The third living creature calls for this minister of  
God’s displeasure. It is the one with face as a man.  
Accordingly this seal refers to corn, wine, oil, prices  
and measures, which bring man into especial view.  
 The horse is “black.” This colour is associated in  
the prophets with famine. “The word of the Lord  
that came to Jeremiah concerning the *dearth*. Judah  
mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they were  
*black* unto the ground” (Jer. xiv. 1, 2). “Their visage  
is *blacker than a coal;* they are not known in the streets:  
their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is  
become like a stick. They that be slain with the *sword  
are better than they that be slain with hunger;* for these  
pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of  
the field” (Lam. iv. 8, 9). Thus this judgment is worse  
than the former. Again, “*Our skin was black like an  
oven because of the terrible famine*” (Lam. v. 10).  
 The rider has “a pair of balances” in his hand.  
They are another indication of famine. When corn  
is plentiful, it is sold by measure, and a few hundred  
grains either way are not regarded. But when it becomes very precious, every grain is taken into the account.  
 Also this weighing of food is given as one of the  
indications of scarcity. “*And when I have broken the  
staff of your bread*, ten women shall bake your bread in  
one oven; *and they shall deliver you your bread again by  
weight; and ye shall eat and not be satisfied*” (Lev. xxvi.  
26). This follows after the threat of the *sword* and  
*pestilence*.  
 But the voice of God instructs the rider also concerning  
the extent of the scarcity. It is not to be without parallel,  
nor the entire want of everything capable of supporting  
life.  
 The throne of God appoints the prices of provisions.  
The weather, the crops, the quantities of money in