INTRODUCTION. ] THE THREE GOSPELS. (cu. 1.   
   
 of the Gospel history (see Gal. i. 12: 1 Cor. xi. 23; xv. 3), to qualify   
 him for his calling as an Apostle.   
 6. I believe then that the Apostles, in virtue not merely of their   
 having been eye and ear witnesses of the Evangelic history, but espe-   
 cially of their office, to the various Churches their testimony in   
 @ narrative of facts: such narrative being modified in each case by the   
 individual mind of the Apostle himself, and his sense of what was   
 requisite for the particular community to which he was ministering.   
 While they were principally together, and instructing the converts at   
 Jerusalem, such narrative would naturally be for the most part the same,   
 and expressed in the same, or nearly the same words: coincident, how-   
 ever, not from design or rule, but because the things themselves were the   
 same, and the teaching naturally fell for the most part into one form.   
 It would be easy and interesting to follow the probable origin and   
 growth of this cycle of narratives of the words and deeds of our Lord in   
 the Church at Jerusalem,—for both the Jews, and the Hellenists,—the   
 latter under such teachers as Philip and Stephen, commissioned and   
 authenticated by the Apostles. In the course of such a process some   
 portions would naturally be written down by private believers, for their   
 own use or that of friends. And as the Church spread to Samaria,   
 Ceesarea, and Antioch, the want would be felt in each of these places,   
 of similar cycles of oral teaching, which when supplied would thence-   
 forward belong to and be current in those respective Churches. And   
 these portions of the Evangelic history, oral or partially documentary,   
 would be adopted under the sanction of the Apostles, who were as in all   
 things so especially in this, the appointed and divinely-guided overseers   
 of the whole Church. This common substratum of apostolic teaching,—   
 never formally adopted by all, but subject to all the varieties of diction   
 and arrangement, addition and omission, incident to transmission   
 through many individual minds, and into many different localities,—JZ   
 believe to have been the original scurce of the common part of our three   
 Gospels.   
 7. Whether this teaching was wholly or in part expressed originally   
 in Greek, may admit of some question. That it would very soon be so   
 expressed, follows as a matter of course from the early mention of Grecian   
 converts, Acts vi., and the subsequent reception of the Gentiles into the   
 Church ; and it seems to have been generally received in that language,   
 before any of its material modifications arose. This I gather from the   
 remarkable verbal coincidences observable in the present Greek texts.   
 Then again, the verbal discrepancies of our present Greek texts entirely   
 forbid us to imagine that our Evangelists took up the usual oral teaching   
 at one place or time ; but point to a process of alteration and deflection,   
 which will now engage our attention.   
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