

man who wrote the note ever read the passage! As soon as the power of the Roman Empire is taken out of the way, the man of sin, who is the Roman emperor, will be revealed! Surely the verse deserves a better explanation than this.

To see the view carried to its ultimate absurdity, one should read Alexander Reese, The Approaching Advent of Christ, p. 247, where the Roman Empire is presented as living on in the Papacy. Does he mean that the existence of the Papacy is the great force which restrains the coming of the man of sin, and that once it is removed the evidence will be before us that apostasy can now act freely and the coming of Christ may be near? What a contrast to the view of the Reformers of the sixteenth century, who maintained that the Pope was himself the Antichrist!

This view, that the one who restrains is the Roman empire, is amazingly widespread, and is doubtless an evidence of the fact that so many try simply to interpret each verse by itself without any effort to see whether it makes sense in the context. Others, of course, take the attitude of Milligan and Deissman, that Paul speaks in great gusts of feeling, without much effort at consistency or reasonableness.

More recently some attempts have been made to present modification of the view which takes the restraining force to be the Roman empire. One such statement which I heard recently was to the effect that the restraining force was human government in general. Yet the great monsters of iniquity, who have terrorized vast multitudes by their wickedness, have all to frequently been men who used human government as their instrument. Certainly this was true of Nero, and of Hitler, both of whom were similar in many ways to the coming man of sin.

Another suggestion has been that the restraining force is lawful government. This is far too vague. What governments, after all, are really lawful? Nero and Hitler used the detailed procedures of established government with great exactness. What makes a government lawful? Is it the