

The Truth About 666
and the Story of the Great Apostasy

With this trilogy on the enigmatic number 666 in the Book of Revelation, Edwin de Kock has presented us with the most exhaustive study on the subject currently available from the Historicist perspective.

William H. Shea, M.D., Ph.D.

Retired professor of Old Testament, Andrews University
Former Associate Director, Biblical Research Institute

The Truth about 666 is the most extensive treatment of the Historicist prophetic interpretation of 666. It brings out abundant evidence for the view of *Vicarius Filii Dei* as the best interpretation of Revelation 13:18 and exposes the problems with the Preterist and Idealist interpretations. The book should be required reading for anyone studying the end-time prophecies of the Bible.

P. Gerard Damsteegt, Dr. Theol.

Associate Professor, Church History Department, Seminary, Andrews University

With *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*, Edwin de Kock has both recovered and magnificently delineated a precious mine of Historicist truth. He provides by far the most comprehensive treatment of the notorious apocalyptic number and its prophetic corollaries ever produced. As such, de Kock's magnum opus is destined to become the unparalleled standard on this subject.

Jerry A. Stevens, English major and two master's degrees in education

Author, *Vicarius Filii Dei*

Former editor, ADVENTISTS AFFIRM

In its capacity as a state, the Roman Catholic church-state of the Middle Ages will have needed a constitution. If it ever had one, it was the Donation of Constantine, where we first find the papal title *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God). If this is not an official title of the papacy, no such title exists. De Kock has explored the history of *Vicarius Filii Dei* in perhaps more detail than anyone ever will, but if the day comes when someone extends his researches further, I predict they will only find more evidence for his positions.

Frank W. Hardy, Ph.D.

Doctorate in Linguistics and graduate degree in Old Testament studies
Former editor of *Historicism*

The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy is largely based on colossal amounts of recently discovered information. Much of it is history. A significant part of it is religious history. The reader will find that sure evidence points to the correct understanding of the Sea Beast in Revelation 13, its name and number. De Kock's presentation is a thorough, frank, factual, eye-opener history of one of Christendom's greatest apostates, its character and career.

Harold Erickson, Ed.D.

Taught Church History and Daniel and Revelation classes at Spicer Memorial College for eighteen years; now conducts prophetic seminars (since 1987)

Like everything else in the book, your documentation and historical approach are impeccable.

Douglas E. LaPrade, Ph.D.

Author in English and Spanish. Two Fulbright scholarships
Tenured English professor, University of Texas–Pan American

Additional Books on Prophecy and Other Matters

Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation, Book (2012).

The Use and Abuse of Prophecy (2007).

Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History (2013).

*Out of print. An updated 2007 revision, together with 13 other pieces, is available on a data CD.

Further details appear at the end of the book.

The Truth About 666
and the Story of the Great Apostasy

by

Edwin de Kock

12916 Los Terrazos Boulevard
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Three volumes in one

by Edwin de Kock

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Unless indicated otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the Authorized Version (also known as the King James Bible), first published in 1611.

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Dedicated to the Memory of

Andreas Helwig

(c. 1572–1643)

who first discovered
the truth about 666

as well as the many writers
of different creeds and denominations
who subsequently
have held high the torch
that he lit

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In lieu of a **General Index**, please use the data CD at the back. This works in one of two ways. Either use the ordinary *search function* of the computer or the *open index* displayed at the side. In the latter case, special markings—either little triangles on a Mac or plus and minus signs on a PC—enable the opening up and closure of chapter headings and even the notes for each. Just click on those markings and see them appear or disappear.

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First, I thank the Most High, together with his heavenly agencies, for shaping my origin, background, education in several major languages, and other circumstances to prepare me so that I could write this book. I also acknowledge his hand in the increase of knowledge for our species during the past two centuries. Further, I thank both him and fellow human beings who at present inhabit this planet with me for the recent marvels of electronics. I think especially of the personal computer, the word processor, the Internet, e-mail, digital cameras, e-books, CDs, DVDs, and similar inventions, without which this book would have been impossible.

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Then there is Google, which provided a crucial research tool for this work. Its downloads of both books and other publications are valuable beyond calculation. They constitute a veritable space-time machine, which enabled my researchers and me to hop from century to century, country to country, and language to language. Consequently we could once more read, refer to, and quote from vast amounts of matter printed since Gutenberg first began to use movable type in about 1450. Google has also reproduced manuscript material from earlier periods. Hereby my thank you for an inestimable gift.

Of my many human helpers, three have played indispensable roles.

Ria, my dear wife of fifty-six years, who has so long been supporting me as a writer in more ways than can be fully mentioned here. This has included physical assistance in my disabilities, finances, editing, and frequent sound advice.

Stephen D. Emse, who has for more than five years collected and transmitted an astounding array of research material without which these volumes could not have existed. Some were photocopies of and specific guidance to Google publications. He has, moreover, supplied me with countless digital images, many acquired through personal visits to collections of multilingual works, old or rare, at more than twenty colleges, universities, and similar institutions in Northeast America. Untiringly he has also undertaken many virtual trips to the Old World to visit—amongst others—Paris, Oxford, Glasgow, Greifswald, Berlin, the Vatican, and Västerås, whose libraries have yielded up much treasure. In the last mentioned town as well as elsewhere, he discovered the third edition of *Antichristus Romanus* (1630) by Andreas Helwig, which up to the present has not been cited by Historicist scholars. A good deal of this would have astonished and delighted LeRoy Edwin Froom, who physically had to go to some of these places, yet did not find what we now have. In addition to all this, Steve has often sharpened my eyes to subtle but significant details which I may otherwise have failed to see.

Jerry A. Stevens, who wrote *Vicarius Filii Dei: An Annotated Timeline* (2009), a former editor of ADVENTISTS AFFIRM, who has tirelessly helped me spot and eliminate textual errors. His contributions have, however, entailed much more, over a dozen unique contributions, mostly acknowledged within the text of all three volumes that make up this book, to which we refer the reader. Here, however, we especially mention two.

Via the Internet, he also traced a huge amount of relevant material throughout North America, and from abroad. Particularly valuable have been the digital images of pages from books and articles by Seventh-day Adventist writers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most impressive are the pages from many, if not all, editions of the various writings by Uriah Smith. Equally important, is the identification, first made by Jerry, of a mystery author whom Smith repeatedly quoted. He found the full title of the book and other relevant details. She was Anne Tuttle Jones Bullard, who wrote *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, Boston, in 1832.

Several scholarly men in the United States have also greatly aided me. I am particularly grateful to William H. Shea (M.D., Ph.D. in Semitic Languages), a Historicist world authority on the year-day principle; P. Gerard Damsteegt (Dr. Theol.), Seminary professor of Church History at Andrews University, who has comprehensively studied both Historicism and its theological implications; Harold Erickson (Ed.D.), veteran professor at Spicer Memorial College, India; Frank W. Hardy, linguist with specialization in Navajo (Ph.D.) and Old Testament (M.A.); Samuel Koranteng-Pipim (Ph.D.), a sharp-eyed conservative theologian, originally from Ghana; and Douglas E. LaPrade (Ph.D.). The last mentioned has twice received a prestigious Fulbright scholarship, and is a tenured English professor at the University of Texas—Pan American in Edinburg, Texas, near which I live. These men have each made unique contributions.

Dr. Shea wrote the Preface. He also pointed out the fraudulence of Justin Martyr's *Apology*, which Sundaykeepers often mention as evidence that the first day of the week was already being observed in the second century.

I thank Dr. Damsteegt for his hospitality to Ria and me in his own home during 2009, apart from his many valuable suggestions as well as a brief but crucial meeting outside a classroom at the Seminary, Andrews University, where I had been a guest lecturer about *vicarius Filii Dei*. He also alerted me to recent Seventh-day Adventist publications, including books, which with reference to the number 666 have deviated from the prophetic interpretation that used to be standard among members of our church.

Dr. Erickson, a keen student of prophecy, for eighteen years taught Church History as well as Daniel and Revelation classes. Since his retirement in 1987, he has also for more than twenty years been conducting prophetic seminars. As an editor, too—at the age of eighty-five—he

proved to be sharp-witted to an extraordinary extent, eagle-eyed in spotting even small errors, typographical or otherwise.

With many references to my text, Dr. Hardy stressed the custom prevalent among present-day scholars dealing with texts in Biblical Greek of omitting most accents. Having for six years edited the journal *Historicism*, he also pointed out other matters of concern.

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Dr. LaPrade read my manuscript critically and alerted me to the poem “Annus Mirabilis” (year of miracles) about the year 1666 by John Dryden, which allegedly also concerned the number 666.

From abroad, I was aided in the understanding of Latin texts, by the Catholic Dr. Mauro Nervi of Italy, a consummate Esperanto poet and a fine linguist in the Classical languages; as well as the Protestant doctorandus M. E. (Joop) Brinkman of the Netherlands. Within America, Dr. Girard J. Etzkorn, another Catholic and an expert in fourteenth-century philosophy and theology, also lent a hand and on a personal level gave us gracious hospitality.

Another voice from far away was that of Michael Scheifler (webpage: biblelight.net) in Hawaii. He has made many valuable contributions to this book. During 2009, he discovered a fact of considerable importance: that the twentieth-century Pope Paul VI had in 1965 and 1968 not only used the title *vicarius Filii Dei* but also applied it to himself. His follow-up research, together with that of others, has validated his findings.

No less treasured have been contributions from Ken Scribner of Berrien Springs, Michigan. He tirelessly guided me during my 2009 visit to Andrews University and the Seminary. Afterwards he undertook a number of research trips on my behalf to the James White Library.

Then there were those, in the United States and abroad, who donated funds—large as well as small amounts—without which this book could not have been printed.

These are the people who have made the most substantial contributions to the writing, improvement, and publication of my book. Others are acknowledged in the notes. To them all, I am very grateful. On the other hand, I take full responsibility for omissions or any errors that remain.

FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE READER

An inspired writer from long before the time of Christ made it clear that for the Most High, whose compassion passes understanding, a mere theological knowledge is not a passport to his kingdom. Further, he will take everybody's background into consideration: "I will mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. . . . The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there" (Psalm 87:4, 6). And some will reach heaven without ever having heard that Jesus was their Saviour. In wonderment, many a so-called heathen will gaze on the marks of his crucifixion and ask him: "What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends" (Zech. 13:6).

When the Redeemer was dying on the cross, he promised eternal life to a repentant criminal who was crucified next to him (Luke 23:39-43). This man will be in heaven without ever having been baptized.

Am I saying, that neither doctrinal purity nor a rite which the Bible prescribes is important? Not so. As the apostle Paul said, when he was addressing the wise Athenians of the Areopagus: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

Truth matters. Nevertheless, today—just as in pre-Christian and early Christian times—our Lord is ever compassionate and does not condemn those who have honestly not yet come to know the facts.

This is a Protestant and especially a Seventh-day Adventist book, though very much of it is based on Catholic sources. It does not presuppose that individual members of the Roman Church or any other denomination are "lost" or anything but good and conscientious Christians. Only they themselves and the Lord know what they think and feel in their hearts. I also do not presume to be judgmental about Muslims, or those who are not people of the Book—like Buddhists—whose convictions of what lies beyond this life do not coincide with my own. This work is anti-papal, but not anti-people.

I believe, moreover, that the writing of *The Truth About 666* was guided by Providence. Appendix I, entitled *About This Book*, tells that tale and also mentions other important concerns.

ABBREVIATIONS

EB: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, of which several editions have been used. The shortened dates 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11 all refer to the *Ultimate Reference Suite*, DVD, for 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011, accessed in the relevant year from the author's computer.

EB2: Macropaedia, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (30 vols., Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton, 1982).

EB2mi: Micropaedia, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (30 vols. Chicago: Helen Hemingway Benton, 1982).

EB 68: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Bicentennial ed., 23 vols., Chicago: William Benton, 1968).

SDABC: *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Francis D. Nichol et al., eds., 1953 (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978).

SDABD: Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, revised (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1979).

SDAE: *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Revised ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1976).

SDASB: *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*, eds. Don F. Neufeld and Julia Neuffer (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962).

Froom, PFF: Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946-1954).

DA: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ*. 1898 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950).

GC: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation*. 1888 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950). And other editions.

PREFACE

by William H. Shea, M.D., Ph.D.

The enigmatic number 666 occurs in the last verse of Revelation 13. It has been applied to a variety of individuals both ancient and modern. In order to arrive at a correct application of the number, it should be studied through sound principles of biblical exegesis.

The author of this trilogy—Edwin de Kock—closely considers those principles. One cannot simply apply 666 to some hated dictator without first analyzing the number on the basis of those principles. At the very outset, it should be noted that in the original biblical text the number quite clearly is six hundred and sixty and six. It is not six and six and six. Thus any interpretation based upon the use of three sixes is bound to be incorrect.

Second, one needs to carefully consider the interpretational presuppositions from which biblical prophecy is approached. De Kock rejects Preterism and Futurism, which largely come out of the Counter-Reformation, as well as Idealism, a development based on Origen's allegorization. He argues vigorously in favor of Historicism, a school of prophetic interpretation which became prominent with Protestant Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and others. This school of interpretation has endured to the present, and de Kock has lent his support to it.

The third basic point of interpretation utilized here is a close attention to context. One cannot apply 666 to anybody just because the number values of the letters in his name make up this figure. They must also fit all of the other characteristics of the symbolic sea beast in Rev. 13.

As de Kock considers those characteristics in extensive detail, he finds—as did the Reformers—that they fit the papacy in Rome, the spiritual (and political) descendant of the Caesars. The question then is, which of the various titles adopted by the pope fits this number. Several of those titles have been suggested, but de Kock settles upon the title *vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar/Representative of the Son of God).

The history of the application of this title is first discussed through the pivotal work of the first scholar to make that application: Andreas Helwig, who wrote three successive editions of his work on prophecy in the early seventeenth century. But few copies of his works have survived in the libraries of Europe. Probably many were destroyed in the European wars that occurred in his time and afterwards. Stephen D. Emse, whose research greatly aided de Kock, has made it possible to locate, identify, and study those surviving copies.

From this basic position, through his own study and as first announced by Helwig, de Kock then goes on in the second major section of the first volume to analyze and discuss the rise of the papacy. With each major military defeat of the Germanic and other peoples of Europe and North Africa, and with each subjugation of their views of Christianity, the power

and authority of the papacy rose higher and higher. This occurred through the defeat of the Vandals of North Africa and the Ostrogoths of the Italian peninsula. It occurred through the conversion of the Franks of Gaul. It occurred through the defeat and conversion of the Visigoths of Spain. It occurred through the subjugation of extensive portions of Celtic Christianity. And finally it occurred through the defeat of the Lombards by the Franks. Through these successive steps, the pope came to be the preeminent religious leader of Europe through the Middle Ages and particularly as supported by the so-called Holy Roman Empire. De Kock has detailed each of these successive steps in extensive historical detail.

For the third major section of his first volume, de Kock has reverted to the time of Constantine to lay the foundation for the discussion of the document known as the Donation of Constantine; for this is the first occasion in which the title *vicarius Filii Dei* was used for the pope. As is well recognized by Catholic, Protestant, and secular scholars (though apparently never admitted by any pontiff), this document is a forgery that was produced in the mid to late eighth century. It has been argued that the title *vicarius Filii Dei* should not be considered an important title of the pope because it first occurred in a spurious document. That is a very simplistic position.

Two questions remain about the Donation of Constantine and this title which it first proposed.

First, What use was made of the document? From the course of its use, it is evident that it became very important to the claims of the papacy even though it was a forgery. That was why it was forged in the first place—to give esteem to the spiritual, political, and territorial claims of the papacy. De Kock details this use of the document through history in extensive detail.

The second major point here is, What became of this title which it first proposed? The answer is that extensive use has been made of it throughout the course of papal history. That is the subject of the second volume of this trilogy. There the mostly Roman Catholic documents in which the title was used are referred to. This is true not only of documents in Latin but also in other languages into which this title—*vicar of the Son of God*—was translated. That is the heart of the research of this trilogy, and it is presented there in full detail.

Non-Catholic, mostly Protestant, prophetic interpreters from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also knew this title and its application to the papacy. Like Helwig, and even before Uriah Smith, a surprisingly large number of them, ninety or more, equated 666 with *vicarius Filii Dei*.

In the third volume, de Kock focuses on the use of that title by Seventh-day Adventist interpreters from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. As the principal expositors working from Historicist principles, they are heirs to this school of thought from post-Reformation times. Also considered in Volume III are Catholic and papal uses of that title during the

twentieth century.

We are indebted to Edwin de Kock together with the other researchers who helped him—especially Stephen D. Emse and Jerry A. Stevens—for the massive amount of documentation, presented and discussed in this book. Searching out and evaluating the relevant material has been brought to a successful conclusion in these present studies.

INTRODUCTION

Enter the Beast

Just like the prophet Daniel six hundred years earlier, John, the beloved apostle—now an old man not far from his hundredth birthday—in vision gazed upon the Mediterranean. He also saw its surface heave, and then a huge, mysterious Beast came lumbering up from the depths.

It bore a strange yet striking resemblance to the four animals that Daniel had seen and written about in the seventh chapter of his book. Basically it was a giant leopard with seven heads, the paws of a bear, and a conspicuous lion mouth. It also had ten horns, each encircled with a royal crown.

It prospered amazingly, persecuting the saints for forty-two prophetic months or 1260 years (538–1798). At the end of this period, it received a deadly wound in one of its heads. This, however, healed up again, so that the Beast went on from strength to strength. Eventually “all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8).

The creature described in Rev. 13 is a composite of the fearsome four described by Dan. 7: the Babylonian lion, the Medo-Persian bear, the Grecian leopard, and the nondescript Roman-European Beast. The main features of that chapter all recur in the Apocalypse. C. Mervyn Maxwell pointed out that this also applied to the “seven heads and ten horns (The leopard had four heads, the other three had one each, and the fourth beast had ten horns).”¹ The only element of Dan. 7 not repeated in Rev. 13 is the Little Horn . . . because the Leopard-like Beast essentially *is* the Little Horn.

Two further features in Rev. 13 are the Beast’s notorious mark and 666, the numerical value of its name. Such are the issues that we shall be focusing on. Before doing so, however, let us briefly note the symbolic meaning of the lion, the bear, and the leopard. As discussed by several interpreters,² these animals represent the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, and the Greeks.

But there is a difference: Rev. 13 reverses the order of their presentation. In comparison with Dan. 7, the Grecian element is now mentioned first; this is followed by Medo-Persian and finally by Babylonian imagery. This complete reversal of the symbolism must be significant.

The reason for it is a different vantage point in time. The prophet Daniel wrote when Belshazzar, the last king and co-ruler of Babylon, was still sharing his father’s throne. With its strict chronological sequence, the vision of Dan. 7 simply looks forward, down through the ages. But when John took up his pen some six centuries later, his lifetime as well as the opening stages of the Great Apostasy stood in the sign of the leopard. That is, it bore the impress of Greek thinking and theology.

This symbolism pinpoints the Antichrist historically as the product of a hybrid civilization. No less a historian than Arnold J. Toynbee characterized the empire of apostolic times and later as the culmination of Greek Society (“the Hellenic universal state”).³ C. H. King referred to it as the “Greco-Roman state,”⁴ while Hugh R. Trevor-Roper regarded it as a “cosmopolitan Greco-Roman culture.”⁵ Politically it was the Romans who ruled the ancient Mediterranean world, but the Greeks were still dominating its mind.

From his period, the apostle John also looked back to Medo-Persia and finally to Babylon. And this is why we have, in the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, a different sequence from that of Daniel, which does not, however, seem to affect the order of the heads. For them, we assume a straightforward chronological order, to parallel Rev. 12:3 and Rev. 17:10.

As Bible readers have recognized through the ages, the Beast depicted in Rev. 13 is the historic Antichrist, which a vast array of authors (especially since the Protestant Reformation) have identified as the papacy. In the year 1600, Andreas Helwig, or Helwich (c. 1572–1643), a brilliant German scholar, demonstrated that a most significant pontifical title *vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God) had a numerical value of 666. During the last part of the eighteenth and throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, very many Protestant as well as other non-Catholic writers have followed that example. Copious evidence of this fact is presented in Appendix III, which also demonstrates that such an identification did not originate with Seventh-day Adventists. Future chapters will delve into the issues surrounding that discovery.

Let us, however, also ask just why the Apocalypse lays such stress on the leopardlikeness of the Beast? After all, Catholicism has since its beginning had its headquarters in the city on the Tiber and has always been described as the Roman Church. Nevertheless, like the paganism which in its formative period surrounded it, it drew the most vital elements of its culture, philosophy, and religion from the Greeks.

Much of the Great Apostasy in the early Christian centuries had its roots in the Hellenic and Hellenistic world. Stephen N. Haskell, perhaps uniquely among Seventh-day Adventist prophetic writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, touched on this point:

“Through Greece, ‘the prince of the power of the air,’ the ‘old dragon,’ who was cast into the earth, attempted a new scheme for enslaving the truth. Greek culture and intellectual development carried men farther away from the simple truth of God’s Word than any form of religion, or any oppression from the government. The teachers of Greek philosophy followed in the wake of the Alexandrian conquests. The beauty and aesthetic nature of their learning deceived men as nothing else has ever done. The mixture of good and evil was divinely represented by the spotted leopard, and its universal acceptance, by the lithe form and agile movements.”⁶

This issue was partly dealt with in our former works,⁷ but also awaits treatment in a further book.

What here especially concerns us is that through the allegorizing methods of third-century theologians like Clement and Origen at Alexandria, Egypt, prophetic interpretation and eschatology—like other attempts at understanding the Bible—were perverted. Their mentors if not their boon companions had mostly been pagans, both Platonic and Neoplatonist. Allegorization, by which anything could be arbitrarily made to mean anything else,⁸ mutated into Idealism. All this prepared the way for Augustinian, Medieval ideas.⁹ With a few adjustments by Jesuits during the Counter-Reformation in the last part of the sixteenth century, such conceptions gave birth to Catholic Preterism and Futurism.¹⁰

Idealism apart, these schools do have one thing in common: the interpretation of prophecy by relating it to history. However, both Preterism and Futurism have gaps, for each of them omits the very long medieval period and even the past five hundred years that followed it. Only Historicism is gapless and continuistic, with an underlying premise made clear through Amos, well before our era: “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Historicism therefore matches prophecy with all the main events of both the remote and recent past, especially in or near the Mediterranean world. This became the epicenter for the great controversy between the Saviour and Satan, as well as their representatives. What has happened in that region has greatly impacted on and continues to affect the planet as a whole.

For more than a hundred years, the largely Historicist Protestants ignored both Preterism and Futurism, recognizing them as attempts to create an intellectual fog for concealing the papacy, so that nobody could identify it as the Antichrist predicted in 2 Thess. 2, the Apocalypse, and other Scriptures. But from 1826 onward, they have allowed themselves to be seduced into these alternatives. Abandoning Historicism, Protestants have increasingly adopted Preterism or Futurism. The latter is nowadays mostly known as Dispensationalism.¹¹ At present, these schools predominate and greatly impede the comprehension of what Rev. 13:18 means with its reference to 666.

Today the only major bastion left standing for Historicism is the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though even this is now being undermined from within, by some of its own theologians. With regret, we will in its proper place be dealing with this phenomenon.

A cornerstone of Historicism is belief in the year-day principle. According to this, time in apocalyptic prophecies is not literal but symbolic, just like the rest of their contents. Therefore, a day in prophecy represents a calendar year. With this, Seventh-day Adventists think on the same wavelength as Protestant Historicists of the past. To their older insights, present-day scholars have added considerably more, especially

William H. Shea in his brilliant two-part study of more than forty pages.¹²

The two most prominent Bible passages that explicitly teach the year-day equivalence are Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. But Shea has greatly elaborated on this and reviewed “in this study twenty-three biblical reasons validating the application of the year-day principle to the time periods in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.”¹³

Shea did not confine himself to Scriptural analysis, but also stepped outside the Bible by applying two pragmatic tests from history. First, he inquired whether, when the Historicist paradigm is applied, the actual events of the past fulfill the Bible’s predictions. For this, he found vindication by comparing Dan. 9:24-27 with what actually happened.¹⁴ He did so successfully without resorting to the peculiar gap theory propounded by Francisco Ribera in the sixteenth century and present-day Dispensationalists. Second, he asked whether Historicists had been able to foretell events of the future through the word of prophecy. The following example is compelling:

“In the year A.D. 1689 an English prophetic interpreter by the name of Drué Cressener (1638-1718) published his predicted date for the end of the 1260 days of Revelation 11-13. This particular time period is given in three different ways in these chapters: 1260 days/42 month/3½ times (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6; 13:5). Beginning the prophetic period in the time of Justinian I in the sixth century A.D., and by applying the year-day principle of these 1260 days, Cressener came to the conclusion that ‘the time of the Beast does end about the Year 1800.’ He applied the symbol of the beast to the papacy, and the pope was indeed deposed in 1798”¹⁵—a mere two years before the date he had calculated!

Cressener wrote this more than a century before it happened. As Shea correctly concluded, “The extraordinary chronological accuracy with which Cressener’s prediction met its fulfillment lends support to the idea that he had indeed employed the correct hermeneutical tool with which to interpret this time prophecy, the year-day principle.”¹⁶

None of this can even remotely be matched by Preterism, Futurism, or Idealism. These schools, moreover, contain the blemish of omitting most events between the earliest church history and the Second Coming, as though the Almighty were not interested in what would happen in between.

That is most peculiar against the background of the Hebrew prophets. Their predictions appear throughout the Old Testament, continuously coordinated with the history of the Chosen People.

Historicism, also known as the continual historical school, is a necessary precondition for understanding the prophetic context of the number 666.

Volume I

The Story of the Great Apostasy

PART 1

The Basics

Chapter One
AN EARLY EXPECTATION OF THE END

With a separate epistle written in about A.D. 100, the beloved apostle alerted the early church to the coming of an ἀντιχριστος (antichristos, “antichrist”), although he did not confine this word to that entity; for he added: “. . . even now are there many antichrists” (1 John 2:18). It is with these that John’s epistle is concerned.

The book of Revelation focuses particularly on one such opponent of God and his true believers. Some writers prefer to call this entity the *historical* Antichrist, which is also what we mean. In the rest of this book, we will nevertheless for convenience’ sake omit that adjective.

Stimulated by the reading of the freshly written Apocalypse, which John had brought with him from the prison island, his readers would have wondered much about these things, for his prediction was obviously related to an earlier prophecy by the Saviour himself. A few days before his passion, looking down the vistas of the future prior to the Second Coming, he had revealed that a great and lengthy tribulation lay ahead for his followers: “And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:21, 22).

For the understanding of Rev. 13 and other passages in the Apocalypse, this prophecy is most significant. Jesus spoke of ψευδοχριστοι (pseudochristoi, “false Christs”) and ψευδοπροφηται (pseudoprophētai, “false prophets”). Now what is an antichrist if not an imposter, a false Christ?

Our Lord’s prediction in Mark is mirrored in the very language of the Apocalypse. We especially note the following words about the false Christs and false prophets: [they] “shall shew signs [σημεια, sēmeia, ‘signs’] and wonders, to seduce [ἀποπλαναν, apoplanan, ‘to lead astray’] if it were possible, even the elect” (Mark 13:21, 22). Compare this with what John wrote about the Antichrist’s latter-day assistant, the two-horned beast: “And he doeth great wonders [σημεια, sēmeia], so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth [πλανα, plana, ‘leads astray,’ etc.] them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles [τα σημεια, ta sēmeia, ‘the signs’] which he had power to do in the sight of the beast . . .” (Rev. 13:13-14)

In their word choice, these two passages closely reflect one another; each of them speaks of signs, deception, and universal success for these associated powers: the Beast with its delusive name and its prophet.

Its prophet? Yes, for the latter word appears in Rev. 19:20: “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet [ψευδοπροφητης, pseudoprophētēs, ‘false prophet’] that wrought miracles [τα σημεια, ta sēmeia, ‘the signs’] before him, with which he deceived [επλανησεν, eplanēsen, ‘deceived’] them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.

These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

This text is virtually a summary of Rev. 13:11-14. It is so obviously based on that passage that we must conclude the two-horned beast is the false prophet of the Apocalypse, who claims to speak for God but is actually a mouthpiece for the Antichrist.

But when would these events take place?

While the Redeemer was sitting there on the mount of Olives and gazed upon the temple below them in the afternoon sun as it slanted toward the west, this was the question for which the apostles especially wanted an answer. But he would and could not tell them. He related many other things, but said: “The end shall not be yet,” for “the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:7, 10). Before this work is completed, however, much would happen in the world with signs to signal the approach of his Return. “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (vs. 32).

The apostles, like other early Christians after them, had an early expectation of the end. But Heaven in mercy withheld from them the knowledge of the immense expanse of time that would intervene. The best they could do was, as Jesus told them, to watch for the events that would indicate the nearness of his Second Advent and be ready at all times.

Likewise, Paul, the great missionary to the gentiles, warned his converts at Thessalonica: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” No, there would first be a great apostasy in the church, “a falling away.” Referring to it, he provided a valuable timeline. He said that even in his day “the mystery of lawlessness” (2 Thess. 2:7, NKJV) was already at work, though something was still restraining it. The apostasy would continue until the Second Advent. “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming” (vs. 8, NKJV). In other words, the Antichrist is a very long-lived beast, whose career was to stretch from the first century until the Second Coming.

Similarly, Rev. 13 makes it plain that the two-horned beast, the “false prophet,” was to be an end-time creature. Its appearance coincides with the conclusion of the forty-two prophetic months, when the first Beast receives its deadly wound (vs. 5); that is, round about 1798.

And how did the Antichrist originate? He received “his power, and his seat, and great authority” from the great red dragon (Rev. 12), which primarily symbolizes Satan, though in a secondary sense it also represents the pagan Roman Empire through whom the Evil One had done much of his work.

Chapter Two
BIBLICAL PARALLELS FOR 666

Apart from the clearly stated idea that 666 refers to the name of the Beast, we also need to inquire whether the Bible specifically mentions such a number anywhere else. This is in accordance with the important principle of comparing Scripture with Scripture.

In addition to Rev. 13:18, the number 666 occurs in a few passages of the Old Testament, such as 1 Kings 10:14; 2 Chron. 9:13; Ezra 2:13. Let us briefly consider these verses.

Ezra 2 is a list of the Jews who returned to Canaan after the Babylonian captivity in the fifth century B.C. In each case, it mentions the extended family and the number of individuals involved. Verse 13 reads: “The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.”

From time to time, expositors of Rev. 13:17, 18 have thought this to be prophetically significant, but we do not think so. It is pure coincidence. If we collected all the numbers that the Bible applies to people, places, objects, etc., arranging them from one to a thousand, we would probably find that more or less every one of them is listed—including 666.

Are the interrelated 1 Kings 10:14 and 2 Chron. 9:13 relevant to our discussion? Let us see.

We read that part of Solomon’s annual income was 666 talents of gold. Here, again, the number is probably just coincidental; yet some, like Roy Allan Anderson (1895-1985), have found it significant. Writing in 1974, this Seventh-day Adventist evangelist stated that 666 was “the number of perpetual unrest.” That is a touch of Idealist interpretation mingled with Historicism, which largely predominates in his *Unfolding the Revelation*. Anderson added: “King Solomon found it so in his experience, for his annual income was 666 talents of gold, a fabulous income but wholly unsatisfying to the heart!”¹

Now this may for some be persuasive sermonizing. It is, however, the baneful fruitage of the allegorical method introduced by Origen (c. 185-254), often blended with a free-and-easy typology that has no proper basis in the Bible. This sloppy way of interpreting the Scriptures influenced preachers throughout the Catholic Middle Ages,² and in some ways is still with us today. William H. Shea’s verdict can hardly be improved on. Allegorizing is like a wax nose: it can be twisted this way and that way to make anything in the Bible mean anything.³

This is not good enough for prophetic interpretation. We therefore find that 666 as it relates to Solomon is also largely irrelevant for our analysis, though perhaps not entirely so—as David Baker, head elder of the Seventh-day Adventist church at Farmington, ME, has pointed out. He thought it providential that 666 was to be found in three verses of the Bible. This shows that throughout the Scriptures it is a normal number, in Rev. 13:18, as well as in the other two verses that contain it. He is acquainted with the reasoning that we apply to this number in several passages of this book. Here is Baker’s take on it:

“God put these two 666 occurrences in the Bible to show two more times that 666 is not 3 sixes, but 600, 60, and 6.”⁴

Or, if we really must bring Solomon’s 666 talents of gold into our calculations, we could say that he found that annual income very satisfying, whatever we may think was in his heart. After all, 1 Kings 10:14 refers to the earlier part of his reign, before his foreign, idolatrous wives seduced him into apostasy. Also, as a dear friend of Boulder, Colorado—a Jewish Seventh-day Adventist—has argued, this Scripture can be taken to suggest that the number six symbolizes not imperfection but perfection!

Such are some of the topics dealt with elsewhere in this book. Let us here in anticipation just note that we do not find three sixes in 666. Instead, we reckon as follows: $666 \div 3 = 222$ and $666 \div 6 = 111$.

Chapter Three
MAGIC SQUARES AND THE SUN GOD

I

More interesting than his reference to Solomon is Anderson's piece about solar seals and so-called "amulets worn by pagan sun-worshipping priests." The following two tables are from drawings based on photographs taken during 1910 of amulets, which were then, he said, in the Berlin Museum¹:

6	32	3	34	35	1	=	111
7	11	27	28	8	30	=	111
19	14	16	15	23	24	=	111
18	20	22	21	17	13	=	111
25	29	10	9	26	12	=	111
36	5	33	4	2	31	=	111

$$\underline{\underline{111\ 111\ 111\ 111\ 111\ 111}} = \mathbf{666}$$

1	32	34	3	35	6	=	111
30	8	27	28	11	7	=	111
20	24	15	16	13	23	=	111
19	17	21	22	18	14	=	111
10	26	12	9	29	25	=	111
31	4	2	33	5	36	=	111

$$\underline{\underline{111\ 111\ 111\ 111\ 111\ 111}} = \mathbf{666}$$

The numbers in each of the rows and columns add up to 111 in four directions: horizontally, vertically, and diagonally (sloping from both the top down and the bottom up). All the totals, as a result of fourteen calculations for every table, amount to 666. This is known as a magic square.

Anderson was neither the last nor even the first writer of his church who referred to such a device. Eleven years after him, Cyril Mervyn Maxwell (1925-1999) did the same in *God Cares: The Message of Revelation for You and Your Family*, Vol. II (1985).² He chaired the Church History Department at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary of Andrews University from 1968 until his retirement in 1988. Dr. Maxwell was also a founding member of the Adventist Theological Society and acted as editor for ADVENTISTS AFFIRM from 1997 until his death.³

He reproduced the same magic square that Anderson had used for his second example, as shown above. Maxwell said he borrowed this and other such ideas⁴ from Dr. Edwin R. Thiele (1895-1986), who had previously taught

at Andrews University as Professor of Antiquity from 1963 to 1965.⁵ Here, however, it is not necessary to deal further with Maxwell or to delve more deeply into Thiele. Instead, it is more useful to keep a searchlight on Anderson, because his book reproduces two magic squares, one below the other.

Predominantly a Historicist, Anderson believed that the 666 of Rev. 13:17-18 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*, a title of the pope—but also in the prophetic relevance of such magic squares. Below a table setting out the *vicarius Filii Dei* identification, he wrote: “It surely is significant that through all the changing centuries from ancient Babylon to modern Babylon, the power that has corrupted the truth of God is branded with the number 666!”⁶

Various writers have shown how many so-called Christian symbols and observances originated in Babylon. Some have written entire books about this topic. *The Two Babylons* (1916) by Alexander Hislop and Ralph Woodrow’s *Babylon Mystery Religion: Ancient and Modern* (1966) are examples. The latter has been especially popular. By 1993, it had been reprinted twenty-seven times and translated into many languages.

II

Mystery surrounds the solar seals to which Anderson referred. For one thing, their originals are definitely no longer at the Berlin museum, as attested by Dr. Karsten Dahmen, the scholar in charge of its Münzkabinett. In answer to a query from Dr. Koot van Wyk, a South African professor at a Korean university, he stated: “I am afraid, but we unfortunately do not have such a coin/such coins or amulets in our collection.”⁷ Anderson in 1974 himself had indicated uncertainty about their whereabouts. He wrote: “These drawings from photographs taken in 1910, show actual amulets *then* in the Berlin Museum” (emphasis added).⁸

Even more serious is the following question: Did these solar seals, together with the related magic squares, really originate in ancient Babylon, as Anderson suggested?⁹ Van Wyk emphatically rejected the very idea and said: “It is most likely a fake creation by an artist who wished to solve the problem of the meaning of 666 in the 1700s.” Part of his reasoning is the presence of Latin words like *sol* (“sun”) and the date 19 August 1705.¹⁰ It is not, however, necessary to suppose that the person who designed this material was setting out to produce a fake.

Michael Scheifler, in his research on the same topic several years ago, had also obtained copies of these seals. He wrote to us: “The second amulet shows the conjunction of the Sun, Moon and the star Regulus in the constellation of Leo the Lion that occurred on 19 August 1705, which is inscribed in Roman Numerals under the sun.” He likewise concluded: “It is definitely not from pagan Rome or Babylon.” To this he added: “I have been unable to find an actual photograph of the 1705 dated amulet, but the conjunction can be easily confirmed by astronomy/planetarium software, which I have done.”¹¹

Scheifler had in fact discovered and also transmitted to us very clear photos of the first object which appears in Anderson’s book on p. 126. This

incidentally confirms the fact that amulet photography had taken place. Anderson was, however, only partly right in his interpretation: “On the front side of No. 1 we see *the god of the sun* standing on the lion. This indicated the sun’s position in the constellation of Leo during the hot days of August. On the back is inscribed ‘Nachyel,’ meaning intelligence of the sun,’ and in 36 squares are arranged the numerals 1 to 36 (see diagram) in such a way that adding the numbers of any column either horizontally or vertically, and also the two diagonals crossing the square, the total is the same—111. The sum of the six columns, computed either horizontally or vertically, is 6 x 111, or 666.”¹² (Emphasis added)

The sun *is* represented on the amulet, and powerfully so; but the crowned king with a scepter below it is not “the god of the sun.” It is the star Regulus in the constellation of Leo. A little Latin helps us to understand these symbols better. *Regulus* means “little king” or “prince”; *Leo*, “the lion.” Let us however also note the presence of Judaic symbols, most prominently three Stars of David. Two of them are located on top of two pillars, traditionally known as Jakin and Boas. These “are the names of the two symbolic pillars of Solomon’s Kabbalistic temple, which were believed to explain all mysteries.”¹³

At least four solar elements appear on this first amulet. On the front, there are three of them, two explicit and one symbolic. Right at the top is the Latin word *sol* (“sun”) with an image of the sun and its rays below it. It shines above Regulus. To the right is a little trident on a shaft that ends as a circle with a dot inside it. Astrologically this is the “Seal of Och, the alchemist, physician and magician”; it is one of the “Seals of the Seven Angels who rule over the 196 provinces of heaven.” This information is from Cornelius Agrippa’s publications and appears in *Amulets and Superscriptions* (1930), by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, the “Sometime Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum.” The Seal of Och is depicted as the fourth, amidst seven symbols, representing the seven astrological “planets.”¹⁴

The fourth solar element is displayed on the back of the amulet, the magic square of the sun, beginning with 6 and ending with 31. As already shown, if added together, whether horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, this always totals 666. Unlike the other amulet that interested Anderson, this one is undated. Nevertheless, it also seems to represent the same or a similar conjunction, for “yearly, on or near August 23, the Sun passes between the Earth and Regulus, the brightest star in the constellation Leo the Lion.”¹⁵

(Considering both amulets, we wonder what was so important about the 19 August 1705 conjunction that it prompted someone to create a golden amulet to commemorate it. To date, we have been unable to discover the reason for it.)

Budge’s sources were partly Kabbalistic, the images of which have long intrigued both Christian and Jewish scholars. But what is the Kabbala? Supposedly it was based on an oral law that God had given to Moses at Sinai in addition to the written law. Amongst others, it has also strongly influenced the Freemasons, as explained by Thomas D. Worrel, who spent twenty years studying the subject. Amongst other things, it made use of gematria.¹⁶ Jakin and

Boas (*Boaz* is an alternative spelling) are also Masonic symbols.

A further belief system that concerned itself with these magic squares and the related imagery was Theosophy, founded in New York by an aristocratic Russian immigrant, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891). Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) “an American lawyer, newspaperman, and student of spiritualism—a 19th-century movement based on the belief that the living can contact the dead—soon fell under her sway and became the society’s president in 1875.” Madame Blavatsky was herself a spiritualist, because “she claimed to be in regular contact with a brotherhood of Great Masters, or Adepts, who, she asserted, had perfected themselves and were directing the spiritual evolution of humanity.” She and Olcott “moved to India in 1878, eventually settling in Adyar (near Madras), which still serves as the international headquarters of the society.”

Theosophy is an occult movement “with roots that can be traced to ancient Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. . . . In modern times, theosophical views have been held by Rosicrucians and by speculative Freemasons.” It teaches “that God is utterly transcendent and impersonal, that creation is the product of spiritual emanations from God, and that humans are sparks of the divine trapped in the material world who desire to return to their spiritual home.” That is, the Theosophical Society is ultimately pantheistic. Although it has a relatively small membership, it “has been very influential.” It “pioneered the promotion of Eastern thought in the West but also inspired the creation of more than 100 esoteric religious movements . . .”¹⁷

Jesus Christ Sun of God: Ancient Cosmology and Early Christian Symbolism (1993) by Theosophist David R. Fideler also deals with magic squares and the associated symbolism in relation to the Kabbala. Amongst other things, it explains: “In the magical branch of the Jewish kabbalistic tradition, each planet is associated with a particular Intelligence and Spirit. The name of the spirit is numerically derived from all of the numbers comprising the magic squares of the planet, while the name of the intelligence is derived from the sum of any line. Therefore, in the Hebrew Kabbalah, the name of the Spirit of the Sun is SORATH (סורח = 666), while the Intelligence of the Sun is NAKIEL (נכיאל = 111).”¹⁸ Further: “Since Nakiel is the Intelligence of the Sun, its number was determined by adding together the values in any line of the magic square of the sun. To construct the sigil, the number values of Nakiel’s letters were plotted out on the magic square and then connected.”¹⁹

Nakiel also appears as *nachyel* on the reverse of the first amulet mentioned by Anderson. In each case, it equals 111. Six nakiels make up 666. It is possible that the amulets which Anderson referred to were particularly important to Freemasons, Theosophists, or some other similar cult and may for this reason have been removed from the Berlin Museum.

Fideler maintained that “888, the number of Jesus, the Spiritual Sun of the early Christians, like 666 and other ‘triple numbers,’ may be derived from the magic square of the sun, and for this reason ‘triple numbers’ were apparently thought to have a solar significance. These repeating numbers—666 and 888—

are also the ratios that underlie the formation of the musical scale and have thus been revered since the time of Pythagoras or before.” And also: “Because of the fact that the Greek name Jesus is equivalent to 888, the early Christian Gnostics referred to his name as ‘the Plenitude of Ogdoads,’ in other words, ‘the Fullness of Eights.’”²⁰

Ogdoad is derived from the Greek word ογδοος (ogdoos, “eighth”) from οκτω (oktō, “eight”). Early Gnosticism taught that there were “seven planetary spheres with an eight above them, the sphere of the fixed stars. Hence the earliest Gnostic systems included a theory of seven heavens, and a supercelestial region called the Ogdoad.” As the system evolved, however, further conceptions were added, such as the even higher realm of the Pleroma.²¹ More will be said about these ideas a few pages further on, so we need not here elaborate.

Fideler also wrote: “The relationship between Jesus and the symbolism of the Ogdoad was developed a great deal in the teachings of the early church. One reason for this was that ‘Christ arose from the dead on the eighth day, the day of Helios’ [the sun god] and ‘this had been the first day of Creation and for the Christians it became again the first day.’ In other words, the creation of the world commenced on Sunday, while God completed the process on Saturday, the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest. Jesus, the Spiritual Sun, rises from the grave on Sunday, now considered the eighth day because it ushers in a new phase of creation. A hymn by Origen celebrates the mystery of the Ogdoad, and the conception was further developed by other fathers.”²²

Such reasoning was used by early Christians whose syncretic minds were contaminated by Gnostic and Neoplatonist thinking, to bolster a tendency to substitute Sunday observance for Sabbathkeeping, for which there is absolutely no Biblical support. Some writers are still doing this, a topic especially discussed in Volume III, where we show what peculiar company Seventh-day Adventists venture into when they substitute numerology and Idealism for their Church’s Historicist interpretation of prophecy.

But let us return to the amulets which Anderson depicted and commented on. They were obviously created after 1705, although the seals and symbols that they were based on went back to the Jewish Kabbala of the European Middle Ages. We think that only in this way, they might have had some Babylonian antecedents, though that is unprovable and conjectural.

Why then, in view of these facts, should we not dismiss the magic squares as irrelevant to our study? Because however and wherever they originated, they have intrinsic qualities that are undeniable. The numbers in each case do add up to 111, which multiplied by 6 gives a total of 666. This is, moreover, a valuable fact that we will be highlighting in our book. It happens to clearly demolish the erroneous notion that there are three 6’s in 666, a fallacy which Idealists have for more than a century been using to obscure and misidentify the 666 of Rev. 13:18.

III

The Kabbala connection also features in an article of Anna Marie Roos, published during September 2008 by the British Royal Society, which has existed for three hundred and fifty years. It is a truly prestigious body, “the world’s oldest science academy,” founded in 1660—“a Fellowship of the world’s most distinguished scientists, which promotes the advancement of science and its use for the benefit of humanity and the good of the planet.”²³ The scholarly Dr. Roos, a former Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, has been described as “a historian of science and medicine, specializing in early modern chemistry and the history of the early Royal Society.” She became “a research fellow in the Modern History Faculty at the University of Oxford.”²⁴

Her article was “‘Magic Coins’ and ‘Magic Squares’: The Discovery of Astrological Sigils in the Oldenburg Letters,” originating with Julius Reichelt (1637-1719).²⁵ It deals in some detail with these seals, called sigils (from the Latin word *sigillum*, which amongst other things means “a seal”).

Several times, she mentioned their relationship with the Kabbala, the occult, and astrology. Sigils were used as charms and talismans for several purposes, above all in vain attempts to cure diseases through magic. Robert Boyle (1627-1691) mentioned “the *Correspondency*” of “the superficial part of the Terrestrial Globe . . . with the Celestial [Regions] of the Universe” (emphasis added).²⁶ As will yet be shown, a century later Emanuel Swedenborg—a Neoplatonist mystic and spiritualist—would also use the word *Correspondence* in such a sense.

Dr. Roos also referred to Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), who had earlier studied them closely. We read that, though a Christian, he was dabbling in astrology and the occult. Agrippa was “court secretary to Charles V, physician to Louise of Savoy, exasperating theologian within the Catholic Church, military entrepreneur in Spain and Italy, acknowledged expert on occultism, and philosopher.” For his pains, he came into conflict with the inquisitor of Cologne and was banished from Germany during the year he died.²⁷

Agrippa was “the most influential writer of Renaissance esoterica, and indeed all of Western occultism.” His book, *De occulta philosophia* (Concerning Occult Philosophy) in three volumes first appeared “between the years 1509 and 1510.” Extensively expanded and carefully revised, it was reprinted in 1533. An English version, which we will be citing, was published in London during 1651. Its translator from the Latin was J. F., most probably John French. In 1801, “it was “shamelessly plagiarized and published as his own work by Frances Barrett.” In 1915, this “was in turn plagiarized and published as his own work by L. W. de Laurence . . .”²⁸

The 1651 translation also contains the first of the magic squares reproduced by Anderson in 1974.

Agrippa wrote: “It is affirmed by Magicians, that there are certain tables of

numbers distributed to the seven planets, which they call the sacred tables of the planets, endowed with many, and very great virtues of the Heavens, in as much as they represent that divine order of Celestial numbers, impressed upon Celestials by the *Idea's* of the divine mind, by means of the soul of the world, and the sweet harmony of those Celestiall rayes, signifying according to the proportion of effigies, supercelestiall Intelligencies, which can no other way be expressed, then [*sic*] by the marks of numbers, and Characters.”²⁹

Apart from its astrology, this paragraph mentions several notions important to the occult. First, we notice the syncretism. It propounds a belief in God, but he is said to have created the celestial bodies with astrological potency. Second, *Ideas* are mentioned. By this, Agrippa did not mean what we mostly have in mind when we use that word. He was referring to a Platonic view of reality. Third, “the soul of the world” meant the *anima mundi*, a concept important to many pantheists and magicians.

A preoccupation with sigils lasted for several hundred years. Dr. Roos found that it “persisted among virtuosi in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.” However, “their lack of efficacy and association with superstitious practice eventually became the predominant one among natural philosophers.” One person who strongly contributed to this reaction was the cartographer, mathematician, and astronomer Julius Reichelt (1637-1719), who taught at Strasbourg University. Roos wrote that he “was also a keen collector of medals, coins, sigils and amulets,” and composed “a book about their symbolism—*Exercitatio de amuletis, aeneis figures illustrate*”³⁰ (1676).

IV

As background to the study of sigils, the facts referred to above are enlightening. But where did Anderson first find out about solar seals and magic squares?

He probably had several sources. No doubt one of them was Thiele, whom we have already mentioned. It is possible that he also obtained data from *The Computation of 666 and Its Relation to Antichristian Systems* (1891) by anonymous writers who called themselves “Two Servants of Christ.” Their book points out that these sun seals are, because of their arithmetical properties, also magic squares. Every one of the seven astrological planets had a magic square, although only one was concerned with the sun. All of them, however, were interrelated and locked into a system, with a specific sequence.

“The 7 numbers, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are severally squared and then all the numbers from 1 up to such square are placed in such an order that the sum of the different rows, whether vertically, horizontally, or in the central diagonal, is always the same.” The following table shows how this astrological setup hung together:

Number	Planet	Number Squared	Resulting Square	Total of Each Row	Totals of All the Rows
1	Saturn	3	9	15	45
2	Jupiter	4	16	34	136
3	Mars	5	25	65	325
4	The Sun	6	36	111	666
5	Venus	7	49	175	1225
6	Mercury	8	64	260	2080
7	The Moon	9	81	369	3331 ³¹

We note again that of these seven bodies the sun is in the fourth and middle position with a sigil value of 666.

Nowadays we do not regard the sun and the moon as planets, though many of the ancients did so. Not possessing the telescope, they could not discern their error, add further planets, or recognize that the earth was also one of these. Let us note, however, that observationally the order is not arbitrary. It begins with the outer planets, proceeds to the sun, the brightest luminary in the sky, and then turns around to go back as far as the moon. Of these, the sun god was central to their devotions as it is in the table reproduced above.

From very ancient times, the celestial bodies were associated with and worshiped as gods. By means of astrology, this tradition remained alive throughout the European Middle Ages and down to the Renaissance. We read of this in a fascinating book, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*.³² The author was Jean Seznec (1905-1983), an immensely learned French mythographer and historian, who taught at several universities outside his native country, including Harvard in America and Oxford in England.

Even today, astrologers willy-nilly are still serving heathen deities like the Roman Jupiter, known to the Greeks as Zeus, whom the Babylonians called Marduk.

V

“Two Servants of Christ” derived a significant part of their material from *Arithmologia* (Arithmology), 1665, a Latin work by Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680), a Jesuit author, an older contemporary of Reichelt.

He was a “priest and scholar, sometimes called the last Renaissance man,” because his “research encompassed a variety of disciplines including geography, astronomy, mathematics, language, medicine, and music, bringing to each a rigorous scientific curiosity girded in a mystical conception of natural laws and forces.” Kircher “wrote some 44 books, and over 2,000 of his manuscripts and letters survive.”³³

After the fashion of his day, the *Arithmologia* has a lengthy subtitle, which we find both enlightening and suggestive; therefore, we translate it in full:

“Of Athanasius Kircher, from the Society of Jesus, *The Arithmology or the Hidden Mysteries of Numbers*, in which the Origin, Antiquity, and Form of

Numbers Is Explained; Their Hidden Qualities Are Demonstrated; the Sources of Superstitions in the Form of Amulets Are Disclosed; and Then, After the Detected Magical Impieties of Kabbalists, Arabs, Gnostics, and Others, the True and Lawful Mystical Meaning of Numbers Is Shown.”³⁴

Comprising 262 numbered pages, this is really a syncretic work because its numerology appeals to the Bible as well as pagan ideas. For instance, it mentions the Sabbath to show that 7 is a perfect number. On the other hand, it also cites Pythagoras, who was both a mystic and a mathematician, as well as Plato. For its sigils, it points to the planets and the zodiac. Parts of its mix are ancient Egyptian, even Muslim Arabian, ideas.³⁵

But Kircher also applied magic squares to ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (Iēsous, *Jesus*) and Maria, to show that the numerical value of both names is 888.³⁶ This, however, has no prophetic or theological importance; for nowhere does the Bible say that it does.

As already noted, the “Two Servants of Christ,” for their solar magic square cited Kircher. They likewise mentioned the *Iēsous* = 888 identification, as well as other lore—Egyptian, Gnostic, astrological, Arabic and so on.³⁷ They again could have influenced Anderson’s thinking. To be sure, there were also other writers that did so, like William Milligan, whom he cited explicitly. But since Milligan’s numerology resembles that of Kircher, it may also have originated with him. Anderson’s first magic square is identical with Kircher’s, and so is the one concerning the Saviour: “*Iesous*, the divinely given name of Jesus—10, 8, 200, 70, 400, 200—equals 888. And this is the number of endless victory!”³⁸

We notice something else about Kircher and his numerology. He was explicitly anti-Protestant, a seventeenth-century apologist for the papacy during the Counter-Reformation. Let us look at this.

Very early in Kircher’s *Arithmology*, we meet a Latin quotation from Rev. 13:18, ending with the words in Latin “for his number is χξξ’ [chi xi stigma], 666.” Further on, we shall be dealing with these three characters in Greek and that notorious number. Here we just move on to his statement: “Heretics leave no stone unturned in applying this number to the Roman pontiff, whom they call the Antichrist, and think they [can] show this in two names.”³⁹

He presented them in vertical tables: ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ, *Lateinos*, in Greek and רומיית, *Romiith*, in Hebrew. The letters of both these titles have, in their respective languages, numerical values totaling 666. Kircher, however, said that Catholic and Orthodox believers laughed at such reasoning. They pointed out that the names of Luther and Calvin, as well as the word *Saxon*, can numerically likewise add up to 666, in which connection Kircher referred to Cardinal Bellarmine⁴⁰ (1542-1621)—a fellow-Jesuit and earlier papal apologist.

The *Arithmology* also demonstrates that ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (Iēsous) has a numerical value of 888, which it links with the Sibylline Oracles.⁴¹ This was “a collection of oracular prophecies in which Jewish or Christian doctrines were allegedly confirmed by a sibyl (legendary Greek prophetess); the prophecies were actually the work of certain Jewish and Christian writers from about 150 BC to

about AD 180 and are not to be confused with the Sibylline Books, a much earlier collection of sibylline prophecies (see Sibyl).⁴²

As a militant Jesuit, Kircher went on to show that from the writings of Irenaeus and onward, 666 was identified with different Greek, Latin, and Arabic names as well as expressions—the last mentioned according to the Kabbala. Here are three of them: “Mahumed, Saxo [aimed at Luther],” and “LVpVs pICarDVs, id est Caluinus”⁴³ (the Picard Wolf, that is, Calvin).

Here Kircher was resorting to a double ploy that would become familiar in later centuries. First, he showed that the number 666 can be applied not only to the pope but also many other entities. Second, he attacked those that made such an identification by applying the number to people who were important to them.

It would be very strange, though it seems likely, that Anderson, a Seventh-day Adventist, ultimately—at least in part—derived his sigil/magic square ideas from a Jesuit defending the papacy!

VI

Anderson was grafting Idealistic, non-Biblical elements onto the Historicist interpretation of Rev. 13, which his church had maintained for more than a century. Otherwise, however, he did believe in the identification of *vicarius Filii Dei* as the name that is a number, namely 666. In pursuing this line of argumentation, he first referred to the spurious Donation of Constantine as contained in Gratian’s Decretum. This is where that title first occurred.

After this, Anderson cited the following sentence: “The title *Vicarius Filii Dei* . . . is very common as the title for the Pope.”—Dr. J. Quaston [*sic* for Quasten], S.T.C., professor of ancient history and Christian archaeology, School of Sacred Theology, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., March 5, 1943.⁴⁴ Here is another of Anderson’s quotations: “The title of the Pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei, and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals (printed large) and add them together, they come to 666.”—*Our Sunday Visitor*, No. 15, 1914.⁴⁵ The background and setting of these statements are discussed in Volume III.

On 31 August 1930, *Our Sunday Visitor*, like Kircher three centuries earlier, dealt with 666 in an astrological context, as a Catholic attempt to rebut the position of Seventh-day Adventists and others that this number refers to the pope.

We read: “In the first place there is no such inscription on the papal tiara,” as though it were somehow an important basis for that interpretation, rather than being a side issue. Then *Our Sunday Visitor* says: “It is clear that the Gnostic system was the Antichrist of primitive times.” To support its contention, it relies on the Church Fathers, especially Irenaeus. It says the title of the five books, commonly called “Against Heresies,” in which he discussed the Antichrist, was actually “Against the Knowledge falsely so-called.”

What follows is an explanation of the Gnostic view that reality consists of

three worlds: the *ogdoad* (“the seat of their eight-fold god, the ‘pleroma’”), the *hebdomad* (an intermediate realm, the “sphere of the seven planets of the ancients”), and the *Hyle* (matter, “this present world”). According to *Our Sunday Visitor*, 666 is concerned with the hebdomad. In this, “the *sun*, being fourth among the planets of the hebdomad and thus central in the hebdomad; and the hebdomad itself being the intermediate world of Gnosticism—may be taken to represent the whole system.”⁴⁶

Our Sunday Visitor also asserts: “And St. John, the author of the Apocalypse, would not so much as remain in the same building, the baths of Ephesus, with that ‘child of Satan,’ Cerinthus the Gnostic.”⁴⁷

We find this fascinating. *Our Sunday Visitor*, rejecting the *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 explanation, seems to suggest that while John was still alive this number was already associated with the Antichrist. In other words, he must have had Gnosticism in mind when he wrote Rev. 13:18. Now, that is totally untrue. There is not a shred of historical evidence that the title *vicarius Filii Dei* was ever used before the eighth century.

VII

Does anything said above invalidate or detract from the explanation that *vicarius Filii Dei* is what Rev. 13:17-18 is really about? It does not. If sigils with their magic squares are in any way relevant to this Scripture, that would only be peripherally. This could only indicate that the Antichrist was to be characterized by a solar element. And so it is, for the Great Apostasy amalgamated Christianity with the Roman and specifically Mythraic worship of the sun, which is the origin of Sundaykeeping.

But all such other matters aside, the Bible asks us to look for a calculable name or title, of a man, a *human* entity. To this, the 666 of the solar seals could have only a subordinate meaning. If the magic squares actually originated in Babylon (which, we repeat, is unprovable), and not just the Kabbala, this could link up with the fact that the composite Antichristian Beast of Rev. 13 does have Babylonian as well as Medo-Persian and Greek components. From these, the various forms of Gnosticism also derived their deceptions.

We also note that the Kabbalists, or whoever thought up the magic squares, did not—like Anderson and other Christian theologians in later ages—make the mistake of imagining that there were just three sixes in 666. On the contrary, magic squares clearly demonstrate that it consists of six 111’s. Inversely, this equals 111 sixes.

The primary identification demanded by the Apocalypse for 666 is to the name of the Beast, and we shall in this connection have much to say about *vicarius Filii Dei*. But the mind of God, which inspired the prophets and is very deep, may also with reference to the solar seals be suggesting to us: No, a certain personage is not the vicar of the Son of God, but of the sun god. It is from this deity, not the Creator, that the *dies solis* (Sunday) was derived—a topic to be discussed in its proper place.

Chapter Four
LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET AS NUMBERS

I

Let us take a closer look at Rev. 13:17-18. Because three items in these verses have become highly controversial, we begin by quoting from the Chester Beatty papyrus in Sir Frederic G. Kenyon's transcription. Dating from the 200s of our era, its leaves were discovered in Egypt during 1930¹ and published in 1934. This is one of the earliest surviving New Testament documents now available. For the Apocalypse, "its text appears to be of good quality, and in antiquity it ranks before all other MSS. of the book."²

The Greek original of the two verses appears in the endnotes.³ Here is what it says: "So that nobody may buy or sell unless he has the mark *or* the name of the beast *or* the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him therefore who has it calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a human being. It is six hundred threescore and six."³ (Emphasis added)

We need to look very closely at the three symbols $\chi\xi\zeta'$ with which the quotation ends. Incidentally, the last of them is not ζ (sigma) = **s**—written at the end of Greek words—but the visually similar ζ (stigma) = **st**, a later form of the ancient \digamma (digamma). This was a remnant of a symbol in the Phoenician aleph-beth, from which the Greeks had derived their alpha-beta (the alphabet). Until about the ninth century, they did not distinguish between small and capital letters. In the original New Testament, sigma was written Σ both within and at the end of words. Its numeric value was 200. It could therefore not also represent 6. For this reason, stigma was employed.

Let us place all this beside three controversial elements which surround that Scripture: (a) the notion that the number should really be 616, (b) the idea that the original lacks the $\bar{\epsilon}$ (or) after *charagma* (mark), and (c) the fallacy that the text contains 666 in the form of triple six. Such and related opinions, to which we will, where necessary, also give further attention, are neatly gutted by the sharp knife of the Chester Beatty papyrus. First, the number is really 666 and not 616. Second, there is indeed an $\bar{\epsilon}$ (or) after *charagma*. And third, the $\chi\xi\zeta'$ (chi xi stigma) are three entirely different characters—not the 666 of our Arabic numeral system.

In fact, not only the Chester Beatty papyrus, but all manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have either these three letters or the words $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota\omicron\iota \acute{\epsilon}\xi\eta\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha \acute{\epsilon}\xi$ (hexakosioi hexēkonta hex), which means *six hundred sixty-six*. The latter is the more common way of writing it and pretty close to the Authorized (King James) Version or its best equivalent today, the New King James Version. Even a person unable to read Greek can see that in each case the relevant word or letter that abbreviates it differs from its neighbor.

Apart from the early Chester Beatty papyrus, an important Version

containing the letters $\chi\xi\zeta'$ is the ancient Koine text which, in parallel columns, accompanies *The New Testament in Modern Greek* (1967), published at Athens by the United Bible Societies.⁴ That would be a variant of the Byzantine Bible which Eastern Orthodox Christians have been using for centuries. On the whole, Greeks insist on this text, although since the nineteenth century some Western scholars have rejected it, especially those who dislike the *Textus Receptus* on which the Authorized (King James) Version is based.

The Preface to the New King James Version has significant things to say about this matter, and we invite our readers to study the entire section under "The New Testament Text." The following is most significant:

The King James New Testament was based on the traditional text of the Greek-speaking churches, first published in 1516, and later called the *Textus Receptus* or Received Text. Although based on the relatively few available manuscripts, these were representative of many more which existed at the time but only became known later. In the late nineteenth century, B. Westcott and F. Hort taught that this text had been officially edited by the fourth-century church, but *a total lack of historical evidence* for this event has forced a revision of the theory. It is now *widely held that the Byzantine Text* that largely supports the *Textus Receptus has as much right* as the Alexandrian or any other tradition to be weighed in determining the text of the New Testament.⁵ (Emphases added)

About the Alexandrian Text, the Preface goes on to explain: "Since the 1880s most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon a relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the Alexandrian Text. However, some scholars have grounds for doubting the faithfulness of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, since they often disagree with one another, and Sinaiticus exhibits excessive omission." Also, "today, scholars agree that the science of New Testament textual criticism is in a state of flux."⁶

To this we add further, even more pointed remarks from another source concerning the Greek New Testament prepared by Maurice Robinson and William Pierpont, who took "the utmost care" in preparing their text: "Various other methods for restoration of the original NT text have fallen short of their goal, in part due to *methodological subjectivity*, and in part to *a presuppositional bias* against the claims of the Byzantine Textform. The texts created under such a bias tend to be based only on a handful of favored manuscripts, and fail to consider all transmissional factors in the preservation of the original text. As a result, the modern

eclectic texts tend to preserve more of a caricature than the essence of the originals.”⁷ (Emphases added)

Since this is not a book about textual criticism, our main point in raising this ancillary topic is that χξζ’ exists in a plurality of ancient texts. Hopefully none of our readers will in this case likewise cherish a presuppositional bias and simply try to sweep the fact of those three characters off the table.

Let us now continue our analysis of Rev. 13:17-18 by looking more closely at “. . . the number [ἀριθμος, arithmos] of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count [ψηφισατω, psēphisatō] the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.”

To many of our time, those texts contain a puzzling statement. But to John’s contemporaries, the original readers of the Apocalypse, it would have been immediately intelligible, as indicated by the two words quoted above. The first, *arithmos*, means a calculable number, even a “reckoning”—from which *arithmetic* is derived.⁸ The second, *psēphisatō*, is from ψηφιζω (*psēphidzō*), “to count *or* reckon, *properly* with pebbles (ψηφοι [*psēphoi*]).” The *psēphos* was “*rubbed and rounded* in river-beds or on the sea-shore” and therefore convenient to handle. Another use for it was to cast a vote by putting it into a voting-urn, as also happened during judicial proceedings. Testifying before King Agrippa, the apostle Paul recounted how—before his conversion—he consented to the killing of the Christians he had captured by putting in his *psēphos* against them (Acts 26:10, RSV). To the explanation about arithmetical reckoning, our *Greek-English Lexicon* adds “cf. Latin *calcularē* from *calculus*.”⁹

Merriam Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus (bundled together on a DVD with the 2010 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*) confirms and further explains the etymology of the latter word, as it has come down to us in its English variant, **calculate**: “L[atin] *calculatus*, p[ast] p[articiple] of *calcularē*,” derived from “*calculus* pebble (used in reckoning) . . .” The people of antiquity did their sums by setting aside and counting off small stones. The abacus was a later improvement, the use of which—to our astonishment—my wife and I observed in Russian shops as late as 1994. Significantly, the New King James Version translates Rev. 13:18 with this very word: “Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast.”

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin had dual-purpose alphabets. Some letters represented numbers as well as sounds. In this, the ancient Mediterranean mind was very different from our own. Even most scholars who can nowadays read those languages with tolerable ease would have found it difficult to talk about numbers to writers of that age, if a time machine could have transported them back to the early Christian era.

Nowhere would they have found a single Arabic number. All figures were represented by letters of the alphabet. And to the ancients in the Greco-Roman world, the present-day method of writing 666 would have been totally alien.

Likewise, their system has been confusing for some scholars living in subsequent centuries. These therefore speak erroneously of the number in Rev. 13:18 as a triple or threefold *six*, or *six* used three times. But see what happens if, according to the ancient method, we write ζζζ. What would this represent? According to the additive system of A.D. 100, that is ζ + ζ + ζ = 18. However, none of the Greek manuscripts have ζζζ, only χξζ or the three words ἐξακοσιοι ἑξηκοντα ἕξ written in full.

We note then that the number of the name is not *six*, either singly or in multiples, *eighteen*, or anything else than *six hundred and sixty-six*. Whatever amounts to more or less than this is not the fruitage of that wisdom which the Bible calls for in prophetic expositors.

II

For people in the ancient Mediterranean world, a name quite naturally also had a numerical value. But some expositors, especially Preterists, object to the use of Roman numerals in dealing with this topic because John's initial readers supposedly all spoke Greek. Consequently, they allegedly had no knowledge of Latin.

Here is how a Catholic website in Brazil expresses the argument, in opposition to Protestants who apply the number 666 to the papacy: "It is important to clarify that the books of the Bible always address themselves to its immediate readers." For understanding them, "it is necessary to reconstruct the geographic and historical ambience. . . . We see, then, that it is an error to use the Latin language in an attempt to decipher the number 666 of the Apocalypse." The immediate readers in Asia Minor would never have understood it in such a sense, for in that period "it was a language used in the territories of Western Europe." But also to be found in Asia Minor was Hebrew. "Therefore, we could say, with a great probability of certainty, that the number in question corresponds to the Greek name of Caesar Nero (37-68), written in Hebrew letters, as follows (read from right to left): N V R N R S Q."¹⁰

This is Historical-Critical thinking, which harmonizes with Catholic Preterism or the Idealist approach. It is, however, inappropriate for Protestant scholars who espouse the Historical School of prophetic interpretation. Even if the argument were true, that would not have mattered; for the beloved apostle did not write only for his contemporaries. Rev. 13 is a prophecy about an Antichrist reaching beyond their time until the Second Advent.

All the same, let us consider whether any of those who read the Apocalypse in A.D. 100 knew Latin. Of course they did! In John's time, and for centuries to come, Latin was the main administrative language of the empire—and its offshoot, the Roman papacy. One of the very first Gentile converts to the gospel had been Cornelius at Caesarea in Palestine (Acts 10). Subsequently more and more Romans, settled everywhere around the Mediterranean, accepted the Lord. Some believers at the seven churches to which the beloved apostle originally sent the Revelation would have spoken Latin at home, for

Asia Minor was a Roman province. We wonder, though, how many of them would have known Hebrew.

Further, we need to consider the Greco-Roman interaction, which is well known to anybody who has studied the literature, philosophy, and culture of those ancient peoples. Part of this heritage was their very similar system of representing figures.

An early British expositor who said that equating names with numbers dated back to the ancient past was Thomas Newton (1704-1782). In 1780, Thomas Bell cited him as follows: “It was a method practiced among the ancients, to denote names by numbers; as the name of Thouth, or the Egyptian Mercury, was signified by the number 1218.; the name of Jupiter, as Ἡ ἀρχὴ [hē archē], or the beginning of things, by the number 717.; and the name of the sun, as ἡσ [ēus] good, by the number 608.”¹¹

How this can apply to the Beast was indicated by Thomas Newton’s contemporary, Alexander Cruden (1699–1770), whose famous *Concordance* first appeared in 1737. Having been revised since then, the text that is usually available today does not fully reflect the author’s ideas. But in 1848, Thomas Whittemore cited him on this. “Cruden explains the matter very wisely, and we shall leave it where he does: ‘The number of the beast, or the number of the name of the beast, stands for the numerical value of the letters that compose his name.’”¹²

Several decades after Cruden, Adam Clarke (1760 or 1762–1832), the great Methodist commentator, also dealt with this procedure. He said: “Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians.”¹³ The Romans learned it from the Greeks, whom they closely imitated in everything. Many regarded Hellenistic *Koinē*, the great lingua franca of the empire, as their second mother tongue.

They therefore adopted the old and well-established Greek practice of representing numbers by letters in the alphabet, even before our era. We can see this from the dates on large numbers of Roman coins minted in Egypt before the Christian era began. In each case, the word *lukabav* (year) is represented by an *L*, followed by numerical letters. “There are coins extant marked of [*sic*] the 2d, 3d, 14th, 30th, 35th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42nd years of Augustus Caesar” (63 B.C.–A.D. 14, emperor since 27 B.C.).¹⁴

Poets like Leonidas of Alexandria played word games. He constructed “equinumeral distichs; that is, epigrams of four lines, whose first hexameter and pentameter contain the same number with the other two.” One example are lines that praise Poppaea, the wife of the emperor Nero (A.D. 37–68),¹⁵ who lived and died before John wrote the Apocalypse. Admittedly Leonidas’ poems were in Greek, but the point is that cultivated Romans could easily read—and loved—such productions. Indeed, when Christianity came into being, most of the greatest Latin poetry had already been created by men like Catullus (c. 84–c. 54 B.C.), Virgil (70–19 B.C.), Horace (65–27 B.C.), and Ovid (43 B.C.–A.D. 17). Their models were provided by the Greeks, including those of Alexandria, whose techniques they closely imitated.

One of the earliest Christian writers to apply the idea of letter-number equivalence to Rev. 13:18 was Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–c. 202), bishop at Lyon in Gaul. In *Against Heresies*, he wrote: “Although certain as to the number of the name of the Antichrist, yet we should come to no rash conclusions as to the name itself, because this number is capable of being fitted to many names.” He favored the word *Teitan*, a variant of *Titan*, amongst other reasons because it “is composed of six letters, each syllable containing three letters.” But he also suggested “*Lateinos* (ΛΑΤΕΙΝΟΣ),” which likewise “has the number six hundred and sixty-six; and it is a very probable [solution], this being the name of the last kingdom [of the four seen by Daniel]. For the Latins are they who at present bear rule.”¹⁶

The observant reader will note that in this discussion we personally avoid the word *gematria*, which some have applied to such a procedure. Our reason for not using it is that it is both anachronistic and derogatory. Gematria was “the substitution of numbers for letters of the Hebrew alphabet, a favorite method of exegesis used by medieval Kabbalists to derive mystical insights into sacred writings or obtain new interpretations of the texts.”¹⁷ Irenaeus was a Christian writer, who lived a long time before the Middle Ages. And he had nothing to do—as this entire topic is not concerned—with the Kabbala, which laid claim “to secret knowledge of the unwritten Torah (divine revelation)” that was supposedly “communicated by God to Moses and Adam” and also had pantheistic overtones.¹⁸ We therefore proceed without that misleading term, except when quoting from others who use or refer to it.

III

A frequent objection to citing Irenaeus as evidence for letter-number equivalence in Rev. 13:18 is that he was a Greek, who wrote in his own language—although his greatest work, *Adversus haereses* (Against Heresies), has survived only as a Latin translation.¹⁹ We therefore need to inquire: Is there any concrete evidence from ancient, pre-Protestant times that Roman numerals were ever applied to unlocking the mystery of that text?

There is, in “the earliest continuous or consecutive commentary on the Apocalypse now extant” by Victorinus (also known as Victorinus Marius, Marius Fabius Victorinus, or Victorinus Afer), who was bishop of Pettau in Upper Pannonia, near present-day Vienna. According to LeRoy Edwin Froom (1890-1974), he died in 303 or 304, a martyr under Diocletian.²⁰ Later, however, Victorinus was not so pleasing to the papacy. As a *Catholic Encyclopedia* has put it, “Like many of his contemporaries he shared the errors of the Millenarians, and for this reason his works were ranked with the apocrypha by Pope Gelasius [d. 496, reigned from 492 to 496].”²¹

Victorinus provided a bridge between Greek and Latin culture, having, according to Froom, been “born on the confines of the Eastern and Western empires.”²² About the leopard Beast of Rev. 13, he wrote: “This signifies the

kingdom of that time of Antichrist.’ The 666 of verse 18 is first reckoned by the Greek *gematria*, suggesting *teitan* and *antemos*, the letters of each of which comprise the equivalent number. Then turning to Latin, he suggests the ‘antiphrase DICLUX,’ as standing for Antichrist.²³ This expression means “say light” and in Roman numerals has a numeric value of 666.

Antiphrasis is an “ironic or humorous use of words in senses opposite to the generally accepted meanings.”²⁴ Migne’s Latin *Patrologiae* of 1844 explained that by the antiphrase DICLUX “we understand antichrist, who—though cut off from and deprived of heavenly light—still transforms himself into an angel of light, daring to assert that he is light.”²⁵ This is an obvious reference to 2 Cor. 11:14, which says so of Satan. How Victorinus applies it to Antichrist need not concern us, the important point being that DICLUX is a very early example of letter-number equivalence in Latin.

This pre-Protestant method of trying to figure out Rev. 13:18 was still flourishing in the eighth century. Beatus of Liébana (c. 730–c. 800), “a monk, theologian and geographer from the Kingdom of Asturias, in northern Spain,”²⁶ from earlier sources compiled a commentary on Revelation. Froom described it as a remarkable contribution, which—despite its derivative nature—“kept the multiple themes of the Apocalypse alive during the Middle Ages.”²⁷

To identify the Antichrist through his name, that writer in both the text and two plates of his *Beati in Apocalipsin Libri Duodecim* (1930) (Twelve Books of Beatus on the Apocalypse), used DICLUX.²⁸ This did not originate with him, according to John Williams, Pittsburgh University professor emeritus and manuscript illumination specialist. Where he commented on Folio 171 v, “The Numbering of the Antichrist” (Apoc. 13:18), of *The Morgan Beatus Manuscript* (1991), he said: “St. Jerome’s edition of a commentary on the Apocalypse written by Victorinus, the bishop of Pettau, served Beatus for this section of the Commentary.”²⁹

Other early prophetic expositors such as Walafrid Strabo (c. 809-849) and Haymo/Haimo (d. 853), as well as Bruno Astensis, Rupertus Tuitiensis, and Garnerius Lingonensis during the twelfth century also pondered the significance of DICLUX. Basically they all recycled the same material.

Beatus was for several centuries widely read by learned Catholics interested in prophecy. Explaining 666 through the use of Roman numerals applied to Latin words or expressions is a very old and pre-Protestant practice. There is no reasonable basis for suggesting otherwise.

Henry A. Sanders, Latin professor and manuscriptologist at the University of Michigan, wrote a 1918 article about the number of the Beast. Surveying the field of previous writers and various titles, he mentioned both Victorinus and Beatus. From the former, he gave DICLUX. From Beatus, he quoted a Latin sentence, translating it in a footnote: “This is wisdom; he who has understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man, i.e. of Christ, whose name the beast takes for itself; for how much this number and name amounts to by the single letters, he will reckon and thus he interprets 666.”³⁰ That is to say, as a substitute Saviour, he is Antichrist.

So much is valuable, but Sanders—evidently a Preterist—also involved Beatus in argumentation that originally this number must have been 616. A bare twelve years after Sanders wrote his article, its tortuous erudition was contradicted and slain by three words in the newly discovered Chester Beatty papyrus: $\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \delta\epsilon\ \chi\acute{\iota}\xi\zeta'$ [estin de chi xi stigma], “It is six hundred, threescore and six.”

The following are the equivalentents of well-known Roman names in church history: Nero = 761, Constantine = 228, and Augustine = 77. How did we arrive at these numbers? First, we used their full and correct names, as those who bore them would have done on formal occasions. Second, we did so in Latin, because that was their mother tongue or they wrote in it. Third, we confined ourselves to Roman numerals, as those men would normally have done. *Nero Claudius Caesar*: $c(100) + l(50) + u(5) + d(500) + i(1) + u(5) + c(100) = 761$. *Flavius Valerius Constantinus*: $l(50) + v(5) + i(1) + u(5) + v(5) + l(50) + i(1) + u(5) + c(100) + i(1) + u(5) = 228$. *Aurelius Augustinus*: $u(5) l(50), i(1) + u(5) + u(5) + u(5) + i(1) + u(5) = 77$.

In Antiquity and during the Middle Ages, throughout the West, Roman numerals were not merely common; for many centuries they were the *only* method of writing and reckoning with numbers, before the introduction of Hindu-Arabic numerals in about 1200.³¹ This vastly superior system had been known even earlier, for nearly two centuries, but reactionary elements long resisted it—despite the fact that Roman numerals “prevented any addition or multiplication from being done on paper.” People had to rely on the abacus. “Even as late as 1299 and in the greatest banking center of the West, Florence, the use of the numerals instead of the old alphabetical system was forbidden by law.”³²

Seeking to explain Rev. 13:18, not a few have devised their own calculation methods, for instance $a = 1, b = 2, c = 3$, etc. But these alternatives are arbitrary and therefore unacceptable. With Roman numerals, we are on solid ground; they dominated the math of Western civilization for almost half of its history.

We note, moreover, that Arabic figures did not entirely dispose of the older system. It survived for special purposes, and so did the numerical value of Roman letters. A good example is the chronogram (“time writing”), a sentence containing hidden numbers, on tombstones, coins, foundation stones, and book covers. “The practice originated in the late Roman Empire and was particularly popular during the Renaissance.”³³ Here, from many possible examples, we select just two:

1. *My Day Is Closed In Immortality*. Lovers of literature will recognize this as an iambic pentameter, a meter made very famous by William Shakespeare, who lived at that time. Commemorating the death of Queen Elizabeth I, the capital letters of the epitaph make up a date, MDCIII, which is 1603, the year when she died.

2. *ChrIstVs DuX ergo trIVMphVs* (Christ the Leader, therefore triumphant), which appears on a coin that was struck by Gustavus Adolphus, the great Swedish Protestant leader during the Thirty Years’ War. When rearranged, the

capitals provide, in Roman numerals, the date MDCXVVVII = 1627.³⁴

This proves that in those years European people were thoroughly aware that words and expressions had a numerical value. This was particularly the case in one country: “Many lengthy examples of chronograms can be found in Germany, notably in and around the town of Bad Salzuflen. These commemorate the building of houses in the form of prayers or quotations from the Bible.”³⁵

IV

In the final decades of the nineteenth century, James Hilton, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London—“the world’s premier Learned Society for heritage”³⁶—strongly focused on this phenomenon. His three books were *Chronograms, 5000 and More in Number, Exerpted out of Various Authors and Collected at Many Places* (1882); *Chronograms Continued and Concluded, More Than 5000 in Number, a Supplement-Volume to ‘Chronograms’* (1885); and *Chronograms Collected, More Than 4000 in Number Since the Publication of the Two Preceding Volumes in 1882 and 1885*. As Hilton himself put it in October 1895: “This brings the grand totals to 38,411 chronograms noticed, and 14,712 recorded in print.”³⁷ He also surveyed their history and sought to explain their essence.

“The antiquity of chronograms, as is shown by my collections, reaches as far back as the year 1210 expressed by one in the Latin language, and the dates 1208 and 1280 in the Hebrew language; the date 1380 appears in the Arabic; these chronograms are, beyond all question, contemporaneous with the dates themselves, and are not retrospective or made at a period subsequent to the events.” When and how long were they popular? “They are met with most plentifully in works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—in fact, from the thirteenth century down to the present time, though in less profusion at the two extremes.”³⁸ That is, their popularity peaked about a hundred years after the Protestant Reformation. Hilton’s “works bear ample testimony to the extent to which the literature of Continental Europe was pervaded by the chronogram element, engaging the attention and approval of scholars, as well as the patronage of emperors and potentates, for at least three hundred years.”³⁹

Here is how he explains the chronogram: It is a sentence or a verse, in which “certain letters express a date, while the sentence itself is descriptive of, or allusive to, the event to which the date belongs. The date is found by adding together the numeral letters, or, to speak more accurately, the ordinary figures represented by them. The method is very simple, because only the seven Roman numerals—I, V, X, L, C, D, M, equal respectively to 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000—are used for the purpose. It is imperative, however, that every one of such letters in the sentence should be counted, and that no such letter should be passed over or rejected from the reckoning. For the sake of perspicuity, all the numeral letters are usually printed larger (or they may be distinguished by red colour, etc.); when a numeral letter occasionally occurs printed small, it is either a printer’s mistake, or evidence that the chronogram is a bad one.”⁴⁰

Because of the many languages in which chronogrammatic writing occurred, the different nationalities have made a few alphabetic adjustments and manifested peculiarities of their own. For instance, Dutch—which is also used in Flanders, Belgium—contains the letters *ij*. This, together with its variant *y*, was counted as 2, and the letter *w* was generally written as VV. Also, “it must be noted that in the chronograms of Flemish writers the letter D = 500, was generally ignored as a numeral—an exception which is manifestly bad, and is admitted to be so by more than one of the leading Fleming writers.”⁴¹

Also wrong was the VV = 10 equivalence. In Dutch/Flemish, *w* is pronounced like phonetic [v]. In English, however, the *w* is a semi-vowel related to *u* and has a numeric value of 5. Why?

The Latin language itself originally lacked the letter *w* or even a *v*. A widely used primer, based on the work of Frederick M. Wheelock—an eminent scholar—explains the situation as follows: “The Roman alphabet was like ours except that it lacked the letters **j** and **w**. Furthermore, the letter **v** originally stood for both the sound of the vowel **u** and the sound of the consonant **w**. Not till the second century of our era did the rounded **u**-form appear, but for convenience both **v** and **u** are employed in the Latin texts of modern editions.”⁴² That is, **u**, **v**, and **w** all have the same numerical value of 5. In fact, *Vicarius Filii Dei* was originally pronounced *Wicarius Filii Dei*!

The Netherlandic VV eventually impacted on the debate about this title in the person of David Goldstein (1870-1958). A Jew who had dropped out of school at the age of eleven and later converted to Catholicism, he directed his hatred against Seventh-day Adventist Historicists for applying that title to the papacy. He retorted by attacking Ellen G. White, whom he incorrectly regarded as their founder. In a letter dated 21 June 1935, he taunted the editors of *Present Truth* with the following table:

E.....	0
l.....	50
l.....	50
e.....	0
n.....	0
G.....	0
o.....	0
u.....	5
l.....	50
d.....	500
W.....	10 (W equals v plus v, 10)
h.....	0
i.....	1
t.....	0
e.....	0
—	
Total	666

Then he asked: “Was Ellen Gould White the “Beast”?” and answered his own question triumphantly: “Your system of counting Roman numerical values says—YES.”⁴³ In the appropriate place, we will revisit this issue more comprehensively. Here we only need to point out that Seventh-day Adventists have never had a special method of their own for calculating Roman numerals; they use the normal one which is universally valid. The real problem lay with David Goldstein himself: he belonged to a family of immigrants from the Netherlands, which caused the spurious VV = 10 to engrave itself in his brain.

But we return to chronograms. Intrinsicly they are not the same thing as prophetic writing, for they always involve the element of time; yet they are relevant, for two reasons.

First, their method and sheer abundance over many centuries demonstrate that letters in the Latin alphabet had numerical value for scholarly or even just whimsical people throughout the European West. Nor is it true that only Protestants used them. Their appearance in the thirteenth century antedate the Reformation. Hilton’s chapter entitled “The Rosary” shows how Catholics also made use of them.⁴⁴

Second, chronograms sometimes overlap with prophecy, as Hilton sought to show in his chapter “The Number 666.” He listed more than twenty that “seem to have been used in the religious controversies raised by the rival followers of Luther and Calvin in opposition to the Romanists.” Of these, we here reproduce only the following:

ALEXANDER EPISCOPVS = 666

[Bishop Alexander]

DRACONIS LVX = 666⁴⁵

[Light of the dragon]

These examples are not in themselves chronogrammatic, for the element of time is absent. They do, however, tie up with and probably presuppose the view of no less a person than Martin Luther, who enshrined it in one of the marginal notes accompanying his German Bible translation. We observe that this was absent from his first, 1522 version of the New Testament, completed in Wartburg castle during a very busy and eventful year. But it is contained in his 1530 New Testament, as well as his 1534, 1541, 1545, and 1546 editions of the Bible. (The last mentioned appeared in the year when he died.) In all of them, he wrote: “Those are six hundred and sixty and six years. So long the earthly papacy stands” (emphasis added).⁴⁶

Calvinists also came to adopt that interpretation. According to the Preterist David Brady, it began among them in 1557 with “the Swiss Reformer Heinrich Bullinger in his commentary *In Apocalypsim Jesu Christi . . . Conciones Centum*. If, as was usual, the Book of Revelation was dated roughly within the reign of Domitian, one could add another *666 years* [emphasis added] and arrive at another European ruler whose name in the years of Protestants at least, was written in the hall of infamy—Pepin III [c. 714–768, king from 751]. . . . What Protestants found most distasteful about Pepin was his use in 754 of the spurious Donation of Constantine in opposition to the Lombard attacks of King Aistulf in order to grant to the papacy certain lands previously held by the Lombards together with the Exarchate of Ravenna.”⁴⁷

Brady went on to tell about the role of the Geneva Bible (New Testament 1557, Old Testament 1560). Those who published it had not only translated it into English; they also sought to explain it to their readers, with marginal notes. The one on Rev. 13:18 “suggested that the number of 666 indicated so many years after the date of John’s vision, when the Pope or Antichrist began to be manifest in the world” (emphasis added).⁴⁸ For two centuries, this idea was most influential.

“From James [1566–1625] onward, the interpretation of the number 666 as indicating so many years from John’s vision achieved enduring currency throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries among a variety of commentators. It was amongst others adopted by William Whitaker, Master of St. John’s College, Cambridge, who made use of Rev. 13.18 in a disputation at commencement, conducted in 1582. His thesis was ‘Pontifex Romanus est ille Antichristus, quem futurum Scriptura praedixit [The Roman Pontiff is that Antichrist, whom Scripture foretells as being future]’ . . . Another work that followed this interpretation was by “the Hungarian Reformer, Stephanus Kis, in a work published in London in 1593.”⁴⁹ The

lengthy title of his book was also in Latin.

However much Luther and Calvin as well as their followers should be honored for advancing the cause of Bible truth, we cannot accept this interpretation. It is on two counts contradicted by Rev. 13 itself. Verse 18 explicitly states that 666 is the number of a human *name*, which could—according to Rev. 17:5 and Rev. 19:16—also be a *title*. It says nothing about time. And yet a time element is stipulated by Rev. 13:5, a text which says of the Beast that “power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” A comparison with other parts of the Apocalypse, such as Rev. 11:2-3 and Rev. 12:6, 14, reveals that it was to be for 1260 prophetic year-days. For these two reasons, guesswork is out of order.

But even more remarkable and at first sight puzzling was the merging by seventeenth-century prophetic expositors of the number 666 from Rev. 13:18 with the year 1666. The indefatigable Hilton dealt with this particularly in relation to “The Works of Johannes Praetorius.” These, however, the latter did not find “an easy matter to describe.” Praetorius of Zetlingen was a Lutheran, “‘Master of Philosophy’ at the University of Leipzig, and imperial poet laureate,” who largely wrote on mystical subjects.⁵⁰

“The mystic number 666, and the year 1666, seem to have furnished him [Praetorius] with matter for much controversy; perhaps he had his own beliefs, and he certainly had his doubts, about what those numbers portended to Germany. At the period of his writing people’s minds had been much disturbed by prognostications and expectations, the Thirty Years’ War had only recently been concluded, and the religious dissensions connected with it could not yet have subsided; another war was impending to expel the Turks from Hungary and Eastern Europe; predictions were afloat that the Papacy was to fall, that the German empire would dissolve, and that the final interpretation of the number 666, in Revelation xiii. 18, would be manifested.”⁵¹

The 1666 examples mentioned by Hilton make up a mixed bag, with the details of which we do not need to trouble the reader; they stretch over eight pages.⁵² We note that for its contemporaries this was indeed an important year. The Sun King, Louis XIV, was trying to build a European empire, while the British were engaged in their third war against the Dutch for naval supremacy. In 1666, the Duke of Albemarle (formerly General George Monk) and Captain Robert Holmes were struggling against their most formidable adversary from the Netherlands,⁵³ Admiral Michiel Andriaanszoon De Ruyter (1607-1676).

“In the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-67), his greatest victories were in the Four Days’ Battle (June 1666) and in the raid on the Medway (June 1667), in which much of the English fleet was destroyed.” But the Dutch were beaten in the St. James’s Day battle of August, 1666.⁵⁴

The British perspective was presented by John Dryden (1631-1700), the leading literary figure of his era. During 1667, he wrote and published “Annus Mirabilis,” a long poem which commemorated 1665-1666 as the “year of miracles.” It made much of the victories over the Dutch and even put a fair complexion on the Great Fire of London from 2 to 7 September 1666. This,

too, was supposedly most marvelous. “The miracle of the Fire was that London was saved, that the fire was stopped, and that the great king (Charles II) would rebuild, for he already announced his plans to improve the streets of London and to begin great projects. Dryden’s view is that these disasters were all averted, that God had saved England from destruction, and that God had performed miracles for England.”⁵⁵

Well, it is true that the Dutch were trounced on St. James’s Day, though Admiral Cornelis Tromp was blamed for this debacle. Later, De Ruyter would achieve his greatest triumph in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-1674). “His victories over larger Anglo-French forces off Solebay (1672) and Ostend and Kijkduin (1673) prevented an invasion of the Dutch Republic from the sea.” His exploits in these two wars “enabled the United provinces to maintain a balance of power with England,”⁵⁶ and thwarted the designs of Louis XIV.

The year 1666 was certainly not without dramatic incidents. But it is a fact that the papacy was not at that time overthrown, and the world did not end in those days or shortly afterwards. We therefore must wonder just how such a date became associated with the number 666 mentioned in Rev. 13:18. After all, that verse emphatically does not say: “His number is one thousand six hundred threescore and six.”

It would seem that those prophetic interpreters were beguiled by the triple 6, which is visually contained in the numerals 666, a figure that they saw embedded in 1666. They also fell into what our previous book has described as “the Trap of the Contemporary.”⁵⁷ But this is an illusion. As already shown, the original Greek of the Apocalypse does not contain a triple 6. Its writer did not use and would not have understood the Hindu-Arabic numerals employed today and which were already firmly established throughout Western Europe in the seventeenth century. By then, too, the erroneous idea of a triple 6 in Rev. 13:18 was already familiar.

We discovered this even in Andreas Helwig’s *Antichristus Romanus* (The Roman Antichrist), published in 1600, more than six decades before 1666. Our next chapter will deal with this book and its further editions. Here we quote only its first paragraph: “Truly difficult is the inquiry about Antichrist: Has he come or not; and if he has come, what would be the true and genuine name foretold by St. John in the Apocalypse, to which would belong that number in a triple grouping of six, 666” (*Numerus triplicis senarij, 666*).⁵⁸

We repeat that finding three sixes in the six hundred threescore and six of Rev. 13:18 is a downright mistake. It reflects the use of decimal Hindu-Arabic numerals, which include “a zero and *positional notation*” (emphasis added).⁵⁹ What is this about? It means that 666 is not simply a horizontal series of 6 6 6, but the result of adding together three numbers written below one another:

600
60
6

That is, whenever we write 666, a *spatial* element—place value—is implied.

Before the use of calculators, figures were added together by being written *below* one another, the units beneath the units, the tens beneath the tens, the hundreds beneath the hundreds, etc. Even when pen and paper were not used, the same process was implied.

It is only *visually* as written symbols that there are three sixes in 666. Arithmetically that is absolutely not the case. Let us clarify this further by asking how many sixes are to be found in 600. To answer this question, we divide as follows: $600 \div 6 = 100$. So there are 100 sixes in 600. If so, how can there be only three sixes in 666? No, for the correct answer, we must similarly reckon it out: $666 \div 6 = 111$.

Hebrew, Greek, and Roman numerals are completely different. They are non-decimal, lack a zero sign, and do not use positional notation, which made math extremely complicated. The ancient and our mindsets are alien to each other. Where modern Westerners can visualize 666, a New Testament writer like the apostle John was unable to do so. At best, he could before his mind's eye see $\chi\xi\zeta'$ (chi xi stigma). And a Roman would only think DCLXVI.

We do not know from what source, contemporary or otherwise, Helwig assimilated the idea that Rev. 13:18 contained a triple 6; but on prophetic interpretation it was destined to have an evil influence, which still exists today—though this did not prevent him from making the momentous discovery described in the following chapter.

As for chronograms, they are relevant to prophetic studies; for they demonstrate the prevalence of Roman numeral letter equivalence over many centuries. This was still well understood in the late 1900s, as demonstrated by Hilton and also Fred Hartney on Christmas day, 1894, in his *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* article, in which he imitated their use of capital letters: VICarIVs fILII DeI.⁶⁰ Calling that a *chronogram* is, however, misleading, as pointed out by Jerry A. Stevens. Instead of this word and the usually pejorative *gematria*, he has coined the term *compugram*.

Chapter Five
HELWIG'S GREAT DISCOVERY

I

It was a German who had the wisdom and understanding called for by Rev. 13:18. He wrote in Latin, the international language of his time.

Since nowadays not many can read it, we shall in what follows mostly translate the original text into English. For the cognoscenti, the Latin does, however, appear in the notes.

In the year 1600 at Greifswald, northeastern Germany, a mystery book was published: *Of the Question Whether Any Certain Name of Antichrist Happens to Exist, to Which That Apocalyptic Number 666 Corresponds Exactly; An Apodictic Treatise, the Author Being Carolus Aglaeonius Irenochoraesus, Dedicated to David Chytraeus*,¹ a Lutheran theologian and writer, who died in 1600. The writer who used this pseudonym was Andreas Helwig, who taught in Greifswald. His work called attention to *vicarius Filii Dei* (The vicar of the Son of God), a very old pontifical title, which has a numerical value of 666.

More than a century later, during 1735, Johann Christopher Wolf (1683-1739), another learned Lutheran—a clergyman of Hamburg who wrote in Latin and called himself Wolfius—referred to Helwig's book but under a somewhat different title: *An Apodictic Treatise on the Question Whether There Exists Any Certain Name of Antichrist Which Agrees with the Apocalyptic Number 666*.² In the original, he substituted *num* for *anne* and added *pondeat*. He also made one rearrangement. The rest is exactly as it appears on the title page of Helwig's 1600 edition which has come down to us, with Greifswald as the place where it was published and the correct date. Wolfius also stated correctly that this work had appeared pseudonymously and gave the writer's nom de plume as *Carolus Aglaeonius Irenochoraesus*.

Nowadays perhaps only three libraries still have the 1600 edition (two in Germany and one in Scotland). The one at Greifswald University, apparently the original, provides us with almost the same title, as well as the date and place of publication, mentioned by Wolfius. In all these copies, *Carolo*—the first inflected word that constitutes the pseudonym—has been overwritten with *Andrea*, the Latin ablative for *Andreas*. On an attachment from Greifswald, the underlying *Carolo* can still be clearly read.

In response to an inquiry, subject specialist Ivo Asmus, M.A., kindly provided the following information:

“Our old prints (until 1850) were catalogued a few years ago by typing the old catalogue cards into the catalogue database OPAC. . . . On the title page the name ‘Carolo’ is altered to ‘Andrea’ by the same hand that wrote a little lower down, also on the title page: ‘Autor est M. Andreas Hellewig Fridlandensis: scholæ Gryphisw[aldensis] [The Author is M. Andreas Hellewig of Friedland: Greifswald School]. Conrector.’ It seems to me to be

some contemporary, but I'm not quite sure.” *Conrector* means the *Stellvertreter* (representative) of the Rector.³ The nearest English equivalent would be *Vice Principal*. The spelling *Hellewig* is a variant, suggesting a period before the 1800s. M. abbreviates *Magister*, the Latin for “Master” (of Arts). For pointing out what this abbreviation means, we are indebted to Jerry Stevens, one of our finest researchers.

Wolfius mentioned the complete pseudonym but gave a different title incorporated into his own writing. He was apparently the only author between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries who specifically referred to Helwig’s prophetic writing, however briefly. Three pages earlier, he also mentioned the 1612 edition, as follows: “*Andrae Helwigii de Antichristo Romano in numero mystico* [Concerning the Roman Antichrist in a Mystic Number of Andreas Helwig], Wittebergae [of Wittenberg] 1612.”⁴

In the latter case, the failure to use italics—except for the author’s name—agrees with the fact that Wolfius was here not directly quoting the title as published. Instead, he indicated it in the ablative case by writing “de Antichristo Romano” (Concerning the Roman Antichrist). The expression after that, “in numero mystico” (in a mystical number), he took from the body of the book, which begins just after the dedication on 10 December 1608 to the Dean as well as the professors and doctors of the Theology Department at Rostock University.⁵ The reference to Wittenberg is probably an error.

The 1600 edition, though anonymous, already provides intrinsic evidence of the writer’s identity. It begins with a Latin poem, addressed to the pope, entitled “EPIGRAMMA ad Principem Sacerdotum Roman” (Epigram to the Roman High Priest). This contains a number of papal titles, including *vicarius Filii Dei* and *vicar of God*, and asks the pontiff: “Numero Antichristi Gaudebis” (Will you Rejoice in the Number of the Antichrist)? At the end, the author signed himself as A. H. F. M.⁶

Jerry Stevens has deciphered these letters as Andreas Helwig—or Andreas Helvigius—plus *Filius Matri* (Son to His Mother). The latter is an old traditional expression, which *The Free Dictionary* (Google) under its acronyms defines as follows: “F M **Filius Matri** (*Latin: Son to His Mother, epigraphy*).”⁷ This has also been translated into other languages. For instance, there is an English song clip called “Every Mother’s Son” from a ‘late 1960’s pop-rock group best known for ‘Come On Down to My Boat’ (1967)’⁸ and a 2004 movie of the same name.⁹ A. H. F. M. means, approximately: “Andreas Helwig himself.”

In 1612, the author dropped the pseudonym, openly revealing his real identity. Apparently the first person on earth who made this discovery, Helwig was a prominent intellectual, “a professional teacher of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew for twenty-seven years.” During his life, he was amongst other things the author of an etymological Greek Dictionary, rector at Berlin (1611–1614) and professor of poetry at the University of Rostock (1614–1616). From stated that Helwig’s “specialty in language and his conspicuous ability in Greek and Latin won him the standing of royal crown poet.”¹⁰

As a scholar, Helwig was also acclaimed abroad. In 1648, just five years after his death, he was mentioned by Thoma[s] Hayne[s] as one of Europe's *viri eruditissimi* (most erudite men), not as a theologian but for his contribution to etymology.¹¹

The best-known version of Helwig's great prophetic work is the one published in 1612 while he was still professor at Rostock, four hundred years ago. At that stage, its title—translated into English—was *The Roman Antichrist, Revealed by His Own Name, Which Contains That Notorious Apocalyptic Number (DCLXVI); and to the Honor and Praise of Our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, the Highest and Only High Priest of the Church, Whose Seat, Fraudulently Occupied, This Person Claims for Himself*.¹²

From Rostock, Helwig relocated to Stralsund as the rector at its gymnasium, in 1617 or 1618.¹³ There he also continued his scholarly work and eventually produced a final, definitive edition of his book.

This appeared in 1630, under yet another name: *The Roman Antichrist, Revealed by His Own Name: Made Public and Subjected to the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Highest and Only High Priest of the Church, Whose Honor and Seat This Vaunted VICarIVs fILII Dei Claims for Himself and Imposes upon the Entire World the Judgment of the Holy Catholic Church, by Master Andreas Helwig, Rector of the Stralsund Gymnasium*.¹⁴ Note how the capitalized letters, which we have here retained from the original title, reflect the numeral value of the letters concerned. Interestingly, the publication date, 1630, is also similarly indicated, by a chronogram: *Vna sIt aVXILIVM, gLoria nostra, Dei* (May it be together with the help of God, our glory), added by either the publisher or the writer himself. Even more notable is the fact that this time Helwig explicitly included *vicarius Filii Dei* on the title page.

We have been unable to discover any influence of the 1630 edition on subsequent scholarship, although Ernst Heinrich Zober mentioned its existence in his six-volume history about Stralsund Gymnasium, published during 1839-1859. All he did was to confirm its publication date and that it was the *third* edition of Helwig's book. He also provided a brief summary in German of its overall structure.¹⁵

Dramatic developments surrounded the writing of *The Roman Antichrist*. It appeared in the framework of the Counter-Reformation, which during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries emphatically reaffirmed but also reorganized the Roman Church. Amongst its greatest achievements were the creation in 1534 of Ignacio de Loyola's Jesuit order to defend the papacy; the multi-session Council of Trent (1545-1563), which revitalized Catholicism; and the activity of three powerful writers. All of them were Jesuits, two Spaniards and one Italian: the Preterist Luis Alcazar, dealt with in a further chapter; Francisco Ribera (1537-1591), whose Futurist commentary on Revelation appeared the year before his death; and his eschatological successor, Cardinal Archbishop Roberto Francesco Romolo Bellarmino (1542-1621).

Helwig's 1612 edition, an expanded version of the much shorter 1600

text, is not just a book about pontifical titles. As suggested by its name, *Antichristus Romanus* is a comprehensive treatise on the papacy. It sets out the Historicist view as taught by Protestants during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More specifically, on page after page, it seeks to demolish Futurism, championed amongst others by Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621). An attractively readable English translation could again make available an arsenal of answers to the errors of Dispensationalism, its modern offshoot.

The final edition of Helwig's book was almost never published, being completed during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Dated 25 June 1630 at Stralsund, it was dedicated to a great Swedish monarch, Gustav Adolf II (1594-1632), famous under his Latin name, Gustavus Adolphus.

This mighty warrior played a crucial role in that war, when he saved Sweden from the Habsburgers and at the same time ensured the survival of Protestantism against the Catholic armies marshaled to blot it out. What makes Helwig's Dedication so fascinating is that just two years earlier, in 1628, Stralsund—"the last remaining Protestant bastion in Pomerania"—was saved in the nick of time from Wallenstein's army, by Gustavus Adolphus together with Christian IV, the Danish King. We need hardly doubt that Helwig, by not falling into his enemies' hands, as a notorious heretic escaped a most unpleasant fate. He owed his very life to the Swedish king. It is pleasant to imagine Gustavus Adolphus in late 1630 sparing a little time to read the dedication and sad to know that only two years later he would fall in battle at Lützen on 6 November 1632.¹⁶

But the Catholic armies and the accompanying Inquisition overspreading so much German, Protestant territory may also have contrived to destroy nearly all the copies of the 1630 edition. A few, however, did survive. One of them came into the possession of Carl Frederik Muhrbeck, whose identity is obscure. In 1772, he gave it to the Västerås City Library, Sweden. There it lay silently since then, for 235 years—from before the American Revolution. Fortunately Helwig's editions have now also acquired digital immortality and are no longer confined to a few locations.

Like others before and after him, Helwig believed that a title could also qualify as a name, which is confirmed by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2010). It shows that these concepts easily merge with each other. A *name* is "a word or phrase that constitutes the distinctive designation of a person or thing," and a *title* can be "a descriptive name."

So, too, the word ονομα (onoma) of Rev. 13:17, as elsewhere in the Apocalypse, has both a restricted and more general meanings, e.g., "a phrase" or an "expression."¹⁷ Concerning the great whore shown to John, it informs us: "Upon her forehead was a *name* written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5). Her onoma consists not only of *Babylon*, but also of these other words. We note that just two chapters further, where the Redeemer is described as he comes again—specifically to save his people from the Antichristian Beast together with its allies—it says: "His *name* is called The Word of God" . . . "And he hath on his

vesture, and on his thigh, a *name* written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19: 13, 16). (Emphases added, but capitals as in the King James Version.) In all these verses, the original uses *onoma*. Therefore, in Revelation, the word *name* can also mean *title*.

Helwig “cites certain Hebrew names, such as *Romith* [*sic*], which yield 666, applied by writers to the pope. He also cites five Greek names, some reaching back to the third century, such as *Lateinos*, each similarly yielding 666. He then cites certain Latin names, used by, or applied by others to, the pope. These are (a) *Vicarius Filii Dei*, (b) *Ordinarius Ovilis Christi Pastor*, (c) *Dux Cleri*, and (d) *Dic Lux*—each likewise yielding 666.”¹⁸

But the numerical value of *vicarius Filii Dei* was Helwig’s own discovery. After a most diligent electronic search, including the Internet and computerized databases that cover the past few centuries, we find that nobody living before him has yet been shown to have spotted this equivalence. He focused on it increasingly, even to bringing that expression into the title of his book when it appeared for the last time, thirteen years before his death. Helwig’s calculation follows:

V	5	D	500
I	1	E	
C	100	I	1
A			—
R			
I	1		666
V	5		==
S			
F			
I	1		
L	50		
I	1		
I	1		

This is natural, simple, and based on five of the seven letters that in the Roman system have numerical values, namely *i*, *v*, *l*, *c*, and *d*. The letter *u* was originally the same as *v*, which can sometimes still be seen on monuments and tombstones.

II

During the twentieth century, after a multitude of scholars well versed in Latin had scrutinized this calculation over and over again for three hundred years, David Goldstein, mentioned above, found fault with it. In 1935, he asserted that numerically *vicarius Filii Dei* actually does not equal 666 but 665, because “when an I appears before an L it does not total, as Seventh Day Adventism says, 1 and 50. It totals 1 minus 50, which is 49.”¹⁹

In this bit of sophistry, Goldstein ignored the fact that Roman numerals have their own conventions and history. They also take into consideration the method of breaking Latin words into syllables.

Most enlightening about their use in the past as well as the present is an article entitled “Roman Numerals,” by Eric W. Weisstein (1969-), who holds a 1996 Ph.D. from the California Institute of Technology and is “a sought-after speaker on mathematics communication, scientific computing, and knowledge management on the Internet.” He has also “participated in a number of important standards initiatives and led Wolfram Research’s contribution on a National Science Digital Library project.”²⁰

In the medieval period, Roman numerals were a largely *additive* number system. In it, 4, 40, 9, 90, etc., were written as IIII, XXXX, VIII, and LXXXX. Clock faces sometimes still have IIII instead of IV. There was, however, also a *subtractive* number system, which placed smaller digits before large ones, for instance IV, XL, IX, and XC. This way of writing, a later development, “was hardly ever used by the Romans themselves and became popular in Europe only after the invention of the printing press.”²¹

The calculation *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666, which goes back to the pre-Gutenberg Middle Ages, is based on an additive number system. In the West, the printing press was invented circa 1450. Even so, for the subtractive number system, 49 has never been *il*, as Goldstein would have it, but always *xlix*. Similarly, the conventions for writing Roman numerals require that the year 1900 be written as *MCM* and not *CMM*.

Another factor is that when *vicarius Filii Dei* is said aloud or written, it has to follow the Latin method of syllable division. As *Wheelock’s Latin* explains it, “Two contiguous vowels or a vowel and a diphthong are separated: **dea** [goddess], **de-a**; **deae** [goddesses], **de-ae**.”²² Applying this to that title, we find that the second *i* must be separated from the *u* that follows it: *Vi-ca-ri-us Fi-li-i De-i*. Therefore, *i* = 1 and *u* = 5 should be reckoned apart and then added together, not be subtracted from each other.

Goldstein was very insistent with his wrongheadedness, repeating it ten years later (1945) in his *What Say You?* In this book, he ridiculed the Seventh-day Adventists and even questioned their integrity by saying: “Only ignorance of how Roman numerals are figured, or dishonest enumeration of the value of the letters, can account for saying that *vicarius Filii Dei* totals 666, as that title only totals 650.”²³

The reader notices that this time Goldstein’s reckoning gave him a different total, for now he brought in the following two equivalences: VIC = 94 and IL = 49. But in actual Roman numerals 94 was never written like that; it was always XCIV. And, as shown, 49 is XLIX, not IL. Roman numerals with their own conventions and very long history cannot now be modified in accordance with the quirky thinking of so recent an apologist.

In attributing the origin of the *vicarius Filii Dei* calculation to Seventh-day Adventism, Goldstein was also grossly mistaken. It began with Helwig in 1600 and was afterwards used repeatedly by generations of Historicist Protestants,

long before the Seventh-day Adventist Church originated after 22 October 1844. This will be demonstrated in its proper place. Here we can in passing only wonder what Helwig, a highly gifted Greek and Latin professor, would have thought of Goldstein's belated and amateurish argument—with an imprimatur from Richard J. Cushing, the Archbishop of Boston!²⁴

Helwig did more than reckon the numerical value of a pontifical title; he also established sensible guidelines. According to Froom, he “shows that the mystic name (1) must yield the required number; (2) must agree with the papal order; (3) must not be a vile name applied by enemies, but acceptable to Antichrist himself; and (4) must be one of which he can boast.”²⁵

This is how Helwig put it, in one persuasive sentence, as early as 1600:

“Look, however, how this matter dealt with here (*vicarius Filii Dei*) is in everything such as is required. For first it renders that Apocalyptic number with great accuracy; next it fits the papal order as such, at once and always, which none of the Pontiffs will deny; thirdly it is not odious, nor vile, as imposed on him by adversaries, but for himself especially honorable and venerable. . . .”²⁶

III

But where did Helwig find the expression *vicarius Filii Dei*? In his time, as for several more centuries, it was common knowledge. It had pride of place in the *Donatio Constantini* (Donation of Constantine), forged by the papacy for its own benefit during the eighth century and repeatedly republished. For all its falsity, this was a momentous document, through which the popes secured unprecedented power—ecclesiastical supremacy mingled with secular, territorial domination.

It was a title which, as Helwig expressed it, “all the pontiffs have now already ascribed to themselves for more than 600 years (as is apparent), and do ascribe today, and wish to be ascribed: on which account they vehemently glory and boast with an execrable voice that they hold, shared as it were with the omnipotent God, the rule throughout the earth in human affairs.” As a Renaissance man and erudite Protestant, Helwig was certainly acquainted with *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine* (1440) and related documents debunking this forgery. Of this fact, he provided evidence, amongst other things, by mentioning that turncoat scholar Aeneas Silvius²⁷ (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), to whom we will have further occasion to refer.

In 1443, Piccolomini endorsed the Valla document, but when he became Pope Pius II he repudiated his former stance. As people of both the Middle Ages and the Reformation period down to Helwig's time knew from personal, often bitter experience, the pontiffs ignored Lorenzo Valla's *Treatise* and kept on wielding their tremendous power.

Vicarius Filii Dei was also enshrined in the *Decretum Gratiani* (Gratian's *Decretum*), which first appeared in 1140 and became the basis for teaching Catholic canon law.²⁸ Included in it, not by the original author but by his successors, was the Donation of Constantine and that title. For centuries

the *Decretum* was copied multiple times and, after Gutenberg had invented the means for doing so, printed abundantly, over and over again.

Together with other church legislation, it became an important part of Canon Law. The *Decretum* was first printed in 1500 (from 1586 onward as part of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Collection of Canon Law), which continuously remained in force for more than another three hundred years, until 1917, when it was replaced by the *Codex Iuris Canonici*, which omitted the *Decretum*.

Reacting to the sixteenth-century Reformation, after the Council of Trent, Pius V (1504–1572, reigned from 1566) in the year when he became pope appointed a commission to revise the Canon Law. This work was completed in the time of the next pope, Gregory XIII (1505–1585, reigned from 1572). The *Decretum* formed part of the then official *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, published at Rome in 1582, which was during Helwig's lifetime. It included the Donation with the words *vicarius Filii Dei*.²⁹

During the pontificate of Urban VIII (1568-1644, reigned from 1623), Luca Castellino, also writing in Latin, produced his *Theological Elucidation Concerning the Certainty of the Glory of Canonized Saints* (1628). Referring to the Emperor Constantine, it quotes from the Donation a passage containing the title *vicarius Filij [sic] Dei*.³⁰ For another such Catholic book to be published precisely within Helwig's lifetime further illustrates the religious milieu of those days.

As a versatile academic, Helwig undoubtedly had access to all these works. Himself an accomplished Latinist, he could, of course, read them without difficulty. Admittedly, some of these dates are a few years later than Helwig's work of 1612, but two years before his 1630 edition.

IV

In the light of the foregoing facts, we are puzzled by a sentence in Froom's *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*: "Helwig's computation, based on *vicarius Filii Dei*, was expressly stated to be an expansion of the actual historical title of the Pope, *vicarius Christi*—and therefore upon an equivalent, and not the actual title" (emphasis added).³¹ The words which follow the dash suggest an absurdity: that Helwig simply made up the expression *vicarius Filii Dei*.

On what did Froom base his conclusion? The reason for it seems to be the following translation which he made or obtained from one of the Europeans who assisted him in his research before the Second World War: "Wherefore, since that extended name (*productum*—lengthened, drawn out), *vicarius Filii Dei*, is best adapted to the Roman Antichrist, in which truly are all the conditions (met) which Bellarmine has thus far demanded for the name of his pope. Hence that this is the true and peculiar name of the very Antichrist, as clearly is it [*sic*] evident from those things which we have brought out into the open, so must it surely be established."³²

Productum is the past participle, here used as an adjective, of the Latin verb *producere*, which has several meanings, among them "to lead

forward, bring out, reveal, stretch out, prolong.” It therefore does not have to mean “lengthened” or “drawn out,” as suggested above. Indeed, in the context of *Antichristus Romanus* and against the background which we have described, the translation cited by Froom can hardly be correct.

The word *productum* also features in another passage, where Helwig acknowledged that several “nomenclatures or appellations of the Roman Antichrist” did exist but highlighted why he settled on this one. It was, he said, the most appropriate one for the Antichrist, which he especially boasted of, and “quod praecipue hic *productum* voluimus [what we here chiefly wanted to have brought out], vicarius Filii DEI” (emphasis added).³³

Other and better translations are possible for the piece to which Froom referred. Here is a recent one by a Classically trained scholar in the Netherlands who is very well versed in Latin, Marius E. Brinkman, M.Div., Drs. Litt. Class. He has gone to very much trouble, rendering into English not only the paragraph under consideration but also many other passages, which has been invaluable for our study of the *Antichristus Romanus*. Regarding *productum*, Brinkman closely studied Helwig’s use of it everywhere in his text, to contextualize his English translation. Here is the result:

“Therefore, because this name, VICARIUS FILII DEI, *as we have shown*, is most appropriate to the Roman antichrist; since in it we do have all conditions fulfilled which Bellarmine thus far required for the name of his pope; it consequently must be plainly concluded that this is the true and proper name of the antichrist himself as is manifestly clear from the things which we have publicly advanced.” (Emphasis added)³⁴

Helwig’s heading for the section with which this paragraph begins is ΣΥΜΠΕΡΑΣΜΑ (*symperasma*), which means “Conclusion.”

In the section immediately after this, he added: “Most untrue is therefore Bellarmine’s conclusion, by which he declares that most true is the opinion of such people who, confessing their ignorance, say that the name of the antichrist is not to be known until now. And on this point he boasts that the proposition can be irrefutably demonstrated that the Roman pontiff is not the antichrist and that he has not yet come. This is altogether futile and of no value, since his name is most widely known to the whole world and most highly praised.”³⁵

In the 1630 edition of *Antichristus Romanus*, which Froom did not have at his disposal but is now available after being traced through Internet archaeology, Helwig in his dedication to King Gustavus Adolphus shed further light on how he really made his discovery:

“And so when I devoted myself somewhat more diligently in the fear of the Lord to this line of thought, and sometimes in accordance with this, sometimes in accordance with another method had found those Apocalyptic numbers—yet not with a sufficiently appropriate appellation—I finally returned to that most familiar nomenclature of the

Roman pontiff by which the *vicarius* CHRISTI desires commonly to be called. In these words, when instead of the second expression [*Christi*, of Christ] I had applied that one which Peter in his confession (Matt. 16, v. 16) by way of apposition combines with it, there presented itself immediately that mystical number with which seemed to correspond all the principles and conditions of that name of the Antichrist as follows: VICARIVS FILII DEI. And so I began to consider it, as offered by divine insight, as the true and proper name of the Roman antichrist and gave thanks to God for the good outcome of my study.”³⁶

In other words, Helwig first attempted to solve the riddle by looking at a variety of interpretations which others before him had suggested. The earliest of them would have been by Irenaeus, whom his book mentions, concerning a name as required by the Apocalypse.

Popular in the 1600s was the idea, inherited from Martin Luther and other Protestant reformers, that the number 666 referred not to a person but to a period of time, which we have already dealt with. Helwig no doubt knew about the interpretations of these men and others like them.

But despite their popularity, such attempts to interpret 666 as years or—for that matter—anything else did not satisfy him. He prayed and with great determination kept on searching for an appropriate name or title. So he eventually juxtaposed *vicarius Christi* with the contents of Matt. 16:16, where he came upon *Filii Dei*. What followed was not, as Froom and Samuele Bacchiocchi (1938-2008)³⁷ suggested, an act of expansion but of a partial merging together. Also present would have been a subconscious awareness of somewhere having heard or read *vicarius Filii Dei*. Helwig may have searched for it, or it suddenly struck him: Of course, the title boldly appears in the fraudulent Donation of Constantine!

Whoever even lightly skims through the text of *Antichristus Romanus* is greatly impressed by its author’s knowledge of church history, theology, and prophetic interpretation. Chronologically Helwig’s field of reference was vast. Amongst others, he mentioned second-century personalities like Polycarp, Tertullian (c. 155-after 220), and Irenaeus (c. 120-c. 200). He also knew of the latter’s *Lateinos* = 666 identification.³⁸ Further, he touched on the ideas of well-known Church Fathers like Jerome (c. 347-419/420) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430).

Helwig was not concerned with only the title *vicarius Filii Dei* but with papal pride and Vatican pretensions to power as a whole. He referred to more than twenty popes by name, from Pope Victor (d. 199, reigned from 189), who tried to anathematize Eastern Orthodox Christians for observing Easter at a time which Rome did not approve of,³⁹ to the contemporary Pope Clement VIII (1536-1605, reigned from 1592).

As explained above, the 1630 *Antichristus Romanus* begins with a Dedication to Gustavus Adolphus. In it, we read how the pontiffs’ ancient enemies, the Waldenses, whose home base was among the Alps of Northern Italy, repeatedly portrayed the papacy as Babylon. On the previous page,

Master Helwig—himself a very skilled versifier—admirably told how the great Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374) had likewise called the papal Curia both Apocalyptic Babylon and the Babylonian Harlot sitting upon many waters.⁴⁰

As Helwig also noted, in 1240—earlier than Petrarch but later than the Waldenses—Eberhardt II, Archbishop of Salzburg, had supported his emperor, Frederick II.⁴¹ He, too, cited Bible prophecy against the papacy. This we will have further occasion to discuss.

V

It is instructive to note the ever-increasing attention that Helwig paid to the Donation of Constantine in the three editions of his book.

In 1600, it is not cited. The 1612 text relates what had by that time become a familiar tale: how Pope Sylvester as a gift from Constantine the Great allegedly acquired Rome, the entire Italy, and all the western provinces of the empire. What particularly interested Helwig about this claim is that the so-called Petrine seat became firmly established in that city.⁴² The 1630 edition of *Antichristus Romanus* mentions the Donation thrice, and each time with considerable skepticism. The above-mentioned story is repeated and interpolates the parenthetical statement: “*Modo vera ea est donatio, de quo multi dubitant*” (in a way that donation, about which many have their doubts, is true).⁴³ The second reference to the Donation has added to it, again in parentheses: “*ut aiunt*” (as they say).⁴⁴ He also went into details about subsequent Donations by Pepin, Charlemagne, and his son, the emperor Louis.⁴⁵ The last mentioned, as Helwig pointed out, did not refer to the Donation of Constantine, because it was a forgery (*quae donatio plane conficta est*, “which donation has plainly been fabricated”).⁴⁶

In the Donation itself, *vicarius Filii Dei* occurs only once. Predominating in it are three other titles: *episcopus civitatis Romae* (bishop of the city of Rome), *pontifex* (pontiff), and *papa* (pope), with their variations: supreme pontiff, chief pontiff, universal pontiff; universal pope, blessed pope, the most holy pope. Absent, certainly in Zeumer’s 1888 edition, is *vicarius Christi* (vicar of Christ) or even *Vicarius Iesu Christi* (vicar of Jesus Christ).⁴⁷ But due to its context and special significance, *vicarius Filii Dei* has pride of place.

A multiplicity of titles has always characterized the papacy, of which many others often predominated. This fact would at first have impeded Helwig in his quest. Our further chapters will, however, show how correct his selection of *vicarius Filii Dei* turned out to be.

Throughout his book, Helwig was hard at work refuting the Futurism and other ideas of his formidable Jesuit contemporary, Bellarmine, who had in Latin written a series entitled *Lectures About the Controversies of the Christian Faith Against the Heretics of This Time*, 1586-1593.⁴⁸ In Volume III of his book, as well as in *Concerning the Power of the Supreme Pontiff in Temporal Matters* (1610), that eminent apologist for the pope “gave definite form to the theory of papal supremacy.”⁴⁹

If, as Bacchiocchi suggested, Helwig had stooped to the silliness of inventing a non-existent *vicarius Filii Dei* or otherwise erred with his many details (such as dated references to pontiffs, bishops, emperors, and writers over many centuries), either Bellarmine or other Catholic opponents would at once have pounced on him and gleefully made intellectual mincemeat of him. But nothing like that happened, in either his time or afterwards. Helwig was just too accurate a scholar and church historian for that kind of mistake.

The supposition that he simply, as an Afrikaner would put it, sucked the title out of his thumb overtaxes the reader's credulity. It suggests that Helwig, an erudite German professor, was an ignoramus though extraordinarily lucky. His guess just happened to be correct through a coincidence, because *vicarius Filii Dei* actually did exist, even though he had not known it! This is the position adopted by Bacchiocchi. In a DVD lecture distributed worldwide, he did, however, admit it was, historically speaking, a papal title, yet also said that Helwig "fabricated" it.⁵⁰ How very strange.

Within as well as outside papal circles, it was common knowledge that the pontiffs regarded themselves as the vicars of the Son of God, as they had done for many centuries. The popes or those who served them also kept on reissuing material containing that title. Considering the weighty implications of this topic, it is significant that not a single Catholic voice was ever directly raised against Helwig. From Rome, he was greeted with thunderous theological silence.

This was a successful stratagem, which helped to prevent its amalgamation with subsequent Protestant thinking. More than a century was to elapse before, in the annals of research, that silence was broken during 1735 by Wolfius, to whom we have already referred. Amongst other writers on prophecy, he mentioned Helwig,⁵¹ whose ideas were probably in this way brought to the attention of other scholars.

VI

Helwig had an excellent command of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, apart from his native German. Nor need we suppose that these were the only languages he knew. A cultivated Renaissance man, he would have been acquainted with more.

Also published in those years were books in Italian, French, and English containing the title *vicar of the Son of God*, some of which he could have read. In the following examples, as elsewhere throughout this book, we have translated the texts into English but retained the original title. This we have also highlighted with italics, though the authors cited as a rule did not do so.

Twelve years before Helwig brought out the first edition of his *Antichristus Romanus*, during 1588—when the Spanish Armada sailed to conquer England—the title appeared in *Historia delle stationi di Roma* (History of the Stations of Rome) by the Italian Pompeo Ugonio (d. 1614). Teaching rhetoric at La Sapienza, a prestigious gymnasium, this author was also Cardinal Ascanio Colonna's librarian. Ugonio was much interested in the churches and other holy

places of his city, saintly relics, general hagiography, etc., with special reference to Lent. He dedicated his work to the Lady Camilla Peretti, sister of Pope Sixtus V (1520–1590, reigned from 1585). Before his elevation to the pontifical throne, Felice Peretti twice served as Inquisitor General at Venice, from which he had to be recalled because of his severity. Ugonio, however, lauded him to high heaven. Calling Rome the new Jerusalem on earth, he said: “Although in this place there is no Solomon, son of David, there is the High Priest *vicario del figliuol di Dio*, who is more than Solomon”⁵² (an obvious and, we think, blasphemous reference to Christ’s statement about himself: “a greater than Solomon is here,” Matt. 12:42).

Another of Helwig’s contemporaries was Henry IV (1553–1610), the Bourbon king of neighboring France, who as Henry of Navarre had first been a Huguenot Protestant but converted to the Roman Church because, as he cynically and basely put it, “Paris is well worth a mass!”⁵³

Our Second Volume will in some detail disclose that the Catholic hierarchy of France (apart from its Jesuits) had by that time already for centuries acknowledged the pontiff only as their spiritual head, though not as a temporal overlord. Regarding the throne, the French clergy—together with their monarchs—believed in the divine right of kings. Henry had councilors to encourage him in this belief. One of them was Louis Servin (1556–1626), a celebrated lawyer and author, whose *Plaidoyez* (Addresses) was published in 1605. He called Henry the David and Solomon whom God had appointed over France. But the pope he described as a Saint Peter, following in the footsteps of Abel, Abraham, and Samuel the prophet. In that sense, the pontiff was the *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu*. He should not, however, encroach on the rights of the temporal ruler or of the Catholic-Gallican church in France.⁵⁴ The king was no doubt well pleased with this explanation.

Just a year earlier, across the English Channel, Thomas Bell (c. 1551–1610) in *The Downefall of Poperie* (1604), which he dedicated to King James I, had attacked the pontiffs, amongst other things for enabling Catholics to sunder holy matrimonial bonds between men and women. “The Pope hath often by his wicked and execrable dispensations taken vpon him to dissolue that matrimonie which is firme and stable by Christs owne institution.”⁵⁵ This practice Bell—a former Catholic priest and anti-Jesuit scholar—declared was supported by papist writers, of whom he cited two in Latin, together with translations in quaint Elizabethan prose. The first was Antoninus (1389–1459), archbishop of Florence, who called the pope “Christs vicar vpon earth, and hath equall power with God almightie.” The other was Augustinus of Ancona (1243–1328), more than a century earlier. Bell quoted that prelate’s words as follows: “(*Papa*) *tanquam* vicarius Dei filij *caelestis imperatoris, iurisdictionem habet universalem super omnia regna & imperia*. The Pope, as he that is the vicar of the sonne of God the heauenly emperour, hath vniuersall iurisdiction ouer all kingdoms & empires.” (Underlining added.)⁵⁶

Helwig was also acquainted with King James’s prophetic writings, to which he referred in 1630, saying that the British King had concluded the pope

was the Antichrist.⁵⁷

In the Protestant circles of Helwig's time, this 1604 reference by Bell to that title would also not have been unknown. Nor, perhaps, would have been another in the same year by Cesare Speciano (1539–1607), the Catholic bishop of Cremona.

On Tuesday, 22 April 1604, this prelate visited—for the second time—the S. Chiara di Casalmaggiore nunnery, with decrees for reforming it. He wrote that this had been authorized by Pope Clement VIII (1536–1605, reigned from 1592), a pontiff of the Counter-Reformation. Speciano called him the *vicario del figliuol di Dio* on earth. One of the problems at the convent was that nuns were doting on books with amorous pictures and verses emanating from a nearby monastery. These writings had to be rooted out. As a substitute, the abbess was to ensure that every nun possessed a copy of the Milan Constitutions appropriate to her order and only material approved by her confessor.⁵⁸

VII

A formidable opponent of King James I was Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), a Spanish Jesuit highly prized by his own sovereign, Philip II. Suárez had entered the Society of Jesus in 1564 and was now a theology professor at Coimbra, Portugal.⁵⁹ Its prestigious university is one of the oldest in Europe, having been founded in 1290.⁶⁰ And Suárez is “often considered the most prominent Scholastic philosopher after St. Thomas Aquinas, and the major theologian of the Roman Catholic order, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).”⁶¹

Pope Paul V (1552–1621, reigned from 1605) had asked him to write on the nature of the Christian state. Suárez's twenty-eight volumes include his *Defensio Fidei Catholicae et Apostolicae adversus Anglicanae sectae errores* (A Defense of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith Against the Errors of the Anglican Sect). He addressed it to all the Catholic rulers in Europe and also most specifically to the Protestant James VI (1566–1625), king of Scotland, who in 1603 had inherited the English throne, ascending it as James I.

In 1588, the year when the Spanish Armada sailed to its destruction, there had appeared from this monarch's pen *A Paraphrase Upon the Revelation of the Apostle S. Iohn*. It was republished in 1603, the year of his accession to the English throne.⁶² The royal theologian not only considered himself to be the head of the Anglican Church but also dared to call the pope the Antichrist. “Revelation 13 King James explained pointedly as ‘the Popes arising: His description: His rising caused by the ruine of the fourth Monarchie the Romane Empire: The rising of the false and Papistical Church; her description; her conformitie with her Monarch the Pope.’”⁶³

Not unexpectedly, as Froom explained, this work was promptly entered into the Roman Index of Forbidden Books. The Jesuits also inspired the

Gunpowder Plot to blow up that hated king and his parliament on 5 November 1605. After Guy Fawkes (1570-1606) had bungled its execution, more drastic measures were introduced against Catholics in Britain, including a new oath of allegiance. "Cardinal Bellarmine injected himself into the controversy, but James sent forth an appeal (*Premonition*), in 1609, to all the rulers of Christendom, in which he identified the Papacy as the 'mysterie of iniquitie,' urging them to action concerning the encroachments of the Papacy upon church and state, as well as to the defense of the authority and privileges of kings." Catholicism abroad reacted fiercely: the king's book "was burned in Florence, forbidden to be translated or printed in France, and refused in Spain."⁶⁴

That was the background of Pope Paul V's request for a new work on the Christian state. It had to meet a different challenge, not by discontented medieval Catholic rulers, who could be cowed through personal excommunication or an interdict on their kingdoms and people, but by Protestants, whom such measures were powerless to terrify.

Suárez's Latin *Defensio* first appeared at Coimbra in 1613. A photographic reproduction was published at Madrid in 1970. The original text is accompanied throughout by a lucid, pleasantly readable Spanish translation, entitled *Defensa de la Fe Católica y Apostólica contra los errores del Anglicanismo* (A Defense of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith Against the Errors of Anglicanism).

Amongst other things, it deals with two crucial problems: the old and inconvenient doctrine that insisted on the divine right of kings, which in the past had brought much trouble to the papacy and was now also fervently espoused by King James, as well as his finger-pointing at the pontiff with the accusation that he was the Antichrist.

To meet the first challenge, Suárez used a novel argument: he denied that kingship was derived from God. Instead, it was a natural thing, rulers being appointed by the ruled through a kind of social contract. Nevertheless, kings were in a double capacity subject to the pontiff, both as individual Christians and as rulers.

But a pope, according to Suárez, was never a merely human appointee. As the successor of the apostle Peter, he always derived his office from the Lord himself. No king or emperor has ever bestowed that position on him, not even Constantine the Great. On considering this ruler, Suárez quoted from the Donation, where it called the pope the *vicarius Filii Dei*. Constantine, said Suárez, had just consented to and recognized the pontiff's elevated station; he was not its originator. He did, of course, give Sylvester temporal possessions, whereby the pope acquired greater honor and prestige.⁶⁵

It is noteworthy that Suárez did not question the authenticity of the Donation but quoted from it. Furthermore, included in the *Defensio*, is *El Anticristo* (Book 5 of Volume IV). This fills up 134 double-column 8.5" x 11" pages in 10-point type—reformatted it is the equivalent of at least 200

pages. Its twenty-two chapters may well be the most comprehensive and ablest surviving apology for the Catholic view on this subject.

Since the *Defensio* appeared in 1613, it would not, of course, have had any bearing on Helwig's 1612 edition—though by 1630 when the *Antichristus Romanus* was published for the last time, its author could certainly have read it. Both works await additional, scholarly scrutiny.

VIII

In the period between the second and third editions of his book, Helwig could also have noticed that *vicarius Filii Dei* was applied to Gregory XV (1554-1623, reigned from 1621), a pupil of the Jesuits, who briefly headed the Roman Church. This pontiff began his reign in Bellarmine's death year. According to a much republished *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Historical and Critical Dictionary) of the French Huguenot rationalist philosopher Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), the famous old Jesuit in 1621 saluted Gregory as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*. A footnote states that the pope came to visit him as he lay dying, and Bellarmine greeted him with the words that the Roman centurion had addressed to Jesus: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof" (Matt. 8:8).⁶⁶

It was, of course, impossible for Helwig to consult this work, which was written beyond his time. Nevertheless, Bayle's dictionary is a further indication of how the title was being used in those days.

Chapter Six
THE HELWIG GAP
AND LATER PROTESTANTISM

I

Helwig's discovery about *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 in 1600 was of cardinal importance. Nevertheless, at least according to Froom, "this computation lay largely dormant until the time of the French Revolution,"¹ when Napoleon's General Berthier in 1798 for a little while all but eliminated the papacy.

The Helwig Gap, as we call it, was actually shorter. According to our research, a little more than a century elapsed; for, as mentioned above, the silence was broken in 1735 by Johann Christopher Wolf. Writing about the epistles of Peter, Jude, and John as well as the Apocalypse, he referred amongst others to Helwig.²

From that time onward, every few years and for the rest of the eighteenth century—even before the French Revolution—one non-Catholic writer after the other explicitly mentioned this identification, in 1751, 1753, 1759, 1765, 1768, 1778, 1780, 1782, 1790, and 1791. After that, from 1793 onwards, there is a veritable avalanche of Protestant publications that deal with *vicarius Filii Dei*, mostly equating it with 666. In toto, from the time of Wolfius in 1735, there were about eighty such prophetic expositors, who scrutinized this topic before Uriah Smith's *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* appeared in 1865. (See Appendix III.) They were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which then did not yet exist.

Here are just three of the eighteenth-century examples that we have found. Interestingly, the first and third of them are from non-Christian sources.

In 1753, a Deist publication referred to various religious leaders and said this about the pope: "The Bishop of *Rome* stiles himself *vicarius Filii Dei, the Vicar of the Son of God.*" It also hinted at, though it did not discuss, "the number of the Beast, *Apoc. xiii.18.*"³

Six years later, in 1759, James Ferguson (1710-1776), a famous Scottish astronomer, portraitist, and polymath, who delighted in figures while also studying prophecy, clearly mentioned the name-number equivalence. He worked out three tables establishing the numerical value of *Romiith, Lateinos, and Vicarius Filii Dei*. He pointed out that in his time the last mentioned was a title recognized by Catholics: "The Papists call the Pope VICARIUS FILII DEI (*The Vicar of the Son of God*). And, if we take the sum of all the numeral letters in these three words, we shall find it also to be 666."⁴

Of the Protestants, Ferguson was apparently the first in Britain to enunciate this equation. After reading Wolfius, he could have looked for and found a copy of Helwig's book. In his time, both the 1600 and 1612

editions of *Antichristus Romanus* were probably already available in his own country. Today they are still to be found in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh. A copy of the 1630 edition is also in that country, at the Glasgow University Library.⁵ From 1734 onward, Ferguson lived and worked in Edinburgh.⁶ Being interested in prophecy, he therefore probably derived his basic idea from Helwig, although he does not seem to have said so.

