this shall be so, the apostasy shall not embrace the whole church, so that the second  
woman in the apocalyptic vision should be  
*absolutely* identical with the first. ‘The  
identity is, in the main, not to be questioned: in formal strictness, not to be  
pressed. "This being so, I should rather  
regard St. John’s astonishment as a compound feeling, occasioned partly by the  
enormity of the sight revealed to him,  
partly also by the identity of the symbolism with ‘that which had been the  
vehicle of a former and altogether different

**7—18.**] *Explanation by the angel of  
the mystery of the woman and of the beast.*And first, 7—14] *of the beast.* {7} **And the  
angel said to me, Wherefore didst thou  
wonder? I will tell to thee the mystery**(which, be it noted, is but one) **of the  
woman and of the wild-beast that carrieth  
her, which hath the seven heads and the  
ten horns, {8} The beast which thou sawest,  
was, and is not, and shall come up out of  
the abyss, and goeth to perdition** (these  
words have been a very battle-field for  
apocalyptic expositors. ‘The principal differing interpretations are far too long to  
be given at all intelligibly here, but will be  
seen best in their own works, aud compendiously but fairly stated in the notices in  
Mr. Elliott’s fourth volume. What is here  
required, is that I should give a consistent  
account of that solution which I have been  
myself led to adopt. 1) It will not be supposed, with the general view which I have  
taken of the beast as the secular persecuting power, that I am prepared to accede  
to that line of interpretation which makes  
the whole vision merely descriptive of the  
Scer’s own time, and of the Roman emperors then past, present, and expected.  
Against such a view it seems to me the  
whole imagery and diction of the vision  
protest: and this it will be my endeavour  
to shew as each of their details comes under my notice. If, as universally acknow-  
ledged, our prophecy be a taking up and  
continuation of that of Daniel, then we  
are dealing with larger matters and on a  
wider scale than such a limited interpretation would imply. 2) Noragain, after the  
meaning assigned above to the harlot and  
her title, will it be expected that I should  
agree with those who take her as, according to the letter of our ver. 18, strictly  
confined in meaning to the material city  
of Rome. She is that city: but she is also  
**mystery**. She is herself a harlot, an apostate and faithless church: but she is also a  
mother: from her spring, of her nature  
partake, with her shall be destroyed, all  
the fornications and abominations of the  
earth, though they be not in Rome, though  
they be not called by her name, though in  
outward semblance they quarrel with and  
oppose her. 3) The above remarks will  
lead their intelligent reader to expect, that  
the present words of our text, which are in  
the main reproductive of the imagery of  
ch. xiii. 1—4, will be interpreted as those  
were interpreted, not of mere passing  
events and persons, but of world-wide and  
world-long empires and changes. 4) Having thus indicated the line of interpreta-  
tion which I shall follow, I reserve the  
details for ver. 10, where they necessarily  
come before us): **and they shall wonder  
who dwell upon the earth, of whom the  
name is not written upon** (so literally,  
as often in this book) **the book of life  
from the foundation of the world** (i.e.