INTRODUCTION. ] REVELATION. (em. xxu.°   
   
   
 I have confessed my inability to assign one, however plausible and   
 attractive the guesses of expositors may have been.   
 18. The result of such a method of interpretation may be apparent   
 want of system ; but I submit that it is the only way which will conduct   
 us safely as far as we go, and which will prevent us from wresting the   
 text to make it suit a preconceived scheme. This latter fault seemed to   
 me so glaring and so frequent in our expositors of the historical school,   
 and inspired me with snch disgust, that I determined my own pages   
 shonld not contain a single instance of it, if I could help it. And I   
 venture to hope that the determination has been carried out.   
 19. The course which I have taken, that of following the text itself   
 under the guidance of Scripture analogy, naturally led to the recognition   
 of certain landmarks, or fixed points, giving rise to canous of interpreta-   
 tion, which I maintain are not to be departed from. Snch are for instance   
 the following:   
 20. The close connexion between our Lord’s prophetic discourse on   
 the Mount of Olives, and the line of apocalyptie prophecy, cannot fail   
 to have struck every student of Scripture. If it be suggested that such   
 connexion may be merely apparent, and we subject it to the test of more   
 accurate examination, our first impression will I think become con-   
 tinually stronger, that the two, being revelations from the same Lord   
 concerning things to come, and those things being as it seems to me   
 bound by the fourfold ery, Come, which introduces the seals, to the same   
 reference to Christ's coming, must, corresponding as they do in order   
 and significance, answer to one another in detail ; and thus the discourse   
 in Matt. xxiv. becomes, as Mr. Isaac Williams has truly named it, “ the   
 anchor of apocalyptic interpretation :” and, I may add, the touchstone of   
 apocalyptic systems. If its guidance be not followed in the interpreta-   
 tion of the seals: if any other than our Lord is he that goes forth con-   
 quering and to conquer, then, though the subsequent interpretation may   
 have occasional points of contact with truth, and may thus be in parts   
 profitable to us, the system is an erroneous one, and, as far as it is   
 concerned, the true key to the book is lost.   
 21, Another such landmark is found IJ believe in the interpretation of   
 the sizth seal: if it be not indeed already laid down in what has just   
 been said. We all know what that imagery means in the rest of Serip-   
 ture. Any system which requires it to belong to another period than   
 the close approach of the great day of the Lord, stands thereby self-   
 condemned. I may illustrate this by reference to Mr. Elliott’s con-   
 tinuous historical system, which requires that it should mean the   
 downfall of Paganism under Constantine. A more notable instance of   
 inadequate interpretation cannot be imagined.   
 22. Closely connected with this last is another fixed point in inter-   
 pretation. As the seven seals, so the seven trumpets and the seven   
 852