

CHAPTER 17

The harlot Babylon clothed with diverse ornaments, 6. and drunken of the blood of Martyrs, sitteth upon a beast that hath seven heads and ten horns: 7. all which things the Angel expoundeth.

AND there came one of the seven Angels which had the seven vials, and spake with me, saying, Come, I will show ^vthee the damnation of the great harlot, which ^csitteth upon many waters,

2. With whom the kings of the earth have fornicated, and they which inhabit the earth have drunk of the wine of her whoredom.

3. And he took me away in spirit into the desert. And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns.

4. And the woman was clothed round about with purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold, and precious stone, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

5. And in her forehead a name written, "*Mystery*": Babylon the great, mother of the fornications and the abominations of the earth.

6. And I saw the woman drunken of the blood of the Saints, and of the blood of the martyrs of JESUS. And I marveled when I had seen her, with great admiration.

7. And the Angel said to me, Why doest thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns.

8. The beast which thou sawest, ^vwas, and is not, and shall come up out of the bottomless depth, and go into destruction: and the inhabitants on the earth (whose names are not written in the book of life from the making of the world) shall marvel, seeing the beast that was, and is not.

9. And here is understanding, that hath wisdom. The seven heads: are seven hills, upon which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings.

10. Five are fallen, one is, and another one is not yet come: and when he shall come, he must tarry a short time.

11. And the beast which was, and is not: the same also is the eight, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction.

12. And the ten horns which thou sawest: are ^vten kings, which have not yet received kingdom, but 'shall' receive power as kings one hour after the beast.

13. These have one counsel and force: and their power they shall deliver to the beast.

14. These shall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, ^{*}because he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with him, called, and elect, and faithful.

15. And he said to me, The waters which thou sawest where the harlot sitteth: are peoples, and nations, and tongues.

16. And the ten horns which thou sawest in the beast: these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and her they shall burn with fire.

17. For ^vGod hath given into the hearts, to do that which pleaseth him: that they give their kingdom to the beast, till the words of God be consummate.

18. And the woman which thou sawest: is the great city, which hath kingdom over the kings of the earth.

^vThe final damnation of the whole company of the reprobate, called here the great whore.

^cThese many waters are many peoples. v. 15.

^vIt signifieth the short reign of Anti-christ, who is the chief horn or head of the beast.

^vSome expound it of ten small kingdoms, into which the Roman Empires shall be divided, which shall all serve Anti-christ both in his life and a little after.

^vNot forcing or moving any to follow Anti-christ, but by his just judgment, and for punishment of their sins, permitting them to believe and consent to him.

do

1 Tim. 6:15
Apoc. 19:16

ANNOTATIONS

Chapter 17

5. *Babylon.*] In the end of St. Peter's first Epistle, where the Apostle dateth it at Babylon, which the ancient writers (as we there noted) affirm to be meant of Rome: the Protestants will not in any wise have it so, because they would not be driven to confess that Peter ever was at Rome. But here for that they think it maketh for their opinion, that the Pope is Antichrist, and Rome the seat and city of Antichrist, they will needs have Rome to be this Babylon, this great whore, and this purple harlot. For such fellows, in the exposition of holy Scripture, be led only by their prejudicate opinions and heresies, to which they draw all things without all indifferency and sincerity.

The Protestants here will needs have Babylon to be Rome, but not in St. Peter's epistle.

But Babylon (according to all the Fathers) is signified, partly the whole society of the wicked, partly the city of Rome, only in respect of the terrene and heathenish seat of them that persecuted the Church.

The Church of Rome is never called Babylon.

Mystery

This woman signifieth all persecutors of Saints.

Putting Heretics to death is not to shed the blood of saints.

The Protestants madness in expounding the 7 hills of Rome: the Angel himself expounding it otherwise.

