

Chapter 17

The harlot Babylon clothed with diuers ornaments, 6. and drunken of the bloud of Martyrs, fitteth vpon a beaft that hath feuen heads and ten hornes: 7. al which things the Angel expoundeth.

And there came one of the feuen Angels which had the feuen vials, & fpake with me, fay-
ing: Come, I wil fhew thee ^{a)}the damnation of the great harlot, which fitteth vpon ^{b)}many waters, ² with whom the Kings of the earth haue fornicated, & they which inhabit the earth haue been drunke of the wine of her whoredom. ³ And he tooke me away in fpirit into the defert. And I faw a woman fitting vpon a fcarlet coloured beaft, ful of names of blafphemie, hauing feuen heads, and ten hornes. ⁴ And the woman was clothed round about with purple and fcarlet, and gilted with gold, and pretious ftone, and pearles, hauing a golden cup in her hand, ful of the abomination & filthines of her fornication. ⁵ And in her forehead a name written, [♠]*Myfterie*: [♠]Babylon the great, mother of the fornications and the abominations of the earth. ⁶ And I faw the woman [♠]drunken of the bloud of the Saints, and of the bloud of the Martyrs of IESVS. And I marueled when I had feen her, with great admiration. ⁷ And the Angel faid to me: Why doeft thou maruel? I wil tel thee the myfterie of the woman, and of the beaft that carieth her, which hath the feuen heads and the ten hornes.

⁸ The beaft which thou faweft, ^{c)}was, and is not, and fhall come vp out of the bottomles depth, and goe into deftruction: and the inhabitants on the earth (whofe names are not written in the booke of life from the making of the world) fhall maruel, feeing the beaft that

^a The final damnation of the whole cōpanie of the reprobate, called here the great whore.

^b Thefe many waters are many peoples. *v. 15.*

^c It fignifieth the short reigne of Antichrift, who is the cheefe horne or head of the beaft.

was, and is not. ⁹ And here is vnderftanding, that hath wifedom. The feuen heads, are [♠]feuen hilles, vpon which the woman fitteth, and they are feuen Kings. ¹⁰ Fiue are fallen, one is, and another is not yet come: and when he fhall come, he muft tarie a fhort time. ¹¹ And the beaft which was, and is not: [♠]the fame alfo is the eight, and is of the feuen, & goeth into deftruction. ¹² And the ten hornes which thou faweft, are [♠]ten Kings, which doe haue not yet receiued Kingdom, but ‘fhall’ receiue power as Kings one houre after the beaft. ¹³ Thefe haue one counfel and force: and their power they fhall deliuer to the beaft. ¹⁴ Thefe fhall fight with the Lamb, and the Lamb fhall ouercome them, becaufe he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, and they that are with him, called, and elect, and faithful. ¹⁵ And he faid to me: The waters which thou faweft where the harlot fitteth, are peoples, and Nations, and tongues. ¹⁶ And the ten hornes which thou faweft in the beaft: thefe fhall hate the harlot, and fhall make her defolate and naked, and fhall eate her flefh, and her they fhall burne with fire. ¹⁷ For [♠]God hath giuen into their harts, to doe that which pleafeth him: that they giue their kingdom to the beaft, til the words of God be cōfummate. ¹⁸ And the woman which thou faweft: is [♠]the great citie, which hath Kingdom ouer the Kings of the earth.

1. *Tim.* 6, 15.
Apo. 19, 16.

ANNOTATIONS

5 Myfterie.) S. Paul calleth this feeret and cloffe working of abomination, the myfterie of iniquitie *2. Theffal. 2.* and it is called a litle after in this chapter *verf. 7. the Sacrament* (or myfterie) of the woman, and it is alfo the marke of reprobation and damnation.

Myfterie.

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- ^a Some expound it of ten fmal Kingdōs, into which the Roman Empire fhall be deuided, which fhall al ferue Antichrift both in his life and a litle after.
- ^b Not forcing or mouing any to follow Antichrift, but by his iuft iudgement, & for punishment of their finnes, permitting thē to beleuee and cōfent to him.

