§ v.] SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION. [intropuction.   
   
 men to worship its image and receive its mark, as the condition of civil   
 rights and even of life itself, Here, in common with very many of the   
 best interpreters, I cannot fail to recognize the sacerdotal persecuting   
 power, leagued with and the instrument of the secular: professing to be   
 a lamb, but in reality being a dragon: persecuting the saints of God ;   
 the inseparable companion and upholder of despotic and tyrannical   
 power. This in all its forms, Pagan, Papal, and in so far as the   
 Reformed Churches have retrograded towards Papal sacerdotalism,   
 Protestant also, I believe to be that which is symbolized under the   
 second wild-beast.   
 57. Next, the apocalyptic vision brings before us the Lamb on Mount   
 Zion with the first-fruits of His people, and the heavenly song in which   
 they join,—as prefatory to the announcement, by three angels, of the   
 prophecies which are to follow, so full of import to the people and church   
 of God. These are, first, the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel as   
 previous to the final judgments of God: next, the fall of Babylon, as an   
 encouragement for the patienco of the saints: third, ihe final defeat and   
 torment of the Lord’s enemies. After these is heard a voice proclaiming   
 the blessedness of the holy dead. Then follow, in strict accord with these   
 four announcements, 1) the harvest and the vintage of the earth, and the   
 seven last plagues, symbolized by the outpouring of the vials: 2) the   
 ample details of the fall and punishment of Babylon: 3) the triumph of   
 the Church in the last defeat of her Lord’s enemies: 4) the millennial   
 reign, and finally, the eternity of bliss. But on each of these somewhat   
 more must be said.   
 58. I have found reason to interpret the harvest, of the ingathering   
 of the Lord’s people: the vintage, of the crushing of His enemies: both   
 these being, according to the usage of this book, compendious, and   
 inclusive of the fuller details of both, which are to follow.   
 59. The vintage is taken up and expanded in detail by the series of   
 the vials: seven in number, as were the seals and the trumpets before.   
 These final judgments, specially belonging to the Church, are introduced   
 by a song of triumph from the saints of both dispensations, and are   
 poured out by angels coming forth from the opened sanctuary of the   
 tabernacle of witness in heaven.   
 60. The course of these judgments is in some particulars the same as   
 that of the trumpets. ‘he earth, the sea, the rivers, the lights of heaven   
 —these are the objects of the first four: but ever with reference to those   
 who worship the beast and have his mark on them. At the fifth, as in   
 each case before, there is a change from general to special: the throne   
 and kingdom of the beast, the river Euphrates, these are now the objeets :   
 / and the seventh passes off, as in each former case, to the consummation   
 \_ of all things,   
 61. Meantime, as so often before, anticipating hints have been given   
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