being the *analogy with* the sayings  
of our Lord to the Apostles, Matt. xix.  
28; Luke xxii. 30. That those sayings do  
not regard the *same* session as this, is  
no argument against the inference from  
analogy. The Abbot Joachim brings  
against this view that the twelve patriarchs  
were not personally holy men, and never  
are held up as distinguished in the Old  
Testament. But this obviously is no valid  
objection. It is not the personal characters,  
but the symbolical, that are here in  
question. It might be said with equal  
justice that the number of the actual  
Apostles is not definitely twelve. It is no  
small confirmation of the view, that in  
ch. xv. 3, we find the double idea of the  
church, as made up of Old Testament and  
New Testament saints, plainly revealed to  
St.John; for he heard the victorious saints  
sing *the song of Moses*, aud *the song of the  
Lamb*. See also ch, xxi. 12, 14, where the  
twelve *gates* of the New Jerusalem are  
inscribed with the names of the twelve  
tribes, and its twelve *foundations* with  
those of the twelve Apostles. Various  
other interpretations are given in my  
Greck Test.).

**5.]** **And out of the  
throne go forth** (the tense is changed, and  
the narrative assumes the direct form,  
which, however, is immediately dropped  
again, and the accumulation of details resumed)  
**lightnings and voices and thunders**(the imagery seems to be in analogy  
with that in the Old Testament, where  
God’s presence to give his law was thus  
accompanied: Exod. xix. 16; where lightnings  
and voices occur in juxtaposition as  
here. If this idea be correct, then we  
have here represented the sovereignty and  
almightiness of God): **and seven lamps**the former construction is resumed) **of  
fire burning before the throne** [**itself**],  
**which are the seven Spirits of God** (see  
notes on ch. i. 4, v. 6. These seem to represent  
the Holy Spirit in his sevenfold  
working: in his enlightening and cheering  
as well as his purifying and consuming  
agency. So most Commentators. De  
Wette and Ebrard regard the representation  
as that of the Holy Spirit, the principle  
of physical and spiritual life, which  
appears only wrong by being too limited.  
Hengstenberg is quite beside the mark in  
confidently [as usual] *confining* the interpretation  
of the lamps of fire to the consuming  
power of the Spirit in judgment.  
The fact of the parallel ch. v. 6 speaking  
of *seven eyes*, and such texts as ch. xxi. 23;  
Ps. cxix. 105, should have kept him from  
this mistake. The whole of this glorious  
vision is of a composite and twofold nature:  
comfort is mingled with terror, the fire of  
love with the fire of judgment): {6} **and before  
the throne as it were a sea of glass**(not, “*glassy*,” as rendered by Elliott: the  
word describes not the appearance, but the  
material, of the sea: it appeared like a sea  
of glass—so clear, and so calm) **like to  
caystal** (and that not common glass, which  
among the ancients was, as we see from its  
remains, cloudy and semi-opaque, but like  
rock crystal for transparency and beauty,  
as Victorinus, “clear water, steady, unruffled  
by the wind.” Compare by way of  
contrast her that sitteth on the *many  
waters*, the multitudinous and turbulent  
waters, ch. xvii. 1.—In seeking the explanation  
of this, we must first track the image  
from its Old Test. earlier usage. There, in  
Exod. xxiv. 10, we have in the Septuagint  
version, “*And they saw the place where  
the God of Israel stood: and that which  
was under His feet was as it were work  
of sapphire bricks, and as the appearance  
of the firmament of heaven in its purity.”*Compare with this Ezek. i. 22, “*And the  
likeness over the heads of the living beings  
themselves was as it were a firmament,  
stretched out over their wings above.*” In  
Job xxvii. 18 also, the sky is said to be  
“as a molten looking-glass.” If we are to  
follow these indices, the primary reference  
will be to the clear ether in which the  
throne of God is upborne: and the intent  
of setting this space in front of the throne