During 1765, a Jew, derisively calling himself Rabby [*sic*] Shylock (undoubtedly a reference to Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*), versified this idea as one that was current in the England of his day:

The title, say they, assum'd by the pope,
Is th' undoubted proof of his being the beast.
Vicarius Dei Filii, forsooth, he is stil'd,
Which God's Son's vicar in *English* implies:
The *Roman* cyphers if we but pick out,
Six hundred they will make three-score and six.

Skeptically this ironic Israelite, intent on countering anti-Semitism, thought he could also—if he manipulated it a little—find the fatal number in a title of the king. This is, for us, beside the point; but he did witness to the Protestant thinking of his day.⁷

To many Seventh-day Adventists, these findings will be news. Nowadays sermons and publications referring to *vicarius Filii Dei* and its numerical value seem to be largely the preserve of their denomination. For further, copious examples, please refer to Appendix III.

All the same, a gap of about a century and a half separated Helwig's discovery that numerically *vicarius Filii Dei* equals 666 from the later expositors who also said so. This brings us face to face with a mystery. Why would Protestant expositors, ever keen on finding ammunition for salvos against the pope and generally knowledgeable about what others have written about him, have kept so quiet about this equivalence for so many years? The Helwig Gap is puzzling and needs to be accounted for.

At least three hypotheses suggest themselves.

First, only few copies of Helwig's book would have survived the Thirty Years' War, at least in Germany. This conflict was already raging when he was putting the finishing touches to his 1630 edition, and wherever the armies fighting for Catholicism penetrated, his book fell prey to its ancient practice of destroying publications—even official records—that impacted negatively on or irritated the Roman Church. Second, the Protestant expositors of those years did not consider *vicarius Filii Dei* an important title because they knew it had first appeared in a forged document. Third, the topic was obscured by rival explanations and the multiplicity of names already dealt with.

Let us briefly consider these possibilities.

Shortly after the first two editions of Helwig's book were published, the destructive Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) repeatedly swept through his country and wrecked it. Could it largely have eliminated *Antichristus Romanus*, making it all but inaccessible to other writers on prophecy?

From the Vatican's point of view, that conflict climaxed Catholic attempts to eradicate Protestantism—although, as explained in the ever-popular *History of the Modern World* (1950) by J. J. Palmer and Joel Colton, “it was also an international war, between France and the Habsburgs, between Spain and the Dutch, with the kings of Denmark and Sweden and the prince of Transylvania becoming involved, and with all these outsiders finding allies within Germany, on whose soil most of the battles were fought. . . . it was the greatest of all European wars before the time of the French Revolution.”⁸

Because “in many extensive parts of Germany as much as a third of the population may have perished,” the sheer depopulation it wrought was worse than that of the Second World War.⁹ That number is a conservative modern estimate. The popular historian Hendrik van Loon maintained that “in less than a generation it turned many parts of central Europe into a wilderness, where the hungry peasants fought for the carcass of a dead horse with the even hungrier wolf. Five-sixths of all the German towns and villages were destroyed. The Palatinate, in western Germany, was plundered twenty-eight times.”¹⁰

This area on the Middle Rhine extended between the Main and Neckar tributaries and had its capital in Heidelberg. Having remained Catholic during the early Reformation, it “adopted Calvinism in the 1560s under Elector Frederick III” and “became the bulwark of the Protestant cause in Germany.”¹¹

According to Robert R. Palmer and Joel Colton, agriculture was ruined, with starvation as a consequence: “People lived in piles of debris and ransacked dumps to find food, as they did after the Second World War.”¹² Various writers have shown that during the Thirty Years' War even cannibalism occurred.

But most significant for what we are saying is the following detail, mentioned by Palmer and Colton: “The full tide of the Counter-Reformation now flowed over Germany. Not only was Catholicism again seeping into the Palatine, and again flooding Bohemia, but it rolled northward into the inner recesses of the Lutheran states. . . . Terror swept over Protestant Germany. It seemed that the whole Protestant Reformation, now a century old, might be undone.”¹³

Accompanying the Catholic armies, were those who practiced the burning of books and other documents by writers opposed to their ecclesiastical system. Ellen G. White wrote about this in the nineteenth century,¹⁴ and so did research professor Ramsay MacMullen a hundred years later.¹⁵ He pointed out how brutally the Byzantine emperor, Justinian I, in the sixth century dealt with

dissidents, pagan as well as Christian. His emissaries stamped out dissent by blending the power of “his armies and his treasury, his power to mutilate or crucify, exile or bankrupt, build and bribe.”¹⁶ This is why we know so little about the beliefs of the Germanic Church that once was prevalent in Italy or the paganism that the tolerant Ostrogoths allowed to coexist with their Christianity. MacMullen also pointed out that such editing of the past began early, with the earliest church historian, Eusebius.¹⁷

This policy of seeking to obliterate religious truth and other inconvenient facts continued into, throughout, and beyond the Reformation period.

For promoting ideas put forward by John Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384), the “English theologian, philosopher, church reformer, and promoter of the first complete translation of the Bible into English,”¹⁸ Jan Hus (c. 1370-1415), the great Czech theologian, was burned at Konstanz, Germany, on 6 July 1415.¹⁹ Amongst other things, he had actively promoted Wycliffe’s contention “that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the Roman church that threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution.” For this and other transgressions, “Hus was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe’s manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.”²⁰

A hundred years later, a much bolder Martin Luther (1483-1546) from 1517 onwards became “the catalyst of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation,”²¹ standing up against the pope himself. The papalists burned his writings and greatly desired to do the same with him, though this wish was frustrated.

In his widely read and much reprinted *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (1950), Roland H. Bainton (1894-1984), professor of ecclesiastical history at Yale, gave several examples of the fires kindled for that purpose. When at Rome the pope’s functionaries executed his bull *Exurge Domine* [Arise, Lord!] (1520), “Luther’s books were burned in the Piazza Navona.”²² When this document was making its way into Germany, further bonfires followed, like the one at Cologne. It is true that at Wittenberg University, the reformer and his friends lit one of their own. Melancthon on 10 December 1521 invited the faculty and students “to assemble at ten o’clock at the Elster gate, where, in reprisal for the burning of Luther’s pious and evangelical books, the impious papal constitutions, the canon law, and works of scholastic theology would be given to the flames. Luther himself threw in the papal bull for good measure.”²³ That, however, was not the end of it. After the Diet of Worms, where Luther had taken his famous stand, the papalists pounced again. Waiting until the delegates sympathetic to his cause had departed, the pontifical legate Aleander drafted and a smiling emperor Charles V signed the Edict of Worms. Amongst other things, it reproached the reformer for burning “the decretals,” pronounced him “a convicted heretic” whom none was to harbor, and concluded: “His books are to be eradicated from the memory of man.”²⁴

But one thing effectively thwarted the Romanists: the technology of printing from movable type. It had been perfected at Mainz on the Rhine by another German, Johann Gutenberg (d. c. 1468), about seventy years before these

events. Burning printed books cannot destroy them; they can be reprinted, if need be in an improved edition. Of this, the following is a good instance. In 1526, a follower of Luther, William Tyndale (d. 1536), needed money to reprint his English New Testament, translated from the original Greek text prepared by Erasmus. Just then “In October, the Bishop of London collected as many copies as he could and publicly burned them. He even arranged to buy copies abroad, which he also burned, but the money went to Tyndale, who used it for the production of more copies.”²⁵

Nevertheless, the Roman Church continued its policy of destroying books and other writings that it loathed, including official records. Of this, Bishop Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), more than a century after Luther and Tyndale, mentioned an example in the Preface to his *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, Vol. I. He was puzzled while laying the groundwork for his book. “In the search I made of the Rolls and other offices, I wondered much to miss several commissions, patents, and other writings, which by clear evidence I knew were granted, and yet none of them appeared on record. This I could not impute to any thing but the omission of the clerks, who failed in the enrolling those commissions, though it was not likely that matters of so high concernment should have been neglected, especially in such a critical time, and under so severe a king.”

And then he found the reason. Following the death of the Tudor boy king Edward VI (1537-1553), a Protestant, his Catholic sister Mary (1516-1558) ruled over England for five years (1553-1558). That was sufficient time to work the will of the Romanists for eliminating documents that they hated. This is what Dr. Burnet discovered:

But as I continued down my search to the fourth year of queen Mary, I found, in the twelfth roll of that year, a commission, which cleared all my former doubts, and by which I saw what was become of the things I had so anxiously searched after. We have heard of the expurgation of books practiced in the church of Rome; but it might have been imagined, that public registers and records would have been safe; yet, lest these should have been afterwards confessions, it was resolved they should then be martyrs; for on the 29th of December, in the 4th year of her reign, a commission was issued out under the great seal to Bonner bishop of London, Cole dean of St. Paul’s, and Martine a doctor of the civil law, which is of that importance, that I shall here insert the material words of it: *Whereas it is come to our knowledge, that in the time of the late schism divers compts, books, scrolls, instruments, and other writings, were practiced, devised, and made, concerning professions against the pope’s holiness, and the see apostolic, and also sundry infamous scrutinies taken in abbeyes and other religious houses, tending rather to subvert and overthrow all good religion and religious houses, than for any truth contained therein: which being in the custody of divers registers, and we intending to have those writings brought to knowledge, whereby they may be considered, and*

ordered according to our will and pleasure; thereupon, those three or any two of them, are empowered to cite any persons before them, and examine them upon the premises upon oath, and to bring all such writings before them, and certify their diligence about it to cardinal Pool, that further order might be given about them.

When I saw this, I soon knew which way so many writings had gone: and as I could not but wonder at their boldness, who thus presumed to raze so many records; so their ingenuity in leaving this commission in the rolls, by which any who had the curiosity to search for it, might be satisfied how the other commissions were destroyed, was much to be commended. Yet in the following work it will appear that some few papers escaped their hands.²⁶

Mary Tudor was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth I (1533–1603), a Protestant. While the latter was still on the English throne, a similar instruction was issued in India by Aleixis de Menezes, Catholic Archbishop of Goa.

After the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama (c. 1460-1524) had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and reached India, he with his companions were amazed on his second voyage to see in 1503 along its southwestern Malabar coast Christian churches and to find a Christian kingdom there. At first the Portuguese were pleasantly surprised but were soon offended by the clergy and their theology, discovering “that they had married wives; that they owned but two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; that they neither invoked Saints, nor worshiped Images, nor believed in Purgatory: and that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the Church, than Bishop, Priest, and Deacon.” Furthermore, they had never heard of the pope, their religious language was not Latin but Syriac, related to the Aramaic which Jesus spoke, and they had for thirteen hundred years enjoyed a succession of bishops appointed by the Patriarch in Antioch. Indeed, as their founder they claimed the Apostle Thomas, who arrived from Aden in Arabia. When their numbers increased and their power grew, the Portuguese forced all the Malabar Christians whom they could reach to become Catholics by turning the Inquisition loose on them. At the Synod of Diamper in 1599, where Alexis de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, presided, “it was also decreed that all the Syrian books on Ecclesiastical subjects that could be found, should be burned; ‘in order,’ said the Inquisitors, ‘that no pretended apostolical monuments may remain.’”²⁷

A startling example of probable book destruction surfaced even in the twentieth century. It concerns *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine: Text and Translation into English* (1922), by Christopher B. Coleman. In his Introduction, he first remarked: “A short time ago diligent search revealed no copy of Valla’s works in the United States”²⁸ and then went on to say: “My text is based on the manuscript Codex Vaticanus 5314, dated December 7, 1451, the only complete manuscript of the treatise I have been able to find,” collated with other material.²⁹

Was some agency or other at work to eliminate such material from libraries, even in Protestant countries? Christian Edwardson (1873–1944) asserted that there was and identified the culprit as the Society of Jesus. For his time, this Scandinavian Seventh-day Adventist pastor and author was very knowledgeable. Having arrived in the United States with his parents as a ten-year-old immigrant from Norway, he developed an internationalist mindset. At his death, his personal library contained about 3,000 books, of which many are to be found in the Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. There they were not, however, at this time of our writing “specifically identified except by the presence of Edwardson’s bookplate.”³⁰

Edwardson recorded how this practice was still in evidence during the 1940s. Apart from other methods, “the Jesuits always have a man, either a priest or a layman, on the committee of almost every public library in Great Britain.” Provided with two lists, he had the task of promoting the purchase of publications favorable to his church, while working to eliminate “every well-known book, ancient and modern, adverse to Romanism.” And “it is quite evident from our investigation of the facts that the Jesuits are the same in America as in England. Besides this, the few remaining books from the days when it was not so unpopular to state the unvarnished facts about medieval history have been diminishing in number by being worn out or purposely destroyed.”³¹

There need be little doubt that during the Thirty Years’ War the Jesuits and other papalists vigorously exploited their opportunities to burn as many copies of Helwig’s book as they could. Nevertheless, despite such mischance and the attrition wrought by four hundred years, a few copies of *Antichristus Romanus* still exist. All three of its editions can be found in scholarly German and British libraries. We have also discovered a copy of the 1630 edition in Sweden.

What is very strange is that, despite this fact, for a century—until the Wolfius reference of 1735—no other writer seems to have referred to Helwig’s book. Even more peculiar is that nobody at any time mentioned the third, 1630 edition, except Zober in his 1839–1859 history of Stralsund Gymnasium, described on a previous page. Of this last one, at least three printed copies have survived—and now, like the other editions, it has also had digital immortality bestowed on it.

Catholic destructiveness must have played its part, yet cannot fully account for the Helwig gap.

III

We now proceed to the second hypothesis: not taking *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 seriously because the document in which this title occurs is a forgery. Among Protestants, this was a well-known fact, established even before the Reformation—especially through Lorenzo Valla’s 1440 treatise on the Donation of Constantine. When it came to his attention, Luther in particular was most indignant. Helwig also knew and said it was a forgery.

This line of thinking was reinforced by David Blondel (1591-1655), a French Protestant clergyman, historian, and classical scholar, who in “his 1628 book against Francisco Torres conclusively demonstrated that the *Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* were a very learned forgery.” One of the documents transmitted in them was the Donation. Blondel was a very sharp-witted man of great integrity; he also angered anti-Catholics who had been spreading a scurrilous tale about Pope Joan. In 1647, he proved that this, too, was fraudulent.³²

During the century after Helwig’s *Antichristus Romanus* was published, Protestants continued dwelling on the falsity of the Donation. Examples are to be found in the works of Jean le Sueur, a Francophone Calvinist, as well as two British scholars.

Le Sueur’s *Histoire de l’Église et de l’Empire* (History of the Church and the Empire) was a respectable and popular work in eight volumes. Of these the first two, called “parts” and bound together, appeared at Geneva in 1674.³³ The complete set was also published there during 1686.³⁴ In that first edition, more than five pages on Constantine’s so-called leprosy and alleged baptism by Pope Sylvester, with telling details, debunk the Donation as well as the story about Roman primacy in which the forger wrapped it up.³⁵ Also quoted are the crucial words: “as Saint Peter has been constituted *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu* on earth, the Pontiffs who will be the successors of the Prince of the Apostles must obtain the principality on earth.”³⁶ However, le Sueur showed no awareness of the numerical value which the title has in Latin, which suggests that he knew nothing about or disregarded Helwig’s identification.

During 1715, Michael Geddes, Chancellor of the Church of *Sarum*, considered the artful ways in which the Catholic hierarchy had elevated and advanced itself at the expense of those who truly sought to serve the Lord. Among the pieces he looked at was “Constantine’s *Donation* as it lies in a Letter of Pope Leo IX’s writ about the Year 1050.” He quoted from it in Latin. In its first two lines are the words: “*Ut sicut B. Petrus in terris vicarius Filii Dei videtur esse constitutus*” [As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted *vicar of the Son of God* on earth] (emphasis added).³⁷ Geddes’s burden was not, however, their numerical value of 666. For him, after all, the Donation was a mere forgery.

Eleven years later, in 1726, John Richardson (1647-1725?) of Cambridge University delivered his *Praelectiones Ecclesiasticae Triginta Novem* (Thirty-Nine Ecclesiastical Lectures). Of these, the nineteenth one is entitled *The Edict of Constantine, by which Rome and the Western Provinces Are Said to Have Been Handed over to the Pontiff, Is Spurious and Fictitious*. Richardson’s quotation from that document includes the words *Sanctus Petrus vicarius Filii Dei* (Saint Peter the Vicar of the Son of God). But his burden was also not the numerical value of this title. He, too, was mostly indignant about papal pretensions to Petrine Primacy and the idea that the Roman pontiff supposedly had authority over “*omnes*

Regiones Occidentales” [all Western Regions] (his emphasis).³⁸

These learned men came very close to the truth, but in this they missed a further point of vital importance.

What they dimly did grasp was the fact that though the Donation was a forgery—a papal forgery—this did not diminish but rather increased the guilt of the popes who benefited from the fraud, maintained for so many centuries. That document was an instrument of grand larceny. Concocting it was a colossal felony as well as a great sin, in itself, in its nasty consequences, and in the blasphemy of claiming to be the Redeemer’s vicar or substitute.

Since Wycliffe, Protestants have had much to say about these themes and strongly emphasized that the Donation was a forgery, as did men like le Sueur, Geddes, and Richardson. Much of what they wrote was valuable. But the very falsity of the Donation also, for more than a century after Helwig, made it more difficult for prophetic expositors to take his equation *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 seriously.

IV

So we come to our third hypothesis: that the Helwig gap could have been caused by alternative Protestant explanations of Rev. 13:18. Of these, at least some could not have failed to be influential. As already mentioned, Martin Luther—a century before Helwig—had written that 666 referred to the number of years during which the papacy would remain; and various Calvinists also believed the same.

Another high-profile Protestant in Helwig’s day was King James VI of Scotland, the later James I of England. We have already noted a prophetic book from his pen, *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle S. John*, which first appeared in 1588 and was republished in 1603. This aroused the ire and anxiety of Pope Paul V. Desiring a new work on the Christian state, that pontiff inspired the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez, who in 1613 brought out his massive four-volume *Defensio*, to oppose the royal Scot’s opinions. To this, we, too, have already referred but here add a highly significant detail.

Without difficulty, Suárez demolished two views that James had put forth for 666: the *Lateinos* explanation—with which we do not here have to concern ourselves—and the idea that it could refer to a period of time.

No, said Suárez, this was not possible. According to the Scripture, it must be the number of the name of the Beast. It needs to be calculated. For it is “contained in the letters of his name, which is how all the expositors have understood it.”³⁹ By these writers, he meant Catholics. After all, very ancient ones among them—Victorinus in the third and Beatus of Liébana in the eighth century—had suggested the word DICLUX, of which the numerical value is 666.

Although those men did not discover the right name, prophetic expositors of the Roman Church had for centuries recognized the letter-number

equivalence involved. This is also found in its most famous English Bible translation, sometimes referred to as the Douay Version, because its Old Testament was first published at Douai (modern spelling), northern France, in 1609—two years before the King James. Its New Testament had already appeared at Rheims in 1582.

In passing, let us note its primary purpose, as expressed by its 1582 Preface to the New Testament. It was “for the more speedy abolishing of a number of false and impious translations put forth by sundry sects, and for the better preservation or reclaime of many good soules endangered thereby . . . , no other bookes in the world being so pernicious as heretical translations of the Scriptures, poisoning the people under colour of divine authoritie.”⁴⁰

The main target in English was Tyndale’s 1525 New Testament. With revisions and improvements, this “version became the basis for most subsequent English translations, beginning with the King James Version of 1611.”⁴¹ Tyndale had Englished his New Testament from the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text), a Greek publication most carefully prepared by Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536), the great Dutch humanist of Rotterdam. Though he never joined the Reformation, he was an honest scholar of towering intellect. His text formed the basis for all translations of Protestant Reformers like Martin Luther. The Catholic establishment hated these Bibles, as well as Erasmus’s Greek original that underlay it. For his anti-papal stance and especially his English Bible translation, Tyndale (c. 1490-94–1536) was strangled and burned in 1536.

The Douay-Rheims Version was created in the Counter-Reformation to hit back at his heritage. It was translated from the Latin Vulgate, based on readings in Greek that had been known to Erasmus but which he ignored. The scholarly men who prepared the Authorized Version at the behest of King James I were well aware of the Douay-Rheims Bible. They carefully eliminated its errors in both Testaments. One of them was most peculiar: Habacuc 3:18: “But I will rejoice in the Lord: and I will joy in my God Jesus”⁴² (translated from the Vulgate: “ego autem in Domino gaudebo exultabo in Deo Iesu meo”⁴³). Putting that into the Old Testament was patently absurd.

Suárez, in the early seventeenth century, seems to have known English, in which King James I wrote *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle S. Iohn*. Evidently a very learned man, this Jesuit could also have had before him the original Douay-Rheims New Testament of 1582, with a Preface and footnote explanations that were compulsory for its Catholic readers. This is its comment on Rev. 13:18, referring to the Antichrist: “His name consisteth of so many, & such letters in Greek, as according to their maner of numbering by the Alphabete make 666.”⁴⁰

In this matter, the British king was wrong and Suárez the Jesuit was right.

V

We think each of the three hypotheses dealt with above provides us

with valid insights. During the Thirty Years' War, with armies thrusting one another back and forth all over Germany, the Catholic enemies of *Antichristus Romanus* destroyed it wherever they found it. At the same time, Protestants were not inclined to take the equation *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 seriously, because the title first came to light in the spurious Donation of Constantine. They despised that document but also knew it to be a forgery. Furthermore, they were afflicted with what N. P. van Wyk Louw, the greatest Afrikaans poet and a profound thinker, has called the insanity of fossilized thought. They thought that 666 referred to a time period of papal domination.

Whenever Protestants permit themselves to be distracted from concentrating on what Rev. 13:18 really demands—to identify the Beast—the consequences are harmful. Silly or beguiling alternatives to explaining the meaning of 666 can, in fact, be a most effective technique from the dark side. For more than a century, Helwig's great discovery was obscured if not eclipsed by such a distraction.

This should be an object lesson for the present time. Some latter-day prophetic interpreters who generally espouse Historicism are again being distracted, blindsided, and lured away from focusing on that text, to prevent the identification of Beast. This has the effect of undermining the three angels' messages described in Rev. 14:6-12, especially the last one. Under the symbol of a celestial messenger and the plain language about a Remnant Church that insists on keeping all Ten Commandments as well as justification by faith, these prophetic Scriptures define what constitutes the everlasting Gospel and rebuts the spurious system which has for too many centuries undermined it. Blurring the reader's vision on this topic is perilous; it risks incurring the terrible curse of the Apocalypse (Rev. 22:18-19), uttered by the Lord Jesus himself.

This topic is, however, also related to another question: Why in the seven hundred and fifty years from the middle of the eighth century to 1600 did no other person notice that *vicarius Filii Dei* is numerically equal to 666? The title was lying out there in the open. Theoretically it could have been discovered by Wycliffe, Hus, Valla, Luther, or others. But none of these men focused on that title. Luther knew Valla's work and indignantly reacted to the spurious Donation. He would even have read in it the words *vicarius Filii Dei*, but without noticing their numerical value.

It is possible that our sovereign Lord, the giver of prophecy and the master of history, did not want anybody to find out prematurely about *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666. The papacy was, so to speak, allowed a very long rope with which to hang itself. Therefore, after Helwig the world had to wait until about the middle of the eighteenth century for one voice after the other to be raised, reiterating the same identification. By 1798 they grew to a crescendo.

This date, according to Historicists, ends the 1260 prophetic year-days and begins what Dan. 12:4 calls the time of the end, when "knowledge

shall be increased.” This especially refers to an understanding of Bible prophecy, for a few verses later we read: “And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” (vv. 9-10)

Prophetic insight still continues to deepen, as we trust this work will also clearly demonstrate.

Chapter Seven
TOO MANY NAMES AND OTHER CONFUSIONS

I

Nevertheless, as is implied by even Helwig's analysis, there has been a special problem: too many names. He not only highlighted *vicarius Filii Dei*; he also, just by mentioning them, demonstrated that the number 666 could be applied to no fewer than fifteen titles. Eventually, as dealt with by later writers, these would proliferate to an amazing extent.

As far back as 1780, Thomas Bell, a Scottish writer, noticed the reason for this. With Roman numerals in mind, he pointed out: "If any man's name among us had the letters *J, V, XL, C, D*, they would amount precisely to 666," though he also added: "but what relation would this have to the subject? Surely, none at all. For we must argue, not from the name only, but from the name joined to other marks of the beast; which cannot be said of other names. For, in vain is any other name sought containing the number 666, unless it be also the name of the beast. A name of that nature, joined with other characters [*sic*] of the beast, must strike strong with conviction; but separated from them it amounts to nothing . . ." ¹

That is to say, the name which the numerical value refers to must necessarily be contextualized within the larger framework of Rev. 13 and related Scriptures.

Our planet now already has about seven billion inhabitants. Just due to probability statistics, quite a few people are bound to have—through sheer coincidence—names with a numerical value of 666; but they are ruled out by the fact that they fail to meet the other specifications set out in the prophecy. For instance, they cannot be said to have risen out of the sea or to have ten horns with crowns on them. Therefore, a minor politician of, say, the Central African Republic or the pediatrician who has his office down our street can sleep easily and daily go about his business, unburdened by any numerology inherent in his name.

II

Truth is usually simple or straightforward. Nonsense can be very complicated. Rev. 13:17-18 calls on those who have the wisdom that God approves to *calculate* the name of the Beast and also obviously take into consideration its other characteristics. But many would-be prophetic interpreters have preferred to be wise in other ways.

This issue has become entangled with a battle between the Historical School and Preterism, which has been raging for several centuries. Though flaring up strongly in the 1830s, it really began with *Vestigatio Arcani Sensus in Apocalypsi* (An Investigation into the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse), a 900-page book by Luis Alcazar/Alcasar (1554–1613), a Spanish Jesuit scholar during the Counter-Reformation.

The members of his Order, the Society of Jesus, founded in 1540, were particularly dedicated to defending the papacy. In writing his magnum opus, Alcazar's intention was to deflect the accusations of Historicism—favored almost unanimously by Protestant Reformers—that the pope is the Antichrist. An important element involved in his approach was Idealism, according to which the Bible should be understood not literally but in a spiritual or symbolic sense.

As his book title implies and he demonstrated, part of Alcazar's inspiration was the allegorical method used by Origen, partly under the influence of pagan Neoplatonism,² to whom prophetic Idealism is traceable.

Note how Alcazar commented on the words "Behold, he commeth with clouds" in Rev. 1:7:

"This signification of *clouds* has in it such force, that even if Christ should not come to Judgment in a *material cloud*, it might nevertheless be truly and beautifully said that He would come in *clouds*, according to the language of Sacred Scripture. . . . And this I wish to say rather that in the symbol of the *clouds* there is latent a much greater and more excellent mystery than any one might think, who considered only the grammatical sense of the Word—a sense to which I see that some persons are too much addicted.

"Behold the Apocalypse sets before us the Advent of Christ in the *clouds of the preaching of the Gospel*, by means of which God pours down his heavenly shower, that is, the spirit of peace and of prayer."³

That Alcazar's thinking was linked with Origen's allegorical ideas, is also proven by an explicit Preliminary Note:

I say a profound philosophy teaches, that in the Creation of things it was the intention of the Artificer and Builder, that in those objects of Creation which come within the reach of our vision, men might also be in possession of wonderful symbols and hieroglyphics, serving to point out to them mystically such lessons as would most highly concern them, viz., true instruction in faith and morals.

Origen, after pursuing the subject in a beautiful train of reasoning, concludes at last with the following words, "Therefore may all things be referred upward from the visible to the invisible, from the corporeal to the incorporeal, from the manifest to the hidden; so that the objects of the world may be understood to be created by divine Wisdom according to such a divine dispensation, as from visible things, by means of the things and exemplars themselves, teaches us the invisible, and transfers us from earthly things to those which are of heaven."⁴

What we have here is rather closely related to Platonism and Neoplatonic thinking, which no doubt fascinates a certain type of mind.

From such a platform, Origen leapt and sought to soar—but in our opinion only plunged—into a peculiar allegorization of the Scriptures. From gave an example of how this clever man interpreted Matthew 17, which tells how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey accompanied by its mother.

According to Origen, “the Ass and the Colt Are the Old and the New Testament,” while “‘Jesus is the word of God which goes into the soul that is called Jerusalem.’ He allegorizes at length on the ‘branches,’ the ‘multitudes,’ and other expressions, and repeats his fancy that ‘the ass and the foal are the old and the new Scriptures, on which the Word of God rides . . .’”⁵

This is arbitrary and cannot be proven from the Bible or be approved by common sense. It nevertheless underpinned a good deal of how medieval preachers explained the Scriptures. However learned a professor Origen was, it is nonsense.

And his approach to the Scriptures became the fountainhead of Idealism in prophetic interpretation. In *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, we show how Origen’s allegorizing method influenced Eusebius, the church historian, who in turn impacted on Augustine of Hippo, whose prophetic ideas predominated throughout the Middle Ages.⁶ Here, according to From, is what medieval Christians were required to believe: “The camp of the saints [in Rev. 20] is the church of Christ extending over the whole world. The 144,000 are the church of saints, of the city of God; and the Jews are to be converted. The imperial Catholic Church is the stone shattering all earthly kingdoms, until it fills the entire earth.”⁷

It is not surprising that Alcazar, a good member of his church, should lean on Origen’s ideas and bolster his Preterism with allegorical, Idealistic elements.

For a long time, most Protestants—who as Historicists strongly believed that the pope was the Antichrist—ignored Alcazar. But Idealism resurfaced during 1766 with the publication in Amsterdam of *Apocalypsis Revelata* (The Apocalypse revealed), which has been translated into various languages, including English.

Its author, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), was a “Swedish scientist, Christian mystic, philosopher, and theologian who wrote voluminously in interpreting the Scriptures.” Apart from the fact that his teaching led to the founding of the New Church, it has also had a widespread, remarkable influence on the mind and imagination of religious as well as other writers during the past two hundred years. Some of the most famous authors of the Western world were affected by his ideas, including Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Butler Yeats, and August Strindberg.⁸

Swedenborg told his friends in later years that on 7 April 1744 “he had his first vision of Christ,” who also allegedly appeared to him in April 1745 and told him “to abandon worldly learning.” Preoccupied with the

immortality of the soul, he gave up belief in the Trinity and sought “to interpret the Scriptures in the light of the ‘correspondence’ between the spiritual and the material planes. He viewed references in the Bible to mundane historical matters as symbolically communicated spiritual truths, the key to which he tried to find through detailed and voluminous commentaries and interpretations.”⁹

In America, Swedenborg’s teachings were taken up by Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888). Living in Concord, Massachusetts, from the 1840s to the 1880s, he profoundly touched the thinking of the New England Transcendentalists, including Emerson (1803–1882), Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862), and others.¹⁰

III

Here we have, allied to the fascination of philosophy, the enchantment of language: poetry, essays, orations, and beautiful prose. Art becomes blended with a more or less pantheistic cult of nature, evidenced in America by Thoreau, who is “renowned for having *lived* the doctrines of Transcendentalism as recorded in his masterwork, *Walden* (1854)” (emphasis added).¹¹

This bewitching power is also seen in a poem by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), who wrote *Les Fleurs du Mal* (The flowers of evil) and fathered modern poetry. Its very title is Swedenborgian:

Correspondances

La nature est un temple où de vivants piliers
Laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles
L’homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l’observent avec des regards familiers.

Correspondences

Nature is a temple where living pillars
Let escape sometimes confused words;
Man traverses it through forests of symbols
That observe him with familiar glances.

In the original, with its lovely cadences, rhymes, and sound patterns, this is seductively beautiful. According to Hugo Heyrman, the multifaceted Belgian artist who has studied the nature of synesthesia, it is arguably the best poem by Baudelaire, “inspired by the mystical theory of ‘Correspondences’, a Swedenborgian term referring to the idea that every form in Heaven ‘corresponds’ to a form on Earth.”¹²

In such a context, the word *form* does not have its ordinary meaning. Like *idea*, it is a philosophical concept, both Platonic and Neoplatonic: “a

transcendent entity that is a real pattern of which existing things are imperfect representations.”¹³ In other words, the things we see around us in the physical world are only truly meaningful to the extent that they reflect a higher, spiritual reality.

To some extent, William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), whom T. S. Eliot regarded as the greatest English poet of the twentieth century,¹⁴ likewise fell under Swedenborg’s influence. He also dabbled directly in theosophy, Platonic and Neoplatonist ideas, and the occult,¹⁵ together with spiritualism. His wife, George Hyde-Lees, was a medium, who in her sleep was prone to uttering phrases, “seemingly dictated by spirits from another world.” Yeats copied these babblings and incorporated them into his occult esthetic system.¹⁶ For such things, he was rewarded with a special name by some irreverent Dublin wits who called him “Willie the Spooks,” which—since he was devoid of humor—he failed to appreciate.¹⁷

Apart from Neoplatonism, Swedenborg was also deeply influenced by Origen, according to John R. Mabry, a former Baptist, Episcopalian, and Old Catholic who became a Universalist minister.¹⁸ He pointed out how Origen influenced Swedenborg, whose “voluminous expositions of scripture use a method nearly identical to Origen’s own. Although Swedenborg was not a proponent of reincarnation, his Christology and approach to scripture were very, very similar indeed. So close, in fact, that sometimes I wonder if Origen was not correct about the transmigration bit, and if Swedenborg was not, in fact, Origen reborn.”¹⁹

Indeed, for like his ancient master, the eighteenth-century Swede interpreted the Bible in an arbitrary, idiosyncratic way. Kevin Baxter, pastoring the Swedenborg Chapel at Cambridge, told how he applied the so-called science of correspondences to interpret the story about David and Goliath recorded in 1 Sam. 17:

“Swedenborg tells us that the Philistines correspond to a belief in God, but without loving the neighbor. Armies, in general, correspond to the doctrines or teachings of the church—those troops assembled to engage in spiritual struggle. The armies of Israel represent the true teachings of the church, whereas the armies of the Philistines are false teachings of a church.”²⁰

But where in the Bible is there anything that warrants such an explanation? We find instead an intellectual disconnect between these men’s philosophy and its alleged applicability to the Scriptures. Although, like Origen’s story of the donkey and her foal, Swedenborg’s version of the David-Goliath story is faintly amusing, we think it is also stuff and nonsense.

For some readers, our conclusion may appear to be not only harsh but farfetched. Both these men were after all extremely learned, Swedenborg being especially versatile. But theologians, who think on their own wavelength, sometimes cannot understand the language of metaphor and symbolism or anything to do with literature. The same is true of specialists

and even polymaths in other fields. Of this, the following personal experience is an example.

In about 1980, I was teaching at a school on the Witwatersrand, South Africa. Because it suffered from a chronic shortage of English teachers, it appointed, on a temporary basis, a brilliant and very versatile man with a doctorate in education—who was also working on a second doctorate in philosophy. He knew a dozen languages, played an outstanding game of chess, often sang most beautifully at concerts or over the radio, professionally taught singing, and was also accomplished in several other ways. But now he had to teach English to eighth-graders, which he was generally able to do, except that having to deal with poetry—also prescribed by their syllabus—terrified him. When he came to me about his problem, I found he simply could not understand the language of metaphor and symbolism. This has a logic of its own, so I rapidly had to explain its rudiments.

The Bible is, amongst other things, a very great work of literature, including much poetry. Most of its parts are narrative and have a straightforward, literal meaning, so that a child can understand them. But metaphor also abounds, and some books contain symbolic material. Mere learning, mental ability, earnest endeavor, or even piety are insufficient for unlocking the meaning of its prophecies. Fortunately Scripture is best explained by other Scriptures. In addition to this, the prophecies—e.g., Dan. 2 and 7—contain Internal Expositors, that is, an angel or person enlightened by God, who indicates how these predictions should be understood.

Either ignorant of these factors or because he willfully rejected genuine guidance by the Holy Spirit, Swedenborg made the words *symbol*, *symbolism*, and *symbolic* problematic for unwary prophetic expositors after him. As terminology, this is very slippery. Apart from the considerations we have already mentioned, we note in passing that since his time, *symbol* with its derivatives has also come to feature in Symbolism, the literary school which began a little after Baudelaire, psychoanalysis practiced by Sigmund Freud as well as Carl Jung, and a conglomerate of witchcraft, magic, and the occult.

To understand the prophecies of the Bible, including Rev. 13, we need to remain untainted by these things and heed its Internal Expositors, adhering to the methods of interpretation suggested above. The words *symbol*, *symbolism*, and *symbolic* should be used with circumspection and as sparingly as possible.

IV

For further elucidation, we now look specifically at Swedenborg's *Apocalypse*. According to his disciple Robert Hindmarsh (1759-1835), who alluded to it in 1790, "the book of Revelation treats solely of the

destruction of the present Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants; and afterwards of the establishment of a new church, called the New Jerusalem.”²¹ This view differs from Alcazar’s Preterism, yet it has in common with it two elements: manipulating the Apocalypse to defend or promote one’s own religion and arbitrary allegorical-idealist thinking, pioneered by Origen.

According to Swedenborg, the Beast in Rev. 13 is Reformed Christianity, which he says teaches a false doctrine “THAT FAITH WITHOUT THE WORKS OF THE LAW JUSTIFIES AND SAVES.”²² This is a purely arbitrary interpretation, which we do not find acceptable or even very interesting.

What does strike us is how Swedenborg jumbled together the mark, the name, and the number of the Beast. Over the next two and a half centuries, many writers—probably under his influence—did the same.

Hating the doctrine of justification by faith, this deviant theologian explains Rev. 13:17 as follows:

*And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name, signifies, that it is not lawful for any one to teach from the Word, nor consequently to be inaugurated into the priesthood, honoured with the magisterial laurel, invested with the doctor’s cap, and called orthodox, unless he acknowledges that doctrine, and swears to the belief and love of it, or of that which is in agreement, or of that which is not at variance, with it. To buy and sell signifies to acquire knowledge, here those which belong to that doctrine, and to teach them, as will appear presently; a mark signifies that acknowledgment of being a Reformed Christian, and confession that he is so (n. 605); the name of the beast signifies the quality of the doctrine . . . or that which is in agreement with it; number signifying the quality of a thing . . .*²³

And how does Swedenborg explain 666? In itself, it is—according to him—a perfect number. First, it has a sexagesimal basis: “Six signifies the same as three multiplied by two, and three signifies what is full and all, and is predicated of truths (n. 505), and two signifies the marriage of truth and good; and as six is composed of those two numbers multiplied by each other, it therefore signifies every truth of good in the Word . . .” Furthermore, “the number six hundred and sixty six is used, because in that number six is tripled, and triplication completes multiplying by one hundred, whence comes six hundred, and by ten, whence comes sixty . . .” To support these ideas, Swedenborg referred to many Scriptures in both the Old and the New Testaments, with which we need not here concern ourselves. But, he maintained, this numerical excellence was all subverted, being falsified by the Protestant clergy.²⁴

With that last bit of numerology, Swedenborg was, of course, mistaken: 666 is tripled 6 only *visually*. But for the purposes of arithmetic figures must be written below one another in *positional* notation, with numerals 1

to 9 plus the zero sign, which the Arabs derived from the Hindu system and later transmitted to the West. With Roman numerals, this procedure is totally impossible. As we have observed, however, no less a personage than Helwig had in 1600 also made this mistake. To discover and expose it is apparently an achievement of the very recent past, in the early twenty-first century.

Hindmarsh introduced Swedenborgianism to the English-speaking world through *The New Magazine of Knowledge*, which he began to publish in July 1790. About the Historicist interpretation of the number, at that time already becoming common, he declared: “It has generally been supposed, that the beast spoken of in the 13th chapter is the Pope of Rome; and in this many have been confirmed by the circumstance of the Pope’s name, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, making the number 666,” but he brushed aside this equivalence—first discovered by Helwig—because it “may be extended to a hundred other names.”²⁵

In *Letters to Dr. Priestley* (1792), which defends the Swedenborgian New Church, Hindmarsh was even more explicit: “I remember to have read, some years ago, many curious explanations of the number 666, all having reference to the titles of the pope, in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, or in some other way alluding to the church of Rome. The words *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *vicarius Generalis Dei in terris*, *vicarius Filii Dei*, with various others, were by dint of numerical powers, and such like calculations, all made to produce the exact complement 666.” These, he thought, were “ingenious speculations; but on further inquiry I soon found, that not only the names above mentioned would make up the required number, but perhaps an hundred and fifty other names, that could no more be supposed to have any connection with the contents of the Apocalypse, than the *man in the moon*.” To this sarcasm he added: “It did not satisfy me that *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *vicarius Filii Dei*, or even *Ludovicus*, made up the complement 666, when other words were to be found, that did the same, such as *Joseph Smith*, *Tomkins*, *Benjamin Bennet*, and what is singular enough, the *Rev. Jos. Priestley*; for by the magical power of numerals I can bring them all to the same song, *six hundred and sixty six*.”²⁶

If this is checked, the reader will find that none of these names qualifies, if Roman numerals are used; the first three all total more than 1,000, as guaranteed by the letter *m*, while *Rev. Jos. Priestley* produces a measly 52.

In 1852, Elias de la Roche Rendell (1803-1987), a Swedenborgian minister of Preston, quoted from *Letters to Dr. Priestley*. He followed Hindmarsh closely, including his argument against the numerical method of explaining 666 through the assertion that a hundred and fifty names could have this value. To this, Rendell added that he preferred a “spiritual” explanation, for “such *numbering* was significant of man, attempting from himself, to ascertain the quality of faith and virtue in the church” (his own emphasis). He did admit that the two most common explanations of his time were that it represented the names *Lateinos*, first proposed by Irenaeus, and *vicarius Filii Dei*. These, however, were just coincidental.²⁷

Such arguments, continued by later writers, were to prove most influential for more than two hundred years in countering the Historicist explanation, of which two examples can here suffice, since in later chapters we will deal with this topic more exhaustively.

On 15 November 1914, John F. Noll, the priest-editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, quoted Ernest R. Hull, a Catholic Jesuit priest in India, who argued that with “a little ingenuity” any name—such as his own and that of each and every reader—could be made to equal 666.²⁸ How much this reminds us of Hindmarsh!

Ninety years onward, a few Seventh-day Adventist scholars, most notably Samuele Bacchiocchi, mingled with the Historicist approach of their denomination Preterist-Idealist elements, which are traceable to Origen, Alcazar, Swedenborg, Rendell, and others who followed in their train.

In the early twenty-first century, Bacchiocchi acknowledged that *vicarius Filii Dei* was a papal title, yet he dismissed its candidacy because so many other names also had a numerical value of 666. He said, moreover, that he preferred a figurative interpretation, so that for him and people who agreed with him the notorious number was “the symbol of incompleteness, imperfection and rebellion.”²⁹ He also found the traditional Seventh-day Adventist interpretation problematic, “because it differentiates between the Mark and Number of [the] Beast. Such a differentiation can hardly be justified exegetically.”³⁰

But here we have run ahead of our chronicle and, because we have not finished with him, leap back in time a hundred and fifty years to Rendell. As though in rebuttal, just five years after he had rehashed ideas from Hindmarsh, excellent argumentation about the number of the Beast appeared in a 1857 work by Hermann J. Gräber (1814–1904), pastor at Meiderich. Published in Heidelberg, Germany’s prestigious university town, his book is entitled *Versuch einer historischen Erklärung der Offenbarung des Johannes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Auslegungen von Bengel, Hengstenberg und Ebrard* (An Attempt at a Historical Explanation of John’s Apocalypse with a Special Focus on the Interpretations by Bengel, Hengstenberg, and Ebrard). It surveys a variety of names that supposedly identify the Beast, from the time of Irenaeus.

According to Gräber, many alleged names should be discarded, for they are fanciful, being simply the product of human ingenuity. Also incorrect are attempts by others to attribute a name to the Beast; he had to choose it for himself. It should, moreover, be in the language of the Antichrist. Such considerations eliminate a majority of titles, names, and attributions, including Irenaeus’s arbitrary *Lateinos*, as well as *Romiiit[h]*. Most eminently suitable is *vicarius Filii Dei* (*Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes*) [Representative of the Son of God], which numerically equals 666. Chosen, applied to itself, and often used by the papacy, it is in Latin, the ecclesiastical language of the Roman Church. It is also blasphemous,

expressing the quintessence of pontifical claims, and is the *Träger der Macht des Papstthums* (“bearer of the power of the papacy”).³¹

With men like Bell and Gräber as his predecessors, Uriah Smith (1832–1903)—whom we consider exhaustively in Volume III—might have read or at least been aware of such or similar conclusions. In the first edition of his *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (1865), he brushed aside the *Lateinos* hypothesis because it was not “the name or title of some particular man,” but rather “the name of a people or kingdom.” He also showed an awareness of the more general problem: “Deriving the number from a name, in this manner, we must regard as rather conjectural than otherwise, seeing that names can be found to almost any extent, making just that number.”³² Henceforth he focused his attention on only one pontifical title: *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Explicit contextualization could have prevented or certainly impacted on many, largely unnecessary publications that kept on appearing. A case in point is David Brady’s book: *The Contribution of British Writers between 1560 and 1830 to the Interpretation of Revelation 13.16–18* (1983). In this survey, he found that “hundreds of solutions [were] proposed.”³³

Brady showed, amongst other examples, how different generations of antagonistic factions in England applied the number of the Beast to one another. For instance, in the seventeenth century Gerrard Winstanley, a leader of “that section of the Levellers who came to be known as Diggers,” said it represented “Kingly Power and Glory (called a *Man*).” He linked this to the idea that the world would exist for 6,000 years before the Millennium, and thought the career of King Charles I (1600–1649) represented “the last Tyrannical power that shall reign.”³⁴ For those who preferred to look across the Channel, it was also found—at various times—that *Ludovicus*, the Latin for Louis (the name of many French monarchs), in Roman numerals equaled 666.

Brady, it is true, acknowledged that during the Reformation and its aftermath the Historical School of prophetic interpretation predominated for several centuries. The mud-slinging uses of 666 that he mentioned had an ad hoc character which contemporary Bible students would not have taken very seriously. Nevertheless, Brady concluded that such things represented “clearly the cul-de-sac that the historicist interpretation of the Apocalypse was destined to run into from the start.” This, he said, “was without doubt to lend strong impetus to the revival in preterist exegesis in the years subsequent to 1830.”³⁵ We think that if he had read the analysis by Gräber and taken it seriously, his conclusion could have been different.

The alleged dead-end for Historicism after 1830 is wishful thinking, a figment of both Preterist and Futurist imagination, as the rest of this book will amply demonstrate.

Let us, for further perspective, glance at Preterism today, according to which “some or all of the biblical prophecies concerning the *Last Days* (or End Times)” refer to events that actually occurred “in the first century after Christ’s birth,”³⁶ or not much later. Essentially it says that most of the chapters in the Revelation and related passages such as Matt. 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 have little relevance for historical periods like the Middle Ages, the Reformation, or the period since 1798.

Preterism has peculiar bedfellows, among them Swedenborg, because, to tell the truth, it cannot stand alone or survive without invoking the aid of Idealism and the historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible.

Preterism has two main branches, Partial Preterism, the older view, and Full Preterism. Let us briefly note their main difference and some problems that they give rise to.

Partial Preterism teaches “that prophecies such as the destruction of Jerusalem, the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, and the advent of the Day of the Lord as a ‘judgement-coming’ (Last Judgment) of Christ were fulfilled circa A.D. 70.” That was when “the Roman general (and future Emperor) Titus sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Jewish Temple, putting a permanent stop to the daily animal sacrifices.” It identifies “Babylon the great” (Revelation 17-18) with the ancient pagan City of Rome or Jerusalem.³⁷

Then, too, “most Partial Preterists believe the term *Last Days* refers not to the last days of planet Earth or the last days of humankind, but rather to the last days of the Mosaic covenant which God had exclusively with national Israel until the year A.D. 70. As God came in judgment upon various nations in the Old Testament, Christ also came in judgment against those in Israel who rejected him. These *last days*, however, are to be distinguished from the ‘last day,’ which is considered still future and entails the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the righteous and unrighteous dead physically from the grave in like-manner to Jesus’ resurrection, the Final judgment, and the creation of a literal (rather than covenantal) New Heavens and a New Earth, free from the curse of sin and death which was brought about by the Fall of Adam and Eve.”³⁸

Another variant holds that the emperor involved was Nero.

This recently provoked a sharp response from Mark L. Hitchcock, a Futurist, who gave many reasons why that wicked Roman emperor could not have fulfilled the prophecies in the Apocalypse. Most powerful were the following arguments: “Nero never gathered his armies with other kings of the earth to make war against the returning Christ from heaven (vv. 11–18). Nero was not cast alive into the lake of fire. He died in Rome on June 9, A.D. 68. History never records that Nero had a henchman like the false prophet. There was never a time when Nero’s army was slaughtered and fed to the birds after he was cast alive in the lake of fire.”³⁹

Indeed, but Hitchcock missed the vital point that nowadays Preterism no longer demands that these things should be taken literally. We see this most clearly by considering its other branch: Full Preterism, which holds that “Jesus’ Second Coming is to be viewed not as a future-to-us bodily return, but rather a ‘return’ manifested by the physical destruction of Jerusalem and her Temple in A.D. 70 by foreign armies in a manner similar to various Old Testament descriptions of God coming to destroy other nations in righteous judgment.”⁴⁰ But how can this be?

Full Preterism also teaches that “the Resurrection of the dead did not entail the raising of the physical body, but rather the resurrection of the soul from the ‘place of the dead,’” known as Sheol (Hebrew) or Hades (Greek). As such, the righteous dead obtained a spiritual and substantial body for use in the heavenly realm, and the unrighteous dead were cast into the *Lake of Fire*. Some Full Preterists believe this judgment is ongoing and takes effect upon the death of each individual (Heb. 9:27). The New Heavens and the New Earth are also equated with the New Covenant and the fulfillment of the Law in A.D. 70 and are to be viewed in the same manner by which a Christian is considered a “new creation” upon his or her conversion.⁴¹

But a failure to explain the number 666 within the larger context of Rev. 13, together with other, related Scriptures, leaves the reader adrift on a sea of wild conjecture. It also indicates the impotence of Preterism, which needs to involve Idealistic elements. This is to surmount the enormous gap between an ancient past and the Second Coming. But Idealism is really a bridge to nowhere. In any case, a prophetic school which cannot provide a clear-cut, credible solution for the riddle posed by Rev. 13:17-18 lacks the wisdom that the Apocalypse calls for.

As a substitute for Historicism, we are left with vague, allegedly “symbolic” formulations, a crop of sometimes dramatic incidents, and diverting tales.

For instance, on 9 September 2009 Jose Flores Pereira, a forty-year-old Protestant minister, originally from Bolivia, hijacked an Aeromexico plane with more than one hundred passengers on their way from Cancun to Mexico City. With a fake bomb—a can of juice—he threatened to blow up the aircraft and all aboard unless he was allowed to speak to Mexican President Felipe Calderon. He wanted to tell him he had “had a revelation that Mexico was facing a great danger, and was threatened by an earthquake.” Flores, “a former drug addict, with a conviction for armed robbery in his native Bolivia,” had been a Mexican resident for seventeen years. However, while still on the plane, he soon stopped threatening and agreed to give himself up to the police, who promptly arrested him. He told them Christ was coming soon, and “that he acted on 9 September 2009, because the numbers 9/9/9 were the inverse of 6/6/6, the number linked to the Anti-Christ.”⁴²

If Flores was a fleeting flash in the pan, the same cannot be said of all other strange interpreters, mentioned in Peter Burger's 1994 article "Van Hitler tot Hoenderloo: *De Vele Gedaanten van 'Het Getal van het Beest'*" (From Hitler to Hoenderloo: The many shapes and forms of the number of the beast). This piece was published by *Stichting Skepsis* (Skepticism Foundation), a Dutch enterprise, devoted to turning a merciless searchlight on and debunking pseudoscience together with the paranormal. Burger presents a vast catalogue of interpretations. Let us focus on just one of these and the waves that it made.

In 1882, Procter & Gamble, the American firm which markets a large variety of household products, adopted a logo: a circle enclosing thirteen stars and the half-moon face of a man with a billowing beard. A hundred years later this trademark cost its business large amounts of money, for in 1979 some pastors concluded that Procter & Gamble belonged to the Unification Church of a false messiah, the Korean Sun Myung Moon (b. 1920), who headed the Moonies. The design supposedly concealed three 6's, and the soap powder, toothpaste, and other cleansing agents were just a façade for very dark practices.

Many people in the Bible Belt of America's southern states accepted this explanation and promptly proceeded to boycott Procter & Gamble products. Suffering financial loss, the firm was obviously not amused, so it undertook a large-scale publicity campaign to counter the rumor, which was being spread in sermons, pamphlets, and church publications. In June 1982, when the rantings peaked, it received no fewer than fifteen thousand letters and phone calls. To deal with all this, fifteen telephone operators were devoted to the handling of incoming complaints. In addition, Procter & Gamble hired Pinkerton detectives to trace the origin of the 666 interpretation. Court cases followed. One couple in Kansas was fined \$75,000. In 1985, the business also redesigned and changed its logo.

All the same, the 666 story linking Procter & Gamble with the Moonies kept on spreading to other countries, including the Netherlands and especially Scotland, in 1994.⁴³

Such nonsense illustrates what effects the baleful number can have on the popular imagination, if it is disconnected from its proper setting in Rev. 13 and the rest of the Scriptures—as well as the need for spelling out, in greater detail, guidelines for its correct interpretation.

Chapter Eight
CLARIFYING THE CRITERIA

I

Apart from having a numerical value of 666, the name as specified in Rev. 13:18 needs to meet the following requirements:

8.1 It must be a specific name or title applicable to a human entity.

Excluded from the outset are bar codes, bank numbers, a time period, and vague formulations which suggest that 666 just symbolizes corrupt humanity. We are told quite pointedly that, in some sense, the Beast is a person. It symbolizes not a thing, an animal, or a supernatural being—neither Satan nor a heathen deity—and its name or title must be specific. That is to say, only one. The Scripture does not call for a multiplicity of names, a point which, more often than not, prophetic interpreters over the centuries have been inclined to overlook. Not before the later 1800s, with the writings of the Seventh-day Adventist Uriah Smith, did a group—in fact, an entire church—abandon that approach to focus on a single name, which is what Rev. 13:18 calls for.

On the other hand, the expression “forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5), which in prophetic parlance equals 1260 years that are included in the Beast’s career, suggests quite clearly that it does not have a normal human lifespan.

It can therefore be no ordinary entity. Our inquiry ranging over all history in the Christian era finds only one “man” who meets this criterion: the Roman pontiff; for he is not simply who he is, a particular human being, but supposedly—through apostolic succession—an avatar, a kind of continuously reincarnated Peter.

At the critical moment in the fraudulent Donation, this is precisely the point the forger made, that “*as the blessed Peter* is seen to have been constituted vicar of the Son of God on the earth, *so the pontiffs* who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles,” should in the church and even in the world be supreme. (Emphasis added)

In this way, the popes are their office. Inscribed within the rotunda of St. Peter’s at the Vatican are the words from Matt. 16:18: “Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam” (Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church). Every pontiff claims to be that apostle, which links together all the popes of Rome, so that there is no essential difference—at least in Catholic theology—between, for instance, Gregory VII (*c.* 1025–1085, reigned from 1073) almost a millennium ago, John Paul II (1920–2005, reigned from 1978), or Benedict XVI (1927–, reigned from 2005) in our time. Without this claim to apostolic succession, the papacy would be nothing and might well have vanished long ago.

8.2 It must refer to the papacy.

This requirement is necessitated by context, the entire Rev. 13 as well as related Scriptures, especially Dan. 7 and 2 Thess. 2:1–9. Protestants from as far back as Wycliffe’s time, and even some of their predecessors like the Waldensians, espousing Historicism, have applied these chapters to the papacy, long before Helwig began to zoom in on *vicarius Filii Dei*.

For background on this matter, we refer the reader to “Two Thousand Years of Prophetic Interpretation” in our previous publication, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy: History, Methodology, and Myth* (2007). The parallel between Rev. 13 and Dan. 7 was also mentioned earlier in “The Sevenfold Prophecy and the Year-Day Principle” by our *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001).

The gist of what the last-mentioned work says is that all seven heads, like the horns of the Antichrist, are present in Dan. 7. To determine this, we just need to count and add up the heads of the four creatures. The result is seven! This is also the key to identifying them in the Apocalypse.

That, however, is too extensive a topic for the present work to elaborate. We deal with it in our *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012). Here we just point out that Dan. 7 does not represent the Greeks by one head but by four heads. Likewise, Dan. 8:22 informs us that after Alexander’s death “four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation” (emphasis added).

These four were not necessarily confined to the Hellenistic kingdoms into which the Conqueror’s empire had divided. A case in point is the Western Greeks, who at an early time settled and flourished in Sicily as well as Southern Italy, all the way up to ancient Neapolis (“New Town”) or present-day Naples. So many Greeks lived in that region for centuries that it was called Magna Graecia—Great Greece. These people blended with the Romans, both biologically and in culture, philosophy, and religion.

In only one respect, the beast of Rev. 13 does not seem to be a perfect composite of the creatures in Dan. 7; it lacks a Little Horn. But, to a large extent, the leopard-like beast—vis-à-vis the heads, which culminate in the seventh one, and supported by the horns—is the Little Horn. This is suggested by very similar wording in these two chapters. Let us note the parallels:

<i>The Little Horn</i>	<i>The Leopard-like Beast</i>
1. “A mouth speaking great things” (Dan. 7:8).	“A mouth speaking great things” (Rev 13:5).
2. “Great words against the most High” (Dan. 7: 25).	“Blasphemy against God” (Rev. 13: 6).

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| 3. “Shall wear out the saints of the most High” (Dan. 7:25). | “It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (Rev. 13:7). |
| 4. “They shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time” (Dan. 7:25, RSV). | “Power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5). |

Both the Little Horn and the Antichristian beast would have a mouth that speaks “great things,” that is, they indulge in arrogant speech and blasphemy against the Lord; both would wage a successful war against his holy ones; and both would prevail for three and a half years or forty-two months (that is, 1260 prophetic year-days).

The Dutch scholar Hans K. LaRondelle (1929-2011) regarded Dan. 7 as the “taproot of all antichrist prophecies.” One of its central components is the time period variously represented as 1260 days, 42 months, and 3½ years, based on the symbolism of the year-day principle.¹ Indeed. The entire sevenfold prophecy is an outgrowth of Dan. 7:23-25. Until the early nineteenth century, such views enjoyed a broad consensus among Protestant interpreters, before they increasingly succumbed to Catholic eschatology, Preterist as well as Futurist—and its offshoot, Dispensationalism—or allegorical Idealism.

We salute LaRondelle for the aptness of his “taproot” metaphor. It is brilliantly insightful. At the same time, however, we caution against some conclusions in his work, especially about the number 666, which this book largely deals with. As will become apparent, especially in our final volume, on this topic he has—like a minority of other Seventh-day Adventist expositors—deviated somewhat from Protestant Historicism.

8.3 It must, at least in its original form, be a Latin name.

Through most of its history, Latin has been the official language of the papacy. Today, at least ecclesiastically, it still is. Its most important works, like the sixteen *Documents of Vatican II* (1963–1965), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994), and the pontifical encyclicals are even these days written in it, with translations into English and other languages. For Christmas 2006, Benedict XVI celebrated mass in Latin. Admittedly its oral use has declined, and only a few of its priests can really speak it. Nevertheless, it is the language of the Roman Church. *Vicarius Filii Dei*, with a numerical value of 666, is a Latin name.

But now a question arises: Does the fateful number not also apply to some individual popes? Considering the many pontiffs that have reigned over much of two millennia, we would expect this to have been the case. After all, as Thomas Bell pointed out and we have quoted above: “If any man’s name

among us had the letters J, V, X, L, C, D, they would amount precisely to 666.” In accordance with this fact, we would have expected several pontiffs to have had such a name.

There has been only one, apparently, though this idea will not survive linguistic scrutiny. But it is at least provides a diverting tale.

During 1605, Sir Henry Wotton, the British ambassador of King James I, arrived in Venice, accompanied by his chaplain William Bedell (1570–1642), an Anglican priest. They found the Venetian Republic in turmoil. Due to a quarrel, Pope Paul V had placed that small but still powerful maritime country under an Interdict.

Just then, “a Jesuit who came to Venice printed a book on Divinity with the extravagant and indeed blasphemous dedication, *Paulo V, Vice-Deo, Christianae Reipublicae Monarchae invictissimo et Pontificiae Omnipotentiae conservator[e] acerrimo*” (emphasis added). (To Paul V, God’s Substitute, Invincible Monarch of the Christian Republic and Most Vigorous Preserver of the Omnipotent Papacy.) Bedell immediately perceived that this title had a numerical value of 666.

Like a contagion, that sensational discovery spread through Venice, first to the clergy and politicians, then to the people: the pope was the Antichrist! The republic seriously considered severing its ties with the Vatican and the Papal States. For this, however, it desired the support of King James in London, who had in his correspondence lauded the Anglican solution, with the ruler heading the church. The state of Venice might well have become a Protestant country, if the British ambassador had not—to flatter his monarch—dithered, waiting until St. James’s Day before approaching the Venetian Senate to explain what advantages such a change could bring.

But Paul V, alarmed, immediately took countermeasures. First, resorting to Ribera’s Futurism, “he caused it to be spread abroad that Antichrist was even then in the East, that he had been born in Babylon, of the tribe of Dan, that he was gathering a vast army to destroy Christendom, and that all Christian princes should prepare their forces to resist him.” Second, before St. James’s Day, the pontiff also “yielded to the demands of the Senate, the quarrel was made up, and the prospects of Reformation in Venice were lost for ever.”²

So was Paul V the Antichrist predicted in Rev. 13? There are serious problems with such an idea.

It especially does not meet a very important criterion explained below. The name referred to in Rev. 13:17, 18 must be one that endures for centuries and not be limited to the lifetime of a single person. Further, Bedell’s calculation was really incorrect. The Jesuit had written “*to Paul*,” which is in the dative case. As a title, it should have to be in the nominative: *Paulus* not *Paulo*, adding an extra 5 for the additional *v*. The same applies to *Deo* (*to God*), which should properly speaking be *Deus*. That brings the figure up to 676, proving that Paul V was not the Antichrist—at least not more than any other pope.

Perhaps the men elected to head the Roman Church are always careful to check numerical values before they choose their pontifical names. It would in

any case seem that among all the 263 popes who the Vatican claims have reigned in Rome since Peter's time not even one has ever had a personal name in accordance with Rev. 13:17, 18.

Nevertheless, *vicarius Filii Dei* does meet the requirement of supplying an excellently descriptive label for the papal office.

8.4 It must be a single name or title.

Like other monarchs through the ages, the pontiff—*il Papa Re*, “the Pope King”—can have several, even many names and titles. That has ever been the custom of royalty. An example of this was Victoria Regina. She was at one and the same time Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and Empress of India. She “also bore the titles of Princess of Hanover and Duchess of Brunswick and Lüneberg. In addition, she was the Princess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha and Duchess in Saxony.”³

In her recent book, the archaeologist Joann Fletcher revealed that this royal habit of having several names and titles antedates the Christian era by more than thirteen centuries. Nefertiti, the wife of the monotheist pharaoh Akhenaten (1353–1336 B.C.), at a certain stage “adopted the name Neferneferuaten. Apparently she became her husband's co-regent in his twelfth year as king, when she added the name Ankhkheperura to become co-ruler Ankhkheperura-Neferneferuaten. Finally at Akhenaten's death, she took the throne herself as King Ankhkheperura Smenkhkara.”⁴ Dr. Fletcher later disclosed that Ay, the next pharaoh, “held several titles—Fan Bearer on the King's Right Hand, Master of the Royal Horses, Royal Scribe, and God's Father.”⁵

Rev. 13 in its first verse mentions a plurality of names, but at the end the prophecy focuses on only one, which has a numerical value of 666, namely *vicarius Filii Dei*.

But let us briefly also look at some other papal titles, beginning with *vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ). This did not, as many may now suppose, originate with the apostles in the first century or any of their alleged successors. It began in the fourth century with Constantine. He it was who first called himself the *vicarius Christi*. By this he meant “he was another Christ acting in the place of Christ.” He also styled himself *Pontifex Maximus* (“Supreme/High Priest”), *Bishop of Bishops*,⁶ and even—“for the last few years of his life”—*Isapostolos* (“Equal of the Apostles”).⁷

Only after the Western emperor had been eliminated and Byzantine power declined in Italy, while Germanic Kings—Odovacar as well as Theodoric—ruled over that country, did the papacy presume to apply such lofty, imperial titles to itself. The bishop of Rome was already calling himself the *vicar of Peter*. But in 495, Pope Gelasius I, bidding for ecclesiastical supremacy, had himself enthusiastically acclaimed *vicarius Christi*.⁸

But having been purloined from the emperor in Constantinople, this ascription can hardly be regarded as legitimate. The sometimes offbeat Seventh-day Adventist thinker William Warren Prescott (1855–1944)

therefore erred and was reacting simplistically when he conceded to Catholic opponents that “the actual title of the pope was vicarius Christi.” According to Gilbert M. Valentine, his biographer, Prescott up to the end “felt deeply disturbed that people would put the credibility of the church at stake by continuing to apply 666” to vicarius Filii Dei, which he regarded as “a nonexistent title of the pope.”⁹ As this book shows in extensive detail, the latter statement is ridiculous.

The pontiff boasts many titles and forms of address, which over the ages have not all necessarily been the same. Amongst others, he has been and is now known as Sanctissimus Pater (Most Holy Father) and Sanctissimus Dominus Noster (Our Most Holy Lord). As for the word “pope,” it is an informal, unspecialized epithet. It also applies to the Coptic Church with its headquarters in Alexandria, Egypt.

In canon law, the person we are discussing “is referred to as the ‘Roman Pontiff.’” Formally his full title nowadays is “Bishop of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of the Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman province, Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City, Servant of the Servants of God.” This, however, “is rarely seen or used in full.”¹⁰ We note that from this “vicar of the Son of God” has been omitted.

The details of Catholic canon law and consequently the titles reflected in it have changed from time to time. The latest revision of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* was initiated by John XXIII (1881-1963, reigned from 1958) on 25 January 1959, though only completed in 1983. It was finally put into effect by John Paul II on 27 November of that year.¹¹

Most of the foregoing titles have, at one time or the other, been controverted, even the first one. According to the eminent British historian Paul Johnson, a Catholic, it is “anachronistic” to apply the title “Bishop of Rome” to the apostle Peter. He maintained that Pius I (reigned 140–155) was “The first leader of the Roman Church reasonably identifiable as a bishop.”¹² Garry Wills, another first-rate historian, an American Catholic, agreed: “There were no bishops in Rome for at least a hundred years after the death of Christ. The very term ‘pope’ (papa, daddy) was not reserved for the bishop of Rome until the fifth century—before then it was used of any bishop.”¹³

On the other hand, “Supreme Pontiff” is very old. It is the English translation of *Pontifex Maximus*. Together with *pontifex* (priest) or “pontiff,” a present-day synonym for “pope,” it preexisted not only the papacy and Constantine, but even the pagan Roman emperors. They were also each the Supreme Pontiff, or religious head of state. In its beginnings, however, *Pontifex Maximus* goes back to the ancient Republic of pre-imperial times.¹⁴

In contrast with these inherited titles *vicarius Filii Dei* was a purely papal invention—a momentous one, as we will keep on demonstrating.

8.5 It must be a blasphemous name or title.

Rev. 13:17, 18 is the culmination of a vision beginning with verse one. In this, we are informed that apart from ten crowns on as many horns, the beast has seven heads “and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.” The New Revised Standard Version (1989) has “blasphemous *names*” (emphasis added). This plural is, moreover, to be found in other translations, which are not limited to English; languages like French, Esperanto, Spanish, etc., also render it as “names.”

Does this have support in the original Greek of the New Testament? Yes, it does. The widely used Nestle-Aland (1963) gives ονοματα (onomata, “names”), though some manuscripts do contain the singular ονομα (onoma).

For this verse, we favor the plural, also for reasons that are not rooted in the language itself; but this, too, is an issue that requires much greater space than the present work will allow. We hope to deal with it in another publication. Here we can only say that to conceive of a single name displayed over seven separate heads is hardly logical, except for those who suppose that these heads refer to just so many popes—although the Roman Church claims to have had 262 by 1979.¹⁵

The word “name/names” is not confined to the beginning and end of Rev. 13. It also occurs in verses 6 and 8. And the theme of *blasphemy*, with which these passages are linked, is pervasive throughout the chapter. We think it is also involved in the special name enigmatically referred to through the number 666 of vs. 18.

But what is blasphemy? According to the Bible, a prime manifestation of it is for a human being to equate himself with God (Mark 2:7; John 8:56–59; John 10:33). Among the Jews of Jesus’ life on earth, making such a claim was to invite execution. The Saviour was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin for precisely that reason (Matt. 26:63–66).

Through the centuries, titles which have this effect or approximate it have often been applied to the pontiffs. Some of them, like *Most Holy Father* and *Our Most Holy Lord*, are undoubtedly blasphemous; for they belong exclusively to God. They meet the specification laid down by Rev. 13: 1, 6, and 8, yet they lack the numerical value of 666; therefore they cannot be the name that is meant at the end of the chapter.

Some papal titles, such as the *Bishop of Rome* and *Sovereign of the State of the Vatican City*, are not offensive. Prophetic expositors of Rev. 13 have frequently erred by dwelling on titles, words, or expressions that cannot be linked with the theme of blasphemy. Then there are those that fail to meet the specification in other respects, including old evergreens in Greek like *Lateinos*—first proposed by Irenaeus and for centuries a great favorite with many Protestant writers—as well as the Hebrew *Romiith*. The former can mean “a Latin-speaking man,” yet it may also be applied to a territory. The latter refers to “(the) Roman kingdom.”

About *Lateinos*, Uriah Smith, as already mentioned, took a stance which he

always maintained: “We think we discover, however, a serious objection to the name here suggested. The number, says the prophecy, is the number of a man; and if it is to be derived from a name or title, the natural conclusion would be that it must be the name or title of some particular man. But in this we have the name of a people or kingdom, not of ‘a man’ as the prophecy says.”¹⁶

When we seek to understand Rev. 13:17-18, such other, unsuitable words or expressions must necessarily be eliminated, which greatly narrows our choice.

What is required is a single, specific, and blasphemous name or title applicable to a human entity, with a numerical value of 666. *Vicarius Filii Dei* also passes this test admirably.

8.6 It must endure for centuries.

Of the Antichrist we read, “. . . and power was given him to continue forty and two months” (Rev. 13:5), the 1260 years of the sevenfold prophecy already referred to. Its special name would cover this or much of this period. Its career would also overlap with that of the two-horned Beast described in verses 11-16. Does *vicarius Filii Dei* meet this specification?

Yes, it does. It is first recorded in the Donation of Constantine during the eighth century. This became part of various later Latin documents that culminated in Catholic canon law. Constantly revised and augmented, this corpus was published again and again.

Among the works that antedated Gratian’s *Decretum* and referred to the Donation two were particularly significant because of their connection with Gregory VII, that powerful medieval pope who humiliated the Holy Roman emperor, Henry IV.

The first of these was by Anselm II (1036–1086), Bishop of Lucca in Italy, cardinal and papal legate. He owed his episcopate as well as his red hat to his brother or uncle, Pope Alexander II (d. 1073), who himself “in cooperation with Hildebrand (later Pope Gregory VII) and St. Peter Damien . . . promoted the Gregorian Reform movement begun by Pope Leo IX in 1049.”¹⁷ Anselm “spent his last years assembling a collection of ecclesiastical law canons in 13 books, which formed the earliest of the collections of canons (*Collectio canonum*) supporting the Gregorian reforms, which afterwards were incorporated into the well-known *Decretum* of the jurist Gratian.”¹⁸

In his fourth book about ecclesiastical rights and privileges, Anselm quoted as an important authority the Donation of Constantine, including *vicarius Filii Dei*. He prefaced this by saying: “Inviolata omnibus decrevimus manere temporibus” (We have decreed them to remain inviolable for all time).¹⁹ Gregory VII would no doubt have read and liked this text. Some five centuries later, another Gregory—the thirteenth bearing that name, who reigned from 1572 to 1585 in the heyday of the Counter-Reformation—was also well acquainted with it. Contemplating the just completed revision of what was now officially called the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (Collection of canon law), which still included the Donation, he pronounced its text “entirely free from fault.”²⁰

Presumably Gregory XIII was infallible, like all pontiffs—as the Roman Church now teaches. But so, supposedly, was John Paul II (1978-2005), who after a further four hundred years on 25 January 1983 promulgated the second *Codex Iuris Canonici*, which totally omits the Donation. On the basis of “the supreme authority with which I am vested,” he commanded this new work “to be valid forever in the future.”²¹

It would seem that Catholicism is by no means as unchangeable as it has often vaunted itself to be, with an oft-repeated boast of *semper eadem* (always the same), nor are its allegedly infallible popes. One thing, however, the Vatican has always maintained: the doctrine of papal supremacy. Perhaps it may now look with greater favor on the following sentiment, immortalized by that learned Welshman John Owen (c. 1560–1622) in Elizabethan times:

Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis
(Times change, and we change with them).

This appears in his *Epigrammata* (Epigrams), which he wrote by cleverly reshaping older materials. Apart from his impeccable Latinity, this schoolmaster was an ardent Protestant who turned his barbs against the Roman Church. For his pains, its functionaries placed that volume on its *Index of Prohibited Books*, and his wealthy Catholic uncle irately disinherited him. But after John Owen’s death, “a monument was erected to his memory in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London, where he was buried.”²²

A second important work that was older than Gratian’s Decretum was the *Collectio canonum* (Canonical Collection) of Deusdedit (d. between 1097 and 1100). This man was the friend and intimate counselor of Gregory VII, who made him a cardinal. Deusdedit’s writings, a compilation from earlier sources—partly found in “the archives and the library of the Lateran palace”—are “concerned with the rights and liberty of the Church and the authority of the Holy See.” Completed in 1087, two years after Gregory’s death, the book was dedicated to the next pope, Victor III.²³

Most probably because Pius IX (1792–1878, reigned from 1846) perceived a parallel with that situation and his own impending loss of the Papal States—which finally occurred on 20 September 1870—Pio Martinucci edited it from Vatican texts and had it reprinted at Venice in 1869. In the third chapter of Deusdedit’s book, we find *vicarius Filii Dei* quoted from the Donation of Constantine.²⁴

In Latin publications of this kind, that title was—as will be shown—repeated over and over again for more than twelve hundred years.

8.7 It must be authenticated by history.

But a little more than a century ago, Catholic apologists for the pope—especially in the English-speaking world—began the process of denying that *vicarius Filii Dei* was the pope’s official title or even any title at all. At the same time, they tried to reason away the Donation of Constantine as a mere

forgery, perhaps an inconsequential little work, which any sensible person would ignore. But we will demonstrate that it was—though fraudulent—the very charter of papal power and authority. For importance and its impact on history, it easily rates alongside England’s Magna Carta (1215) and the Constitution of the United States of America (1787).

By the third decade of the twentieth century, this technique of denial and misinformation was working so well that even a prominent Seventh-day Adventist scholar like LeRoy Edwin Froom (1890–1974) became, at least for a time, confused by it. Concerning this, we have already cited his letter of 29 August 1938 to Warren E. Howell, an impressive scholar in his own right, who as far back as 1936 had been the “chairman of the committee appointed to revise Uriah Smith’s *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation: Being an Exposition, Text by Text, of these Important Portions of the Holy Scriptures* [hereinafter abbreviated to *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*].”²⁵ This activity eventually resulted in the standard text as published from 1944 onward.

Despite extensive research in Rome, Vienna, Geneva, Paris, London, and Berlin, with the assistance of good Latinists as well as other experts, Froom concluded, as he wrote to Howell: “I have never found an authentic use of the title [*vicarius Filii Dei*] by a papal leader, save in the forged Donation of Constantine in the Decretum of Gratian.”²⁶ Our book, however, shows—on the basis of copious additional research during the twenty-first century—that Froom, notwithstanding the many people who had helped him, was in this respect mistaken. Neither Anselm II’s *Collectio canonum* nor that of Deusdedit, which both antedate the Decretum, had been brought to his attention.

What made matters worse is that he and his colleagues were paying far too much attention to a minor and irrelevant controversy: whether or not *vicarius Filii Dei* was ever written on a papal tiara or over a doorway at the Vatican.

The Revision Committee produced a splendid document entitled *The Number of the Beast*, which arrived at results that are in many ways similar to our own, although we were until recently unaware of its existence. Our copy, derived from the Adventist Heritage Center of the James White Library at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, is anonymous and undated. But from a comparison of materials provided by the General Conference Archives, we believe it was prepared by Howell on the basis of various inputs before and during 1943—previous to his death in the same year. His most important contributor was Jean Vuilleumier (1864-1956), a polyglot scholar from Switzerland. Its documentation is impressive.

Amongst other things, it mentions seven editions of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, from 1591 (Lyons) to 1879 (Leipzig) which were in the British Museum, London. For these, in each case, it quotes the key sentence from the Donation of Constantine in Latin containing the title *vicarius Filii Dei*. It also lists forty-three editions of Gratian’s Decretum between 1471 and 1890, which “may be found in the Paris National Library.” All of them likewise contain that title.²⁷ Additional material, unearthed since 1943, has brought to light

considerably more examples, which we will refer to where it is appropriate to do so.

It is strange, however, that none of those men seem to have called attention to the fact that Cardinal Deusdedit published his *Collectio Canonum* (Canonical collection) in 1087, which was fifty-three years earlier than Gratian's *Decretum* of 1140—and the even earlier Anselm II's *Collectio Canonum*. Froom's letter, quoted above, reveals that even he (at that time the premier researcher of his church) had not discovered or by 1938 noticed these vitally important details.

Why are they so significant? They are relevant to a document that records a meeting held at 9:00 a.m. on 16 April 1936 in the office of Charles Henry Watson (1877–1962), the General Conference President until that year. The others in attendance were Froom, as well as I. H. Evans, F. D. Nichol, M. E. Kern (Secretary), F. M. Wilcox, W. P. Elliott, and A. W. Cormack.²⁸ These men included eminent Seventh-day Adventist scholars. That day's discussion was to be influential in the work of the Revision Committee, soon to be continued under James Lamar McElhany, the new General Conference President (1936 to 1950).

The meeting had been called at the insistence of and was largely dominated by William W. Prescott, who maintained that the pontiffs had only one official title, namely *vicarius Christi*, adopted—according to him—at the Council of Florence in 1439. While admitting the existence of the expression *vicarius Filii Dei*, he denied it had ever been an *official* title. Catholics, however, have never said the pope had a single or only one official title.

It is, in fact, an inconsequential argument. English is also not the official language of the United States, and yet without it this country could not function or even exist. Indeed, it is one of the three most basic features that determine what it is to be an American. The other two are citizenship and predominant domicile. America has many languages, none of them—according to its law books—official; but all its inhabitants need and therefore have to learn English.

Catholics would especially deny what Prescott implied: that *vicarius Christi* was only really valid since the fifteenth century.

In a further chapter, we will show how in 1983 distinguished American Canon lawyers came to admit that for hundreds of years *vicarius Christi* was not confined to the pontiffs. They have also stated that since Vatican II, it again applies to each and every bishop. That is, it is not a title limited to the pope. Published in an impeccable Catholic source, this acknowledgement nullifies Prescott's point of view.

Despite his dogmatic assertions and a certain glib persuasiveness, he was also historically inaccurate. Neither Prescott's statements nor his conclusions stand up well to present-day scrutiny, however much he may have impressed the men in that office more than seventy years ago.

Note, for instance, how he asks and answers his own question: "Now where was this Donation of Constantine first found? In what is called the *Decretum of Gratian*." But that is simply untrue; Anselm II and Deusdedit wrote about it several decades earlier. We fear that Prescott was also much mistaken in pooh-

poohing the importance of Gratian's Decretum for the development of Catholic Canon Law. Then there is Prescott's assertion that Leo IX was the *only* pope who ever used the Donation. In what is to follow, we will amply demonstrate that this is far from being the case. Meanwhile, we note a statement in the 2011 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: "Leo IX (1049–54) was the *first* pope to cite it as an authority in an official act, *and subsequent popes used it* in their struggles with the Holy Roman emperors and other secular leaders" (emphasis added).²⁹ Another point is that every republication of the Donation, as in Gratian's Decretum, ipso facto reasserted and insisted on its pontifical claims. Prescott also argued a little too emphatically from a silence he thought he had found in the historical record, which is always a dangerous thing to do. He stressed that Gregory VII (reigned 1073–1085) "who immediately succeeded" Leo IX and was "the most outstanding pope for centuries, as you know, in the establishment of absolute Roman Catholic power, never once appealed to that document for authority."³⁰ Actually, Gregory VII did not directly succeed Leo IX; no fewer than four other popes—Victor II, Stephen IX (X), Nicholas II, and Alexander II—came in between. That is, nineteen years intervened between the pontificates of Leo IX and that of Gregory VII. The supposed silence by the latter is, moreover, compensated for by Bishop Cardinal Anselm's publication as well as by the eloquence of Gregory's friend and counselor, Deusdedit, whose work on his own *Collectio Canonum* must have been undertaken as a papal project. These people spoke for him and what he stood for.

Something else that neither Prescott nor Froom, or their colleagues, seem to have grasped was the ever more inclusive, almost encyclopedic character of Gratian's Decretum and the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* which developed from it. Though never fully complete, these works were continuously absorbing ecclesiastical laws and theological opinions generated by those who supported the Roman pontiff. It was like a rather dirty snowball rolling down the slope of the centuries, growing larger and larger as it gathered to itself the mental detritus that lay across its path. Among the pieces, both old and new, that it picked up was the Donation of Constantine. Not surprisingly, it therefore did become a part of Gratian's Decretum, though it is untrue to suggest that this was its original source. But the resultant collection did to a large extent and for many centuries become the charter of papal power, in a religious as well as a secular sense. And it certainly contained the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.

All the men who attended that meeting in Pastor Watson's office one April morning of 1936 have long since gone to their silent rest, and the reader may wonder why we call into remembrance the fallacies expounded by William W. Prescott. It is because they had a permanent consequence. They played a role in producing the 1944 (and present-day) text of *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, which differs—as we shall yet relate—from earlier editions, omitting material that might have been profitably retained.

In any case, the argument about an *official* title, raised by some Catholic apologists and accepted by Prescott, is a mere quibble with which Rev. 13:18 has nothing to do. This text mentions the "number of his name," and not the

“number of his official name.”

Further chapters of these volumes will provide a large amount of material dealing with the Donation and its aftermath.

What will be new in comparison to other somewhat similar works on this topic is that we do not confine ourselves to Latin or papal publications. Since even before the Renaissance, Westerners have also been writing voluminously in Italian and French, as well as other languages. And authors who were not working for the papacy have sometimes, even inadvertently, left important evidence.

Apart from the original *vicarius Filii Dei* of Latin texts, this expression is used by a remarkable number of vernacular publications. Concerning these, our research has largely focused on material in Spanish (*vicario del Hijo de Dios*), English (*vicar of the Son of God*), Italian (*vicario del Figlio/Figli[u]o/[o] di Dio*), and French (*vicaire du Fils de Dieu*). We have also found examples of this title in German (*Vikar/Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes/Statthalter des Gottessohnes*, etc.) and even Portuguese (*vigario do Filho de Deos*). Undoubtedly more such publications await the diligent researcher, in these and additional languages.

It may be objected that none of these translations has a numerical value of 666, which is true. But behind each of them there is always the original Latin *vicarius Filii Dei*, on which they are based and which they imply.

Why do so many instances of the title occur in French? For three major reasons. First, after Latin and Italian, it became the most prestigious language of the West, an international language widely used for centuries by educated people in many parts of Europe and even America. Second, until its great Revolution, France was continuously Roman Catholic, at times the most powerful such country. Third, Protestant Calvinism, centered in Geneva, Switzerland, also used and favored French.

In what follows, we shall for the main text usually translate the foreign-language material into English, except the title. This is in italics, which is our emphasis. At times, we will also retain a few non-English words to preserve the flavor of the original. The foreign text can be found in the Notes. But wherever *vicarius Filii Dei* occurs in the Latin, we retain it in the main text and also italicize it. Those who originally used it generally did not.

Polyglot purists may dislike this methodology, especially the fact that we will be translating so much of what we quote. But always to cite our text in so many languages, except sometimes in the Notes, could surely discourage and eliminate many readers whom this book intends to reach.

8.8 It must theologically characterize the papacy.

For Christians, *Filius Dei* (the Son of God) is a very holy title, which the Saviour claimed for himself, for instance after extending the gift of sight to a man born blind (John 9:35–38). John 3:16, which summarizes the plan of salvation perhaps more strikingly than any other verse in the Bible, also

contains it, as the Latin translation makes clear: “For God [Deus] so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [Filium], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Filius Dei is a beautiful expression. *Vicarius Filii Dei*, however, is virtually synonymous with “Antichrist.” Why? The prefix *anti-* in Greek can signify not only “against” but also “instead, in the place of,”³¹ while the Latin *vicarius*—originally an adjective—means “a deputy,” somebody “put in place of.”³²

Four centuries ago, Andreas Helwig, a professor of Greek as well as a prophetic expositor, discussed the linguistics together with the theology involved. The Catholic apologists had objected that the pope was not directly opposed to Christ and therefore could not be the Antichrist, so that the Antichristian number should not be applied to him. The rebuttal from Helwig’s pen is that it is not necessary for him to be in heads-on opposition to Christ in everything or with blasphemous words contradict him everywhere. It is enough that he should do so through his deeds and actions, which is what the pontiff does.³³

Examples of this abound in the numerous dogmas with which the Roman Church contradicts the Gospel, as when it rejects the Bible doctrine that there is only one true mediator between our Heavenly Father and humanity: the man-god Jesus Christ. Instead, it interposes masses of priestly confessors, saints, and especially the Virgin Mary. Then, too, to kill or ill-treat those who serve God according to the dictates of their conscience is also to fight against Christ, as Saul of Tarsus discovered on the Damascus road. He was on his way to that city with warrants to arrest the followers of the Saviour and drag them to Jerusalem for trial by the Sanhedrin. Suddenly he was stopped in his tracks when there appeared before him the glorified Lord, who asked him: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4). This is exactly what the Apocalypse predicts the Antichrist will do: “It was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them . . .” (Rev. 13:7).

Helwig also showed that *anti-* in compounds does not always indicate opposition. To illustrate this point, he discussed it at some length with copious examples in Greek.³⁴

Vicarius Christi, another title sometimes attributed to the pope, is almost a synonym of *vicarius Filii Dei*, and of ἀντιχριστος (antichristos, “antichrist”). Nevertheless, these two expressions also differ in important ways, of which we now will mention only two.

First, *vicarius Filii Dei* is an exclusively papal title, never applied by the Roman Church to any other person, ecclesiastical or secular. But *vicarius Christi* began as a designation that the emperor Constantine invented for himself. As twentieth-century canon lawyers have admitted, it was also used by other emperors as well as bishops, the pope being just one of these.³⁵

Second, *vicarius Filii Dei*—unlike *vicarius Christi*—invariably stresses the idea of divinity. Does the Latin *Christus* from Χριστος (Christos), the “anointed one,” which is the Greek word for “Messiah,” not do the same? Not

necessarily. For instance, Jewish theology does not always include the idea of the Messiah being divine.

That this also comes close to papal thinking is confirmed by Pope Benedict XVI in his *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007). With reference to Peter's great confession, he told how important *Son of God* has been in comparison with *Christ* and said that the latter, as a "title, taken by itself, made little sense outside of Semitic culture."³⁶ To some extent we agree, although we also observe that Peter blended these two concepts: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

The present pontiff is a very learned and knowledgeable man, an authoritative spokesman for his church. He stated that "the title 'Son of God' connected him [the Lord Jesus] with the being of God."³⁷ But he also linked it with kingship. Looking not only at what the Bible teaches, but beyond it, he pointed out: "The term 'Son of God' derives from the political theology of the ancient Near East. In both Egypt and Babylon the king was given the title 'son of God.'"³⁸ And "the Emperor Augustus, under whose dominion Jesus was born, transferred the ancient Near Eastern theology of kingship to Rome and proclaimed himself the 'Son of the Divine Caesar,' the son of God." Benedict went on to say: "While Augustus himself took this step with great caution, the cult of the Roman emperors that soon followed involved the full claim to divine sonship, and the worship of the emperor in Rome as a god was made binding throughout the empire."³⁹

Indeed, and how remarkable that a pope should have pointed this out, for it became a part of the papal heritage. It appears, then, that even for Catholicism *Filii Dei* is more than a Scriptural idea. Behind it there also lurks the syncretism of the Great Apostasy, with political-religious *Romanitas* (Romanness) as a powerful ingredient. There is more to the title *vicarius Filii Dei* than meets the eye: it always suggests the idea of supremacy, over both church and state.

Vicarius Christi (vicar of Christ), though apparently synonymous, is—for popes—an insufficient title, since it is not theirs alone. It falls a good deal short of the more pretentious *vicarius Filii Dei*, which is uniquely a papal title. This is most descriptive, summarizing with great precision the claim that the pontiff as Peter's successor wields a particular kind of power, derived from the Redeemer (and the ancient Roman emperors), as a king in both heaven and on earth. Specifically included was the pope's authority as a ruler over Italy, Western Europe, and the ends of the earth.

But apart from the fact that Jesus, speaking to Pilate, denied that he was an earthly monarch, no being in the universe can take his place. He is the incomparable One, our incarnate Lord and God. He has no need of an earthly vicar such as is required by the Roman Church. Although the Saviour has entered the heavenly sanctuary, to intercede for all believers and even the human race, he also promised with his last words at the ascension: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Besides, our heavenly Father has sent—as Jesus' real representative—the

Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–18), to be a mighty helper in our salvation. He woos our hearts and brings us to Christ, he causes us to be born again, he lives within to sanctify us, he even edits our imperfect prayers to make them acceptable to God (Rom. 8:26). If necessary, he performs great miracles.

Yet even he, the third member of the Godhead, never presumes to usurp the Saviour's place. There is not and cannot be a substitute for Jesus, no "other Christ" as every Catholic bishop and priest⁴⁰—and therefore also, preeminently, every pontiff—claims to be. Since this is what *vicarius Filii Dei* represents, amongst other things, the Lord may well regard it as the most odious of pontifical titles. That may be why the Apocalypse has set us the riddle of identifying it via its numerical value.

In teaching us, the Holy Spirit must "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). This sacred Being, also called the Spirit of truth, "will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13, 14)

Though himself divine, the Third Person of the holy Trinity never contradicts God's Word and always adheres most carefully to the Saviour's will. How different this is from the arrogance of Rome, which has imagined itself empowered even to change the Law of God, for instance by abolishing its second commandment and introducing idolatry into the church.

Let us also ask whether the Redeemer had anything to say about religious leaders who claimed the right to modify doctrines as revealed by God, on the basis of authority derived from their forebears, literal or otherwise. Yes, he did, in response to the Pharisees who sought to validate their status, as well as their errors and wickedness, through a historical connection with Abraham, with whom the Lord had made an everlasting covenant.

Jesus could hardly deny that biologically they were the offspring of the great patriarch: "I know that ye are Abraham's seed" (John 8:33). But spiritually they were not; for "if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Unlike that magnificent man, these theologians of Judaism were rejecting truth and seeking to kill the One who taught it. (Vv. 39, 40) Therefore, the Saviour rejected their claim to Abrahamic succession and even descent in the sense that really mattered. He boldly proclaimed: "Ye are of your father the devil" because "ye do the deeds of your father" (vv. 42, 41).

Ellen G. White, in her incomparable biography of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, discussed this very point and added perceptively: "This principle bears with equal weight upon a question that has long agitated the Christian world,—the question of apostolic succession. Descent from Abraham was proved, not by name and lineage, but by likeness of character. So the apostolic succession rests not upon the transmission of ecclesiastical authority, but upon spiritual relationship. A life actuated by the apostles' spirit, the belief and teaching of the truth they taught, this is the true evidence of apostolic succession. This is what

constitutes men the successors of the first teachers of the gospel.”⁴¹

8.9 It must be a name or title indicative of tremendous power.

The Beast is destined eventually to acquire no less than planetary domination: “It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. 13:7-8)

At the end of time, it is to be helped to achieve this goal by the second, two-horned beast, which will make an image to the Antichrist and tell everyone in the world to worship it (vv. 14-16).

Papal ambition grew as the centuries marched on. Ecclesiastically the pontiffs were only able at first to identify themselves with and to play the supposed role of the Apostle Peter, whose successors they claimed to be. This, according to Eamon Duffy, a Catholic author and professor in church history at Magdalene College, Cambridge, was the extent of the vision cherished by Gregory VII (1025–1085, reigned from 1073). But when the pontiffs attained the acme of their medieval power, this no longer suited them: “More than a century after Gregory’s death Pope Innocent III (1198–1216, reigned from 1198) declared, ‘We are the successor of the prince of the Apostles, but we are not his vicar, not the vicar of any man or Apostle, but the vicar of Jesus Christ himself.’”⁴²

Territorially, too, the scope of papal aspiration was in the beginning largely limited to the Mediterranean world, especially Italy and western Europe. Later the pontiffs’ vision also took in such parts of the New World and the Far East as the Roman Church could bring under its sway.

But Rev. 13 predicts that in the end time the pontiff’s reach would be universal, coextensive with our planet itself: the whole world would wonder after the Beast and, by making obeisance, worship it.

Such is the context for challenging the reader to calculate the number of his name, which as already shown can be a title. Expressing the quintessence of pontifical claims, it was—as Gräber put it a hundred and fifty years ago—the *Träger der Macht des Papstthums* (Bearer of the power of the papacy)⁴³ for more than twelve hundred years.

II

We will now trace the steps which the papacy took to reach its objectives as well as the hindrances impeding its progress. At first, the popes found it difficult to achieve religious primacy vis-à-vis the other archbishops around the Mediterranean. The Roman emperors, all being pagans, would not aid them in enforcing it. To some extent, the situation changed with Constantine’s conversion. He favored Christianity, making it the state religion, yet he saw himself as the head of all the churches. This,

however, still did not elevate the pontiffs over their colleagues in Constantinople, Alexandria, or Jerusalem. And so Catholicism invoked the doctrine of Petrine primacy. The later emperors, especially in the West, accepted it, but only ecclesiastically. A complicating factor was the breakup of the Roman Empire and domination by Germanic peoples. These were Christians, though not Catholics, who refused to acknowledge the pope's supremacy or to obey his unbiblical dogmas. This problem was partly solved with the assistance of King Clovis in Gaul, who became a Catholic and used military force to impose his new religion. Thirty years later, Justinian I, reigning in Constantinople, decided to reunite the Roman Empire. To this end, he recognized the pope as the head of all the churches, with a view to gaining support in Italy. He sent his great general, Belisarius, first to crush the Vandals in North Africa and then the Ostrogoths in Italy, together with their Germanic religion. But after Justinian died, the other archbishops ignored his elevation of the pope, whom they no longer accepted as their superior.

To add to the pontiff's woes, another Germanic people, the Lombards, then invaded Italy and tried to dominate him, at a time when weak emperors in Constantinople were no longer able to save him. Thereupon he turned westward and petitioned the Franks to provide the necessary troops. At that time, too, the forged Donation was produced, procuring not only deliverance from the Lombards but also the Papal States, a temporal kingdom that lasted more than eleven centuries, until 1870. After that comes the finale, an even more ambitious scheme of world domination, in league with a global superpower.

It is with such developments that the following parts of this book are concerned.

PART 2

The Ascent to Papal Power

Chapter Nine
THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS

I

More than thirty years before John the Revelator, the apostle Paul (d. between A.D. 66 and 68) toward the end of his amazing career as an evangelist, also—according to several New Testament passages—predicted the Antichrist, whose coming he said was imminent.

In his farewell speech to the elders of Ephesus whom he had summoned to meet him on a beach at Miletus, he stated: “After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29, 30). Writing to Timothy, he prophesied that the coming apostasy would be characterized by “doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1-3). One of these was to be a ban on marriage, that is, the dogma of celibacy. But his most striking prediction is to be found in his second letter to the Thessalonians.

First he warned his readers not to expect the Second Coming before the advent of the Antichrist and then explained: “For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and *the man of lawlessness* is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you this? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For *the mystery of lawlessness* is already at work; only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then *the lawless one* will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of *the lawless one* by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.” (2 Thess. 2: 3–10, emphasis added).

This translation, from the Revised Standard Version, comes close to matching the original Greek (Nesle-Aland, 1963). It contains a fourfold repetition, which is most emphatic. First it speaks of *the man of lawlessness* (ὁ ἀνθρώπος τῆς ἀνομίας, ho anthrōpos tēs anomias), who will embody the *mystery of lawlessness* (μυστηριον τῆς ἀνομίας, mystērion tēs anomias) and then twice refers to him as *the lawless one* (ὁ ἀνομος, ho anomos).

To this should be added that *the rebellion* in this passage translates ἡ ἀποστασία (hē apostasia). In his translation, David H. Stern used the latter word: “But in connection with the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our gathering together to meet him, we ask you, brothers, not to be easily shaken in your thinking or anxious because of a spirit or a spoken message or a letter supposedly from us claiming that the Day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For the Day will not come until after

the Apostasy has come and the man who separates himself from *Torah* has been revealed, the one destined for doom.” (2 Thess. 2:1–3).¹

Gentile Christians who find “our Lord Yeshua the Messiah” or “who separates himself from *Torah*” a little strange, need only reflect that Dr. Stern is a Messianic Jew. *Christ* is actually the Greek for *Messiah*. The name *Jesus* is also more or less a translation; the Aramaic-speaking apostles would no doubt have called our Aramaic-speaking Redeemer *Yeshua*. We, however, have no burden to do the same; for the inspired writers of the New Testament always referred to him as *Jesus*. Greek has no *sh* sound, and in it the ending *-a* is often feminine. This New Testament usage indicates that he has no objection to having his name adapted to the sound systems of other languages.

Of special importance is that in writing about the Antichrist the apostle Paul described a person or entity with a lifespan of almost two thousand years. Even in his day, the Satanic principle of *anomia* was already beginning to stir into life within the church. In time, it would mushroom into a full-blown apostasy and endure until Jesus comes again, at which time he will destroy the Antichrist “with the spirit of his mouth” and “the brightness of his coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). This is a vital key for unlocking the prophecies about the Antichrist.

Only the papacy, headed by its pontiffs, has exhibited such longevity. What is more, its history with great exactitude matches all the predictions in Daniel, Revelation, and the Olivet Discourse, as well as Paul’s epistles.

II

According to the New Testament, the word $\alpha\nu\omicron\mu\iota\alpha$ (*anomia*) is extremely significant. More often than not, it can be found in a prophetic, even an end-time setting. As theologians would put it, it is an eschatological word.

The beloved apostle used it in defining sin itself: “Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness [*anomia*]; sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4, RSV). This, too, includes an eschatological element, as becomes clear from the preceding verses: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure” (vv. 2, 3).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:17–19) That he meant the Decalogue is evident from the words which follow: even unjustified anger breaks the commandment against murder, and a lustful glance is adultery.

Near the end of his great address, the Saviour also commented on those who in the last days would want to compensate for their disobedience to the Law by

performing miracles: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matt. 7:21–23) Here the Greek text has *ἀνομία* (*anomia*), and the New King James Version correctly translates it as “You who practice lawlessness.”

Shortly before his crucifixion, Jesus denounced the theological leaders of his people—his “church,” as we might say—for their pretended religiosity, which masked an inward wickedness. Using some of the strongest language that ever passed his lips, he said: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and *lawlessness*” (Matt. 23:27-28, NKJV, emphasis added). For such reasons, as well as involvement or complicity in the persecution and murder of the righteous, he utterly rejected them. His words were also aimed at all religious malefactors of the future who for their salvation would trust in a heartless and warped theology (vv. 29-35).

Thereupon he uttered the woeful words: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (vv. 37-38)

That glorious edifice, rebuilt and beautified by Herod the Great, which Jews today call the Second Temple, was destined to be destroyed, as foretold in Dan. 9:26-27. In A.D. 70, the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under Titus culminated in its utter devastation. This had also happened to the First Temple, erected a thousand years earlier by King Solomon.

That one had been rebuilt at the end of Judah’s Babylonian captivity, especially since God-fearing people interceded for it. Most notable among them was Daniel at the court of Darius, a Median who represented the Persian Empire, ruling over a recently conquered Babylon. The aged prophet’s prayer, recorded in the first twenty-one verses of Dan. 9, admitted the guilt of Judah and its kings in breaking their covenant with the Most High. God had been faithful, “keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments” (vs. 4). But his people had transgressed his Law and thereby brought on themselves the curse for persistent disobedience as predicted centuries earlier by Moses (vv. 10-14). As the Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament puts it, Daniel confessed: *ἀνομιῶσάμην* (*anomōsamēn*, “we acted lawlessly,” vv. 5, 15).

In particular, the ancient, pre-Captivity Jews had repeatedly broken the Second Commandment by committing idolatry, which to the Lord has always been most abominable, and also transgressed the Fourth by desecrating the

Sabbath. About the latter, we read that Jerusalem and all Judaea would lie desolate for seventy years, “to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (2 Chron. 36:21).

As part of his Olivet Discourse, Jesus also foretold a great tribulation awaiting his followers in the centuries to come. Embedded in this prophecy are the words: “And because lawlessness [ἀνομία, *anomia*] will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matt. 24:11, NKJV). The phrase “of many” (τῶν πολλῶν, *tōn pollōn*, “of the many”) can also—as in the 1933 Afrikaans Bible—be legitimately translated “van die meeste” (of most/of the majority). It is the genitive form of οἱ πολλοί (*hoi polloi*), which means “the greater number.”

About the end of the world, the Lord told what would happen to the wicked via his parable about the tares that an evil person scattered among the wheat which a householder had sown: “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice *lawlessness*, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Matt. 13:41–43, NKJV, emphasis added)

Further prophetic, end-time references to the law of God are found in the Apocalypse. We read that the great red dragon and serpent, Satan, will through the ages persecute the Lord’s people, symbolized by a chaste woman clad with the sun. At the end, the fiend—enraged by his inability to destroy her—goes forth “to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17). These people are brought to view again in the context of preaching against the Antichrist and its image. They refuse to accept his mark on their forehead or in their hand, and utter a dire warning about those who do. Of this remnant, it is written: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” (Rev. 14:12).

In none of this, is there any legalistic suggestion that they obey by their own strength or even that such a thing is humanly possible. Instead, as the apostle Paul puts it, they have been “transformed by the renewing” of their minds (Rom. 12:2). The Saviour himself has dwelt within them through the Holy Spirit. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:3-4)

Or as the book of Hebrews beautifully expresses it by quoting from Jer. 31:33: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people” (Heb. 8:10).

In Hebrews, we also read that the Redeemer’s kingship and office as Messiah—the very reason for his incarnation—is based on the following fact:

“Thou hast loved righteousness and hated *lawlessness*” (Heb. 1:9, RSV, emphasis added). This occurs within a quotation from Ps. 45:6-7. That sentence is exactly the same in the original of the New Testament as in Ps. 44 (45) of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In pre-Christian times, as always, the Lord was compassionate and merciful to repentant sinners, yet he also severely punished all willful transgression of the Ten Commandments. His ire was especially directed against idolatry and Sabbath-breaking. Must we now believe, as the Roman Church teaches, that since the crucifixion we may—even should—bow down to images and desecrate his holy day by abolishing it in favor of another?

III

Let us, however, ask to what extent history has vindicated Paul’s predictions, especially those of 2 Thess. 2: 3–10.

He said that in his time “the mystery of lawlessness” was already at work; it would be led by one who elevated himself in “the temple of God,” that is, the church, “proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess. 2: 3-7, RSV).

An inordinate elevation of bishops, especially at Rome, as well as doctrinal syncretism with pagan religions arose early in Mediterranean Christianity. It proceeded with astonishing swiftness, becoming noticeable shortly after the last apostle, John the beloved, had been laid to rest. Mythraic and other solar cults were allowed into the church and contaminated the teachings of the Bible. Various writers have dealt in detail with this aspect of the great apostasy, as we have also done in a previous book.²

The first record of blatant arrogance by a pope is found in *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians*. The author of this letter, also known as Clement Romanus (d. about A.D. 100), was a bishop of Rome in A.D. 88–97 or 92–101, the “supposed third successor of St. Peter.”³ He was a contemporary of the last apostle, John the beloved.

Clement was apparently upset by tidings that had reached him from Greece. Elements in the church at Corinth, founded by the apostle Paul about fifty years before, had rebelled against the leaders of their local church and apparently ousted some of them. To this kind of action, Clement was determined to put a stop. So he wrote his letter to the Corinthians, stating amongst other things that the disaffected members, and indeed the whole congregation, should “Receive our counsel, and there shall be nothing for you to regret”⁴

This is a thinly veiled threat. More explicitly he went on to say, “If some be disobedient to the words which have been spoken by him [Jesus Christ] through *us*, let them know that they will entangle themselves in transgression and no little danger” (emphasis added).⁵

Imagine some reactions at Corinth, with not a few of the believers asking, “Just who does that man in Rome think he is, and who gave him the right to lay down the law to us?” Indeed. If local church authority had broken down,

there were several other bishops closer at hand in sister congregations that Paul had founded in Greece: at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and possibly Athens.

This, so far as we have been able to determine, was the first interference by a Roman bishop in the affairs of churches outside his diocese.

Significantly, however, Clement made no overt claim to Petrine Primacy, nor did he quote the words that the papacy eventually would love to dwell on to the exclusion of very much else in the Bible: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:18, 19). Why did Clement not use this argument to call himself at least the vicar of Christ? Because, as shown elsewhere in this book, that title would be invented several generations after his death, by the emperor Constantine to describe himself.

As the centuries marched on, Clement’s successors accumulated an astounding array of blasphemous titles. Of these, we have already mentioned a number, such as “Most Holy Father” and “Our Most Holy Lord”—which surely ought to be reserved for describing the One who reigns on high. But according to Lucio Ferraris (fl. 1748-c. 1763), a respected Catholic canonist of the eighteenth century, the pope is “as it were God on earth . . . the supreme King of Kings.”⁶ More than a hundred years later, Pope Leo XIII in an encyclical letter boldly repeated this claim. He wrote: “We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.”⁷

IV

And it was more than a matter of titles. The papacy also spearheaded the most direct form of *anomia*, a separation from *Torah*, as David Stern expressed it. This began to rear its head, not long after Clement Romanus, in the boldest manner imaginable, with a change to the Law of Ten Commandments, as described by many Seventh-day Adventist and other Sabbatarian writers.

The Catholic intelligentsia, however, mostly refrains from trying to prove from the Bible that the Lord has commanded his followers to sanctify the first day of the week. Instead, many of its writers have proudly asserted that long before the Reformation the Roman Church changed the rest day from Saturday to Sunday, through the authority vested in it by Jesus Christ. They have frequently taunted Protestants with this notion. A good example is the following statement by John Gilmary Shea (1824–1892), “the preeminent American Catholic historian of his day.”⁸ In January 1883, when the idea of Sunday laws was being agitated in the United States, he wrote:

“For ages all Christian nations looked to the Catholic Church, and, as we have seen, the various states enforced by law her ordinances as to worship and cessation of labor on Sunday. Protestantism, in discarding the

authority of the Church, has no good reason for its Sunday theory, and ought logically, to keep Saturday as the Sabbath. The State in passing laws for the due sanctification of Sunday is unwittingly acknowledging the authority of the Catholic Church, and carrying out more or less faithfully its prescription. The Sunday as a day of the week set apart for the obligatory public worship of Almighty God is purely a creation of the Catholic Church.”⁹

The authority of which he speaks is the alleged right to change the Decalogue.

Papal tampering with the Law of God is thrown into sharp relief when we contrast the third column of the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on pages 496-497 with Ex. 20:2-17, RSV:

**God’s Law as Originally
Given *with papal deletions***

**The Traditional Cate-
chetical Formula**

I

I

I am the LORD your God, ~~who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of of bondage.~~ You shall have no other gods before me.

I am the LORD your God: you shall not have strange Gods before Me.

II

~~You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.~~

III

II

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain;

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

for the LORD will not hold him
guiltless who takes his name
in vain.

IV

Remember the sabbath day, to
keep it holy. ~~Six days you shall
labour, and do all your work: But
the seventh day is a sabbath
to the LORD your God; in it you
shall not do any work, you,
or your son, or your daughter,
your manservant, or your
maidservant, or your cattle, or
the sojourner who is within your
gates; for in six days the LORD
made heaven and earth, the sea,
and all that is in them, and rested
the seventh day; therefore the
LORD blessed the sabbath day
and hallowed it.~~

V

Honor your father and your
mother, ~~that your days may be
long upon the land which the
Lord your God gives you.~~

VI

You shall not kill.

VII

You shall not commit adultery.

VIII

You shall not steal.

IX

You shall not bear false witness
against your neighbour.

III

Remember to keep holy the
LORD'S Day [*sic*].

IV

Honor your father and your
mother.

V

You shall not kill.

VI

You shall not commit
adultery.

VII

You shall not steal.

VIII

You shall not bear false
witness against your neighbor.

X

You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, ~~or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's.~~

IX

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

X

You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.¹⁰

We point out that abbreviations of the Ten Commandments do not appear in any Catholic Bible translations. They are, however, a remarkable feature of the catechisms published and used by the Roman Church.

Just what is meant by the expression “a Traditional Catechetical Formula”? Let us see. *Catechetical* is, as Webster explains it, an adjective referring to *catechesis*, that is, the oral instruction of a *catechumen*. Such a person is either “a convert to Christianity receiving training in doctrine and discipline before baptism” or one “receiving instruction in the basic doctrines of Christianity before admission to communicant membership in a church.”¹¹

Catechumens of the Roman Church, who are often very poor, cannot normally be expected to possess or be quizzed on the more exhaustive catechism, a big and expensive book with more than nine hundred pages. In most cases, he or she would be instructed by means of “a Traditional Catechetical Formula.” Therefore, until the Roman Church explicitly repudiates it, we can regard this as another official and valid, though abbreviated, version. For most people, it is an alternative to the longer book, with which in any case it harmonizes perfectly.

Uriah Smith, whose great work on Daniel and the Revelation links the Antichrist's changes to the Law—predicted in Dan. 7:25—with the abbreviated Decalogue in the formulaic catechisms that the Roman Church was using in his day. He referred amongst others to those by Keenan and Geiermann “and many more like them.”¹²

A Doctrinal Catechism by Stephan Keenan was already extant in 1851.¹³ The similar Geiermann catechism has had a long shelf life, and was published again in 1930 under the title of *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*. Its 1946 reprint contains the 1945 imprimatur of Archbishop Joannes J. Glennon, S.T.D.¹⁴

The original, 2001 edition of our *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* reproduced the Ten Commandments according to Keenan and Geiermann, “with Papal Deletions.” A book reviewer objected to this as an “archaic” catechism. He said it was “obsolete” and regarded it as no longer valid. Keenan and Geiermann did use an older Bible translation with several *thee's* and *thou's*, which is the sum total of their so-called archaism. Their text, however, is identical with that of the Traditional Catechetical Formula in the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,¹⁵

except for Ex. 20:8. Keenan and Geiermann still had the grace to say: “Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day,” although they also obliterated the rest of the commandment.¹⁶ For this the “Traditional Catechetical Formula” has substituted the more daring alteration: “Remember to keep holy the LORD’S day.”

V

Let us now compare the Traditional Catechetical Formula with Ex. 20:1-17 in greater, sequential detail.

Even a cursory look reveals that this is very different from the Law delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai. Most striking are the many omissions (more than 75 percent of the total text). The second commandment against idolatry disappears completely. The rest has been renumbered. Only four of the Lord’s commandments remain unaltered. The other six have all been modified, with more than 50 percent deleted in each case.

The abbreviated Ten Commandments of the Roman Church introduce—directly or by implication—no fewer than fifteen changes.

First, the shorter Catholic versions omit the identification of the legislator as the God of the Exodus. The truncated Decalogue could be the law of almost any deity. It also opens the way for syncretism with non-Christian gods like the Lord Mithras.

Second, the abbreviation leaves out the vital fact that the Almighty does not arbitrarily impose the Ten Commandments; he announces them, not only as the Creator, but also as the Saviour God of Israel. That is, he first redeems and only afterwards legislates to his people. This teaches what theologians call prevenient grace and the lovingkindness of God, which is also a New Testament doctrine.

Third, the deletion of the second commandment legitimizes idolatry. God’s Law says people are not permitted even to make graven images for religious purposes, and they are not to kneel to them or “serve them” in any way. This also applies to the adoration of saints—who are really spirits of the dead—and Mary, the mother of Jesus. God has always taken strong exception to idolatry of any kind. In ancient times, it caused him to obliterate the northern kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 12;28-32; 17:7-12).

Fourth, the omitted second commandment speaks not only of the Lord’s severity toward idolaters and the offspring that follow in their footsteps; it also mentions his mercy for thousands of generations that love and obey him. Jesus was virtually quoting from this passage when he said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Fifth, Catholicism omits the threat that those who take the name of God in vain will be punished.

Sixth, the commandment about the Sabbath has been extensively mutilated to conceal its identity as the seventh day in the week as defined at the creation of the world. In Keenan and Geiermann, only 8 (8.5%) of its

original 94 words were retained. The more recent Traditional Catechetical Formula is even worse. Of Ex. 20:9-11, the longest commandment in the Decalogue, it has kept only five words: “remember to keep holy the . . .”—and blotted out everything else about the Biblical Sabbath. Substituting “Remember to keep holy the LORD’s day” is a total alteration. All the same, the Lord who made heaven and earth insists that we must rest on the seventh day of the week. The reason he gives for instituting the Sabbath is that then he rested, rejoicing over his workmanship, and wants us all to commemorate some very important facts. These are that he is the creator, the owner, and therefore the rightful legislator for this planet. But what happens if it is abbreviated as in all these catechisms, culminating in the Traditional Catechetical Formula? Clerics can mislead catechumens into believing that the Decalogue which the Almighty gave on Sinai refers to Sunday, the first day of the week.

According to the prophecy of Dan. 7:25, the Little Horn would think to change times as well as the Law. Both elements are involved in tampering with the fourth commandment. As will be shown, observing the first instead of the seventh day originated with Easter Sunday. The Traditional Catechetical Formula, including its older versions—such as Keenan and Geiermann—is hard documentary evidence that the Roman Church has instituted a spurious Sabbath. Protestants who seek a Biblical explanation for their own Sunday-keeping will find that the Scriptures do not even hint at it, except in Dan. 7:25.

Seventh, by concealing the identity of the lawgiver, the Catholic revision of the fourth commandment can, like that of the first, become an injunction from any deity, such as the Lord Mithras. Historically, the *dies solis* (day of the sun), which Constantine instituted in 321 with enthusiastic support from the bishops of his time, changed the Sabbath of the creator God and his Messiah into a memorial to the sun god. And that is why, to this day, the Roman Church abbreviates the fourth commandment.

Eighth, the lovingkindness of God is again not mentioned, as though people should worship him only because they fear him. But he has compassion on servants—even slaves—and animals, for he ordains that they must also be allowed to rest.

Ninth, this drastic surgery on the fourth commandment cuts away important links between Israel and Gentile believers. Ex. 20:10-11 shows that all people should keep the Sabbath. The One who had made the world pronounced the rest day holy, instituting it at the end of creation and the first week of time (Gen. 22-3), before there was a single Israelite or Jew in the world. The only ones to keep it when the world began were Adam and Eve, together with their children that chose to serve the Lord. Accordingly, God on Sinai decreed that the fourth commandment applied not only to everybody of Hebrew descent, but also to “the stranger within thy gates.” Elsewhere the Bible pronounces a blessing on Gentiles that observe the Sabbath, for they take “hold of my covenant” (Isa. 56:2, 6).

The latter Scripture ties them in with the Lord's promises to Abraham, through whom "all families of the earth" were to be blessed (Gen. 12:3), because the Redeemer is his descendant. The apostle Paul wrote, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). But with the relevant wording omitted from the Sabbath commandment, the Decalogue—like both the Old and the New covenants formulated in relation to it—is only for literal Israelites and Jews, other nationalities being excluded from the kingdom of God. Their only hope would be to convert to Judaism. This is exactly what many Jews have sometimes believed, including Judaizing Christians, who dismayed the Gentiles that Paul and Barnabas had converted on their first missionary journey: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). A modern relic of this idea is the Sabbath Gentile, whom Orthodox Jews employ to fulfil some functions, necessitated by daily life on the seventh day but which they believe the Law will not allow them to perform. These, incidentally, also turn a blind eye to the words "nor . . . thy manservant, nor thy maidservant."

Tenth, the work ethic is set aside. The Sabbath commandment not only orders each human being to rest on the seventh day, but also to do "all thy work" for the rest of the week—everyone according to his or her talents, ability, state of health, and circumstances. Idleness is forbidden, as is the parasitic exploitation of other people's labor. The apostle Paul exhorts his readers "to do your own business, and to work with your own hands" (1 Thess. 4:11). Such ideas, which have made individuals, families, and entire nations prosperous, are backed by the fourth commandment.

Eleventh, in its Traditional Catechetical Formula the Little Horn has expunged the promise of longevity for sons and daughters who truly honor their father and mother, together with the implication that failing to do so could shorten their lives. In the case of those who take monastic vows, such an omission enables the church to deprive their parents of the physical and financial support to which they are entitled. Jesus himself condemned a similar abuse by the Scribes and Pharisees of his time (Mark 7:9-13). Once more, the lovingkindness of God is not mentioned.

Twelfth, the last commandment of the Decalogue has been split into two. This seeks to cover up the fact that cutting out the prohibition against idolatry has eliminated a tenth of God's law—which means, incidentally, that the Roman Church has only nine instead of ten commandments.

Thirteenth, the order of the prohibitions against covetousness is inverted, for Ex. 20:17 mentions the neighbor's house *before* the neighbor's wife.

Fourteenth, omitting the words "manservant or maidservant" narrows the focus of the commandment in its direct application to human beings.

Fifteenth, leaving out "or anything that is your neighbour's" and using the word "goods" confines the prohibition to material things, although much more is meant.

These many changes have seriously corrupted the law of God as it has often, for many generations, been taught to unsuspecting children and adults.

VI

When did this tampering with God's holy Law begin? This is too extensive a subject to fully deal with here. Let us therefore just look at the change of the rest day, a topic that Seventh-day Adventist scholars have addressed repeatedly.

Samuele Bacchiocchi in his *From Sabbath to Sunday: A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (1977)—his *doctoratus* dissertation at Rome's pontifical Gregoriana university—maintained that most of it happened very swiftly, a little more than three decades after John the beloved apostle had died. But not all Seventh-day Adventist writers have thought so. According to them, it was a more gradual process. We think there are serious problems with his contention.

Amongst other factors, Bacchiocchi singled out the role of anti-Semitism, which especially flared up under the emperor Hadrian (AD 76–138). This lover of Greek culture provoked the Jews by “a universal ban on circumcision,” which he “issued in, it seems, the early 130s.”¹⁷ Determined on Hellenizing Judaea, he also had a Roman colony (*Aelia Capitolina*) founded in Jerusalem, erecting “a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus over the ruins of the Jewish Temple,”¹⁸ which Titus and his legions had destroyed in A.D. 70.

These actions unleashed the second Jewish war of A.D. 132–135, which was led by a false Messiah known as Bar Kokhba. It, too, was crushed by the Romans. “Jewish war casualties are recorded as numbering 580,000, not including those who died of hunger and disease. Judaea was desolated, the remnant of the Jewish population annihilated or exiled, and Jerusalem barred to Jews thereafter.”¹⁹

According to Bacchiocchi, they also had other harsh restrictions imposed on them: “They were expelled from the city, forbidden categorically to re-enter it and prohibited to practice their religion, particularly their two characteristic customs, the Sabbath and circumcision.”²⁰ Regarding this rite, his sequencing of events is not accurate. The banning of circumcision did not follow but preceded and helped to precipitate the second Jewish war. It was no doubt insisted on once more, though not much came of this since only three years later Hadrian was dead.

The edict against Sabbathkeeping also impacted on Christians, especially at Rome, where the emperor was in residence. Bacchiocchi maintained that this promptly precipitated a change to widespread Sunday observance. As evidence, he cited the following words from Chapter 67 of Justin Martyr's *Apology*:

“On the day which is called *Sunday* (τῆ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένη ἡμέρα [tē

tou hēliou legomenē hēmera]) we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read, as long as there is time.

“*Sunday* indeed is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, transforming the darkness and prime matter, created the world; and our Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the same day. For they crucified him on the day before that of Saturn, and on the day after, which is Sunday, he appeared to his Apostles and disciples, and taught them the things which we have passed on to you also for consideration.”²¹ The explicit use of *Sunday*—more properly “day of the Sun,” a Mithraic name—was supposedly “to make the Emperor aware that Christians were not Jewish rebels but obedient citizens.”²²

That is to say, a large-scale abandonment of the seventh-day Sabbath and a widespread introduction of first-day observance allegedly occurred just after the second Jewish war and while Hadrian was still alive, within three years, between A.D. 135 and 138—or soon afterwards. A spinoff of this idea is support for “The Primacy of the Church of Rome,” a teaching of vital importance to the papacy. Presented in *From Sabbath to Sunday* as a six-page section with just that heading, it communicates a distinctly Catholic perspective.

After quotations from and references to church fathers as well as several modern scholars, Bacchiocchi wrote: “In the light of these indications the Church of Rome seems to have emerged to a position of pre-eminence already in the second century. The Roman Pontiff was in fact the only ecclesiastical authority widely recognized and capable of influencing the greater part of Christendom (even though some churches rejected his instructions) to accept new customs or observations.”²³

In 2001, William H. Shea described a fatal flaw in the Bacchiocchian hypothesis of early, general Sunday observance as a substitute for keeping the seventh-day Sabbath. His fifteen-page article, entitled “Justin Martyr’s Sunday Worship Statement: A Forged Appendix,” is a most persuasive analysis. He found that Chapter 67 of the Martyr’s testimony—a crucial basis for Bacchiocchi’s argumentation—“does not come directly from Justin, but was interpolated into his work at some later time by some unknown later writer. If this important passage is an interpolation, then the purpose of that interpolation is evident: it was used to further support the transition from Sabbath to Sunday by projecting that transition back as early as the middle of the second century, thus gaining further prestige for Sunday.”²⁴

Shea provided excellent reasons for his conclusion, which readers can delve into for themselves. We are most impressed by Justin’s own testimony, which he was about to seal with his blood in his defense before Rusticus, the prefect who tried and sentenced him to death:

One of the questions during Justin’s examination by Rusticus has to do with the Christians’ assemblies. The exchange between these two individuals runs as follows:

Rusticus the prefect said, “Where do you assemble?” Justin said, “Where each one chooses and can: for do you fancy that we all meet in the very same place? Not so; because the God of the Christians is not circumscribed by place; but being invisible, fills heaven and earth, and everywhere is worshipped and glorified by the faithful.” Rusticus the prefect said, “Tell me where you assemble, or into what place do you collect your followers?” Justin said, “I live above one Martinus, at the Timiotinian Bath; and during the whole time (and I am now living in Rome for the second time) I am unaware of any other meeting than his.” (“The Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs,” Chap. 2, *ANF*, 1:305).²⁵

But the interpolation—a forgery—quoted by Bacchiocchi says: “On the day which is called *Sunday* . . . we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts.” The words *common assembly* as well as the plurals *cities* and *districts* claim that the practice was prevalent, perhaps throughout the Roman Empire.

Shea summed up his own findings as follows: “These lines of evidence demonstrate that Chapter 67 does not belong with Justin’s *First Apology*. It was placed there later by some anonymous author who wished to enhance the acceptance of Sunday by reading it back into the time of Justin in the middle of the second century. We do not know who did this or when it was done, but one might estimate that it occurred sometime during the third or fourth centuries A.D., when the spread of the Christian Sunday took on greater proportions. That was not the case in Justin’s time in the second century.”²⁶

So an essential part of Bacchiocchi’s *From Sabbath to Sunday* is built on shifting sand. When this is removed from under his position, his evidence for a change to large-scale, universal Sunday observance in or shortly after A.D. 135 collapses.

This is not to say that venerating the first day of the week did not begin quite early. Both the anti-Semitism which Bacchiocchi dwelt on and a syncretistic tendency undoubtedly promoted it, but his version of just when and how it happened is unacceptable.

Justin Martyr (c. 100-c. 165) belonged to a new breed of early Christians. An erudite man, he remained enchanted by Greek philosophy, literature, and culture. Another person like him, who wrote a little later, was pseudo-Barnabas—allegedly a companion of the apostle Paul. Like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and others, these men sought common ground between their faith in Jesus, a lowly Galilean, and the writers of Hellas. To do this, they used an allegorical method of interpretation to bridge the gap between the Greek myths and the Bible.

More than a century ago, a scholarly Seventh Day Baptist church historian, Abram Herbert Lewis, harshly—though not unjustly—mentioned and condemned them all as “pagano-Christian leaders.”²⁷

Amongst others, he referred to Justin Martyr as “an eminent example of one

who perverted the Scriptures while claiming to explain them.”²⁸ For instance, near the end of his *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin stated that “Noah, along with the other mortals at the deluge, *i.e.*, with his own wife, his three sons, and their wives, being eight in number, are a symbol of the eighth day wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead . . .”²⁹ Dr. Lewis apparently did not know, as Shea would demonstrate a century after him, that the key passage in Justin’s *Apology* was a forgery. Nevertheless, he did point out peculiar deficiencies in it. First, “there is nothing scriptural in the reasons given.” Second, “no sabbatic regard” is ascribed to Sunday. That is, we do not read that people refrained from work on it. In those days, some people were observing Sunday as a prayer day but not as a Sabbath.³⁰

Concluding this analysis of first-day observance, Lewis said (and these are his own italics): “It is enough to add under this head, that *no writer of the first three hundred years gives, or attempts to give, a scriptural reason for observing Sunday. There are no such reasons to give.*”³¹

Bacchiocchi was correct in pointing out that some form of Sunday observance began early, and a few writers like Justin indeed promoted it. But it did not almost overnight to a large extent obliterate Sabbathkeeping. That would not happen for several centuries. Denying this other truth is grossly inaccurate.

V

To reach us, the documents of early Christianity had to be manually copied over and over again. Threatening them were the normal ravages of all-devouring time. But as they traveled down the centuries, they also had to penetrate the barriers of opinionated minds that sought to alter them or even to prevent their further passage through the years.

About this, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Century* (1997) by Ramsay MacMullen (b. 1928), Dunham Professor Emeritus of History and Classics at Yale University, is most enlightening. He said that rewriting or editing the past began early, with Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, who lived in the fourth century. Outside the Bible, this prelate wrote the first history of the Christian Church but limited himself to “‘what may profit.’ His example found favor among successors, by whom all sorts of details were bent out of shape or passed over, events were entirely suppressed, church councils deliberately forgotten . . .”³²

After Eusebius, the spirit animating the Great Apostasy struck even bolder blows against the truth. A favorite Catholic stratagem from time immemorial was to destroy the books and other writings of opponents, together with the records that mention them.

Ellen G. White described this custom and its consequences as follows: “The history of God’s people during the ages of darkness that followed Rome’s supremacy is written in heaven, but they have little place in human records. Few traces of their existence can be found, except in the accusations of their

persecutors. It was the policy of Rome to obliterate every trace of dissent from her doctrines or decrees. Everything heretical, whether persons or writings, she sought to destroy. Expressions of doubts, or questions as to the authority of papal dogmas, were enough to forfeit the life of rich or poor, high or low. Rome endeavored also to destroy every record of her cruelty toward dissenters. Papal councils decreed that books and writings containing such records should be committed to the flames. Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favorable for preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romanists from carrying out their purpose.”³³

Those words were published during 1888 in the first edition of her masterpiece, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, and especially focus on the Vaudois of Piedmont in the Cottian Alps.

Predominating nowadays is the originally Catholic contention that the Waldensian Church was founded in the twelfth century by a Frenchman, variously named but known in English as Peter Waldo (c. 1140-c. 1218), a merchant from Lyon. A hundred years and more ago, however, Protestant authors often painted a very different picture. Though acknowledging Waldo as an important figure, they said the Vaudois had originated many centuries before his time. They were, in fact, a remnant of primitive Christianity which had rejected the apostasy radiating from Rome. We mention a few of these writers, whose works are fortunately again available via the Internet.

Roma papale (Papal Rome) was published at Florence in 1865.³⁴ Its Italian author Luigi Desanctis (1808-1869) was a Waldensian minister converted from Catholicism. Formerly he had, amongst other things, been a highly esteemed parish priest at the church of the Maddalena alla Rotonda in Rome, professor of theology, and an official censor of the Inquisition. In 1903, this work, competently translated by eighty-one-year-old Maria Betts of Pembury, was reissued under a new title: *Popery, Puseyism, Jesuitism*. It proved to be very popular, so that its second edition appeared just two years later.³⁵ In it, a Waldensian—who was evidently Desanctis’s alter ego—conducted a tour among the ancient monuments of Rome. After the group which was with him had viewed the Arch of Titus, they ascended “the neighbouring side of the Palatine Hill to see the ruins of the Palace of the Caesar.” And then: “‘See,’ said the Waldensian, ‘a beautiful monument of ecclesiastical antiquity. These rough materials are the ruins of the two great Palatine libraries, one Greek, and the other Latin, where the precious manuscripts of our ancestors were collected, and which Pope Gregory I., called the Great [c. 540–604, reigned from 590], caused to be burnt.’”³⁶ Another pontiff has long since sainted him, but culturally he was a barbarian.

The History of the Waldenses by James Aitken Wylie (1808-1890) of Scotland first appeared in 1860.³⁷ This book greatly impressed Ellen G. White, and is cited in her *Great Controversy*.

Earlier, in 1847, Antoine Monastier, a Waldensian pastor who wrote in French, had published his *History of the Waldensian Church Since Its Origin and of the Vaudois of Piemont Until Our Day*.³⁸ An appendix lists the Vaudois

writings in two catalogues. The second of them mentions their ancient works collected from the Valleys by a learned pastor, Jean Léger, and handed over for safekeeping to Lord Morland, the British ambassador at Turin, in 1658. He, again, deposited them in the library of Cambridge University.³⁹ Monastier said these writings had been collected during the seventeenth century “after several horrible persecutions which had already destroyed much,” although he did find some other copies.⁴⁰

Well before Monastier, William Stephen Gilly published his *Waldensian Researches During a Second Visit to the Vaudois of Piemont, With an Introductory Inquiry into the Antiquity and Purity of the Waldensian Church* (1831).⁴¹ Dr. Gilly, Canon of Durham and Vicar of Norham, provided one of the sources for Wylie, who explicitly named him and lauded his work.⁴²

Gilly, a learned and conscientious researcher, was frustrated by a scarcity of early source material. He concluded: “Either the pages of history have not been enriched by any Waldensian authors of a very early date, or if there were any annals written by native chroniclers, previously to the year 1000, they have accidentally perished amidst the devastations committed in the valleys, or they have been purposely destroyed by their enemies. I am inclined to adopt the latter opinion . . .”⁴³

In support of this idea, he first cited the monks Belvidere and Rorengo, who had paid inquisitorial visits to the Waldensian valleys. They admitted: “Heretics had been found at all periods of history in the valley of Angrogna” and that these people “were not a new sect in the ninth and tenth centuries.” Gilly commented: “It is very likely that they had access to documents, which they did not permit the world to hear of any more. The suspicion is confirmed by that which Claude Seissel, Archbishop of Turin, said of them about the year 1500. ‘The Vaudois sect, which originated with one Leon, a devout man in the time of Constantine the Great,’ etc.”⁴⁴ Further, too, according to Gilly: “Leger, the Vaudois historian of the seventeenth century, declared that there was no artifice, no exertion, no expence spared by the enemies of his church, both in quiet and troublesome times, to efface all records of the ancient Vaudois from the face of the earth; and added, that after he himself had searched every where, and had collected what he could relating to the antiquity of the Waldenses, every book and every morsel of paper was taken away from him during the massacres of 1655, and carried to Turin. Not the least scrap was left to him, and it was by incredible pains that he was able to gather the materials of his history, from relics that were preserved in the neighbouring provinces of France.”⁴⁵

Frustration awaited Gilly on his return to England: “It is a singular thing that the destruction or rapine, which has been so fatal to Waldensian documents, should have pursued them even to the place of security, to which all, that remained, were consigned by Morland, in 1658, the library of the university of Cambridge. The most ancient of these relics were ticketed in seven packets, distinguished by letters of the alphabet, from A to G. The whole of these were missing when I made enquiry for them, in 1823.”⁴⁶

By 1865, according to James Henthorn Todd, senior fellow and regius

professor at Trinity College, Dublin, this had led to the question: “Were these MSS. ever at Cambridge?” for no catalogue at the place mentioned them.⁴⁷ Even more: slanderous tongues began to besmirch the names of the long-dead Jean Léger and Lord Morland. But this, said Todd, was wrong; for “Whilst we were discussing, a quarter of a century ago, the circumstantial evidence which seemed to establish so strongly the dishonesty of Leger and the fraudulent connivance of Morland, the supposed missing volumes were lying unknown, and buried in their dust, untouched for upwards of 200 years, on the very shelf where Morland had placed them.”⁴⁸ But Todd was in Dublin, Ireland, not Cambridge, England, so he could not pursue this further; therefore, he contented himself with cataloguing and studying the Waldensian manuscripts at his own college.

Gilly, however, was never fully satisfied. He went the way of all flesh without ever finding those missing packets that he had so diligently looked for in 1823. Another century passed. In 1935, LeRoy Edwin Froom, a great Seventh-day Adventist researcher, accompanied by Prof. Alfred Vaucher of Collonges College in France, went to the Vaudois valleys. At Torre Pellice they visited its Waldensian college and library. “Here I secured information concerning the precious Waldensian documents that, in the time of bitter persecution, had been sent to Cambridge University, England, for safekeeping.”⁴⁹

Afterwards Froom, by prior arrangement, traveled there and asked for access to the Waldensian materials. All of them were readily available, except a set of books labeled A to Z, which had been missing for many years. “This was disappointing, for the most important items were listed as being in those earlier volumes. I appealed for special search to be made, and for them to be traced back through the records of the past.” A day or two later, the attendant helping him found them all and exuberantly brought them to Froom. Because of the Romaunt language in which the manuscripts were written, they had been “catalogued as some unidentified antiquated Spanish writings.”⁵⁰ They had remained there, undisturbed, beyond the reach of all but the right person who was destined to find them. Froom wrote: “Their recovery was of real importance and has a definite bearing on the whole question of our understanding of the medieval church and its positions. Here was Providence again at work.”⁵¹ Gilly, gone for a hundred years, would have been so happy. The enemies of truth had after all not, as he feared, found and eliminated those manuscripts; and Jean Léger as well as Lord Morland were after three centuries fully vindicated.

Nevertheless, just as Ellen G. White wrote in 1888, and as other authors likewise pointed out, unscrupulous hands had erased so much through so many ages. This fact has also been startlingly confirmed by Ramsay MacMullen, in 1998, on the threshold of the twenty-first century:

“In late antiquity, both secular and ecclesiastical authorities repeatedly destroyed unedifying texts, in well advertised ceremonies, most obviously in sectarian disputes where rival claims for orthodoxy were pitted against each

other; whereupon one of them along with its creeds and treatises would be declared heterodox by the other, and measures would be taken to insure that no trace of its existence remained except, perhaps, what might be embedded in victorious disproofs and rejoinders. Non-Christian writings came in for this same treatment, that is, destruction in great bonfires at the center of the town square. Copyists were discouraged from replacing them by the threat of having their hands cut off.”⁵²

The implication is staggering. Vital parts of early as well as late medieval history, having been falsified, are really unknown, just as Ellen G. White expressed it.

A brilliant statement, often—though perhaps erroneously—attributed to George Orwell’s *1984*, expresses the intention behind such acts: “He who controls the past, controls the future; and he who controls the present, controls the past.” From a very early period, the papacy has understood this truth and deliberately, from time to time, rewritten history. Endowed with a more-than-human, malignant ability, the Church of Rome desired and still desires to preempt what is to come through falsified data, by creating a mindset for future generations. Inclined to think the thoughts implanted in this way, they would tend to create a world promoting its vital interests.

The prophet Daniel predicted the rise of such a power under the image of a Little Horn. It would have not only “a mouth speaking great things,” but also “eyes like the eyes of man” (Dan. 7:8). It would be able to look deep into the nature of reality as people usually understand it, and seek to shape it for the furtherance of its own designs.

