**CHAP I. 1—4.]** PREFACE ADDRESSED TO  
THEOPHILUS. The style of this preface is  
purer Greek than the contents of the Gospel,  
and also more labored and formal. This  
may be accounted for, partly because it is  
the composition of the Evangelist himself,  
and not translated from Hebrew sources  
like much of the rest, and partly because  
prefaces, especially when also dedicatory,  
are usually in a rounded and artificial  
style.

**1. many]** Much depends on the  
meaning of this word, as guiding, or modifying, our opinion on the relation and  
sources of our Gospel histories. (1) That  
*the writers of our present Gospels exclusively* cannot be meant, is evident;  
since, even *supposing St. Luke to have*  
*seen all three Gospels*, one (that of St.  
John) was wholly, and another (that of  
St. Matthew) was in greater the  
production of an *eye-witness and minister  
of the word*, which would leave only one  
for the **many**. (2) Apocryphal Gospels *exclusively* cannot be meant: for they would  
not be *‘narrations concerning matters fully  
believed among us,’* nor *‘delivered by eye-witnesses and ministers of the word,’* a  
great part of their contents being *excluded*  
by this very author from his *own* **narration**. (3) A combination of these two  
*may* be intended—e.g. of the later sort,  
*the Gospel according to the Hebrews,—*  
of the former, *that according to St. Mark,*  
but then also how shall we make out the  
**many?** Our present apocryphal Gospels  
arose far later than any likely date which  
can be assigned to St. Luke’s Gospel  
see Introduction to Luke. (4) I believe the  
only probable interpretation of the words  
to be, that many persons, in charge of  
Churches, or otherwise induced, drew up,  
here and there, statements (*narratives*) of  
the *testimony of eye-witnesses and ministers of the word* (see below), so far as they  
themselves had been able to collect them.  
(I do *not* believe that either the Gospel  
of St. Matthew or that of St. Mark *is to  
be reckoned* among these; or if they are,  
that St. Luke had seen or used them.)  
That such narratives should not have come  
down to us, is no matter of surprise: for  
(1) they would be absorbed by the more  
complete and sanctioned accounts of our  
present Evangelists; and (2) Church tradition has preserved very few fragments of  
authentic information of the apostolic age.  
It is probable that in almost every Church  
where an eye-witness preached, his testimony would be taken down, and framed  
into some narrative, more or less complete,  
of the life and sayings of the Lord. This does not  
necessarily imply the insufficiency of such  
narrations, as some have imagined. The  
fact of that failure is indeed implied in  
St. Luke’s description of his own work—  
but that, more because *it possessed completeness* (whereas they were fragmentary)  
than from any difference in kind.

**to set forth in order]** more Properly, **to  
draw up, to arrange.**

**a declaration] a setting forth:** and so if in relation  
to *things past*, **a narration—history**.

**surely believed]** According to some, this