

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 17

This chapter contains a vision of a beast, and a woman on it, and the interpretation of it; one of the seven angels that had the seven vials proposes to John to show him the whore of Babylon, the Jezabel before spoken of, who sits on many waters, with whom the kings and inhabitants of the earth have committed fornication, being intoxicated by her, (~~6670~~ Revelation 17:1,2) in order to which he carries him into the wilderness, and there he sees a woman, who is described by the beast she sat on, of a scarlet colour, full of blasphemous names, with seven heads and ten horns; by her array, in purple and scarlet, decked with gold, pearls, and precious stones; by a cup she had in her hand, full of abominable filth; by a name written on her forehead, given at large, and by the condition she was in, drunk with the blood of the saints; which sight filled John with great wonder and admiration, (~~6678~~ Revelation 17:3-6) wherefore, to remove his astonishment, the angel proposes to explain to him the mystery of the woman, and the beast she sat on, (~~6670~~ Revelation 17:7) and first the mystery of the beast is explained, by its several states, past, present, and to come; by its original and end, ascending out of the bottomless pit, and going into perdition; by the veneration it would be had in by the reprobate part of the world, (~~6678~~ Revelation 17:8) its seven heads are interpreted of the seven mountains on which the city of Rome, designed by the woman, stood, and of seven kings, or forms of government, five of which had ceased, and one was in being in John's time, another was to come, which should not continue long, and the beast would be an eighth, (~~6670~~ Revelation 17:9-11) its ten horns are explained of ten kings, described by their kingdom they had not as yet received, and which they should have one hour with the beast; by their agreement in mind and conduct; and by their war with the Lamb, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and those that are with him, the called, chosen, and faithful, and the issue of it, (~~66712~~ Revelation 17:12-14) the waters on which the whore sat are interpreted of a multitude of people, nations, and tongues, (~~66715~~ Revelation 17:15) the hatred and destruction of her by the ten kings, and the manner of it, are declared, (~~66716~~ Revelation 17:16) which is owing to the will of God, who put it into

their hearts to agree to give their kingdom to the beast till the prophecies and promises were fulfilled respecting this matter, and now to destroy the whore that sat upon it, (^{<6671>}Revelation 17:17) which woman is explained of the great city of Rome, that reigns over the kings of the earth, (^{<6678>}Revelation 17:18).

Ver. 1. *And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven vials,* etc.] It may be the first of them, since one of the four beasts designs the first of them, in (^{<6610>}Revelation 6:1,3) though Brightman thinks the fifth angel is meant, because he poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, who is by this angel described; but rather this is the seventh and last angel, concerned in the utter destruction of antichrist: and therefore proposes to John to show him the judgment of the great whore:

and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither: he conversed with him in a friendly manner, (see ^{<3009>}Zechariah 1:9) and desires him to come nearer to him, and go along with him, adding,

I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore; that noted and famous one, known before to John by the names of Jezabel and Babylon, who taught and caused many to commit fornication, (^{<6621>}Revelation 2:20) (^{<6648>}Revelation 14:8) and is no other than Rome Papal; for that a city or state is meant is clear from (^{<6678>}Revelation 17:18) and it is usual for idolatrous or apostate cities to be called whores or harlots, (see ^{<2012>}Isaiah 1:21) (^{<2320>}Ezekiel 23:2-4 Na 3:4) and she is called a “great” one, because of the largeness of the Papal see; and because of the multitude of persons, the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of it, with whom the Romish antichrist has committed spiritual fornication, or idolatry: her “judgment” signifies either her sin and wickedness; in which sense the word is used in (^{<6516>}Romans 5:16) and which is exposed, (^{<6675>}Revelation 17:5,6) namely, her idolatry and cruelty; or else her condemnation, and the execution of it, suggested in (^{<6678>}Revelation 17:8,16) and more largely described in the following chapter:

that sitteth upon many waters; which in (^{<6675>}Revelation 17:15) are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, subject to the jurisdiction of Rome; and so several antichristian states are in the preceding chapter signified by the sea, and by rivers and fountains of water: and this is said in reference to Babylon, an emblem of the Romish harlot, which was situated upon the river Euphrates, and is therefore said to dwell upon many waters, (^{<2513>}Jeremiah 51:13) her sitting here may be in allusion to the

posture of harlots plying of men; or may denote her ease, rest, and grandeur, sitting as a queen; and is chiefly expressive of her power and dominion over the kings and nations of the earth, (^{667B}Revelation 17:18).

Ver. 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication*, etc.]

These are the ten kings, who being of the same mind, and of one religion, the Popish religion, gave their power, strength, and kingdom to the beast, (^{667B}Revelation 17:12,17) and have been enticed by the whore of Rome to commit spiritual fornication with her; that is, idolatry, to worship, as that church enjoins, idols of gold, silver, brass, and wood, the images of the virgin Mary, and other saints; hence this whore appears to be no mean strumpet, but one of great note, and in much vogue, being sought after and made use of by the great men of the earth;

and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication;

that is, the inhabitants of the Roman empire, or earthly minded men, mere carnal persons, have been drawn into idolatrous practices by the allurements of the church of Rome; such as riches, honours, pleasures, lying miracles, and great pretensions to devotion and religion; whereby they have been intoxicated as men with wine, and have been filled with a blind zeal for that church, and the false doctrines and worship of it, and with madness and fury against the true professors of religion.07834-Re17.3 Ver. 3. *So he carried me away in the spirit*, etc.]