5 Babylon.) In the *end of S. Peters first Epistle*, where the Apostle dateth it at Babylon which the ancient Writers (as we there noted) affirme 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 thinke it maketh for their opinion, that the Pope is Antichrist, and Rome the seat & citie 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 preindicate opinions and heresies, to which they draw all things without all indifferencie and ficeritie.

But S. Augustin, Aretas, and other Writers, most commonly expound it, neither of Babylon itself a citie of Chaldæa or Ægypt, nor of Rome, or any one citie, which may be so called spiritually, as Hierusalem before *chap. 11.* is named spiritual Sodom and Ægypt; but of the general societie of the impious, and of those that preferre the terrene Kingdom & commodity of the world, before God & eternal felicitie. The Authour of the *Commentaries vpon the Apocalypse set forth in S. 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 citie of the Diuel, that is, the vniuersal corps of the reprobate.* Tertullian also taketh it for Rome, thus.

Babylon (saith he) in S. Iohn is a figure of the citie of Rome, being so great, so proud of the Empire, and the destroyer of the Saints. Which is plainly spoken of that citie, when it was heathen, the head of the terrene dominion of the world, the persecutor of the Apostles & their Successors, the seat of Nero, Domitian, and the like, Christs special enemies, the sinke of idolatrie, sinne, and false worship of the Pagan Gods. Then was it Babylon, when S. Iohn wrot this, and they was Nero and the rest figures of Antichrist, & that citie the resemblance of the principal place (wherefoever it be) that Antichrist shall reigne in, about the later end of the world. Now to apply that to the Romane Church and the Apostolike See, either now or then, which was spoken only of the terrene state of that citie, as it was the seat of the Emperour, and not of Peter, when it did flee about 30. Popes, Christs Vicars, one after another, & endeavoured to destroy the whole Church: that is most blasphemous and foolish.

The Church in Rome was one thing, & Babylon in Rome another thing. Peter seat in Rome, and Nero seat in Rome. But Peter, as in the Church of Rome: Nero, as in the Babylon of Rome. Which distinction the Heretikes might have learned by S. Peter himself *ep. 1. chap. 5.* writing thus: *The Church saluteth you, that is in Babylon, coelect.* So that the Church & the very chosen Church was in Rome, when Rome was Babylon. Whereby it is plaine, that whether Babylon or the great whore doe here signifie Rome or no, yet it can not signifie the Church of Rome: which is now, and ever

The Protestants here will needs have Babylō to be Rome, but not in S. Peters epistle.

By Babylon (according to all the Fathers) is signified, partly the whole societie of the wicked, partly the citie of Rome, only in respect of the terrene and heathenish state of them that persecuted the Church.

The Church of Rome is neuer called Babylō.

Li. aduer. Iudæos.

was, differing from the terrene Empire of the fame. And if, as in the beginning of the Church, Nero and the rest of the persecuting Emperours (which were figures of Antichrift) did principally fit in Rome, so also the great Antichrift shall have his seat there, as it may well be (though others think that Hierusalem rather shall be his principal citie:) yet even then that neither the Church of Rome, nor the Pope of Rome be Antichrift, but shall be persecuted by Antichrift, and driven out of Rome, if it be possible. For, to Christs Vicar and the Romane Church he will beare as much good will as the Protestants now doe, and he shall have more power to persecute him and the Church, then they have.

