when he says, "As there are no marks nor evidence, internal or external, by which to arrange them differently, it seems hardly advisable, on mere conjecture, to abandon the order in which they have been left to us by Luke himself."

This principle is not only true of Luke, but of all the Gospels, and, moreover, it is not only true when the change is "on mere conjecture," but when for any reason not founded on one or more of the Gospels themselves. It is true there is no necessity to require that the inspired records of our Lord's life must be in the chronological order, and, as we have seen, a large portion in Matthew is not. But what is meant here by leaving the narratives undisturbed, and having implicit confidence in the chronological independence and methodical character of each, is, that now a thorough examination of the several accounts in their chronological relation to each other reveals the patent fact, which is attested by the growing consensus of judicious harmonists, and is shown in the revised edition of Robinson's *Harmony*, that the inspired records of our Lord's life are substantially chronological, except this single passage of nine chapters in Matthew; and even this portion, without aiming to be chronological, is yet methodical, and none of the evangelists are more reliable in their specific statements as to order of time and place.

This rule, moreover, strictly observed, will fix most, if not all, of the vexed questions of the harmony; such as, the departure to and from Galilee, the sending and return of the seventy, the order of the events from Bethany to the tomb, and also the appearances to the women. And although it may not fix in all cases the order of arrangement so as to justify positive statements, yet it will secure an arrangement that is at least most probable and satisfactory, because honoring the inspired records, in preserving

ferent from the order in which it is given by the three records; and no amount of testimony, however excellent, could be allowed to change it, if not for the unmistakable testimony of the Synoptists themselves. The whole of this peculiar and important portion of Matthew shows, again, how necessary it is to observe this rule. For while this whole portion of nine chapters is unchronological, yet, if without the certain testimony of the Gospels themselves a single section could not be dislocated, so clear is their testimony, that it is dislocated and readjusted with the greatest ease and certainty. The visit to Zacchæus, as changed above, likewise could not be transposed unless attested by various plain and good testimonies from the Synoptists themselves. So that, while Luke is the only one that records the incident, yet from certain good and forcible considerations from the narratives themselves, it seems a good and necessary change in a complete harmony, and is a transposition by no means difficult or impossible to understand. Yet without some good and certain Gospel testimony, it would have to remain in the order in which it has been left us, even if it *apparently* contradicted one or more of the other records. In the whole of Luke's peculiar portion it is necessary to keep in mind this important rule. For as soon as it is admitted, as by Robinson, that Luke is without order or method, and may be changed at will, then there is no end to the possible arrangements according to the skill of the manipulator.

The whole number of transpositions in the harmony that have reference to chronology, as given above, besides the large portion in Matthew, are but twelve, and all of these are established by the direct testimony of the Gospels, without the least room for extra-Gospel authority; and, as no other changes than these given are necessary, or by any judicious judgment can be forced on the Gospels, it seems quite certain that there is now no other so safe rule to guide us to the most probable and satisfactory results in the harmonization of the Gospels into their most chronological order.

Dr. Robinson's aim was not entirely to reach the chronological order. He says: "It is the aim of the present work, not so much to ascertain and exhibit the true chronological order (although this object is not neglected) as to place side by side the different narratives of the same events, in an order which may be regarded as at least a probable one." And, moreover, he considered it "perhaps impossible to arrive at results which shall be entirely certain and satisfactory." But while certainty in all points may not be secured, yet by observing the suggestions of Robinson himself, and building on the main points which he has established, and which are quite generally accepted, and with sincere confidence in the chronological and methodical character of the several records, which he and others seem somewhat to lack, especially in regard to Luke, and with the observance of the principles controlling the arrangement of the harmony, now quite certainly established, as given above, we may not only attain to an accurate and complete harmony, but even produce a consensus among harmonists that will be practically unanimous in the arrangement of the harmony, and generally, if not completely, satisfactory to all students and readers who are interested in that important result.

It remains only to remark, that the idea of a harmony giving such a result, as it is hoped is established above to be within our reach,—and with which agree in the most part many—perhaps most—of the recent harmonists, suggests several observations which need only mention.

(1) That the narratives are independent, there can certainly be but little doubt, even to the careful English reader. There can be no question of this from even a careless glance at the harmony as to John, and as to Matthew from this large and important account of our Lord's Galilean ministry, and as to Luke from his large and import-

same events of the life and works of our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as he dwelt among the children of men.

(2) The results reached in such a harmony show unmistakably to any careful reader of it, that this history came out of the full glow and midst of the apostolic period. By no stretch of imagination can any one who has the least acquaintance with the history of the early church honestly suppose that such a result could be attained in any one of the accounts, much less as shown in the harmony of the four, after the death of John. Says Riddle, "The age was one when memory was cultivated, the Jews being remarkably retentive of verbal forms. The first disciples would especially treasure up with reverence the words of our Lord." But who can suppose that, beyond the "first disciples," four accounts could be written that would in no point contradict each other, or even that one account should be free from inconsistencies? And, moreover, that their harmony, revealing both their independence and their perfect agreement in practically every point, shows that all four records, and each, are the bubbling up and overflow from the very bosom of the apostolic life and influence, there can be no serious question to any who consider the results of the harmony.

(3) To this, it may be added, the harmony when read in the full force of the light that it suggests, presents the life of our Lord in a roundness and fulness and a transparent truthfulness that supersedes all lives of Christ, as the sun does the moon, and overcomes all attacks against his life-work and divinity, as easily as his own words overcome and surpass all that has ever been spoken or written by the sons of men.

(4) The Gospels harmonized thus, discover a miracle of biography, which can be accounted for, in its completeness and smoothness, only by the fulfilment of the promise and prophecy of our Lord on the same night in which he was betrayed: "He [the Spirit] shall bring to your re-

membrance all that I said unto you." It is a miracle only surpassed by the miracle of the person it records.

(5) In the whole no contradiction can be made out, and there is not even a slip of the pen by any one of them. And even if there were a hundred times as many variances and difficulties, we still might, without the shadow of a doubt, accept the Gospels for the person of the God-man they contain.