§v.] ITS OBJECT AND CONTENTS. [ixtropucrion.   
   
 or implied by antiquity, we are quite unfurnished with any other   
 evidence than that deduced from the passage under consideration. And   
 the difficulties which beset the conjunction of the various notices   
 respeeting our Apostle remain much the samo in amount, whichever way   
 we attempt their solution: whether by forcing the words “in Babylon”   
 to some far-fetched and improbable sense, as has been very generally   
 done, or with Weiss and others assigning an early date to our Epistle,   
 contrary to the plain sense of his own words, and the common-sense   
 inferences from the indications furnished by it. That St. Peter wrote   
 this Epistle to churehes in Asia Minor mainly consisting of Gentile   
 converts: that those churches had been previously the seene of the   
 labours of St. Paul and his companions: that he wrote from Babylon in   
 Assyria, and at a time subsequent to St. Paul’s missionary agency :   
 these are points which can hardly be controverted, consistently with the   
 plain aceeptation of language in its obvious and ordinary meaning.   
 That the same Apostle visited Rome and suffered martyrdom there, we   
 would fain believe as the testimony of Christian antiquity. It is difficult   
 to believe it: difficult to assign the time so as to satisfy its requisitions :   
 but in the uncertainty which rests over all the later movements of the   
 great Apostles, it would be presumption for us to pronounce it impos-   
 sible. ‘There may be means of reconciling the two beliefs, of which we   
 are not aware. And since this may be so, we are not unreasonable   
 in retaining both, both being reasonably attested.   
 19. One personal notice has not been mentioned in the foregoing   
 paragraphs, viz. that of Silvanas having been the bearer of the Epistle   
 (ch. v.12). And the reason for its omission has been, that it is far too   
 uncertain to found any argument on as to date or locality. Even   
 assuming him to be the same person as the Silas of Acts xv. 22, 32, 40;   
 xvi. 19, 25; xvii. 4, 10, 14; xviii. 5, or the Silvanus of 1 Thess. i. 1,   
 2 Thess. i. 1, 2 Cor. i. 19,—we know absolutely nothing of his history   
 subsequently to that period of his companionship with St. Paul, and all   
 that is founded on any filling up of the gap in his history can only   
 tend to mislead, by giving to baseless conjecture the value of real   
 fact.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION V.   
 ITS OBJECT AND CONTENTS.   
   
   
 1, The object of the Epistle is plainly enough announced by the   
 Apostle himself at its conclusion :   
 “ By Silvanus . . . . I have written in few words, exhorting and   
 testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”   
 2. But this apparently simple declaration is not easy to track to its   
 Vor. I. Pant Il.—247 ity