

The Prophetic Outlook Today – The Judgment Of The Great Harlot



Continued from [The Seventh Vial](#).

(Rev. xvii.)

“Come hither, I will show thee.”—Rev. xvii. I.

This Vision (Rev. xvii.) is introductory to the judgment on Babylon, and explanatory to St. John, as the symbolic man, of its causes and reasonableness. This is God’s usual method when about to execute any very notable act of vengeance. He shows His Church its justice beforehand, thus vindicating His honour, and warning such of His people as may have been deceived to separate themselves in order to escape imminent doom. So with Lot and Sodom, Babylon (Jer. li. 6), our Lord and Jerusalem.

Definitions

The Beast is the Papacy*, the whole succession of the Popes of Rome, with their subjects, and the Harlot is the Romish Church. So important is the description of the Beast that it is twice given—here in this chapter, which relates to the end of his history, and in Rev. xiii., which relates to its beginning. Here is given us a bird’s-eye view of more than twelve centuries of history, a chapter the right understanding of which is of the last importance.

* **Note:** I always understood the Beast to be the political empire the Popes of Rome control.

The judgment of the Great Harlot was revealed to St. John by one of the Seven Angels that had the Seven Vials, this signifying that the complete historical revelation here given belongs to the era of the Vials. That particular Vial Angel may be supposed the revealer in the time of whose Vial-outpouring a full understanding would prove to be given of the Woman and the Beast, doubtless the Seventh and last. If so, this exposure belongs chronologically to the time of the outpouring of the Seventh Vial, just as it stands in the sacred text. Much would have been made clear before that date, but not till then would the Woman fully appear in the depicted relationship to the Beast

and to his Horns. The picture would be premature at any earlier period, though it embodies a long previous history.

Purpose of the Vision

1. *"Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot."* Who that earnestly desires to know the truth would not eagerly respond to this gracious offer of instruction?

Not, "I will show thee the great harlot," but *"the judgment of the great harlot,"* with whom the kings and the inhabitants of the earth—that is, all classes of persons in many parts of the world—have committed fornication. She sits upon many waters—that is, peoples (ver. 15)—so wide is the extent of her influence and of her teaching. This is in fact the "catholicity" of which she boasts (see the medal representing Rome Papal: *"sedet super universum"*). The judgment is described in verses 16, 17; but St. John is so overcome with astonishment at what he sees, that the Angel gives him fuller and further explanations before describing the judgment itself. The Angel (ver. 7) promises the explanation of (1) the Woman, (2) the Beast, but begins with (2). This is in strict accordance with the chronology, for it is not till near the end of the Beast's history that the Woman fully appears in this condition and this relation to him.

The same Power—the Beast of Rev. xiii.—as seen and described here is in a later stage of development, and is now represented by a double symbol, a Beast and a Woman. The secular power is thus shown to be wielded by Church authority. The Woman has become responsible for the crimes committed by the Beast, and so occupies the chief place in the Vision.

Secret Spiritual Teaching

3. *"He carried me away in the spirit."* The Vision was out of the usual routine and order, as displaying a phenomenon of no less than 1260 years' duration, and consequently that which Christ's people living at the era of the Vials could see only mentally and not by the bodily eye.

The result of this secret spiritual teaching is seen in the next chapter (Rev. xviii. 1, 2). That exposure is public and notorious. It seems to represent the several sections of the Christian Church uniting in opinion as to Rome being indeed Babylon the Great, after the secret teaching that has been preparing the minds of some.

A Wilderness and Waters

3. *"Into a wilderness."* Not the wilderness into which the Woman, the true Church, fled and was hidden (Rev. xii. 6); nor the desolation total and final destined to befall the Harlot at last through the judgment by fire (Rev. xvii. 16); for she is here depicted not as suffering under judgments of either human or Divine origin, but as in all the wantonness, pride, and gaudiness of a prospering harlotry. The desert appeared to a considerable extent flooded with water round where the Harlot was seated. Moreover, she was said to be seated on Seven Hills, symbolised by the Seven Heads of the

Beast that bore her.

The waters are emblematic as well as literal. As the Seven Heads or mountains were not only a natural feature of the scene, but also symbolised the seven forms of government Rome would previously have experienced, so the waters that inundated the base of those hills where the Harlot had her seat were not only literally true, but also were an apt symbol (ver. 15) of the barbarian floods which, after pouring into and desolating the Empire, would at length constitute nations, tribes, and languages, subject to Papal Rome's dominion.

The Roman Campagna

campagna noun

1. An open level tract of country; especially "Campagna di Roma." The extensive undulating plain which surrounds Rome.

By almost necessary inference this desert scene was the Campagna around Rome. St. John might ask, How could this be the Roman Campagna, which in his time and for centuries had been most cultivated?

The present desolate state of the Campagna, began at the time when first, after the Ten- Horned Beast of Western Christendom had emerged into existence (Rev. xiii. 1), the Harlot Church of Rome rose on its back to supremacy; and it has continued ever since, till the Italians, after the fall of the Pope's Temporal Power in 1870, recovered Rome as their capital city, and were able to begin to do something towards recovering also that desolate area.

