may infer, that but for that, they would have attacked  
the holy ones of God, equally with the wicked, or in  
preference to them. He who sends them forth forbids  
them to torment any but His enemies. That their  
nature and tendencies are to injure is shown by this,  
that the negative in each case comes first, and the positive point is permissive only, not a command. “It  
was said to them that they should *not* hurt the grass,”  
“but the men which have *not* the seal of God.” “It  
was given, that they should *not* kill them.” So, in the  
next plague, all that is requisite is to *loose* the fierce  
angels of evil: no restriction is laid on them, and they  
slay.

5. “And it was given to them, that they should not kill them,  
but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man.”

Ordinarily tormentors dwell in the prison, and the  
culprits to be tormented are brought to them. Here  
the tormentors are let loose among the habitations of  
earth. The globe is one vast prison. It has become  
like the pit for its wickedness; it is like it also in punishment.  
 That the torment is *bodily pain* is proved by this, that  
it stands opposed to *death*. These locusts torment,  
without killing. But all prefer death to their tormenting.  
 But for the limit set by God, they would willingly  
have slain the objects of their attack. But this plague  
is torment—insufferable pain of body. God’s ordinary  
plagues are frequently unto death: but here He would  
show how many and varied are the arrows of His quiver.  
 In the infernal flames we find the cause of the  
“smoke” which ascends from beneath; and from the  
place of torment ascend the “locusts” that inflict  
anguish. Earth is a picture of the place of the damned.  
Darkness and smoke shut out the light of the sun; and