S. Hierom *ep. 17. c. 7.* to Marcella, to draw her out of the citie of Rome to the holy land, warning her of the manifold allurements to finne and ill life, that he in so great and populous a citie, alludeth at length to these words of the Apocalypfe, & maketh it to be Babylon, & 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 societie of the wicked only, he addeth: *There is there indeed the holy Church, there are the triumphant monumēts of the Apostles & Martyrs, there is the true confession of Christ, there is the faith praised of the Apostle, & Gentilitie troden vnderfoot, the name of Christian daily aduancing it-self 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 Doctour *li. 2. aduerf. Iouinian c. 19.* signifieth that the holines of the Church there, hath wiped away the blasphemie written in the forehead of her former iniquitie. But of the difference of the old state and dominion of the Heathen there, for which it is resembled to Antichrift, and the Priestly state which now it hath, read a notable place in S. Leo *ferm. 1. in natali Petri & Pauli.*

Ro. 1.

6 Drunken of the blood.) It is plaine that this woman signifieth the whole corps of all the persecutors that have & shall shed so much blood of the iust: 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 Heretikes 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 eues, man-killers, and other malefactors: for the shedding of which by order of iustice, no Common-wealth shall answer.

This woman signifieth all persecutors of Saints.

Putting heretikes to death, is not to shed the blood of Saints.

9 Seven hills.) The Angel himself here expoundeth the 7. hills to be all one with the 7. heads and the 7. Kings: and yet the Heretikes blinded exceedingly with malice against the Church of Rome, are so mad to take them for the seven hills literally, upon which in old time Rome did stand: that so they might make the vnlearned believe that Rome is the seat of Antichrift. But if they had any consideration, they might marke that the Prophets

The Protestants madnes in expounding the 7. hills of Rome: the Angel himself expounding them otherwise.

vifions here are moft of them by Seuens, whether he talke of heads, hornes, candleftickes, Churches, Kings, hilles, or other things: and that he alluded not to the hilles, becaufe they were iuft feuen, but that *Seuen* is a myftical number, as fometime *Ten* is, fignifying vniuerfally al of that fort whereof he fpeaketh: as, that the feuen heads, hilles, or Kingdoms (which are here al one) should be al the Kingdoms of the world that perfecute the Chrifians: being heads and mountaines for their height in dignitie aboue others. And fome take it, that there were feuen fpecial Empires, Kingdoms, or States that were or shal be the greateft perfecutours of Gods people: as of Ægypt, Chanaan, Babylon, the Perfians, and Greeks, which be fue: fixtly of the Romane Empire, which once perfecuted moft of al other, and which (as the Apoftle here faith) *yet is*, or ftandeth. But the feuenth, then when S. Iohn wrote this, was not come, neither is yet come in our daies: which is Antichrifts ftate, which shal not come fo long as the Empire of Rome ftandeth, as S. Paul did prophecie. 2. *Theffal.* 2.

11 The fame is the eight.) The beaft it-felf being the cōgregation of al thefe wicked perfecutours, though it confift of the forefaid feuen, yet for that the malice of al is cōplete in it, may be called the eight. Or, Antichrift himfelf, though he be one of the feuē, yet for his extraordinary wickednes shal be counted the odde perfecutour or the accōplishment of al other, & therefore is named the eight. Some take this beaft called the eight, to be the Diuel.

What is the eight beaft.

18 The great citie.) If it be meant of any one citie, and not of the vniuerfal focietie of the reprobate which is the citie of the Diuel, as the Church & the vniuerfal fellowship of the faithful is called the citie of God, it is moft like to be old Rome, as fome of the Greeks expound it, from the time of the firft Emperours, til Cōftantines daies, who made an end of the perfecution. For by the authoritie of the old Romane Empire, Chrift was put to death firft, & afterward the two cheefe Apoftles, & the Popes their Succeffours, & infinit Catholike men throughout the world by leffer Kings which then were fubiect to Rome. Al which Antichriftian perfecutions ceafed, when Conftantine reigned, & yealded vp the citie to the Pope, who holdeth not the Kingdom or Empire ouer the world, as the Heathen did, but the fatherhood and fpiritual rule of the Church. Howbeit the more probable fenfe is the other, of the citie of the Diuel, as the Authour of the *homilies vpon the Apocalypfe in S. Auguftin*, declareth.

The double interpretation of Babylon.