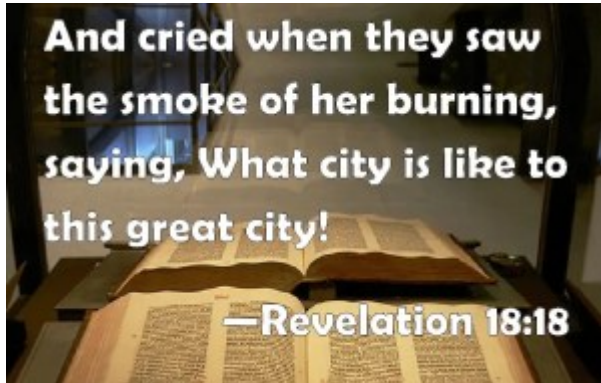


The Seventh Vial Chapter XXVII. The Tripartition And Burning Of The Great City



Continued from [Chapter XXVI – Part 2. Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings.](#)

BEFORE deciphering the ominous characters traced by the mysterious hand upon the walls of his palace, Daniel saw it fit to tender a reproof to the monarch, whose ear fear had now opened. First, he rebuked him for not profiting by the notable warning given him in the awful chastisement which befell Nebuchadnezzar, his father. As he well knew Nebuchadnezzar was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. And he was driven from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that He appointeth over it whomsoever He will.

And second, he rebuked the monarch for having taken the vessels of the house of the God of heaven, and having with his lords, and his wives, and his concubines drank wine in them, and praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know. This was his double sin, impenitency (not penitent, not being regretful of wrongs done), and impiety. And lo! here was its punishment, written full in his sight, in a few brief characters, unread as yet, save by the conscience of the king, which most surely divined the doom with which they menaced him.

This two-fold sin has been committed over again by the monarch of "Babylon the Great." The modern Belshazzar has slighted with contempt the warning given him in the terrible overthrow of the man who was before him. He has, too, like his prototype of twenty-five centuries ago, prostituted the vessels of the sanctuary by taking them to grace his revels on the seven hills. When the "heart" of Caesar "was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride," the warriors of the North were sent against him, who "deposed him from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him," and drove him forth to herd with the barbarous Goths. Here was a fall as humiliating as that which befell Nebuchadnezzar, when, driven from the society of his lords, he roamed with the beasts of the field.

But the Pope refused to be warned by the fate of his predecessor. With spirit haughtier than that of Caesar, and with impiety more daring than Pagan emperor ever was guilty of, he appropriated the vessels of the house of the Lord, the blessed doctrines of Holy Writ, and prostituted them to the purpose of decking his Pagan temple. He made them simply the means of procuring riches, and honours, and glory to his cardinals, and bishops, and priests, and of upholding the pomp and pride of the pontifical chair.

The sin of the old Chaldean king was venial (minor) compared with that of his modern representative. The Vatican Mount has for ages been the scene of orgies more impious, more blasphemous, and more obscene, than any which the imperial Palatine ever knew, or any that shook the walls and roof of the royal palace of Babylon on that night, when the tumult was stilled at once and for ever, by the writing of the hand of doom. The Pontiff rifled the temple over again. He abstracted the golden vessels of the Christian Church, and he drank wine out of them with his lords, and wives, and concubines, and praised, in his drunken devotion, the gods of silver and gold, of brass, and iron, and wood.

It mattered not that liberty and virtue were outraged, that nations were destroyed, and that countless myriads of immortal souls were lost, if glory and wealth continued to flow in upon the "Church." Divine ordinances were profaned, religion was turned into mockery, dead men were worshiped, the woman was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and thus the obscene revel went on, its delirious mirth rising louder and louder every age, till at last, in 1789, a "hand" came forth—an awful dispensation of Providence—which wrote upon the walls of Europe the words of doom—God had numbered His kingdom and finished it.

Then the smoke of Babylon began to ascend into the sky, and the conflagration kindled then has gone on, with short pauses, ever since, in the revolutions, the bloody wars, the spoliation of ecclesiastical property and revenues, and the gradual consumption of all the dignity, wealth, and political dominion and power which upheld the Papacy. This is the predicted burning of the great city which has so often provoked the lament, Alas! alas! Again and again have we seen Papal Europe from side to side a scene of social burning. We have seen everything consuming, and turning into dross, just as if fire were preying upon it. Law, order, the power of princes, the dignity of thrones, the sanctity of altars, the estates of nobles, the wealth of merchants, industry, trade, confidence, all tending as rapidly to naught, as if thrown into the midst of a devouring conflagration. And we have seen both the kings of the Papal earth, and the false prophet of Rome, enduring torment in this lake of fire, and we have heard them venting their poignant grief in lamentations and bitter maledictions (cursing), gnawing their tongues, and gnashing their teeth, and, by reason of their ceaseless alarms, resting not day nor night.

But the most terrific blaze of that great conflagration is yet to come. Often has its fitful and lurid splendor broken over Europe since 1789; but higher yet in midheaven shall rise its flame, and wider yet over earth shall shine the light of its ruin, and then Rome shall sink in ashes, and lie covered for ever with the blackness of darkness. The instant sign of the final

catastrophe will be the tripartition of the great city.

"The great city was divided into three parts: and the cities of the nations fell." -Revelation 16:19

By the "great city" is meant that mixed system of polity, civil and ecclesiastical, of which the Pope was the directing head. This city was co-extensive with Papal Europe. The various countries were the several quarters of that city, the capitals of the nations were its streets. Rome was its form or broad place. In the earthquake of the Seventh Vial, this great city will be rent into three parts; that is, its States will break loose from their present arrangement, and form themselves into three confederacies. This tripartite division will be facilitated, doubtless, by the fall of "the cities of the nations;" that is, the several national polities throughout Europe. Like the parent polity of Rome, they are of a mixed character, partly civil, partly ecclesiastical. She is the metropolitan; they are the provincial cities of the Papal empire. They will fall in the shock of the great earthquake, leaving only three grand parties or political federations with, or, more probably, without their kings.

