§ v.] PROPHETIC IMPORT OF CILAP. IL. 1-12. [1ntRopucTioN.   
   
   
 tion, Antichrist in Napoleon, and “ that which hindereth” in the con-   
 tinuance of the German Empire: an idea, remarks Liinemann, convicted   
 of error by the termination of that empire in 1806.   
 14. One opinion of modern days has been, that it is objectionable to   
 endeavour to assign closely a meaning to the single details of the imagery   
 used by St. Paul. This has led to giving the whole description a general,   
 ideal, or symbolic sense. So Koppe, who thinks that the Apostle is only   
 following the general import of the Jewish expectations, resting on the   
 prophecy of Daniel, that there should be a season of godlessness before   
 the time of the end, the full eruption of which he expects after his own   
 death: he himself being “he that hindereth.” Similarly Storr,—who   
 sees in “the man of sin” some power, hostile to God and to all religion,   
 which is now quite unknown, and will manifest itself at some future   
 time: and in “that which hindereth” “the multitude of men actuated   
 by true love towards the Christian religion.” —Nitzsch again believes the   
 “man of sin” to be the power of godlessness come to have open authority,   
 or the general contempt of all religion. Pelt, in his Commentary on   
 these Epistles, believes the adversary to be the spiritual principle which   
 is antagonistic to the Gospel, the most eminent example of which   
 hitherto has been the papacy. He thinks the coming of Antichrist to be   
 some future culminating of this evil principle, which shall precede   
 Christ’s return, by which last he thinks is only meant the general   
 accession of the nations to Christianity.” “ That which hindereth” he   
 believes, with Theodoret, to be the will of God restraining the kingdom   
 of Satan; and if second causes be regarded, in the Apostle’s time the   
 Roman Empire,—in every age that resistance which public opinion and   
 value for men’s esteem opposes to the progress of evil. He thinks that   
 the symptoms of the future corruption ‘of the Christian Church were   
 already discernible in the apostolic times, in the danger of falling back   
 from Christian freedom into Jewish legality, in the mingling of hea-   
 thenism with Christianity, in false gnosis (knowledge) and ascetic prac-   
 tices, in angelolatry, in the pride, altogether alien from the Christian   
 religion. :   
 15. Olshausen’s view is, that inasmuch as the personal coming of   
 Christ is immediately to follow this revelation of Antichrist, such reve-   
 lation cannot have yet taken place: and consequently, though we need   
 not stigmatize any of the various interpretations as false, none of them   
 has exhausted the import of the prophecy. The various untoward events   
 and ungodly persons which haye been mentioned, including the unbelief   
 and godlessness of the present time, are all prefigurations of Antichrist,   
 but contain only some of his characteristics, not all: it is the union   
 of all in some one personal appearance, that shall make the full Anti-   
 christ, as the union in one Person, Jesus of Nazareth, of all the types   
 and prophecies, constituted the full Christ. And “that which hindereth”   
 85