.§ v.] PROPHETIC IMPORT OF CHAP. IL. 1—12. [ryrropuction.   
   
 understand them of the fabric of human polity, and those who rule that   
 polity, by which the great up-bursting of godlessness is kept down and   
 hindered. I say, we have been taught this by history: seeing that as   
 often as these outbursts have taken place, their course and devastations   
 have been checked by the knitting up agaiu of this fabric of temporal   
 power: secing that this power, wherever'the seeds of evil are most   
 plentiful, is strictly a coercive power, and that there only is its restrain-   
 ing hand able to be relaxed, where the light and liberty of the Gospel   
 are shed abroad: seeing that especially has this temporal power ever   
 been in conflict with the Papacy, restraining its pretensions, modifying   
 its course of action, witnessing more or less against its tyranny and its   
 lies.   
 40. The explanation of the mystery of lawlessness has been already   
 anticipated. It, the lawlessness, in the hearts and lives, in the speeches   
 and writings of men, is and ever has been working in hidden places, and   
 only awaits the removal of the hindering power to issue in that con-   
 centrated manifestation of the lawless one, which shall usher in the times   
 of the end.   
 41. When this shall be, is as much hidden from us, as it was from   
 the Apostles themselves. This may be set, on the one hand, as a motive   
 to caution and sobriety ; while on the other let us not forget, that every   
 century, every year, brings us nearer to the fulfilment,—and let this serve   
 to keep us awake and watchful, as servants that wait for the coming of   
 their Lord. We are not to tremble at every alarm; to imagine that   
 every embodiment of sin is the final one, or every falling away the   
 great apostasy: but to weigh, and to discern, in the power of Him, by   
 whom the prince of this world is judged: that whenever the Lord comes   
 He may find us ready,—ready to stand on His side against any, even   
 the final concentration of His adversaries; ready, in daily intercourse   
 with and obedience to Him, to hail His appearance with joy.   
 42. If it be said, that this is somewhat a dark view to take of the   
 prospects of mankind, we may answer, first, that we are not speculating   
 on the phenomena of the world, but we are interpreting God’s word:   
 secondly, that we believe in One in whose hands all evil is working for   
 good,—with whom there are no accidents nor failures,—who is bringing   
 out of all this struggle, which shall mould and measure the history of the   
 world, the ultimate good of man and the glorification of His boundless   
 love in Christ: and thirdly, that no prospect is dark for those who believe   
 in Him. For them all things are working together for good; and in the   
 midst of the struggle itself, they know that every event is their gain:   
 every apparent defeat real success ; and even the last dread conflict, the   
 herald of that victory, in which all who have striven on God’s part shall   
 have a glorious aud everlasting share.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
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