The history passed on from previous Christian centuries is therefore often distorted or falsified. Many documents originating in and before the Middle Ages are unreliable. Conspicuous, too, is the present-day nonexistence of writings by those who in the earliest centuries must have vigorously opposed all efforts to bring in Sundaykeeping and especially to downgrade the Sabbath according to the decalogue. Time, or rather the Roman Church, has largely erased them.

VI

Against that background, we return to Justin Martyr’s *Apology* and what Bacchiocchi had to say about it. Being from such an early period, it had to be transmitted down to us through a long, benighted era. Its details—to quote MacMullen again—were “bent out of shape” and should not be taken at face value.

Its oldest transcript still available was made 1200 years after its original had been produced, in the fourteenth century. According to Kevin Knight in his *Catholic Encyclopedia*, “There are extant but three works of Justin, of which the authenticity is assured: the two ‘Apologies’ and the ‘Dialogue’. They are to be found in two manuscripts: Paris gr. 450, finished on 11 September, 1364; and Claromont. 82, written in 1571, actually at Cheltenham, in the possession

of M. T. F. Fenwick. The second is only a copy of the first, which is therefore our sole authority; unfortunately this manuscript is very imperfect (Harnack, 'Die Ueberlieferung der griech. Apologeten' in 'Texte und Untersuchungen', I, Leipzig, 1883, i. 73–89; Archambault, 'Justin, Dialogue a vec Tryphon', Paris, 1909, p. xii–xxxviii). There are many large gaps in this manuscript, thus II. Apol., ii, is almost entirely wanting, but it has been found possible to restore the manuscript text from a quotation of Eusebius (*Church History* IV, xvii).⁵³

But for us the last-mentioned reference is hardly reassuring. Eusebius, as we now know, was an extremely biased historian.

VII

So how and when did Sunday observance really originate? As Bacchiocchi indicated, it began with a single annual Easter, celebrating Jesus' resurrection on that day. Afterwards it became a weekly institution,⁵⁴ a *pasquetta* (little Easter), as Italians still call it.⁵⁵ But from what has been said above, general Sundaykeeping did not originate in or shortly after Hadrian's reign, according to the Bacchiocchi timeline. This came later. Moreover, the first day of the week did not immediately replace the seventh-day Sabbath. The two institutions existed side by side for several generations.

According to Ellen G. White, the substitution went through several stages. "In the first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians." Then, at a time which she does not specify, Sunday "was made a festival in honor of the resurrection of Christ. Religious services were held upon it; yet it was regarded as a day of recreation, the Sabbath being still sacredly observed." But after this the devil, who was stealthily inspiring the changeover, "cast contempt upon it as a Jewish institution. While Christians generally continued to observe the Sunday as a joyous festival, he led them, in order to show their hatred of Judaism, to make the Sabbath a fast, a day of sadness and gloom." A further step occurred in the fourth century, when "the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire."⁵⁶

Even this was not the end of the process. "The archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner and to exercise his power through his vicegerent, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ. Through half-converted pagans, ambitious prelates, and world-loving churchmen he accomplished his purpose. Vast councils were held from time to time, in which the dignitaries of the church were convened from all the world. In nearly every council the Sabbath which God had instituted was pressed down a little lower, while the Sunday was correspondingly exalted. Thus the pagan festival came finally to be honored as a divine institution, while the Bible Sabbath was pronounced a relic of Judaism, and its observers were declared to be accursed."⁵⁷

In his *Endtime Issues Newsletter* No. 202 of 5 June 2008, Bacchiocchi rejected this explanation by Ellen G. White. He refused to believe that "In the

first centuries the true Sabbath had been kept by all Christians.” In thrusting this statement aside, he also garbled her account by telescoping together some of her remarks and omitting others. He knew, moreover, that those who belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church—of which he used to be a minister—believed she was inspired, though neither she nor they considered her writings as important as the Bible. For more about this and *The Great Controversy*, we refer the reader to Appendix IV.

Bacchiocchi said Ellen G. White had been in error. To this, he added an even more dangerous idea (via quotations from somebody else’s book for which he was an agent), namely that those who wrote the Bible also made mistakes, “including the numerous discrepancies in the NT” as in the four Gospels.⁵⁸

Here our analysis could easily degenerate into a he said/she said wrangle or nitpicking arguments about inspiration. Let us rather ask: Are there any documents, independent of either Bacchiocchi or Ellen G. White, which show that during the early centuries Christians widely observed the seventh-day Sabbath? This is, after all, the crux of the matter.

Amongst other writers, two ancient Byzantine historians have provided us with exactly such material, clear evidence which sustains Ellen G. White’s contention and also meshes with William H. Shea’s discovery that the Sunday worship statement in Justin Martyr’s *Apology* is a forgery:

Socrates Scholasticus (c. 380–c. 450), wrote: “For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries [the Lord’s Supper, etc.] on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.”⁵⁹ And according to Sozomen (c. 400–c. 450), who was Socrates’ contemporary, “The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria.”⁶⁰

VIII

Further evidence is provided by etymology, the study of where words and expressions in modern languages have come from, to see what they used to mean originally. Sometimes called historical linguistics, it is a kind of language paleontology, treating such material as fossils from olden times yet still encrusted within present-day contexts.

We begin by noting that in Italian the word for *Saturday* is *sabato*. In Spanish as well as Portuguese it is *sábado* and *sâmbătă* in Romanian. All these words are obviously related. So, too—though less transparently—is *samedi* in French, which used to mean “Sabbath day.”⁶¹ What links these five languages together is a common ancestry. They were all originally dialects of Latin, from which they diverged by being spoken in different parts of the Roman Empire. All those words for *Saturday* derive from one original word: *sabbatum*. This, again, is simply the Latinized form of the

Greek σαββατον (Sabbaton), which occurs in the New Testament (Luke 23:56) and ultimately comes from the Hebrew שַׁבָּת (Shabbat) in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8–11).

Furthermore, “Saturday is officially called *Samstag* in all German-speaking countries,” although *Sonnabend* is also used. What is the origin of *Samstag*? “It derives from Old High German *sambaztac*, which itself derives from Greek Σαββατο . . .”⁶²

All this is a legacy, not of Judaism but of early Christianity. As for when *sabbatum*/σαββατο(ν) established itself in the Mediterranean vocabulary, this must obviously have happened during the first few centuries of our era. More light is thrown on this by an etymological look at present-day Greek.

IX

Its speakers still consider Saturday the seventh day of the week and call it τὸ Σάββατον or τὸ Σάββατο, *to sávaton/sávato* (the Sabbath). This is followed by ἡ Κυριακή, *i kiriakí* (the Lord’s [day]), which indicates a transitional stage from a later time, reflecting the coexistence of Sunday observance with Sabbathkeeping. Monday, however, is ἡ Δευτέρα, *i dheftéra* (the second [day]); Tuesday, ἡ Τρίτη, *i tríti* (the third [day]); Wednesday, ἡ Τετάρτη, *i tetárti* (the fourth [day]); and Thursday, ἡ Πέμπτη, *i pémpiti* (the fifth [day]). But Friday has a special name: ἡ Παρασκευή, *i paraskeví*.⁶³

This, too, is a New Testament word, in relation to Passion Weekend. Luke 23:54 informs us, in the Koiné Greek of almost two thousand years ago, that the crucifixion took place on the παρασκευή (*paraskeuē*). Modern Greek has preserved the identical spelling, though nowadays it is pronounced *paraskeví*. Our Bible has translated this as “the day of Preparation,” since the Sabbath was beginning. The apostle John said that these events took place on “the Jewish day of Preparation” (19:42), which Mark explained as “the day before the sabbath” (15:42).

It is fascinating that the Greeks, who have mostly given up the Biblical Sabbath, have through the centuries kept on preserving its name intact—and even a memorial to those who regarded the sixth day (Friday) as a day to prepare for it. Apart from the post-Biblical interpretation of *i kiriakí* as Sunday (Lord’s Day), the names for all the days are based on the Bible.

Those for Monday through Thursday, quoted above, appear in the first two chapters of the Bible, according to the Septuagint, the Old Testament translation into Greek that the apostles and early Gentile Christians used throughout the Western world. By their meaning, these names bear a strong resemblance to those that are used in modern Hebrew, which still adheres to the original names in Gen. 1 and 2 as well as Ex 20:10, i.e. *Day One*, *Second Day*, *Third Day*, *Fourth Day*, *Fifth Day*, *Sixth Day*, *Sabbath*.

For the first of these, none of the four Gospels uses ἡ Κυριακή, *i*

kiriaki. All of them call it *μία των σαββάτων*, *mia tōn sabbatōn*, “one (day) of the sabbaths.” *Mia* does not mean “first” but “one.”

This seems like a peculiar variant, until we go back to Gen. 1:5, in the creation story. Like most translations, the King James for this gives “the first day”; but that is not how the Hebrew original puts it. It says, *yom echad* (day one). And so does the Septuagint: ἡμέρα μία, *hēmera mia*, and also the Gospel writers, who quote from it. In the fourth commandment, the Septuagint uses the word *Sabbath* in the plural (Ex. 20:10). This also came to mean “week.” That is why the four Gospels in speaking of what we call Sunday, name it *mia tōn sabbatōn*, that is, *day one of the Sabbaths/week*.

The present-day Greek names for the days of the week established themselves at a time when Christians still recognized the Sabbath but had also begun with Sunday observance. This may have been in about the time of Constantine or afterwards.

In the Orthodox tradition, the seventh-day Sabbath survived longer than in the West. Evidence for this exists in the Eastern and Central European languages. The Russians adopted Constantinople’s version of Christianity only in 988-989 under Vladimir (d. 1015), “grand prince of Kiev and of all Russia.”⁶⁴ They speak of *subbōta*, which J. L. I. Fennell in his book for teaching Russian explains as “Saturday (the Sabbath).”⁶⁵ With variations, this word also found its way into other East and Central European languages, e.g. *súbuta* in Serbo-Croatian, *sobota* in both Polish and Czech. In Hungarian, a non-Slavonic language, it is *szombat*.⁶⁶

These examples are incomplete. They do, however, constitute irrefutable evidence, sufficient to prove that for many years the early Christians kept the Ten Commandments, which included resting on the seventh-day Sabbath.

Some readers may wish to delve more deeply into this topic. They can find much additional material on the Internet. Most impressive is the *Chart of the Week* in one hundred and sixty languages by William Meade Jones (1818–1895), a saintly Seventh Day Baptist polyglot. Born in America, he was eventually called to pastor the famous Mill Yard Church in London. Granted an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Alfred University in 1886, he was also “Professor of Arabic and Hebrew at the City of London College, Moorfields, for several years, and was a member of many societies.”⁶⁷

Jones’s simple Chart, which covers many eras and countries, gives the names of every day in the week. All items are in English, except for the column “Name of the SEVENTH DAY.” This mentions, in the Latin alphabet, two forms: one in the language concerned; the other, its translation.⁶⁸

Etymological facts—language paleontology, as we have also called our analysis—provide additional support for Ellen G. White’s explanation rather than the views of Samuele Bacchiocchi.

Chapter Ten
THE PRIMACY OF PETER?

I

In 1651, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) declared: “The papacy is no other, than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon the grave thereof: for so did the papacy start up on a sudden out of the ruins of that heathen power.”¹ The writer was a famous British polymath: philosopher, political theorist, translator of Homer, and even a minor Latin poet.² *Leviathan*, the book that contains this celebrated statement, is an English classic (the spelling and punctuation of which we here have modernized).

Hobbes in several passages elaborated his idea that the papal power was a rump state of the Roman Empire. About Latin, which Catholicism has retained and “which is not commonly used by any nation now in the world,” he asked: “What is it but the ghost of the old Roman language?” Many other things, too, had been inherited from the ancient imperial religion. Therefore, he spoke of the “old empty bottles of gentilism, which the doctors of the Roman Church, either by negligence or ambition, have filled up again with the new wine of Christianity.”³

In pagan times, the kingpin of the Empire was Caesar Augustus and his successors to the throne. They represented Rome itself, so the Senate voted divine honors to most of them after their death. However, Domitian, a vicious man who ruled from A.D. 81 to A.D. 96, personally insisted “on being addressed as *dominus et deus* (‘master and god’)” in his lifetime.⁴ Such men, supposedly divine, had to be worshiped. This practice derived from earlier Middle Eastern states. One of the imperial titles was *The Son of God*, which happened to coincide with Christian usage. We have already shown how Benedict XVI made that assertion. He also said this title had first been applied to Babylonian and Egyptian kings.⁵ Incidentally, while this was true of all the Pharaohs, only some Mesopotamian rulers claimed to be divine.

That for centuries the popes have been described as vicars of the Son of God, an idea not present in the Bible, is part of their syncretistic, pagan heritage. But have they also dared to go further in imitating the old Roman emperors through an aspiration to divinity? Indeed, they have. Lucius Ferraris, whom we have already cited, said the pontiff was both the *vicarius Filii Dei* and so to speak “God on earth.”⁶

Let us, however, return to Hobbes, who mentioned specific parallels between pagan and papal practice. Instances of this were “the carrying about of images in procession” and “the bearing of burning torches, and candles, before the images of the gods, both amongst the Greeks and Romans. For afterwards the emperors of Rome received the same honor . . . And in process of time, the devout but ignorant people did many times honor their bishops with the like pomp of wax candles, and the images of our Saviour and the saints, constantly, in the church itself.”⁷ Curiously, the canonization of saints is also a relic from

pagan Rome. It bestowed posthumous sanctity on its greatest leaders, from Romulus to its emperors. Even Julius Caesar was proclaimed a saint!⁸

About the claim to Petrine Primacy, which the popes asserted had given them authority over all other religious leaders, Hobbes declared: “It is not any privilege of St. Peter, but the privilege of the city of Rome, which the emperors were always willing to uphold, that gave them such authority over other bishops; as may be evidently seen by [the fact] that the bishop of Constantinople, when the emperor made that city the seat of the Empire, pretended to be equal to the bishop of Rome; though at last, not without contention, the pope carried it and became the *Pontifex Maximus*; but in right only of the emperor . . .”⁹

Hobbes was sarcastic about “the errors brought in from false or uncertain history, what is all the legend of fictitious miracles in the lives of the saints and all the histories of apparitions and ghosts, alleged by the doctors [but] which have no warrant, neither in reason nor Scripture; as also those traditions which they call the unwritten Word of God.” These, he asserted, were just “old wives’ fables.”¹⁰

Two hundred years after Hobbes, Ellen G. White in 1888 commented on how paganism had gained the upper hand over Christianity, especially after Constantine’s nominal conversion. Abetted by the bishops, he deliberately amalgamated his sun-worshipping Mithraic cult with the requirements of the gospel. And then “the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church.” The result was that “Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror.”¹¹ So the victory did not, after all, go to Christianity but to heathenism. The Great Apostasy, by perverting the gospel of Jesus Christ and through other dogmas at variance with Bible truth, is essentially a semipagan religion.

II

In the Olivet discourse, just before his crucifixion, the Saviour left us vital clues to heaven’s view of Rome: “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains . . .” (Matt. 24:15, 16). Jesus was speaking of the Roman army that would encircle and finally destroy Jerusalem, together with its temple.

Let us break down this expression into its two components.

It is called “the abomination,” Rome as Jesus conceived of it. “Desolation” is what it brought about, both physically—even to the extent of destroying God’s ancient people, the Jews—and through its assaults on the Lord’s sanctuary on earth and in heaven. Let us page back to “Daniel the prophet” to examine briefly what that ancient seer foretold. We discover that much of it concerned this same entity, linked to all the prophetic time periods in his book.

When still a lad, in his explanation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the young prophet explained: “And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch

as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise” (Dan. 2:40). Rome, throughout its career, as a republic or as an empire, had a habit of using force to smash and hurt whatever nation or individual dared to oppose it. It could also be cunningly diplomatic when it had to be.

Years afterwards, beyond Nebuchadnezzar’s time, the now aged Daniel in night visions saw four beasts climbing up out of the Mediterranean. The fourth one was “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” (Dan. 7:7). Daniel’s attention was especially drawn to this nasty, cyborg creature, part animal, part metal. It “was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet” (vs. 19). The two metals, iron and brass, also featured in Nebuchadnezzar’s image, identifying the fourth beast as a Graeco-Roman state. However, the focus now shifted from the ancient Empire to the kingdoms into which, at least throughout the West, it had broken up, and especially the Little Horn. The latter represented an ascendant papacy, after three of the previous horns had been “plucked up.” It is on this entity that Daniel’s attention was riveted, for in it “were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (vs. 8). What particularly distressed him was that “the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them” until the time of the judgment (vv. 21-22).

To Daniel, who was seeking to understand this vision, a heavenly expositor explained it. He reemphasized the ferocity as well as the destructiveness of the beast. “Thus, he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces” (vs. 23). But what about the Little Horn? “He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (vs. 25). As already shown, this is the 1260 year-days that the books of Daniel and the Revelation mention no fewer than seven times. For this period, the papacy would be largely victorious over those whom God regards as his people. Another of its characteristics was that it would sacrilegiously “think to change times and the laws,” which climaxes the mystery of lawlessness dealt with in the previous chapter.

Dan. 8 augments Dan. 7 with further explanations, though it uses different imagery, based on a sheep ram and a he-goat. Both of these are sanctuary animals. Symbolically they also represent the Medo-Persians and the Greeks, especially those of Hellenistic times. At first glance, this vision seems to be about another Little Horn grown huge, because its career is not limited to the 1260 year-days. It is rather fitted into the 2300 year-days, the longest time prophecy in the Bible, stretching from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844. Nor does it grow on the head of the Roman beast but seems to issue from a Grecian horn. As we

will show in a future book, this symbolism is most appropriate. Even biologically, the Romans were partly descended from the ancient Greeks, who had settled in southern Italy all the way up to Naples as well as in western Sicily. Very much of Roman culture, philosophy, and religion were also derived from them.

A mighty Being instructed the angel Gabriel to tell Daniel what this vision meant. He likewise stressed the destructiveness of Rome, but also added that “the prince of the host”—the Messiah, the Lord Jesus himself—would become its special target. Indeed, “the place of his sanctuary” would be “cast down.” The Little Horn “cast down the truth to the ground: and it practiced, and prospered.” (Dan. 8:11-12). In this vision, Daniel heard a holy being question another saint about this horrible creature, which he called “the transgression of desolation” (vs. 13). The answer came: “His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.” (Vv. 24-26). In his discourse on the Mount of Olives, our Lord was especially referring to this prediction.

The Little Horn of Dan. 8 is different from the one in Dan. 7 in being more comprehensive. It provides a larger context, representing Rome as a whole in its relation to the Holy Land, its people, and Christ himself. For Jesus sitting on the Mount of Olives, as for the later Hobbes and Ellen G. White, there was no essential difference—although, when necessary, the Lord prophetically does distinguish between these aspects. Rome as an agent of the Evil One put the Redeemer to death and then in A.D. 70 went on to destroy Jerusalem together with its magnificent temple.

However we may interpret the role of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus’ time, it was the Romans who actually crucified him and afterward destroyed both the Jews as a nation state and their ancient sanctuary. The symbolism of Dan. 8 can therefore not be limited to the papacy, yet in some sense this must also be included; otherwise the juxtaposition of the Little Horn in Dan. 7 with the one in Dan. 8 would be more than awkward.

In God’s eyes, Rome is Rome from beginning to end. The Papal States became a rump of it, the Holy Roman Empire sought to revive it, the Vatican today perpetuates it. Ultimately, it aims at reestablishing its domination on a planetary scale.

Dan. 9 recounts how the angel Gabriel returned to continue Heaven’s explanation of Dan. 8. He related it to the seventy prophetic weeks or 490 literal years, which form part of the 2300 year-days. Verses 26 and 27, with which the chapter ends, predict:

And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.

And the people of the prince who is to come
 Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
 The end of it shall be with a flood,
 And till the end of the war desolations are
 determined.
 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many
 for one week;
 But in the middle of the week
 He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
 And on the wing of abominations shall be
 one who makes desolate.
 Even until the consummation, which is
 determined,
 Is poured out on the desolate. (Dan. 9:26-27, RKJV)

This prophecy, uttered centuries earlier, foretold that Rome at a specific time would murder the Messiah and then destroy Jerusalem together with the sanctuary in it. In the passage cited, the words “abominations” and “desolations” occur explicitly.

Dan. 11 likewise depicts the animosity of this entity against God’s “holy covenant” as well as an armed assault on “the sanctuary of strength,” which will be polluted. Moreover, Rome was destined to “take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.” (Dan. 11:30-31) In both these Scriptures, *sacrifice* is a supplied word which is absent from the original. “The daily” was the תמיד (tamid), as the Hebrew original puts it, encompassing a good deal more.

For Israelites and Jews, it was really the entire sanctuary service. For some Christians, it therefore refers to the risen Lord’s intercessory work on our behalf in heaven. Others, however, interpret it as paganism. This issue is discussed in a further chapter.

The abomination that makes desolate is mentioned yet again in Daniel’s final verses, where it is linked with three related time prophecies, 1260, 1290, the 1335 year-days. About the second last of these, we read: “From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days” (Dan. 12:11). We particularly note that the words “set up,” like “place” in Dan. 11:31, refers not to the mere existence of the abomination that makes desolate—for it is an ancient thing—but a specific further development, to be dealt with later in its proper place.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus looked back to Daniel’s predictions. He also looked forward: “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21: 24). These words are closely mirrored in the Apocalypse: “And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave

out, and measure it not; for *it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot* forty and two months. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.” (Rev. 11:1–3, emphasis added.)

When Christians interpret these prophecies, they often omit the Jews, as though God were no longer interested in his ancient people. Such a position cannot, however, be sustained from his Holy Word. In the terrible time of papal oppression, not only his true Christian followers were persecuted, often slaughtered, for their faith. Horrible treatment was also meted out to the Jews, of whom many were precious in his sight. Most significantly, these remained a perpetual witness to the true Sabbath, for which we honor them. We are not Dispensationalists. Nevertheless, we believe that according to Rev. 11:1-3 there would no longer be a heavenly prohibition against the existence of a state for the Jews. At any time after 1798, they could return.

But, it may be objected, with the crucifixion the services of the earthly temple lost their significance. The sacrifices, the priests with their intercession for sinners, and the great national festivals had been symbols, foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah, who came to redeem the world. And yet the temple built in Solomon’s day and rebuilt when the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity, as well as its predecessor, the tabernacle created when Moses still led the chosen people, had for a millennium and a half been the object of God’s supreme regard. All this was remembered by Jesus, the incarnated Second Person of the holy Trinity and a Jew. In that vast expanse of time, it had been holy as nothing else on earth, and desecrating anything connected with it was punishable by death.

Even priests could and did die when they committed a sanctuary sin. Such were Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, the high priest. They put “strange fire” on their censers and then dared to appear before God. “And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified” (Lev. 10:1–4). In Samuel’s time, the Most High even rejected the entire line of Eli the high priest, because his sons Hophni and Phinehas—who were also “sons of Belial”—abused the sacrificial meat. They also fornicated “with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (1 Sam. 2:12–17, 22, 27–36) Their sentence was both to die “in one day” (vs. 34). Surely these were object lessons and warnings for all ages to come concerning those who serve at his altar!

When he executed these judgments, the sleepless guardian of his people, “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people” (Dan. 12:1), who has always “loved righteousness and hated lawlessness” (Heb. 1:9, RSV), did not let highpriestly “succession” stand in his way.

Not even the “supreme pontiff” Aaron or the great Moses himself was exempt. They died without realizing their dream, which they had cherished for so long, of entering Canaan with their people, whom they—guided by the

Lord—had freed from Egyptian bondage and led through the wilderness for forty wearisome years. But God insisted that they pay with their lives for committing a single, high-profile sin as described in Num. 20 and also referred to in several other passages.

At Meribah, the Israelites had bellyached, as so often before, because in that arid place they found nothing to drink. The Lord's response was to tell Moses and Aaron just to *speak* to a rock to satisfy their need. Accompanied by a very large crowd, the two men went to it. There an exasperated Moses exclaimed: "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. 20:10–12)

The Most High had intended this experience to have a great symbolic meaning. The rock pointed forward to the Redeemer, as Paul the great Apostle explained. The ancient Israelites, he wrote, "did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). Our Lord would be struck—sacrificed—only once and for all, after which the believer only had to ask to be forgiven. Those great leaders had spoiled an important symbol. By striking the rock again, they were typologically suggesting that the Saviour had to be sacrificed over and over again, as is now done in the mass. And this the Lord would not tolerate. For just marring a symbol—another sanctuary sin—both Moses and Aaron had to die.

Modern disobedient ministers, priests, and popes would do well to think on such things, rather than talk nonsense about the irrelevance of their personal characters to the sacredness of their office. Nothing could be further from what the Bible teaches.

Jesus, who was and remains a Jew, remembered. He could not lightly regard the desecration of the temple. Before his incarnation, he had graced it with his presence for so many centuries. Its precincts, too—the very approach to it—were also holy. It was intolerable to think that Gentile Roman soldiers would boldly thrust their way into and destroy that building, especially since their people would one day also deny the Saviour's intercession as the only mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim. 2:5) in a heavenly sanctuary. Rome was one day going to set up on earth a gigantic rival system of its own. It would be centered in the so-called sacrifice of the mass, with sinful mortal priests presuming to act as other Christs.

III

A Catholic error which Hobbes pointed out in several places is to teach "that the present church now militant on earth is the kingdom of God (that is, the kingdom of glory or the land of promise; not the kingdom of grace, which is but a promise of the land)." To this are annexed both ecclesiastical rights and

worldly benefits for the clergy, “as God’s public ministers.” Further, if “the church now on earth is the kingdom of Christ,” it is also reasonable to suppose that the Lord “hath some lieutenant amongst us, by whom we are to be told what are his commandments”—the pope! He would, in both religious and secular matters, be a universal monarch.¹² Such and more are the instructive and thought-provoking ideas of Thomas Hobbes.

To this, we add that traditional Catholic eschatology is based on a misinterpretation of prophecy, beginning with King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, as recorded in Dan. 2. He saw a great statue with a head of gold, a chest and arms of silver, a belly and thighs of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of iron and clay. These materials symbolize the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the kings of Europe. Also in that dream, a stone cut out without hands came hurtling onto the feet of the image, pulverizing it. Then it grew and grew until it filled the world. This, as the Bible explains and many Protestants have maintained, represents a future kingdom still to be set up by God, “which shall never be destroyed . . . it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44).

But according to expositors like Augustine of Hippo, “the imperial Catholic Church is the stone shattering all earthly kingdoms, until it fills the entire earth.” Other prophecies have also been fitted into this scheme. The millennium supposedly began when Christ was born, and the New Jerusalem is the eternal city of Rome¹³

IV

Catholicism in theory places its own traditions on the same level as, but in practice elevates them above, the Word of God. It even claims to have written it and that the pope has a monopoly for interpreting it. Let us take up these points in reverse order, as we find them in *Four Witnesses: The Early Church in Her Own Words* (2002) by Rod Bennett, a recent convert to and apologist for the Roman Church.

He said the pontiff was neither impeccable (incapable of sin) nor the originator of Biblical teaching. “All the pope is held to be is an infallible *interpreter* of that original revelation, someone who, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, will never say that something is part of the original revelation if it was not, or subtract something from that original revelation that truly belongs there.”¹⁴ How convenient! This preempts all theological debate and stops it in its tracks if it dares to go beyond what the Vatican teaches.

Bennett then stated that “the papacy (in the persons of Peter, Linus, Cletus [Anacletus], and Clement, at least) actually *predates* much of the Bible, and certainly predates the final canon of the Bible.”¹⁵ Apart from the unwarranted inclusion of the apostle’s name, we can agree with this—though Linus and Anacletus are not known to have strayed beyond the pages of the Word. About Clement, too, there is also not much to say beyond his presumptuous claims to episcopal power, which we have already looked at. But we continue with Bennett: “I also learned that the Christian Church had never been ‘based on’ the

Bible in the first place, but that the Bible had been based on the Church—in the sense that it was bishops of the Catholic Church who preserved it, who compiled it, who passed it down through the ages, and who vouched for it to the world.”¹⁶

Whoa! This blends together and therefore confuses two very different things: the individual books that constitute the New Testament and its canon. Neither Linus, nor Anacletus, nor Clement, nor any other Catholic bishop ever wrote an inspired part of it. As for canonicity, we basically agree with other Protestants about the following four criteria:

“1. *Apostolic Origin*—attributed to and based on the preaching/teaching of the first-generation apostles (or their close companions).

“2. *Universal Acceptance*—acknowledged by all major Christian communities in the ancient world (by the end of the fourth century).

“3. *Liturgical Use*—read publicly when early Christian communities gathered for the Lord’s Supper (their weekly worship services).

“4. *Consistent Message*—containing a theological outlook similar or complementary to other accepted Christian writings.”¹⁷ (Emphases added)

The papacy has effectively elevated its traditions above the Bible, despite its lip service to the Scriptures. In this, it also commits the academic sin of preferring secondary to primary sources. About this, let us explain by referring to *How to Study History* (1967) by Norman F. Cantor and Richard I. Schneider.

To help their students, these professors made the following elementary distinction, with italics which were all their own. “*A primary source is a work that was written at a time that is contemporary or nearly contemporary with the period or subject being studied.*”¹⁸ The books that make up the New Testament are primary sources. On the other hand, “*a secondary work for a subject is one that discusses the subject but is written after the time contemporary with it.*”¹⁹ Cantor and Schneider went on to explain that the difference was to be partly found in the role of inferences. These are conclusions and judgments about the primary sources. They also dealt with the phenomenon of a writer who distorted “the significance or meaning of the facts” and how this could happen, when he or she “has been opinionated; *opinions are personal and individual conclusions, identical in kind to inferences but without any support or grounding in fact.*”²⁰

All canon assemblers, whether Catholic or not, have only a secondary status. The same is true of the so-called Church Fathers, who were often biased and opinionated men. Of paramount importance are the individual Scriptures.

Some practices of the Roman Church, like Lent and Purgatory, are not based on the Bible. Often its doctrines contradict what the Word teaches, even to the extent of changing the Decalogue. For instance, as already shown, some widely used Catholic catechisms (though not Catholic Bibles) have omitted the Second Commandment, to legitimize idolatry, and abbreviated the Fourth, to further Sundaykeeping.

But the papacy does insist, on a certain passage in the Bible, repetitively and with undying fervor: the one that records the Redeemer's question: "But whom say ye that I am?" and Peter's answer: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To this, the Lord replied with a blessing, to which he added: "And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:15-19)

The Roman Church maintains that these words prove a cluster of doctrines: the Primacy of Peter, apostolic succession, and papal infallibility. The Twelve whom Jesus appointed supposedly continue through the centuries as Catholic bishops, headed by the pope. Here is how this dogma is officially stated by the 1983 *Codex Iuris Canonici*: "Can. 330. Just as by the Lord's decision Saint Peter and the other Apostles constitute one college, so in a like manner the Roman Pontiff, the successor of Peter, and the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, are united among themselves."²¹

By virtue of this office, the pope supposedly also cannot err when he speaks on matters of faith and morals; for he is the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. From this, it follows furthermore that the supreme pontiff should be free from governmental domination or oversight by any other ruler, for nobody has the right to judge him.

As Protestants have often pointed out, this interpretation is theologically unsound, as is clear from several awkward facts.

At the Council of Jerusalem, probably in A.D. 49, it was not Peter who presided but James (Acts 15:13), Jesus' stepbrother. And Paul makes it plain that his own apostleship was not derived from the Twelve, including Peter, or any other mere human being. Instead, the Resurrected One made a special trip from heaven back to planet Earth to confront and call him on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3-6, 15). Paul could therefore declare that in his ecclesiastical rank he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5). He even could and did reprimand Peter, the so-called first pope, for straying from the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:11-14).

Various writers have discussed the wordplay in the original text: "You are Πετρος [petros, *a stone*] and upon this πετρα [petra, *rock*] I will build my church" (Matt 16:18). The first of these words was the nickname Jesus gave Peter when they met for the first time. Since they both spoke Aramaic, it was actually Cephas, but the beloved apostle who recorded the event explained: ". . . which is by interpretation, A stone" (John 1:42). The word that the fourth Gospel uses is Πετρος (petros). When the New Testament was written, the Greek language did not differentiate between what we today call small letters and capitals. Therefore, in both these scriptures, *petros*—as an ordinary noun instead of a name—is equally acceptable.

But nowhere does the Bible call Peter a πετρα (petra). This word is only applied to the Redeemer himself. The apostle Paul, citing ancient Israel's

desert wanderings to illustrate the experience of the Christian church, is unequivocal with this identification: “and that Rock [πετρα, petra] was Christ” (1 Cor. 10:4).

The rock on which the church was to be built was therefore not Peter but his confession: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Yet shortly afterwards, in the same chapter, as soon as that fallible apostle deviated from the Saviour’s teaching about his death on the cross and the resurrection, the Lord repudiated him and addressed him as Satan (Matt. 16:21-23).

In the Gospel according to Mark, the parallel account contains a highly significant clause: “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he spoke that openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when *he had turned about and looked on his disciples*, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” (Mark 8:31-33, emphasis added.)

Why did the Saviour look so knowingly at the other apostles? By his body language, he was telling them: “I want you all to notice this. When a disciple confesses me aright, in word and deed, he or she is inspired by my heavenly Father. But any person whose profession or behavior contradicts my teaching or will is inspired by Satan.” The same would also apply to the pope.

The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, put this even more strongly: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:6-9)

He was most indignant because the Galatians were deviating from the teaching of righteousness by faith, which would one day become the central doctrine for the Protestant Reformation. This is brought out clearly in the second chapter of the same epistle. It is within this context that Paul rebuked his colleague, the apostle Peter, in public for compromising with Judaizers. A Christian’s main doctrine must always be that “a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. 2:4-16).

V

Peter, moreover, was not the first person, the first human being, or even the first of the Twelve to confess the Lord Jesus as both the Messiah and the Son of God.

This privilege belonged to the angel Gabriel, who in heaven stands by the throne of the Most High. Sent by the Almighty himself, he announced to the virgin Mary that she was to become the mother of Jesus. He would be “called the Son of God” and one day sit on David’s throne. “And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” (Luke 1:31-35). These words echo the explanation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream by the prophet Daniel about the rock that would eventually replace all merely human governments: “And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Dan. 2:44).”

The mighty Gabriel had been used by the Lord to communicate with Daniel (Dan. 8:16, 17; 9:21, 22; 10:10-14). Six centuries later, he spoke to Mary, the mother of the Messiah, the Son of God. He was also no doubt the bright and shining “angel of the Lord” who appeared to the frightened shepherds at Jesus’ birth and said to them: “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ *the Lord*.” (Luke 2:9-11, emphasis added)

Thirty years afterward, the divine kinship of the Messiah, the Incarnate One, was again proclaimed at his baptism, this time by the Father himself. “And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Mark 1:10, 11).

His testimony was immediately taken up by John the Baptist, the Redeemer’s forerunner, the greatest prophet who ever lived (Luke 7:24–28). He not only announced that Jesus was the Messiah, the Lamb of God but said: “And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).

From the outset, the fallen, evil angels likewise knew all too well exactly who he was, although in the wilderness of temptation Satan tried to make him doubt himself and sin with the taunting words: “*If* thou be the son of God . . .” (Matt. 4: 3, 6, emphasis added). To embarrass him, demons early sought to reveal his double identity as Messiah and the Holy One in public. For instance, they did so one Sabbath in the synagogue at Capernaum and, that evening, outside Peter’s house, while he was healing a large number of people. Of the latter occasion we read: “And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.” (Luke 4:34-35, 41)

Of the apostles, it was Nathanael, not Peter, who when Jesus called him first exclaimed: “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel” (John 1:49). In fact, all of the Twelve (even Judas Iscariot) knew he was the Christ—the Messiah—and acknowledged his divinity before Peter’s

confession. This happened on a storm-tossed boat that was about to sink, before the Lord came walking toward them on the lake of Galilee and saved them. After he had quietened the wind, “they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33).

That all these men acknowledged not only his divinity but also his messianic mission was brought out clearly just a day later. Many of the fickle multitude—offended by his teaching—had turned against him, whereupon Jesus asked the Twelve: “Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord to whom shall *we* go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And *we* believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.” (John 6:66-69, emphasis added) Though Peter on this occasion, too, was the spokesman, it was a communal declaration of faith. And it was uttered before his personal confession recorded in Matt. 16:15-19, which the champions of Petrine Primacy are so fond of quoting.

This is clear from the context of the two utterances. The group confession by the Twelve is recorded in Chapter 6 of the Gospel according to John and was made about twenty-four hours after the Lord had multiplied the five loaves and two fishes (vv. 9-13). Peter’s individual confession followed the second multiplication, of seven loaves. Jesus, had warned the apostles against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, by which he meant their doctrine. At first, they were too literal-minded and did not grasp his meaning, so he asked them: “Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?” (Matt. 16:9-10) It was after this that the great confession was personalized and Peter reiterated it.

As for the keys of the kingdom, the Saviour clarified that these were not the preserve of a single human being. Shortly after speaking about them to Peter, he showed that the idea of authority applied to the entire church at every, even the most local level: “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:18-20). The unspoken proviso was, of course, that such believers had to act within and not contrary to the will of God. For Protestants, this means that none of their decisions in church matters should conflict with what the Bible teaches.

Jesus also specially called the Twelve to him to warn them against trying to dominate one another: “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.” (Matt. 20:25–27, RSV).

Legitimately there could be no lording of one apostle over the other or

one bishop over another. And this passage about earthly rulers also brings to mind the need for defining exactly what Jesus meant when he spoke of the *kingdom*. He was not referring to, nor should he be construed to have meant, dominion in a secular sense on this planet. As he was soon to say to Pilate, the Roman governor who tried and finally condemned him: “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

From its context in the Gospel narrative, we observe that the apostolic confession, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16), was also expressed a short time later and in almost exactly those words by a very different person: Caiaphas, the high priest, at Jesus’ trial by the Sanhedrin. That odious Jewish pontiff “said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.” When the Saviour complied and answered: “Thou has said,” it clinched their case against him. Thereupon the leaders of his people condemned him to death for blasphemy. (Matt. 26:63-66)

Immediately after Peter in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi had uttered the famous formula to which papalists appeal so persistently, the Lord commanded his disciples to “tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ” (Matt. 16:20); but so far as the Saviour’s earthly fate was concerned it was too late. The Scribes and the Pharisees already knew who he was. For three and a half years, they had progressively rejected the mounting evidence provided by his works as well as his words; and now, in the stubborn pride of opinion and self-deceit, they voted to kill their Messiah, the Creator God—though this did not automatically make the entire Jewish nation culpable.

VI

The identity of the rock to which Jesus referred was clearly revealed by Paul. This great theologian of the New Testament said the church was “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone” (Eph. 2:20). Not on one apostle, not even only on all the apostles, but on the prophets as well; and the “chief cornerstone” is not Peter but the Redeemer himself.

Besides, the man to whose authority the Roman Church appeals was a Palestinian Jew and not a Gentile, as every pope has always been. Peter was not a bishop, a title that the New Testament never applied to the apostles, who had a higher rank; but if he were he did—quite unlike the Catholic pontiffs—meet one necessary episcopal qualification: he was “the husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2).

As for the theory of apostolic succession, the Bible says absolutely nothing about it. That is, the Twelve could not hand down or transfer their prerogatives to anybody else. Some papal apologists have argued that they could, according to Acts 1:15-26. This passage tells how at Peter’s suggestion a substitute was found for Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed his

Lord.

A single verse destroys their argument; it specifies the basic qualification of the man the apostles needed to appoint: “Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (vs. 22). Two candidates were nominated: “Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.” The latter was appointed by casting lots.

The Twelve as eyewitnesses of and participating in Jesus’ earthly ministry, were unique and historically unrepeatable. There can never be another band of brothers like them: Peter, James, John, and the rest. On earth, they were the Redeemer’s special companions. He even promised that in the world to come they would be his co-rulers, sitting on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel and eating at his table (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). And their names will forever be inscribed on the foundations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:14).

Nothing of all this could be applied to or has ever been true of any bishop, archbishop, cardinal, or pope. None of them was an eyewitness of the Resurrection. Apostolic succession is a myth. A vast gap yawns between those verses in Matt. 16 in their original setting and their later, Catholic accretions.

VII

To see how the conception of Petrine Primacy developed, we need to look at papal history through the lens of prophecy. First we inquire just when this doctrine first appeared and in what form. Specifically, did the earliest Church Fathers believe in it?

A startling answer has come from that historically knowledgeable ex-Jesuit professor of the Vatican’s Gregorian University and married former priest (who yet considered himself a loyal Catholic), Peter De Rosa. Commenting on Matt. 16:18—“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church”—he said that none of the early Church Fathers had seen a connection between this text and the pope.

“Not one of them applies ‘Thou art Peter’ to anyone but Peter. One after another they analyse it: Cyprian [200–258], Origen [c. 185–c. 254], Cyril [c. 315–386?], Hilary [c. 315–c. 367], Jerome [c. 347–419/420], Ambrose [339–397], Augustine [354–430]. They are not exactly Protestants. Not one of them calls the Bishop of Rome a Rock or applies to him specifically the promise of the Keys. This is as staggering to Catholics as if they were to find no mention in the Fathers of the Holy Spirit or the resurrection of the dead.”²²

De Rosa went on to say: “For the Fathers, it is Peter’s faith—or the Lord in whom Peter has faith—which is called the Rock, not Peter” and “Perhaps this is why not one of the Fathers speaks of a transference of power from Peter to those who succeed him; not one speaks, as church documents do

today, of an 'inheritance'. There is no hint of an abiding Petrine office. In so far as the Fathers speak of an office, the reference is to the episcopate in general. All bishops are successors to all the apostles."²³

This harmonizes with "A Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope" (1537), largely written by Luther's friend and successor, Philip Melancthon (1497–1560), but also signed by the other theologians assembled at Smalkald. It appears in *The Book of Concord*, which contains the Lutheran Confessions.

In paragraphs 26-28, Melancthon stated that unlike the Levitical priesthood, the New Testament ministry was "not bound to places and persons." It was "dispersed throughout the whole world, and is there where God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers; neither does this ministry avail on account of the authority of any person, but on account of the Word given by Christ. . . . And in this way, not as referring to the person of Peter, most of the holy Fathers, as Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Hilary and Bede interpret this passage: Upon this Rock." To which Melancthon added a testimony of another early Church Father, the sainted Chrysostom (347–407, Archbishop of Constantinople from 398): "'Upon this rock,' not upon Peter. For He built His Church not upon man, but upon the faith of Peter."²⁴

On this topic, we find Paul Johnson, a reputable Catholic historian, even more interesting than De Rosa or, for that matter, Melancthon. He said that "Rome was exerting its authority over other churches as early as the second century." This it was certainly trying to do, amongst other things because as the capital city of the Empire it enjoyed a natural priority and exerted the pagan influences mentioned by Hobbes.

But Johnson also stated that what he called "the Petrine text did not . . . play any part before c. 250."²⁵ He showed that the doctrine based on it went hand in hand with the cult of the great fisherman's body, together with that of the other famous apostle who was martyred in Rome. Pope Gregory I, the Great (c. 540–604, reigned from 590), who lived considerably later, wrote a letter to the empress saying: "'The bodies of the apostles Peter and Paul glitter with such great miracles and awe that no one can go to pray there without considerable fear.' He related two anecdotes of workmen dying after being too near the bodies. As with the tomb of Tutankhamen, proximity might prove fatal. . . . Everyone believed that St Peter was there, in a physical sense. He dominated all the activities of his see. His remains guarded his rights, and struck down those who tried to usurp them."²⁶ This was and remains a cult of dead bodies or related relics, together with a spiritualistic element. The analogy of Tutankhamen is most apt.

Moreover, according to Johnson, "it was only in the *eighth century* that the full importance of St Peter's connection with Rome began to be fully understood and proclaimed. As Peter's reputation and continuing power swelled, what more natural than that men should believe that previous ages had acknowledged it, not merely in theory but in a highly practical

manner?” (Emphasis added.) This brings us down to that spurious letter from Constantine to Pope Sylvester, of which Johnson said: “Like many other Christian forgeries, this was very likely a sincere attempt by clerks in the papal chancery to document a transaction which they had convinced themselves had actually taken place. . . . At a stroke it proffered the keystone needed to complete the arch of the total Christian society.”²⁷ Indeed, indeed!

The greater carefulness of recent Catholic writers who relate these matters needs to be set beside the way in which former co-religionists kept on projecting papal primacy back into the first century, sometimes with wild abandon.

A blatant example jumps out at the reader of *Geschichte der Religion Jesu Christi* (History of the Religion of Jesus Christ), which was published in Vienna during 1817. Its author, Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg (1750–1819), was a German nobleman and minor poet who converted to Catholicism in 1800. “His final work was the immense *Geschichte*” in fifteen volumes completed over twelve years, “which covered the development of Christianity up until the year 430.”²⁸

Von Stolberg told how in A.D. 70 Titus and his legions destroyed Jerusalem as God’s terrible judgment over “the degenerated seed of Abraham according to the flesh.” He then turned his eye to “Abraham’s seed according to the spirit, the church of Jesus Christ.” Having glanced at the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, he asserted that after this the Lord provided “a new supreme shepherd in the person of Saint Linus,” who supposedly reigned from A.D. 64 or 67 to his death in 76 or 79. In fact, these apostles were both, as von Stolberg had it, the channel for doing so.²⁹ It was certain, he said, that he “followed Saint Peter in a dual capacity, as Bishop of Rome and as supreme head of the entire church.” According to him, this pope was the *Statthalter des Sohnes Gottes auf Erden* (the vicar of the Son of God on earth).³⁰

But there is nothing certain about it. As his authority for the idea that Linus succeeded Peter, von Stolberg quoted Irenaeus (c. 120/140–c. 200/203). Although the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* of 1910 upheld him in this, it also cited Tertullian (c. 155/160–after 220), who “unquestionably places St. Clement (De praescriptione, xxii) after the Apostle Peter, as was also done later by other Latin scholars (Jerome, ‘De vir. ill.’, xv).”³¹ By 1997, so much doubt had accumulated about Linus that the most Paul Johnson had to say about him was: “Probably an historical person, but still not technically a bishop.”³²

Von Stolberg’s *Statthalter des Sohnes Gottes auf Erden* was anachronistic, an expression which clearly echoes the Donation; for that title never appeared in an earlier source. But it is even more fascinating how he extolled the sanctity of this Linus, who allegedly obtained that position “at a time when apostles and apostolic men were still alive.”³³ In other words, a Roman prelate was elevated above them, appointed even over the beloved John, who wrote the Apocalypse and survived to about

VIII

Having established that Petrine Primacy as understood today is not taught by the New Testament, and for the next few centuries did not feature in the Church Fathers to whom Catholicism attributes great authority, let us now trace its true development down to the time of the Donation, when it reached its final form.

In the first century, Clement of Rome, already referred to as a very early pope, laid no claim to Petrine Primacy. He also failed to quote the words which the papacy would eventually love to dwell on to the exclusion of very much else in the Bible: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:18, 19). Why did Clement not use this argument to call himself at least the vicar of Christ?

He could not do so, for that particular title did not yet exist. Even the word *vicar* began as a purely secular term, which came into prominence during the fourth century. Diocletian, a pagan who ruled over the Roman Empire and persecuted Christians, sought to shore up his tottering realm by restructuring it into four major territories with various subdivisions.

To describe these, he used the word *diocese*, which politically designated an area, “governed by an imperial vicar.”³⁴ About this, we also read that “in the Roman Empire as reorganized by Emperor Diocletian (reigned 284-305), the *vicarius* was an important official, and the title even remained in use for secular officials in the Middle Ages. In the Roman Catholic Church, ‘vicar of Christ’ became the special designation of the popes starting in the 8th century, and eventually it replaced the older title of ‘vicar of St. Peter’.”³⁵

The latter statement referred to the time of the Donation. *Vicar of Christ* does not, however, appear in that document, and its exclusive appropriation by the pope took centuries to accomplish.

It is true that even in pagan times the ambitious Bishop of Rome desired and strove after primacy, but those who headed the other churches, centered in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria—apart from the later Constantinople—could safely disagree with him, resisting his pretensions. He did not have the Bible on his side, and his claim was unenforceable before the emperors accepted Christianity.

As for Clement of Rome, it is true that “numerous Clementine writings” were “at various times” added to his letter. He has been “credited with the transmitting to the church of the *Ordinances of the Holy Apostles Through Clement (Apostolic Constitutions)*, which, reputedly drafted by the Apostles, is the largest collection of early Christian ecclesiastical law.” These, alas, “are now believed, however, to have been written in Syria c. 380.”³⁶—another of the numerous forgeries with which pious clerics have

striven, century after century, to validate error.

Papal apologists have therefore had to skip down from Clement of Rome to Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), and specifically the latter's *Who Is the Rich Man That Is Saved?* written in A.D. 200.³⁷ But a full century of ever-increasing theological darkness separated these two men.

Clement of Alexandria, principal of the Catechetical School in that city, who fled from his post when persecution threatened during A.D. 202, was a highly problematic theologian. Formerly a philosopher, he did not after his conversion give up but retained his love for ancient pagan writers like Plato. Using heathenish allegorical methods, he mingled their ideas with Christianity.

At that time, solar syncretism was also biting more deeply into the church at Rome, with greater emphasis on Sunday observance. A determined proponent was Pope Victor I (d. 199, reigned from 189). It irked him that churches in Asia Minor kept on observing Easter on 14 Nisan according to the Jewish lunar calendar. Known for this reason as Quartodecimans (Fourteenthers), they saw no reason for obeying his plea that it should always be on a Sunday. After all, in the East, they still largely rested on the seventh-day Sabbath according to the Ten Commandments.

What was Victor's response? He excommunicated "Polycrates (the bishop of Ephesus) and other bishops of Asia Minor."³⁸

For this, the pontiff encountered stiff opposition from Irenaeus (c. 120/140–c. 200/300), bishop at Lugdunum (Lyon) in Gaul and the most eminent theologian of his day. He had been "born of Greek parents in Asia Minor," and "historical sources testify to a close cultural connection between Asia Minor and southern France (the Rhône Valley) during the 2nd century." He persuaded the pontiff to withdraw his excommunication. "Mediating between the parties, Irenaeus stated that differences in external factors, such as dates of festivals, need not be so serious as to destroy church unity."³⁹ And Quartodeciman practices "continued in Asia Minor for several centuries."⁴⁰

Martin Luther, writing in 1537, put it more strongly. He said that Irenaeus *reprimanded* Pope Victor. Furthermore, as the Reformer pointed out, Irenaeus was not a priest at Rome but of another church in another country. Therefore, the pontiff did not at that time have the authority claimed for him in later centuries via the spurious Donation⁴¹ or otherwise. Quite so, and we add that Victor had no secular backup to enforce his decisions, since in those days the emperor was a pagan.

As for the seminary professor Clement of Alexandria, we note that with his approach to the Bible and syncretism, he also polluted the mind of Origen (c. 185–254), his Egyptian student. This precocious young man, seminary professor and amazingly prolific writer, succeeded Clement as head of the Catechetical School. Though at different times condemned as a heretic, Origen bequeathed to Catholics and others—even many Protestants—a destructive legacy.⁴² By his methodology, it is possible to

make anything in the Scriptures mean anything else. This has also strongly affected the interpretation of prophecy. Present-day Idealism owes much to him.

Some Catholic apologists quote Origen for his alleged early support of Peter's Primacy,⁴³ although, as indicated, both Melanchthon and De Rosa expressed a contrary opinion.

IX

In those days and from its earliest period, even before it became an empire, Rome was a pagan theocracy. In A.D. 312, Constantine (c. 287-337) was suddenly converted. At the battle of the Milvian Bridge, he added Christ to his pantheon, which soon was to lay the groundwork for a Catholic-Orthodox theocracy, resulting in "the fatal alliance between Caesar and Pope, Throne and Altar." At first, however, this royal convert, in agreement with his rival Licinius, issued the Edict of Milan, which decreed "that everyone should be allowed to have his own beliefs and worship as he wishes." Such tolerance, however, was "never accepted by the Catholic church. Truth, she insisted, can never be compromised. Hence whenever she was in control, she denied freedom of religion to others."⁴⁴

In the fourth century, however, she was not the mistress of her own destiny but subject to the emperor. Constantine retained as many as possible of the prerogatives that he had inherited from his heathen predecessors. Like them, he was still the *Pontifex Maximus* (supreme pontiff), a title which he "never relinquished."⁴⁵ He also added further titles: *Bishop of Bishops* and *Vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ).⁴⁶ The last-mentioned was brand new. The word *vicarius* came from the system that the pagan Diocletian had created just a few years earlier to describe the civil divisions of the empire; but now it began to acquire religious overtones. Constantine also called himself the Thirteenth Apostle.⁴⁷ During his final years, he came to be known as *Isapostolos* (Equal of the apostles), and he had himself buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles amid a dozen sarcophagi.⁴⁸

In his new role, Constantine necessarily gave up the older imperial practice of being described or addressed as *Dominus et Deus* (Lord and God), but he still insisted on the obsequious ceremonial that Diocletian had introduced. When Constantine died, "the senate nevertheless declared him *divus*," a god.⁴⁹

That he was the first *vicar of Christ*, a title also subsequently borne by other emperors who followed him on the throne, may amaze some readers, yet twentieth-century canon lawyers have conceded this to have been the case.⁵⁰ But did Constantine recognize the primacy of the Roman pontiff, handing over to him those many western lands—as his alleged Donation states? Of course he did not, nor would he have dared to do so; such an act would have provoked rebellion among his heirs and troops.

Chapter Eleven
GERMANIC INTERLUDE

I

In a tumultuous hundred years, from A.D. 376 to A.D. 476, the Roman Empire was occupied, defeated, and ripped apart. The Germanic peoples who did so were spearheaded by the Goths.

In the last part of the third century, they had already exerted such pressure on the Empire that “they obliged the Romans to evacuate the trans-Danubian province of Dacia.” The Visigoths (Western Goths) moved in.¹ More and more Germans also migrated peacefully or were even invited into the Empire, where they eventually became the backbone of the Roman armies.

Later the Goths to the north of the Danube were pressured from behind and attacked by the Huns, a fiercely warlike people from the Far East. In A.D. 376, the Visigoths pleaded with the Romans for permission to cross into the Empire. This being granted, they streamed across the Danube. They would supposedly become Roman allies, a buffer against an invasion by the Huns.

But things misfired horribly, when selfish Romans ill-treated and exploited these hapless immigrants, who merely to subsist were obliged to sell their children into slavery—although they managed to retain their swords. And then they rebelled. Supported by other Germanic elements, the Visigoths made their stand at Adrianople (present-day Edirne in European Turkey). Here, on 9 August 378, under Fritigern, “the Goths annihilated the Roman army.” On that day, by some accounts, it lost 40,000 men, the emperor Valens being one of them. Barbarian horsemen had triumphed over the supposedly invincible Roman infantry.²

For another four years, the Visigoths “continued to wander in search of somewhere to settle. In October 382, Theodosius I, the Great (347–395), who succeeded Valens, settled them in Moesia (a Balkan territory) as federates, giving them land there and imposing on them the duty of defending the frontier.”³

II

The influx of the Visigoths, swelling the Germanic population already in the Empire, aggravated another problem with which Theodosius was confronted: “the sharp antagonism that arose around 379 between disciples of the Nicene Creed (according to which Jesus Christ is of the same substance as God the Father) and several other Christian groups.”⁴ Among them were the non-Catholic Goths, who could not be bullied into ecclesiastical subjection. After all, just a year earlier, they had smashed a Roman army and possessed the fatal knowledge that they could, if necessary, do so again—which did not augur well for the future.

Nevertheless, on 28 February 380, Theodosius I “issued an edict

prescribing a creed that was to be binding on all subjects. Only persons who believed in the consubstantiality of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were henceforth to be considered Catholic Christians, a designation that here appears for the first time in a document.” *Consubstantiality* means “of the same substance,” an idea which—as we shall see—owes much to Greek philosophy. The Nicene Creed “was again defined at the beginning of 381 and ecclesiastically sanctioned, as it were, by a church council summoned to Constantinople by Theodosius in the summer of 381. That gathering is considered the second ecumenical council.” It resulted in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, still “used by most Christians,” and also ranked the pope ahead of the bishop of Constantinople.⁴

Moreover, “between the years 343 and 381,” the Synod of Laodicea presumed to outlaw obedience to one of the Ten Commandments, proclaimed and written by God himself on Mount Sinai. In Canon 29, it decreed: “Christians must not judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.”⁵

That was a decision by a church that had departed from the Scriptures and therefore lost its way. In 386, Theodosius I enforced it with an imperial, civil edict:

On the day of the sun, properly called the Lord’s day by our ancestors, let there be a cessation of lawsuits, business, and indictments; let no one exact a debt due either the state or an individual; let there be no cognizance of disputes, not even by arbitrators, whether appointed by the courts or voluntarily chosen. And let him not only be adjudged notorious, but also impious who shall turn aside from an institute and rite of holy religion.

Published the third before the nones of November, at Aquilia; approved at Rome the eighth before the calends of December, in the consulship of most noble, pious Honorius, and most illustrious Euodius (386).

“Codex Theo.,” lib. viii, tit.viii, lex 3.⁶

August Neander, perhaps the greatest Protestant church historian of the nineteenth century, commented on this decree. He said there had been “a collision” between a churchly ordinance “and the relations to the state, which must have arisen in the earlier situation of the church.” But it could “now be easily removed, when the state itself recognized the church as such, and endeavored to uphold her in the prosecution of her principles and the attainment of her ends.”⁷

He was referring to what is usually recognized as the first Sunday law, which had been promulgated in A.D. 321 by Constantine I (A.D. 280?-337). Urged on by the bishops, that emperor had cleverly sought to strengthen his regime by exploiting the fact that those who worshiped a solar deity named Mithras and Christians shared a number of religious convictions. Amongst

other things, both groups venerated the first day of the week. For the Mithraics it was *dies solis* (the day of the sun, or Sunday), while many Christians celebrated it as the resurrection day, even if they also still kept the Biblical Sabbath. This legislation read as follows:

“On the venerable Day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-sowing or for vine-planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost. (Given the 7th day of March, Crispus and Constantine being consuls, each of them for the second time [A.D. 321])”⁸

But the emperor also, “in a law enacted previous to the year 321, commanded the suspension of all suits and courts of justice on Sunday. It was a beautiful exception, wholly in accordance with the spirit of Christianity, by which he provided that the emancipation of slaves, after the usual forms, should be permitted to take place on Sunday.” Theodosius I, however, was more stringent: “By a law of the year 386, those older changes effected by the emperor Constantine were more rigorously enforced, and, in general, civil transactions of every kind on Sunday were strictly forbidden. Whoever transgressed was to be considered, in fact, as guilty of sacrilege (as a *sacrilegus*).”⁹

At this point, a question arises: Is it sheer coincidence that the Visigoths’ entrance into the Empire during 376 as well as their victory at Adrianople in 378 were followed so soon—in 379, 380, 381, and 386—by pro-Catholic as well as Sunday legislation? We think not. It was prompted precisely by the influx of so many additional Sabbathkeepers. Sunday laws do not occur in a vacuum. Often they are provoked by Sabbathkeeping, for it is a reproach to Christians who in any manner break or seek to modify the Ten Commandments.

What, however, could Theodosius I do about the Visigoths? Theoretically they were now also Roman subjects, yet they were so-called Arians. He knew very well that he was unable to make them confirm to his religious legislation and may have even been reminded of what had so recently happened near Adrianople. But by accommodating them in Moesia he hit on a “novel arrangement.” He settled “an entire people on imperial soil while retaining its autonomy.”¹⁰ That meant the Visigoths would largely (at least for the time being) not be subject to the laws of Rome but to their own, so that they were able to ignore his edicts.

III

Historicist expositors have never, to our knowledge, designated 380 or 386 as dates for setting up “the abomination that maketh desolate”—although T. W. Christie came close to doing so. He said the Roman

“empire, A.D. 385, formally abandoned Paganism, and embraced baptized Christianity.”(See Appendix III).

Uriah Smith, believing “the abomination that maketh desolate” referred to the papacy, linked it with the time prophecy of 1290 year-days mentioned in Dan. 12:11. That period began in 508 and ended in 1798.¹¹ It is, moreover, related to the 1260 year-days dealt with in Dan. 12:7 and elsewhere. But what about the years 380-386, when Theodosius I legislated that henceforth Catholicism was to be the only form of Christianity throughout the Empire, tightened the thumbscrews on dissident Sabbathkeepers, and even theoretically proclaimed the supremacy of the pope?

Two substantial, interrelated reasons hinder such an earlier dating.

Despite imperial support for the Roman Church, very many ordinary people, especially in the countryside, still stubbornly clung to their paganism. Eliminating it required a great deal more than legislation, preaching, or beguilement through an appeal to miracles, a very common practice.

Where necessary—and for hundreds of years it was, from Constantine’s conversion until at least the seventh century—pagans also had to be threatened, intimidated, and evangelized by force. Leading out in this were wealthy aristocratic landowners, relatively cultured men who adhered as well as they could to *Romanitas*, the Roman way of life. The poor people, their dependents, were called *pagani*, which originally meant “rustics” or “country dwellers.” Cooperating with the bishops, the landed gentry built and endowed the churches on their property. Converting the countryside often meant smashing the altars and temples of the pagan underclass, who formed the majority, and fighting them off when they had the temerity to resist.

Recently, scholars with excellent credentials have been exploring this topic, among them Richard Fletcher, a British academic at the University of York in England. The second chapter of his 1997 book, *The Barbarian Conversion from Paganism to Christianity* is a real eye-opener.¹²

And so is Ramsay MacMullen’s *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Century* of the same year, which was published at Yale University.¹³ In its opening chapter, he dismissed the older conception that “pagans were not only defeated by the end of the fourth century but had in fact all converted.” This view, he said, is far from the truth. “Historians’ consensus, such as it was until at least the 1980s, rested on a corrupt foundation.” Also, as already cited from MacMullen, the Roman Church falsified history by repeatedly burning the books that recorded the ideas and revealed the existence of not only Christian dissidents but of heathens aplenty.¹⁴

Such efforts at concealment have, however, to some extent been undermined by archaeology. “Excavation uncovers great amounts of minutely smashed building elements and statuary in or near [pagan] holy places, most but not all in Gaul, just as can be seen in the east but far more frequently.”¹⁵ Eventually the bishops grew desperate as their many efforts failed to subdue the persistent heathenism. They issued ever more stringent instructions at their

councils. “The first to do so was in Spain, where successive canons grew more and more furious, ending in 681 with a recommendation of capital punishment for recalcitrant peasants unless their masters took action first, to lock them up and flog them.” Nevertheless, by that year, “most of the peninsula had long reverted to paganism.”¹⁶ This is highly instructive, both for the lateness of the date—which in itself is startling—but even more for the light it throws on such conversion methods, which Romanism has applied throughout the centuries.

But a more powerful reason why the 1260 year-days did not begin in either 380 or 386 is the Germanic Interlude.

Just before 380 and the Theodosian edict, the abomination that makes desolate had suddenly, as already shown, acquired a powerful rival. The Visigoths had crossed the Danube in 376 and two years later defeated the Roman army near Adrianople. The onward march of Catholicism was abruptly delayed if not halted by the Germanic peoples, especially the Goths, who for more than a hundred and fifty years, between 376 and 538, disturbed the *Pax Romana*. During that time, they were able to migrate within and at various times even to rule over crucial parts of the Western Empire.

The Germanic peoples were Christians though warlike, at times even predatory when spurred on by dire necessity. Theologically they refused to recognize dogmas like Petrine Primacy or compulsory Sunday observance, yet they were generally tolerant towards Catholics and others who failed to agree with their religious ideas. The large number of pagans who were still in the Empire therefore also enjoyed religious liberty.

To such a situation, the papacy would and could not adapt. Aspiring to religious domination and expanding its influence sphere throughout the Mediterranean world, it was also uncomfortable with subordination to the senior Roman emperor, who after 330 resided in Constantinople. The pontiffs were even more unhappy about the growing influence of the archbishopric which rose to ever greater eminence in that great city astride the Bosphorus.

IV

This resentment boiled over in the time of Damasus I (304–384). He became pope in 366 despite lawsuits and riots by factions that bitterly opposed his election. But Valerian, the western emperor, as well as the Roman aristocracy supported him. On the other hand, the pontiff was now “outclassed by the Patriarch of Constantinople as the capital . . . and was not even invited to the Church Council of Constantinople in 381.”¹⁷

We are intrigued by two contrasting Catholic evaluations of Damasus’s career. Like all his papal predecessors, except Liberius, he has long since been canonized. But in the twentieth century Paul Johnson wrote: “Damasus seems to have been a wholly unspiritual man” and referred to the fact that he “lived well and entertained sumptuously.” He also dedicated himself to converting the rich, with most success among society

women. A disreputable aspect of Damasus's pontificate was that "Forgeries circulated to boost Christian credentials: thus a correspondence between St Paul and Seneca was produced."¹⁸ The Donation of Constantine and the False Decretals would one day continue this proud tradition.

All the same, for the Catholic Church, Damasus was officially a fine achiever. "He was the first pope to refer to Rome as the apostolic see, to distinguish it as that established by the apostle St. Peter," and "active in suppressing heresy."¹⁹ In 378, the year of Adrianople, he held a synod which demanded "state intervention to ensure that western bishops were subject to Rome." It also decided that popes did not have to appear in a court of law to answer for accusations against them. Pope Damasus maintained that both Peter and Paul had adopted Rome as their city, which gave it primacy over the East.²⁰

He more significantly insisted "that the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Roman Church was based, not on the decrees of councils, but on the very words of Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:18)," i.e., "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He strengthened the use of Latin, inducing Jerome, his secretary, to revise the older Bible translations in this language. This led to the production of the Vulgate,²¹ which became the exclusive Catholic version for many centuries.

But an occasional fly in the ointment for Damasus was precisely his gifted secretary. According to Martin Luther, well acquainted with church history, Jerome wrote "that the Roman bishop was no more than the bishop of any other city, but all are equal."²² Papal primacy was still a pontifical pipe dream with little substance.

Nevertheless, it must have brought some happiness to the aging Damasus when "in 380 the emperors Gratian [359–383] in the West and Theodosius [347–395] in the East declared Christianity as preached by Peter to be the religion of the Roman Empire and defined orthodoxy as the doctrines proclaimed by the bishops of Rome and Alexandria."²³

V

Less than half a century after the founding of Constantinople in 330 and the Gothic victory at Adrianople in 378, the Western territories increasingly came to be dominated by the Germanic peoples. The Empire began to disintegrate, and the other archbishops, especially the ones in the East, asserted their independence from Rome.

In 410, there occurred an event that convulsed the Mediterranean world psychologically as nothing else could have done. Alaric I (c. 370–410), who led the Visigoths, still discontented with the treatment of his people, sacked Rome, which had for centuries been regarded as an impregnable fortress. It is true that his army "treated its inhabitants humanely and burned only a few buildings"²⁴—for it was largely composed of Germanic *Christians*. But the

news sent seismic shocks deep into the psyche of Romans everywhere.

The pagans, of whom there were still very many, saw this as heaven's judgment upon the Empire for giving up its ancient gods. Bishop Augustine of Hippo (354–430) in North Africa thought otherwise and wrote his famous and voluminous *De civitate Dei contra paganos* (Concerning the city of God against the pagans). He stressed the need for godliness and seeking a heavenly city, the Jerusalem on high. As a byproduct of his writing, the *City of God* deeply influenced Catholic thinking throughout the Middle Ages, being regarded "at some points virtually as a founding document for a political order of kings and popes that Augustine could hardly have imagined."²⁵ An idea which he certainly did not entertain was that God perhaps allowed the sack of Rome as a punishment for Catholic persecution of the North African Donatists and other religious dissidents.

The saga of the Visigoths continued after Alaric's death, which was also in 410, and their removal under Ataulphus, his successor, to Southern Gaul and Spain (415). They were now on both sides of the Pyrenees. But the emperor Constantius III (d. 421), to bolster his power, recalled them to Gaul and gave them land in Aquitania Secunda between the Loire and the Pyrenees, with their capital at Toulouse,²⁶ which they called Tolosa.

Meanwhile Catholicism still experienced great difficulties in achieving its ends, although it did its best to do so. Neander pointed out that public entertainments were then a particular problem, which prominent citizens were required to support; and these shows tended to collide with their religious obligations. "Hence, the North African church resolved, at an ecclesiastical convention held at Carthage in 401, to petition the emperor that the public shows might be transferred from the Christian Sunday and from feast days to some other days of the week."²⁷

For this, the churchmen had to wait for twenty-four years, until the time of Theodosius II (401–450). Enthroned at Constantinople, he was weak in dealing with adversaries like the Germanic Vandals, who were in control of North Africa. He was also "a gentle, scholarly, easily dominated man who allowed his government to be run by a succession of relatives and ministers."²⁸

Nevertheless, "in the year 425, the exhibition of spectacles on Sunday, and on the principal feast days of the Christians, was forbidden, in order that the devotion of the faithful might be free from all disturbance." As in the time of Theodosius I, "the church received help from the state for the furtherance of her ends, which could not be obtained in the preceding period."²⁹

Although it was not yet fully able to bite, the Beast of Rev. 13 was sharpening its teeth. Additional legislation, together with all such earlier laws accumulated over the years, went into the Theodosian Code. Published in 438, this was a compilation, supervised by Theodosius II himself. It codified Roman jurisprudence issued after 312.³⁰

Here is part of his Sunday law, which he issued jointly with Valentinian

III (419–455), the western emperor, who had also become his son-in-law³¹:

“C. Th. XV. v.1: On the Lord's day, which is the first day of the week, on Christmas, and on the days of Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, inasmuch as then the [white] garments [of Christians] symbolizing the light of heavenly cleansing bear witness to the new light of holy baptism, at the time also of the suffering of the apostles, the example for all Christians, the pleasures of the theaters and games are to be kept from the people in all cities, and all the thoughts of Christians and believers are to be occupied with the worship of God. And if any are kept from that worship through the madness of Jewish impiety or the error and insanity of foolish paganism, let them know that there is one time for prayer and another for pleasure. . . . Theodosius Augustus and Caesar Valentinian.”³²

That intriguing expression “the madness of Jewish impiety” perhaps referred to *Christians* who persisted in observing the Sabbath on the seventh day.

But, it may be asked, is it necessary for Sundaykeepers to indulge in legal persecution when they want to ensure compliance with their wishes by a whole society? Unfortunately, it is. The reason is that Sunday sacredness lacks divine authority. It cannot be found in the Bible, and those who refuse to rest or go to church on the first day of the week quite soon discover this fact. Nor can a mere appeal to Petrine Primacy suffice, for such a dogma can also not be sustained from the Scriptures. For both Catholics and Protestants, only one final expedient remains: to establish authority through civil legislation, together with the penalties it provides.

Let us make this a little clearer with reference to *Decision in Philadelphia: The Constitutional Convention of 1787* (1986) by Christopher Collier, American history professor and State Historian at the University of Connecticut, and his brother James Lincoln Collier, a prolific author. A thought-provoking idea in their book is that “Power, wherever it lies, ultimately has to be backed by force.” For “Nations need military forces to protect themselves against intruders threatening their integrity, and they need an internal police force to put down disorder and make people obey the law.”³³ Admittedly, *power* is not quite the same thing as *authority*; nevertheless, in everyday affairs the one is unimaginable without the other.

Through legislation, backed by the courts and the police, attendance at church on Sundays as well as outward, so-called morality can be enforced, but at the expense of persecuting whoever refuses or fails to cooperate.

VI

The Visigoths remained in Southern Gaul for the rest of the fifth century. Again they were supposedly allies of Rome and did help to save the West from Attila the Hun (d. 453). This fearsome warrior-king had swept into the Empire and was on the point of overwhelming it. To oppose him, the Roman general Aetius reached an agreement with the Visigoth

king, Theodoric I (?–451). “The decisive engagement was the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains, or, according to some authorities of Maurica . . .” in 451. Their combined forces defeated Attila, driving him out of Gaul. Among the fallen on that day was Theodoric I.³⁴

The next year, Attila invaded northern Italy, where he sacked a number of cities. At that time, Pope Leo I (d. 461) “enhanced the prestige of the papacy and helped to place Western leadership in its hands by dealing with invading barbaric tribes. Allegedly, he persuaded the Huns . . . not to attack Rome (452), and the Vandals, a Germanic people, not to sack Rome when they occupied it three years later.”³⁵ Nevertheless, under their king Gaiseric—also spelled Genseric—(d. 477), the Vandals did capture and plunder it, however much they agreed to soften the severity of their onslaught. Apart from Leo’s persuasion, they probably listened to their consciences. After all, they too, like the Goths, were Germanic *Christians*.

The Vandals, whose capital was Carthage, had by 439 rapidly built up a kingdom in North Africa, to which they originally crossed from Spain at the strait of Gibraltar. In 430, Genseric defeated the Roman army of Bonifacius, “and then crushed the joint forces of the Eastern and Western empires that had been sent against him.” Besides, his “fleet soon came to control much of the western Mediterranean, and he annexed the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Corsica, and Sicily.”³⁶

Like all nations, the Vandals had a long memory, and were for various reasons much embittered against Rome. One of them was that the western emperor had colluded with the Visigoths, who drove them out of the Iberian Peninsula. Consequently, the Catholics of North Africa were treated less leniently than those who were ruled by the Ostrogoths in Italy. “Catholic bishops were exiled or killed by Geiseric and laymen were excluded from office and frequently suffered confiscation of their property. He protected his Catholic subjects when his relations with Rome and Constantinople were friendly, as during the years 454-57, when the Catholic community at Carthage, being without a head, elected Deogratias bishop. The same was also the case during the years 476-477 when Bishop Victor of Cartenne sent him, during a period of peace, a sharp refutation of Arianism and suffered no punishment.” But “generally most Vandal kings, except Hilderic, persecuted Trinitarian Christians to a greater or lesser extent, banning conversion for Vandals, exiling bishops and generally making life difficult for Trinitarians.”³⁷

We point out, however, that though the Germanic peoples at times—when exasperated or provoked into doing so—persecuted Catholics sporadically, the Roman Church for many centuries almost uniformly ill-treated and sought to destroy whomever it regarded as heretics. This depended on whether or not it could assume control of a country, for which it usually needed royal or imperial assistance.

Pope Leo I not only saw the Western Empire going to pieces around him; he also became the “master exponent of papal supremacy” in the whole

Mediterranean world. The 451 Council of Chalcedon (modern Kadiköy, Turkey) recognized his doctrinal utterances as “the voice of Peter.” In his 432 letters and 96 sermons, he expounded “his precept of papal primacy in church jurisdiction. He held that papal power was granted by Christ to St. Peter alone, and that that power was passed on by Peter to his successors.”³⁸ His ideas resembled those of Damasus I before him but with a stronger Petrine emphasis.

Three extremely troublesome factors did nonetheless persist. First, the popes were still subject to the whims of their overlords, the emperors at Constantinople, who had a tendency to favor the archbishop in their city. Second, far too many pagans continued practicing their ancient rites. And third, there were those Teutonic interlopers, whom the Romans regarded as barbarians and who thwarted the pontiff’s claims to ecclesiastical supremacy.

VII

The origins of Germanic Christianity are shrouded in the twilight if not darkness caused by the destruction of its documents in Gothic and other languages. As a result, both books on church history and shorter articles which seek to enlighten us are confusing. This is even truer of later than of earlier works.

The Germanic Church was kindled among the Visigoths well before they entered the Roman Empire during A.D. 376. In about A.D. 250, they had invaded Cappadocia, eastern Asia Minor, where they captured a number of Christians, who successfully shared their faith. Visigoth converts evangelized the Ostrogoths in the Ukraine and the Gepidae in the mountains north of Transylvania. Their best-known missionary was Bishop Ulfilas or Wulfila (c. 311-382), “descended on one side of his family from Cappadocian prisoners, who had been carried off from the village of Sadagolthina.”³⁹ He is especially famous for translating the Bible into Gothic. It is not, however, true that he founded Germanic Christianity, which took root among the Visigoths sixty years before his birth.

This is reflected in or implied by the Bicentennial (1968) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. But of Ulfilas, a key figure, its 2009 edition presented a problematic picture. In one and the same article, his role was exaggerated and rendered self-contradictory. We still read that he was of Cappadocian descent and had lived among the Visigoths north of the Danube before they crossed over into the Empire; but also that “at the age of 30 he was supposedly sent on an embassy to the Roman emperor and was consecrated (341) bishop of the Gothic Christians by Eusebius of Nicomedia, bishop of Constantinople.” How true can this be? New converts are not normally elevated to the Episcopal estate. That is, he must already have been a Christian before he visited Constantinople. But his ordination allegedly made him “the missionary who evangelized the Goths.” Because Eusebius was an Arian, this has been

taken to mean that Ulfilas was one as well. On the other hand, the article says that “when in 379 a champion of Nicene orthodoxy, Theodosius I the Great, became Roman emperor, Ulfilas apparently led a party of compromise and conciliation with the homoean position.” This would make him one of the “Semi-Arians,” who we will show were not Arians at all. Nevertheless, “the national Gothic church that Ulfilas helped to create, endowing it with a vernacular Bible and probably liturgy, was Arian from the start.” In fact, the Visigoths’ acceptance of this heresy allegedly impacted on the other Germanic peoples to such an extent that it made Arianism part of their “national self-consciousness.” This included the “Ostrogoths, Vandals, and Burgundians.”⁴⁰

But the other Germanic peoples, like the Vandals and Burgundians, were not Goths. They had their own languages. Though interrelated, these were different, perhaps as much as English, Dutch, and German are today, though their religious literature—which must have existed—has not survived. We do not know to what extent these other Germans could read Gothic and are downright skeptical about all of them becoming Christians as a result of Ulfilas’s evangelization. A much simpler and more reasonable explanation is that they were converted earlier, well before they entered the Empire.

In all this, we must never forget that their enemies, who eventually through military power triumphed over them, have not—apart from the Gothic Bible—allowed a single page of East Germanic religious literature to survive, so that all our knowledge about them is ultimately derived from Greek and Latin writers who did not belong to their church. What predominates is the viewpoint of people who theologically had no liking for these Germans, often of those who hated and destroyed them. After they had been physically butchered, their documents were burned. We have already described this charming habit. Even well-meaning Protestant writers peering back into a murky past have myopically looked at this topic through spectacles put onto them by opponents of those hapless people.

The Visigoths’ conversion, which presumably originated Germanic Christianity, antedated Arianism by fifty years or more, and nothing in Ulfilas’s Bible translation into Gothic reflects it. Arius (d. 335) only became active in the second decade of the fourth century, when he began to proclaim the deviant doctrine that our Lord had been *created* by God the Father before his incarnation.

At most—as already indicated—the Goths might be described as Semi-Arians, though even this term applies the tar brush to the reputation of the silent dead who can no longer speak for themselves.

Let us therefore clarify who the Semi-Arians were. They “refused to call the Son a creature, were prepared to acknowledge a Trinity, and would even accept a certain ‘unity’ of substance, although they understood this to mean ‘similarity’ of substance and affirmed a gradation of beings within the Trinity.”⁴¹ That is, they were definitely not ancient Jehovah’s Witnesses, who teach that Christ was a created being.

More details about the Semi-Arians can be found in *A Manual of Church*

History (1900) by Albert Henry Newman (1852-1933), Baptist scholar, both excellent and prolific, who amongst other accomplishments helped to found Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and also taught at several other colleges and universities.⁴² Aware of his own competence, he dedicated his book to two great German church historians, Albert Hauck and Johann Loserth.⁴³ In his Preface, Newman said: “This work is the product of over twenty years of almost continuous application on the author’s part to the study and teaching of church history.”⁴⁴ He also claimed his textbook was “scientifically prepared and free from partisanship.”⁴⁵

Newman mentioned and characterized the three main parties that contended at Nicaea and later. Each of them insisted on a specific separate word with a background in Greek Philosophy: (1) The Arians, who said: “The Son was created out of nothing; hence, he is *different in essence* (*ἕτεροουσιος*, [heteroousios]) from the Father”; (2) The Athanasian Party, who taught: “The Son is *identical in substance* (*ὁμοουσιος*, [homoousios]) with the Father. His deity is identical with the deity of the Father”⁴⁶; and (3) The Semi-Arian or Eusebian Party. About the last mentioned he wrote:

We may regard this large and influential party as, on the one hand, a continuation of the Ante-Nicene Origenistic party, and on the other hand as mediation between Arianism and Athanasianism. Most of the early defenders of Arius were not willing, with Arius, to deny absolutely the deity of Christ, yet they were just as loath to accept the, to them, self-contradictory representation of Athanasius.

The creed of the Semi-Arians may be summed up as follows:

a. They rejected the *Arian* view that the Son was created out of nothing, and hence is different in essence from the Father; that “there was when the Son was not”; that the Son is a creature or a birth in the sense in which other things are created and born.

b. On the other hand, they declared that the Son was begotten of the Father, *before all time*, God of God, entire of entire, only of the only, perfect of the perfect, image of the deity, the essence, the will, the power, and the glory of the Father. Yet they denied the Athanasian *sameness of essence*, holding only to *likeness as to essence* (*ὁμοιουσιος*, [homoousios]).⁴⁷

VIII

And now we are faced with a dilemma. For a better understanding of the issues involved, it is necessary to venture more deeply into the relationship between religion and philosophy. But those who are unused to metaphysics and related subtleties may well find that reading about them is heavy going. We therefore further pursue this topic in *Philosophy as Theology* (Appendix VI).

With the exception of the pagan Saxons and possibly the Franks, the Teutonic peoples followed the Gothic example, unwilling to submit to the papacy. “In all these cases it seems likely that the conversion was carried through by German-speaking and not Roman missionaries and Visigoth priests are likely to have played a major part in the process.”⁴⁸

Germanic Christianity was also distinguished from Catholicism by its Sabbathkeeping, as required by the Ten Commandments. Rome had changed the day of rest to Sunday. But the Germanic peoples, adhering more closely to the Decalogue, were still observing it on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, as all Christians had originally done.

A Seventh-day Adventist scholar who noted this fact was Leslie Hardinge, a prolific writer and public speaker. He contrasted the “Sunday-keeping Trinitarians” of Nicaea with the “Sabbath-keeping Arians.” He also briefly traced the conflict between them from the Council of Laodicea in 375—with a mandate “to set the Sabbath aside, and observe Sunday”—down to 538. Amongst other things, he wrote: “From 476-538 the western world was under the sway of Arian Christian kings. During this half century sporadic fighting continued until the Arian Heruls (493), the Arian Vandals (534) and the Arian Ostrogoths (538) were ‘plucked up by their roots.’ The influence of the Sabbath-keeping Arians then disappeared for all practical purposes, while the Trinitarian Sunday-keepers daily grew in power.”⁴⁹

For reasons set out above, we cannot accept the notion that these Germanic peoples were Arians. We do, however, record our debt to Hardinge for referring us to an ancient church historian who mentioned Sabbath observance among early Christians. He was Socrates Scholasticus (c. 380-c. 450), a legal consultant and Byzantine church historian born in Constantinople. His important *Ecclesiastical History* covers the period from Constantine I (306-337) to Theodosius II (408-450). A layman, “Socrates compiled a relatively impartial account of events that he sometimes embellished with expanded anecdotes from eyewitnesses.”⁵⁰

In one passage, after noting how differently various communities conducted their services, Socrates stated: “For although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the sabbath of every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this.”⁵¹

A footnote explains the word *Sabbath*: “i.e. Saturday. Sunday is never called ‘the Sabbath’ by the ancient Fathers and historians, but ‘the Lord’s day’ (κυριακή [kiriakí]). Sophocles (*Greek Lex. of the Rom. and Byzant. Period*) gives three senses to the word: viz., 1. ‘the Sabbath’ (of the Jews) (so in the LXX and Jewish writers). 2. ‘The week.’ 3. ‘Saturday.’ Many early Christians, however, continued to observe the Jewish Sabbath along with the first day of the week. Cf. Bingham, *Christ. Antiq.* XX. 3.”

A. C. Zenos, who extensively edited the translation of

Ἐκκλησιαστικῆ Ἱστορία (Ekklesiastikē Historia, *Ecclesiastical History*) and wrote or approved that note, was a native Greek, installed as professor of New Testament Greek at the Hartford Theological Seminary on 12 January 1889. Before studying at Princeton Theological Seminary, he had been “educated at Robert College, Constantinople”⁵²—where Socrates Scholasticus was born and wrote his History! Over and above the reference to Byzantine usage as described by Bingham, Zenos also knew from weekly personal experience that contemporary Greeks still called Saturday τὸ Σάββατον/τὸ Σάββατο (to sávaton/sávato) and Sunday ἡ Κυριακῆ (i kiriakí), as explained in our chapter on the Mystery of Lawlessness.

Socrates again mentioned the custom of early Christians to hold church services on both the seventh and the first days of the week where he wrote: “The Arians, as we have said, held their meetings without the city. As often therefore as the festal days occurred—I mean Saturday and Lord’s Day—in each week, on which assemblies are usually held in the churches, they congregated within the city gates about the public squares, and sang responsive verses adapted to the Arian heresy.” They taunted the “Homoousians, often singing such words as these: ‘Where are they that say three things are but one power?’” Their insulted opponents responded vigorously, for “the Homousians performed their nocturnal hymns with greater display.”⁵³

On this page, too, there is a footnote: “The ancient Christians observed the Lord’s day as the greatest day of the week, and also in the second place the Jewish Sabbath or Saturday. See Bingham, *Christ. Antiq.* XX. 2, on the Lord’s day, and 3, on the Sabbath.”

This statement, reflecting the interpretation of either Bingham or Prof. Zenos, needs to be treated with some reserve. It puts the cart before the horse. By the time of and after Constantine I, such a situation was no doubt generally true, at least in most of the Mediterranean basin. Earlier, however, it was the other way round. At first, the Church kept only the seventh day “according to the commandment” (Luke 23:56). But under the influence of Rome, some Sunday observance was soon tacked on. Afterwards, as the years passed by, it increasingly crowded out the Biblical Sabbath.

In any case, we do not think this passage contrasts “Sunday-keeping Trinitarians” with “Sabbath-keeping Arians,” as Hardinge suggested. Both the Trinitarians and the Arians mentioned by Socrates went to church on Saturday as well as Sunday and held their rowdy *homoousios* and *homoiousios* protests against one another. As the context shows, all this happened at Constantinople when John Chrysostom was bishop and patriarch, while Eudoxia (d. 404) reigned as empress. It is, of course, possible that in this context the word *Arians* included the so-called Semi-Arians.

For what the Goths believed about the day of rest, we must look further west and at a later date. They were still Sabbathkeepers. Concerning this,

we have important testimony in the letter of a contemporary, Bishop Sidonius Apollinaris (c. 431–after 480), an aristocratic Roman who lived in Gaul exactly when the Western Empire was disintegrating. He spent some time at the Visigoth court of Theodoric II, who reigned from 453 to 462, closely observing the routine and pursuits of that monarch.⁵⁴

J. P. Migne in his *Patrologia Latina* quoted Sidonius Apollinaris as saying: “De luxu autem illo sabbatario narrationi meae supersedendum est” (But it is unnecessary for me to write about his sabbatarian sumptuousness).⁵⁵ The adjective *sabbatarius* is derived from *sabbatum*, the Latin word for Sabbath, which with slight modifications still means Saturday in its daughter languages, as already demonstrated.

On the same page of Migne, we also find the following footnote:

“It is a fact that formerly those who dwelt in the East were accustomed as a church to sanctify the Sabbath as well as the Lord’s Day, and to hold sacred assemblies; wherefore Asterius, bishop of Amasia in Pontus, in a homily on incompatibility called Sabbath and Sunday a beautiful pair, and Gregory of Nyassa in a certain sermon calls these days brothers and therefore censures the luxury and the Sabbatarian pleasures; while on the other hand, the people of the West, contending for the Lord’s Day, have neglected the celebration of the Sabbath, as being peculiar to the Jews. Whence Tertullian in his apology: ‘We are only next to those who see in the Sabbath a day only for rest and relaxation.’ That is, we observe the Lord’s day, as they do the Sabbath. It is, therefore, possible for the Goths to have thought, as pupils of the discipline of the Greeks, that they should sanctify also the Sabbath after the manner of the Greeks.”⁵⁶

Accompanying this material is a commentator’s suggestion that here the word *Sabbath* probably refers to all feast days.⁵⁷ But we think that neither the text nor the history of Christianity justifies such a conclusion. A few other points, however, do require clarification.

First, the Latin for *Lord’s Day* could just as well be translated *Sunday* throughout, but we have refrained from doing so. Second, the original of the Asterius statement is not Latin but Greek, containing the words τῆς κυριακῆς (tis kuriakís). Therefore, it is translated “Sunday.” As a matter of fact, ἡ Κυριακή, *i kuriaki* (the Lord’s Day), remains the ordinary word for Sunday in modern Greece. After all these centuries, it still coexists with τὸ Σάββατον/τὸ Σάββατο, *to sávaton/sávato*, the word used in Luke 23:54-56. Third, we cannot know to what if any extent the Goths did honor Sunday alongside the Saturday Sabbath, which they clearly did keep, because all the theological texts in their language have been ruthlessly eliminated.

Much depends on the extent to which they had kept on aligning their religious practices to those of other Eastern churches, especially the one at Constantinople, after they first accepted Christianity outside the Roman Empire in A.D. 250. We consequently give them the benefit of the doubt and simply call them Sabbathkeepers.

As the fifth century was drawing to a close, the Western Empire largely shrank back to its heartland, the Italian peninsula. Its political capital was now Ravenna, the center of a turbulent interplay between imperial and Germanic forces. Further south, the pontiffs had more or less appropriated Rome and some of the surrounding areas. They were, however, still subject to and dependent on the two emperors: the senior man in distant Constantinople, and his junior sidekick, the one who from Ravenna tried to control the chaos of Italy.

But suddenly an even darker cloud descended over papal prospects. In 476, Odovacar (Odoacer) (435–493), the *magister militum* (master of the soldiers) who headed the western Roman army, carried out a coup d'état. Orestes, whom he helped to depose the emperor Nepos, had promised Odovacar a third of Italy for his Germanic followers, the Scirians and the Heruli, as well as others confederated with them. But on coming to power, Orestes double-crossed Odovacar and refused to honor his pledge. This promptly caused another revolt, in which Orestes was overthrown and executed. Then “the Germanic *foederati*, as well as a large segment of the Italic Roman army, proclaimed Odoacer *rex Italiae* (king of Italy).” Thereupon they advanced on and captured Ravenna.⁵⁸

Here they found the boy emperor, whom his father Orestes had elevated to the purple on 31 October 475. Owing to his youth, Odovacar spared his life. He also “gave him a pension and sent him to live with his relatives in Campania, a region of southern Italy.” This lad was Romulus Augustus,⁵⁹ an appellation which joined together the two most illustrious names in the history of Rome: its founder and its greatest emperor. Because he was still a child, however, Orestes had called him Romulus Augustulus, the *little* Augustus. Ironically, in this way, the Western Roman Empire expired, not with a bang but with a whimper.

Emperor Zeno (d. 491), who sat on the throne in Constantinople, the major capital, had not, however, recognized the boy, whom he regarded as a usurper.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Odovacar wisely avoided using the word *emperor*. He sent the imperial insignia to Constantinople to demonstrate his outward submissiveness, declaring himself “Patrician of the Western Half (which, by this time, was no more than the Italian peninsula). Odoacer was then confirmed as *rex Italiae* by Zeno later in 476.”⁶¹

But what of the relationship with the pope? The pontiff would have been far from pleased by this development. “Although Odoacer was an Arian Christian, he rarely intervened in the affairs of the Roman Catholic church.”⁶² To the pope, however, even such moderation on the part of a heretic was unacceptable.

Unfortunately for the new Germanic king, he proved to be too successful, both in expanding his territory and in his foreign affairs, which would later lead to his undoing. With an Italic-Germanic army, Odovacar

routed the Vandals in Sicily, the whole of which he captured by 477. Then, during 480, his forces moved to the east of the Adriatic, taking Dalmatia, which is part of modern Croatia. He also forged “pacts with the Visigoths and Franks and joined them in battle against the Burgundians, Alamanni, and Saxons.”⁶³

These and other events aroused suspicion and a sense of insecurity in Zeno. He simultaneously had to cope with another powerful Germanic leader, Theodoric, often called Theodoric the Great (454–526). This man headed the Ostrogoths, who were also in the Balkans. On both sides, the emperor felt himself threatened by two sets of Germanic peoples.

Originally the Ostrogoths had been ill-treated and displaced by the Huns. They had to move from their home in the Ukraine to Pannonia, north of the Danube. Here they fell within the influence sphere of the Eastern Roman Empire. “In northern Pannonia they fought endlessly against other Germanic peoples, acted for and against the emperors at Constantinople, and sometimes received and sometimes were refused financial subsidies from the imperial government.” When Theodoric succeeded his father in 471, he “soon led his people to new homes in Lower Moesia (in what is now Bulgaria).”⁶⁴

Toward him, Emperor Zeno had followed a policy similar to the one he adopted with Odovacar, giving him “the title of patrician and the office of master of the soldiers and even appointed him as consul in 484; but in vain efforts to achieve his aims Theodoric frequently ravaged the imperial provinces and actually threatened Constantinople itself.”⁶⁵

As Shakespeare in an oft-quoted line expressed it: “Uneasy rests the head that wears the crown”—especially when it falls into a troubled sleep while wondering about these two ambitious, land-hungry Germans, whose religion also troubled him. And then Zeno had an aha experience. He would mobilize them against each other and confine the problem to the West!

In 488, he ordered Theodoric “to make his way to Italy, overthrow its barbarian ruler Odoacer, and govern the peninsula in the Emperor’s name.” Theodoric, having as a hostage been educated at Constantinople, was a lover of Greco-Roman culture and complied. Together with his people, perhaps as many as one hundred thousand, he migrated to that country in 489. The next year he defeated Odoacer in three battles. But Ravenna, the capital of Italy, proved impregnable. For three years, Odoacer held out against him.⁶⁶

Now Theodoric resorted to a treacherous stratagem and perhaps the most dastardly act of his life. He pretended to accept an agreement with his adversary for joint rule over Italy and was admitted to Ravenna’s Laetum palace on 5 March 493. But “10 days later, two Goths, pretending to be suppliants, suddenly seized Odoacer by the hands, and Theodoric cut him down with a sword. Theodoric went on to murder the dead man’s wife and son and to massacre his followers remorselessly throughout northern Italy.”⁶⁷

In this way, after only seventeen years, the first Germanic kingdom was uprooted from the heartland of the Roman Empire.

XII

Ostrogothic rule was more enduring. It lasted for almost half a century. During his thirty-three-years' reign, Theodoric did his best to restore, for a war-ravaged and somewhat derelict Italy, whatever was admirable in the Classical way of life. Physical, architectural evidence of this can still be found in Ravenna, to which I journeyed during 1985.

The visitor first needs to make his or her way to the Catholic San Vitale, consecrated in 547. This church is still ablaze with marvelous Byzantine mosaics, which depict Justinian I and his empress Theodora, intact and fresh as if the artwork were created just yesterday—though fifteen centuries have slipped away. And then let such a person go to the similarly impressive Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo, erected by Theodoric. After the Ostrogoths had been defeated, the Catholics stole it and since 570 turned it into one of their own churches. And yet, with the pictures on its walls, it still stands as a mute monument to early Germanic culture, blended with what was best in Greco-Roman art. "This church contains magnificent mosaics depicting the teachings, miracles, Passion, and Resurrection of Christ; these are among the oldest such representations in existence."⁶⁸

Like Odovacar, Theodoric was in religious matters a tolerant man. His great aim "was to preserve harmony between Goths and Romans. He was never guilty of religious persecution. In his letters of appointment and elsewhere, he stressed above all else that the Goths must not oppress the Roman population, must not plunder their goods or ravage their fields, and must try to live amicably with them." What is more, his people largely inhabited northern and central Italy, so that he usually did not have to deal too much with the southerners. Goths were even "subject to Roman law, though not to Roman judges." On the other hand, Theodoric did not trust the Catholics, so the canny "Goths alone served in the army, and Romans were forbidden to carry arms."⁶⁹

As Mr. Heidi Heiks has pointed out, the Ostrogoths believed in the separation of church and state, with religious liberty for all, including Jews. An instance of this was an edict in Latin by Theodoric, drawn up for him between 507 and 511⁷⁰ by his greatly valued assistant, Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus (490-c. 583), a Catholic "historian, statesman, and monk," who after retiring in 540 "founded a monastery named Vivarium, to perpetuate the culture of Rome." When Theodoric died in 526, Cassiodorus was his *magister officiorum* (chief of the civil service). He also collected manuscripts and later, at his monastery, put the monks to work as copyists. "To this is due the preservation of many ancient authors' writings,"⁷¹ including, of course, his own.

The evidence for Theodoric's toleration is striking. Some of it is

contained in a text translated by Thomas Hodgkin (1831-1913), a Quaker who through much research “became a leading authority on the history of the early Middle Ages, his books being indispensable to all students of this period.”⁷² As he himself explained, he “spent some days in examining the MSS. of Cassiodorus in the British Museum.”⁷³

It is clear that Theodoric was averse to the Jews’ religion and would have liked to see it vanish. But since it showed no sign of doing so, he wrote to its adherents in Genoa:

“The Jews are permitted to roof in the old walls of their synagogue, but they are not to enlarge it beyond its old borders, nor to add any kind of ornament, under pain of the King’s sharp displeasure; and this leave is granted on the understanding that it does not conflict with the thirty years’ ‘Statute of Limitations.’

“Why do ye desire what ye ought to shun? In truth we give the permission which you craved, but we suitably blame the desire of your wandering minds. *We cannot order a religion, because no one is forced to believe against his will.*”⁷⁴ The italics are original to Theodoric’s text as prepared by Cassiodorus.

XIII

While Odovacar and Theodoric were ruling Italy from Ravenna, Gelasius I (d. 496, reigned 492-496) was pope in Rome. There he maintained papal authority, making him one of the great architects of Roman primacy in ecclesiastical affairs. J. A. Wylie referred to the climax of the pontiff’s endeavors in 495: “The council in which these lofty claims were put forth concluded its session with a shout of acclamation to Gelasius,—‘In thee we behold Christ’s vicar.’”⁷⁵

But we also note that a year earlier, in 494, Gelasius had taken the precaution of writing what has become a famous letter to his Byzantine overlord at Constantinople, Anastasius I (430?-518, emperor since 491). Gelasius said: “There are two powers by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the priesthood and the authority of the kings.” According to this, “both sacred and civil power are of divine origin and independent.”⁷⁶

In those years, Petrine Primacy remained a concept limited to ecclesiastical matters. As yet, the pontiff had no substantial and indisputable *territory* over which he could rule on his own behalf. He therefore could not shake off the political overlordship that shackled him to the emperor in Constantinople.

Chapter Twelve
CLOVIS CONVERTED

I

Gaul, which eventually became France, was conquered and subdued by Julius Caesar (12/13 July 100 B.C.–15 March 44 B.C). It was perhaps the most desirable of the provinces which in theory still made up the Western Roman Empire. Inhabited mostly by a Celtic people, it had learned to speak Latin and to some extent adopted Catholicism. But in the disorderly time to which we are referring the imperial government had only a tenuous hold on it. Various Germanic peoples, intent on slicing out kingdoms of their own, had poured into it.

Of these, we have already mentioned one: the Visigoths, who controlled the maritime strip between Italy and Spain, as well as the south of Gaul in the West, with their capital at Tolosa (now Toulouse). Their kingdom also extended into and included much of Spain. But Germanic peoples, like the Burgundians and Alamans, had also crossed the old Roman frontier of the Rhine and migrated southward.

In the north, there lurked another, even more powerful constellation of settlers, the warlike Franks. During the third century, they lived “on the east bank of the lower Rhine River,” as three independent tribes: the Salians, the Ripuarians, and the Chatti, also called the Hessians.¹ They all spoke the same language, ancestral to present-day Dutch, Afrikaans, and Flemish as well as various Low German dialects. King Chlodovech, more commonly known as Clovis I (c. 466–511), a great warlord, was the man who united them fifteen hundred years ago.

He was a Salian Frank, whose forebears had come from Salland, Overijssel, in the northeastern Netherlands. Succeeding his father Childeric “in one of these kingdoms on the river Scheldt,”² he at first had to limit his realm to what is now Belgium and northeastern France.³ But later, the western empire having decayed and the power of the Visigoths diminished, after their great King Euric (420–484) had died, he ventured further south into Gaul, eventually transferring his headquarters to Paris, already a bastion of the Roman Church.

Clovis made a decision of fateful and far-reaching importance: he would himself become a Catholic. Since he was the first Germanic ruler to do so, “the Pope styled him ‘the eldest son of the Church’, a title adopted by all the subsequent Kings of France.”⁴

His conversion was greatly affected if not determined by political considerations, especially a desire to integrate the victorious Franks, relative newcomers into that area, with the older and well-settled Gallo-Romans, who constituted the majority. He wanted the support of the latter for his great new project: subjugating the Visigoths. For this, he especially needed the help of their elite, the landowners. These had long cherished the tendency to equate

Romanitas with *Christianitas*.⁵ As already noted, it was they who built and endowed the Catholic churches on their vast estates. In liaison with their bishops, they also ensured that the peasants, slaves, and others who lived there adopted or conformed to their religion.

This decision by Clovis also resulted from a strategy which the Roman Church has often applied with dramatic success: the use of woman power, manipulated by priest-confessors and bishops. The Frankish king was married to a Catholic princess, Clotilda of Burgundy.

At this distance in time, it is a little difficult to fathom the fascination that such brides had for barbarian kings. Partly it was a matter of prestige. But those princesses also displayed superior breeding, culture, and poise derived from their *Romanitas*. Partly, too, it was the lure of picking forbidden fruit—and paying for it an exorbitant price. To marry them, the monarchs had to promise, amongst other things, that their children would be reared as Catholics and not as members of their father's church.

Intermarriage with such princesses took place repeatedly, often, as we shall see, with the same result on both the European continent and in the British Isles. By this means, entire countries were enticed into the arms of the Roman Church.

Clotilda became a powerful channel for the hierarchy to gain a foothold in her husband's mind. And so "the bishops saw themselves as the king's natural advisers, and, even before his conversion to Catholic Christianity and his baptism at Reims (now in France) by Remigius, Clovis apparently recognized their rights and protected their property."⁶

II

Some fifty years after his death, Bishop Gregory of Tours (538/539–594?) in his *Ten Books of Histories*—often, though wrongly, called *The History of the Franks*—depicted him as a kind of Constantine, who by trusting the Christian God was rewarded with military victory. This chronology necessitated a considerable tampering with the facts. "Gregory places Clovis's baptism in 496 and characterizes his subsequent battles as Christian victories, particularly the engagement with the Visigoths in 507 that has long been identified with Vouillé," France. Applying extrabiblical typology, Gregory also "elevated the Franks to equivalency with the ancient Hebrews, the chosen people, and Clovis to the stature of their great king David."⁷

It seems that Clovis had at first been favorable to if not actually a member of the Germanic Church. He was probably not a pagan. This idea is bolstered by, amongst others, Richard Fletcher at the University of York in England, who has published on many medieval topics. In *The Barbarian Conversion from Paganism to Christianity*, a recent work (1997), he remarked: "It is of great interest to discover that one of Clovis's sisters was already a Christian at the time of the baptism, albeit an Arian one. This snippet of information acquires more significance when considered alongside a strictly contemporary source.

There survives a letter to Clovis from Bishop Avitus of Vienne in which the writer congratulated the king upon his conversion. Avitus wrote in a convoluted and rhetorical Latin, but what he seems plainly to say at one point is that the conversion of Clovis which he celebrates was not a conversion from paganism to Christianity but one from heresy to orthodox Catholicism. In the context, the heresy can only have been Arianism.”⁸

The baptism of Clovis as a Roman Catholic occurred just after he had defeated the Visigoths, expelling most of them from France into Spain. This conclusion is, as the 2011 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* puts it, upheld by “recent analysis of the contemporary sources that describe his reign—especially of a letter written by Avitus of Vienne congratulating him on his baptism.” It contradicts Gregory of Tours’s historical revisionism, revealing that probably “Clovis was baptized rather late in life, possibly at Christmas 508, only three years before his death.”⁹

About that date, Danuta Shanzer, an Oxford-educated professor of Classics and Medieval Studies at the University of Illinois (formerly of Cornell University) has been most convincing. Expert in the Latin of the Middle Ages and acutely analytical, she found Avitus’s *Epistle 46* to be a genuine primary source, “the only surviving contemporary evidence for the event,”¹⁰ in contrast with the account by Gregory of Tours, which is “a non-documentary literary text,”¹¹ written more than fifty years later. Gregory not only lived after Avitus but was also vague in his dating of Clovis’s victory over the Alamanni, a crucial event for determining when the king became a Catholic. Gregory used the word *aliquando*, “some time or other,”¹² which is quite unhelpful. From such facts and after reasoning through as well as around the texts, Dr. Shanzer settled on Christmas 508 as a good date for the baptism.¹³

Fletcher also said: “Good reasons have been advanced for placing his baptism quite late in the reign; a strong case for 508 has been made.”¹⁴

We need to note, moreover, the 1988 remarks by Edward James, who just like Danuta Shanzer was educated at Oxford and used to be professor of medieval history at University College, Dublin. His advanced studies were in archaeology. While Dr. James approvingly nodded at 508 as a special date and was well aware of the Avitus epistle, he added that the conversion of emperors and kings—from the time of Constantine I—was never abrupt. “There may be at least three stages in the process: first of all, intellectual acceptance of Christ’s message, the ‘conversion’ proper; secondly, the decision to announce this publicly, to followers who may be hostile to the change; thirdly, the ceremony of baptism and membership of the community of Christians.”¹⁵ We are somewhat skeptical about that phrase “intellectual acceptance of Christ’s message,” when applied to Clovis; it has too Catholic a ring about it. In any case, good indications exist for supposing that previous to his decision Clovis had belonged or been inclined to the Germanic Church, as James himself acknowledged. More to the point is his following statement: “Avitus’s letter, which mentions how Clovis had shown mercy to a formerly captive people, suggests that the baptism came after Clovis had liberated the Gallo-Romans of

southwest Gaul from the Arian captivity, and probably after his alliance with the Emperor, in 508 at the earliest.”¹⁶

Just after his victory, Clovis called for a synod of the Roman Church, described in the *Conciliengeschichte* (A History of the Councils of the Church), highly esteemed in Catholic circles. The author was Karl Joseph von Hefele, D.D. (1809-1893), a bishop, consecrated in 1869 and “summoned to Rome to be a consultor for Vatican Council I.” Before that, he had since 1835 been a professor at the University of Tübingen in the Church History Department.¹⁷ We shall be citing an English translation, authorized by the writer:

After Clovis (Chlodwig), king of the Franks, had conquered the portion of the West Gothic kingdom which lay in Gaul (507 and 508), he summoned a great Synod to Orleans, Aurelianensis I., on the 10th of July 511, at which there were present not only bishops of the Frankish, but also of the former West Gothic kingdom, altogether thirty two, among them five metropolitans, Cyprian of Bordeaux (probably president of the Synod), Tetradius of Bourges, Licinius of Tours, Leontius of Elusa (Eauze), and Gildared of Rouen. Many of those present had been members of the Synod of Agde, from which many canons were now repealed at Orleans. That Chlodwig had invited the bishops to the Synod is stated in the short preface which they prefixed to the minutes, and is clear also from the letter of the Synod to Chlodwig, which mentions that he had also prescribed the points on which they should take counsel, and that the bishops had asked for the confirmation of their decrees by the King.¹⁸

Thirty-one canons follow, of which we mention a few for their relevance to our present topic:

10. If heretical clerics return of their own accord to the Church, for instance, from the Arian Goths, they shall receive the clerical office of which the bishop has thought them worthy with ordination by imposition of hands; and heretical churches shall be consecrated in the same manner in which Catholic churches are wont to be reconciled (*imovari*).

25. No one must keep Easter, Christmas, or Pentecost in his villa unless he is sick.

26. The people must not leave the church before the end of Mass; and if a bishop is present, they shall first receive the blessing from him.

31. A bishop, unless he is ill, must not fail in attendance at divine service on Sunday in the church which lies nearest to him.¹⁹

Canon 10 provides for the assimilation of former clerics from the Germanic Church, by submitting to the Catholic hierarchy. Canons 25, 26, and 31 insist further on ecclesiastical authority. Everyone must attend the Catholic services. Bishops in particular must go to church on Sundays. Why? Probably to ensure that those of them who might previously have belonged to the Germanic Church would not wriggle out of their new Roman Catholic obligations. Some former clerics of the Germanic Church might secretly observe their Saturday-

III

Establishing 508 as a year of pivotal importance is momentous news for the Historicist interpretation of Dan. 12:11: “And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” (The italics in the King James Version indicate words that are not in the original.)

Applying the year-day principle laid down in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, supported by Biblical passages, Historicists have long maintained that the 1290 prophetic days extended from 508 to 1798. Seventh-day Adventists have done so since their denomination arose in the aftermath of the Great Disappointment at midnight on 22 October 1844, when the Lord had not returned as the Millerites predicted he would.

The quest for authenticating 508 is even older than that. It dates back to at least 5 March 1838, when Charles Fitch (1805–1844), the pastor of an Orthodox Congregational church in Boston, wrote to William Miller. He said he had carefully studied Miller’s prophetic interpretations, comparing Scripture with history, and agreed with them. Yet he found the dates 508 and 538 problematic. About the former, he asked: “Will you have the kindness to inform me, by letter, in what history you find the fact stated that the last of the ten kings was baptized A.D. 508?”²⁰

At that time, Miller could not provide a satisfactory response, nor were his Seventh-day Adventist successors able to do so before the end of the twentieth century.

Fitch became a very prominent Millerite. Amongst other things, he designed the 1843 Chart and edited a weekly journal entitled *Second Advent of Christ*. In this, on 26 July 1843, he printed a momentous sermon. Referring to both Rev. 14 and Rev. 18, he “contended that the term Babylon was no longer limited to the Roman Catholic Church, but now included also the great body of Protestant Christendom. He maintained that both branches of Christendom had, by their rejection of the light on the Advent, fallen from the high estate of pure Christianity. In early October 1844, he also “accepted the ‘seventh month’ concept, and looked to Oct. 22 as the time for the coming of Christ.” He did not, however, live to see that day, since—just eight days before it—he died of pneumonia on Oct 14, “after long exposure while baptizing outdoors in cold weather.”²¹

Ellen G. White, relating her first vision about the New Jerusalem and the tree of life, referred to him together with another Millerite minister who died in 1844: “We all went under the tree and sat down to look at the glory of the place, when Brethren Fitch and Stockman, who had preached the gospel of the kingdom, and whom God had laid in the grave to save them, came up to us and asked us what we had passed through while they were sleeping.”²²

We can well wonder what dark clouds would have gathered in the mind of

Charles Fitch, such a sincere and brilliant believer. And what role might that detail about A.D. 508 have played? In any case, only now, a hundred and seventy years later, can his query to William Miller be answered adequately.

The year 1798 is also the terminal date for the 1260 prophetic days, the “time, times, and an half” of Dan. 12:7. This period must be very important, for the Bible mentions variants of it no fewer than seven times, twice in Daniel and five times in the Apocalypse (Dan. 7:25, Dan. 12:7, Rev. 11:2, Rev. 11:3, 7, Rev. 12:6, Rev. 12:14, 15, Rev. 13:5-7). In all this, $3\frac{1}{2}$ prophetic years are equated with 42 prophetic months and 1260 year-days. For Historicists this equivalence, which is very specific, works beautifully well; but for Futurists/Dispensationalists, who maintain that literal time is involved, it is arithmetically impossible. And Idealists, who like Origen thrive on vague allegorizations and dislike such exactitude, cannot even begin to understand it.

Let us begin with a simple question: How many days make up a year? According to the Gregorian calendar, it is 365, except in the case of leap years. The actual number is 365.2422 days. Calculating on this basis, we have the following: $365.2422 \times 3\frac{1}{2} = 1,278$ days; not 1,260 days.

This poses a major problem for Dispensationalists, who identify the $3\frac{1}{2}$ years with half of the prophetic week described in Dan. 9:27. They need to cope with an 18-day discrepancy, though mostly they are unaware of it. Interpreters of the Historical School do not, however, run into such a difficulty; their calculation is as follows: $360 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ (or 42×30) = 1,260.

This equation does not depend on ordinary time units. A natural year does not contain exactly 360 days, nor are all months made up of 30 days—not even in the calendar normally used by the Jews, as Tracey R. Rich explained it. This “is based on three astronomical phenomena: the rotation of the Earth about its axis (a day); the revolution of the moon about the Earth (a month); and the revolution of the Earth about the sun (a year).” The Gregorian calendar, which was devised to ensure that Easter would always fall on a Sunday and is used throughout the world, ignores the cycles of the moon, having months of 28, 30, or 31 days. To remain in step with the seasons, however, it is normally adjusted every 4th year, by allocating 29 days to February. In contrast with this, the Jewish months—which have their own names—consist of either 29 or 30 days, because the moon goes round the earth every $29\frac{1}{2}$ days. This calendar, which is only used for religious purposes, has 12 and sometimes 13 months, with seasonal adjustments over a period of 19 years. Additional modifications are made, especially to eliminate problems with festivals, for instance to avoid a Yom Kippur adjacent to a weekly Sabbath.²³

Such modern Jewish reckoning also cannot explain the $360 \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ (or 42×30) = 1260 calculation. The latter does, however, agree with the antediluvian calendar, as revealed by a comparison of the data in Gen. 7 and 8. “That the 150 days include the 40 days of vs. 4, 12, 17 [and 24 in ch. 7], and so must be counted from the beginning of that period, is seen from v. 11, and ch. 8:4, where it is said that the ark rested on the mountains

of Ararat on the 17th day of the 7th month, exactly 5 months after the beginning of the rain. The reckoning is in terms of 30-days months.”²⁴

Archaeologist Siegfried H. Horn pointed out that “no known calendar runs in an unbroken series of 42 30-days months.” Nevertheless, “the idea of a theoretical or ideal month of 30 was logical to the Jews, who called 30 days a ‘full’ month; a 29-day month they spoke of as ‘hollow,’ or ‘deficient.’”²⁵

The equivalence in the Bible of 3½ years with 42 months as well as 1260 is not arbitrary and contrived. It might seem so if only a short stretch of time were taken into consideration. But an astonishing answer emerges when we relate the prophetic periods of the Bible to one another and then link them with astronomy.

Several crucially important time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation begin in different years but are interlinked by their terminal dates. Of the last mentioned, there are only three: 1798 and the spring as well as the fall of 1844. The 1260, 1290, and 1335 year-days are all enclosed within the more comprehensive period of 2300 year-days. A key date for tying them all together is 508.

IV

Concerning the 2300 year-days and their relationship to the 1260 year-days, we interpose the following story, which is both fascinating and true.

In the eighteenth century, a Protestant landowner, mathematician, and astronomer of Switzerland, Jean Philippe Loys de Chéseaux (1718–1751) was doing chronological research. This young man was a correspondent of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris as well as a foreign associate of the Academy at Göttingen, Germany. He was a reputable professional with several scientific publications to his name.

Seeking an accurate date for the crucifixion, he turned to the prophecies of Daniel, especially the eighth and the ninth chapters. He began to wonder about the relationship between the 1260 and the 2300 days conceived as years. No doubt he noticed that these periods are linked to one another by the themes of desecration, a treading underfoot, and a sanctuary cleansed. And so he scrutinized these periods from an astronomical point of view, relating them to attempts by scientists who were seeking to harmonize three basic time units, namely the *solar day*, the *solar year*, and the *lunar month*. Of these there were four possible combinations:

1. Harmonizing the *solar day* and *solar year*.
2. Harmonizing the *solar year* and *lunar month*.
3. Harmonizing the *solar day* and *lunar month*.
4. Harmonizing all three—*day*, *month*, and *year*.²⁶

First, de Chéseaux discovered that both the 1260 and the 2300 years of Daniel’s prophecies were remarkably perfect and accurate lunisolar cycles.

Each was a harmonization of the second class, i.e., the solar year with the lunar month. No previous astronomer had discovered this relationship.

Continuing his calculations, de Chéseaux eventually tried to discover a cycle of the fourth class (a harmonization of the day, the month, and the year), which up to that time had eluded all astronomers. For this cycle, too, the 1260 years were a good fit, not quite perfect yet with “a remarkably small error.” The 2300 years were even better, the kind of cycle that had long been unsuccessfully sought by astronomers. It was thirty times longer than the ancient Period of Calippus, with only a seventeenth part its error, namely 8h 12’.

Next, de Chéseaux pondered the similarity of the very small error in each case and theorized that the difference between the 1260 and the 2300 years—namely 1040 years—would prove to be a perfect cycle of the fourth kind so long and vainly searched for. And that is exactly what he found!

“This period of 1040 years, indicated indirectly by the Holy Ghost, *is a cycle at once solar, lunar, and diurnal or terrestrial of the most perfect accuracy*. I subsequently discovered two singular confirmations of this fact, which I will explain presently, when I have adduced all my purely astronomic proofs; may I in the meantime be permitted to give to this new cycle, the name of the DANIEL CYCLE.”²⁷

De Chéseaux believed that this discovery provided absolute proof that the book of Daniel had been divinely inspired. “Such a cycle would never have been chosen by accident. And since it was not accidental, it must have been chosen by Him who timed the movements of the sun and moon in their orbits.”²⁸

Froom said the results were checked and declared astronomically correct by two contemporaries, Messrs. Mairan and Cassini, “celebrated astronomers of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris.”²⁹ De Chéseaux recorded his discovery in *Remarques historiques, chronologiques, et astronomiques, sur quelques endroits du livre de Daniel* (Historical, Chronological, and Astronomical Remarks on Certain Parts of the Book of Daniel). Edited by his sons, this booklet was published in 1754 after his death.³⁰

Although he died young, his discoveries about the intermeshing of astronomic with prophetic time had, as we explained in our first book, a great impact on nineteenth-century expositors.³¹ Three of these men were British Historicists who strove to defend the year-day principle, which underlay de Chéseaux’s calculations, against an upsurging Futurist-Dispensationalism and specifically referred to him.

The first of them was William Cunningham (1776-1849), a landowner in Scotland who wrote twenty works, both small and large, on prophecy and Biblical chronology. His *Dissertation on the Seals and the Trumpets of the Apocalypse* (1813) deals chiefly with the 1260 years.³² Thirty years later, Thomas R[awson] Birks (1810–1883), a professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge University, also took up these themes. According to Froom, his *First Elements of Sacred Prophecy* (1843), was “the most exhaustive and

masterly treatise on the year-day principle of the entire nineteenth-century Advent awakening.”³³ Then there was Henry Grattan Guinness (1835–1910), a mighty Irish preacher, educator, and author—between 1878 and 1905—of nine books on prophecy. According to Froom, in this he was “without a peer in Britain,” a “powerful exponent of the Historical School.”³⁴ It was he who translated de Chéseaux. He also further explored the relationship between astronomy and prophecy, though this need not concern us here.

Somebody else impressed by de Chéseaux’s ideas was Auguste Nicolas (1807–1888), a Roman Catholic, for whom Protestants were heretics. Nevertheless, in his 1855 edition of *Études philosophiques sur le Christianisme* (Philosophic Studies About Christianity), Vol. IV, he marveled at what this young man had been able to accomplish in his short lifetime. Amongst others who shared this admiration, he cited the philosopher Bonnet, who remarked on de Chéseaux’s “rare and abundant knowledge, exalted by modesty, a candor, and a piety that were even more rare.” He also told how the Daniel Cycle had astonished Mairan and Cassini, “the premier astronomers of this century.”³⁵

Remarkably Samuele Bacchiocchi, who had given up much of Historicism, preferring Idealistic ideas, dismissed such reckonings and precision. For him, “these time designations (three and a half years, 42 months, 1260 days) have more a *qualitative* and than [*sic*] a *quantitative* significance. In other words, the focus of this prophecy is *not on the time of the rule of the Antichrist*, but on the *nature of its rule*, manifested in the persecution of God’s people and in the promotion of false worship.”³⁶ Just what, in plain English, is a “qualitative time designation” supposed to be? Such gobbledygook is hardly more meaningful than the sentence *Colorless green ideas sleep furiously*, which the famous linguist Noam Chomsky concocted in 1957 “as an example of a sentence whose grammar is correct but whose meaning is nonsensical.”³⁷

Bacchiocchi seemed to suggest that the Lord, instead of emphasizing a most important point concerned with temporality, repeated this period *seven* times and in three *numerical* ways for no sensible reason. Apart from suggesting that God does not mean exactly what he says, this was an attack on the year-day principle.

V

But let us descend from the lofty heights to which de Chéseaux has raised our minds (and sidestep the Bacchiocchian miasma) to face the awkward fact that until recently, expositors who gave 508 as the beginning for both the 1290 and 1335 year-days were unable to authenticate it from history. Nor could anybody explain precisely what was meant in Dan. 12:11 by the setting up of “the abomination that maketh desolate.”

Even more, the word “daily”—the תמידי (*tamid*)—of Dan. 12:11 has been understood in various ways. Among Seventh-day Adventist scholars, two views have predominated. According to the first, the “daily” was paganism.

The second one holds that it refers to Christ's perpetual ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Also, the year 1843 as a terminal date for the 1335 year-days has from the time of William Miller to the present puzzled them.

This topic, debated by many writers in numerous articles, books, and even dissertations, really lies beyond the scope of our work. And yet we need to say briefly what the two understandings constitute and possibly clear up a few problems besetting each of them.

VI

We begin with William Miller according to his Lecture VI of 1840. Amongst other things, he said: "And shall take away the daily sacrifice.' The angel is giving us a history of what these kings would do, when Rome should be divided into its ten toes, or when the ten horns should arise, which the angel has heretofore explained to mean ten kings, Daniel vii.24. . . . To 'take away the daily sacrifice,' means to destroy Paganism out of the kingdom. This was done by those ten kings who now ruled the Roman empire, and would for a little season, until they should give their power to the image beast." Miller went on to say that these kings were "all Pagans" who supported "Paganism." But "they were converted to the Christian faith, which happened within the space of twenty years, Clovis, the king of France, having been converted and baptized in the year A.D. 496. By the year A.D. 508, the remainder of the kings were brought over and embraced the Christian religion, which closes the history of the Pagan beast, whose number was 666; which, beginning 158 years B.C., would end the beast's reign A.D. 508 . . ."³⁸

Miller's take on the number 666 was incorrect, as is evident from considerations dealt with elsewhere in this book. Was it, however, correct to assert that the ten Germanic peoples were pagans until Clovis's time? As we have amply shown, it was not. They were Christians, though not Catholics. And was the reign of the *pagan* beast ended in A.D. 508? No. This, too, is a historical error. After Constantine had been converted, two centuries before Clovis's time, the Roman emperors had—with the brief exception of Julian the Apostate—all belonged to either the Roman Catholic or the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Seventh-day Adventist writers who had previously believed in Miller's message modified some, though not all, of his prophetic conclusions. For instance, "[James] White and other Seventh-day Adventist pioneers adopted Crosier's view that the sanctuary *trodden under foot* (Dan. 8:13) was the one in heaven, yet held Miller's view that the sanctuary *cast down* (Dan. 8:11) was a pagan sanctuary and that the "daily" was paganism (Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens*, 1846, pp. 30-32; J. N. Andrews, in the *Review and Herald*, Jan. 6, 1853, p. 129; Uriah Smith, *ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1864, pp. 180, 181; James White, *ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1870, pp. 57, 58, in a series 'Our Faith and Hope,' which was reprinted in *Sermons on the Coming . . . of . . . Christ*)."³⁹

Miller was much mistaken about crucial facts of history. Therefore, some of

these conclusions are perplexing. And so is Smith's 1873 statement of the view prevailing among Seventh-day Adventists of his time:

"The little horn [of Daniel 8] symbolized Rome in its entire history, including the two phases of pagan and papal. These two phases are elsewhere spoken of as the 'daily' (sacrifice is a supplied word) and the 'transgression of desolation;' the daily (desolation) signifying the pagan form, and the transgression of desolation, the papal. In the actions ascribed to this power, sometimes one form is spoken of, sometimes the other. 'By him,' the papal form, 'the daily,' the pagan form, 'was taken away.' Pagan Rome gave place to papal Rome. And the place of his sanctuary, or worship, the city of Rome, was cast down. The seat of government was removed to Constantinople. The same transaction is brought to view in Revelation 13:2, where it says that the dragon, pagan Rome, gave to the beast, papal Rome, his seat, the city of Rome, and power and great authority, the whole influence of the empire."⁴⁰

On 7 September 1886, Uriah Smith, who edited the *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*, in an article entitled "The 1335 Days," asserted that 508 concerned the taking away of paganism, and not the setting up of the papacy. Here is his statement in its original context:

When do the 1335 days commence, and what marks their termination? The two periods 1290 and 1335, being introduced together, must commence at the same point, and for the 1335 days we have no starting point whatever. We are therefore to ascertain the starting-point of the 1290. These commence from the taking away of the daily (abomination) or paganism, and not from the setting up of the abomination of desolation, or the papacy. Some confound these two events. But they are separate and distinct; and one had to be accomplished to make way for the other. "He who now letteth," or hindereth, says Paul (2 Thess. 2:7), which was paganism, must "be taken out of the way" before that "wicked" or "the man of sin" could be revealed. And this is the event given by inspiration as the date of the 1290 and 1335 days. The marginal reading of Dan. 12:11 makes this plain: "And from the time that the daily shall be taken away, *to set up [or in order to set up], the abomination that maketh desolate,*" etc. This places it beyond controversy that it is the taking away of paganism, and not the setting up of the papacy, that marks the commencement of these prophetic periods. Now it is a historical truth that paganism was taken away, as Paul said it would have to be, thirty years before the papacy was set up. Testimony, not necessary to our purpose to introduce here, might be given to show that paganism, as the religion of the empire, fell in 508, and after thirty years of transition, the papacy was fully established, in 538.⁴¹

But by that time paganism had long since ceased to be "the religion of the empire," although it still existed. Constantine I, the Great, had adopted Christianity in 320. He also, in 330, inaugurated his new capital, New Rome, which soon became known as Constantinople. Yet Old Rome remained under

his jurisdiction and also, as we have shown, that of the subsequent emperors who ruled the empire from the East.

We also discern a dichotomy between the Millerite element in the interpretation of the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers and their new belief that “the sanctuary *trodden under foot* (Dan. 8:13) was the one in heaven. Further, regarding the “daily,” we note that “*tamid* is used in connection with the tabernacle and Temple service about 50 times: of the daily morning and evening burnt offering . . .”⁴²

Such considerations would all seem to indicate that Uriah Smith and his colleagues were wrong in interpreting the “daily” as paganism. We could brush this view aside, except for its apparent endorsement by Ellen G. White, whom Seventh-day Adventists regard as an inspired writer. In *The Present Truth* of 1850, she said: “Then I saw in relation to the ‘DAILY,’ that the word ‘SACRIFICE’ was supplied by man’s wisdom, and does not belong to the text; and that the Lord gave the correct view of it to those who gave the judgment hour cry. When union existed, before 1844, nearly all were united on the correct view of the ‘DAILY; but since 1844, in the confusion, other views have been embraced, and darkness and confusion has followed.”⁴³ She subsequently repeated these words, with a slight modification, in *Early Writings*. Nowadays, however, many Seventh-day Adventists think she did not really endorse Uriah Smith and his colleagues’ interpretation but was chiefly protesting against the insertion of the word *sacrifice* into the Biblical text.

Even though the pagan Roman Empire definitely ended with Constantine in the early fourth century and did not endure until the sixth century, let us ask: Did rampant paganism nevertheless endure as a major force until Clovis’s time? As a matter of fact, it did—and abundantly so—, which we have already indicated with reference to Ramsay MacMullen’s *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Century*.

The tolerant Goths, who belonged to the Germanic Church, were generally tolerant of everybody who had other religious convictions: Catholics, Jews, and even pagans. The last mentioned seem to have been the majority. When Clovis defeated the Visigoths, driving them out of southern France across the Pyrenees and also converted to Catholicism, the Roman Church was finally empowered to crush all religious systems opposing it: Germanic Christianity as well as paganism.

Setting up “the abomination that maketh desolate” is much concerned with the papacy. Until Clovis’s time, it had been greatly thwarted by the Germanic Church, which not only held to its own doctrines but also tolerated other religions, including paganism. Now, however, for the first time since the Western emperors had disappeared in A.D. 476, a mighty new monarch was propping up the power of the pope.

In this regard, we observe the scope of what Clovis was doing. He did not content himself, and the Catholic Church, by compelling his own people to change their beliefs. As the previously cited Edward James remarked: “The conversion of Franks always went hand in hand with the conversion of Gallo-

Romans.” He said that while in some areas this seems to have been swift, it was sometimes a slow affair. For instance, “in north-east Gaul, modern Belgium, where a large proportion of the Frankish people were living, and where the process of migration and settlement had totally disrupted the diocesan structure, the conversion of the Franks and the reconversion, or conversion, of Gallo-Romans was still being actively pursued in the late seventh century.”⁴⁴

VII

The idea that the “daily” refers to paganism predominated among Seventh-day Adventists through most of the 1800s. But “about the end of the century dissatisfaction with Smith’s exposition resulted in the rise of the view that the ‘daily’ meant Christ’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, ‘taken away’ by the substitution of an earthly priesthood and sacrifice. This ‘new view’ was advocated by L. R. Conradi in Europe and by A. G. Daniells, W. W. Prescott, W. C. White, and others in America.”⁴⁵

Favoring it is the fact, already referred to, that in the Bible *tamid* is so frequently applied to the sacrifices of the tabernacle and temple service. On the other hand, those who espouse this “new view” have problems with the understanding of Dan. 12:11, where the 1290 and 1335 year-days are mentioned.⁴⁶

Both schools, however, taught a crucial fact: setting up “the abomination that maketh desolate” is the empowerment of papal power—at least in religious matters—which Clovis unleashed upon the Mediterranean world. From him, it began to gain unlimited, persecuting power to impose its false doctrines and traditions. It is, in any case, not necessary here to further pursue the differences of the two views about the “daily.”

VIII

We can now also show that the 1335 year-days, which began in 508, did not end in 1843 but apparently extended to early 1844.

This is the date which after much deliberation was established by educated nineteenth-century followers of William Miller, even though they were more concerned with another time prophecy, as found in Dan. 8:14: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

To begin with, some Millerites thought that even this longer period stretched until 1843, after which they settled first on the spring of 1844. However, 22 October 1844 marked their Great Disappointment, because Christ did not then return. A remnant from that movement—who went on to found the Seventh-day Adventist Church—discovered that though the last-mentioned date had been calculated correctly, the sanctuary referred to by the prophecy was not this world, as was commonly believed in those days. Instead, it was the sanctuary in heaven, where the Lord Jesus intercedes for penitent sinners.

What we have here is the meshing of two different prophecies: the 2300 year-days with the 1335 year-days. To understand why the spring of 1844 applies to the latter, we need to note what Heidi Heiks wrote in his *508, 538*,

1798, 1843 Source Book (Preliminary):

“All of the Advent believers acknowledged and used the Karaite Jewish calendar when calculating the end-time prophecies, because it was the Jewish time reckoning that applied to these prophecies. The Gregorian calendar, whose use was decreed by Pope Gregory in A.D. 1582 when he changed times, was not used in their prophetic calculations. The Karaite calendar of 1843 extended from spring 1843 to spring 1844. The Advent believers initially looked to Christ’s return during that Jewish year.”⁴⁷

Having studied the matter closely, LeRoy Edwin Froom had also confirmed this important detail by quoting from an editorial in the *Signs of the Times* of 21 June 1843. Unlike Rabbinical Jews, the Karaites still strictly adhered to the original lunisolar calendar of the Old Testament. “The Jewish year of A.D. 1843, as the Caraites [*sic*] reckon it in accordance with the Mosaic law, therefore commenced this year with the new moon on the 29th day of April, and the Jewish year 1844 will commence with the new moon in next April [18/19], when 1843 and the 2300 days, according to their computation, will expire.”⁴⁸

Consequently, the Millerites like the Karaites “reckoned that the last day of the Jewish year ‘1843’ would close with the sunset of April 18, 1844. Therefore the first day of the first month (Nisan) of ‘1844,’ true Jewish time, would have as its civil equivalent April 19, though beginning actually with the sunset of April 18. Thus it should read April 18/19. (See Exhibits C and D, page 790).”⁴⁹

Froom substantiated the Millerites’ 1844 dates with photographic images. Exhibit D does not here concern us; it shows how they arrived at 22 October 1844, their final date for the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Exhibit C is headed with the words: CORRECTED RECKONING FOR “JEWISH YEAR 1843” MADE BY MILLER ASSOCIATES IN SPRING OF 1843, THROUGH ADOPTING THE TRUE BIBLICAL RECKONING FOR THE SACRED YEAR, ACCORDING TO THE ORIGINAL KARAITE POSITION. Three rows follow. The middle one shows the Gregorian calendar for the years 1841, 1842, 1843, 1844, and 1845. Above it, we read that this is the “Jewish Sacred Years (Common Rabbinical Reckoning)” for 1841, 1842, 1843, and 1844. It is the “Old Miller Reckoning” with March 21, 1843 as its final date. But below those years for the Gregorian calendar we find another row. Entitled “Karaite Reckoning (True Biblical Calculation),” it gives a “corrected reckoning,” with a final date of April 19, 1844.

Some may disagree with this reckoning. But whether the period of 1335 year-days extended from 508 to 1843 or to the spring of 1844, the second last verse of Daniel pronounced a blessing on the believers who lived to that date (Dan. 12:12).

IX

The baptism of Clovis was a historical watershed. He compelled his nobility and other subjects, including reluctant Gallo-Romans, to follow his

example. Three thousand of his soldiers were then also sprinkled en masse into the Roman Church.⁵⁰ In this way, the king imposed on his entire realm compulsory Catholicism, which he embraced just after he had attacked the Visigoths with their dissident religion and broken their power. His pretext for going to war with Alaric II in 507 was the alleged “persecution of his Catholic subjects.”⁵¹ Through this act, Clovis fatefully committed himself. Both the jubilation and the firm intent of the Roman bishops are clearly evident in a letter that one of them wrote to him subsequent to his signal victory over the Visigoths. “Urging him to ‘spread the light’ of his new faith to the nations about him,” he asserted: “Where *you* fight . . . *we* conquer.”⁵²

But so-called conversion imposed on people’s outward behavior cannot win the heart or fully dominate the mind. About half a century later, Gregory of Tours remarked that the Franks were still referring “to *dies dominicus*, the Lord’s Day, dimanche, as *dies solis*, Sunday: he and many churchmen of his time regarded this as a shameful survival of pagan worship.”⁵³

And so it was, but not the heathenism of France. It is a name that reaches all the way back to the original syncretism of the Great Apostasy, which created so-called Orthodox Christianity as well as Catholicism. The emperor Constantine I, who always remained a Mythraic as much as he was a Christian, inserted *dies solis* into the first Sunday law.

Abram Herbert Lewis, a Seventh Day Baptist of great learning and persuasiveness, emphasized Constantine’s paganism. He pointed out that just a day after the famous *dies solis* decree, the emperor’s Edict Concerning Aruspices also became law. An aruspex (*haruspex* is an alternative spelling) was “a diviner in ancient Rome basing his predictions on inspection of the entrails of sacrificial animals.”⁵⁴ This is what the first “Christian” emperor also allowed to be enacted:

The August Emperor Constantine to Maximus:

If any part of the palace or other public works shall be struck by lightning, let the soothsayers, following old usages, inquire into the meaning of the portent, and let their written words, very carefully collected, be reported to our knowledge; and also let the liberty of making use of this custom be accorded to others, provided they abstain from private sacrifices, which are specially prohibited.

Moreover, that declaration and exposition, written in respect to the amphitheatre being struck by lightning, concerning which you had written to Heraclianus, the tribune, and master of offices, you may know has been reported to us.

Dated, the 16th, before the calends of January, at Serdica (320). Acc. the 8th, before the Ides of March, in the consulship of Crispus II and Constantine III, Caesars Coss. (321).

“Codex Theo.,” lib. xvi, tit. x, l. r.⁵⁵

In the same chapter, Lewis said: “The term ‘Lord’s day’ does not appear in

any civil legislation concerning Sunday, until the year 386, more than two generations after the date of the first law.”⁵⁶ For this, he reproduced the text prepared by Theodosius I,⁵⁷ which we have also previously quoted and need not here repeat.

Understandably, Eastern Orthodoxy as well as the Roman Church have sought to conceal the fact that Sundaykeeping is a relic of paganism by substituting *dies dominicus* or *dies domini* (the Lord’s day) for *dies solis* (day of the sun), but managed to do so in only some languages.

