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- ART. I.—1. *Synopsis Evangelica. Ex quatuor Evangeliiis ordine chronologico concinnavit, prætexto brevi commentario illustravit, ad antiquos testes apposito apparatu critico recensuit Constantinus Tischendorf.* Lipsiæ, 1851. 8vo.
2. *Synopsis Evangeliorum Matthæi, Marci, Lucæ, cum locis qui supersunt parallelis litterarum et traditionum evangelicarum Irenæo antiquiorum. Ad Griesbachii Ordinem concinnavit, prolegomena, selectam Scripturæ varietatem, notas, indices adjecit Rudolphus Anger, Phil. et Theol. Doctor, utriusque in Acad. Lips. Professor, etc.* Lipsiæ, 1852. 8vo.
3. *A new Greek Harmony of the Four Gospels, comprising a Synopsis and a Diatessaron, together with an Introductory Treatise, and numerous tables, indexes, and diagrams, supplying the necessary proofs and explanations.* By William Stroud, M. D. London, 1853. 4to.
4. *A New Harmony and Exposition of the Gospels, consisting of a parallel and combined arrangement on a new plan, &c.* By James Strong, A. M. New York, 1852. 8vo.
5. *A Harmony of the Gospels in the Greek of the Received Text, on the plan of the author's English Harmony, with the most important various readings, &c.* By James Strong, A. M. 1854. 12mo.
6. *The Four Witnesses: being a Harmony of the Gospels on a new principle.* By Dr. Isaac Da Costa, of Amsterdam. Translated by David Dundas Scott, Esq. New York, 1855. 8vo.

THERE is something strange in the unwearied constancy with which the Church, in every age, has wrought at the great

problem of harmonizing the Gospels. While no one Harmony retains its hold upon the public mind for many generations, there is never wanting one or more possessing such an influence. To each successive age the subject seems as fresh as ever; and to some of the best cultivated minds of each, the theme is still attractive. A mere glance at the immense amount of mental labour thus expended, not only by the Tatians and Augustines, the Calvins and Osianders, the Chemnitzes and Lightfoots, the Macknights and Newcomes, but by multitudes of later or lesser lights in harmonistic learning, is sufficient to make two impressions, which, at first sight, may seem contradictory, but which are really two aspects of the same thing. One is the grand and comforting impression of the Church's strong faith in the absolute consistency of these divine records. The other is the less agreeable impression of continued failure in one specific object usually aimed at, namely, the reduction of these four books to a single narrative, with anything like certainty as to the precise order of minute details. The fact of failure is apparent from the endless diversity of the results, all reached *secundum artem*, and all held with equal confidence. Nothing of the same kind can exceed the complacency with which each harmonist regards his own arrangement as the true one, even when it differs by a year, or two years, from the corresponding dicta of his predecessor. The reason why this vast disparity and endless contradiction need not shake the faith or trouble the composure of the mere reader or spectator, is that he can often see, from his position as such, what the harmonists themselves are blind to, namely, that one grand result of all their labours is to make it highly probable, if not to prove, that these four books were never meant to be reduced to one, but to remain for ever side by side, as four great pictures of the same great object, by four heavenly artists, with something of course common to them all, but with something peculiar to each, and no more admitting of amalgamation, than so many literal paintings upon canvas can be made more perfect by being cut to pieces and then glued together. If the mere identity of subject and of ultimate design can never make this process rational in painting, no more can the same cause have that effect in history. Every complete intellectual pro

duct has its individuality, which dies by the intrusion of a foreign element, however homogeneous and congenial it may seem. Even the oldest garment may be spoiled by patching with the newest cloth. It is this that has made paraphrase, as usually understood, to the great majority of readers, an unsatisfying mode of exposition.

But even in the case of two or more inspired writings, amalgamation is forbidden by a double law, intellectual and moral; as being inconsistent with the unity, which is essential to the effect of every rational, coherent composition; and also with the paramount authority, which gave us these books just as they are, and chose to make them four, when it might as easily have made them one. This may be misconceived as an objection to all meddling with the text of Scripture, in the way of illustration and interpretation; but the two things are entirely distinct. Let every lawful process of investigation and of exhibition be applied to Scripture; but let the Scripture itself alone. Let the Gospels be compared and explained *ad libitum*; but let them not be displaced and supplanted by another. Let each produce exactly the impression which it is intended and adapted to produce, not only by its substance, but its form, not only by its detached contents, but by their combination. We may not be able to detect or analyze the specific operation of these causes; but all reason and analogy conspire to prove that they exist and act, and that their action must be interrupted and perverted by joining together that which God has put asunder. What then, it may be asked, is the use of all this harmonistic labour, from the second to the nineteenth century? We answer, much every way—or rather, every way but one—and that the very one on which the heart of the harmonical interpreter is often set—the undesirable, impracticable, and chimerical reduction of these four inestimable gems to one bright but artificial compound. The true use of Harmonies is threefold, Exegetical, Historical, Apologetical. By mere juxtaposition, if judicious, the Gospels may be made to throw light upon each other's obscure places. By combination, not mechanical but rational, not textual but interpretative, harmonies put it in our power, not to grind, or melt, or boil four Gospels into one, but out of the four, kept apart, yet viewed together,

to extract one history for ourselves. And lastly, by the endless demonstration of the possible solutions of apparent or alleged discrepancies, even where we may not be prepared to choose among them, they reduce the general charge of falsehood or of contradiction, not only *ad absurdum*, but to a palpable impossibility. How *can* four independent narratives be false or contradictory, which it is possible to reconcile on so many distinct hypotheses? The art of the most subtle infidelity consists in hiding this convincing argument behind the alleged necessity of either giving a conclusive and exclusive answer to all captious cavils and apparent disagreements, or abandoning our faith in the history as a whole. This most important end of Gospel Harmonies has been accomplished. It has been established, beyond all reasonable doubt, that however the evangelists may differ, and however hard it may be often to explain the difference, they never, in a single instance, contradict each other. This is a grand result, well worthy of the toil bestowed upon it by Fathers and Reformers and Divines for eighteen hundred years; while, on the other hand, the minute chronology, which some of these have viewed as the great object to be aimed at, is as far from its complete solution now as in the days of Tatian or Augustine; so that the inquirer may still say to the most able harmonists, with one of Terence's dramatic characters: *Fecistis probe, incertior sum multo quam dudum!*

