**great voice to the four angels to whom it  
was given to injure** (viz. by letting loose  
the winds, which they as yet held in) **the  
earth and the sea, {3} saying, Do not ye  
injure the earth nor the sea nor the  
trees, until we** (not, *I*; see Matt. xxiv.  
31, cited below) **shall have sealed the  
servants of our God** (the God alike of  
the speaker and of those addressed) **upon  
their foreheads** (the noblest, as well as  
the most conspicuous part, of the human  
frame).

This vision stands in the closest analogy  
with Matt. xxiv. 31, where immediately  
after the appearing of the sign of the Son  
of man and the mourning of the tribes of  
the earth, we read, *And He shall send  
His angels with a great sound of a  
trumpet, aud they shall gather His elect***from the four winds**, *from one end of  
heaven to the other*. The judgment of the  
great day is in fact going on in the background ; but in this first and general summary of the divine judgments and dealings,  
in which the sighs of Creation and of the  
Church for Christ’s coming are set before  
us, only that portion of its proceedings is  
described which has reference to these two.  
When the strain is again taken up, the  
ease and reference are different.

The questions now arise, 1) who are  
these that are sealed? and 2) what is the  
intent of their being sealed ? 1) Those  
who have followed the preceding course  
of interpretation will have no difficulty in  
anticipating the reply. They are, primarily, those elect of God who shall be living  
upon earth at the time here indicated, viz.  
that of the coming of the Lord: those  
indicated in Matt. xxiv. 31, above cited.  
(On the import and reason of the use of  
*Israel* and its tribes, I shall speak below.)  
As such, they are not *identical with*, but are *included in*, the great multitude which  
no man ean number of ver. 9 ff. But they  
are also symbolical of the first-fruits of the  
church ; see notes on ch. xiv. 1 ff.

**4**.] **And I heard the number of the sealed,  
an hundred and forty-four thousand sealed**(the number is symbolical of fixedness and  
full completion, 12 x 12 taken a thousand fold. No one that I am aware of has  
taken it literally, and supposed that just  
this particular number and no more is  
imported. The import for us is, that the  
Lord knoweth and sealeth His own: that  
the fulness of their number shall be accomplished and not one shall fail: and, from  
what follows, that the least as well as the  
greatest of the portions of his Church shall  
furnish its quota to this blessed company:  
see more below) **from every tribe** (i.e.  
from the sum of the tribes; from every  
tribe, all being taken together. This is  
evident from what follows) **of the sons  
of Israel** (this has been variously understood. By many, and even by the most  
recent Commentator, Düsterdieck, these  
sealed ones are taken to represent Jewish  
believers: the chosen out of the actual  
children of Israel. I need hardly say that  
such an interpretation seems to me to be  
quite inconsistent with the usage of this  
book. Our rule in such cases must be, to  
interpret a term, where it. may possibly be ambiguous, by the use of the same term, if  
we can discover any, in a place or places  
where it is clear and unmistakable. Now  
in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 9 ff., we have the names  
*of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel*inscribed on its twelve gates. Can there  
be any doubt as to the import of those  
names in that place? Is it not, that the  
city thus inscribed is the dwelling-place of  
the Israel of God? Or are the upholders