

in their circumstances require a corresponding variety in addressing them upon all subjects; though the things spoken be substantially the same, and the design of the speaker precisely the same. Now in writing as well as speaking, the same persons vary their communications according to the times, places, and circumstances in which they speak or write. For example, though Paul proclaimed the same gospel at all times and in all places, he does not always exhibit it in the same words, nor accompanied with the same evidences, arguments, or reasons. Thus in publishing the same gospel to the Lycaonians, the Athenians, the Antiochans, the Corinthians, he is governed by all the prejudices, views, feelings, and circumstances of his auditors; and adapts the style, the facts, arguments, and evidences, to the capacities, views, and circumstances of his hearers. While he publishes the same glad tidings to them all, he varies in many respects upon all these occasions. This was absolutely necessary to his success, and is a most irrefragable proof of the sincerity and honesty of the man, and greatly adds to the credibility of his testimony. Now for the same reasons that Paul differs from himself, or varies in his way of speaking the gospel in different places, he would have observed the same varieties in writing to the same people. For he never spoke at random in publishing the glad tidings, and what he *spoke*, was as deliberate as what he *wrote*. For the same reasons, therefore, had any one of the writers of these four histories written them all to the different persons, at the different times and in the different places where they were at first published, there is every reason to believe that they would have been as different from each other as they are; and making a reasonable allowance for the peculiarities of each writer, that they would have been the same as they now are. Many reasons could be offered for this opinion, but we shall only submit one proof or argument in favour of it, which is indeed done when one single fact is stated—viz. Luke, in his Acts of the Apostles, *three* times gives an account of Paul's conversion and special call to the apostleship, and these three differ as much from each other as Matthew, Mark, and John differ in their narratives concerning Jesus of Nazareth. But there is just the same reason and necessity for, and the same propriety in, the varieties which are found in these four histories, as there was for Paul to speak the same gospel in a different way, with different arguments, facts, and evidences, in the different places in which he published it. Suppose Matthew Levi to have written a narrative for the Jews in Judea, one for the conviction of the people at Rome, one for the Jews and Greeks in Greece, and one for the Asiatics in general, at different periods within the lapse of from 20 to 30 years; would it not have been as fitting for him to have been as diverse in his statements, as Paul was in his preachings in Damascus, Lycaonia, Athens, and Rome?

It was, for example, of indispensable importance that Matthew Levi, when writing for the Jews in Judea, at the time in which he wrote, should trace the lineage of Jesus of Nazareth up to David and Abraham; but of no consequence to the people of Rome, for whom John Mark wrote, that he should do it at the time he published his testimony. This, and other differences between Matthew and Mark and the others, is precisely analogous to that between Paul in Damascus and Paul in Athens. In a