It will not escape notice that as we saw three frogs go forth, to enlist recruits each to his own banner; so now we behold a corresponding result, Europe ranged into three bodies or camps. On the flag of the one will be inscribed "Despotism," on that of the other "Popery," and on that of the third " Revolution." Such are the three principles which will meet and wrestle together on this last fatal field. To this spot, unaware that it is the appointed place of doom, the "Tophet ordained of old," (Isaiah 30:33, Tophet: a place of ritual fire or burning for pagan sacrifices) will each lead down its followers, assembling, thus, all the Papal nations; and here will they wreak upon one another the vengeance due to ages of martyrdom. In that day of burning and wrath, of tribulation and bitter anguish, will the Papacy find its grave.

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." -Revelation 16:19b

So soon as the tripartite division of the Roman earth has been completed, the final stroke will fall. The words, "came in remembrance before God," are associated with one of the most terrific judgments of early times. Similar language was used by God with reference to Sodom, on the evening that preceded that awful morning when He rained fire and brimstone upon it from the Lord God out of heaven. The division of the great city into three parts will mark the very eve preceding the conflagration of the mystic Babylon. On the next morrow shall her plagues come. Upon that "Wicked" "He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest."

Will the fire in which she shall be consumed be literal fire? It is the opinion of many expositors of name that it will be literal fire; and their views receive countenance, as they suppose, from the fact that the whole country of Italy is volcanic. They think it not impossible that its now extinct craters may anew and simultaneously burst into action, and convert the country around Rome into a lake of fire. We are disposed to regard the

fire and burning, under which the last judgment of the Papacy is set forth, as symbolic; and that this symbol has been selected from its fitness to denote the peculiar severity of her last plagues, and the utter consumption and annihilation which they will produce, it being the property of fire to annihilate that on which it preys. It will form a more striking demonstration of the baleful nature of Popery, as well as of the wisdom and justice of her great Judge, that her final calamities should grow out of her crimes; that the connection between the two should be manifest to the whole world; that the passions of the European nations, whom she has so long retained in ignorance and slavery, and robbed both of their temporal wealth and their eternal salvation, roused by the recollection of her numerous thefts, idolatries, and murders, should burst their chains, and be directed like burning fire against her.

Of this sort was the eating of the harlot's flesh, and the burning of her with fire, by the kings of Europe, after the first outbreak of the French Revolution. When authority shall be prostrate, and the popular vengeance comes to rage without restraint, what more likely than that the same scenes will be enacted over again? The pillagings, massacres, burnings, the destruction of property, and the general proscription that fell upon the Popish hierarchy, may again be inflicted upon them, but in more terrible measure. Nor would we deny that the rage of the elements may combine with the fury of man, to give additional terror to the scene, and to make still more visible the hand of God in the awful plagues of her ruin. Of this we are certainly informed, that these plagues will come unexpectedly, when the words are in her mouth, "I shall not be a widow," that they will come suddenly, "Alas! alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come;" and that they will be irretrievable, "As a millstone cast into the depths of ocean, so shall Babylon with violence be cast down, and shall rise no more." Her plagues, moreover, will be unprecedentedly awful; exhibiting in point of horror the full realization of what Babylon and Sodom, in their fall, exhibited only in type, and forming an anticipation of the terrors of the judgment-day.

The thrones, hierarchies, and powers of the Papal world will accompany Rome in her descent into the tomb. That era will be the judgment-day to nations. It will be the burial-day of the old earth. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and all the stars of the political and ecclesiastical firmament shall fall. It is not easy to find words in which to convey an adequate impression of the solemnity of the epoch, and the transcendent importance and terrible grandeur of the events which will then be witnessed. Kingdoms will be tossed and tumbled. The dominion and glory of twelve centuries will suddenly go out in darkness. Empires will be borne to the tomb; and how? Not amid the solemn grief of nations, but amid the exulting shouts and bitter execrations of enraged peoples. Princes of ancient and honourable lineage will go forth, discrowned, into exile. The beauty of renowned capitals will be defaced by war: the monuments of a past civilization, the creations of genius, and the triumphs of art, will perish amid the flames of conflagration. The symbols of authority will be desecrated: the fences of order will be torn down: the restraints of law, the obligations of morality, and the sanctions of religion, will all be contemned and set at naught.

The visitation will be awful beyond all former precedent, seeing it will contain the boarded vengeance of ages. Most impartial and unsparing will it truly be, sweeping off into destruction all that has lent itself to the support of idolatry, and purifying the earth as if by fire. The dukedom set up but yesterday, and the empire that dates its rise from the era of the Gothic invasion; the electorate that includes but a few hundred square acres, and the kingdom that comprehends within its ample limits extended plains, mighty rivers, vast mountain-chains, and races diverse in language and in blood; monarchs small and great, from the petty chief of a handful of followers, to the master of countless hosts—all “shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their brodered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling: they shall sit upon the ground.”

The potentates that were of old time, who have long dwelt in Hades –Ashur, and all his company; Elam, and all his multitude; Edom, his kings and all his princes—when the rumor of this great event shall reach the dominions of death, will be moved at the tidings, and shall rise up from their seats to welcome this mightiest of crowned chiefs, whose day has at last come.

“Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” – Isaiah 14:9-12

Continued in [Chapter XXVIII. The Expedition of Gog; Or Irruption Of Nations From The North And East](#)

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