But St. Augustine, Aretas, and other writers, most commonly expound it, neither of Babylon itself a city of Chaldea or Egypt, nor of Rome, or any one city, which may be so called spiritually, as Jerusalem before, chap. 11, is named spiritual Sodom and Egypt: but of the general society of the impious, and of those that prefer the terrene kingdom and commodity of the world, before God and eternal felicity. The author of the Commentaries upon the Apocalypse set forth in St. Ambrose name, writeth thus: *This great whore sometime signifieth Rome, specially which at that time when the Apostle wrote this, did persecute the Church of God. But otherwise it signifieth the whole city of the Devil, that is, the universal corps of the reprobate.* Tertullian also taketh it for Rome, thus, *Babylon* (saith he) *in St. John is a figure of the city of Rome, being so great, so proud of the Empire, and the destroyer of the saints.* Which is plainly spoken of that city, when it was heathen, the head of the terrene dominion of the world, the persecutor of the Apostles and their successors, the seat of Nero, Domitian, and the like, Christ's special enemies, the sink of idolatry, and false worship of the Pagan gods. Then was it Babylon, when St. John wrote this, and then was Nero and the rest figures of Antichrist, and that city the resemblance of the principal place (wheresoever it be) that Antichrist shall reign in, about the later end of the world.

li. advers. Iudaeos.

Now to apply that to the Roman Church and Apostolic See, either now or then, which was spoken only of the terrene state of that city, as it was the seat of the Emperor, and not of Peter, when it did slay above 30 Popes Christ's Vicars, one after another, and endeavored to destroy the whole Church: that is most blasphemous and foolish.

The Church in Rome was one thing, and Babylon in Rome another thing. Peter sat in Rome, and Nero sat in Rome. But Peter, as in the Church of Rome: Nero, as in the Babylon of Rome. Which distinction the Heretics might have learned by St. Peter himself *ep. 1 chap. 5.* writing thus, *The Church saluteth you, that is in Babylon, coelect.* So that the Church and the very chosen Church was in Rome, when Rome was Babylon. Whereby it is plain that, whether Babylon or the great whore do here signify Rome or no, yet it cannot signify the Church of Rome: which is now, and ever was, differing from the terrene Empire of the same. And if, as in the beginning of the Church, Nero and the rest of the persecuting Emperors (which were figures of Antichrist) did principally sit in Rome, so also the great Antichrist shall have his seat there, as it may well be (though others think that Jerusalem rather shall be his principal city) yet even then shall neither the Church of Rome, nor the Pope of Rome be Antichrist, but shall be persecuted by Antichrist, and driven out of Rome, if it be possible. For, to Christ's Vicar and the Roman Church he will bear as much good will as the Protestants now do, and he shall have more power to persecute him and the Church, than they have.

St. Jerome *epist. 17 c. 7.* to Marcella, to draw here out of the city of Rome to the holy land, warning her of the manifold allurements to sin and ill life, that be in so great and populous a city, alludeth at length to these words of the Apocalypse, and maketh it to be Babylon, and the purple whore. But straight way, lest some naughty person might think he meant that of the Church of Rome, which he spake of the society of the wicked only, he addeth: *There is there in deed the holy Church, there are the triumphant monuments of the Apostles and Martyrs. There is the true confession of Christ, there is the faith praised of the Apostle, and Gentility trodden under foot, the name of Christian daily advancing itself on high.* Whereby you see that whatsoever may be spoken or interpreted of Rome, out of this word Babylon, it is not meant of the Church of Rome, but of the terrene state, in so much that the said holy Doctor (*li. 2 advers. Jouinian*) signifieth, that the holiness of the Church there, hath wiped away the blasphemy written in the forehead of her former iniquity. But of the difference of the old state and dominion of the Heathen there, for which it is resembled to Antichrist, and the Priestly state which now it hath, read a notable place in St. Leo *serm 1 in natli. Petri et Pauli.*

Ro. 1.

5. *Mystery.*] St. Paul calleth this secret and close working of abomination, the mystery of iniquity, *2 Thess. 2,* and it is called a little after in verse 7 *the Sacrament* (or mystery) of the woman, and it is also the mark of reprobation and damnation.

6. *Drunken of the blood.*] It is plain that this woman signifieth the whole corps of all the persecutors that have and shall shed so much blood of the just: of the Prophets, Apostles, and other Martyrs from the beginning of the world to the end. The Protestants foolishly expound it of Rome, for that there they put Heretics to death, and allow of their punishment in other countries: but their blood is not called the blood of saints, no more than the blood of thieves, mankillers, and other malefactors: for the shedding of which by order of justice, no Commonwealth shall answer.

