the Samaritans: 2 Kings xvii. 25; and she-bears the  
mocking young men: 2 Kings ii. 24.  
 In the present case there is sin, and this is the secret  
cause of the peculiar ferocity of the wild beasts at the  
time predicted. He who holds all creatures in His hand,  
increases now their numbers, and lets them loose on  
men, as never was the case before; because men are  
more openly his enemies than their fathers were.  
 They are called “wild beasts *of the earth*,” by way  
of distinction. When these well-known animals of the  
surface fail to effect their purpose, the Most High  
brings up creatures *from beneath*. He has many shafts  
in His quiver: the lightest are used first. But if they  
avail not, His judgments deepen in intensity.  
 It will be understood from the general principles  
laid down that not one of these seals has been opened:  
and the various attempts at explaining them have  
proved unsatisfactory to almost all but the authors.  
They will not, I suppose, begin to be fulfilled till  
Israel is restored to his land.

FIFTH SEAL.

9. “And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the  
altar the souls of those that had been slain because of the word of  
God, and because of the testimony which they used to hold: and  
they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the  
Holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon  
the dwellers upon the earth?”  
  
 Why so many saints of God have been slain, and He  
seems not to regard, is a mystery. But His patience is  
not to last for ever.  
 The “souls” of the slain were seen by John. At  
this many stumble: but it is perfectly possible. The  
soul of Samuel was seen by Saul. The *soul* is a different  
thing from the *spirit* of man. The soul or ghost appears  
as a shadowy likeness of a man’s self, when the