But why is this failure not to be regarded as a great loss and damage to the cause of truth? For the simple reason, to which many great men in this field of labour have been strangely blind, that EXACT CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO THE TRUTH OF HISTORY. { All history, indeed, as the science of events, and therefore implying change, must have a definite relation to time, and must, therefore, to a certain extent, be chronological. But this extent is far less than is commonly supposed, by such harmonists as Townsend, who appear to think the Life of Christ worth nothing, till the absolute or relative chronology of every minute fact is settled, and the characteristics of the several Evangelists confounded in one uninspired narrative, without defined character at all; or by such as Osiander, who chose rather to believe that some of Christ's

most unique acts were twice performed without the slightest difference of circumstances, than to admit that either of the four Evangelists had ever departed from the order of time. It is astonishing that an assumption so gratuitous, so groundless, so directly contradictory to ordinary usage, and to the general analogy of Scripture, should have been so obstinately cherished, in relation to this matter, even by some who never thought of applying it to any other. No one can deny that in the historical books of the Old Testament, events are often brought together on account of some affinity between them, or of their common relation to the author's purpose, without detracting in the least from the historical character or credit of the record. If the books of Kings and Chronicles go through with one reign, and then back to the commencement of another partially contemporaneous, why may not the Gospels do the same? If the best biographers of Washington and Bonaparte can treat their private, military, and administrative history *seriatim*, or alternately, without inaccuracy or confusion; if Mr. Prescott, in his *Life of Philip the Second*, can deliberately and avowedly depart from the precise order of events, so far as to treat kindred portions of the history together, not only without damage, but with great advantage to his ultimate design; why may not the four Evangelists have followed the same method, so far as to have rendered the precise determination of minute dates, and even the precise succession of minute events, not only needless but impossible? If each of the four Gospels makes precisely the impression which its writer and the Holy Spirit had in view; if all the facts designed to be perpetuated are on record, and exactly in the shape and in the order predetermined by infallible authority; if the great phases and conjunctures of the history succeed each other in an order not to be mistaken; why should I care to know which of two parables was first uttered, or which of two miracles was first wrought? If their chronological relation is explicitly recorded, or distinctly ascertainable by inference and combination, so much the better; but such cases are not here in question. If it is not so recorded or so ascertainable, why should I spend my life in reasoning or guessing to discover what, if known, however interesting or worth knowing it might be, would probably add nothing to the strength of

my impressions or the clearness of my views, and what can certainly not be essential to the end for which the history was written, or it would have been written too? These views may no doubt be perverted and abused to the exclusion of legitimate and even necessary efforts to discover what is really contained in the inspired record, although not exposed upon the surface; and the Gospel History abounds in such scarcely hidden treasures, little suspected by the superficial or the supercilious reader. Between such investigation and the vain search for minutiae of time and order, which are neither needful nor attainable, it may be sometimes hard to draw the line; but that only makes it the more necessary that it should be drawn, and that no *nugæ difficiles* should usurp the place of genuine interpretation.

These few considerations may suffice to show, that the failure of harmonical interpretation to demonstrate the precise chronological succession of the detailed facts recorded in the Gospels, detracts nothing from their credit or historical trustworthiness, nor from the value of the great negative conclusion, reached by these laborious inquirers, often as unconsciously and undesignedly as some of the old alchemists contributed to physical discoveries of later times, although they died without possession of their long sought elixir and philosopher's stone. As men of science now look back upon the toils and speculations of a Raymond Lull and a Paracelsus, so may the biblical interpreter look back upon the labours of that class of harmonists, to whom we now refer, with gratitude for what they have accomplished in the vindication and elucidation of these precious books, but with complete indifference to their speculations and their strifes about those *minima*, of which it may be said in reference to the law that should control all criticism and interpretation, *de minimis non curat lex*.

But besides these reasons for not overrating the importance of this favourite harmonic problem—the determination of the precise order in which every minute incident took place—there are positive objections of the gravest kind against the more presumptuous attempt to substitute a single compound narrative for the four distinct ones in the Canon, not merely in the way of comment, but in that of reconstruction, an error into

which few harmonists of the higher rank have fallen, but which is nevertheless so common, that the arguments against it, though already hinted at, may not without some good effect be more distinctly stated,

The first objection to this practice is, that it assumes some imperfection in the word of God; as if the work of revelation had been done only in part, and needed now to be completed; as if the four Evangelists had only left materials in a crude state, to be afterwards digested and reduced to shape by human skill and wisdom. This, though never openly avowed, and seldom consciously admitted, is really involved in every harmonistic scheme which undertakes to substitute a composite narrative of its own for the four canonical Gospels. By a composite narrative, we do not mean a paraphrase, exhibiting the substance of the four accounts in other language, but a combination of their very words into a new texture, different from any one of the Gospels, but purporting to contain them all. If this is not supposed to be a better and more perfect shape than that of the four Gospels, why attempt it? If intended merely to interpret or illustrate, why not do it by reference to the parallels, or by simple juxtaposition? Why such extreme care to retain the *ipsissima verba* of the sacred writers, and even to gather up the fragments wasted by this sacrilegious process, and preserve them in the margin? All this shows it to be not interpretation, but re-construction; not the elucidation of an old text, but the manufacture of a new one, and as such, implying that the work of the Evangelists is only half done, and requires to be finished, in order to accomplish its design. Besides the fallacy which lies at the foundation of this undertaking, in relation to what constitutes a true and perfect history, it tends necessarily to undermine the reader's reverence and faith in the completeness of the record, which the Holy Ghost has given, of the life of Christ.