The Ten Gothic Powers spoiled and burned Imperial Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries, and so desolated her Campagna as in fact to originate that desert region out of which she rose up again as Papal Rome, and which attached to her ever after. This desert state of the Roman Campagna continued most remarkably the constant characteristic of the scene all through the 1260 years of Papal supremacy, a notable contrast between Rome Imperial and Rome Papal. (The Gothic Invasions are more fully described in the Author's larger work, *Present-Day Papers on Prophecy*.)

Gibbon, when about to describe Rome's revival and restoration to dominion in the new character of Rome Papal, under Gregory I., about the close of the sixth century, gives a descriptive sketch of the Campagna which one might suppose to have been drawn for the express purpose of illustrating this passage (*Decline and Fall*, viii. chap, xlv.) : Chiefly from the long continued harass of barbarian invasions, "the Campagna was reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness; the land barren, the waters impure, the air infectious." Further desolation was caused by the inundations of the Tiber.

Though the city rose again in its new and ecclesiastical character, the Campagna remained a scene of desolation. In consequence of depopulation after the barbarian invasions, districts once highly cultivated, above all in Italy, were changed into forests or marshes. In every other country, as civilisation and population advanced, the recovery of these lands was successfully accomplished, but not so in the vast plain round Rome. From the days of the Goths and Gregory down to the present, the traveller has been

struck by the waste and dreary Campagna that surrounds the city. The Tiber still from time to time overflows his banks as of old, and then from the distant hills Rome is often to be seen actually sitting upon many waters.

Thus the desert scene associated with the Harlot in the Vision was a landscape admirably perfect, drawn from nature; a true and faithful picture of the Campagna of Rome as from that date it appeared and has continued ever since.

The Woman and the Beast

The Woman and the Beast are here shown distinct, though in close connection; the Beast's body—that is, his popular constituency—both upholding and being subject to the Harlot that sat on it. By the Woman sitting on the Beast's body is signified that superintending and guiding power which the rider possesses over his beast; than which nothing could be chosen more apt to represent the superiority claimed and exercised by the See of Rome over the secular kingdoms of Western Christendom. Under the figure of the Woman and the Beast are represented a professing Church, and a great Empire of which the ruling head is the Papacy.

As the true Church is doubly prefigured as a Woman and a City—the Bride and the Heavenly Jerusalem—so the false apostate Church is doubly symbolised as a Woman and a City.

An Apostate Church

In the light of the accompanying and contrasted symbol of “the Bride, the Lamb's wife” (Rev. xix. 19), this Harlot Woman is interpreted to represent an Apostate Church, the Church of Rome. The Woman is a visible Church, an earthly corporation, with a local connection. The contrast with the Bride settles the general meaning of the symbol. It is not the Papacy as a temporal power, with a ruling dynasty of Popes at Rome, but the Church of Rome as an ecclesiastical system, long submitted to by the Roman world, but in the latter days, according to the prophecy, hated, despised, and despoiled by the Ten Kingdoms.

As the Beast's body both upheld and was subject to the Harlot that sat on it, so the Papal Empire of the West, with the power of its Ten Kingdoms and many peoples, upheld and was at the same time ruled by Papal Rome, as the recognised Mother and Mistress Church of Christendom. The Beast's ruling Head—the Pope for the time being—in his twofold character as Christ's Vicegerent on earth and as Patriarchal Head of his Church, took part in the same act, sustaining his Church upon the Seven Hills as one married to her, according to the phraseology of the Roman Law.

The acquiescence of the Western Kingdoms in the Hildebrandine theory of the Roman Supremacy is typified by the Beast taking the Woman Babylon, who represents the Seven-Hilled City and the Roman Church, on its back (not on its heads) as its guide and director.

Down to near the time of the Harlot's final destruction, the Ten Kings,

during the chief period of their connection with the Beast as his constituency, support her; but towards the end they tear and desolate her. At last she is suddenly and utterly destroyed; and when the Beast himself comes to his end (Rev. xix. 19), though the False Prophet (Rev. xiii. 11-17) is still with him, the Woman is no longer there; before this she has entirely disappeared.

A Scarlet coloured Beast

A deeper red than before struck the Apostle's eye and is specially noted here. No doubt the colour was deeper now because of the blood of saints shed during the Beast's career. The colour is the same as that of the royal robe put in mockery on the Lord Jesus, as described by St. Matthew; in St. Mark and St. John it is called purple. In the description of the Woman's dress (ver. 4) the two are combined, "purple and scarlet." In like manner the names of blasphemy—in the sense of claiming Divine titles and powers have accumulated during the 1260 years. In Rev. xiii. 1, "names of blasphemy" are said to be on the Beast's heads. Here it is simply said that he is "full of names of blasphemy," or "names full of blasphemy." They may still have appeared on the heads; nothing is said about their being on his body.

No Diadems

3. *"Having seven heads and ten horns."* The Seventh Head has grown out of the wound of the previous Seventh Head wounded to death (Rev. xiii. 3), but it is really in order of time the Eighth. Since the Great Earthquake and the Tripartition (Rev. xvi. 19), the Ten Horns are no longer dominant as they have been for twelve centuries, hence they are now mentioned last (see Rev. xii. 3, xiii. 1). The Beast still has the Ten Horns, but there is now no mention as before of Diadems on the Horns. All has been reduced to a dead level; dominion has now passed entirely to the democracy. Does not this feature connect this Vision with the Seventh Vial and the Great Earthquake? However, the Horns have been "kings" during a long period of their history, and they are so called by the Angel. They have been associated with and subordinate to the Beast "until the words of God should be accomplished" (ver. 17). The symbol here seems meant to represent the normal kindly relationship between the Beast and them during the 1260 years.

