

satisfying proof of the divine origin of Christianity. It is a great mystery that the feet of God, in the person of Jesus Christ, should have walked the hills of Judea and left their traces so that we can walk where He walked; but the reverent reason can find rest in no other conclusion than that it was as these inimitable records state.

The childlike argument of immediate experience, or the adaptation of the Scriptures to the needs of the soul, is adduced by the Gospel narratives themselves. "He that doeth My will," said Christ, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself." "Come and see," was the simple appeal of Philip to Nathaniel, offsetting sight against the prejudice of predisposition. This, too, was the import of the last words of the Shechemites to the Samaritan woman: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that He is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42). Anselm couched the general idea in his aphorism, "*Credo ut intelligam.*"

Within the four Gospels there is no claim set up of inspiration. In view of theories which have prevailed in the Church, this absence merits adequate explanation, and the only explanation is that upon no assertion of external authority does their life-giving and convincing power depend. The very personality of the authors is concealed, except in the case of the fourth Evangelist, whose identity with John the apostle amounts to a certainty from the manner in which he makes reference to himself as the "other disciple" and "the disciple whom Jesus loved," in distinction from the rest of the twelve disciples (John xxi. 1-7). Nor is the personality of the first three Evangelists hinted at anywhere else in the New Testament. The reputed authorship aids the mind in its acceptance of the four narratives, and we should feel we had suffered a great loss if any possible discovery were to invalidate the claims of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It is true that the "Imitation of Christ" would still remain a book of devotion, whether Chancellor Gerson or the Abbot of Vercelli were made out to be the authors instead of Thomas à Kempis, and the "Veni, Spiritus Sancte" would still hold its place in the worship of the sanctuary, if Robert of France were proved not to have been the writer. The case, however, is quite different with the Gospels, which record historical events and portray a personality claiming to be the Son of God. It is fortunate that, from the earliest mention, there is no dissent of any weight as to the authorship of the Gospels. It has been said again and again that no work of ancient times bears such a seal of truthfulness as they. (Schaff. Ch. Hist., vol. i., 585.)

The trustworthiness of the four Evangelists cannot stand upon the statement of St. Paul or St. Peter touching inspiration. When the former says, "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable," there is no evidence that any one of our four Gospels was before Him. And the same may be said of Peter when he says,