Again, as history, from its very nature, is eclectic; and as every historian, inspired or uninspired, must choose his own materials; and as every intelligent historian is guided in his choice by a regard to the object that he has in view; it follows of necessity, that his omissions and exclusions are as much a part of his design, as his insertions; and that I have no more

every
historian
chooses

right to put in what he has left out, than to erase what he has written; nay, that I cannot do so in the one case, any more than in the other, without thwarting his purpose and disturbing the impression which his composition was intended to produce. And if this is a wrong to any book whatever—if Boswell's Johnson has been spoiled by Croker as an intellectual production, though enriched as a mere magazine of facts*—how doubly inadmissible is such a course in reference to writings which are owned and really believed to be inspired, by the very men who thus presume to mangle them! For it is worthy of remark that this mistaken theory and practice are confined, almost exclusively, to pious writers, of the American or English school. If Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, directed by the Holy Spirit, have selected each a certain number of particulars belonging to the Life of Christ, arranged them in a certain order, and wrought them up into a certain shape, it must have been with a design to make a definite impression, perhaps inscrutable by any critical analysis, but not on that account less real, less important, or less sacred. And yet this impression must be greatly marred, if not destroyed, by the adoption of the current fallacy, that the four Evangelists were not inspired to write histories, but only to collect materials for Mr. Townsend or for Dr. Stroud.

The last objection we shall make to this pernicious mode of fusing or amalgamating, under the pretence of harmonizing, four complete productions, both divine and human, just as if they were mere fragments or bundles of anecdotes, is, that it hinders and embarrasses interpretation, by depriving the interpreter of that inestimable aid which he derives from a continued context. A collection of inscriptions—such as that which the French government has gathered from the graveyards of Numidia and Mauritania, and is now publishing in lordly style†—is harder to interpret, as a whole, than the hardest

* The Quarterly Review has very recently (January, 1856,) declared this work to be the best edited in the language, which, so far as illustrations and additions are concerned, may be true, but not in reference to the treatment of the text, and of the composition as a whole.

† *Inscriptions Romaines de l'Algérie, recueillies et publiées sous les auspices de S. Exc. M. Hippolyte Fortout, Ministre de l'Instruction Publique et des Cultes.* Par M. Leon Renier. Paris, 1855—56. folio.

ancient book ; the book of Proverbs is more puzzling than the book of Psalms, the Psalms more puzzling even than the Prophecies, and all for the same reason, though in different degrees, that at least half the light, which an interpreter enjoys, is shed directly or reflected from the context, and that this is reduced to a *minus* in the lyric, and to a *minimum* in the aphoristic and the lapidary style. It matters little whether we can see the *nexus* in a chapter of John or not; however incoherent it may seem, we know that it is just as he composed it, and we therefore look with some degree of confidence to the surroundings of a passage for assistance in decyphering its meaning. But we cannot feel such faith in the artificial context which the harmonist has thrust in, like a wooden leg, among the mangled limbs of the Evangelists. He may have hit upon the true chronology, but he may not; and if he has, it may be at the cost of the original connection, and of the associations in the writer's mind from which it sprang at first, and of which it is still the living intellectual expression. This loss can never be made good by any possible amount of chronological precision, even though it should exceed that of an almanac.

Before concluding these remarks, we wish to say a word upon an opposite extreme, which has sometimes been engendered by reaction from the one that we have just described. We mean the flippant and contemptuous ignoring of all harmonizing methods, where there seems to be a discrepancy on the surface, and treating them not only as inadequate, and even silly, but as unmanly and dishonest. To those who are at all familiar with the history and literature of the subject, there is something quite amusing in the air with which some recent and by no means first-rate writers, try to put out of existence, by a peevish exclamation or a wave of the hand, problems and methods of solution, which have been deemed worthy of profound thought and laborious exertion, not merely now and then, or here and there, but by many of the great minds of the Christian Church, in every country and in every age.*

* Such views are less surprising on the part of German skeptics, who have no experience in the practical comparison and estimate of evidence, than in American or English Christians who have ever heard a witness cross-examined, or a complicated case summed up.

At all events, this habit of insisting upon cutting, and often with a dull knife, knots which so many strong and skilful fingers have been trying for ages to untie, ought to come, if it comes at all, from those who have acquired the right of speaking *ex cathedra*, and when urged by others, is as little entitled to consideration as the simple faith which it affects to pity, or the honest but mistaken means employed to gain an end, which it dogmatically sets aside as wholly unattainable.*

Abjuring, as we do, both these extremes; believing that the Gospels can and must be harmonized, without destroying their unity and individuality; and knowing that the product of such studies includes wheat as well as chaff; we cheerfully resume the account of contemporary harmonistic literature, which we began more than seven years ago. In the number of this journal for October, 1848, besides stating in another form some of the same views which we have now presented, and enumerating several recent German publications on the Gospel History, we recommended Dr. Robinson's Harmony as, on the whole, the best with which we were acquainted, and at the same time, as the cheapest and most readily accessible to ministers and students in this country. Repeated re-examinations of the subject, and of many later works respecting it, have only deepened our conviction, that for judgment, accuracy, caution, and exemption from vagaries and extremes, this fruit of native scholarship is still unsurpassed by any rival, foreign or indigenous. We can say this in consistency with what we have already said as to the failure of all efforts to determine the minute chronology or *ἀπολογία* of our Saviour's life; because Dr. Robinson's conclusions are collectively as probable as any others; and because, apart from this vexed question, the merits of his work enable it to stand a comparison with any that have followed it, to some of which we now ask the attention of our readers.