The Woman's Array

4. Purple, scarlet, gold, and gems. As said of the Romish Church, this is a truly characteristic picture, drawn from the life. The dress-colour specified is distinctively that of the Romish ecclesiastical dignitaries, the scarlet being reserved by her to her Pontiffs and Cardinals. The ornaments are those with which she has been bedecked beyond any Church called Christian.

The Crown.



NERVA

A.D. 96-98

Rome Imperial.



VESPASIAN

A.D. 69-79

The Diadem.



VALENS

A.D.
364: 378

Rome Papal.



Pope LEO XII

A.D. 1823-29

The Golden Cup

4. "In her hand a golden cup" This cannot be Imperial Rome, which is far otherwise represented on medals, coins, and monuments; it is Rome in the cupbearing form—that is, Rome Papal—holding forth the drugged cup of her superstitions. The Woman is represented under a double character: as a Harlot to the Ten Kings, and as a vintner or tavern-hostess, vending wines to the common people—two characters often united of old.

So the Church of Rome interchanged mutual favours with the kings of Western Christendom, such as might suit their respective circumstances and characters; while to the common people she dealt out for sale the wine of the

poison of her fornication,—that is, her indulgences, relics, masses, and the rest of her superstitions,—therewith in the spiritual sense drugging them and making them besotted and drunk. All the features of the description are symbolical. Rome's sin has been that of leading men aside and astray from the right worship of God, and of substituting for the purity and unworldliness of Christian living the irreligious and worldly spirit of the earth. God commands men to use the endowments of reason and conscience, and not to give them away. But the Church of Rome requires men to sacrifice them to her will; and then she pours into their minds a delirious draught of unscriptural doctrines, with which she makes the head dizzy, the eyes to swim, the feet to stagger, and this intoxication she calls faith.

The Woman's Name and Character

5. *"Upon her forehead a name."* In allusion to the custom of certain notorious prostitutes of having their name written on a label on their foreheads. Fornication and adultery throughout the Old Testament are the emblems of religious degeneracy, of departure from the true God and from His right worship and service. In numerous passages both terms are used to describe Israel's departure from the worship of Jehovah, and the degrading sensuality by which such idolatry was everywhere accompanied.

The name is upon her forehead, so that everyone can see and read it. It is visible to all others, though not to the Harlot herself. The name is in contrast to the words "Holiness to the Lord" on the forefront of the mitre of the High Priest, also in contrast to what is described in Rev. xiv. 1. Who has written that name there? Not she herself. Is it History that has now written it? If so, this means that at the epoch to which this Vision belongs her true character and doings will have become known without mistake to all who are willing to be taught.

"Mystery," as part of the name, or *"a mystery,"* as describing the name. This indicates a spiritual meaning. Something lies behind which will be made manifest in due time; the meaning is not simply literal. Heathen Rome was no "mystery" in Christian eyes, but how many professing Christians have been deceived by Rome Papal! There is evidently an allusion to St. Paul's predicted "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. ii. 7, 8), and it is in contrast to the "mystery of godliness" (I Tim. iii. 16).

"Babylon the Great." The very parody of the title Rome arrogates, "Rome, Mother and Mistress."

"The mother of the harlots"—that is, of the Roman Catholic Churches in other lands, she herself being the mother and progenitress of the rest. All this spiritual fornication and corruption are owing to her and to her example and teaching. *"And of the abominations."* The word especially designates an object of idolatrous worship. Not only is she first and greatest of these, but she is herself the origin of the rest.

So far from the interpretation which identifies the Church of Rome with the Apocalyptic Babylon dating only from the Reformation, the truth rather is that it did very much to bring about the Reformation. Even if it were a late

interpretation, this Vision, at the era of the Seventh Vial, leads us to expect fresh and convincing light on that very subject in this later time.

The Woman Drunken

6. She makes the peoples drunk with the wine of her teaching, but she herself has been made drunk with the blood of Christ's saints—that is, of those who ruled their lives by God's laws; and of the martyrs or witnesses of Jesus—that is, of those who testified for Christ against her teaching. That implies a long career of cruel persecution and slaughter.

St. John does not see her drinking the blood of the saints; she had done this abundantly in her past career, and under the influence of those draughts in times gone by she was now drunk, implying that there has been much drinking. This drunkenness of course has a symbolical meaning, and this Vision is intended to represent her towards the end and not at the beginning of her evil career. The great Antichristian persecution has taken place during the reign of Babylon, not after her destruction; and her destruction is followed not by that great Antichristian persecution, but by the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. xix.).

6. "*Drunken with the blood.*" The applicability of this to the Romish Church, throughout the latter half of the 1260 years, is written in deep-dyed characters on the page of History. What other professedly Christian Church has slain millions of Christians for no crime but that of being true Christians, as she has done? The persecuting Church, by a wretched quibble, always handed her victims over to the secular power to be dealt with by it, and with a mockery of mercy always enjoined the secular power to deal leniently with her children. Even the Inquisition did not burn its own victims, but called upon kings and princes to kindle the flame of the *auto-da-fé*.