Not in body, as if he was removed from the isle of Patmos to some other place; but in a visionary way, just as Ezekiel was carried between earth and heaven, in the visions of God, to Jerusalem, (^{208B}Ezekiel 8:3). It was represented to the mind of John, to his spirit, or soul, as if he had been taken up by the angel and carried through the air:

into the wilderness; by which may be meant either the wilderness of the people, the world, the church hereafter described, being a worldly one, and consisting of worldly men; or Gentilism, the Gentile world is often in the prophecies of the Old Testament called a wilderness; the Romish church having much of Heathen worship, and Heathen customs and practices in it, hence its votaries are called Gentiles, (^{661B}Revelation 11:2) or this circumstance may be mentioned, and the thing so represented to John, because that a wilderness is a solitary place, and fit for retirement and meditation; and where he might, without any interruption, take a full view of the following sight, and make proper observations upon it; and it is worth notice, that this is the place where the true church and became out of

sight, in the room of which this apostate church appears: or, as others have thought, John is had into the wilderness, where the true church was hid and nourished, and the false one is there shown him, that seeing both together, he might compare them, and observe the difference between them; to all which may be added, that a wilderness is a fit place for such a beast as hereafter described to be seen in:

and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast; the beast is the same with that in (~~f610~~ Revelation 13:1) as the description shows, and is no other than the Roman empire as Papal; the “scarlet” colour is expressive of its imperial dignity, its power and authority, it received from the dragon; and also of this beast's cruelty and tyranny, and of its shedding the blood of the saints: the woman sitting upon it is the great city of Rome, as is manifest from (~~f678~~ Revelation 17:18) or the Romish antichrist, the apostate church of Rome, represented by a woman, as the true church is, (~~f621~~ Revelation 12:1) but in a very different form, and is the same with the second beast in (~~f631~~ Revelation 13:11) and the false prophet; and as the two beasts respect the same, under different considerations, namely, the Papacy, in its civil and ecclesiastic capacity, so this strange phenomenon, a woman sitting on such a beast, means one and the same thing as the horse and his rider in the seals, though in different views; the woman designs the Romish church, with the pope at the head of it, and the beast the Roman Papal empire as civil, by which the former is supported and upheld, bore up on high, and exalted in the manner it has been: moreover, as purple and scarlet are the colours of garments wore by the pope, and cardinals, hence the woman in the next verse is said to be “arrayed in purple and scarlet colour”, so even the very beasts on which they rode were covered with scarlet. Platina ^{f393} says that Pope Paul the Second

“ordered by a public decree, on pain or punishment, that no man should wear a scarlet cap but cardinals; to whom also, in the first year of his popedom, he gave cloth of the same colour, to put upon their horses and mules when they rode; and besides, would have put into the decree, that the cardinals' hats should be of scarlet silk:”

upon which Du Maulin ^{f394} makes this remark;

“Pope Paul the Second was the first that gave scarlet to the cardinals, as well for themselves as for their mules, to the end that this prophecy, which agreeth in general with the see of Rome,

might likewise appertain particularly to everyone of the pillars of the said see, which is to be set upon a “scarlet coloured beast”.”

It follows,

full of names of blasphemy: that is, the beast, or Roman Papal empire, was full of them; in (⁶⁶¹⁰Revelation 13:1,5) a name of blasphemy is said to be upon his head, and he to have a mouth speaking blasphemy; but here his whole body is represented as full of them, and may refer to the blasphemous doctrines of worshipping of images, of pardons and indulgences, of transubstantiation, etc. and to the multitude of images, of the virgin Mary, and other saints, in the antichristian state, in every part of it; and to those blaspheming persons, the cardinals, priests, and Jesuits, which abound in it; as well as to those blasphemous names and titles which are given to the pope, the head of it, or assumed by him; such as God on earth, the vicar of Christ, the head, and husband, and foundation of the church, with many others:

having seven heads, and ten horns: the seven heads are the seven mountains, on which the city of Rome, the metropolis of the empire, is seated; and the seven kings, or seven forms of government, under which it has been, as appears from (⁶⁶⁷⁰Revelation 17:9,10) (see Gill on ⁶⁶¹³Revelation 12:3”), (see Gill on ⁶⁶¹⁰Revelation 13:1”) and the “ten horns” signify the ten kings over the ten kingdoms, into which the empire was divided, when overrun by the Goths and Vandals; and which ten kings gave their kingdoms to the beast, the Romish antichrist; they gave their strength and power to him, being of his religion, and have been his horns, his defenders and supporters, ever since, as may be gathered from (⁶⁶⁷²Revelation 17:12,13,17).

Ver. 4. *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour*, etc.] Which may be expressive of her grandeur, authority, and power, sitting as a queen, and sovereign in the empire, ruling over kingdoms and nations in it; and also of her bloody disposition to the saints, with whose blood she is afterwards said to be drunk;

and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls; which may denote her hypocrisy, she being gilded with these things, as the word signifies, when she was inwardly rotten, corrupt, and filthy; and may point out the things by which persons have been enticed into the communion of the church of Rome, and to comply with her idolatrous worship and practices;

and may also respect the prodigious riches, which have, by various methods, been brought into the pope's coffers; these, with other things, are reckoned among the merchandise of Babylon, (^{<6682>}Revelation 18:12) and particularly this may have reference to the adorning of their temples, or churches, and the decking of their images, with those things; which gaudy pompous shows strike the minds of carnal men, amuse them, and engage their attention. So Philo^{f395} the Jew describes an whore as arrayed in purple, and adorned with gold and precious stones; (see ^{<3170>}Proverbs 7:10).

Having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; in allusion to Babylon, (^{<2510>}Jeremiah 51:7) and also to harlots, who give philters or love potions to men, to excite lust, and draw their affections to them; and this being a golden cup may design the external lustre and splendour of the worship of the church of Rome, by which many have been drawn into a compliance with it, which is attended with many abominable, filthy, and idolatrous practices: and perhaps some regard may be had to the golden chalice, in which, it is pretended, is the very blood of Christ, which the priests take as such, and worship and adore, and is no other than an abominable and filthy piece of idolatry; and such are the persons that partake of it; like the Pharisees of old, they make clean the outside of the cup and platter; glisten, and make a great show of devotion, but within are full of extortion and excess.

