executioners of the judgments of the Lord, not to injure  
the wearer. Ps. cv. 15.  
 It is the seal of “*the living God.*” This is the title  
which God usually takes, as the author of miracles, and  
as set in opposition to the vain gods of idolaters.  
 By this mark, then, the faithful remnant is constituted  
God’s witnesses against the idolatry then abroad. ix. 20.  
 The four angels are those “to whom *it was given* to  
hurt the earth and sea.” That it is by the commission  
of the throne that all fulfil, either designedly or undesignedly, their parts, is a truth continually enforced upon  
us in this book. ‘Tis God’s earth. The power of angels,  
whether good or bad, is limited by Him.  
 The interval was to last “till we have sealed the  
servants of our God on their foreheads.” By this sign  
the Lord distinguishes His people from the terrified  
and hostile world. “The Lord knoweth them that are  
His.” But that during the churches was a secret thing:  
now He makes them known to the earth. These are  
the people whom He would spare, during the judgments  
abroad on earth. But this marking of the flock by  
God only points them out to man as those whom He  
hates and will injure. This is “the flock of the slaughter.” These are the elect of earth, for whose sake the  
days of great woe are to be shortened, as now the coming  
on of wrath is delayed. Matt. xxiv. 22. They are those  
who are referred to in the reply to the souls under the  
altar, as about, in part, to be slain, ere the full woes  
descend.  
 These are referred to also by Joel, as those of Israel  
on whom the Lord would pour out His Spirit: for  
besides the outpouring upon all flesh, it is to be upon  
“your sons [O Jews] and your daughters.” Presently,  
too, follow “wonders in heaven and earth, *blood* and *fire*,  
[first trumpet] and *pillars* of *smoke* [fifth trumpet].  
The *sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into*