INTRODUCTION. ] 2 THESSALONIANS. [cu. mx.   
   
 before the coming of the Lord. We look for him as the final and   
 central embodiment of that lawlessness, that resistance to God and God’s   
 law, which has been for these many centuries fermenting under the   
 crust of human society, and of which we have already witnessed so many   
 partial and tentative eruptions. Whether he is to be expected per-   
 sonally, as one individual embodiment of evil, we would not dogmatically   
 pronounce : still we would not forget, that both ancient interpretation,   
 and the world’s history, point this way. Almost all great movements   
 for good or for ill have been gathered to a head by one central personal   
 agency. Nor is there any reason to suppose that this will be otherwise   
 in the coming ages. In proportion as the general standard of mental   
 cultivation is raised, and man made equal with man, the ordinary power   
 of genius is diminished, but its extraordinary power is increased ; its   
 reach deepened, its hold rendered more firm. As men become familiar   
 with the achievements and the exercise of talent, they learn to despise   
 and disregard its daily examples, and to be more independent of mere   
 men of ability ; but they only become more completely in the power of   
 gigantic intellect, and the slaves of pre-eminent and unapproachable   
 talent. So that there seems nothing improbable, judging from these   
 considerations, and from the analogy of the partial manifestations which   
 we have already seen, that the centralization of the antichristian power,   
 in the sense of this prophecy, may ultimately take place in the person of   
 some one of the sons of men.   
 37. The great apostasy again will receive a similar interpretation.   
 Many signal apostasies the world and the Church have seen. Con-   
 tinually, those are going out from us, who were not of us. Unques-   
 tionably the greatest of these has been the Papacy, that counterfeit of   
 Christianity, with its whole system of falschood and idolatry. But both   
 it, and Mohammedanism, and Mormonism, and the rest, are but tentamina   
 and foreshadowings of that great final apostasy, which shall deceive, if it   
 were possible, even the very elect.   
 88. The particulars of ver. 4 we regard variously, according as the   
 lawless one is a person or a set of persons, with however every inclination   
 to take them literally of a person, giving out these things respecting him-   
 self, and sitting as described in the temple of God, whether that temple is   
 to be taken in the strictly literal signification of the Jerusalem-temple (to   
 which we do not incline), or as signifying a Christian place of assembly,   
 the gathering-point of those who have sought the fulfilment of the   
 divine promise of God’s presence,—and so called the temple of God.   
 39. The hindrance and hinderer, the one the general hindrance, the   
 other the person in whom that hindrance is summed up, are, in this view,   
 very plain. As the Fathers took them of the Roman Empire and Emperor,   
 standing and ruling in their time, repressing the outbreak of sin and   
 enormity,—so haye we been taught by history to widen this view, and   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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