

CHAPTER XVI

Text (16:1-21)

INTRODUCTION

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image.

3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea.

4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues; and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works.

12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising. 13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done: 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. 19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

The sixteenth chapter describes the pouring out of the plagues

from the seven vials, or bowls. These are the final judgments visited upon the Roman Empire. One finds himself confronted with confusion unless he keeps in mind that the major theme of the book of Revelation is the unfolding of the history of the church as that institution relates to the Roman Empire, whether it be pagan, political or papal Rome.

Shall we briefly review the path over which we have come in the "series of sevens" we have studied.

The seven seals carried us to the triumph of Christianity over paganism, or pagan Rome. The seven trumpets brought us to the overthrow of the western half of the empire by the Goths, Vandals, Huns and Suevi, and the collapse of the eastern half of political Rome under the onslaught of the Parocens and Turks. Those, trumpets, in the main, reveal the fall of political Rome.

Thus we see that each of these three "series of Sevens" had a distinct purpose. Briefly again: The seven seals fulfilled a definite purpose, the overthrow of Roman paganism. The seven trumpets had as their purpose, the overthrow of the Roman Empire, politically. The seven vials also have a definite design, the overthrow of that blasphemous religious institution variously described as, a beast which had two horns like a lamb, the city of fornication, a scarlet adulteress and "that great city Babylon."

While we are still on the subject of the "series of Sevens," we note, as in the case of the seven seals and the seven trumpets, there was an interruption, or a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh seals and trumpets, respectively, (see Rev. 7:1-17 and Rev. 10:1-11, 11:1-14). So, here between the pouring out of the sixth and seventh bowls, there occurs a brief parenthesis, or interlude.

Furthermore, we should take cognizance of the fact that while the fifteenth chapter introduces the seven vials in immediate connection with those who *have overcome* the beast, his image mark and number of his name, here in this chapter as the first vial is poured out, its wrath falls upon the men *who have* the mark of the beast and worshipped his image. The second bowl of wrath is emptied upon those who had "Poured out the blood of saints and prophets. The fifth vial is poured out upon the seat, or throne of the beast. The sixth vial is poured out upon the river Euphrates, and, like stirring as a snakes nest, three unclean Spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, of the beast and of the false prophet.

The emptying of the seventh bowl is upon the great city Babylon, spiritually speaking.

All these considerations help us to identify the arena of activity portrayed by the seven last plagues. The definite purpose of these plagues is the destruction of spiritual Babylon, or papal Rome.

The symbols of this "series of sevens," in a great measure are drawn from the record of the plagues of Egypt, and, while there are differences, they do have a close correspondence to the ten plagues.

The term "plagues" applied to this "vial, or bowl series" recalls God's punishments visited upon the Egyptians. How natural it is that "plagues" should also be applied to the punishments visited upon papal Rome, for in Rev. 11:8, we found that apostate Christendom is also called Egypt, spiritually speaking. "And their dead bodies shall be in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, when also our Lord was crucified."

Having determined the purpose of pouring these bowls of wrath and the object on which they are to be poured, we are ready to take up their historical fulfillment. We must ever remember that John was to write, "the things he had seen, the things that are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter." This being true, we are not to spiritualize these symbols away, but to treat them as prophetic symbols of historic events to come to pass.

So the seven angels begin to empty their vials.

The First Vial Poured Out

vs. 1, 2 "And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."

As the plagues of physical Egypt were designed to destroy the oppressor of the Israel of God, in the Old Testament economy, and to bring about the deliverance of God's chosen, so this vial and its companions are for the destruction of the oppressor of the Israel of God of the New Testament, and to bring about their deliverance from spiritual oppression.

The time of the pouring of this vial and its following bowls without doubt, follow the 1260 year period when the apostate church, or papal Rome was in full flower. This time period we have found to be that time when the bishop of Rome was first blasphemously called "the Lord of the church," and continued until 1793 when he was humiliated. Then the time of these vials must follow that termination of the 1260 year period.

In 1793, exactly at the close of the 1260 years, there broke out in France a moral ulcer which had been festering for a long while. The

church had become so corrupt and the royalty, acting as the temporal arm of the church so rotten, that the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme and the "age of Reason," dawned upon the world.

Hear Myers on the terrible condition of the church of that time:

"The upper clergy formed a decayed feudal hierarchy. A third of the lands of France was in their hands, and this immense property was almost wholly exempt from taxation. The bishops and abbots were usually drawn from the ranks of the nobility, being attracted to the service of the church rather by its enormous revenues and social distinction, than by the inducements of piety. They spent their princely incomes in luxurious life at court. . . .