Ver. 5. *And upon her forehead was a name written*, etc.] As the high priest had on his mitre upon his forehead written, holiness to the Lord, (^{<0286>}Exodus 28:36) only a different inscription from that; the allusion is thought to be to harlots, who not only used to put their names over their doors, but some of them upon their foreheads, that all might know who they were; of which Mr. Daubuz has given proofs out of Seneca, Martial, Juvenal, and Petronius; and such might be said to have an whore's forehead indeed: and this is expressive of the openness and impudence of the church of Rome, in her idolatrous worship; she openly declares it, and pleads for it, and invites and ensnares persons to join with her in it: the name follows,

mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth; her name is "mystery"; not the mystery of godliness, that she dislikes and opposes, but the mystery of iniquity; which is the name antichrist went by in the Apostle Paul's time, when he was but in embryo, (^{<3117>}2 Thessalonians 2:7). Some reference may be had to the mystery of the Mass, in which the Papists pretend are the very body and blood of Christ;

to their seven sacraments, for wherever almost they find the word mystery, they make a sacrament of that to which it is applied; and to their unwritten traditions, and the sense of the Scriptures, which are locked up in the pope's breast: and it is very remarkable what has been observed by some, that the word "mystery" was formerly upon the frontlet of the pope's mitre, and was removed by Pope Julius the Third, when it was observed that the Protestants made use of this passage of Scripture, and applied it to the Romish antichrist. Joseph Scaliger¹³⁹⁶ affirms, that he saw mitres at Rome with this inscription on them. Though others think that this is not any part of the name, but only signifies that this woman was, in a mysterious or mystical sense, called Babylon, etc. just as the great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, (~~6108~~ Revelation 11:8) but to me it seems to be a part of the name, as well as what follows, "Babylon the great"; that is, the great city, (~~6148~~ Revelation 14:8) by which name the church of Rome may well be called, because of the signification of it, confusion, (~~0110~~ Genesis 11:9) its doctrine and worship being a confused mixture of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity; and because of the pride and haughtiness of it, its tyranny and cruelty, and its sorceries and idolatry; (see ~~2342~~ Isaiah 14:12-14 47:6,7,12,13 ~~2878~~ Jeremiah 50:38).

And the mother of harlots, of all antichristian states and kingdoms; and is different from the heavenly Jerusalem, the Gospel church, which is the mother of true believers, (~~8005~~ Galatians 4:26) or the "mother of fornications": as some copies read, and the Vulgate Latin and eastern versions render it; that is, the author and encourager of them, as the church of Rome has been; of corporeal fornication, by commanding celibacy, and forbidding marriage to priests, and setting up of brothel houses; and of spiritual fornication or idolatry, everywhere required and encouraged by it: and of "the abominations of the earth"; of abominable doctrines and practices; all manner of wickedness that is to be found in the earth, as murder, adultery, sodomy, perjury, etc. these, with everything that is vile and wicked, are practised and connived at by her.

Ver. 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints*, etc.] To see a woman drunk is a shameful sight; but to see one drunk, not with wine, but with blood, is monstrous, cruel, and shocking; the sword, when it devours, and is satiate, is said to be drunk with blood, (~~2450~~ Jeremiah 46:10) but for a woman to be so is unexampled; and not with her own blood, as she will be, (~~2326~~ Isaiah 49:26 ~~6106~~ Revelation 16:6) but with the blood of others; and not with the blood of wicked men, but with the blood of saints;

such as God the Father has set apart from everlasting, and chosen to be holy; whom Christ has sanctified by his blood, or whose sins he has expiated, and to whom he is made sanctification; and who have principles of grace and holiness wrought in them by the Spirit of God, and live holy lives and conversations:

and of the martyrs of Jesus; the saints, whose blood is shed by antichrist, are martyrs also; but they seem to design the common people, and these the ministers of the Gospel, who are the martyrs of Jesus, both in life and death; they are his martyrs or witnesses, by their doctrine and ministry, bearing testimony to him as Jesus, a Saviour; testifying that he is the only Saviour, that there is salvation in no other, in opposition to the antichristian doctrines of merit, penance, purgatory, etc. for which they have been cruelly put to death, and in great numbers, and so have sealed their doctrine by their blood. Now the woman being drunk with their blood, denotes the blood thirstiness of the church of Rome, her greedy and insatiable desire after the blood of the saints, and her delight in it, being exceeding mad against them; and the multitude of it shed by her, as the slaughters of the Waldenses and Albigenses, the butcheries of the duke d'Alva in the Low Countries, the massacres in France, Ireland, and other places, the burning of the martyrs in Queen Mary's days here, with numerous other instances, show.

And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration; not at the sight of the beast, which he had seen before, but at the sight of the woman, as, upon the beast; he wondered that one of her sex, generally timorous and fearful, should ride on such a monstrous creature; he was amazed at her dress, and grand appearance, whereas the church in his time consisted of poor persons, meanly arrayed; it was astonishing to him that one bearing the name of a Christian church should rise to such grandeur; and he wondered at the name upon her forehead, what the whole of that inscription should mean; but, above all, at her drunkenness with the blood of the saints; at her inhumanity and cruelty, being as savage as the beast she rode on; and also at God's forbearance of her, that he, who is a pure and holy Being, a lover of his saints, an avenger of his elect, should suffer such a brutish, barbarous, and blood thirsty creature, to live upon earth; (see ^{<601B>}Habakkuk 1:13).

Ver. 7. *And the angel said unto me*, etc.] The same as in (^{<601B>}Revelation 17:1)

wherefore didst thou marvel? which is not said by way of reproof, as questions of this kind sometimes are, (^{<44B12>}Acts 3:12) for John did not wonder at her with a sinful admiration, so as to have her in great veneration, and to do homage and worship to her, as the inhabitants of the world wondered after the beast, (^{<66B3>}Revelation 13:3 17:8) but his admiration was an amazement, or stupefaction of mind, joined with indignation at her; and this is said by the angel to lead on to what he had to declare unto him.

I will tell thee the mystery of the woman; that is, what is mysteriously or mystically designed by her; for till it was made known to John by the angel, it was a mystery to him; and when it was revealed, the interpretation is given in such an obscure manner, that it is only understood by the mind that has spiritual wisdom; and still remains a mystery to carnal men, just as the Gospel itself does. The hidden meaning of this woman, or the mystery of her, is told by the angel in (^{<66B7>}Revelation 17:18).

