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 lamps of fire: this is Jehovah the covenant God of His redeemed. And   
 next we haye Creation, symbolized by the four living-beings—the Chureh,   
 patriarchal and apostolic, represented by the twenty-four elders: and the   
 innumerable company of angels, ministering in their glory and might,   
 now by one of them, now by another, throughout the course of the   
 prophecy.   
 44. In the next section, the Lamb, alone found worthy, opens one   
 after another, the seals of the closed book or roll, so that, when they   
 are all opened, it may be unrolled and read. One point I have urged   
 in the following notes: viz., that the roll is never during the prophecy   
 actually opened, nor is any part of it read. ‘The openings of its sue-   
 cessive seals are but the successive preparations for its contents to be   
 disclosed: and as each is opened, a new class of preparations is seen in   
 prophetic vision, When the seventh is loosed, and all is ready for the   
 unfolding and reading, there is a symbolic silence, and a new series of   
 visions begins.   
 45. As regards the seals themselves, the first four are marked off from   
 the other three in a manner which none can fail to observe. They repre-   
 sent, I believe, Christ's victory over the world in His appointed way.   
 We have Himself going forth to conquer, and in His train, the sword   
 which He came to send on earth, the wars, famines, and pestilences which   
 He foretold should be forerunners of His coming. At each of these   
 appearances, one of the living-beings who symbolize Creation echoes   
 with his “Come” the sighs of the world for the manifestation of the   
 sons of God. I conceive it to be a mistake, necessarily involved in the   
 consecutive historical interpretation, but sometimes found where that is   
 not, to interpret these four seals as succeeding one another intime. All   
 are co-ordinate, all are correlative.   
 46, Next to the sighs of Creation for the Lord’s coming, we have   
 those of His martyred saints, erying from under His altar, Then, at   
 the opening of the sixth seal, we have reproduced the well-known imagery   
 of our Lord’s discourse and of the Old Test. prophets, describing the   
 very eve and threshold, so to speak, of the day of the Lord: the portents   
 which should usher in His coming: but not that coming itself. For the   
 revelation of this, the time is not yet. First, His elect must be gathered   
 out of the four winds—the complete number sealed, before the judgments   
 invoked by the martyred souls descend on the earth, the sea, the trees.   
 First, the Seer must be vouchsafed a vision of the great multitude whom   
 none can number, in everlasting glory. ‘The day of the Lord’s coming is   
 gone by, and the vision reaches forward beyond it into the blissful eter-   
 nity. Why? Because then, and not till then, shall the seventh seal,   
 which looses the roll of God’s eternal purposes, be opened, and the book   
 read to the adoring Church in glory. Then we have the last seal opened,   
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