

Thus then I understand the PRESENT HEAD OF THE BEAST TO BE THE PAPACY. What then is Babylon? Well, just as the Beast has seven heads, so the Harlot has seven successive manifestations. She is said in verse 18 to be "that great city which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth." A "city" may be also a "community." And a community may be religious or political. Consequently, the harlot may be either a corrupt church, or a profligate and wicked capital. During the course of ages, the "city" has taken both these shapes. In the present dispensation, the city appears to be the Roman community, regarded as a *religious* body. The Beast seems to be the same body regarded as a *political* power. The religion of Rome has always been carried by her politics. When the temporal power was supreme in any country the Church condemned the heretics and the temporal power punished them. The Beast has carried the woman all along. But before Rome Papal took the place of Rome Pagan the harlot was sometimes a literal city or mercantile community; like Tyre, or No-amon—Thebes in Egypt—or Nineveh (see Nahum), or Babylon, the city of the Chaldean power itself. What the Babylon of the future will be I do not venture to predict. I should suppose that it will comprise all the elements of all previous Babylons; the wealth, the trade by sea, the position, and the religion too. What its site may be is another question, which seems to be of less importance. The Mystical Babylon, like the Church of Christ on earth, has had many centres, and may have another yet. The chief seat of Papal power on earth has not always been at Rome locally. The Spanish and French capitals have been of almost equal importance at some periods.

But there has always been some power in the first place in Satan's kingdom on earth; and always some city or religious community that has been carried and supported by it, and has ruled the power, just as a strong and unscrupulous woman will rule over man, as Jezebel ruled over the house of Ahab; and Athaliah, for a time, in Jerusalem itself.

The fourth parallel of Revelation exhibits the downfall of the power and the city together in order to make room on earth, not only for Christ as King, but also for the Bride, the Lamb's wife, that is, the city, and church and community, which, when Babylon is destroyed, shall take her place on earth for ever, and be the metropolis of the people of God.