Though there were noble exceptions, the most of these dignitaries were narrow-minded and self-seeking, and many of them so shamelessly immoral that as a class they had lost all credit and authority with the people. They had brought the church into disrepute. The hatred of the people felt toward them was transferred to the religion which they so unworthily represented."

Myers *Mediaeval and Modern History*, pages 502, 503.

Under these was what was called the Third Estate or *Tiers Etal*. This embraced all the nation aside from the nobility and clergy.

Hear Myers again page 503:

The peasants constituted the majority of the Third Estate. The condition of most of them could hardly have been worse. Their only recognized use in the state was "to pay feudal services to the lords, tithes to the priests, and imports to the King."

La Bruyère, in *Les Caractères*, wrote of human slaves:

"One sees certain fierce animals, male and female, scattered through the fields; they are black, livid and burned by the sun, and attached to the soil, which they dig up and stir 'with indomitable industry; they have what is like an articulate voice, and when they rise to their feet they show a human face,—in truth they are human beings. They retire at night into dens, where they live on black bread and water and roots; they save other men the trouble of sowing and delving and harvesting."

No wonder, then, when the mob cried for bread and they were contemptuously told 'to eat cake,' that the match was struck to the fagots of the revolution, in which the King, Marie Antoinette, the girondins and thousands of lesser lights were executed. This in-

augured the Reign of Terror in which the enslaved masses, maddened to fury, sent the Catholic King, royal families, nobles and priests to the guillotine, by the tens of thousands. The nation declared itself atheistic, inaugurated a new calendar, and forever unshackled the world from the tyranny of papal Rome.

As a result of this breaking out of greivous sore upon those who worshipped the beast and his image, the mightest Catholic nation of that time was plunged into Civil war and as a result Europe was deluged in blood.

The Reign of Terror resulted in the pouring out of the first vial or bowl.

The Second Vial Poured Out

vs. 3 "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea."

How fitting that this second vial was emptied on the sea. The revolution in France unsettled all Europe. Keeping in mind that the destruction of papal Rome is the prime object of this pouring out of the vials, shall we proceed to the historical fulfilment of this vial. In some way it will affect the fortunes of spiritual Babylon.

There is a noticable parallel here in the vial series with the Trumpet series. Under the second trumpet a great and burning mountain was cast into the sea. And historically the Vandals swept the Mediterranean, to drive the Roman navy from its waters. Likewise from the sea, under the second vial, papal Rome was weakened.

France, a Catholic power was evenly matched with England. At the time of this vial began a death struggle for the mastery of the seas. This contest lasted for twenty years.

France, after the revolution, again became Catholic, by reason of Napoleon's concordat with the papacy. She rallied other Catholic nations, namely, Spain, Italy and Portugal—all great maritime powers of that day, to battle with Protestant England, another great sea power.

From the Indian Ocean to the Carribean, from the North Sea to the Nile, over the Atlantic and Pacific, their navies fought. And the Catholic flag was lowered everywhere. We can only grasp the significance of this by a review of hisotry.

Upon the return of Columbus from his successful expedition to the new world, Pope Alexander 6th, with a view to adjusting the

conflicting claims of Spain and Portugal, issued a bull wherein he drew from pole to pole a line of demarcation through the Atlantic, one hundred leagues west of the Azores, and gave the Spanish sovereigns all pagan lands, not already in possession of Catholic princes, that their subjects might find west of this line, and to the Portuguese, all unclaimed pagan lands discovered by Portuguese navigators east of the designated meridian.

How the mighty had fallen! Catholic power had been swept from the oceans. Spain, the discoverer of the new world and once the greatest naval power of the world, Portugal, great in naval equipment, France, long the rival of England on the seas, did not have a ship left to hoist their flags to the salty breeze.

“On Oct. 21, 1805, Lord Nelson, having, near Cape Trafalgar on the coast of Spain, the combined French and Spanish Fleets, almost completely destroyed the combined armaments. This decisive battle gave England the control of the sea. The “wet ditch,” as Napoleon was wont to call the English Channel, was hence forth an impossible gulf. He might rule the continent, but the sovereignty of the ocean and its islands was denied him.”
Myers, Mediaeval and Modern History, page 557.

So we behold the maritime power which supported Rome, swept from the seven seas. Truly a terrible blow to papal power, prestige and pride!

The Third Vial Poured Out

vs. 4-7 “And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood, and I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.”