Almost all Europe, for many centuries, was inundated with blood, which was shed at the direct instigation or with the full approval of the ecclesiastical authorities, and under the pressure of a public opinion that was directed by the Catholic clergy, and was the exact measure of their influence.

That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant that has a competent knowledge of history...These atrocities were not perpetrated in the brief paroxysms of a reign of terror, or by the hands of obscure sectaries, but were inflicted by a triumphant Church, with every circumstance of solemnity and deliberation.— Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, chap. iv.

The Beast called forth by the Dragon had power given him (by the Dragon) "*to make war with the saints, and to overcome them*" (Rev. xiii. 7). The Attendant Beast causes "*that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed*" (Rev. xiii. 15). The Harlot that rode on the Beast is seen, not "*drinking,*" but "*drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus*" (Rev. xvii. 6; see also Rev. xi. 7). Therefore the

Beast, the Attendant, and the Harlot are contemporaneous in their warfare against the witnesses of Jesus, and the result of their warfare is the second series of martyrs foretold under the Fifth Seal (Rev. vi. 11). The first series was slain by Rome Heathen; the second is slain by Rome Papal.

It was only by means of the Ten Horns and the mouth of the Eighth Head that the Woman was thus enabled to persecute and slay the saints, and to become drunk with their blood. The Beast under its revived wicked and persecuting Eighth Head is contemporary with Babylon prospering, and is not subsequent to Babylon destroyed by the Ten Horns. The persecutions were Babylon's, yet effected by the Beast on which she sat. It was she that instituted crusades of slaughter against heretics, and that compelled the Ten Horns to rend and destroy. The Beast's body was under her control, so that though the actual bloody deeds might be his, the responsibility was hers. It is the Beast that wars against the witnesses of Jesus.

When at last serious inquiry is made of History,—and it will be made,—“in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (Rev. xviii. 2.4).

Two marks of identification are given. One is present and visible throughout the earth today—namely, widespread extension among the peoples of the world, “upon many waters” (Rev. xvii. 2, 15, xviii. 3). Rome's boasted “catholicity” is thus one of the marks of identification. With all this extension goes propagation of unscriptural doctrines and corruption of God's truth. The important matter is to test by God's Word the doctrines taught and enforced, and it soon appears what kind of “wine” is offered in her cup to the souls of men. The other mark is past and historical—namely, shedding the blood of Christ's saints and witnesses on a prodigious scale (Rev. xvii. 6, xviii. 24). This is writ large, in terrible characters of fire and blood, on the pages of History, and cannot be wiped away. It is not either of these marks alone, but the union of the two in the past history and present extension of the same Power, that so unmistakably establishes the identification.

Add to this, that in these Visions she is connected not only with the Seven Hills but also with the Ten-Horned condition of the Western Roman Empire; that is, with Mediaeval and Modern Europe, which by profession is Christian, not Heathen. Heathen Babylon is on the Seven Hills; Christian Babylon is also on the Ten-Horned Beast.

St. John wonders

6. This is a proof that St. John did not conceive the symbol to represent Heathen Rome. He was told indeed by the Angel (ver. 18), “the Woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which *reigneth* over the kings of the earth.” That was Imperial Rome, the great city existing in his time, and at that time actually reigning over the kings of the earth. In the Vision she is Rome still, but in much later phases of her history. In the Vision she is contemporary with the Ten Horns or Kingdoms of Western Europe, whereas that break-up of the Western Roman Empire did not happen till centuries after St. John's day. Those Ten Horns hate and hurt her, therefore she exists in their times. She is riding on a Beast who is the eighth in a series (vers. 10, 11),

and it was the sixth in that series that existed when St. John wrote.

The Harlot Woman Babylon is the Church of Papal Rome. From this picture it would seem that whatever injury the Beast or the Woman might have sustained under the Vials—as from the outpouring of the Fifth upon the throne of the Beast, fulfilled in the anti-Papal acts and fury of the French Revolutionists, or from the progress of the Angel with the everlasting Gospel—all would have been in appearance repaired by the time of the Vision, which seems to be not long before the Harlot's final destruction. So that up to the very last Rome's Harlot Church will appear putting on all her former bravery and boastings and charms; still, as of old, holding out to the world her cup of abominations; still, as of old, breathing out her spirit of persecution against the true saints of Christ.

It could have caused St. John no astonishment that the Heathen City should persecute Christianity. But that Rome should not only become a Christian Church, but being such should also be a more bitter persecutor of Christians than ever Heathen Rome had been—this was astonishing indeed. Heathen Rome doing the work of heathenism in persecuting Christ's Church was no mystery; but a Christian Church calling herself the Mother of Christendom, and yet drunken with the blood of the saints, this was indeed a mystery; a Christian Church boasting herself the Bride, and yet being the Harlot.

The Angel had promised St. John to show him the judgment of the Great Harlot, which he does in verses 16, 17. But St. John is so overcome with astonishment at what he sees that the Angel gives him fuller and further explanations before describing the judgment itself. The Angel (ver. 7) promises the explanation of (1) the Woman, (2) the Beast, but begins with (2). This, as has already been stated, is in strict accordance with the chronology, for it is not till near the end of the Beast's history that the Woman appears in this condition and this relation to him.

