iyTropuction.] TIE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. [en. xv.   
   
   
 29. Another set of important notices which this hypothesis will   
 illustrate is found, where past persecution, and the death of eminent   
 men in the church, are alluded to. These have ever presented, on the   
 Palestine view, considerable difficulties. Any assignment of them to   
 known historical occurrences would put them far too carly for any   
 probable date of our Epistle: and it has been felt that the deaths by   
 martyrdom of St, Stephen, St. James the Great, and the like, were far   
 from satisfying the expression, the decease of your leaders, which they   
 were commanded to imitate: and though the time during which the   
 Epistle must have reached Jerusalem was indeed one of great and   
 unexampled trouble and disorganization, we know of no general per-   
 secution of Christians as such, since that which arose on account   
 of Stephen, which was hardly likely to have been in the Writer’s   
 mind.   
 30. But on the Roman hypothesis, these passages are easily explained.   
 About 49 or 50, Claudius, as Suetonius tells us, “expelled from Rome   
 the Jews, who were continually stirring up tumults under the instigation   
 of Chrestus.” This time may well be alluded to by the expression,   
 remember the former days, in ch. x. 32; for under the blundering   
 expression, “at the instigation of Chrestus,” it is impossible not to   
 recognize troubles sprung from the rising of the Jews against the   
 Christian converts. Thus also will the fact of the sympathy with pri-   
 soners receive a natural interpretation, as imprisonments and trials   
 would necessarily have accompanied these “continual tumults,” before |   
 the final step of expulsion took place: and the taking with joy the   
 spoiling of their goods may be easily understood, either as a result of   
 the tumults themselves, or of the expulsion, in which they had occasion   
 to test their knowledge that they had for themselves a better and abiding   
 possession.   
 31. It is true there are some particulars connected with this passage,   
 which do not seem so well to fit that earlicr time of trouble, as the   
 Neronian persecution nearly fifteen years after. The only objection to   
 taking that event as the one referred to, would be the expression the   
 former days, and the implication conveyed in the assertion, that they   
 then suffered affliction after they were enlightened: considering that   
 we cannot go beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, at the latest eight   
 years after, for the date of our Epistle. Still it is not impossible that   
 both these expressions might be used. A time of great peril passed   
 away might be thus alluded to, even at the distance of five or six years:   
 and it might well be, that the majority of the Roman Jewish Christians   
 had beeome converts during the immediately preceding imprisonment   
 of St. Panl, and by his means.   
 32. On this supposition, still more light is thrown on this passage,   
 and on the gencral tenor of the martyrology in the eleventh chapter.   
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