Never does the divine chronicler permit us to forget the object of these bowl judgments. Interpreters have gone far afield in applying these vial punishments to fanciful objects like, “humanism,” commercialism and atheism, but we are ever told that the object of this ‘bowl series’ is the apostate church which “has shed the blood of saints and prophets.”

This oft reminder keeps us in line on the time, place and object in the circle of Revelation’s visions.

This third angel pours out his vial upon the rivers and their sources. This is understandable when we remember that papal Rome had for years wrecked her vengeance upon the dwellers of the Piedmont, source of Italy's river system, because they dared to resist the Pontiff's pronouncements.

This very region was the home of the Albigenses and the Waldenses, against which the papacy hurled its legions generation after generation. The blood of the Protestants of the Alps had oft flowed, until Oliver Cromwell informed the Pope that unless he called off his wolves from preying on the flock in the Piedmont, the cannon of his army would teach him mercy around the castle of St. Angelo. The river system of Italy was the center of papal persecution and in the time of the third vial, became the arena of war.

One glance at a map of Northern Italy and one will be abundantly convinced that this is a region of rivers and fountain of waters.

And one of the results of the French Revolution was the invasion of Northern Italy, the gage of battle being fought on the Rhone, the Po and their tributaries. It is a remarkable corroborating bit of history. The French fought the battles, that punished papal Rome, upon the Rhone, the Po, the Adda, the A'dege and Bromida.

Myers mentions among the noted engagements of Napoleon's campaign, the battles of Lodi (May 10, 1796), Castiglione (Aug. 5, 1796), Arcola (Nov. 15-17, 1796), Rivoli (Jan. 14, 15, 1797), and the siege of Mantua (July 1796-Feb. 1797)

In Student's France, we read:

"The French crossed the *Po* at Piacenza and drove back Beaulieu upon the line of the *Adda*; the strongly fortified bridge of *Lodi* was carried after a severe struggle, and the enemy retreated upon the line of the river *Mincio*. Page 581.

Marching secretly from Verona, the French descended the *Adige* river . . . on Nov. 14th, they made a furious attack upon the bridge (over the *Adige*) of *Arcole*. Page 583.

From the theater of their triumphs upon the *Adige* and *Mincio* rivers, Bonaparte led his armies into the territory of the *Pope*, against whom the Directory had resolved to proceed to extremities. Page 584.

Bonaparte took up a position with his whole army upon the great plain of Marengo, being separated by the river *Bromida* from the enemies lines. Page 598.

A convention was signed the day after the battle by which the Austrians agreed to retire beyond the river *Mincio*." Page 598.

So at the hand of two witnesses a thing is firmly established. The persecution of the saints centered for generations upon this river system and the fountains, or source of rivers. And here also the third vial was poured out upon those who, "shed the blood of saints and prophets."

We can almost hear the Albigenses and Waldenses joining with the angel in saying, "Righteous are thou, who art and wast and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy!"

While it is entirely aside from our present consideration of Revelation, it is interesting to notice that angels are employed about such regulations as the flow of rivers and streams. It was the angel of the waters who spoke here. John writing by inspiration said: "Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the *moving of the water*. For an *angel* went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the water." (John 5:2-4).

Throughout the Scriptures we find the angels performing many and varied tasks, and it doubtless will be quite an eye-opener on the other side to learn just how intimately they are connected with the activities of mankind.

This brings us to the pouring out of the fourth vial:

The Fourth Vial Poured Out

vs. 8, 9 "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory."

We have already found that the "sun" is a symbol of a great ruler or King. Anyone who attains great prominence may be so designated. Joseph, in his dream is likened to a sun, with his father Jacob and his brothers bowing in obeisance to him. Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness.

In this fourth vial period, the contents are poured upon the sun, and power is given it to scorch men with fire. Remembering always we are walking in the realm of symbolism, we recall that at this particular time in history, Napoleon was elevated from a Corsican Corporal, to first Consul and ruler of France. Then in 1802, was elected and made Consul for life. Thus did he move a step higher,

nearer the imperial throne. Following a royal custom, Napoleon, from that time on, used only his first name. In 1804, the Senate conferred upon him the title of Emperor of the French. The coronation took place in Paris, on Dec. 2, 1804. Napoleon had forced the Pope to come to Rome to crown him, because it was the little Corsican's design, to have himself regarded, not only as the successor of the Bourbons, but, also, as the successor of Charlemagne and the Caesars. Hear Myers at this juncture:

"The pope poured the holy oil upon the head of the kneeling Emperor and girded him with the imperial scepter; but when he would have placed the crown upon his head, Napoleon checked him, and, taking the diadem from the pope, crowned himself with his own hands. What portion of the spirit of the old divine-right monarchies entered into the new French Empire, may be inferred from the doctrines which in less than a year after Napoleon's coronation, the subservient French clergy were teaching the youth of France. "The Emperor is the minister and the power of God, and his image on earth," ran the new catechism; "to honor and serve him is to honor and serve God." Myers, *Mediaeval and Modern History*—pages 551, 552.