This wondering comes at the end of the Harlot's career, as here shown. St. John as a symbolic man has the whole of this career before him when he wonders. The prophets had spoken of Israel and Judah as harlots, when they had allied themselves with the world and its dark idolatries. Did St. John see in this Vision a hint that after the lapse of years the Church of Christ, like Israel of old, might fall from her high calling, and become the ally of the worldly power? The hint certainly was there. His wondering, he being a symbolic man, may mean that even to the end Babylon will seem powerful, having recovered from former judgments, and being in no apprehension of her approaching destruction. But God will teach His servants, from these very Visions, that the Romish Harlot is about to be suddenly destroyed. This is signified by the action of the Angel towards St. John, in removing his astonishment.

The Mystery of the Woman

The Harlot must be exposed, branded, and destroyed ere the manifestation of the Bride. The rise, pretensions, persecutions, and decay of the Papal Church have been beyond all controversy the greatest and most important facts in the history of the Christian centuries. The early Christians were not in danger

of relapsing into heathen idolatry, but a Christian idolatry was to arise; Antichrist was to sit on the throne of Christ, in God's Temple—that is, in the professing Church; a fearful apostasy was to take place in the Church itself. It was an object well worthy of Divine inspiration to expose this new and specious form of evil, which, rising slowly and imperceptibly, was destined to attain such gigantic proportions, and to endure more than a thousand years.

For a true understanding of the prophecies of Babylon and the Beast, a clear idea of the relations of Church and State during the Dark Ages is needful—the relations between the Church of the Seven Hills and the Kingdoms of Western Europe. Had there been prefigured only a persecuting Church or only a persecuting State, half the truth would have been omitted. What actually existed for ages, and consequently had to be depicted in prophetic Vision, was Church and State distinct in themselves as secular and spiritual, yet united in the persecution of the saints, the one acting through the other, and the head of both co-operating and sharing the blood-guiltiness.

Twofold Character of the Pope

What creates apparent complexity is the strange fact that the head of the one was head also of the other; that a succession of priests claiming descent and authority from St. Peter became also a dynasty of sovereigns of longest continuance in Europe; assuming, moreover, to be the supreme rulers of the kings and temporalities of the Roman world, and actually recognised and accepted as such for centuries by the Powers of Europe.

The twofold character of the Pope must be kept distinct:

1. There is first the immeasurably higher, mightier, but usurped character of Christ's Vicegerent upon earth, with consequent headship over kings and people. This is royal, or rather super-royal. It is signified by the triple-crowned Tiara.
2. There is also his patriarchal headship of the clerical body belonging to the Church of Rome, and of course of the Church herself, as well as the claim to headship of the whole Christian Church. This is sacerdotal or ecclesiastical, and is signified by the Mitre.

These two distinct characters and functions are nevertheless united in one and the same personage, but the Vision shows that the distinction will be made much clearer towards the end.

The Popes and their Church

The Beast is a political power, the Woman an ecclesiastical system; and these two are not one, whatever the relation between them. The Roman Empire under its last ruling head—that is, the Papal dynasty—is very closely connected with the Romish Church. But the members of that dynasty have been also European monarchs, temporal sovereigns, who, enthroned at Rome, succeeded to the Western Empire of the Caesars, governed, and for more than twelve centuries united in the bond of a common obedience to themselves, all the

nations of the Western Empire of Rome. The Church of Rome, as such, never did this.

St. John saw a Woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured Beast; not a Beast apart from a Woman, nor a Woman apart from a Beast. A close and important connection exists between the Roman Empire under its last governing head and the Roman Catholic Church; the symbols employed distinctly show that connection to be both close and of long continuance. The Woman, or Church, is carried or supported by the Beast, or Papal Empire. The Church and the Empire in this their last stage are represented not by two distinct and separate symbols, but by one double one.

St. John is told in explanation that the peoples, nations, and tongues forming the Latin Empire under its last head would first uphold and obey the Woman or Church, and then in the end turn against and rend her. The Beast would first bear her up and accept her guidance, and then at last hate, insult, and destroy her. There is close relation, but not identity, between Beast and Woman. They are never confounded, yet never are they disjoined.

History of the Beast

The Beast that St. John sees bearing up the Harlot has a long history, which the Angel proceeds to describe. The Seven Heads are to be viewed not as contemporaneous but as successive; and at the time when the Angel was revealing this Vision to St. John, some of the heads were past, one was present, and two still future.

"The beast that was" is the same as the Roman Heathen Dragon; it was cast down and politically slain under its Seventh Head (Rev. xii. 9).

"And is not" in respect of its old heathen form of existence. This does not mean that it was absolutely non-existent, but that the Seventh Head had received its deadly wound.

"And is about to come up." The "let" or "hindrance" having been removed (2 Thess. ii. 6, 7), the Beast was about to come up as the Beast from the Sea or Abyss, in the new form, by the Dragon's creation, and under the new head, under which it revives. This is the era of the Eighth Head, or revived Seventh, and it is to this era that the Woman belongs in her character as here displayed. The Beast had not yet so come up when the Angel was speaking, hence it cannot be the Roman Heathen Empire then in existence. It is this Beast that makes war on the witnesses (Rev. xi, 7), hence it must have appeared and have grown to maturity and power before the time of that war. St. John had seen this Beast rising up out of the sea (Rev. xiii. 1), but the Angel, who sees and knows more than does St. John, here describes it as the Beast from the Abyss, deeper than the sea, this being its true origin. So a marine volcanic island rises both out of the sea and out of a deeper depth beneath.