In modern French, the day is indeed *Dimanche*; Portuguese, like Spanish, has *Domingo*; while Italian calls it *Domenica*, which is the closest to *Dominica*, as it became in later Latin, the mother of all these languages.

But where Frankish survives in a modern form, as it does in the Netherlands, *dies solis* is still *Zondag*. Transplanted to the Cape of Good Hope, it mutated into the Afrikaans *Sondag*. English, a closely related language, likewise has adhered to *Sunday*. On the other hand, most of these nations have not retained the original word for *Sabbath*—with a notable exception. German still has both *Sonntag* and *Samstag*. As already explained, the latter derives from Old High German *sambaztac*, based on the Greek σαββατο(ν) (Sabbato[n]). *Sambaztac* means *Sabbath day*.

Whenever today the name board of a church building advertises “Divine services on Sunday,” or words to that effect, this still suggests “Divine services on the Day of the Sun” (if not “the Sun god”).

X

Merging state and church, with consequent persecution for dissenters, has always been the way of Rome, both pagan and papal. The Catholic Church has never fully accepted the principle of religious tolerance for everybody, though it has always demanded it whenever its own interests are imperiled or its designs curtailed.

That was before and during the Middle Ages as well as in Reformation times. But what about today? This is how *The Shepherd of the Valley*, a Catholic publication, chillingly on 22 November 1851 predicted our own American future in an article entitled “Religious Toleration”:

If Catholics ever gain,—which they surely will do, though at a distant day,—an immense numerical superiority, religious freedom in this country is at an end. So say our enemies. So we believe. But in which sense do we believe it? In what sense are we the advocates of religious intolerance? . . . We simply mean, that a Christian people will not consider [tolerate] the ridicule of Christianity, the denial of its fundamental truths, of the immortality of the soul and the existence of God; . . . that the foundation will be laid for a legislation which shall restrain the propagation of certain doctrines; that men will no longer be permitted to attack dogmas with which morality is inseparably connected; that the State will take its proper position as ancillary to the

Church. It is useless to disguise this fact; every man's reason will tell him that it is true, and every Catholic will feel that he wishes that time were come, even whilst he wastes his breath in empty praise of liberty of speech. . . .

The world has nothing to fear from the empire of the Church, because the Church can never command or authorize the slightest wrong. She is absolutely infallible in all points of faith and morals; . . . Her enemies, it is true, scoff at her claims and hold her as a mere human and fallible institution, or . . . directed by the Arch-enemy of the human race. They are consistent in opposing her so long as they regard her thus; their error lies—not in believing that she aims at absolute dominion and would rule, not only the actions but the most secret thoughts of man—for in this they are correct enough, it is impossible to exaggerate her intense desire to extend her empire, and to bring the whole human race into subjection to herself; the error of her enemies lies in believing her to be human, or devilish, and not divine; . . . We have said that we are not the advocate of religious freedom, and we repeat it, we are not. The liberty to believe contrary to the teachings of the Church, is the liberty to believe a lie; the liberty to think otherwise than as she permits, is the liberty to abuse the mind and pollute the imagination; from such liberty may we and those we love at all times be preserved.⁵⁸

When this came to be written, Pope Pius IX was still lording it over the Papal States in Italy. Thirteen years later, on 8 December 1864, he issued his notorious *Syllabus of Errors*, containing ideas rather similar to those in *The Shepherd of the Valley*.

Here are two of the propositions that he condemned: “In the present day it is no longer expedient that the Catholic religion should be held as the only religion of the State, to the exclusion of all other forms of worship” and “Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true.” Also obnoxious to him was the notion that “it has been wisely decided by law, in some Catholic countries, that persons coming to reside therein shall enjoy the public exercise of their own peculiar worship.”⁵⁹

The Shepherd of the Valley published its article in this land of the free and of religious liberty, confidently predicting what will one day happen here. No cardinal or pope has ever unequivocally and without qualification rejected those utterances, nor have they roundly turned on Pius IX. After all, like every pontiff throughout history, he was supposedly infallible—as Vatican I declared in 1870.

The Roman Church has always cherished such thoughts, as its actions in some modern Catholic countries still attest. To see just a little how things can be, let us here momentarily cast a look beyond our southern border. Mexico constitutionally guarantees that other religions shall have freedom

of worship, yet its authorities are not infrequently powerless to enforce this noble ideal. We cite an example from a 25 February 2008 news item in the *Religion Today Summaries*: “‘Traditionalist Catholics’ this week expelled 20 evangelical Christians from a town in Guerrero state and cut off the electricity and water supplies to eight Protestant families in Chiapas state, Christian sources said. *Compass Direct News* reported that authorities in Tenango Tepexi, Guerrero, on Monday February 18 removed 20 Christians in three families, including 14 children, from their homes. Sources said the Christians were temporarily held in town offices, then loaded onto trucks and dumped on the edge of town. Town leaders supportive of the ‘traditionalist Catholics,’ who practice a blend of Catholic and native religions, told them they would be burned to death if they tried to return.”⁶⁰

XI

Let us, however, return to the early Middle Ages and contemplate the fate of the Visigoths, who saw the superior Frankish forces beginning to close in on them. They also sought some compromise. Their stratagem was to retain their own religion but at the same time to cultivate peaceful theological coexistence through a system of dual legislation.

King Alaric II (d. 507) “authorized the Catholic council at Agade in 506. To provide a law code for his Roman subjects, he appointed a commission to prepare an abstract of Roman laws and imperial decrees. This code, issued in 506, is generally known as the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* [Roman law of the Visigoths], or *Breviary of Alaric*.”⁶¹

It was not an original work but an adaptive compilation from older material. Furthermore, as the *Catholic Encyclopedia* points out, the ministers of the Roman Church, “chiefly the bishops and abbots, had a large share” in writing down and transmitting even the *leges barbarorum* (laws of the barbarians).⁶² The Germanic peoples were understandably not accomplished Latinists, and Catholic “Ecclesiastics—priests or bishops—were certainly employed in the composition of the ‘Lex Romana Visigothorum’ or ‘Breviarium Alarici’ . . .”⁶³

This owed much to the Theodosian Code, previously referred to and cited. From its Book II, Tit. VI–VIII, the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* amongst other provisions also took over the following:

“*Emp. Constantius Augustus to Elpidius*. As it seemed very unworthy that the day of the sun, famous by its veneration, is occupied by altercations, struggles, and the harmful contentions of a faction, it is therefore acceptable and pleasing that on this day the things which are especially devotional are accomplished. And therefore all should have the permission of emancipating and of manumitting on the holiday, and deeds in addition to these matters should not be prohibited. *On the fifth of the Nones of July when the Pious Caralis, Crispus II. and Constantinus II. Caesar are consuls*.

“INTERPRETATION. *Although we have ordered that all trials and repetitions be quiet on the holy day of the Lord, we do not at all prohibit emancipations*

*and manumissions, and with equal regulation permit that proceedings concerning these things be done.*⁶⁴

The Catholics in Gaul observed Sunday, the first day of the week; therefore, this provision applied to them—though not to the Visigoths. As the previous chapter has indicated, they were still Sabbathkeepers in accordance with the Ten Commandments.

That is, Alaric II sought to make legal provision for accommodating his Catholic subjects. But for the bishops, and no doubt the pope in Rome, that was not good enough. What they wanted was nothing short of the Visigoths' total conversion. So far as Clovis was concerned, he simply wanted to subjugate them.

The *Lex Romana Visigothorum* was issued in 506. Alaric also “tried to maintain his father’s treaty with the Franks, but Clovis, the Frankish king, made the Visigoths’ Arianism a pretext for war. In 507 the Visigoths were defeated in the battle of the Campus Vogladensis (Vouillé, or Vouglé, in Poitou). Alaric is said to have been overtaken in flight and killed by Clovis himself.”⁶⁵ Most of the surviving Visigoths retreated into Spain, although—because Theodoric in Italy sent belated assistance—they also retained a maritime strip in southernmost France between the Alps and the Pyrenees.

And so in 508, Clovis—together with his nobles—accepted Catholic baptism. According to the Roman Church, “He was awaited as their deliverer by the Catholics of that kingdom, who were being cruelly persecuted by Arian fanatics, and was encouraged in his enterprise by the [Byzantine] Emperor Anastasius [430?–518], who wished to crush this ally of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths.” This resulted in an important political linkup with Constantinople. “So greatly did the Emperor Anastasius rejoice over the success attained by Clovis that, to testify his satisfaction, he sent the Frankish conqueror the insignia of the consular dignity, an honour always highly appreciated by the barbarians.”⁶⁶

Against the background of how Alaric II bent over backwards to accommodate Catholic religious preferences, we are puzzled about this allegedly fierce persecution by the Visigoths.

All the same, the potential of the embassy from Anastasius to Clovis was immense. When Theodoric at Ravenna, Italy, heard the news about their collusion in the aftermath of Vouillé, he could not fail to be worried by the possibility that one day his people might be crushed between the jaws of a Frankish-Byzantine nutcracker—although when the crunch eventually did come, thirty years later and after his death, it was to assume a different form.

At any rate, by Christmas 508 the abomination of desolation had been set up in Gaul, a country that would henceforth be known as Francia and later France. Having crushed the Visigoths, who until then had been the mightiest Germanic people in the Roman Empire, it became a superpower. From this date onward, Catholicism continued on the path toward total victory in Western Europe.

It is true that the successors of Clovis’s Merovingian dynasty were neither illustrious nor even reputable. Eventually they dwindled into nonentities,

yielding substantive power to the Parisian mayors of the palace. Of these, we shall have more to tell, beginning with Pepin III, who in 751 was formally anointed king by one pope and three years later deceived by another into accepting the spurious Donation of Constantine. His son was the formidable Charlemagne, who established the Holy Roman Empire, through which the papacy for much of a millennium sought to dominate the West. But it was Clovis, two and a half centuries earlier, who had laid the foundation of a mighty Catholic France that would play a fateful role for ages to come.

As for Gregory of Tours, we now know that he was not a good or even an honest historian. He was, however, very influential; for he concocted a myth about the Franks, depicting them as a species of Israelites, with Clovis as a kind of David. This the pontiffs found convenient to take up and perpetuate. "Within decades of his death," Clovis "had become a hero and was held up as a model king. A millennium and a half later he remains significant. For the French, he was the founder of France, and a derivation of his name, Louis, became the principal name of its kings. His baptism is considered one of the formative dates in French history. For Catholics, he was the first major Germanic Catholic king, and Pope John Paul II celebrated a mass in Reims in 1996 in honour of the 15th centenary of his baptism."⁶⁷

Chapter Thirteen
JUSTINIAN AND THE RECONQUEST

I

Few calamities that befall a society can be greater than a military genius, even though his career should be rich in legal, administrative, and cultural accomplishments. He may dazzle those who read history through rose-tinted spectacles as though it were a romantic tale, but he wades to victory through rivers of blood. Such a man was Julius Caesar (100? B.C.–44 B.C.), in the century before the Prince of Peace was born, and Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), two hundred years ago. A similar figure, to whom we now must turn our attention, was Justinian I (483–565), the last great Roman emperor.

Even before his elevation to the throne in Constantinople, he was the power behind it. His uncle, Justin I (c. 450–527), who reigned from 518, “was a champion of Christian orthodoxy,”¹ after renouncing the Monophysite idea that Christ had only one nature. This act reestablished good relations with the papacy.

Justin adopted Justinian (483–565), a well-educated and able man, who would one day become the mightiest of all the Byzantine rulers.² A Latin-speaking Illyrian, he also cherished a dream of reviving the ancient empire as a whole. In 525, Justin appointed him Caesar,³ which ensured him first place for the succession.

In Ravenna, the capital of the Ostrogoths, Theodoric was very unhappy about the new cordiality between the emperor on the Bosphorus and the pontiff on the Tiber. Especially Justinian’s ambition boded ill for his regime. After the Visigothic defeat at Vouillé and the establishment of a new relationship between Clovis and the Byzantine court, Theodoric tried desperately to forge an alliance against the Catholic-Orthodox pincer movement that he sensed was beginning to close around his kingdom. He wanted his own people to link up with the Burgundians, Vandals, and Visigoths. One of his methods was to negotiate dynastic marriages.⁴ But none of these efforts bore fruit.

In the end, Theodoric gave up his policy of peaceful coexistence with the papacy. On 30 August 526, he decreed that “all the Catholic churches of Italy should be handed over to the Arians.”⁵ So far as the pope was concerned, this was a declaration of war.

In that same year, Theodoric died, and so, within a few months, did Justin, who was succeeded by his ambitious nephew on 1 August 527.

Like all Byzantine emperors since Constantine, Justinian officially bore the titles Equal of the Apostles and God’s Vicegerent on Earth.⁶ He was also personally pious and had a passion for theology, pursuing the “ideal of an Empire which should be populated only by orthodox Christians.”⁷ He built magnificent churches, especially Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), which can still be seen in Istanbul today.

Unfortunately, however, this emperor's piety also made him a great persecutor, unleashing vigorous action against pagans, Samaritans, and dissident Christians. He harassed the Monophysite churches of the East and Egypt, which were part of his empire. Manichaeans, who believed that matter was evil, were often burned.⁸ In 532, Justinian granted all heretics only three months to change their religion or go into exile, which Edward Gibbon, the great historian, calls an "insufficient term."⁹

In his *History of the Popes*, Archibald Bower (1686-1766) graphically portrays the consequences: "The imperial edict was executed with the utmost vigor. Great numbers were driven from their habitations with their wives and children, stripped and naked. Others betook themselves to flight, carrying with them what they could conceal, for their support and maintenance; but they were plundered of the little they had, and many of them inhumanly massacred by the Catholic peasants, or the soldiery, who guarded the passes."¹⁰

Justinian also oppressed and persecuted the Jews, as is evident from his famous *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (Civil Code), which consolidated and augmented the entire legal system of ancient Rome.¹¹ It further institutionalized and stimulated anti-Semitism in the West for more than a thousand years. In A.D. 212, Caracalla's Edict had made Jews, like other free inhabitants of the empire, first-class citizens, but they lost that privilege after Constantine's conversion.¹² One of the many obnoxious provisions in Justinian's Code was a death sentence for anybody attempting to convert a Christian to Judaism.¹³

Surveying the religious cruelties perpetrated by so-called Christians under the aegis of this emperor, Gibbon in one place loses his customary composure and refers to him and his co-religionists as poisonous "theological insects."¹⁴

Justinian's ambitions to reunite the Roman Empire were matched by a desire to create complete ecclesiastical unity. Therefore, he also—so far as the West was concerned—"regarded his project somewhat as a crusade to rescue the Catholics from Arian rule."¹⁵ To this end, he took a step quite contrary to the normal tendency at Constantinople: he decided to elevate the Roman pontiff over the entire church.

According to Froom, the emperor stated this in a letter to Pope John II (b. ?–535, reigned from 533) in that pontiff's accession year. Justinian said he had taken pains to unite all the priests of the Eastern church, subjecting them to the pope, "because you are the Head of all the holy churches (*quia caput est omnium sanctarum ecclesiarum*)."¹⁶ This decision was incorporated in the Civil Code.¹⁶

In various parts of it, the same idea is repeated—as in the 131st Novella, which states: "Hence, in accordance with the provisions of these Councils, we order that the Most Holy Pope of ancient Rome shall hold the first rank of all the Pontiffs, but the Most Blessed Archbishop of Constantinople, or New Rome, shall occupy the second place after the Holy Apostolic See of ancient Rome, which shall take precedence over all other sees."¹⁷

This must have been most gratifying to the papacy. By inscribing it in the greatest work of Roman law, Justinian during the sixth century ensured that

the idea would survive him for more than a millennium, and persist in the minds of nations at that time still unborn.

As Robert Browning pointed out, a host of these took the Code “as the starting- point from which to develop their own legal systems. No work of legislation except the Ten Commandments has had such lasting effect.”¹⁸ It remained the chief basis of European legislation for almost 1260 years, from 534 until 1793. What is more, it became “the basis of all canon law,” including the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁹ This is apparent from even a superficial comparisons of the two titles: *Corpus Iuris Civilis* and *Corpus Iuris Canonici*.

Justinian’s decision to recognize the pope as the head of all the churches was naturally subject to the unspoken proviso that the emperor occupied a still higher place. He meant ecclesiastical precedence, not dominion of a temporal nature; for he himself remained the *vicarius Christi*. Like all Byzantine emperors, both before and after him, he was the real head of the church within his jurisdiction. Petrine Primacy would come to full fruition only two centuries later through the spurious Donation of Constantine.

II

Apart from Justinian’s interest in theology, there was a compelling political reason for establishing papal supremacy over the entire church: he was planning military intervention in Italy. In the very year when he wrote that letter to Pope John II, 533, he was already planning to send Belisarius, his famous general, to subject the Vandals in North Africa. After this, he meant to overthrow the Ostrogothic regime in Italy. But for his plans to succeed, the emperor also needed the cooperation of the senatorial class, which was centered in Rome. Under both the republic and the subsequent empire, they administered Italy and still wielded great influence.

With their vast estates and influence, they were a power to be reckoned with. They had long since allied themselves with the papacy. It was therefore impossible for the emperor to secure the support of those senators without involving the pope. Often the pontiffs were patricians, Roman aristocrats. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill said that the senators “looked on the Pope as one of themselves.”²⁰ For this reason, as well as by reason of their ecclesiastical stature, the pontiffs could on no account be ignored.

As Paul Johnson put it, “this social stratum, with its traditions of authority and decision-making, provided bishops not only for Rome itself but for many other Italian sees,” for “just as the Roman upper class had once been associated with state paganism, so now it was tied to Christianity.” In many cases, the aristocrats also transferred their immense estates to the church, though their descendants still controlled them.²¹

A great deal of the land in Italy was controlled by clerics. Already in the time of Pope Leo I (4th century, reigned from 461) the church was “becoming the greatest property owner in the peninsula.”²²

We also remark that this religious legislation, so important to the West, had

only a temporary effect on the Eastern Orthodox Church. Despite Justinian's designs, it never did submit to the pope, for it has consistently refused to regard him as the head of Christendom. Timothy Ware, a scholarly Western convert to Eastern Orthodoxy, makes it plain that the furthest the Greeks have ever gone in their concessions to the Latins is to recognize the Roman pontiff as the *first among equals*, enjoying a *primacy of honor*. He even had the right "to hear appeals from all parts of Christendom."²³

But on the papal mind Justinian's decision, permanently incorporated in his Civil Code, made a powerful impression, with abiding consequences for Italy and the whole of Europe.

III

In 533, the same year in which the emperor accorded special recognition to the papacy, Belisarius sailed with an expeditionary force against the Vandals of North Africa. Clerics seem to have played a direct role in promoting this campaign. According to the contemporary Byzantine historian Procopius (490–507, d. ?), Justinian was influenced by a bishop "who declared that God had revealed to him in a dream that the emperor should 'rescue the Christians in Libya from tyrants' and that He himself would aid him."²⁴

Apart from being a military genius, Belisarius was greatly favored by two important factors. First, the Ostrogoths ruling over Italy were now on bad terms with the Vandals and would not help them. Second, the Vandals suffered from the scourge of internal dissension. In 530, Gelimer had deposed and imprisoned his cousin King Hilderic—whose mother was the daughter of the emperor Valentinian III—for being too tolerant toward his Catholic subjects. Belisarius therefore had a good excuse for invading North Africa. He claimed he was coming to restore the Vandals' rightful king.

Gelimer (ruled 530–534), a rather incompetent monarch, would normally have had the assistance of his more able brother, but he was out of the country with his own expeditionary force to subdue Sardinia. So when Belisarius disembarked with his small but well disciplined Roman army, Gelimer had to face them alone.

Within a few months, by March 534, Belisarius conquered the entire Vandal kingdom. Since Gelimer had Hilderic executed as soon as the Byzantines landed, it was not even necessary to set up a puppet king. Belisarius simply reannexed North Africa to the Roman Empire²⁵ and returned to Constantinople in triumph.

The campaign had been relatively bloodless, but its aftermath proved to be calamitous for the people of the captured territory. Justinian's "religious resettlement exceeded the wildest hopes of the African Church, which not only received back its stolen properties but was given (and took) the chance to persecute the Arian hierarchy."²⁶

Soon the Catholics made further vigorous and enthusiastic use of their renewed advantage. They suppressed the Germanic Church, and all other

dissenters like the Donatists, who had broken with Catholicism as far back as 312.

Inevitably a reaction set in. According to Gibbon, the Vandals “deplored the ruin of their church, triumphant above a century in Africa; and they were justly provoked by the laws of the conqueror which interdicted the baptism of their children and the exercise of all religious worship.”²⁷ The conquered North Africans fomented rebellion, aided by treason on the part of elements within the Roman forces. It began with the mutiny of a thousand soldiers, mostly Heruli, who were converted or reconverted to Germanic Christianity. Eventually two-thirds of the army became involved in a rebellion against Constantinople. The ensuing battles and chaos during the next ten years desolated North Africa.

Nevertheless, in the end Justinian triumphed, but large parts of what had been a prosperous and peaceful kingdom were completely depopulated. As a nation, the Vandals disappeared. With them perished an even greater multitude of their Moorish subjects. These were Berbers, many of whom had been Donatists who welcomed the Vandals as “deliverers from Roman oppression.”²⁸ Procopius stated that “five millions of Africans were consumed by the wars and government of the emperor Justinian.”²⁹

With the Vandals, Germanic Christianity in North Africa became extinct and, as a bonus for the pope, so did the lingering influence of Donatism. As foretold by Dan. 7:8, 24, the second of the three horns that had threatened the Antichrist for so long was suddenly gone—the first had been Odovacar’s Italian kingdom. The previous chapter has shown how he eliminated the emperor of the Western Empire.

The North African campaign was a triumph for both the Roman Church and the seemingly revitalized Roman Empire. But for this victory, Catholic Europe would ultimately pay a very stiff penalty. A century and a half later, Muslim warriors swept in. From Alexandria to Gibraltar, they conquered all of Roman Africa, 4,000 miles of cultivable land along the Mediterranean seaboard. The largest and fairest portion of that wonderful coastal strip was the Tunisian plains, which overlooked the Sicilian Narrows.³⁰ The great, traditional breadbasket of the Romans was snatched away by Islamic hands.

IV

Belisarius began his Italian campaign in 535, the year that just followed his conquest of the Vandals. He went via the island of Sicily. Shaped like a triangular football and lying right at the toe of bootshaped Italy, it is only about ninety miles from North Africa.

This venture also benefited from Germanic disunity. Among the Ostrogoths, a period of instability had set in, characterized by anti-Byzantine demonstrations.

Theodoric had died without a male heir, leaving only a daughter, Amalasantha. A remarkable woman, widowed at thirty and very beautiful, she

was “also an intellectual, fluent in Latin and Greek, enjoying a breadth of culture rare in the sixth century and unique among the Goths.”³¹ She possessed a great drive for power but suffered from the handicap of a conservative people, who did not want a woman to rule over them. The Ostrogoths also resented the fact that she was continuing and even extending her father’s policy of Romanization.

She therefore appealed for help to Constantinople, but Theodahad, her treacherous kinsman—whom she had recently married to become queen—had her imprisoned within a castle on Lake Bolsena in 535.

Justinian had written to her with a promise of protection, but the empress Theodora feared a possible rival, whom her ambitious husband might for more than one reason find convenient to marry. Despite her own beauty and powerful personality, the emperor’s consort could never forget that originally she had been a prostitute,³² born into a lowly family of circus entertainers, whose girls could hardly avoid their traditional lot.

So Theodora, well aware of the queen in Ravenna and her charms—physical as well as political—sent another message to the Byzantine ambassador, ordering him “to assure the Goths privately that the emperor would do nothing, and that Theodahad need not fear to get rid of Amalasantha.”³³ Soon she was strangled in her bath, no doubt on his instructions.

This murder deeply shocked Justinian. But his hands were tied, since he was much indebted to Theodora. On his accession, he had her crowned “as an equal and independent colleague in the sovereignty of the empire.”³⁴ Then, too, on one occasion she had saved his throne and his life, when he was about to flee from the rabble of Constantinople, who had almost succeeded in replacing him. Refusing to abandon her post as Augusta, she shamed him into fighting back and crushing the rebellion. From that time on, Theodora’s power came to rival his own.

Besides, Amalasantha’s assassination provided an excellent pretext for invading Italy to complete the Reconquest of the Western Empire.

In 535, the Byzantines began their advance against the Ostrogoths with a pincer movement. One army went overland via Dalmatia. Another, under the command of Belisarius, was seaborne.³⁵

Having captured Sicily, this brilliant general crossed over to the mainland, where he promptly took Naples.³⁶ Its fall demoralized the Ostrogoths, who blamed Theodahad, Amalasantha’s murderer, whom they deposed and executed. In his place, they elevated General Vitiges (also spelled Witigis) to the throne.³⁷

Belisarius captured Rome on 10 December 536, after which he proceeded to conquer the adjacent countryside; but when Ostrogothic reinforcements were mobilized in Ravenna and advanced toward him, he withdrew his army into the city.³⁸ The resultant siege continued for a year and nine days.³⁹

During that time, on 11 March 537, Belisarius deposed the pope, Silverius, who had been accused of pro-Gothic sentiments.⁴⁰ Then, “At the emperor’s command, the clergy of Rome proceeded to the choice of a new bishop, and,

after a solemn invocation of the Holy Ghost, elected the deacon Vigilus—who had purchased the papal throne with a bribe of two hundred pounds of gold.”⁴¹

This election took place on 29 March 537. The ex-pontiff survived until 2 December of that year, when he expired, probably from the ill-treatment he had received.⁴² Since then, however, the Catholic Church has canonized the deposed Silverius, though it also acknowledges Vigilus as one of its 263 popes.

Protestants invited to recognize the pontiffs as the Lord’s representatives in an unbroken line since Peter the apostle find it puzzling why the Deity would endorse such irregularities. A supposedly saintly pope is pushed from St. Peter’s throne but survives into the reign of his successor, who is really a usurper. The latter owes his election to simony—that is, purchasing a churchly office. What is more, Vigilus is not simply chosen by the clergy and laity of Rome but imposed by the emperor’s military representative.

The soldiers with Belisarius numbered only 5,000, for on his march from the south he had left garrisons in Sicily and various parts of conquered Italy. This greatly depleted his forces. His adversaries outside the walls of Rome numbered no fewer than 150,000. In all, there were sixty-nine engagements.⁴³ Belisarius was hard pressed and hastily dispatched a letter to his sovereign in Constantinople, asking for reinforcements.⁴⁴

The emperor, shocked by his general’s dire condition, promptly sent the additional troops, yet victory did not come only as a result of these. As Gibbon explains, “the whole nation of the Ostrogoths had been assembled for the attack, and was almost consumed in the siege of Rome.”⁴⁵ Because they cut the aqueducts to deprive it of water, marshy conditions were created, giving rise to diseases—especially malaria—that devastated the attackers.

The siege went on and on, from March 537 to March 538, when Vitiges, the Gothic general and king, abandoned it, retreating northwards. His immediate reason for leaving Rome was a flanking movement executed by General John (history does not give the rest of his name), who occupied Rimini, only thirty-three miles from Ravenna, the Ostrogoth capital.⁴⁶

V

After 538, the Ostrogoths were a defeated nation. The next year, Ravenna surrendered. According to Gibbon, King Vitiges agreed to become a Catholic, thereby turning his back on his ancestral faith. For this, he gained various honors and “a rich inheritance of lands in Asia.”⁴⁷ But he may not really have enjoyed that benefit. According to later research, it seems that “the fate of Witiges is unknown.”⁴⁸ In any case, Germanic Christianity was suppressed and all its churches handed over to the Catholics.⁴⁹

At that point, the conflict was virtually over; but then the envious court at Constantinople recalled Belisarius, whom it suspected of treason, since the desperate Ostrogoths had offered to make him king. His yielding to such a

temptation was not implausible; after all, he was himself of Germanic stock, a blond and handsome man from the Danube.⁵⁰ The Byzantines were also distracted from completing their Italian campaign because the Bulgars invaded their territory from the north and King Chosroes of the Persians captured Antioch in June 540. Thereupon Justinian promptly dispatched Belisarius to the eastern front.

In Italy, the Ostrogoths rallied under Totila in 541⁵¹ and began what was virtually a second war. They enjoyed a number of short-lived successes, even capturing Rome itself on more than one occasion. In 546, he said he was going to destroy it completely, but then Belisarius—having returned to Italy—intervened; and “Totila was persuaded, by the advice of an enemy, to preserve Rome as the ornament of his kingdom, or the fairest pledge of peace and reconciliation.” He gave up his plan.⁵²

Accepting an enemy’s advice, however plausible it may be, is contrary to human nature and utterly at variance with the conduct of war—except where the adversary’s superior power has already been demonstrated and further defeat seems likely.

The Ostrogoths knew the Byzantines’ inability to beat them again was only temporary. They noticed the threat implied by the message from Belisarius and decided not to antagonize him unnecessarily. Besides, Totila had already delegated the deacon Pelagius and Theodorus, a Roman teacher of Rhetoric, to Constantinople to negotiate a peaceful settlement. They carried his letter offering to make a nominal submission to the emperor. This would have reestablished the status quo as it had been before the war began.⁵³

But none of this could save Totila and the Ostrogoths. In Constantinople, the emperor told the emissaries to go back to Italy and negotiate with Belisarius, who was the plenipotentiary for that country.⁵⁴ Events, however, forestalled all further talks; for in April 547 the great general recaptured Rome.⁵⁵

The Ostrogoths’ protracted and desperate efforts to maintain themselves, even involving Frankish and Alamannic forces, only ensured that the ruin of Italy would be the more complete—and that their nation would not survive. The final victory was obtained by the eunuch Narses, another brilliant general from Constantinople, who defeated Totila in 552 and within a few more years mopped up every vestige of resistance throughout Italy.⁵⁶

In all, the conflict between the empire and the Ostrogoths continued for twenty years. According to the estimates of Procopius, it annihilated fifteen or sixteen million people.⁵⁷

Imperial and papal victory over the Germanic Church in most of Italy and in North Africa exacted a dreadful price. The intervention of Justinian’s armies destroyed the last real chance of preventing the Dark Ages. Under the kingdom of Ravenna, Italy had preserved a great deal of its ancient civilization; for the Ostrogoths admired and were successfully assimilating the Greco-Roman heritage.

In fact, for ordinary folk the Byzantine dream of restoring the empire to its

ancient borders brought only disaster. Wallace-Hadrill gave a graphic portrayal of an Italy “ravaged from end to end and her cities sacked as they had never been before. So many people perished that the country was greatly depopulated. Much of the damage must be ascribed to the ferocity of the imperial mercenaries, who had less reason than the established Goths to protect the rights of property.” Rome was plundered several times.⁵⁸

The great aqueducts were cut, and the grain supplies no longer arrived as they used to do, from either Sicily or the coastal strip of North Africa. For generations, this region, more fertile in ancient than in modern times, had been the “grain basket of the Roman Empire.”⁵⁹

Cheetham says the conflict “marked the end of a civilized way of life that had subsisted in its essentials since the Roman Republic and that no one expected to be so abruptly extinguished.”⁶⁰

Together with the five million who died in North Africa, twenty million human beings—the entire Vandal and Ostrogoth nations—were obliterated by Justinian’s imperial-religious expansionism. Apart from a remnant near and in the Alps, the Germanic Church became extinct throughout Italy and Africa. And, as already related, their records were also destroyed. The same is true of the pagans in Italy whom the Ostrogoths had been tolerating.

MacMullen has informed us that Justinian “was still engaged in the war upon dissent. To this end he bent his armies and his treasury, his power to mutilate or crucify, exile or bankrupt, build and bribe. His general, Narses, assigned a regiment to the minutely careful smashing of offensive wall carvings in a temple which we happen to know about because it has been excavated and studied, while his agent in charge of the peaceable side of the effort, a certain John, was supplied with the equivalent of many months’ wages to offer to each person willing to be baptized. Eighty thousands were the harvest of John’s efforts, as we happen to know because he very naturally boasted about them.”⁶¹

VI

The desperation of the Ostrogothic resurgence under Totila should not blind us to the fact that the crucial year was 538, which shattered his people’s power.

Great conflicts usually do not end abruptly, though their outcome is often determined by a crucial battle. Such was the defeat of the Spanish Armada sent in 1588 by King Philip II to conquer England. The great significance of its loss was not immediately apparent, yet it was “epoch-making. It probably saved the Reformation and it certainly saved England and it taught England that the sea would be the instrument of its future greatness.”⁶²

Incidentally, there was also a second Spanish Armada, which few people know about, when Philip II decided on another invasion attempt. And this time, the ships would in the normal course of events have got through and landed their formidable troops without opposition from the Royal Navy,

because of a blunder by Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and Walter Raleigh. They had been sent in 1597 to head off this fleet but were unable to sight it. Then they allowed themselves to be sidetracked, waiting off the Azores to prey on treasure ships returning from America.

None turned up, but meanwhile “the Armada put out into the Bay of Biscay with the seas clear of defending ships to the north. Once again the winds saved the Island. The badly manned galleons tottered into a northern gale scattered and sinking. The disorganised fleet crept back into its ports. King Philip was kneeling in his chapel in the Escorial praying for his ships. Before the news of their return could reach him he was seized with a paralytic stroke, and the tale of their failure was brought to him on his deathbed.”⁶³ It was like Totila trying a second time and failing once again.

Similarly decisive was the victory by American Union troops at Gettysburg on 1-3 July 1863. The Confederate forces struggled on for almost two more years, and additional battles were fought. Nevertheless, Gettysburg “is generally regarded as the turning point of the American Civil War.”⁶⁴

So, too, it was at Rome in 538. This was not when all the fighting stopped, yet it began the fateful events that eliminated the Ostrogoths. Had their siege been a success, resulting in the defeat and capture of Belisarius, this would have blighted Justinian’s ambition to reconquer Italy. The papacy may not have survived, and the Goths’ religion would have remained entrenched in Europe.

Above all, the Byzantines in 538 freed Rome and the papacy from the potential interference by the Germanic Church. This made it possible to implement Justinian’s 533 decree and elevate the pope as the “Head of all the holy churches.”

VII

Historicists focusing on 3½ prophetic years (“a time, times, and an half”), alternatively referred to as 42 year-months and 1260 year-days in Daniel as well as the Apocalypse, maintain that this period began in 538 and ended in 1798. This is how Ellen G. White expressed it:

“In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast ‘his power, and his seat, and great authority.’ Revelation 13:2. (See Appendix.) And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5–7. Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons, or to suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman’s ax.”⁶⁵

On the same page, in the preceding paragraph, she had also mentioned Sundaykeeping: “The observance of Sunday as a Christian institution had

its origin in that ‘mystery of lawlessness’ (2 Thessalonians 2:7, R.V.) which, even in Paul’s day, had begun its work.”⁶⁶

But was there really such a linkage in Justinian’s time?

His famous *Codex Justinianus*, also known as the *Corpus Juris Civilis* (Collection of Civil Law) consolidated and clarified the Roman legal system down to his time.⁶⁷ It includes a correspondence between “the Emperor Justinian, Victorious, Pious, Happy, Renowned, Triumphant, always Augustus, to John, Patriarch, and the most Holy Archbishop of the fair City of Rome,” informing the pope that all the other churches in the empire have been subjected to him. It even forbids “certain infidels and persons who do not belong to the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of God . . . like Jews and apostates” to dispute or even discuss any “matters which are properly accepted, glorified, and preached by all priests in accordance with your doctrines.”⁶⁸ Another section of the Code, entitled “Concerning Festivals,” quotes and revalidates Sunday laws made by previous emperors over a period of more than one hundred and fifty years, from A.D. 311 to 469, including Constantine, Valentinian, Theodosius, Arcadius, Leo, and Anthemius.⁶⁹ That was previous to the Belisarius invasion of Italy.

Furthermore, in 538—that momentous date when the 1260 year-days began—additional and stricter Sunday legislation was adopted in France, where Clovis had been baptized thirty years earlier. This happened at the third synod of Orléans, which was no local gathering but one that widely represented the territories ruled over by the Franks. “The president was the Metropolitan Lupus of Lyons, although the city and diocese of Orleans did not belong to his province, but to that of Sens. Besides him were present the Metropolitans Pantagathus of Vienne, Leo of Sens, Arcadius of Bourges, and Flavius of Rouen. The Archbishop of Tours, Injurious, was represented by a priest. The Acts were subscribed by nineteen bishops, and seven priests as representatives of absentees.”⁷⁰

We note that all these clerics fell under the jurisdiction of the pontiff. In the very month when the year-long siege of Rome was lifted, Pope Vigilius sent a letter to France. “On 6 March, 538, he wrote to Bishop Caesarius of Arles concerning the penance of the Austrasian King Theodobert [I, c.495/500–547/548] on account of his marriage with his brother’s widow.”⁷¹

Working from a facsimile reproduction of Johannes Dominicus Mansi’s *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio* (a new and great collection of the holy councils), 1759, the Florence edition, Mr. Heidi Heiks pinpointed the twenty-eighth canon adopted on that occasion and provided the following text, “translated from the original Latin document into fluent English”:

“28. Whereas the people are persuaded that they ought not to travel on the Lord’s day with the horses, or oxen and carriages, or to prepare anything for food, or to do anything conducive to the cleanliness of houses

or men, things which belong to Jewish rather than Christian observances; we have ordained that on the Lord's day what was before lawful to be done may still be done. But from rural work, i.e. plowing, cultivating vines, reaping, mowing, thrashing, clearing away thorns or hedging, we judge it better to abstain, that the people may the more readily come to the churches and have leisure for prayers. If any one be found doing the works forbidden above, let him be punished, not as the civil authorities may direct, but as the ecclesiastical powers may determine."⁷²

In that same century, according to Richard Fletcher, "Church councils repeatedly enjoined the observance of Sunday by abstinence from labour: at Orléans in 538, at Mâcon in 585, at Narbonne in 589."⁷³ In "How Sunday Became the Popular Day of Worship" (1982), Kenneth A. Strand, erstwhile professor of church history at the Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, MI, and a prolific writer about the Sabbath, also referred to these councils. Further, he made it clear that the Catholic Sunday legislation of the Dark Ages continued for at least another two centuries, with two popes and a very famous emperor weighing in on this issue. He cited the following from Walter Woodburn Hyde's *Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire* (1946):

"After Justinian's death in 565 various *epistolae decretales* were passed by the popes about Sunday. One of Gregory I (590-604) forbade men 'to yoke oxen or to perform any other work, except for approved reasons,' while another of Gregory II (715-731) said: 'We decree that all Sundays be observed from vespers to vespers and that all unlawful work be abstained from.' . . ."

Later "Charlemagne at Aquisgranum (Aachen) in 788 decreed that all ordinary labor on the Lord's Day be forbidden, since it was against the Fourth Commandment, especially labor in the field or vineyard which Constantine had exempted."⁷⁴

For details of more such edicts, both royal and ecclesiastical, the interested reader could turn to *Sunday Legislation: Its History to the Present Time and Its Results* (1902), an updated variant of *A Critical History of Sunday Legislation From A.D. 321 to 1888*. Reprinted in 1997 under the latter title by the legal publishers, William S. Hein and Co., Buffalo, NY, its author was Abram Herbert Lewis, the Seventh Day Baptist church historian referred to above.

Strand remarked that "for a good share of Christendom, the history of the Sabbath and Sunday had by the sixth through eighth centuries taken a complete circle. For most Christians, God's rest day of both Old Testament and New Testament times had through a gradual process become a workday and had been supplanted by a substitute rest day. God's command that on the seventh day 'you shall not do any work' had been replaced by the command of man: Work on the seventh day; rest on the first."⁷⁵

The Germanic rulers who converted to Catholicism, just like the later Roman emperors, repeated the same blue laws over and over again, while

making them ever more stringent. This fact demonstrated their hatred for the Biblical Sabbath and their exaltation of Sunday.

VIII

Commenting on Rev. 13:1-10, which describes the Apocalyptic Beast, and especially verse 5 that states it would have power “to continue for forty and two months,” Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy* (1911 and later) declared:

“The forty and two months are the same as the ‘time and times and the dividing of time,’ three years and a half, or 1260 days, of Daniel 7—the time during which the papal power was to oppress God’s people. This period, as stated in preceding chapters, began with the supremacy of the papacy, A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time the pope was made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deadly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.’”⁷⁶

The original, 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy* of that book had worded this passage a little differently. Two of its sentences were: “This period began with the establishment of the papacy A.D. 538, and terminated in 1798. At that time, when the papacy was abolished and the pope made captive by the French army, the papal power received its deathly wound, and the prediction was fulfilled, ‘He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.’”⁷⁷

Samuele Bacchiocchi assailed the use of this word used by Ellen G. White in 1888. As shown elsewhere, he also rejected the idea that the 1260 prophetic days represented as many calendar years. But he especially faulted the statement quoted above for two reasons. One of them has to do with inspiration, since Seventh-day Adventists generally believe that Ellen G. White had the gift of prophecy.

By implication, it was wrong for her to edit or alter anything she has written previously. But neither she nor enlightened members of her church have ever believed, not even as it concerns the Scriptures, in verbal inspiration. Here is what she herself had to say about this topic:

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes.

The stamps of minds are different. All do not understand expressions and statements alike. Some understand the statements of the Scripture to suit their own particular minds and cases. Prepossessions, prejudices, and passions have a strong influence to darken the understanding and confuse the mind even in reading the words of Holy Writ. . . .

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of

thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God (MS 24, 1886).⁷⁸

Bacchiocchi's objection to Ellen G. White's word choice in her 1888 text must also have partly resulted from a misunderstanding of the English language, or he would surely not have written:

"The historical reality is that the papacy was not *established* in 538, nor was it *abolished* in 1798 (emphasis added)." He called this a "glaring mistake" and stated that "the development of the 'supremacy of the papacy' began long before 538. During the fourth and fifth centuries there were influential popes like Damasus (366-384), Innocent I (402-417), and Leo I, called 'the Great' (440-461), who greatly advanced both the spiritual and temporal power of the papacy."⁷⁹

Whatever progress these pontiffs made toward achieving that objective was, however, thwarted by the Germanic peoples, for about a hundred and fifty years. Before Clovis broke the power of the Visigoths and Justinian demolished both the Vandal and Ostrogothic kingdoms, the popes could not enjoy the supremacy that they were yearning to possess.

But that paragraph about Damasus, Innocent I, and Leo I is irrelevant in view of what Ellen G. White meant by the word *establishment*. In American usage, it features in the first and most famous Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. This begins with the sentence "Congress shall make no law respecting an *establishment* of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ." (emphasis added).⁸⁰

In just what sense is that word used in the Bill of Rights? Taken by itself, it can have different meanings. Here, however, it evidently refers to the adoption of a particular denomination as the state church. The Webster's Dictionary makes this clear: "**established church** (ca. 1702): a church recognized by law as the official church of a nation or state and supported by civil authority."⁸¹

Justinian—in accordance with the intention expressed in his letter of 533—made the pope supreme throughout the Roman Empire, requiring even the reluctant archbishop at Constantinople to submit to the pontiff. And he enacted this as part of his Civil Code. In this context, *establishment* has nothing to do with how the papacy originated.

Nevertheless, for some people, this word has been and remains

misleading, and to this day its use in part of the First Amendment is variously interpreted. Ellen G. White therefore revised her text to avoid misunderstanding on the part of some readers.

Bacchiocchi, we think, misunderstood what it meant in *The Great Controversy* of 1888. After all, he was not a native speaker of English, but an Italian immigrant who had not mastered such niceties of our tricky language. Therefore, he considered Ellen G. White's original usage to have been a downright error, because "the establishment of the papacy" did not begin in 538."⁸² Alas, in this case, the mistake was his!

Bacchiocchi also took issue with the statement of the 1888 *Great Controversy* that in 1798 "the papacy was *abolished* and the pope was made captive by the French army" (emphasis added). For the revised edition, Ellen G. White altered her word choice and simply said the period "terminated" in that year. Apparently she did not in this context want to take up the question as to what the men who guided the events of 1798 were seeking to accomplish.

In passing, we also wonder at Bacchiocchi's patronizing tone and the sheer effrontery of the man in the following paragraph: "If Ellen White was alive today, she would welcome the service of competent scholars willing to correct the remaining inaccuracies found in *The Great Controversy* and other publications. She was a humble and open-minded woman, fully aware of her limitations. On my part I would be glad to offer my services to her . . ."⁸³

To counter misunderstanding by readers, Ellen G. White writing about A.D. 538 in her 1911 revision replaced the word *establishment* with *supremacy*. So far as the events of 1798 are concerned, she had also said that they *abolished* papal power. That original text was not erroneous, but some readers could have been puzzled by it.

When the pope was sent into exile, the papacy did not come to an end. But so far as the men who had been guiding the French Revolution of 1789 were concerned, it had indeed—at least in their intention and for a time—been abolished.

More was involved than the personal motivations of Napoleon Bonaparte and General Berthier. They represented the Directory, which was still in charge of the French Revolution. Some of its factions exhibited distinctly atheist tendencies. In the period immediately before 1798, their influence had predominated, in fulfillment of Rev. 17:3-12. By law, they abolished religion and banned the Bible. As George Croly (1780-1860), a learned Irish divine-cum-historian put it in 1827: "The Church and the Bible had been slain in France from November, 1793, till June, 1797. The *three years and a half* were expended, and the Bible, so long and so sternly repressed before, was placed in honor, and was openly the book of free Protestantism!"⁸⁴

But even then the revolutionaries still wanted to break the power of the Vatican over France, which it largely exercised through its priesthood.

That, however, could only be done by abolishing the papacy as a blend of religious and secular power. Therefore, “the Pope was first told that he might stay in Rome as its Bishop but not as temporal ruler . . .”⁸⁵ That is to say, he was deposed as *il papa re*, the pontifical king. But then the order came that he also had to leave the city. He was first removed to other parts of Italy and finally to France, where he died in Valence, an exile.⁸⁶

For more than a thousand years, the concept of papacy had indissolubly blended temporal with churchly power. Later chapters of this book describe that issue abundantly. Consequently, it is unnecessary to delve into all its details here. Let us, however, note in passing how a contemporary, Baron Jean François de Bourgoing (1748-1811), the French ambassador at Madrid—who was “a keen analyst of both politics and finance”—⁸⁷ described Pope Pius VI (1717-1799, reigned from 1775) as viewed by the poor and miserably exploited Italians under his dominion. The following is from a 1799 translation of De Bourgoing’s *Historical and Philosophical Memoirs* about this pope:

To the reflections of the philosopher, we will only add, that the Roman Nation, so devout and so depraved, continued, till the overthrow of the papal throne, to pay to him who occupied it, this idolatrous homage, the evident work of their servile attachment; but at the same time, while they admired the pontiff, they often cursed the sovereign. Clad in his pontifical habits, surrounded by the pomp of religious ceremonies, and employed in the distribution of ecclesiastical treasures, Pius VI. appeared to the Romans to be a god. On his return to the Vatican, he was no more in their eyes, particularly during the last years of his pontificate, than a man opposed to their murmurs, and to their sarcasm. This double sovereignty was so far singular, that the sceptre considered itself as inviolable under shelter of the tiara; that the devotion of his subjects seemed to insure their obedience; and that the benedictions, the indulgences, and all the celestial favours, of which the monarchical demi-god had undertaken to be the distributor, had at once for object and result to sanctify and to overawe, and to disarm them. Accordingly nothing less than the violent hurricane of the French revolution was necessary to tear up by the roots that gigantic tree,

De qui la tête au ciel étoit voisine,
Et dont les pieds touchoient à l’empire des morts.*

*Of which the head approached the skies, and the feet reached down to the mansions of the dead.⁸⁸

The mishmash of religion and secular government as manifested in the Papal States affected not only the Italian peninsula. It influenced every country of the world, at least wherever Catholics could be found. For all of them, the pontiff’s word was law. This is the yoke that the Directory of the

French revolution resolved to break. It deposed *il papa re* in 1798. In that sense, it did abolish his office, though for only a brief span of time.

After all, Rev. 13 does not say the Beast would be killed but that one of its heads would be “wounded to death” (vs. 3). It bled intermittently, yet it did not expire. The successors of Pius VI struggled for another seventy-two years to retain their rulership over the Papal States, which they lost in 1870. Eventually, in 1929, Benito Mussolini, the Fascist dictator of Italy, struck a deal with the pontiff and restored his temporal power by creating the Vatican State. From that time onward, the power of the pope has recovered stupendously. The Apocalypse predicts that eventually the whole world will wonder after the Beast (Rev. 13:3).

IX

But let us return to Bacchiocchi’s objections, for there is one more reason why he will not accept those statements in *The Great Controversy*—either “the establishment” or the “supremacy” of the papacy—in 538.⁸⁹ The idea that both of them express was repugnant to him because they clash with one of his own and cherished ideas:

“In my dissertation *From Sabbath to Sunday*, I have shown that the development of the papal primacy was already in progress in the second century, when the Pope exercised his ecumenical authority by imposing on Christian churches at large Easter-Sunday, Weekly Sunday, besides condemning various movements like the Marcionists and Montanists”⁹⁰

This is as startling as it is inaccurate. We are amazed at a Protestant assenting to such a Catholic interpretation of early Christian history by applying the phrase “ecumenical authority” to the pontiff’s status in the second century. The basic problem is that this passage telescopes together two erroneous conclusions.

First, the popes had no ecumenical authority over “the churches at large” in either the first or the second century, although they certainly lusted after it.

We have already shown how Clement of Rome (d. about A.D. 100) began the interference with other congregations. But, as we have also related, there were other clerics who rebuffed and countered this tendency. For instance, toward the end of the second century, the redoubtable Irenaeus reprimanded Pope Victor I, who in his insistence on the Easter Sunday had excommunicated the Quartodecimans. Opposition from such a formidable quarter made him retract that decision. Why? Because the Roman emperors were still pagans and obviously would not have backed the budding papacy in enforcing its decrees. Nor did it yet, in those early days or for another century or so, appeal to Matt. 16:13-19, since the doctrine of Petrine Primacy had not yet been invented.

Second, *From Sabbath to Sunday* contains a serious flaw. In it, Bacchiocchi argued that the rest day was changed from the seventh to the

first day of the week in the early second century. Crucial to his argumentation is Chapter 67 of Justin Martyr's Apology. But—and this we have also dealt with in a previous chapter—William H. Shea demolished this idea in 2001 by showing that the passage is a forgery, interpolated into that text at a later time.

Bacchiocchi also opposes Ellen G. White's account in the following words:

“In many ways A.D. 538 marks, not the establishment, but the humiliation of the papacy. In theory Emperor Justinian affirmed and expanded the authority of the papacy, but in practice he forced three popes to promote his political agenda. Through the influence of Justinian's wife, Empress Theodora, general Belisarius selected Pope Vigilius in 537 while the previous Pope Silverius was still alive. The pontificate of Vigilius (537-555) is characterized by repeated doctrinal compromises made under the pressure of Emperor Justinian who kidnapped him, brought him to Constantinople and humiliated him. The outcome was that Vigilius was excommunicated by some Western bishops, and his papal authority was rejected in several western provinces. These historical facts hardly support the claim that the year 538 marks the establishment or beginning of the supremacy of the papacy.”⁹¹

This is a parody of the truth, especially due to its incompleteness. So let us, citing a modern source that is friendly to Catholicism, briefly look at the three popes who were active round about 538, whom Bacchiocchi evidently had in mind, and then at what happened afterwards—which he failed to mention.

Pope Agapetus I (d. 536) displeased the emperor for coming to the imperial court, “at the urging of the Ostrogothic king Theodahad” to deter “Justinian I from his plans to reconquer Italy.”⁹² This pontiff also angered Theodora “by condemning Patriarch Anthimus of Constantinople and thus ruining her plans to restore monophysitism, a doctrine that Christ has only one nature rather than two (*i.e.*, human and divine).”⁹³ Interfering with the emperor's grand design of the Reconquest while thwarting the religious plans of his powerful queen made him persona very much non grata. Nevertheless, Pope Agapetus was allowed to die in peace at Constantinople, and his remains were shipped to Rome.⁹⁴

A much more diplomatic man, who had accompanied him to the imperial court on the Bosphorus, was the Roman deacon Vigilius. While at Constantinople, he “ingratiated himself with Justinian's wife, the empress Theodora. With her, Vigilius schemed the deposition of Pope St. Silverius, who had been elected in June 536 as Agapetus' successor.”⁹⁵

She further sweetened the deal by promising Vigilius 700 pounds of gold.⁹⁶ The reason for her anger toward Silverius was his refusal to restore the Monophysite Anthimus, her favorite, whom Pope Agapetus had deposed. Therefore, “Theodora ordered the Byzantine general Belisarius to enter Rome (Dec. 9, 536) and depose Silverius,” replacing him with Vigilius, which is what he did. Pope Silverius was exiled to Lycia, in Asia Minor. From there, he

appealed to the Emperor Justinian, “who, apparently unaware of the situation, sent Silverius back to Rome for an inquiry. Vigilius, however, was ultimately able to banish his rival by force to the island of Palmaria, off Naples, where Silverius died by murder or starvation.”⁹⁷

Subsequently Pope Vigilius played a “major role in what later was called the ‘Three Chapters Controversy,’ a complex theological dispute between the Eastern and Western churches.” We will not trouble the reader with the details, but the upshot was that he got himself into hot water with the emperor, who coerced him into a compromise. Due to this, however, “he lost the support of his nuncio Pelagius I (later his successor), who had been with him throughout the ordeal at Constantinople but who now deserted him. Vigilius then excommunicated Pelagius, who was subsequently imprisoned.” Pope Vigilius died on the way back from Constantinople to Rome, where he was buried. “The Western schism resulting from his Eastern policies raged on for 150 years.”⁹⁸

Despite his eventual canonization, Vigilius seems to have been a real rascal if not a scumbag.

But let us now ask, against the background of Bacchiocchi’s naysaying, whether the emperor Justinian dealt harshly with all the subsequent popes. Is it really true that “in many ways A.D. 538 marks, not the establishment, but the humiliation of the papacy”?

Consider the sequel to these initial events. We especially note Justinian’s *pragmatic sanction* of 554. Through this decree, “the emperor acknowledged, confirmed and increased the temporal power of the pope, who was henceforth to have a voice in the nomination of the governors of the Italian provinces of the empire and to participate in the control of their finances.” The edict should be seen against the background of the Ostrogoths’ defeat and the fact that the pontiffs literally owned so much of Italy. “This power was to grow so rapidly that Gregory the Great (c. 540–604, reigned from 590) could write, a generation later: ‘I should like to know whether the pope, in this world, is a spiritual leader or a temporal king.’”⁹⁹

Important, too, is the fact that Pope Pelagius I (d. 561, reigned from 556 to 561) stood up to both Vigilius and the emperor. Though put in prison for his principles, he became “reconciled with Justinian and was elected, through imperial insistence, to succeed Vigilius in 555, being consecrated at Rome on April 16, 556.” After this, he capitalized on the benefits of the recently proclaimed Pragmatic Sanction. “By making his new rights resolute and by organizing the temporal government of papal sovereignty, Pelagius began the foundation of the papacy’s political power.”¹⁰⁰

Of course, the pontiffs were theoretically still subordinate to the emperor in Constantinople, but history would soon take a hand to remove this fly from their ointment.

After Justinian’s death in 565, his Reconquest collapsed. The campaigns against the Vandals and Ostrogoths had weakened the Byzantines’ ability to resist their enemies in the East and along the frontier on the Danube, where

their real problems lay. Although, in some ways, Justinian's reign may have been, as Willis Linnell said, "the most brilliant and glorious in Byzantine history," his military adventures exhausted the empire for 150 years.¹⁰¹ But they also put an end to the revival of Western civilization begun by Theodoric. The campaigns conducted so brilliantly by Belisarius and Narses left behind them, in Europe as in North Africa, two smashed-up countries full of corpses, ushering in the darkness.

All the same, in Rome and elsewhere on the Italian peninsula the papacy had secured a territorial base to maintain itself. As yet, the political clout of the pontiffs was limited. But in the heartland of the original Roman Empire their great religious opponent, the Germanic Church, had been liquidated through the elimination of the Odovacar, Vandal, and Ostrogoth kingdoms. As foretold in the symbolic prophecy of Dan. 7:8, 24, and 25, three horns had fallen before the Little Horn.

With those enemies gone and in the vacuum left by a declining Byzantium, the papacy could consolidate its hold on Italy and extend it over the entire West—with a single exception: an area in the Cottian Alps. Here a remnant of the Germanic Church was able to linger on and later merge with other religious refugees, like the Waldenses. The power of the pontiffs, however, would grow and endure for more than twelve hundred years, sustained by many kings and emperors, including some of the mightiest figures known to history.

Chapter Fourteen
VISIGOTHIC COMPROMISE

The crushing defeat inflicted by the Byzantine generals on the Vandals in North Africa and the Ostrogoths in Italy dismayed—most probably also terrified—the Visigoths, who were now the only major Germanic nation that still held onto its religion.

Just thirty years earlier, Clovis had broken their power in France, and driven most of them southward, fleeing pell-mell over the mountains. A remnant hung on in Septimania, along the coast between the Alps and the Pyrenees. Their shrunken kingdom was now largely limited to the Iberian Peninsula, with their capital at Toletum, present-day Toledo. Even this smaller territory they had to share with others. The independent Suebi ruled over Galicia, and the Basques held onto their independence with that stubbornness which has often characterized this people.¹

Suddenly, too, the Franks became dangerous again. In 533 or 534, Theodebert I (495 or 500–547 or 548), ruling from Reims, succeeded his father. He “greatly expanded the area under Frankish hegemony,” at least while the war raged on in Italy.² And then the Byzantines also established themselves in Iberia. A Visigothic usurper, Athanagild, had provided them with an opening by asking help against King Agila. Therefore, in 552, Justinian I sent 2,000 troops under Liberius, an experienced octogenarian general. “The Byzantines took Cartagena and other cities on the southeastern coast and founded the new province of Spania before being checked by their former ally Athanagild, who had now become king.”³ This largely maritime strip of land and the Balearic Islands remained a Byzantine province for more than seventy years, until 614.⁴

Unable to read the future, the Visigoths could not know that just a few years later, after the death of both Theodobert I in 547/548 and Justinian I in 565, the double threat against their nation and religion would swiftly weaken and recede. The prospect of invasion by either the Franks or the Eastern Empire was largely imaginary.

But there was also another more dangerous internal factor: the Visigothic compromise. Insidious and working like a slow but deadly cancer, it kept on sapping the vitality of the realm. In the end, it would bring about apostasy from their ancestral faith and conversion to Catholicism.

To understand what this was about, we must again consider the overall history of the Visigoths, right from their entrance into the Empire and their uneasy relationship with the Romans. In the beginning, they had to flee from their country across the Danube ahead of the Huns. They were seeking for themselves another, better land. But once in the Empire, when the Romans meted out brutality to them and their children—which caused them to rebel at Adrianople—they found it difficult to settle down. Becoming wanderers, they soon left the Balkans, marauded through Italy, settled in southwestern Gaul, and finally ended up on the Iberian Peninsula. They were now at the opposite

end of the Empire.

What they really yearned for was independence, but they were never fully able to achieve it. Always it came down to this: they were federates and had to live with the fact that Romans regarded them as second-class citizens. This intolerance was rooted in racial as well as religious bias, giving rise to discriminatory legislation.

It began with Valentinian I (321-375, ruled from 364), whom Gibbon considered to have been the last great emperor before the breakup of the Empire. This evil man, who was every bit as cruel as Nero, made an apartheid law to prevent biological assimilation. It “forbade on pain of death the intermarriage of Romans and barbarians.”⁵ Numerous exceptions did not detract from its general consequence: the two peoples were prevented from amalgamating.

More than two centuries after Valentinian I, until it was abolished in the late sixth century,⁶ his law still inhibited intermarriage between Visigoths and Hispano-Romans. Separate legal codes developed for the two peoples, although they inhabited the same country.

This process went through several stages. While the Visigoths were still a power to be reckoned with and had their capital at Tolosa (Toulouse) in southwestern Gaul, King Euric (420–484) enacted a code of law. For its compilation, he used Roman jurists. It “was memorable in that it acknowledged the rights of his Roman as well as his Gothic subjects.”⁷ A mere twenty years later, his son Alaric II was faced with a much more difficult situation created by the formidable Clovis, who increasingly favored Catholicism. A desperate Alaric II decided on a major compromise and in 506 promulgated his *Lex Romana Visigothorum* (The Roman Law of the Visigoths), alternately known as the *Breviarum Alaricarum* (Breviary of Alaric).⁸ Unfortunately he perished during the decisive battle against Clovis and the Franks.⁹ But the *Lex Romana Visigothorum* survived; the remnant of the Visigoths fleeing across the Pyrenees bore it with them into Iberia.

Catholic ecclesiastics played a major role in creating this code. Amongst other things, it made Sunday observance binding on the Gallo-Romans in France and the Hispano-Romans in Spain. For them, belonging to the Roman Church was now compulsory. They could not refuse to accept its membership or escape from it in any way, even if they wanted to adopt Germanic Christianity—perhaps because they were drawn to obeying the entire Decalogue, including the Sabbath commandment. And some of them may not have been Catholics to start with.

Alaric II had reserved the right for his own people to worship God as their conscience saw fit but by implication decreed that all non-Visigoths had to be Catholics. This made him an agent of evil. Eventually, his successors would rue the day; for he was weaving a net in which his entire nation would become entangled and dragged to its ruin.

In Spain, “the majority of the population, probably about six million, were Hispano-Romans, as compared with 200,000 barbarians. Hispano-Romans

held many administrative positions.” The *Codex Euricianus* (Code of Euric) continued to be “the personal law of the Visigoths.” But the Hispano-Romans “continued to be governed by Roman law embodied in the Theodosian Code”¹⁰—absorbed into the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*.

This does not also mean that all Hispano-Romans, inheritors of the old imperial culture, were necessarily subject to the pontiff and therefore Sundaykeepers at the time when the Visigoths began to rule over them. On the contrary, as originally in Gaul, it was mostly the wealthy landowners of old Iberia who built and endowed the Catholic churches. In cooperation with the bishops, they also sought to enforce it on the peasants, slaves, and others dwelling on their estates.

The latter were mostly heathens, though some of them may well have belonged to an older Christianity which had not yet acknowledged the authority and dictates of the papacy. The still-persistent word *sábado* in both Spanish and Portuguese is a powerful testimony for this view, which we maintained above with our argument based on language paleontology. We think that many Hispano-Romans at first still clung to what the Bible teaches about obedience to God and, on a Biblical basis, sought to keep the Ten Commandments. But then the clerics of the Roman Church, empowered by the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*, forcibly began to make Catholics of them all.

It was only a matter of time before the same lot would befall their Germanic overlords. The Visigoths had enabled the Roman Church to create an ambient Catholic culture in Spain, and in the end it engulfed them too.

Compromise by a nation in matters of principle can be deadly, leading to war or worse. The Visigothic compromise reminds us somewhat of what happened during the nineteenth century when the American Congress was faced with pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions in their country.

In 1820, they adopted a measure known as the Missouri Compromise. It prohibited human bondage north of latitude parallel 36° 30’, while allowing it to the south. But one state, Missouri, was allowed to have both slaveholding and free counties.¹¹

For a time, this compromise showed some promise of working, but it proved to be at best a rickety arrangement. In his famous speech at Springfield, Illinois, on 16 June 1858, Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, running against Douglas as the Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate, insisted that “a house divided against itself cannot stand.” He said the government could not endure, “half *slave* and half *free*. . . . It will become *all* one thing or *all* the other.”¹²—a clear reference to Jesus’ words in Matt. 12:25: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city and house divided against itself shall not stand.”

In 1860, Lincoln was elected president, and then the United States split into two countries, which soon went to war against each other. For four and a half years (1861–1865), Americans slaughtered one another. More than 600,000 fell in battle or died from their wounds, with almost as many wounded or maimed for life.¹³ Much of the South was devastated.

The numbers of dead and wounded dwarf the casualties sustained by America in all its subsequent conflicts combined. A “kingdom divided against itself” was literally “brought to desolation.” And to this day at least the psychological scars have not fully healed.

Although the details were different, the compromise of the Visigoths with Catholicism brought an even greater, much longer-lasting tragedy to Spain and the world.

Before nemesis burst upon his people like a flood, the powerful King Leovigild (d. 586) did try to struggle up against the strengthening stream which threatened their existence. He was “the most effective of the Visigothic monarchs”; he conquered the Suevi, subdued the Basques,¹⁴ and took Córdoba “from the Greeks in the south.” When his brother Liuva died, he also succeeded to the rulership of Septimania, the last Visigothic outpost in southernmost France.¹⁵ He had unified his kingdom.

Unfortunately, however, Leovigild was still inclined to compromise in religious matters. To encourage the conversion of the Catholic Hispano-Roman population to his own faith, he put forth “efforts to bring the Arian faith more in line with Catholic teaching.”¹⁶

A further serious blunder was royal intermarriage with the Franks, who belonged to the Church of Rome. It had begun in the time of his father, King Athanagild, who founded Toledo and there established a splendiferous court. One of his daughters, Brunhilda (also known as Brunhild), Leovigild’s sister, was married off to the Frankish King Sigebert, who ruled in Austrasia.¹⁷ She necessarily had to convert to the Church of Rome, and Ingund, the fruitage of their union, grew up to become “a zealous orthodox Catholic.”¹⁸

Hermenegild, one of Leovigild’s sons, married his fanatical cousin. Aided or guided by Leander, Bishop of Seville, Ingund kept up what she considered a good work on her husband. As a result, Hermenegild converted to Catholicism and then took up arms against his father. He fought until he was captured and beheaded.¹⁹ The papacy eventually declared him a saint.

King Leovigild died “within a few weeks of April 21, 586,” and was succeeded by his younger son and co-ruler, Reccared I (reigned from 586 to 601). Bishop Leander hurried to his side at Toledo. In addition to this powerful Catholic influence at his capital, Reccared was affected by the attitude of his Merovingian relatives who ruled over France and Burgundy. He tried to forge an alliance with them, but both kings being Catholics, they rebuffed his overtures.²⁰

Events now avalanched with astonishing swiftness. In January 587, Reccared—further seeking to unify his kingdom—suddenly renounced his ancestral religion, converting to Catholicism. Most of his nobles and clerics, “certainly those around him at Toledo,” followed suit. But in different parts of his realm there were conspiracies and rebellions, which either he or his generals put down by force. In each case, the greatest dissident leader was a bishop of the Germanic Church.²¹

Most notable was the uprising in Septimania, northeast of the Pyrenees.

The moving spirit was Bishop Athaloc. His civil allies also acquired a Catholic ally, King Guntram of Burgundy, who saw an opportunity to enlarge his territories and sent his commander-in-chief Desiderius. But “Reccared’s army defeated the Arian insurgents and their Catholic allies with great slaughter.”²²

The next rebellion “broke out in the west, Lusitania,”²³ comprising almost all of modern Portugal as well as territories in what now is Spain.²⁴ This was headed by “Sunna, the Arian bishop of Mérida, and Count Seggo. Claudius, Reccared’s *dux Lusitaniae* [commander-in-chief in Lusitania], put down the rising, Sunna being banished to Mauritania and Seggio retiring to Gallaecia.”²⁵

In the latter part of 588, a third conspiracy arose. It “was headed by the Arian bishop Uldila and the queen dowager Goisvintha, but they were detected and the bishop was banished. This Arian resistance is not often mentioned in popular history.”²⁶

We note that all these quotations in their word choice reflect the traditional bias and misinformation of the Roman Church. As previously explained, these people, betrayed by their king and eliminated with his support, were not Arians; for they did not believe the Lord Jesus was a created being. They were also Bible-believing Sabbathkeepers.

Catholicism had triumphed throughout the Iberian Peninsula and celebrated the fact at the Third Council of Toledo in May 589. Its convener was Bishop Leander, acting on behalf of King Reccared. A public, obviously ghostwritten confession of the monarch, containing much theology supported by many quotations from the Bible, was read for him. “Bishop Leander also delivered the triumphant closing sermon, which his brother Isidore entitled *Homilia de triumpho ecclesiae ob conversionem Gothorum*” (Homily upon the Triumph of the Church and the Conversion of the Goths).²⁷

Immediately afterwards, Leander and the Catholic bishops “instituted the program of forced conversion of Jews and extirpation of the remains of Arianism as ‘heresy.’ Catholic history traditionally imputes these persecutions to the Visigothic kings. When, after Reccared’s reign, at a synod held at Toledo in 633, the bishops took upon themselves the nobles’ right to select a king from among the royal family, the transfer of power was complete.”²⁸ And so the abomination that makes desolate began to overwhelm the Iberian Peninsula.

This, however, was not without set-backs. As already related, half a century after that triumphant synod at Toledo, most of the peninsula had relapsed into paganism. The bishops’ response was ever more stringent canons, which “grew more and more furious, ending in 681 with a recommendation of capital punishment for recalcitrant peasants unless their masters took action first, to lock them up and flog them.”²⁹

The Visigothic kings, now puppets of the pope, cooperated with this noble enterprise; but the time had also come to make their exit from what had become a bloody and sordid history.

Three decades later, embittered noblemen opposed Duke Roderick’s succession to the throne so much that they “apparently summoned the

Muslims in North Africa to their aid. Subsequently, Tāriq ibn Ziyād, the Muslim governor of Tangier, landed at Cape (Gibraltar) in 711 and routed King Roderick and the Visigoths near the Guadalete River on July 19.”³⁰

The Moors had come to stay. “Tāriq marched straight on to Toledo, and most of Spain capitulated.”³¹ The crescent had defeated the cross and was destined to dominate much of Iberia for almost eight hundred years.

And what happened to the Visigoths? As a people, they disappeared, absorbed by the more numerous Hispano-Romans. These largely became the Spaniards, who would one day consistently—at home as well as abroad—support the papacy, establishing Catholicism throughout the huge empire that they eventually founded in North Africa, Latin America, and the Philippines.

Chapter Fifteen
CELTIC CHRISTIANITY LIQUIDATED

I

The Germanic interlude, which had delayed the advance of papal power for a hundred and fifty years, was over. In 590, as the gloom of the Dark Ages began to descend on Western Europe, Gregory I, the Great (c. 540–604), was elected pope. Though harassed by the Lombards, to whom we must yet refer, he could look back on the previous century with considerable satisfaction.

Three powerful Germanic nations, one in North Africa and two in Italy, had been uprooted through warfare: Odovacar's partially Herul state, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. Each in its heyday posed a potentially mortal threat to the papacy. As a bonus—just three years before he ascended the pontifical throne—a fourth people, the once even mightier Visigoths, obligingly began to commit religious and national suicide, with their king converting to Catholicism.

Pope Gregory I expended a good deal of attention on an important new project: converting the Germanic Anglo-Saxons in Britain and subjugating the Christian Celts, who were also living there. The faith of the latter having been reinvigorated, they were in his time sending out missionaries, who were active on the European continent. They now represented a further threat to the Catholic religion.

According to ancient Roman records, the Celts of both Britain and Ireland were “closely related to the Gauls.”¹ As already shown, in A.D. 508 a large percentage of the latter were still pagans. They therefore deeply resented being forced to follow Clovis into Catholicism and conformity to the will of the land-owning elite, who cooperated with the Roman bishops. At the same time, however, the Gallo-Romans—and even many ordinary Franks—represented an evangelistic opportunity for the Celtic missionaries from the West, who not only preached but also lived the genuine gospel of Jesus Christ as explained in the Bible.

In 590, the year when Gregory I became pope, Columban (c. 543–615)—frequently referred to by his Latin name, Columbanus—arrived from Ireland with twelve monks. An abbot, a poet, and a writer, he was also “one of the greatest missionaries of the Celtic Church, who initiated a revival of spirituality on the European continent.” His alma mater had been the monastery of Bangor, County Down, in Northern Ireland. He and his companions established themselves in the Vosges Mountains at Annegray, which was then a part of France. As they made converts, “Columban built the nearby monasteries of Luxovium and Fontaines.”²

For the Catholic hierarchy, the alarm bells went off. Some doctrines of the Celts were different from those of Rome, and so were their monasteries. Worst of all, they failed to recognize the supremacy of the pope.

Even superficially, any knowledgeable person could notice straight away that they were unlike Roman Catholics. Their priests cut their hair differently, they observed Easter at a time not approved by the papacy,³ they baptized by immersion,⁴ and their priests were allowed to marry.⁵

They also “kept Saturday as a day of rest, with special religious services on Sunday.”⁶ In his scholarly work, *The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800*, Bryan W. Ball referred to several writers who stressed the sabbathkeeping of the Celtic Church. These have included A. Lang, J. C. Moffat, and T. Ratcliffe Barnett.⁷ In his excellent work, *The Celtic Church in Britain*, Leslie Hardinge, a scholar of British extraction who took great pains to determine what the Celtic Christians believed, described how they gradually shifted “from the keeping of Saturday, the seventh day Sabbath, to the observance of both Saturday and Sunday. It was only later, after their subjugation to Rome, that they celebrated Sunday exclusively.”⁸

Celtic monasteries cultivated the intellect as much as the soul and the soil. According to Hardinge, the abbots who headed these institutions were semiseccular leaders. Most interesting were the double monasteries, usually superintended by women, with men and women living in the same or nearby buildings. Like their clergy, some of the monks were married and had their families with them. A system of separate though neighboring huts made it possible for them to fit into the settlement together with single people.⁹

Paul Johnson said these monasteries were part and parcel of the general community. Their holdings, spread over huge areas, included “lands, fishing-rights and other forms of subsistence living.” The abbots “were nearly always members of the ruling clan or tribal family . . . Irish monasticism was wholly integrated with local society: in fact it was the Church in Ireland.”¹⁰ In some ways, they resembled the rural kibbutzim of modern Israel.

Startling in this setup was the leadership role of women. Perhaps the most famous of them was Brigid of Kildare in southern Ireland. She was the “high abbess of an immense double monastery.”¹¹ Together with her female colleagues, she played a role that is still anathema to the Catholic church—as well as Protestants of the more conservative sort. Many functions were attributed to the high abbesses: the power to heal, ordain clergy, hear confessions, and possibly even to celebrate the Eucharist. They also preached.¹²

Thomas Cahill, to whom we owe these details, acknowledged: “Such goings-on, though of great antiquity, still have the power to shock the more piously orthodox. *The Old Life of Brigid* claims that Brigid was consecrated bishop ‘by mistake.’”¹³ Elsewhere, Cahill added a snippet which suggests that such ordinations may not have been uncommon. He mentioned a 1977 discovery at Amay in Belgium: “A sarcophagus, ornamented in the Celtic manner and showing the image of a woman (mysteriously labeled ‘Saint Chrodoara’) who carries a bishop’s crozier.”¹⁴

In the fifth and sixth centuries, when the western Roman Empire was

crumbling, “Ireland in its seclusion appears to have been a bastion of learning and Christianity.” Moreover, many refugees from the European continent fled to this westernmost isle.¹⁵ It is therefore likely that native scholars were augmented by learned immigrants.

Theologically, too, these Irish monastery schools, with an emphasis on the Bible, became a magnet which attracted students from not only Britain but the Continent beyond¹⁶—much like Wittenberg in Luther’s time.

With their scholarship, the Celtic institutions stood in startling contrast to the Catholic Benedictine monasteries, a system founded in Italy by Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-c. 547), who ended up as the abbot at Monte Cassino. In those days, the Benedictines were not inclined to intellectual pursuits. We see this most clearly in the actions of Pope Gregory I, who may have been one of them or found them at least congenial. According to Wilkinson, he was “well known as an enemy of classical learning. Many authorities upbraid this pontiff because he drove the mathematicians out of Rome, proscribed Greek, and denounced learning.”¹⁷

To the Roman Church, one thing about the Celts was especially odious: their bishops were subject to the abbots. But in Catholicism it was the other way round. The papacy had begun with the elevation of bishops, and its entire system now depended on the episcopate, headed by the pope.

Johnson is right in saying that Irish monasticism was “an insidious challenge to the early Dark Age Church and its hold on society . . . it advocated a return to primitive Christian purity.” It “evaded the normal hierarchical system of the Church.” Furthermore, “the Irish monks had a tremendous cultural dynamic. They were enormously learned in the scriptures, and wonderfully gifted in the arts. They combined exquisite Latin scholarship with a native cultural tradition which went back to the La Tène civilization of the first century.”

This culture had developed outside and on the fringe of what used to be the Roman Empire, where it remained until its missionaries crossed the North Sea. But during the early seventh century, the influence of Celtic Christianity extended across “a huge area of France, Italy, and the Alps, and had founded about forty monasteries” by 615.¹⁸

The endeavors of these missionaries, who were a much-needed civilizing force, could have produced an entirely different Europe from the one that was slipping into medieval darkness. But this was not to be, for Pope Gregory determined on converting the Anglo-Saxons to Catholicism and subjecting the Celtic Church in the island of its birth.

For this purpose, he used his bishops in France and enlisted the aid of Brunhilda, whom we have met before. She was the Visigothic princess who had converted to the Roman Church on marrying a Frankish king. She subsequently became a fanatical Catholic and a very powerful, nasty queen. In 595, Gregory ordered the purchase by his church in France of Anglo-Saxon slaves for Catholic monasteries, perhaps with a view to using them as interpreters in Britain. He appointed Augustine, the Benedictine prior of St.

Andrew at Rome, to head his mission.¹⁹

Nearer home, Columbanus “was indicted before a synod of French bishops (603) for keeping Easter according to the Celtic usage, and a powerful conspiracy was organized against him at the court of Burgundy on the grounds of his bold rebukes to King Theuderich [Theodoric] II.” Being forcibly removed from his monastery in 610, he withdrew with St. Gall and other monks to Switzerland, where he preached to the Alamanni. Compelled to leave that country, too, “he went to Italy and founded the monastery of Bobbio, where he died on Nov. 21, 615.”²⁰

II

We will presently follow Augustine, as he and his monks made their way to Britain. But first, to orient readers who may not be too familiar with it, we need to look back on the history of the Celts (also called Kelts), whose subjection was his ultimate goal. Who were they? Let us briefly trace their origins and identity, especially recounting how they first received the gospel.

About seven hundred years before the Redeemer was born, when Rome—a mere village—had not yet become a republic, they were already present in what would later become Austria. At that time, the Teutonic peoples had not yet migrated to warmer climes but were more or less cooped up in southern Sweden, the Danish Peninsula, the Baltic Sea area, and northernmost Germany.

The earliest archaeological remains of the Celts are from Hallstatt near Salzburg, dating back to about 700 B.C. They were an iron-age people. “By the mid-5th century B.C. the La Tène Culture, with its distinctive art style of abstract geometric designs and stylized bird and animal forms, had begun to emerge among the Celts centered on the middle Rhine, where trade with the Etruscans of central Italy, rather than with the Greeks, was now becoming predominant.” From then on, their tribes migrated to both the West and the East. They settled in the British Isles as well as the area which now comprises Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia. They also thrust into Greece, where they sacked the pagan sanctuary of Delphi in 279 B.C.²¹

From the Balkans, the eastern Celts were invited to come over into Asia Minor and take part in a Bithynian civil war (278 B.C.). They “plagued western Anatolia until checked by the Seleucid king Antiochus I at the so-called Elephant Battle (275 B.C.). At that point the Celts, called Galatae (Galatians) by 3rd-century writers, settled in the territory to which they gave their name.” Later they joined forces with the Seleucid kings against the Romans, who defeated them in 189 B.C. and subsequently, in 85 B.C., made Galatia part of their empire.²²

These people are of special interest to our narrative, since they accepted Christianity from the apostle Paul, who wrote a letter to them. In the New Testament it bears the heading Προς Γαλατας, Pros Galatas), which means

“To the Celts.” Being bilingual, they could read this powerful epistle about righteousness by faith in the Greek original. But they also, for several centuries, retained their own language.

About this, we have the testimony of that learned Catholic scholar, Jerome (c. 347–419/420), who “in his commentary on St. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians notes that the language of the Anatolian Galatians in his day was still very similar to the language of the Treveri. St. Jerome probably had firsthand knowledge of these Celtic languages, as he had visited both Augusta Treverorum and Galatia.”²³ The Treveri were a Celtic tribe who lived in the lower valley of the Moselle, which flows into the Rhine. “*Colonia Augusta Treverorum* (now Trier, Germany)” was their capital in the Roman Empire.²⁴ The Celts of Britain also spoke languages related and similar to the one at Trier. They could consequently also communicate with their distant cousins in Galatia.

III

Beyond the main island of Britain lies Ireland, which was also colonized by Celts. Today its southern part is an independent republic, with two official languages: English and Erse, a form of Gaelic.

An oddity of history is that Ireland and Scotland have interchanged names. Until the tenth century, the Emerald Isle was called Scotia, and its inhabitants were known as Scotti. Originally, the Scots were “an ancient Gaelic-speaking people from northern Ireland who settled in what later became known as Scotland sometime in the 5th century AD.” The immigrant Irish Scots kept on extending their territory in Britain and amalgamated with the pre-Celtic Picts. Eventually, “in the 14th century Scotland came to be the name for the whole land, and all its inhabitants were called Scots, whatever their origin.”²⁵ Some quotations in these pages reflect that usage, which we will therefore need to bear in mind.

In their original westward migration, the Celts had also spread into Gaul, Iberia, and by 391 B.C. the Po Valley as well as other parts of northern Italy, where they founded cities like Milan. The Romans called this area Cisalpine Gaul,²⁶ which means “Gaul on the near side of the Alps.” Before these Celts settled down and could be absorbed, they wrought havoc and caused great perplexity. Equipped with iron weapons, they were formidable warriors. They routed the Romans “at the battle of Allia and Rome was sacked in 390 B.C.” And “it was not until 192 B.C. that the Roman armies conquered the last remaining independent Celtic kingdoms in Italy.”²⁷

Beyond Cisalpine Gaul, extended the fair land that would later bear the name of France. The Romans gradually began to occupy it, first along the Mediterranean coast, where they formed a province which they called Gallia Transalpina (“Gaul beyond the Alps”).²⁸

In 58-50 B.C., Julius Caesar (100?–44 B.C.) within a few years

conquered the rest of this area. Then he carried out two raids on Britain. In 55, he gained a foothold on the coast of Kent and in 54 B.C. set up a reluctantly cooperative native government, though he left no garrison there.²⁹

Almost a century later, in A.D. 43, the emperor Claudius I (10 B.C.–A.D. 54) with his legions launched a full-scale invasion.³⁰ Subjecting the Britons took some time, but the upshot was that they became imperial subjects for more than three hundred and fifty years, until the troops were withdrawn to defend the heartland when Alaric I and his Visigoths were marauding through Italy. Roman occupation may have lasted until A.D. 430.³¹

In all that time, the Britons were not only pacified; they assimilated Greco-Roman civilization, though retaining their own language. Many of them adopted Christianity, though paganism would also have persisted, just as it did in Gaul.

IV

The manner and date of how the Britons were originally converted are in dispute.

An obvious source to turn to for details is *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastical History of the English People), completed in 731/732 by Bede (also spelled *Baeda* or *Beda*, 672/673–735), an Anglo-Saxon, Roman Catholic cleric. This work consists of five books, recording “events in Britain from the raids by Julius Caesar (55-54 B.C.) to the arrival in Kent (A.D. 597) of St. Augustine. For his sources, Bede claimed the authority of ancient letters, the ‘traditions of our forefathers,’ and his own knowledge of contemporary events.” Although he was anxious about accuracy, his account is “overloaded with the miraculous.” He also wrote theological commentaries and two works on chronology. It was, incidentally, he who introduced the *Anno Domini* system of dating our era from the birth of Christ. For his time, he was a learned man and afterwards very influential.³²

But as a church historian Bede was obviously biased. This is not to be wondered at; from the age of seven, his entire youth had been spent in monasteries. At 19 he was ordained a deacon, and he became a priest at 30. He has long been referred to as the Venerable Bede and is a Catholic saint.³³ In his book, he consequently tried to show that not only the Anglo-Saxons but originally even the Celts became Christians as members of the Roman Catholic Church.

In this, however, he presented the world with an impossibly muddled account, which was demonstrated as far back as 1894 by William Cathcart, a learned American editor of *The Baptist Encyclopaedia*, who also wrote *The Papal System*. Bede’s inaccuracies also emerge from the 1907 notes which A. M. Sellar, Vice-Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, interspersed with his translation of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Together

these men pointed out a remarkable number of errors in just one short passage of Bede's work, namely Chapter IV, Book I.³⁴

We quote it in full: "In the year of our Lord 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, was made emperor, together with his brother, Aurelius Commodus. In their time, whilst the holy Eleutherus presided over the Roman Church, Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to him, entreating that by a mandate from him he might be made a Christian. He soon obtained his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith, which they had received, uncorrupted and entire, in peace and tranquility until the time of the Emperor Diocletian."³⁵

Dr. Cathcart's comments are devastating: "There was no king of the Britons, as a whole people, as Bede represents Lucius to have been, during the Roman occupancy of their country. There were no missionaries from Rome, or elsewhere, who brought the whole British people, apparently in the life of one man, to the Saviour. No such emperors as the two named by Bede ever reigned together; nor is the date or the name of the Roman bishop more correct than the names of the emperors. Eleutherus flourished between A.D. 176 and 190; and Marcus Antoninus became emperor in A.D. 161."³⁶

In an editorial note, Sellar throws more light on these mistakes: "Marcus Antoninus Verus, commonly called Marcus Aurelius, succeeded in 161 A.D. His colleague in the empire was his adopted brother, Lucius Verus, whose full adoptive name was Lucius Aurelius Antoninus Verus Commodus. He died in 169. Eleutherus became Pope between 171 and 177. Bede's chronology is therefore wrong."³⁷

From this, it would seem that the name Lucius, which belonged to a coemperor, was transferred to a mythological British king!

Catholicism has not been able to obliterate the memory of Celtic Christianity to the same extent as that of the Germanic Church, whose texts in the Gothic language were—apart from the Bible—completely destroyed. It has, therefore, had to content itself with rewriting history. It has also pooh-poohed what many Protestants have long maintained: the very idea that there ever was such a thing as a Celtic Church. Furthermore, it has also appropriated to itself such Celtic Christians as Patrick (5th century), Columba (d. 597), Columban (c. 543-615), and others, alleging that they recognized papal authority. These have all conveniently been turned into Catholic saints.

We read, moreover, that nowadays "historians do not employ the term 'Celtic Church', since that entails a sense of their being a unified and identifiable entity separated from greater Western Christendom." For instance, Kathleen Hughes for the *O'Donnell Lectures in Celtic Studies* (1981) posed the question: "The Celtic Church: Is This a Valid Concept?" and Wendy Davis wrote "The Myth of the Celtic Church" as part of *The Early Church in Wales and the West* (1992).³⁸

But more authentic voices have drifted down to us from a remoter time

than that of Bede or these later writers. Some belonged to men who became famous in the history of the church. They all commented on the presence of a very early (and non-Catholic) Christianity in Britain.

In a short anti-Semitic work, Tertullian (c. 155/160–after 220) during the second century listed the many regions to which Christianity had spread: to the North, to the East, into Africa, and to the West. Among the latter, he mentions “many territories of the Moors, all parts of Spain, the different peoples of Gaul, and parts of Britain not reached by the Romans but subjugated to Christ.”³⁹ That is, some of the converts lived in what now is Scotland, beyond Hadrian’s Wall. Others may even have been in Ireland.

Origen (c. 185-254), fifty years later, in his “Fourth Homily on Ezekiel” asked and answered these questions: “When did Britain previous to the coming of Christ agree to worship the one God? When the Moors? When the whole world? Now, however, through the church, all men call upon the God of Israel.”⁴⁰ In his “Sixth Homily on Luke,” he also stated: “The influence of the gospel and the power of the Saviour’s kingdom, have reached as far as Britain, which seemed to be in another division of the world.”⁴¹

Eusebius of Caesarea, the famous church historian, who wrote in the fourth century and was a contemporary of Constantine I—the first Christian emperor—made a similar point. But he attributed world-wide evangelization to the apostles themselves. He marveled “That some of them should take possession of Rome itself, the head and queen of cities, that others should occupy the kingdom of the Persians, others the kingdom of the Armenians, others that of the Parthians, others even that of the Scythians; that some should have penetrated to the ends of the earth, and the country of the Indians: and others should have crossed the ocean to those islands called British; such things I will not believe to be according to man, through man only.”⁴²

This claim that Christian evangelization included the entire inhabited planet within apostolic times may stretch some readers’ credulity. Yet even the apostle Paul had said as much in writing to the Colossian church about “the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Col. 1:23). Every convert was a missionary, and “never in the history of our race was there a zeal that surpassed that of the early Christians.” Somehow one or more of them reached Britain to tell the story of the Saviour’s love.⁴³

At least two possibilities raised by Cathcart are worth mentioning.

The first Christian in Britain could have been a colonist or soldier. “Roman legions were located for an indefinite period in some one country—a century, or even centuries; they were never recruited in the province where they were encamped, but in foreign and often distant countries. An English legion might have as recruits some of Paul’s converts in Asia Minor. British recruits might be sent to some legion located in the East, and might be converted there.”⁴⁴

Or the first Christian in Britain might have been a trader from

Marseilles, originally Massilia, a Greek colony on the south coast of France, which was founded more than twenty-five centuries ago.⁴⁵ A major port on the Mediterranean, it was also a depot for tin. Alloyed with copper, this metal produces bronze, which was of the greatest importance to the ancient world. “The oldest tin mines were those in England and Spain
...⁴⁶

A good deal of evidence points further east and especially to the Galatians. Benjamin G. Wilkinson, who among Seventh-day Adventist scholars looked most extensively at early Christianity outside Europe, as far back as 1944 cited several knowledgeable scholars on this topic. They indicate that early Celtic Christianity was not of the Greek or Latin type but akin to the church in Asia Minor. Like all early Christians, the Galatians witnessed to their faith, which they soon communicated to their kinsmen inhabiting both Gaul and the British Isles. Wilkinson referred to the solidarity between them when trouble arose:

“There is abundant evidence of intercommunication between Ireland, France, and Galatia in the three hundred years between Paul and Patrick. That the Celts in France were evangelized by the Celts in Asia Minor is shown by a well-known event in the history of the French church. About seventy years after the death of the apostle John, the churches in southern France suffered a terrible persecution at the hands of the pagans. The distressed believers in 177 sent a pathetic account of their afflictions, not to Italy or to Africa, but to their brethren in Asia Minor.”⁴⁷ In support of these contentions, Wilkinson refers to a number of authorities. Two of them are here especially relevant.

H. J. Warner said in *The Albigensian Heresy* (1922), a book based on his graduate Bachelor of Divinity dissertation approved by Cambridge University, England: “In order to understand the situation, political and ecclesiastical, in Southern France we must bear in mind that the Gauls of the West and the Galatae of the East were of the same stock, and that each branch, though several nations intervened, retained unimpaired its racial characteristics. Galli, Galatae, Keltae are but different forms of the same word. Livy would speak of Gauls in the East; Polybius of Galatians in the West.”⁴⁸

George T. Stokes (1843-1898), who had been born in Ireland and became professor of Ecclesiastical History at Trinity College, Dublin, stated: “Every tyro in ecclesiastical history knows that Celtic Gaul received the Gospel from the earliest times, while the celebrated story of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons, as told by Eusebius in the fifth book of his History, proves that the Celtic Christians of the second century were just as ready in Gaul as in Galatia to lay down their lives for Christ. It is important, too, as bearing on our future investigations, to remember that Gallic was intimately connected with Oriental Christianity. The Christians of Lyons and Vienne, under Marcus Aurelius, sent an account of their sufferings to the Church of Asia as to the mother Church. Irenaeus, second Bishop of Lyons, was a Greek, and a native of Asia Minor. The whole of southern Gaul was, in fact, Greek and Oriental as much as Roman, and remained so till the Middle Ages.”

Stokes cites several Latin and French authorities to support these

contentions.⁴⁹

V

A little after the Visigoths had sacked the imperial capital in 410, the Roman garrison abandoned Britain, which soon fell prey to pagans: raiding Picts and Scots from beyond the northern border, as well as Saxons, Angles, Jutes, and other Germans from the continent. Some or many of them may have been mercenaries left behind by the retreating Romans, but the rest were invaders from beyond the English Channel.

Though suffering great losses, the Celtic Christians were not, however, wiped out. They gradually retreated, especially into the mountains of Wales, where they established their semimonastic communities.⁵⁰ Some survived in northern Britain. From these territories, they also ventured westward, into Ireland. From there, they later launched a second, amazing career.

VI

The Emerald Isle, which the Romans never sought to conquer, was almost totally pagan. Contrary to a popular opinion, Patrick (c. 396-469) was not really the first to bring Christianity to Ireland. He had been long preceded by others, perhaps Galatians or their Gallic converts, to whom we have already referred. Then, too, there were the Christian slaves who were captured during repeated raids along the coast of Britain, especially in the North. Some of them would have shared their faith.

As Hardinge pointed out: "The old Irish writers had little doubt that there had been Christians in Ireland before Patrick began his missionary work. Tirechan in a homily on the life of Patrick, mentioned archaeological remains of liturgical objects, glass chalices under a stone altar. There are also notices, in the *Book of Armagh*, of Christian clerics in Ireland before the saint's arrival who later pledged the support of their churches to Patrick."⁵¹

Very little dependable data about this great missionary has survived. His earliest biographers, who provided much though sometimes contradictory information, wrote two centuries after his death.

According to Paul Johnson, Patrick might have been a Romanized Briton from Wales.⁵² But Neander said that Patrick was born in Bonnaven, between the towns of Dunbarton and Glasgow, which was then a part of ancient Britain. "This village, in memory of Patricius, has received the name of Kil-Patrick or Kirk-Patrick."⁵³ This, however, would not make Patrick Scottish. He was a Briton. As already explained, the Scotti came from Ireland, and in his time the country now known as Scotland did not yet exist.

Neander's view is confirmed by Patrick's "Confession," in which he wrote: "I had Calpurnius, a deacon, for my father, who was the son of the late Potitus, a presbyter, who resided in the village of Banaven Taberniae."⁵⁴

In later generations, he would almost invariably be referred to as *St.*

Patrick, having morphed into the Catholic patron saint of Ireland, with many legends growing up around his name. This is a little difficult, not least because of his parentage. Both his father and grandfather were churchmen, yet neither of them practiced celibacy, always favored and often insisted on by the Roman Church. They were married men, unless we are to suppose that Patrick's birth was illegitimate.

Other reasons also exist why he could not have been a Catholic. Above all, he could not have supported Romanism since it exerted strenuous efforts to eradicate the Celtic Church to which he belonged. This is the most palpable evidence that these were very separate traditions.

As Wilkinson said, it is significant that Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* did not mention him. This historian, who lived about two hundred and fifty years after Patrick, was a conscientious if biased scholar and had access to the archives in Rome. So why did not even these refer to the great Celt? The reason, in the words of Wilkinson, is that "the papacy had not yet made up its mind to claim Patrick."⁵⁵

VII

The Irish Christians did more than evangelize the new Germanic people of England. Their missionaries also fanned out to the north, the west, and the southeast. This included other islands, and even the European continent. Hardinge described and graphically illustrated their endeavor on a map of that area. It shows arrows from Ireland reaching out to Scotland, the Shetland Isles, the Faeroe Isles, and Iceland (which they reached before the Norsemen colonized it); from Scotland down into Britain; across the sea to the island of Iona; and into Germany, France, Switzerland, even northern Italy. All these places experienced a Celtic presence.⁵⁶

Nature itself assisted with global warming, for "During the Dark Ages which followed the end of the Roman Empire in the West there was an improvement in the climate. It appears from both literary and historical evidence to have become a little warmer and drier in the northern half of Europe. The seas were much less stormy. Celtic missionaries traveled freely in minuscule and insubstantial boats along the Atlantic seaways"⁵⁷

The greatest Celtic Christian leader who followed in Patrick's footsteps was a prince of Clan Conaill. Of royal stock, he could have been a king, even the high king of Ireland, but he preferred to become a monk, whom his companions nicknamed Columcille—Dove of the Church.⁵⁸ He is better known to history as Columba (c. 520-597).

Round about 570, accompanied by a dozen fellow believers, he founded a monastery and a school on the island of Iona, off the southwest coast of Scotland. These people were all Irish, who brought Christianity to the Highland Picts and a considerable part of northern England.⁵⁹ In this way, a Celtic Bible-based faith was strongly reestablished in Britain.

Twenty years after Columba began his work on Iona, during 590, Columban (also accompanied by twelve companions) arrived in France. As already recounted, they were—despite persecution—immensely successful.

VIII

Pope Gregory I, who promptly recognized their activity as a threat to Catholic interests, laid plans to counter it. He would strike back, both on the European continent and in the British Isles, where the Celtic missionaries had come from. His plan was to send Augustine and a bank of monks to Kent⁶⁰ in southern England. There they would seek to convert the pagan Germanic invaders, who by now had conquered much of Britain, and also subjugate the Celtic Church.

The pontiff's strategy also involved the writing of letters to cultivate the Catholic monarchs of France, which by his time had divided into two kingdoms, Austrasia in the east and Neustria in the west. He particularly concentrated on royal women, especially the twice-married Brunhilda.⁶¹ She was the Visigothic princess, who had become the wife of King Sigebert I of Austrasia and converted to Catholicism. Highly cultivated, she was now an extremely powerful and utterly ruthless woman, who three times ruled as queen regent.⁶²

Then, as ever, the papacy was very much aware of the power that women in high places were able to wield. Coached by confessors and clerics of the Roman Church, they could convert the kings they were married to as well as the children they bore. Was it not Clotilda from Burgundy who persuaded Frankish Clovis to become a Catholic, and Ingund from Austrasia who made one of Visigothic Hermenegild?

And so, Gregory I in his letters “asked Brunhild and other Frankish rulers such as Theuderic [Theodoric] II and Theudebert II to support Augustine of Canterbury’s mission to Kent.”⁶³

Aethelberht (Ethelbert) of Kent, who ruled the dominant Anglo-Saxon kingdom in Britain, was married to Bertha (539–c. 612), the Catholic daughter of Charibert I (c. 517–567). The latter had until recently been the Merovingian king in Paris.⁶⁴ Bertha was Brunhilde’s niece. With her was her chaplain, a cleric named Liudhard. And “there are many indications of close relations between Kent and the Franks. Aethelberht’s marriage to Bertha certainly connected the two courts, though not as equals: the Franks would have thought of Aethelberht as an under-king,” although he probably did not quite see it that way.⁶⁵

In the spring of 597, Augustine together with about forty monks landed on Thanet, an island near southeastern Britain,⁶⁶ which at that time was not united, consisting of several different states. They proceeded to Canterbury in Kent, where the papacy had its first important success. Within that year, the king and 10,000 of his subjects accepted Catholicism. For the future of Britain, this was “a crucial hour.”⁶⁷ Ethelbert was also nominal overlord of two neighboring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms: Essex and East Anglia.⁶⁸ Augustine became the first

archbishop of Canterbury.⁶⁹

The methods that he and his successors applied were quite different from those of the Celtic Church. Instructed by Gregory, he made it as easy as possible for the pagans in Britain to transfer to Catholicism with as little culture shock as possible. In 601, the pope wrote a letter to Abbot Mellitus, who was on his way to Britain, with a message for Augustine: the heathens' temples were not to be destroyed, but rededicated as Christian churches, and their festivals retained as days associated with saints; even their sacrificial animals could still be used, but now they would be slaughtered for festivities of thanksgiving to God.⁷⁰

Augustine, however, was—in harmony with the pope's intention—after bigger game than merely converting the heathen; soon he also sought the submission of the Celtic Church. Two fruitless conferences took place in 603. The upshot was that the British bishops indignantly refused to accept the pope as their spiritual head or to receive direction from Augustine, whom they regarded as haughty and unbending.

Bede has provided a fascinating account of the proceedings.

At their first meeting, Augustine admonished the Celtic Christians to unify their efforts with his Catholic mission “and undertake the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the heathen for the Lord's sake.” It particularly troubled him that “they did not keep Easter Sunday at the proper time, but from the fourteenth to the twentieth moon.” Besides, “they did many other things which were opposed to the unity of the church.” But no arguments could persuade them to unite with the Roman Church. He then resorted to a contest of miracles. “A blind man of the English [Anglo-Saxon] race was brought, who having been presented to the British bishops, found no benefit for healing from their ministry.” Then it was Augustine's turn. Kneeling, he prayed, and “immediately the blind man received sight.”⁷¹

This certainly impressed, yet did not entirely persuade, the Celts. They might have thought there was something fishy about that miracle. Perhaps they wondered whether the man had ever really been blind. Therefore, they arranged for another conference and went away to consult their colleagues and fellow believers.

One of them was “a certain holy and discreet man, who was wont to lead the life of a hermit among them.” He advised them to find out what kind of man this Augustine was, especially whether he was meek and lowly of heart, like Jesus, or harsh and proud. But how could they test him on this point? “‘Do you contrive,’ said the anchorite, ‘that he first arrive with his company at the place where the synod is to be held; and if at your approach he rises up to you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is the servant of Christ; but if he despises you, and does not rise up to you, whereas you are more in number, let him also be despised by you.’”⁷²

This is what they did. On their arrival, Augustine remained seated. “When they perceived it, they were angry, and charging him with pride, set themselves to contradict all he said.” He responded by reiterating his position

and said: “Many things ye do which are contrary to our custom, or rather the custom of the universal Church, and yet, if you will company with me in these three matters, to wit, to keep Easter at the due time; to fulfill the ministry of Baptism, by which we are born again to God, according to the custom of the holy Roman Apostolic Church; and to join with us in preaching the Word of God to the English nation, we will gladly suffer all the other things you do, though contrary to our customs.” Again they refused.⁷³

It was at this point that the Catholic bishop showed his true colors. As Bede put it: “Then the man of God, Augustine, is said to have threatened them, that if they would not accept peace with their brethren, they should have war from their enemies; and, if they would not preach the way of life to the English nation, they should suffer at their hands the vengeance of death.”⁷⁴

A little after Augustine died, “the Northumbrians under Ethelfrid slaughtered twelve hundred British monks in a fearful massacre.”⁷⁵ Here is Bede’s remark about it: “Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of the holy Bishop Augustine, though he himself had been long before taken up into the heavenly kingdom, that the heretics should feel the vengeance of temporal death also, because they had despised the offer of eternal salvation.”⁷⁶ However, J. H. Merle d’Aubigné (1794–1872), an eminent Protestant church historian, accused Augustine of actively plotting the slaughter: he “occupied his last days in preparing the accomplishment of his ill-omened prophecy.” As evidence, Merle d’Aubigné said that “a national tradition among the Welsh for many ages pointed to him as the instigator of this cowardly butchery.”⁷⁷

IX

As head of the Roman Church in Britain, Augustine was succeeded by Laurentius (Lawrence, d. 619), in whose time the interests of Catholicism suffered notable setbacks. The new archbishop also failed in his negotiations with the British and Irish bishops. Another problem was that the pagan King Ethelfrid, who had polished off the Celtic monks, now also turned against the papists.

According to Merle d’Aubigné many of their converts returned to heathenism, among them Eadbald, king of Kent, and all the Roman bishops fled to Gaul—except Lawrence himself. On the night before the day when he would have crossed the Channel, he suddenly decided to stay. The next morning he presented himself before Ethelfrid, “with his clothes all disordered and his body covered with wounds. ‘Saint Peter,’ he said, ‘appeared to me during the night and scourged me severely because I was about to forsake his flock.’”⁷⁸

The superstitious pagan king was impressed, and Catholicism survived.

Ethelfrid died in battle, defeated by Raedwald, king of East Anglia. The victor made it possible for Edwin (d. 632), an exile at his court, to ascend the throne of Northumbria. Consisting of what today is northeastern England and southern Scotland, this now became the most powerful country in Britain.

Suddenly a great new opportunity presented itself for the Roman Church. In Bede's book, we read how King Edwin wanted to marry Ethelberga, a princess of Kent and a Catholic. But to do so, he had to promise in advance that he would open up his country for evangelism by the Roman Church and also allow himself to be instructed about its doctrines. He agreed. She came to his court accompanied by Bishop Paulinus. Soon enough, King Edwin was baptized.⁷⁹

One of the inducements that Paulinus offered was to tell him that one night some years earlier he himself had met a mysterious stranger who "prophesied Edwin's future greatness and held out the promise of salvation."⁸⁰ This was indeed most gratifying.

But Edwin, although he was the most powerful English monarch of his day, had in store for him not further greatness but disaster. Only five years after his baptism in 627, his country was invaded by Cadwallon, the Celtic Christian king of Gwynedd in Wales, and King Penda, the pagan ruler of Mercia. They defeated Edwin, slaying him in battle; and Catholicism was largely uprooted from his country.⁸¹ For the time being, the mission initiated by Pope Gregory I and Augustine of Canterbury—both of them now deceased—had ground to a standstill.

X

The next round in the struggle belonged to the Celtic Church.

At Edwin's accession in Northumbria, the sons of Ethelfrid, its former pagan king, had fled to Iona. Here they found refuge and were influenced by the spiritual heirs of Columba. Later one of them, Oswald (c. 604–642), became king of Northumbria. A true child of God, he invited the Celtic Christians on Iona to send a teacher who could evangelize his people.

A monk named Aidan (d. 651) responded and was made a bishop at the king's insistence. Bede described him as "a man of singular gentleness, piety, and moderation," although he faulted him for his theology—especially the fact that he celebrated Easter "according to the custom of his country."⁸²

In 635, Aidan proceeded to the east coast of England and selected another sea-girt, offshore base: Lindisfarne, which today is known as Holy Island. This was near the Northumbrian stronghold of Bamburgh. On Lindisfarne, Aidan "established his church, monastery, and see." From there also, he "evangelized northern England. He founded churches, monasteries, and, on Lindisfarne, a school for the training of ministers."⁸³

Over the next thirty years, these institutions sent out missionaries, winning much of Anglo-Saxon England to the gospel. From noted that "most of Christian England was attached to the Scottish church; Wina of Wessex was in communion with British bishops, and in 664 only Kent and East Anglia were in complete communion with Rome and Canterbury."⁸⁴

The reign of good King Oswald, whose humility and great piety Bede applauded, continued for only nine years. While still alive, he was eager and

active in helping with this work. For instance, “when the bishop [Aidan], who was not perfectly skilled in the English tongue, preached the Gospel, it was a fair sight to see the king himself interpreting the Word of God to his ealdormen and thegns, for he had thoroughly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment.”⁸⁵

It was therefore not, as Catholic historians have suggested, the efforts of Augustine that led to this gospel triumph in early Germanic England, but the resurgent Celtic Church.

XI

But then the tide of affairs abruptly turned against the Irish missionaries and their converts. In 642 King Oswald, the great supporter of Celtic Christianity, fell in battle at Maserfeld, slain by Penda of Mercia, a pagan.⁸⁶ Oswald was succeeded by his brother Oswiu [Oswy] (612-670), who defeated Penda and his allies. This made him the ruler of Northumberland and, at least for a while, the overlord of all the southern English kingdoms.⁸⁷

Like his late brother, King Oswy also at first favored the Celtic Church, but later he made an about turn. According to Merle d’Aubigné, he did not, like his brother, cherish religion for its own sake. “His heart overflowed with ambition, and he shrank from no crime that might increase his power”; for “he looked upon the Christian religion as a means of combining the Christian princes against the heathen Penda.”⁸⁸

Besides, he had married Eanfled (626–685?), King Edwin’s daughter. This Catholic princess was both proud and fanatical. She “undermined her husband’s faith in the orthodoxy of the Church of Iona, whose champion he had been ever since the death of his brother Oswald.”⁸⁹ With her, as her chaplain, came Romanus, an aptly named priest of her church.⁹⁰ Both bent their minds and energies to the project of subverting King Oswy.

In about 653, Wilfrid (634–709/710), a young Northumbrian priest and an aristocrat, returned from a visit to Rome, where he had studied and become enthusiastic about papal supremacy. Previously he had been a Celtic Christian. Merle d’Aubigné maintained that this man’s motivation for converting to Catholicism was far from spiritual. At the seat of the papacy he had “soon discovered that the priests of France and Italy possessed more power both in ecclesiastical and secular matters than the humble missionaries of Iona; and his thirst for honours was inflamed at the court of the pontiffs. If he should succeed in making England submit to the papacy, there was no dignity to which he might not aspire.”⁹¹

After visiting Rome, Wilfrid became a mighty instrument in the hand of his new-found faith. He joined forces with the queen and Romanus in their efforts to convert King Oswy. They first targeted prince Alfred, whom Wilfrid eventually won to Catholicism.⁹² Next these four people, and especially Alfred, persuaded the king to hold a conference for the purpose of deciding the religious issues that were dividing society.⁹³ The meeting took place at

Whitby, a monastery on the Yorkshire coast. This Synod (663 or 664) “marked a vital turning point in the development of the church in England.” The representatives of Rome “included Queen Eanfled, Bishop Wilfrid, and other influential people. The Celtic party was led by the bishops Colman [c. 605–676] and Cedd [c. 620–664] and Abbess Hilda [614–680].”⁹⁴ The importance of this encounter is thrown into strong relief by Merle d’Aubigné, who wrote: “Kent alone at that time acknowledged the jurisdiction of Rome: in every other province, free ministers, protected by the kings of Northumberland, preached the gospel. This wonderfully simplified the question. If Rome gained over Oswy, she would gain England: if she failed, she must sooner or later leave that island altogether.”⁹⁵

The argumentation, as recorded by Bede, centered on the observance of Easter, a mark of the pope’s authority. Wilfrid of the Catholic party proved to be a skillful debater and made a deeper impression on the king than Colman. The latter, being more Biblical in his orientation, referred to the example of Christ and his apostles, especially John the beloved, as set out in the New Testament. Easter for them, with some variation, coincided with the Jewish Passover.

Wilfrid acknowledged that Catholic Easter was not, strictly speaking, Scriptural. As for the apostle John, “He literally observed the precepts of the Mosaic Law, whilst the Church was still Jewish in many points.” This was a deadly seventh-century admission, showing that the papacy knew that what it was teaching and doing could ultimately not be harmonized with the Bible. But how artfully Wilfrid brushed this fact aside by linking it with the notion that the apostles were really just trying not to offend the Jews among the Gentiles! Therefore, they “were not able at once to cast off all the observances of the Law which had been instituted by God.” Yet Peter, when “he preached at Rome,” allegedly had other and better insights, which made him teach the Catholic observance of Easter. Wilfrid made much of this apostle’s authority,⁹⁶ although the Bible does not mention that he ever preached at or even went to Rome.

The celebration of Easter on Sunday originated well after Peter’s death, the fruitage of both pagan sun worship and anti-Semitism. Roman believers in particular wanted to clearly differentiate between Christianity and Judaism, during the reign of the emperor Hadrian and later. Also, as already shown from various writers, including Peter De Rosa and Paul Johnson—both of them Catholics—Petrine Primacy was not, for the first few centuries of the Christian era, a doctrine taught by their church.

But the Synod of Whitby took place in a benighted age, when some of these facts were probably unknown to Colman, as well as to Wilfrid, who nevertheless proved the more eloquent. He argued on the basis of the idea that Catholic Easter was an almost universal observance, except among the Celts—“and their accomplices in obstinacy, I mean the Picts and the Britons, who foolishly, in these two remote islands of the ocean, and only in part of them, strive to oppose all the rest of the world.” He strongly emphasized Petrine

Primacy and the idea that the pope had the keys to the kingdom of heaven.⁹⁷

Colman and his Celtic colleagues were dismayed by such theology, coming out of Wilfrid's mouth. After all, this man was a turncoat from their own church. Now he was elevating the pontiff above the Word of God! Especially startling must have been those statements that the apostle John had "literally observed the precepts of the Mosaic Law, whilst the Church was still Jewish in many points," because it was not yet "able at once to cast off all the observances of the Law which had been instituted by God."

In the very period when the theologians gathered for that debate at Whitby, the papacy was also acting against one of the Ten Commandments. Over the previous century and a half, a number of Sunday laws had been promulgated, one of them by Gregory I. This, at least, those disputants would have known. They would also have understood the historical link between Easter and the observance of a spurious Sabbath, which was designedly replacing the one that God had instituted at creation and defined in the Decalogue.

Wilfrid's sophistry, discourteous tone, and arrogance—like that of Augustine before him—shocked the Celts; but he pleased King Oswy, who decided to accept the religion of Rome, which he "proceeded to impose on his people."⁹⁸

Again the papacy triumphed. It had captured the opponent's king, by using a Catholic queen plus other important pieces—especially the bishop, or a pawn promoted to become one—in the game of ecclesiastical chess. At Whitby, the proxies of the pontiff suddenly said: "Checkmate!"

The culminating victory at that place subjugated most of Anglo-Saxon Britain, though to fully bring the Celts beneath the papal yoke would require several more centuries.

We now look briefly at the aftermath of that notorious synod in relation to both these people groups and their territories, as well as some parallel developments.

XII

To complete and further organize its work in England, the papacy five years after Whitby sent two more important churchmen to that country: Theodore of Tarsus (c. 602-690), a cultured Greek who had studied at Athens, and Hadrian (Adrian) from North Africa.⁹⁹

Theodore was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury. According to Fromm he was an efficient organizer and psychologically shrewd. Beautiful churches were erected. These contrasted sharply with the simpler buildings of the Celts. Rich vestments and pictures were brought from Rome, as well as a teacher to instruct the choirs in chanting. And schools were established.¹⁰⁰ In these, the instructors provided the rudiments of a liberal education, teaching not only religion but secular subjects, such as the metrical art for writing poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic.¹⁰¹ One such school was "SS. Peter and Paul monastery, afterward named St. Augustine's," which was Bede's alma

mater.¹⁰²

This emphasis on both education and ritualism were powerful instruments for converting Anglo-Saxon and even Celtic people to Catholicism.

Mary Faulkner, a feminist member of the Roman Church, has written fascinating things about the impact of emotive, non-verbal stimuli on people's piety. Holding a Master's degree in religious education, she was in 2003 the director of the Institute of Healing Arts in Nashville, Tennessee, and a practicing psychotherapist. She realized how effective intellectual theology could be, as shown in her book *Supreme Authority: Understanding Power in the Catholic Church*. In a chapter entitled "The Power of Image, Symbols, and Ceremony," she said: "God was lavish when it came to our emotions. We have emotions to burn. Reason and logic have their own power, but if we want to caress or mess with the emotions, image and symbol have more power—nowhere more potently than in the realm of religion."¹⁰³

It is, she maintained, most potently expressed in ritual, which activates "the feeling side of the brain through symbol, working "internally and mysteriously—deeper than the written word."¹⁰⁴

So far as her church is concerned, it is also a syncretic thing; for "the roots of Catholic ritual go deep into the earth. They connect us to our origins among ancient tribal peoples for whom the elements of air, earth, fire, and water represented the presence of the Great Spirit in creation. Their spirituality, like that of Native Americans and most indigenous cultures, is holistic; it wasn't split in half by Western dualism. Catholicism coexisted with those indigenous cultures for centuries, until many of the earth-based cultures were finally eradicated. Yet most of the ritual we still use today stretches back to the Middle Ages and beyond—only a blink of an eye in the big scheme of things. This ritual is a hybrid of earth culture and Christianity."¹⁰⁵

In the late nineteenth century, Ellen G. White acknowledged this form of power and warned against it. She recognized its seductiveness in the Oxford Movement, when brilliant clergymen—most notably Henry Edward Manning and the poetic John Henry Newman—converted from the Church of England to Catholicism. Their reasons were far from being purely intellectual. They yielded to the Romantic lure inherent in such things, as well as the fiction that the papacy had extended in an unbroken line from Jesus, via the apostle Peter, down to the present. Even after the departure of these clerics from the Anglican Communion, ritualism persisted with "frequent defections to the ranks of the Catholics." So in 1888, she uttered this warning:

"Many Protestants suppose that the Catholic religion is unattractive and that its worship is a dull, meaningless round of ceremony. Here they mistake. While Romanism is based upon deception, it is not a coarse and clumsy imposture. The religious service of the Roman Church is a most impressive ceremonial. Its gorgeous display and solemn rites fascinate the sense of the people and silence the voice of reason and of conscience. The eye is charmed. Magnificent churches, imposing processions, golden altars, jeweled shrines, choice paintings, and exquisite sculpture appeal to the love of beauty. The ear

also is captivated. The music is unsurpassed. The rich notes of the deep-toned organ, blending with the melody of many voices as it swells through the lofty domes and pillared aisles of her grand cathedrals, cannot fail to impress the mind with awe and reverence.”¹⁰⁶

It is true that nothing of this can cure—in fact, as she also said—it “only mocks the longings of the sin-sick soul.”¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, “a religion of externals is attractive to the unrenewed heart. The pomp and ceremony of the Catholic worship has a seductive, bewitching power, by which many are deceived; and they come to look upon the Roman Church as the very gate of heaven. None but those who have planted their feet firmly upon the foundation of truth, and whose hearts are renewed by the Spirit of God, are proof against her influence. Thousands who have not an experimental knowledge of Christ will be led to accept the forms of godliness without the power. Such a religion is just what the multitudes desire.”¹⁰⁸

So, too, it was in seventh-century England, and so it is now.

XIII

But what about Wilfrid, who featured so prominently in the Catholic victory at Whitby, and the rewards that this ambitious Celt was seeking?

At first, no churchman’s situation could have been fairer. He was rewarded marvelously for championing the cause of Rome. King Oswy sent him to France in a magnificent ship with a retinue of 120 men and very much money. There, in 664—during or just after the year of Whitby—the Roman Church consecrated him as a bishop. He “was raised aloft on a golden throne.” In England, he retained his armed retinue and lived as a *grand seigneur*; but in 678 his situation turned sour.¹⁰⁹

King Oswy, his admirer and benefactor, had died in 670, only seven years after Whitby. Learned and eloquent, but opinionated, Wilfrid was not a submissive man. He disputed with both Archbishop Theodore and the new Northumbrian king, Egfrith (d. 685). For his pains, he was driven into exile and deprived of his diocese. He struggled long and fruitlessly to regain his lost position, but all in vain. When he returned to Northumbria in 680 with papal support, Egfrith thrust him into prison, but let him go the next year, on condition that he leave the kingdom.

However, in 686 Wilfrid came back again, a year after his royal enemy had died. But six years later, this quarrelsome cleric also clashed with the new king, Aldfrith (d. 704), who exiled him once more. In 703, Wilfrid, now an old man, made another appeal to the pope. Once more he was upheld, but on arriving home he found that Osred (c. 697-716), who had in the meantime succeeded to the throne, would not restore him as bishop of York. In 709/710 Wilfrid died at Oudle, Mercia, a monastery founded by him.¹¹⁰

A short time after his death, exiled noblemen who still bore a grudge against him burned his monastery to the ground.¹¹¹

Another story about Wilfrid concerns the methods used to convert the Isle

of Wight. Caedwalla, king of the Gewissae or West Saxons, planned its conquest. At that time, it was, as Bede explained, still pagan and “entirely given over to idolatry.” Caedwalla decided to exterminate all its inhabitants, “and to place in their stead people from his own province; binding himself by a vow, though it is said that he was not yet regenerated in Christ, to give the fourth part of the land and of the spoil to the Lord, if he took the island. He fulfilled this vow by giving the same for the service of the Lord to Bishop Wilfrid, who happened at the time to have come thither from his own people.”¹¹²

And so the Catholic hero of Whitby was also to benefit by genocide. Bede, who recorded this detail, in no way decried it; on the contrary, his words convey a note of approval: “Thus, after this manner, when all the provinces of Britain had received the faith of Christ, the Island of Wight also received the same.”¹¹³ Nor do we read that Wilfrid recoiled at being promised such a bloody offering.

He was eventually canonized by the Roman church, for “All in all he was, in Alcuin’s words, ‘filled with light from Heaven.’”¹¹⁴

XIV

A considerable part of the Celtic Church in Britain did not submit to the decisions of Whitby, but Anglo-Saxon England was now lost to the Irish missionaries and their spiritual descendants. Let us look at what happened next.

Colman left Northumbria and retreated, not to the eastern island of Lindisfarne, where up to then he had been the third bishop-abbot, but to the West, where he had begun his ministry as a monk. He resigned his see and “with all the Irish and about 30 of the monks of Lindisfarne, returned to Iona.” Between 665 and 667, they did found several more Scottish churches. Afterwards, however, Colman and his disciples settled on a more remote island, Inishbofin, off the west coast of Ireland. There, in 668, he built another monastery. For the English monks, who had accompanied him and his Celts, “he later founded a separate abbey at Mayo,”¹¹⁵ a nearby county on the Irish mainland with a wild and broken coastline.¹¹⁶ Colman remained the abbot of both institutions until his death.¹¹⁷

Leaving Anglo-Saxon England and later even Iona were wise precautions by which these Celtic Christians avoided the woeful religious purges that must have followed.

In passing, we note what eventually happened to Iona. During 715, even this bastion fell, when the papists expelled from it the remnants of the Irish Church.¹¹⁸ Eighty years later, from 795 onward, the pagan Norsemen from Scandinavia repeatedly attacked the island, eliminating it as a significant religious center. The original monastery of Iona, now occupied by Catholics, “was burned down and the monks murdered.”¹¹⁹ Lindisfarne on the east coast suffered a similar fate. After Catholicization, “the monastery was plundered by

the Vikings in 875 and burnt to the ground. All but a handful of the monks were slaughtered.”¹²⁰ Of both these centers as well as lesser shrines, George M. Trevelyan said they “were robbed of their treasures, and the monks were either massacred or carried off to be bartered as slaves on the continent.”¹²¹

Throughout history, the triumphs of the Roman Church have often been followed by calamities. But the future of neither Iona nor Lindisfarne could be known to Colman and his companions. Besides, they had another, more immediate reason for anxiety: Catholic encroachment in the rear, which had already begun from southern Ireland, even before the showdown at Whitby.

XV

That country differed from Britain, where in the Anglo-Saxon states like Kent or Northumbria a monarch such as Ethelbert, Edwin, or Oswy wielded absolute power. If converted through the efforts of a Catholic queen, assisted by her bishop, he could compel his nobles and through them all his subjects to become Catholics. Ireland, however, had several kinglets, and authority was more fragmented. Agricultural communes, centered in the monastery, predominated. As previously described, this setup was normally headed by an abbot or abbess belonging to the local nobility, with the bishop in a subordinate position.

The chief agents for subjecting Ireland to the papacy were ambitious Celtic priests. They were enchanted by the ritual and emotionalism that characterizes the Roman Church, its cultural heritage, and the doctrine of Petrine Primacy. Nor can we escape the suspicion that they were tempted by the superior status and power, even the wealth, available to a Catholic bishop. A cleric who wanted to get on in the world could barter his simple faith for a more exciting career in serving the pope.

The ringleader in this enterprise was Cummian (d. 661/662), a bishop at Clonfert, located mainly in the eastern part of County Galway on the west coast of Ireland. With its monastery and school, it was “the dominant ecclesiastic center in the area.”¹²²

Cummian, who died a year before the Synod of Whitby, became “famous for a Paschal letter which displays his high level of learning. It consists of five manuscript folios, contains quotes from the Vulgate and Vetus Latina [old Latin] Bible; patristic commentary by Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian, Origen, Ambrosiaster and Gregory the Great; extracts from Canon law, ecclesiastical history and synodal decrees from Nicaea and Arles in their original, uncontaminated forms, in addition to *a decretum that enjoined on the Irish that, if all else failed, they should take their problems to Rome.*”¹²³

Hardinge focused on Cummian’s role in undermining his church. Laurentius, one of the monks who had accompanied Augustine to Britain, had succeeded his leader and mentor as the second Archbishop at Canterbury. He now demanded that the Irish believers submit to him. They refused. Thereupon, Rome “evidently anathematized the Celtic Christians in Ireland sometime early in the seventh century, possibly following their rejection of the

appeal to conform made by Laurentius.”¹²⁴

Ten years later, an attempt was made to bridge the chasm between the two churches. In about 629, a generation before Whitby, a Synod took place at Campus Lene (Magh Lene), near Tullamore. Cummian headed the pro-papal party. The majority who attended wanted conformity with Catholicism but were unable to sway their church as a whole, which after this synod was filled with revulsion. But Cummian “persuaded some Celtic representatives to journey to Rome to study the matter further.”¹²⁵

Other meetings followed, with more disagreements, especially about the date for Easter. But more and more Celts undertook those pilgrimages to Rome, which kept on influencing them with its usages. The union party under Cummian eventually gained the victory. Like Wilfrid after him, he argued: “What more harmful ideas can be held concerning our Mother the Church than if we are to say Rome errs, Jerusalem errs, Alexandria errs, Antioch errs, the whole world errs, but the Britons and the Scots are the only people who think right?”¹²⁶ In a letter which he later wrote to his superiors on Iona, to explain why he had changed his allegiance, “He discussed the unity of Catholic countries and contrasted them with ‘the little party formed by the Britons and Scots, who are almost at the very end of the world, and but a mere eruption, so to speak, on its surface.’”¹²⁷ In other words, they were little more than a pimple on the planet!

Cummian, however, failed to mention other, more distant churches. In his time, the Quartodecimans of Asia Minor were still celebrating Easter at the same time as the Jewish Passover “on the 14th day of the first full moon of spring, 14 Nisan (*see* Jewish calendar).” This controversy was to continue for a century after Cummian’s death. He also said nothing about Christians in Ethiopia or on the Malabar Coast of India, whose disagreements with the papacy were even more pointed. For instance, they still observed the seventh-day Sabbath, more completely than the British Celts, as a later chapter will show. Perhaps the ignorance enshrouding his clever but limited mind prevented him from knowing such facts.

The same could not have been true of the more knowledgeable bishop of Rome. According to Bede, Pope Honorius I (reigned 625–638), wrote a letter to “the Scots, whom he had found to err in the observance of the holy Festival of Easter, as has been shown above, with subtlety of argument exhorting them not to think themselves, few as they were, and placed in the utmost borders of the earth, wiser than all the ancient and modern Churches of Christ, throughout the world.”¹²⁸ He would certainly have known at least about the Quartodecimans in the Near East.

We note in passing that Pope Honorius was subsequently condemned by his own church for believing that though the Redeemer has two natures, he has only one will. In 680, the third Council of Constantinople decided that he had not only two natures but also two wills. Two years later, Pope Leo II confirmed this decision. Whether Honorius was or was not a heretic has been debated down to the present.¹²⁹ Such is the hair-splitting theology with which

the Great Apostasy has often occupied itself rather than obedience to the Law of God.

At any rate, Hardinge concluded that by 635, the Celtic Church in southern Ireland had submitted to the papacy.¹³⁰

Elsewhere on the Emerald Isle, the situation was more complicated. Most of the north capitulated by the Synod of Tars in 697, but “while the majority of Irish Celtic Christians accepted the Roman traditions, there was apparently a sizeable minority that continued to exercise independence.” Even four centuries later, “the Bishop of Rome had grave misgivings about the way things were carried on in Ireland.” Malachy O’Morgair became abbot of Bangor and coarb of Comgal in 1142. According to Bernard of Clairveaux, his biographer, he was “an axe or a mattock casting down evil plantings” and introduced “the canonical hours after the fashion of the whole world.”¹³¹

XVI

The Christianity of the Celts survived and for a long time lingered on in Britain where it had originated, though not in Anglo-Saxon England. It first retreated to where the Celtic languages were spoken.

“Somerset and Devon surrendered early in the eighth century, and North and South Wales followed. The Cornish bishops held out until the tenth century. But in parts of Scotland, Celtic practices persisted until the eleventh century, when they were suppressed. Some parts of Ireland were not subjugated until the twelfth century.”¹³²

During 1905, the School of Irish Learning, Dublin, published “Cáin Domnaig [Law of Sunday], I.—The Epistle Concerning Sunday.” The original text is in Erse, together with an English translation by the author James George O’Keeffe (1865-1937).

Neither Jesus nor the apostles had introduced or authorized Sunday, so somebody in Rome—that great factory of forgeries and frauds—decided to lend a helping hand. In or before 886, a papal pilgrim turned up to astonish the Christians of Britain with this document, which suggests that one of the Celtic practices which Catholicism was determined to stamp out was Sabbathkeeping on Saturdays.

We quote from its contents: “Here begins the Epistle of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ concerning the Lord’s Day, which his own hand wrote in the presence of the men of Heaven, and which was placed upon the altar of Peter the Apostle in Rome of Latium, to make Sunday holy for all time.” The document lists many calamities visited on the human race for Sunday desecration and anathematizes all who persist in it, threatening them as follows: “‘Whoever shall not keep Sunday’, says the heavenly Father, ‘within its proper boundaries, his soul shall not attain Heaven, neither shall he see me in the Kingdom of Heaven, nor the Archangels, nor the Apostles.’” But numerous blessings, secular as well as spiritual, would reward and enrich whoever observed the day.¹³³ Well, well!

The long-drawn-out struggle against Celtic Christianity also entailed stratagems of a more concrete, cruder nature. One of them was the Norman invasion of 1066 under William the Conqueror (c. 1028–1087). Though no mere pawn of the papacy or willing as king over England to be blindly subservient to it, he nevertheless furthered its ends. This is what Thomas F. Tout (1855-1929), professor of history at the Victoria University in Manchester, wrote about the Normans: “They were the champions of the Hildebrandine Papacy. They were foremost in the Crusades. Their duke, William the Bastard, conquered England, and in the next generation his Norman followers swarmed over Scotland, Wales, and Ireland.”¹³⁴

The invasion from the European continent turned into a colossal land grab for the king and William’s 5,000 knights, including adventurers from Brittany and Flanders who had come for this exclusive purpose.¹³⁵ On one pretext or the other, vast estates all over the country ended up in the hands of these foreigners.

Few people today are aware of the terrible calamities that followed the Norman Conquest. An early indication of the crudities and cruelties this would involve were the events at Westminster on Christmas day in 1066, when Duke William was being crowned as King William I. In that very hour, “his followers, on a false alarm of treachery, were setting fire to the houses of the English outside.”¹³⁶

Rebellion brought swift reprisal, as when two Earls, Edwin and Mocar, raised their standard against the invaders with the assistance of Danes from abroad. William not only defeated them but also inflicted an almost genocidal retribution:

“Between York and Durham he left no house standing and no human beings alive that his horsemen could search out. As Domesday testifies, many scores of villages were still without inhabitant seventeen years later. Most of the North Riding and much of the East Riding of Yorkshire were depopulated by massacre. In Durham County the houses and cattle were destroyed, but the inhabitants had warning and escaped across the Tyne. Many sold themselves as slaves, not a few in the Lothian district of Scotland which thus obtained a strong infusion of Scandinavian blood. Devastation and massacre were let loose in more spasmodic fashion in Cheshire and the midland shires.”¹³⁷

About William’s reaction, Trevelyan’s acid comment is: “The ‘harrying of the North’ was a vengeance Turkish in its atrocity, but fully in accord with the ideas and practice of the most zealously Christian warriors in medieval Europe.”¹³⁸

European-style feudalism now replaced the less organized system which had existed in England before that time, with greater power for the monarch than on the continent. Such a turn of events made even his nobles unhappy. In these circumstances, the Catholic Church obtained the balance of power between the barons and the king.¹³⁹

One of the things the papacy achieved through the Norman invasion was monastic reform.¹⁴⁰ As Trevelyan put it, “Until the middle years of the Tenth Century the monasteries remained sunk in one of those ever recurring lapses by which human nature has always avenged itself upon the demands of asceticism.” Married clerks, who lived in their own rich homes, were exploiting the monastic endowments. The Normans changed all this by enforcing the Cluniac ideal.¹⁴¹

That was a resurgent Benedictine monasticism, with a dash of artistic endeavor—like the copying of manuscripts—adopted from the Celts. It insisted on celibacy and made each of its monasteries directly answerable to the pontiff and to nobody else. “During its height (c. 950–c. 1130) the Cluniac movement was one of the largest religious forces in Europe. It sought to restore discipline to the Church and free the Church from secular controls.”¹⁴²

The papal victory over Scotland was an indirect consequence of the Norman invasion. In that country, beyond Anglo-Saxon England, Celtic Christianity still existed. But eventually King Malcolm III (c. 1031-1093) married Margaret (c. 1045-1093), an aristocratic refugee. Born in Hungary and a Roman Catholic, she had high connections with Saxon royalty. After the battle of Hastings, where the Normans gained their great victory, her mother had fled from England to save herself and her children. King Malcolm made Margaret his wife, most probably in 1070. She became—like so many Catholic queens before her—a mighty instrument in the hands of the papacy. “Through her influence over her husband and his court, she promoted, in conformity with the Gregorian reform, the interests of the church and of the English population conquered by the Scots in the previous century.”¹⁴³ Within two years, Scotland submitted to the archbishop of York and became a Catholic country. This happened at the council of Windsor in 1072. There the energetic queen had finally offered the remnants of the Celtic Church “in Ninian Hill’s terse phrase, ‘conformity or Canossa.’”¹⁴⁴ They capitulated and disappeared.

In 1250, the Roman Church proclaimed Margaret a saint. She became the Catholic patroness of Scotland.¹⁴⁵

Wales, at least in some parts, held out much longer. From the time when the Roman legions withdrew, it resolutely resisted the Anglo-Saxons and preserved its own religion. A great leader was Dinooth (c. 530–610), a disciple of Columba, who had “led the Celtic Church in its critical encounter with Augustine, the founder of the papal church in England.”¹⁴⁶

A doctrine greatly loathed by Rome that distinguished Welsh Christianity was the observance of the seventh day as required in God’s holy Law. To commemorate the 1902 centenary of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference as a formally organized American church, a historical paper by Pastor James Lee Gamble and Charles Henry Green contained the following statement: “There is much evidence that the Sabbath prevailed in Wales universally until A.D. 1115, when the first Roman bishop was seated at St. David’s. The old Welsh Sabbathkeeping churches did not even then

altogether bow the knee to Rome, but fled to their hiding places where the ordinances of the gospel to this day have been administered in their primitive mode without being adulterated by the corrupt Church of Rome.”¹⁴⁷

Gamble and Green were claiming an ancient lineage for their denomination. They partially based their remarks on and quoted from the *History of the Welsh Baptists* (1835) by Jonathan Davis (1786?-1846). The latter particularly mentioned two places where the Welsh for centuries defied Catholicism and its doctrines, from before the time of the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther. These locations were the valleys of Carleon and Olchon. Davis compared them both to the Waldensian heartland of northern Italy. About the former, he wrote:

“The vale of Carleon is situated between England and the mountainous part of Wales, just at the foot of the mountains. It is our valley of Piedmont; the mountains of Merthyn Tydfyl, our Alps; and the crevices of the rocks, the hiding-places of the lambs of the sheep of Christ, where the ordinances of the gospel, to this day, have been administered in their primitive mode, without being adulterated by the corrupt church of Rome.”¹⁴⁸

If, as Gamble and Green maintained, there really was a direct link between themselves and ancient Celtic Sabbathkeepers, this would also apply to Seventh-day Adventists. These adopted the Sabbath from the Seventh Day Baptists, as is even reflected in the name of their denomination.

It is true that Celtic Sabbathkeeping largely disappeared from Wales, in the years that followed its subjection to the throne of England. Edward I (1239–1307), “who overthrew Sir William Wallace of Scotland as well as Prince Llewellyn of Wales, asserted his claim to be the head of the Welsh Church, and also to be the sovereign lord over Wales.” From 1275 to the time of Henry VIII, its traditions were eroded. The latter, who had brought into existence the Church of England, ordered that the civil and religious laws of England should be supreme throughout Wales. But in the eighteenth century, the Welsh—“a nation always resentful of ritualism”—proved fertile ground for the Methodist revival. Therefore, “the Celtic Church of Wales, not the papal, is the connecting link in that land between apostolic Christianity and latter-day Protestantism. Although centuries have passed, the old religious characteristics of the people still remain. Ecclesiasticism which was forced upon them is no deeper than a thin veneer.”¹⁴⁹

XVIII

All the same, though it took many toilsome centuries, the Roman Church essentially eliminated Celtic Christianity from the British Isles. In a vision of the Little Horn, which represents the papacy, the prophet Daniel

was told this terrible power would “wear out the saints of the most High,” who were to “be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time” (Dan. 7:25), that is, for 1260 year-days.

And so it did. But it did more than wear out and kill individuals, often gruesomely. It also wore out competing ecclesiastical structures, beginning with the Germanic Church of France, North Africa, Italy, and Iberia. And then it crushed a resurgent Celtic Christianity in the British Isles. From then on, its triumph in most of Western Europe was assured.

PART 3

The Pope Becomes a King

Chapter Sixteen
PRELUDE TO THE DONATION

I

Justinian I had greatly benefited the popes by proclaiming their ecclesiastical supremacy in his Civil Code and through the pragmatic sanction of 554, even though his armies ruined Italy. But after his death in 565, the East most urgently demanded the Byzantines' attention. The Reconquest of the Western Empire swiftly fell apart, and then, during 568-569, the Lombards swept into Italy. Suddenly, on its home turf, a poorly defended papacy found itself in serious trouble.

