church: so Elliott, vol. i. p. 87. But thus  
we have no account given of the peculiar  
symbolism of these living-beings, nor of  
the part which they perform in the act of  
praise below. There are many other interpretations  
and ramifications of interpretation,  
hardly worth recounting. But  
the one which above all these seems to me  
to require our notice is that which is indicated  
in the rabbinical sentence cited by  
Schöttgen here: “There are four which  
hold pre-eminence in this world: man  
among all animals; the eagle among  
birds; the ox among cattle; the lion  
among beasts.” The four cherubic forms  
are the representatives of animated nature  
—of God’s sentient creation. In Ezekiel,  
each form is compounded of the four.  
Here, the four forms are distinct. There  
[xxviii. 12], where the prince of Tyrus is  
compared to one of them, it is called the  
impression of similitude, and the crown of  
beauty: in Isaiah vi. where the seraphim,  
which enter into the composition of these  
living-beings, ascribe holiness to Jehovah,  
they cry, “His glory is the fulness of the  
whole earth.” With this view every thing  
that follows is in accordance. For when  
these, and the 24 elders, in vv. 9—11, fall  
down before the throne, the part which  
these living-beings bear in the great  
chorus of praise is sufficiently indicated  
by the reason which they give for their  
ascription, viz. *for Thou art worthy*, **because  
Thou didst create all things**, *and  
because of Thy will they were, and were  
created.* The objection brought against  
this view by Ebrard, viz. that Behemoth,  
the king of the waters, is not here represented,  
is mere trifling. He forgets that  
in the record of creation, the noblest of  
the creatures sprung from the waters are  
not fishes, but birds; and that the eagle  
represents both. It is in strict accordance  
also with this view, that these living-  
beings are full of eyes, ever wakeful, ever  
declaring the glory of God: that they  
have each six wings, which doubtless are  
to be taken as in Isa. vi. from which the  
figure comes—“with twain he covered his  
face [*reverence*, in not venturing to look  
on the divine majesty], and with twain he  
covered his feet [*humility*, hiding his own  
created form from the glory of the Creator],  
and with twain he did fly [*obedience*, readiness  
to perform the divine commands].”  
This view is taken by the best of the  
modern Commentators: by Herder, De  
Wette, Rinck, Hengstenberg, Düsterdieck.  
Ebrard differs only in this, that he regards  
them as symbolic not of creation itself, but  
of the creative power of God. Stern, whose  
commentary on this whole passage is very  
able and beautiful, inclines rather to take  
them as representing the power of divine  
grace within the church of God: but in  
his usual interpretation treats them as  
“the whole creative-life of nature.” See  
also my Hulsean Lectures for 1841, vol. i.  
Lecture ii.

We have thus the throne  
of God surrounded by His Church and His  
animated world: the former represented  
by the 24 elders, the latter by the four  
living-beings.

**9–11.]** {9} *The everlasting song of praise  
of creation in which the church joins.* It  
is well observed by Düsterdieck, that the  
ground of this ascription of praise is not  
*redemption*, which first comes in at ch. v.  
9 ff.,—but the power and glory of God as  
manifested in Creation; so that the words  
of the elders are in beautiful harmony with  
the praise of the four living-beings, and  
with the signification of the whole vision.  
**And whensoever the living-beings shall  
give** (the future must not be pressed quite  
so strongly as is done by De Wette [so  
also Stern], “from henceforth for all the  
time to come: see ch. vii. 15 ff.: beforetime  
it was not so, seeing that the 24  
elders have only assumed their place since  
Christ’s work of Redemption has been  
proceeding and His victory developing.”  
Still, it has a distinct pointing onward  
towards the future, implying eternal repetition  
of the act) **glory and honour** (i. e.,  
recognition of His glory and honour) **and  
thanksgiving** (i.e., actual giving of  
thanks) **to Him that sitteth upon the  
throne, to Him that liveth to the ages  
of the ages, {10} the twenty-four elders shall  
fall down before Him that sitteth upon  
the throne, and shall worship Him that  
liveth to the ages of the ages** (ch. v. 8,