The works which we have chosen for this purpose may be said to represent four countries, two being natives of Germany, one of Holland, one of England, and two (by the same author)

* This fault is chargeable, in some degree, on Alford's Greek Testament (vol. 1. London, 1849,) a useful addition to our English *apparatus biblicus*, though encumbered with a vain parade of textual criticism, and often showing signs of "cramming" rather than digestion.

of America. One of the German works is by a writer, who acquired considerable reputation more than twenty years ago, by a Latin treatise on the Chronology of Acts,* which was regarded as a sort of standard until superseded and eclipsed by Wieseler.† The peculiar feature of his synopsis is not the arrangement of the text, in which he follows Griesbach, but the exhibition, in a lower margin, of quotations, references, parallels, and traditional addenda, from the Fathers of an older date than Irenæus. This description will suffice to show, that the labours of the editor, however learned, and however valuable they may be, belong rather to patristic than to harmonistic literature. They may, and no doubt will, facilitate the task of the interpreter and critic, but can scarcely be expected to throw much light on the points which are particularly interesting to the readers of a harmony. The author indeed seems to have adopted this merely as a convenient vehicle for his collections from the early Fathers, using Griesbach's well-known synoptical arrangement as a text, to which his own patristic parallels might be appended. He has probably accomplished all that he designed, but can hardly be considered as having given a new impulse or advancement to harmonical interpretation.

The name of Tischendorf has been, for some years past, becoming famous, not so much for great ability or general learning, as for strenuous devotion to a single study, and an almost preternatural fertility and diligence in making books for its promotion. As a critical editor of the Greek Testament, and a personal explorer of manuscript treasures in the East and elsewhere, he is commonly allowed the first place in contemporary literature. Although still in the prime of life, he has already published more editions of the Greek text and its Latin versions than Erasmus, Beza, and the Stephensens together. That this is not a speculation or a drudgery, but a passion, may be seen from the unabated zeal with which he can

* *De Temporibus in Actis Apostolorum ratione scripsit Rudolphus Anger, Philos. D. AA. LL. M. in Academ. Lips. Privatim Docens. Lipsiæ, 1833. 8vo.*

† *Chronologie des Apostolischen Zeitalters bis zum Tode der Apostel Paulus und Petrus. Von Dr. Karl Wieseler, Professor der Theologie in Göttingen. 1848. 8vo.*

rewrite and reprint the same text and prolegomena and annotations, under a dozen varied shapes and sizes and denominations. Of his textual labours we may take another opportunity to give a more particular account. At present, we can only say that the same one idea or ruling passion still inspires him in his Harmony or Synopsis, where a large space is allotted to another reproduction of his critical labours on the text of the Four Gospels. The harmonical arrangement varies only in a slight degree from that of Dr. Robinson; and whether this be acquiescence or coincidence, it bears a very honourable and important testimony to the labours of his learned predecessor. The arrangement and typography of this Synopsis are, as might have been expected from the author's other publications, tasteful and attractive, but without the lavish ostentation which his own wealth or the patronage of others has enabled him, in many cases, to indulge. The work before us, although neat, is wholly unpretending, and within the reach of any student, all the contents, except the text and variations, being written in Latin. Beyond this, however, it would not be just to go, in making Tischendorf's Synopsis an important contribution to the harmonizing of the Gospels.

Much more attention has been paid to the harmonical arrangement of the text by the American and English writers of a recent date. Both Dr. Stroud and Mr. Strong appear to have begun the work *de novo*, reconstructing the whole narrative on principles and methods of their own. Dr. Stroud, however, goes much further in the actual amalgamation of the Gospels into a new and compound narrative, which occupies the leading column of this splendid quarto from the press of Bagster. Besides this mixed text, he exhibits those from which it is compounded in parallel columns. The author is an English physician, previously known, both at home and on the continent, by a treatise on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, (London, 1847.) This special and professional inquiry seems to have directed his attention to harmonical studies. For unwearied industry and conscientious care, in the performance of his task, he is entitled to all praise, as well as for a large amount of useful information in his Introduction. We are bound to add, however, that with all the advantage of a

faultless typography and artistical arrangement of the page, the result is complicated and confusing, while the infinitesimal divisions and innumerable titles, far from aiding either eye or understanding, only serve to make confusion worse confounded. Besides these empirical objections to the aggregate result, we are constrained to reiterate our strong dissent from the theory and practice of ignoring the four Gospels, as coherent and complete books, and treating them as bundles of materials for book-making. We have no doubt that, like multitudes of similar productions, Dr. Stroud's costly volume will do good, especially in wealthy circles, where a book less showy might not find access; but we cannot conscientiously regard it as a sensible advance upon preceding harmonies and towards the ultimate solution of the great harmonic problem.

The Gospel Harmony of Mr. Strong is now before the public in two shapes. The first, exhibiting the English text, arranged upon a new plan, with accompanying maps, notes, chronological tables, and illustrative engravings, is a large and elegant octavo volume. In addition to some new and independent views, affecting the adjustment of the narrative, this work has two distinctive features of a bold and somewhat novel kind. The first is a "free version," or accompanying paraphrase, "in a straight-forward and modern style." (Preface, p. vii.); the other an original translation of "poetical strains," especially citations from the Hebrew, into English blank verse. (Preface, p. ix.) Of these we shall say nothing, but exhibit samples, taken almost *ad aperturam libri*. The dialogue between our Saviour and the thief upon the cross is paraphrased as follows:

"Then looking toward Jesus, he fervently begged, 'Master, remember me [by a participation in the reorganization of that period] when you return [after your resurrection] to establish your kingdom [by the resuscitation of saints and the renovation of Judaism!]' To this diffident appeal] Jesus blandly replied, 'Yes, I assure you, that [without waiting for any future development of my mediation] *this very day* you shall share with me the immortal bliss of *Paradise* [that portion of *Hades* (*i. e.*, the region of departed spirits beneath the earth) assigned by the Jews to the pious.]"—*Strong's Harmony and Exposition*, p. 360.

The prophecy of Micah, quoted by the chief priests and scribes, in Matt. ii. 6, is versified as follows:

"[Dark is the cloud impending o'er the land;
But gleams of happier times break through the gloom.]