Thus we see the sun of the fourth vial given power to scorch men. And scorch men, Napoleon did. No such scorching sun had risen on the political horizon for more than a thousand years. He conquered Italy and invaded Egypt and as he sat his horse in the shadow of the Pyramids, inspired his soldiers with a now historic challenge, "Soldiers," he exclaimed, pointing to the Pyramids, "forty centuries are looking down upon you." Austria, Germany, Prussia, Portugal, Spain, Holland, fell in rapid succession to this "scorching sun."

"The empire which this soldier of fortune had built up stretched from Lubeck to beyond Rome, embracing France proper, the Netherlands, part of western and northwestern Germany, all western Italy as far south as the Kingdom of Naples, together with the Illyrian Provinces and the Ionian Islands.

He, himself, was King of the Kingdom of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine and Mediator of Switzerland. Austria and Prussia were completely subject to his will . . . Not since the time of the Caesars had one man's will swayed so much of the civilized world." Myers *Mediaeval and Modern History*, page 569.

And we read that under the scorching heat of this "sun," men

blasphemed the name of God. The sweep of atheism over France in Napoleon's day surely fulfils this phase of the prophetic symbolism of the fourth vial.

And in spite of it all, we read that, "men repented not to give Him (God) glory."

We now, advance to the pouring out of the fifth vial of wrath.

The Fifth Vial Poured Out

vs. 10, 11 "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his Kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

Thus far the four vials, or golden bowls have followed the sequence of the first four trumpets. The first trumpet and the first vial affect the earth, the second trumpet and vial, the sea; the third trumpet and vial, the rivers and fountain of waters; and the fourth trumpet and vial, the sun. Now a departure is made, and the fifth vial's scene of action is entirely different from the fifth trumpet.

The explanation lies in the fact that the trumpet series followed the history of the fall of political Rome, whereas the vial series described the fall of religio-political papal Rome.

The only similarity between the fifth vial and fifth trumpet is the prominence of darkness in each case. Under the fifth trumpet, the darkness was occasioned by a dense smoke coming up out of the bottomless pit. There, we found, the smoke was a symbol of the spiritual force of Mohammedanism which brought darkness to the earth.

By the same token, since this activity is concerned with the seat or throne of the beast, or religio-political papal Rome, the darkness here is a spiritual one, brought on by apostacy. Surely, the Kingdom of the beast is full of darkness.

Rome was the seat, or throne of the papal power of this period indicated by the fifth vial, so naturally we look to the "seat of Satan," or Rome, for the fulfilment of the events symbolized. In our study of the Thyatira period, we found that the church of this period, now known as the Catholic Church, reached "the depths of Satan." (Rev. 2:24)

Therefore, the scenes of the fifth vial will be, Italy and Rome, for this had been the seat of the beast for thirteen centuries. The very seat, or throne of the beast is to receive the blow that will cause great dismay and anguish, to where men will gnaw their

tongues in pain—an expression sybolic of terrible suffering and anguish of heart.

We found under the fourth vial that Napoleon, as the scorching sun, converted the whole of Europe—the ten horn Kingdoms succeeding the beast, or political Rome—into an armed camp. Every nation was torn with war and crimsoned with blood-shed. It is estimated that his wars, from 1796 to 1815, too the lives of two million soldiers, besides civilians who perished from attendant causes.

But this scorching sun exerted its most baleful power upon the papacy. We know, by history, that Napoleon and his armies invaded the papal provinces in 1797, and took the city of Rome, the seat of the beast, imposing a forced peace upon papal Rome in which the pope paid a rich tribute. In 1798, Pope Pius 6th was carried, a prisoner, to France, where he died. His successor was elected not in Rome, but in Venice. I take time to quote from Allison's History of Europe, Vol. I—page 546:

“Immediately after the entry of the French troops commenced the regular and systematic pillage of the city. Not only the churches and the convents, but the palaces of the cardinals and of the nobility were laid waste . . . Not only the palaces of the Vatican, and the Monte Cavallo, but those of Castel Gandolfo, on the margin of Iban Lae, the villa Ablani, and others, in the environs of Rome, were plundered of every article of value. The whole sacerdotal habits of the pope and cardinals were burned, in order to collect from the flames the gold with which they were adorned. The Vatican was stripped to its naked walls. A contribution of four millions in money, two millions in provisions, and three thousand horses, was imposed upon a city already exhausted. . . .

