§ 1v.] TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING. [intropucrion.   
   
   
 promise of ch, xxiii. 11 was now fulfilled, “so must thou bear witness also   
 at Rome.” For on this view, the being brought before Caesar ought   
 to have been expressly narrated: another promise having been given to   
 Paul, ch. xxvii. 24, “Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before   
 Cesar.”—Indeed this very argument tells forcibly in favour of the date   
 commonly assigned. Without attributing it as an object in the mind of   
 the writer, to relate the fulfilment of every divine promise recorded by   
 him, we may at least regard it as probable, that had he been able to   
 chronicle the fulfilment of this promise, he would have done so, seeing   
 that the apology before Cesar was so weighty an event, and that three   
 former apologies, those before the Jews, before Felix, and before Festus   
 and Agrippa, had been inserted.   
 7. If we look at the probabilities of the matter, we shall find that the   
 time commonly assigued was by very far the most likely for the publi-   
 eation of the book. The arrival at Rome was an important period in   
 the Apostle’s life : the quiet which sueceeded it seemed to promise no   
 immediate determination of his cause: a large amount of historic mate-   
 rial was collected :—or perhaps, taking another view, Nero was beginning   
 “to be changed for the worse ;’ none could tell how soon the whole outward   
 repose of Roman society might be shaken, and the tacit toleration which   
 now the Christians enjoyed be exchanged for bitter persecution. If   
 such terrors loomed in the prospect of even those who judged from   
 worldly probabilities, there would surely be in the church at Rome   
 prophets and teachers, who might tell them by the Holy Ghost of the   
 storm which was gathering, and might warn them that the words lying   
 ready for publication must be given to the faithful before its outbreak,   
 or never. It is true that such antecedent considerations would weigh little   
 against presumptive evidence furnished by the book itself: but when   
 arrayed in aid of such evidence, they carry with them no small weight :   
 when we find that the time naturally and fairly indicated in the book   
 itself for its publication, is that one of all others when we should con-   
 ceive that publication most likely.   
 8. We thus get a.p. 63 (see the following table) for the date of the   
 publication.   
 9. The same arguments which establish the date, also fix the place.   
 At Rome, among the Christians there, was this history first made   
 public, which has since then in all parts and ages of the church formed   
 a recognized and important part of the canon of Scripture.   
 10. As regards the title of the book, we may observe, that it appears   
 to represent the estimate, not of one culling these out of more copious   
 materials, but of an age when these were all the Acts of the Apostles   
 extant: and probably therefore proceeded not from the author, but from   
 the transcribers,   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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