§ n1.] THEIR ORIGIN. ’ [INTRODUCTION.   
   
 referred back for a more complete account of the matter. That such   
 evangelical documents did eaist, I think highly probable ; and believe   
 I recognize such in some of the peculiar sections of Luke; but that the   
 common parts of our Gospels, even if taken from such, are to be traced   
 back further, I am firmly convinced.   
 4. We come then to enquire, whether the common sections of our   
 Gospels could have originated from a common oral source. If by this   
 latter is to be understood,—one and the same oral teaching every where   
 recognized, our answer must be in the negative: for the difficulties of   
 verbal discrepancy, varying arrangement, insertion, and omission, would,   
 as above, remain unaccounted for. At the same time, it is highly impro-   
 bable that such a course of oral teaching should ever have been adopted.   
 Let us examine the matter more in detail.   
 5. The Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.   
 In this consisted their especial office and work. Others besides them   
 had been companions of our Lord :—but peculiar grace and power was   
 given to them, by which they gave forth their testimony (Acts iv. 33).   
 And what this testimony included, we learn from the conditions of   
 apostleship propounded by Peter himself, Acts i. 21,22: that in order   
 to its being properly given, an Apostle must have been an eye and ear   
 witness of what had happened from the baptism of John until the ascen-   
 sion: i. e. the whole official life our Lord. With the whole of   
 this matter, therefore, was his apostolic testimony concerned. And we   
 are consequently justified in assuming that the substance of the teaching   
 of the Apostles consisted of their testimony to such facts, given in the   
 Holy Ghost and with power. The ordinary objection to this view, that   
 their extant discourses do not contain Evangelic narrations, but are   
 hortatory and persuasive, is wholly inapplicable. Their extant discourses   
 are contained in the Acts, a second work of the Evangelist Luke, who   
 having in his former treatise given all which he had been able to collect   
 of their narrative teaching, was uot likely again to repeat it. Besides   
 which, such narrative teaching would occur, not in general and almost   
 wholly apologetic discourses held before assembled unbelievers, but in   
 the building up of the several churches and individual converts, and in   
 the catechization of catechumens. It is a strong confirmation of this   
 view, that Luke himself in his preface refers to this original apostolic   
 narrative as the source of the various narrations, which many had taken   
 in hand to draw up, and states his object in writing to be, that Theo-   
 philus might know the certainty of those sayings concerning which he had   
 been catechized.   
 It is another confirmation of the above view of the testimony of the   
 apostolic body,—that St. Paul claims to have received an independent   
 knowledge, by direct revelation, of at least some of the fundamental parts   
 By.