Nor were the exactions of the French confined to the plunder of palaces and churches. Eight cardinals were arrested and sent to Civita Castellona, while enormous contributions were levied on the papal territory. At the same time, the ample territorial possessions of the church and the monasteries were confiscated, and declared national property, a measure which, by drying up, at once, the whole resources of the affluent classes, percipitated into the extreme of misery, the numerous poor who were maintained by their expenditure or fed by their bounty.”

No wonder, under the fifth vail it was said they should “gnaw their tongues for pain!”

While this was going on in Italy, the same procedure obtained in France. Hear Myers on this:

“One of the most important of its (the National Assembly) measures, and one far reaching in its effects was the confiscation of the property of the church. Altogether, property consisting largely of lands, and worth, it is estimated, over a billion francs, was by decree, made the property of the nation.” Myers, *Mediaeval and Modern History*—page 518.

Note: This decree was made Nov. 2, 1789.

In 1808, Pius 7th, was dragged from his palace, as his predecessor Pius 6th had been, and taken as a prisoner to France. His states of the church were confiscated and the pope was left without temporal possessions. The pope was forced to sign an agreement by which he gave up the power of appointing bishops, in the French Empire, to Napoleon.

The length of these vial outpourings is not stated, but the contents of the fifth vial continued to be poured until 1848.

In that year, the citizens of Rome rose in rebellion to papal authority and drove Pius 9th into exile. He was later restored to his throne by the French army—France now being in alliance with the Vatican. But in 1870, France was compelled to withdraw her troops to defend her own soil from German invasion.

Hear Myers on this:

“This sharp, quick war between France and Prussia gave the coveted capital to the Italian government. Upon the overthrow of the French Empire and the establishment of the Republic, Victor Emmanuel was informed that France would no longer sustain the papal power. The Italian government, at once gave notice to the pope that Rome would henceforth be considered a portion of the Kingdom of Italy and forthwith an Italian army entered the city, which by a vote of almost one hundred to one (Exactly 133, 681 to 1507) resolved to cast its lot with that of the Italian nation.

This marked the end of the temporal power of the pope, and the end of an ecclesiastical state, the last in Europe, which long before Charlemagne, had held a place among the temporal powers of Europe, and all that time had been a potent factor in the political affairs, not only of Italy, but of almost the whole continent.” Myers *Mediaeval and Modern History*—pages 629, 630.

Albert Barnes quotes an old writer by the name of Robert Fleming, who in 1701, wrote and published a work called, "Apocalyptic Key." On the fifth vial, or bowl, this author said: "The fifth vial which is to be poured out on the seat of the beast, or the dominions which belong more immediately to, and depend upon, the Roman see; that I say this judgment will begin about AD 1794 and expire about A.D. 1848."

And looking now upon history, Napoleon invaded Italy in 1796 and in 1848, the citizens of Rome arose in rebellion against papal authority and drove Pius 9th into exile. And, to think Robert Fleming writing two and one-half centuries ago, and one full century before the beginning of events he predicted and one and one half centuries before the culmination of these same events, saw it all so clearly!

The popes have steadfastly refused to recognize the legitimacy of the act which stripped them of their temporal power, maintaining there can be no settlement of the Roman question save through the restoration of the pope to his former status, as an independent temporal sovereign. Thus it is true, as the concluding words of the fifth vial declares, "They repented not of their deeds."

As for blaspheming God, in 1870, the pope declared himself infallible and made it a canon law of the church to which, all, who have the mark of the beast, and the number of his name, must subscribe, under penalty of excommunication.

But, in spite of all this the power of the papacy is forever broken to the extent that the church can no longer resort to forceful means in suppressing non-conformist teaching, or rebellion against her spiritual despotism. We now come to the sixth vial.

The Sixth Vial Poured Out

vs. 12 "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof dried up, that the way of the Kings of the east might be prepared."

The Euphrates was always regarded by the Roman world as its furthestmost eastern boundry and it served as a barrier against the invasion of hostile tribes living east of that river. We will recall how in the sounding of the sixth trumpet, four angels were loosed, who set in motion the hords of Turkish soldiers.

Here the pouring out of the sixth vial dries up, or removes the Euphrates as a barrier, thus foreshadowing the fall of the Turkoman.