The Lombards were the last Germanic invaders. Overrunning much of the Italian peninsula, they chiefly established themselves in three localities. Most prominently they created a kingdom in the north and Tuscany, where—by the 620's—Pavia became their capital. Further down were two great Lombard duchies, "Spoleto in the central Apennines and Benevento in the mountains and plains of the south."¹

At first, this people belonged to the same Germanic Church as Odovacar's Heruli plus others in his entourage, the Ostrogoths, and the Vandals, who had been previously eradicated. It was therefore a stressful time for the pontiffs; their territory, a nascent Papal State, found itself hemmed in and threatened on every side. And now their former protectors, the Byzantines, whose Italian headquarters were behind the sheltering marshes of Ravenna, were unable to help them.

A powerful lady by the name of Theodolinda provided Gregory I (c. 540-604, reigned from 590) with temporary relief. A Bavarian Catholic princess, she had married two successive Lombard kings.² First, in 588, it was Authari. When he died in 590, Gregory's accession year, she "was allowed to pick Agilulf as her next husband and Authari's successor in 591."³ Theodolinda "intervened vigorously in favour of Catholicism at the Lombard court and had her son baptized as a Catholic."⁴ He was Adaloald, on whose behalf she ruled as regent.⁵ From then on Arianism was on the decline."⁶

But converting the Lombards only mitigated the pontiff's problems; it did not solve them. In spite of becoming Catholics, they just kept on harassing Rome and his territory. Their "swords were held back only by daily ransom from the church." Pope Gregory I became as it were their "paymaster."⁷ Whatever church they belonged to, for him the Lombards were "that abominable people."⁸

Their plundering continued for a hundred and fifty years beyond Gregory's death. A crisis arose when the Lombardic King Aistulf (d. 756) captured Ravenna from the Byzantines. Having expanded his realm, he contemptuously treated the pope as his subject, imposing a poll tax on him and everybody in Rome.

At that point, the pontiff turned his back on the eastern emperor of Constantinople, who could obviously not rescue him, and desperately looked to the West. He pleaded with the Franks to come over and help him. What happened next is shown in the following chapter.

The popes had had enough of being bullied, robbed, and dominated, by either foe or friend. Even the Roman Emperors who had assisted them in the past had often been a pain in the neck. To tell the truth, the pontiffs had misgivings even about the Franks whose aid they were trying to invoke. They certainly needed to be rid of the Lombard menace but also wanted—vis-à-vis both western allies and Byzantines—to extract from their situation a good deal more.

II

Concerned with all these worrisome things, the papacy had begun to cultivate a fantasy, even before the time of Gregory I. Half wishful thinking and half lie, it may first have welled up, perhaps at night, from the depths of some monkish mind. Eventually it was fondled into an audacious dream, and so history was rewritten—ultimately with a criminal intent.

A spell-binding perspective on how this happened can be found in *Constantine the Great and Christianity* (1914) by Christopher B. Coleman, history professor at Butler College, Indianapolis.⁹ It leads the reader step by step along a path from the relative sunlight of history into the twilight of myth and finally into the darkness of outright deception.

It all began with attempts to resolve theological problems related to Constantine's baptism. The rite was administered very late in his life, just a little before he died, which meant that he had convened the 325 Council of Nicaea while still “an unbaptized catechumen, or neophyte.” In fact, he “presided over the opening session and took part in the discussions.”¹⁰ Even more galling was the fact that he was baptized by Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (d. 342), an Arian, who at Nicaea had led the opposition against the Trinitarians!¹¹

However, “men of the Middle Ages were skilled harmonizers of discrepancies,” especially since “their business was not primarily to discover facts, but to systematize accepted teachings.”¹² History was therefore not allowed to stand in the way of what they wanted to believe.

Besides, they found an opportunity in conflicting accounts of how Constantine had been converted in the first place. The apologist Lactantius (240-320) said that before he defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, the emperor had “received instructions in a dream to paint the Christian monogram on his troops' shields.” But late in life the royal convert told a different story to Eusebius of Caesarea, the famous church historian, who recorded it. It “tells of a vision seen by Constantine during the campaign against Maxentius, in which the Christian sign appeared in the sky with the legend ‘in this sign, conquer.’”¹³

The medieval harmonizers also liked other rival accounts, especially a legend made up from different bits and pieces over several centuries. According to Christopher B. Coleman, its earliest variant to be preserved

is contained in a homily upon the baptism of Constantine from James of Sarug, in Mesopotamia (452-521), a monophysite bishop who wrote in Syriac. This is his version: Constantine from birth had leprosy upon his forehead and lips, which no physicians could heal. After his succession to the throne he sent for 'Chaldeans' from Babylon. These advised him to bath in the blood of freshly-slain infants. The infants were collected, but the chief of the slaves and the mothers tried to prevent the death of the children. The chief of the slaves urged that Constantine would be cured by baptism, and cited him an instance of its miraculous effect. Through the appearance of an angel the advice of the slave carried the day. He ran to the church and asked the bishop to prepare for the baptism of the emperor. The bishop called his priests and they met the emperor, who came from his palace with his splendid retinue. The bishop first anointed Constantine with oil, that he might be cleansed, and that the leprosy might not defile the holy water. The leprosy fell from him; he praised God, and descended with the priest into the water. He was deterred from baptism, however, by a flame which burned above the water, until his crown was removed. Then, as a simple believer, he was baptized, and afterwards he partook of the eucharist.¹⁴

Coleman's analysis shows how different writers touched up this legend, adding detail after detail. It also migrated to Rome, "by the end of the fifth century, possibly earlier,"¹⁵ Bishop Sylvester being substituted for the priest who had allegedly baptized the emperor. The resultant work was the *Vita Silvestri* (Life of Sylvester), part of which appears as a Latin appendix to Coleman's book.¹⁶

Amazingly, this fabrication was not only amalgamated with the Donation for the sake of papal aggrandizement and gain. It was also used at the second Council of Nicaea in 787, where the Roman Church insisted on the use of icons, opposing a decree by Emperor Leo III to outlaw them. "It furnished one of the arguments . . . for the use of images."¹⁷

Then it lived on in both the writings and visual art of subsequent ages, right down to the present. "The whole story of Constantine's leprosy, cure, and baptism gained graphical representation in a series of ten pictures in the oratory of St. Sylvester adjoining the church of Quattro Incoronati at Rome."¹⁸ Furthermore, "it still forms a part of the Roman *Breviary*, to be read on Sylvester's Day, the last day of the calendar year."¹⁹

We recently found this work online, in both its Latin and English versions. Amongst other things, it says the following about Sylvester: "Hardly had he undertaken the government of the Church when he betook himself to stir up the Emperor to protect and propagate the religion of

Christ. Constantine was fresh from his victory over his enemy Maxentius on the Eve whereof the sign of the Cross had been revealed to him limned in light upon the sky; and there was an old story in the Church of Rome that it was Sylvester who caused him to recognise the images of the Apostles, administered to him holy Baptism, and cleansed him from the leprosy of misbelief.”²⁰

We must say that this “old story” harmonizes awkwardly with the tale about the sign which allegedly appeared in heaven and not at all with the historical facts.

When Prof. Coleman a few years afterwards translated Valla’s *Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine* (1922), he looked again at the run-up to that spurious document. In his Introduction, he said that at Rome, “as early as the last of the sixth century” (when Gregory I was pope), there existed a legend about Sylvester and Constantine. This is “the story which forms most of the narrative part of the Donation.” It provided the forgery with “the whole of its background.” About this, he cited various sources, especially von Döllinger’s *Paptsfabeln des Mittelalters* (Papal Fables of the Middle Ages).²¹

III

The papacy desired not one but two kinds of support: recognition of its religious supremacy as well as secular kingship, including very much real estate in Italy and the West. Ideally this would secure complete political independence for the pontiff, a privilege he had never enjoyed before. The temporal rulership by *il Papa Re* (the pope king) was to be something completely new and an addition to Catholic theology.

Blended with it would be the idea of Petrine Primacy. Because Peter had supposedly founded the church at Rome, Pope Gregory I “asserted Rome’s right to judge on certain moral issues,” although “he made no claims of Roman primacy as the term later would be understood.”²²

However, in *Chiesa e Primato* (Church and Primacy) (1971), based on a dissertation, the Italian scholar Pietro Conte analyzed what the papacy supposedly taught at that time. He concluded that Catholicism already believed the church of Peter was the same thing as the church of Christ, its authority resting on apostolic, papal succession:

“The justification of the primacy is in the threefold word of Christ to Peter that makes him the *doorkeeper of the heavenly kingdom* and the *vicarius Dei Filii* and *prince of the disciples* as legal concrete element which—beyond the spirituality of Peter or even parallel to it—continues to manifest itself in the Pope. The *authority* of Peter concerning the *apostolic tradition*, the discipline, the ordination of *priests* passes on to the pope, who exercises the role of the *prince of the apostles* and of his *see*, in the *order of the fathers*, as *successor–vicar* of Peter *vicarius Christi*.”²³

But this is doubly problematic. First, the Bible in Matt. 16:18-19 does

not use such a title or otherwise designate that apostle as the vicar of the Son of God or prince of the disciples, nor does it say he would have any successors. Second, our extensive, multilingual research has failed to unearth a single instance of the title *vicarius Filii Dei* being used before the eighth century. Conte himself ascertained that fifty-five of the alleged papal letters from that period are spurious.²⁴

Petrine Primacy as we know it today was fully established through a forgery, the so-called Donation of Constantine, dating back no further than 753. It firmly wedded the idea of spiritual supremacy with earthly, kingly power. Not only was the pope designated as the successor of Peter, supposedly the original *vicarius Filii Dei*, but also—throughout the West—the greatest potentate *in terris* (on earth).

The popular writer and editor Andrew Ferguson marveled in his *Land of Lincoln: Adventures in Abe's America* (2007): “How quickly the unlikely congeals into fact, when circumstances are right, and then fact into myth.”²⁵ And this is what religionists as well as politicians have resorted to as an instrument of profit and power. Such was also what *vicarius Filii Dei* astoundingly proved to be.

Chapter Seventeen
THE DONATION OF CONSTANTINE

I

We now focus on the Donation of Constantine, together with its impact on events, both religious and secular. In Latin, this forgery is known as the *Constitutum donatio Constantini* or *Constitutum domini Constantini imperatoris* (the Donation of the emperor Constantine). The following pages will review its background, its text, its tremendous footprint in history, and its theological implications. Then we will need to inquire whether its being a fake invalidates the title contained in it.

The eighth-century Pope Stephen II (III) (reigned 752-757) not only headed the Roman Church but also ruled, to a limited extent, over part of Italy. This was a duchy that he held on behalf of the emperor in Constantinople, who was, however, effectively an absentee landlord. The Byzantines could not help when King Aistulf of the Lombards invaded Italy. Controlling large parts of it, he claimed sovereignty over the pontiff and the territories under him, demanding a poll tax of one gold *solidus* (1/72 of a pound or 4.5 grams) for every inhabitant.¹

To this, however, the pope was unwilling to agree, so he opened negotiations with Pepin/Pippin III (*d.* 768), the Short, the king of the Franks. He first secured that monarch's protection and then crossed the Alps, accompanied by two Frankish nobles,² together with some of his clerics. An anonymous chronicle, reviewed in the *Journal historique et litteraire* on 15 February 1784,³ describes how the pontiff—who was not well—began this journey on 14 October 753 and made his way over the Great Saint Bernard pass, which has an altitude of 8,100 feet (2,469 meters).⁴ He was welcomed by a sympathetic king, queen, princes, and the whole court, as well as thousands of people from all over France. They came on “having been informed that the successor of the Apostles, the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, the high priest of the Christian world, afflicted with age and infirmities, pursued by his adversaries, had, during the rigors of winter, crossed the high Alps, to see (the first of all the Pontiffs since the foundation of the Christian faith) the territories of the Franks, and to ask their help for the defense of the tombs and patrimony of the Apostles”⁵

A critical reader will object that the use of that title by a writer who was obviously sympathetic to the papacy does not prove its existence prior to the Donation—the chronicler probably just projected it back into the past. With this we agree, but in any case here we also have another witness that the expression *vicarius Filii Dei*, or its translation into another language, was already familiar in 1784.

The upshot of the deliberations between Pope Stephen and King Pepin was that the latter came to the pontiff's aid in 754 or 755 and once again in 756.

Although formidable when facing Italian or Byzantine troops, the

Lombards were no match for the Franks, who prevailed on the battlefield. Pepin did not, however, establish his own rule in Italy. Instead, he turned over the conquered territories to the *pope*, allegedly through a decree that is known as the Donation of Pepin. This is how, for the first time ever, the pontiff became a totally independent potentate, and the Papal States were created. Why did Pepin do such an unprecedented thing? For this, there were two reasons.

First, he was indebted to the Vatican for his crown, which he had obtained from Pope Zacharias (741-752), Stephen's predecessor. Pepin had not always been a monarch, but only the mayor of Paris. The real king was Childeric III, the last of Clovis's Merovingian line to hold that office. His house having waned in power, he was only a figurehead, the nominal ruler. The actual potentate was Pepin, who, however, was not content with being the power behind the throne; he also wanted to sit on it.

But as a son of the Catholic Church, he was well aware of the papacy's favorable disposition toward King Clovis and his descendants. Pope Zacharias, however, by the authority he claimed was vested in him, anointed Pepin to supplant Childeric—allegedly like the ancient prophet Samuel who had anointed David to succeed King Saul.⁶

Zacharias, however, was now dead, and his successor had become King Pepin's suppliant. It was by no means certain that mere gratitude, always a short-lived commodity, would suffice to secure for Pope Stephen the additional prize he was yearning for: extended temporal rule in Italy—without subordination to anyone. So on his way across the Alps, the pontiff carried with him a brand-new “ancient” document, the Donation of Constantine.

When and where did it originate? According to Nicolas Cheetham, it was “reputed to have been fabricated in the papal Chancery during the feverish weeks when Stephen was preparing to leave for France.”⁷ Dated 30 March 315, it was a letter purporting to have been written four centuries earlier by Constantine to Pope Sylvester I (314-335).

It allegedly “bestows upon the pope supremacy over the sees of Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Jerusalem and all the world's churches.” The emperor also “grants administrative rights to Sylvester and his successors over estates granted to churches throughout the empire. Most importantly, Constantine gives the pope control of the imperial palace in Rome and all the regions of the Western Empire; this effectively conveys the notion that the pope has the right to appoint secular rulers in the West.”⁸

Here are the crucial words. We quote them in the original Latin, together with Christopher B. Coleman's 1922 translation:

“Ut sicut B. Petrus in terris *vicarius Filii Dei* videtur constitutus, ita et Pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices, principatus potestatem amplius, quam terrena imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur” (emphasis added).

“As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted *vicar of the Son of*

God on the earth, so the pontiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a supremacy greater than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity” (emphasis added).⁹

The Horst Fuhrmann Latin text of 1968 (reprinted 1984 and later) is practically identical, although it eliminates all capitals in the title—including *dei* (God), which we find curious. A 2007 translation based on it by Princeton’s erudite W. G. Bowersock is less literal than Coleman’s. Although it also has merit, we think it is not in all respects as satisfactory. For instance, *qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices* becomes “who hold the place of the Prince of the Apostles.”¹⁰ It is a crucial phrase, for which Coleman is more accurate.

When Pope Stephen persuaded Pepin to take Ravenna and other Italian towns from the Lombards, he told the king that these had previously belonged to the papacy, to which they should be restored.

That was a lie. It is true that for generations the church had been accumulating a vast acreage of real estate, and in the recent past the Byzantine emperor had confiscated its properties in Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria, and Corsica.¹¹ But this claim to even more extensive parts of Italy was a blatant fabrication, nor had the pope in any previous period been an independent ruler. Ravenna had never belonged to or been controlled by the pontiffs but was continuously ruled by or on behalf of the Roman emperors—whether in Italy or in Constantinople.

In that ignorant age, however, the precise details about the past were not widely known by Westerners beyond a limited circle of churchmen, who in any case monopolized the writing of the history books.

Under the pressure of the pope’s desperation, clerical effrontery was limited by neither respect for the truth nor common sense. Apart from the Donation, the pontiff’s spokesman also submitted to Pepin’s court and displayed a second document: an epistle—golden letters on beautiful vellum—allegedly written in heaven by the apostle Peter himself. This was an eloquent plea for Frankish intervention to save the Romans from their enemies, and offered in exchange a heavenly place with him hereafter.

It began with the words: “Peter, elected Apostle by Jesus Christ, to our favorite Son, the King Pepin, to his whole army, to all the bishops, abbesses, monks, and to the whole people.” The document was, or so the spokesman assured his astonished audience, in its author’s own handwriting. He even personally vouched for Peter’s signature!¹²

Now the Franks, though limited in formal education, were no fools and asked some pointed questions. Pepin wanted to know exactly how the letter had found its way from heaven to earth. But the papal spokesman had a ready answer for the king and his entourage: “The Blessed Peter in person had come down from Heaven and given the letter to his successor, the pope of Rome.”¹³

Although he was technically committing treason against his Byzantine overlord, Pope Stephen through these forgeries got his heart’s desire: the Papal States. The armies from France became his tools. Their action was backed up

by a further document, the Donation of Pepin.

Some scholars, however, have relegated the *Constitutum Constantini* to a later period.

Johannes Fried, a German academic and specialist in medieval history quoted by Bowersock, “sees Frankish opposition to the emperor Louis [778–840] the Pious as the background for the original fabrication.”¹⁴ But Eamon Duffy, an Irish Catholic and History of Christianity professor at Cambridge University, put it differently:

“Nobody knows exactly when, where or why this document was assembled.” After mentioning those who have supported the date against the background that we have described, he declared: “Other historians believe the document is a later creation, composed piecemeal as much as two generations after Pepin’s reign, by clergy on the payroll of the Frankish royal family, and designed to justify the exercise of overlordship in Italy by Pepin and his successor Charlemagne, against the attacks of the Emperor in Constantinople.”¹⁵

It is difficult to sustain this idea from either the facts of history or common sense.

Duffy himself remarked that Charlemagne restricted the role of Pope Leo III (795–816) to “saying his prayers and setting a good example by always sticking to the rules, while the King both defended the Church from its enemies, and oversaw the spread of the Catholic faith.” Indeed, he reserved a good deal more for himself: ruling the roost as monarch and even, when it suited him, dabbling in theology. Despite the pontiff’s strong disapproval, it was Charlemagne who insisted on adding the expression *Filioque* (and from the Son) to the Apostles’ Creed.¹⁶ This is a point of doctrinal difference which has for hundreds of years bedeviled the relationship between Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

And if Charlemagne (c. 742–814), his son Louis I (778–840), his grandson Lothar/Lothair I (795–855), or his great-grandson Louis II (c. 822–875) really had clerics concoct the Donation for them to fend off claims of temporal sovereignty by the Emperor in Constantinople, why would they have allowed the churchmen to put in that bit about all western lands being subject to the pontiff? History clearly shows that these rulers made important arrangements about the administration of the empire without consulting him. Lothar at the outset of his reign went even further. “He issued the *Constitutio Romana* (824), affirming imperial sovereignty over Rome and demanding an oath of fealty” from Pope Paschal I (795–855).¹⁷

Obviously none of these lordly Carolingians would have tolerated any document that subordinated his empire to the pope.

Both Fried and the historians mentioned by Duffy blamed the Franks for forging the Donation. This exonerates the papacy of the criminality involved, although for very many centuries it kept on enjoying the benefits derived from it.

Such argumentation is intrinsically flawed. It was one of the reasons why

Lorenzo Valla in 1440 rejected the Donation as a fraud. He pointed out sarcastically that Constantine would have had to be insane to give away, on the religious grounds described in the *Constitutum*, “Italy along with Rome,” as well as “the three Gauls, the two Spains, the Germans, the British—the whole western world—and to deprive himself of one of the two eyes of his empire.”¹⁸ Likewise, neither Charlemagne nor any of his imperial descendants was a fool or out of his mind.

Walter Ullmann, history professor emeritus of Syracuse University, NY, thought that the Paris manuscript (BN, 2777), the oldest copy of the Donation still extant (and of which we have photographic images), was “written before 792.” However, he also insisted: “The forgery was made not later than the early fifties of the eighth century, at any rate before Stephen II set out on his journey to Pippin” and: “That the place of the forgery was the papal chancery is indisputable.”¹⁹

A 753 dating for the Donation as well as the circumstances already described are more consistent with the earlier timeframe of that particular king and that pontiff.

II

Charlemagne (c. 742-814) virtually doubled the size of the Papal States. He did so on the strength of the original forgery after producing a donation of his own. This is how it happened.

After Pepin’s death, the political situation among the Franks had tempted the Lombards under King Desiderius (757–774) to reassert their power in Italy, threatening the papacy a second time. But Pope Adrian (Hadrian) I (d. 795), who reigned from 772 to 795, was not going to knuckle under to them, so he fortified Rome and urgently summoned the Franks to come to his rescue.

During the autumn of 773, Charlemagne with his army clambered over the Alps, descended into Italy, and in 774 crushed the Lombards, eliminating their kingdom definitively after the capture of Pavia, their capital—though further campaigning proved necessary to reestablish the Papal States.

Legally this was laid down in the *Donation of Charlemagne*, which as a Catholic Encyclopedia puts it became “for eleven centuries the Magna Charta of the temporal power of the popes.” It made Adrian “monarch of above two-thirds of the Italian peninsula.” For him and some of his successors, things were not, however, at first as simple as all that. Pope Adrian’s “sway was little more than nominal,”²⁰ especially while Charlemagne was still alive; for that Frankish monarch—who would on Christmas day, 800, be crowned as Holy Roman Emperor—considered those former Lombard lands and Italy as part of his empire. In fact, he regarded himself as head of the Catholic Church.

But Adrian, whose pontificate lasted for twenty-three years and ten

months, the longest reign until that of Pius VI a thousand years later, was a tactful man. He knew how to coexist with Charlemagne, well aware that even this powerful personality would one day die, and that the popes could wait for future developments to tighten their grip on the Papal States. In the meantime, he did what he could, as is evident from a flattering letter he wrote to Charlemagne in May 778.²¹

And as, in the times of Blessed Sylvester, the Roman pontiff, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church was exalted by the most pious emperor of blessed memory, Constantine the Great, and power (potestas) was given to it in these Western parts, so in your and our most happy times may the Holy Church of God, i.e. of Blessed Peter the Apostle, exult . . . because a new most Christian emperor Constantine has arisen in these times, through whom God has deigned to bestow everything on his Holy Church of Blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. Moreover, may there be restored in your day all the other things which have been granted to Blessed Peter and the Roman Church by divers emperors, patricians and other God-fearing men for the good of their souls and the pardon of their sins, in Tuscany, Spoleto, Beneventum, Corsica and the Sabine patrimony, and which have been in the course of time filched away by the unspeakable Lombards.²²

Adrian also asserted that he had historical documents which proved his claims to those territories: “We have sent for the satisfaction of your Most Christian Majesty, many of the donations which we have in our archives in the Lateran.”²³ From this, together with the expression “these Western parts,” it is clear that this pope was referring—whatever else he meant—to the Donation of Constantine.

According to William P. Barker, Adrian I “laid the foundation for the Papal States and the growth of the papacy’s temporal powers.”²⁴

His workmanship proved to be so enduring that René François Guettée (1816-1892), the French Catholic priest and historian who joined the Russian Orthodox Church and became Fr. Vladimir,²⁵ asserted that Adrian I was “in fact the first pope.”²⁶ Viewed superficially, such a declaration is, of course, absurd; but Guettée, who wrote an entire book about the papacy, meant something special. On a later page, he clarified: “Adrian is the true creator of the *modern Papacy*” (emphasis added).²⁷

He also argued persuasively that another set of forgeries, the *False Decretals*, were concocted between 775 and 785, “*in Rome itself* under the *pontificate of Adrian*.” Pointing out that this pope knew they were spurious, Guettée wondered whether he also authorized their composition.²⁸

It is unclear when the False Decretals (also known as the *Decretals of Pseudo-Isidore*) were first made public. They were certainly foisted on the Council of Soissons about seventy years later, in 853. It was a collection of laws for the Roman Church pretending to be “the decrees of councils and

decretals of popes (written replies on questions of ecclesiastical discipline) of the first seven centuries.”²⁹ Very cunningly, those documents blended genuine material with blatant falsehoods. One of the ingredients was the Donation of Constantine.

The False Decretals were an extremely corrupt compilation. According to Anthony Grafton, who made a special study of forgeries in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, it “contains some five hundred forged legal texts.”³⁰

The augmentation of falsehood by incorporating false documents with further frauds became a standard medieval practice.

We think Guettée’s suspicion of how the False Decretals were created was justified. In his letter to Charlemagne, cited above, Pope Adrian himself mentioned “many of the *donations* which we have in our archives in the Lateran” (emphasis added). This use of the plural is intriguing.

Ellen G. White, in “The Apostasy,” a chapter of her great epic work, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (1888), surveyed the ever-deepening darkness which over centuries came to envelop the Western mind. Here are her comments on these particular fabrications:

“Notwithstanding that vice prevailed, even among the leaders of the Roman Church, her influence seemed steadily to increase. About the close of the eighth century, papists put forth the claim that in the first ages of the church the bishops of Rome had possessed the same spiritual power which they now assumed. To establish this claim, some means must be employed to give it a show of authority; and this was readily suggested by the father of lies. Ancient writings were forged by monks. Decrees of councils before unheard of were discovered, establishing the universal supremacy of the pope from the earliest times. And a church that had rejected the truth greedily accepted these deceptions.”³¹

Her phrase “about the close of the eighth century” harmonizes well with Guettée’s conclusion that these forgeries had originated between 775 and 785. He also said: “History reveals to us the Papacy, after several fruitless attempts, taking its birth from circumstances and establishing itself in the ninth century, with its double political and ecclesiastical character. Its real founder was Adrian I. Nicholas I. chiefly contributed to its development; Gregory VII. raised it to its loftiest pitch.”³²

Guettée’s “double political and ecclesiastical character” is what we also mean when we speak of the new, enduring doctrine established at that time. It is, in fact, a double doctrine, which emerged with the Donation and came to fruition in its aftermath.

Two centuries earlier than Ellen G. White or Guettée, John Milton (1608-1674), a great theologian whose epic *Paradise Lost* and other religious verse had made him the most famous English poet after William Shakespeare, expressed the same idea: “Popery is a double thing to deal with, and claims a twofold power, ecclesiastical and political, both usurped, and the one supporting the other.”³³

This appeared in *Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration*,

and What Best Means May be Used Against the Growth of Popery (1673), Milton's last work, which was published just a year before his death.³⁴ He had observed that consequent to the 1630 restoration of the monarchy under King Charles II (1630-1685), a politically ambitious Catholicism was creeping back into Britain and might one day overwhelm it. "The object of Milton in this Tract was to form a general Protestant Union, by uniting Protestants of all denominations against the Church of Rome (which he styles 'the common adversary' of the Protestant religion,) . . ."³⁵

In 1860, William Elfe Tayler wrote an illuminating work, a *History of the Temporal Power of the Popes; Showing the Crimes by Which It Was Originally Acquired, and Afterwards Enlarged*. It maintains that the fraudulent Donation of Constantine became the basis for adding to the pontifical domain yet further territories. As if all this were not enough, some later pontiffs through their henchmen fabricated additional spurious documents. "In the prosecution of their determined purpose to rank amongst the monarchs of this world, no means seem to have been too base for the pretended *vicars of the Son of God*" (emphasis added). The papacy also created ". . . *other forged documents of the Holy See, viz., the donation of Louis the Pious . . . and Otho I*" (Tayler's own emphasis).³⁶

For more than a thousand years, the pontiffs kept on using the original Donation. "In fact, kingdoms were given away by these pretended masters of the world, on the strength of it—as Ireland to our Henry II, by Pope Adrian IV,"³⁷ an Englishman!

III

So far, we have been largely focusing on what has often been considered the most crucial part of the forgery, namely the sentences that made possible the fraudulent acquisition of real estate on a massive scale. But it is preceded by Constantine's preamble, purportedly written by that emperor to explain the background of his Donation; and this contains its theological undergirding.

It is the tale of how the Roman Pope, Sylvester I, allegedly healed the emperor's leprosy and baptized him. Constantine is made to say: "That same venerable father told to us most clearly how much power in Heaven and on earth He, our Saviour, conferred on his apostle St. Peter, when finding him faithful after questioning him He said: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (petrani) shall I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Give heed ye powerful, and incline the ear of your hearts to that which the good Lord and Master added to His disciple, saying: and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven.' This is very wonderful and glorious, to bind and loose on earth and to have it bound and loosed in heaven."³⁸

The events portrayed are purely fictitious. Constantine never had leprosy and it was Bishop Eusebius, an Arian, who officiated at his baptism, which

took place in Nicomedia, a city of western Asia Minor, just before the emperor's death in A.D. 337. (Sylvester had already gone to his grave in 335.) But imbedded in that story are the words that it quotes from Matt. 16:18, 19. Their Catholic interpretation is the theological heart of the Donation. It is concerned with ecclesiastical primacy, power, and temporal dominion. This blending of Scripture with royal pretensions was a brand-new doctrine, which had not existed before Pope Stephen's time.

After the famous passage containing *vicarius Filii Dei*, the emperor is quoted as adding: "And we ordain and decree that he shall have the supremacy as well over the four chief seats Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople and Jerusalem, as also over all the churches of God in the whole world."³⁹ This, incidentally, was a clumsy mistake on the part of the forger. In 324, the phony date of the Donation, Constantinople (founded as New Rome and dedicated in May 330) did not yet exist. The emperor even was made to assert that he was still planning to build it, so as to vacate the city of old Rome for pontifical purposes.

This papist interpretation of Matt. 16:18, 19—amalgamated, that is to say, with royal dominion—remains to the present day the dogma which lies at the foundation of the pontificate. There is no other part of the Bible that Romanism takes so seriously, however much it deviates from the Scriptures in other ways. At his coronation, pope after pope is told: "Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam" (thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church). And all believers are taught about the celestial keys and the alleged papal ability to bind and loosen people's guilt. Catholicism also continues to maintain that all the churches in the world are subject to the pope.

On 31 August 2002, John Paul II reemphasized these ideas in his address to the bishops from Southern Brazil: "The Successor of the Prince of the Apostles is called to be the rock upon which the Church is built, and to exercise the ministry belonging to the one to whom the keys of the Kingdom were given (cf. Mt 16:18–19)." About this audience we also read: "The Synod Fathers stressed that 'the strengthening of the Petrine ministry is fundamental for the preservation of the Church's unity', and that 'the full exercise of the primacy of Peter is fundamental for the Church's identity and vitality in America.'⁴⁰

Likewise, on 5 March 2008, the present pontiff, Benedict XVI, pursuing rapprochement between Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Church, referred to this doctrine, with special reference to Pope Leo I (b. 4th century–461, reigned from 440). Petrine Primacy, he argued, was as "'necessary' today as in the past." Benedict, citing Leo, "finally repeated: 'what was communicated to all the apostles was entrusted to only one of them.'⁴¹

This teaching is pure fiction, but does it actually derive from the alleged Donation of Constantine? Yes, it owes a great deal to that spurious document. It certainly did not originate with the Lord's apostles or exist for the first half dozen centuries of our era.

Chapter Eighteen
FORGERY UPON FORGERY

I

It is a grave fallacy to conceive of the Donation simply as a document. We should rather see it as the original blueprint for the gigantic edifice of both ecclesiastical and secular power erected by the papacy. It profoundly affected the social life, the politics, and the economy of Europe for many hundreds of years. Because it was central to the frequent conflicts between the pontiffs and monarchs of Europe, it collected numerous enemies during much of the medieval period and also during the Protestant Reformation.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Roman Church, in country after country, was virtually a state within the state. Its clergy and monastics, even if they committed murder, were exempt from prosecution in ordinary courts of law. They could only be tried by church tribunals. A parasitic papacy harvested tribute from vassal countries like England, and together with its supporters owned an amazing amount of real estate. As the sixteenth-century Reformation was dawning, by the time of Francis I (1494-1547, reigned from 1515), “a mere six hundred abbots, bishops and archbishops controlled so much land throughout France that the income they derived from it equaled that of the French state itself.” And such was also the situation in “practically every other country in Western Europe.”¹ All this wealth and power resulted from the temporal sovereignty of the pope.

II

A crisis summit meeting in 1439, the Ecumenical Church Council of Florence, provided the means for exposing the foundational forgery and fraud on which all of this was based—not directly but in its aftermath. Let us briefly look at that august assembly.

It had actually begun in Ferrara on 10 January 1438 but transferred itself as a result of plague and because its funding was exhausted. Because at the time he was *persona non grata* in Rome, Pope Eugenius IV (*c.* 1383–1447, reigned from 1431) also came to that city. The wealthy Medici family, which was unofficially running Florence, was well endowed and disposed to help.

Accordingly, a whole retinue of men arrived, including many high dignitaries from the Eastern churches. The Greek contingent numbered more than seven hundred souls and mouths to feed. These included “the Eastern Roman Emperor, the Patriarch of Constantinople and representatives of the Patriarchal Sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem in attendance.” The pope presided.²

The delegation from Constantinople, especially the emperor, were desperate. According to the scholarly art lover Colonel George Frederick Young (1846–1919), C.B., their real reason for coming was to plead for

Western help against the Turks, who were beleaguering their city—destined to fall into Muslim hands a dozen years later. This was to be the last Ecumenical Church Council of both Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodox Church.³

The frantic Byzantines were willing to make any doctrinal concession, even to accepting the pope as the head of their own church. On 8 June 1439, “an agreement was signed by Patriarch Joseph II of Constantinople and all the Eastern bishops but one, Mark of Ephesus, who held that Rome continued in both heresy and schism.” Unfortunately the arrangement collapsed with the death just two days later of Joseph II. He had strongly supported the reunification, but now the Greeks insisted on its being ratified by an Eastern synod. On returning home in Constantinople, they found that the general public and civil authorities rejected the deal—which only the emperors kept on favoring until their city fell to the Turks in 1453.⁴

We also note that before the events of which we speak, Jan Hus, the Czech martyr, had in 1415 been burned at the stake and the Bohemian Reformation had already taken root.

The most important issue debated in 1439 was the papal insistence on primacy, which also brought into prominence the titles of the pontiffs. This becomes evident from an examination of the Greek Patrology, J. P. Migne’s edited 161 volumes produced in 1857-1866. Apart from the early church Fathers, who wrote in Greek, this collection also includes a record of the matters dealt with during the Council at Florence.

As with the disagreement which had led to the schism in 1054 when Pope Leo IX argued with the Orthodox Patriarch almost four hundred years earlier, the notorious forgery foisted on Pepin III again became of pivotal importance. In the Migne text, it is called *Decretum invicti imperatoris et magni Constantini, ad sanctissimum Sylvestrum Romanum papam* (“The decree of the unconquerable and great emperor Constantine, to the most holy Roman pope Sylvester”). In it, we notice two words interpolated into the original formula, which here reads “sanctus Petrus vicarius *ex persona* Filii Dei” (Saint Peter vicar *on behalf of* the Son of God). (Emphases added)

This material is presented in parallel bilingual versions. The Latin rendering is a translation of the Greek column, which has ὁ ἅγιος Πέτρος ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ (ho hagios Petros ek prosōpou tou Uiou tou Theou),⁵ *Persona* is here a translation of πρόσωπον (“face,” “person”, N.T.),⁶ which happens to be part of the English word *prosopopoeia*. Webster’s Dictionary defines this as “a figure of speech in which an imaginary or absent person is represented as speaking or acting.”⁷

In other words, the apostle Peter supposedly spoke and acted on behalf of the absent Son of God. But at his ascension the Redeemer had told the apostles that he would actually never leave them. His last words were: “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:20).

Jesus had also promised the apostles to send the holy Third Person of the godhead to be his personal representative. We find this recorded in two chapters of the same Gospel, just before he went to Gethsemane the night

before his crucifixion. First he said: “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth . . .” (John 14:16-17). In the same discourse, he clarified further: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (John 16:13-15)

Of special interest in that first passage is the word “Comforter.” In the Greek original it is *παρακλητος* (*paraklētos*), which can generally be translated as one who is “called to one’s aid”, a “legal assistant,” or an “advocate.” In the New Testament, it means “the Intercessor or the Comforter.”⁸

But, as the Migne text explains it, Jesus allocated this office to Peter: “And as he himself was on earth the disciples’ Lord and master, both Father and Pastor, just so when he resolved to ascend to the Father’s throne, he put Peter in charge of them as Father and master; and, if I may say so in one word, as his vicar and successor.”⁹ But naturally no apostle can take the place of the Holy Spirit. To suggest the opposite is surely blasphemous.

We note, moreover, that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on all the apostles as well as other believers (Acts 2:1-4), not only on Peter, whom the Roman Church regards as the first pope.

III

The reader may recall that in 1936 William W. Prescott alleged the pope’s official title was *vicarius Christi*, adopted at the Ecumenical Church Council of Florence (1439). Such a conclusion is, however, anachronistic and historically inconsequential. The title does occur in the text which we have been considering, at least twice as *Christi vicarium*.¹⁰ But by 1439, these titles were already ancient history. *Vicarius Filii Dei* had existed for almost seven centuries and *vicarius Christi*—originally appropriated by Constantine and applied to himself—for more than a thousand years. As previously pointed out, the pontiffs began assuming both at roughly the same time, in the eighth century.

Nevertheless, that 1439 delegation from Constantinople was momentous in more than one way. It made possible the last Ecumenical Church Council held jointly by clerics from both the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. What is more, it brought additional scholars to Florence, where the Renaissance was already under way.

A number of those learned Greeks decided to settle there. With them, there arrived some precious manuscripts which the Westerners had not known to exist. Through these and others collected by the bibliophilic Medici family, the truth about the real councils of the past increasingly became known; also how “the claims of the Papacy had originated.” Consequently, “in the latter half of the fifteenth century, men gradually learnt that, whereas these papal claims had

for centuries been based upon three great historical documents, these were all of them from end to end colossal forgeries, concocted in the Roman Curia during the darkness of the eighth and ninth centuries—the forged *Donation of Constantine*, the forged *Donation of Pepin*, and that which has obtained in history the name of *The Forged Decretals* . . .”¹¹

Was even the Donation of Pepin, previously referred to, a forgery? Certainly, no written text of it has survived. At best, it was only some kind of oral promise. Nevertheless, it was confirmed by Pepin’s successors, “Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, in 778 and 817 respectively,” after which “it was later offered as proof of the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine”!¹²

IV

About these matters, Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, a great nineteenth-century Catholic scholar writing under the pseudonym of Janus, had a dramatic tale to tell. Rejecting the doctrine of papal infallibility just months before its adoption at Vatican I in 1870, he presented a fifty-page survey of forgeries perpetrated over centuries by popes or their minions.¹³ According to him, the Donation of Pepin was a forgery foisted on his son Charlemagne, and the Donation of Charlemagne on the generations after *him*.¹⁴ Von Döllinger asserted, moreover, that this was part of “the line habitually followed at Rome from the sixth to the twelfth century,” which was “undertaken in the interests of ecclesiastical supremacy.”¹⁵

Even more insightful is the following: “The most potent instrument of the new Papal system was Gratian’s *Decretum*, which issued about the middle of the twelfth century from the first school of Law in Europe, the juristic teacher of the whole of Western Christendom, Bologna. In this work the Isidorian forgeries were combined with those of the Gregorian writers, Deusdedit, Anselm, Gregory of Pavia, and with Gratian’s own additions. His work displaced all the older collections of canon law, and became the manual and repertory, not for canonists only, but for the scholastic theologians, who, for the most part, derived all their knowledge of Fathers and Councils from it. No book has ever come near it in its influence in the Church, although there is scarcely another so chokefull of gross errors, both intentional and unintentional.”¹⁶

Now “all these fabrications—the rich harvest of three centuries—Gratian inserted in good faith into his collection, but he also added knowingly and deliberately, a number of fresh corruptions, all in the spirit and interest of the Papal system.”¹⁷

The *Decretum* also, according to Von Döllinger, nakedly reveals “that in his unlimited superiority to all law, the Pope stands on equality with the Son of God. Gratian says that, as Christ submitted to the law on earth, though in truth he was the Lord, so the Pope is high above all laws of the Church, and can dispose of them as he will, since they derive all their force from him

alone. This became, and chiefly through Gratian's influence, the prevalent doctrine of the *Curia*. . . .

“In the fifty years between the appearance of Gratian's *Decretum* and the pontificate of the most powerful of the Popes, Innocent III., the Papal system, such as it had become in its three stages of development, through the pseudo-Isidore, the Gregorian school, and Gratian, worked its way to complete dominion.”¹⁸

This entire corpus of corrupt and corrupted documents, above all the Donation as part of the Forged Decretals, were from 1140 onward lovingly embalmed in Gratian's *Decretum*.

Chapter Nineteen
THE ANATOMY OF FORGERY AND FRAUD

I

Embarrassed by Protestants who have for several centuries been using it to prove that the pope is the historical Antichrist, Catholic apologists have strenuously tried to deflect the incriminating finger from pointing in that direction. To do so, they have for four hundred years since Helwig's discovery about *vicarius Filii Dei*—from the Counter-Reformation and down to our day—resorted to alternative schools of prophetic interpretation: Preterism, Futurism, and Idealism. Latterly they also raise peculiar quibbles, especially that since the Donation of Constantine is a forgery it should not be taken seriously and that *vicarius Filii Dei* is not and never has been an official title of the pope.

Here we need to anatomize forgery and its relationship with fraud.

A South African scholar working in Korea, Dr. Koot van Wyk, has put the matter in a nutshell: "In a crime, it is immaterial whether the gun used by the robber in a bank robbery is plastic or real."¹ On this, we must now expand by spotlighting the relationship between forgery and fraud. We will also show how serious the results of such transactions can be.

II

Forgery "is the process of making or adapting objects or documents . . . with the intention to deceive." Most important is motive and intention. Fraud is the wider concept, forgery being just one of its techniques, which also include identity theft.² A forgery may just be a hoax and aim at some trivial reaction, such as raising a laugh. But "a fraud is a deception made for personal gain." Different legal jurisdictions may not all define it in exactly the same way. In any case, "Fraud is a crime, and is also a civil law violation."³

Relevant to the topic which we are addressing is the question of falsehood about history. This can be honestly believed, so that some popes may eventually have come to accept the Donation as genuine. For them, historical falsehood was simply a myth, though that would not mitigate its harmful effects. Plain ignorance is not a sin, so they were less culpable than their predecessors, who clearly knew what they were up to. But as Charles Percy (Baron) Snow (1905–1980), the English physicist and novelist, remarks in his *The Two Cultures: And a Second Look*, "One can teach a myth: but when the myth is seen as a fact, and when the fact is disproved, the myth becomes a lie."⁴ That is, after Valla's exposé in 1440, the Donation was widely recognized as falsehood and fraud, so that the pontiffs were henceforth knowingly acting like thieves and robbers who cling to their ill-gotten gains.

As a forgery, the Donation began as an instrument for deliberately committing grand larceny: the large-scale stealing of real estate and

preeminence. It brought about the most notorious if not the greatest fraud in human history. The subsequent complicity—especially since the fifteenth century—of pope after pope, together with the often horrendous consequences over many centuries, is what raises it far above triviality. Before we look at this more closely, both here and in further chapters, the reader may find it enlightening to ponder some more recent examples, to gauge the gravity of fraud through forgery. In these, we will notice that it can take the form of omitting or adding material, as well as of total fabrication.

III

In the first year of the twenty-first century, Enron crashed. Quite shortly before that, in 2000, this colossal firm had still been claiming revenues of \$111 billion. Those who ran it were accumulating millions of dollars to reward themselves for their financial acumen. “*Fortune* named Enron ‘America’s Most Innovative Company’ for six consecutive years.” What a success story! But it also soon produced, at least until WorldCom collapsed, “the largest bankruptcy in history” because of questionable accounting practices in addition to complex offshore partnerships. The upshot during the court cases of 2002–2006 was that Andrew Fastow, who directed Enron’s finances, was sentenced to a 10-year prison sentence; Jeffrey Skilling, the Chief Executive Officer, to 24 years and 4 months; and Kenneth Lay, the former Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer—died from heart failure after being found guilty but before he could be sentenced.

For others, too, there was massive fallout. “Thousands of Enron employees and investors lost all their savings, children’s college funds, and pensions . . .” Most spectacular was what happened in and to California. There the company had made very large campaign contributions to politicians, of whom Congressman Phil Gramm was the second largest recipient. He “succeeded in legislating California’s energy commodity trading deregulation,” in spite of warnings from prominent consumer groups that this would give traders too much influence over prices. Enron’s income surged immensely, but that state “experienced a total of 38 blackouts until federal regulators intervened in June 2001.” The resultant public anger due to the power crisis and the financial impact on California was “a major factor contributing to the recall of Governor Gray Davis and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger.”⁵

But where was the forgery? It took the form of omission: modifying records through the destruction of documents that would have clarified or put them in the right perspective. David Duncan, a former Enron partner, ordered Arthur Andersen of a major auditing firm to shred them.⁵ This he did and was convicted on 15 June 2002 for obstruction of justice. Fortunately for him, he escaped imprisonment when on 31 May 2005 the United States Supreme Court overturned his conviction because the jury who found him guilty had not been properly instructed. There was no proof “that the firm knew it had broken the law or that there had been a link to any official proceeding that prohibited the

destruction of documents.” Nevertheless, this all but totally ruined the Chicago-based Arthur Andersen LLP, which “was once one of the so-called ‘Big Five’ accounting firms” of America.⁶

Just three years later, the Enron fraud was dwarfed by the seventy-year old Bernard Madoff (b. 1938), who received a jail term of a hundred and fifty years on 12 March 2009, “for masterminding the biggest investment scam in U.S. financial history.” Through a \$65-billion Ponzi scheme, he had stolen from hundreds of investors.⁷ Some of them, including friends, were totally ruined.

And this occurred within the context of the still lingering Recession, in which all the earth became mired from the later 2008 until the present. It has already developed into the most terrible economic crisis since the Great Depression of the early 1930s. The housing market collapsed, and all at once, on a huge scale, financial corporations—banks, insurance companies, and the like—were staring into a gigantic sinkhole that was yawning at their feet, about to swallow them up. Worldwide, many of these institutions, together with countless individuals, suddenly sank into bankruptcy and ruin.

In this, also, greed and juggling with the figures played their role. It is, however, still too early to understand all the factors that could produce and contribute to such results. Fraud was certainly one of them. We therefore leave them and return to our major theme: what the papacy was up to.

Previously we provided an example of the far-reaching effect that omission can have, namely the most presumptuous religious forgery ever foisted on the human race: the Decalogue adapted by the Roman Church for the use of Catechumens, whom it has misled for generations. Amongst other things, it omits the second of the Lord’s commandments, the one against idolatry, and the words in the fourth one that define the Sabbath as the seventh day. In this way, both the adoration of images and Sundaykeeping have been legitimized.

IV

For our next example of documentary tampering, we travel back in time to 13 July 1870 and meet the wily, ruthless Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898). He was the chancellor of the Prussian King Wilhelm I and intent on reassembling the German Empire, which had been disunited since the Middle Ages. As a final step to bringing this about, Bismarck wanted war with France, at that time ruled by Emperor Napoleon III.

Suddenly the Spanish throne became vacant and was offered to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, King Wilhelm’s cousin. But Napoleon III, who feared encirclement, was resolutely opposed to such an idea, insisting on guarantees that no Prussian or German would rule in Spain. Prince Leopold turned down the offer in July 1870, but through its ambassador, Count Vincent Benedetti, the French court insisted on a further undertaking: that King Wilhelm “would never approve the candidacy of a Hohenzollern to the Spanish throne.”

This the Prussian king refused to promise, “somewhat severely” yet politely.

An account of the interview was made available to Bismarck, who now saw his opportunity for fomenting war. He edited and released to the media as well as foreign embassies a report which became known as the *Ems Dispatch* (more popularly called the *Ems Telegram*).

Basically correct as a representation of the objective facts, it was nevertheless also in part a forgery. Bismarck had deliberately sharpened the language. “He cut out Wilhelm’s conciliatory phrases.” He also created the impression that “Benedetti was rather more demanding” than had been the case. In other words, the Dispatch was “designed to give the French the impression that King Wilhelm I had insulted Count Benedetti; likewise, the Germans interpreted the modified dispatch as the Count insulting the king.” A happy Bismarck observed: “The Ems Telegram should have the desired effect of waving a red cape in front of the face of the Gallic [French] Bull.”⁸

It did. On 19 July 1870, Napoleon III declared war, and his forces were crushed. With his ousting, the hegemony of France in Europe was forever ended. On 18 January 1871, Bismarck had the satisfaction of seeing Germany reunited, and Wilhelm I crowned as its first emperor at Versailles. Unfortunately, however, these humiliating events kindled a bitter enmity with the French, which endured for several generations. Seventy-five years later the *Ems Dispatch* and the events it unleashed had an aftermath in two World Wars, destroying millions of human lives. And starting it all there was just a bit of forgery, a little massaging of a partially altered document.

V

For our final example we fast forward from Bismarck to Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) and others after him who have considered *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, published in 1903, to be genuine. This notorious forgery is a lethal bit of work which claims to describe a Jewish plot to dominate the world by controlling the media and finance. It has repeatedly been proven to be a counterfeit. Most recently a Russian historian, Mikhail Lepekhine, “traced the *Protocols* to Matvei Golovinski, assumed agent provocateur of Okhranka [which fathered the KGB], as part of a scheme to persuade Tsar Nicholas II that the modernization of Russia was really a Jewish plot to control the world.” Nevertheless, very many anti-Semites have throughout the twentieth century and down to the present stubbornly insisted on believing it.

One of them was Hitler, who mentioned *The Protocols* in *Mein Kampf* and had its allegations taught in all his schools. This contributed substantially to the murder of six million Jews in the Nazi horror camps. Some Muslim states like Saudi-Arabia and Iran today, desirous of stoking hatred against Jews, continue to spend money on teaching their citizens, especially children, that everything in *The Protocols* is true, which hardly augurs well for the future. In the past, it was believed by Islamic “Presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat of Egypt, one of the President Arifs of Iraq, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, and Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi of Libya.” Nowadays it is still endorsed by “the

Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Sheikh Ekrima Sa'id Sabri and Hamas” as well as “the education ministry of Saudi Arabia.”

But that is not all. “The *Protocols* are widely considered to be the beginning of contemporary conspiracy theory literature.” They are sometimes considered “a cover identity for other conspirators such as the Illuminati, Freemasons, the Priory of Sion, or even, in the opinion of David Icke, ‘extra-dimensional entities.’”⁹

The *Protocols* have become part of Dispensationalist folklore, together with other persistent tales about a New World Order spearheaded by international bankers.

Apparently the first writer who in 1905 brought the *Protocols* into a book on prophecy was Sergei Alexandrovich Nilus (1862-1929), a Russian religious writer who also thought of himself as a mystic. It appeared as the final chapter of *Velikoe v malom I antikhrist, kak blizkaja politicheskaja vozmozhnost. Zapiski pravoslavnogo* (The Great within the Small and Antichrist, an Imminent Political Possibility. Notes of an Orthodox Believer). It had, however, first been published at Paris “in antisemitic circles around 1897-1898.”¹⁰ (Italics added)

The prime exhibit for conspiratorialists who think on this wavelength has been the Rothschild Family, the “most famous of all European banking dynasties, which for some 200 years exerted great influence on the economic and, indirectly, the political history of Europe.” And these were Jews. From the founding of their House by Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744–1812) and for several generations, they were enriched by both the Industrial and the French Revolutions, as well as many major transactions such as the Suez Canal. On all sides, princes who fought one another needed money, which the Rothschilds—operating in several, even belligerent countries—could supply.¹¹

Today when nations go to war, they still require the financial wherewithal, and there are still international bankers to help them out; but nowadays the wealthiest and most influential of these are not Jews. The Rothschilds have quietly faded from the memory of the world, except for conspiratorialists obsessed with a Futurist Antichrist.

Apart from being a large-scale forgery, the *Protocols* have in two ways been very similar to the Donation of Constantine: those who loved and wanted to believe a lie kept on defending them long after abundant evidence had shown they were fabrications, and they wrought tremendous damage in the world, which they filled with corpses. And instigating it all has ever been the mind of Lucifer. About him, Jesus said that he was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, as well as the father of those who do such things. (John 8:37-44)

VI

In all such productions, credibility is promoted by skirting as close to the truth as possible. Therefore, forgers do their utmost to make their handiwork look authentic. As Ralph Ingersoll, formerly of *Time* magazine, once said:

“The way to tell a successful lie is to include enough truth in it to make it believable.”¹²

The clerical falsifier of the Donation was also well aware of this fact and therefore included a feasible title for the pontiff. Otherwise, he could not have gotten away with it. Pepin’s lawyers were sure to scrutinize the document minutely and with suspicious eyes. Everything in the Donation had to ring true; it therefore looked like and also, wherever possible, was the real McCoy.

Vicarius Filii Dei seemed right as a title of Peter as well as Pope Sylvester, and the story about the Emperor Constantine was plausible. Of course, the date was fictitious and neither his signature nor his seal was real. The former had long since rotted away with his hand, now dead those four hundred years, while the latter—if it still existed—was inaccessible in faraway Constantinople. And that city, about to be deprived of its Italian possessions, would obviously never have cooperated with such a swindle.

Garry Wills said the person who had devised the document “juggled with three sets of relationships—those between Rome and the East, between Rome and the Franks, and between the Franks and the East.” He added: “In light of these complex tasks to be performed, we can only admire the artfulness with which the Donation is constructed.”¹³

We are not inclined to share that admiration, yet we do note what contributed to the verisimilitude: as far as possible the document “built on some real events, especially the fact that Constantine had given the popes their seat of government, the Lateran Palace, and built the Lateran Church, as well as the shrines to both Peter and Paul. . . .”¹⁴

Vicarius Filii Dei, the pivotal title in the Donation, naturally had to be acceptable, or its first readers would have rejected the entire document outright. It studiously avoided *vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ), because Constantine had applied this description to himself. Besides, the perpetrator wanted to endow his man with a loftier, more magnificent title, to show his superiority to kings and even the Byzantine emperor.

The Donation supplied the original basis for medieval popes to claim religious supremacy on the entire planet, and also to achieve—for several centuries—unwonted power over the secular rulers of Western Europe. This began to peak with the pontificate of Hildebrand, Gregory VII (c. 1025-1085, reigned from 1073). He it was who excommunicated and also sought to depose the German emperor Henry IV (1050-1106). To save his crown, that monarch had to repent and seek absolution at the castle of Canossa, standing for three days outside in the snow of January 1077 before the pope would deign to admit him.¹⁵

VII

This was also the pontiff whose friends, both Cardinal Anselm II and Cardinal Deusdedit, compiled the canonical collections to which we have

previously referred, including the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Wills asserted that “Gregory bequeathed to successors the papacy of the forgeries.”¹⁶ Peter De Rosa, his fellow Catholic writer, went further. He said that “most” of the twenty-seven theses which Gregory VII listed in his *Dictatus* to outline his pontifical powers “were based on forged documents.”¹⁷

Indeed. “For seven centuries, the Greeks had called Rome the home of forgeries. Whenever they tried talking with Rome, the popes brought out forged documents, even papal additions to Council documents, which the Greeks, naturally, had never seen.” And “Gregory went way beyond the Donation of Constantine. He had a whole school of forgers under his very nose, turning out document after document, with the papal seal of approval, to cater for his every need.”¹⁸

But who led out in this school? According to De Rosa it was Anselm of Lucca, Cardinal Deusdedit, and after them Cardinal Gregory of Pavia. They were at the beck and call of Gregory VII whenever he required “justification for some action against a prince or bishop,” producing “the appropriate document. No need for research; it was all done on the premises.” In this way, the past could be rewritten; it was an “instant method of inventing history,” which was “marvellously successful, especially as the forgeries were at once inserted into canon law.”¹⁹

Such a method, as De Rosa also pointed out, “would not have worked in an era of universal literacy, printing, photocopying and carbon dating; it worked without a hitch in an age of rare manuscripts, inept scholarship, and when even some emperors could not read and write.”²⁰

More than a hundred and twenty years ago, another writer—Ellen G. White—wrote something similar: “Before the invention of printing, books were few in number, and in a form not favorable for preservation; therefore there was little to prevent the Romanists from carrying out their purpose.”²¹ She also made another thought-provoking statement: “Frauds and forgeries to advance the power and prosperity of the church have in all ages been esteemed lawful by the papal hierarchy.”²²

Chapter Twenty
PUBLISHED AGAIN AND AGAIN

I

When fraud through forgery is profitable, a criminal usually repeats it over and over again—for instance, if he can get away with printing batches of \$1,000 bills and foisting them on people. This is exactly what happened with the Donation.

Previously we mentioned seven editions of the *Corpus iuris/juris canonici* (Collection of Canon Law), from 1591 (Lyons) to 1879 (Leipzig), containing the Donation of Constantine with its *vicarius Filii Dei* title. We also referred to forty-three editions of Gratian's Decretum between 1471 and 1890. Interested readers will find this data presented in Appendix II.¹

As already pointed out, this is the fruitage of research by Seventh-day Adventist scholars up to 1943, which was recorded in a document entitled *The Number of the Beast*. But now we know that of these reprintings there have been many more. For instance, according to a website posting, the library of Harvard Law School has in its rare books section “nearly 225 editions of *Corpus juris canonici*.”² (Further inquiry revealed that this really refers to Gratian's Decretum, sometimes by itself and sometimes as part of the Canon Law as a whole.)

Through such publications, the papacy reasserted the *vicarius Filii Dei* title multiple times after 1450, when Gutenberg perfected his printing press. The list we provide concerns Gratian's Decretum and the *Corpus iuris canonici*. In those centuries, there were, moreover, other Latin publications that quoted or referred to the title. Likewise not included are many works of different genres in later European languages. They contain the title in translation, amongst others the French *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, the Spanish *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, the Italian *vicario del Figlio/Figli[u]ol[o] di Dio*, the English *vicar of the Son of God*, and the German *Vikar/Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes/Statthalter des Gottessohnes*, etc. Of all this, our general text gives copious examples.

In the 1500s, Gratian's Decretum was republished at least an astonishing twenty-seven times. That was in the run-up to or during the Protestant Reformation as well as the subsequent Catholic Counter-Reformation. During that century, the publishers could hardly keep up with readership demand. Occasionally they put out more than one edition per year in different cities. Let us compare the following:

1471	1500	1601	1705	1844
1472 (x 2)	1502	1606	1717	1855
1474	1506	1612 (x 2)	1726	1879
1476 (x 2)	1507	1613 (x 2)	1752-1757	1890
1477	1511 (x 2)	1622	1772	
1478	1512	1628		
1483	1514	1671		
1484	1517 (x 2)	1677		
1486	1519 (x 2)	1687		
1489	1523	1695		
1491	1526			
	1533			
	1538			
	1542			
	1550			
	1552			
	1553			
	1561			
	1570			
	1582			
	1584 (x 3)			
	1591			

But what could account for the decline in the 1700s and 1800s? There were no doubt several factors. One was that after the Thirty-years' War, which ended in 1648, the use of Latin by educated people greatly declined, its place being taken by other European languages. Therefore, the nineteenth century, which had the fewest Latin reprints of Gratian's *Decretum* and the *Corpus iuris canonici*, also produced the largest number of *vicarius Filii Dei* items translated into other languages.

As pointed out in *History of Canon Law* (1990) by priest-author and archivist Constant van de Wiel: "Innumerable manuscript copies of the *Decretum Gratiani* and many editions are still available." He mentioned eleven of the best known between 1500 and 1959.³

II

But in 1917, the Catholic Church on the orders of Pope Benedict XV (1854-1922, reigned from 1914) replaced the *Corpus iuris canonici* with the *Codex iuris canonici* (Code of Canon Law). This project had been initiated by the previous pontiff, Pius X (1835-1914, reigned from 1903). Therefore, it is also known as the Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law. Its basic text, unadorned with footnotes, appeared in Rome.⁴ The next year, it was republished, amongst other places in New York. In this 1918 version, it was annotated by Cardinal Pietro Gasparri.⁵ With further modifications, it was reissued in 1983 under the pontificate of John Paul II.

Writing about the 1917 version, van de Wiel considered the relationship of Gratian's *Decretum* to the new Code, asserting: "In spite of the renown and the great authority of the *Decretum Gratiani*, it remained a private collection with no universal force of law. The ecclesiastical authorities never officially recognized or approved the collection."⁶

The *Decretum* was regularly used in and recognized by law courts for more than seven hundred years from 1140 onward. And pope after pope permitted it to be published repeatedly and to undergird the Catholic legal system. Van de Wiel was no doubt aware of these facts, so he added: "every text included in it retained the value that it had independently of it." Furthermore, "no text was abrogated by the *Decretum*. Nevertheless, some of the texts, even the *dicta*, acquired the force of universally applicable law, even though they rested on false or private sources." In confirmation, he cited Cardinal Pietro Gasparri's foreword to the 1917 Code.⁷

III

More light has been shed on the matter by recent students of the Middle Ages. One of them is Yale University's scholarly Anders Winroth, whose specialty is medieval European history—religious, legal, and intellectual. In 2000, he focused on the original Gratian's *Decretum*, "a text which survives and can be read in medieval manuscripts."⁸ This is what he called "a first recension."⁹ It is shorter and more limited in scope than the more comprehensive document which through various accretions grew out of it in later ages. Does such a finding not set our topic on a slippery slope? Not really; the *Decretum* which we are concerned with is precisely that more comprehensive document.

In a note accompanying his 2007 translation of Valla's treatise, G. W. Bowersock, another scholar writing about that period, asserted: "The Donation of Constantine appears in Part I, Distinction 96, canons 13-14 of the *Decretum*, which was part of the text added after the time of Gratian (probably around 1150) by another hand. These additions, which included over 150 canons, were mostly made by law professors at the University of Bologna and were known as *paleae* ('chaff' or 'straw'), though some writers later spoke as though the additions were made by a single compiler named Palea. Distinction 96 is attributed to a compiler nicknamed Paucapalea in canonist writers."¹⁰ That is, the Donation existed for about four hundred years before Gratian's work.

About this whole tradition, Winroth had further illuminating things to say. He pointed out that "Gratian's *Decretum* was one of the cornerstones of canon law. Its definitions of concepts and terminology as well as its actual solutions to legal problems have in many cases been definitive and survive in the most recent compilation of the law of the Catholic Church, the *Codex iuris canonici* of 1983." The influence of the *Decretum* was not limited to ecclesiastical matters, also being felt in what today would be regarded as

secular affairs. “Together with Roman law, canon law formed a coherent and autonomous legal system, the so-called *ius commune* (European Common Law). This system was the only legal system that was studied at the universities, and during the middle ages (and in some countries also much later) it was in fact used in local judicial practice and in producing local law codes.”¹¹

Such facts are very damaging for the position in 1936 of William W. Prescott, who quibbled that Gratian’s *Decretum* “was never recognized by the [Catholic] church as an official statement on church authority.”¹²

Winroth acknowledged this to be technically true, yet he added: “It was, nonetheless, one of the texts which were subject to philological attention following the Council of Trent. A commission, commonly known as the *Correctores Romani*, was appointed in 1566 for the purpose of correcting and emending the *Corpus iuris canonici* (including the *Decretum* of Gratian, the *Liber extra* of Gregory IX, the *Liber sextus* of Boniface VIII, the *Clementinae* promulgated by John XXII, and the *Extravagantes*.) The *Correctores*’ efforts resulted in the so-called *editio Romana* published in 1582.”¹³ Winroth said that this corrected text “was reprinted numerous times.”¹⁴

It retained the title *vicarius Filii Dei* throughout.

IV

In his Preface to the 1917 Code, Gasparri made another statement that we find peculiar—about the False Decretals (the *Decretals of Pseudo-Isidore*). He admitted to their being used by elements in the Roman Church “until rather recent times, albeit privately . . . Nevertheless, there are none today who assert, as contended by enemies of the Catholic name, that the *discipline* of the Church was even slightly affected internally by the pseudo-Isidorian decretal subterfuge”¹⁵ (emphasis added).

Whatever this word choice is supposed to mean, it remains a fact that the False Decretals became an important if not the only vehicle for conveying down through the ages the equally false Donation of Constantine included in them. And this, as our book demonstrates, has impacted immensely, in the most tangible ways, on the behavior of popes and European history.

As for Gratian’s *Decretum*, Seventh-day Adventist author Christian Edwardson, writing in 1943 about its sixteenth-century revision, pointed out that this had the backing of two pontiffs: Pius V (1504-1572, reigned from 1566), and his successor, Gregory XIII (1505–1585, reigned from 1572). The latter declared the resultant text to be “entirely free from fault.” Surely this was “official.” Edwardson, focusing on *vicarius Filii Dei*, also remarked: “We cannot see how any consistent Catholic can deny the authenticity of this title without denying the infallibility of the pope.”¹⁶

On looking more closely at these pontiffs, we find that—whatever else

they may have been—they were both exceedingly competent and energetic men.

Pope Pius V, at all times an ascetic, was a Dominican. By 1558 he had become the grand inquisitor. On being elected pontiff, he “immediately began the work of reform. Decrees and ordinances were issued rapidly; the papal court became a model of sobriety; prostitutes were driven from the city or confined to a certain quarter; penalties were fixed for Sunday desecration, profanity, and animal baiting . . .” and so forth. He had several instruments of piety revised: a new catechism (1566), a better breviary (1568), an improved missal (1570). Further, “The rules governing the Inquisition were sharpened; old charges, long suspended, were revived; rank offered no protection but rather exposed its possessor to fiercer attack.” He urged relentless war against the Protestants. He egged on “Philip II of Spain to use the most ruthless tyranny to preserve his Dutch subjects in the Catholic faith and sent troops to France to help Catherine de Médicis repress the Huguenots . . .” He also had further work done on the list which detailed the books “condemned as dangers to faith and morals” [the *Index of Forbidden Books* created by Pius IV, his predecessor], with the result that “hundreds of printers took flight to Switzerland and Germany.” The great regret of this lovely man, who is now a Catholic saint, was “that he had sometimes been too lenient.”¹⁷

The next pope, Gregory XIII, is chiefly remembered for three things. First, when he received the news about the St. Bartholomew’s Day slaughter of Protestants which began in Paris on 24 August 1572, “he celebrated the massacre with a *Te Deum* (hymn of praise to God) at Rome.” Second, on 24 February 1582 with a papal bull, he introduced the Gregorian calendar. Though welcomed by astronomers like Johannes Kepler and Tycho Brahe as well as the Catholic rulers of Europe, many Protestants for a long time “saw it as the work of the Antichrist and refused to adopt it.” Third, he was an eminent jurist. Long before his election as pope, he had graduated “as doctor of canon and civil law,” at the University of Bologna. There he also taught canon law from 1531 to 1539.¹⁸

He served several pontiffs in learned capacities; therefore, when he was made pope at the age of a still vigorous seventy, he could put the capstone on his career with “an *official* Roman edition of the *Corpus juris canonici*,” the following being its background: “Shortly after the conclusion of the Council of Trent, Pius IV had appointed a committee which was to bring out a critical edition of the Decree of Gratian. The committee was increased to thirty-five members (*correctores Romani*) by Pius V in 1566. Gregory XIII had been a member of it from the beginning. The work was finally completed in 1582. In the Briefs ‘*Cum pro munere*’, dated 1 July, 1580, and ‘*Emendationem*’, dated 2 June, 1582, Gregory XIII ordered that henceforth only the emended *official* text was to be used and that in the future no other text should be printed.” (Emphases added)¹⁹

Pontiffs have tried to be consistent with their predecessors—except

when it was inconvenient to do so. In the early twentieth century, Gregory XIII's decision seems to have been ignored by Pius X (1835–1914, reigned from 1903). With equal infallibility, “His decision to adapt and systematize canon law led to the publication of the new code in 1917, effective in 1918.”²⁰

And so the *Corpus juris canonici* was formally supplanted by the *Codex juris canonici*. As a Catholic scholar, John A. Alesandro, put it in the General Introduction to the later 1983 Code, the one of 1917 “abrogated, or repealed all other extant universal canonical legislation,” being “the most radical revision of law that Church had ever effected, surpassing even the monumental contribution of the *Decretum Gratiani* eight centuries earlier.” Nevertheless, the 1917 Code remained “rooted in the Church’s lengthy and complex legal history. Its critical apparatus contained over twenty-five thousand citations of former texts.”²¹ Much the same can be said of the succeeding Code, promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983.

A crucial point is that the expression *vicarius Filii Dei* was edited out of both these twentieth-century Codes. But has this also obliterated the title and with it our entire argumentation?

V

It is not as simple as that. This papal decision cannot undo the events of history that flowed from or were closely bound up with the Donation and its intellectual progeny for more than a thousand years. Also, those medieval forgeries inculcated high-handedness and abetted arrogant doctrines like papal infallibility, which have been woven permanently into the worldview of the men who sit enthroned at the Vatican.

The *Corpus* is a major source for the twentieth-century *Codex* in both its versions. It therefore remains indispensable for understanding the pontifical system and the Roman Church. The *Corpus* itself was also reprinted as late as 1959.²²

The Preface to the Latin edition of the 1983 Code, translated into English and appearing online in 2003, explains that from Gratian’s *Decretum* onward ecclesiastical laws kept on proliferating for hundreds of years. Many additional items were added by the Council of Trent, reacting to sixteenth-century Protestantism. These laws had never been “digested into one collection. This was the reason why during the course of time legislation outside the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* constituted ‘an immense pile of laws piled on top of other laws.’”²³ All this needed to be incorporated and systematized. “Therefore [in 1917] it was not a case of enacting a new law but rather a matter of arranging in a new fashion the operative legislation at that time.”²⁴

Perhaps so, but this does not explain why the Donation with the title *vicarius Filii Dei* was deleted from the resultant text and is not to be found in the pages of the *Codex iuris canonici*, in either its 1917 or 1983 variants.

We think the main reason was that the Papal States, which had been the illicit fruitage of the Donation and lasted for more than eleven hundred years, were eliminated in 1870. The aftermath therefore provided a good opportunity for unobtrusively dropping that forgery. It was no longer needed, nor was the title it contained. As time went on beyond 1917, *vicarius Filii Dei* could recede into the shadows of the past, so that people might be led to doubt that it had ever existed. This would help to confound those pestilent Protestants, especially Seventh-day Adventist evangelists, who kept on embarrassing the Roman Church with publications and lectures which show that this title had a numerical value of 666.

To deal further with these questions, we think it best to invoke the testimony of concrete, historical facts, which are more important than merely theoretical arguments. Therefore, in our next volume, we will in several chapters survey the journey of the Donation down through the ages, attentive to how often it was used manipulatively by the papal power, with *vicarius Filii Dei* as a crucial element. As regards this title, we shall note its occurrence in both Latin and its translations into other languages.

Nor will we restrict ourselves to the pronouncements, both true and false, of clerics loyal to the pontiff, as Prescott and papists would no doubt have liked us to do. These will naturally feature prominently, but we have also unearthed much relevant and amazing material in writings by dissident Catholics, Protestants who lived before there was a single Seventh-day Adventist in the world, and other witnesses. We have found, moreover, that this notorious title, the French *vicaire de Fils de Dieu* and the Spanish *vicario del Hijo de Dios* in particular, was used by members of the Roman Church in the twentieth century after the 1917 *Codex Iuris Canonici* had replaced the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, even though the *Codex* omits that title. Nevertheless—and this is most startling—one pontiff after World War II actually referred to himself as the *vicarius Filii Dei*.

All this must have its day in the court of our deliberations.

Volume II

The Further Witness of History

Chapter Twenty-One
THE DONATION CASTS A LONG MEDIEVAL SHADOW

I

We now survey the events that further demonstrate the impact of the fraudulent Donation on European history, beginning with Pepin's son and successor, Charlemagne (742–814). This powerful warrior king put together an empire which included what today are France, the Netherlands, and much of Germany. Though he largely dominated the papacy, he was—as the first of the Holy Roman emperors—also one of its greatest benefactors. But after his death and that of his son, Louis I, the Pious (778-840), Italy and other Western countries fell on evil times.

The Frankish empire which these men had established was broken up among their squabbling heirs. This fragmentation opened the way for repeated raids by the Vikings from Scandinavia, the Magyars from Hungary, and the Saracens from North Africa as well as Spain—a terrible, triple scourge that especially afflicted the monasteries. These attacks “destroyed many of the great abbeys and dispersed the monks.”¹

At this stage, the Western European kings were too weak and therefore also unable to protect the papacy adequately, yet they kept on interfering with it.

A serious showdown came under Nicholas I (c. 800-867, reigned from 858), whom Cheetham considered “the most vital of all Popes between Gregory I and Gregory VII.” He was a highly intelligent, strong-minded man.² Seeing himself as the superior of all patriarchs and metropolitans, whether in the East or the West, this pontiff was determined to protect the Catholic Church and uphold its authority. He would especially not tolerate any lay infringement in papal matters.³

First he secured submission from the important archbishop of Ravenna and then of Hincmar, archbishop of Reims. Then he was ready for the Frankish monarchs.

Lothair II, king of Lorraine (which then was known as Lotharingia), badly needed an heir for his country. To secure a legitimate son, he wanted an annulment of his marriage to Theutberga, so that he could wed his mistress, Waldrada—who had already borne him three children. In court circles, this seemed like a sensible scheme. He also got the archbishops of Lorraine to agree to it, as well as his relative Louis II (822-875), emperor and titular king of Italy.

But Pope Nicholas, who “welcomed the challenge as a test of his authority”⁴ said *no* and deposed the two archbishops, Günther of Cologne and Thietgaud of Trier⁵ for supporting Lothair.

Thereupon, during 864, the emperor Louis invaded Rome on behalf of his kinsman to pressurize the pope, who barricaded himself in St. Peter's. But Louis had to back down, for the Romans would have none of his interference.

So Lothair's marriage to his mistress came to nothing, and he left no legitimate heirs to his realm,⁶ which on his death was divided among his relatives.

Froom found that Nicholas I upheld his authority by using the False Decretals, which contained the Donation of Constantine (together with the words *vicarius Filii Dei*). He "pressed the issue of the Roman supremacy to the point of absolute monarch, and the Decretal Epistles were declared by this pope to be on an equality with Scripture."⁷

This high-mindedness has been corroborated by Timothy Ware, a member of and an authority on the Eastern Orthodox Church; for Nicholas even meddled in the appointment of the Patriarch at Constantinople. In a letter of 865, he claimed the pontiff had been endowed with authority "over all the earth, that is, over *every* Church."⁸

It is plain that by this time, more than eleven hundred years ago, the idea of pontifical supremacy had already fatefully petrified in the papal psyche. It remains, to this day, the very keystone of Roman Catholicism. But first, for the next two centuries, events limited the exercise of the authority Nicholas I had claimed.

He was, however, assisted by Anastasius the Librarian (c. 810–879), abbot at the monastery of the Virgin Mary on the farther side of the Tiber (in Trastevere). This cleric had "learned Greek from Greek monks and obtained an unusual education for his era, so that he appears to be the most learned ecclesiastic of Rome in the barbaric period of the ninth century." Anastasius was both an author and translator into Latin from Greek. The pope employed him in various matters. In 869, he and two high-ranking Frankish noblemen were sent to Constantinople. Their mission was to make marriage arrangements for the Emperor Louis's daughter with the son of the Byzantine Emperor. While in that city, Anastasius attended the final session of the Eighth Ecumenical Council, where he "zealously defended the papal cause and was of much service to the papal legates." Amongst other writings, he also "translated from Greek into Latin the 'Acts' of the Seventh and Eighth Ecumenical Councils."⁹

He worked under successive pontiffs: Nicholas I (c. 819–822–867, reigned from 858); Adrian II (792–872, reigned from 867); and John VIII (882–882, reigned from 872). The last-mentioned pope esteemed and confirmed him in his office as librarian. He also "entrusted important affairs to him, and encouraged him to further literary work."¹⁰

Anastatius quoted at length from the so-called Donation of Constantine. Included in his piece on this was the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.¹¹ Pope John would no doubt have been aware of that material, yet he apparently never appealed to it, which was simply added to the papal library. For such silence, there must have been a good reason.

John VIII was a belligerent man, who often threatened or pronounced excommunication. Of his three hundred and eighty-two letters, a hundred and fifty had this theme, that is (on average) fifteen times per year. But hardly any of these were concerned with religion as such. "Almost all dealt with temporal

possessions of the Church—some with worthwhile substantial solid matters like the transfer or promise of a whole kingdom, but some with the most ridiculous and petty concerns”;¹² since he was personally vindictive. For instance, he excommunicated the unknown thieves who had stolen his horse, and the “knaves” who had made off with his plate at the Abbey of Avigny.¹³

Yet he seems to have had the good sense to avoid an unnecessary confrontation with kings and emperors by vaunting his superiority over them through appeals to the Donation. He greatly needed whatever assistance they could give, for after the death of Louis II in 875, “the Moslem raiders pillaged at will to the gates of Rome.”¹⁴

The potential conflict between throne and altar remained in abeyance, the more so because John VIII had no able successors. After him, the papacy entered on one of its most deplorable periods. For more than a hundred and fifty years, from his death to virtually the accession of Gregory VII, the period offers—as Cheetham has put it—“a lamentable record of weakness, corruption and violence, a catalogue of squalid and almost unbelievably [sic] decadence.”¹⁵

Though not all those pontiffs were cruel, immoral, or incompetent, it is significant that they were so ephemeral. While only eleven popes had reigned during the preceding two hundred years, there were thirty-five between 882 and 998; that is, in a little more than a century. In the eight years from 896 to 904 no fewer than ten were elevated and then replaced, “of whom at least one was strangled and two died or were murdered in prison.”¹⁶

Amazingly, for several years during the first half of the tenth century, successive pontiffs owed their position to the family of Theophylactus, or rather his immoral wife, Theodora, and her equally profligate daughters, Theodora and especially Marozia. Collectively they are known as the pornocracy,¹⁷ or, as C. H. A. King expressed it, the Rule of Harlots. According to him, these women appointed and then disposed of nine popes in thirteen years.¹⁸

In *The Lives and Amours of Queens and Royal Mistresses, with Some Intrigues of Popes*, an anonymous eighteenth-century writer, who probably had access to medieval material, left us a pungent tale that recaptures the ambience of that period.

Marozia’s son, the short-lived Pope John XI (910–935, reigned from 931)—reputedly fathered by Pope Sergius III (d. 911)¹⁹—was passionately in love with his stepsister, Princess Alda. She was the daughter of King Hugh of Italy,²⁰ at that time married to Marozia.

With his mother’s connivance, Pope John approached the young woman in the gardens of the Castle of St. Angelo. Consumed by a mixture of lust and shame, he laid at her feet his tiara and keys, which symbolized the papal office. She responded: “Your Holiness need not fear . . . I shall abuse so glorious a Sacrifice, or contribute to disfigure in you the venerable Character of *Vicar of the Son of God*” (emphasis added).²¹

John XI was pontiff for only four years and “served his mother’s political ends until 932/933.” But then his half brother Alberic II (912-

954), another of Marozia's sons whose father was Duke of Spoleto, intervened. He deposed and arrested his mother, imprisoning her in the Castle of St. Angelo. He also had his half brother Pope John shut up in the Lateran, where "he remained a prisoner until his death"²² at the youthful age of twenty-five. King Hugh fled from Rome in 932, and Alberic married his daughter Alda in 936.²³

For the papacy, the world was badly out of joint, and yet—if this chronicle is to be credited—even amid such sordid intrigues that title was taken seriously.

As for Marozia, she lingered on, neglected though not entirely forgotten, in her gloomy cell for more than fifty years. "Once the most ravishing creature of her day, she was reduced to a withered stringy heap of bones wrapped up in rags." And so she remained until her middle nineties, sustained, perhaps, by her memories. Thereupon, "in the spring of 986, Pope Gregory V, aged twenty-three, and his cousin, Emperor Otto III, aged fifteen, decided the poor old woman had languished in prison long enough. The pope sent a tame bishop to exorcize her of her demons and lift her sentence of excommunication. She was absolved from her sins. Then she was executed."²⁴

II

Meanwhile, the political setup of Western Europe was undergoing a major change that would greatly affect the pontiffs. Louis IV, the Child (983-911), the last of Charlemagne's East Frankish descendants, had died. The nobles were unwilling for the crown to pass to the West Franks, or French. Instead, in 911, they elected Conrad, Duke of Franconia. A little later, on his deathbed, he nominated as his successor his German opponent, Henry I, the Fowler (876-936)—or so it was said soon afterwards. The latter was crowned in 918 and proved to be an effective king.²⁵

Henry founded the Saxon dynasty, which lasted until 1024. He was succeeded by a son, a grandson, and a great-grandson, all named Otto: Otto I, the Great (912-973); Otto II (955-983), who married a Byzantine princess; and Otto III (980-1002).

The last mentioned was a highly cultivated man, his mother being Theophano from Constantinople. He had before him the example not only of his German father and grandfather, but also of his other ancestors on the thrones of Byzantium since Constantine the Great. He was determined to renew the Roman Empire, with Rome as capital (*renovatio imperii Romanorum*), his models being the Caesars and Charlemagne. Under him, according to an important Italian historian Giorgio Falco, crown and altar were briefly in perfect accord: "Never before and never again was there such close co-operation between Church and empire, such a concentration and coincidence of the two powers, such a renunciation on the part of the Church of her terrestrial politics, or a more complete dedication of the empire to

religious ideals.”²⁶

Indeed. These Otto’s were all energetic, ambitious monarchs who greatly benefited the Catholic Church of their time, though—despite what Falco said—they often also irritated it by interfering in pontifical affairs. But there was nothing the popes could do about it. From now on, the realm was pointedly known as the *Heiliges römisches Reich deutscher Nation* (the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation).²⁷

From the death of Pope John VIII in 882 to the High Middle Ages, the papacy found itself at a low ebb. As we have noted, for more than a century and a half the pontiffs were mostly nobodies, and the church was actually headed by powerful German emperors, who saw themselves as the appointees of God himself.

The three Ottos were succeeded by a new Rhine-Frankish dynasty, known as the Salians; but there was no change in the basic policy toward the church.

The second of these rulers, Henry III (1039-1056), was (at least for the next two hundred and fifty years) “the last emperor able to dominate the papacy.” While he supported the monastic reforms that began at Cluny, the pontiffs under him were puppets. In 1046, he went to Rome, where three rivals were claiming to be pope. The emperor called a synod at Sutri, commanding it to elect a German bishop, Suidger, who became Clement II. “Rome became an imperial city, and the control over the Church—i.e., the decisive vote in future conclaves—passed into the hands of the German king. In succeeding years Henry made use of this right to appoint a pope three more times.” During his reign, however, the disintegration of the empire also began, many territories “being swept away: northeastern Germany, Hungary, Southern Italy, and Lorraine.”²⁸

Two years before this emperor died, he made his last and most momentous appointment: Bruno, Graf von Egisheim und Dagsburg, as Pope Leo IX (1002–1054, reigned from 1049).²⁹

Not infrequently, a person’s contribution for good or evil occurs in a very brief span of time. So it was with this German count with royal relatives. In his five years on the papal throne, Leo unleashed an amazing amount of harm, with effects that have reverberated down the centuries—for which his coreligionists have rewarded him by declaring him a saint.

For the first time in two hundred years, since Nicholas I, the issues dealt with by the Donation surfaced again, remaining prominent for ages to come. This is how it happened.

The Normans were growing too powerful in Sicily and southern Italy. Emperor Henry III having withdrawn his promised help, Pope Leo went with his own troops, who were disastrously defeated. He himself was made a prisoner on 18 June 1053 and held for nine months. His venture was also resented by the Byzantines, who had for generations been claiming sovereignty over Sicily and the Italian south. Moreover, the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, interpreted the pontiff’s involvement as meddling in the affairs of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Negotiations were conducted by Leo's friend, the combative Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, in the hope of brokering a deal. But it went awry. "Cardinal Humbert attacked the Patriarch in a vitriolic and passionate manner by arguing the case for Roman primacy and also quoting extensively from the forged 'Donation of Constantine. . .'" Understandably, this did not go down well in the city founded by that very emperor, especially since he—like all his successors—had also headed the Orthodox Church.

As a last resort, the pope in 1054 sent Humbert on the long journey to the Bosphorus. With him, he had Leo's bull of excommunication against the patriarch, Michael Cerularius (c. 1000-1059, officiated from 1043 to 1058). However, amid the negotiations, back in Rome, the pontiff died. About this fact, the tidings reached Constantinople three months later. But the cardinal, with that document in his hand, went right ahead and did what he thought best: "On July 16, 1054, in the full view of the congregation, Humbert put the papal bull of excommunication—already prepared before the legation left Rome—on the altar of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople." Michael Cerularius reciprocated by excommunicating the legation and its supporters.³⁰ The schism between Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Church that began on that day has now lasted for almost a thousand years.

For students of prophecy, it is noteworthy that henceforth the Eastern Roman Empire energetically used Apocalyptic imagery to preserve or extend its political influence. "Missionary and propaganda teams were systematically despatched by the Eastern Church to the Balkans, Egypt and the Near East, who united with Byzantine diplomats in preaching the iniquity of the West." It was, they taught, incurably tainted by its connection with Rome, which was "Babylon, the mother of all wickedness."³¹

It is widely believed that Leo IX's assault on Eastern Orthodoxy was the "earliest certain appeal" to the Donation by a pontiff, and from then "was increasingly employed by popes and canonists in support of the papal claims, and from the 12th century onward it became a weapon of the spiritual powers against the temporal."³² Though that statement may be largely true, we have a reservation about it. The letter, previously mentioned, written by Nicholas I in 865 (some two centuries earlier) to influence a Patriarchal appointment in Constantinople, also alleged that the pope possessed authority everywhere on earth and over every church. It implied the Donation and must have been at least a background factor. Certainly after Leo IX, other pontiffs or their representatives also used that forgery for many centuries, energetically.

III

Henry IV (1050-1106), the son of Henry III, to whom the pontiff had been subservient, inherited a troubled realm. He also faced a revitalized, much more powerful papacy in the person of Hildebrand, Gregory VII (1020-1085), who humiliated him at Canossa in 1077. A notorious account which is well known to church historians relates how there he was compelled to stand for three

days, barefoot in the snow, and crave admittance to a reluctant pontiff. Hildebrand was planning to depose this emperor and bestow his realm on a rival claimant.

Central to the problems they had with each other was the investiture conflict. Who must appoint the bishops: the emperor or the pope? This issue had first been raised by Leo IX. Some readers of our time may well be puzzled by it, wondering: Was this so important? It was. At stake were two interrelated issues vital to the entire feudal setup of the Middle Ages, affecting both church and state.

From among the bishops, the cardinals were also chosen, and mostly these elected the pontiffs. Therefore, whoever appointed the bishops could by extension also control the papacy. Hildebrand wanted to put a stop to this situation.

But a great deal more was involved: the control and possession of the real estate and other property that the bishops had been amassing for centuries. More often than not, the most senior churchmen were also noblemen, even relatives of the emperor. They were his vassals, obliged to support him with their material possessions and to help him fight his battles by supplying troops. What is more, secular rulers and their departments of state greatly relied on these churchmen, who could read and write Latin—while the secular aristocracy was often illiterate. That is, the civil service consisted of clerics.

To insist that bishops had to be chosen only by the pope was by implication also to claim for him tremendous amounts of property and the power generated by it. Therefore, the investiture conflict took generations to resolve.

We have already noted how Gregory VII's pretensions to temporal power were strongly supported by two contemporaries: Cardinals Anselm II and Deusdedit, both of whom quoted from the Donation and explicitly mentioned the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.

The meddling of the pontiffs in politics from an early period was to have dire consequences for the future of Europe and the world. The title deed to their involvement was, as Avro Manhattan pointed out, the Donation of Constantine, which supposedly made the Holy Roman Empire "a fief of the papacy, while the Emperors turned into vassals and the popes into suzerains . . . *de jure*."³³

IV

Let us now skip down a century to Frederick I (*c.* 1123–1190). He was a proud Hohenstaufen, whom the Italians nicknamed Barbarossa (red beard), a German who reigned in the High Middle Ages as Holy Roman Emperor from 1152 until his death.

At that time, the papacy had a prophetess, Hildegard of Bingen, who was nicknamed Sibyl of the Rhine. Prioress over the Benedictine cloister of Disibodenberg, she told her confessor in 1141 that she had since childhood been having visions. This created quite a stir. "A committee of theologians subsequently confirmed the authenticity of Hildegard's visions, and a monk

was appointed to help her record them in writing. The finished work, *Scivias* [know the ways] (1141–1152) consists of 26 visions that are prophetic and apocalyptic in form . . .”³⁴

In 1928, several of them were published, having been translated into German by Maura Bückeler, a twentieth-century nun at the same cloister. Some pieces are incomplete, augmented by editorial summaries. One of these calls the pope the *Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes*.³⁵ The pontiffs of Hildegard’s time were Innocent II (*d.* 1143, reigned from 1130) and his successor Celestine II (*d.* 1144). We may well wonder what Barbarossa thought of her writings.

We do know that papal pretensions based on the Donation enraged and catapulted him into conflict with Pope Alexander III (*c.* 1105–1181, reigned from 1159). “Supported by arguments from the Roman law, Frederick based his imperial claim on secular foundations and pitted it against the theocratic arguments of the papacy.”³⁶ He wanted to be an emperor in the tradition of Constantine, Justinian, Charlemagne, and Otto I. Besides, he firmly believed that “he derived his Empire from God,” while insisting on the supremacy of *law* and not of the priestly office.³⁷

The papacy regarded Barbarossa as a threat, since its policy was to strive for a balance of power in Italy. The Papal States, the “patrimony of St. Peter,” were more or less in the center of the peninsula. When the empire in the north was too strong, the pontiff favored the Normans, who ruled over Sicily and southern Italy. When the latter were too strong, he supported the empire. Now the German emperor was accumulating far too much power, aiming at domination both north and south of the Papal States.

In 1152, a revolutionary called Wetzeld wrote a letter to Frederick about the Donation. He reported: “Mendacium vero illud et fabula heretica, in qua refertur, Constantinum Silvestro imperialia symoniace concessisse, in Urbe ita detecta est, ut etiam mercennarii et mulierculae quoslibet etiam doctissimos super hoc concludant, et dictus apostolicus [Eugenius III] cum suis cardinalibus in civitate pro pudore apparere non audeat.”³⁸

(“That lie and heretical fable of Constantine’s having conceded the imperial rights in the city to Pope Sylvester, was now so thoroughly exposed that even day laborers and women were able to confute the most learned on the point, and the pope and his cardinals would not venture to show themselves for shame.”³⁹)

According to the German church historian Johann J. Ignaz von Döllinger, Wetzeld was an Arnoldist.⁴⁰ That is, he supported Arnaldo da Brescia (*c.* 1100–*c.* 1155) from the Venetian Republic, about whom nothing is known beyond what others—especially his papist enemies—have recorded; for “no written word of his has survived” his execution.⁴¹ But we do read that Arnold of Brescia, monk and prior at the monastery in that town, was a “radical religious reformer noted for his outspoken criticism of clerical wealth and corruption and for his strenuous opposition to the temporal power of the popes.” Eventually he became an intellectual leader for “the

renovatio senatus ('renewal of the Senate')," people who established a republic in Rome, after driving out the Pope and his cardinals. In 1155, the pontiff, Adrian IV, struck back by placing the city under an interdict. The coup d'état collapsed, and Arnaldo fled.⁴²

Barbarossa may have been of two minds about this man. They both opposed the pontiff's secular pretensions, yet they could not have disagreed more about politics. Arnaldo was a proponent of democratic republicanism; Frederick I, a lordly Hohenstaufen, believed in the divine right of kings. Moreover, his coronation as Holy Roman emperor depended on the pope. So when he journeyed to Rome to receive the crown, his forces captured Arnaldo, who "was tried by an ecclesiastical tribunal, condemned for heresy, and transferred to the Emperor for execution. He was hanged, his body burned, and his ashes cast into the Tiber River."⁴³ He had "refused to recant any of his positions." For Protestants, Arnaldo was a precursor of the Reformation; for many Italians, a patriot. "In 1882, after the collapse of Papal temporal powers, the city of Brescia erected a monument" to honor his memory.⁴⁴

Wetzeld's letter about the Donation reflected the hatred for the Donation on the part of Arnaldo and his republican associates. As von Döllinger expressed it, "When a Roman faction, stirred up by Arnold of Brescia, was purposing to arrogate to itself the control of the city, the papal party in Rome had appealed to the Donation, according to which it appeared that Rome belonged to the pope." It was in response to this that Wetzeld wrote his letter to Frederick.⁴⁵ This is truly intriguing; it reveals that three full centuries before Lorenzo Valla's treatise, which soundly debunked that document, it was already in some quarters considered a forgery.

Anyhow, the emperor Frederick Barbarossa emphatically rejected the idea that, owing to his coronation by the pope, he had derived his power from the papacy or was subservient to it. Five years after Wetzeld's letter, "At the imperial diet of Besançon (1157), there was a furious scene when Frederick denounced a papal letter in which Hadrian [IV] claimed to have 'conferred' the Empire on him as a *beneficium*, the word usually used to denote a fief."⁴⁶

But, at least for the time being, the papacy won. In northern Italy the Lombard cities had achieved independence. Barbarossa tried to subdue them. Though he even captured Rome in 1167, he could not attempt the conquest of Norman Sicily (his army being decimated by malaria). Behind him, Alexander III succeeded in getting the city-states of Northern Italy to bury their differences, and the Lombard League (*Societas Lombardie*) was formed.⁴⁷ Their armies won control of all the central and eastern passes of the Alps. Then they defended the western approaches by founding a new city, Alessandria (1168), naming it in honor of the pontiff.

Also at about this time—circa 1169—John, a deacon and canon of the Lateran as well as a man of some learning, put another delicious cherry on Alexander's cake. He dedicated to the pope his book *De Ecclesia Lateranensi* (About the Church of the Lateran), citing the Donation.

Central to it, of course, as to all such documents, was the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.⁴⁸

With the Lombard League united against him, Frederick I could no longer raise forces in Italy, so he had to turn to Germany. Here “his cousin, Henry the Lion, the head of the house of Guelf” would not help him. So he marched against the Lombards without this support. On 29 May 1176, they defeated the emperor decisively at Legnano. As a result, the proud Hohenstaufen had to recognize the pope whom he hated and restore captured church property. “On 24 July 1177, he submitted to Alexander III in person at Venice. The meeting took place outside St. Mark’s church. Frederick approached the Pope, threw off his imperial garment and prostrated himself at his feet. The Pope, with tears in his eyes, raised him, embraced him, and led him into the church, where he gave him his blessing. Afterwards Frederick held the Pope’s stirrup.”⁴⁹ Two works of art have captured the drama of that day. “The painting in the doge’s palace and another in the Vatican, depicting the event on large canvases, represent Alexander sitting on a throne with his feet on Barbarossa’s right shoulder as the emperor lies prostrate. The Venetian picture contains the words: ‘Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder,’ Psalm 91:12.”⁵⁰

For Frederick to walk beside the pontiff on horseback, holding his stirrup must have been almost as vexatious as having to lie at his feet. This humiliating ceremony was partly inspired by the Bible story of Haman who, commanded by the Persian emperor Ahasuerus (Xerxes), had in a similar way to honor Mordecai, whom Haman hated (Esther 6:6–11). With a little variation, it also comes straight out of the Donation, where Constantine allegedly said about Pope Sylvester: “But we have placed with our own hands upon his most holy head a Phrygian tiara of white radiance, as a symbol of our Lord’s splendid resurrection, and holding his horse’s bridle out of reverence for the blessed Peter we have assumed for him the role of a squire, as we ordain that all his successor pontiffs individually use the same tiara in processions in imitation of our imperial power.”⁵¹

V

This, however, was not the end of that story. After the death of Alexander III, the conflict between the papacy and Barbarossa flared up again. Now the Catholic Church was ruled by a series of weak and short-lived pontiffs, who mostly did not dare to show their faces in Rome, where the populace was also disgusted with them.

First there was Lucius III, who reigned for only four years, from 1 Sept. 1181 to 25 Nov. 1185. Urban III, who succeeded him, lasted a mere two years: 25 Nov. 1185 to 12 Oct. 1187.⁵² Thereupon the cardinals probably suffered some embarrassment, on 20 Oct. 1187, for electing a refusenik pope, Henri of Albano (d. 1189).

In an age without surnames, he was variously named Henry of Marcy (where he was born); Henry of Clairvaux (the Cistercian monastery, where he

ruled as abbot); and Henry of Albano, near Rome (where he became the cardinal bishop).

Several accounts refer to his misselection, though the details vary. One of them disposes of him in half a sentence: “Le cardinal élu, Henri d’Albano, refuse la charge qu’on veut lui confier . . .” (The cardinal elected, Henri d’Albano, refuses the burden that they want to entrust to him).⁵³

This was first recorded in *Exordium magnum Cisterciense sive narratio de initio Cisterciensis ordinis*, a narrative about the origins of the Cistercian order. Its author, Conrad/Konrad (d. 1221), was a monk at Clairvaux in the last decade of the twelfth century before becoming the abbot of Eberbach. The *Exordium* was published together with other material about the famous monastery at Clairvaux, from the time of its founder and first abbot (the famous Bernard).

Amongst other laudatory words, we come across the following, which we emphasize: “et *vicarius Filii Dei* factus, nomen pariter et officium Patris et pastoris adipisci mereretur” (and elected *vicar of the Son of God*, he deserved obtaining the name together with the office of Father and pastor).⁵⁴ But Henry refused the appointment. A day later, Alberto of Morra was elected in his stead and briefly reigned as Gregory VIII (21 Oct.-17 Dec. 1187).

According to Konrad, Henry as a youth was outstandingly innocent and pure; later, as abbot, he imposed a rigorous discipline, not only on others but on himself; afterwards, when he was old and a cardinal bishop, he still daily recited the seven penitential psalms. The reason for this was an old offense: on a day when he was setting an example for his monks through participation in their manual labor, a messenger ran up and summoned him to administer extreme unction to a dying Catholic. But not wanting to interrupt his exemplary, meritorious labor, he sent a substitute, who successfully performed that office. One night, after the prayer known as Compline, while Henry of Albano, still awake, was lying in his cell, the spirit of a departed monk allegedly appeared to him with a message from heaven. The Lord was dissatisfied with what Henry had done, so he imposed on him this daily penance, until he died.⁵⁵

Believing what the Bible teaches, we reject the idea that the dead are conscious and already in heaven. “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” (Eccl. 9:5-6) The only hope for life beyond the grave is a physical resurrection, when Jesus the Life-giver returns. “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” (1 Cor. 15:16-18)

We also, on the basis of God’s Word, do not believe in penance or the asceticism so highly prized and practiced by Cistercians. But Medieval men and women, as many accounts reveal, believed that the holy life was promoted

by physical mortification: wearing hair shirts, sleeping on uncomfortable surfaces, avoiding a bath for months on end . . . It was possible to smell their holiness, and their bodies often crawled with vermin.

We fail to see how such things can have anything to do with righteousness, but Henry of Albano would no doubt have vehemently disagreed. We therefore cannot forbear to mention the contrast between monkery and a truly holy life as measured by Biblical standards, by comparing it with the conduct of the Cathars—often referred to as Albigenses—in Languedoc, Southern France.

Like others of his order, Henry loathed them. This dislike had flared up with his Cistercian predecessor, Bernard of Clairvaux, a mystic, religious poet, writer, and eloquent preacher. In June 1145, he had gone to Languedoc to combat large-scale defections from Catholicism. This included, though it was not limited to, Cathar beliefs.

He discovered a crisis: “The people of the Languedoc had abandoned the Roman Catholic Church *en mass* [*sic*] for unnamed heresies.” Now those folks did know a thing or two about practical godliness. This is what Bernard wrote: “If you question the heretic about his faith, nothing is more Christian; if about his daily converse, nothing more blameless; and what he says he proved by his actions . . . As regards his life and conduct, he cheats no one, pushes ahead of no one, does violence to no one. Moreover, his cheeks are pale with fasting: he does not eat the bread of idleness; he labours with his hands and thus makes his living . . . Women are leaving their husbands, men are putting aside their wives, and they all flock to those heretics! Clerics and priests, the youthful and the adult among them, are leaving their congregations and churches . . .”⁵⁶

About the doctrines of the Cathars or Albigenses very little is known from their own sources, which their persecutors destroyed; but surprisingly much has been written by Catholics. This often zooms in on their supposed Manichaeian dualism, such as the doctrine that matter is intrinsically evil; but fails to present real evidence for it. Most such material, which is vicious as well as grotesquely slanted, is worthless. “It is exceedingly difficult to form any very precise idea of the Albigensian doctrines, because present knowledge of them is derived from their opponents and from the very rare and uninformative Albigensian texts which have come down to us. What is certain is that, above all, they formed an antisacerdotal party in permanent opposition to the Roman church and raised a continued protest against the corruption of the clergy of their time.”⁵⁷

And that was the real problem, especially since they dared to set up and organize a church of their own. This whipped up Catholic zeal for exterminating them. Much of this would be accomplished later, beginning with Pope Innocent III (1160/1161–1216, reigned from 1198), whom we have met before in these pages. Considered “the most significant pope of the Middle Ages,” he greatly strengthened papal power. It was he who would unleash against the Cathars the dreadful Inquisition and in 1208 the Albigensian Crusade.⁵⁸

Though less effective, Henry of Albano had a similar disposition. “He strongly supported the use of force to suppress heresy and a strong alliance between secular ecclesiastic authority in the use of force.” In 1178, he “excommunicated Roger II of Carcassonne for imprisoning William of Dourgne, the [Catholic] Bishop of Albi.” When this proved ineffectual, “Henry returned to the Languedoc in 1181 and led a military attack on Roger’s town of Lavaur, which Roger’s wife Adelaide immediately surrendered to him without giving a fight.”⁵⁹

That, too, was part of this churchman’s sanctity. It will surely be weighed in the balance together with the groans of the Cathars, on the great and final Judgment Day—his penance as well as his cruelty—when his case comes up for final disposition.

Henry of Albano does not appear in any list of pontiffs, though he was elected to be one of them. All the same, we are indebted to Konrad the chronicler for recording the title *vicarius Filii Dei* and his indication that it was a twelfth-century synonym for “pope.” This, we think, is a discovery of some importance.

VI

A few years after Henry of Albano and those feeble pontiffs, the papacy recovered from its weakness and went on from strength to strength. The next stage in the struggle by the man who supposedly sat on Peter’s chair to maintain supremacy over the emperors continued for several pontificates.

Central to the conflict was Barbarossa’s grandson, Frederick II (1194–1250). When he was a boy, he began his career as a protégé of a reluctant Pope Innocent III. Frederick was his Sicilian vassal but subsequently became a powerful Holy Roman Emperor.

After that pontiff had died, feuds and battles raged between this ambitious Hohenstaufen and the popes who followed, especially Gregory IX (before 1170–1241, reigned from 1227) as well as Innocent IV (12th century–1254, reigned from 1243). Ultimately at stake was the very survival of the Papal States.

On the battlefield, the pontificate eventually won, yet in the aftermath this proved to have been a disastrous victory. Cheetham, focusing on the last two of these popes, believed that they greatly erred through an over-concentration on politics. He concluded: “The gradual decadence that the papacy underwent throughout the thirteenth century, that eventually led to schism and disruption, stemmed from the irreparable nature of the breach between the Emperor and Gregory IX (1227–41), a feud prosecuted with increasing violence during the pontificate of Innocent IV (1234–1254).”⁶⁰

As far as it goes, we agree with this evaluation, but we think the problem went deeper. It was inextricably tied up with two interrelated facts: the existence of the Papal States and the popes’ insistence on the right to appoint, depose, and harass the emperor, if this could promote or safeguard their

temporal power. The final showdown came further on in Frederick II's reign, and the more general denouement even later, well beyond the death of Pope Innocent III; but the problem owed much to his pontificate. We therefore provide additional details.

Innocent III was like Alexander III, only more so. Bringing the papacy "to the zenith of its earthly power,"⁶¹ Innocent III believed that God had given him the right to meddle with imperial appointments. "For him there was no doubt at all that only a pope could choose and make an emperor; the latter was simply the sworded arm of the universal Church; the Pope was the sun and the Emperor, shining with reflected light, the moon."⁶² And so he found himself in the position of choosing between Philip of Swabia and Otto of Brunswick.

He first supported the latter, until the new emperor began to annex the church's territories. "Innocent was deeply shocked and grieved. 'It repenteth me', he exclaimed in the words of *I Samuel* 15:12, 'that I have set up Saul to be King, for he is turned back from following me,'" and so the pope supported Frederick II. "Innocent knew perfectly well that he was taking a great risk in sponsoring yet another Hohenstaufen, the grandson and son of two rulers whose conception of empire had in the past so disastrously clashed with the papacy's traditional theory of the proper relationship between the spiritual and secular powers in the Christian world."⁶³

But he thought he would surely know how to handle this young man. After all, he could get rid of emperors. Indeed, his whole career demonstrated tremendous competence in wielding every weapon at his disposal. He was able, through the dreaded power of excommunication and by placing England under a five-year interdict, to reduce King John to vassalage in 1213 for refusing to accept the papal appointee as Archbishop of Canterbury. (The barons, however, rejected this status for themselves and their country "in 1215 when they compelled John to sign the *Magna Carta* . . ." ⁶⁴) Innocent III "imposed similar penalties on King Philip and France for the sovereign's personal misbehaviour as a husband, and in both cases brought the monarchs to heel."⁶⁵ He also mistakenly thought he had healed the great schism between the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches by subordinating to himself their archbishops, after the Venetians—plotting with Frankish knights—had diverted the Fourth Crusade to Constantinople. In 1204, that city was captured and sacked atrociously.⁶⁶

However, though supposedly inspired by the Holy Spirit, popes cannot foretell the future. Real prophecy did exist in early Christianity, as long as it remained unsullied by the degenerate doctrines of the great Mediterranean apostasy. The Revelation also predicted it for the Lord's end-time Remnant Church and specifically linked this gift with the keeping of God's commandments (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). It is an endowment of the Holy Spirit. But whatever entity speaks through the pontiffs is, just like them, incapable of knowing exactly what is to be. If only the popes possessed real prophetic ability, what failures could have been prevented, what fiascos forestalled! But Innocent III could not foresee the problems which his endorsement of

Frederick II would set afoot, or understand the historical principle of unintended consequences.

Frederick's tutor was Cencio Savelli, who in 1216 succeeded Innocent III as Honorius III (d. 1227) and is "often considered one of the great administrators in papal history." His Fifth Compilation (*Compilatio quinta*), "a collection of his decretals, is regarded as the first official book on canon law."⁶⁷

Together with Gratian's *Decretum* and other papal decisions, this work went into the makeup of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. In his *Ordo Romanus* (Roman series), Pope Honorius argued about the prerogatives of his church with reference to what he called excerpts from John the Deacon's *Liber de Ecclesia Lateranensi*.

Honorius especially focused on the spiritual domination and primacy exercised by Catholicism but said it also possessed the glorious name of the Roman Empire. The whole earth should therefore honor and be obedient to "this mother church" (*huic matri Ecclesiae*), founded by Jesus Christ through Peter as well as Paul. To this was added the special right which Constantine bestowed on the pontiff throughout the Roman world. At this point, the pontiff quoted verbatim from the Donation the sentence that includes the words "ut sicut beatus Petrus in terris vicarius Filii Dei videtur esse constitutus . . ." (as the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted Vicar of the Son of God on earth . . .), with which we are by now familiar.⁶⁸

In 1219, just three years into his pontificate, Honorius had "to flee to Viterbo, Italy" owing to a quarrel among leading Roman families. Fortunately for him, Frederick II intervened to ensure the position of his old tutor, which imposed an obligation on the pope, "who, despite his misgivings, crowned Frederick emperor in Rome on Nov. 22, 1220, and finally gave Frederick permission to keep the Holy Roman Empire and Sicily united." After this, however, their relationship deteriorated. The emperor wanted to unite the entire Italy under his control, but the pontiff wanted him away from Europe, insisting that he had to depart on a new crusade. When Frederick kept on postponing it, "in 1225 Honorius threatened to excommunicate him if he did not embark on the crusade by August 1227."⁶⁹

VII

In those years, a splendid poet and a man of noble birth, Walther von der Vogelweide (1170-1230), spoke up. Though nowadays he is chiefly remembered as a minnesinger, and his love songs in Middle High German are still treasured, more than half of his approximately two hundred "existing poems are political, moral or religious."⁷⁰ Von Döllinger was more specific, telling that Walther's "poems abound in anti-papal sentiments."⁷¹

At that time, many people came to believe that "the Donation had brought ruin into the Church," which even "assumed in that legend-producing age the form of an actual occurrence. An angel was said to have cried from heaven,

‘Woe! woe! This day hath poison been infused into the Church.’ The legend is to be found as early as the commencement of the thirteenth century, in WALTHER VON DER WOGELWEIDE [*sic*]. ‘The angel hath told us true,’ says this poet, but he is thinking chiefly of the weakening of the empire, which appears to him to be the evil fruit of the Donation:

‘alle vürsten lebent nû mit êren,
wan der höhste ist geswachet,
daz hat der pfaffen wal gemachet.’⁷²

Having quoted these lines, von Döllinger translated them as follows: ‘That is, ‘all the princes now live with honours, since the highest (the emperor) is weakened. The election of the clergy has brought about this.’⁷³

As we will see, the legend of this angel was to reappear a century later in Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and beyond that, after another hundred years, in William Langland’s *Piers the Ploughman*. But with our narrative we are still back in the thirteenth century when the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II locked horns with the papacy.

His first great opponent was Pope Gregory IX (1145–1241), a nephew of Innocent III, who reigned from 1227 to 1241.⁷⁴ Gregory was “a canon lawyer, theologian, defender of papal prerogatives, and founder of the papal Inquisition.” This man “promulgated the *Decretals* in 1234, a code of canon law that remained the fundamental source of ecclesiastical law for the Catholic Church until after World War I.”⁷⁵

Although this work was actually put together by a Catalan Dominican friar, Raymond of Peñafort (c. 1185–1275),⁷⁶ the compilation received the pope’s endorsement. Therefore, it bears his name.

Since Gratian’s *Decretum* a hundred years earlier, much new material had been added during the regime of later pontiffs, most notably by Innocent III and even Gregory IX himself. Canon lawyers therefore had to spread their attention over “several collections containing decisions most diverse and sometimes contradictory, exhibiting in some cases gaps and in other tedious length; moreover, on several matters the legislation was uncertain.” Raymond of Peñafort spent four years on the task of editing all this material. “He left out 383 decisions, modified several others, omitted parts when he considered it prudent to do so, filled up the gaps, and, to render his collection complete and concordant, cleared up doubtful points of the ancient ecclesiastical law by adding some new decretals.”⁷⁷

This did not, however, affect the validity of Gratian’s *Decretum*. On the contrary, the *Decretals* became part of the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* (the Collection of canon law). One expression in them is most significant, because it is directly derived from the Donation and adapted to the needs of a particular pope.

The key sentence from that document, already quoted in these pages, begins with the words “Ut sicut B. Petrus *in terris* vicarius Filii Dei videtur

constitutus, ita et pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum *gerunt vices . . .*” (As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted Vicar of the Son of God on the earth, so the pontiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles . . .”). But the Decretals modify this to say the Roman pontiff is individually “non puri hominis, sed veri Dei *vicem gerit in terris*” (the representative upon earth, not of a mere man, but of the true God). (Emphases added.) Note how “gerunt vices” (plural) becomes “vicem gerit” (singular), and “in terris” (on the earth) has been moved from before *vicarius Filii Dei* into a new position.⁷⁸ In this way, the vicegerent concept was even more clearly equated with “the Son of God on the earth” and, it seems, individualized to suit Pope Gregory IX himself.

Though historians have judged him harshly,⁷⁹ the Vatican has highly honored his memory. In the Raphael Rooms of Pope Julius II, twin paintings depict “the two founts of the law. On the left is the civil law, represented by the Roman Emperor Justinian holding the Digest of the Roman code. The canon law is represented by Gregory IX holding the decretals. . . .”⁸⁰

VIII

This pope became totally disenchanted with Frederick II, who was reluctant to undertake the crusade he had promised and also offended in other ways. Moreover, for Gregory it was unacceptable that one man, especially Frederick II, a bold individualist as well as the grandson of ambitious Barbarossa, should rule not only over the empire in Germany but also Sicily and southern Italy. He seemed to be a threat to the Papal States, the fruitage of the Donation, which was sandwiched in between. The emperor, therefore, was duly excommunicated.

Relations did not improve with Gregory’s death, for Innocent IV (12th century–1254, reigned from 1243) shared the high-and-mighty ideas of his predecessors. He was deeply distrustful of Frederick and in 1244 called a General Council that met at Lyon. Here the emperor “was solemnly condemned, his subjects were freed from their bond of loyalty to him, and he was deposed on the basis of the triple charge of perjury, sacrilege, and suspicion of heresy. The Pope himself admonished the German princes to elect a new emperor.” The pontiff also engineered an alliance in northern Italy, “which contributed to the Emperor’s defeat at Parma (1247).”⁸¹

In the course of his confrontation with the papacy, Frederick called the pope Antichrist, the compliment being reciprocated because the emperor often traveled around with a whole menagerie of exotic animals. These were presumably the beasts of the Apocalypse. Frederick’s chief ally and counselor at the Council of Regensburg in 1240 or 1241 was Eberhardt II, Archbishop of Salzburg (1200–1246). This cleric was the first to describe the papacy as the Little Horn of Dan. 7. Looking back over almost two centuries, he castigated the pontiffs of the High Middle Ages, declaring: “Hildebrand, one hundred and seventy years before, first laid the foundations of the empire of Antichrist

under the appearance of religion.”⁸²

Nevertheless, Frederick II was defeated and all the males of his line exterminated. The conflict between the Hohenstaufens and the papacy unleashed events that eventually smashed the most powerful country in Europe, the medieval German empire. It kept on breaking up until what was left consisted of some three hundred independent states, which were not reunited until six centuries had passed—in January 1871.

However, this German disunity proved to be very beneficial to the sixteenth-century Reformation from the time of Martin Luther onward. That, however, belongs to another story.

Chapter Twenty-Two
THE DONATION AND A PAPACY IN DECLINE

I

It was the special Catholic jubilee of 1300. An old man for that time, Boniface VIII (c. 1235-1303, reigned from 1294) had ridden to the Lateran “on a white palfrey, with a crown on his head, robed in full pontificals. Two sovereigns walked by his side—the kings of Naples and Hungary,”¹ as though they were his squires. Now, he was sitting, as James Shotwell and Louise R. Loomis put it so picturesquely, “on the throne of Constantine, girded by the imperial sword, wearing a crown, and waving a sceptre” and “he shouted to the throng of loyal pilgrims: ‘I am Caesar—I am Emperor’”!²

Neither the crown nor the sword was just a bit of eccentric theater. They were deliberately symbolical, to show that the pontiff wielded both political and religious power. This reflected the pretensions of the papacy as it sought to dominate the feudal system, in that year as in the foregoing High Middle Ages.

But Boniface, unable to read the signs of the times, did not know that for him with his hubris the number thirteen would prove a most unlucky number. He should have been warned by “the short pontificates of the second half of the thirteenth century, during which no fewer than thirteen Popes came and went.”³ Nor could he even guess what lay beyond the year 1300 for both his church and the countries that had supported it.

It was to be, as the subtitle of a book by Barbara W. Tuchman indicates, *The Calamitous 14th Century*,⁴ the worst hundred years that have ever befallen Western Europe. It was destined to bring the Black Death, obliterating at least a third of its people, and long-term climatic change—with increasing, massive floods, disastrous crop failures, and horrific famine, which further decimated the population. There would be a hundred-years’ war between France and England as well as economic collapse, with all the major Italian banks going bankrupt. The very fabric of feudalism, for so many centuries the system that the Roman Church could depend on, use, and manipulate, was being torn apart. Its replacement, the national states, would center in powerful new kings and emperors who would, when it suited them, co-operate with—yet brook no nonsense from—the papacy.

The pontificate was about to plunge, with dramatic suddenness, from the pinnacle of power to which Gregory VII and his successors had exalted it. For the next five hundred years and beyond, it would never regain the political supremacy it had enjoyed in the High Middle Ages, a time that James A. Wylie called simultaneously “the noon of the Papacy” and “the midnight of the world.”⁵

In the meantime, France had already become the new superpower of Western Europe. Its king, the handsome but frightful Philip IV (1268-1314), the Fair, had begun to tax the clergy and also “summarily tried and imprisoned a French bishop,” without consulting the pope. Now, these actions

were, for Boniface VIII, intolerable; since they threatened the main achievements of his medieval predecessors. And so he “retaliated in 1302 with the bull *Unam Sanctam*, which restated the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power. In 1303 he recognized King Albert I (c. 1250-1308) of Habsburg as the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, which Boniface described as supreme over all other kingdoms, including France.”⁶

Unam Sanctam begins by declaring that outside the Roman Church there is no salvation or remission of sin and ends with the statement that every human creature “is subject to the Roman pontiff,” which is “altogether necessary to salvation.”⁷ Its second paragraph contains a secular claim: “The papal theory that made the pope alone the representative of God on earth, the overlord of emperors, was claimed through succession from Peter, and supported by arguments from the power of the keys, the forged Donation of Constantine, the coronation of Pepin and of Charlemagne, and from such figures as sun and moon, body and soul.”⁸

Unfortunately for Boniface, Pope Gregory IX and his Northern Italian allies had broken the back of that empire fifty years earlier. It could no longer prop up the pontiff in his extremity, and he was unable to manipulate the politics of Europe. Unlike Henry IV, that hapless German emperor at Canossa more than two hundred years before him, Philip IV—being backed by both his people and army—was not going to stand around in any snow.

He could afford to shrug off his personal excommunication, but then—in the summer of 1303—the pope began to work on a larger project: to place all France under the dreaded interdict. Boniface had “once declared that a Frenchman had no soul. The French naturally thought otherwise, and when they heard [of it] . . . there was panic and consternation.”⁹

The intended date for publishing the bull against France had been trumpeted abroad. It was 8 September. But a single day before it Philip struck back with forcible decisiveness. “On September 7, 1303, agents of the king aided by anti-papist Italian armed forces seized the 66-year-old-Pope in his summer retreat at Anagni near Rome with the intention of forestalling the excommunication and bringing him by force before a council. After three days’ turmoil, Boniface was freed by the citizens of Anagni, but the shock of the outrage was mortal and within a month he was dead.”¹⁰

About these events, Antoine Henri de Bérault-Bercastel (1720–1794?), a former Jesuit turned priest and canon of Noyon, who became a popular ecclesiastical historian, has left a graphic account in his *Histoire de l’Église* (History of the Church). Its twenty-four volumes were published during 1778–1780. Augmented by various authors, it was reissued at different times in the nineteenth century. In de Bérault-Bercastel’s account, when Philip’s henchmen with their mounted and other troops so suddenly occupied Anagni, they arrived at a dramatic moment.

Boniface had just finished writing his terrible bull, *Super Petri solio* (Concerning the throne of Peter). In it, according to de Bérault-Bercastel,

he said that as *vicair du fils de Dieu* he had the power to rule over kings with a rod of iron and to break them as a potter's vessel; all King Philip's subjects were absolved from their loyalty to him even though it might have been established through an oath; and under pain of anathema the pope forbade the French to obey or render him any service. Furthermore, any alliances that he may have contracted with other princes were annulled.¹¹

Incidentally, tracing back this account to its original Latin sources, we have not yet been able to confirm that Boniface did apply the title *Vicar of the Son of God* to himself.

When the pontiff heard his enemies were within the gate and on the way to get at him, he declared: "I have been betrayed like Jesus Christ . . . let us die, if necessary; but let us die at least like a pope." He then immediately had himself dressed in the mantle of St. Peter, put the tiara on his head, and took into his hands the keys and the cross. He seated himself on the pontifical chair and, together with the only two cardinals who had not fled, was waiting for his adversaries as they burst in on him.¹²

According to Anne Fremantle, "Anagni came to symbolize the nadir of papal power even as Canossa, some two centuries before, had symbolized its zenith."¹³ And, as Owen Chadwick—looking at the situation of two hundred years later—put it, "ever since Pope Boniface VIII had been kidnapped in the fatal day at Anagni . . . , the Pope walked delicately amid the Sovereigns of Europe."¹⁴

Pope Benedict XI (1240–1304, reigned from 1303), who succeeded Boniface VIII, died with excruciating intestinal pain. He had presumptuously continued to play the excommunication game—at least against Sciarra Colonna, who headed the assault on his predecessor, as well as Gillaume de Nogaret, Philip's chief advisor and Colonna's companion at Anagni.¹⁵ Though this could never be proved, it was widely believed that Nogaret poisoned the pontiff.

The next pope, Clement V (c. 1260–1314, reigned from 1305), was a Frenchman, elected through Philip's manipulations. Terrified by the lot of his immediate predecessors, he was little more than the king's puppet. Philip compelled him to cancel Boniface's bulls, including *Unam Sanctam*, and to turn the dreadful engine of the Inquisition on his own and closest allies, the Knights Templar. Under dreadful torture, they were made to confess to the sins of sodomy and Satanism. Many were burned at the stake.

The King's reasons for dissolving the Order were two-fold; it formed a state within a state, and it was extremely rich. The Templars were great landowners and international bankers, and the royal treasury was itching to lay its hands on their resources. In 1307, without informing the Pope, the King had them arraigned for heresy and immorality. Neither Clement nor his Curia seriously believed these charges, which, if not entirely unfounded, were such as could easily be cooked up

against an exclusive and secretive organization. They would rather have dealt leniently with the Order and, if possible, diverted part of its wealth into the Church's coffers. But Clement, while well aware where the best interests of the papacy lay, did not have the courage to defend them. Egged on by Nogaret, the royal inquisitors pursued the Templars with relentless savagery. Their Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, was brutally tortured and burned, while the Archbishop of Sens sent 54 Knights to the stake on the same day. The papacy did nothing to mitigate the severity of one of the nastiest judicial crimes in history. Nor did the Council of Vienne, which was largely concerned with the affair and approved the Bull that finally extinguished the Order.¹⁶

Apart from serving King Philip, Nogaret also had a personal motive for destroying the Templars. He hated them passionately because under their supervision his parents, who owned and lived on a smallholding twenty-five miles southeast of Toulouse, "had been burnt alive as heretics" for being Cathars.¹⁷

Clement V was a timid pontiff and "chronically ill from cancer." During his time, the papacy, uprooted from Rome, was forced to relocate to Avignon on the Rhône in Southern France, where its headquarters remained for seventy years. Nevertheless, he made "a notable contribution to canon law in the *Clementinae*," later promulgated by Pope John XXII (d. 1334, reigned from 1316) in 1317.¹⁸

The kings of Europe had triumphed over the papacy. The next six popes who followed Clement V were also Frenchmen, reigning not at Rome but at Avignon. This, however, caused a neglect of Italy, both in Rome—an increasingly derelict city—and the Papal States, which attracted political adventurers, who desired its territories for themselves.

Paul Johnson has painted a dismal picture of pontifical Avignon. It totally lacked spirituality and there "the Church turned itself primarily into a money-raising organization." Johnson also thought that "The papacy never really recovered from the move to Avignon."¹⁹ It was by no means the first time that clerics had yielded to the lure of moneymaking, nor would it be the last; but in those days it was their great preoccupation.

II

Such developments horrified all pious Catholics and made them think deeply about the church, the state, and their interrelationship. One illustrious layman who wrote about these matters was Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), a Florentine statesman who went into exile for supporting the imperial party. He was also a theologian, philosopher, father of the Italian language, and an incomparable Christian poet. For greatness as a writer, he equaled William Shakespeare. He lived at the same time as Boniface VIII and Philip the Fair, although he survived them both.

He "asserted in *De Monarchia* [About Monarchy], written in about

1313, that the Pope had no right to exercise universal government or to dictate to the Emperor, who received his authority not from him but directly from God.”²⁰ And how did the papacy react? For this analysis, “Shortly after he died, Dante was accused of Averroism and his book, *De Monarchia*, was burned by the order of Pope John XXII.”²¹

Averroës (1126-1198), a Muslim, wrote summaries and commentaries on Aristotle’s philosophic works, which influenced Islamic as well as Christian scholars in the Late Middle Ages and for many centuries after him. “The basic tenet of Latin Averroism was the assertion that reason and philosophy are superior to faith and knowledge founded on faith.”²²

Against Dante, this charge was simply a slander. It is inherently refuted by his *Divina Commedia*. But being involved in politics, he knew what had happened to the Hohenstaufens, especially Frederick II, who died a few years before he himself was born.

No, the real problem with Dante was that he was far too clever, too knowledgeable, too honest, and too outspoken—a blend of qualities that invariably brings on tribulation. Indeed, asleep in his tomb at Ravenna where he died in exile, he has been doubly honored by the papacy in the persecution of his ideas. First, there was the burning of *De Monarchia* in the fourteenth century. Then, more than two hundred years later, the papacy tilted at him again, when during the Counter-Reformation the Inquisition in 1559 brought out its notorious *Index librorum prohibitorum* (Index of Prohibited Books). *De Monarchia* was included on it for advocating a separation of church and state. Lorenzo Valla’s much-hated debunking of the Donation would likewise earn a place on this honor roll.²³

But Dante also dealt with this subject in his *Divine Comedy*, a three-volume book with hundreds of pages which was then already much too famous for inclusion in the *Index*. Imbedded within this great work are the same political ideas as in *De Monarchia*.

The *Inferno*, the first part of the *Divine Comedy*, in Canto 19 says much about papal corruption. In it, a number of popes are committed to hell for simony and lusting after worldly possessions. One of them is Boniface VIII. Dante clearly indicated that the church through the love of money had become the harlot woman of Rev. 17. Mournfully and indignantly, he exclaimed:

Ahi, Constantin, di quanto mal fu madre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco padre!²⁴

Ah, Constantine! what ills were gendered there –
No, not from thy conversion, but the dower
The first rich Pope received from thee as heir!²⁵

Dante was a very learned man. Therefore, he would probably have read Wetzeld’s 1152 contemptuous dismissal of the Donation as a “lie and heretical fable,” though he himself—unable to prove it—was careful not to

say so. Nevertheless, the ideas of *De Monarchia* are also present and augmented in the *Divine Comedy*.

This fact has drawn attention from various writers. For instance, in 1853 Emil Ruth explained the allegorical elements and basic idea that underlie that great poem by saying Dante wanted to teach the human race about its double destiny: happiness on earth and heavenly bliss. The former must be attained in free political development through all possible forms of government under a common head, an emperor. Taught by the philosophers, this ruler must bring righteousness and peace to the whole world, with the preservation of liberty, to prepare people for the happiness of heaven. This, however, cannot be found on earth. For its attainment, humanity must be led by the pope, “as the head of the holy church and the *Stellverteter des Sohnes Gottes*.” To the pontiff belongs only the realm of spirituality, contemplation, and faith.²⁶

De Monarchia appeared in about 1313 and the *Inferno*, containing the lines that deprecate the Donation, was finished by 1316.

Round about 1322 (just a year after Dante’s death), an Italian hermit, Augustinus of Ancona—also known as Augustinus Triumphus—published his *Summa de Ecclesiastica potestate* (Concerning Supreme Ecclesiastical Power) in manuscript form. It was first printed at Augsburg in 1473.²⁷ For our research, we have especially consulted both the 1479 Vatican edition²⁸ and beautiful JPG images of a hand-copied illuminated manuscript from the Rare Book Collection in the Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School.²⁹ The latter is a pre-Gutenberg version, older than the Augsburg edition, though not necessarily related to it. According to Anders Winroth, the eminent medievalist at Yale who is an authority on such manuscripts, “this looks like a fairly normal 14th-century hand . . .”³⁰

Small differences between these texts, involving both textual criticism and the intricacies of the Latin language, need not here detain us. For a valid translation into English, they make no material difference and can therefore be left to medievalists, who specialize in such things. We will content ourselves with quoting from later variants, such as the authoritative Vatican edition.

Summa de Ecclesiastica potestate was dedicated to Pope John XXII, residing at Avignon in France and a prominent canonist, whom Augustinus admired, though we do not. For he was the pontiff who, to rationalize the opulent lifestyle rampant at the papal court, “condemned as heretical the doctrine of the poverty of Christ,” with the result that the early lives of St. Francis were rewritten.³¹ And as already noted, he had Dante’s *De Monarchia* committed to the flames.

John XXII was also enraged by two scholars whose ideas were very similar to those of the great poet. They were the Italian Marsilio da Padova (c. 1280–c. 1343), and the Frenchman Jean de Jandun (c. 1286–1328). Both of them were influenced by Aristotle’s ideas and evolved a viewpoint that the pontiff hated. In his *Defensor pacis* (Defender of the Peace), which he wrote between 1320 and 1324, Marsilius of Padua taught that the unity

of the state must be preserved “by limiting the power of the church hierarchy The source of all political power and law is the people, among whose rights is the right to choose their ruler. The church’s supreme authority in morals and doctrine, he concluded, should be vested in a general council representative of all believers—people and clergy.”³² John of Jandun, who in his commentaries on Aristotle was especially concerned with “the division between faith and reason,” agreed with him. In 1327, the pontiff excommunicated both of them.³³

His reasons for doing so were summarized well in 1905 by two American professors, Drs. Oliver J. Thatcher at the University of Chicago and Edgar H. McNeal of the Ohio State University. The following were the sentences in *Defensor pacis* that John XXII considered most odious:

(1) When Christ ordered the coin which was taken from the fish’s mouth to be paid to the tax collector, he paid tribute to Caesar; and he did this not out of condescension or kindness, but because he had to pay it. From this it is clear that all temporal powers and possessions of the church are subject to the emperor, and he may take them as his own.

(2) That St. Peter had no more authority than the other apostles, and was not the head over the other apostles; and that Christ left behind no head of the church, and did not appoint anyone as his vicar.

(3) That the emperor has the right to make and depose popes and to punish them.

(4) That all priests, whether pope or archbishop or simple priests, are, in accordance with the appointment of Christ, of equal authority and jurisdiction.

(6) [*sic*] That the whole church together cannot punish any man with coactive punishment, without the permission of the emperor.

The above articles are contrary to the holy scriptures and hostile to the catholic faith and we [John XXII] declare them to be heretical and erroneous, and the aforesaid Marsilius and John [of Jandun] to be open and notorious heretics, or rather heresiarchs.³⁴

The pontiff himself, in heated if repetitive detail, argued his case against these two men at very great length, appealing to both the Bible and history. For those whose Latin is limited, a lively German version of the document by which he did so is available in the 1831 *Römisches Bullarium* (Roman Collection of Bulls), Vol. I, translated by Leonhard Martin Eisenschmid (1795–1836). After ordination as a Catholic priest in 1819, this scholarly man taught at Munich and later at Aschaffenburg in 1824. In 1828, he converted to Protestantism and was then employed as a teacher of the Gymnasium (academic high school) at Schweinfurt, Bavaria, becoming its Rector from 1833.

The Latin original of John XXII’s excommunication bull was preserved in the *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Ecclesiastic Annals) of Cardinal Cesar

Baronius (1538-1607), with Odorico Raynaldi (1595-1671), Giacomo Laderchi (1678-1738), and Augustin Theiner (1804-1874) as his main continuators. Baronius was the confessor of Pope Clement VIII (1536-1605, reigned from 1592), who “made him cardinal in 1596, and in the following year he became Vatican librarian.” The twelve folios of his work (1588-1607) presented Catholic church history down to 1198. The rest was added by the continuators.” The most useful edition of the *Annales* is by A. Theiner (37 Volumes, 1864-1883),³⁵ whose father was a German shoemaker at Breslau.

Theiner graduated with a law degree from Halle University and then became a theologian as well as a historian. He used a scholarship granted by the Prussian Government for “researches in Belgium, England, and France as to the sources of canon law,” which greatly interested him. Thereupon he resorted to and settled permanently at Rome. At some time after 1836, he was ordained a priest. The pope, Pius IX, impressed with his writings, gave him “a position in the Vatican Library in 1850,” commissioning him to write a history of Clement XIV’s pontificate. “In 1855 Pius IX appointed Theiner prefect of the Vatican archives.”³⁶

Up to this point, his career was somewhat similar to that of Baronius, but then he fell foul of the Jesuits and afterwards offended the pope himself. Theiner opposed the doctrine of infallibility. “Both before and during the Vatican Council” I, he smuggled out material to likeminded ecclesiastics, which led to his fall from papal grace. “Because he communicated to them the order of business of the Council of Trent that had been kept secret he was deposed from his dignities and offices.”³⁷

Nevertheless, just two years before his death, his 1872 edition of the *Annales Ecclesiastici* by Baronius—as continued by Raynaldi, Laderchi, and himself—was published. The material in the Vatican archives no doubt enhanced the excellence of this publication. Pope John XXII’s bull of 1327 appears in Volume XXIV (1313-1333). In what follows, we utilize both the Theiner text and the earlier *Römisches Bullarium*, which we have also found useful.

III

John XXII began his bull of 23 October 1327³⁸ with the words “Licet juxta doctrinam,” by which it is named. Amongst other things, he “affirmed that our Lord and His Apostles held true ownership in the temporal things which they possessed, and that the goods of the Church were not rightfully at the disposition of the emperor.”³⁹

This document also deals with Petrine primacy, mingling Biblical arguments with an appeal to the Donation. John XXII declared that nobody should entertain any doubts about this matter, since “Constantine, that most Christian emperor, at some time testified to it, saying: It appears that the blessed Peter was appointed as the *vicarius Filii Dei* on earth. From this it

follows self-evidently that Peter can be called the head of the universal Church according to the way that holy Scripture explains it . . .”⁴⁰

In the original, that key sentence—with a slightly different word order—quotes familiar words: “Hoc ille imperator Christianissimus Constantinus testatus est dicens: Beatus Petrus videtur in terris *vicarius Dei filii* constitutus. Ex hoc etiam sequitur evidenter, quod Petrus caput universalis Ecclesiae potest dici juxta morem illum sacrae Scripturae . . .”⁴¹ Eisenschmid’s *Römisches Bullarium* translates the title as *Statthalter des Sohnes Gottes*.⁴²

John XXII mentioned Constantine several times, as where he pointed out that this emperor’s predecessors had all been idolaters who persecuted the Catholic faith and the orthodox pontiffs. For that reason, the appointment of popes was not derived from and had nothing to do with emperors.⁴³ It seems like a good argument, but John XXII then spoiled it with another appeal to, and by virtually quoting from, the Donation.

He declared that after his baptism Constantine thought it “inappropriate and wrong for an earthly emperor to wield his power where the suprema of the priests and the head of the Christian religion had been established, namely at Rome, for which reason he resigned the imperial seat to Pope Sylvester and transferred his residence to the eastern regions.” The Christian secular rulers therefore had no ecclesiastical rights in the West but were really subject to the pontiff. “The office of emperor was transferred by the pope from the Greeks to the Latins,” so that these also had no right to concern themselves with papal elections. And all this, John XXII asserted triumphantly, is what history demonstrated.⁴⁴

But the Donation was, as we now know, a rickety plank to stand on, though by and large his readers could not yet know it was fraudulent, whatever some of them might have suspected. After all, the pontiff’s rantings of 1327 antedated Lorenzo Valla’s exposé of 1440 by more than a century.

Virtually everything in the Donation is fiction. Constantine never said he believed in Petrine primacy, he never recognized the pope as the head of the church—for this he considered his own prerogative—and he never had leprosy. Also, he moved his capital from Old Rome to New Rome (Constantinople) on the Bosphorus for reasons that had nothing to do with the pontiff. As for Sylvester, it is not he who baptized Constantine, nor did he lay claim to Petrine primacy just because the Donation says so. It is all a tissue of lies.

IV

For us, two things are particularly significant about the bull which we have been considering.

The first is John XXII’s passionate and personal involvement. Since he wrote on his own behalf, he was personally claiming to be the Vicar of the

Son of God and heir to everything with which that colossal forgery had endowed the papacy. Latter-day apologists for the Roman Church have therefore been mistaken in suggesting that the Donation was a mere bagatelle and not historically meaningful, or that no pope ever laid claim to such a title. For instance, in 1988, Karl Keating explicitly stated, under the Imprimatur of Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles: “*Vicarius Filii Dei* never has been used as a title by any pope.”⁴⁵

The second is that almost six hundred years later John XXII’s argumentation echoed beyond his moldering body into the 1917 *Codex iuris canonici* (Code of Canon Law). A new legislative venture, this supposedly superseded the *Corpus iuris canonici* (Collection of Canon Law), which the Catholic Church had been using since Gratian’s time for well over seven centuries.

