§ m.] THEIR ORIGIN. (zytropuction.   
   
 8. It will be observed that I am now speaking of those sections which   
 our Gospels possess IN COMMON, and WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THEIR   
 orper. The larger additions, which are due to peculiar sources of   
 information,—the narratives of the same event which have not sprung   
 from a common source,—the different arrangement of the common sec-   
 tions, with all these I am not now concerned.   
 9. The matter then of those sections I believe to have been this   
 generally-received oral narrative of the Apostles of which I have spoken.   
 Delivered; usually in the same or similar terms, to the catechumens in   
 the various Churches, and becoming the text of instruction for their   
 pastors and teachers, it by degrees underwent those modifications which   
 the various Gospels now present to us. And I am not now speaking of   
 any considerable length of time, such as might suffice to deteriorate and   
 corrupt mere traditional teaching,—but of no more than the trans-   
 mission through men apostolic or almost apostolic, yet of independent   
 habits of speech and thought,—of an account which remained in sub-   
 stance the same. Let us imagine the modifications which the individual   
 memory, brooding affectionately and reverently over each word and act   
 of our Lord, would introduce into a narrative in relating it variously and   
 under differing circumstances :—the Holy Spirit who brought to their   
 remembrance whatever things He had said to them (John xiv. 26),   
 working in and distributing to each severally as He would ;—let us place   
 to the account the various little changes of transposition or omission, of   
 variation in diction or emphasis, which would be sure to arise in the   
 freedom of individual teaching,—and we have I believe the only reason-   
 able solution of the arbitrary and otherwise unaccountable coincidences   
 and discrepancies in these parts of our Gospels.   
 10. It might perhaps be required that some presumptive corroborations   
 should be given of such a supposition as that here advanced. For the   
 materials of such, we must look into the texts themselves of such sections.   
 And in them I think I see signs of such a process as the latter part of   
 paragraph 9 describes. For,   
 11. It is a well-known and natural effect of oral transmission, that   
 while the less prominent members of sentence are transposed, or dimi-   
 nished or increased in number, and common-place expressions replaced by   
 their synonymes, any unusual word, or harsh expression, or remarkable   
 construction is retained. Nor is this only the case, such words, expres-   
 sions, or constructions, preserving their relative places in the sentences,   
 —but, from the mind laying hold of them, and retaining them at all   
 events, they are sometimes found preserved near their original places,   
 though perhaps with altered relations and import. Now a careful   
 observation of the original text of the Gospels continually brings before   
 the reader instances of both of these. I have given a few of them in a   
 note to this portion of the Introductory matter in my Greek Testament.   
 15]