§ 1v.J ITS PLACE AND DATE. [2ytropuction.   
   
   
 5. The voice of tradition on this point is very uncertain, Ireneus   
 states that this Gospel was the latest written of the four : which, as he   
 places Mark’s and Luke’s after the deaths of Peter and Paul (but see   
 Introduction to Luke, § iv.), would bring us to a similar date with that   
 pointed out in the preceding paragraph. As usual in traditional   
 matter,—on our advance to later writers, we find more and more par-   
 ticular accounts given :—the year of John’s life, the reigning Emperor,   
 &e., under which the Gospel was written. In all such cases the stu-   
 dent will do well to remember, that such late traditions are worthless   
 exactly in proportion to their particularity of detail.   
 6. But we have thus no direct indication, at what date to place the   
 Gospel. On examining its contents, we find no such indication given   
 by them. It is true that the Evangelist speaks in ch. v. 2 of the pool   
 of Bethesda in the present tense as being near the sheepgate, and thence   
 it might seem as if he wrote before the destruction of Jerusalem :—but   
 such indications are confounded by the fact that he alone of the Evan-   
 gelists speaks of places near Jerusalem, which would remain after the   
 destruction, in the past tense (ch. xi. 18), which seems to shew that   
 no stress is to be laid on such expressions, which were perhaps used   
 by him according to the cast of the particular narrative which he   
 was then constructing, without any reference to the existing state of   
 things at the time of his writing‘. See, however, note on ch. xi. 18.   
 7. It has been variously inferred,—from ch. xxi. 18, 19,—that the   
 Gospel must have been published during the lifetime of Peter ; for that,   
 had the Lord’s prophecy been fulfilled before the account was written,   
 some notice would have been taken of such fulfilment ; and from ch.   
 xviii. 10, that it cannot have been published till after his death,—for that   
 Peter’s name would not have been mentioned, had he been still living.   
 But it is plain that we might just as well argue for ch. xxi. 18, 19, being   
 written after Peter’s death, on account of the definiteness of the inter-   
 pretation there given to the prophecy ; and I have shewn in my note on   
 Matt. xxvi. 51, that no stress can be laid on the other inference.   
 8. Nor do we find any more certain indication by comparison of the   
 Gospel with the First Epistle, or with the Apocalypse. The dates of   
 both these are very uncertain ;—and it has been disputed whether their   
 contents presuppose the Gospel or not. Such expressions as “the Word   
 of Life,” “the life eternal, which was with the Father and was manifested   
 to us,” 1 John i. 2, and similiar ones, make it at least probable, that the   
 Epistle was written after the Gospel. But how long after, we have   
 no means of even conjecturing. And with regard to the Apocalypse,   
 if we assume the Domitianic date (95 or 96 a.v.), which I have   
 upheld in the Introduction to Revelation, § ii., yet get no trustworthy   
 points of comparison whereby to infer the date of the Gospel.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 63] 4 See also ch. xviii. 1; xix.