Jehovah singles thee, O Bethlehem,—
 Ephráthah erst; though small thy borders seem,
 Compared with many towns of Judah's tribe,
 Yet large the honour destined thee among
 Its Principalities—of 'thousands' all.
 For out of thee will rise the Heaven-sent Prince,
 A pastoral sway to bear o'er Israel's fold."—P. 22.*

Of these "poetical strains," and this "straight-forward and modern style," as well as of the costly plates and maps, the second or Greek Harmony is wholly destitute. The taste of some, however, will be apt to regard it as a much more elegant and scholar-like performance. While the useful part of the accompanying apparatus is retained, the book attracts the eye by its accurate and neat typography, its clear symmetrical arrangement, and the proof which it affords both of scholarship in general, and of learned labour spent upon this subject in particular. The departures from preceding harmonies, in form and order, though apparently the fruit of independent speculation, and in some cases plausibly defended, are still subject to the general uncertainty, which we have represented as involving the minute chronology of this whole matter. One of the most convenient appendages of Mr. Strong's harmonical arrangement, is the clear and simple exhibition, in the margin, of the textual changes which have been *adopted* (not *suggested* merely) by the latest critics. If we do not set as much store by the grammatical notes, it may be from a want of experience in the use, to which they were particularly meant to be applied. To us, we frankly own, they seem precisely of the sort, which tempts the wish that there were either more of them or none at all.

But the grand peculiarity of Mr. Strong's Harmony, as such considered, and therefore found in both its forms, is yet to be described, and well deserves description for its novelty and ingenuity. Among the parallels, in every case where they occur, he chooses what he thinks the fullest narrative, and prints this in a large type, as the leading column. The other, or others, he displays beside it in a smaller letter. But what strikes us as a really original invention, is the introduc-

* This is the result, to which the fashionable mode of printing such quotations naturally tends. The next step, we suppose, will be to make them rhyme.

tion from the parallel columns into the main one, of such words or phrases as may serve to supplement it and complete it. This, which would otherwise be liable to all that we have said against the method of amalgamation, is redeemed from that reproach by printing these interpolations in a smaller type than the rest of the column, so that the eye can instantly detect them, and refer them to their places in the other columns. We must confess that we were greatly taken with these neat contrivances at first sight, and regarded them as sensible improvements in the method of exhibiting harmonical results, and in the means of promoting harmonical study. Closer examination has made no change in our estimate of the talent for ingenious combination and arrangement which is here displayed. We are constrained to say, however, that the more we have examined the result as embodied in this handsome volume, the more misgiving have we felt, with respect to its expediency and usefulness. The process of selection and comparison, here finished to the reader's hand, is by far the most improving and delightful part of all such studies. Even the school-boy, who requires this degree of aid, must need a *clavis* to replace his lexicon; while students of a riper age must certainly lose much, both of pleasure and improvement, by having that done for them which they can do, and would do, and ought to do themselves. Another objection to the method is, that it destroys the prestige of integrity and unity belonging to the gospels when presented side by side without admixture. There is something almost morally offensive in the sight of any human hand, however reverent or skilful, tampering with the text of these incomparable records, cutting them into shreds, or mutually patching them, as if by that means we could get a seamless fabric, woven from the top throughout. Especially is this impression made by occasional changes in the form of words and phrases thus transferred, in order to adjust the syntax, a necessity which, far from recommending the arrangement, is itself sufficient to condemn it, or at least to justify a strong predilection for the good old plan of simple tabular synopsis, which exhibits nothing but the matter to be harmonized, and leaves the reader to compare it and combine it at his own discretion.

Very different from all these is the last book named at the beginning of this article. It is not so much a Harmony as a Harmonical Commentary on the Gospels. In its original form, it was a course of popular lectures on the difference and agreement of the gospels, delivered in Holland more than fifteen years ago, and subsequently published, as an antidote to Strauss's *Life of Jesus*.* It was afterwards translated, with the author's approbation and with some modification of its form and a new title, by a Mr. Scott. This elegant volume, from the press of Ballantyne in Edinburgh, has been since put into circulation in America, at a very reasonable price, and is, we trust, already known to many of our readers. For the sake of such as have not met with it, however, we propose to give a more particular description than we could in a short notice on its first appearance.† Without repeating what we then said, that Da Costa is a Christian Jew, descended from one of the old Portuguese or Spanish families, who fled from persecution to the Netherlands some centuries ago, and is equally esteemed by those who know him, for his genius, learning, and peculiarly unjewish piety; we shall simply say, by way of introduction to what follows, that this work shows so much modest independence and originality, with such familiar knowledge of the oldest and the latest speculations, true and false, and the results of ancient and modern exegetical investigations, that we know of no contemporary writer who seems to come so near the character described in Matt. xiii. 52, a scribe disciplined into the kingdom of heaven, and like a faithful householder, bringing forth out of his treasure things both new and old.

The radical idea of the work before us is, that THE GOSPELS CAN BE HARMONIZED ONLY BY DUE REGARD TO THEIR PECULIARITIES, a principle by which it is immediately distinguished from the English schemes of fusion or amalgamation. This primary or fundamental postulate is verified by separate descrip-

* *Voorlezingen over de Verscheidenheid en de Overeenstemming der Vier Evangelien*: door Mr. Isaac da Costa. Eerste Deel, 1840. Tweede Deel, 1842. Leiden, Svo.

† See our number for January, 1855, pp. 162, 163, where this and another of Da Costa's works are briefly noticed, with a few facts of his history.

tions of the Gospels, with their several characteristics, followed by mutual comparison or contrast, and the author's mode of solving alleged contradictions.