And of the beast that carried her, which hath the seven heads, and ten horns; the mystical sense of the beast, its heads and horns, and which is also delivered in a mysterious manner, is given in (^{<66B7>}Revelation 17:8-12).

Ver. 8. *The beast which thou sawest was, and is not,* etc.] It is added at the end of the verse where the same description is given, “and yet is”; this beast is to be understood not of the devil, who “was” the god of this world, “is not”, being cast out by Christ, and yet is in being; for he, the dragon, is distinguished from this beast, and indeed from him the beast has his seat, power, and authority, (^{<66B1>}Revelation 13:1,2) nor any particular emperor, as Domitian, a cruel and savage one, who was in power in Vespasian's time, when he was abroad, and then was out of it upon his return, and yet afterwards was in again, being as one sent from hell, and went at last into perdition; but the Roman empire itself is intended, as we have seen, which carried and supported the Papacy; and variously may this be interpreted; as that it was in the hands of the Romans originally, and long continued with them, but now “is not”, in John's time, being in the hands of Trajan, a Spaniard, “and yet is” in being, Rome being the metropolis of it: it was a very powerful and flourishing empire, “and is not”, being destroyed by the Goths and Vandals, “and yet is” a large empire under the jurisdiction of antichrist; it was an idolatrous empire, which encouraged the worshipping of Heathen gods, “and is not” guilty of the same idolatrous practices it was, as the worshipping of Jupiter, Mars, etc. “and yet is” much given to

idolatry in another way, worshipping the virgin Mary, and other saints; it “was” under kings, consuls, dictators, tribunes, decemvirs, and emperors, it “is not” in such a form of government, “and yet is” under its seventh head the pope; “Rome was”, but “is not” the same it has been, in some respects, and yet is the same, for idolatry, cruelty, etc. it has the image of old Rome, when Pagan, and under the power of the dragon; and though antichrist was not risen up in the empire to an head, to supreme power yet it was in being in the apostles' times, and began to work, and by degrees to show itself. In short, the meaning is, that this beast “was” the Roman empire, as Pagan, described by a dragon with seven heads, and ten horns, with crowns on the heads, but is not as yet in the Apostle John's time, as Papal, described with seven heads, and ten horns, and crowns on the horns.

And shall ascend out of the bottomless pit: out of hell, from whence the antichristian beast has its power; (see ⁶¹¹⁸Revelation 11:8 13:2) otherwise all civil power is from God, but not antichristian power, that is from the devil:

and go into perdition; everlasting destruction, the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; this will be the end of the beast, (⁶⁶⁹⁰Revelation 19:20).

and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder; the inhabitants of the Roman empire, earthly minded men, shall have the beast in great veneration, and follow and worship him; (see ⁶⁶¹⁸Revelation 13:3,4,12)

whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world; none but reprobates, not any of the elect of God, are the admirers and worshippers of antichrist; (see Gill on “⁶⁶¹⁸Revelation 13:8”)

when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is; the Roman empire in glory, under the emperors, destroyed by the Goths, and revived in the Papacy. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause,

and yet is.

Ver. 9. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom,* etc.] This refers either to what goes before, concerning the beast, his various states, rise, and ruin, and his admirers; or to what follows after, concerning the meaning of his heads and horns, or to both; and the sense is, that notwithstanding the interpretation of these things by the angel, yet it requires a large share of wisdom to understand them; and here is enough to exercise the mind that is

ever so well stored with knowledge and understanding; and so the Arabic version renders it, “here it is required that one should have judgment and wisdom”; for to a man that has not, the affair will still be obscure and unintelligible. The words may be rendered, “here is the mind, he that hath wisdom”; that is, let him make use of it, as in (~~663~~¹⁸ Revelation 13:18) and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “and this is the sense, he that hath wisdom”; this is the sense of the beast, and of his heads and horns; and he that has wisdom, let him consider it, and take it in, and apply it to proper persons, things, and times; and so the Ethiopic version, “he that has wisdom and understanding, let him know this”; or take cognizance of it, it being a matter of importance, and attended with difficulty:

the seven heads are seven mountains of which the woman sitteth that is, they signify seven mountains, or are symbolical representations of them; just as the seven good kine, and seven good ears, in Pharoah's dream, signified seven years of plenty, and seven thin kine, and seven empty ears, seven years of famine, (~~042~~⁵ Genesis 41:26,27). As the woman is a city, (~~667~~¹⁸ Revelation 17:18) these seven mountains, on which she sits, must be so many mountains on which the city is built; and what city can this be but Rome, which is so famous for being built on seven hills? This is taken notice of by Virgil ^{f397}, Horace ^{f398}, Ovid ^{f399}, Claudian ^{f400}, Starius ^{f401}, Martial ^{f402}, and others; and indeed there is scarce a poet that speaks of Rome but observes it: hence it has been sometimes called, by writers, the seven hilled city, and sometimes Septiceps, the seven headed city, which comes near to the language here: the names of the seven mountains were these, Capitolinus, Palatinus, Aventinus, Esquilinus, Coelius, Viminalis, and Quirinalis; the four first of these were taken in by Romulus, the first founder of it, and the three last by Servius Tullius, when he enlarged it; and upon the addition of the seventh mountain there was a feast kept, called Septimontium; and which was kept in seven places in the city ^{f403}; and was annually observed; and in this situation it was in John's time; for Pliny ^{f404}, who was contemporary with him, expressly says, that in his time it took in seven mountains; and that this refers to a city in John's time, then reigning over the kings of the earth, is certain from (~~667~~¹⁸ Revelation 17:18). Now there was no imperial city, so built in his time, but Rome: for though Constantinople is built on seven hills, yet this was not in being in John's time, but was built by Constantine many years after, in imitation of Rome; and though the situation is much altered now, being in Campus Martius, it being greatly reduced, and in a less compass, yet this hinders not but that it

is the same city here designed: and this confirms that the beast before spoken of, on whom the woman sat, is the Roman empire, since she is here said to sit on the seven mountains, on which Rome, the metropolis of that empire, was built; and this shows the pope of Rome to be antichrist, the great whore, Babylon, the mother of harlots, since no other has his seat at Rome but he.