So important is the description of this Beast that it is twice given in— Rev. xiii. at the beginning, and in Rev. xvii. at the end of its history. In Rev. xiii. I, the Beast, though rising from the sea, is represented as of devilish

origin; in the later Vision (Rev. xvii.) the origin is more plainly declared—it is from hell itself. That may be explained as implying that later on in the course of time, through better understanding of these Visions, the true origin of the Beast will be recognised as being from hell. Compare Rev. ix. I, 2.

“And to go into perdition.” Therefore under this Eighth Head the Beast is in its final form, that in which it receives final judgment. It now represents the last form of Roman Power. It does not fall like the others, but goes on and meets its own destruction at the hand of the Lord (2 Thess. ii. 3, 8).

Those four statements, from “was” to “go,” cover or correspond with the whole of the supplementary Visions, from Rev. xii. I to xiv. 20, the “writing outside.”

How marvellously concise yet comprehensive are these inspired symbolisations! In that one symbol of the Beast as now seen by St. John is represented the whole course of Roman History, from the time of Romulus (753 B.c.) to an end still future.

Seven Heads and Mountains

9. “Seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.” The Woman being the city which then, in St. John’s time, ruled over the kings of the earth (ver. 18), these mountains could only mean the far-famed Seven Hills of Rome. Constantinople, the only other city besides Rome famed as built on Seven Hills, had not then been built, much less had it acquired rule. The unanimous voice of Roman poetry during more than five hundred years, including the age of St. John, proclaimed Rome as the Seven-Hilled City. On the Imperial medals of that age, still preserved (see illustration, p. 137), we see Rome represented as a Woman sitting on Seven Hills, precisely as is here described.

“Sitteth on them.” This necessarily associates the Beast, bearing these Seven Heads, so interpreted, with the Seven-Hilled Rome for capital. It binds the Power symbolised, through all its various mutations, to that same locality. The Seven Hills of Rome were to be the Beast’s seat or throne of empire, as they had been of the Dragon before him.

Seven Forms of Government

“And they are seven kings.” A second mystery is symbolised by the Beast’s Seven Heads. Had they meant hills or mountains only, how could we explain the wounding to death and the revival of one of them? They are “kings,” the word being used in the dynastic sense as meaning not mere individuals, but a succession of them (see Dan. ii. 37, 38, vii. 17, 23, 24, Viii. 22, 23).

They are the number of Forms of Government, of successive Governing Heads, of bestial character,—that is, lines of heathen-like ruling governors,—which the same Seven-Hilled Roman Empire would be under from its early origin to its final destruction. They are all of them heads of the same Beast; the body is the same, though at different epochs under a different head. A Beast carries

its own heads only. The first seven are the same as the Seven Heads of the Dragon, "*who gave the beast his power, and his throne, and great authority*" (Rev. xiii. 2), and they belong to that Beast or Empire in its Draconic or Heathen form. Satan gave to the Beast the power and influence which he (Satan) had so long possessed and exercised in Heathen Rome. Probably the Dragon, on transferring to the Beast his throne and power, transferred also the covering skin with seven heads and ten horns, so that he now appeared on the scene simply as the Dragon. The Beast, then, is the Dragon's creature and substitute; and the real source of its power and success is expressly declared to have been the Dragon or the Devil, who, after long animating and reigning in the old Roman Empire, now gave to the Beast his seat and throne. The Dragon does not himself directly act, though remaining on the scene (Rev. xvi. 13); he has his representative, or Vicar, or substitute, in the Beast. The Eighth or revived Seventh Head—the Popes of Rome—belongs to the Beast in its bestial form, which is the last phase of Roman power.

These heads could not be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, or any such separate Powers. Those are whole Beasts, not heads only, and so some of them are represented in Daniel. A head is a form of government, ruling the body to which it belongs. If that Beast represent the Roman constituency, then the heads of that Beast—which are declared to be successive, not contemporaneous—must represent forms of government that have prevailed over that Roman constituency.

History of the Heads

The very symbol of a Dragon or Wild Beast necessarily excludes the supposition that it could represent a truly Christian Power; besides, it is said of the Dragon's heads and of the Beast generally, that they had on them names of blasphemy (Rev. xiii. 1, xvii. 3). When the Vision was revealed, the heads were past, present, and future; and it must be remembered that the Seventh Head visible on the Beast was really in order of existence the Eighth, taking the place of the original Seventh that had been wounded to death.

The historian Tacitus names the first six ruling heads that had had the supreme executive authority legally attached to them at Rome. Five had passed away, and the sixth bore rule when Tacitus wrote. He belongs to the same era as St. John, to whom the Angel said:

10. "*The five are fallen.*" These are: Kings, from 753 B.c.; Consuls, from 509 B.c.; Dictators, from 498 B.c.; Decemvirs, from 451 B.c.; Military Tribunes, from 443 B.c. These five had "fallen," or ceased to rule, before the time at which St. John saw the Vision.

"*The one is.*" This is Emperors, the Imperial Head, beginning with Augustus, 31 B.c. This head was in power in St. John's day. The "crown," or wreath of bay leaves, was the Imperial emblem then worn."