The symbol "drying up," does not indicate a sudden calamity,

but a gradual decay. This indicates extinction by slow degrees, and this is just what is taking place in the case of Turkey, the modern descendant of the ancient Turkoman Empire.

The Turko-Egyptian fleet was destroyed by the combined fleets of England, France, and Russia, in the Bay of Navarino in 1827. In 1828, Nicholas declared war against the Ottoman Porte. The Russian troops crossed the Balkans without serious opposition, and were marching upon Constantinople when the Sultan sued for peace. The Treaty of Adrianople (1829) bought the war to a close. Hear Myers again:

“Tsar Nicholas held some provinces in Asia which gave him control of the eastern shore of the Euxine. The Turkish provinces of Moldavia (now Roumania) and Wallachia, were rendered virtually independent of the Sultan. All Greece, south of Thessaly and Epirus, was liberated, and along with most of the islands of the Aegian, was formed into an independent Kingdom, under the guardianship of England, France and Russia. Myers, *Mediaeval and Modern History*—page 655.

In 1849 Mohamet Ali revolted in Egypt. Since that time Egypt has been independent of Turkey.

Then came the Crimean War (1853-1856). We again quote the very reliable historian, Myers:

“A celebrated parable employed by the Tsar Nicholas in conversation with the English minister at St. Petersburg, throws a great deal of light upon the circumstances that led to the Crimean War. “We have on our hands,” said the Tsar, “A sick man—and very sick man; it would be a great misfortune if he should give us the slip some of these days, especially if it happened before all the necessary arrangements were made.” Nicholas had cultivated friendly relations with the English government, and he now proposed that England and Russia should divide the estate of the ‘sick man,’ by which phrase Turkey, of course, was meant. England was to be allowed to take Egypt and Crete, while the Turkish provinces in Europe were to be taken under the protection of the Tsar, which meant, of course, in the complete absorption, in due time, of all Southeastern Europe into the Russian Empire.” Myers *Mediaeval and Modern History*.—page 656.

In 1876, Herzeovina revolted along with Montenegro. The war of 1877 resulted in the loss of the greater part of the Turkish possessions in Europe, as well as a part of Armenia, to Russia. Today the

Turkish Empire, once so great, is a very sick nation, and only manages to keep alive because greater nations preserve her as a barrier between them. The Euphrates is surely drying up. And for what reason? That the way of the Kings of the east may be prepared.

No further hint is given who these Kings of the east will be, but the prophecy implies that when this obstacle is entirely removed, the way of the inhabitants of the east shall be opened. The drying up of the Euphrates is still going on. Before the final destruction of this Mohammedan power it seems destined to receive help which will aid it in its last struggle which undoubtedly will end in utter ruin. John proceeds to describe this future gathering of the Kings of the whole world:

vs. 13-16 "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophets. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together in a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon."

Just as in the case of the seven seals and the seven trumpets, there was an interlude between the sixth and the seventh of each series, so here between the pouring out of the sixth and seventh bowls, there occurs a brief parenthetical interruption.

In this interlude we are given the process, the purpose and the place of the gathering of the Kings of the whole world. First, the process:

These Kings are gathered through the Satanic influence of the three great enemies of Christ and his church. All three have appeared before in our study in Revelation. They are a monstrous trinity of evil in contradistinction to the blessed trinity of good in the Godhead, namely, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. This evil trinity consists of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet.

The first of this trinity, the dragon, is called "the old serpent, the devil and satan." (Rev. 12:9). He it is who has animated the age-long opposition to the church.

But he has as his agents, the last two of this unholy trinity, the beast and the false prophet. The beast, we have found to be, political Rome, which John saw coming up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1), "unto whom it was given to make war with the saints," and "to

hold authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation." (Rev. 13:17)

The false prophet is, beyond all question, the second beast which John saw, "coming up out of the earth," or papal Rome, as we have found him to represent. This is the apostate religion-political church which "exercised all the power of the first beast before him" and "to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (Rev. 13:11, 12)

These three, the devil, political and papal Rome exercise their influence by means of three unclean spirits, as they were frogs. From the mouth of each one of these goes forth one such spirit. The mouth is ever the instrument which the devil has used to persuade people by falsehood. "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," said Christ. (John 8:44)

In Christ called Satan the father of lies, and he did; then the first beast, political Rome would stand in the place of the Son, who had all power, and the false prophet, or papal Rome would occupy, in this unholy trinity, the place of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit animated the life of the true church, so the papacy animated the life of the apostate church. And isn't it more than a coincidence that the pope calls himself, the Vicar of Christ?

