4. “And it was said to them, that they should not hurt the  
grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the  
men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads.”  
  
 They are under control. Though released, it is not  
in order to do their own will. “It was said to them”;  
where we must fill up the ellipsis with the words, “by  
God,” as in other places.  
 This command of God supposes the locusts intelligent  
up to a certain point. Commands are given only to those  
who can comprehend them. But the degree of intelligence supposed is not greater than that which belongs  
to a dog. They are free to touch only those who are  
unsealed by God. A dog can be trained to distinguish game, and to point at it, while he disregards  
birds which the sportsman cares not for. Or he  
can be taught to fly at beggars, while he suffers the  
well-dressed to pass unhurt.  
 The mark on the chosen of God must be a literal and  
visible one, to be recognized by these creatures.  
 From the prohibition against hurting the vegetable  
creation, we gather, that but for that injunction, these  
creatures would injure it.  
 The grass, herbs, and trees, then, are literal here.  
They had been before injured by the fire and *hail* of the  
first trumpet. But now they are not to be stricken.  
*Men* are the prey of these locusts.  
 That the inhabitants of the earth are to be plagued  
directly now, is the characteristic of the woe-trumpets;  
or, at least, of the two first. Disregarded judgments  
grow in terrors. The objects of the plague are described  
as men unsealed by God. This throws us back on the  
sealing of the seventh chapter. The sealed are abiding  
on earth still. Therefore I conclude that the plagues  
succeed one another quickly, and not after intervals of  
centuries; else the sealed ones had died off.  
 From this limitation of the objects of their injury we