But the novelty is only superficial. Beneath the surface of what was new, the old stuff lingers on. We note this under Canon 218, No. 1, in the Second Book of the *Codex*, Titulus VII, Chapter I: *De Romano Pontifice* (about the Roman Pontiff). In Latin, it says: “The Roman Pontiff, Successor to the primacy of the Blessed Peter, has not only a primacy of honor, but supreme and full jurisdictional power over the universal Church, both in matters pertaining to faith and morals and those that concern the discipline and governance of the Church throughout the whole world.”⁴⁶

Included in the footnotes with their critical apparatus are many items of substantiation from papal history. Especially this part of the Code was under the personal care of Pietro Gasparri, Ph.D. He had been “professor of canon law at the Catholic Institute, Paris (1880-1898).” A cardinal since 1907, he became the Vatican’s Secretary of State under Pope Benedict XV. He was also made Secretary of the commission that codified the Canon Law.⁴⁷

One footnote in the 1917 *Codex iuris canonici* reads: “Ioannes XXII, const. ‘Licet’, 23 Oct. 1327, art. 2, errorum Marsilii Patavini et Ioannis de Janduno, damn.”⁴⁸ This refers to the excommunication on that date of Marsilio of Padova and Jean of Jandun. During 1949 and 1951, the *Codex iuris canonici* was reprinted in the United States, “with the special permission of the Holy See.”⁴⁹ It contained the same definition of the pontifical office as well as that footnote, though with different pagination.⁵⁰

In condemning those two men, Pope John XXII claimed to be the Vicar of the Son of God; and to prove his point he quoted from and embroidered on the Donation. And this he found in Gratian’s Decretum! Underlying the *Codex iuris canonici* much of the *Corpus iuris canonici* endures, at least so far as its basic ingredients are concerned.

But what about Augustinus's *Summa de Ecclesiastica potestate*, which also originated in that pope's time and was dedicated to him? It proved to be highly influential for especially the next two hundred years. "In the latter part of the sixteenth century, according to William J. Bouwsma (*Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty*, p. 312) it became 'a standard repository of papalist arguments'; and was several times reprinted."⁵¹ That is, the champions of pontifical power used it right down to the time of Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers, even though by then Valla had totally debunked the Donation. Let us look at a few of the ideas in this book.

Like other apologists before him, Augustinus still cited the words: "Ut sicut beatus Petrus in terris *vicarius filii dei* videtur esse . . ." ⁵² (As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted Vicar of the Son of God on earth . . .) They recur in a sentence which expresses his central idea: "There ought to be no doubt for anyone that the supreme pontiff, whom Constantine firmly confessed to be the *vicarium . . . dei Filii*, may elect whomsoever and from wherever it pleases him for the assistance and defense of the church."⁵³ (Emphases added.)

Such a stance, however, brought upon the papacy what Michael Wilks, a lecturer at Birkhead College, University of London, with his book title called *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages* (1963). According to this work, Augustinus argued that the emperor, acting on the pontiff's behalf, could even receive "a universal executive function." This would not, however, nullify the pope's right to intervene directly in the state's affairs if he chose to do so.

Augustinus said the pope was, after all, the vicar of the Son of God ("Est enim ipse papa *Dei Filii vicarius*" [emphasis added]). He elaborated this idea by making a comparison with the Almighty. God also worked through his created agencies while retaining the right to intervene directly in the affairs of the world if he so chooses. Just so, the pontiff might also when necessary go over the emperor's head and rule.⁵⁴

In such reasoning, Augustinus involved not only blasphemous pseudotheology but also a further reference to what he thought was history: "Constantine made a transfer of this kind to the authority of the supreme Pontiff, who just like the *vicarius Dei filii*, the celestial Emperor, has universal jurisdiction over all kingdoms and empires" (emphasis added). Indeed, "the judicial authority of the Pope is greater than that of any angel—the jurisdiction and management of the whole world has been committed to the Pope—because he has received the jurisdiction and care over heaven and earth."⁵⁵

According to William D. McCready in the Jesuit journal *Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion*, 1947, Augustinus—like other late medieval papal publicists—maintained that

secular power for the pontiff was actually based on the authority granted by Jesus to Peter as the chief apostle. Sovereignty over the Roman Empire always by right belonged to the pope and not to Constantine or his predecessors. The Donation was only “a restitution of what the pope had already possessed by right.”⁵⁶

To substantiate this claim, Augustinus used several arguments from the Bible, including one that referred to Dan. 2, which deals with Nebuchadnezzar’s prophetic dream.

The traditional “Protestant” view, which goes at least as far back as Hippolytus (c. 165-c. 235), explains it as follows: the golden head represents the neo-Babylonian Empire, the silver arms and chest the Medo-Persian Empire, the bronze belly and thighs the Greek Empire, the iron the Roman Empire, and the feet of iron mixed with clay the Western European kingdoms. The stone that strikes the feet and then grinds up the entire statue symbolizes the universal kingdom of Christ to be ushered in by the Second Coming.

But Augustinus, in accordance with a Catholic view, had a different interpretation, chiefly for the last part of the dream. The kingdom of Christ, as represented by the stone, allegedly began with his First Coming and existed throughout the Middle Ages with the pope as his vicar on earth.⁵⁷

Like other Historicists, we completely reject this deviant idea. We point out, moreover, that according to the Bible it is the Lord who “removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Dan. 2:21). He successively gave the sovereignty to the Babylonians, the Medes and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. Therefore, the emperor Constantine, a Roman Emperor, owed nothing to the pope. Besides, the medieval papacy did not grind in pieces and utterly destroy the kings of Europe, as required by Dan. 2:35, 44. Instead, it tried to exploit and dominate them.

It is awkward for Augustinus’s theory that he based it on both an erroneous prophetic interpretation and a criminal forgery, although in his time the man who would definitively expose the fraud had not yet been born. His name would be Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457). According to Lewis W. Spitz (1922-1999) of Stanford University, a great professor and world-renowned authority on Martin Luther,⁵⁸ Valla was “perhaps the most brilliant critical mind of the Renaissance,” who had become “a superb Latinist and learned Greek so well that he did translations for the pope on commission.”⁵⁹

Augustinus also had to face a further, difficult problem. In his time the Holy Roman Empire was shrinking and other monarchs, some of them very powerful, had carved out kingdoms for themselves. For this, he says, they had no justification. But, as McCready put it, “although prescription of this kind is not valid against the authority of the church, the pope has willingly acknowledged their claims to jurisdictional sovereignty and abandoned [*dimisit*] his universal claims, in order to avoid scandal and schism amongst the faithful and to foster in their place the *vinculum pacis* [the bond of peace]. Because of these concessions, then, the pope retains the right to the actual

administration of temporal affairs only in those parts of Europe commonly acknowledged to be contained within the medieval empire: indeed, he presses these claims only in Italy and not even in Germany.”⁶⁰

This is nonsense. During the High Middle Ages, in the heyday of papal might, no pontiff would have tolerated such a situation—for the sake of mere peace and unity. McCready himself was troubled by that argument. On the last page of his article, he wondered rather naively about the reason for Augustinus’s failure to explain “why the pope would be willing to excuse the other monarchs of Western Europe from the scope of his extraordinary powers when he is not prepared to make this kind of concession to the emperor.”⁶¹

The real answer, of course, is history. The papacy did not in Augustinus’s time dare antagonize Western European rulers outside what still remained of the Holy Roman Empire—especially not the French. Having suffered the brutality of Philip the Fair and his henchmen, the pontiffs had to be exceedingly careful. They also constantly needed to keep in mind that their headquarters were now in southern France at Avignon and no longer at Rome.

VI

A very great reverse, a direct consequence of relocating to Avignon, was a splintering in the papacy itself. As time went on, the discontented nobles and people of Rome elected a pontiff of their own. This is how Cheetham depicted the ensuing situation: “There had been plenty of antipopes in the past, but the divisions they caused had been transitory and far from fatal. What had now occurred quickly acquired an air of permanence. The Church had two Popes, two papal capitals, two Colleges and two curial systems, both fully staffed and furiously competing with each other. Moreover Europe had split into two political camps, each supporting a different pontiff.”⁶²

Worse was to follow. “Bishop engaged against bishop; and even St. Peter’s chair was divided against itself, there being, at one time, three Popes, each claiming to be the *vicar of the Son of God*, and the true and infallible successor of the holy apostles” (emphasis added).⁶³ And all these infallible pontiffs hurled anathemas against one another.

It was a brutish time of brutish people, debased by a millennium of apostasy, who relished public torture and executions like entertainment at a fair. In France and England, the custom was even to deny a person condemned to death the privilege of confession and final rites administered by a priest—to ensure that he or she would not only suffer great physical agony but also go to hell forever. The rulers of Christendom stubbornly endorsed this practice, despite the Church Council of Vienne which in 1311 ordered that criminals be granted “at least the sacrament of penitence.” Even as late as the sixteenth century, the supposedly moderate

Charles V “declared that no change would be made in his lifetime.”⁶⁴

A generation after Dante, William Langland (c. 1330–c. 1400), an educated cleric of London, wrote *Piers the Ploughman*, between 1360 and 1399. It is regarded by many critics as “one of the early great works of English literature along with Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.” This long poem—“part theological allegory, part social satire—concerns the narrator’s intense quest for the true Christian life.”⁶⁵ It frequently criticizes the medieval church.

It asks: “What Pope or what prelate is there today who carries out Christ’s command, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature’?” and then it focuses on what really preoccupied the clerics at Avignon: material possessions. It zooms in on the Donation to say:

When the kindness of Constantine gave Holy Church
endowments
In lands and leases, lordships and servants,
The Romans heard an angel cry on high above them,
“This day *dos Ecclesiae* has drunk venom
And all who have Peter’s power are poisoned forever.”⁶⁶

(*Dos Ecclesiae* means “wealth or endowment of the church.”)

A general cry for church reform went up all over Europe, and so—despite protestations from all three pontiffs—the powerful Sigismund, king of Hungary and Germany, insisted on a General Council of the church, which was held at Constance in 1414-1418. With widespread support by the crowned heads in the West, it deposed every one of these men and appointed a brand-new pope, Martin V (1368–1431, reigned from 1417). Also during the proceedings of the Council, Jan Hus (John Huss) was burned at the stake on 6 July 1415 for his theological ideas as well as his troublesome reactions to the great schism.⁶⁷

Briefly the pope as well as those Catholic monarchs could heave a sigh of relief. The fourteenth century with its many nightmarish events lay behind them, and a better time seemed to beckon them on. Especially the pontiff might have thought that Europe could again be manipulated to settle back into its old medieval rut.

But what really awaited them were totally new circumstances and an unimaginable series of events that would change the world forever.

Chapter Twenty-Three
THE DONATION CONTRADICTED AND DEBUNKED

I

In some European countries, politics and economics—almost as much as theological differences with the Vatican—fuelled the Protestant Reformation, especially during its early phases. Indulgences played their part, and so did tribute generated by the Donation of Constantine. This can be seen from the careers of three great stalwarts: John Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384) of England, Jan Hus (c. 1370–1415) of Bohemia, and Martin Luther (1483-1546) of Saxony.

The last mentioned was greatly assisted in his attacks on papal corruption by reading Lorenzo Valla's brilliant exposé of the Donation. Although this treatise dated to 1440, it was for almost eighty years not generally available, existing only as copies of a handwritten manuscript. It was first printed by Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523) in 1517,¹ the same year as the posting of Luther's 95 theses. Valla had a considerable influence on the German reformer, who not only rejected the Donation but was increasingly coming to regard the pope as Antichrist.

II

Born in the same year as Langland, Wycliffe—often called the Morning Star of the Reformation—clashed with the papacy, its clerics, and its friars because financially they were eating up his country like locusts. This came in the aftermath of the conflict already referred to between King John and Innocent III.

Conditions for lifting that monarch's excommunication and the interdict against England were vassalage and an annual tribute of a thousand golden marks. By the time of Edward III (1312–1377), however, the country had discontinued its payment for thirty-five years. But suddenly Pope Urban V (c. 1310–1370, reigned from 1362) demanded its resumption together with all the accumulated arrears. Relocating from Avignon to Rome, he needed large amounts of cash.

To this preemptory demand, the king of England, his nobles, and parliament were vehemently opposed, with Dr. Wycliffe greatly abetting them, orally as well as through his writings. James A. Wylie wrote a great deal about this in *The History of Protestantism*. He depicted that great man, not only as a Reformer but as a patriot, which he indicated through a chapter heading entitled "Wycliffe's Battle with Rome for England's Independence."² In this struggle, he bypassed all merely human writings such as the Donation, relying on the Bible, which says nothing of temporal power for the pope.

Wycliffe was a "theologian, philosopher, church reformer, and promoter of the first complete translation of the Bible into English." He wrote influential treatises, especially *De dominio divino libri tres* (Three Books Concerning Divine Dominion) and *Tractatus de civili dominio* (Treatise on Civil

Dominion), “in which he argued men exercised ‘dominion’ (the word is used of possession and authority) straight from God and that if they were in a state of mortal sin, then their dominion was in appearance only. The righteous alone could properly have dominion, even if they were not free to assert it. He then proceeded to say that, as the church was in sin, it ought to give up its possessions and return to evangelical poverty. Such disendowment was, in his view, to be carried out by the state, and particularly by the king.”³

Wycliffe considered it abominable that the papacy at Avignon had largely become such a money-making enterprise.

Apart from rejecting the idea that England should pay tribute to the pope, he attacked the Franciscan friars who enriched themselves with their begging. When Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) had founded their order, he insisted on a life of charitable service and poverty.⁴ But a century later, Pope John XXII “condemned the whole Franciscan theory of evangelical poverty in two decretals (letters): *Ad Conditorem Canonum* (1322) and *Cum Inter Nonullos* (1323),” arguing from the Bible “that Christ and the Apostles had owned property.” He even persecuted the Spiritual Franciscans who resisted his decision.⁵

Wycliffe also, like Luther more than a hundred years after him, “despised indulgences, and the whole notion of a storehouse of merit, or spiritual treasury, at the disposal of the pope.”⁶ He concluded that forgiveness was the free gift of God to all repentant sinners who accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, without any payment. That is, Wycliffe taught the doctrine of righteousness by faith alone.

His theological dissent was therefore closely bound up with his rejection of papal pretensions. This led him to producing the first translation of the Bible in English, for “he held that the only way to free the minds of Christians from the corrupt tyrannies of papal rule was to make the text of Scripture available to them directly, so they could judge controversial matters for themselves.”⁷

III

In Wycliffe’s day, the youthful Richard II (1367–1400, king of England from 1377 to 1399) forged a royal link between England and Bohemia, which since 1993 “has formed much of the Czech Republic.”⁸ On 22 January 1382, he married sixteen-year-old Anne (1366–1394), who “is said to have been a very kind person and popular with the people of England.”⁹

She was both a genuine Christian and a mentally precocious young woman with a mind of her own. Indeed, she “brought with her Bohemian scholars to study at Oxford. They imbibed the fresh air of Wycliffe’s biblical thinking. They not only introduced his ideas back in Prague, but also spread his [Latin] essays through Europe.”¹⁰

Anne’s father was Wenceslas (Wenzel as the Germans called him), king of both Germany and Bohemia. He was also the Holy Roman Emperor, reigning as Charles IV (1316–1378). Under this rather learned sovereign,

diplomatically adroit and touched by the Renaissance, “Prague became the political, economic, and cultural centre—and eventually the capital” of the Empire. “In 1348 Charles founded the first university in central Europe to possess the same rights and liberties as did the universities of Paris and Bologna.” Wenceslas [IV] (1361–1419), his son, succeeded him as king of Bohemia.¹¹

According to Robert Vaughan (1795–1868), professor of History at the London University during 1830–1843, Wycliffe described Queen Anne “as the sister of Caesar, and as possessing the gospel written in three languages, Bohemian, German and Latin.” She is reputed also to have regarded the reformers with favor. She certainly studied the four gospels and read “godly books,” about which, in Wycliffe’s words, “she was more diligent than even the prelates themselves, though their office and business require this of them.”¹²

Just twelve years after she had landed in England, this remarkable woman, only twenty-eight years of age and childless, was swept away by the plague, which dealt a “devastating blow” to Richard II, “whose subsequent unwise conduct lost him the throne.”¹³ Their life together had been so brief, and yet it was to have enduring consequences, for it was the prelude of a dramatic story that would within a generation unfold on the European continent, to which we must now direct our attention.

IV

Jan Hus [John Huss] (c. 1370–1415) “studied Wycliffe’s works and later his theological writings, which were brought into Prague in 1401.” To such seed, the soil of Bohemia proved particularly receptive. Ecclesiastics owned about half of all the land in the country, “and the great wealth and simoniacal practices of the higher clergy aroused jealousy and resentment among the poor priests. The Bohemian peasantry, too, resented the church as one of the heaviest land taxers.” Papal authority having been undermined by the Western Schism with its multiple popes, the time seemed ripe for national reform. For this, “Wycliffe’s writings were the chosen weapon.”¹⁴

Hus was a man of irreproachable character. He also possessed a powerful intellect, great oratorical ability, and gifts as a writer. He taught at the university, where for a few years he was even the rector. At the same time, he preached in the Bethlehem Chapel, using the Czech language instead of Latin. Through these activities, he acquired a large following, but also incurred the animosity of Archbishop Zbyněk, who excommunicated him. After this man’s death, his case was taken up by the Roman Curia itself.¹⁵

Up to that point, the Reformer had been shielded by Wenceslas IV, Anne of Bohemia’s brother, nicknamed the Drunkard, an unstable character whose kingship was in dispute.¹⁶ But “in 1412 the case of Hus’s heresy, which had been tacitly dropped, was revived because of a new dispute over the sale of indulgences that had been issued by Alexander’s successor, the antipope John

XXIII (c. 1370-1415, reigned from 1410), to finance his campaign against Gregory XII, his papal rival. “Their sale in Bohemia aroused general indignation but had been approved by King Wenceslas, who, as usual, shared in the proceeds. Hus publicly denounced these indulgences before the university and, by so doing, lost the support of Wenceslas. This was to prove fatal to him. Hus’s enemies then renewed his trial at the Curia in Rome, where he was declared under major excommunication for refusing to appear and an interdict was pronounced over Prague or any other place where Hus might reside, thereby denying certain sacraments of the church to communicants in the interdicted areas.” To spare the people of Prague, he withdrew and found refuge “mostly in southern Bohemia in the castle of his friends, and during the next two years he engaged in feverish literary activity.”¹⁷

The most important of Hus’s treatises produced under those harrowing circumstances was *Tractatus de Ecclesia* (The Church), which appeared in 1413.

It is an immortal book. Unfortunately, for five centuries, only the Latin original was available. But in 1915, on the fifth centenary of its author’s martyrdom, an eminently readable translation by the church historian David S. Schaff (1852–1941) was published—apparently for the first time in any vernacular language.

In his introduction of *The Church*, Schaff has pinpointed the Bohemian reformer’s indebtedness to his English predecessor: “The leading principles set forth in his Treatise on the Church, Huss found in the writings of Wycliff and particularly in Wycliff’s treatise on the same subject. Not only has he the main principles in common with Wycliff, and also many of his quotations from the Fathers and the canon law and his proofs from Scripture. Huss appropriated paragraph after paragraph from his predecessor and transferred them often with little verbal change to his own pages.”¹⁸

Was this plagiarism? That is an anachronistic question; such a concept did not exist before the nineteenth century began to introduce the ever more tyrannical regime of copyright, which is now beginning to impede the free dissemination of knowledge. For many generations, writers saw no harm in such a verbatim reuse of suitable material created by others and were at liberty to quote one another, often without acknowledgement. Even inspired authors of the Bible did so. For instance, the Gospel according to Matthew has incorporated entire passages from Mark. When Hus produced *De Ecclesia*, he was pressured for time. In fact, he had only three more years to live—and the book would cause him to be burned, explicitly for its Wycliffite ideas, which at his trial he refused to repudiate.

In a nutshell, *De Ecclesia* teaches that the Bible, which it quotes repeatedly, constitutes the sole unerring basis for Christianity, that believers have a right to interpret it for themselves, that killing heretics is contrary to the Gospel, that Jesus himself is the only true pontiff¹⁹—St. Peter’s so-called successor could therefore not be the head of the church—and that a wicked life disqualifies a cleric, whether he is a priest, a bishop, a cardinal, or a pope.

Such people, according to Hus, are collectively “the clergy of antichrist,” discernible from the fact that it is “zealously intent upon human traditions and rights which savor of pride and the greed of this world, and that it wishes to live ostentatiously and in pleasure and in a way contrary to Christ, wholly neglecting the imitation of the Lord Jesus Christ in its living.” About this, the Reformer quoted the Saviour’s admonition: “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16) and asked: “If, therefore, a prelate is proud, lives in luxury, follows after greed, is impatient, does not feed the sheep, but oppresses and scatters them, is he not antichrist?”²⁰

This is classic Protestantism, a century before Martin Luther, but rank heresy from a papal point of view, as formulated over more than a thousand years while Roman Catholicism reigned supreme—at least in Western Europe.

During the fourth century, the imperial church under the Emperor Constantine had persecuted the North-African Donatists precisely for teaching that unworthy conduct on the part of a priest or a bishop disqualified him from office. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) concurred. According to the Catholic historian Paul Johnson, he even considered torture a legitimate device for furthering the ends of the church. “He not only accepted, he became the theorist of persecution; and his defences were later to be those on which all defences of the Inquisition rested.”²¹ More than eight hundred years later, Thomas Aquinas (1224/25–1274), still recognized today “by the Roman Catholic Church as its foremost Western philosopher and theologian,”²² echoed Augustine in his *Summa Theologiae* where he wrote: “Heresy is a sin which merits not only excommunication but also death.”²³ Both these men have long since been canonized as saints.

And popes as far separated in time as Leo I (4th century to 461, reigned from 440) and Gregory VII (c. 1025–1085, reigned from 1073) had insisted, centuries before Hus, that the Roman pontiff was always infallibly right, not because he was in himself a good person but by virtue of his office. In the fifth century, Leo wrote that “any Pope, whatever his personal failings, was as legitimately entitled to perform his functions and govern the Church as the most morally and intellectually perfect individual.”²⁴ And six hundred years after him, Gregory VII went even further, asserting in his *Dictatus papae* that the pontiff “once ordained according to canonical law, becomes indubitably holy by the merit of St Peter.”²⁵ Both these popes were canonized as saints of their church.

It is clear that well before Wycliffe and Hus, these matters had all—so far as Catholicism was concerned—been fully settled. “Gregory was convinced that the pope was the living successor and representative of St. Peter. Because of this link, the pope, and he alone, would always remain a true Christian, never deviating from the faith and always cognizant of the will of God. Therefore, all Christians owed him absolute and unquestioned obedience. Disobedience was regarded as heresy, and obedience to God became obedience to the papacy.”²⁶ And this is what every pontiff since Gregory has also believed, including the three rival popes produced by the Schism.

The comment of *De Ecclesia* by Hus on all such posturing is that in the beginning Christianity had no human pontiff, nor did one church lord it over the others: “Christ is a most sufficient head as he proved during three hundred years or more. . .”²⁷

How then did the papacy obtain dominion, both ecclesiastical and secular? To this question, the book provides a bold reply: “Constantine, the Caesar, three hundred years after Christ, instituted the pope; because the Roman pontiff was an associate of other pontiffs until the donation of Caesar by whose authority the pope began to rule as head.”²⁸ At this point, Hus referred to and quoted from two parts of the Donation. Where it says that Constantine “on the fourth day after his baptism conferred on the pontiff the grant—*privilegium*—of the Roman church that the pontiffs might have headship in all the earth, as judges over the king.” Also where it asserts that the pope is “to hold government over the four sees, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Constantinople, and is the highest ruler over all priests in the whole world . . . See how the institution and pre-eminence to the pope emanated from Caesar’s power, which, however, cannot limit God’s power.”²⁹

What is more, Hus added: “For this reason later pontiffs, fearing that they might lose their pre-eminence, sought confirmation from other Caesars.” About this he quoted from the Donation of the emperor Louis,³⁰ Pepin’s grandson.

As we have shown, the historical truth was rather more complex, since other emperors, like Gratian, Theodosius, Justinian, and Charlemagne, were also involved. What is more, the Donation was—as Hus did not know—a forgery. In essence, however, he was right; and communicating such things exacted a terrible price.

By contradicting the dogma of papal supremacy, both ecclesiastical and secular, Wycliffe and his Bohemian successor were literally playing with fire. The former was saved from it by dying before his enemies could light it under him. But Jan Hus was consumed by it. This is how it happened.

King Sigismund (1368–1437), the younger half-brother of Wenceslas and Anne of Bohemia, was now ruling over Hungary and Germany. He would eventually also be crowned as Holy Roman Emperor. He was determined to end the division in European Christendom as well as the theological discord that was undermining the Catholic Church. In 1412–1413, while campaigning against Venice, Italy, “he also persuaded one of the three rival popes, John XXII, to call a Church Council at Constance to settle the Western Schism.”³¹

Intent on also stamping out heresy, “he sent an emissary to invite Hus to attend the council to explain his views—an invitation Hus naturally was reluctant to accept. But when [Pope] John threatened King Wenceslas for noncompliance with the interdict, and after Sigismund had assured Hus of safe-conduct for the journey to Constance and back (no matter what the decision might be), Hus finally consented to go.”³²

Alas, shortly after his arrival, he was, “with Sigismund’s tacit consent,” arrested and imprisoned. His enemies saw to it that he was tried before the

Council as a Wycliffite heretic. Refusing to recant, he was sentenced on 6 July 1415 and promptly burned at the stake.³³ And what about the safe-conduct? It was ignored, because as Richard Frederick Littledale (1833–1890), a learned Anglican apologist, pointed out: “It is the received principle of the Roman Church, that no faith need be kept with heretics; and no oath, however solemn, observed which is against Roman interests.” Because of the outcry which followed, the Council retrospectively passed a decree to that effect,³⁴ which sought to rationalize its horrid deed and Sigismund’s perfidy.

But it was all in vain, for sparks from that auto-da-fé at Constance flew back to Prague and over the rest of Bohemia, igniting a national uprising. Sigismund had to fight a “series of wars against the Hussites during the decade of the 1420s, most of which were military disasters” for him and his party.³⁵ The upshot was an independent church, which defied the papacy for more than a century, down to and even beyond the time of the sixteenth-century Reformation.

Another legacy was the survival of *De Ecclesia*, together with a prophecy by Hus, which he uttered more than once in the time of his imprisonment. Even as the executioner finally bound him to the stake with a chain around his neck, he said: “It is thus . . . that you silence the goose [which is what *Hus* means in the Czech language], but a hundred years hence there will arise a swan whose singing you shall not be able to silence.”³⁶

V

First, however, a dramatic development intervened: the debunking of the Donation, which began in the later fifteenth century, within a few years after the martyr’s death. Three Renaissance scholars “succeeded, more than any others had done, in exploding the myth on historical grounds, proving without doubt that the *fact* of the Donation, no less than the document, was a fraudulent invention.” These were Reginald Pecock (c. 1395-1460), Bishop of Chichester; Cardinal Cusa (1401-1464); and especially Lorenzo Valla (1405-1457).³⁷

In his analysis of 1440, *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio* (A Presentation About the Falsely Believed and Invented Donation of Constantine”), the last mentioned—a papal secretary³⁸—irrefutably exposed the Donation as a forgery,³⁹ only twenty-five years after Hus had been burned at Constance. Letting the cat out of the bag made Valla unpopular, to put it lightly. Later he was condemned for heresy and barely escaped being burned alive, because a king intervened on his behalf.⁴⁰

By butchering this holy cow of the papacy, Valla was, for his time, acting with almost foolhardy courage. Not surprisingly, the gentle fathers of the Inquisition tried to destroy him for this and other heterodox activities—like refusing to believe that it was the Twelve Apostles who had written the Apostles’ Creed. Their design, however, was thwarted by his powerful employer, Alfonso V of Aragon (1396-1458), king of Naples. This monarch

did not want to lose his extremely gifted Latin secretary, who so usefully buttressed his own political pretensions against the territorial claims of the pope. “Only Alfonso’s personal intervention saved him from the stake.”⁴¹

This has not prevented recent apologists for the Vatican from claiming Valla as one of their own. Nominally he was a Catholic, like most people in the West of those days; and afterwards he did act as Apostolic Secretary for Pope Nicholas V and was favored by Calixtus III.⁴²

Nevertheless, he was a proto-Protestant and his critical knife cut very deep. Apart from debunking the Donation, he also “denied that the Apostles [*sic*] Creed was composed in succession by each of the twelve Apostles,” said that Augustine had committed heresy, ridiculed the Latin used by Jerome when he translated the Vulgate, and “questioned the utility of monastic life.”⁴³

That Valla never repented of or desisted from his attacks on those whom the papacy deeply venerated is shown by his last performance in 1457, the year when he died. He had been asked to speak on the anniversary of Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval Catholic scholar and saint. But instead of simply praising him before the Dominicans who had gathered at Rome to celebrate the day in the church of Sta. Maria sopra Minerva, Valla criticized “St. Thomas’ style and his interest in logic that advocated a return to the theology of the Fathers of the church.”⁴⁴

No, he was never an obedient son of mother Rome; and it does not surprise us to learn that Erasmus praised him or that Luther “had a very high opinion” of him. During the Counter-Reformation, Jesuit Cardinal Bellarmine justly characterized Valla as *praecursor Lutheri* (a forerunner of Luther).⁴⁵

Did remorseful pontiffs then respond by giving up the scepter and returning the Papal States to the control of their inhabitants? They certainly did not. Or did they confess their error in elevating themselves over other bishops? Well, that would have been awkward, since the admission would have undermined the idea of the pope’s infallibility and threatened his political position in Italy.

As for Valla’s and anybody’s assault on the Donation, it enraged the Vatican. About this, Lord Acton (1834-1902), a great Catholic historian—renowned for his dictum “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely”—has left a most significant finding.

His mother belonged to the German aristocracy; therefore, after Oscott College, Warwickshire, he went on to study at Munich. Here he was grounded in the new and more scrupulous German methods of historical research by Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger. As a consequence, Acton applied a “rigorously scientific approach to history.”⁴⁶

According to Gertrude Himmelfarb, the latter characterized the work of the Inquisition as follows: This body had not been created to combat sin, “unless accompanied by [theological] error. . . . The gravest sin was pardoned, but it was death to deny the donation [*sic*] of Constantine. . . . and the Donation was put on a level with God’s own law.”⁴⁷

That such indeed was the case is proven by a fearsome fact: “‘This donation,’ said Daunou, ‘obtained belief so long, that in 1478, Christians were burnt at Strasburg for having dared to doubt its authenticity!’”⁴⁸ They had probably read Valla’s exposé, and paid for it with their lives.

Only three centuries later did the Catholic establishment at last reluctantly admit the Donation to have been a spurious document.

VI

In 1443, three years after Valla’s work had appeared, Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1405–1464), a poet, a playwright, and for a while the ambitious secretary of Frederick III, recommended that a General Church Council be held to deal with the issue, inciting his employer to confiscate all the territories concerned;⁴⁹ but nothing came of this, since the German emperor lost his struggle against the pontiff.

In 1458, fifteen years after his radical proposal, Piccolomini purchased the papacy for himself by securing a block of votes controlled by his friend Rodrigo Borgia. This unscrupulous man, who later became pope Alexander VI, wanted to stay on as papal vice-chancellor. The deal concluded, Piccolomini was duly elected and became Pius II.⁵⁰

One of his preoccupations was resistance against the Turks who had captured Constantinople just five years earlier. He therefore “summoned the Christian princes to a congress in Mantua to study and meet the danger.” Arriving there on 1 June 1459, however, “he was alone. Very gradually some came but only to squabble for advantages to themselves.”⁵¹ The rulers of Europe were no longer interested in Crusades, and—to tell the truth—subsequently Piccolomini also became halfhearted about this issue.

It would have been unnecessary to mention the 1459 episode if it were not for a curious anonymous poem written during April of the same year to honor the Duke of Milan with his entourage and to celebrate the new pontiff, who both visited Florence. Its date is provided by the heading, which mentions the month, and the second line of text, where the year is given: “Mille, e Quattrocento cinquanta nove” (a thousand and four hundred fifty-nine). In lines 134 and 136, it calls Piccolomini the *vicario del Figliuol di Dio* and “head of the Christians, holy pope Pius.”⁵²

We particularly note that he also executed a total about-face over the debunked Donation, or at least its fruitage: papal sovereignty as a temporal ruler over much of the Italian peninsula. Piccolomini set about regaining control over the Papal States, some of which had already slipped from pontifical rule, “and on Jan. 17, 1460, he issued a bull condemning appeals from a pope to a general (ecumenical) council of the church.”⁵³ This can be seen as a willful rejection of Valla’s findings.

Strangely, the two men were compatriots and exact contemporaries, both being born in the Papal States in 1405. Both were also humanists, versatile writers, with a love of fine literature. Devoted to the Renaissance, they further

had in common an excellent ability to turn out good and cultivated Latin texts. But they differed in a crucial way. Valla had principles, especially being too addicted to the truth, for which he would fight to the bitter end, however much this could endanger him. Piccolomini, a minor impoverished nobleman, had none, except for personal advancement, and a thirst after immortality, not so much in heaven as culturally, in the memory of future generations.

A literary adventurer, the latter used his pen and considerable charm to enrich himself and seek the highest position to which he could aspire. Like Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), to be born just five years after his death, Piccolomini knew all the tricks that unscrupulous fifteenth-century Italians resorted to for the achievement and retention of political power—and also, more than half a millennium before Dale Carnegie, how to win friends and influence people.

As far as possible, Piccolomini agreed with everybody about everything, and did not allow mere truth to stand in his way. “He had done many things which probably he wished he had been spared the necessity of doing; but poverty sharpened his wits till they regarded strict honesty as clumsy blundering, and his ambition, which had all its own work to do, neglected, in the pressure of business, the sharp distinctions to which more groveling minds have time to attend.”⁵⁴

His addiction to Renaissance ideals also encouraged the pontiffs who succeeded him to focus on art and worldly fame instead of religion. This had started with Pope Nicholas V (1397–1455, reigned from 1447), who had begun “a program for the rebuilding of many of Rome’s architectural wonders, including St. Peter’s Church, and became the patron of many artists and scholars.”⁵⁵ Piccolomini/Pius II was more interested in literature, but he continued this trend, and so did Julius II (1443–1513, reigned from 1503)⁵⁶ and Leo X (1475–1521, reigned from 1513).⁵⁷

In their time, the city on the Tiber became “the literary and artistic capital of Europe.” It “ceased to have much care for religion; and Erasmus was startled to find in Rome that no one was considered to be in the fashion who did not hold some false or erroneous opinion about the dogmas of the Church, that the Cardinals made oath ‘by the immortal gods,’ and proved the souls of men and beasts to be the same.” The Papacy had “fallen victim to a heresy worse than any she had in former times combated—the heresy of the Renaissance.”⁵⁸ Instead of God, the popes and other cultivated prelates at the Vatican were worshiping beautiful manuscripts, paintings, statues, and architecture. They were also enamored of charming poems.

Curiously, the most famous among these, *Orlando Furioso* (The Frenzy of Orlando), an Italian romantic epic by Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), in one passage pokes fun at the spurious Donation. It is one of the longest poems in European literature and was destined to wield an astounding influence on subsequent writers in various languages as well as on artistic creations. Among these have been Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, operatic music, and many paintings.⁵⁹ For poetic achievement, Ariosto was for his day as great a figure

as Dante and Langland had been in theirs, with one great difference: after reading Valla, Piccolomini, and other debunkers, he knew the Donation was a phony document.

Orlando, the hero in the poem, is the Italian version of Roland, Charlemagne's great military leader, who helped him save Europe from Saracen invaders. This champion had, however, gone astray by falling in love with Angelica, a pagan princess. Orlando was quite deranged, having lost half his wits. To find them and restore his sanity, an English knight, Astolfo, mounted on a winged steed, a hippogriff.⁶⁰

He searched everywhere. At one point, he found himself in the entrance of hell, though he did not venture further down. Afterwards he flew onto a delightful mountain, which was the terrestrial paradise. There he met three men: Enoch, Elijah, and John, who had written the Apocalypse and supposedly also never died. The apostle told Astolfo he would take him to the moon where all of the world's lost things were kept. They flew aloft on the chariot which once had taken Elijah up to heaven, drawn by four very red and flame-like horses. In a valley on the moon, they discovered Orlando's lost sanity and took it back with them in a bottle. But while they were there, they also surveyed a large number of other things which had been lost on earth.⁶¹

Some of them were represented as symbols, which the Apostle John interpreted. Among other things, the two men also chanced upon the Donation:

Di vari fiori ad un gran monte passa,
ch'ebbe già buono odore, or putia forte.
Questo era il dono (se però dir lece)
che Costantino al buon Silvestro fece.⁶²

He passed a heap of flowers, that erst distilled
Sweet savours, and now noisome odours shed;
The gift (if it may lawfully be said)
Which Constantine to good Sylvester made.⁶³

Orlando Furioso was first published during 1516. This was a year before the theological roof began to fall in on the Vatican, which would help to account for the fact that no action was taken against the poet. Besides, in those days the Renaissance pontiffs were culturally besotted and irreligious. Their greatest yearning was to be immortalized by famous artists, like Raphael (1483–1520), who charged exorbitant fees. The reigning pope, Leo III, was a de' Medici and a connoisseur of everything beautiful.

To pay for it all, the pope and other princes of the church exacted ever more money from their subjects, including the apparently simpleminded Germans beyond the Alps.

But these were a frugal, hardworking folk, who kept a watchful eye on their cash and resented wily traffickers in souls who kept on turning up to exploit them in the name of religion.

VII

On the morning of Wednesday, 31 October 1517, the Elector Frederick, who ruled over Saxony, related to his brother, Duke John, a recurring dream which had troubled him the previous night. Wylie said it “is recorded by all the chroniclers of the time.”⁶⁴

Frederick dreamed he saw a monk who wrote something on the castle church door at Wittenberg, in huge letters readable far and wide. “The pen which he used was so large that its end reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion that was crouching there, and caused the triple crown upon the head of the Pope [Leo] to shake. All the cardinals and princes, running hastily up, tried to prevent it from falling. You and I, brother, wished also to assist, and I stretched out my arm;—but at this moment I awoke, with my arm in the air, quite amazed, and very much enraged at the monk for not managing his pen better.” (Leo in Latin means *lion*.)

Thereupon Frederick fell asleep again and “the dream returned. The lion, still annoyed by the pen, began to roar with all his might, so much so that the whole city of Rome, and all the States of the Holy Empire, ran to see what the matter was. The Pope requested them to oppose this monk, and applied particularly to me, on account of his being in my country.” Once more, the Elector woke up.

When he slept again, he “dreamed that all the princes of the Empire, and we among them, hastened to Rome, and strove, one after another, to break the pen; but the more we tried the stiffer it became, sounding as if it had been made of iron. We at length desisted. I then asked the monk (for I was sometimes at Rome and sometimes at Wittenberg) where he got this pen, and why it was so strong. ‘The pen,’ replied he, ‘belonged to an old goose of Bohemia, a hundred years old.’ As to its strength, it is owing to the impossibility of depriving it of its pith or marrow; and I am quite astonished at it myself.’ Suddenly I heard a loud noise—a large number of pens had sprung out of the long pen of the monk. I awoke a third time: it was daylight.”⁶⁴

That very afternoon, Martin Luther, Augustinian monk and priest-professor, posted his nine-five theses against indulgences on the castle church door at Wittenberg. He was incensed because the Dominican monk, John Tetzel, had told the parishioners who bought them that possession of these documents made repentance unnecessary. What is more, with them future sins which they were planning to commit would allegedly also be forgiven. Further, “a scale of prices was so fixed as to draw heavily from the rich and yet not overlook and miss the pennies of the poor.” For instance, “the royal crime against the laws of the Church, of marriage with a first cousin” would cost [in today’s currency] \$5,000, while the terrible sin of wife-murder or parricide cost only \$20.”⁶⁵

The posting of Luther’s nine-five theses in Latin to invite local debate about these issues, caused the printers to copy and translate them. Published throughout Europe, this set off an unimaginably rapid avalanche of events.

By 1520, he found himself standing at perilous crossroads, much as the Bohemian Reformer and martyr had done a hundred years before. In that year, Luther produced a number of antipapal publications. During the first three weeks in June, he wrote his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate*, an open letter to the youthful Emperor Charles V (1500–1558), who had been elected the previous year, and especially the princes ruling over the different states in Germany. In the midst of this activity, far to the south in Rome, Pope Leo X on 15 June completed *Exsurge Domine* (“Arise, Lord, and Defend Thine Own Vineyard Against the Wild Beast That is Devouring It”). This was a bull of excommunication against Martin Luther, giving him just 60 days to recant.⁶⁶

The *Address to the Christian Nobility* largely focuses on the pontiff, his cardinals, and other Italian clerics, together with the many devices they were using for the financial exploitation of Germany. It calls for the secular rulers to convene a General Church Council to address and remedy these abuses by acting against the papacy in the interest of their country and its people. Throughout this treatise, Luther buttressed his reasoning with copious quotations from the Bible. He was also very specific in his accusations. The following is a sample:

1. It is a distressing and terrible thing to see that the head of Christendom, who boasts of being the vicar of Christ and the successor of St. Peter, lives in a worldly pomp that no king or emperor can equal, so that in him that calls himself most holy and most spiritual there is more worldliness than in the world itself. He wears a triple crown, whereas the mightiest kings only wear one crown. If this resembles the poverty of Christ and St. Peter, it is a new sort of resemblance. They prate of its being heretical to object to this; nay, they will not even hear how unchristian and ungodly it is. But I think that if he should have to pray to God with tears, he would have to lay down his crowns; for God will not endure any arrogance. His office should be nothing else than to weep and pray constantly for Christendom and to be an example of all humility.

However this may be, this pomp is a stumbling-block, and the Pope, for the very salvation of his soul, ought to put it off, for St. Paul says, “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. v. 21), and again, “Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (2 Cor. viii. 21). A simple mitre would be enough for the pope: wisdom and sanctity should raise him above the rest; the crown of pride he should leave to antichrist, as his predecessors did some hundreds of years ago. They say, He is the ruler of the world. This is false; for Christ, whose vicegerent and vicar he claims to be, said to Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John xviii. 36). But no vicegerent can have a wider dominion than this Lord, nor is he a vicegerent of Christ in His glory, but of Christ crucified, as St. Paul says, “For I determined not to know

anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (2 Cor. ii. 2), and “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant” (Phil. ii. 5, 7). Again, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. i.). Now they make the Pope a vicegerent of Christ exalted in heaven, and some have let the devil rule them so thoroughly that they have maintained that the Pope is above the angels in heaven and has power over them, which is precisely the true work of the true antichrist.

2. What is the use in Christendom of the people called “cardinals”? I will tell you. In Italy and Germany there are many rich convents, endowments, fiefs, and benefices, and as the best way of getting these into the hands of Rome, they created cardinals, and gave them the sees, convents, and prelacies, and thus destroyed the service of God. That is why Italy is almost a desert now: the convents are destroyed, the sees consumed, the revenues of the prelacies and of all the churches drawn to Rome; towns are decayed, the country and the people ruined, because there is no more any worship of God or preaching; why? Because the cardinals must have all the wealth. No Turk could have thus desolated Italy and overthrown the worship of God.

Now that Italy is sucked dry, they come to Germany and begin very quietly; but if we look on quietly Germany will soon be brought into the same state as Italy. We have a few cardinals already. What the Romanists mean thereby the drunken Germans are not to see until they have lost everything—bishoprics, convents, benefices, fiefs, even to their last farthing. Antichrist must take the riches of the earth, as it is written (Dan. xi. 8, 39, 43). They begin by taking off the cream of the bishoprics, convents and fiefs; and as they do not dare to destroy everything as they have done in Italy, they employ such holy cunning to join together ten or twenty prelacies, and take such a portion of each annually that the total amounts to a considerable sum. The priory of Wurzburg gives one thousand guilders; those of Bamberg, Mayence, Treves, and others also contribute. In this way they collect one thousand or ten thousand guilders, in order that a cardinal may live at Rome in a state like that of a wealthy monarch.⁶⁷

In a footnote, Luther’s translator added this explanation: “The epithet “drunken” was formerly often applied by the Italians to the Germans.”⁶⁸ The latter were great beer-drinkers—many still are—while the supposedly more refined clerics in Rome sipped wine of exquisite and expensive vintage.

Apart from the Bible and his knowledge of history, both ecclesiastical and secular, Luther had two important background documents to buttress his position. One was a copy of Jan Hus’s *De Ecclesia*, sent to him by the followers of the Bohemian reformer from Prague. It reached him in early October 1519.⁶⁹ The other was Lorenzo Valla’s devastating critique which

showed that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery, in Ulrich von Hutten's second edition, published during 1520.⁷⁰

Luther read Hus. In January 1520, he wrote to his friend, the Humanist Spalatin (1484–1545): “I have taught and held all the teachings of John Huss, but this far did not know it. Johann Staupitz had taught it in the same unintentional way. In short we are all Hussites and did not know it. Even Paul and Augustine are in reality Hussites . . . I am so shocked that I do not know what to think when I see such terrible judgments of God over mankind, namely that the most evident evangelical truth was burned in public . . . Woe to this earth.”⁷¹

Ten days later, in February, he again wrote to Spalatin “after reading Valla's exposure of the Donation of Constantine, that he now had no doubt that the Pope was the real Antichrist, expected by the world.”⁷²

When Luther finally committed his *Address to the Christian Nobility* to writing and refers to the forgery, he was fierce: “It must have been a plague sent by God that induced so many wise people to accept such lies, though they are so gross and clumsy that one would think a drunken boor could lie more skillfully. How could preaching, prayer, study, and the care of the poor consist with the government of the empire? These are the true offices of the Pope, which Christ imposed with such insistence that He forbade them to take either coat or scrip (Matt. x. 10), for he that has to govern a single house can hardly perform those duties. Yet the Pope wishes to rule an empire and to remain a pope. This is the invention of the knaves that would fain become lord of the world in the Pope's name . . .”⁷³

And what remedy does Luther propose?

The Pope must withdraw his hand from the dish, and on no pretence assume royal authority over Naples and Sicily. He has no more right to them than I, and yet claims to be the lord—their liege lord. They have been taken by force and robbery, like almost all his other possessions. Therefore the Emperor should grant him no such fief, nor any longer allow him those he has, but direct him instead to his Bibles and Prayer books, so that he may leave the government of countries and peoples to the temporal power, especially of those that no one has given him. Let him rather preach and pray! The same should be done with Bologna, Imola, Vicenza, Ravenna, and whatever the Pope has taken by force and holds without right in the Ancontine territory, in the Romagna, and other parts of Italy, interfering in their affairs against all the commandments of Christ and St. Paul. For St. Paul says “that he that would be one of the soldiers of heaven must not entangle himself in the affairs of this life” (2 Tim. ii. 4). Now the Pope should be the head and the leader of the soldiers of heaven, and yet he engages more in worldly matters than any king or emperor. He should be relieved of his worldly cares and allowed to attend to his duties as a soldier of heaven. Christ also, whose vicar he claims to be, would have nothing to do with the

things of this world, and even asked one that desired of Him a judgment concerning his brother, “Who made Me a judge over you?” (St. Luke xii. 14). But the Pope interferes in these matters unasked, and concerns himself with all matters, as though he were a god, until he himself has forgotten what this Christ is whose vicar he professes to be.⁷⁴

Repeatedly throughout that document, Luther accused the papacy of pride and avarice. He insisted on the priesthood of all believers and therefore rejected the idea that the pontiff belonged to a special caste which was elevated above judgment by the secular power. This, he maintained, has the duty to act against all evildoers.

As for the idea that the pope was immune to retribution, Luther indignantly exclaimed: “It must have been the arch-devil himself who said, as we read in the ecclesiastical law, If the Pope were so perniciously wicked, as to be dragging souls in crowds to the devil, yet he could not be deposed. This is the accursed and devilish foundation on which they build at Rome, and think that the whole world is to be allowed to go to the devil rather than they should be opposed in their knavery. If a man were to escape punishment simply because he is above the rest, then no Christian might punish another, since Christ has commanded each of us to esteem himself the lowest and the humblest (Matt. xviii. 4; Luke ix. 48).”⁷⁵

Unfortunately Emperor Charles V ignored this appeal. Nor, at that time, would most of the German nobility side with Luther. Instead, on 10 October 1520, the Reformer finally received the pontiff’s bull of excommunication, which had arrived from Rome. From 12 November onward, Luther’s writings were burned in Cologne and elsewhere in Germany. On 10 December, he retaliated by burning *Exsurge Domine* as well as other papal documents, the canon law, and books by his enemies.⁷⁶

The next year, 1521, brought Luther’s appearance before the Diet of Worms, where he refused to recant. The youthful emperor, Charles V, a devout Roman Catholic, rejected Luther’s appeal just as his predecessor a hundred years earlier had despised the words of Hus. He went on to sacrifice his career and personal happiness in support of his religion, headed by the pontiff.

The clerics pleaded with the emperor to ignore his own safe-conduct and have Luther arrested on the grounds that faith need not be kept with a heretic. He refused. Then “he was still further urged by the most bitter of Luther’s papal enemies to deal with the Reformer as Sigismund had dealt with Huss—abandon him to the mercies of the church; but recalling the scene when Huss in public assembly had pointed to his chains and reminded the monarch of his plighted faith, Charles V declared: ‘I should not like to blush like Sigismund.’”⁷⁷ So Luther was able to flee from the clutches of Rome. With him, the Reformation in Germany also survived and prospered.

As indicated, Protestantism was born not simply for religious reasons of

a personal nature. With Luther, like Wycliffe and Hus before him, another potent factor was an indignant desire to shake off the papal leeches who through their exploitation were sucking dry the lifeblood of his people. The totally unspiritual but arrogant pontiffs of the Renaissance had purchased earthly beauty, luxury, and fame by selling indulgences and by other means of exploitation. The cost to the papacy was prodigious.

But did Luther, on reading Valla and the Donation, notice the title *vicarius Filii Dei*? He certainly did, for he later translated it into German, and even briefly commented on it, which is to be found in *Einer aus den Hohen Artikeln des Allerheiligsten Bepstlichen Glaubens Genant Donatio Constantini* (One of the High Articles of the Most Holy Papal Doctrine Called the Donation of Constantine).

Appearing in 1537 at Wittenberg, this booklet consists of two parts. The first is Luther's German translation of that document—the abbreviated version as it appears in Gratian's Decretum—together with a few marginal notes. In the second part, he assailed it violently against the background of church and secular history. He showed how the *Donatio Constantini* became a charter for heinous crimes by pontiffs, cardinals, and bishops. For centuries, they committed—supposedly for God's sake—large-scale theft (extorting tons of gold), plain robbery, seduction, murder, and numerous other crimes. As the popes energetically strove to rule the world as if they were the Almighty himself, they bullied or disgustingly ill-treated kings and emperors. Thereby they brought about political dissension, instability, and very much bloodshed. To accomplish all this, the papacy elevated, in St. Peter's name at Rome, the Donation with its "devilish lies" to "the most important article of Christian faith."⁷⁸

But what did Luther say about *vicarius Filii Dei*? Translating the Donation, he rendered it—in his own, now antiquated spelling—as *Stathalter Gottes Sons*. In the margin, he wrote: "*Stathalter*. As one finds described in the chimney at Babylon under the fifth brick."⁷⁹ He was apparently trying to be funny. Whatever this is supposed to mean, it says nothing about the title in Latin having a numerical value of 666, a fact which remained unknown for another eighty years, until Helwig's great discovery.

The Antichrist can also be identified in other ways, which Luther did most vigorously. Probably his last and most bitter work to be published, in 1545, the year before he died, was a treatise entitled *Wider das Papsstum zu Rom, vom Teufel gestifter*⁸⁰ (Against the Roman Papacy, an Institution of the Devil).

In it, he referred to the 1415 events at Constance, where three rival popes were deposed and Jan Hus expired on a martyr's pyre. A question needing to be settled urgently was whether a pope was above or under the jurisdiction of a General Council. Those dignitaries at Constance decided on the latter, "despite the fact that for so many centuries beforehand the pope had cried himself hoarse and bellowed until he nearly died through all

his decrees and decretals that said he was above all councils, above all the world, even above all the angels in heaven; that is, he was God's vicar on earth [*Gottes Stathalter auff Erden*] and an earthly god . . ."⁸¹

Among the "decrees and decretals" was no doubt the almost two-hundred-year-old *Summa de Ecclesiastica potestate* by Augustinus of Ancona (1243–1328), which we have already discussed.

VIII

So Luther specifically mentioned the title in German, though he failed to notice its numeric value in Latin. All the same, according to P. Antonio Bresciani, a Neapolitan Jesuit who wrote in the nineteenth century, Luther as well as Calvin vented their "impiety" so far as "to call the *vicario del Figliuolo di Dio* on earth by the cursed name of Antichrist."⁸²

While Luther was still writing his *Address to the Christian Nobility*, the artist Raphael died in Rome on his thirty-seventh birthday.⁸³ The next year, on 1 December 1521, Pope Leo X also passed away. The project of decorating with beautiful frescoes the apartments in the Apostolic Vatican palace was left unfinished. Raphael's assistants therefore continued their master's work to complete it in the rooms which are now known as the Stanze di Raffaello (The Raphael rooms). Between 1520 and 1524, either Gianfrancesco Penni or Giulio Romano painted *The Donation of Constantine*, also known as *The Donation of Rome*. It is located in the Sala di Costantino (Hall of Constantine). Sylvester I bears the features of Clement VII (1478–1534), Leo's cousin, another art-besotted de' Medici pope, who began his reign in 1523.⁸⁴

For the Roman Church, the Donation remained of crucial importance. Further artistic evidence was still in 1889 available at the Vatican in its magnificent library, the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*. According to Monsignor Xavier Barbier de Montault (1830–1901), an art-loving French prelate and a prolific writer,⁸⁵ this had been founded by the Renaissance pope Nicolas V (1397–1455, reigned from 1447) and augmented by his successors. Among them, were ten pontiffs over four centuries whom de Montault mentioned, from Calixtus III (1378–1458, reigned from 1455) to Gregory XVI (1765–1846, reigned from 1831).⁸⁶

The most important of them was Sixtus V [Felice Peretti] (1520–1590, reigned from 1585). As we have seen, Pompeo Ugonio in dedicating a book to Lady Camilla—this pope's sister—described him as *vicario del figliuol di Dio*. Sixtus V had the library reconstructed. His architect, Domenico Fontana put up a palatial "building, which still houses the Library today."⁸⁷

In 1901, John Willis Clark, a British bibliophile at Cambridge University, described three frescoed figures on the pilaster against the West Wall of the Vatican library. One of them was Christ. "Our Lord is seated. Over His Head A, Ω; in His Hand an open book: Ego sum A et Ω;

principium et finis. At His Feet: Iesus Christus summus magister, caelestis doctrinae auctor.” The two letters are, of course, Greek. The rest is Latin for “beginning and end and Jesus Christ, supreme master, author of celestial doctrine.”

About the two figures flanking the Saviour, Clark wrote: “On Christ’s right hand is a POPE, standing, with triple cross and tiara. Christi Domini vicarius [Vicar of Christ the Lord]. On Christ’s left hand is an EMPEROR, also standing, with crown, sword, blue mantle. Ecclesiae defensor [Defender of the church].”⁸⁸

That is still an accurate description for those frescoes today. But the writing below the pope as well as the emperor used to be different and more complete in the nineteenth century. For this, we have the published witness of two earlier writers.

Monsignor de Montault catalogued the Vatican Museum with permission obtained in 1855 from Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli (1806–1876), Pope Pius IX’s Secretary of State, through the intervention of Cardinal Piccolomini. Here is what de Montault noted according to the 1889 edition of his book: “16, J.-C., souverain maître et docteur, tient le livre des Évangiles ouvert à cet endroit [Jesus Christ, sovereign master and doctor, holds the book of the Gospel open to this place]: *Ego sum A et Ω, principium et finis. Iesus Christus summus magister, caelestis doctrinae auctor.* Il est placé entre S. Sylvestre et Constantin [He is placed between Saint Sylvester and Constantine]: *Sanctus Sylvester, Christi Domini Vicarius. Constantinus Imperator, Ecclesiae Defensor.*”⁸⁹

De Montault’s testimony, backed by eminent cardinals, agrees with the earlier work of Erasmo Pistolesi (1770–1860), whose eight Italian volumes on the Vatican appeared in 1829.

His text about the three adjacent frescoes is even better. They are, he said, “on the face of the last pilaster which is joined to the arches.” For the Lord, the inscription is entirely in capital letters, as it still remains today: IESVS CHRISTVS SVMMVS MAGISTER, CAELESTIS DOCTRINAE AVCTOR. About the Redeemer, Pistolesi did not—like Montault—assert that he was holding the book of the Gospel; but rather that with his right hand Christ held up the world and with his left “a book, on which is written the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet A and Ω, to allude to the words of the Apocalypse: . . .” Pistolesi also described the pope’s appearance and dress, declaring of him: “il quale molto operò in vantaggio della chiesa di Cristo” (who wrought much to the advantage of Christ’s church), and said: “Sotto l’affresco, sebbene di primo lancio si ravvisi che’egli è Silvestro, leggesi la seguente iscrizione: SANCTVS SILVESTER CHRISTI DOMINI VICARIVS” (Below the fresco, although it is immediately clear that he is Silvester, can be read the following inscription: Saint Silvester Vicar of the Lord Christ). We note that, unlike de Montault, Pistolesi spelled the pontiff’s name *Silvester*, which is more correct. About Constantine, he provided a physical description, mentioned

that emperor's various actions in promoting Christendom—among them “un editto che si celebrasse il di di domenica” (an edict that Sunday should be observed)—, and said the inscription “così si esprime” [is expressed as follows] CONSTANTINVS IMPERATOR ECCLESIAE DEFENSOR.” Further, Pistolesi also gave the names of the artists who had originally painted the frescoes.⁹⁰

They were all contemporaries of Sixtus V: amongst others, Paris Nogari (c. 1536–c. 1601), Andrea Lilio (1555/1570–after 1639), Cesare Nebbia (c. 1536–c. 1614), and Arrigo Fiammingo [Hendrick van den Broeck] (1519–1597).

Artistically picturing Constantine and Sylvester near each other, together with that pope's title, is an obvious reference to the Donation. *Christi Domini Vicarius* (Vicar of Christ the Lord) is, moreover, almost synonymous with *Vicarius Filii Dei*. The latter is in fact the only title in the Donation to include *vicarius*. This we have established by scrutinizing that document. Other words for the pontiff do appear in it: *papa* (pope), mostly as *universalis papa* (universal pope), as well as *pontifex* (pontiff), and especially *summus pontifex* (supreme pontiff).⁹¹

We possess a digital image of a photograph, taken in 2008, which shows that the names *Sanctus Silvester* and *Constantinus Imperator*—attested by Pistolesi in 1829 and de Montault in 1889—are now missing, as they were from John W. Clark's 1901 account. All that still remains of the papal and imperial inscriptions is *Christi Domini Vicarius* and *Ecclesiae Defensor*. We suspect that formerly there also used to be text above the Sylvester's and Constantine's heads, as in other frescoes of the Vatican library.

The two inscriptions below the frescoes of those figures were most probably abbreviated during the years that elapsed between de Montault's book and 1901. This probably occurred within the pontificate of Leo XIII (1810–1903, reigned from 1878), who succeeded Pius IX and lived to be 93. Of him we read that “he made considerable efforts to bring the Church into line with modern scholarship.”⁹² Indeed. The Donation, long since exposed as a forgery, was an embarrassment; and now that the Papal States no longer existed the Vatican could rid itself of having it depicted so graphically and in such a public place. Imagine Leo XIII one day strolling through the library. Abruptly he stopped before those frescoes, frowning his brows. Before he walked on, he pointed to the names and abruptly commanded an aide to have them removed. They were. But altering an artist's work to misrepresent him is to falsify it, an act of forgery—to which the papacy has over the centuries so often been prone.

A present-day comparison with the inscription on the central fresco, below the picture of Jesus, also shows that now both *Christi Domini Vicarius* and *Ecclesiae Defensor* are in slightly different and larger letters than those which describe the Lord. *Vicarius* is spaced out to give it special prominence.

We conclude this chapter with a little detective story based on Internet archaeology and other research data.

In 1793, the redactor of *Apocalyptic Key* (1701), by Scottish pastor Robert Fleming, Jr. (1660-1716), in a reprint appended a supplemental statement assigning to 666 the numerical value of the name *vicarius Filii Dei*. This they declared the popes “have assumed to themselves” and “caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican.”⁹³

Also in 1793, William Button, a diligent compiler, brought out a work entitled *Prophetic Conjectures on the French Revolution*. After extracting his ideas from the writings of prophetic interpreters over the preceding two centuries, he added: “A late writer has also remarked, a very singular circumstance, that the title VICARIUS FILII DEI, which the popes of Rome have assumed to themselves, and have caused, *as is said*, to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes the number 666, when deciphered.”⁹⁴

With that qualifying phrase, to which we have added our emphasis, he proved to be more cautious than Fleming’s redactor. He or someone even earlier gave that idea its phantom feet for a remarkable walk into and through the books of further Protestant writers on prophecy. In Appendix III, we mention and contextualize twelve of them. They included J. Buel or Anonymous (1797),⁹⁵ Henry Kett (1799),⁹⁶ John Burr ridge (1830),⁹⁷ Richard C. Shimeall (1842⁹⁸ as well as 1867⁹⁹), James H. Braund (1875),¹⁰⁰ and Alfred Brunson (1881).¹⁰¹ All these writers used very similar wording; most of them also equated *vicarius Filii Dei* with 666.

So was it all a cock-and-bull story? Not quite. It is true that there is no such thing as “the door of the Vatican,” since its buildings have many entrances. But there used to be a Sylvester inscription. Though not over, it was yet positioned near a door. Is it *vicarius Filii Dei*? No, it is not; and yet the synonymy of *Christi Domini Vicarius* is indubitable, while its reference to the Donation is difficult to dispute.

A Protestant, whose identify after all that time will probably remain unknown, seems to have visited the Vatican library a decade or so before the end of the eighteenth century. After viewing those pictures together with their inscriptions, he may well have grasped their significance. Then he could have related what he had seen as well as what he had thought to a second person, who garbled the story before passing it on to others. Where there is smoke there is usually a fire. Sometimes, however, the smoke gets blown into the beholder’s eyes!

In any case, the myth of the inscription over the Vatican door can probably—after more than two hundred years—be laid to rest.

Chapter Twenty-Four
**IN CATHOLIC COUNTRIES, THE DONATION
AND ITS TITLE ENDURE**

I

For the sin of theft, the appropriate remedy can—according to the Bible—only be repentance, confession to the person or people wronged, and restitution of the stolen goods. Was this ever the response by any pope to Luther’s *Address* or other similar pleas? It certainly was not.

Individual Catholic writers did acknowledge the fraudulence of the Donation, but the papacy never did anything of the kind. Instead, the following is true: “The Vatican placed Valla’s work on the list of prohibited books, and the genuineness of the document was defended. It continued to be used as authentic until Baronius in his ‘*Annales Ecclesiastici*’ (published 1588-1607) admitted that the ‘Donatio’ was a forgery, and eventually the church conceded its illegitimacy. It has been suggested that this acceptance was hastened by Andreas Helwig’s work *Antichristus Romanus* (1612) which had identified the title Vicarius Filii Dei used in the Donation as being the number of the beast.”¹

That bit about *Annales Ecclesiastici* and the influence of its author is misleading. What are we to make of the statement that “eventually the church conceded its illegitimacy”?

Cardinal Cesare Baronius (1538-1607) was no doubt a formidable church historian and an excellent Catholic apologist of the Counter-Reformation. He also seems to have been an honest man, but this does not mean that any pope agreed with him. There is specific evidence to the contrary from his younger colleague, Jacques-Davy du Perron (1556-1618), who was created a cardinal in 1604. This fervent French convert from Protestantism was the man who persuaded Henry IV (1553-1610), king of Navarre, also to turn his back on his religion and convert to Catholicism, so that he might inherit the throne of France.³ Under the title *Perroniana*, his “remarks on theological, political, and literary subjects were published by Christophe du Puy from the notes of his brother, who had been with Duperron [*sic*] for a long time.”³

Du Perron, who himself regarded the Donation as “an out-and-out swindle,” told how he quizzed the pontiff about what Baronius had written. But “il ne me répondit autre chose ‘*che volete? i Canonici la tengono*’: il le disoit en riant”⁴ (he answer’d me nothing, except ‘What would you have? *The Canons* hold it so.’ And this he said laughing.”)⁵

That conversation probably took place a little after Baronius had died, in the time of Pope Paul V (1552–1621, reigned from 1605), “a distinguished canon lawyer.”⁶ And while he was laughing, names like Bishop Reginald Pecock, Cardinal Nicolaus Cusa, and especially Lorenzo Valla might have flitted through this mind. These, too, had been Catholics who

once presumed to criticize the Donation, more than a hundred years before. And then there was Piccolomini, who had first endorsed the impudence of Valla but on becoming pope rather fiercely renounced his own conclusions. But where were they now? So this Baronius could also be safely laughed off. Only one thing mattered: that the Canon law endured. Embedded in it was that precious document which kept on being so profitable to the papacy and would—as we have shown—be republished over and over again.

The canons which Pope Paul V had in mind no doubt included the work by two of his recent predecessors, Pius V and Gregory XIII. In their time was published the *Editio Romana* (1582), the emended Canon Law, to which we have already referred. It retained the Donation, together with its potent title, *vicarius Filii Dei*. About this text, Gregory XIII said that it was “entirely free from fault.”

II

The spuriousness of the Donation which Baronius had raised was really not a laughing matter. As already recounted, in 1605—the very year of Paul V’s accession to the papal throne—an ecclesiastic rebellion suddenly reared its head and almost caused the Venetian Republic to turn Protestant. That pestilent William Bedell, Anglican chaplain of Sir Henry Wotton, the British ambassador, had shown that *Paulo V, Vice-Deo* (to Paul V, God’s substitute) numerically equaled 666.

Bedell’s sovereign, King James I, had previously produced a book to demonstrate that the pope was the Antichrist. To put it lightly, Pope Paul V did not like this, either; therefore, the royal amateur theologian and prophetic expositor had to be answered. Fortunately for the pontiff, in 1613 the erudite and capable Jesuit professor in Coimbra, Francisco Suárez, obliged with his voluminous *Defensio Fidei Catholicae et Apostolicae adversus anglicanae sectae errores* (A Defense of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith Against the Errors of the Anglican Sect). This work also takes for granted both the Donation and the title *vicarius Filii Dei*, which it quotes.

No, for the preservation of the Papal States that over-scrupulous Cardinal Baronius had to be ignored, and so he was. After Paul V had gone the way of all pontiffs, until 1879, the *Corpus iuris canonici* just kept on appearing. Contained in it was the Donation with its special title. In the decades and centuries beyond Pope Paul V, a troop of other writers also defended its validity. Two of them, publishing in 1671 and 1745 respectively, merit particular mention.

III

As late as 1999 John William Robbins (1949-2008), a brilliant scholar with a doctorate in political philosophy, pointed out that five hundred years after Valla had debunked the spurious *Donation of Constantine*, “the new

Roman Emperors . . . have yet to admit that their claim to political power and jurisdiction rests on forged documents.” In a footnote, he added: “Nowhere has the author found an admission by the papacy that the *Donation of Constantine* is a forged document. If the reader is aware of such an admission, please inform the author.”⁷

We, too, await such a pontifical acknowledgement. Meanwhile, in our chronicle, we return to the seventeenth century.

The Jesuit Philippe Labbe (1607–1667) was as diligent as he was learned and versatile, writing over eighty books. His chief work was the 1671 *Sacrasancta concilia ad regiam editionem exacta* (Sacred Councils, Accurate in a Royal Edition)⁸ in seventeen volumes, completed by Gabriel Cossart (1615–1674), another member of his order who survived him.⁹ These were printed “in Paris at the expense of the Typographical Society for Ecclesiastical Books,”¹⁰ obviously with church support and “iussu Regis” (by a decree of the king).

His Volume I has the subtitle *From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Year 324*. The latter is the date of the forged Donation. Labbe and Cossart reproduced it together with the words “Anno Christi 324” (in the year of Christ 324). The text is in Latin, including *vicarius Filii Dei*. But what we find most intriguing is that it is also accompanied by a Greek version. Someone no doubt assumed that because his capital lay in the Byzantine East, Constantine would have written in this language. That, however, is a clumsy anachronism. In his time, Latin was still the official language of the empire, even at the largely Greek-speaking Constantinople. What we have here is an extra, bonus forgery to boost the plausibility of the first one, which was really the original!¹¹

Volume IX in Labbe and Cossart is subtitled *From the Year 872 to 1072*. It reproduces the first epistle from Pope Leo IX, *In terra pax hominibus*, which asserts supreme authority over the Orthodox Church, headquartered in Constantinople. In 1054, this Roman arrogance led to the great East-West Schism, which keeps Catholicism and that other branch of the Mediterranean Church divided to this day. In his letter, the pontiff asserted that the Saviour gave to Peter—and his alleged papal successors—the keys of the heavenly kingdom. To this, the pontiff linked what the Apostle Paul had written in Rom. 13: All earthly government is instituted by God, and to resist it is to resist the Lord himself. Pope Leo then clinched his argument by quoting verbatim from the fraudulent Donation of Constantine, including the title *vicarius Filii Dei*.¹²

For Labbe and Cossart to have brought out these publications when they did, with the assistance of both king and clerics, showed that the Catholic establishment, headed by the pope, was spurning Cardinal Baronius.

The persistent belief in the Donation was further demonstrated through the appearance of another authoritative work by a highly respected Catholic canonist, Lucio Ferraris (fl. 1748-c. 1763), almost a hundred

years later.

His quick-reference Latin work, *Prompta bibliotheca canonica* (Handy Library of Canon Law) (1746), Vol. 6 in Article II, “Papa” (the Pope) quotes *vicarius Filii Dei* from the Donation. Ferraris slightly but significantly reworded a statement in it. Instead of “ita et Pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices” (so the Pontiffs, who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles), he wrote: “Ita et Pontifices eius successores” (so also the Pontiffs, *his successors*). He added that very many sacred canons had extolled the pope’s authority and power.

Before this, on the same page, he also stated that the pope was “as it were God on earth . . . the supreme King of Kings.” He allegedly has power over earthly, infernal, and heavenly affairs. Ferraris said that in authority the pope was even greater than the angels. If it were possible for angels to err against the Faith or entertain an understanding contrary to the Faith (that is, Catholicism), they could be judged and excommunicated by the pope.¹³

As mentioned previously, Martin Luther, two hundred years before Ferraris, had poured indignant scorn on similar claims in older “decrees and decretals,” among them probably the *Summa de Ecclesiastica potestate* written by Augustinus of Ancona, who died in 1328, another two centuries earlier. So these statements in *Prompta bibliotheca canonica* had very old precedents, although Ferraris—who evidently had a sense of the dramatic—did expand and also linked them with the Donation as well as the title *vicarius Filii Dei* in Latin.

Apart from being very far from the spirit of Valla and Baronius, not to say Protestantism, these boastful words are surely a fulfillment of Rev. 13:6: “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”

As for the statement about the Donation quoted above to the effect that “*eventually* the church conceded its illegitimacy” (emphasis added), it is misleadingly vague. Peter De Rosa, an honest if very critical Catholic, is much more candid about it: “Though every independent scholar was won over by Valla’s arguments, Rome did not concede; she went on asserting the Donation’s authenticity for centuries.”¹⁴

Long before De Rosa, the great historian Edward Gibbon in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1787) wrote about the factory of forgeries which had churned out documents to uphold pontifical claims:

“The Vatican and Lateran were an arsenal and manufacture which, according to the occasion, have produced or concealed a various collection of false or genuine, of corrupt or suspicious acts, as they tend to promote the interest of the Roman church. Before the end of the eighth century some apostolical scribe, perhaps the notorious Isidore, composed the decretals and the donation of Constantine, the two magic pillars of the

spiritual and temporal monarchy of the popes. This memorable donation was introduced to the world by an epistle of Adrian the First, who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality and revive the name of the great Constantine.”¹⁵

Gibbon described how Valla and various other writers had gutted the Donation. Of this he gave several examples in his footnotes, among them a passage from Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*—which we have also dealt with—and the *Perroniana* piece about the pope who laughingly preferred the Canon Law to the exposé by Baronius.¹⁶ And so Gibbon reported of his time: “The popes themselves have indulged a smile at the credulity of the vulgar; but a false and obsolete title still sanctifies their reign . . .”¹⁷

Indeed. For more than eleven hundred years—until 1870, when they lost the Papal States—the pontiffs remained inextricably entangled in the net that Pope Stephen and their other predecessors had woven so many centuries earlier. To admit officially that the Donation was a forgery would have endangered the papacy. Predatory Catholic monarchs, even the Holy Roman Emperor, could have promptly pounced on and annexed its territory in Italy—and squashed its claims to supremacy throughout the West.

The title *Vicar of the Son of God* therefore continued in use, as a special index to pontifical pretensions, both spiritual and secular. These are concerned with what we have already characterized as the new, enduring doctrine of the Roman Church. Originally described in the Donation and then elaborated by later documents which built on the same idea, its implementation had begun with Pope Adrian (Hadrian) I, whose date of birth is unknown. He reigned from 772 to 795. After enjoying all the material wealth and churchly power accumulated from this source for more than seven hundred years, a defiant hierarchy was not at the time of Luther and his followers going to give it up.

Instead, it had already—anticipating the exposé by Baronius and Pope Paul V’s laughter—launched the Counter-Reformation, to restabilize the badly shaken foundations of the papal system. Let us note a few of its salient points.

Chapter Twenty-Five
THE COUNTER-REFORMATION,
A REACTIONARY AND BLOODY RESPONSE

I

The words *Reform* and *Reformation* were already a part of the Roman Catholic vocabulary during the late Middle Ages. In the fourteenth century, the corruption of a greedy religious establishment, the sheer ignorance of priests (many hardly knew enough Latin to understand the masses which they were required to say), and a plurality of popes had shocked both kings and clerics. To address and solve such problems as well as to appoint a single pope was the main reason for convening the General Church Council at Constance in 1414–1418.

Apart from deposing all three rival pontiffs, appointing Pope Martin V (1368–1431), and burning Jan Hus (*c.* 1370–1415) as well as his friend Jerome of Prague (*c.* 1365–1416), it accomplished little. A century later Martin Luther and ever more other Protestants stood up to the Vatican. As often before, it responded by having murder on its mind. But this was a crisis of humongous proportions that could not be disposed of by burning a heretic here and there.

To meet it, the papacy finally responded with another General Church Council, convoked by Pope Paul III (1468–1549, reigned from 1534), at Trent in northern Italy. Its three sessions, covering eight years from 1545 to 1563, defined Roman Catholic dogmatics and practice for a further three centuries, until Vatican I (1869–1870). The first Tridentine period (1545–1547), which fell within Paul III’s pontificate, “laid the groundwork for future declarations.” This included a rejection of Luther’s teaching about justification by faith alone, as well as the idea that Catholicism is based not only on the Bible but also ecclesiastical tradition.¹

During this pope’s reign, Gratian’s *Decretum*—which contains the Donation as well as *vicarius Filii Dei*—was republished in both 1538 and 1542. (See Appendix II.) By implication, the title referred to Paul III as well as other pontiffs. As a matter of fact, a contemporary directly applied it to him in Italian, the other language used at the Vatican.

On 16 March 1539, Pietro Bembo (*c.* 1490–1576), former secretary of Leo X, wrote an anxious letter from Venice to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520–1589) in Rome, to enlist his aid against enemies who were bad-mouthing him to Pope Paul III.² Farnese was the pontiff’s eighteen-year-old grandson, a favorite of the pope, whose name he bore and who had elevated him to the cardinalate at the ripe age of fourteen.³

Bembo had been promised a red hat, but some people at the papal court were interfering with his prospects. Amongst other things, he pleaded: “I would not, for any treasure, want his Holiness, who is the first and greatest and most reputable man alive under heaven, who is the *vicario del figliuol*

di Dio on earth, to regard me as no good . . .”⁴ The letter seems to have done the trick: the young Farnese spoke to his grandfather, who made Bembo a cardinal in that very month.⁵

II

On the whole, the Council of Trent, initiated by Pope Paul III, proved to be—for Catholicism—immensely successful. At least, it eliminated many overt shortcomings of the Roman Church. By the end of the sixteenth century, “many of the abuses that had motivated the Protestant Reformation had disappeared . . .”⁶

This did not, however, extend to changing fundamental Catholic theology. Minor adjustments were made then or added later. For instance in the twentieth century the laity was finally allowed to drink the communion wine as well as eat the bread at the Eucharist. Other changes—some of them purely cosmetic—were brought in from time to time. An important new dogma was also added here and there, like the Immaculate Conception or the Ascension of the Virgin. The liturgy was sometimes updated with changes such as saying mass in English rather than Latin. But never abandoned were basic doctrines or practices like purgatory, confession to a priest, bowing before images, and constantly invoking Mary as though she belonged to the Trinity—none of which is Biblical.

By reasserting its ancient errors, often derived from paganism, and rejecting virtually all the light that Protestantism had recovered from the Bible, with which it illuminated the minds and gladdened the hearts of so many common people, the Council of Trent was thoroughly reactionary.

Those who accepted its decisions also continued on the ancient and bloody medieval path of murdering Christians who dared to disagree with its beliefs.

The Roman Church is uncomfortably aware that old-time Protestants have insisted on identifying it with the Apocalyptic harlot and the terrible indictment in Rev. 17:6: “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus . . .” Accordingly, her clerics have often disputed the figures used to highlight her crimes, but we cannot forbear to mention a few.

For instance, during the massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day, which began in Paris just before dawn on 23 August 1572 and continued for two months throughout France until October, Catholics slaughtered almost 100,000 Protestants. That is the figure mentioned in *The New Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*.⁷ It may be a little exaggerated because the body counts were not conducted with scientific accuracy. It has, in any case, been disputed. The estimates “have varied from 2,000 by a Roman Catholic apologist to 70,000 by the contemporary Huguenot Duke de Sully, who himself barely escaped death.”⁸

In 1887, H. Grattan Guinness, the Protestant author of *Romanism and*

the Reformation From the Standpoint of Prophecy, as devout a man as he was learned, put it a little more conservatively at 60,000. To this, he added the statistics of other Catholic outrages: “the Marian persecutions in England, the cruel slaughter in six brief years of 18,000 Protestants in the Netherlands, the desolating Thirty Years’ War in central Europe, and *the revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, which in 1685 exiled 400,000 Huguenots from France and caused the death of nearly as many more.”⁹

Elsewhere in his book, Dr. Grattan Guinness, surveying centuries of the papacy, said that in one way or the other millions lost their lives. In an impassioned paragraph that several writers have quoted, he exclaimed—and the emphases are all his own:

The past, the awful past rises before me. I see THE GREAT APOSTASY, I see the desolation of Christendom, I see the smoking ruins, I see the reign of monsters; I see those vice-gods, that Gregory VII., that Innocent III., that Boniface VIII., that Alexander VI., that Gregory XIII., that Pius IX.; I see their long succession, I hear their insufferable blasphemies, I see their abominable lives; I see them worshiped by blinded generations, bestowing hollow benedictions, bartering lying indulgences, creating a paganized Christianity; I see their liveried slaves, their shaven priests, their celibate confessors; I see the infamous confessional, the ruined women, the murdered innocents; I hear the lying absolutions, the dying groans; I hear the cries of the victims; I hear the anathemas, the curses, the thunders of the interdicts; I see the racks, the dungeons, the stakes; I see that inhuman Inquisition, those fires of Smithfield, those butcheries of St. Bartholomew, that Spanish armada, those unspeakable dragonnades, that endless train of wars, that dreadful multitude of massacres. I see it all, and in the name of the ruin it has wrought in the Church and in the world, in the name of the truth it has denied, the temple it has defiled, the God it has blasphemed, the souls it has destroyed; in the name of the millions it has deluded, the millions it has slaughtered, the millions it has damned; with holy confessors, with noble reformers, with innumerable martyrs, with the saints of ages, I denounce it as the masterpiece of Satan, as the body and soul and essence of antichrist.”¹⁰

III

But the Inquisition later found a high-ranking apologist: Pope John Paul II. According to a BBC news item of 15 June 2004, headed “Vatican ‘dispels Inquisition myths,’” he had his scholars research the topic. Their report of 800 pages concluded that “in fact the much feared judges of heresy were not as brutal as previously believed.” According to its editor, Prof. Agostino Borromeo, the most notorious branch of the Inquisition, the one in Spain, had “only 1.8% of those investigated” killed. “For 125,000 trials of suspected heretics in Spain, less than 2% were executed.”¹¹ And

so, we are asked to believe that a mere 2,500 were ill-treated, tortured, and burned. Not millions.

We are unimpressed by this whitewashing and note that “the Pope stopped short of breaking the age-old Vatican rule of not condemning your predecessors,”¹² which suggests that this research was prompted more by embarrassment than regret.

What is overlooked in all this is the horrible criminality of murder. The death of even one man, woman, or child is for that human being the extinction of an entire universe. As for torturing and killing one of God’s elect, the Saviour experiences it as though he were being crucified again: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt. 25:40). “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Ps. 116:15). And who would these be? According to the Apocalypse, they are those who serve and obey him, especially “they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

We conclude this chapter with a true story about just one such person.

IV

In December 1545, the Council of Trent began its deliberations, but the Protestants refused to recognize its legitimacy. Therefore, the Elector Palatine arranged a colloquy between them and the Catholics at Ratisbon (Regensburg), Bavaria, to see whether they could compose their differences.

To head the papal party, the emperor Charles V chose an erudite Spanish doctor teaching at the Sorbonne in Paris, Pedro de Maluenda—whom the French called Pierre Malvenda. One of the Protestant party was Juan Diaz, another learned Spaniard but a younger man. Originally from Cuença, he had been studying at the Collège Royal and the Sorbonne since 1532. They knew each other well, but Malvenda, unaware of Diaz’s conversion to Protestantism, was flabbergasted to see him at Ratisbon.

In Paris, Diaz had been studying scholastic theology, but in about 1540, he was learning Hebrew and Greek, because he longed for a better understanding of the Bible. Another compatriot, James Enzinas, led him to a deeper acquaintance with the Scriptures, and he accepted the doctrine of God’s free grace through Jesus Christ and righteousness by faith. This caused him to visit Geneva, where he met Calvin. Later he also made contact with the German reformers.

Of all this, Malvenda had been unaware, and so at Ratisbon in 1546 he exploded against Diaz. He told him he was bringing dishonor on his noble family and Spain, which at that time was the leading power in Europe. “‘Wretched man,’ said Malvenda, ‘do you not know that the Protestants will pride themselves far more on having gained over to their doctrine one single Spaniard than if they had converted ten thousand Germans or an infinite number of men of other nations?’” He also strictly warned his

younger compatriot:

“Dost thou not perceive all the dangers which are threatening at once thy body and thy soul? Dost thou not see the formidable thunderbolts of the pope, the *vicar of the Son of God*, which are about to fall upon thee. And dost thou not know with what a horrible execration those are smitten whom he excommunicates, so that they become the plague of the human race? Is it well, then, to venture, for the sake of the opinion of a small number of people, to stir up sedition in all countries and to disturb the public peace? Dost thou not dread the judgment of God, and the abhorrence of all thy fellow-countrymen.”¹³

Merle d’Aubigné’s nineteenth-century account, from which we have drawn the foregoing, was based on an older French martyrology, the first edition of which appeared in 1572. Its author, Jean Crespin, was personally acquainted with Diaz. Crespin called the pope the “*vicaire du Fils de Dieu & successeur des Apostres*” (vicar of the Son of God and successor of the Apostles).¹⁴

But on hearing Malvenda’s threats, Juan Diaz, a humble Christian with a winsome personality, declared that he would not give up what had become so precious to him. “I am not afraid,” he answered, “modestly but decisively, of exposing myself to danger for the purpose of maintaining the heavenly doctrine on which our salvation depends, or even of shedding my blood to bear testimony to the religion of Christ. To me this would be a great honour and a great glory.”¹⁵

Malvenda insisted that the pontiffs were infallible. An argument ensued, in which Diaz called them “monsters defiled within and without with enormous crimes.” Malvenda saw he was making no headway and sought to end their discussion. But he did say that the meeting at Ratisbon was a waste of time. If Diaz “wished to do any good, he ought to go to the Council of Trent, which was established by the pope and attended by many prelates.” At this point, the Spanish Protestant left the doctor and decided to stop meeting with him privately. But according to Crespin in *Actes des Martyrs*, Book 3, p. 174, “Diaz wrote down the conversation which he had with Malvenda, and from his papers we derive our information about it.”¹⁶

When Malvenda observed that he had fully made up his mind, his friendship turned into deadly hatred, and he immediately began to plan the young man’s destruction. First he wrote to De Soto, Charles V’s confessor, but Diaz had an imperial safe-conduct.¹⁷

We now turn to details unearthed in the 1960s by John Edward Longhurst. He had previously “published a number of articles and monographs on various related aspects of humanism (Erasmism) and ‘Lutheranism,’ and one volume on Judaism and the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition. But he became tired of researching the hypocritical brutalities of the last-mentioned organization and turned to the Diaz story.”¹⁸ Among his sources was an 1865 Spanish edition of a book that focuses on what happened in 1546, when Luther died and Diaz was done to death.¹⁹

Malvenda wrote to Spain, “back home; other people wrote to other people, and before long the news got to Juan’s twin brother Alfonso in Rome, where he was serving as a member of the Rota.” This body, a section of the papal Curia, had—according to Webster—“jurisdiction, ordinarily appellate, in civil and ecclesiastical cases.” Alfonso Diaz’s response was to hire an assassin, a professional executioner in Rome, and with him to go after his brother.

Following a diligent search, he tracked him from Ratisbon to Neuburg, where he was staying with a Protestant pastor. Here Alfonso “pretended that he was beginning to be attracted to Juan’s religious ideas” and urged him to go back with him, so that they could both proclaim this new light in Spain. Before consenting to this, however, Juan wrote for advice to Martin Bucer, a prominent Protestant, and Claude Senarclaus, his close friend. But they suspected treachery and urged him not to do so. They also set out for Neuburg, arriving there on 22 March 1546.

Alfonso departed, feigning a return to Italy but turned back, with the assassin, after buying a portable hatchet, which a man could hide beneath his clothes. On the morning of 27 March, Juan—who had been sleeping in the same room as Senarclaus—was woken by a domestic who told him a messenger had brought him an important letter from Alfonso. The young man jumped up, “clad only in a light nightgown, and went into the front room.” The so-called messenger was the assassin, who handed the letter to Juan, who walked to a window for light by which to read it. “While his attention was thus engaged, the assassin took out the hatchet he carried hidden inside his jacket and plunged it up to the handle into the right side of Juan’s head, near the temple.” All this time, his twin brother Alfonso, out of sight, was standing guard at the entrance. The assassin caught Juan’s body, quietly letting it down to the floor, and then the murderers fled.

Senarclaus, his suspicions roused, got up and went to the front room, where he heard their hurried footsteps and found his friend Juan, who was still alive. He pulled out the axe, but saw him die within an hour, “he eyes turned to heaven, like one begging God’s mercy.”

The murderers were pursued and caught at Innsbruck, but there was a controversy between the Protestants and Catholics about who had jurisdiction over this case. Then, on 14 April, the Emperor sent word that for judgment the prisoners had to be brought to him and his Catholic brother, King Ferdinand.

Longhurst said this narrative “was written in the form of a letter to Bucer by . . . Claude Senarclaus,” so we can hardly doubt its authenticity.²⁰ He concluded his account by adding: “And there the matter ended. Or did it? I remember reading some time ago, in an out-of-the-way place, a brief reference to one Alfonso Diaz, cleric at Rome, who committed suicide (I think) about 1555,” but unfortunately he had to admit: “I must, however, apologize to my readers for the most amateurish of all scholarly errors: I cannot, for the life of me, find my notes on this point.”²¹

Perhaps someone will yet establish whether or not Alfonso really killed himself, with one tragedy leading to another. The Lord Jesus had, at any rate, warned in advance about this sort of thing when he predicted the Great Apostasy which lay ahead for his people: “And the brother shall deliver up his brother to death . . . And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved” (Matt. 10:21, 22).

Such may well have been the last thoughts of Juan Diaz, that noble martyr from Spain.

V

The Counter-Reformation, which continues to this day, used every device at its disposal. When deemed essential, torture, murder, and military action were resorted to. But such brutal violence was always preceded by appeals to the Bible. These could be directly argumentative, but some of them just blended sublime with mundane material presupposing a Catholic world view.

Here is an example from *De la devocion y patrocinio de San Migvel, principe de los angeles, antiguo tvtelar de los godos, y protector de España* (About the Devotion and Patronage of Saint Michael, Prince of the Angels, Ancient Guardian of the Goths, and Protector of Spain) (1643), authored by a Jesuit priest, Juan Eusebio Nieremberg (1595-1658).

He reasoned subtly about the high position held by Michael, the angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses at the burning bush, which made that place holy ground (Ex. 3:2-5); for this messenger represented the Almighty. On this theme, Nieremberg cited the opinion of learned Catholic writers. Amongst other things, he said: “It was enough that Saint Michael in heaven as the Vicar of God should have the authority which on earth is held by the Roman Pontiff, as the Vicar of Christ our Redeemer.” The Archangel possesses, as Nieremberg put it, “the honor of a divine name.” However, “the Pontiff does not in an absolute sense assume the title of Christ, he calls himself the servant of the servants of Christ; with this the *vicario del Hijo de Dios* on earth contents himself.”²²

We also believe that Michael is no ordinary angel. This name is based on a Greek form of the Hebrew *Mika’el*, which means “Who is like God?” According to Siegfried H. Horn et al., “Many Christian scholars identify Michael with Christ.”²³ The Scriptures show that this name reflects what our Lord used to be called before his incarnation. But for anyone to compare the pope to Jesus Christ is in our opinion downright blasphemy.

Chapter Twenty-Six
THE DONATION AND THE VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY

I

On 2 January 1492, Islamic Granada in Andalusia fell to the forces commanded by King Ferdinand II of Aragon (1452–1516) and Queen Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504). After more than seven centuries, the Muslim presence on the Iberian Peninsula was at an end. On 3 August, also in 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed from Palos on the Tinto River with the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*, to seek a western route to the Far East. A few days later, on 11 August, Rodrigo de Borja [Borgia] y Doms (1431–1503), a Spaniard, emerged from the conclave in Rome to be hailed as Pope Alexander VI (1431–1503, reigned from 1492).

The creation of both Spain as a united country and its empire was intertwined with the papacy in general, and this Borgia pope in particular. Moreover, that year became the door between the European Middle Ages and modern history, opening up a new era for the entire world. It ushered in changes that hinged on those events and four important people.

Isabella had been the most desirable heiress of Castile and destined for an important political marriage. She was to succeed Henry IV, her half-brother, who wanted her to wed Afonso V (1432–1481), the king of Portugal. But she preferred Ferdinand, crown prince of Aragon, whom she married in October 1469 at the age of eighteen. King Henry was furious and, on the ground that she had acted without his consent, decided to exclude her from the succession and nominated his own daughter, Joan. On his death, the offended Portuguese invaded Castile to deny Isabella the crown. The war lasted for five years until 1479. In that year, Isabella's husband Ferdinand became the king of Aragon. This was when Castile and Aragon united to create what today is known as Spain.¹

But it was no easy thing to merge those countries, each with its different history, traditions, and usages. Therefore, these monarchs needed all the support they could muster. Two uniting factors proved to be a common Iberian goal: completing the ages-long Reconquista—by finally driving the last Muslims out of Europe—and backing from the Roman Church.

The papal court, however, demanded its pound of flesh. In 1478, the Spanish Inquisition was established to ensure religious uniformity. One of the measures for doing so was to expel both Muslims and Jews, who included some of the most productive people in the country. While their Semitic cousins, the Arabs, dominated most of the country for close on eight hundred years, they could freely practice their religion and often flourished.

Now, however, their victorious Catholic majesties “decreed that by August 2, 1492, all the nation's Jews had either to convert to Christianity or leave Spain. The penalty for failure to comply was death.” That also happened to be the day before Columbus sailed. He therefore could not leave from Cádiz, the

country's most important harbor on the Atlantic; it was cluttered up with ships transporting Jews into exile. And so Columbus had to content himself with Palos, a much smaller seaport near the border with Portugal.²

Ecclesiastical influence was further strengthened by the pope's involvement in transatlantic affairs.

When Columbus triumphantly returned from his first voyage in 1493, it immediately became clear that a conflict of interest was bound to arise with Spain's competitive Iberian rival; for previously "the popes had given Portugal a monopoly on the sea route to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope."³ A French nobleman, Count Roselly de Lorgues (1805-1898), Columbus's enthusiastic nineteenth-century biographer, stated that the matter went a good deal further than that: the pontiffs had accorded special rights and privileges "to the King of Portugal, in 1438 and 1439."⁴ What now made the matter urgent was that already in 1488 Bartolomeu Dias (c. 1450-1500) had rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Therefore, the sea route to the Far East lay open for Portugal's experienced navigators, who might at any time also veer toward the West. And so, advised by Columbus,⁵ Isabella and Ferdinand asked their compatriot, Pope Alexander VI, to help them.

Obligingly, he "issued a bull granting Spain the exclusive right to explore the seas and claim all the New World lands lying west of a north-south line 100 leagues (about 320 miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands. Portugal was granted similar rights of exploration east of the demarcation line."⁶ This became known as the *Repartimiento*, the Bull of Partition.⁷

Alexander VI was the notorious and disreputable Borgia pope. Like every other pontiff, however, he could allegedly, while acting "in quality of inheritor of the primacy of Peter," commit no errors and yield to no frailties. From that viewpoint, none of his acts were therefore censurable.⁸

The court in Madrid was no doubt jubilant about this result, but the one in Lisbon did not share its joy. King John II "was dissatisfied because Portugal's rights in the New World were insufficiently affirmed, and the Portuguese would not even have sufficient room at sea for their African voyages." The upshot was a meeting at Tordesillas, in Northwestern Spain, in 1494. There the Spanish and Portuguese ambassadors "reaffirmed the papal division, but the line itself was moved to 370 leagues (1,185 miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands." This became known as the Treaty of Tordesillas. It was, however, only endorsed at the Vatican in 1506, by another pope, Julius II (1443-1513), who reigned from 1503 to 1513.⁹

We may well ask why it took so long to receive this endorsement and even why it was necessary at all.

To the latter question, Froome provided an answer: "This prerogative of assigning to these two nations the lands in the West was in accordance with the so-called gift or donation of Constantine to Pope Sylvester." Pope Alexander VI "forbade, under pain of excommunication, anyone to trade in that direction, threatening the indignation of Almighty God. It directed barbarous nations to be subdued, and no pains to be spared in reducing the

Indians to Christianity.” Froom added: “One cannot but ponder the thought that had Columbus landed on the continent of North America, a Spanish Catholic rather than an English population might have resulted.”¹⁰

So it was the Donation of Constantine by which the papacy tried to bring the entire New World under its dominion. According to that document, all authority over western lands and islands of the sea lay with the pontiff. Even though Julius II hated Pope Alexander VI so much that he “incited Charles VIII of France (1483–1498) to undertake the conquest of Naples,”¹¹ it was no light thing to set aside a decision made by a papal predecessor. In maintaining the rights spelled out by the Donation, Alexander had presumably been infallible—just like Julius himself.

It was events that suddenly forced the latter to make up his mind. In 1498, Vasco da Gama (c. 1460–1502), continuing Dias’s pioneering work, had with four ships reached India and begun to create an empire for Portugal, which was now on its way to becoming a world power.¹² In 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral set out with thirteen ships to establish his country’s nascent empire more firmly. Following da Gama’s advice, he took a more westerly route to avoid the becalmed waters in the Gulf of Guinea, and rounded the bulge of Africa, driven—some say—by a strong wind. And then suddenly Cabral saw looming up before him the shore of South America, which at that point juts out far to the east. Landing on the beach of what was soon to be named Brazil, he annexed that land for his king.¹³ It was discoveries like this that compelled Pope Julius II to stop dithering and ratify the Treaty of Tordesillas.

The result was Brazilian exploration and settlement, subsequently even much further to the west than what the line of demarcation had stipulated.¹⁴ Today the largest country in Latin America speaks Portuguese instead of Spanish. This it owes to the Donation of Constantine.

II

In addition to the trade interests, even the rapacity of the Portuguese and especially the Spanish conquistadors, those voyages also had a religious motivation. This first becomes clear in Alexander VI’s *Repartimiento* as well as a book by Columbus himself: his *Libro de las profecías* (Book of the Prophecies). He wrote it just after his third voyage, which had ended with his replacement as governor and judge of Hispaniola, when he “was returned to Spain in chains in October, 1500.”¹⁵

Both the European colonists and the Native American Taino of that island had resented being ruled by Bartolomeo as well as Diego Columbus and lodged official complaints about their cruelty. Consequently Francisco de Bobadilla, Spanish chief justice, turned up with a royal commission to investigate. In a previous memorandum after his second voyage, Columbus had referred to “sickness, poor provisioning, recalcitrant natives, and undisciplined hidalgos (gentry).” But now the problems had intensified. Beside, “the Columbus family must be held at least partly responsible, intent as

it was on enslaving the Taino and shipping them to Europe or forcing them to mine gold on Hispaniola.” For such reasons, “de Bobadilla ruled against the Columbus family when he arrived in Hispaniola. He clapped Columbus and his two brothers in irons and sent them promptly back on the ship *La Gorda*, and they arrived at Cádiz in late October 1500.”¹⁶

While on his way back to Spain, Columbus wrote a letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. When he arrived, they ordered his release and acceded to his plea that he be allowed to undertake a fourth voyage. This began on 9 May 1502.¹⁷

During the preparations for that voyage, Columbus between September 1501 and March 1502 wrote his *Libro de las profecías* of approximately seventy pages. It “was evidently written in the convent of Las Cuevas, when he was for a time wearing the gray frock and knotted cord of the Franciscans.” In it, he included “a letter to the king and queen, a remarkable report, which reads almost like a theological treatise.”

Columbus had studied the prophecies of the Bible as well as their interpretation by various writers, and he had calculated that only another one hundred fifty-five years would pass before history would end. He based his time-setting on Augustine’s idea that the world would last for seven thousand years. Citing various Old Testament prophecies, especially the Psalms, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, Columbus “believed that the whole Gentile world must have the knowledge of the Lord, and many nations gather to Mount Zion, and Jerusalem come under the sway of the Redeemer.” To this he added that “he expressly believed the discovery of these lands, and the opening of these pagan countries to the teachings of the gospel, in which he had a part, was a direct fulfillment of prophecy.”¹⁸

At the same time as his *Libro de las Profecías*, he compiled his Book of Privileges, “which defends the titles and financial claims of the Columbus family.” He also “took to calling himself ‘Christbearer’ in his letters,” for he “seems to have been certain that his mission was divinely guided.” He apparently saw nothing incongruous in this juxtaposition of secular and religious concerns.¹⁹

Columbus then sailed from Cádiz to the West on 9 May 1502 on his fourth and last voyage, which did not, however, repair his fortunes.

III

As for the monarchs of the two Iberian nations, they—though thoroughly Catholic—set limits on what they would endure from the Vatican, and the popes knew it.

On Isabella’s part there was considerable resistance to allowing free play for the papacy, toward which “she could be both imperious and pertinacious,” although personally she was apparently a pious woman. Pope Alexander VI bestowed on both her and Ferdinand the title by which they came to be generally known: *los Reyes Católicos* (the Catholic Monarchs). Nevertheless,

she insisted on her royal prerogatives vis-à-vis the church. She particularly sought to control appointments to Castilian sees and had high standards for the men who surrounded her throne. She was interested in intellectual as well as religious matters. Having by the age of thirty mastered Latin, she was in her way a patron of the arts.²⁰

An ideal man to meet her criteria and whom she greatly favored was Ambrosio Montesino (1444?–1514), a poet and intellectual, who belonged to the Franciscan Order. He proved to be most influential. By that crucial year of 1492, he was already installed at Ferdinand and Isabella's court, as a preacher and perhaps also as a confessor. In 1512, he was rewarded for his ecclesiastical services when Cardinal Cisneros (another of Isabella's choices) named him as the titular bishop of Sarda (Albania).²¹

An indication of the queen's regard for Montesino was the fact that she gave him many fine gifts. He in turn flattered both her and her husband Ferdinand, maintaining that their achievements bore the very imprint of Heaven. He eulogized the establishment of the Inquisition in Spain as well as their other religious acts. He considered the conquest of Granada as a victory in a holy war and interpreted the discovery of the New World from a religious point of view. Afterwards, Isabella having died in 1504, Montesino also greatly lauded Ferdinand. In an *Epistola Prohemial* (Introductory Epistle), he called him an *hombre providencial* (a providential man), a gift of God to the country and Catholicism: “. . . all the unity of the church militant since its foundation, which is Christ, hangs on the life of your Highness, through the most loyal and complete obedience that you have always rendered toward the *vicarios del hijo de Dios*. . . .”²²

The spirit that emanated from the Donation would overshadow the history of the Spanish Latin Empire for more than three hundred years. Of this, a number of examples remain on record. None of them is more spectacular than the one which concerns Francisco Pizarro (c. 1475-1541), the conquistador who overwhelmed the Incas in Peru.

Up to 1523, he had still been a man frustrated in his hopes. Of humble birth, he reputedly at one time even worked as a swineherd. In view of his character as it later manifested itself, this was surely not inappropriate. But he was inspired by dreams of wealth and worldly greatness. Before him, he especially had the shining example of Hernán Cortés, who in 1520-1521 conquered Mexico with a small, audacious force.

With the approval of Charles V, Pizarro—already forty-eight years of age—set out to conquer Peru. He had with him two companions: a soldier, Diego de Almagro, and a Dominican friar, Vicente de Valverde (c. 1490-1543). They had much in common, especially that blend of religion and greed which motivated most conquistadors. This would one day be very well expressed by Bernal Díaz, who was associated with Pizarro's hero, Cortés: “We went to America *para servir a Dios y hacernos ricos* (to serve God and to make ourselves rich).”²³

At Cajamarca in the Peru of 1530, a contemptuous Atahualpa (c. 1502-

1533), the Inca emperor, was waiting for them. Suddenly, the Spaniards found themselves surrounded by 30,000–40,000 of his retainers. And then Atahualpa, with an escort of between 3,000 and 4,000 men, arrived, being borne into the city square on a litter. The cleric was sent to negotiate with him.

Now we will let Albert Réville (1826-1906), “a distinguished French Protestant theologian” and nineteenth-century President of the Section des Études Religieuses at the Sorbonne in Paris,²⁴ take up the tale:

“Pizarro’s almoner, Father Valverde, drew near to the Inca, a crucifix in one hand and a missal in the other, and by means of an interpreter delivered a regular discourse to him, in which he announced that Pope Alexander VI had given all the lands of America to the King of Spain, which he had a right to do as the successor of St. Peter, who was himself the *Vicar of the Son of God* [emphasis added].

...
“Atahualpa was literally stupefied. Much of the discourse, no doubt, he failed to follow, but what he did understand filled him with indignation. He answered that he reigned over his peoples by hereditary right, and could not see how a foreign priest could dispose of lands that were not his.”²⁵

De Valverde also offered the emperor a Bible, which he examined briefly. Then he “flung the book to the ground.” When the cleric reported this to Pizarro, he immediately ordered an attack. The Incas were shot and “cut down from all sides.” Pizarro personally seized Atahualpa, who was first held as a hostage until his followers filled the chamber with gold and silver. Thereupon the Inca emperor was accused of executing his brother Huascar, who had been a rival claimant to the throne, “and of plotting to overthrow the Spaniards.”²⁶

Despite the huge ransom, melted down to 24 tons of gold and silver, the conquistadors sentenced Atahualpa to death by burning. When he was already at the stake, Valverde made him another offer: to die by strangulation through the garrote if he converted to Christianity. At last the Indian emperor, quailing before the flames, became and died a Roman Catholic.²⁷

That was not quite the end of the story for the threesome who had set out for Peru and were at first such intimate friends. Within a little more than a decade, each of them would taste both triumph and bitterness, experiencing quite literally that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

After the religious murder of Atahualpa, Pizarro set out for Cuzco, entering it on 15 November 1533. Again Vicente de Valverde was with him. By 23 March of the following year, a new church had been erected there. It later became Friar Valverde’s cathedral. “Pizarro also gave him a large native commandery.” Valverde accepted this, only to mistreat the Indians. Later in 1534 he went back to Spain, where he was made the bishop of Cuzco and Peru. By 1536, he was reappointed as “protector of the Natives and inquisitor.” With papal confirmation, he was back in Peru by 1538.²⁸

In the meantime, Diego de Almagro had also been sent to help with the

conquest of Chile. While he was gone from Peru, the Indians rebelled, besieging Cuzco. He rushed back, “put down the insurrection, and then imprisoned Pizarro’s two brothers, Hernando and Alonso, for having refused to obey his orders during the fighting.” For him, this was a death sentence written in his own blood, for Francisco Pizarro, his old friend with whom he had conquered Peru, returned to Cuzco, “where he defeated Almagro’s army, captured Almagro, and put him to death in the first of several internecine wars between the Spanish captains in the new colony.” The date was 1538.²⁹

For his last two years, Pizarro was in Lima, which he had founded in 1535. His enemies were also there: Almagro’s former followers, who were now “grouped around Almagro’s son.” Pizarro had them watched very closely. Nevertheless, on 26 June 1541, they boldly attacked his palace. “Pizarro died that day a protracted death, drawing a cross of his own blood on the ground, kissing it, and crying ‘Jesus’ as he fell.”³⁰

De Valverde, who had so rapidly risen from being an ordinary friar to heading a bishopric, survived him for only four more months. He was forced to flee from Peru. While heading toward Panama, he stopped over for a brief stay on the Island of Puná, near Guayaquil in Ecuador. There rebellious Indians killed him on 31 October 1541. According to some sources, after capturing him, they poured molten gold down his throat as a punishment for greed.³¹

IV

Not all the Catholic overlords who went to the Americas were cruel or nasty. A magnificent exception was Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566), who began as one of the conquerors but later joined the Dominican Order. He became bishop of Chiapas in Guatemala from 1545 to 1547. But notwithstanding his impact on the Spanish king and efforts at reform, he “failed to stay the progressive enslavement of the indigenous races of Latin America.” Indeed, he acquired a great opponent at the court, who proved to be increasingly influential: the learned Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. In his *Democrates II* (“Concerning the just cause of the war against the Indians”), this scholar—on the basis of Aristotelian principles—argued that the Indians “are inferior to the Spaniards just as children are to adults, women to men, and, indeed, one might even say, as apes are to men.” Las Casas is now best remembered for his writing, continued until he was 90 years old, just two years before his death. His greatest work is *Historia de las Indias* (History of the Indies), which was printed posthumously. He foretold the Lord’s judgment on Spain for its heartless treatment of the indigenous people in its Western Empire. Eventually his letters helped to inspire Simón Bolívar, the great liberator who led the wars of independence for Latin America.³²

The Spanish Empire created by the conquistadors kept on using the Donation as a pretext for exploiting the Indians in cruel ways. In the eighteenth-century writings of the Ecuadorian Dr. Francisco Javier Eugenio

Santa Cruz y Espejo (1717-1795), native reaction is strikingly reflected. This man's mother was an Indian. By adopting the name *Espejo* (mirror), he made an abiding statement of what he was seeking to do with his compositions, which historian Roberto Andrade discussed. Espejo, a revolutionary thinker, analyzed the terrible injustices of the Spanish Empire, maintaining that all people, including natives and women, were entitled to freedom and equality.³³

One of Espejo's actions, related by Andrade, was to compose a sermon for his brother, an Indian priest, to preach in Riobamba, a city inhabited by Spaniards and their descendants. These people all owned legions of indigenous slaves whose labor enriched them while receiving no remuneration except ill-treatment. Delivering the sermon composed by Espejo, his brother exhorted his hearers to look at Saint Peter and his good example. Then he exclaimed: "Oh, if only all those who succeeded him had imitated him, if the reality was not so many foul pontificates!" He asked how that could be, and answered his own question: "Was the basis of the Church of Jesus, Saint Peter, privileged in this way, among those who propagated his divine precepts, and held by the faithful to be the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, not subverted to justify tyranny, advising servitude for their brothers?" Ironically he added: "Honor the king, he says: you servants, remain submissive with fear to your masters, not only the good and humane ones, but also to those of a harsh disposition."³⁴

Espejo's reward was imprisonment on more than one occasion. At last, he died in jail. His writings, however, directly inspired the revolution of 10 August 1809 and the first declaration of independence in Latin America.³⁵

It started a chain reaction of uprisings, which within a few years destroyed the overlordship that Spain had established three hundred years earlier. Henceforth its former colonies could become independent countries, with their own identities and history.

V

Participating in the conquistadors' triumph over those three centuries and also sharing in their spoils, the Roman Church as a religion, educator, judicial entity, and landowner of vast estates, could not contemplate these Latin American revolutions with equanimity. The Vatican was undoubtedly worried. It therefore viewed with interest a curious aftermath concerning Columbus, who had begun it all: the efforts spearheaded by Count Roselly de Lorgues to have the great navigator canonized. He, "and other prominent Church leaders 'hailed Columbus as a Catholic Hero and demanded that his name should be included in the calendar of saints' (Jane 1988:xviii)."³⁶

In *The Life of Christopher Columbus*, de Lorgues extravagantly praised the great discoverer for his holiness. He called him "a man of perfect virtue, of an entire purity of heart, whose moral grandeur surpasses the most celebrated types of antiquity, and who is not inferior to the noblest of those of the heroes formed by the Gospel."³⁷ Columbus, he maintained, "was the precursor of the missionaries, the herald of Catholicity, and the

tacit mandatory of the Papacy.” Stressing his hero’s connections with ecclesiastics like the Dominicans, the Carthusians, and the Hieronymites, he especially pointed out: “A Tertiary, or member of the Third Order of St. Francis, he lived as a true religious not raised to the priesthood.” Indeed, “evidently God chose Christopher Columbus as a Messenger of Salvation.”³⁸

And so, as the fourth centennial of America’s discovery was approaching, a movement arose, encouraged by Pius IX, to have the famous navigator canonized. In 1877, the pontiff designated Roselly de Lorgues to be the official postulant for this purpose, even though he was a layman. But the next year Pope Pius died,³⁹ which was a very serious setback.

Although this attempt to canonize Columbus ended in failure, it excited indignation on the part of at least one Protestant writer, Anna Howard Shaw (1847–1919), “a leading United States civil rights leader; a physician; and the first Methodist minister in the United States.”⁴⁰ This brilliant woman, who vigorously opposed the papacy, instantly grasped the implications. In her *Fate of Republics* (1880), she first detailed many dreadful persecutions conducted over the centuries by the Roman Church and then said:

The plea is now put forth that the United States of America, by legal right, belong [*sic*] to the Pope. “Columbus,” says De Lorgues, a distinguished French Catholic, “gave the name of the Blessed Virgin to his ship, lifted the cross in her, departed on Friday, and commanded the sails to be unfurled in the name of Jesus Christ. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that he took possession of the lands he discovered. It was to honor the Redeemer that he erected the cross everywhere he landed.” What follows? This: that these territorial titles of the Church of Rome, obtained through the discoveries of Columbus, antedate all other rights and titles. Hence, therefore, the Pope simply bides his time to claim, politically, what is his own. Leading Papists confidently predict that the day is not distant when our *de facto* claims and titles must yield to the *de jure* domination of the Church of Rome.⁴¹

That is, through the Treaty of Tordisillas based on the Donation, even the United States in a legal sense allegedly belongs to the Vatican, and at some future time the pontiff will reassert his original rights to this country and after all those centuries reclaim it for himself.

Besides, in one spot the Spanish did create the oldest, continuously inhabited city that still exists and thrives in this country: Saint Augustine, Florida, founded on 28 August 1565 by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés⁴² (1519-1574).

He was “a classic example of the conquistador—intrepid, energetic, loyal, and brutal.” He had arrived from Spain “with 11 ships and about 2,000 men,” expedited by King Philip II with a specific objective:

Huguenots having successfully settled in that area, they had to be eliminated. Therefore, on 20 September 1565, Menéndez de Avilés and his men “took the nearby French Colony of Fort Caroline and massacred the entire population.”⁴³

The killing did not stop there, as is made clear in *The History of Saint Augustine, Florida* (1881) by William W. Dewhurst, who based his narrative on Spanish, French, and English sources, mentioned in his Preface.⁴⁴ Fort Caroline was on the St. John’s River, while other Huguenots were on the French ships supporting their enterprise. They hovered near the coast under Captain Ribault. But lashed and driven westward by storms, these also were compelled to land. Their presence in two places were promptly reported to Menéndez de Avilés by Native Americans, whereupon he drove his men to undertake a further two marches. The first company of Frenchmen whom they found was persuaded to surrender. Of these, the few Catholics among them were spared, but he had all the Huguenots slaughtered, including noblemen whose ransom he refused. The second company fought back, though unsuccessfully. Most of the survivors agreed to surrender, trusting Menéndez de Avilés’s word, which he kept. But those who continued to resist were captured and also killed.⁴⁵ A few hundred Huguenots seem to have perished.

Dewhurst made it perfectly clear just why the king of Spain had sent this dreadful man to found Saint Augustine: it was to uproot the Huguenots: “Philip II. determined not to allow any encroachment on the territory, which he claimed by the right of his subjects’ former expeditions of discovery and by gift from the Holy See. Not only was he unwilling to see Florida occupied by foreigners, but of all persons none were more objectionable than Protestants, upon whom he looked as upon those without the pale of Christianity, who only lived as enemies of God, to disseminate a wicked creed, and war upon His holy faith.”⁴⁶ The words “by gift from the Holy See” no doubt refer to the Treaty of Tordesillas arranged at the Vatican in 1506 under Pope Julius II.

As for “his subjects’ former expeditions of discovery,” we find that this claim has not yet been abandoned. A *Catholic Encyclopedia* mentions several Spanish captains who previously sailed their ships around that peninsula. It also says that on April 1513 Juan Ponce de León (1460-1521) actually landed there, naming it Florida, “in honour of the Easter festival, set up a stone cross with an inscription, and impressed with the hostile character of the natives, returned after six months’ exploration to Porto Rico.” Seven years later, in 1521, he even tried to establish a colony, although it “was doomed to speedy failure.” Because of these events, Florida supposedly “belonged by right of discovery to Catholic Spain.”⁴⁷

If so, at least Canada and possibly the whole of North America belongs by right of discovery to Norway; for Leif Erickson set foot there a few years after 1000!⁴⁸ “According to the Sagas of Icelanders, he established a Norse settlement at Vinland, which has been tentatively identified with the

L'Anse aux Meadows Norse site on the northern tip of the island of Newfoundland.”⁴⁹

The key fact is that more than forty years before the British settled in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, and also before the Spaniard Menéndez de Avilés founded Saint Augustine in 1565, Protestant Huguenots from France established themselves at Fort Caroline. Martyrs to their faith and our first European immigrants, they were remorselessly hunted down and butchered like cattle; but their blood soaked into this soil of what eventually became the United States of America. They were here first.

VI

But we return to the tale of Columbus. Attempts to canonize him did not die out with the nineteenth century. On 20 October 1952, *Time Magazine* contained the following item: “From Vatican City came a report that talk of sainthood for Christopher Columbus is still going on. The movement began, said the New York Herald Tribune, more than 100 years ago, when a study of Columbus, published by Count Roselly de Lorgues, attracted the attention of Pope Pius IX. The Archbishop of Bordeaux later petitioned the Pope to begin the process of beatification of Columbus on the basis of his ‘humility, obedience, gentleness, resignation, charity, conformity to the divine will’ and other virtues.”⁵⁰

There were two main reasons why nineteenth-century as well as later attempts to declare Columbus a saint have not yet succeeded.

Ecclesiastically, Columbus was after his death accused of living with an unmarried woman and fathering a child by her. This was rather awkward. John A. Hardon, a twentieth-century Jesuit priest, dismissed this charge as false. According to him, Columbus during the autumn of 1487 married the aristocratic Donna Beatrix Enriques, their only child, Fernando, being born in August of the next year. Hardon stressed Columbus’s link with the Franciscans and his strong religious motivation for his voyages of discovery, concluding: “Everything we know about the life Columbus witnesses to his life long practice of continence and chastity.”⁵¹

Another strong defendant of the navigator’s reputation was Douglas T. Peck. This sailor with a passion for history actually sailed Columbus’s routes and spent time throughout all the Caribbean areas which the great man had frequented. Peck in “The Controversial Historical Image of Columbus from the Sixteenth Century to Modern Times” focused on the second and, we think, more serious reason for the failure to canonize him. It was the “Black Legend,” a Protestant and largely North American emphasis on the cruelties of Spanish colonization.

New World Explorers, hosting the article by Peck, asserted that the Black Legend died out in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century, “when it became apparent that the indigenous natives in Spanish colonies fared as well or better from a humanitarian and legal rights standpoint as those

in many of the other European colonies.”⁵² Peck said the image of Columbus “as a heroic, virtuous, and nearly divine figure extended from the sixteenth century well into the twentieth century” but “late in the twentieth century” new authors revived the Black Legend. Peck was at some pains to refute them, especially on one sore point: “Columbus’ practice of taking slaves. Inanely he asked: “Was this in conflict with his stated primary interest in converting the Indians to Christianity?”⁵³

He thought not, for such a practice was based on “the then current legal and accepted European system of *repartamiento* [*sic*, share-out] which was adopted in the Middle Ages by Spain in the Moorish reconquest campaigns and well before Columbus’ voyage.” What was this about? “*Repartamiento* [*sic*] provided that once the ownership of a conquered land was established, whether it was in Spain on lands occupied by the Moor, or on foreign soil (Africa, Canaries, or Columbus’ Espanola) the occupants of the land automatically became bonded vassals (or by common usage, slaves) of the occupiers.”⁵⁴ Because the navigator had not invented this system but only brought it with him to the New World, it was, according to Peck, so very wrong of historians to hold him responsible for it!

VII

But down to the present, the people of Latin America still remember their former overlords with burning resentment. This also became evident when Pope Benedict XVI visited Brazil in May 2007 and had to face the South Americans’ “standard view that Spanish and Portuguese colonizers forced the conversion of natives by making them choose between ‘the cross and the sword.’” In Ecuador, where Espejo had written and suffered, one indigenous group asserted that “representatives of the Catholic Church of those times, with honorable exceptions, were accomplices, deceivers and beneficiaries of one of the most horrific genocides of all humanity.” On returning to Rome, the pontiff rather feebly tried to mollify them by admitting that it was, of course, impossible to forget the suffering and injustice inflicted by the colonizers on the Indians. Nevertheless, he “repeated his claim that Catholicism in South America had favorably ‘shaped their culture for 500 years.’”⁵⁵

Chapter Twenty-Seven
VICEGERENT OF THE SON OF GOD

I

Like *Vicar of the Son of God*, the title *Vicegerent of the Son of God* is based on the Donation of Constantine, where it says: “Ut sicut B. Petrus **in terris vicarius Filii Dei** videtur constitutus, ita **et Pontifices**, qui ipsius principis apostolorum **gerunt vices**” (As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted *Vicar of the Son of God on the earth*, so the **pontiffs** who are **the representatives** of that same chief of the apostles. . . .) *Vicegerent* is an English translation for *gerunt vices*. (Emphasis and bolding added.) Though it does not have the same numerical value as *vicarius Filii Dei*, this title is its synonym.

Historicists interpret Rev. 13 against the background of the chapter preceding it. This teaches that the great red dragon who persecutes and seeks to destroy the church is “the Devil, and Satan” (Rev. 12:9). It is, moreover, a symbol of pagan Rome, which ruled the Mediterranean world in the ancient past. The dragon lives through seven heads, representing the empires which in ages past accepted our great supernatural Adversary as the god of this world and with him rebelled against heaven. About the Antichrist depicted in Rev. 13:1, 2, the Bible says: “The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.”

Until well into the nineteenth century, Protestants—still mostly Historicists—did not refrain from saying so. They went further. According to their theology, the pope was the *vicegerent*, the *representative*, of Satan. Ellen G. White was only one of many who expressed this with clarity and vigor.

Commenting on how Jesus was tempted in the wilderness by our Archenemy (Matt. 4:5–11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:5–13), she wrote: “When Satan declared to Christ, The kingdom and glory of the world are delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it, he stated what was true only in part, and he declared it to serve his own purpose of deception. Satan’s dominion was that wrested from Adam, but Adam was the *vicegerent* of the Creator. His was not an independent rule. The earth is God’s, and He has committed all things to His Son. Adam was to reign subject to Christ. When Adam betrayed his sovereignty into Satan’s hands, Christ still remained the rightful King. Thus the Lord had said to King Nebuchadnezzar, ‘The Most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.’ Dan. 4:17. Satan can exercise his usurped authority only as God permits.”¹ (Emphasis added.)

Nevertheless, “the archdeceiver had not completed his work. He was resolved to gather the Christian world under his banner and to exercise his power through his *vicegerent*, the proud pontiff who claimed to be the representative of Christ.”² (Emphasis added.)

Ellen White’s theology, held by her Seventh-day Adventist

contemporaries, largely continued the Historicism characterizing many of their Protestant predecessors. In the examples of the following paragraphs we again add italics to throw the title into relief.

In 1753, more than two hundred and fifty years ago, James Duchal (1697-1761), a dissenting Presbyterian minister and writer educated at the University of Glasgow—whose birthplace was County Antrim, Northern Ireland—depicted the papacy as the man of sin or Antichrist. He said that, precisely as foretold by the Apostle Paul, the pope sat in the temple of God and was worshiped as God (2 Thess. 2:3–13). He considered himself to be “the *vicegerent of the Son of God*, pretending, that all the kingdoms of the earth were given to him, and that he hath a right to dispose of them. This is indeed shewing himself, that he is a God; it is claiming and exercising supreme dominion.”³

A decade later, the Catholic Thomas Phillips—perhaps in rebuttal—produced a biographical history about Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500-1558), the last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, when Mary Stuart (1516-1558) ruled over England. This was the man who “shared in the responsibility for the persecution and mass burning of Protestants, which gave his queen her lasting nickname of ‘Bloody Mary’. . . .” He also wrote a book “*De Concilio* and treatises on the authority of the Roman pontiff.”⁴ Phillips cited the archbishop as saying that our Lord had established for his church “a form of Government” centered in Peter, who “is *Christ’s Vicegerent* on earth.” Pole also called that apostle the “*Vicegerent of the Son of God*” and asserted that this had already become apparent at the “first Council held at *Jerusalem*.” This, he said, “must be looked on as a complete proof of the Supremacy of the Bishops of *Rome*.”⁵

For a sixteenth-century Catholic like Pole and his biographer of 1764, *vicegerent* and *vicar* were synonymous.

In 1766, Edward Stone (1702-1768), an English clergyman from Oxford—who also happened to discover the active ingredient in Aspirin—took up the challenge posed by the assertion “that St. Peter was the Prince and Chief of the Apostolic College, and presided at this meeting at Jerusalem.” He stated that Phillips “produces likewise a quotation from Cardinal Pole’s dissertation on General Councils, where he said that St. Peter, as *Vicegerent of the Son of God*, exerted the office of Father of the future age, of Guardian and Pastor of the Church, in the first Council held at Jerusalem. . . .” But as Stone pointed out the Bible did not mention Peter’s so-called superiority and preeminence. It was rather “St. James, who was Bishop of Jerusalem, and closed the debate with his Speech.”⁶

The background to this controversy between Catholics and English Protestants was the fact that King Henry VIII (1491-1547) had broken with Rome, establishing the Church of England, headed by himself and all his successors. This brought with it a dispute about the right to that title, as is also evidenced amongst others by Edward Irving (1792-1834).

For seven years in the early nineteenth century, that mighty evangelist preached the Second Coming and translated into English a greatly influential

Spanish book, *La venida del Mesías en gloria y magestad* (The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty) by Manuel de Lacunza, a Jesuit exiled from Chile but one who had truly loved the Scriptures. Irving also delivered a series of discourses on the four beasts in Dan. 7. In a blistering chapter of *The Church and State Responsible to Christ, and to One Another: A Series of Discourses on Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts* (1829), entitled "Rome, with the Pope Her Little Horn," he castigated the papacy for usurping the prerogatives that belonged to kings.⁷ According to Irving, these were the true *vicegerents of the Son of God* in church and state.⁸

A little later, John Dowling, pastor of the Berean Church in New York City, wrote *The History of Romanism: From the Earliest Corruptions of Christianity to the Present Time* (1845). He depicted the period between Charlemagne's coronation in 800 and Gregory VII's pontificate in 1073 as "Popery in Its Glory—the World's Midnight—A.D. 800-1073."

Dowling told of the gross immorality and corruptions during the ninth-century pornocracy, when Theodora and Marozia flourished, and also afterwards, deep into the eleventh century. To the pontiffs of that entire period, he ironically applied the title *vicegerents of God upon earth*.⁹

Having already from other sources dealt with the clerical immorality of that time, we shall not repeat ourselves by dwelling on sordid details but rather mention three other matters which Dowling raised.

First, he referred to *A History of the Christian Church* by the Irish Catholic priest and scholar, William Gahan (1732-1804),¹⁰ and cited him where he wrote about "some unworthy popes," whom "three women of scandalous lives" had "thrust into the apostolic chair." According to Dr. Gahan, these men nevertheless performed their pontifical duties acceptably; for "'Christ promised infallibility,' says he, 'to the great body of her pastors, in their public doctrine, but he has nowhere promised them impeccability in their conduct. 'Go,' said he to them, 'teach all nations: Baptize and teach them to observe all that I have ordained, and I will be with you,' &c. In virtue of this promise, he is always with the pastors of his church, to guarantee them *from all error in the doctrine of faith*, but *not to exempt them from all vice*; for he did not say, as the great Bossuet observes, 'I will be with you *PRACTISING all that I have commanded*, but I will be with ye *TEACHING*. Hence, to show that the mark of the true faith was attached to the profession of the public doctrine, and not to the innocence of their morals, he said to the faithful who are taught, 'DO ALL THAT THEY SAY, AND NOT WHAT THEY DO.'"¹¹

Second, according to Dowling, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, clerics openly kept concubines, which popes and prelates regarded as far less of a crime than marrying a wife. Fornication by clergymen was "not only tolerated but also preferred to matrimony." Whoredom was supposedly less sinful than getting married.¹² Surely this fulfills the Apostle Paul's prediction about the great Apostasy, that "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry . . ." (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Third, in all this, Dowling attacked the papal doctrine of an unbroken apostolic succession. He especially referred to Pope Benedict IX (d. 1055/1056), as vicious a man as the worst of Roman Emperors. “Finding himself at length an object of public abhorrence, on account of his flagitious crimes, he finally *sold* the popedom to his successor, Gregory VI . . .”¹³

It was even worse than that, for Benedict IX reigned as pontiff on three occasions, “from 1032 to 1044, from April to May 1045, and from 1047 to 1048.”¹⁴ His troubles started when “his violent and licentious conduct provoked the Romans to insurrection.” He fled. Then, in January 1045, they elected another pope to succeed him: Sylvester III (d. 1046?). But a month later Benedict’s supporters drove *him* away. Benedict, however, felt insecure, which is when he sold the papacy to Gregory VI. On receiving a bribe, Sylvester also recognized Gregory VI.¹⁵

But the game of pontifical musical chairs was not yet over. In the following year, “both Benedict and Sylvester returned to Rome, each claiming to be pope instead of Gregory.” This was when the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III (1039-1056) decided that enough was enough. At the Council of Sutri, which he convened, all three pontiffs—Benedict IX, Sylvester III, and Gregory VI—were for various defects deposed and replaced with Pope Clement II.¹⁶ He was consecrated on Christmas day in 1046. But less than a year later, on 9 October 1047, he suddenly died, which “was attributed to poisoning by Benedict’s supporters. Benedict then reappeared in Rome and installed himself as pope.”¹⁷ A few months later, the emperor had him expelled for a final time.¹⁸ Only after that was the papacy able to return to a more orderly succession.

With all this in mind, Dowling asked: “What becomes of the UNINTERRUPTED APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION?”¹⁹ A very good question.

Almost thirty years later, Dowling—now pastoring the South Baptist Church in New York City—was still warning about the dangers of the Antichrist. In a lecture series, his first topic was “The Early Corruptions of Christianity,” presented on the evening of 27 July 1873. The next day, *The New York Times* reported that he had asked those who had come to hear him: “Was it possible that with the history of the Church of Rome before them they could resist the conclusion that to this corrupt and anti-Christian community they were to look for the origin of the terrible picture drawn by the graphic and unerring hand of inspiration—in a word, that the great predicted apostasy was the Church of Rome, and that its leaders were the long list of crowned potentates who arrogate to themselves the title of *vicegerents of God upon earth*, and who sat themselves upon the temple of the Deity, showing themselves as God?” (Emphasis added.)

According to the same report, Dr. Dowling said this was not just an individual opinion, but “the echo of the verdict pronounced by the greatest theologians of the Church from the earliest times.” Among them, he singled out Wycliffe and Luther, but also asserted: “Such was the opinion of hundreds of others, and, with a few exceptions, such was the opinion of the great living Protestant divines of this community on the verdict that the great predicted

apostasy is the Church of Rome, and in this apostate church, and in this alone, were concentrated all the signs described by inspiration.”²⁰

How startled Dowling would have been if he could have lived another hundred years to find that Catholic Preterism and Catholic Futurism—repackaged as Dispensationalism—had all but swept away this Protestant consensus and to witness how Evangelicals, Lutherans, and others were ecumenically joining the great Apostasy.

In the nineteenth century, the title *Vicegerent* was also attributed to the Roman pontiff by Catholics. One of them was John Henry Newman (1801-1890), Anglican leader of the Oxford Movement, who converted to the Roman Church in 1845 and was made a cardinal a year before his death.²¹

In Sermon XIV, which later appeared in his *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions* (1870), Newman referred to Pius IX as the *Vicar of Christ* and then compared the Papal States—a most imperfect setup—to ancient Israel, which had also been a theocracy with many shortcomings, ruled on God’s behalf by Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Eli, and Samuel. These men, like the pontiff of his time, were also allegedly “*Vicars or Vicegerents of the Eternal Lord.*”²² (Emphasis added.)

This nomenclature also appeared in the Bishop of Nottingham’s piece, *The Catholic Church in the Scriptures* (1899). He attacked the Anglican concept that true Christianity could accommodate different branches, including Catholicism, Russian Orthodoxy, and—within the Church of England itself—a Low as well as a High, ritualistic contingent. For him, this was at odds with the order established by Christ and the apostles. And so the bishop called the Roman Church “that one Holy Kingdom, founded by our Blessed Lord, for all nations, to which belong those, and those only, who, being baptized, believe and profess the whole faith of Christ, and who are subject to the Roman Pontiff, as the *Vicar of Christ* upon earth, and as their infallible Teacher, and supreme Ruler.” A few sentences later, he described the pope as the *Vicegerent of the Son of God.*²³ (Emphasis added.)

We note that for the abovementioned writers this concept was by no means limited to religious matters. The pontiff supposedly at the same time had authority over “all the **kingdoms of the earth**” (Duchal), was “Christ’s **Vicegerent on earth**” (Pole), usurped “**the prerogatives that belong to kings** . . . the true *vicegerents of the Son of God* in church and **state**” (Irving), was the *Vicar of Christ* who theocratically ruled the **Papal States** just as ancient prophets and judges were “*Vicars or Vicegerents of the Eternal Lord*” with temporal power over ancient Israel (Newman), and as the “Vicegerent of the Son of God” was “the *Vicar of Christ upon earth*” (Bishop of Nottingham). (All emphases and bolding added.)

II

Like *vicarius Filii Dei* and its translations into other European languages, the synonymous *vicegerent of the Son of God* played a role in the material exploitation of the New World.

A good example is to be found in the *History of Texas* (1875) by J. M. Morphis, apparently an attorney who was much concerned with that state. Chapter 18, "Texas Land Titles," begins with the following words: "The earliest titles to land in Texas emanated from the kings of Spain, who, being good Catholics, claimed through the Pope of Rome, who, as the successor of St. Peter and *vicegerent of the Son of God* on earth, derived his title from the Almighty." Morphis went on to point out that these land grants "have been generally held by the courts of Texas to be good," if issued before 13 November 1835.²⁴ (Emphasis added.)

It is fascinating that shadows of the Donation were still lingering on in southmost Texas more than a hundred and sixty years later. According to several reports of 2007 by *The Monitor*, a McAllen newspaper, some farmers in the lower Rio Grande Valley whose property adjoined the river were planning to fight off attempts by the United States Federal government to erect a border fence to keep out illegal immigrants. They were going to lodge appeals on the basis of those old Spanish land grants, which were taken over and validated by Texas, when it achieved its independence from Mexico in 1836!

Chapter Twenty-Eight
PAPAL ONSLAUGHT AND FIASCO
IN AFRICA AND THE FAR EAST

I

For many centuries, two great non-Catholic churches had been protected against interference from both the pagan Roman Empire and the Imperial Church created by Constantine. They were the Copts in Ethiopia and the Malabar Christians in Kerala on the southwest coast of India. Some of their practices were very ancient. For instance, both churches still observed the fourth Commandment by resting on Saturday, the seventh day of the week. These communities could worship in their own way without fearing the archbishop in Constantinople or the pope in Rome.

The Apocalypse symbolically predicted such safety in describing a resplendent woman, the fugitive church, who would mount up on an eagle's wings and fly away from her persecutor, a great red dragon: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. . . . And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" (Rev. 12:6, 14). According to the Historical School of prophetic interpretation, that period extended for 1260 year-days, from 538 to 1798.

In the Greek original, the word ἔρημος (erēmos), *wilderness*, is closely related to ἔρημία (erēmía), *desert*.¹ Furthermore, ἔρημος (erēmos), marked with a different accent, is an adjective meaning *desert*.² Bible translations in several languages—such as German, French, Afrikaans, and Spanish—state that the woman fled into the *desert*. This may be significant, because a desert is also a wilderness, though a wilderness need not be a desert.

Like other symbols in Rev. 12, the region into which the woman flees from the dragon has been variously identified, many of them no doubt valid. A writer who looked at it in a fresh way, applying this prediction to churches in a wide range of places, including pre-Catholic Ireland, Africa, Mesopotamia, India, and China, was Benjamin George Wilkinson (1872-1968). His *Truth Triumphant*, bears the subtitle of *The Church in the Wilderness*.³

While we cannot here concern ourselves with all the ramifications of this issue, we do suggest that students of prophecy should ask (but usually omit) the following question: Was there in Biblical times a literal, natural feature to which these verses could have applied? Yes, there was: the huge Sahara that stretches over the entire North Africa and into Asia. As Susan Arritt explains: "Straddling the Tropic of Cancer for 4,000 miles (6,452 km), this giant region covers almost 1 percent of Earth's entire land surface."⁴ In the ancient Mediterranean world it was, as everybody knew,

the Desert par excellence.

Until the end of the fifteenth century, the Coptic Church in Ethiopia and the Malabar Christians of India were both still sheltered from the papacy by the intervening Sahara and the Arabian Desert. To the west, with its seemingly unending coastline along the Atlantic, lay another protective rampart: the continent of Africa.

But the Portuguese had set their mind on circumnavigating this barrier and discovering a sea route to India. Slowly at first but then ever more boldly, they snaked a southerly route along the African coast. In 1488, Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape, and then their way lay open. A decade later, in 1498, Vasco da Gama suddenly arrived in India with his four ships, startling its Muslim, Hindu, and Christian communities. He and subsequent Portuguese mariners had come prepared for war against their Islamic enemies and a conquest which they soon completed.

Their ships now monopolized the South Atlantic, the entire Indian Ocean, even the Western Pacific. "The Portuguese operated in the East for nearly a century without European competition. They faced occasional Oriental enemies but weathered these dangers with their superior ships, gunnery, and seamanship."⁵

Although they came in relatively small numbers, almost all Africa in its maritime areas bore the burden of the Portuguese forts and exploitation. From West Africa, they acquired gold and other products, especially their black gold: innumerable slaves whom they transported to be sold in the rest of the world. Angola became their property and remained so for five hundred years, and so did Mozambique. Higher up on the east African coast, their ships for a long time likewise kept on coming and going. The chief destination was India and beyond: Ceylon, the Spice Islands, even the coast of China.

Only one area amazingly escaped them: the southernmost portion of the African continent. There the hostile natives and a formidable topography held them at bay. Below Angola a dreadful desert shore, including the notorious Skeleton Coast, prevented their entrance into the land which today is known as Namibia. Further down, the sparsely populated, arid terrain of western South Africa was scarcely more welcoming—and they could not know that there the sand concealed the richest diamond deposits in the world. Then came the Cape of Storms, later renamed the Cape of Good Hope, and the southern tip of the continent. Beyond this, lay a beautiful shore, but it was guarded by treacherous seas which over the centuries would become the graveyard of ship after ship that ventured in too closely.

