INTRODUCTION. | 2 THESSALONIANS. [ou. 1x.   
   
 which makes war with the saints. He is the person of whom the divine   
 Apostle speaks the foregoing words. I do not think then that the divine   
 Apostle meant (by ‘that which hindereth’) either of these, but I believe   
 that to be true which is said by other expositors: viz. that the God of   
 all has decreed that he (Antichrist) shall appear close upon the time of   
 the end; so that it is God’s decree, which now hinders him from   
 appearing.” And so also Theodore of Mopsuestia‘, Another meaning   
 yet is mentioned by Chrysostom, or rather another form of that repudiated   
 above by Theodoret, viz. that the continuance of “the grace of the   
 Spirit, i.e. spiritual gifts,” hindered his appearing. And remarkably   
 enough, he rejects this from a reason the very opposite of that which   
 weighed with Theodoret,—viz. from the facet that spiritual gifts had   
 ceased: “ He ought already to have appeared, if he was to appear when   
 spiritual gifts failed; for they have long ago failed®”” Augustine’s   
 remarks are curious: “As to what he says,—‘ and now ye know what   
 hindereth.” .... . Since he says that they knew it, he wished to speak   
 plainly. And on that very account we, who are ignorant of what they   
 kuew, desire to attain with pains to that which the Apostle meant, but   
 eannot: especially because what he adds afterwards makes this meaning   
 yet more obsenre. For what does this mean, ‘For the mystery is already   
 working, &c.? I confess that J am entirely ignorant what he means to   
 say.” ‘Then he mentions the various opinions on “that which hindereth,”   
 giving this as the view of some, that it was said “concerning the bad   
 men and hypocrites who are in the Church, until they come to such   
 number as to constitute a great people for Antichrist: and that this is   
 the mystery of iniquity, because it seems hidden . .” then again, quoting   
 ver. 7, adds, “that is, until the mystery of iniquity which is now hidden   
 in the Church, go forth from the midst of it.”   
 6. This mystery of iniquity, or lawlessness, was also variously under-   
 stood. Chrysostom says, “He here is speaking of Nero, who was as it   
 were a type of Antichrist : for he wished to be thought a god. And he   
 well names him the mystery: for he did it not openly, as Antichrist will,   
 nor unblushingly. For if before that time there were found one not far   
 behind Antichrist in wickedness, what wonder if there shall be again ?   
 But he spoke thus obscurely, and did not wish to make him evident, not   
 from fear, but to teach us not to conceive excessive enmities when there   
 is no urgent cause.” ‘This opinion is also mentioned by Augustine, but   
 involves of course an anachronism, as our Epistle was written probably   
 before the commencement of Nero’s reign,—certainly, at its very com-   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 4 It is decisive against this latter as Liinemann has observed, that if “that   
 which hindereth” be God’s decree, “ He that hindereth” must be God Himself, and   
 then the “until he be removed” could not be said.   
 § An ingenuous and instructive confession, the end of the fourth century, one   
 of the most illustrious the Fathers.   
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