The first Gospel he regards as the genuine work of Levi the publican, or Matthew the apostle, written probably in Greek, and not in Hebrew, yet peculiarly oriental and judaic in its character; recording few dates and few minute details, but abounding in quotations from the prophets, as proof of the Messiahship of Jesus; often combining homogeneous matters, without regard to mere chronology, as in the parables, the sermon on the mount, our Lord's instructions to the twelve, and his predictions; *never naming the Samaritans*; peculiarly fond of the word *τότε* (*then*), and of generic plurals (as in speaking of the thief upon the cross;) and with a strong disposition to exhibit things in pairs or couples, on which the author founds a new, but rather far-fetched explanation of the two blind men at Jericho, and the two demoniacs at Gadara, where Mark and Luke have only one.

With respect to the second Gospel, the author's views are still both "new and old." He believes it to have been written with a full knowledge of the first, and under Peter's influence, embodying many of his vivid recollections, so that words and acts, which in the other Gospels are anonymous, are here ascribed to Peter; while his vain attempt to walk upon the water is omitted. Compared with Matthew's Gospel, this has fewer incidents but more minute details, as in the account of the Transfiguration, and the miracle that followed. It omits much that was particularly interesting to Jews; the genealogies, some parables, the woes denounced upon the Scribes and Pharisees, Jerusalem, Capernaum, and other cities; it explains peculiar Jewish terms and customs, such as "corban," and washing before meat; all which shows a primary reference to gentile readers. As characteristics of the writer, he enumerates his fondness for the adverb *εὐθέως*, and for Aramean or vernacular expressions (*Talitha cumi*, *Epphatha*, *Abba*,) always accompanied by a translation; also his habit of precisely designating persons, (as in the case of Bartimeus, Abiathar, Levi, Boanerges, the father of Alexander and Rufus.) As examples of minuter strokes, not found in Matthew, he speci-

fies the mention of the hired servants at the call of James and John; the crowd being so great that they could not eat; their toiling in rowing; Christ's inviting them to come and rest; the mention of the stone at the sepulchre as great; his looking round with anger, and in general the frequent mention of our Saviour's looks and gestures, most of which we know only through this Gospel. As minute peculiarities of diction, he refers to his habitual quotation of the very words spoken; his frequent transposition of the words used by Matthew, where the words themselves are just the same; and his fondness for the combination of a cognate verb and noun (create and creation, astonish and astonishment, blaspheme and blasphemy.) He accepts the old tradition, that the writer was named Mark, but denies that it was John Mark, on the somewhat unsubstantial ground of a perceptible difference of character; while from the soldierly laconic style, the precision and rapidity like Julius Cæsar's, the fondness for recording brief and peremptory orders, the obvious reference to gentile readers, the occasional use of Latin words, and the allusion to military usages, especially the Roman watches of the night, he draws the singular conclusion, that the writer was a Roman soldier, Peter's son in the faith (1 Peter v. 13,) and therefore not improbably *the same devout soldier, who attended him from Joppa to the house of Cornelius in Cesarea.* As to the view of our Lord himself presented in this Gospel, Da Costa thinks, with many others, that it is pre-eminently that of his humanity, the Son of Man, while Matthew views him chiefly as the Son of Abraham and David, Luke and John as the Son of God. In recording the miracles, he dwells upon the instrumental or accompanying acts, the touch, the clay, the spittle, the sighing, &c., &c. As to the subject matter of this Gospel, its chief peculiarity is, that it has so little that is really peculiar to it, the facts which it records, with few exceptions, being found in the other Gospels.

The third Gospel he regards as the work of a Greek proselyte and a physician, as appears from his descriptions of disease, and of our Saviour's bloody sweat; not an eye-witness, but a regular historian, paying great attention to minute chronology, as in the case of Anna and Eneas, and others, the

duration of whose sufferings is specified, the indication of Christ's age, and of certain intervals occurring in his history; often referring to contemporary persons and events (Herod, Archelaus, Antipas, Philip, Chuza and Joanna, Pilate's massacre, the tower in Siloam;) sometimes restoring the order of time, from which Matthew had departed for the purpose of his argument, as in the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, the parable of the mustard-seed and leaven, the prediction of the downfall of Jerusalem; though a gentile, dwelling much upon the Jewish history and usages; often coinciding, both in sentiment and language, with Paul in his epistles; fond of exhibiting our Lord's beneficence to publicans and sinners, to Samaritans and gentiles, to women and children; dwelling much on his devotional habits and his unction with the Holy Ghost. Compared with Matthew, he exhibits many of the same facts, but with many differences, showing however an acquaintance with the older Gospel, and assuming the same knowledge in his readers. His relation to Mark is, according to Da Costa, that he often borrows the details from him, where he follows Matthew as to the main facts, evincing that he knew both, and derived from both precisely what was suited to his own specific purpose.

Besides the great distinctive features of John's Gospel, which are recognized by all, Da Costa points out his peculiar habit of interpolating parenthetical explanations in his narrative (this he spake of his body—this he spake of the Spirit—he knew what was in man—Jesus himself baptized not—this was that Mary—this was that Nicodemus—this was that Caiaphas—this he spake signifying what death he should die, &c.;) his constant use of logical and not mere narrative connectives, (therefore, for this cause, &c.;) his selection of incidents intrinsically grand, or connected with our Lord's discourses; the paucity but magnitude of miracles recorded; his frequent mention of the Father and the Paraclete; his disposition to record the speeches even of inferiors (John the Baptist, Nathaniel, the Jews at Capernaum, the blind man and his parents; Thomas, Mary Magdalene;) his peculiar use of the terms, Word, Light, Glory, Truth, Son, Lamb, &c.; his attention at the same time, to minutiae, (much grass—much water—other boats—barley-

loaves—such and such a day, hour, year; so much myrrh and aloes, so many fishes;) his careful record of the festivals which Christ attended; his quotation of prophecies not found in Matthew, among which are some by Christ himself.