"*The other is not yet come.*" This is Absolute Monarchs, beginning with Diocletian, A.D. 292. He "divided" (Dan. ii. 41) the Roman Empire into four parts, and introduced a fundamentally new constitution, with it adopting,

instead of the "crown," the "Diadem,. the fillet of pearls worn round the head, an Oriental badge of empire. This head or form of government was wounded even to death at the final downfall of Heathen ism, A.D. 395.

It was to continue only "*a little while*"—little, as compared with those before and after it. It lasted only about 100 years, from its establishment by Diocletian, A.D. 292, to its final downfall, A.D. 395. Whereas Augustus' Imperial Head, the one next before this, had lasted some 300 years; and the Beast's Eighth Head, next following, was to last 1260 years.

The Eighth Head

11. "*The beast...is himself also an eighth.*" One of the heads was "wounded to death," but healed, a fresh head having sprouted up in place of the old Seventh cut down. The Seventh Head visible would thus be really the Eighth. So did the Beast become under his new and last head what the Angel called him (8): "*The beast that was, and is not, and shall come.*"

But was not the next governing head of the Roman Empire Christian Emperors, such as Constantine and Theodosius? True; but the Beast's heads meant Rome's Seven Hills as the seat of government, as well as the successive governing heads themselves; thus excluding any but those that had their seat of empire at Rome.

Most remarkably, Constantine, when he adopted the Christian Faith, removed the seat of his Empire to Constantinople. Even after the division of the Empire into Eastern and Western, never did the Western Emperors again enthrone themselves at Rome, but at Milan or Ravenna. It was not till the Gothic flood had swept once again over Italy, and had utterly desolated old Rome itself, that Rome became again a seat of empire, and even then not the seat of any new secular Emperors or Kings, but of its Bishops or Popes, who in their usurped character of successors of St. Peter, and so Vicegerents of Christ upon earth, claimed universal empire.

Thus does History mark out the Roman Popes to be the Eighth or last ruling head of the Roman Beast, subsequently to the Gothic desolations of Rome, and to their own usurpation of the prerogatives and title of Christ's Vicar, itself a "name of blasphemy," as is said of the titles written on the Beast's heads. This Eighth Head, the Vision shows, is a revival of a professedly Heathen headship, that of Diocletian and successors, that had been wounded to death.

The veritable inheritors of Pagan rites, images, and superstitions; actually the continuators, under a different name, of the same worship in the same places—that of the Virgin for that of Venus, Cosmas and Damian for Romulus and Remus, the image of Peter for that of Jupiter Tonans.

He is of the Seven

11. "*And is of the seven.*" He is similar in spirit and character to the seven previous heads; though professedly Christian, yet essentially Heathen; professedly gentle as a lamb, but really cruel against Christ's saints as the

Dragon, of whom he is the creature, the representative, and the chosen delegate. What an awful indictment for a professedly Christian Power! But these inspired Visions tell the real truth, whether or not it agree with popular notions.

The symbol employed to prefigure this evil Power demands its dynastic character, and forbids the thought that an individual man is intended. It is represented as an Eighth Head of the Roman Beast, an eighth form of government, having its seat at Rome. Now none of the previous heads of the Roman world were individual rulers, but each consisted of a series of rulers. The Man of Sin was to be the last and the most important of these heads of this same Roman Beast. If he be a race of rulers enthroned at Rome, and thence governing the Roman world for more than twelve centuries, he keeps in proportion and harmony with all the rest. But if the Eighth Head represent only one individual man, who exercises authority for only a very short period, there is a violation of symmetry and proportion in the symbol. Analogy demands that the last head, like all the previous ones, be a race or succession of rulers.

But it must be borne in mind that though a certain Power may be a race or succession of rulers, yet at any particular date the then representative of the succession will be an individual. Thus we speak of "the King of England," meaning thereby the whole succession of our kings and queens, and we say, "the King never dies." But in A.D. 1066 this corporate King of

THE SEVEN HEADS OF THE DRAGON AND THE EIGHT HEADS OF THE ROMAN BEAST

Dan. vii. 7; Rev. xiii. 1, 3, xvii. 3, 10-12.

B.C. NUMBER HEADS

753. First Head **KINGS**. Romulus, etc.

(Only this head had yet come in Daniel's day.)

509. Second Head **CONSULS**. L. Jun. Brutus, L. Tarqu. Collat. etc.

498. Third Head **Dictators**. T. Lartius, etc.

451. Fourth Head **Decemvirs**.

443. Fifth Head **Military Tribunes**.

(These five had fallen, or ceased to rule, before the time of St. John.)

31. Sixth Head **Emperors**. Augustus, etc. (This head was in power in St. John's day.)

CROWN WORN

A.D.

292. Seventh Head ABSOLUTE MONARCHS. Diocletian, etc.

DIADEM ADOPTED

363 to 395. This head was wounded to death at the downfall of to Heathenism. The first Seven Heads are the same for Dragon and Beast.

(The Christian Headship, being at Constantinople, does not appear at all on this Western Beast. It begins in the interval between the "deadly wound" and the healing.)

476. End of the Western Roman Empire.

TEN HORNS GROW

530 or 606. Eighth Head Popes. Deadly wound healed. Revived Seventh Head:

Rev. xiii. 3, xvii. 8.

