§v.] CONTENTS AND ARRANGEMENT. [iyrropucrion.   
   
 2, Again it has been fancied that tho words, “it is the last time,”   
 ch, ii. 18, furnish a note of time; and must be understood of the   
 approaching destruction of Jernsalem. But as Liicke replies, this ex-   
 pression is used simply in reference to the appearance of antichristian   
 teachers, and the apprehension thence arising that the coming of the   
 Lord was at hand. So that we have no more right to infer a note   
 of time from it, than from similar expressions in St. Paul, e. g. 1 Tim.   
 iv. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 1.   
 4, As to the place of writing, we are just as much in uncertainty.   
 ‘The Gospel (Vol. I. Introd. ch. v. § iv.) is said by Irenaus to have been   
 written at Ephesus. And ancient tradition, if at least represented by   
 the subscriptions to the Epistle, seems to have placed the writing of the   
 Epistle there also. Further, it is impossible to say.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 SECTION V.   
 CONTENTS. AND ARRANGEMENT.   
   
   
 1. This Epistle, from its aphoristic and apparently tautological   
 character, is exceedingly difficult to arrange as a continuous contextual   
 whole. Some indeed from this have been induced to believe that there   
 is no such contextual connexion in the Epistle. So Calvin, Episcopius,   
 and others. And this seems, up to the beginning of the last century, to   
 have been the prevailing view. About that time, Sebastian Schmid, in   
 his commentary on the Epistle, maintained, but only tentatively and   
 timidly, that there is a logical and contextnal arrangement. The same   
 side was taken up with more decision by Oporinus of Géttingen.   
 2. But the principal advocate of this view in the last century was   
 Bengel. In his note on the famous passage, ch. v. 7, he gives his   
 contextual system of the Epistle’, This arrangement is made in the   
 interest of the disputed verse, and tends to give it an important place in   
 the context of the Epistle. It is moreover highly artificial, and the   
 Trinitarian character, which is made to predominate in it, is certainly   
 far from the obvious key to the real arrangement, as given us by the   
 Epistle itself.   
 3. Nearer to our own time, differing arrangements of the Epistle have   
 been proposed, by Liicke, De Wette, and Diisterdieck. I shall take   
 these three in order.   
 4. Liicke holds the proper theme of the Epistle, the object, ground,   
 and binding together of all its doctrinal and practical sayings, to be this   
 proposition: “As the ground and root of all Christian fellowship is, the   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 7 Cited in the note on this part of the Introd. in my Greek Test.   
 283