**the wild beasts of the earth** (the  
enumeration comprehends the “*four sore  
judgments*” enumerated in Ezek. xiv. 21,  
and in the same terms. This fixes the  
meaning of this second and subordinate  
**death** as above.

This seal also is  
interpreted as above by the earliest Commentators:  
e.g. Victorinus: “These same  
also, among other means of death, the  
Lord had foretold, great coming pests and  
mortalities.” But as on the third seal,  
so here also, he goes off into vague allegory  
about the latter part of the vision).

We have now passed the four first seals,  
after which the character of the vision  
changes. One feature common to these  
four is, Personification : the representation  
of processions of events by the impersonation  
of their leading features. Another is,  
the share which the four living-creatures  
bear in the representation, which after this  
point ceases, as far as the seals are concerned.  
In my mind, no interpretation  
can be right, which does not take both  
these common features into account. And  
this may best be done by viewing, as above,  
these four visions as the four solemn preparations  
for the coming of the Lord as  
regards the visible Creation, which these  
four living-beings symbolize. The whole  
Creation demands His coming. **COME**, is  
the cry of all its tribes. This cry is answered,  
first by the vision of the great Conqueror,  
whose arrows ave in the heart of  
his enemies, and whose career is the world’s  
history. The breaking of this first seal is  
the great opening of the mystery of God.  
This in some sense includes and brings in  
the others. Those others then, as we might  
expect, hold a place subordinate to this.  
They are, in fact, but exponents of the  
mysteries enwrapt within this conquering  
career: visions of the method of its being  
carried out to the end in its operation on  
the outward world. That the world-wide  
declaration of the everlasting Gospel should  
be accompanied by war, by famine, by  
pestilence, and other forms of death, had  
been announced by our Lord Himself  
[Matt. xxiv. 11], and is now repeated in  
this series of visions. The fulfilment of  
each of these judgments is, as it were, the  
removing a seal from the book of God’s  
mysterious purposes: the bringing nearer  
of the time when that book shall be open  
for all the redeemed to read.

With regard to the question whether  
these four visions are to be regarded as consecutive  
or contemporaneous, I have already  
expressed an opinion. In their *fulness*,  
I believe them to be contemporaneous, and  
each of them to extend through the whole  
lifetime of the church, The analogy of the  
whole four symbols seems to require this.  
We read nothing implying that there are  
“days” of the opening of any particular  
seal, as there are, ch. x. 7, of the sounding  
of the several trumpets. The **in  
order that he may conquer** of the first  
seal speaks of a purpose which will not  
be accomplished till the earth be all subjugated:  
and if I am right in supposing  
the other visions subordinate to this,  
their agency is necessarily included in its  
process. At the same time I would by no  
means deny that they may receive continually  
recurring, or even ultimate fulfilments,  
as the ages of the world go on, in  
distinct periods of time, and by distinctly  
assignable events. So far we may derive  
benefit from the commentaries of those who  
imagine that they have discovered their fulfilment  
in successive periods of history, that,  
from the very variety and discrepancy of  
the periods assigned by them, we may verify  
the fact of the prevalence of these announced  
judgments, hitherto, throughout the whole  
lifetime of the Church.

As regards *ultimate* fulfilment, there can  
be no doubt, that all these judgments on  
the world without, as well as the manifestation  
[of which they form a part] of  
the conquering career of the Kingdom of  
Christ, will reach their culminating point  
before the coming of the great and terrible  
day of the Lord.

I may add, that no account whatever is  
taken, in the common *historic* interpretation,  
of the *distinctive* character of the  
four first seals, as introduced by the cry  
of the four living-beings: nor indeed is  
any interpretation commonly given of that  
cry itself.

**9—11.]** OPENING OF THE FIFTH SEAL.  
We may at once observe, that the whole  
character of the vision is altered. The  
four living-beings have uttered each his cry  
of **Come**, and are now silent. No more  
horses and riders go forth upon the earth.  
The scene is changed to the heavenly altar,  
and the cry is from thence. Any interpretation  
which makes this vision of the  
same kind with aud consecutive to the four  
preceding, must so far be wrong. In one