in the main identical with the cherubim  
of the Old Test. [compare Ezek. i, 5—10,  
x. 20], which are called by the same name  
of living-creatures, and are similarly  
described. We may trace however some  
differences. In Ezekiel’s vision, each living-  
being has all four faces, Ez. i. 6, whereas  
here the four belong severally, one to  
each. Again in Ezekiel’s vision, it is  
apparently the *wheels* which are full of  
eyes, Ezek. i. 18; though in ch. x. 12, it  
would appear as if the animals also were  
included. Again, the having *six* wings  
apiece is not found in the cherubim of  
Ezekiel, which have *four*, Ezek. i. 6,—but  
belongs to the seraphim described in Isa.  
vi. 2, to whom also [see above] belongs  
the ascription of praise here given. So  
that these are forms compounded out of  
the most significant particulars of more  
than one Old Test. vision.

In enquiring after their symbolic import, we  
are met by the most remarkable diversity  
of interpretation. 1) Our earliest Commentator,  
Victorinus, may serve as the  
type of those who have understood them  
to symbolize the Four Evangelists, or  
rather, *Gospels:*— “The animal like a  
*lion* is the Gospel according to Mark, in  
which the voice of a lion roaring in the  
desert is heard, the voice of one crying in  
the desert, Prepare ye the way of the  
Lord. Under the figure of a *man*, Matthew  
strives to announce to us the generation  
of Mary from whom Christ received  
flesh. So while he enumerates from Abraham  
to David and Joseph, he has spoken  
as of a man. Therefore his preaching  
shews the effigy of a *man*. Luke, while  
he tells of the priesthood of Zacharias  
offering a victim for the people, and the  
angel appearing to him,—on account of  
the priesthood, and the description of the  
victim, is represented by an *ox*. And the  
Evangelist John, like an *eagle*, taking  
wing and hastening up to loftier things,  
treats of the Word of God.” I have cited  
this comment at length, to shew on what  
fanciful and untenable ground it rests.  
For with perhaps the one exception of the  
last of the four, not one of the Evangelists  
has any inner or substantial accordance  
with the character thus assigned. Consequently  
these characteristics are found  
varied, and that in the earliest writer  
whom the view can be traced, viz. Irenæus,  
who makes the lion to be the gospel of  
St. John; the steer that of St. Luke, as  
above; the man, that of St. Matthew; the  
eagle, that of St. Mark. So also Andreas.  
But again Augustine attributes the lion to  
St. Matthew, the man to St. Mark, the  
steer to St. Luke, aud the eagle to St. John.  
These notices may again serve to shew with  
what uncertainty the whole view is beset.  
It has nevertheless been adopted by Jerome,  
Primasius, Bede, and many others of old,  
and among the moderns by Williams [on  
the Study of the Gospels, pp. 1—92],  
Scott [Interpretation of the Apocalypse,  
p. 132, but making, as Augustine above,  
the lion, St. Matthew; the man, St. Mark;  
the ox, St. Luke; and the eagle, St. John],  
Wordsworth [Lectures on the Apocalypse,  
p. 116, who, as in his statements on the  
other details, so here, ascribes unanimity  
[see below!] to the ancients: “in them  
*the ancient church* beheld a figure of the  
four gospels,” suppressing also the fact of  
discrepancies in the application to the individual  
gospels], &c. The principal of  
the other interpretations prevalent among  
the ancients and moderns have been:  
2) the 4 elements: 3) the 4 cardinal  
virtues: 4) the 4 faculties and powers of  
the human soul: 5) Our Lord in the fourfold  
great events of Redemption: 6) the  
4 patriarchal-churches: the lion being  
Jerusalem, for its constancy ; the ox,  
Antioch, for its obedience; the man,  
Alexandria, for its human learning; the  
eagle, Constantinople, for having produced  
the men of most elevated contemplation:  
and Cornelius-a-lapide, who adopts this,  
interprets the throne of God to be “the  
see of Rome, in which sits the lion of  
God:” 7) the 4 great Apostles, Peter, fervent  
as the *lion:* James the Lord’s brother,  
patient as the *ox:* Matthew, good  
as the *man:* Paul, always flying about  
as the *eagle:* 8) all the doctors of the  
church: 9) four orders of churchmen,  
pastors, deacons, doctors, contemplatives:  
10) the 4 representatives of the New Test.  
church, as the four standards of the tribes  
Reuben, Judah, Ephraim, and Dan, which  
are traditionally thus reported [see also  
Num. ii.], were of the Old Test. church:  
11) the 4 virtues of the Apostles, magnanimity,  
beneficence, equity, wisdom: 12)  
the 4 principal angels: 13) the angelic,  
or equal-to-angelic, state of the glorified