INTRODUCTION. | 2 THESSALONIANS. [cx 1x.   
   
 the coming of the Lord will overtake and destroy it. The apostasy is the   
 fall from pure evangelical doctrine to the traditions of men. The sin-   
 gular, “the man of sin,” is taken collectively, to signify a ‘series and   
 succession of men,” inasmuch as it is 2 monarchical empire which is in   
 question, which remains one and the same, though its individual head   
 may change. The godlessness of Antichrist, described in ver. 4, is   
 justified historically by the Pope setting himself above all authority   
 divine and human, the words “every one that is called God,” &e., being,   
 in accordance with Scriptural usage, taken to mean the princes and   
 governments of the world, and an allusion being found in the term object   
 of worship (sebasma) to worshipful (sebastos), the title of the Roman   
 Emperors. The “temple of God” is held to be the Christian Church,   
 and the “sitting in it” to point to the tyrannical power which the Pope   
 usurps over it. By “that which hindereth” is understood the Roman   
 Empire, and. by “him that hindereth” the Roman Emperor,—and history   
 is appealed to, to shew that out of the ruins of that empire the papacy   
 has grown up. The declaration, “ the mystery of lawlessness is already   
 working,” is justified by the fact, that the “ seeds of error and ambition,”   
 which prepared the way for the papacy, were already present in the   
 Apostle’s time. For a catalogue of the “wonders of falsehood,” ver. 9,   
 rich material was found in relics, transubstantiation, purgatory, &e. The   
 annihilation of Antichrist by the breath of the mouth of the Lord, has   
 been understood of the breaking down of his power in the spirits of men   
 by the opening and dispersion of the word of God in its purity by means   
 of the Reformation ; and the destroying by the appearance of His coming,   
 of the final and material annihilation of Antichrist by the coming of the   
 Lord Himself.   
 11. In the presence of such a polemical interpretation directed against   
 them, it could hardly be expected that the Roman Catholics on their   
 side would abstain from retaliation on their opponents. Accordingly   
 we find that such writers as Estius, al., interpret the “ apostasy”   
 of the defection from the Romish Church and the Pope, and under-   
 stand by Antichrist the heretics, especially Luther and the Protestant   
 Church.   
 12, Even before the reference to the papacy, the interpreters of the   
 Greek Church took Mohammed to be the Antichrist intended by St. Paul,   
 and the “‘apostasy ” to represent the falling of of many Oriental and   
 Greek Churches to Islamism. And this view so far influenced the   
 Protestant Church, that some of its writers have held a double Anti-   
 christ,—an Eastern one, viz. Mohammed and the Turkish power,—   
 and a Western, viz. the Pope and his power. So Melancthon, Bucer,   
 Bullinger, Piscator, &.   
 13. Akin to this method of interpretation is that which in our own   
 century has found the apostasy in the enormities of the French Revolu-   
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