of the literal sense here prepared to carry  
it out there, and to regard these inscribed  
names as importing that none but the  
literal descendants of Israel dwelt within ?  
[For observe that such an inference could  
not be escaped by the fact of the names of the twelve Apostles being inscribed on its foundations: those being individual names, the others collective.] It seems certain,  
by this expression being again used there  
in the same words, that the Apostle must  
here, as there, have intended Israel to be  
taken not as the Jewish nation, but as the  
Israel of God. Again, we have a striking  
indication furnished in ch. iii. 12, who  
these children of Israel are :—“ *He that  
overcometh*, .... **I will write upon  
him** *the name of my God, and* the name  
**of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem**,  
*which cometh down out of heaven from my  
God,—and my new name*.” These words  
serve to bind together the sealing here,  
and the vision of the new Jerusalem in ch. xxi. Nor is it any valid objection to  
this view that the persons calling themselves Jews in ch. ii. 9, iii. 9, have been  
taken to be actual Jews, There is a wide  
difference in the circumstances there, as  
there is also in the appellation itself):  
**out of the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed, &c. &c**.—The points to be  
noticed in this enumeration are, 1) That  
with the exception of Judah being placed  
first, the order of the tribes does not seem  
to follow any assignable principle. It may  
indeed be not without reason, that Reuben,  
the eldest, next follows Judah, and Benjamin the youngest is placed last, with Joseph  
his own brother: but beyond this, all is  
uncertainty: as any one will find, who  
attempts to apply to the order any  
imaginable rule of arrangement, So far  
has been generally confessed. “No order  
is kept, because all are equal in Christ,”  
says Grotius. 2) That the tribe of Dan  
is omitted. This is accounted for by the  
fathers and ancient interpreters, from thé  
idea [founded on Gen. xlix. 17] that antichrist was to arise from this tribe: by  
most Commentators, from the fact, that  
this tribe was the first to fall into idolatry,  
see Judg. xviii.: by others, from the fact  
that this tribe had been long ago as good  
as extinct. Grotius quotes for this a Jewish  
tradition. Accordingly we find in 1 Chron. iv. ff. where all Israel are reckoned by  
genealogies, that this tribe is omitted altogether. This latter seems the more probable account here, seeing that in order to  
the number 12 being kept, some one of  
the smaller tribes must be omitted. In  
Deut. xxxiii., Simeon is omitted. 38) That  
instead of Ephraim, *Joseph* is mentioned.  
We have a somewhat similar instance in  
Numb. xiii. 11, with this difference, that  
there it is “ of the tribe of Joseph, namely  
of the tribe of Manasseh.” The substitution here has been accounted for by the  
“untheocratic” recollections connected  
with the name Ephraim. But this may  
well be questioned. In the prophecy of  
Hosea, where the name so frequently  
occurs, it designates Israel repentant, as  
well as Israel backsliding ; compare especially ch. xiv. 4—8, the recollection of  
which would admirably fit the spirit of  
this present passage. I should rather  
pose that some practice had arisen which  
the Apostle adopts, of calling the tribe of  
Ephraim by this name. 4) That the tribe  
of Levi is included among the rest, hardly  
appears to depend on the reason assigned  
by Bengel and others, that the Levitical  
ceremonies being now at an end, all are  
alike priests and have access to God: for  
in some Old Test. catalogues, even where  
territorial division is in question, Levi is  
not omitted : the cities of the priests being  
mentioned under the head of this tribe.  
See 1 Chron. vi.

It yet remains to enquire, before passing  
on to the second vision in this episode,  
what is the import and intent of the sealing here mentioned. It has been the  
general view, that it was to exempt those  
sealed from the judgments which were to  
come on the unbelieving. And it can  
hardly be denied, that this view receives  
strong support from Scripture analogy;  
e.g. that of Exod. xii. and Ezek. ix.,  
especially the latter, where the exempted  
ones are marked, as here, on their foreheads. It is borne out by our ch.  
ix. 4, where these sealed ones are by  
implication exempted from the plague of  
the locusts from the pit. It is again  
hardly possible to weigh fairly the language used in this place itself, without  
coming to the same conclusion. The four  
angels are commanded not to begin their