

xxiv., 14) must find its ultimate fulfilment after, and not before the end of the Jewish polity and the setting up of its kingdom at that time.

It is plain from II. Thes., chap. II., that before the second coming of Christ there was to be a great apostacy or falling away in the church; verse 3—"That day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed the son of perdition." In Paul's time it was not yet revealed but the mystery of iniquity was already working; and when a certain hinderance to its developement would be removed that wicked would be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. It is plain its full developement was in the future after the end of the Jewish polity, and therefore Christ's coming was to be (II. Thes. II., 8)—after that, as the Apostle says,—“The day of Christ is at hand,” should be “the day of Christ is present”—there being in Scripture a difference between the two in meaning, different Greek words being used. The Scriptures never deny but that in a certain sense the day of the Lord is at hand, and we are to watch and be ready; but the Thes. had taken the notion that it was already present, and this was beginning to interfere with their daily business of life. The Apostle in this chapter dispels the delusion by telling them it would not take place till after the man of sin had been revealed, thus pointing to a period yet in the future.

But who is this man of sin? Whatever power it may refer to it is certainly not applicable to the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem. Its developement was after that event in the future.—Paul says, “Having proved this it is not necessary to discuss fully to what power it refers, but the usually received opinion is that the description in this chapter applies to the Papacy, which is Anti-Christ. Dr. Hodge says: “That the common opinion among Protestants is that the prophecies concerning Antichrist have special reference to the Papacy, and that Antichrist does not denote a particular individual but an institution, a power or corporation, and that ecclesiastical, rather than civil, the “man of sin,” the “son of perdition,” having a religious import being more appropriate to the former than the latter.” “His coming is after the working of Satan with all powers and signs and lying wonders.” Civil powers have recourse to diplomatic measures and force to attain to and preserve their power, and these are rather descriptive of the way in which the Papacy has maintained its fearful ascendancy in the world;—Miracles of every possible description they have pretended to have wrought. Its power has been achieved mainly by fraud, “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,” by false pretences, by claiming that Peter was made Primate over the whole Church, and Vicar of Christ on earth, and as such, was superior to all earthly potentates.