Christ said, the Holy Spirit would speak for Him, so the pope tries to take the place of the Holy Spirit, by claiming himself to be the Vicar of Christ.

To the mind of John the frogs represented uncleanness. So, were they considered in the plagues of frogs in Egypt. Thus, we see here Satan's promptings, political lust and malice, and religious fanaticism unite to precipitate a war involving the whole world.

Already, we see this allignment coming about. The way of the Kings of the east is being prepared and all the Kings of the whole world being "gathered together unto the war of the great day of God Almighty."

We have now considered the "process" and the "purpose" of this gathering; we now would logically consider the "place" of gathering. But just as we are ready to do so, John breaks the sequence of thought by inserting a message intended to emphasize the nearness of that final gathering, and the need for watchfulness on the part of the true saints. It is as though Christ were himself speaking, for the words are his very own: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

To come "as a thief," means to come suddenly and unannounced and these words are unmistakably those of Christ. "But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched. Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. (Matt. 24:43, 44)

To the church in Sardis, Christ also said: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee *as a thief.*" (Rev. 3:3)

To this, Peter by inspiration, adds his testimony, "But the day of the Lord will come as a *thief in the night.*" (II Pet. 3:10)

Two things are to be kept in mind by the true Christians. They are to watch and they are to keep his garments, dressed, ready. Wakeful attitude and proper raiment will ever guarantee his readiness for Christ's sudden return.

And "Blessed" is such a one. This is the third of the seven beautitudes of the Apocalypse.

To the mind of the Lord, his triumphant return at the time of the final conflict, were very near in the period of the sixth vial.

Now we are ready to return to the consideration of the "place" of this gathering of all the Kings of the East and of the whole world. The Kings of the whole world are to be there.

The place of this final struggle is described by a striking symbol, freighted with deep meaning. "And he gathered them together in a place called in the Hebrew tongue (Har-Magedon) Armageddon."

The name denotes "the hill of Megiddo." Jackson's Dictionary of Scriptural names gives the meaning, "The Hill of Slaughter." This battlefield is in the plain of Esdraelon, the depression between Judea and Galilee. Armies passing through the country from north to south, or from south to north, always sought the advantage of this plain.

This famous valley eight miles southeast of Mount Carmel is one of the most fought over spots of earth. Here, Barak defeated Sisera. In this valley Josiah fought at Megiddo with Pharaoh-Necho. Here, Gideon and his three hundred men routed the Midianites in the beginning of the middle watch. Near here Saul and Jonathan fell on Mount Gilboa. Here, the Crusaders fought the Moslems. Here, Napoleon battled with the Turks. Here, the British army, under Allenby, fought the Turks of his day. And here, the Kings of the East and the Kings of the whole earth are to be gathered, at the Hill of Megiddo, the Hill of Slaughter, in the plain of Esdraelon.

And they are gathered there by the lying mouths of the Infernal

Trinity. This reminds us of an Old Testament illustration, how a lying spirit can lead one to certain death:

“The Lord said: who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said: I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, where-with? And he said: I will go forth, and I will be a *lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets*. And He said: Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so . . . the Lord put a lying spirit in the *mouth* of these thy prophets.” (I Kings 22:20, 23)

The result was that Ahab was deceived by the lying spirit and went up and fell at Ramoth-Gilead.

So here the devil, the father of lies, uses the mouth of the beast and the mouth of the false prophet to deceive the Kings of the East and the Kings of all the world to gather for the Battle of Armageddon and there perish.

With the gathering of the Kings of all the world and their armies to this place of Armageddon, this sixth bowl ends. It breaks off suddenly, because it simply brings things into readiness for the final catastrophe, which only the seventh vial, or bowl can bring forth.

The Seventh Vial Poured Out

vs. 17-21 “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

This seventh vial, which completes the perfect number, symbolizes the consummating catastrophes to fall upon Papal Rome. As

the seven seals covered the events which brought about the downfall of Pagan Rome; and the seven trumpets described the historical happenings which terminated in the destruction of Political Rome; these seven vials delineate the events which bring about the utter wiping out of Papal Rome.

This seventh vial is poured out upon the air. Two applications might be made here.

First, the air, or atmosphere which all must breathe is affected, by which health and life are endangered. Since this is the time of the end, we are able to see this first application very readily. The nations airy navies battle with increasing ferocity as greater wars follow one after the other. Bomb, atomic and chemical warfare fulfil the physical aspects of this plague. But, *Second*, if the air visited with this bowl is spiritual, the sense in which Paul once used it in (Eph. 6:12), then this vial seems to refer to the spiritual warfare between principalities against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world and against spiritual wickedness in high places.

