INTRODUCTION. ] REVELATION. fou. xx.   
   
 recognize the characters: but I cannot appropriate them. I do not feel   
 it to be any reproach to my system, or any disproof of its substance, that   
 there are this and other gaps in it which I cannot bridge over. Nay,   
 on the contrary, if it be a sound interpretation, there must be these : and   
 to find events and persons which may fit the whole, ere yet the course   
 of time is run, would seem to me rather writing a parody, than earnestly   
 seeking a solution.   
 52, And now the seventh angel sounds ; and as before at the opening   
 of the seventh seal, the heavenly scene is before us, and the representa-   
 tives of the church universal fall down and give thanks that God’s king-   
 dom is come, and the time of the dead to be judged. But though this   
 series of visions likewise has been thus brought down to the end of the   
 final consummation, there is more yet to be revealed ; and in anticipation   
 of the character of the subsequent visions, the temple of God in heaven   
 is opened, and the pause between one and another series is announced,   
 as before between the seals and the trumpets, and as after at the end of   
 the vials, by thunders and lightnings and voices.   
 53, And now opens the great prophetic course of visions regarding   
 the church. Her identification in the eyes of the seer is first rendered   
 unmistakeable, by the scene opening with the appearance of the woman   
 and the serpent, the enmity between him and her seed, the birth of the   
 Man-child who should rule over the nations—His ascension to heaven   
 and to the throne of God. Here, at least, all ought to have been plain :   
 and here again I see pronounced the condemnation of the continuous   
 historical system,   
 54, The flight of the woman into the wilderness, the easting down of   
 Satan from heaven no longer to curse the brethren there, his continued   
 enmity on earth, his persecution of the remnant of the woman’s seed,   
 these belong to the introductory features of the great vision which is to   
 follow, and serve to describe the state in which the Church of God is   
 found during the now pending stage of her conflict.   
 55. What follows, carries out the description of the war made by the   
 dragon on the seed of the woman. A wild-beast is seen rising out of   
 the deep, uniting in itself the formerly described heads and horns of the   
 dragon, and also the well-known prophetic symbols of the great empires   
 of the world: representing, in fact, the secular powers antagonistic to   
 the Church of Christ. To this wild-beast the dragon gives his might   
 and his throne: and notwithstanding that one of its heads, the Pagan   
 Roman Empire, is erushed to death, its deadly wound is healed, and all   
 who are not written in the Lamb’s book of life worship it.   
 56. The further carrying out of the power and influence of the beast   
 is now set before us by the vision of another wild-beast, born of the   
 earth, gentle as a lamb in appearance, but dragon-like and cruel in cha-   
 racter. This second beast is the ally and servant of the former : makes   
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