The Last Form of Roman Power.

England was an individual, William the Conqueror; in 1568, Elizabeth; in 1900, Victoria; in 1910, George V. And so with any other race or succession of rulers.

Woman and Beast contemporaneous

The Woman is contemporaneous not with any earlier form of Roman Power, nor with the brief interval in which Roman Power seemed wounded to death; but with its last revived form—that is, with the Eighth Head. Now as Babylon, the Romish Church, has existed for more than twelve centuries, this Beast must also have been in existence for the same period; and therefore the Eighth and last and peculiarly evil and Antichristian form of Roman Power predicted cannot be a short-lived individual, but must be a dynasty or succession of rulers, like all the other heads. And further, since no other succession of rulers has swayed the Roman earth from Rome during the career of Babylon, that must be the line of Roman Pontiffs.

The Ten Horns receive Authority

These Ten Kingdoms which were to arise out of Rome's Western Empire, and were to receive power together and to be allied with Rome, did not yet exist in St. John's age. Heathen Rome was destroyed before any such kingdoms arose.

12. *"They receive authority as kings, with the beast."* But the real sovereign of their subjects is the Beast. "For one hour"—that is, they retain their authority as kings only for a very short time, and then (13), "they give their power and authority unto the beast." The verb "give" is in the perfect tense, meaning a continuing act. The Pope is their common father and head, and they do not exercise their authority apart from him. They recognise his authority as superior to theirs, and they allow him to make use of their power as he may require. These finally war against the Lamb, under the leadership of the Beast (Rev. xix. 19).

The Judgment on the Harlot

16. "The ten horns...and the beast...shall hate the harlot." This is a description of the judgment itself, a description promised by the Angel in ver. 1, but delayed owing to the astonishment shown by St. John, and the need of fuller explanation as to the history and relations of the Beast and the Woman.

Here is a reversal of the attitude of the Kings to the Harlot, maintained for twelve centuries before. To hate, after having loved, represents ceasing to be under that influence to which the person was before subject.

Taking "Beast" in its broadest sense, the statement is that the kingdoms of Western Europe, the mass of the people as well as their rulers, the entire body politic, "*the ten horns and the beast*," shall at last come to hate and forsake the Harlot, the corrupt Roman Church; they shall strip her of her glory, cast her down from her high position among them, eject her religious orders, limit the powers of her priesthood, refuse her doctrines, scoff at her authority, appropriate her revenues and substance to secular uses, and at last adjudge her to utter destruction. The flesh of the Harlot denotes her temporal possessions, and "devouring" is the confiscation or secularisation of her temporalities.

The Two-Horned Beast of Rev. xiii. 11, 12 represents the Papal Clergy, the officials of the Papacy, as a class distinct from the laity. The Harlot is the Roman Church with her adherents and possessions, church buildings, monasteries, convents, lands, sumptuous worship and ceremonial, wealth and influence of all kinds, dispersed throughout the world. These are her "flesh," which the Ten Horns and the Beast are to "eat." This explains how that the Beast and the False Prophet are still found together (Rev. xix. 20) even after the Harlot has been completely despoiled and burnt with fire. The Harlot rides on the Beast's back; the False Prophet stands in front of the Beast. (See the author's *Present-Day Papers on Prophecy*)

The Process begun

This process is now actually begun; it is in fact the state of things amidst which we are living. Ever since the French Revolution of 1789, when judgment began, and the Romish Church in France was despoiled, the Ten Horns, as was foretold, have been making her desolate and naked, and have been eating her flesh. All through "the time of the end" this process has been going on, and it will continue at an accelerated rate till the final destruction comes.

The Roman Catholic nations of Modern Europe have begun to hate the Roman Catholic Church, to which in bygone ages they all yielded admiration, affection, and obedience. The past century has witnessed an ever-growing and deepening disaffection. Entire nations have defied that Church's censures, confiscated her property, and wrested every department of politics from her control. The full results of this modern movement are not seen as yet, for it is only in progress, not completed. We see that the very nations which for ages, under the Papacy, upheld and obeyed the Roman Catholic Church, now hate, despise, and despoil her. Frequent instances of this are to be seen in

the newspapers. But there is worse to come.

Her Sudden Destruction

The destruction of the mystic Babylon is to be effected all unexpectedly to those remaining in her, as well as to herself. Complete carnal security to the very end is the characteristic of Babylon and her constituents. To the last she says (Rev. xviii. 7): "I sit a queen." It is effected all in a moment by the sudden and tremendous agency of earthquake and volcanic fire. The expressions may be understood symbolically in reference to the Romish Church, in the sense of revolutionary earthquake and fire; and literally in reference to the literal city Rome. The very nature of the soil of Italy has forced on many a mind, in different ages, the thought of its physical preparedness for such a catastrophe.

The Pope remains

After the burning of the Harlot, the Pope still remains as a great leader of men. The destruction of Babylon by fire and earthquake precedes, by whatever interval, that of the Beast, with his Helper and his Confederation.

The Horns and the Beast that have hated and destroyed the Harlot remain in close confederacy to the very last conflict. But when the Beast, the Ten Kings, and the False Prophet appear in the final warfare with the Lamb (Rev. xix. 19), the Harlot (who represents the Church of Rome as an ecclesiastical system) is seen there no more; before this date she has disappeared.

"Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot."

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