Ver. 10. *And there are seven kings*, etc.] The Arabic version renders it, “who are seven kings”; and it should be rendered, as it is by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Ethiopic versions, “and they are seven kings”; that is, the seven heads signify seven kings also, for they have in them a double representation, first of seven mountains, and then of seven kings; by which are meant not seven ages of the world, as from Adam to Noah; from Noah to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Babylonish captivity; from the Babylonish captivity to Christ; from Christ to antichrist; and from antichrist to the end of the world; the five first of which were gone in John's time, the sixth was then in being, and when the seventh shall come it will continue for a short time: this is a foolish and absurd interpretation of the Papists, who make the beast to be the devil, and these his seven heads; whereas he rather is the head, or god of the world: nor are seven emperors of Rome intended, which are differently reckoned, according to the different times John is supposed to have had this revelation. Grotius, who is followed by Hammond, supposes this was written in the times of Vespasian, and reckons them thus; Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus; the first five of these were dead in John's time, one was then, the sixth, Vespasian, the then reigning emperor, and the other, Titus, was yet to come to the empire; and when he came to it, continued but a short time, two years and two mouths: others, who more rightly judge that John wrote in Domitian's time, reckon them after this manner; Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, and Nerva; the first five of these were dead; Domitian was then living, and Nerva, the other that was to come and succeed him, reigned but a little while, not quite two years; but to this sense must be objected, that there were other emperors before either Galba or Claudius; and before John's time there were more than five fallen or dead; according to the first account, there must be nine dead, and according to the latter eleven; for before Claudius there were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius: besides, if these were the seven heads of the beast, the beast must have been long ago without any head, and consequently must have expired; whereas it is

still in being, and will be under the fifth, sixth, and seventh vials, which are yet to come; it will be at the battle of Armageddon, and will be taken then, and cast alive into the lake of fire; to which may be added, that the beast, in the form in which John now saw it, was not yet risen in the times of these emperors; but by the seven heads are meant so many forms of government which took place successively in the Roman empire, and were all of them idolatrous heads, as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, tribunes, emperors, and popes; it being usual for any sort of governors, or governments and monarchies, to be called kings, (⁽⁶³³⁾Deuteronomy 33:5 ⁽²³⁷⁾Daniel 7:17,23).

Five are fallen; or ceased, are no longer in being as kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes; at least, the supreme power was not lodged in any bearing either of these names in John's time:

and one is; the Pagan emperors; an Heathen emperor, Domitian, then reigning, when John had this vision; and these continued to the opening of the sixth seal, which put an end to that succession, as Pagan, and till the woman brought forth the man child, or till Constantine's time:

and the other is not yet come; which some understand of the Christian emperors, who immediately succeeded the Pagan ones, and were another, and different from them, as to religion, though the form of government was the same, and were not another head; for they were not an idolatrous head, on which were names of blasphemy, but another king; for from the following verse it appears, that there are eight kings, and but seven heads, and therefore one of them should seem not to be a head; and these, when they came, continued but a short time in comparison of the Heathen emperors that reigned before them, and of the hope, or antichrist, who was to reign after them 1260 years; for they reigned not, put them all together, more than 150 years; and especially at Rome their stay was short, for Constantine removed from thence to Constantinople, in the nineteenth year of his empire. But these emperors, though in religion they differed from the others, yet their form of government and title were the same, and therefore must be included in the sixth head: according to some, Theodoricus the Ostrogoth, and his successors, are meant, who continued about an hundred years; others have thought that the exarchs of Ravenna, who rose up upon the destruction of the western empire, are intended, and who continued but a short time; but then these had not their seat at Rome, which it seems necessary each head of this beast should have; it is better, therefore, to

understand this of the popes of Rome, the seventh and last head of the Roman empire; these were not yet come, in John's time, to their supreme dignity and authority:

and when he cometh he must continue a short space; forty two months, or 1260 days; that is, so many years, which, though a long time in itself, and in the account of man, yet with God, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and in comparison of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and his people, it is but a short space; and so the reign of the beast, and of the ten kings with him, is said to be one hour, (⁶⁶⁷¹²Revelation 17:12) and this is said for the comfort of the saints, and to keep up their faith and patience under their sufferings in antichristian states. Mr. Daubuz makes these seven heads, or kings, signified by seven mountains, seven capital cities, which by degrees came to belong to the Roman empire; as first Rome itself, the capital of Italy; next Carthage, the capital of Africa; then Aegae, the capital of Macedonia; after that Antiochia, the capital of the east; then Augustodunum, the capital of the Gauls; and Alexandria, the capital of Egypt; five of these six, with the monarchies belonging to them, were fallen; one, or the first of them now, was the mistress of all; and the other seventh was to come, namely, Byzantium, or Constantinople, which continued not long. This passage is so interpreted, as also the seven heads, in (⁶⁶³³⁸Revelation 13:1) by this writer.

Ver. 11. *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth*, etc.]

That was in embryo in John's time, and yet was not come to its power and grandeur, is the eighth king; and this is the Papacy, which takes the name of the beast, because it is the head of the beast, and the only surviving head of the beast, or Roman empire, now become Papal:

and is of the seven; one of the seven heads, and the last of them, and is an idolatrous one, as the rest were, requiring and encouraging the worship of angels, of the virgin Mary, and saints parted: the pope of Rome is the eighth king, and seventh head, the latter with respect to his temporal power, and the former with respect to his ecclesiastical authority; for his government is quite of a different sort from the rest, being of a mixed kind, partly civil, and partly ecclesiastical, and therefore is signified by two beasts in the thirteenth chapter:

and goes into perdition; being the son of perdition, and is justly deserving of it; (see Gill on "⁶⁶⁷¹⁸Revelation 17:8").

