§.y.} PROPHETIC IMPORT OF CHAP. If. 1—12. [1nrropucrtion.   
   
   
 mencement, years before his bad qualities became predominant. Theo-   
 doret, also mentioning it, adds: “But I think that the Apostle points at   
 the heresies which had sprung up. It is through them that the devil, by   
 drawing away many from the truth, prepares beforehand the destructive   
 snares of his deceit. He calls them the mystery of lawlessness, because   
 they held the snare of lawlessness concealed: . . . that which he has been   
 always preparing in secret, then he will proclaim openly and in plain words.”   
 7°. The view of the Fathers remained for ages the prevalent one in   
 the Church. Modifications were introduced into it, as her relation to   
 the State gradually altered,—and the Church at last, instead of being   
 exposed to further hostilities from the secular power, rose to the head   
 of that power,—and, penetrating larger and larger portions of the world,   
 became a representation of the kingdom of God on earth, with an im-   
 posing hierarchy at her head. Then followed, in the Church in general,   
 and among the hierarchy in particular, a neglect of the subject of Christ’s   
 coming. But meanwhile, those who from time to time stood in opposi-   
 tion to the hierarchy, understood the Apostle’s description here, as they   
 did also the figures in the Apocalypse, of that hierarchy itself. And thus   
 arose,—the coming of the Lord being regarded much as before, only as an   
 event far off instead of near,—first in the eleventh century the idea, that   
 the Antichrist foretold by St. Paul is the establishment and growing power   
 of the Popedom.   
 8. This view first appears in the conflict between the Emperors and   
 the Popes, as held by the partisans of the imperial power: but soon   
 becomes that of all those who were opponents of the hierarchy, as   
 wishing for a freer spirit in Christendom than the ecclesiastical power   
 allowed. It was held by the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the followers of   
 Wickliffe and Huss. The hindrance, which retarded the destruction of   
 the Papacy, was held by them to be the Imperial power, which they   
 regarded as simply a revival of the old Roman Empire.   
 9. Thus towards the time of the Reformation, this reference of Anti-   
 christ to the papal hierarchy became very prevalent: and after that   
 event it assumed almost the position of a dogma in the Protestant   
 Churches. It is found in almost all the foreign Reformers, and many   
 subsequent Commentators: in the symbolical books of the Lutheran   
 Church, and in Luther’s own writings: and runs through the works of   
 our English Reformers’.   
 10. The upholders of this view generally conceive that the Papacy will   
 go on bringing out more and more its antichristian character, till at last   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 6 What follows, as far as paragraph 24, is taken principally from Liinemann’s con-   
 cluding remarks, as above: with the exception of the citations in full, personal   
 opinions expressed.   
 7 See a very complete résumé of the passages on Antichrist in the Reformers, under   
 the word, in the excellent Index to the publications of Parker Society.   
   
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