9. *Seven hills.*] The Angel himself here expoundeth these 7 hills to be all one with the 7 heads and the 7 kings: and yet the Heretics blinded exceedingly with malice against the Church of Rome, are so made to take them for the seven hills literally, upon which in old time Rome did stand: that so they might make the unlearned believe that Rome is the seat of Antichrist. But if they had any consideration, they might mark that the Prophets visions here are most of them by Sevens, whether he talk of heads, horns, candlesticks, Churches, kings, hills, or other things: and that he alluded not to the hills, because they were just seven, but that *Seven* is a mystical number, as sometime *Ten* is, signifying universally all of that sort whereof he speaketh. As, that the seven heads, hills, or kingdoms (which are

here all one) should be all the kingdoms of the world that persecute the Christians: being heads and mountains for their height in dignity above others. And some take it, that there were seven special Empires, kingdoms, or States, that were or shall be the greatest persecutors of God's people, as of Egypt, Chanaan, Babylon, the Persians, and Greeks, which be five. Sixthly of the Roman Empire which once persecuted most of all other, and which (as the Apostle here saith) *yet is*, or standeth, but the seventh, then when St. John wrote this, was not come, neither is yet come in our days: which is Antichrist's state, which shall not come so long as the Empire of Rome standeth, as St. Paul did Prophecy, *2 Thess. 2.*

11. *The same is the either.*] The beast itself being the congregation of all these wicked persecutors, though it consist of the foresaid seven, yet for that the malice of all is complete in it, may be called the eight. Or, Antichrist himself, though he be one of the seven, yet for his extraordinary wickedness shall be counted the odd persecutor, or the accomplishment of all other, and therefore is named the eight. Some take this beast called the eight to be the Devil.

18. *The great city.*] If it be meant of any one city, and not of the universal society of the reprobate (which is the city of the Devil, as the Church and the universal fellowship of the faithful is called the city of God) it is most like to be old Rome, as some of the Greeks expound it, from the time of the first Emperors, till Constantine's days, who made an end of the persecution. For by the authority of the old Roman Empire, Christ was put to death first, and afterward the two chief Apostles, and the Popes their successors, and infinite Catholic men throughout the world, by lesser kings which then were subject to Rome. All which Antichristian persecutions ceased, when Constantine reigned, and yielded up the city to the Pope, who holdeth not the kingdom or Empire over the world, as the Heathen did, but the fatherhood and spiritual rule of the Church. Howbeit the more probable sense is the other, of the city of the Devil, as the author of the homilies upon the Apocalypse in St. Augustine, declareth.

What is the eighth beast.

The double interpretation of Babylon.

CHAPTER 18

The fall of Babylon, her judgment, plague and revenges: for the which, 9. the kings, 16. and merchants of the earth that sometimes did cleave unto her, shall mourn bitterly: 10. but heaven, and the Apostles and Prophets shall rejoice.

¶The measure of pains and damnation according to the

Apoc. 14:8
Ϟ φυλακη

AND after these things I saw another Angel coming down from heaven, having great power: and the earth was illuminated of his glory.

2. And he cried out in force, saying, *Fallen, fallen, is Babylon the great: and it is become the habitation of Devils, and the custody of every unclean spirit, and the custody of every unclean and hateful bird:

wicked pleasures or unlawful delights of this life. Which is a sore sentence for such people as turn their whole life to lust and rict.⁹⁶

3. Because all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication: and the kings of the earth have fornicated with her: and the merchants of the earth were made rich by the virtue of her delicacies.

4. And I hear another voice from heaven, saying, Go out from her my people: that you be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.

¶Kings and Merchants are most encumbered, dangered and drowned in the pleasures of this world. Whose whole life and traffic is (if they be not exceeding virtuous) to find variety of earthly pleasures. Who seeing once the extreme end of their joys and of all that made there hearts here, to be turned into pains and damnation eternal, then shall howl and weep too late.