This, says our author, is a new but not “another gospel.” By a bold musical figure, he describes it as the bass of the quartette! As to the other books, John must have known them, and indeed he may be said to combine Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, and Peter, all in one. He is at once prophetic, historical, doctrinal, and practical. He gives no list of the Apostles, but he speaks of “the twelve;” he gives no genealogy or record of Christ’s birth and education, but he tells us that men called him “Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph;” he repeats none of the parables recorded by the others, but abounds in parabolic illustrations of the same kind, (the Good Shepherd, the lost sheep, the vine, the harvest;) he records no case of dispossession, but he tells us of Christ’s saying, “Now shall the prince of this world be cast out;” he omits our Lord’s prediction of the downfall of Jerusalem, but records that of Caiaphas. He explains what Matthew, Mark and Luke left unexplained, as when he tells us that Christ spake of his body, and accounts for the great concourse between Jerusalem and Bethany, by relating the raising of Lazarus, thus explaining Luke’s allusion to his mighty works, and Matthew’s record of the question, Who is this?

Among his singularities of language is the double Amen, found exclusively in John, which most regard as a real habit of our Lord, but Lightfoot as a mere repetition of the writer, and Da Costa, somewhat mystically, as the echo of Christ’s word in the soul of the beloved disciple. He describes, as the grand distinctive feature of this Gospel, its combination of extremes, of grandeur and minuteness, of the Jewish and the Christian, of divine and human.

In determining the author he adopts the old view, but presented in a new light, that although he never names himself, but John here always means the Baptist, every reader feels that the mysterious nameless figure which appears in the first chapter, passing from the school of John to that of Christ, who leaned upon his bosom at the Supper, and followed him on

his arrest, who knew the High Priest, and brought Peter into his palace, who stood beneath the cross and was entrusted with the mother of his Lord, who saw his side pierced, and ran before Peter to the sepulchre, who first knew Jesus on the lake, and of whom that mysterious rumour went abroad, that he was not to die—must be one of the twelve—must be one of the three—and as no one could be less like Peter—and as James died too soon to be the author of this Gospel—the unanimous tradition of the ancient church is true, that it was written, in his old age, by the last survivor of the twelve, John the son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved and yet rebuked, the Son of Thunder, the perpetual associate of Peter in the Acts, and with him a pillar of the Church at Jerusalem long after Paul's conversion.

After giving some account of the modern neological reaction against this Gospel, represented by the "Probabilia" of Bretschneider, and the counter-reaction in its favour, represented by Bretschneider's recantation; and after showing how many of the traits peculiar to this one of the four Gospels may be also traced in the Epistles and Apocalypse, Da Costa takes the only miracle recorded by all four Evangelists, the feeding of the five thousand, and employs it to illustrate their peculiarities. He then repeats this process on a larger scale, filling more than a hundred pages (of the English volume) with a thorough analytical comparison of our Saviour's passion, as recorded in the different Gospels. This, though not so satisfactory to general readers, on account of its descending into such detail, is of the highest value to the critical inquirer; even its failures and its over-refinements being not only interesting but instructive. Into this of course we cannot enter further, as it does not admit of either abstract or abridgment, but must hasten to present some of the general conclusions which the author draws from these distinctions and comparisons.

His grand result is, HARMONY NOT UNISON, perfect accordance in design and substance, with the utmost individuality of character and form.

The author's mind, prolific in analogies, exhausts itself in efforts to illustrate this idea, by architectural and musical comparisons which, like most others, do not always run upon all

fours. Some of his distinctions, if not altogether just, are striking and suggestive; as that Matthew presents Christ as a king and prophet, Luke as a king and priest; Matthew writes as a Jew for Jews, Mark as a Roman for Romans, Luke as a Greek for Greeks, John as a Cosmopolite for Jews and Christians.

The chronological relation of the Gospels is presented in a manner equally original, whatever may be thought of its ratiocination. He who writes always as a Jew, an eye-witness, an apostle, building on the Old Testament, combining things that are alike, and drawing gigantic outlines—must be first in time. He who follows the first closely, often using the same words, but omitting, transposing, and particularly filling up the outline with details—must be the second. He who takes outlines from the first, and details from the second, but enriches both with fresh additions, and professes to write $\epsilon\grave{\xi}\epsilon\gamma\gamma\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ —must be third. He who repeats little from the other three, but is ever presupposing their existence, yet continually adding what is found in none of them—must be the fourth. This mutual relation he illustrates and confirms by Old Testament analogies, or rather by the uniform organic progress, which he thinks may be traced alike in nature, providence, and revelation. As the Prophecies are, so to speak, evolved out of the Pentateuch and one another; as the New Testament thus grows out of the Old, and each successive part from that before it; so Matthew's argument, though it maintains its place, gives birth to Mark's description, and both to Luke's history, and all to John's *θεολογία*—the infancy, youth, manhood, and old age of one and the same revelation—or, to change the figure, as our author sometimes does without sufficient notice, a quaternion of evangelists, the two apostles marching outside, to cover, as it were, the apostolicals, though clothed at the same time, with the authority of Paul and Peter. Whatever may be thought of these particular distinctions and analogies, it must be owned that the ingenious author has established his right to ask the triumphant question at the close, Can all this be the work of chance or human contrivance?

In accordance with his fundamental principle, he holds that these four views of Christ were necessary to produce the

requisite effect; that none of them could have been spared; that though the inspiration of the authors was the same, their human gifts were different; that each Gospel is perfect in its kind, but not complete by itself, like the members of the body; that each answers its own purpose, but not God's, which requires and comprehends them all. If we had only Matthew's outline record of some facts, it would be perfect as an outline, yet not all we need. One side of a building may be perfect in design and execution; yet it cannot be the whole, or any other side but itself.

As to apparent or alleged discrepancies, our author holds that they are aggravated, not relieved, by fusion and assimilation; that the actual diversities are not to be ignored or even extenuated, but allowed to give the key (another musical allusion) to the entire harmony, so that the more differences we find, the more distinctly will the Gospels stand forth in their individuality; and yet these differences, far from being contradictions, will be found to be the necessary elements and indispensable conditions of the highest unity. However transcendental this may seem in form, we do believe that it embodies an intelligible and important truth, the same that was propounded at the outset of this abstract, as the radical idea of Da Costa's work.