Only the Cape held out the possibility of becoming a convenient halfway station between Europe and India, where water and other supplies could be taken in; and here the Portuguese at first from time to time made landfall. But a remarkable episode saved South Africa for half a millennium from the fate of Angola and Mozambique and becoming a permanent Catholic settlement.

In March 1505, Francisco de Almeida (c. 1450-1510) had departed from Portugal as the viceroy for the newly conquered territories of and around

India. He sailed past the Cape of Good Hope and up the east coast. There he “took Kilwa (in what is now Tanzania), where he constructed a fort, and then destroyed Mombasa before reaching India and taking up residence in Cochin.” He fortified many places and amongst other things concluded a commercial treaty with Malacca in Malaysia. Thereupon the Arabs and Egyptians banded together to oppose the threat he represented, but de Almeida “burned and pillaged their ports and defeated their combined fleet off Diu, India, north of Bombay, in February 1509.”⁶

In the same year, Afonso de Albuquerque, the Great (1453–1515) arrived to complete the Portuguese conquests and supersede him as viceroy. The new man was also a great warrior. In 1510, he took Goa on the west shore of India. The next year, he also captured Malacca on the Malay Peninsula, this being “the immediate point of distribution for the Spice Islands and points east.”⁷ He “endeavored to gain a monopoly of European spice trade for his country by sealing off all entrances and exits of the Indian Ocean competing with the Portuguese route around the Cape of Good Hope.”⁸

In this he and Portugal nearly succeeded, but already in those very years, an event occurred that left open a fatal breach through which a lethal enemy would one day enter.

After de Albuquerque had taken over from him, de Almeida set sail in December 1509 for his return trip to Portugal. At the Cape of Good Hope, he and part of his crew stopped off to take on water. They fell in with a band of Khoekhoe (Khoikhoi), ancient hunter-gatherers and occasional cattle herders, whom white people would one day disparagingly call Hottentots. These natives had become increasingly irritated by the Portuguese visitors who arrived from time to time. A skirmish ensued. One of the Khoekhoe flung a spear, and the conqueror of Diu fell dying to the ground.⁹

That unknown warrior changed the history of South Africa and, perhaps, of the world. Owing to de Almeida’s death, the Portuguese decided that henceforth they would avoid the Cape and that entire region. It remained uncolonized for almost a hundred and fifty years, and when at length a Protestant settlement was planted there, it was as a vital link between Europe and Java.

For decade after decade, no other European power intervened to thwart the will of the imperial Portuguese. The Spanish observed the Treaty of Tordesillas as well as the Treaty of Saragossa (Zaragoza), which on 22 April 1529 augmented the older agreement, specifying its anti-meridian. “Originals of both treaties are kept in the Archivo General de Indias in Spain and at the Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo in Portugal.” These arrangements, both of them based on the spurious Donation, ensured that Spain—obedient to the pope—would not infringe on Portuguese waters, although it did some poaching, for instance by “illegally” annexing the Philippines.¹⁰

II

Together with their other cargoes of trade goods, the Portuguese also conveyed the dreaded Inquisition, “which was introduced into Goa in 1500.”¹¹ Four decades later, they also brought in the Society of Jesus, commonly known as the Jesuits, whom Pope Paul III recognized as a religious order in 1540, with Ignatius Loyola as their leader.¹²

These played a crucial role in a concerted effort to impose the Roman Church on Ethiopia, Japan, and Southern India.

In Europe, the Jesuits quickly became popular with Catholic rulers. “One of these was King John III of Portugal, who desired diligent priests to minister to the Christians and to evangelize the peoples in his new Asian dominions.” And so on 15 March 1540, Francis Xavier (1506-1552) left Rome and went to Lisbon, where he embarked for the Indies, landing at Goa on 6 May 1542.¹³

Imbued with an extraordinary fervor for converting people to his church, he baptized some 30,000 Asians in the ten short years of his ministry—though legend has it that it was one million. For this reason, he is still regarded by Catholics as the greatest missionary of modern times.¹⁴

Like other Jesuits after him, Xavier was a great educator. He first did follow-up work in Southeast India among the poor Paravas, who “had accepted Baptism seven years before, chiefly to secure Portuguese support against their enemies.” Traveling tirelessly from village to village, he instructed these converts from a little catechism which, assisted by interpreters, he had translated into Tamil. Then he worked among the primitive Macuans on the southwestern coast. After brief instructions, in the last months of 1544 Xavier baptized 10,000 of them.” Thereupon, in the fall of 1545, he heard of great missionary opportunities further east. On Portuguese vessels, he traveled to Malaya and the East Indies—present-day Indonesia—working for a few months at the great commercial center at Malacca. He founded mission stations among the Malays as well as the headhunters in the Spice Islands (Moluccas).¹⁵

In 1548, he returned to India, where more Jesuits had arrived. He found that in absentia he had been appointed their superior throughout the Indies. Moreover, in Goa, the College of the Holy Faith, created a few years earlier, was now handed over to the Jesuits. Xavier “began to develop it into a centre for the education of native priests and catechists for the diocese of Goa, which stretched from the Cape of Good Hope, at the southern tip of Africa, to China.”¹⁶

The next year, on 15 August 1549, he embarked on another Portuguese ship bound for Kagoshima in Japan. With him was Anjiro, a Japanese whom he had met in Malacca, converted, and baptized. The fruitage of this venture was “about 2,000 Christians in five communities.” In late 1551, he briefly returned to India but then set out for China, which was closed to foreigners. This time, however, Xavier failed to enter and was slain by a fever on the island of Shang-chu’uan Tao, off the Chinese coast, on 3 December 1552. He

was canonized in 1622.¹⁷

Let us now briefly consider the impact of Xavier and other Jesuits—sometimes allied with the Inquisition—on three countries during the sixteenth century, while the maritime empire established by the Portuguese still dominated the Indian Ocean as well as the Western Pacific.

III

The first who felt their presence were the Ethiopians. Today this nation belongs predominantly to the Orthodox Tewahedo Church with between forty and forty-five million members, which makes it “the largest of all Oriental Orthodox churches.”¹⁸ They maintain it is also older than most other Christian communities in the world, originating in apostolic times with an episode mentioned in Acts 8:26-39. This begins by saying that an angel of God had instructed Philip the Evangelist to go to a lonely stretch of road on the way to Gaza. There he saw “a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot reading Esaias the prophet.” The encounter ended with Philip baptizing this important royal official, who “went on his way rejoicing.”¹⁹

The early church historian Eusebius confirms this account and also says: “The first Gentile to receive from Philip by revelation the mysteries of the divine word, and the first-fruits of the faithful throughout the world, he is believed to have been the first to go back to his native land and preach the gospel of the knowledge of God of the universe and the life-giving sojourn of our Saviour among men. Through him came the actual fulfilment of the prophecy: Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand to God.”²⁰

This, however, was an oversimplification. These days, we know that the Ethiopia mentioned here was actually another, earlier country situated further north in what is now the Sudan. It was actually the Nubian Kingdom of Kush, with its capital at Meroë, south of Egypt. It lasted for more than nine hundred years, before it was succeeded by, respectively, the kingdoms of Axum and the later Ethiopia. Meroë lay over a 1,000 miles (1600 km) south of Alexandria.

Although the official may well have combined his pilgrimage to Jerusalem with business for his queen, it was certainly a tremendous distance to travel for religious purposes. To go to so much trouble, he must therefore already have been a devout believer in the God of Israel and able to read the Hebrew Scriptures.

In any case, we have no reason to discount the claim put forth by the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, except to point out that it first involved not only the earlier kingdom of Axum—which it acknowledges—but also the long ago kingdom of Kush, with its capital at Meroë. Also important were two other historical factors: a link with fourth-century Mediterranean Christianity and a more ancient Jewish or even Israelite presence.

Frumentius, a Syrian from Tyre, and his companion Aedesius “were captured by Ethiopians in about 340. They became civil servants at the court of the Aksumite king Ezana, whom Frumentius converted. On the death of the monarch, Frumentius became the royal administrator and tutor to the crown prince and was empowered to grant freedom of religious expression to visiting Christian merchants from the Roman Empire.” After his regency, he “visited Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in about 347.” In this way, he established a bond with Coptic Christianity in Egypt. The Ethiopians called him *abuna* (Our Father), a title still used by their patriarch today.²¹ The Coptic pope—a word which also means “father”—of Alexandria kept on appointing the *abuna* for sixteen hundred years,²² a practice which ended in 1959. From then on, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has been autocephalous, that is, with a head entirely its own.²³

But the truth of the matter is that in several ways it never conformed to the apostasy that had taken root in Egypt and the rest of the Mediterranean world; and this brings us to the second, much older link referred to: Jews, perhaps even Israelites belonging to the “lost tribes,” a topic which puzzles even present-day Israelis. Today they have in their midst, the Falasha, black Jews for whose origin they cannot easily account. During the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, Christian Ethiopia was even at war with these people, who called themselves the Beta Esrael²⁴ (House of Israel).

Nowadays the Orthodox Tewahedo Church still emphasizes the Old Testament more than Roman Catholics or even Protestants do. Several of its practices resemble Judaism. “Ethiopian Christians, like some other Eastern Christians, traditionally follow dietary rules that are similar to Jewish Kashrut, specifically with regard to how an animal is slaughtered. Similarly pork is prohibited, though unlike Rabbinical Kashrut, Ethiopian cuisine does mix dairy products with meat. . .” In the Ethiopian Church, the men and women are seated separately, though this is also “common to some Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Christians and not unique to Judaism.” Further, “Ethiopian Orthodox worshippers remove their shoes when entering a church, in accordance with Exodus 3:5 (in which Moses, while viewing the burning bush, is commanded to remove his shoes while standing on holy ground). Furthermore, both the Sabbath (Saturday), and the Lord’s Day (Sunday) are observed as holy . . .”²⁵ Ethiopian churches also typically contain an ark, and all their males are circumcized.²⁶

All this seems to indicate considerable Judaic influence. “Ethiopian Christians claim a long Jewish heritage before the coming of Christianity. They trace the royal line back to Menelik the son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, though that claim cannot be independently verified.”²⁷

We rather think that several of these observances seem so Jewish largely because they reflect an earlier Christianity as it existed in the early church at Jerusalem. Like their Lord, the apostles—all of them Jews—observed the seventh-day Sabbath. Only afterwards the great Mediterranean apostasy, influenced by Mithraism, introduced Sundaykeeping. Slaughtering animals in

the Jewish way can easily be explained on the basis of Acts 15:29, where the apostles ordered all Christians, including Gentile converts, to abstain “from blood.” This has an even more ancient origin in what God told Noah: “Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat” (Gen. 9:4).

In our day, too, there are messianic Jews who accept Jesus while retaining a synagogue style of worship. This phenomenon can even be found among Seventh-day Adventists. They are predominantly Gentile Christians, who observe the seventh-day Sabbath, abstain from eating pork or other unclean animals, and avoid blood in their meat. Their churches and liturgy resemble those of other Protestants. But in the recent past at least some Seventh-day Adventist Jews have also opted for synagogues of their own. One of their motives is to introduce the Lord Jesus to their people. In 2004, the late James H. Zachary, who coordinated the cross-cultural relations for his church’s North American Division, began his report on this as follows:

“It’s encouraging to see that 12 new synagogues have recently been formed in North America. It’s a precious experience to participate in a worship service that has its roots in a service similar to the type Jesus attended during His life on earth. I watched as the rabbi reverently took the Torah from its place in the ark. Placing the large scroll on a table, he reverently opened the 400-year-old leather document, the worshippers listening to the Hebrew words of Scripture and his English translation.”²⁸

But why did members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church rest not only on Saturdays but also Sundays? The answer is a century-long presence in their country of the Portuguese and the Jesuit Order. Ethiopia had been threatened by the Muslim Sultanate of Adal, which formed part of the expanding Ottoman Empire. It therefore in 1507 sent an Armenian envoy named Matthew (or Matheus) to Portugal for help. In response, an embassy under Dom Rodrigo de Lima entered the country. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, also wanted to go there and “take up the task of conversion, but was forbidden. Instead, the pope sent out Joao Nunez Barreto as patriarch of the East Indies, with Andre de Oviedo as bishop, and from Goa envoys went to Ethiopia, followed by Oviedo himself, to secure the king’s adherence to Rome.” This, however, took a long time. Only in 1624, the Ethiopian Emperor Susenyos formally submitted to the pope. He instituted Roman Catholicism as the official state religion, but his subjects resisted so fiercely that in 1632 he had to abdicate. His son Fasilides immediately restored the state religion to Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. In 1633, he expelled the Jesuits, and in 1665 ordered all their books to be burned.²⁹

The Catholics had made themselves odious. Amongst other things, “Alphonsus Mendes, who was sent out as patriarch of Ethiopia, demanded that all Ethiopian Christians be re-baptized, and the priests re-ordained, though he permitted the married priests to remain married. He prohibited the Ethiopian custom of circumcision, and insisted that Saturday be turned from the Sabbath as observed by the Ethiopians to a fast day . . .”³⁰

Having been driven out, the angry Jesuits and their fellow papists departed,

though not without leaving traces of their presence, including Sundaykeeping. All the same, the Ethiopians were fortunate; the representatives of Rome had no way of reasserting themselves with reinforcements from Goa. By then, the more powerful navies of the Protestant Dutch had arrived to eliminate the Portuguese in the oceans around Africa, India, the Spice Islands, and Japan. About this nemesis we will presently have more to tell.

IV

The night of Friday, 20 March 1585, brought special jubilation to Rome. Two troops of papal cavalry, headed by their general and vainly trying to act in secret, sought to smuggle in three ambassadors from a faraway land. But the crowds were out on the streets, and trumpets blared their welcome. In the Casa Processa, Claudius Aquaviva, the General of the Jesuit order, was waiting with two hundred of his religious.

After the new day had dawned, the threesome—sumptuously garbed in Japanese dress—were brought before the pope: “Don *Mancio* was sent by Don *Francis* King of *Bungo*, Don *Michael* by Don *Protase* King of *Arima*, and Don *Martin* by Don *Bartholomew* King of *Omura*, to render Obedience to the Holy See.”³¹ The word “don” is a Spanish honorific that indicates nobility, while these Western names for the three Japanese reflected conversion to Catholicism.

This account forms part of a two-volume work, *Histoire de l'Église du Japon* [History of the Church of Japan] (1689), published pseudonymously by the Jesuit Jean Crasset (1618–1692), who was amongst other things a preacher, a professor, and an ascetic writer. For convenience sake, we largely quote from an English translation, *The History of the Church of Japan*, Vol. I (1705).

According to the French text, these men were an “ambassade que trois Rois du Japon ont envoyée au *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* le Pape Gregoire XIII . . .” (an embassy that three kings of Japan had sent to the Vicar of the Son of God, Pope Gregory XIII).³²

In this case, the English translation we are using departs a little too much from the original, where it says: “The Embassy which was sent from three Crown’d Heads of *Japan*, to the Vicar of Jesus Christ *Gregory* the XIIIth . . .” We pass over the detail of asserting that the rulers who sent them were “Crown’d Heads,” for as will be shown they were not really kings. But rendering *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu* as *Vicar of Jesus Christ* is a totally unacceptable translation. It should, of course, have been *Vicar of the Son of God*.

Let us, however, look more closely at these ambassadors’ quest.

Beginning at Nagasaki on 22 February 1582, their journey consumed no less than “three Years, one Month, and two Days, of above seven Thousand Leagues,” during which they “cross’d so many Lands and Seas, so many Shelves and Rocks, escap’d so many Tempests, so many Pyrates and Rovers,

and at last happily accomplish'd the end of their desires"—which was "to kiss the Feet of his Holiness."³³

The chronicle about them tells, with exact though occasionally also tedious detail of all the places where they wanted or were compelled to stop over—almost exclusively at Jesuit institutions—including Goa, Lisbon, and Madrid. For most of this, exact arrival and departure dates are provided. Everywhere high ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries made much of it. It was such a special pilgrimage and triumph for the Roman Church and the Society of Jesus in particular!

At the Vatican, the three oriental ambassadors were ushered in, accompanied by two Archbishops and their interpreter, as "the first fruits of the Kingdom of Japan." The climax came when they kissed the pontiff's feet. He embraced them with tears in his eyes. "After Kissing his Holiness's feet, they rose up and declared in few words by Father *Mesquita* their interpreter, that they came from the Kings of *Japan*, and in their own proper name, to acknowledge the *Vicar of the Son of God on Earth*, and to render him a true, faithfull and perfect obedience, as the Head of the Universal Church, and Sovereign Pastor of all Christians."³⁴

According to the 21 March 1585 date of their submission, Pope Gregory XIII (1505–1585), by that morning had reigned for thirteen years. History especially remembers him for introducing the Gregorian calendar, appointing cardinals to draft the *Index of Forbidden Books*, and celebrating the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's night with a *Te Deum* (a hymn of praise to God), which he ordered to be sung in Rome.³⁵ As previously recounted, a major revision of the Canon Law was also completed during his reign. He may have relished the audience with these Oriental ambassadors groveling at his feet as the ultimate glory of his pontificate. Ten days later, on 10 April, he was dead.

Did an angel from heaven smite this nasty, presumptuous pontiff, as he once came down to kill King Herod? After beheading the apostle James, that monarch also tried to have Peter executed. Then he crossed the threshold of God's forbearance by allowing pagans from Tyre and Simon to declare him a god. (Acts 12)

The men whom those ambassadors represented were, as already indicated, not really kings, but daimyos, provincial Japanese rulers. But in that unsettled time of their country's history the emperor was weak, so that these lords did exercise virtual autonomy.

Xavier had arrived in Japan during 1549 and remained there for two years. After him, "Jesuits missionaries arrived continuously." Their methods were far from always being spiritual. For instance, they "utilized trade in goods from the Portuguese ships to propagate Christianity, and there were cases in which merchant ships would not enter the ports of daimyo who did not show good will toward missionary activity. Thus, the daimyo of the Sengoku era, seeking profits of foreign trade and the acquisition of military equipment and supplies, protected Christianity. Some daimyo became Christian converts. Three

Kyushu Christian lords—Ōtomo Sōrin, Arima Harunobu, and Ōmura Sumitada—even sent an embassy to Rome.”³⁶

Against this background, we have reservations about Crasset’s tale that those ambassadors had just come voluntarily, filled with a desire to kiss the pontiff’s feet in such abject submission.

Back in Japan, at this very time, a growing irritation with the Jesuits and their ways, as well as other Catholics, was already smoldering. And Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616) was through warfare and political manipulation beginning to subordinate the country to himself. The imperial court became totally powerless and in 1603 “appointed him shogun (generalissimo), thereby acknowledging that this most powerful daimyo in Japan was the man officially authorized to keep the peace in the emperor’s name.” Ieyasu soon retired but remained the real power in the land. By 1612, “certain diplomatic incidents had convinced the old soldier that the missionaries were, potentially at least, part of a secular threat to the political order that he had so laboriously constructed, and in the next two years he took steps to stop missionary activity and discourage the practice of their religion. Ieyasu started a trend that his successors were to pursue for three decades.”³⁷

His son Hidetada (1579–1632), the second Tokugawa shogun, repeated his father’s ban on the Jesuits’ foreign religion. He was “apparently fearful of rebellion by Japanese Christians (Kirishitan), who were aided by Spain.” The missionaries ignored him, so in 1617 he had four of them executed. In 1620, he extended the persecution. A further 120 missionaries and other Christians were also executed. He “banned all Christian literature and forced his vassals, several of whom were pursuing pro-Christian policies, to institute similar persecutions in their own realms.” He then limited all foreign ships, except those from China, to the ports of Nagasaki and Hierado. In addition to this, he severed relations with Spain.³⁸

Iemitsu (1604–1651), the third Tokugawa shogun, became master of all Japan, even eliminating “the few remaining prerogatives of the emperor, whose role was merely symbolic.” He also continued the policies of his father Hidetada and his grandfather Ieyasu.³⁹

In 1637, “Amakusa Shiro, a Christian masterless samurai (*rōnin*) led an uprising in the Shimabara Peninsula of Kyushu.” This was partly to resist heavy taxes but also because Christianity had been prohibited. He and his followers fought for five months before their defeat. In the aftermath, came strict controls on Christians. One of them “was to trample on an image of Christ or the Virgin Mary.”⁴⁰ Iemitsu “expelled or executed the remaining Christian missionaries in Japan.”⁴¹ Furthermore, “the system of registration at Buddhist temples was instituted: all Japanese were required to register as parishioners to a parent Buddhist temple, called a *danna-dera* (‘family temple’), which every year had to guarantee that the parishioner was not a Christian.”⁴²

In 1638, Iemitsu drove the Portuguese out of Japan “to prevent the spread of seditious ideas, thus closing his country to all commerce with the outside

world except for a limited, strictly regulated trade with Korea and with Dutch and Chinese merchants at the port of Nagasaki—a policy of seclusion that remained unaltered for more than 200 years.”⁴³

The Japanese still required a limited range of trade goods from Europe, but they were now able to dispense with both Spain and Portugal, which they regarded as dangerous to their interests. But they continued to do business with the Dutch, avowed enemies of those Catholic countries, who confined their business to trade and promised not to proselytize.

V

Like Ethiopia, Japan could with a struggle break free from the clutches of Catholicism, but the Indians in Kerala on their southwestern seaboard were not so fortunate. Their tropical province was nearer to and more exposed to the Portuguese, who—together with the Jesuits and the Inquisition—had their Asian headquarters in Goa. Kerala also harbored an ancient Christian church.

Their history, like that of Ethiopia, is layered with the influx of different immigrant peoples, as even their various names suggest. A pitiful remnant in Kerala call themselves the Nasrani, which is reminiscent of *Nazarene*. Otherwise they are also known as the Saint Thomas Christians or the Syrian Christians. Another term applied to them is Mapilla, “to denote semitic immigrants from West Asia.” This referred to “both Arab and Christian-Jewish descendants in Kerala.”⁴⁴

First, before our era, came the Jews and the pre-Islamic Arabs. Then the Apostle Thomas brought the gospel of Jesus, the Nazarene. Afterwards the eastern Syrian or Nestorian Church in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) assumed the oversight of these believers.

All this forms a part of what the remaining Nazrani still teach their children, despite the domination established by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century. It also became mirrored in the fact that, although these Indians mostly spoke Malayalam, their liturgy was in Syriac, a form of Aramaic (the language spoken by Jesus and the twelve apostles). As in Ethiopia, the religious services in Kerala preserved a number of synagogue traditions: men and women were seated separately, their symbol being the Nasrani menorah, and they had a Holy of Holies, usually divided from the rest of the church by a red curtain but “opened during the central part of the Nasrani Mass or *Qurbana*.” As they worshiped, they covered their heads, and “their ritual service used to be held on Saturdays.” Before the Portuguese turned up in the 1500s, “the proto-Jewish-Nasrani ethos in Kerala thrived with Jewish customs and the Syrian-Antiochan tradition.”⁴⁵

VI

But the invading foreigners would have none of this. “They imposed their European rituals and liturgy and obliterated the Jewish legacy from the Nasrani tradition.” Two things especially offended them. The Indian Christians

“were accused of not worshipping images of saints and biblical figures,” and “the Portuguese described the Nasranis as Sabbath-keeping Judaizers.”⁴⁶ Catholicism had discarded the Second Commandment and tampered with the Fourth, while these people were still obeying the Decalogue as God had delivered it to Moses.

To enforce their will, the Portuguese brought with them first the horrible Inquisition, which was established at Goa in 1560, and later the Jesuits. The former was, as Wilkinson puts it, “a European, not an Asiatic, engine of torment imposed upon the St. Thomas Christians of India. In it could be found torture by fire, by water, by the rack, and by burning at the stake.”⁴⁷

To the Inquisition, the persecutors in Kerala added a dreadful and dishonorable stratagem, which their church had resorted to at various times in ages past: expunging the records of a people to destroy its identity, so that its history could be rewritten. In 1599, Archbishop Aleixo de Menezes from Goa at the Synod of Diamper in Kerala “ordered all the texts of the Syrian Nasranis to be burnt.” This included the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Acts of Thomas*. Not even the Nasrani Aramaic *Peshitta* Bible was spared. Menezes was quite specific about the reason for doing so. It was “to erase all legacies of antiquity and Jewishness.” The Portuguese “completely obliterated the records of early Nasrani life and Hebrew-Syriac tradition and imposed on the Nasranis that they were local people who were converted and not descendants of early Jewish settlers converted to Christianity by the Apostle Thomas. This despite the fact that the Acts of Thomas (a copy of which still survives in a monastery on Mount Sinai), states that the early Christian converts by the apostle Thomas in Kerala were early Jewish people settled in the Malabar coast.”⁴⁸

Serving the Counter-Reformation spearheaded by the Council of Trent, Aleixo de Menezes was not prone to the slightest compromise. “He forged ahead with the latinisation of the St. Thomas Christians,” whom he amalgamated with the Roman Church.

The effects were devastating, though not all the Malabar believers tamely submitted to this theological rape. More than half a century later, in 1653, a group of dissident St. Thomas Christians, led by their archdeacon, at Mattancherry near Fort Kochi “swore the *Coonan Cross Oath* not to obey the Jesuit missionaries. Subsequently they received a bishop, Mar Gregory, from the Syriac Orthodox Church of West Syrian tradition (though the Saint Thomas Christians had been of East Syrian tradition) [who] took the oath.”⁴⁹ They could do so, because by that date the Dutch had driven the Portuguese out of their area. But the latter left behind them tremendous theological damage, with a permanent foothold for Catholicism on the shore of Kerala.

At present, twenty percent of that state is still Christian though its believers are very divided. Some of them are Catholic or Protestants belonging to different denominations. Nevertheless, Kranganor, on the Kerala coast, remains “the cradle of Christianity in India where according

to legend, St. Thomas, or Doubting Thomas—one of the 12 apostles of Jesus—first came ashore in AD 52.”⁵⁰

According to this tradition, which admittedly has several variants, he also died a martyr’s death, being slain by the Brahmins, though Hindu writers have disputed all of this.

Nevertheless, the believers of Kerala have at Kranganor erected a shrine in his honor. Apart from the disputed details of the apostle’s martyrdom, other facts cannot be so easily discounted. To this day, those believers call themselves Syrian Christians. “The melody played at the Holy Communion at the Orthodox Syrian Church of Cheriapoli, in Central Kerala, is of ancient Syria. So is the language used in some of the prayers—Syriac, very close to what Jesus himself spoke.”⁵¹

VII

The Oriental triumphs of the Jesuits and their inquisitor colleagues were, however, soon to be shattered. Far away in Europe along the shores of the North Sea and the English Channel, a situation fraught with dramatic consequences had been shaping up. It would suddenly destroy the Portuguese as a world power and chase them out of the Far East.

It began with the preaching of Protestantism. Ellen G. White declared that “Nowhere were the reformed doctrines more generally received than in the Netherlands. In few countries did their adherents endure more terrible persecution.”⁵²

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500-1558) had been born in Ghent, which is now part of Belgium. Dedicating his career to the destruction of Protestantism, he found himself thwarted in Germany by powerful princes who resisted his efforts; but in the Netherlands—on home turf—it seemed as if nobody could check his brutality. “Persecuting edicts followed each other in quick succession. To read the Bible, to hear or preach it, or even to speak concerning it, was to incur the penalty of death by the stake. To pray to God in secret, to refrain from bowing to an image, or to sing a psalm, was also punishable with death. Even those who should abjure their errors were condemned, if men, to die by the sword; if women, to be buried alive.”⁵³

An anonymous author of 1815 put it as follows: “In the Netherlands alone, more than one hundred thousand of the subjects of Charles the 5th, are said to have suffered by the hands of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius.” The writer supported his statement with a reference to Gibbon, Vol. VI, p. 495.⁵⁴

Philip II (1527-1598), Charles’s son and heir to the Netherlands, proved to be worse than his father. He was not even a fellow countryman, having grown up in faraway Madrid as a Spaniard. He was also extremely autocratic, with no patience for even the ordinary civil liberties of his subjects. Especially the freedom-loving northern provinces hated him, his

armies, and the Inquisition. He sought to exterminate Protestantism with unexampled fervor. In 1568, the people of the Netherlands rebelled.

However much some writers have sought to whitewash this monster's reputation, he was a man of whom Hitler could have been proud. A monumental work, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856) by John Lothrop Motley, has recorded to what lengths Philip II and the papacy—in one of its genocidal frenzies—were willing to go when no other means availed to subdue an uncooperative populace:

“Upon February 16, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned *all the inhabitants* of the Netherlands *to death* as heretics. From this universal doom *only a few persons, especially named*, were excepted. A proclamation of the king, dated ten days later, confirmed this decree of the inquisition, and ordered it to be carried into instant execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. This is probably the most concise death warrant that was ever framed. Three millions of people, men, women, and children, were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines . . .”⁵⁵ (Motley's original italics). From that date onward, the northern provinces, led by Holland, fought the Spanish for eighty years until 1648. When necessary, they resorted to the stratagem of opening the dykes to drive off the hostile armies. Up to then, the Spaniards had been the most skillful and apparently invincible soldiers of Europe.

The Dutch, a maritime people, also built an increasingly formidable navy and made Amsterdam a booming center of trade. In their struggle, they had managed to occupy both banks of the Scheldt, an estuary of the Rhine which provided access to the sea for Antwerp. Up to that time, this Flemish city had been the thriving queen of commerce for Northern Europe and beyond. But since—like the rest of what today is Belgium—it remained in Spanish hands, the Dutch blocked it off in 1585 and tenaciously kept the Scheldt closed. “This marked the definitive partition of the Netherlands.”⁵⁶ Amsterdam, which headed a new, predominantly Protestant republic, took over the role of Antwerp and greatly augmented it. It flourished all the more because the new state, which had forsworn all loyalty to Spain, became the haven of religious freedom in Europe. Productive Protestants fleeing from the southern provinces and the Inquisition as well as Jews from Spain and Portugal, who were clever financiers, settled there.

Meanwhile events took a strange turn for Portugal. Its youthful King Sebastian (1554-1578), a religious fanatic, “austerely educated by Jesuits”⁵⁷ and urged on by flatterers, launched a crusade against the Muslims of Larache, Morocco. “His forces departed in June 1578 and on August 4 were utterly destroyed by the Moors in the Battle of the Three Kings near Alcazarquivir (Ksar el-Kebir). Sebastian and some 8,000 of his forces were killed, some 15,000 were captured, and only a handful escaped.”⁵⁸ The sole surviving heir to the empire was now his great-uncle, the sixty-six year-old Catholic Cardinal, Henry (1512-1580), a son of King

Manuel I. “For a time he [had] headed the Portuguese Inquisition. He also became a staunch supporter of the Society of Jesus and founded the Jesuit university in Évora (1558).”⁵⁹ But neither his religious fervor nor his celibacy was helpful in providing a successor to the throne. He lasted for only two years.

Thereupon, in 1580, Philip II of Spain—a distant royal relative—marched into Portugal, annexed it, and added it to his kingdom, which retained it until 1640.⁶⁰ This facilitated the missionary work and other actions of the Jesuits, who had originated in and mostly still hailed from his country. But this new setup also exposed the empire around India and in the Pacific to deadly danger from the vengeful and enterprising Dutch.

Denied their traditional ports for trading with Portugal, these determined and resourceful seafarers now resolved upon venturing into the Far East for themselves. The way lay open after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. All they were still looking for was specific information about the sea route with its ports of call to India and particularly to the Pacific East Islands. This is where most of the spices that they were so eager to acquire were actually grown. Ideally they needed somebody who could obtain this data for them. And destiny provided them with just such a man, a compatriot. His name was Jan Huyghen van Linschoten (1563-1611).

VIII

Even as the Synod at Diamper in 1599 was making its arrangements to burn Nasranis and their books, three other volumes lethally dangerous to the Catholic cause were already being avidly read in Amsterdam. These had been published within the most recent four years: *Reys-geschrift van de Navigatien der Portugaloyzers in Orienten*, 1595 (Travel Document of the Navigation of the Portuguese to the Orient), *Beschryvinge van de gantsche custe van Guinea, Manicongo, Angola ende tegen over de Cabo de S. Augustijn in Brasilien, de eyghenschappen des gheheelen Oceanische Zees*, 1597 (Description of the Entire Coast of Guinea, Manicongo, Angola and Across from the Cape of St. Augustine in Brazil, the Characteristics of the Entire Oceanic Sea), and *Itinerario: Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels Indien*, 1579-1592 (Itinerary: Voyage by Ship of Jan Huyghen van Linschoten to the East or Portugal’s East India). These works were based on top-secret nautical maps and other confidential details. The *Reys-geschrift* contains a large number of sailing directions, not only for shipping between Portugal and the East Indies colonies, but also between China and Japan. Just a year before Diamper, an English translation of the *Itinerario* appeared in London, *John Huighen van Linschoten his Discourse of Voyages into ye East & West Indies*, 1598. “A German edition was also printed the same year.”⁶¹

Where and how did the author of these works obtain such breathtakingly sensitive material? It is an amazing tale of real-life espionage.

Van Linschoten, who had bookkeeping as well as general secretarial expertise, was a merchant. As proven by his career among the Spaniards and Portuguese, he obviously also possessed considerable language skills. His remarkable exploits began in December 1576, when he left his home in Holland for Spain “to be with his brother in Seville.”⁶² In doing so, he was jumping straight into the lion’s mouth, because of the eighty-year war, which had started in 1568. But moves for peace were still in progress, and the unity of the Netherlands had not yet been shattered. In cultural terms, that country still “counted amongst the best in Europe,” with Antwerp as its economic centre.”⁶³

Hitherto the Netherlands had been a single country, consisting of seventeen provinces. But in January 1579, through the Union of Utrecht, seven of these—including Holland—“promised not to sign a separate peace deal with Philip II.” The upshot was partition, with the creation in 1588 of a new northern state, the Seven United Netherlands,⁶⁴ which still exists today. Three years before the Union of Utrecht, Van Linschoten had arrived in Seville, apparently still loyal to Spain. He remained in this country until 1580, “when he got a job working with another merchant in Lisbon.”⁶⁵

That was a significant date, the year when Philip II of Spain annexed Portugal. This opened up further vistas for Van Linschoten, an opportunistic and audacious man, whose career was being strangely shaped by a remarkable confluence of events. Due to his Protestantism, however, his situation in those Iberian countries was fraught with mortal danger, because of the thought police, the ever-vigilant Inquisition. But he was not such stuff as martyrs are made of, because he carefully concealed his religion.

In Lisbon, through a downturn in business, Van Linschoten looked around for something else to do. It so happens that the Dominican João Vicente da Fonseca just then was appointed to become the Archbishop of distant Goa. Willem, Van Linschoten’s brother, knew him and used his good offices, with the momentous result that Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten became da Fonseca’s secretary. Together they set sail for Goa on 8 April 1583. For those days, this was a propitious voyage, via Madeira, Guinea, the Cape, Madagascar, and Mozambique; for they arrived just five months later.⁶⁶

In Goa, Van Linschoten found that he “had access to secret information, including the nautical maps that were well guarded for over a century.” He copied them meticulously.⁶⁷ Also on the spot to aid him was Dirck Gerritszoon Pomp, nicknamed “Dirck China.” He, too, was working for the Portuguese. This man disclosed to Van Linschoten “the secret sail instructions, with the help of which the Portuguese ships sailed there from harbor to harbor.” In 1584, Pomp was aboard the *Santa Cruz*. This Portuguese ship “was richly laden with merchandise and had sailed by way of the trade settlement in Goa, India, to Macao in China and from there to Japan. He arrived in Nagasaki in 1585, perhaps the first Hollander to set foot on Japanese soil. Dirck gave oral information to Van Linschoten.”⁶⁸

The latter spent six years in India, from 1583 to 1589, keeping his eyes and

ears open all the time. But his employer, Archbishop da Fonseca, died in 1587 while on the way back to Lisbon, where he was needed for a report to the king. This destroyed Van Linschoten's privileged position. Accordingly, he himself in 1589 set sail for Lisbon via Portuguese St. Helena and the Azores, where shipwreck induced by English pirates held him up for two years. He arrived in Lisbon during 1592 and then returned to his home at Enkhuizen. "With assistance from Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Claesz, who specialized in shipping, geography and travels," Van Linschoten then wrote his *Reysgheschrift* (Travel Document), which as we have seen appeared in 1595, to be followed by his other works.⁶⁹

For the Dutch, these books suddenly opened golden opportunities. For the Portuguese, they were a nasty Pandora's Box, the contents of which would virtually wipe out the empire that they had established and maintained for a century in the Far East.

To protect their trade throughout the Indian Ocean and beyond, as well as to strengthen their independence from Spain, the new Dutch Republic created the *Vereenigde Oost-indische Compagnie* (the United East India Company) in 1602. This vastly successful joint-stock corporation, which lasted until 1799, was granted wide-ranging powers: "a trade monopoly in the waters between the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan with the right to conclude treaties with native princes, to build forts and maintain armed forces, and to carry on administrative functions through officials who were required to take an oath of loyalty to the Dutch government."⁷⁰

Just a year after its founding, the Company achieved a swift and major success. It captured the much-coveted Spice Islands in 1603.⁷¹

The news about this serious reverse in their fortunes undoubtedly brought consternation to Portugal and Spain. Nevertheless, for the next two decades, European life seemed to carry on as usual. During this time, Francisco Suárez (1548–1617)—a Jesuit writer already dealt with in our first volume—belatedly appealed to the Donation of Constantine, on the basis of which the popes had granted imperial hegemony to those two Iberian countries.

Still "often considered the most prominent Scholastic philosopher after St. Thomas Aquinas, and the major theologian of the Roman Catholic order, the Society of Jesus (Jesuits),"⁷² Suárez quoted from that document the title *vicarius Filij Dei*, upholding the preeminence of the pope, both spiritually and in a secular sense. He said Constantine, the first of the Christian emperors, had bestowed on the pontiff vast dominions to the Roman See.⁷³

But in the Far East, momentous events demolished the pretensions of the Donation and the alleged Vicar of the Son of God.

After conquering the Spice Islands, the Dutch continued their triumph. They "mercilessly harried the Portuguese inter-port trade of Asia—their blockade of the Straits of Malacca in the 1630's being particularly effective—and they reduced many of the long chain of Portuguese coastal

settlements by picking them off one by one. Malacca fell in 1641 and the last Portuguese stronghold in Ceylon (Jaffna) seventeen years later. The Asian conquests of the Dutch were rounded off by their capture of Cochin and the other Portuguese settlements on the Malabar Coast in 1663.⁷⁴

IX

In that period, the Dutch East India Company had energetic and cleverly effective governors-general. Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587–1629) became the “chief founder of the Dutch commercial empire in the East Indies.” He made Jakarta his headquarters, renaming it Batavia, whereupon he “established a chain of fortified posts in the Indonesian Archipelago, displacing the Portuguese and preventing penetration by the English.”⁷⁵ The next governor, Anthony van Dieman (1593–1645), consolidated Coen’s work, which “resulted in a Dutch spice monopoly in the area.” In 1638, he invaded Ceylon to oust the Portuguese, acquiring the cinnamon-producing areas. Two years later, the Dutch succeeded in conquering “the key Portuguese stronghold of Malacca (1641).” By 1644, these enterprising people had also established posts on India’s Coromandel Coast. Apart from these achievements, “Van Diemen initiated the exploring expeditions of Abel Tasman and Frans Visscher in 1642 and 1644 on which they discovered Tasmania (originally Van Diemen’s Land), New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, and the northern coast of Australia.”⁷⁶

At that time, “the Dutch also secured the monopoly of European trade with Japan, after the Portuguese of Macau had been expelled from the island-empire for political and religious motives by the military dictatorship of the Tokugawa in 1639.”⁷⁷ In 1642, they “captured all of Formosa (Taiwan), driving out the Spaniards.”⁷⁸ Those waters now being controlled by the warlike Protestant Dutch, the economic and military backup for the Jesuit dream of papal triumph in Japan and China evaporated.

The resources of the Dutch East India Company were not limited to what the Netherlands could supply. As the most prosperous commercial firm in Europe, it had become a most attractive employer. Therefore, “the Dutch could and did make extensive use of German and Scandinavian manpower in their armies and fleets. The disparity in sea power was even more striking, and was expressed with only slight exaggeration by the great Portuguese Jesuit, António Vieira, in 1649. He estimated that the Dutch possessed over 14,000 vessels which could be used as warships, whereas Portugal did not possess thirteen ships of this kind. The Dutch, he claimed, had a quarter of a million sailors available, whereas Portugal had fewer than four thousand.”⁷⁹

Portugal’s only real achievement in this momentous time was its ability to break free of Spain in 1640 and again became an independent country. Otherwise, it could only witness how the Dutch sank its once-irresistible

vessels, sweeping them out of the Far East, apart from a few enclaves like Goa. In Africa, too, they retained some territories. Peace with the Netherlands was finally concluded in 1664.⁸⁰

The naval penetration by the Dutch East India Company into East Asian waters had the further effect of limiting ready access to China for the Jesuits and other Catholic missionaries. But their failure to succeed in that great country was also the result of a long-drawn-out rivalry among the different orders, culminating in a fateful decision by Pope Clement XI (1649-1721, reigned from 1700).

K'ang-hsi (1654-1722) effectively assumed the emperorship in 1669. He "is usually counted among the ablest monarchs ever to govern the vast Chinese empire." He subdued his enemies, reconquered lost territories like Taiwan, and prevented foreign powers from encroaching on his country. In love with learning as well as new technology, he was greatly impressed by the Jesuits, the most skillful and erudite of Catholics, whom he regarded as sages from the West. Astute as ever and politically correct, they were not averse to a little syncretism, being "lenient with such traditional Chinese rites as ancestor worship and the state cult of Confucius and Heaven." And so "the Jesuits endeared Roman Catholicism to K'ang-hsi, who gave official permission for its propagation in 1692."⁸¹

But the Jesuit dream that he could become a Chinese Constantine was undermined by the persistent efforts of the Augustinians, Franciscans, and Dominicans. They had in the meantime also entered the country and "condemned the traditions as superstitions incompatible with Christian faith."⁸²

These newcomers denounced the Jesuit methods to the Inquisition as well as Pope Clement XI. Somewhat indecisive, he was also—once he had made up his mind—a man both rigid and severe, as first became evident when, in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, he condemned all Bible reading by ordinary people.⁸³

Responding to the complaints from these other Catholic orders, he "sent a bishop to Peking as his personal representative to make enquiries. His lordship, very foolishly, condemned the rites in public as idolatrous. The emperor, annoyed and puzzled that Christians were not only divided but hated one another, put the bishop in prison. Clement responded by making him a cardinal just before he died bravely in Macao in 1710. Clement took the imprisonment of his legate as a personal insult. His indecision came to an abrupt end. In his considerable anger, he approved all the decrees of the Inquisition against the Jesuit approach. Now, in the year 1715, every missionary in China had to swear detestation of the Chinese rites and promise never to tolerate them."⁸⁴

This ended the love affair between the Roman Church and Emperor K'ang-hsi. A few of the most gifted Jesuits were still welcomed at his court, but the Catholic missionaries were expelled. The pontiff's ban, contained in his bull *Ex Illa Die* (From That Day . . .), "led to a persecution of the Chinese

Christians and to the ruin of many flourishing missions, a ban that was not permanently lifted until 1939.”⁸⁵

Ten years later, when the Communists came to power in that country, they reimposed it. To this day, the papacy has been prevented from appointing its own bishops in China. That country recognizes and prefers the Patriotic Catholic Church, an indigenous entity which is registered with the government.⁸⁶

With sorrow, and no doubt also chagrin, the Vatican still regrets what it considers a great lost opportunity: that a hundred and twenty million Japanese and thirteen hundred million Chinese are not today members of its church, like most people in Latin America—where syncretism had long been tolerated. Apart from an undiplomatic pope, a potent factor was the Protestant Dutch. Their fleets removed the economic stranglehold and potential of military intervention from Catholic Iberia, which could have reinforced the papal onslaught in the Far East. For this fiasco, the men from the Netherlands must bear a considerable part of the blame or, as Protestants will have it, receive the most fulsome praise.

X

In southernmost Africa, things also went further awry for the Catholic global strategy.

On 6 April 1652, Jan van Riebeeck annexed the Cape of Good Hope for the Dutch East India Company and the Netherlands. This became a convenient halfway station, where his people kept on taking in provisions for their numerous long voyages to Ceylon, the Spice Islands, and Japan—all of which had once been a Portuguese sphere of influence. Subsequently that little Protestant colony, founded for growing fresh produce to combat scurvy, grew and grew to become the most influential country on the continent. That is also where the present writer was born, a fact which may be of little importance to others, although without it this book would not have been written.

Francis Drake (c.1540-1543 to 1596), after he had circumnavigated almost the entire planet in 1577-1580,⁸⁷ on his way back to England, called the mountainous peninsula in that area “the fairest Cape in all the world.”⁸⁸ That was half a millennium ago, and to this day it remains true. For natural beauty, few places rival it, and nothing we have seen on five continents is more magnificent.

At the end of the eighteenth century, when the English supplanted the Dutch as a naval superpower, the Cape retained its importance. The political capital of the British Empire was London, but effective power was vested in its navy. For this, the southern headquarters and shipyards were at Simonstown, a British enclave, where the Union Jack fluttered for more than a hundred and fifty years (“the jurisdiction of the naval facilities was transferred to South Africa” in 1957).⁸⁹ It is now almost a suburb of Cape Town. After Protestant England had expelled the Catholic French from India during the eighteenth

century, its navy concentrated at Simon's Town could strike out over the entire South Atlantic and much of the Indian Ocean, ruling the waves from the Falkland Islands to far-away Australia.

Chapter Twenty-Nine
FRANCE AND GALLICANISM

I

One European country was, for the papacy, over more than twelve hundred years a source of both power and ecclesiastic headaches: France. In early 1798, during its first Revolution, a searing pain was abruptly added: a sword-inflicted head wound (Rev. 13:3, 14), at the hand of a Frenchman, General Louis-Alexandre Berthier. Having invaded the Vatican, he set up a Roman Republic and took the pope prisoner. Afterwards the pontiff was exiled to Valence in France, where he died.¹

Such was the end of two prophetic periods: the 1260 year-days, which began in 538 with the siege of Rome when Justinian I was emperor, and the 1290 year-days, which began in 508 when King Clovis was baptized after his conversion to the Romanist faith.

From the beginning, Catholicism in France developed differently from elsewhere in Europe or Britain. It eventually came to bear the name of Gallicanism, “a complex of French ecclesiastical and political doctrines and practices advocating restriction of papal power; it characterized the life of the Roman Catholic Church in France at certain periods.”² Overtly or by implication, from the fourteenth century onward, it raised serious doubts about pontifical claims to the Papal States, universal domination, and infallibility. Gallicanism crescendoed in the seventeenth century during the reign of King Louis XIV with an aftermath under the emperor Napoleon I. It was defeated at the first Vatican Council (1869-1870)—so far as the papacy is concerned. But the questions it raised to this day remain important for those who reject the supremacy of the pope and his right to dominate or superintend the world.

In what follows, we cover some of the same ground as in previous chapters, but with additional details and a different focus. The reader needs to pay special attention to two special points. First, with the exception of the Jesuits, French Catholics of every stripe for centuries rejected papal domination in secular affairs. And so, of course, did the Protestants who came later. Second, all these groups at times referred to the pope as the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*.

Whenever this title is used, we give it in italics, though usually the writers concerned as a rule did not.

II

The seed for the events of 1798, when the French Revolution assaulted the papal throne, was sown a little after Clovis’s time by Bishop Gregory of Tours (538-594). Quite soon, it germinated—long before the word *Gallicanism* was used to describe it—and kept on growing, century after century.

Gregory typologically portrayed the Franks as a species of Israelites. He also said that Clovis was their King David, apart from his being a new Constantine. Historically, as a chronicle of events, this bishop's book is really only valuable for providing a "broad background and engaging stories about the early Frankish world," that is "the Clovis of the *Histories* is more a literary fiction than a historical reality."³

Nevertheless, the papacy kept on clinging to that tale for many hundreds of years. But by adopting Gregory's national, extra-Biblical typology, it also unintentionally committed a major blunder. The clerics had kindled what was to become a widespread belief in the divine right of kings—derived from Old Testament monarchic thinking.

This was further fueled about two and a half centuries after Gregory of Tours, when Pepin III (c. 714-768, king from 751), the powerful mayor of Paris, petitioned Pope Zacharias to help him usurp the throne from Clovis's feeble last descendant. Again the pontiff used extra-Biblical typology. He suggested that he was, so to speak, a Samuel, empowered to replace a latter-day Saul with another David: Childeric III with Pepin. In this way, allegedly, "it was the 'spirit of the Lord' that transformed Pepin into a king. He was consecrated, or made holy, and his descendants were, as the Pope subsequently expressed it, 'a sacred race and a royal priesthood' (*vos gens sancta estis atque regale estis sacerdotium*)." Both in theory and as a practical stratagem, it looked like a clever approach. The new royal line, the Carolingians, were regarded "in a very special sense, Christian kings, since they owed their kingship to the Pope."⁴

But Pepin, his son Charlemagne (747-814), and the rest of their Frankish line from the eighth century onward were not disposed to accept a role subordinate to the pope in what came to be known as the Holy Roman Empire. Those powerful rulers maintained that they really owed their throne not to the pontiffs but to God himself, much to the chagrin of the papacy.

Charlemagne in particular was far too powerful to be dominated by any cleric, even theologically. He, or rather the bishops who kowtowed to him, embarrassed the pope by endorsing the *filioque* addition to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. For many ordinary Protestants, this topic is obscure. But professionals among them, as well as even lay people in both the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox communities, know that apart from the pontiff's claim to supremacy the *filioque* is the greatest doctrinal difference between their churches.

This is how the Greek original puts it: "Πιστεύω . . . εις το Πνευμα το Άγιον, το κυριον, (και) το ζωοποιον, το εκ του πατρος εκπορευομενον" (I believe . . . in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, [and] the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father).

Two centuries before Charlemagne, the Visigothic King Recarred of Spain had read a declaration in 589 to signal officially that he was becoming a Roman Catholic and to condemn Arius.⁵ On that occasion, *Filioque* (*Filio* = "from the Son" + *que* = "and"), one and a half words, were added to the Latin

version of the Creed, to make it read as follows: “Credo . . . in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit” (I believe . . . in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father *and the Son* [emphasis added]).⁶ Whoever wrote it in no doubt thought it a clever touch, for it “underlined the equality of the Son with the Father,” which many Germanic Christians disputed.⁷

But the purpose of a creed is not simply to summarize the believer’s faith, but—as one writer has expressed it—also “to identify heretics or any disconformity.” Hence “the Nicene Creed, both in its original and revised formulas, is an implicit condemnation of specific alleged errors.”⁸

At first, even Western bishops and the pontiff rejected the *filioque* addition. Nevertheless, under Charlemagne at the Council of Aachen in 809, Roman Catholic churchmen approved it, despite Pope Leo III’s dissent. The latter knew this novel formulation would raise a tremendous hullabaloo. And so it did. It “contributed to the later East-West Schism of 1054,” which split Roman Catholicism from the Eastern Orthodox churches. Not before a thousand years had elapsed, in the final decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first, did the papacy through its acts (though not always its words) imply that it had been wrong. But apparently Charlemagne, whom the pontiff crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800, was trying “to find grounds for accusations of heresy against the East,”⁹ since he wanted to further his own political agenda. And the pope who was weaker than he and greatly dependent on him had to play along in a game that he did not like.

Such imperial goings-on quite clearly smacked of Gallicanism, though the word was not yet being used.

III

For the French, the quirkiness of history intensified the problem; after the Carolingian dynasty had petered out, the emperors all became Germans, before whom the kings in Paris were unwilling to bend the knee. Eventually the proud pontiffs through their machinations in the thirteenth century brought low the haughty Hohenstaufens, which began the fragmentation of Germany. King Philip the Fair of France (1268–1314), who knew all this, was most certainly not going to abase himself before Pope Boniface VIII (1235–1303, reigned from 1295).

This is a conflict which we have already described, but let us briefly revert to it. Not realizing how events had tilted against him, this arrogant pope prepared his *Super Petri solio*, a bull for the personal excommunication of Philip, with an interdict for his whole country.

The eighteenth-century, church historian Bérault-Bercastel described what happened on that fateful day of 8 September 1303. In the 1800s, when the pontiffs would struggle to regain their medieval power, while even the Papal States were slipping from their grasp, other writers also

concerned themselves with how King Philip IV disposed of Pope Boniface VIII. From that period, let us add two voices, one of a Frenchman, the other of a Spaniard.

Charles François Chevé (1813-1875), an early Socialist writer with an inclination to becoming a Dominican, related that Boniface VIII had penned his dreadful bull at Anagni on 7 September 1303 and was planning to publish it the next day. He was, however, preempted by Sciarra Colonna and Gillaume de Nogaret, who on behalf of the French monarch thrust themselves into his presence. The bull asserted about the pope “that by virtue of being *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, he had the power to rule the kings with a rod of iron and to break them like vessels of clay, he declared all King Philip’s subjects absolved from their allegiance to him.”¹⁰

Particularly fascinating is the perspective on that day and the run-up to it provided in the 1860 *Historia constitucional de Inglaterra* (Constitutional History of England) by Patricio de la Escosura (1807-1878). He was a most versatile Spaniard of the Romantic literary school. Apart from training at the Academia de Artillería and his participation in the Carlist civil war, he was a dramatist, poet, mythographer, magazine writer, critic, editor, publisher, and politician, as well as a prolific historian. No doubt his interest in British constitutional affairs was related to the fact that he had an English mother, Anna Morrogh Wolcott.¹¹

The *Historia constitucional* goes well beyond the affairs of the Sceptered Isle. Its larger framework includes the conflict between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII. Most significant, according to de la Escosura, was the role of economics as the true key to understanding the pontiff’s actions. By the fourteenth century, the Catholic Church by feudal right possessed at least a third of the real estate in the West,¹² and for laymen to tax it was taboo. But, above all, it was gold that glittered in the papal mind.

King Philip had published a decree to embargo every kind of export from France to any other country: jewels, arms, horses, provisions, and cash. Nothing could go out without his personal signature. What especially offended Boniface VIII were the effects of this law on the transport of money to Rome.¹³

What was the reason for King Philip’s decree? For ten years, from 1294, he had been at war with England and Flanders, in a “conflict that severely strained” his resources. Looking around for whatever cash he could extract, his eyes fell on the wealthy bishops, so he began to tax the clergy.¹⁴ On the other hand, the pontiff also urgently needed money. He, too, had been embroiled in wars. Especially Sicily and Italy demanded his attention. But the papacy “drew much of its revenue from France, inclusive of crusade moneys, when the numerous papal collectors were henceforth banished.”¹⁵ And so the hitherto irresistible papal force collided with what proved to be the truly immovable object of King Philip’s will.

The monarch proved to be cleverer than the pontiff. Apart from his preemptive strike at Anagni on 7 September 1303, he saw to it that he had

his parliament and people on his side. Of the three estates which made up his kingdom, the clergy, the nobles, and the commoners, the last two groups energetically united against the pope's pretensions. Churchmen naturally had to be more careful of both inflexible men: a terrible sovereign at home and an implacable, lordly ruler in Rome.

Not understanding that the medieval set-up was being replaced by a new kind of centralist monarchy, Boniface VIII prepared his fateful *De Petri solio* bull. It declared, in de la Escosura's Spanish translation that the "vicario del Hijo de Dios had the power to *rule the Kings with the rod of iron, and to break them like earthen vessels*" (his own italics).¹⁶

Through this reference to verse 9 of the second psalm, a great Messianic prophecy, the pontiff was identifying and placing himself on equality with Christ. On this, de la Escosura's comment is: "Providence severely castigated" the pride of Pope Boniface VIII.¹⁷

IV

In the aftermath, the pontiffs were uprooted from Rome and relocated to Avignon, which is in France, where the king could keep an eye on them. This led to a residence of seventy years, sometimes called the papacy's Babylonian Captivity. It also brought on the Great Schism, with its multiple holy fathers hurling anathemas at one another. All this added to the low esteem in which the papacy was held by the people of France.

The pontiffs could, as much as they liked, fulminate or pretend to hold dominion over all the monarchs of Europe. But the king in Paris was sure that he and his ancestors had received a personal mandate directly from God himself. Besides, he could marshal a powerful professional army and, if needed, hire mercenaries to back his claims.

The leading Catholic scholars in France, most prominently Pierre d'Ailly (1350–1420) and Jean de Gerson (1363–1429), also struck heavy blows against the papal claims.

The former studied at and later became chancellor of the University of Paris as well as the king's confessor and almoner in 1384. D'Ailly "advocated the doctrine of conciliarism—the subordination of the pontiff to a general council." In 1381, when Europe had to put up with two rival popes, he made a concrete call for such an assembly, which resulted in the Council of Pisa (1409). This, however, saddled the Roman Church with an additional pope, although another consequence was that d'Ailly became a cardinal. Then he favored convoking a new General Council, which took place at Constance,¹⁸ in 1414–1418.

De Gerson had studied theology under d'Ailly and in 1395 succeeded him as the chancellor of their university. At first, he was reluctant about conciliarism but after being won over to the idea took part in the abortive Council of Pisa. In 1414, together with his old mentor d'Ailly, he led out at the Council of Constance, where all three pontiffs were deposed and Martin V

(1368–1431, reigned from 1417) elected as the new pope.¹⁹

Of these two doctors, we find de Gerson the more intriguing. He believed that “Christ had instituted the primacy of the church as the collection of the faithful, with the pope as its deputy.” That is to say, the pontiff was subordinate to his constituency. In given circumstances, the church at large could even depose him. Between 1391 and 1415, Gerson wrote *De potestate Ecclesiae* (On Ecclesiastical Power), which “pictured the pope as a constitutional monarch.”²⁰

V

However, immediately on taking office, Pope Martin V condemned the conciliar theory and “forbade any appeal from papal judgment on matters of faith.” An Italian, he chose to live in his native land, a year at Florence and afterwards at Rome,²¹ beyond the influence of the French theologians.

To this day, the papacy has hated Gallicanism, and its supporters would like to believe that it was fully defeated in 1870 when the first Vatican Council declared the pontiff infallible. Official, latter-day Catholicism is utterly negative about and condemns de Gerson’s ideas. One writer says that “with him temporary expedients become principles. It is what might be called ecclesiastical opportunism.”²²

To question de Gerson’s sincerity is, however, most unfair. He was deeply troubled by the corruption of the papal courts as well as dishonest pontiffs. Some of these men made promises to abdicate if elected, yet afterwards always wriggled out of them. De Gerson was a good Catholic who loved his church, wanted to reform it from within, and respected the pope (if he did not get out of hand and act abominably). Therefore, the learned Frenchman in his writings defended the Council of Constance and its actions. These included a horrible episode: the burning of the reformer Jan Hus,²³ who—like his mentor John Wycliffe—had dared to think outside the medieval box and turned against the papacy. We think that de Gerson went down to his grave with the martyr’s blood on his hands and garments.

Babara W. Tuchman in her lucid way, thought-provokingly, remarked that “Once divinity of doctrine has been questioned there is no return to perfect faith.”²⁴ She was writing about the First World War and the *idée fixe* of the military theorists in France, who unanimously maintained that a defensive posture always had to be avoided. “Attack! Attack!” was the only watchword for victory. This, however, led to the debacle of soldiers with fixed bayonets charging machine guns, which immediately mowed them down in heaps. Soon enough, the generals literally had to ditch their ridiculous doctrine and entrench the troops to save them from annihilation.

Likewise, in the centuries after the Council of Constance as explained by de Gerson’s writings, French Catholic scholars and lawyers kept on looking askance at papal claims.

A little before the end of the wars between the Catholics and the Calvinist Huguenots, explicit Gallicanism flared up strongly. The climax came when Protestant King Henry of Navarre (1553-1610, reigned from 1594) converted to the Roman Church to become King Henry IV of France. For him and other turncoat Huguenots, full submission to the pope would have been too bitter a pill to swallow; but two councilors made it easier by showing that this was not necessary. The title *vicair du Fils de Dieu* features in the writings of both these men. They were Jacques Auguste de Thou (1533-1617) and Louis Servin (1556-1626).

De Thou wrote about personalities and events related to the Wars of Religion in his day. For a time, he cooperated with Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589), the queen mother, who in 1560 became the regent on the death of her son, the youthful King Francis II (1544-1560). His brother and successor, Charles IX (1550-1574), was just a boy. In this task, Catherine was assisted by high-born noblemen. She tried to reconcile the Catholic with the Huguenot factions to further the interests of France.²⁵ She did so both before and after the treacherous massacre of Protestants that began on 24 August 1572 in St. Bartholomew's night, for which she has often been blamed.²⁶

In 1560, the French parliament sent a written address to the princes of the blood. It describes the duties of as well as the personal characteristics, both secular and ecclesiastic, needed in rulers. It says they must remember that at his Second Coming our Saviour and overlord will require an account of what we have believed and done.²⁷ Christians wielding power have to defend the members of Jesus Christ. In this, they must oppose false prophets as well as heretics, uphold the Word of God, and maintain the true church, which has to be "good and well reformed."²⁸ But more than that, each of them has to set a personal example, princes as well as the clergy. Regarding the latter, "There is nothing that causes the heavenly doctrine to be more contemptible and scandalous, for Christians as well as Turks, Jews, and other infidels, than when churchmen, those who call themselves *Vicaires du Fils de Dieu*, are seen to be contaminated with all sorts of vice and sin."²⁹

De Thou, who recorded and was possibly even the author of this passage, had at first belonged to the Catholic clergy. He was "a member of the third order of St Francis," a canon of Nôtre-Dame de Paris. However, his relatives prevailed on him to leave the church to enter parliament, hoping that he would—like his late uncle, a bishop—become its *premier président* (first president). He therefore took this step and also got married in 1588. As a councilor, he faithfully served two monarchs, Henry III, a Catholic, and Henry IV, the Huguenot who so dramatically bent the knee to the Church of Rome.³⁰

A tolerant, peace-loving man, De Thou "negotiated the edict of Nantes

with the Protestants.” However, as a Gallican, he also opposed recognition for the Council of Trent. At Rome and among the Jesuits of France, this blotted his copybook. When Henry IV was assassinated, the royal widow and queen regent, Marie de Medicis, refused to promote De Thou as *premier président* of the parliament in Paris.³¹

He also had a special passion for history, which he wrote both clearly and with great objectivity. For this, his reward was that on 9 November 1609 the Vatican placed the second part of his Latin *Historia sui temporis* (History of His Time) on its Index of Forbidden Books. This volume had included details about the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day. Five years later, in 1614, de Thou was also taunted by “the Jesuit Father Machault,” who accused him of being “a false Catholic, and worse than an open heretic.”³²

VII

With King Henry III (1551-1589), who ruled for eleven years from 1574, the history of France took a dramatic turn. Worn out by the Wars of Religion, which had begun in 1562, he made concessions to the Huguenots. But his Edict of Beaulieu angered the Catholics, and in 1584 they were greatly alarmed when it became clear that their childless king would be succeeded by none other than the Protestant leader Henry of Navarre (1553-1610). Henry III resorted to compromise, first “by revoking past edicts that had granted toleration to the Huguenots.” Yet he vacillated. The upshot was intrigue, an alliance with Henry of Navarre, and assassinations—including his own. “On Aug. 1, 1589, Jacques Clément, a fanatical Jacobin friar, gained admission to the king’s presence and stabbed him. Before he died, Henry, who left no issue, acknowledged Henry of Navarre as his heir.”³³

The new king inaugurated the Bourbon dynasty, which ruled over France for two hundred years, until the French Revolution of 1789.

In a former chapter, we have already referred to Louis Servin (1556-1626), the second of King Henry IV’s Gallican councilors. He was the country’s advocate-general and author of *Plaidoyez* (Addresses), 1605, in which one argument resembles that of Gregory of Tours, a thousand years earlier. According to Servin, the monarch was the David and Solomon whom God had appointed to rule the country. To this, however, he added that though the pope was the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, a Saint Peter, similar to Abel, Abraham, and the prophet Samuel, he was not to infringe on the rights of the king or of the Catholic-Gallican church in France.³⁴ One of the ablest officials of his time, Servin continued as a councilor under King Henry IV’s son, Louis III. “He died suddenly, at the feet of the latter monarch, on the 19th of March, 1626,” still at his post.³⁵

A third personage connected with the throne was Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629), the Jesuit-educated priest who became Henry IV’s confessor when the king became a Catholic. Far from being a Gallican, de Bérulle became “a

mainstay of the Counter-Reformation in France.”³⁶ He did much to promote “the clerical reforms that had been proposed by the Council of Trent (1545-63).”³⁷

One thing he had in common with both de Thou and Servin: he used the title *vicair du Fils de Dieu*. This can be read in his letter to Bernardino Cardinal Spada (1594–1661) in Rome. The news had reached de Bérulle that Pope Urban VIII had made him a cardinal in 1627, no doubt to reward him for his secular as well as his ecclesiastic work—amongst other things he had reconciled King Louis XIII with his mother, Marie de Médicis.³⁸

De Bérulle wrote to Spada “that in the purple with which it has pleased the *vicair du Fils de Dieu* to adorn him, he wanted to remember only the robe with which his Master had been clad in his Passion, and that like him he would see in it only thorns and an occasion for suffering.”³⁹ Probably weighing heavily on his mind was his resignation as a councilor of state, because of his pro-Habsburg policy. He favored an alliance with Spain, which might have pleased the pope, but it also provoked the ire of the powerful Cardinal Duc de Richelieu (1585-1642), King Louis XIII’s chief minister since 1624.

But de Bérulle never did receive his red hat, for which he would have had to go to Rome. He died in 1629, two years after hearing about it.⁴⁰

VIII

Henry IV’s grandson, Louis XIV (1638-1715), was reared and indoctrinated as a Catholic. Nevertheless, he also cherished Gallican ideas as part of his grand design to subordinate everything and everybody in France to his will. He insisted on the principle of *un roi, une loi, une foi* (one king, one law, one faith),⁴¹ the last mentioned being the pope’s religion—as he interpreted it. All those who might oppose his plans had to be thwarted by cunning, stratagem, or force: the nobility; deviant Catholics like the Quietists and Jansenists, whom he persecuted; Protestants, whose power he broke with utmost brutality;⁴² even the pontiffs, like Innocent XI (1611-1689, reigned from 1676). The last mentioned, of course, like generations of popes before him, had his own pretensions to power.⁴³

By some, King Louis XIV “was saluted as ‘a visible divinity’” and nicknamed *Le Roi Soleil* (The Sun King), though others, less inclined to such idolatry, at least agreed to call him the Grand Monarch.

On 10 March 1661, at the age of 23, he astonished his ministers by announcing that henceforth he would not only reign over but also personally rule his country. He introduced “a dictatorship by divine right,” keeping it up for 54 years until he died—for eight hours a day, with meticulous attention to every detail, none of which escaped his vigilance.

Apart from his ideology, Louis XIV had a powerful basis in the economy, material circumstances, culture, and art of France, which owed much to gifted ministers, especially Jean-Baptist Colbert (1619-1683). This man reformed the

system of taxation, reorganized industry and commerce, and built his sovereign a powerful fleet. Already himself a member of the Académie Française, Colbert created the additional “Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1663) to choose inscriptions for medals and monuments celebrating the king’s victories; the Académie des Sciences (1666) to study how the sciences could be exploited to the kingdom’s advantage; and the Académie Royal d’Architecture (1671) to lay down rules and refine the taste of French work.” He also founded celebrated schools, of which some were beyond the borders of his country, such as the Académie de France (the French Academy) in Rome.⁴⁴

Louis XIV approved, and himself became a benefactor of the arts. “It was under his reign and indeed his patronage that Classical French literature flourished with such writers as Molière, Jean Racine and Jean de La Fontaine whose works still hold great influence to this day.” Furthermore, he fostered music, the visual arts, the art of gardening, and architecture. Several of his splendid buildings have been erased by time. But two still arrest the tourist’s gaze: *les Invalides*—where in a sarcophagus Napoleon Bonaparte sleeps, awaiting the resurrection of the damned—and the inimitable Palace of Versailles.⁴⁵

Living at the same time as Louis XIV was an astounding galaxy of French intellectuals, second to none throughout the ages we have surveyed. Some of them thought and wrote deeply about theological matters. In addition to Gallicans, who supported their monarch’s religious policy, there were Jesuits who did not. Furthermore, the king had to cope with Protestant Calvinists and somewhat similar Catholic Jansenists. In what follows, the reader will also observe how people of that era rather often and unselfconsciously used *vicair*e *du Fils de Dieu* as a papal title.

Two early instances occur in *L’Histoire et la vie des papes* (The History and the Life of the Popes), by Abbé Louis Coulon (1605-1664), a prolific writer.⁴⁶ This, however, is not an original work but a translation from Latin. Its Italian author was Bartolomeo Sacchi (1421-1481), also called *Platina*, after his birthplace, this being the original Latin name of Piadena, near Mantua.⁴⁷

In Colon’s version, the title is first applied to no less a personage than Pope Gregory I (c. 540-604, reigned from 590). Having been a councilor and secretary of Pope Pelagius II (d. 590, reigned from 579), “He was elected his Successor and *vicair*e *du Fils de Dieu*.”⁴⁸ Here the use of that title is, however, an anachronism. No pontiff ever bore it before the eighth century, since it originated in the spurious Donation of Constantine, more than one and a half centuries after Gregory I.

The title also occurs where the events at the Council of Constance are portrayed. There the French antipope Benedict XIII (c. 1328-1423, reigned 1394-1417), one of three rival pontiffs whom the European monarchs deposed in 1417, to the very end held firm that he was “the only *vicair*e *du Fils de Dieu*.”⁴⁹

Despite the fact that the Grand Monarch was a good Catholic, conflict arose between him and the pope over the age-old question as to who had authority over the episcopate, the throne or the altar. Pope Innocent XI “quarreled with Louis when two French bishops resisted the edict of 1673 that extended the king’s right to administer vacant sees. Louis then convoked a French synod, which issued the famous Gallican Articles, four statements in support of Gallicanism, a French ecclesiastical doctrine that advocated restriction of papal power. In response, Innocent refused to confirm the promotion of clergymen involved in the synod, and the deadlock worsened.”⁵⁰

We need to look a little more closely at this gathering. It was not really a synod in the traditional sense of the word but was best described by its official name, the *Assemblée du Clergé* (Assembly of the Clergy). Being so momentous, with far-reaching results for almost two centuries, its proceedings were reported and commented on well beyond 1682, the year when it met.

Of this material, we have before us two editions.

The first is the fourth volume of the *Les Libertez de l’Église gallicane, prouvées et commentées* (The Liberties of the Gallican Church, Proved and Commented On) by M. Durand de Maillane. It was published in 1771, in the time of King Louis XV (1710-1774), the great-grandson of the Louis XIV, “whose ineffectual rule contributed to the decline of royal authority that led to the outbreak of the Revolution in 1789.” He was nicknamed Louis the Well-Beloved. Nevertheless, due to failures which included “reverses in foreign and military affairs,” when he died in 1774, he was “hated as much as Louis XIV had been.”⁵¹

That such a book about the liberties of the Catholic Church in France appeared eighty-nine years after the *Assemblée du Clergé* did its work reveals to what extent such issues were still relevant. But this material was also republished in 1811. That was almost a further four decades later, one hundred and twenty-nine years after Louis XIV’s original promulgation—though the Revolution had in the meantime abolished the monarchy, establishing a republic.

In the aftermath of those events, Napoleon Bonaparte first became a dictator and then emperor. He reestablished Catholicism in France but strictly limited the power of the pope. To do so, he repromulgated Louis XIV’s royal edict, adding his own imperial endorsement.

Of these two versions, we will quote from the latter, because after Napoleon’s fall and death it remained the charter of nineteenth-century Gallicanism in its struggle against the pope’s party, often referred to as the Ultramontanes. The text and layout have, moreover, benefited from additional editing.

The *Assemblée du Clergé* began its deliberations in November 1681.⁵² Finally, on 19 March 1682, eight archbishops and twenty-six bishops signed their “Déclaration du clergé de France, touchant la puissance ecclésiastique” (Declaration of the Clergy of France, Concerning Ecclesiastic Power). Four days later, on 23 March 1682, Louis XIV turned their conclusions into law, registered in parliament, with his “Édit du roi, sur la déclaration faite par le clergé de France de ses sentimens sur la puissance ecclésiastique” (Edict of the King, on the Declaration Made by the Clergy of France of its Sentiments About Ecclesiastical Power).

In the preparatory work of the *Assemblée*, two eminent scholars stood out.

The first was an aristocratic and extremely well-read doctor of the Sorbonne, Gilbert Choiseul du Plessis-Praslin (1613-1686), “a descendant of the noble family of du Plessis.” As bishop of Tournai, he was a “member of the committee on resolutions, and was personally entrusted with the duty of formulating in Latin the propositions on which the Assembly was to vote.”⁵³ He also presented an erudite report of more than two hundred pages, with many references to the Bible, the Church Fathers, and history, papal as well as secular.⁵⁴ This may have been prepared jointly with Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), to whose role in the *Assemblée* we shall have further occasion to refer. In the report, the following points stand out.

After looking closely at both the Old and the New Testaments, Choiseul du Plessis-Praslin declared: “The Holy Scriptures, gentlemen, are filled with the marks of submission owed to kings and which the ministers of Jesus Christ are obliged to render them; and there is no place in this divine book that gives these ministers any authority in temporal matters over crowned heads.”⁵⁵ We find several of his arguments unanswerable and every bit as powerful as any ever proffered by a Protestant.

About the first Christians, he reminded his audience that persecution had been their lot. He also asserted that just to be pope ensured martyrdom; “yet in all those times of cruelty was it ever manifest that the *vicares du Fils de Dieu* had other weapons against their persecutors than patience, charity, prayer?” They recognized that the authority of the sovereigns came directly from God. Therefore, it is unreasonable to suppose that the pontiffs had the right to depose kings, deprive them of temporal power, or influence their subjects to disobey them.⁵⁶

Applying that title to any early Christian is, of course, anachronistic; every bit of real evidence shows that it originated in the spurious Donation of Constantine. Yet we find it significant that the bishop used it, while none of the prelates listening to him objected to it. In those days, *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* was a normal part of their vocabulary.

Choiseul du Plessis-Praslin also sought to validate the *Assemblée du Clergé* by saying that it possessed divine authority. He especially did so by

referring to the Council of Constance as well as the men involved in it, amongst others de Gerson. From its record, he cited as follows: “That the synod legitimately assembled by the order of the Holy Spirit, constituting the general council and representing the Church, catholic and militant, hold its power directly from Jesus Christ . . .” To this he added a further quotation: “The council also declares that whoever, of whatever condition, state, and dignity he may be, even at the papal level, who will be so presumptuous and opinionated as not to obey the arrangements and commands of this holy synod, or of any other general council that has been legitimately assembled . . . will be subject to a just penitence, and will be punished according to his demerit . . .”⁵⁷

One of du Plessis-Praslin’s climactic statements was that in spiritual things even the popes were obliged to obey the general councils, since infallibility belongs not to the pontiffs, but to the church alone as represented by such bodies. And this had “always been most religiously observed in this kingdom.”⁵⁸

The steering committee on resolutions had also designated du Plessis-Praslin to prepare, in Latin, the propositions on which the *Assemblée du Clergé* was to vote. On this score, however, he was opposed by the second great personality who took part in those deliberations: Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704).

A doctor of divinity and a celebrated preacher, he was a master of the French language and powerfully blended emotion with well-organized logical argumentation. This had brought him to the attention of the royal family. Though in 1669 he was nominated bishop of Condom, Southwestern France, he gave up this appointment a year later, on being made “tutor to the dauphin, the king’s eldest son. This post brought about his election to the Académie Française” (French Academy).⁵⁹ the most prestigious body in that country.

Bossuet had delivered the inaugural sermon at the *Assemblée du Clergé*. When Bishop Choiseul du Plessis-Praslin at last presented his Latin draft, Bossuet immediately rose and rejected it, and a heated discussion followed. Choiseul objected to elements which he thought were too conciliatory toward the pontiff and resigned his special commission. Thereupon, “Bossuet took his place” and prepared another document.⁶⁰

He authored the final statement, *Déclaration des quatre articles* (Declaration of the Four Articles), which “asserted the king’s independence from Rome in secular matters and proclaimed that, in matters of faith, the pope’s judgment is not to be regarded as infallible without the assent of the total church.” On 19 March 1682, the eight archbishops and twenty-six bishops signed the *Déclaration*. These articles and Bossuet’s role in producing them “remained perhaps the most significant” of his life.⁶¹

Unfortunately he also “supported the king’s revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes, an action that in effect prohibited French Protestantism.”⁶² This abolished its religious freedom, unleashing unutterable suffering for and a massive exodus of the Huguenots, the most productive people of France. Their

flight brought great benefits to the communities in which they settled, including my native South Africa.

XI

What were the immediate reactions to the Four Gallican Articles of 1682?

The Roman pontiff angrily rejected them. He also, wherever he could, took steps against those who had supported or were supporting Gallicanism. One of them was a Jesuit writer, Louis Maimbourg (1610-1686). In 1681, “Pope Innocent XI ordered his expulsion from the Society of Jesus.” After Maimbourg had left the Order in 1682, “Louis XIV granted him a pension, and until his death he continued his literary pursuits in the Abbey of St. Victor, Paris.” If not otherwise of value, his works are “remarkable for their elegant diction,”⁶³ which would certainly have appealed to that polished monarch.

One of Maimbourg’s books was his 1682 *Histoire du Calvinisme* (History of Calvinism). It drew fire from Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), the highly popular philosopher of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose “erudition was second to none in his, or perhaps any, period” and whom Voltaire called “the greatest master of the art of reasoning that ever wrote.”⁶⁴ A Huguenot, Bayle relocated to Rotterdam, Holland, where he incurred the displeasure of even the Calvinists for being too fair and objective in dealing with ideologies which they disliked, to such an extent that he was later ousted as professor of philosophy.⁶⁵

Just a few months after *Histoire du Calvinisme* was published, Bayle’s book-length review of it also appeared. He surveyed the history of the Roman Church far back into the past. He noted how already in the sixth century King Theodoric the Ostrogoth had to fight for toleration toward Arians, whom the Emperor Justin in Constantinople was persecuting, with threats to mete out the same treatment to Catholics in Italy. He especially pointed his readers to the struggle of Protestants to maintain themselves in his native France as well as the Netherlands and England. Even the Gallican Church, though Catholic, was having a hard time.⁶⁶

The fundamental problem was that those who belonged to the Roman Church had to take their cue from “the Holy See, and the conduct of him who is the Head of the Church, the *vicaire du fils de Dieu*, and successor of the Prince of Apostles.”⁶⁷

At this point, Bayle referred to a treatise by the Bishop of Lincoln—evidently the royalist John Williams (1582-1650), who for a little while was also Archbishop at York, being enthroned there in 1642.⁶⁸ This learned prelate “with four kinds of arguments” proved that according to the Roman Church “*the Pope can excommunicate and depose Kings, transfer their Kingdoms to others, and free their subjects from their oath of loyalty*” (Bayle’s emphasis). The arguments advanced by the bishop were based on: 1. Testimonies by the most learned and illustrious writers of the Roman Communion, 2. Canon Law, 3. Papal Bulls, 4. The Decrees and Canons of General Church Councils. After

this, he described the pernicious consequences born of these principles, not only through simple reason but by the current conduct of Catholics.⁶⁹

Of these considerations, Bayle found the last one most convincing. It revealed the spirit that animated the Roman Church. It was, he said, a bloody and murderous spirit as always. “A long succession of centuries shows us that she has always employed the cruelty of torture to abolish everything she called Sects and Heresies. She preached the Crusade against the Albigenses, who were better Christians than she was.” She instituted the “bloody Tribunal of the Inquisition to rid herself through its ultimate torment” of those who would not accept her beliefs. And when she was unable to crush the Sects through most barbarous violence but found herself compelled to tolerate them, it was always with this reservation that when circumstances would permit, she would go back on her word and somehow do them in again.⁷⁰

He pointed out, moreover, that after Henry IV had established toleration for the Protestants through the Edict of Nantes, Romanists incessantly kept on urging the kings of France to revoke it.⁷¹ Therefore, Bayle contemptuously rejected Maimbourg’s assertion: “The times have changed, and so have the persons, and that the reasons for Edicts no longer exist, one can scrap all the Edicts and Declarations in the world.”⁷²

On the contrary, in 1685, just three years after Bayle’s book was published, events provided evidence of the most atrocious kind to vindicate his conclusions. King Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, and began to plunge his country into a dreadful abyss.

XII

Pierre Bayle was not the only French Huguenot who had taken refuge in Rotterdam, in a period when the Dutch Republic allowed the greatest religious liberty of any place on earth. Two brothers, who were also expatriate writers, mentally looked back across the border into and commented on the religious situation of the Catholic world which they had left. They were Henri Basnage de Beauval (1657-1710) and Jacques Basnage de Beauval (1653-1723). Their father was Henri Basnage, sieur de Franquenay (1615-1695), an eminent aristocratic lawyer.⁷³ The books of both these brothers contain the title *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*.

Henri was “a celebrated Protestant divine, preacher, linguist, writer and man of affairs.”⁷⁴ In his ten-volume *Histoire des ouvrages des savans* (History of the Works of the Scholars), published between 1687 to 1697, he discussed amongst other things the tenth century, when three immoral yet powerful women made and unmade the pontiffs, guided only by their caprice and passion—which we, too, have already referred to. Originally Pope John X (d. 928) was a simple priest whom the archbishop of Ravenna sometimes sent as a messenger to Rome. Theodora fell head over heels in love with him. She contrived to have him climb up the episcopal ladder, from see to see, and finally made him the supreme pontiff, so that she could have her lover nearer

to herself. And “the church did not fail to recognize him as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*.” The dalliance between Pope John X and the influential harlot continued until pontifical court intrigues caused Guy, marquis of Tuscany, to put him in jail, where he died.⁷⁵

In 1715, a book by the younger brother, Jacques Basnage, was published anonymously at Amsterdam. It bears the title *L'Unité, la visibilité, l'autorité de l'Église et la vérité renversées par la constitution de Clement XI. Unigenitus* (The Unity, the Visibility, the Authority of the Church and the Truth [All] Overturned by the *Unigenitus* Constitution of Clement XI). It represents a Calvinist intervention in the long-drawn-out struggle between the pope and the Catholic Jansenists of France.

To see why a Protestant would involve himself with it, we need to step back in time and note what Jansenism entailed. It was a movement that began with Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), the Catholic bishop of Ypres in West Flanders.⁷⁶ Later it became especially associated with the convent of Port-Royal at Paris. It influenced the development of Gallicanism in France, opposed the Jesuits, and defied the pontiff with doctrines of its own. Following Jansen's lead, it “insisted on justification by faith” but also strongly stressed the idea which Augustine of Hippo had taught that people were predestined to be saved or lost. Therefore, Jansenism denied “the role of free will in the acceptance and use of grace.” For such reasons, it was often confused with and accused of Calvinism, though it still adhered to the Roman Church and its rites.⁷⁷

The Jesuits hated the Jansenists and had drawn forth a denunciation from Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), a superlatively brilliant man in a country and an age of brilliant men. He began life as an infant prodigy but from the age of eighteen “suffered from a nervous ailment that left him hardly a day without pain.” Nevertheless, he became a great mathematician and multifaceted scientist. Amongst other achievements, while not yet nineteen, he “constructed a mechanical calculator capable of addition and subtraction.” He was equally gifted in other fields. As a youngster, he was converted and became a Jansenist. After 1654, he largely gave up science “and devoted himself to philosophy and theology.” His *Lettres provinciales* (Provincial Letters) were published from 1656 to 1657, under a pseudonym. In them, he attacked the Jesuits for their use of casuistry, a rationalizing method which sought to resolve problems with conscience, duty, or behavior. He denounced this type of reasoning “as the mere use of complex reasoning to justify moral laxity and all sorts of sins.”⁷⁸

The *Provincial Letters* incensed the Grand Monarch. In 1660, he “ordered that the book be shredded and burnt.” The next year, the Jansenist school at Port-Royal was also condemned and closed down, though this could not extinguish Jansenism itself as a force in France. As for Pascal's book, it proved to be unkillable and became immensely popular. In fact, it proved to be a literary masterpiece. Bossuet, already referred to, was once “asked what book he would rather have written had he not written his own, he answered,

the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal.” Later Voltaire (1694-1778), one of the greatest authors in the French language, called *The Letters* “the best-written book that has yet appeared in France.” To this can be added the *Pensées* (Thoughts), Pascal’s incomplete apology and defense of Christianity. It, too, is widely regarded as “a masterpiece, and a landmark in French prose.”⁷⁹

After Pascal’s death in 1662, despite Louis XIV’s opposition and condemnations by several pontiffs, Jansenism persisted. It received a new impetus under Pasquier Quesnel (1634–1719). Foreseeing persecution, he fled from Paris to Brussels in 1691. In 1694, his *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament* [1634–1719] (Moral Reflexions on the New Testament) was published. Nine years later, in 1703, the archbishop of Mechelen had him imprisoned, but after three months he escaped and fled to Amsterdam, where he lived for the rest of his life. Jansenism established itself in the Netherlands as well. Back in France, it flared up again, and Louis XIV asked Pope Clement XI to deal with the problem. He tried to do so with his *Unigenitus* bull of 1713, which attacked and denounced no fewer than 101 propositions in the *Réflexions morales*.⁸⁰

Just two years later, Protestant Jacques Basnage de Beauval weighed in as well with the already mentioned *L’Unité, la visibilité, l’autorité de l’Église et la vérité renversées par la Constitution de Clement XI. Unigenitus* [The Unity, the Visibility, the Authority of the Church and the Truth Overturned by the *Unigenitus* Constitution of Clement XI]—no doubt because of the affinities between Jansenism and Calvinism, Pasquier Quesnel’s presence in Amsterdam (which is not far from Rotterdam), and especially the pontiff’s comments on the Bible. So let us look just a little at this work by Jacques Basnage.

As a general background, he first considered the papalist dogma that the apostle Peter had established his see at Rome, together with apostolic succession. That city is where the head of the church supposedly resided. To him, everybody had to be united. Whoever detached himself from the pope was “a separated branch with no life in himself, and a schismatic who cannot find his salvation in an excommunicated Society. . . .”⁸¹ And so we allegedly have “a Head that is the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, who holds his place and must possess his authority.”⁸²

According to the thesis statement that heads Basnage’s second chapter, “The Divisions between the Pope and the Bishops render the character of the Church uncertain and doubtful.”⁸³ The Catholic prelates to whom he referred were the ones in France and its neighboring countries. Basnage thought the pontiff in Rome, whom some regarded as the only sovereign Pastor of people’s souls, was really a wolf in sheep’s clothing.⁸⁴ He also warned that the Angel of Darkness sometimes transformed himself into an Angel of Light. In fact, it is only Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, to whom one must submit.⁸⁵

In other words, Jacques Basnage de Beauval exploited the problems and inconsistencies of the Jansenist-Papal controversy to write a thoroughly Protestant book.

XIII

Meanwhile those powerful and often wily religionists in France, the Jesuits, had also been at work. Intrinsicly of the pope's party, they mostly rejected Gallicanism. They have often been referred to as Ultramontanes, a word derived from the Latin *ultra montes* (beyond the mountains), i.e. Rome on the other side of the Alps. Ultimately they swayed the king to at least moderate his attitude toward the Vatican.

An ambiguous figure was François de la Chaise d'Aix (1624–1709), more commonly known as Le Père La Chaise (Father La Chaise). He was a nobleman turned Jesuit priest who officiated as the king's father confessor. "During the long strife over the temporalities of the Gallican Church between Louis XIV and Innocent XI, he supported the royal prerogative, though he used his influence at Rome to conciliate the papal authorities." On the other hand, "he must be held largely responsible for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,"⁸⁶ although he was by no means the only person who schemed to achieve that end. The reason for saying so can be found in a letter that he himself wrote to another, unnamed priest in 1688, just three years after the Edict of Nantes had been revoked.⁸⁷

La Chaise explained precisely how he had, as father-confessor, applied religious coercion to manipulate Louis XIV into agreeing that all the Protestants of France should be suddenly surprised and slain. To begin with, that monarch was most unwilling.

But at last I got him on the hip; for he had lain with his daughter-in-law, for which I would by no means give him absolution, till he had given me an instrument, under his own hand and seal, to sacrifice all the hereticks [*sic*] in one day. Now, as soon as I had my desired commission, I appointed the day when this should be done, and, in the mean time, made ready some thousands of letters, to be sent into all parts of France in one post-night. I was never better pleased, than that time; but the king was affected with some compassion for the Hugonots [*sic*], because they had been a means to bring him to his crown and throne; and, the longer he was under it, the more sorrowful he was, often complaining and desiring me to give him his commission again; but that I would by no persuasion do, advising him to repent of that heinous sin, and also telling him, that the trouble and horror of his spirit did not proceed from any thing of evil in those things that were to be done, but from that great wickedness which he had done; and that he must resolve to undergo the severe burden of a troubled mind for one of them, or the other, and he would remain satisfied as it was, his sin being forgiven, there would, in a few days, be a perfect atonement made for it, and be perfectly reconciled to God again. But all this would not pacify him, for the longer the more restless; and therefore I ordered him to retire to his closet, and there spend his time

constantly in prayer, without permitting any one to interrupt him; and this was in the morning early, when, the evening following, I was to send away all my letters.⁸⁸

How much like Haman, when King Ahasuerus ruled over the ancient Persian Empire, as recounted in the book of Esther! That scoundrel also planned to have the people of God destroyed in a single day. Soon, however, the plot misfired badly. The Jews were allowed to defend themselves and kill their enemies, while Haman himself was hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai, the queen's adoptive father.

But Père La Chaise escaped a similar fate, and events took a different turn. The high-born Prince of Condé intervened. He went to the royal closet and insisted on seeing the king, who issued an order that enabled him to retrieve the commission. Louis XIV at first declared that La Chaise would not return it. But the prince persisted until the king said: "Well go then, and break his neck, if he will not give it you."⁸⁹ On being confronted, La Chaise demurred; but the prince threatened to run him through with his sword if he did not hand over the document, which he did, though this was not the end of that story.

The enraged La Chaise, who called the Prince of Condé a devil and a son of perdition, took counsel with his fellow Jesuits. "I soon gave an account of this affair to several fathers of our society, who promised to do their best to prevent the aforesaid prince's doing such another act; which was accordingly done, for, within the space of six days after the damned action, he was poisoned, and well he deserved it."

La Chaise in his letter continued:

The king also did suffer too, but in another fashion, for disclosing the design to the prince, and hearkening to his counsel. And many a time since, when I have had him at confession, I have shook hell about his ears, and made him sigh, fear, and tremble, before I would give him absolution; nay, more than that, I have made him beg for it on his knees, before I would consent to absolve him. By this, I saw that he had still an inclination to me, and was willing to be under my government: so I set the baseness of the action before him, by telling the whole story, and how wicked it was; and that it could not be forgiven, till he had done some good action to balance that, and expiate the crime. Whereupon, he at last asked me what he must do? I told him, that he must root out all the hereticks from his kingdom; so, when he saw there was no rest for him, without doing it, he did again give them all into the power of me and our clergy, under this condition, that he would not murder them, as he had before given orders, but that we should by fair means, or force, convert them to the Catholick religion; to which end he gave us his dragoons to be at our devotion and service, that he might use them as we saw convenient, to

convert them to the true religion. Now, when we had got the commission, we presently put it into practice, and, what the issue of it hath been, you very well know.⁹⁰

The reader also needs to be acquainted with what happened: The lives of the Huguenots, often highly productive aristocrats—the very flower of France—were suddenly disrupted, and they had to make drastic choices. “Many Protestants converted to Catholicism and many others fled to refugee countries to freely live out their faith. Others still, stayed in France and tried to celebrate their religion that was forbidden by the royal monarchy. If they were caught, they were condemned for ‘religious crimes.’ Pastors were executed, women were imprisoned for life, and men were sent as galley-slaves on the royal galley-ships that protected the coast,”⁹¹ which was a living death.

With a view to all the suffering which he unleashed and all the deaths resulting from that priest’s atrocious deed, we think it appropriate that the Père Lachaise Cemetery, the largest burial ground within the city of Paris,⁹² should memorialize his name, which has the stench of death about it.

XIV

Also living at that time was the Jesuit Jean Crasset (1618-1692), who under the pseudonym Monsieur M. Labbé de T[ressac] wrote pieces recorded in two volumes of *Sacrosacta Concilia* (1671). The first quotes the Donation in both Latin and Greek.⁹³

Crasset also produced the *Histoire de l’Église du Japon* (History of the Church of Japan) (1689), already cited in another chapter. It contains the French *vicair du Fils de Dieu*.⁹⁴ About this book, a modern *Catholic Encyclopedia* remarks that it “was drawn in great part from the work which Father Solier had issued in 1637.” Crasset “merely retouched the style and continued the narrative from 1624 to 1658.”⁹⁵

He also wrote a book on how to die, *La douce et sainte morte* (Sweet and Holy Death), which appeared in 1681. It contains a formula for a Catholic testament, “which it is good to recite once a month before a crucifix.”⁹⁶ In it, there are many statements to gladden the papalist theologian, though they may horrify a Protestant reader. Among other things, it states: “I declare again that I die within the communion of the Holy See, and within the obedience that every faithful Catholic owes to our Holy Father the Pope, as to the *vicair du Fils de Dieu* on earth, to the Head of the universal Church, to the successor of Saint Peter, and to the sovereign shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁷ In this way, by committing themselves for time and eternity to their church, the dying lock themselves and their future destiny into that of the papacy. The disposition to sign such a testament quite naturally, though by no means incidentally, also disposes the signatory to making generous bequests to the Church of Rome.

This seems to have been a popular piece of writing, because it was

echoed or imitated elsewhere in the world. For instance, in 1781, exactly a hundred years after it had first appeared, an anonymous Portuguese edition was published in Lisbon, with an amplified title, invoking the work of “the holy fathers and most important authors on piety,” Named *A morte suave, e santa, ou preparação para a morte* (Sweet and Holy Death or Preparation for Death), it was printed under a royal licence. In it, we find Crasset’s original statement, this time in Portuguese: “I declare again that I die within the communion of the Holy See, and within the obedience that every faithful Catholic owes to our Holy Father the Pope, as to the *Vigario do Filho de Deos* on earth, to the Head of the universal Church, to the successor of Saint Peter, and to the sovereign shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁸

In French, too, Crasset’s book was reissued during 1853, almost two centuries after its first edition, by the Perisse brothers—who designated themselves as the printers and booksellers for the pope (Pius IX)—as well as Monsignor the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyon.⁹⁹

Another work by Crasset was *Considérations chrétiennes pour tous les jours de l’année, avec les évangiles de tous les dimanches* (Christian Thoughts for All the Days of the Year, with the Gospels of All the Sundays). He had much to say under 29 June, “For the Feast of the Prince of the Apostles St. Peter.”¹⁰⁰ As every Bible-reading Protestant knows, the claim in this heading lacks all Scriptural support. Another blatant fiction is that Peter loved Jesus more than the other apostles did, so that in return the Saviour also loved him more than any of them!¹⁰¹ But the Good Book repeatedly says the disciple whom he especially loved was John (John 13:23-25; 19:26, 27; 21:7, 20).

Crasset, however, went on to assert that because of this alleged preference Jesus made Peter “the Prince, the Chief, the foundation and the Pastor of his entire Church,”¹⁰² which caused him to exclaim: “Oh, I am happy to be among your children, and one of your flock! I declare before heaven and earth that I recognize you as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, as the Chief and the Pastor of the entire Church.” And he added: “I say with Saint Jerome, that I am united to the Chair of Saint Peter; that it is his doctrine which I want to follow, and that in his Communion I want to die.”¹⁰³ He remained an inveterate papalist to the end of his life.

In 1699, another Catholic lauding the pope to high heaven was Dom François le Tellier de Bellefons. With its byline, his *Panegyriques pour les principales fêtes de l’année* (Panegyrics for the Principal Feasts of the Year) identifies him as prior at Gassicourt in the Cluniac Order as well as a doctor and professor of theology. Perhaps he was also a kinsman of François Michel le Tellier (1641-1691), Marquis de Louvois, “the French Secretary of State for War for a significant part of the reign of Louis XIV.”¹⁰⁴ He certainly had important connections, for he dedicated his book to “Madame la Princesse.”

As a preacher, Dom François was longwinded and somewhat tedious. It is interesting, though, that in praising Lawrence, a deacon who had died for his

faith at Rome on 10 August 258,¹⁰⁵ he made the saint refer to Pope Sixtus II—also martyred, a mere three days before him—¹⁰⁶ as the *vicair*e du Fils de Dieu.¹⁰⁷ Which, as already pointed out in other instances, is an anachronism; for in the third century the title did not yet exist. It originated five hundred years later with the spurious Donation of Constantine and other impostures.

Chapter Thirty
**FROM THE GRAND MONARCH
TO THE LITTLE CORPORAL—AND BEYOND**

I

When an almost 77-year-old Louis XIV died in 1715, the Jansenist controversy and other religious problems were still unresolved. He also left his country economically depleted by the Huguenot exodus and the wars with which he had vainly tried to extend his realm in Europe. As death was approaching, he may well have pondered his ruinous defeats engineered by a Dutchman, the Protestant Prince William of Orange (1650–1702), whom he called “my mortal enemy.”¹

This nemesis was raised up against him in 1672, “the ‘disaster year’ (*Dutch: rampjaar*) due to the Franco-Dutch War and the Third Anglo-Dutch War, in which the Netherlands were invaded by France under Louis XIV, England, Münster, and Cologne.” It looked as though the Dutch forces, commanded by William, had been utterly routed. But he withdrew what was left of the army into Holland, their northerly province, and the dykes were opened against that fearsome coalition.²

In that terrible crisis, on 4 July 1672, William was appointed stadtholder, an idea which the Dutch had previously resisted. It was at this time that he made a very famous statement. The English Lord Arlington, sent by Charles II (1630–1685), “offered to make William Sovereign Prince of Holland in exchange for his capitulation—whereas a stadtholder was a mere civil servant.” But he was not bribable and refused. When Arlington threatened that William would witness the extinction of the republic, he answered bravely: “There is one way to avoid this: to die defending it in the last ditch.”³

On 7 July, the flooding halted the army from France, which had already overrun a good deal of the Netherlands. And now William, after allying himself with Spain and Brandenburg, marched on Maastricht, threatening the French supply lines. The next year, astonishingly, Lieutenant-Admiral Michiel de Ruyter thrice defeated the combined fleets of France and England, forcing Charles II to give up his involvement in the war. The British left, and after 1673 the French forces also had to withdraw from most of the Netherlands.⁴

When Louis XIV in 1685 revoked the Edict of Nantes, the Protestants hailed William as their great champion. Large numbers of Huguenots fled to the Netherlands. All this led him “to join various anti-French alliances, such as the Association League, and ultimately the League of Augsburg (an anti-French coalition that also included the Holy Roman Empire, Sweden, Spain and several German states) in 1686.”⁵

William of Orange was half English, his mother Mary being the princess royal and daughter of King Charles I (1600-1649). He

strengthened his claim to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland by marrying his cousin Mary (1662-1694), who had been brought up a Protestant.⁶

But her father, the Duke of York (1633-1633), stood first in the line of succession. He had, however, converted to Catholicism under the influence of his French mother, Henrietta Maria (1609-1669). As the daughter of King Henry IV,⁷ she was Louis XIV's kinswoman. In 1685, the very year when the Sun King revoked the Edict of Nantes, Charles II died and the Duke of York became King James II over Britain and Ireland. What excitement the news must have brought to the palace at Versailles! And what splendid prospects for the future!

But within three years these hopes were crushed. A group of prominent Protestant politicians in Britain plotted with Louis XIV's "mortal enemy." William landed at Brixham, southwest England, on 5 November 1688 with about 11,000 foot and 4,000 mounted soldiers. "He came ashore from the ship *Brill*, proclaiming 'the liberties of England and the Protestant religion' . . ." A large part of the British forces soon deserted James II, who fled the country. And so it happened, after the only successful invasion of Britain for six hundred years, that the Dutch stadtholder—with his wife and joint sovereign Mary—was crowned King William III of England in Westminster Abbey on 11 April 1689. He also "encouraged the passage of the Act of Toleration (1689), which guaranteed religious toleration to certain Protestant nonconformists"—though it did not extend freedom as far as William had wished, for it still restricted "the religious liberty of Roman Catholics, non-Trinitarians, or those of non-Christian faiths."⁸

Though Louis XIV was not to know it, this law plus other enactments, like the Bill of Rights passed by parliament in December 1689, would contribute much to something even more famous, the 1787 United States Constitution. This came to full maturity through its own Bill of Rights adopted in 1791. Amongst other things, its most important article, the First Amendment, guarantees the freedoms of religion, speech, the press, and peaceful assembly.⁹

William III died in 1702, and Louis XIV probably exulted to hear about it; nevertheless, the Dutchman was about to destroy his power from beyond the grave. During the previous year, the Sun King had turned his eyes toward the south, across the Pyrenees, and placed his grandson on the throne of Spain as Philip V. Then he "invaded the Spanish Netherlands."¹⁰

In reaction, King William organized another anti-French alliance on 7 September 1701, a mere six months before he died. It involved "England, the Dutch Republic, and the emperor Leopold. They were later joined by Prussia, Hanover, other German states, and Portugal." In 1703, Savoy switched sides and also joined them.¹¹

The next year began to dismantle the might of France. The allies' military leader was Winston Churchill's ancestor, John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, whom William III had appointed as his commander-in-chief.

With able and flawless cooperation from the imperial general Prince Eugene of Savoy, he crushed Louis XIV's forces in three great battles. At Blenheim (now Blindheim), Bavaria, on the Danube, John Churchill, assisted by Prince Eugene and Austrian troops, in 1704 inflicted "the first major defeat that the French army suffered in over 50 years." Vienna and the eastern wing of the alliance were spared.¹² In 1706, its army under the Duke of Marlborough, once more routed the French at the village of Ramillies, in what today is Belgium.¹³ Two years later, during 1708, the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene of Savoy again defeated Louis XIV's army, this time at Oudenaarde, another town in that country. But fighting continued for several more months, until "Marlborough recaptured Ghent and Bruges in January 1709, and the French withdrew to their own border."¹⁴

The overall consequence was that "in 1709 France came close to losing all the advantages gained over the preceding century."¹⁵ In the aftermath, the disastrous war of the Spanish Succession brought victory for Britain and its colonial empire. The power of France, like that of Spain, declined.¹⁶ It never made a full recovery, despite its spectacular but short-lived resurgence under Napoleon Bonaparte.

As death approached Louis XIV during 1715, while gangrene was eating his life away in that beautiful palace of Versailles, he may well have pondered how his ambitions had fallen apart on those battlefields. And did he not also remember his "mortal enemy," now gone for more than a dozen years? At his funeral, a final indignity awaited him: "His body was borne, amid the jeers of the populace, to the Saint-Denis basilica."¹⁷ The people of Paris were unforgiving for the sorry pass to which he had brought their country.

II

By revoking the Edict of Nantes in 1685, Louis XIV had set in motion the forces that were hurtling France toward its rendezvous with the Revolution of 1789. In a little more than a century, the guillotine would end his Bourbon dynasty, by lopping off the head of his descendant, King Louis XVI.

When on 1 September 1715 the Grand Monarch went down into darkness, he left his country in socio-economic, military, and religious disarray. The Gallicans, Jansenists, Protestants, and Jesuits were still contending for their place in the sun, not realizing how soon it would set for the Ancient Régime. Interestingly, however, examples of using the title *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* could still be found among them all.

For the Jansenists, Clement XI's *Unigenitus* bull remained the prime target. It had been directed against the *Moral Reflections on the New Testament* by Quesnel, who was one of their own. In 1717, several Jansenist scholars created a collaborative work of six parallel parts, which they called *Les Hexaples ou les six colonnes sur la constitution Unigenitus* (The Hexaples or the Six Columns on the Constitution *Unigenitus*). This appeared at Kuiper in

Amsterdam.¹⁸ Supposedly modeled on the *Hexapla* by Origen, which presented six ancient versions of the Bible in parallel columns,¹⁹ this compendium had nothing to do with that third-century writer. Instead, the various authors looked at six aspects of the *Unigenitus*. Their work grew to encompass seven volumes.²⁰

In 1723, one of these scholars, Jean-Baptiste Le Sesne de Ménilles d'Étemare (1682-1770),²¹ brought out a work that focused on Column 4. Its title page added the assertion: "In which a comparison is made of the new Doctrine of the Jesuits authorized by the Bull with the Doctrine of the Church established by the Scriptures, the Holy Fathers, and the Ecclesiastical Authors."²² He said the Order upheld their doctrine by odiously refusing to admit Article 5 in the writing of Pope Clement VIII, who had maintained that grace drew its efficacy from God's omnipotence, and the dominion which his Sovereign Majesty exercised on people's wills, as he did on all other creatures under heaven. "Is this what the Jesuits thought, when they rejected such an article, in the presence of the premier *vicaire du fils de Dieu* Almighty?"²³

Not at all deferential toward the pontiff was Théodore Crinzos (1690-1750), Lord of Cottens and Bionnens. A Swiss Protestant, he had made his own, individualistic translation—really a paraphrase—of the Bible. He also produced a singular *Essai sur l'Apocalypse, avec des éclaircissements sur les prophéties de Daniel qui regardent les derniers tems* (1729) (Essay on the Apocalypse, with Explanations Concerning Daniel's Prophecies About the Last Days). He thought the time of their fulfillment was near. Regarding some things, Crinzos also disagreed with the Calvinists, refusing to sign a statement of adherence to their beliefs. They took their revenge by not allowing him to publish his book in Geneva, after which he did so at Yverdon in the Canton of Vaud.²⁴

Concerning the prostitute depicted in Rev. 17, he boldly said she represented the Roman Church,²⁵ "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (vs. 6)." This had astounded John when in vision he observed her. And, Crinzos asked: "Who today can think without astonishment that he who claims to occupy the chair of Saint Peter, who calls himself the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, the Father of the Christian world, has proclaimed crusades against believers, has been the principal author of so many conspiracies and massacres, has resorted to iron and fire, the wheel, gibbets, tortures, and the most studied torments against people whose crime consisted in wanting to observe religiously the laws of the Lord? How is it possible that he has erected the frightful tribunal of the Inquisition, and made all Europe the scene of so many bloodstained tragedies?"²⁶

III

Among the many authors whose works we have found relevant to our study, only a handful has been women, though some of them were very significant. One of these was Claudine Guérin de Tencin (1682-1749). Her

father, Antoine Guérin, seigneur de Tencin, belonged to the recently created nobility. The reader need not be burdened with many details about her, for nowadays only a few of her writings live on in French literature. Suffice it to say that she was highly intelligent, influential in social and political affairs, and presided at a salon attended by leading authors together with other notables of her time.²⁷

She was also a forceful feminist, who never forgot her early ill-treatment at the hands of men. When she was about eight years old, the youngest of five children, her father—who held high government positions—put her in the royal Dominican monastery of Montfleury. In 1698, having turned sixteen, she was compelled to take her vows as a nun. But Claudine had found monastic life repugnant, so the very next day she protested with a formal deposition before a notary. Her relatives, especially her father, were scandalized. She was, however, a tenacious woman and battled on for almost twenty years, until the pope agreed to an annulment in 1711. These events scarred her, yet it is noteworthy that she used her growing influence to obtain, eventually, political preferment for her brother, who was a wimp of a man.²⁸

In the *Bibliothèque raisonnée des ouvrages des savans de l'Europe* (Reasoned Library of Works by the Scholars of Europe) for July, August, and September 1733, in fifty-one pages, she critically reviewed Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix's *Histoire de l'Isle Espagnole, ou de Saint Dominique* (History of the Island of Hispaniola or Santa Domingo).²⁹ Discovered by Christopher Columbus on 5 December 1492, this was eventually subdivided into Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

De Charlevoix was a Jesuit, who with his book—as Claudine Guérin de Tencin concluded—delivered more than its title promised.³⁰ It deals not only with that island but the discovery of the entire New World. It shows how the Spanish, as de Charlevoix put it, went on to establish throughout America “an Empire as vast as and richer than that of the first Caesars.”³¹

We will skip over many details that do not here concern us and focus on only two matters, of which the first is a buildup for the second. Where de Charlevoix wrote about the native people of Haiti, he described them as hospitable and frugal. But he also said they were unambitious, indolent, knew nothing and were not interested in knowing anything, danced for part of the day (after which they went to sleep), had no writing system, and were immoral. Other Spaniards went further than he did, depicting Native Americans as monsters of debauchery.³²

Our chapter on “The Donation and the Voyages of Discovery,” has also partly dealt with these ideas and their far-reaching consequences for all America.

We noted that this provided an excuse for what happened after Columbus got back to Europe in 1493. A conflict of interest arose between Spain and Portugal, the latter also having sent out great seamen to explore unknown, faraway countries. Therefore, the Spanish monarchs informed the pontiff of the New World discovered on their behalf, imploring him to grant them

dominion over it.³³ As a Frenchwoman, Claudine Guérin de Tencin had reservations about what significance, if any, this had; but she did, though disapprovingly, mention de Charlevoix's as well as the papal perspective.

Pope Alexander VI, with his bull of 4 May 1493, represented his approval as a Donation, a favor from the Holy See. Through that document, cited in a footnote, he claimed the right—with full power—as the Vicar of Jesus Christ, to grant all the countries discovered or yet to be discovered. He did not, moreover, want anyone to think he was making the Donation because of the Monarchs' request or anything like that. It had to be seen as a pure effect of "his *benevolence*, and of his *Apostolic power*" (original emphasis).³⁴

And so, as a disapproving Claudine Guérin de Tencin expressed it—she herself italicized the key expressions—"a proud Bishop, under the shadow of the title which he arrogated to himself, of *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, that is to say, of him who had formally declared . . . *That his kingdom was not of this world*; such a man liberally gives what does not belong to him: at his pleasure, he disposes of countries known and unknown: he despoils people who do not depend on him in any way, of the most natural and incontestable rights. Such are the reflections that the *love of Truth* and the Laws of History, should have evoked in Father de Charlevoix."³⁵

IV

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church had a moderate if not entirely tolerant pontiff, Benedict XIV (1675-1758, reigned from 1740). "Of a noble family, he received a doctorate in theology and law from the University of Rome." He adopted a conciliatory attitude toward secular rulers and remained "an active scholar all his life." He was a witty man, maintaining a correspondence "with many of the great men of his age, including Voltaire."³⁶

Nevertheless, for 1750, he not only held an old-fashioned jubilee at Rome but invited all Catholics elsewhere in the world to come there the next year. For these events indulgences were issued. This situation clearly upset Charles Pierre Chais (1701-1786), "pastor of the [Protestant] French Church in The Hague from 1728 until his death in 1786."³⁷ After all, it was indulgences that had in 1517 unleashed the Reformation spearheaded by Martin Luther. Chais promptly, in 1751, produced a multi-volume response, his *Lettres historiques et dogmatiques sur les jubilés et les indulgences* (Historical and Dogmatic Letters Concerning Jubilees and Indulgences).³⁸

He debunked the explanation that these jubilees in Rome were typologically prefigured by those of the ancient Jews. Surveying Catholic history from the fourteenth century, he fixed a jaundiced eye on Boniface VIII—whom we have already met in these pages. If that pope, he sardonically suggested, "had not instituted this Jubilee, the types of the ancient Law would not have had their accomplishment under the new Law."³⁹

Chais next considered the pompous announcement by Pope Innocent XII

(1615-1700, reigned from 1691) of the previous Catholic jubilee in 1700, when amongst other things he had exclaimed: “To you, we announce the good news . . . the year of peace from the Lord, the year of expiation, of pardon, of redemption, and of grace, of the remission and indulgence of sins.”⁴⁰ As a product of the Jesuit College in Rome, the pontiff was more of a diplomat than a theologian. He made a deal with King Louis XIV “to disavow the four Gallican Articles of 1682 issued against Innocent XI.” In exchange for this, “Innocent XII agreed to extend the king’s right to administer vacant sees.” We also note that that this pope died on 27 September during the 1700 jubilee.⁴¹

Chais concluded that Benedict XIV had acted in the same spirit when he announced the jubilee of 1750. This brought in its train “all the magnificent promises made to the faithful, who with penitential sentiments went to Rome to taste the sweet things of the Holy Year”— but “How is it that the *vicaires du Fils de Dieu* waited so many centuries to open up this treasure of benedictions? If the Papal Jubilee was supposed to realize in such a striking and useful way the types of the Judaic Jubilee, why was it deferred until the fourteenth century . . . ?”⁴²

In his third volume, Chais relentlessly continued probing the problems with and uncertainties that surround the doctrine of indulgences. Allegedly the pontiff dispenses the surplus merit of Christ and of the saints, which enables the dead to shorten or eliminate their stay in purgatory. But how, for instance, is it possible that in the treasure guarded by the popes as its economists, the part made up from the surplus merit of suffering saints has not been entirely exhausted after so many centuries during which pontiffs, cardinals, bishops, and often even church councils liberally drew upon it?⁴³ Also: the dead enduring purgatory cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, really know whether they are in a state of grace or not, until the final Judgment Day, when they will discover what conditions they must fulfill to avoid damnation.⁴⁴ Such, said Chais, was undoubtedly the logical framework within which “Benedict XIV wants the Christian people to know about the existence of the immense treasure of the merits of Jesus Christ and of the Saints, the right which Jesus Christ has given his Roman Pontiff to guard that treasure, and the option which this *vicair du Fils de Dieu* has to make, according to his prudence, a suitable application of the merits comprising it.”⁴⁵

How the Holy Inquisition would have liked to lay hands on this gadfly critic of the Reformed Church! But he dwelt safely beyond the frontiers of Catholicism in the Dutch capital, where those gentle fathers could not touch him.

One thing that nobody questioned in those days was the fact that *vicarius Filii Dei*, with its translations into other languages, was a well-known title of the pope—applied piously by mainline Catholics, querulously by Jansenists, or derisively by Protestants.

V

Time was now marching on relentlessly to the beating of a hidden drum that not everyone could hear. By 1765, the Revolution lay less than a quarter of a century in the future. But a fervent papist named François Guillaume Quériau was evidently unable to discern the signs of the times. He therefore published at Avignon an astonishing work. Addressed to the entire Jewish nation, its title page urges them to “reunite” with the Catholic Church, make peace with the Apostolic Chair, and submit to the pontiff.⁴⁶

Quériau must have known the Lord’s Messianic promise to David that his “seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me” (Ps. 89:35-36). But he said it was the pope who had a throne as durable as the sun. Indeed, from the face of the sovereign pontiff, there flowed a river: “light and grace, of which the abundant and inexhaustible fountain is placed within the field of the Church, which is earth’s paradise.”⁴⁷ Echoing Rev. 22:1-2, this likens the pope to God himself. Quériau also referred to prophecies in the Bible which he believed foretold the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, a project that the bishops were intent on. Their zeal would not, however, be fruitful if not animated by “him who is on Earth the Image of the Father, the *Vicaire du Fils*, and the organ of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁸

Of course, in this case the phrase does not contain the words *de Dieu*, but—in view of other similar utterances by Catholic theologians—what else could it mean?

VI

In the late eighteenth century, all Europe was greatly influenced by an intellectual phenomenon known as the Enlightenment, which focused on reason, “the power by which man understands the universe and improves his own condition. The goals of rational man were thought to be knowledge, freedom and happiness.” This complex of ideas concerned “God, reason, nature, and man,” which were “synthesized in art, philosophy, and politics.”

Though its character and details varied from country to country, the Enlightenment, which fostered libertarian tendencies, would also play a role in the American Revolution of 1776. We find that “the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence, the United States Bill of Rights and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen were motivated by ‘Enlightenment’ principles (although the English Bill of Rights predate the era).”⁴⁹

The pontiffs hated the Enlightenment, because it threatened the age-old, medieval concept of unquestioning obedience to their authority. A spectacular enemy was Voltaire (1694–1778). For many Christians, he is in bad odor as a Deist—practically an infidel—and an enemy of religion. Nevertheless, he was “one of the greatest of all French writers,” and also “a courageous crusader against tyranny, bigotry, and cruelty.” His vast array of books included a *Dictionnaire philosophique* (Philosophic Dictionary), 1764, in which he

debunked and even poked fun at the papacy.⁵⁰

The supporters of the pope hated Voltaire and two of them attacked him furiously. The first was Louis-Maieul Chaudon (1737–1817), a Catholic apologist, originally from the Benedictine abbey at Cluny. In 1767, just three years after Voltaire's work had appeared, he began to produce his *Dictionnaire antiphilosophique* (Antiphilosophic Dictionary),⁵¹ which was published anonymously. We quote from the 1771 edition of its third volume.

In the article "Pierre" (Peter), Chaudon indignantly rebuked Voltaire for joking that "there was no other reason to believe that Saint Peter was at Rome than his letter dated from Babylon," and for saying that "Paul was not the only one to be scandalized by his conduct. He has often been resisted face to face, both he and his successors." No! said Chaudon, Matthew's gospel, Church Fathers, and historians have all agreed about St. Peter's primacy, and most pontiffs led holy lives, some dying as martyrs. A few were indeed corrupt, but their failures were a personal matter, which could not reflect on the Holy See itself. And as for the Cephas whom Paul resisted, it was not St. Peter but one of the seventy-two disciples, as various theologians since St. Clement of Alexandria pointed out.⁵²

The other papal apologist was Claude-François Nonnette (1711–1793), whose *Dictionnaire philosophique de la religion* (Philosophic Dictionary of Religion), Vol. III, first appeared in 1762 and was, besides, translated into Italian, Spanish, and German. We cite the 1772 edition, published—also anonymously—just a year after Chaudon's work.

It likewise contains an article entitled "Pierre," which angrily opposes Voltaire's assertions. Nonnette said our Lord put Peter in charge of all the apostles, as their superior and as the universal pastor of the church. He "is also the only one of the apostles to whom Jesus Christ said his faith would never fail."⁵³ This last assertion is, however, completely negated by the New Testament. Soon afterwards, perhaps within the hour, the Lord addressed the Apostle Peter as Satan, for contradicting him (Matt. 16:22). When Judas, accompanied by armed men sent by the High Priest, suddenly turned up at the Garden of Gethsemane to arrest the Saviour, Peter—like the other apostles—ran away. And at Jesus' trial he denied his Lord, not once, not twice, but three times. Nonetheless, Nonnette referred to Peter, and presumably to each of his successors, as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, the agency through whom the Holy Spirit worked.⁵⁴

Like Chaudon, Nonnette was angered by Voltaire's skepticism about Peter's sojourn in the eternal city, for saying that he could not have been the Bishop of Rome, because at the time referred to and for a long time afterwards there was, as was well known, no special bishop in that place. Voltaire conceded that the apostle might have traveled there, "but we have no proof of it." To this, he added a witticism about a holy man who in Rome had been made to pay dearly for a benefice, which is called *simony*. When asked whether he knew Simon Peter, this person allegedly said: "I do not think that Peter has been here, but I am sure of Simon." About these ideas of Voltaire,

Nonnette remarked: "It would be difficult to tell more lies in fewer words."⁵⁵

Years later, in the nineteenth century, Abbé E. Grosse of the Nancy diocese, combined and updated these ideas. They were published in his own article "Pierre," as part of a *Dictionnaire d'antiphilosophisme, ou réfutation des erreurs du 18^e siècle, d'après Nonnette et Chaudon* (Dictionary of Antiphilosophism, or Refutation of the Errors of the Eighteenth Century, According to Nonnette and Chaudon), 1856. We need not trouble the reader with Grosse's extensive argumentation but note that he also called Peter—and his would-be successors—"le vicaire du Fils de Dieu Jésus-Christ, l'organe de l'Esprit-Saint."⁵⁶

VII

Our narrative now enters the period just before and during the French Revolution of 1789. King Louis XVI and Pope Pius VI (1717-1799, reigned from 1775) were still on their thrones, but neither of them could know how soon he would be toppled and die. Just then, in the years 1778-1790, the celebrated *Histoire de l'Église* (History of the Church) by de Bérault-Bercastel was being published at Paris in twenty-four volumes. According to the title page of its third volume, which appeared in 1782, he dedicated it to the king.⁵⁷

We have already dealt with this author and his description of how Pope Boniface VIII met his doom when emissaries from King Philip IV assailed him at Anagni in 1303. We note again that de Bérault-Bercastel referred to that pontiff as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, who said he had the power to rule kings with a rod of iron.⁵⁸

Could Pope Pius VI in this discern a portent of his own impending fate? We think not, for the spirit that animates the pontiffs through the ages lacks the genuine gift of prophecy and therefore cannot foresee the future. Nevertheless, Pius VI, a rigid reactionary, was already having trouble with the Catholic rulers of Europe. "In October 1781 the Holy Roman emperor Joseph II inaugurated his reforming Edict of Toleration, whereby non-Catholic minorities received considerable religious toleration, 'unnecessary' monasteries were dissolved, diocesan boundaries were redrawn, and seminaries were placed under state control." A shocked Pope Pius VI "intervened in 1782 by personally visiting Vienna but failed to secure any concessions." The emperor, inspired by the Enlightenment, was applying "Febronianism, an ecclesiastical doctrine that advocated restriction of papal power."⁵⁹

Seven years later, the pontiff faced similar problems in the West. "Under the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790), France intended to force a reform of the French Church, thus causing a major conflict between Rome and the Revolution, whose scheme resembled Emperor Joseph's designs. Pius took no immediate action, but when an oath of fidelity to the new regime was demanded from the clergy, he formally denounced the

Civil Constitution and the Revolution on March 10, 1791.”⁶⁰

In those days, Emile Peltier, who resided in London and was perhaps an émigré, went to France and wrote his *Paris, pendant l'année 1796* (Paris During the Year 1796). He found a change of attitude toward monarchy after the Terror had ended on the guillotine, with the execution of its extremist leader, Maximilien de Robespierre (1758-1794).

Peltier wrote: “Since those dreadful days, the republic is a little humanized toward kings, and even toward tyrants: it has sent a solemn embassy to the despot on the Bosphorus, and pushed politeness to the point of giving presents to the women of his seraglio. If it desires consistency, it would need for some time longer to endure the Pope’s reign on the Tiber and let him think he is the *vicaire du fils de Dieu*.” But though consistent, this was also most improbable.⁶¹

VIII

The men who after the Revolution contrived the pontiff’s downfall had behind them not only a recent animosity or even just Gallicanism, but the entire history of the Roman Church in France and its antipathy toward domination by the Vatican. Concrete evidence for this is to be found in what happened under Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). He was thin and small in stature, and his soldiers affectionately called him the “Little Corporal.” Later he went on to become Emperor of France in 1804. Because he had been born on Corsica, it no doubt also specially gratified him when in March 1805 he “was proclaimed king of Italy and crowned in Milan in May.”⁶²

During 1796, he had commanded the Revolutionary forces in that country and vainly tried to persuade Pope Pius VI “to retract his briefs against the French priests who had accepted the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which in practice nationalized the church.” In 1798, an uncompromising Pius VI was deposed. The next year, he died an exile in France.

Napoleon, after becoming First Consul of the Republic in 1799, continued his former efforts. He was not himself inclined to piety—during his Egyptian campaign he had even cynically considered becoming a Muslim, since it then seemed like a good political maneuver; yet he believed that for the sake of peace his country needed a national religion. Renewed negotiations, this time with Pope Pius VII (1742-1828, reigned from 1800), produced in 1801 a Concordat, “reconciling the church and the Revolution,” but Napoleon forbade “the exercise of any papal jurisdiction in France without the permission of the government.”⁶³

It soon became clear, however, that this new pontiff was disinclined to accept any such restrictions. Just like his predecessors, he wanted both to rule the Papal States and to wield unlimited ecclesiastical powers, in France as elsewhere. This Napoleon would emphatically not allow.

The struggle with the Vatican persisted and like a cold sore would not go away. On 25 February 1810, one hundred and twenty-eight years after

Louis XIV's edict of 23 March 1682 imposing the Gallican articles, Bonaparte—who was now Napoleon I (1769-1821), emperor of France and king of Italy—repromulgated the *Déclaration du clergé de France* (1682). He made no alteration to it but simply changed a royal into an imperial edict, though he also received the written submission of French and Italian prelates to his decree. The next year, the core documentation of the *Assemblée du Clergé* from 1682, augmented with the later material from 1811, was published in a book of 316 pages.⁶⁴

It was almost a replay of the struggle between Louis XIV and Pope Innocent XI. We find it fascinating that these two, the Sun King and the Little Corporal from Corsica, who ranked among the mightiest rulers since Charlemagne, were both determined that the pope should not wield too much power in France.

IX

In the decades after Napoleon, the conflict between the pro-papal Ultramontanes and Gallicans was internationalized, for several reasons, especially because Italian patriots struggled to unite their country by eliminating the Papal States.

Across the Channel, Henry Edward Manning, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster and an ardent Ultramontane, attacked the *Déclaration du clergé de France* in *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions* (1871). Amongst other things, he did so via quotations from and references to a work by Charles Plowden (1743-1821), an English priest and writer of twenty-two publications,⁶⁵ who had asserted in 1790: “Before the Declaration of the Gallican Clergy in 1682, it was the general persuasion of Roman Catholics that the solemn decisions of the Holy See on matters of dogmatical and moral import are infallible. Since that epoch the contrary opinion is asserted in many schools in France, it has been imported with other French rarities into this kingdom, and it now appears to be the prevailing system, especially among those members of our Catholic clergy and laity who have studied little of either.”⁶⁶

Plowden was an ex-Jesuit, which is a rather special term that requires clarification. In 1773, Pope Clement XIV (1705-1774, reigned from 1769) had abolished the Society of Jesus, under pressure from the Catholic monarchs of Portugal, Spain, and France.⁶⁷ These maintained that the Jesuits were interfering in politics and destabilizing their regimes. The Order was reestablished in 1814 by Pope Pius VII, and since then has grown “to be the largest order of male religious.”⁶⁸

We were fascinated to find that also during 1790, the very year when Plowden published his statement in England, another ex-Jesuit, Johann Evangelist Hochblichler (also spelled Hochblüchler) (1740-1817), a professor of theology at Augsburg, Bavaria, was irritated by a far more learned Catholic than himself.

In 1787-1790, a three-volume work entitled *Vertheidigung der katholischen Religion nach den Bedürfnissen unserer Zeiten* (Defense of the Catholic Religion According to the Needs of Our Times) had appeared in Hochblichler's city. Its author was Beda Mayr (1742–1794), a philosopher, apologist, and poet, with fifty-eight literary productions to his name. He had become a Benedictine monk in 1762 and been ordained a priest in 1766. Mayr was not only an incredibly versatile polymath, but a gentle, tolerant, and peace-loving soul with ecumenical tendencies. He dared to suggest “that a unification of the Catholic and Protestant religion is possible.”⁶⁹

Nowadays Mayr's ideas are more fashionable, and Internet searches reveal that he may have been or is being rehabilitated by the Roman Church; but two centuries ago, its Bavarian leaders jumped onto him like Rottweilers. The bishop of Augsburg censured him and for a time forbade him to teach theology.⁷⁰ But it was former Jesuit Johann Hochblichler who headed the pack.

He really tore into Mayr, resorting not only to arguments, but sarcasm, innuendos (for instance that the monk was a latter-day Judas Iscariot), and the most deplorable mudslinging. To deal with this, in the interest of truth and of defending his honor, Mayr wrote *Apologie seiner Vertheidigung der katolischen Religion, eine Beylage*, 1790 (Apology of His Defense of the Catholic Religion: A Supplement).

In its Preface, he suggested that Hochblichler had misunderstood him and also highlighted his enemy's despicable behavior. Mayr was not strident but did chide the professor for his lack of Christian love.⁷¹ Such, too, is the tone and tenor of his “Zweyter Brief. Ueber die Hochbüchlerische Einleitung zu seinem ersten Hefte” (Second Letter. About the Hockbüchler Introduction to His First Number). Significant was the professor's ultimate threat, quoted by Mayr: “Dear P. Beda! May a stricter judge not overtake you in the end, and by chance even the *Statthalter des Sohnes Gottes* with the triple crown on his head himself sit down in judgment to knock you on your rude fingers with the Fisherman's ring or even the more hurtful keys of heaven.”⁷²

As for Manning in 1870, almost a century after 1790, he represented Plowden as maintaining that, “with the exception of the modern opinion of the local and transient Gallican School, the universal and traditionary faith of the Church in the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff has never been obscured.”⁷³ But this is untrue. As we have seen, there was nothing modern, transient, or even local about Gallicanism; its roots lay far back in the history of France and Europe.

Manning also mentioned the emphatic rejection of *Déclaration du clergé de France* by the Provincial Council of Kalocza in 1860.⁷⁴ This assembly decreed: “Wherefore we also reject, proscribe, and forbid all the faithful of this Province, to read or maintain, and much more to teach, the propositions published by the Gallican Clergy in 1682, which have already

been censured this same year by the Archbishop of Gran, of pious memory, and by the other Bishops of Hungary.”⁷⁵

X

The conflict between Ultramontanes and Gallicans culminated in the ecumenical council of Vatican I (1869-1870), when Pope Pius IX had himself declared infallible. This decision drove some prominent, conscientious Catholics out of their church.

One of them was Abbé René François Guettée, who felt compelled to leave the Catholic priesthood in France. He had got into very hot water with a book on the history of the church in his fatherland. The Gallicanism which it could hardly fail to deal with caused it to be placed on the Vatican’s *Index of Forbidden Books*. Later Guettée went over to the Eastern Orthodox Church and was obliged to emigrate to Luxemburg. His scholarly work is entitled *The Papacy; Its Historic Origin and Primitive Relations with the Eastern Churches* (1867),⁷⁶

Another victim was Janus, a pseudonym for Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, who wrote *The Pope and the Council* (1869).⁷⁷ We have already, in a previous chapter, cited this work. It asserts that Gratian’s *Decretum* contains the accumulated forgeries of three hundred years.⁷⁸ According to von Döllinger, these fabrications—including the pseudo-Isidorian Decretals and therefore the Donation—seemingly enabled the pope to stand “on an equality with the Son of God.” In the following fifty years, between the appearance of the *Decretum* and Pope Innocent III, further frauds empowered the papal system to achieve “complete domination.”⁷⁹

Von Döllinger was a Catholic professor of canon law and church history, who also taught dogma and New Testament exegesis. As a prolific writer, he exhibited “profound learning and brilliant diction.” He was equally adroit and engaging as a speaker, with—it would seem—a heart as great as his learning. For instance, representing the University of Munich in the Bavarian parliament, he “defended the emancipation of the Jews,” while protesting “the admission of the Jesuits.” It was, however, especially through his Gallicanism and his implacable opposition to the doctrine of papal infallibility that he fell foul of the Roman hierarchy. On 18 April, 1871, von Döllinger was excommunicated by the Archbishop of Munich,⁸⁰ Gregor Leonhard Andreas von Scherr (1804-1877).⁸¹ *The Pope and the Council* “immediately was placed on the Vatican’s *Index of Forbidden Books*.”⁸²

Pope Pius IX had cunningly manipulated the procedures of Vatican I to ensure that he and his successors would be declared infallible, for which he was heavily criticized. But, anticipating such reactions, Dom Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger (1805-1875), the Benedictine abbot of Solesmes—who died before the Council could meet—had defended Pius IX’s machinations. He wondered why some persons, especially Catholics, were astonished to see the pope impose certain rules on the Vatican Council. He reasoned that

councils, after all, were governed by the pontiff, “who holds the place of Christ, as taught by the Council of Trent.” Indeed, “the prerogatives of this *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* inside the Council are the same as outside the Council.” He therefore had the right to make rules for its conduct, and nobody ought to be surprised by that fact.⁸³

With regard to this stance, the following announcement of 2006 is rather interesting: “The Diocese du Mans website in France recently announced that the great Dom Prosper Guéranger’s cause for beatification has been officially opened.” The reasons given include the fact that “he was also a preferred theologian of his friend, Blessed Pius IX, due to his energetic support for the soon-to-be defined doctrines of papal infallibility and the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.”⁸⁴

But what, after Vatican I, did von Döllinger do?

He played a leading role in raising up the Old Catholic Church. Though it shares a number of beliefs with the Vatican, it also differs from it in several respects. From 1874, when it held its first international congress at Bonn, the Old Catholic Church has accepted what at the time was a Protestant usage: worshiping in the vernacular languages. It also decided that “confession to God in the presence of a priest is not obligatory.” Furthermore, “celibacy of the clergy was made optional in some Old Catholic Churches.” It also adopted the von Döllinger principle of striving “for a future great reunion of separated Christians and Churches.” Old Catholicism believes in the apostolic succession of bishops, though not of domineering popes. For this notion, it received assistance from one of its supporters, the Jansenist church of Holland, which since the eighteenth century “had preserved an episcopal succession recognized by Rome as valid though irregular.” Since 1931, the Old Catholic Church has been in full communion with the Church of England. In 1946, it reached similar agreements with “the Polish National Catholic Church and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.” Nowadays, “rather more than half the Anglican episcopate in the world has the Old Catholic as well as the Anglican episcopal succession.”⁸⁵

Von Döllinger never actually became a member of the Old Catholic Church, though he was “helpful to it by counsel and deeds.” For the rest, he continued publishing as an ecclesiastical historian. Until he died at the age of ninety-one, he retained “remarkable physical and mental strength.”⁸⁶

Though he remained excommunicate to the end, we trust that he kept on looking forward to the Christian’s blessed hope, the Second Coming—and the resurrection of the just.

XI

We now ask a final question. Did the first Vatican Council, through its declaration of papal infallibility, really hand the pope a definitive victory over Gallicanism? We believe it may not have done so. Gallicanism, as we

have shown, had very old roots, going back some twelve hundred years to the time of Clovis and to Charlemagne in the eighth and ninth centuries. An independent spirit on the part of the monarchy in France was strongly rekindled by Philip the Fair, who defeated the pretensions of Pope Boniface VIII and of the pontiffs who succeeded him. Thereupon the papacy was forced to relocate into France, at Avignon. Later this brought on the Great Schism, which finally afflicted the West with the tender mercies of three popes, who each claimed infallibility. To get rid of them all and elect another, single pontiff at the Council of Constance proved possible only through the conciliar theory, which taught that the authority of a general church council was superior to that of the pope.

Pius IX and his successors were declared infallible in 1870 by precisely such a council. If at some future date, the burden of this dogma becomes too difficult to bear, it can be cast off again, quite simply. How? Another ecumenical council—let us call it Vatican III—could nullify the decree of Vatican I, on the grounds that this gathering had been unfairly orchestrated by the pope.

What is more, John Wycliffe, Jan Hus (perfidiously burned at Constance), Calvinists like Jacques Basnage de Beauval in the Netherlands, as well as many later Historicist Protestants have maintained—as we also do—that neither pope nor church council nor any group of mortal human beings, Catholic or otherwise, is infallible. That privilege is the prerogative of only our holy Lord in heaven and, on earth, his inspired revelation, the Bible.

Chapter Thirty-One
MANY, MOSTLY CATHOLIC VOICES
JUST BEFORE AND IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

I

The National Assembly of the French Revolution, between 11 and 24 August 1793, was surveying its situation. Most of the surrounding countries, headed by hereditary kings and autocratic queens, were at war with the newly established Republic, which had at first defeated them but was now suffering reverses. In this context, an unnamed speaker pointed out that three-fifths of two hemispheres belonged to just a handful of people. Some were allegedly monarchs by the grace of God and ruled in the name of the Holy Trinity. As for Louis XVI, the French king deposed on 21 September in the previous year and guillotined on 21 January 1793, his line had begun with the assistance of the pontiff, who, as the *vicaire du fils de Dieu*, had called the first of those Bourbon kings “the eldest son of the Church.”¹

In 1796, another functionary of the French Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte, successfully invaded and by the next year conquered Italy. Thereupon the Directory sent to that country a few learned men on a special mission. One of them was Gaspard Monge (1746–1818), an eminent mathematician, who had served on a committee which established the metric system in 1791.² This time, however, he had no similarly noble purpose. His mission was to collect such artistic and scientific material as the French Republic might wish to display in its own museums or libraries.³

Rome he found to be in a dilapidated state but full of Madonna statues, which he detested. Writing to his wife, he poured out his hatred for the pope, with an obscenity that we prefer to omit: “The infallible one, my dear love, the successor of the great gatekeeper of heaven, the *vicaire du fils de Dieu* on earth, who has the right to bind and unbind . . . is ____ better. He has in these past days received Spanish prelates . . . ; he must give the benediction on the day of Pentecost.”⁴

For both the legislator of 1793 and Monge to have mentioned this title does not mean that either of them liked it. They merely did so because for ages it had been used to invoke religious potency and awesome secular power.

