**full of abominations and of the impure  
things of her fornication** (this cup is best  
taken altogether symbolically, and not as  
the cup in the Mass, which, however degraded by her blasphemous fiction of tran-  
substantiation, could hardly be called by  
this name, and moreover is *not given*, but  
*denied* by her to the nations of the earth.  
That she should have represented herself  
in her medals as holding forth this cup  
[with the remarkable inscription, “she sits  
over the whole earth ;” see Elliott, vol. iv.  
p. 30, plate], is a judicial coincidence rather  
than a direct fulfilment), {5} **and** [**having**]  
**upon her forehead a name written** (as was  
customary with harlots), **Mystery** (is this  
word part of the name, or not? On the  
whole it seems more probable that it is.  
For though no such word would in the  
nature of things be attached to her forehead as part of her designation, so neither  
would the description which follows **Babylon the great**, to which the word **mystery**  
seems partly to refer. But whether part  
of the name or not, the meaning will be  
the same: viz. that the title following is  
to be taken in a spiritual and an enigmatical sense : compare ch. i.20, and 2 Thess.  
ii, 7), **Babylon the great, the mother of  
the harlots and of the abominations of  
the earth** (i.e. not only first and greatest  
of these, but herself the progenitress and  
origin of the rest. All spiritual fornication  
and corruption are owing to her, and to  
her example and teaching). {6} **And I saw  
the woman drunken with the blood of the  
saints, and with the blood of the witnesses  
of Jesus** (as the Seer contemplates the  
woman, he perceives that she is drunken:  
and from what is revealed to him, and from  
her symbolic colour of blood, he assigns the  
cause of that intoxication). A**nd I wondered, when I saw her, with great wonder** (what was the ground of the Seer’s  
astonishment? One doubtless might be  
assigned, which would at once account for  
any degree of such emotion. If this woman  
is *the same as he before saw*, who fled into  
the wilderness from the face of the dragon,  
“the faithful city become an harlot”  
[Isa. i. 21], he might well wonder. And  
certainly there is much in favour of such a  
supposition. It has been taken up by some  
considerable expositors, such as Auberlen  
[on Daniel], who has argued earnestly but  
soberly for it. There is one objection to  
it, which has been made more of in this  
place than perhaps it deserves. It is, that  
in the Angel’s replication to St. John’s  
wonder, no allusion is made to this circumstance as its principal ground. But, it may  
well be replied, this would be just what we  
might expect, if the fact of identity were  
patent. The Seer, versed in the history of  
man’s weakness and depravity, full of Old  
Test. prophetic thoughts and sayings,  
would need no solution of the fact itself:  
this would lie at the ground of his wonder,  
and of the angel’s explanation of the consequences which were to follow from it.  
Auberlen very properly lays stress on the  
fact, that the joint symbolism of the wilderness and the woman could not fail to call  
up in the mind of the Seer the last occasion  
when the two occurred together: and insists that this symbol must be continuous  
throughout. Without going so far as to  
pronounce the two identical, I think we  
cannot and ought not to lose sight of the  
identity of symbolism in the two cases. It  
is surely meant to lie beneath the surface,  
and to teach us an instructive lesson. We  
may see from it two prophetic truths:  
first, that the church on earth in the main  
will become apostate and faithless, compare  
Luke xviii. 8: and secondly, that while