When the vial was poured there came forth a voice from the throne, saying, "It is done." Literally, in the Greek, there is just one word, "Done!" The work of visitation of judgments was done, even as Christ, in completing the work of sacrifice for our redemption, cried from the cross, "It is finished!"

The result was the usual symbolic manifestations of divine judgments in a demonstration of voices, thunderings, lightnings. Then follows a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth.

These features are attendant to the tremendous movements of the divine will and purpose. In the closing period of the history of the church, society is to experience an upheaval that will shake it to its very foundations. This being near the time of Christ's return, Haggai's prophecy in (Hag. 2:6-7), is most fitting:

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once, it is a little while and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will *shake all nations*, and the *desire of all nations shall come* and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts."

Of course, Christ is "the desire of all nations" whose coming is predicted. But before his coming there shall be a marvelous shaking of all the nations of the world.

This seventh vial must be upon us, for never have all nations, the

world over, been so shaken economically, ideologically, politically, religiously and even physically.

This Old Testament prediction re-echoes in the New Testament, for we read in Heb. 12:25-29:

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, and those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Wherefore we receiving a Kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”

The dividing of the city into three parts is most difficult to explain, since that event lies in the future, but we have found out that “the great city,” refers to religio-political Rome. The proof will be even more clinching in the next chapter which we are approaching.

But it would seem that all that is embraced in the phrase, papal Rome, will be divided into three parts, It is to be broken asunder and shaken to pieces.

And with her fall, the cities of the nations fall. What a cataclysm awaits the end of this age!

And Babylon, another name for that city, the city, the confuser of spiritual tongues, is brought up in remembrance before God. A fuller description of her fate is given in the eighteenth chapter.

Babylon which is at the base of the pyramid of rebellion and sin against God, Christ and His church, is made to drink the bitterest draught of all. God gives to her the “cup of the wine of the fierceness of His anger.”

Furthermore, the islands and mountains fled away at the climax of the seventh plague. Islands and mountains denote earthly powers. He does not say that islands ceased to be, or that no mountains are to remain or exist after this mighty shaking, but there is to be a recession of the islands from their present places and the mountains were not found.

In other words, great portions of the earth, with its present national standings will be drastically altered, as to their boundaries and relations to one another, and particularly to that “great city”

called Babylon, or Papal Rome. It would seem that old lines between states and nations are to be obliterated and pass away.

Three quarters of a century ago, Loxely Hall seemed to have dipped his poetic pen into the ink of inspiration, to write of this very prediction contained in the events of the seventh vial:

“For I dipped into the future, far as human eye
could see
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders
that would be;
Saw the heavens filled with commerce,
Argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down
with costly bales;
Heard the heavens filled with shouting, and
there reigned a ghostly dew,
From the nation’s airy navies, grappling in the
central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the
south wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples, plunging
through the thunder storm;
Till the war-drums throbbed no longer, and the
battle flags were furled,
In the Parliment of man, the Federation
of the World!”

The grand climax of the plague is marked by the dropping of hail stones. The symbolism of these vials have followed, in many respects, that of the ten plagues of Egypt, in which one of the plagues was one of hail.

Hail is a symbol of Divine judgment and hail stones of such weight signify terrible judgments. One might see in these hailstones the falling of bombs, but we have studiously steered our course away from the treacherous shoals of speculation.

“And men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.”

We who now live in the days of the seventh vial, have never ceased to marvel that, in spite of a rising tempo of wars, men have not been driven back to God and the church, but, rather, go on in their sins, blaspheming God!

With each war there have arisen the false prophets who declared, “with the end of this war, men will go back to the church

and seek God." But men have gone their wilful way, little heeding the pious pronouncements of the pink tea prophets!

Here the seventh vial discussion draws to a close, not an end. The symbolism here indicates only a mere outline of what is set forth in more detail in the visions of the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters.

The kings of the east and the Kings of the whole world have been summoned to the battle of Armageddon. Babylon has come into remembrance "in the sight of God." An outline has been given of the changing picture of national upheaval and a description is given of continued ungodliness, in spite of the awful visitations of Divine judgment.

We are now ready to "uncover" the closing scenes of awful grandeur and the glories of the new heaven and the new earth wherein will dwell righteousness.

CHAPTER XVII

MYSTERIOUS BABYLON SITTING UPON THE BEASTS

Text (17:1-18)

1 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the