

brightness of His image which was to be adequately presented to the world from many sides under the direct teaching of God's Spirit. Hence *the Gospel according to Matthew*, the Gospel according to *Mark*, *Luke*, *John*. The common name by which we designate them, embodies a great truth. It means the one Gospel as it presented itself to their different minds. And these four biographies contain ample evidence that they are not copies taken, the one from the other, but four separate and independent records. Instead of having a mechanical repetition—a mere copy struck off four times—we have Christ's life and work viewed from so many angles, and photographed from different points of view. The same scenes, incidents, sermons, and miracles are described and recorded by each writer in his own way, with no effort at reconciliation with any previous account; and with no labored design to make the records tally. There is no comparing of notes for any such purpose, but on the contrary, a fearless setting forth of what they knew. Each speaks with a boldness of statement that becomes the messenger of the Lord, with a consciousness of truth that never hesitates, and a transparency which reveals their honesty of purpose. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John have all distinct, well-defined mental and moral characteristics, and these are reflected in the accounts which each gives of our Lord's life.

It has been asked, "If the various writers were inspired, why were they not inspired to write the same account in the same way so as to agree with each other?" But if such had been the case, what would have been the result? Such a supposition implies that the evangelists should have written the same account in identical words, chapter for chapter, verse for verse, sentence for sentence and word for word. But if we had four such documents as these, they would not have been our four Gospels, but merely one book written four times. And this would have destroyed all value from their separate testimonies. We know the value put on separate and independent witnesses where everything is to be settled by moral evidence—"In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." Now what the early Church specially needed was testimony to the facts of the Gospel. Repeated testimony from many independent centres is the strongest corroboration of a fact. And surely it confirms our faith in the facts of the Gospel that we have four witnesses instead of one.