Ver. 12. *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings*, etc.] Not ten Christian emperors, which are reckoned up by Brightman from Constantine to Theodosius; for these did not reign with the beast, or give their kingdoms to him, and much less did they make war with the Lamb; they are rather the angels of Michael, that fought for him, the Lamb, against the dragon, and his angels, (⁴⁰⁰Revelation 12:7) nor ten kings that will rise up and divide the Roman empire between them, towards the end of the world, which is a sense devised by Papists to obscure and hide from men the true meaning of the passage; but the ten kingdoms which rose up, and into which the Roman empire was divided upon its being ruined, and torn to pieces by the Goths, Huns, and Vandals. They are the same with the “ten toes” of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the “ten horns” of the fourth beast, or kingdom, in (⁴⁰⁰Daniel 2:42 7:7,23,24). These are differently reckoned up by interpreters: by Napier thus; Spain, France, Lombardy, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, and the exarchate of Ravenna: by Mr. Mede after this manner; the Britains in Britain, under Vortimer their king; the Saxons in the same place, under Hengist; the Franks in Gallia Belgica, or Celts, under Childeric; the Burgundians in another part of France, under Gunderic; the Wisigoths in Aquitain, and part of Spain, under Theodoric; the Sueves and Alans in Gallaecia and Portugal, under Riciarius; the Vandals in Spain and Africa, under Genseric; the Almans in that part of Germany called Rhetia, under Sumanus; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and after in Italy, under Theodimir; and the Greeks in the rest of the empire, under Marcianus: and by another ⁴⁰⁵writer they are accounted for in this way; the Almans in both the Rhetia, and in Pannonia, who rose in the year 356; the Ostrogoths, first in Pannonia, and then in Italy, in 377; the Wisigoths in Pannonia, and then in Italy, afterwards in France, and last of all in Spain, in 378; the Huns in Pannonia, and for some time throughout all Europe, in 378; the Britian Romans in Britain, and afterwards the Saxons, in 406; the Sueves, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Alans, first in France, and then in Spain, in 407; the Vandals, first in France, then in Spain, afterwards in Africa, in 407; the Burgundians in France, in 407; the Franks in France, in 410. And it is generally thought all these ten kingdoms were up by the year 450 at least. Though Dr. Allix makes the epocha of them A. D. 486, when the western empire was taken from the Romans, and fixes them in the following order; the Almans in Rhetia and Pannonia; the Franks in Belgica; the Anglo-Saxons in Britain; the Wisigoths in Gallia Aquitania and Hispania Tarraconensis; the Sueves and Alans in Portugal; the Vandals in

Africa; the Burgundians in Gallia Sequanensis; the Ostrogoths in Pannonia, and afterwards in Italy; the Lombards in Pannonia, and the Heruli and Turcilingi, who conquered Augustulus: and though these kingdoms were thrown into different forms and shapes afterwards, yet it is remarkable they were just of this number; as,

1. Italy and Germany;
2. France;
3. Spain;
4. England with Ireland;
5. Scotland;
6. Hungary;
7. Poland with Lithuania;
8. Denmark, with Sweden and Norway, Sweden being since divided;
9. Portugal;
10. The Grecian empire seized by the Ottomans.

And as these kings cannot be understood of single persons at the head of these kingdoms, or of so many kings succeeding one another; so neither is it necessary to consider these kingdoms as being in the same state, and made up of the same sort of people always; it is enough that they are in the same place, and within the empire; for we, may observe, that different things, at different times, are ascribed to them, or at least to some. They all are at first of one mind, and give their kingdom to the beast; then they, at least some of them, hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and yet others lament the destruction and burning of Rome, (⁽⁶⁶⁷⁾Revelation 17:16,17 18:9).

Which have received no kingdom as yet: in John's time, when the Pagan empire was in being, and the beast was not risen, with whom they were to reign; hence these horns have no crowns on them, (⁽⁶⁶⁸⁾Revelation 12:3).

But receive power as kings one hour with the beast; as soon as he was risen; and therefore the horns are represented with crowns upon them, (⁽⁶⁶⁹⁾Revelation 13:1). Their rise was with the Papal beast, who rose not to his supreme power and dignity until the western emperor, which let and hindered, was removed out of the way; which was done by the barbarous nations, who set up these kingdoms, which made way for the lordly and tyrannical government of the pope of Rome; so that he and they rose up together: and this may he meant by the "one hour"; namely, that at one and the same hour or season he came to his supreme authority and grandeur,

and they received their kingly power with him; or this may denote the time of their continuance in their honour and greatness; it was but for an hour, or a short time, as that phrase sometimes signifies, (^{<5015>}Philemon 1:15) and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “for one hour”; to which agrees the Arabic version,

and their power shall be of one hour: and this shall be “as kings”; for they only have the title of kings, but not sovereign power; they are vassals to the beast, the pope, who reigns over them, (^{<6178>}Revelation 17:18) and sets up kings in these kingdoms, and deposes them at pleasure; exalting himself above all that is called God, or above all civil magistrates; so that these have only the name, not the thing; they are as kings, and look like such, but are not really so; though what power they have, they receive not from the beast, but from God; the beast receives his power and authority, as well as seat, from the dragon; but civil power and magistracy is from God, who suffers these princes, and gives them up to such stupidity as to give their kingdom to the beast, and to exercise their power as he directs.

Ver. 13. *These have one mind*, etc.] The princes of these kingdoms, and their subjects, become, in time, of one religion; first they were Arians, and then Papists; and for a long series of time there was great unity between them, with respect to religious sentiments, being zealously attached to the church of Rome, its principles and practices:

and shall give their power and strength unto the beast; the Papal antichrist, the eighth king, and seventh head; to him they have given power to exercise all ecclesiastical authority in their kingdoms; as to ordain bishops, and deliver the pall to whom they will; to excommunicate offenders, and even lay their kingdoms under an interdict when they pleased; and have assisted and defended the popes of Rome with all their force, with all their might and main, and to the utmost of their power, and have engaged in what have been called the holy wars, at their motion; they have given their riches and wealth, which are called the forces of strength, (^{<1339>}Job 36:19) which they have, by various methods, drained them of; hence the whore of Rome came to be decked with gold, and pearls, and precious stones; yea, they have given them their kingdoms, and have received them from them, and become tributary to them.

