§ 1v.] AT WHAT TIME WRITTEN. [inrropucrion.   
   
 the commencement of His genealogy from Abraham and David; hence   
 the frequent notice of the necessity of this or that event happening,   
 because it was so foretold by the Prophets; hence the constant opposition   
 of our Lord’s spiritually ethical teaching to the carnal formalistic ethics   
 of the Scribes and Pharisees.   
 2. But we must not think of the Gospel as a systematic treatise   
 drawn up with this end continually in view. It only exercised a very   
 general and indirect influence over the composition, not excluding   
 narratives, sayings, and remarks which had no such tendency, or even   
 partook of an opposite one.   
 3. Grecian readers were certainly also in the view of the “Apostle ;   
 and in consequence, he adds interpretations and explanations, such, for   
 example, as ch, i, 23; xxvii. 8, 33, 46, for their information.   
 4, In furtherance of the design above mentioned, we may discern   
 (with the caution given in 2) @ more frequent and consistent reference   
 to the Lord as a King, and to his Messianic kingdom, than in the other   
 Gospels. Designing these remarks not as a complete Introduction to   
 the Gospels, but merely as subsidiary to the following Commentary,   
 I purposely do not give instances of these characteristics, but leave them   
 to be gathered by the student as he proceeds.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION Iv.   
   
 AT WHAT TIME IT WAS WRITTEN.   
   
 The testimony of the early Church is unanimous, that Matthew   
 wrote first among the Evangelists. Clement of Alexandria, who dis-   
 sented from the present order of our Gospels, yet placed those of   
 Matthew and Luke first. Origen’s testimony is, that tradition in his   
 time reported Matthew to have written first. And Irenus relates that   
 Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching and   
 founding the Church in Rome. Without adopting this statement, we   
 may remark that it represents a date, to which internal chronological   
 notices are not repugnant. It seems, from ch. xxvii. 8, and xxviii. 15,   
 that some considerable time had elapsed since the events narrated ; while,   
 from the omission of all mention of the destruction of Jerusalem, it would   
 appear that the Gospel was published before thatevent. All these marks   
 of time are, however, exceedingly vague, especially when other notices   
 are taken into account, which place the Gospel eight years after the   
 Ascension (so Theophylact and Euthymius); fifteen years after the   
 Ascension (Nicephorus) :—at the time of the stoning of Stephen (Cosmas   
 Indicopleustes).   
 31]