180 THE APOCALYPSE (ox. viii. 12  
  
FOURTH TROMPET.  
  
12. ‘‘ And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet, and the third  
of the sun, and the third of the moon, and the third of the stars,  
were smitten ; in order that the third of them might be darkened,  
and the day not shine for the third of it, and the night likewise.”’  
  
God remembers mercy still, and His covenant with  
Noah. He promised that as long as earth should  
remain, “day and night should not cease”? (Gen. viii.  
22). Hence day continues still, though its brightness is  
diminished. God shows His right to call in question  
man’s right to the covenant. He has not kept the  
terms. Blood for blood is not shed by the nations. By  
this time the command to put the murderer to death is,  
through a false philanthropy, refused by the world.  
  
13. ‘‘ And I saw and heard a single eagle 1 flying in mid-heaven,  
saying with great voice, Woe, woe, woe to the dwellers upon the  
earth, from the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three  
angels who are about to sound !”’  
  
The eagle and its cry separates the first four trumpets  
from the last three. It is not easy to understand why  
the cry should be by an “eagle,” rather than by an  
“angel.” Antichrist rises at the next trump. The  
eagle appears to be his forerunner. It is a “ single  
eagle.” Hagles are often spoken of in the plural. Isa.  
xl. 31; Jer. iv. 13; 2 Sam. i. 23. Specially when con-  
nected with judgment: Matt. xxiv. 28. At the close,  
in a body, they prey on men. Rev. xix. 17.  
But this eagle not only flies, but speaks. Is that  
literal or symbolic? If any think it is not absurd to  
suppose that an eagle may be made to speak, as  
  
1“Fagle.”’ This is the reading of the best MSS. and adopted  
by the critical editions. It is the most difficult reading ; and in-  
ternal evidence is thus in its favour.