in ver. 1) **saying, Seal up the things  
which the seven thunders spoke, and do  
not write them** (compare the contrary  
command, ch. xxii. 10. Many speculations  
have been raised as to the purport of the  
utterances of the seven thunders, and the  
reason for concealing them. From the  
very nature of the case, these must be  
utterly in vain. The wisdom of Him,  
who signified this Revelation to His servant John,  
has not seen fit to reveal these  
things to us. But the very nature of the  
case also convicts some of these speculations  
of error. The thunders, e. g., did  
not speak *“things exceeding human comprehension,”*  
as Ewald thinks, seeing that  
not only did St. John understand their  
utterances, but he was about to write  
them down for others to read, as intelligible  
to them also. Again, they were  
not any utterances of mere human device.  
They were spoken by command of the  
great angel, as ver. 3 necessarily implies:  
they, in common with the seals, trumpets,  
and vials, form part of the divinely-  
arranged machinery of the Apocalypse.  
It is matter of surprise and grief therefore,  
when we find historical interpreters  
of our day explaining them of the papal  
anathemas of the time of the Reformation.  
It seems to me that no interpretation  
could be more unfortunate—none more  
thoroughly condemnatory of the system  
which is compelled to have recourse to  
it. For, merely to insist upon one point,—  
if it were so, then the Apostle sealed the  
utterances in vain, for all know what  
those thunders have uttered: then the  
command should have run “*seal the book  
even to the time of the end,*” as in Dan.  
xii. 4, instead of an absolute command as  
here. Thus much we may infer; from  
the very character of thunder,—that the  
utterances were of fearful import: from  
the place which they hold,—that they  
related to the church: from the command  
to conceal them,—first, encouragement,  
that God in His tender mercy to His own  
does not reveal all His terrors: secondly,  
godly fear, seeing that the arrows of His  
quiver are not exhausted, but besides  
things expressly foretold, there are more  
behind not revealed to us).

**5–7.]** *The oath of the strong angel,  
that the time of fulfilment of all  
prophecy was close at hand.* In this  
portion of the vision, the reminiscences  
of Dan. xii. 7 are very frequent:—“*And  
I heard the man clothed in fine linen,  
which was upon the waters of the river,  
when he held up his right hand and his  
left hand unto heaven, and sware by Him  
that liveth for ever, that* it shall be *for a  
time, times, and a half: and when he shall  
have accomplished to scatter the power of  
the holy people, all these things shall be  
finished*.” {5} **And the angel whom I saw  
standing upon the sea and upon the  
earth, lifted his right hand** (not both  
hands, as in Daniel above, seeing that  
the little book lay open on his left. On  
the practice of lifting the hand in swearing,  
compare Gen. xiv. 22 [Exod. vi. 8 and  
Num. xiv. 30, margin], Deut. xxii. 40)  
**towards heaven** (us God’s dwelling-place,  
Isa. lvii. 15), {6} **and sware by Him that  
liveth to the ages of the ages** (compare  
Dan. above), **who created the heaven and  
the things in it, and the earth and the  
things in it, and the sea and the things  
in it** (this full and formal designation of  
God as Creator of all is given, because the  
subject of the angel’s oath is, the mystery  
of God, which necessarily rests in His  
power alone who made all things.

We may observe, that the fact as well as  
the form of this oath is against the supposition,  
that this strong angel is the Lord  
Himself. Considering St. John’s own declarations  
respecting the Son of God, it is  
utterly inconceivable that he should have  
related as spoken *by* Him an oath couched