We shall close our crude account of this extraordinary book with the author's own summary harmonic rules, or rather pregnant statements of the consequences flowing from the previous discussion. He concludes then, that the earlier Evangelists were well known to the later, and were used by them, but independently, or only in dependence on the Holy Ghost, whose will was not that they should use precisely the same matter, still less the same manner, but that each should choose from the common material, with a view to his own specific task and calling; that they consequently might, or rather must, differ widely in selection, arrangement and expression; Matthew combines like with like; Mark frequently, by transposition, makes it chronological; Luke gives it a historical construction; to which John adheres, except for cause, in what is common to them both. As a general thing, Matthew abounds in topics and in words, Mark and Luke in more minute details, while

John is full in both respects, yet different from all. In speaking of the same thing, Matthew sometimes has the plural, Mark and Luke the singular, the former being more generic and collective in his thoughts and words, the others more specific and individual. Even where John is like the others in his general mode or manner, as in local description or exact specifications of time and number, the details are for the most part peculiar to himself. In recording speeches, all convey the true sense; but Mark and Luke more generally give the precise words, Matthew the substance, sometimes with ideas that were not expressed though really implied, and John with the echo or reflection of the language from his own soul.

In giving an idea of Da Costa's singular production, we have chosen to retain, as far as possible, his own arrangement and peculiar form, although the one is often desultory and the other odd. But the very fact that these peculiarities are so much out of keeping with the old fashioned harmonistic methods of the English school, may lead to wholesome action and reaction, between systems so antipodal in form, though really concurring in the same essential views of inspiration, and of Christ himself. We should not have thought our author's speculations, striking and ingenious as they are, entitled to be brought before our readers at such length, if they were not imbued, and we may say instinct, with vital Christianity, with clear and large views of the most important doctrines, and with pure affections corresponding to them.

In parting from the books which have detained us so long, it is pleasing to reflect, that every one of them is likely to be useful, in its way, and to a certain class of readers. We are glad to think that Anger will lead some German students of the Gospels to compare them with the Fathers of the first two centuries, not only for their own improvement, but for that of others, and not only in the way of illustration, but of critical authentication. We are glad that such a name as that of Tischendorf is here pledged to the possibility of harmonizing all the Gospels, and not merely three of them, which is the *maximum* conceded by the modern German theory and practice. We are also glad that a synopsis so coincident with that adopted by our own best harmonists, is thus put into German circula-

tion with a needless but respectable endorsement. We are glad that many buyers of fine books in England will be led, perhaps insensibly, by Dr. Stroud, to learn far more than they would otherwise have known, about the Life of Christ, not only in its outlines but in its details. We rejoice that our Methodist brethren, of whom we are informed, though not by himself, that Mr. Strong is one, have so intelligent and accurate a writer of their own, on this important and delightful part of sacred learning. And lastly, we congratulate ourselves and others, that such principles and sentiments as those of Da Costa—leaving out of view particular exceptions—are in active circulation through so wide a sphere, in Holland, Britain, and America.

To ministers and students of our own Church we recommend as helps in this most interesting study, the Greek text of Robinson and Scott's English version of Da Costa. We have not compared the same parts of the latter work in Dutch and English; but our strong impression is that the translation is a good one, and its beautiful typography is not the least of its attractions. We have only one defect, or rather one excess, to criticize, which might be deemed too small for notice, but for its doing great injustice to the author's judgment and good taste, merely to gratify a freak of his translator. When we first cast our eye upon the English volume, we were struck with the multitude of *Saints* scattered over the surface. Not knowing this to be a Low Dutch fashion, we regretted that the author, however great a stickler he might be for this saintly etiquette, had not sought or seized a dispensation from the rule, if only to save space and spare the reader's eyes. On coming to a sight of the original, we found, to our surprise and indignation, that this host of saints was introduced by the translator, who might almost seem from this officious act to be a convert from dissent to churchmanship, as scarcely any other would have thought of overloading and defacing such a book, in such a way, lest either of the four Evangelists should once appear without a handle to his name; although it might be hard to say why such a deprivation would be more unjust to them than to the Saints of the Old Testament, to whom even Puseyites and Papists do not scruple to refer, as plain Noah, Moses, David, and Elijah. Against this absurd exaggeration of a harmless though unmean-

ing practice, and especially this vast multiplication of words, without the addition of a single new idea, we appeal not to Scripture or sectarian distinctions, but to taste and common sense. Many a reader, we have no doubt, though accustomed and attached to such formalities in other cases, will consider their use here a work of supererogation, and perhaps be ready to say:

“Is it a custom?—Ay, marry, is it.
 But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honoured in the breach than the observance.”

ART. II.—*A Memoir of the Rev. Sydney Smith, by his Daughter, Lady Holland. With a Selection from his Letters. Edited by Mrs. Austin. In two volumes. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1855.*

It is not without design that we have delayed to notice this Memoir. Other reviews have considered its subject as a critic, a reformer, a politician, and a wit. We design to consider him as a *minister of religion*; for in this relation he was truly a remarkable man. In thus viewing him, we shall examine his religious writings, as well as observe him in his biography and letters.

Sydney Smith was born at Woodford, in Essex, 1771; received his early education at Winchester, and then went to New College, Oxford; where nothing special is recorded of him, except that he obtained first a scholarship, and then a professorship yielding about a hundred pounds a year. After this, he deliberately resolved to enter the church. When Dr. Johnson, in his time of need, was offered a good living, if he should enter into orders, he declined it, saying: “I have not the requisites; and I cannot, in my conscience, *shear* the sheep which I am unable to *feed*.” But Sydney Smith had no difficulty in answering the Bishop, that he was “inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the