

there, to the gaze of the world, as if he were God, the very representative of God on the earth.

And now we come to the important question, "of whom speaketh the prophet this?" And I put it to yourself, or to the judgment of any candid man, whether there is any other personage to whom these characters can possibly apply, except the Popes of Rome, as the Head and Representative of the Roman Church. I may possibly be reminded of the Pagan Roman Emperors, whose claims were almost equally blasphemous. And I admit that many of the early Fathers believed that the Apostle did refer, in this passage, to the Emperor Nero, whose wickedness was so enormous; and, when Nero died without fulfilling their expectations, they supposed he would rise again from the dead, and appear in the true character of Antichrist. But there are these two fatal objections to the opinion that this personage is to be found in any Roman Emperor: First, that none of them ever sat in *the temple of God*. And second, that, whereas it is evident from the context in this chapter, that the Apostle is speaking of some one who had not made his appearance at the time of writing, but was still future; the outrageous claims of the Roman Emperors were matters of history long before his day. We think it not improbable, however, that in drawing this picture, he had these Emperors in his eye; perhaps, they suggested some of the traits; perhaps, it was his design to teach that Antichrist would resemble them—would have some connexion with them—would, in fact, be their successor. But, with the exception of these Emperors, let me ask you to cast your eye back over the whole compass of history, sacred or profane, and tell me if you can find a single personage, to whom even the half of these characteristics are so applicable, as the whole of them are to the Head of the Roman Church?

First Identification: Antichrist is the opponent of Christ; so are the Popes of Rome in their office as the