cH. xx. 1-3] EXPOUNDED 507  
  
authority to His saints, to cut off His foes, and to dis-  
play them burning in the fiery lake, that none will be  
found hardy enough to attempt to resist Him. God  
means, on the other hand, to discover to us, that man,  
placed under the most favourable circumstances, will yet  
fall if left to his own choice under temptation. Yes,  
even against Christ in person he can rebel !  
2. This displays the foreknowledge of God. Ages ere  
they take place, God has foretold the things that shall  
be. The choice of men, and of Satan himself, is dis-  
cerned by Him from afar. Much as Satan must desire  
to dishonour God, and to prove His words false, still his  
hatred of God will prevail, and thus will he act. God  
knows, too, what man is, and howhe will choose. Man  
is unchanged in nature, wherever grace has not stepped  
in to heal.  
3. This discovers to us Saian’s incurable wickedness,  
and the enduring character of sin in general. Though  
he foresees the coming wrath of God, he is not even  
restrained for awhile from open acts of rebellion  
against God. Sin overleaps all calculations of self-  
interest, all past results of experience, all threatenings  
of God.  
4. This discovers also to us the futility of the ideas  
of many on a point of much importance. Many will  
not believe God’s testimony concerning the eternity of  
punishment. They trust in the efficacy of penal inflic-  
tions on the sinful to restore them to a right mind.  
“The fire will burn out the dross from the corrupt:  
the gold will at length appear.” This is a false and  
foolish supposition. It is here negatived by the voice  
of prophecy. The mighty intellect of Satan knows the  
unchangeable holiness of God, sees that as long as God  
shall be holy, and himself sinful, so long God must be  
against him. He has experienced imprisonment a  
thousand years: has felt the superior might of the