to answer the conditions: nor do we gain  
any thing by their combination, But any  
thing within reasonable regard for the  
analogies and symbolism of the text seems  
better than the now too commonly received historical interpretation, with its  
wild fancies and arbitrary assignment of  
words and figures. As to the time indited by the 1260 days or 3 ½ years, the  
interpretations given have not been convincing, nor even specious. We may observe thus much in this place: that if we  
regard this prophecy as including long  
historie periods, we are driven to one of  
two resources with regard to these numbers: either we must adopt the *year-day*  
theory (that which reckons a day for a  
year, and consequently a month for thirty  
Years,—and should reckon a year for 360  
or 365 years), or we must believe the numbers to have merely a symbolical and mystical, not a chronological force. If [and  
this second alternative is best stated in an  
inverse form] we regard the periods mentioned as to be literally accepted, then the  
prophecy cannot refer to long historic  
periods, but must be limited to a succession  
of incidents concentrated in one place and  
space of time either in the far past or in  
the far future. Of all prophecies about  
which these questions can be raised, the  
present is the one which least satisfactorily  
admits of such literal interpretation and  
its consequences. Its actors, the woman  
and the dragon, are beyond all controversy  
mystical personages: one of them is expressly interpreted for us to be the devil:  
respecting the other there can be little  
doubt that she is the Church of God: her  
seed being, as expressly interpreted to be,  
God’s Christian people. The conflict then  
is that between Satan and the church. Its  
first great incident is the birth and triumph  
of the Son of God and of man. Is it likely  
that a few days or years will limit the  
duration of a prophecy confessedly of such  
wide import? I own it seems to me that  
this vision, even if it stood alone, is decisive against the literal acceptation of the  
stated periods, Rejecting that, how do we stand with regard to the other alternative  
in its two forms? Granting for the moment the year-day principle, will it help us  
here? If we take the flight into the wilderness as happening at any time between  
the Ascension, A.D. 30, and the destruction  
of Jerusalem, .D. 70, 1260 years will bring  
us to some time between a.d. 1290 and  
1380: a period during which no event can  
be pointed out as putting an end to the  
wilderness-state of the church. If again  
we enlarge our limit for the former event,  
and bring it down as late as Elliott does,  
i.e. to the period between the fourth and  
seventh centuries, we fall into all the difficulties which beset his most unsatisfactory  
explanation of the man-child and his being  
caught up to God’s throne, and besides,  
into this one: that if the occultation of  
true religion [the condition of the invisible  
church] was the beginning of the wilderness-state, then either the open establishment of the Protestant churches was the  
end of the wilderness-state of concealment,  
or those churches are no true churches:  
either of which alternatives would hardly  
be allowed by that author. And if on the  
other hand we desert the year-day principle, and say that these defined and constantly recurring periods are not to be  
pressed, but indicate only long spaces of  
time thus pointed out mystically or analogically, we seem to incur danger of missing  
the prophetic sense, and leaving unfixed  
that which apparently the Spirit of God intended us to ascertain). {17} **And the dragon  
was wroth at the woman and departed**(from his pursuit of her) **to make war with  
the rest** **of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony  
of Jesus** (as in ch. vi. 9: see note there.  
Notice as important elements for the interpretation, 1) That the woman has seed besides the Man-child who was caught up to  
God’s throne [for this is the reference of  
**the rest**], who are not only distinct: from  
herself, but who do not accompany her in  
her flight into the wilderness: 2) That  
those persons aro described as being they  
who keep the commandments of God and