Ver. 14. *These shall make war with the Lamb*, etc.] The Lord Jesus Christ, so often spoken of in this book under this character, (^{<6178>}Revelation 5:6,12 6:1 7:10 14:1). And this war is not to be understood of a war with him

personally, or of that last and decisive, battle at Armageddon, in which will be the kings of the earth; but of a war with his members, of their persecuting of the saints, and faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, within their jurisdictions, being instigated to it by the beast, under whose influence they are:

and the Lamb shall overcome them: partly through the constancy of his people, who will not love their lives to the death, but freely lay them down for him; nor can anything separate them from the love of Christ, or prevail upon them to desert him, his truths and ordinances, cause and interest, but are more than conquerors through him, and so he overcomes in them; and partly through a reformation which he effects, as in some of those kingdoms already, as Sweden, Denmark, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and others, and will do in others hereafter; (see ^{<66776>}Revelation 17:16)

for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; he is so by nature, as God and Creator, to whom the kingdom of nature and providence belongs; and by office, as Mediator, being made higher than the kings of the earth; hence he is more than a match for them, they cannot stand before him; this is a reason why he overcomes them, and it cannot be thought it should be otherwise: this Lamb is the lion of the tribe of Judah, and when he rouses himself, and stirs up his wrath, and exerts his power, kings and great men flee from him; (see ^{<66165>}Revelation 6:15-17 ^{<66116>}Psalms 2:6,9-12). This is a proof of Christ's proper deity, the same titles being given to him, the Word and Son of God, as to God himself, (^{<66916>}Revelation 19:16 ^{<66165>}1 Timothy 6:15,16).

And they that are with him: his servants and his soldiers, that fight under him, and abide by him,

are called, and chosen, and faithful; they are chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here, and glory hereafter, and so stand opposed to the admirers of the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life, (^{<66708>}Revelation 17:8) for this is to be understood of their eternal election, and not of their separation by the effectual calling in time, for that is expressed by their being "called"; and though their calling is here set before election, as in (^{<66010>}2 Peter 1:10) yet it does not precede it; the Arabic version reads, "chosen, called, faithful"; first "chosen" by God the Father, then "called", not with the bare external call by the ministry of the word, for, so, many are called, and not chosen; but by special grace to special benefits, and with an holy and heavenly calling, and which is irresistible,

and without repentance; and being called they remain “faithful”: the meaning is, either that they have faith, or are believers in Christ; which faith they have bestowed on them in the effectual calling, as a fruit of electing grace; and by this they overcome the world: or else, that they are persons of integrity and uprightness, that are on the side of Christ; they are the faithful in the Lord, and are made so by him; and they are faithful to him, and abide by his Gospel and ordinances, and in his cause and interest, even unto death; and so this character is expressive of the perseverance of those who are chosen and called, even unto the end.

Ver. 15. *And he saith unto me*, etc.] That is, the angel, who proposed to give John the interpretation of the vision, he went on with it as follows:

the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, (see Gill on “^{<670>}Revelation 17:1”),

are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues; denoting the vast multitude of people, of which the several kingdoms, of divers languages, consist, which belong to the jurisdiction of Rome Papal: it is an eastern way of speaking, and is particularly used to express the various kingdoms, and infinite number of people belonging to the Babylonish monarchy, which was an emblem of the antichristian state, (^{<278>}Daniel 3:4,7,29 4:1) and these are compared to waters, to many waters; which phrase sometimes is used for the sea, (^{<1973>}Psalms 107:23) because of the vast numbers of them; the whole world wondered after the beast, and the kings and inhabitants of the earth have been subject to the see of Rome; and because of their overbearing force, carrying all before them; (see ^{<230>}Isaiah 8:7,8 ^{<340>}Jeremiah 47:2) (^{<668>}Revelation 13:3,4) and because, like waters, they are continually upon the flux, one generation succeeding another; and because of their instability, fickleness, and inconstancy, as in religion, so in their constitution, they will hate the whore they love; and as they frequently change and alter in their form, at last they will utterly cease: so the Jews ^{<406>}interpret many waters, in (^{<230>}Song of Solomon 8:7) of all people, and of the kings of the earth, and of the nations of the world; and they say, that many waters never signify any other than all the nations, and those that are appointed over them ^{<407>}. So, “he drew me out of many waters”, (^{<1986>}Psalms 18:16) is by the Targum on the place explained, he delivered me from many people. And so (^{<1940>}Psalms 46:4) is paraphrased by the Targumist;

“people, “as rivers”, and their streams, shall come, and make glad the city of the Lord;”

see the Targum on (²¹⁸⁰Isaiah 8:7) and in (²⁶³⁰Ezekiel 32:2) where it is observed kingdoms are compared to waters ^{f408}.

Ver. 16. *And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast*, etc.] (^{667B}Revelation 17:3) and which are interpreted of ten kings, (^{667D}Revelation 17:12). The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, and the Syriac Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, “and the beast”; and then the sense is, that the ten kings and states in particular, who have defended antichrist, and the whole empire in general, which has bore up and supported the whore of Rome:

these shall hate the whore; her principles and sentiments, her doctrines, which are doctrines of devils, her wicked practices, her idolatries, adulteries, murders, and thefts; they will repent of their fornications with her, and cease from them; their love will be turned to hatred, and the latter will be greater than ever the former was, like Amnon's to Tamar; and as it usually is with men towards harlots, when they see their follies, and how they have been deceived and abused by them:

and shall make her desolate; leave her, quit her communion; no more commit fornication with her, or join with her in her idolatrous worship; but come out from that apostate church, and renounce all fellowship with her, and persuade and engage as many as they can influence to do the same:

and naked; strip her of her purple, scarlet colour, gold, pearls, and precious stones; cease to give their power and strength, withhold their taxes and tribute, deprive her of her power and authority, civil and ecclesiastical, in their realms, and take away even her patrimony from her; and not only so, but expose her shame and filthiness, her abominable principles and practices, to all the world; which has been in part done already:

and shall eat her flesh; not literally, but mystically; not out of love, but hatred; they shall take that to themselves, and make use of, which have fattened her, as bishoprics, and other benefices, lands, endowments belonging to abbeys, and monasteries, and other religious houses; an instance and example of which we have in King Henry the Eighth's time; so some understand this phrase of devouring the substance of others, in (^{197D}Psalms 27:2 ^{200E}Daniel 7:5). So the Targumists often interpret “flesh and fatness”; by “riches, goods”, or substance; the phrase in (^{237A}Isaiah 17:4) “the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean”, is paraphrased, **hyrqy rtw** [“the riches of his glory shall be carried away”]; and the words in