5. Because her sins are come even to heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6. Render to her as she also hath rendered to you: and double ye double according to her works: In the cup wherein she hath mingled, mingle ye double unto her.

Es. 47:8

7. As much as she hath glorified herself, and hath been in delicacies, ^vso much give her torment and mourning: because she saith in her heart, *I sit a queen, and widow I am not, and mourning I shall not see.

8. Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine, and with fire she shall be burnt: because God is strong that shall judge her.

9. And ^vthe kings of the earth, which have fornicated with her, and have lived in delicacies, shall weep, and bewail themselves upon her, when they shall see the smoke of her burnings?

10. Standing far off for the fear of her torments, saying, Woe, woe, that great city Babylon, that strong city: because in one hour is thy judgment come.

11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep, and mourn upon her: because no man buy their merchandise any more,

⁹⁶rict: right

☉The Angels and all Saints shall rejoice and laud God to see the wicked confounded, and God's justice executed upon their oppressors and persecutors. And this is that which the Martyrs prayed for, chap. 6.

☉By this it seemeth clear that the Apostle meaneth not any one city, but he universal company of the reprobate, which shall perish in the day of judgment: the old prophets also naming the whole number of God's enemies mystically *Babylon*, as Jer. 6:52.

12. Merchandise of gold and silver and precious stone, and of pearl, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all Thyne wood, and all vessels of ivory, and all vessels of precious stone and of brass and iron and marble,

13. And cinnamon, and of odors, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14. And the apples of the desire of thy soul are departed from thee, and all fat and goodly things are perished from thee, and they shall no more find them.

15. The merchants of these things which are made rich, shall stand far from her for fear of her torments, weeping and mourning,

16. Saying, Woe, woe, that the great city, which was clothed with silk, and purple, and scarlet, was gilded with gold, and precious stone, and pearls:

17. Because in one hour are so great riches made desolate: and every governor, and every one that saileth into the lake, and the shipmen, and they that work in the sea, stood afar off,

18. And cried seeing the place of her burning, saying, What other is like to this great city?

19. And they threw dust upon their heads, and cried weeping and mourning, saying: Woe, woe, that great city, in which all were made rich that had ships in the sea, of her prices: because in one hour she is desolate.

20. ☉Rejoice over her, heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets: because God hath judged your judgment of her.

21. And one strong Angel took up as it were a great millstone, and threw it into the sea, saying, *With this violence shall ☉Babylon that great city be thrown, and shall now be found no more.

22. And the voice of harpers, and of Musicians, and of them that sing on shalme and trumpet, shall no more be heard in thee, and every artificer of every art shall be found no more in thee, and the noise of the mill shall no more be heard in thee,

23. And the light of the lamp shall no more shine in thee, and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall no more be heard in thee: because thy merchants were the princes of the earth, because all nations have erred in thine enchantments.

24. And in her is found the blood of the Prophets and Saints, and of all that were slain in the earth.

Jer. 52:63

CHAPTER 19

The Saints glorifying God for the judgment pronounced upon the harlot, 7. the marriage of the Lamb is prepared. 10. The Angel refuseth to be adored of ST. JOHN. 11. There appeareth one (who is the Word of God, and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords) sitting on a horse, with a great army, and fighting against the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies: 27. the birds of the air being in the meantime called to devour their flesh.

The Epistle for many Martyrs.

ALLELUIA

☉This often repeating of *Alleluia* in times of rejoicing, the Church doth follow in her service.

AFTER these things I heard as it were the voice of many multitudes in heaven saying, Alleluia. Praise, and glory, and power is to our God:

2. Because true and just are his judgments which hath judged of the great harlot, that hath corrupted the earth in her whoredom, and hath revenged the blood of his servants, of her hands.

3. And ☉again they said, *Alleluia*. And her smoke ascendeth for ever and ever.

4. And the four and twenty seniors fell down, and the four beasts, and adored God sitting upon the throne, saying: *Amen, Alleluia*.

5. And a voice came out from the throne, saying: say praise to our God all ye his servants: and you that fear him, little and great.

6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying, *Alleluia*. because our Lord GOD the omnipotent hath reigned.