trumpets as setting forth the gradual subjugation of the earth to Him whose kingdom it is in the end to become, by judgments  
inflicted on the ungodly, as regards  
the vitiating and destroying the ordinary  
means of subsistence, and comfort, and  
knowledge. In the details of these judgments, as also of the two following, there  
are many particulars which I cannot interpret, and with regard to which it may be  
a question whether they are to be considered  
as other than belonging to the requisite  
symbolic machinery of the prophecy. But  
in confessing this I must also say, that I  
have never seen, in any apocalyptic Commentator, an interpretation of these details  
at all approaching to verisimilitude :  
never any which is not obliged to force the  
plain sense of words, or the certain course  
of history, to make them fit the requisite  
theory. “Many examples of these will be  
found in the history of apocalyptic interpretation given by Mr. Elliott im vol. iv.  
of his Horae Apocalypticae.

**7**.] **And the first blew his trumpet, and  
there took place hail and fire mingled  
in blood** (i.e. the hail *and* the fire were  
mingled together in blood, as their flux  
or vehicle; the stones of hail and the  
halls of fire [not *lightning*] fell in a  
shower of blood, just as hail and fireballs  
commonly fall in & shower of rain. There  
is here manifestly an allusion to the plague  
of hail in Egypt, of which it is said that  
“the fire ran along upon the ground:”  
“*there was hail and fire mingled with  
the hail*,” Exod. ix. 24: but with the  
addition of the blood. With regard to this  
latter, we may remark, that both here and  
under the vials, where the earth, seas, and  
rivers are again the objects of the first  
three judgments, *blood* is a feature common to all three. It appears rather to  
indicate a general character of the judgments, than to require any special interpretation in each particular ease, In blood  
is life: in the shedding, or in the appearing, of blood, is implied the destruction  
of life, with which, as a consequence, all these judgements must be accompanied), **and it was case into the earth** (towards the surface of the earth): **and the third part** (this expression first occurring here, it will be well once for all to enquire into its meaning in these prophecies. I may first say, that all *special* interpretations seem to me utterly to have failed; e.g.  
that of Eliott, which would understand it of  
a tripartite division of the Roman Empire  
at the time to which he assigns this judgment. It is fatal to this whole class of  
interpretations, that it is not said the hail  
&c. were *cast on a third part*, but that  
the destruction occasioned by them *extended* to a third part of the earth on  
which they were cast. And this is most  
expressly declared to be so in this first  
case, by *all green grass* being also destroyed, not a third part: a fact of which this interpretation takes no notice. It is  
this mixture of the fractional third with  
other designations of extent of mischief,  
which will lend us I believe to the right  
interpretation. We find it again under  
the third trumpet, where the star Wormwood is cast “*on* **the third part** *of the  
rivers, and on the springs of the waters* :”  
the result being that *the third part of the  
waters* was embittered. This lax usage  
would of itself lead us to suppose that:  
we are not to look for strict definiteness in the interpretation. And if we refer  
to the prophecy in Zech. xiii. 7 ff., where  
the import is to announce judgment on a  
greater part and the escape of a remnant,  
we find the same tripartite division : “*And  
it shall come to pass, that in all the land,  
saith the Lord, two parts therein shall  
be cut off and die, but the third shall be  
left therein. And I will bring the third  
part through the fire, &c*.” Nay, in the  
Apocalypse itself, we have *the third part*  
used where the sense can hardly but be  
similarly indefinite: e.g., under the sixth  
trumpet, ch. ix. 15, 18, and xii. 4, where  
it is said that the dragon’s tail “*draweth  
the third part of the stars of heaven*:”  
the use of the *present* shewing that it  
is rather a general power, than a particular event which is designated. Compare again the use of “*the fourth part the earth*,” in ch. vi. 8, and of “*the tenth part of the city*,” in ch. xi. 13. All these  
seem to shew, that such prophetic expressions are to be taken rather in their  
import as to amount, than in any strict  
fractional division. Here, for instance, I  
would take the pervading **third part** as  
signifying, that though the judgment is  
undoubtedly, as to extent, fearful and  
sweeping, yet that God in inflicting it,  
spares more than he smites: two-thirds