(³⁸¹⁸Micah 3:3) who shall also eat the flesh of my people”, etc. are rendered, “and they who spoil” *ym[yskn*, “the goods”, or “substance of my people, and take away their precious mammon, or money, from them. And again, (³⁸¹⁹Zechariah 11:9) “let the rest eat, everyone the flesh of another”, is in the Targum, “let a man spoil” *yskn*, “the goods or substance of his neighbour”; and in (⁶⁵⁷⁶Revelation 17:16) he shall eat the flesh of the fat; the paraphrase is, “he shall” spoil *yskn*, “the goods or substance of the rich”.

And burn her with fire: alluding to the law in (⁴²⁰⁹Leviticus 21:9) which required that the daughter of a priest, that played the whore, should be burnt with fire; and this is to be understood literally of burning the city of Rome, the seat of the whore, with fire; of which (see ⁶⁶⁸⁸Revelation 18:8,9,18). It has been very near being burnt in times past, as by Alaricus the Goth, Attila the Hun, Genseric the Vandal, and by Totilas, and in later times by Charles the Fifth; and would have been, had they not been dissuaded or diverted from it; and which were so many preludes and warnings of its future fate: and we may learn from hence, that Rome, and the Romish antichrist, will not be destroyed by the Turks, but by the Christians; and by the same states, and kingdoms, and princes, by which the whore of Rome has been supported in her grandeur, power, and authority, who will revolt from Popery, and embrace the pure Gospel of Christ: and this shows, that the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire has been divided, will subsist in this form at the destruction of Rome; wherefore, it has been rightly observed by some, that not one of these kingdoms shall ever be able to rise to universal monarchy. France has been for many years attempting it, but in vain; and we may sit down easy and satisfied, assuring ourselves with the greatest confidence, that all attempts this way will be fruitless; there never will be another universal monarchy on earth but that of Christ's; (see ²¹⁹⁵Daniel 2:37,39,40 7:3,23, 27).

Ver. 17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will*, etc.] By doing the preceding things to the whore of Rome, whose destruction is according to the will of God; it is his approving will, what he likes of, and will be well pleased with; it is his will of command, what he will order to be done, (⁶⁸¹⁶Revelation 18:6,7) and it is his determining will, his will of purpose, his decree, what he has resolved shall be done; he has fixed the time of her reign, and longer than that she shall not continue: and these kings, in

destroying her, will not do so much their own will, as the will of God, and God will put it into their hearts to do it; he will work in them both to will and to do; he will fill them with hatred to her; he will incline their minds to do the above things, as it will be in the power of their hands to do them; he who has the hearts of all men, and even of kings in his hands, and can turn them as rivers of water, will move them hereunto, (^{<3100>}Proverbs 21:1) he that turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate his people Israel, (^{<1945>}Psalm 105:25) will turn the hearts of these kings to hate the whore, and do unto her as is here predicted; and the same God will do this, who has, on the other hand, already put into their hearts to do the following things:

and to agree: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin version, and is the same with that of having one mind, (^{<6173>}Revelation 17:13) that is, being of the same religion; God giving them up to a reprobate mind, to believe a lie, that they might be damned; which must be understood not of the same individuals, but of their predecessors; unless this is to be interpreted of their agreeing together against the whore, to pull her down, and set up the pure worship and service of God; for this is a blessing of grace from God, who gives his people one heart and one way, that they may fear him, (^{<2429>}Jeremiah 32:39) but the former sense seems best, since it follows,

and give their kingdom unto the beast; the eighth king, and seventh head, the pope of Rome; to whom they have given their power and strength in things civil and ecclesiastical, their wealth and riches; and have received their crowns from him, and have held their kingdoms by him, and become tributary to him: and this is done, and will be,

until the words of God shall be fulfilled; concerning the afflictions of his church and people, and the reign of antichrist, for the space of forty and two months, (^{<6112>}Revelation 11:2 13:5) all which while they are fulfilling the secret will of God, unknown to them, and yet act against his revealed will, and break his commands; just as the Jews, ignorant of the prophecies of the Old Testament, fulfilled them in condemning Christ, (^{<4137>}Acts 13:27). That God should put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfil his will, in destroying the whore of Rome, is easily received; but there seems some difficulty that he should put it into their hearts to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, which was sinful: now this he did, not by infusing sin into them, which is contrary to his pure and holy nature; but by leaving them, and giving them up to their own hearts' lusts; stirring up, and moving

upon their minds, and directing the motions of it, to such and such objects, which they readily and voluntarily fell in with; and yet the concern of God herein does not, nor do his decrees about sin infringe the liberty of the will in acting, or excuse the sinfulness of the action, or make God the author of sin; as the instances of selling of Joseph by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews, show.

Ver. 18. *And the woman which thou sawest*, etc.] (^{<667B>}Revelation 17:3) as there described,

is that great city, often mentioned in this book; great Babylon, the city of Rome, (^{<661B>}Revelation 11:8 14:8 16:19) which reigneth over the kings of the earth; which then reigned in John's time over the kings of the earth; and this clearly points out the city of Rome, for there was no other city then, but that, which reigned over the kings of the earth; that was then the metropolis of the Roman empire, to which the whole world was subject; and therefore it is called all the world, (^{<661B>}Luke 2:1) and since, all the kings of the empire have been under the jurisdiction of Rome Papal. It was formerly called Urbs Regum, a “city of kings”, ^{f409}, either for the reason in the text, or because its inhabitants looked like kings.