On 15 February 1798, in fulfillment of prophecy, the French Republic inflicted a seemingly mortal wound on the papacy. Forces under General Louis-Alexandre Berthier, who was closely associated with Napoleon, occupied Rome.⁵ Italian patriots thereupon proclaimed the short-lived (first) Roman Republic (March 1798–September 1799). Pope Pius VI was driven out of his city and died in exile.

The thousand-year-old Papal States had been terminated, but then they were resurrected, after Napoleon executed a coup d’état against the Revolution in 1799. As dictatorial First Consul, he was already wanting to become an emperor, which would happen in 1804. Concluding that for such a regime

some sort of liaison with the Catholic Church would be necessary, he forged a Concordat with Pius VII (1742-1823, reigned from 1800) in 1801.

During the funeral of this pope, P. D. Gioacchino Ventura in eloquent Italian uttered the following words at Naples: “Ah! he was the powerful, the magnanimous, the incomparable, the sublime shepherd of the universal Church and *vicario del Figliuol di Dio* on earth, our most holy father in God, Pius the Seventh, Pontifex Maximus.” In the printed text from which we quote, this pontiff is also on another page compared to his predecessors, under the same title—with a plural spelled, rather unusually, as *vicarj del figliuol di Dio*. The speaker said that though some of these men were more illustrious for zeal and power, none exercised a greater and more magnificent authority than the deceased, such a gentle man . . .⁶

Ventura, a striking if somewhat flowery pulpit orator and priest, began his career at Palermo with the Society of Jesus—until Sicily suppressed it, whereupon he switched to another order, the Theatines, whose superior-general he became in 1830,⁷ a few years after his oration, which was published a fourth time in 1824.

Another probable reason for the extravagant praise of his funeral oration was that Ventura thought the Papal States had been strongly and permanently reestablished under Pius VII. After all, Napoleon Bonaparte—a thorn in the pontiff’s flesh despite the 1801 Concordat—had been defeated at Waterloo in 1815 and died in 1821, an exile on the island of St. Helena. While still on his throne, that emperor had kept the Papal States in vassalage. As previously noted, one instrument for doing so was his repromulgation—on 25 February 1810—of Louis XVI’s 1682 edict to impose Gallicanism, which severely limited the pope’s power in France.

Events would prove, however, that Ventura’s opinion was premature. The Papal States would endure only feebly, with many ups and downs, until 1870.

Pius VII was briefly followed in 1823 by an autocrat, Leo XII (1760-1829), for less than six years and in 1829 by a sickly Pius VIII (1761-1830), who lasted only twenty months. Their successor from 1831 was Gregory XVI (1765-1846), “an inveterate opponent of democracy, liberalism, republicanism, and the separation of church and state.” Almost immediately after his election, a popular revolt erupted in the Papal States. He repressed it with the help of Austrian troops and then, reluctantly, introduced a few administrative reforms, which held the revolutionaries at bay, at least while he was pope.⁸

During Gregory XVI’s pontificate, Spain was also racked by turmoil, political discord, even a war of succession. On 15 May 1836, the widowed queen consort and regent María Cristina de Borbón (1806-1878) “was forced to accept the liberal constitution of 1812.”⁹ In the aftermath, lands that had belonged to the Catholic Church were sold to finance the war.¹⁰ Other carelessness toward traditional papal interests also reared its head and did not sit well with the bishop of Tuy, Francisco García Casarrubios y Melgar. When a bill affecting the ecclesiastical prerogatives of the pope had been read to the

Córtes, he directed a protest to the Congress of Deputies, dating it 10 March 1842.¹¹ Amongst other things, he reminded those Catholic legislators: “It is a dogma of faith that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Saint Peter, and that in him resides the power which Jesus Christ gave to the first of the apostles, and that according to this he is the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, head of the Church, father and doctor of all Christians. To him was given by Jesus Christ in the person of Saint Peter a plenitude of power to rule and govern the universal Church.”¹²

II

The next pope, Pius IX (1792-1878, reigned from 1846), controlled his church for thirty-two years, which up to that time was the longest pontificate in history. It was also one of the most eventful.

He startled the world by promulgating a brand-new Catholic doctrine, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (1854).¹³ According to this dogma, the mother of Jesus was conceived and born with a sinless nature, untainted by original sin resulting from Adam’s disobedience and fall.

With non-Catholics, Pius IX was even more infamous for another deed, no doubt incited in his angry, feverish mind by his uncertain position as temporal ruler of the Papal States. On 8 December 1864, he issued an encyclical known as *Quanta Cura*. Attached to it was the so-called *Syllabus Errorum* (Syllabus of Errors), “in which all the favourite beliefs of the modern world—the rights of democracies, the claims of science, the sanctity of free speech, the principles of toleration—were categorically denounced, and their supporters abandoned to the Divine wrath.”¹⁴

Amongst other so-called heresies, he condemned, in article 15, the idea that “every man is free to embrace and profess that religion, which guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true.” In article 18, he lumped together with Socialism, Communism, Secret Societies, and Clerico-Liberal Societies “*Biblical Societies*” (emphasis added).¹⁵

With this, Pope Pius IX was back on the same medieval mental wavelength as the Council of Trent and the Inquisition, with its 1559 Index of Prohibited Books. This had placed entire authors beyond the pale, like Martin Luther and William Tyndale, including the Bible that he had translated, of which 90 percent was later incorporated into the King James Version. In fact, reading any vernacular Bible unauthorized by the Catholic Church (German, French, Spanish, Italian, English, Dutch, etc.) was strictly forbidden. Also prohibited were many specific publications. One of these was Dante’s *De Monarchia*, which advocated a separation of papal and imperial power. Another was Lorenzo Valla’s *De Falsa Donazione Constantini* (Concerning the False Donation of Constantine).¹⁶

Pius IX also had himself voted infallible at the First Vatican Council on 13 July 1870.¹⁷ This was to become the cornerstone of the papacy in all the years that have followed.

But then the French troops of the pope's protector, Napoleon III, withdrew; for just six days after this pontiff's triumph—on 19 July—that emperor foolishly declared war on Prussia. Within months he and France were disastrously defeated. January 1871 saw the unification of Germany, when Wilhelm Friedrich Ludwig, the Hohenzollern king of Prussia, was crowned emperor at Versailles.¹⁸ Suddenly Europe had a new superpower.

Also brought on by the Franco-German War was the end of the Papal States. The French detachment being gone from Rome, the Italian nationalists moved in on 20 September 1870. The next month, “in October a plebiscite was held in which an overwhelming majority of the votes cast were for the incorporation of Rome in the kingdom of Italy.”

Pius, however, could never—for the rest of his life—reconcile himself to this turn of events. Until his death, he shut himself up in the Vatican, where he regarded himself a prisoner. With him, it also became an *idée fixe* that his spiritual power “could be protected only by his continued exercise of a temporal authority.”¹⁹

III

We must now jump back in time, for there is a good deal more to say about Pius IX.

Pierre Giraud (1791-1850) had been consecrated bishop of Rodez on 30 November 1830 and appointed Archbishop of Cambrai in 1841. Six years later, when created cardinal priest, he traveled to the Vatican, where he received his red hat from the pope on 23 September 1847.²⁰ After coming back, on 3 November of the same year, he delivered a “Discours à l’occasion de son retour de Rome” (Discourse on the Occasion of His Return from Rome). With great emotion, he reflected on his experiences in that city: “We have seen the well-beloved Pius IX, Pius the great, greater than all praise.” Giraud told of rendering his respect for and his filial submission to the pope’s “august See and sacred Person.” In that first audience, said the new cardinal, “we found ourselves, atremble with fear and tenderness, in the presence of the charity and sweetness of the Saviour himself!” Thinking back on it, he was still so overwhelmed that he exclaimed: “There is no spirit so rebellious that would not have confessed the Faith, no knee that would not have bent, no tongue that would not have cried out: ‘Holy Father, you are truly the *vicair du Fils de Dieu!*’”²¹

It seems that a personal enthusiasm for Pius IX was somewhat widely shared, at least among the upper crust of his church. Within months, this passage from Giraud appeared in a Spanish translation: “Santo Padre, vos sois verdaderamente el *vicario del Hijo de Dios!*”²² by Jaime Lluçà Balmes Urpià (1810-1848) of Vic, Catalonia, an “ecclesiastic, eminent as a political writer and a philosopher.”²³ It is significant that when the Balmesiana Foundation of Barcelona republished his complete works a hundred years later, they were approved by an ecclesiastic censor as well as an imprimatur from Madrid. At

least for that country, under Franco's Fascist dictatorship in league with a medievalizing Catholic Church, when Pius XII was pope, the title still proved acceptable as late as the holy year which he proclaimed in 1950.

Back in the nineteenth century, however, whatever personal charm Pope Pius IX possessed could not avail in less aristocratic circles. Just fourteen months after Giraud's visit to him disaster struck, in 1848.

A liberal revolution flared up on the island of Sicily. A spark from it blew over to the mainland, settling in the tinder of Paris. The Seventh-day Adventist church historian, John Norton Loughborough, dramatically recounted an event that suddenly kindled, for France, its third revolution, which rapidly spread from there and for a few weeks burned through much of Europe before suddenly dying down:

On the 21st day of February, 1848, when the courtiers of King Louis Philippe (1773–1850) of France, were gathered around him, he said: "I was never more firmly seated on the throne of empire than I am tonight." In the twilight of the next evening, wearing a "pea jacket," disguised as a hackney coachman, he fled outside the walls of the city of Paris seeking a refuge for his personal safety. The cause of this great and sudden change is said to have been the result of some movement on his part favoring the papal usurpation, which offended his subjects and his soldiers. He had on that day completed, in the city of Paris, a grand military review of the French army; and when their arms were stacked, he retired to the palace, when suddenly a small boy jumped upon a cannon, waving a tri-colored flag, crying, "DOWN WITH THE POPE! DOWN WITH THE POPE!" The soldiers taking up the cry, it passed swiftly up and down the lines, gaining strength as it went, until connected with it was the cry, "AND DOWN WITH THE KING!" In a few hours all Paris was a scene of wild confusion. The soldiers, with guns in hand, accompanied by a mob, were rushing for the king's palace. He, on being informed of the turmoil, hastened to escape under disguise.²⁴

A few months later, on 24-25 November 1848, assisted by the French and Bavarian ambassadors, Pius IX also fled from the Papal States to Gaeta in the kingdom of Naples. He returned to Rome on 12 April 1850.²⁵

But while in Gaeta, he had pondered the advisability of proclaiming the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, to which we have already referred. On various occasions, over centuries, Catholic theologians had debated this point, and it was raised again in the time of the previous pontiff, Gregory XVI. Pius thought the time was now ripe for making a final decision. Therefore, on 2 February 1849, he issued an encyclical, *Ubi Primum* (On the Immaculate Conception), "To Our Venerable Brothers, Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Entire Catholic World," for their reactions.²⁶

A most important prelate who responded from Languedoc, Southern France, was Archbishop Jean-Joseph-Marie-Eugène de Jerphanion (1796-1864) of Albi. In the Middle Ages, more than six centuries earlier, this had

been a center of the Cathars, often referred to as the Albigenses, taking their name from that town. During a papal crusade against them in 1209, Roman Catholic soldiers largely exterminated those alleged heretics. In 1264 and until the French Revolution, a convention granted temporal power to the bishops of Albi, who after 1678 became archbishops. Most noticeable in that town is the Gothic cathedral of Sainte-Cécile (1277-1512) and, next to it, the archbishop's palace, built in the thirteenth century.²⁷ In 1992, with sorrow and great indignation, I visited both buildings. Like the university of Toulouse, the church is a monument to the triumph of the priests and armies who slaughtered or burned the medieval Albigenses.

From that very palace, on 17 May 1849, the Archbishop wrote to approve the papal project. He called Pius IX, "this holy and venerable pontiff" and regarded him as infallible. De Jerphanion justified the new dogma with many references to the Bible and the church fathers. For example, according to his medieval method of interpretation, Gen. 3:15 refers to the Virgin Mary where God addresses the devil, saying: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The Archbishop did not, however, quote the next verse, which completes the passage with what the Lord said to Eve: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception . . ." De Jerphanion explained how Pope Pius, whom he described as the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, not only consulted the men of the episcopate, but also called for public prayers that the Holy Spirit would descend on him with inspiration from above.²⁸ This latter idea is in harmony with Catholic theology. When he speaks about matters of doctrine, faith, and morals, the pope is supposed to be directly inspired by the Spirit of God.

And so, on 8 December 1854, Pope Pius formally announced the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

In 1859, an English version of a book by Monsignor Romualdo Gentilucci was published in New York City, entitled *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of Her Blessed Spouse, St. Joseph, and Holy Parents St. Joachim and St. Anne*. Added to it were remarks that briefly tell how two hundred high dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church were present on the day when the pontiff issued the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, which proclaimed that Jesus' mother had been totally sinless. "The prelates with the clergy and faithful heard with deep emotion the decree that now declared as of faith, that Mary could justly be styled 'Conceived without sin,' and as the letter, borne on the wings of the press, reached each corner of the globe, all read with reverence and love and thanksgiving the solemn decision of the *vicar of the Son of God*."²⁹ On a separate page, a signed introductory note of 19 February 1856 from the Archiepiscopal Residence stated that this English translation had been approved by John Hughes (1797-1864), the first archbishop of New York,³⁰ who also gave his consent for it to be published.

A startling dedication appears on a front page of *Grégoire VII ou Le pape et l'empereur au moyen age* (Gregory VII or The Pope and the Emperor in the Middle Ages), 1860, a French drama by Désiré Laverdant (1802-1884), an ardent Catholic, utopian critic, and author. It reads: "To Pius IX, *vicair du*

Fils de Dieu, to Whom All Power Has Been Given in Heaven and on Earth.” Below it, a subsidiary dedication contains the writer’s homage of respect and recognition to Dr. Voigt, a wise, and just man, an impartial Protestant, who acquainted him with Gregory VII.³¹

We might wonder to whom Laverdant wanted to apply the words: “To Whom All Power Has Been Given in Heaven and on Earth.” Was it not to Christ? After all, he had uttered them just before ascending to heaven (Matt. 28:18). But it is clear that for Laverdant this expression also applied to the pontiffs, according to his Preface. It begins with a reproduction of a letter, dated “Ideas of March, 1080,” translated from the Latin original, by Gregory VII to Hérimann, Bishop of Metz. In it, the pontiff referred to two Scriptures. The first is Jesus’ words to Peter about establishing his Church on the rock and giving him the keys of Heaven. The second is Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 6:3, misquoted and taken out of context: “Do you not know that we judge the angels? How much more rightly the secular powers?”³²

Here is what the Apostle actually said: “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints *shall* judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we *shall* judge angels? how much more *things that pertain to this life*? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.” (1 Cor. 6:1-4, emphases added) This judging of angels still lies in the future, and has nothing to do with either pontiffs or the secular powers.

Désiré Laverdant had unbounded admiration for Gregory VII. He believed that this pope had been maligned and grossly misunderstood. He was really one of the greatest men of God who ever passed through the world. In fact, “St. Gregory, that living incarnation of St. Peter, crowns the great line of popes, who were saints, in the plenitude of the virile age of the papacy.”³³

As to Pius IX, to whom the book was dedicated, Laverdant toward the end of his Preface compared this pope’s experience to that of Christ on the way to his crucifixion; but “the way of the cross is undoubtedly the final path of triumph and the glorious resurrection.”³⁴

Apparently the title *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* was very commonly used in the nineteenth century. Two years after Laverdant’s drama, during 1862, the Parisian *Revue du monde Catholique* (Review of the Catholic world) reported about the interpretation of images on a drinking glass discovered in the catacombs underneath old pagan Rome. These are golden images depicting two apostles on both sides of a monogram representing Christ. On the left, is Peter partly bearded; on the right, a clean-shaven Paul.³⁵ They were found by Père Raffaele Garrucci (1812-1885), a famous Jesuit archaeologist who wrote “an [Italian] essay on the gilded glasses of the catacombs,” published in 1858,³⁶ by *La civiltà cattolica*, the prestigious journal that his order had founded on 6 April 1850. This became an important mouthpiece in support of Pope Pius IX and still appears today.³⁷

According to *Revue du monde Catholique*, this positioning of the two apostles could at first seem awkward. It might have been thought that the apostle Paul should not have been placed on the right side of the monogram, with Peter on the left of it—even though he is somewhat over it. This does not, however, according to Catholicism mean that Paul enjoyed the primacy. It is only because he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, whose name means “son of my right hand.” Besides, it is not only on this glass that Peter’s image has been placed to the left of the monogram. This positioning of the two apostles is also found on very old pontifical seals. Peter does, however, lean over the monogram of Christ. With a glance at Eph. 2:20, this detail was taken to suggest that he represented all the apostles, whose chief he was alleged to be, positioned in that way “evidently to render testimony to the primacy of Peter, and to demonstrate that on earth he is the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*.”³⁸

We disagree with this interpretation. In addition to the apostles, Eph. 2:20 also mentions the prophets. Paul, moreover, made it clear that because the Lord Jesus had called him personally, his office was in no way inferior to that of the Twelve: “For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5). But here we do not wish to press this point or even that the earliest Christians who worshiped and were buried in the catacombs probably did think more highly of Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, than of Peter, apostle to the Jews. In fact, the Romans of their era did not like beards. Instead, we just note another occurrence of that title.

In 1863, *Les instructions familières sur toutes les vérités de la religion* (Familiar Instructions About All the Truths of Religion) by the Catholic apologist Monsignor Louis-Gaston de Ségur (1820-1881)³⁹ described St. Peter’s, adding: “And close by, in an immense palace near to the church, the Pontiff lives—the successor of St. Peter, the *vicar of the Son of God*, and Sovereign Pastor of all the Christians upon the face of the whole earth.”⁴⁰ An English translation of this work was published in 1881.

Another book by de Ségur appeared in 1869. Entitled *La grande question du jour: la liberté* (The Great Question of the Day: Liberty), it asserts: “We are not, we Catholics, the disciples of a man, whatever his genius or even his virtue: we are the disciples of the Son of God, and we have no other head, no other pastor, no other doctor, except the Pope: the head of the Church, *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, the Bishop of our Bishops.”⁴¹

That was a very special year for the papacy. On 8 December 1869, the First Vatican Council, during which Pius IX expected to be declared infallible, was scheduled to begin. In a book review, *La civiltà cattolica* lavished praise on *Le pape et le concile* (the Pope and the Council), 11 April et 8 Décembre, 1869, a 220-page book by L. Allemand, a Frenchman who taught at *L’Assomption*, a Catholic Lycée or College. His style was declared attractive, and his emphasis on papal infallibility noted. Edited by Jesuits, *La civiltà cattolica* “carried a uniquely authoritative status because—although it is not an official organ of the Vatican—all of the articles published in the magazine are approved in advance by the Vatican Secretariat of State.”⁴²

Amongst other things, L'Allemand was quoted in Italian as saying that the pope was the “*vicario del Figlio di Dio*, and assisted by the Holy Spirit he is the sun of the Church which generates light and heat . . . He is King, the King of our souls. Every man must submit to him his own will with filial subjection.”⁴³ We find such solar imagery, applied to the pontiff by one of his own, both interesting and historically appropriate.

IV

In English, we have abundant evidence for *vicar of the Son of God* from the writings of a rather special Roman Catholic, Henry Edward Manning (1808–1892). He was a contemporary of Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpreters like Uriah Smith and John N. Andrews. A member of the Oxford Movement, Manning converted from Anglicanism on 6 April 1851 and went on to head the Roman Church in England as the archbishop of Westminster, from 1865. In 1875, the pope elevated and made him a cardinal.⁴⁴

An indication of Manning’s stature in the Roman Church is the fact that when the ailing Pius IX was not far from death, a party at the Vatican considered the Englishman “the best candidate for the Papacy.” Those princes of the church were prepared to vote for him, although they realized they were unlikely to succeed, since most Italian cardinals were determined to stay in Rome and confine the office to one of their compatriots.⁴⁵

According to ten different publications, if not more, Manning referred to his pontiff not only as the *vicar of Christ* but also as the *vicar of the Son of God*. These titles he used interchangeably. In each of the following quotations or references, we have—as for other languages—added the emphasis.

In 1860, Manning preached “at the Solemn Mass of Requiem for those who fell in battle for the liberties of the Church, and the sovereignty of its Head.” His topic was “*Occisi et Coronati*” (Killed and Crowned). He complained that worldly people failed to understand what it meant “to be slain for the temporal sovereignty of the *vicar of the Son of God*, for his sacred person, or for the Church of God, or even for the Christian Society to which they claim to belong.” Appropriately, this first appeared in a volume of his sermons published eight years later in Catholic Dublin, Ireland.⁴⁶

In 1861, at a time when nationalist forces were at work to unite Italy by depriving Pius IX of the Papal States, Manning wrote two tracts to defend their existence.

The Last Glories of the Holy See Greater Than the First maintains that temporal sovereignty for the pontiff compares for importance with the Immaculate Conception. Its author declared: “I may say there never was a time when the temporal power of the *vicar of the Son of God*, though assailed as we see it, was more firmly rooted throughout the whole unity of

the Catholic Church in the hearts and convictions of its members.”⁴⁷ At least the nationalists in Italy would have rejected this statement vigorously. Manning pointed out, moreover, that no fewer than thirty-nine thrones in Europe had been overturned by revolution. “And why? Because the nations have broken the bonds which bound them to the centre of obedience, and have shaken off the noble submission to a tribunal higher than man, from which came forth, in other days, the judgments of equity and justice. It was a dignified obedience to bow to the *vicar of the Son of God*, and to remit the arbitration of their griefs to one whom all wills consented to obey.”⁴⁸

Manning’s second tract, *The Present Crisis of the Holy See Tested by Prophecy*, equated the pontiff’s anguish with the Saviour’s sufferings. Manning complained that not even “Catholic France, and Catholic Germany, and Catholic Sicily, and Catholic Italy” seemed to understand how important it was for the pope to have and rule over a territory of his own. Therefore, the pontiff was made to suffer, just like Jesus, “betrayed, bound, carried away, buffeted, blindfolded, and scourged; they saw Him carrying His Cross to Calvary, then nailed upon it, and lifted up to the scorn of the world . . .” For “the *vicar of the Son of God* is renewing the Passion of his Master upon earth.”⁴⁹

These statements were republished in *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*.⁵⁰ The two tracts had now been combined and incorporated in a book. Its second edition appeared in 1862.⁵¹

At the funeral of Cardinal Wiseman (1802-1865), the first Catholic archbishop of Westminster in centuries, Manning was the main speaker. In a eulogy that greatly touched his hearers, he delivered an hour-long oration. He pictured the deceased as a patient worker who had sought to reestablish Catholicism in England, after its virtual elimination three centuries before by King Henry VIII, and his descendants. He compared Wiseman to Noah and Peter, “a believer like him who for a hundred and twenty years built the ark; and a hopper like him who all alone entered imperial Rome a simple fisherman, but the *vicar of the Son of God*.”⁵²

Within months, the Roman Pontiff appointed the eloquent Dr. Manning as Wiseman’s successor.

V

Just then, however, the Papal States seemed to be on the point of unraveling, attacked by nationalists bent on uniting Italy. On 8 December 1866, Gaetano Tammaro—provincial counselor of Terra di Lavoro, a region in southern Italy—was prompted by an unnamed person to write out ideas for governing the new country. Tammaro concluded with a specific plan intended for implementation in 1867. It comprised nine points, of which the first eight included a general amnesty for politicians as well as radical reforms in both the governance and economy of Italy. The ninth and final one sought reconciliation with the pope, “the present *vicario del Figlio di Dio*, the

immortal Pius IX.”⁵³

An ardent and well-rewarded papist in those years was Monsignor Jean Joseph Gaume (1802-1879), who wrote “numerous books treating of theology, history, education.” His Catholic curriculum vitae was impressive. A Frenchman, he first became prominent at Nevers to the south of Paris. There, amongst other things, he was professor of theology, vicar-general of the diocese, and published several works. He went to Rome in 1841, where Pope Gregory XVI “made him a knight of the Reformed Order of St. Sylvester.” Other achievements and accolades followed: “A doctor of theology of the University of Prague, a member of several societies of scholars, honorary vicar-general of several dioceses, he received from Pius IX in 1854 the title of prothonotary apostolic.”⁵⁴ Gaume was a *monsignor*, belonging to the nobility of the Catholic Church. As *prothonotary apostolic*, he was “a member of the highest non-episcopal college of prelates in the Roman Curia.”⁵⁵

In at least two of his books, he called the pontiff the vicar of the Son of God.

The first was *A quoi sert le pape?* (Of What Value Is the Pope) (1861).⁵⁶ Of this, we have been able to consult an Italian translation, *A che serve il papa?*, published in the same year. To answer his own question, Gaume said the pope “on earth represents God himself.” He is the “vicar of God on earth.”⁵⁷ A few pages later, the pontiff is likened to Christ: “The *vicario del Figlio di Dio*, as on another occasion the Son of God himself, is nowadays betrayed by some, abandoned by the others . . . amid the indifference of the nations.”⁵⁸

As noted, Manning said much the same. But cynics could have retorted that far from being innocent martyrs like our Lord, the popes—through centuries of cruelty and corruption—thoroughly deserved what was happening to them. Protestants, who in those days were still mostly Historicist students of prophecy, no doubt pondered the following prediction: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” (Rev. 13:10).

As for Gaume, just three years later, in his *Traité du Saint-Esprit* (1864), he dwelt on his interpretation even more vehemently:

“Is there a single country, in Europe, where, since the Renaissance, the bishops, the priests, the religious have not been despoiled, hunted, pursued like wild beasts, insulted, and massacred? The *vicar even of the Son of God*, the Father of the Christian world, Peter, at least, should have been respected. But see rather how they have treated him in the person of Pius VI and of Pius VII; how they still treat him in the person of Pius IX. What is present-day Europe if not a family in revolt against its father? Every day, for the past five years, have millions of voices not been echoing the cry of decide: We no longer want to have him rule over us? Surrounded by a hundred thousand excommunicates, has the papacy not been a Calvary? Judas, the seller; Caiaphas, the buyer; Herod, the mocker; Pilate, the coward; the soldier, looter and executioner—have they not reappeared on the scene?”⁵⁹

VI

By October 1870,⁶⁰ the Papal States were no more, though on 13 July 1870 Catholicism had also undergone another great change. After centuries of bickering over it, it formally adopted a new dogma: papal infallibility, which—amongst others—Manning in England accepted. On 20 August 1870, the *London Times* reported his sermon at the dedication of a new Roman Catholic Church at Eden-grove, Holloway. Here he linked the title *vicar of the Son of God* with that teaching.⁶¹

Also in 1870, his 1860 sermon “Occisi et Coronati” was reprinted in London.⁶²

In 1871, Manning’s *Petri Privilegium* (Peter’s Privilege): *Three Pastoral Letters to the Clergy of the Diocese* appeared in London. He defended the doctrine of Infallibility, and even Pope Pius IX’s notorious Syllabus of Errors. He also, once again, expressed sorrow at the loss of the Papal States, which he said had been created by the Lord himself. He reminisced about the past: “When the Civil powers became Christian, faith and obedience restrained them from casting so much as a shadow of human sovereignty over the *vicar of the Son of God*.” To this, he added a warning: “They who attempt it now will do it at their peril.”⁶³ But he omitted any reference to the Donation of Constantine and the fact that it was a forgery.

Still in 1871, the same text was reprinted in America, but now entitled *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions: A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy*. This also contains the title *vicar of the Son of God*.⁶⁴

VII

Now let us once more, for further testimony, take an eastward mental leap across the Atlantic as well as the English Channel to Spain, France, and Sicily.

We first enter Spain to look at the thinking of Don León Carbonero y Sol (1812–1902), whose colorful career took place in a tumultuous, unstable period of history with several revolutions, affecting his country as well as France. In 1849, Dr. Carbonero y Sol was a university professor at Seville,⁶⁵ where he headed the Arabic Department. In 1852, he also founded *La Cruz* (The Cross), of which he was proprietor, director, and only editor. He intended it for other countries as well as his own. Two years later, he dedicated it to “Maria Santisima” (Most Holy Mary), when Pius IX proclaimed the doctrine of her Immaculate Conception.

Carbonero y Sol’s enthusiasm for the papacy climaxed in his *Crónica del concilio ecuménico del vaticano* (Chronicle of the Vatican’s Ecumenical Council). Its third volume, *Preparación del concilio* also reviews L’Allemand’s *Le pape et le concile*, mentioned above. He translated, though now into Spanish, the same passage about the pope as the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, who—assisted by the Holy Spirit—was “the sun of the Church which produces light and heat,” to whom everyone must submit his will. On the same

page, Carbonero y Sol referred to L'Allemand's treatment of papal infallibility.⁶⁶

During 1871–1872, Carbonero y Sol was a senator for the province of Barcelona.⁶⁷ However, his political office seems to have ended when Spain in 1873 became a republic, though the monarchy was restored in 1875.⁶⁸

Meanwhile, in France, Emperor Napoleon III—who had supported the pontiff with troops at Rome—had been toppled because of his defeat by the Prussians. A new régime, the Third Republic, came to power in 1871. Increasingly, the republicans had gained the upper hand and “enacted a good deal of anticlerical legislation.” For instance, within a decade—by 1880—they would suppress the Jesuits, and in 1881–1882 the Ferry laws would establish “free, secular education, compulsory civil marriage, and the opportunity for divorce.”⁶⁹

These tendencies roused the ire of Carbonero y Sol. In a *La Cruz* of 1872, he pointed out indignantly that such things violated the Concordat between France and the papacy, concluded between Napoleon Bonaparte and Pius VII in 1801.⁷⁰

He mentioned seven transgressions of the new French government, the last being freedom for non-Catholic religions and the atheism allegedly professed by the state. As for the claim that granting assets to the church was the prerogative of the government, Carbonero y Sol compared this with the statement made by the Roman procurator who tried the Saviour to the effect that he had power over him. The modern Pilates might also say to the pontiff, whom the professor-politician in 1872 called the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*: “If you claim to be the only Master and Judge of the Concordat, do you not know on the other hand that the temporal power is the landlord of the possessions needed by the clergy to live on . . . To these Pilates, it is easy to answer as follows: ‘You would have neither temporal power nor any possessions if these were not conferred from on high to help the Church in its divine mission.’”⁷¹

In France, the title was at the same time used by Félix-Antoine-Philibert Dupanloup (1802–1878), the bishop of Orléans. A scholarly man, he had been “prominent in the struggle for educational freedom under the July Monarchy and was an architect of the Falloux Law (1850), which gave legal status to independent secondary schools.” Dupanloup was even elected to be a member of the French Academy, a rare distinction for anyone in France. Although this famous cleric accepted Pius IX as the head of his church, he was a liberal Catholic, later expressing dissenting views on the *Syllabus of Errors*. He also had reservations about the doctrine of papal infallibility.⁷²

Dupanloup's *De l'éducation* (Concerning Education), published in 1872, contains a section entitled “Le Père et la Mère” (The Father and the Mother). It zooms in on the role of the former as the head of the family, which the author said was providentially ordained. For him, it was the most important unit of society, all families together being regulated by a government whose civil chief is also a father. The same, he said, applied to the religious world. The apostles, the martyrs, and the past dignitaries of Catholicism were all fathers of

the church. Then there is the pope. About him, as the religious head of the church, Dupanloup explained in the following passage: “That person himself who appears at the summit of the pontifical hierarchy, who is the perpetual doctor, the apostle, at times the martyr, and always the faithful witness to Christian truth and virtue; he who represents the patriarchate, prophecy, law, the Gospel; this mortal man whom Providence has made the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* on earth, what is he here below? He is a father!”⁷³

More praise was lavished on that pope in Caltagirone, south-central Sicily, where two priests—Salvatore Leonardi and Mario Mineo Janny (1846–1927)—wrote *La chiesa in relazione con lo stato* (The Church in Relation to the State), to oppose the liberal ideas of Antonio Maggiore Grimaldi, a history professor, whose oration of 2 July 1871 had aroused their ire. Effusively they dedicated their book in 1872 on the day of Mary, the Immaculate One, to “Pius IX Supreme Pontiff.” Alluding on that page to the hardships he had to endure, they said he nevertheless with a robust hand was guiding the barque of St. Peter through the fury of a terrible storm. They addressed him as “You Infallible *vicario del Figliuolo di Dio*, universal Teacher of the world, Supreme Hierarch of the Church of the Saviour . . .” The next year, the priests’ book was printed in Palermo, the capital of Sicily.⁷⁴

Both these apologists for the pontiff were or evolved into prominent ecclesiastics, at least on their island: Leonardi as professor of Moral Theology in the Caltagirone Seminary and dean as well as priest at the Collegiate basilica of St. James the Major Apostle; Janny, by 1885, was director of the Poliantea Oratoia in Palermo.

Within their book, these authors asserted that it was Christ himself who through the church had created a perfect society, with a visible and human element linked to an invisible, supernatural element, the Man-God. “For this reason the Church has a Hierarch appointed for government, and an order of the faithful as subjects.” They all have “one supreme visible head, the Roman Pontiff, successor of St. Peter, *vicario del Figliuolo di Dio*, who is its invisible head.” Instituted by Jesus, it is a kingdom “not of this world” but one transmitted through his apostles,⁷⁵ (which twists the Lord’s words to Pilate in a most blasphemous way.) And it is through the Primacy, in the person of St. Peter, that the Redeemer allegedly granted the supreme authority of the Church.⁷⁶

According to these writers, Maggiore Grimaldi was much mistaken in conceiving of church and state as two separate entities, with God giving each a mandate of its own. “For we can conclude that the Pontiff, as supreme religious Authority, as Head of the Church, as universal Doctor of the faith, has a direct power over all believers and over all Christian states . . .”⁷⁷

The linkage of secular to ecclesiastical power was still upholding the basic doctrine originally first enunciated by the Donation of Constantine. For these, as for other Catholic writers, Petrine Primacy was also the

fountainhead of political domination by the pope.

In the new France created by the Third Republic, another staunch Romanist came out in support of Pius IX, who had recently lost his temporal power and seen the Papal States amalgamated with a united Italy. He was Prosper Louis Pascal Guéranger, abbot at Solemes since 1837.⁷⁸

His book about Saint Cecilia and Roman society during the first two centuries of our era, published in 1874, described early Christianity from a purely Roman Catholic point of view. According to Dom Guéranger, the Apostle Peter had originally been the monarch of the church in the West as well as in the East and the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, the foundation stone, the universal Pastor. After his martyrdom, the believers grouped themselves around the Roman see,⁷⁹ a situation recognized by the Council of Nicaea, even though the parvenu church in the new capital, Constantinople, insisted on and acquired rights that used to belong to Alexandria. Nevertheless, despite this development, Roman Catholicism from then on still reigned supreme throughout the world.⁸⁰

VIII

A year after Guéranger's book appeared, back in England, *The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature* (June 1875) carried an anonymous article, possibly as an editorial, entitled "Ultramontanism and Civil Allegiance." Amongst other observations, it included the following remark: "In an argument, obviously intended for Protestants, Dr. Manning assumes, as also does Dr. Newman, and proceeds upon it as if it were fact, that the Church which Christ instituted in the world is the Romish Church; that the Pope is the *vicar of the Son of God*; that the Pope has Divine authority, either with or without the Church, to legislate on faith or morals; and that his official legislation on such matters is infallible."⁸¹

The next year, in *The Glories of the Sacred Heart* (1876), Manning depicted as martyrs a whole series of pontiffs who supposedly suffered just like the Master: "Five-and-forty times the vicars of Jesus Christ have been driven out of Rome or have never set their foot in it; they have been, from the beginning, martyrs, exiles, fugitives, and prisoners. It has been their common fate, it has been the lot and the inheritance of him who bears the office of the *vicar of the Son of God*, who was the first to be mocked, bound, scourged, and crucified; and in this there is revealed the 'beauty of the King,' the beauty of meekness, the beauty of faith, the beauty of inflexibility, the beauty of fearlessness, the beauty of fortitude, and the beauty of fidelity to God and to His truth even unto martyrdom."⁸² (If this were the place for it, we could mention other popes of a completely contrary nature.)

In 1885, *The Glories of the Sacred Heart* was reprinted by a different New York publisher—still containing the title *vicar of the Son of God*.⁸³

In 1878, Manning was 67 years of age when his hero, Pope Pius IX, died. For more than two decades, Manning, orally and in print, had kept on referring to him as the *vicar of the Son of God*. In the pieces we have cited he did so no fewer than eleven times. Like other Catholic writers, he used this expression interchangeably with the *vicar of Jesus Christ*.

And so did D. Jesus Torres, Penitentiary Canon and Rector at the Conciliar Seminary of distant Zacatecas, central Mexico, in his funeral oration on 21 March 1878. That diocese had a special reason for this tribute and commemorating the passing of Pius IX; he had proclaimed that their church would henceforth be a cathedral.⁸⁴ Dr. Torres said that God's enemies would not triumph. They might imagine that this pontiff's passing could end the papacy, as they had also thought when Pius VI died in exile. "They raised a devastating storm against Pius IX, believing they were fighting against Juan Mastai [Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, his baptismal name] and not against the *vicario del Hijo de Dios* . . . Nevertheless, however violently St. Peter's little barque may be assaulted, it is guided by the master of the tempests: we have nothing to fear; the Anointed of God accompanies us."⁸⁵

In 1880, *The Temporal Power* by Manning was republished a third time.⁸⁶

Like other Anglican clergymen of the Oxford Movement, he had begun his apostasy from Protestantism by looking back nostalgically to the Middle Ages, as the Romantics in those days frequently did. Until he died in 1892, he remained enchanted with Rome, the papacy, and the aesthetic sorcery of its music, incense, and ancient ritual. He was fascinated by the idea of Petrine apostolic succession, which for the pontiff had even burgeoned into a temporal kingship lasting more than a thousand years. To such seductions, Manning yielded both heart and soul.

Therefore, even after crude reality had snatched away the Papal States, he kept on looking back on their history. As early as 1862, in the second edition of his book, he had stated: "The temporal power in the hands of St. Gregory I. was a fatherly and patriarchal rule over nations not as yet reduced to civil order. In the hands of St. Leo III. it became a power of creating empires. In the hands of St. Gregory VII. it was a scourge to chasten them. In the hands of Alexander III. it was a dynasty, ruling supremely, in the name of God, over the powers of the world." Furthermore, "It was a dignified obedience [for the nations] to bow to the *vicar of the Son of God*, and to remit the arbitration of their griefs to one whom all wills consented to obey."⁸⁷

In 1866, he wrote what we consider his most astounding statement: "The Temporal Power is not only a power *de facto* but *de jure*. It not only exists, but it exists by a perfect title. It is a rightful authority in its origin, in its formation, and in its claims upon its subjects. The foundation of it is not in the donation of

man, but in the ordinance of God. The donation of Constantine is a fable; but it rudely represents the divine notion whereby Rome and its provinces were transferred from the Caesars to the Pontiffs.”⁸⁸

A well-educated man, he knew that the rotten foundation on which the Papal States rested was a downright forgery, designed to commit a colossal fraud, and yet he kept on defending it. However, when in 1870 Italy was unified, which eradicated—at least for the time being—the pontiff’s entire secular domain and kingly power, Manning fell back on another fable: Petrine primacy together with apostolic succession. In a lecture first published during 1871, he said:

“There is no man on earth so near to Jesus Christ as His own vicar. Two hundred and fifty-seven links, and we arrive at the Person of the Son of God. Two hundred and fifty-seven Pontiffs, and we are in the presence of the Master whom His vicar represents. That chain runs through the ages of Christian history, and connects us with the day when, on the coasts of Decapolis, Jesus said to Peter, ‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ No man therefore brings us so near to the Person of the Son of God as His vicar upon earth . . .”⁸⁹

We have already dealt with this issue on a Biblical basis. We also noted that after Manning’s time Catholic writers like Peter De Rosa and Paul Johnson contradicted Petrine Primacy from a historical point of view. Both maintained that for the first few centuries the Roman Church had not based its theology on Matt. 16:13-20.

Johnson concluded: “It was only in the *eighth century* that the full importance of St. Peter’s connection with Rome began to be fully understood and proclaimed” (emphasis added).⁹⁰ This happens to be when the Donation was forged. Johnson explained this document against the background of the fact that up to those days the pontiff had, politically, been a Byzantine duke, subordinate to the emperor in Constantinople. For him to appeal for Frankish assistance was therefore problematic.

The transfer of alliance from Byzantium to the Franks implied . . . that the papacy was an independent power, free to move from one jurisdiction to another. Hence the theory developed that the central Italian lands controlled by Rome were of special significance, being the core of a renewed Roman empire, over which the Pope exercised control. This appeared to solve a historical problem which had long proved puzzling. Why had Constantine transferred his capital to New Rome so soon after his conversion? The answer could only be that he wished, as a testimony to his new faith, to transfer Old Rome and its dependencies to St Peter, as an outright gift. Some time in the eighth century this explanation found written expression in the shape of a ‘letter’ from Constantine to Pope Sylvester I, dated 30 March 315. Like many other Christian forgeries, this was very likely a sincere attempt by

clerks in the papal chancery to document a transaction which they had convinced themselves had actually taken place. . . . At a stroke it proffered the keystone needed to complete the arch of the total Christian society.⁹¹

We do not like those words, “a sincere attempt.” Whatever else it was, the Donation designedly set out to con King Pepin III into granting the pope an enormous amount of real estate, political independence, and what would eventually become a royal throne.

Especially astounding and offensive to a Protestant is Manning’s suggestion that only after believers have mentally worked their way back through “two hundred and fifty-seven Pontiffs” can they make authentic, personal contact with the Saviour. Not so; we have been enabled to get in touch with him directly, by praying to a gracious and loving Heavenly Father.

Manning’s view of history was weird: “For fifteen hundred years, Christians served God and loved man . . .”⁹² By this he meant the period from the apostles to the sixteenth century. How glorious he supposed the Middle Ages to have been! We have previously presented a very different picture. But, he continued: “The world, having once been Christian, has for the last three hundred years been ceasing to be so.” At that point, namely when the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation took place, there was a “separation or schism, actual and visible departure from the unity of the Church.”⁹³

So much, of course, is true; but to designate what happened from that time onward as an “Antichristian Apostasy from the Faith”⁹⁴ hardly harmonizes with the facts. Manning’s own century, in the Protestant world, saw the founding of Bible societies, religious awakenings, and international missionary work on an unprecedented scale. But though he had eyes, he could not see beyond the portals of Rome, which he mistook for the gates of heaven.

Under inspiration, the apostle Paul had written about the mystery of lawlessness as manifested through the Antichrist. A tendency toward it was already at work in his time. He declared that eventually the lawless one would sit in the temple of God and proclaim himself to be God. His coming would be through the activity of Satan, “with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false . . .” (2 Thess. 2:1–11, RSV).

Manning was defending fables. Having turned his back on Protestantism to serve the Roman Church and its pontiff, he insisted—to the very end—on believing a lie.

X

We now look at a trio of German writers from near the end of the nineteenth century.

The first is Georg Link, a Catholic clergyman at Neustadt am Main, who wrote the 1873 *Klosterbuch der Diocese Würzburg* (the Monastery Book of the Würzburg Diocese). Volume I, an ambitious History of the Benedictine Monasteries, begins with a chapter titled “Recht und Nutzen der Klöster überhaupt” (Legality and Usefulness of Monasteries in General). It surveys their lot over many centuries, touching on the utterances, attitudes, and actions of friends and foes alike: St. Augustine, Bernard of Clairveaux, Martin Luther, Voltaire, Ludwig I, the king of Bavaria, etc.

Link emphasized monasticism as a means toward attaining spiritual perfection through voluntary poverty, lifelong celibacy, and absolute obedience to a religious superior. Also important, according to him, is the basis it provides for communal life as Christians.⁹⁵ He particularly appreciated the support of Pope Pius IX, who on 8 December 1864 defended the Benedictine Order, and in his *Syllabus of Errors* (numbers 53 and 80) condemned the idea that it should be abolished.⁹⁶ Twice in the same paragraph, with two variants, we find German expressions that mean the *vicar of the Son of God*:

“We need not be at all surprised by the fact that the *Stellvertreter des Gottessohnes* [vicar of the Son of God] in his defense of the Order goes a significant step further than those who after despairing of God have rejected him and necessarily been cast upon nature worship or, as is nowadays asserted, humanity. To the two hundred million faithful, the *Staahtalter des Gottessohnes* [vicar of the Son of God] also designates monastics as useful members of the higher spiritual world order or of God’s kingdom on earth, and tirelessly declares the advantage of monastic life for individual areas.”⁹⁷

Next we contemplate the fourth volume of *Das Kirchenjahr* (the Church Year), 1875. It comprises a series of sermons on ethics and doctrine by Munich’s cathedral preacher, Joseph Ehrler. In one of them, he spoke glowingly about “der Christliche Mann” (the Christian Man/Husband), whom he depicted as the head, the king, and the priest of his family. Ehrler said the title of *father* was the highest that could be given to a human being. It belonged to the man of the house. “Our Father, who art in heaven” is even used, on Christ’s instruction, in addressing God. Also: “We priests and bishops, whom the Holy Spirit appoints to pasture the flock of Christ, which he bought for himself with his blood, are distinguished by this name; and we call the visible head of the church the *Stellvertreter des Gottessohnes* on earth, who guides the rudder of Peter’s little ship, the Holy Father, the universal father of Christendom.”⁹⁸

This reminds us of Dupanloup, already referred to, who used the same image of the papal *vicair du Fils de Dieu* on earth as a father. Joseph Ehrler probably read his 1872 book, which had appeared just three years earlier.

The last of the German books that we refer to is the Munich *Historisch-*

politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland, Hundertster Band (Historical-political Papers for Catholic Germany, Vol. C), published by Edmund Jörg and Franz Binder. In it we find a seven-page obituary of Giacomo Margotti (1823-1887), who served under two popes: Pius IX and Leo XIII.⁹⁹ After being ordained a deacon, Margotti obtained a doctorate in theology during 1845. From then until 1849, he taught at a seminary: canon law, church history, and morality; but the assault on the papacy represented by the movement for Italian unity made him turn to writing, journalism, and editorial work in several papers. Amongst other things, the obituary says this about Margotti: “Christ the God-man, the church which he founded as a continuation of his becoming a human being, and the pope as *Stellvertreter des Gottessohnes* on earth: those were the guiding ideas, from which the editor of *Armonia I* [1863] derived his smart weapons.”¹⁰⁰

XI

To conclude this analysis, we return to the writers of France and Belgium. In 1881, a self-styled manual of popular preaching was published at both Paris and Brussels. Its author was Monsignor Henri-Cyrille-Adrien Juge (d. 1899), a French Dominican abbot and apostolic missionary trying to convert his Protestant readers. He argued from the Bible about the primacy and infallibility of the pope by referring to Jesus as conferring a special position on Peter. Every pontiff has supposedly been the successor of this apostle. As a human being, the pope can be mistaken when he talks about politics or the economy. In his personal capacity, he may even be a sinful man.¹⁰¹ But when he speaks about matters of faith and doctrine, he cannot be wrong because he has divine assistance. As Juge put it: “Certainly, the pope is not God, but he is the *vicair du Fils de Dieu* on earth, and, as such, he could not be subject to the teaching of lies and error.”¹⁰²

This writer had seen the installation of a new pontiff, Leo XIII (1810–1903, reigned from 1878). Of indifferent health, as well as being an elderly sixty-eight, he was—according to some who speculated about such affairs—not expected to live for long. However, like many oldsters whom new challenges rejuvenate, he surprised them, lasting a further twenty-five years. Inclined to diplomacy rather than political confrontation with the newly united Italian kingdom, whose advent Pope Pius IX had so bitterly resisted, Leo XIII in some ways manifested a new attitude. Nevertheless, he “was as intractable as his predecessor on the principle of the temporal sovereignty of the pope and continued to consider the traditional doctrine of the Christian state as an ideal.”¹⁰³

The same spirit appeared in the 1883 *Revue du monde Catholique* (Review of the Catholic World), a scientific, historical, and literary journal. In it, Léonce de la Rallaye wrote reflectively about two publications concerned with Count Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). This was a “French

polemical author, moralist, and diplomat who, after being uprooted by the French Revolution in 1789, became a great exponent of the conservative tradition.” After Napoleon’s armies had invaded Savoy during 1792, he spent most of his life as an exile in Switzerland. Apart from writing books like *On the Pope* (1819), “he opposed the progress of science and the liberal beliefs and empirical methods” of philosophers like Francis Bacon, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Lock. De Maistre “was convinced of the need for the supremacy of Christianity and the absolute rule of both sovereign and pope.”¹⁰⁴

Two of his biographers were Amédée de Margerie, Dean of the Catholic faculty of letters at Lille, and Louis Moreau (Palmé). In his book reviews concerning them, de la Rallaye also speculated on how De Maistre would have evaluated and reacted to the course of events beyond his death. In this regard, de la Rallaye mentioned the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Second Empire, and especially “the break-down of 1870 and this lamentable event, one of the most important of modern history, which calls itself the suppression of the temporal power of the pope.” De Maistre, not being a prophet, could not have foreseen all of this, but he was surely able to discern the seed for the conception of such things in the future.

De la Rallaye said that once one has defined the Revolution as *satanic*, one must admit that if it prevails definitively the reign of Satan has arrived. Does one then really find it astonishing “that the seat of the social empire of Jesus Christ should be assailed and humiliated, and that the throne of the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, this throne which the faith of peoples erected, should be transported into a narrow prison, awaiting the catacombs?”¹⁰⁵ (The truth, of course, was somewhat different. It was the pontiffs who chose to shut themselves up behind Vatican walls. There they remained until 1929 in a kind of internal exile.)

Leo XIII was the first of them. By birth, he belonged to the lower nobility, his original name being Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci. He was ordained a priest in 1837.¹⁰⁶ In 1886, as his fifty years’ golden jubilee of that event was drawing near, Giovanni Acquaderni (1839-1922) of Bologna spearheaded a campaign which urged all Roman Catholics to send festive cards to the pope.

Acquaderni, originally trained as a lawyer, had turned to journalism. In 1867, together with Mario Fani, he founded a movement to mobilize the laity of his church “to encourage a Catholic influence on society,” especially where anti-clerical regimes existed. It still continues to operate under the name of *Azione cattolica* (Catholic Action). Originally it was called the *Società della gioventù cattolica italiana* (Italian Young Catholic Society).¹⁰⁷

In a promotional monthly, linking together the national diocesan committees, Acquaderni during 1886 asked who should participate by sending to the pope a congratulatory card, since the next year he would celebrate the golden jubilee of his ordination as priest. Acquaderni’s

answer was: all baptized Catholics—rich and poor, high and low, educated and unlearned—however situated, but so fortunate as to belong to the “Church of Jesus Christ and recognize in the Supreme Pontiff the *vicario del Figliuolo di Dio*, who has from God himself the awesome commission of opening for them the gates of the eternal reward of paradise.”¹⁰⁸

Eleven years later, during 1897, another work was published—this time in Latin—which applied that title to Pope Leo XIII. Its author was a celebrated Redemptorist Belgian priest and preacher, Francis Xavier Godts (1805–1888). Redemptorists belong to a Catholic missionary order, the *Congregatio sanctissimi Redemptoris* (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer). He once again raised the question of temporal power for the pontiff in Italy, a topic still dear to the papal heart.

In his *Papa sit rex Romae! Haec est summa solutio* (Let the Pope Be the King of Rome: This Is the Greatest Solution) of 1897, Godts declared: “We see the dominion, so necessary, so legitimate, so holy to the Bride of Christ, usurped unjustly, treacherously, and sacrilegiously and its legitimate Administrator, the *vicarium Filii Dei* committed to a hostile power virtually as a prisoner-of-war.”¹⁰⁹ For those who do not know Latin, we point out that *vicarium* is simply the accusative case of *vicarius*. It indicates that the word is the direct object rather than the subject of the sentence.

After its ordeals from 1798 to 1870, the papacy was badly battered, and yet its supporters kept on emphasizing the supremacy of the pope, not only in Italy and Europe but in the rest of the world. They also stressed the primacy of the Roman Church. A good example of this at the end of the nineteenth century can be found in *Bessarione*, a periodical whose specialty was Catholic studies concerned with what its subtitle called Oriental Studies. An article in it concerns Armenia.

Christianity is traditionally believed to have been planted in that country by Bartholomew and Thaddaeus, two of The Twelve whom Jesus had appointed to carry on his work. The final result of their labors was the national Armenian Apostolic Church, which at present “generally shares the doctrinal beliefs of the Eastern Orthodox church,” apart from its Monophysite belief that Jesus had only one nature.¹¹⁰ But since 1740 one branch has submitted to papal authority, and is known as the Armenian Catholic Church.¹¹¹

Today, especially in Ukraine but also other countries of Eastern Europe, the Levant, and Mesopotamia, there are twenty-four churches that are “all in communion with the Pope, and accept his authority.” These include the Armenian, Melkite, Romanian and Chaldean Catholics.¹¹²

The Armenians had made early contact with and some were influenced by the Roman Church in the twelfth century, when the Crusaders invaded Asia Minor. “Later in the 14th century, through the missionary activities of the Franciscan and Dominican orders, a ‘latinizing movement’ gained ground among ‘liberal elements in the Armenian Church.’” But “it was

only in the 19th century, during the Ottoman period, that the Armenian Catholics became a millet—an autonomous Church affiliated with Roman Catholicism. In 1831, when a new constitution for Christians living in the Ottoman Empire was instituted, ‘the (Armenian) Catholic Church Community’ was created and legally recognized to form the Armenian Rite Catholic segment of the Roman Church, with its own hierarchy and its own Catholicos-Patriarch.”¹¹³

The article which intrigues us about the 1899-1900 collection of *Bessarione* is “The Armenian Church and Arianism” by Monsignor Asgian. Written in Italian, it contains quotations from both Latin and his mother tongue. He said:

“But what should not be less interesting to our readers is the sixth canon among the twenty that the Council of Nicaea decreed, and which was concerned with the supremacy of the *vicario del Figlio di Dio* on earth; a canon which was received by the Armenian Church with the veneration and submission, with which the Nicean Fathers had decreed and promulgated it.” On the same page, Asgian declared: “The Roman Church has always had the Primacy.”¹¹⁴

By the way, he confused the two Councils of Nicaea. The first, at which the Emperor Constantine presided, occurred in 325. It was concerned with Arianism but did not establish Roman Catholic or papal primacy, nor did that title yet exist; it originated more than four hundred years later via the fraudulent Donation of Constantine. The second ecumenical Council of Nicaea took place in 787. “Convoked by the [Eastern Orthodox] patriarch Tarasius, the council was attended by delegates of Pope Adrian I, and the pope confirmed the decrees of the council.”¹¹⁵

XII

After the Papal States had been extinguished in 1870, elements of the Roman Church began to stop using or even to conceal the title *vicarius Filii Dei*, together with its translations into other languages.

For instance, during 1885 Monsignor Capel, a Domestic Prelate of Leo XIII, put out *The Pope: The Vicar of Christ; the Head of the Church*. It presents a long list of “titles and appellations given from the earliest times to the Pope and his See by Christian writers, and used in various Church documents.”¹¹⁶ In it, Capel mentioned no fewer than sixty-two and in each case briefly provided its source as well as the date when it made its appearance.¹¹⁷

One of these is *vicar of Christ*. But he omits the *vicar of the Son of God* as well as the synonymous *vicegerent of the Son of God*.

In doing so, Capel ignored important, well-nigh contemporary Catholic publications—not only the copious evidence we have adduced but works that were similar to his own, such as *Annales de philosophie Chrétienne* (Annals of Christian Philosophy). This 1852 periodical collection was dedicated to proofs

and discoveries that favored religion. Issued by a society of French as well as foreign literary men and savants, its director was Augustin Bonnetty (1798-1879). An eminently scholarly man, he was amongst other things “a member of the ‘Société des études littéraires’, the ‘Association pour la défense de la religion catholique’, the ‘Société asiatique’, and the ‘Roman Academy of the Catholic Religion’. He was also a knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great and of the Order of Pius IX.”¹¹⁸

Bonnetty listed the “Canonical titles given to the popes,” which he said “*le droit canon*” (canon law) assigned to the pontiffs. He substantiated each title in a footnote, based on claims by the Roman Church. One of several items stated: “The pope is the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* like Saint Peter, even when he might not have the habits of Saint Peter.” The seventh footnote gives four sources, of which the most interesting is Leo IX (1049-1054) in *ep. I, c. 13*; since he actually applied the title to himself. Bonnetty was here apparently referring to Section 13 of Leo IX's letter to Michael Cæularius in 1054, which quotes the Donation. This proud pontiff was the one who almost a thousand years ago precipitated the schism between Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Bonnetty summarized such claims to papal authority in this formula: “Papa est *vicarius Filii Dei*, sicut Petrus” (the pope is the vicar of the Son of God, like Peter).¹¹⁹

Capel also overlooked the 1860 edition of the encyclopedic *Dizionario di erudizione Storico-Ecclesiastica* (Historical-Ecclesiastic Dictionary of Scholarship), compiled by Gaetano Moroni (1802-1883). A Roman knight of the Papal States, this scholarly man was the private secretary of two successive pontiffs: Gregory XVI and Pius IX.¹²⁰ Under a long entry dealing with the word *vicar* as it variously applied to bishops and pontiffs, Moroni stated, amongst other things: “Si vuole esistere nel Vaticano un'iscrizione, che appella il Papa, *vicarius Filii Dei*” (It is claimed that in the Vatican there is an inscription which calls the Pope *vicarius Filii Dei*).¹²¹

Similarly Capel ignored the “Títulos canónicos dados a los papas” (Canonical Titles Given to the Popes) listed in *Crónica del concilio ecuménico del vaticano* (Chronicle of the Vatican's Ecumenical Council), Vol. I (1869), by D. Leon Carbonero y Sol. For each entry, the latter cited councils, apostolic constitutions, church Fathers, and other worthies from whom it was derived. In one paragraph we read: “El Papa es el *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, como San Pedro, aun cuando no tuviera las costumbres de San Pedro.” (The Pope is the vicar of the Son of God, like Saint Peter, even when he might not have the habits of Saint Peter.)¹²² This is similar to the statement in Bonnetty's book.

With his omission, Capel likewise contradicted the *Dictionnaire raisonné de diplomatique* (Rational Diplomatic Dictionary), by Dom de Vaines (b. 1733 or 1734), a Benedictine monk of Saint-Maur,¹²³ as augmented in its 1884 edition by Bonnetty.

Under “titres canoniques donnés aux papes” (canonical titles given to the popes), this work says: “The pope is the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* like saint Peter, even if he should not have the habits of Saint Peter.” That was one of

Bonnetty's additions. Here, too, a footnote refers to Pope Leo IX's "Papa est *vicarius filii Dei, sicut Petrus.*"¹²⁴

We can only wonder at Monsignor Capel's motivation, since he was neither obtuse nor ignorant. Did Pope Leo XIII on this point give a specific instruction to his Domestic Prelate? After all, apart from Augustine Bonnetty, Gaetano Moroni, Leon Carbonero y Sol, as well as other non-Protestant writers, these titles had often for many centuries been applied to the pontiff. Just in Capel's own century, the people who did so included eminent leaders of the Roman Church in France. Did he not regard his compatriots Bishop Dupanloup, Cardinal Archbishop Giraud, or the Archbishop de Jerphanion, as "Christian writers," and their publications as "Church documents"?

In pleasant contrast to this underhandedness is the bold and full-blooded testimony of Augustin Canron, in Mgr. Michel André and Abbé Pierre Condis's *Dictionnaire de droit canonique* (Dictionary of Canon Law), as revised by canon J. Wagner in 1894. Canron, a doctor from the University of Avignon, was a scholar whom Pope Pius IX greatly esteemed and decorated with the order of St. Gregory the Great.

The ten-page article "Rome" of that Dictionary begins by citing Isaiah 2:2–6. Of this, we quote only verse 3: "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." This is followed by the assertion that Isaiah wrote these words in 752 BC, the very year when Rome was founded. Then we are told the prophecy was not fulfilled by the Jews but by the church in Rome. This city, and particularly the papacy, is stated to be the real house of the Lord—a typological interpretation elaborated by Canron.

The rest of the entry is by him. He reviewed the history of the papacy hand in hand with that of Rome. Mentioning pontiff after pontiff, he kept on emphasizing only their positive contributions to Catholicism, with nary a denunciation of the grievous crimes which history has recorded against them. Like Manning, Canron maintained that temporal power was designed by Providence and given to the Roman pontiff, "so that, not being subjected to any civil power, he could with entire liberty and without an obstacle exercise from one pole to the other his ministry as the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu.*"¹²⁵

He said that though the Papal States had been occupied by the king of a united Italy, this would so to speak be for a mere instant. As the past makes plain, when the pope is compelled to leave his temporal heritage, he eventually always returns to reign in his place, more glorious and triumphant than ever.

Canron's main argument was the sheer persistence of the papacy throughout history from apostolic times. His lucid French is passionately eloquent, his rhetoric enchanting. To buttress his contention, he quoted Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) and Lord Macaulay (1800-1859), neither of whom had much time for the pope. The latter, reviewing Leopold Ranke's *History of the Popes* in the 1840 *Edinburgh Review*, said about the Roman

Church:

“She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's.”¹²⁶

To this striking prose, the impassioned Canron added, in both French and Latin: “Sa durée n’aura point de terme [her duration will have no end]. *Et ipsum stabit in aeternum!* [And it will stand forever].”¹²⁷

Obviously this is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which climaxed with a stone that smote the image on its feet and ground it into pieces. Thereupon, it grew into a mountain, which will fill the earth. This is how Daniel interpreted it: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan. 2:34-44).

We are convinced that this will come to pass at the Second Coming and afterwards, on an earth renewed; but according to theologians like Augustine of Hippo—as well as Canron—that stone is Peter and the Catholic Church. With this, we could not disagree more, although we concede that what later became the papacy did begin to rear its head quite close to the beginning of the Christian era. Paul, the great Apostle, in his time indicated as much: “The mystery of lawlessness is already at work.” But “the lawless one” is not destined to last forever. On the contrary, “the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming.” (2 Thess. 2:7, 8, RSV)

XIII

In this chapter, we have referred to evidence provided by important figures, sometimes very high dignitaries, of the Roman Church—theologians, bishops, archbishops, even cardinals—which proves conclusively that during the late 1700s and the 1800s *vicarius Filii Dei*, together with its translations into Italian, Spanish, German, French, and English, was still considered a title or valid description of the pontiff. We have mentioned about fifty occurrences on the part of Manning or other writers. During the same period, the title was also published four times if not more in Latin reprints, during 1844, 1855, 1879, and 1890, mostly of Gratian’s *Decretum*—as shown by Appendix II. Undoubtedly more such material remains to be discovered.

Among the instances we have mentioned above are four popes who

reigned in the last years of the Papal States, between 1796–1797 and 1870, to whom the title was applied: Pius VI, *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* and *Stellvertreter des Gottessohnes*; Pius VII, *vicario del figluol di Dio*; Gregory XVI, *vicario del Hijo de Dios*; and Pius IX, *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*. The last mentioned is in addition to Manning's oft-repeated *vicar of the Son of God*. And after the dissolution of the Papal States, a fifth pontiff, Leo XIII, was called *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, *vicario del Figluolo di Dio*, and *vicarius Filii Dei*. Five popes in little more than a century!

That period, from 1775 to 1903, saw the reign of seven pontiffs. According to the records that we have traced and cited, most of them were referred to as the *vicarius Filii Dei*, in one or the other of the six languages mentioned above. The two exceptions were apparently Leo XII and Pius VIII. Further research may, however, yet show that they have also had that title attributed to them.

As yet it is unknown how many times *vicarius Filii Dei* or its translations into other languages has appeared in manuscripts or books since the latter part of the eighth century, when the infamous *Donatio Constantini* was forged and foisted on the world. In this book, we have recorded scores of instances. New material is, moreover, being constantly unearthed. Since the preparation of these chapters, Stephen D. Emse as well as Michael Scheifler have kept on roving through cyber space, and discovered several more texts that we have not had the occasion to process or include.

A case in point is an article of 1 February 1856 entitled “Rhifedi y Bwystfil” about Rev. 13:18 in *Y Cyfaill*, authored by Hafrenydd. Because it is in Welsh, we are regrettably unable to read it. But whatever else it says, it does feature *vicarius Filii Dei*, followed by both English and Welsh translations in parentheses. After this, in a vertical table, the numerical value of the letters with 666 as the total are clearly shown. We note, moreover, that the article begins by mentioning “Dr. Faber” and later “Fleming,” both of whose ideas are dealt with in Appendix III.¹²⁸

Undoubtedly more awaits discovery by future researchers either on the Internet or elsewhere, perhaps in Polish, Hungarian, Catalan, and other languages. But the foregoing is, we think, for the present quite sufficient.

Volume III

The Seventh-day Adventist Connection

Chapter Thirty-Two
URIAH SMITH'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

I

Informally, the Seventh-day Adventists began in 1844 as a remnant of the Millerite movement, blended with Seventh Day Baptist traditions. They still taught the Second Coming but now believed it was to be preceded by an Investigative Judgment in Heaven; and Rachel Oakes (1809–1868) had introduced to them the Biblical Sabbath.¹ They also concluded that Ellen G. Harmon (later White) possessed the prophetic gift, promised in the Bible for the end-time, commandment-keeping church (Rev. 12:17, 19:10; 1 Cor. 1:7). But, as she often herself insisted, her ministry as well as her writings were a lesser light subordinate to and never intended to replace the Bible.

The theology of these Sabbatarian Adventists was profoundly Protestant yet diverse, since they had come from different churches. Many were actually expelled for having believed in Miller's ideas. Therefore, this Remnant, conscious of its need for greater unity, held a series of Bible conferences from 1848 to 1850 in which doctrinal consensus was reached. Ten years later, at Battle Creek, Michigan, in 1860, they became a denomination, calling themselves the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1863, a General Conference met and framed a constitution for it.

However, full accord about the minutiae of prophetic interpretation came a little more slowly.

The earliest Sabbatarian Adventists agreed that the first Beast of Rev. 13 was the papacy. About the second, two-horned Beast, they at first held a view which in some respects differed from that of their later denomination. This is apparent from their first prophetic chart, designed in 1850 by Samuel W. Rhodes of Oswego, NY, (1813-1883) and engraved by Otis Nichols (n.d.). It telescopes together the two Beasts of Rev. 13, displaying a leopard-like creature that has the paws of a bear, a lion's head, two lamb horns, and a horrible open snout with fangs and a dragon tongue in it. Beneath this are the mostly italicized words: *The two lamb like [sic] horns, the papist and protestant, whose names number 666, become united in action, speak like a DRAGON, and controll [sic] the civil legislature, and cause it to make themselves the IMAGE of papacy which received a deadly wound and was healed.*" Subsequently strips with bolded words in a larger typeface (**Republicanism & Protestantism**) and **CHURCH** were pasted over but could not quite conceal *the papist and protestant* as well as *themselves* of the original text.²

The Sabbatarian Adventists also believed the Protestant churches which had rejected the first angel's message of Rev. 14:6-7, as preached by the Millerites, constituted the Babylon referred to in Rev. 14:8. Rome, they said, was the mother of harlots (Rev. 17:5), and these were the harlot daughters. Soon they went on to apply the number 666 to them. During 1851-1860,

three of the leading lights among the Seventh-day Adventists, expressed this idea, especially in *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* articles.

The first of them, a youthful, merely twenty-one-year-old John Nevins Andrews (1829–1883) pioneered such thinking on 19 May 1851. He identified the two-horned beast described by Rev. 13:11-17 as the United States of America. He said its Protestant inhabitants would one day make an image of the papal beast, by uniting religious with civil power. Rome being the “mother of harlots,” their daughter denominations had followed in her footsteps and also become corrupt. Creating such an image would enable them to enact the pontiff’s mark, a coercive Sunday law. Within this context, Andrews wrote: “The Protestant church may, if taken as a whole, be considered as a unit; but how near its different sects number six hundred three score and six, may be a matter of interest to determine.” As shown by their history, these denominations persecuted when they had the ability to do so: “That they are oppressive when possessed of civil power, let the case of the Puritans, themselves fugitives from oppression, bear testimony. Witness their persecution of the Quakers, even unto death. Witness also the martyrdom of Michael Servetus under the sanction of John Calvin.”³

On 28 March 1854, John N. Loughborough (1832–1924) mentioned the “man of sin” (2 Thess. 2:3) and added: “That this man represents the Papal Anti-Christian church, we all believe. And he will represent that church until the revelation of Christ. Verses 8, 9. The church represented by this man, continued a unit nearly a thousand years after its foundation, when it commenced breaking up under Luther and Calvin, and these divisions have continued dividing and subdividing until, according to the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, they now number about six hundred three score and six.”⁴

The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald of 3 April 1855 carried an extensive piece by J. N. Andrews. In some detail, he dealt with the papacy and Sunday as its mark of authority and its image to be created by American Protestants.

Doubting their sincerity, he raised a number of awkward questions to test their words by their deeds. He asked: “If ‘all men are born free and equal,’ why then does this power hold three millions of human beings in the bondage of slavery? Why is it that the Negro race is reduced to the rank of chattels personal, and bought and sold like brute beasts? If the right of private judgment be allowed by the Protestant church, why does she expel men from her communion for no greater crime than that of attempting to obey God in something wherein his Word may not be in accordance with her creed?” (This probably referred to Millerites disfellowshipped for expecting the Second Coming in 1844.)⁵ And further: “‘Congress,’ says the constitution, ‘shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.’ But most of the state governments, which have no right to infringe upon the constitution, have already decided that the Sabbath of the Bible shall be kept on Sunday, and the judges have

decided such laws to be constitutional!”⁶

II

Some readers may be perplexed and wonder what that last point was all about. Those governments and their judges argued that the First Amendment, by which freedom of worship is guaranteed, is a Federal statute and not binding on individual States. The latter could therefore enact new or implement old religious laws and punish anyone who broke them.

The Fourteenth Amendment which finally put a stop to this anomaly was proposed on 13 June 1866 and ratified on 9 July 1868. Section One says: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within the jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”⁷

This was adopted in the aftermath of the American Civil War. It was “first intended to secure the rights of former slaves.”⁸ It took additional decades and several court decisions before the Fourteenth Amendment also protected Sabbathkeepers against Sunday laws.

Moreover, the religious persecution of Seventh-day Adventists in North America became quite vigorous in the decade before the year 1900. Andrews, who had died in 1883, did not see the worst of it. But John N. Loughborough, living throughout that time, was able to witness it. In 1905, he recorded the following details: “Before me is a list of one hundred and sixteen arrests of Seventh-day Adventists in America, from the year 1878 to March, 1896. Of these, one hundred and nine were convicted. Many of these have been imprisoned from twenty to sixty days, and about a dozen of them were compelled to work in the ‘chain gang’ with murderers, thieves, and the worst sort of criminals. In every case they were admitted, by those imposing sentence upon them, to be the best of citizens.”⁹

Several examples of prosecution and punishment at that time are also mentioned in *Dateline Sunday, U.S.A.* (1967) by Warren L. Johns, a graduate in church history and a Doctor of Law, who practiced before the United States Supreme Court. Quoting from the *American State Papers*, p. 562, he noted that “During the years 1895 and 1896 alone, ‘no less than seventy-six Seventh-day Adventists were prosecuted in the United States and Canada under existing Sunday laws. Of these twenty-eight served terms of varying lengths in jails, chain gangs, etc., aggregating 1,144 days.’”¹⁰

Johns’s book contains an old photograph showing nine Seventh-day Adventists, including their minister, in a chain gang of Rhea County, Tennessee.¹¹ George R. Knight, a later church historian, asserted that scores of them went to prison.¹²

Intolerance toward Seventh-day Adventists resurfaced badly during the

First World War, because conscripted young men insisted on observing the Sabbath on Saturdays. Frederick C. Gilbert, a converted Jew and a Christian minister of their church, recounted their sufferings. More than a hundred were court-martialed. “Over thirty were sentenced to Fort Leavenworth, as military prisoners, whose sentences ranged from ten to fifty years of imprisonment at hard work.”¹³

III

But we return to Andrews who was displeased with the Protestant churches of his day. They manifested a lack of Christian charity and, like the Catholicism from which they had sprung, an increasing tendency to persecute dissenters. In his 3 April 1855 article already mentioned, he had written: “The name of the beast, as given in verse 1, is ‘blasphemy.’ The image it appears is made up by legalizing the various classes that will acknowledge the blasphemous claims of the beast, by taking his mark. Every class that will therefore acknowledge the authority of the beast may be legalized and form a part of this image; but when this is accomplished, woe to all dissenters! It is thus that we understand the number of the beast as six hundred threescore and six.”¹⁴

In 1860, his 1855 article became part of a book, *The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12*. Although some details were updated and occasionally altered, most of the text remained identical over the years, retaining the statement “It is thus that we understand the number of the beast as six hundred threescore and six.”¹⁵

A little more than three weeks after the Andrews article of 3 April 1855, on 26 April 1860, James S. White (1821-1881) expressed his ideas on this topic, a little ironically. He wrote: “The Protestant sects are fully represented by the harlot daughters of the Woman of Rev. xvii, 4, 5. . .” but also said: “‘Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast,’ &c. Here is a call for wisdom. Let him that hath understanding come forward. We confess our lack of wisdom, and decline attempting an exposition to the matter.” Why? Because “Fifteen years since some declared the number 666 to be full—that there was that number of legally organized bodies. Since that time there have been almost numberless divisions, and new associations, and still the number is just 666!”¹⁶

So in 1860 (about “fifteen years since” 1844), when Seventh-day Adventists assumed a denominational name, they really still lacked clarity on this topic and were rather vague about it. This, together with uncertainty on the part of James White, who was then their paramount leader, left the way open for another idea.

IV

Just five years later, in 1865, the work was published that would swiftly

and permanently change the understanding of those early believers. It was *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* by Uriah Smith.¹⁷ Soon he went on to become the leading Seventh-day Adventist Historicist expositor of prophecy. Consistently, in all his writings, Smith declared that the six hundred threescore and six mentioned by Rev. 13:18 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Up to that time, the most highly respected prophetic interpreter and versatile theologian of the new denomination had been J. N. Andrews. A polyglot of great intellect, he enjoyed “severe study,” with the result that “in later years, he could read the Bible in seven languages and claimed the ability to reproduce the New Testament from memory.”¹⁸

The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12, brought together the main strands of his prophetic writing. This went through five editions, the first appearing in 1860, the second in 1864, the third in 1872, the fourth in 1876 and 1877, the fifth in 1866 and subsequent years.

It was in his 1872 or third revision that Andrews abandoned his previously held view about 666. With a statement in his book, he now referred the reader to a work by Uriah Smith: “for extended remarks concerning the *image, mark, and number of the name*, see the *United States in Prophecy*.”¹⁹

But how can we know that this was the author whom Andrews had in mind? After all, he did not mention the name in his book. The details can be deduced from the “Catalogue Of Books, Pamphlets, Tracts, &c., Issued by the Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing Association, Battle Creek, Mich.,” which was printed before the text of *The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12*. It included all the books by Uriah Smith, two of them on prophecy. One was “THOUGHTS ON THE REVELATION, Critical and Practical. By U. Smith”; the other, “THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY. By U. Smith.”²⁰ The full title of the latter was actually *The United States in the Light of Prophecy; or, An Exposition of Rev. 13:11-17*. Interesting is the fact that the title page of this book is anonymous. The author’s name can only be found in the Catalogue.²¹

That these two works by Andrews and Smith on similar topics were published by the same press and in the same year is a concurrence that may have been intentional. From research by Jerry A. Stevens, we know that by the year 1886 both authors’ books had undergone revision and the reference by Andrews to Smith was made unambiguously in a footnote.

In 1874, James White founded what would later be called the Pacific Press Publishing Association, by irregularly issuing—for several months—the Seventh-day Adventist *Signs of the Times*. This work began “in a second-floor commercial print shop in Oakland, California.” Assisting White as corresponding editors were Smith and Andrews.²² Initially the new venture was called The Pacific Press. In 1876, it published *The Three Messages of Revelation 14:6-12, Fourth Edition Revised*, by J. N. Andrews, but without a Catalogue.²³ Nor did this edition within its text refer to any book by Smith.

It did, however, say: “The number of the name of the beast is also to be enforced as a test of submission to him. This name which is said to be that

of a man, is seen, without doubt, in the title of Vicar of the Son of God, which the pope has caused to be inscribed upon his mitre. It is written in Latin, and the numeral letters employed make the sum of 666. The design of this test is to cause men to acknowledge the authority of the papacy.”²⁴

This is similar to how Smith explained it in *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*. Andrews, however, never referred to this book, nor did he actually quote the Latin words *vicarius Filii Dei*. It is possible that independent research led him to an identical conclusion.

Back at Battle Creek, MI, just a year later—in 1877—the fourth edition of *The Three Messages of Revelation XIV, 6-12* was republished, retaining, on p. 109, that paragraph about the vicar of the Son of God. The Steam Press also continued its former practice, by once more inserting a Catalogue. On p. 110 of the book text, we again read: “See the ‘United States in Prophecy,’” with the addition of italics to make it clearer that a book title was meant. This time the Catalogue mentioned “THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL, critical and practical” as well as “THOUGHTS ON THE REVELATION, critical and practical,” indicating that both were by U. Smith. It also included “THE UNITED STATES IN PROPHECY. By U. Smith.”²⁵

The posthumous fifth edition (1886) of the Andrews book retained the text of its predecessors, with almost the same pagination. The author, a missionary to Europe since 1874, had meanwhile died at Basel, Switzerland, in 1883²⁶ So now an editorial hand intervened. The statement by Andrews, still on p. 110, became a footnote: “For extended remarks concerning the *image, mark, and number of the name*, see the “Marvel of Nations.” Once more, the key for comprehension is a Catalogue preceding the title page. On it, Uriah Smith’s “**Thoughts on Daniel**” and “**Thoughts on the Revelation**” were listed, as well as “**The Marvel of Nations**,” with which he was also credited by name.²⁷

The *United States in Prophecy* and *Marvel of Nations* were alternative titles for different editions of the same book. This footnote likewise indicated that Andrews agreed with Smith about the meaning of 666—to the end of his life.

From 1872 and onward, the two great Seventh-day Adventist Historicists read off the same script. This was only a dozen years since 1860, when their denomination had been formally organized, and twenty-eight years after 1844, when it began to come into existence. From that date and thereafter, most Seventh-day Adventists have been teaching that the 666 of the Apocalypse was *vicarius Filii Dei*.

For those men to alter their interpretation of this detail was undoubtedly not an easy thing. Ill-treatment of Adventist pioneers, who were often expelled from their churches just before 1844 because they favored Miller’s ideas about the Second Coming, as well as later persecutions by the same or similar bodies, had kindled in them an aversion to the Protestant churches of their day. But Christian honesty persuaded them to change their mind.

Gathering together the data for establishing these facts was an

outstanding achievement of Jerry A. Stevens, former editor of ADVENTISTS AFFIRM, who from 2006 onward conducted an extensive Internet search on all or practically all that Uriah Smith ever wrote about this topic. Ranging through cyberspace, he paid virtual visits to college, university, and private libraries as well as ecclesiastical entities or individuals throughout North America and all the world's inhabited continents. Interspersed with this was his massive correspondence with librarians or their assistants, most of whom were graciously helpful. As a result, Jerry—whose contribution has been invaluable—found the relevant pages in every or almost every edition of Uriah Smith's books. He also looked closely at J. N. Andrews and other early Seventh-day Adventist writers on prophecy. Additional researchers supplemented this material in and since 2008.

We have established, then, that Seventh-day Adventists had an early as well as a later prophetic consensus. From 1844 to 1872 (for less than thirty years), they saw a connection between the number 666 and the papacy, but thought it had to do with Protestant churches who were following in the footsteps of Rome. But from 1872 onward, they generally accepted Smith's explanation that the number referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*.

These publication dates, these interrelated facts, these two stages of prophetic consensus make possible an important perspective, which—as we will yet see—has been lacking in some twenty-first-century writers seeking to denigrate or at least to downplay Uriah Smith's crucial role as a prophetic interpreter.

V

The man to whom Seventh-day Adventist prophetic expositors of the nineteenth century were ultimately indebted—whether they knew it or not—was Andreas Helwig, already discussed in Volume I. It was he, the first of all human beings on record, who during the early 1600s discovered that in Roman numerals *vicarius Filii Dei* equaled 666. Yet even he acknowledged that the number could also be applied to other titles.

Smith, however, pushed aside the alternative identifications so dear to many of his predecessors, like *Romiith* in Hebrew and *Lateinos* in Greek. The latter, venerable idea went all the way back to Irenaeus in the third century. Focusing exclusively on *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 was Smith's unique contribution.

For him, this was the only identification that mattered. He specifically rejected *Lateinos* because it was not “the name or title of some particular man,” but rather “the name of a people or kingdom.” He even revealed an awareness of another problem: “Deriving the number from a name, in this manner, we must regard as rather conjectural than otherwise, seeing that names can be found to almost any extent, making just that number.”²⁸

We think it unfortunate that he failed to delve more deeply into this issue. He apparently just assumed what we in this book have made explicit

and believe should always be pointed out: the centrality of context.

VI

Only against the background and as part of the whole Rev. 13 can we sensibly zoom in on what its last verse means. That Apocalyptic chapter is also bound up with the larger context of other Antichrist prophecies in the Bible. Together with the witness of history, prophetic contextuality is the key that enables us to eliminate all 666 identifications which have nothing to do with the papacy. Context, we say, context, context.

On this, let us expand a little. Three dimensions of context are meant. The first is *intratextual*, that is, verse 18 is studied as part of and within Rev. 13 as a whole. The second is *intertextual*, which concerns the fact that elements of this chapter demonstrably allude to other Scriptures. Above all, these are the prophetic books of the Old Testament, most notably Daniel; Jesus' Olivet discourse; and 2 Thess. 2:2-9. With the last mentioned, it is also legitimate to link up 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7; these are the only verses in the Bible which explicitly use the word "antichrist" and were authored by the same man as the one who wrote Revelation. The third dimension is *extratextual*: the words and symbols of Scripture reach out beyond themselves toward the events of history. As it was written, so it happens. And through the mysterious dynamics of eternity, prophecy is history in the future tense. This form of contextuality lies beyond the scope of exegesis as it is sometimes understood. In these interrelated dimensions, we find the very genius of Historicism.

Present-day students of prophecy may wonder just why Uriah Smith was so emphatic about *vicarius Filii Dei* being a papal title, yet provided little documentary evidence for its existence. Part of the reason is that in his time it was common knowledge, such as a writer could assume on the part of savvy readers. What is more, the Catholic establishment also used or failed to reject the applicability of *vicarius Filii Dei* to the pope.

But nowadays that is no longer the case. In the period following the appearance of books by Smith and other Seventh-day Adventist writers, especially from the twentieth century onward, defenders of the Roman Church have in several cases repudiated such ideas. For instance, in 1988 Karl Keating, a full-time lay apologist and director of Catholic Answers, asserted: "*Vicarius Filii Dei* never has been used as a title by any pope."²⁹ Presumably he also meant that no publication of the Roman Church or high-ranking personage like a cardinal ever applied it to him—which is far from the truth. We note that his book was published under an Imprimatur, dated 28 January 1988, by Roger Mahoney, Archbishop of Los Angeles.³⁰

Another reason why Smith provided little documentary evidence for the existence of *vicarius Filii Dei* is that by and large he did not have it. Appendix III to our book lists and discusses more than ninety publications by non-

Catholic writers between 1715 and 1896—the majority of them in the nineteenth century—which mention *vicarius Filii Dei*. Most of them also show that the title has a number value of 666. To unearth this amazing material required numerous visits to collections of rare publications at colleges and universities as well as copious Internet archaeology. Also needed was Stephen D. Emse, researcher without peer, to whom we are heavily indebted for doing the footwork in both cyberspace and the real world—with much-repeated driving, sometimes after nightfall over slippery roads through snow and ice.

Such resources were not yet available in Smith's time. He does not even seem to have known about Helwig's great contribution in the 1600s; otherwise he would surely have mentioned it. He did, however, discover and quote from a work which he called "'The Reformation,' bearing the date of 1832,"³¹ though that, it appears, is an incomplete title, nor is the author mentioned.

With his Internet archaeology of 2006, it was Stevens who cleared up this enigma. We take special pleasure in here unveiling what he discovered. The author was one of those women—often unsung—whose work appeared in nineteenth-century America. Her name was Anne Tuttle Jones Bullard (1808-1896), the wife of Artemas Bullard, a clergyman; her book, *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, was published by the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, Boston, in 1832.

In this work, Mrs. Athearn, a teacher at a school for little girls and young ladies, recounted how Protestant martyrs were often burned at the stake or otherwise cruelly murdered during the Reformation. Those events took place in both continental Europe and Britain. But the book most plainly reveals its intention near the end—to warn against increasing Catholic immigration and the pontiff's plans for America: "Colleges, convents, academies, and schools are thickening fast, pregnant with the baleful influence and erroneous doctrines of the Romish faith. About 100,000 of his Holiness' most faithful subjects pressed our shores the last years. Money will not be spared to forward their designs."

And then, in the passage that Smith both quoted and truncated, a Miss Emmons spoke up:

"I saw a very curious fact the other day; I have dwelt upon it much, and will mention it.

"A person, lately in Italy, was witnessing a ceremony of the Romish church, similar to many you have described to us, and as the Pope passed him in the procession, splendidly clothed in his pontifical robes, the gentleman's eye rested on these full, blazing letters, in the front of his mitre—

VICARIVS FILII DEI.
The Vicar of the Son of God.

His thoughts, with the rapidity of lightning, reverted to Rev. xiii.18."

"Will you turn to it, Alice [Brandon]?" said Mrs. Athearn.

Alice opened the New Testament and read:

“Let him that hath understanding, count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”

She paused, and Miss Emmons said—”He took out his pencil, and marking the numerical letters of the inscription on his tablets, it stood thus:—

	V	5		I	1		D	500
	I	1	FILII	L	50	DEI	I	1
VICARIUS	C	100		I	1			
	I	1		I	1		<u>501</u>	
	V	5						53
					<u>53</u>			112
		<u>112</u>						<u>666</u> ³²

We need not suppose that the gentleman mentioned by Miss Emmons recognized the *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 equivalence on the spur of the moment. Eliminating all the letters which have no number value, Anne T. J. Bullard used the characters in a lightly fictionalized account to clarify the prophecy of Rev. 13:18—and to spur her readers on to action. Also involved are the viewpoint and objectives of the organization that printed her book, for the title page states explicitly that it had been revised by its Publishing Committee. What is more, the passage occurs in a climactic position, just two pages from the end of her 250-page book.

Both Mrs. Athearn and Miss Emmons are imaginary characters, though not historical rulers like Charles V and Philip II, the martyrs mentioned, or their sufferings—described in excruciating detail. We must read the passage cited with some literary finesse, while bearing in mind that in those days the historical novel, recently invented and exploited to great effect by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), was immensely popular throughout both Britain and America. This, no doubt, influenced Anne Bullard to utilize that genre. Incidentally, her book was published in Sir Walter’s death year.

What is certainly not a fiction is the continued existence of *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*. After more than one hundred and seventy years, that book is still to be found—whether on paper or microfilm—in some American libraries today.

VII

Anne Bullard was not, however, the first of the Protestants who referred to an inscription on a papal miter. Her passage was derived from several earlier accounts. We mention two, a nineteenth-century predecessor and his probable source from 1799.

A writer under the pseudonym of CANDIDUS wrote about it in a newspaper letter of 2 August 1817.³³ Employing explanatory tables, he analyzed the number values of the Hebrew *Romiith*, the Greek *Lateinos*,

and the Latin *Vicarius Filii Dei*. In each case, he found the total to be 666. He linked the last mentioned title with an eyewitness account of someone who had seen it in the eternal city. He also said: “Finally a gentleman on a visit at Rome, viewing a procession of the Pope, observed on his mitre the Latin words VICARIVS FILII DEI, the *Vicar of the Son of God*. This, as every one knows is the peculiar title claimed by the Pope, as head of the church. The gentleman had the curiosity to number the letters, and to his astonishment, he found” that they totaled 666.³⁴

CANDIDUS probably based his piece on an item that had appeared a little more than eighteen years earlier, on 1 January 1799, under “Anecdotes” of the London-based *Evangelical Magazine*: “Some time ago an English officer, happening to be in Rome, observed on the front of the Mitre, which the Pope wore at one of the solemnities of their worship, this inscription: VICARIVS FILII DEI. It instantly struck him,—perhaps this is the number of the beast. He set to work, and when he had selected all the numerals, and summed them up, he found, to his great astonishment, that the whole amounted precisely to six hundred threescore and six. What stress is to be laid on this I shall not say.” This is followed by a table containing only the letters that have numerical values.³⁵

Anne Bullard, or somebody else’s work she had read, embellished this a little to produce the wording quoted by Smith: “. . . the blasphemous title which the pope applies to himself, and wears in jeweled letters upon his miter or pontifical crown.”³⁶

With hardly any variation, the Bullard passage is cited in all Uriah Smith’s editions of *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation: Being an Exposition, Text by Text, of These Important Portions of the Holy Scriptures* (hereinafter abbreviated to *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*). It was published throughout the 1800s until 1892. But from 1897 onward, he added a proviso: “The foregoing extract doubtless refers to a particular pope on a particular occasion. Other popes might not wear the title emblazoned on the miter, as there stated. But this does not affect the application at all; for the popes all assume to be the ‘Vicar of Christ’ (see Standard Dictionary under ‘vicar’) and the Latin words given above, are the words which express that title, in the form ‘vicar of the Son of God,’ and their numerical value is 666.”³⁷

This statement recurs in subsequent editions, between 1898 and 1905. The last mentioned was posthumous, Smith having died in 1903.

Apart from *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*, a general study of prophecy ranging over many lands and centuries, he also wrote another prophetic book, as already mentioned. Its various editions bear slightly different titles but have identical or nearly identical texts. They all omit the word “miter” and settle for “pontifical crown.” We quote from the first edition of 1872, which was published anonymously and titled *The United States in the Light of Prophecy; or, An Exposition of Rev. 13:11-17*:

The number over which the saints are also to get the victory, is the number of the papal beast, called also the number of his name, and the number of a man, and said to be six hundred three score and six. The pope wears upon his pontifical crown in jeweled letters, this title: "*Vicarius Filii Dei*," "Vicegerent of the Son of God;" the numerical value of which title is just six hundred and sixty-six. The most plausible supposition we have ever seen on this point is that here we find the number in question. It is the number of the beast, the papacy; it is the number of his name; for he adopts it as his distinctive title; it is the number of a man; for he who bears it is the "Man of Sin." We get the victory over it by refusing those institutions and practices which he sets forth as evidence of his power to sit supreme in the temple of God, and by adopting which we should acknowledge the validity of his title, by conceding his right to act for the church on behalf of the Son of God.³⁸

This book was reprinted in 1874 with the same pagination, though "man of sin" had been changed into lower case and "three score" joined into a single word. More importantly, the author was now identified as Uriah Smith.³⁹ The book became somewhat of a theological best-seller. In 1876, it reappeared with the same title page, though adding the words "Third Edition. Revised and Enlarged" and the new publication date. What had not changed was the text we have quoted (apart from small typographical alterations), although the number of book pages was increased.⁴⁰ The 1884 edition added at the top of its title page the words "Our Country's Future." Further pages were inserted but the cited text remained the same.⁴¹

On the 1886 title page, however, we find several changes. At the top a new line appeared: "The Marvel of Nations." Below it is a new title: *Our Country: Its Past, Present, and Future, and What the Scriptures Say of It*. Information about Uriah Smith's career and activities was added, together with the words "Fiftieth Thousand." The book was lengthened once again and no longer published only at Battle Creek, but also in California and England. Added into the middle of the text which we have cited is a vertical table showing that *vicarius Filii Dei* has a numeric value of 666, as is also separately explained. Otherwise, this material remained the same.⁴² The next year, in 1887, the book was reprinted without alteration, except that the title page bears the new date and has added the words "One Hundredth Thousand."

In 1902, the book again adapted its title, to become *Our Country the Marvel of Nations: Its Past, Present, and Future, and What the Scriptures Say of It*. Apart from new data about its publishers, we read: "Third Edition, Revised, 255th Thousand." The text is the same as in 1886 and 1887, though with a different page number. But we now read: "The pope *is said* to wear upon his pontifical crown in jeweled letters, this title: 'Vicarius Filii Dei' . . ." ⁴³ (emphasis added).

A note of hesitation has crept in, reminiscent of the 1897 statement in

Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation: “The foregoing extract doubtless refers to a particular pope on a particular occasion. Other popes might not wear the title emblazoned on the miter, as there stated.”

Though Smith’s book about the United States in Prophecy lacked the long passage from Anne Bullard’s book about Mrs. Athearn, Miss Emmons, and the Reformation of the Sixteenth century, it was certainly presupposed. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the assertion that the pope’s headgear ever bore such an inscription was being challenged.

We find this reflected in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* of 2 March 1897. Somebody with the initials B. E. F. asked: “If the pope does not constantly wear this motto upon his miter, are we justified in using it as the title from which to derive the number 666 as designating the papacy?” The unsigned editorial answer was by Uriah Smith, who had assumed responsibility for “In the Question Chair.” In part, it reads as follows:

We think there is sufficient warrant for so using it. In the first place, the claim of the papacy to infallibility makes the action of any pope representative of all the others. Whatever title one pope assumes, he assumes it, therefore, for the whole system. Now according to a work entitled “The Reformation,” it appears that one pope did, on a special occasion, appear before the public with that title emblazoned in jeweled letters upon his miter, or pontifical crown. Would not that, then, be sufficient to designate the number of the man, though no other one should adopt just that form of words! But further, that title expresses just the office which every pope claims most tenaciously to hold; that is, “Vicar of the Son of God.” They may use different words to express the fact, as, “Vicar of the Prince of Peace,” or “Vicar of Christ,” as Cardinal Gibbons does in his book, “Faith of Our Fathers;” but the essence of the whole claim lies in the fact that the reference is to the Son of God.⁴⁴

Let us be candid about it: by itself this argument is not entirely compelling, just like the proviso in the 1897 and subsequent editions of *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*. The documentary evidence at Smith’s disposal was based on a secondary source and of limited value. Furthermore, its occurrence in a fictionalized account cannot fail to make scholars raise their eyebrows. Another blemish is that the Bullard passage linked *vicarius Filii Dei* to a miter or tiara said to be worn by a particular pope.

And yet Smith was essentially correct. The title does exist. Here we mention three kinds of additional sources that he did not refer to but which prove this fact.

First, as part of the much reprinted *Corpus Iuris/Juris Canonici*, it was enshrined in the *Decretum Gratiani* (Gratian’s Decretum), which first appeared in 1140 and became the basis for teaching Catholic canon law.

This work contained the Donation, bundled up with the False Decretals. In that body of ecclesiastic law, which the Catholic Church maintained for so many centuries, *vicarius Filii Dei* traveled down to Smith's time. It kept on being reissued deep into the nineteenth century, the last edition appearing at Leipzig in 1879.

Second, as already noted, more than 90 English publications by non-Catholic non-Seventh-day-Adventists, who wrote in the century before and contemporaneously with Smith, specifically mention *vicarius Filii Dei*. The majority of them also demonstrated that it had a number value of 666.

Third, many Catholic writers of other languages also used the title in various translated forms: *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, *vicario del Figlio/Figli[u]ol[o] di Dio*, *vicario del Hijo de Diós*, *Statthalter des Sohnes Gottes/Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes/Statthalter des Gottessohnes*, etc., and *vicar of the Son of God*. Much of this was published in Smith's lifetime. Most accessible to nineteenth-century Seventh-day Adventists, who were predominantly English speaking, would no doubt have been the last mentioned translation, especially as often used in his many books by a high-profile contemporary: Henry Edward Manning, Roman Archbishop of Westminster, whom we have copiously dealt with in Volume II.

In another context, we will have to consider whether a papal miter or tiara was ever really inscribed with the words *vicarius Filii Dei*. Here we only emphasize what Smith himself has pointed out: the title does have a number value of 666.

VIII

Despite the limitations imposed on him by his circumstances, Uriah Smith made a most significant contribution toward understanding Rev. 13:18, by focusing exclusively on *vicarius Filii Dei*. We believe he was correct in doing so. This is our conclusion after eight years of intensive study, aided during five of them by the two indefatigable researchers mentioned above.

Such is also still the dominant position held today by Seventh-day Adventist ministers and public evangelists in the North American Division of their church. This became empirically clear to me from personal experiences, not only at the level of local congregations but also in both the Michigan Conference and the Southern Union Conference.

Of these, the former was Adventism's first denominational structure, antedating the organization of its General Conference. A good number of its most important functionaries, scholars, and evangelists have very clearly demonstrated their stance on prophetic interpretation. This was evident at the Michigan Conference Camp Au Sable ministerial retreat near Grayling in August 2006, to which I was invited to speak, and also during my visit to its headquarters at Lansing in 2009.

On invitation, I also held symposiums in the South. The first of these took

place on 9 January 2008 at Daytona Beach, Florida, during the Ministerium of the Southern Union Conference—which consists of eight conferences covering as many states. Such meetings are held every five years to enrich and empower pastors together with their families. There I presented some of the material that I had found and now present in this book. Their response, in a room crowded and overflowing, was fervent and overwhelmingly positive.

The same enthusiasm manifested itself a few months later at the 2008 Camp Meeting of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, where in the time frame of 23-31 May I held several further prophetic symposiums and shared even more of my data with them.

Chapter Thirty-Three
INDIGNANT CATHOLICS RESPOND

I

For century after century, the pontiffs had profited immensely from the fraudulent Donation, in a secular and material as well as in a religious sense. Therefore, up to when the Papal States went out of existence in 1870, the Roman Church could not repudiate the title *vicarius Filii Dei* or even be too shy about it. Until about a hundred years ago, it was rather fondled as an accurate description of the pope's pretentious office—though Catholic apologists did from time to time, increasingly, show irritation with Protestants who equated it with 666, the fatal number of Rev. 13:18.

Between 1715 and 1844, a galaxy of writers with denominationally different backgrounds did so. Some had studied at prestigious universities like Oxford and Cambridge in Britain or Heidelberg, Germany. Others were ministers or laymen who belonged to mainline Anglican, Episcopal, Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian, and similar churches. Of these, details appear in Appendix III.¹ After 1865, and especially since 1872, Seventh-day Adventists brought it into sharper focus.

With the Papal States abolished in 1870, it became feasible to let the Apocalyptically incriminating title *vicarius Filii Dei* fade away or even suggest that it had never really existed. From the twentieth century onward, we find far fewer traces of it in the utterances of Catholic spokesmen or publications, though some of these do exist; and non-ecclesiastical writers belonging to the Roman Church have not been as restrained as their clerics.

Papalist rebuttals have included three lines of thought: (a) denials that *vicarius Filii Dei* is or has ever been a papal title, or at least an official one, (b) the idea that 666 can really be made to fit any name, and (c) confusing critics—even Seventh-day Adventists—about the distinction between the mark and the name of the Beast in Rev. 13.

An early example of the first two stratagems appeared on 5 May 1832 in Cincinnati-based *The Catholic Telegraph*, a paper intended to contain amongst other things “The explanation and defence of the Roman Catholic Faith.” Its Irish-born editor, James Ignatius Mullon (1793-1866), bitingly commented as follows: “The number of the beast has been discovered, by the religious feelings of a set of pretended seers, who like the brawlers of Baal, in olden times, assume the garb of the Prophets without their inspiration. An English officer, in the fervour of his devotion during a short visit to Rome, is made to discover on the Mitre of the Pontiff, (though he wears a Tiara) the convenient motto, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, (the Pope has no such title, being only *Vicarius Christi*.) the numerals of which, when summed up, make 666 . . .” And then, ironically, he remarked: “Now we, without going to Rome, having considered the matter attentively, discover this awful characteristic on the foreheads of the very clerical gentlemen, who have made themselves so merry on their new

prophetic combination. VARIIS PREDICATORIBUS NOVAE RELIGIONIS. *The discordant Preachers of the Reformation.*” A table of numerical equivalences follows, after which the little article ends triumphantly with the letters Q.E.D. (*Quod erat demonstrandum*, What Had to Be Demonstrated).² We owe the identification of Mullon to the indefatigable Jerry A. Stevens.

Mullon was perhaps reacting to William Collier’s *Evangelicana; or Gospel Treasury* (1809), chiefly a reprint with very few changes from *The Evangelical Magazine* published on 1 January 1799. (See Appendix III)

II

Eighty years later, on 18 June 1910, Ernest R. Hull, an influential Jesuit author and editor of *The Examiner* in Bombay (Mumbai), India—a Catholic weekly founded as far back as 1849³—also tried to laugh off *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666. He was a little more jovial about it than *The Catholic Telegraph* of 1832, though not much less sarcastic; his guffaws have been echoing down the decades of the twentieth and right into the twenty-first century.

A letter had arrived on Hull’s desk. He published it, following it with his own comments. Since parts of this text were destined to be quoted and misquoted several times in coming years, we reproduce it here as a whole.

Letters to the Editor THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST A STARTLING DISCOVERY

Sir,—I shall be much obliged if you could give me an answer to this argument which has been put before me by a Protestant friend. I am a convert myself, and this is why some of my acquaintances bring forward arguments to try and convince me that the Catholic Faith is not the true one.

The point in question is as follows:—“We read in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelations in the 18th verse that the anti-Christ and man of perdition is the man whose name spells 666. The title of the Pope of Rome is “Vicarius Filii Dei.” This is inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of the title which represent Latin numerals [printed large] and add them together they come to 666:—

VICARIUS FILII DEI.

Latin	V	equals	5
"	I	"	1
"	C	"	100
"	I	"	1
"	U or V	"	5
"	I	"	1
"	L	"	50
"	I	"	1
"	I	"	1
"	D	"	500
"	I	"	1
			666

I shall be very grateful if you could let me have an answer to it, to try and convince my friend that he is wrong.

YOURS etc.

[SIGNED.]

Comment on the foregoing letter.

Does not our correspondent see how extremely silly this sort of thing is? The only sensible answer to a Protestant friend who brings up such an argument is to laugh at him till he is ashamed of himself. For centuries people have been playing the game of *hunting for the number of the beast*, and it has been found already times out of number. Judging from results, instead of one beast (or Antichrist) there must have been about fifty thousand. Almost every eminent man in Christendom, who has enjoyed the privilege of possessing enemies, has had his name turned and twisted till they could get the number 666 out of it. In past history there have been numberless beasts or Anti-Christis, all of whose names counted up to 666. I fancy that my own name, especially in Latin form, might give the number of the beast. While I was a boy there were at least three well known to me. The first was Napoleon, the second was Beaconsfield, and the third was Gladstone. There were others also, but I have forgotten about them now. Similarly in past history, from Nero downwards, there have been numberless beasts or Antichrists, all of whose names counted up to 666. And before the world comes to an end there will be legions more of them—that is, until Protestants learn a little more sense, and give up looking for the number of the beast altogether, as every level-headed man has done long ago. I never yet tried it, but I shrewdly guess that *my own name*, especially in Latin form, might give the number of the beast. Let us try just for fun—following the same principle, viz., of taking the value of

all the Roman numerals:—

ERNESTUS REGINALDUS HULL.

E	R	H
R	E	U = 5
N	G	L = 50
E	I = 1	L = 50
S	N	
T	A	
U = 5	L = 50	
S	D = 500	
	U = 5	
	S	

$$5 + 1 + 50 + 500 + 5 + 5 + 50 + 50 = 666$$

Quod erat demonstrandum—namely, that the Editor of THE EXAMINER is Antichrist, or the Beast of the Apocalypse!

I think this will be a sufficient answer for your Protestant friend. A little ingenuity with *his* name might show that he is the beast of the Apocalypse too.

Madame Tussaud might open a new department in her wax-works show, viz., effigies of all the men in history (the Editor of THE EXAMINER included) whose names have been found to furnish the number of the beast. It would be a mighty big and varied exhibition, and no mistake.⁴

III

The reader needs to note carefully that the first part of this text was not written but only reproduced by Hull from a Letter to the Editor. Later commentators have often overlooked this point and erred in attributing the words “The title of the Pope of Rome is ‘Vicarius Filii Dei.’ This is inscribed on his mitre . . .” to Hull or his successors who quoted him. Neither he nor Catholics who reused this material originated it. The author of that entire letter was Hull’s correspondent, a new Catholic, quoting his Protestant friend. Though the denomination of the latter is not mentioned, he or she was almost certainly a Seventh-day Adventist missionary. That wording reflects rather similar statements in publications by Uriah Smith, J. N. Andrews, and others. Such a conclusion is supported by further publications from Hull’s pen in 1922 as well as David Goldstein’s *Campaigners for Christ Handbook* (1934), still to be referred to.

IV

Hull’s article drew the immediate attention of Arthur Preuss (1871-1934), a German-American born in St. Louis, Missouri, who “wrote widely for the Catholic press and translated theological works from German.” He had also in 1894 “launched the *Catholic Review* (later, *Catholic Fortnightly Review*). At that time, Preuss was “perhaps the most important Catholic journalist in America.”⁵

Just a few months after its being published at Bombay, Hull’s “Number of the Beast,” made its American debut via *The Catholic Fortnightly Review*, Vol. XVII: 1910.⁶ Preuss, however, provided his own introductory sentence, abbreviated the text (including its beginning and end) and adapted the orthography. Further, he split the text by introducing a remark about its author. And he blundered badly by not using quotation marks or some such device to show that the material from “We read in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelations . . .” was also quoted from Hull. For all the world, this looks like a paragraph and a table written by Preuss himself:

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

Again some one has found the “number of the beast”!

We read in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelations in the 18th verse that the anti-Christ and man of perdition is the man whose name spells 666. The title of the Pope of Rome is “Vicarius Filii Dei.” This is inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of the title which represent Latin numerals [printed large] and add them together they come to 666:—

VICARIUS FILII DEI.

Latin	V	equals	5
"	I	"	1
"	C	"	100
"	I	"	1
"	U or V	"	5
"	I	"	1
"	L	"	50
"	I	"	1
"	I	"	1
"	D	"	500
"	I	"	1
			666

Rev. Ernest R. Hull, S.J., editor of the Bombay *Examiner*, to whom this “argument” was submitted by an anxious convert, performs the *reductio ad absurdum* thus (*Examiner*, Vol. 61, No. 25):

“Almost every eminent man in Christendom, who has enjoyed the privilege of possessing enemies, has had his name turned and twisted till they could get the number 666 out of it. The first was Gladstone. Similarly in past history, from Nero downwards, there have been numberless beasts or Antichrists, all of whose names counted up to 666. And before the world comes to an end there will be legions more of them—that is, until Protestants learn a little more sense, and give up looking for the number of the beast altogether, as every level-headed man has done long ago. I never yet tried it, but I shrewdly guess that *my own name*, especially in Latin form, might give the number of the beast. Let us try just for fun—following the same principle, *viz.*, of taking the value of all the Roman numerals:—

ERNESTUS REGINALDUS HULL.

E	R	H
R	E	U—5
N	G	L—50
E	I—1	L—50
S	N	
T	A	
U—5	L—50	
S	D—500	
	U—5	
	S	

5 & 1 & 50 & 500 & 5 & 5 & 50 & 50—666

Quod erat demonstrandum—namely, that the editor of *Examiner* is Antichrist, or the Beast of the Apocalypse!

I think this will be a sufficient answer for your Protestant friend. A little ingenuity with *his* name might show that he is the beast of the Apocalypse too.⁷

V

Four years later, this version as adapted by Preuss was republished by *Our Sunday Visitor*, a Catholic weekly that had been created at Huntington, Indiana, in 1912 by John Francis Noll (1875-1956), a priest. Very soon this paper prospered, with a rapidly increasing circulation, and still exists today. It grew into a multifaceted enterprise which greatly promoted the interests of the Roman Church in America. Noll remained its editor for more than forty years, from 1912 until 1954, when he was laid low by a stroke just two years before his death.⁸ We note in passing that he was a hard-working and versatile man

whose contributions to Catholicism were not confined to publishing work, so that the papacy elevated him to high office. The title of “monsignor” having been conferred on him in 1921, he was ordained a bishop in 1925. A quarter of a century later, “as a sign of Vatican esteem, Bishop Noll was given the honorary title of archbishop in 1953, even though his see was not an archdiocese.”⁹

Now let us consider the third, even more misquoted version of Hull’s piece. *Our Sunday Visitor* contained a Bureau of Information, which dealt with readers’ queries. On 6 November 1914, the following question and answer appeared in it:

“Is it true that the words of the Apocalypse in the 13th chapter, 18th verse refer to the Pope?”

The words referred to are these: “Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man; and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six.” The title of the Pope of Rome is ‘Vicarius Filii Dei.’ This is inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of the title which represent Latin numerals (printed large) and add them together they come to 666:

V I C A R I V S F I L I I D E I
 5 1 100 1 5 1 50 1 1 500 1

Add these together and the result will be 666.

This “argument” was submitted to Rev. Ernest R. Hull, and answered in the following manner: “Almost every eminent man in Christendom, who has enjoyed the privilege of possessing enemies, has had his name turned and twisted till they could get the number 666 out of it. In past history there have been numberless beasts or Anti-Christ, all of whose names counted up to 666. I fancy that *my own name*, especially in Latin form, might give the number of the beast:

E R N E S T V S R E G I N A L D V S H V L L
 5 1 50 500 5 5 50 50—666

Quod erat demonstrandum, namely, that Rev. Ernest R. Hull is Antichrist, or the Beast of the Apocalypse!”

Perhaps a little ingenuity with *your* name will show that you are the beast of the Apocalypse too.¹⁰

VI

Let us note what has happened here to Hull’s text in its second American transformation. Noll probably never laid eyes on what Hull himself had written. He reused the text provided by Preuss, abbreviating and adapting it to

his own purposes. The quotation of Rev. 13:18 was Noll's addition. Above all, he failed to show that the words "The title of the Pope of Rome is 'Vicarius Filii Dei.' This is inscribed on his mitre" were a quotation.

Just five months later, on 18 April 1915, *Our Sunday Visitor* once more referred to this issue. It now began with the question: "What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope's crown, and what do they signify, if anything?"

Noll answered: "The letters inscribed in the Pope's mitre are these: *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God. Catholics hold that the Church which is a visible society must have a visible head." He went on to explain the doctrine of Petrine primacy and apostolic succession: "Upon the death of Peter the man who succeeded to the office of Peter as Bishop of Rome, was recognized as the head of the Church. Hence to the Bishop of Rome, as head of the Church, was given the title 'Vicar of Christ.'"¹¹

But now Noll did not even mention Hull; he simply adopted as his own what had started as a Protestant assertion to the effect that *vicarius Filii Dei* was inscribed in the papal miter. As subsequent issues of *Our Sunday Visitor* have shown, this was not to be the end of that muddle—nor will we fail to look into it further. But before we do so let us make a few points which we think are rather important.

It is an error to assert that any statement about *vicarius Filii Dei* being on the miter (or the tiara) of the pontiff ever originated with the Roman Catholic Church. It did not. It was derived in Bombay from a Protestant, most likely a Seventh-day Adventist, using a statement by one of his or her own authors. Noll had clearly taken his lead from Preuss. If he had read Hull's original piece in *The Examiner*, he would have composed his various answers to reader queries very differently—and forestalled a colossal waste of ink and time, by himself as well as others.

For explaining the prophecy of Rev. 13, it is totally irrelevant whether or not *vicarius Filii Dei* was ever inscribed on either a miter or a tiara. To make this clearer, we shall regretfully have to keep on delving into this issue. We begin by going back to and look at Hull's attempted rebuttal.

As a writer, he was superb and cunningly persuasive, which is why his work was destined to survive and one of his phrases, "a little ingenuity" would attain a certain notoriety. We therefore briefly consider his argument that each and every identification for 666 as Rev. 13:18 must be invalid simply because this number has been explained in so very many ways.

First, we need not be taken in by the words: "I never tried it, but I shrewdly guess . . ." He knew, all right, and was just foisting on his readers a little affected British understatement.

Second, it is simply untrue that every name or title can be made to produce the figure 666, with the honest use of Roman numerals. Like Hull a century ago, we herewith also invite our own readers to see whether their names are equal to 666. We are sure that for most of them they will not. I tried with my own name, employing several variants: Edwin de Kock, Edwin de Cocq (the

original spelling used by my first South African ancestor, who emigrated from Middelburg, Zeeland, in 1707), and even Edvinus Coquus. In Latin, the last-mentioned surname means “(the) cook,” exactly like the Dutch equivalent. In each case, the numerical total is considerably more than 666.

Third, we note that Hull did not also Latinize his last name as *Hullus*. This would have added an extra 5 to his number. He was imitating Cinderella’s sisters, who snipped away at their toes to make their feet fit her slipper. But no twisting, turning, or ingenuity is required for working out the numerical value of *vicarius Filii Dei*. Itself a Latin expression, it does not need to be manipulated or adapted in any way.

Above all, as pointed out above, it is all a matter of prophetic context. The last verse in Rev. 13 must be read as part, indeed as the capstone of that entire chapter. To determine its meaning, we must also look at the other Antichrist prophecies of the Bible. Further there is the witness of history, which demonstrates how God’s predictions have actually been fulfilled throughout the ages. Contextuality, in both Scriptural exposition and history, is the key which enables us to exclude all 666 identifications that have nothing to do with the papacy.

Hull’s 1910 use of *Quod erat demonstrandum* like Mullon’s *Q.E.D.* in *The Catholic Telegraph* in 1832, does not by itself prove that he had been eminently logical. We think it was a rhetorical flourish and nothing more.

VII

Now we must hop into the time machine of the imagination and return to Noll. We find him on 16 September 1917 dealing with the question: “What application has the number 666 to Benedict XV [1854-1922, reigned from 1914]?” He answered: “None whatever.” He then discussed the alleged shortcomings of Historicism and the fact that it identifies the pope as Antichrist. Thereupon, he referred to writers “who have never shown that the title ‘Vicarius Filii Dei’ is really inscribed upon the Pope’s *tiara*” and added: “The words Vicarius Filii Dei are not the name of the Pope, they do not even constitute his official title.” He pointed out, moreover, that the name of Benedict XV had a number value not of 666 but of 1123. Nevertheless, once more, he referred to and (via Preuss) quoted from Hull, who had stressed that “in past history there have been numberless beasts or Anti-Christ.” Once again, Noll provided the following little table:

E	R	N	E	S	T	V	S	R	E	G	I	N	A	L	D	V	S	H	V	L	L
				5							1			50	500	5			5	50	50—666 ¹²

Here was a new departure. By now, Noll had come to realize his mistake of confusing the miter with the tiara and also knew that the title, at least in his time, did not appear on either. But he did stress the idea that very many names had a numeric value of 666. At the same time, he did not deny that *vicarius Filii Dei* existed, only that it was not an *official* title of the pope. Precisely as

English is not the official but the only indispensable language of America.

Let us bear in mind that earlier in the year when Noll wrote those words, the *Corpus Iuris Canonici* had been replaced on 17 May 1917 by the similar-sounding (but actually brand-new) *Codex Iuris Canonici*, which did not mention *vicarius Filii Dei*. Regarding the argument of officiality that we have already dealt with, it would also—as we shall further note—be adopted by some Seventh-day Adventists.

But the pope is a king, who like other royalty has several titles. Our foregoing chapters have already made it plain that one of them, *vicarius Filii Dei*, for many centuries played a prominent role in securing and maintaining for the pontiffs both secular and ecclesiastical power. Besides, Rev. 13 nowhere uses the word “official.” Nevertheless, the name which is a number, referred to in that chapter, is significant and offensive from the Lord’s point of view. Ultimately this is what really matters, not just the Catholic perspective on it.

Our Sunday Visitor kept up its denials of *vicarius Filii Dei* and 666. Its issue of 18 July 1920 openly joined battle with the Seventh-day Adventists by introducing a person who had supposedly written:

“I have been in a friendly controversy with one of your subscribers. I, a Seventh Day Adventist [*sic*], have proved to him that the Book of Revelations is a tirade against Catholicism, even telling when God will destroy the whole Papal System.”

We think this was a bogus questioner. He misspelled his alleged church affiliation, which should be hyphenated as *Seventh-day Adventist* and referred to the Book of Revelations in the plural. This form, first employed by Hull in India and then by Preuss in America, is totally foreign to Seventh-day Adventist usage. And to state that the Apocalypse “is a tirade against Catholicism,” etc., is also fishy.

Noll, in any case, repeated his former ideas that *vicarius Filii Dei* did “not appear on the Pope’s tiara” and that “666 can be made to fit hundreds of names or titles.”¹³

On 29 January 1922, *Our Sunday Visitor* reverted to some of the wording it had used on 6 November 1914. According to the questioner, “A friend of mine says this number is on the Pope’s mitre.” Noll answered: “There is no such number on the Pope’s mitre just as there is no such inscription as ‘Vicarius Filii Dei.’” Once more he stressed the idea that the number 666 could be made to apply to many people. Again he referred to Hull, who had “made his own name spell 666,” and added: “All Protestant commentators of note ridicule the idea that the application is to be made to the Pope.”¹⁴ This was denying the very existence of the title.

But on 23 July 1922, Noll reversed himself, so laconically that we can quote the entire piece, both question and answer: “*Does the Pope claim the title of Vicarius filii Dei?* The Pope claims to be the vicar of the Son of God, while the Latin words for this designation are not inscribed, as anti-Catholics maintain, on the Pope’s Tiara.”¹⁵ We note that Noll was jumping back from the

miter to the tiara and we could speculate about his reason for doing so. Very interesting, however, is the statement that the pontiff actually “claims to be the vicar of the Son of God.”

VIII

Meanwhile, over in India, Hull had not been idle. In *The Examiner* of 1 April 1922 under the heading “Leading Article” we read “Adventist Doctrines. Part III. The Sabbath Continued.” Using an antinomian argument, he asserted that according to the New Testament the so-called Old Law had been abolished; therefore, the Sabbath no longer applied to Gentile Christians. Lord’s Day observance, according to Hull, was not derived from the Ten Commandments. “We regard the Sunday as an independent Christian institution having no connection with the Old Law at all except that of coincidence.” He repudiated assertions even by Catholics that the obligation to rest on it had been *transferred* from the Sabbath.

Within this context, Hull attacked the Seventh-day Adventists by name for saying that the Beast of Revelation was the Papacy: “This is of course a well-worn Protestant theme dating from the Reformation. To it the Adventists add a new feature, namely that the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation is nothing other than the Sunday observance. A deal of clumsy ingenuity is expended on these propositions, which we do not deem it profitable to deal with. More by way of amusement than anything else we will take up one point, namely, the famous ‘number of the beast.’”

The next section is headed “Beastly Arithmetic,” in which Hull reproduced, from a Seventh-day Adventist tract, a vertical table to show that *vicarius Filii Dei* had a number value of 666. But, he said, “people have been playing at the game of discovering ‘the number of the beast’ for at least 1800 years.” He went on to enumerate identifications all the way from Nero down to the German Kaiser. Then he showed again how his own name, Latinized into *Ernestus Reginaldus Hull*, could be made to equal 666. But, “to pass from the funny to the serious: The only really plausible discovery of the beast we know of is the earliest one, which finds him in Nero”; for “NERON KAESAR turned into Hebrew letters does really give 666.” Nevertheless, he regarded even this as “precarious,” remarking: “The whole question of the interpretation of Revelation is bound up with the greatest obscurity.”¹⁶

That for him its meaning was hidden is evident. As for the Nero explanation, favored by Preterists and the Roman Church, it is most peculiar. “According to Suetonius, in AD 69 he stabbed himself in the throat with a dagger” and died.¹⁷ A legend arose that he did not perish but survived and would one day return. If so, the world has certainly been waiting for him a long time, in fact for most of the Christian era. But according to Rev. 13 the Beast could not have been this wicked Roman emperor. The Antichrist is depicted as having seven heads and ten horns (vs. 1) which we think was not the case with Nero, and the prophet saw only “one of his heads as it were

wounded to death” (vs. 3).

A little more than a month after the publication of Hull’s article, the Examiner Press on 20 May 1922, brought out an entire tract containing more than sixty pages, likewise entitled *Adventist Doctrines*. One of its eight chapters basically reproduces the same tired, repetitive material which we have just referred to, so we need not comment on it further. But we do note that according to the title page it was published much further afield than just in Bombay, India. It appeared worldwide in all the largest English-speaking countries: England, Australia, America, and Canada.¹⁸

IX

Hull’s influence seems to have spread even further, into other languages. The Roman Church, like Seventh-day Adventism, is international and active everywhere on this planet. It also has a very long memory. Accordingly, such arguments were also current in Europe and Africa, where they impinged on Seventh-day Adventists in their mission fields, of which we give the following example.

In 1925, *Un an au Congo Belge* (A Year in the Belgian Congo) was published in Brussels. Its author was the marquis de Chateleux, a Catholic nobleman and author-journalist, writing under the pseudonym Chalux. He tells of his journey to Lake Kivu and how he arrived at Gitwe, Rwanda, a recently established Seventh-day Adventist mission station. Its director was the charming David E. Delhove (1882–1949), who was preaching to the Bahutu. At a religious service, which de Chateleux attended, one of the missionary’s little daughters pleasingly played the harmonium, while the natives sang in their own language.

Lightly amused and with aristocratic condescension, the nobleman mentioned the Adventists’ Sabbathkeeping on the seventh day of the week as well as their emphasis on the Second Coming, but also extolled their splendid work for the indigenous people. At the same time, he found their explanation of the prophecies in Daniel and especially Rev. 13 repellent, though he good-naturedly reigned in his chagrin. De Chateleux fully reproduced Delhove’s table which showed that *vicarius Filii Dei* had a numerical value of 666. But then he added: “It would also be easy, if one had some time to waste on this little game which has the fault of not being innocent, to fabricate a Latin sentence containing some names that are dear to the Reformation and arrive at the same number. Lutherus already makes 60, and Calvinus 161. Let us move on.”¹⁹

We, too, must do so but in passing mention that the work which Delhove kindled at Gitwe eighty-six years ago continues to spread its light and still endures, for “Gitwe Secondary School has a tremendous reputation throughout the country of Rwanda. Many of the students have stories to share about God’s protection during the genocide of 1994. The campus is operating at full capacity—nearly 700 students. Church leaders say that Gitwe is an important

training ground for the church in central Africa.”²⁰

The cruel and inept domination by the king of Belgium throughout that region and its aftermath since the 1950s enveloped it in perhaps the most appalling darkness that post-colonial Africa has ever known. But Delhove left a splendid heritage. Even after his retirement, he insisted on returning to work in Africa; and he laid down his life on that continent. Moreover, “Several children of the Delhove family, born in Ruanda-Urundi, later became second-generation missionaries in the Congo.” As for David himself, “He died of a heart attack at Rutshuru on March 12, 1949. The doctor who was with him stated that only ten minutes before taking his last breath Pastor Delhove was seeking to convert the native orderly attending him.”²¹

X

But what about Hull? We think there is a very troubling element in what he implied: that his readers should simply ignore the number. Was it a bothersome idea that could just as well be deleted from the Scriptures? Did this Jesuit and those who followed his lead not notice that such an elimination incurred the dreadful curse of the Apocalypse? This is written into a most emphatic place, right near the end of Revelation and even of the Bible itself: “If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:19).

Greater than Hull’s implicit transgression was the effrontery of those who were responsible for *The New American Bible* in its 1971 edition. Their translation for Rev. 13:18 reads as follows: “A certain wisdom is needed here; with *a little ingenuity* anyone can calculate the number of the beast, for it is a number that stands for a certain man. The man’s number is six hundred sixty-six.”²² (Emphasis added.)

Incorporated into the Bible itself, we here have Ernest R. Hull’s exact phrase, “a little ingenuity”! Apart from a Nihil Obstat and an Imprimatur from American ecclesiastics, this translation was also recommended and endorsed by the pope himself. He ended by saying: “On all who have contributed to this translation, and all who seek in its pages the sacred teaching and the promise of salvation of Jesus Christ our Lord, we gladly bestow our paternal Apostolic Blessing.” This was followed by the pontifical signature: “*Paulus PP. VI*, From the Vatican, September 18, 1970.”

But some readers probably objected, for in subsequent editions common sense prevailed. The offending phrase was removed. In 2000, this verse stated, more conservatively: “Wisdom is needed here; one who understands can calculate the number of the beast . . .”²³ Accompanying the latter text, however, is a hodgepodge of explanatory notes, which Catholic readers are obliged to believe. On Rev. 13: 18 it has: “Each of the letters of the alphabet in Hebrew as well as in Greek has a numerical value. Many possible combinations of letters will add up to 666, and many candidates have been

nominated for this infamous number. The most likely is the emperor Caesar Nero (see the note on 13, 3), the Greek form of whose name in Hebrew letters gives the required sum. (The Latin form of this name equals 616, which is the reading of a few manuscripts.) Nero personifies the emperors who viciously persecuted the church. It has also been observed that ‘6’ represents imperfection, falling short of the perfect number ‘7,’ and is represented here in a triple or superlative form.”²⁴

With the argument that 666 could be made to fit just anyone, we are back to apologists like Hull. The bit about Nero involves the Preterism that many Catholic writers have preferred. And the idea that 6 is a symbol of imperfection in contrast with the perfect number 7 comes from a motley crowd: especially Sundaykeeping Protestants, but even Swedenborgians. It represented the addition of an Idealist element to papalist eschatology.

This also appeared in the updated Douay Bible of the Roman Church. A footnote to Rev. 13:18 in the 1914 edition still declared: “The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”²⁵ As already indicated, this identical explanation continued until at least 1935; for W. A. Spicer quoted it in his *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* of that year, when the controversy with David Goldstein was reaching fever pitch. By 1941, just six years later, the Douay—known as the Challoner-Rheims version since the eighteenth century—had in this been radically revised. The footnote to Rev. 13:18 now said: “*Six hundred and sixty-six*: the most probable interpretation of the number is that it represents the name Caesar Neron, which in Hebrew characters make up the number 666. It symbolizes extreme imperfection, for each digit is one short of seven, the number that signifies perfection.”²⁶

Idealism has become influential in both Catholic and Protestant circles. It is regrettably now even beginning to destabilize the prophetic interpretation of some Seventh-day Adventists, an issue to be dealt with in its proper place.

XI

After the 1922 publication of *Adventist Doctrines* by Hull, *Our Sunday Visitor* introduced additional and sometimes peculiar twists. On 9 August 1924, it mentioned Uriah Smith as follows:

“For the purpose of settling an argument, please answer, eliminating all doubt, the question: Did any Pope ever wear on his biretta the inscription ‘Vicarius Filii Dei,’ as charged by Uriah Smith in his Seventh Day Adventist text-book?

“No. That inscription never appeared on a Pope’s Biretta or Tiara.”²⁷

Most probably the “text-book” referred to was *Thoughts on the Revelation*, Part II of *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation* published after the author’s death in both 1907 and 1912. It contained material unknown to him, centering in the expression “triple crown.”²⁸ Also retained is the word “miter,”²⁹ which Smith had quoted from Anne Bullard. But we failed to find in it any reference to a “biretta,” which is

“a square cap with three ridges on top worn by clergymen esp. of the Roman Catholic Church.”³⁰ This, it would seem, is more bogus material.

Perhaps Noll eventually realized that introducing it was serving no useful purpose, for on 17 March 1929 he simply wrote: “As a matter of fact there is no inscription on the Pope’s tiara.”³¹ As Catholic apologetics, this was both conservative and safer.

But on 31 August 1930, he tried another tack by answering not one but two questions.

The first was: “Who are the dragon, beast, and false-prophet of Apocalyptic chapters 12 and 17?” Noll answered: “They make up together, as it were, an ‘infernal trinity’ in sharp contrast to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” The devil, he said, stood up against the Father; the beast—“an incarnation of Satan”—against the Son; and the false prophet, seeking to finish the work that the beast had started, against the Holy Spirit.

Then the questioner introduced a follow-up query: “But what is the number ‘six hundred sixty-six,’ in Apoc. 13:18?” Noll wrote: “First, it is the number of a man: the numeral letters of his name will make up this number.” This is what we also maintain and here need not comment on. But he continued:

Second, it is the number of the *sun*, as shown by St. Irenaeus. In the Gnostic cosmology there are three worlds: the ogdoad, the hebdomad, and ‘Hyle’ (matter)—this present world. The ogdoad was the seat of their eight-fold god, the ‘pleroma;’ the hebdomad, or intermediate world, was the sphere of the seven planets of the ancients: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, *the Sun*, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon. Thus the *sun*, being fourth among the planets of the hebdomad and thus central in the hebdomad; and the hebdomad itself being the intermediate world of Gnosticism—may be taken to represent the whole system. [All these italics occur in Noll’s text.]

The ancients gave to each planet for a sign a magic square, and the magic square of the sun contained thirty-six squares, using the numbers 1-36 in such fashion that the column added the same sum in any direction, to wit, 111. The grand total of all the numbers in such a magic square was 666.³²

This is learned stuff but interesting, too. We have previously also remarked on it. Though a side issue, it is not irrelevant, because in its syncretism the great Mediterranean apostasy absorbed Mythraic and other solar elements. Sunday, as even its name still indicates, began as the *dies solis*—the day of the sun. It points another finger at the pope. Yet for Noll to add this into his answers was somewhat of a diversionary tactic.

XII

A Catholic lay celebrity of those days, from the 1920s to the middle 1940s, was David Goldstein (1870-1958). We have already met him in Volume I of this book but now need to look at him more closely. Born into a Dutch Jewish

family who had immigrated to America from England, he dropped out of school when eleven years old and went to work as a tobacco stripper. At first he became a self-educated socialist but converted to the Roman Church in 1904 or 1905. He joined Fr. Peter Dietz's Militia of Christ, a body that sought "to inoculate Catholic workers against the inroads of socialism and communism into the union movement." Goldstein developed into a popular and prominent public speaker. Indeed, he "quickly became a sensation in Catholic circles." He also wrote letters, articles, and books to support his new religion. Together with Martha Moore Avery, he created the Catholic Truth Guild in 1917. In 1936, he also founded and directed Catholic Campaigners for Christ. But "Following Vatican II, Goldstein became unfashionable. His writings are considered in some circles as offensive to Jews, and therefore a hindrance to inter-religious dialogue. However, he is still greatly revered by, extensively relied upon, and quoted by Traditionalist Catholics."³³

During the 1930s and 1940s, he fought strenuously against Seventh-day Adventists. Since Goldstein has been swallowed up by the darkness of his grave and an increasing obscurity, we cannot nowadays reproduce his effectiveness on the public platform, but let us briefly look at some of his prolific writings. A real flurry of them, carried by several Catholic publications, appeared in 1935, though "perhaps, the most famous and relied upon apologetical book by David Goldstein is *What Say You?*"³⁴ This was published in 1945. Over that ten-year period, he proved to be a nasty thorn in the flesh for Seventh-day Adventists, provoking soul-searching and even some dissension within their ranks.

An early Goldstein attack is to be found in his *Campaigners for Christ Handbook*, which made its debut during 1931 and was printed for the fifth time by 1938. With variations, it contains the same question that we have met with before: "Who is the man in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelation whose name numbers six hundred sixty-six? I am seeking for information as I have heard it declared to be the numerical value of the name of the Pope, Vicarius Filii Dei (Vicar of the Son of God), which is engraven in Latin on the tiara he wears."

Goldstein answered that it was "impossible to say who the man is that St. John refers to." He said that Nero, Mahomet, the Kaiser and others had at different times been nominated as the Beast. But he himself was a Futurist and declared: "Evidently he has not yet put in his appearance and reigned the expected time, for this terrestrial planet seems still to be turning smoothly on its axis and the Pope, unperturbed by slander, continues to exercise the power Jesus Christ delegated to Peter and his successors."

Among Goldstein's arguments, we find the following: "The worthy Editor of *the Bombay Examiner* balked the attempt of the Seventh Day Adventists to make the people of India believe that their 'beastly arithmetic' applied to the Pope by showing that, according to their ingenious numerical process of reckoning, he himself is the Antichrist." To demonstrate this calculation, Goldstein reproduced the vertical table, now familiar to our readers, which

shows that *Ernestus Reginaldus Hull* has a numerical value of 666.³⁵

On 2 June 1935, *Our Sunday Visitor* contained, as a copy for Bishop Noll's attention, an angry letter from Goldstein to the editor of the Seventh-day Adventist *Present Truth*.³⁶ Within thirteen days, it also appeared at Boston in *The Pilot* of 15 June, beneath the heading: "Challenge Sent by David Goldstein to Seventh Day Adventists Is Unanswered."³⁷ This article, communicating a somewhat expanded version, is the one to which we now must bend our mind.

XIII

At Lufkin, Texas, both the judge and sheriff had permitted Goldstein to interview Glenn M. Warren, charged with murder and "very likely to be sent to the electric chair." Goldstein discovered that literature available in that place had converted this man to the Seventh-day Adventist point of view. The poor fellow spent part of his time in drawing "a picture of the tiara of the pope with the words inscribed upon it 'Vicarius Filii Dei' (Vicar of the Son of God) which he has figured out, as Seventh Day Adventism directs, to the numerical value 666."³⁸

Goldstein accused the editors and publishers of *Present Truth* of "embittering hearts and minds with the monstrous notion that the pope is the 666 in the Book of Revelation. If it were a crime as well as a sin, you may rest assured that you and your associated Seventh Day Adventists would be under lock and key for murdering truth." (Oh, for the holy Inquisition and its tender mercies!) Goldstein thought it was horrible that they were using public places to show their "wanton disregard of the courtesy due to citizens and taxpayers who are Catholics. This you have done here in Lufkin, as elsewhere, by placing racks in the Courthouse, railway station and hotels that are filled with your insulting effusions." Wherever he had gone through America on his "70,000 mile lecture journey of the Catholic Campaigners for Christ," he had also found and opposed the preachers who in outdoor meetings did this "evil work." But the case of Glenn Warren made him angry, for "it is the vicious work of drawing a man indicted for murder into the maelstrom of Seventh Day Adventist misrepresentation that prompts me to write directly to headquarters in Tacoma Park to find out whether the time has come when a dispassionate detailed refutation of the charge will turn you from furthering the assault for which God will surely punish its perpetrators if they do not repent and make reparation for their offense."

The rest of this open letter comprises Goldstein's rebuttal. Amongst other things, he cited a Protestant professor, who had in 1905 declared: "The interpretations of the number form a jungle from which escape is apparently hopeless." Goldstein also quoted Preuss, who had said: "This famous number has been made to yield almost all the historical names of the past eighteen centuries," and Hull of Bombay, who had Latinized his name "to show the Seventh Day Adventists of India that according to their system of reckoning,

he himself and not the pope is the anti-Christ in the Book of Revelation, for his name totals 666.” Another point that Goldstein considered most important was this: “Vicarius Filii Dei is not the Pope’s title, though he is the vicar of Jesus Christ Who is the Son of God.”

In conclusion, he wrote: “My hope is that ‘Present Truth’ will cease bearing false witness against Catholics by printing real truth.”³⁹

(For readers who wonder what happened to Glenn Warren, we unfortunately lack the necessary information. In the foregoing, however, we find nothing to suggest that he ever gave up his new-found faith.)

A mere six days after his letter was republished in *The Pilot*, David Goldstein on 21 June 1935 addressed another—Challenge No. 2—to the editors of *Present Truth*. Of its typewritten as yet unsigned draft on letterhead paper, we have JPEG images. It was written from 62 Essex Street, Boston, Massachusetts, and contains an ugly accusation. Referring to the 500,000 readers of *Our Sunday Visitor* who had read his first Challenge on 2 June, Goldstein said they “know now that bearing false witness against the Catholic Church is the deliberate policy of Seventh Day Adventism.”

But he also added a new argument:

Since sending you Challenge No. 1 further evidence has come to me to prove not only that the 666 in the 13th Chapter of the Book of Revelation does not apply to the pope, but that—according to proper reckoning of the numerical value of letters—it fits exactly the “Prophetess”—Ellen Gould White—upon whose “visions”, “revelations”, and “testimonies” Seventh Day Adventism was founded.

The title you insist belongs to the pope (Vicarius Filii Dei) can only be held to total 666 by violating the law of Roman numerals which holds that when an i appears before a v or u it is 1 minus 5 (4) and not 1 plus 5 (6). Hence counting properly, according to the law of numbers, the title will be found to total 664. On the other hand, proper calculation shows the number of the name of the Founder of your Anti-Catholic sect to total exactly 666. Is she the “Beast”? That will be left for you to answer, here is the “title” of the pope and the name of your “Prophetess” in parallel columns.

V.....	5	E.....	0
i.....	1	l.....	50
c.....	100	l.....	50
a.....	0	e.....	0
r.....	0	n.....	0
i			
u.....	4	G.....	0
s.....	0	o.....	0
		u.....	5
F.....	0	l.....	50
i.....	1	d.....	500
l.....	50		
i.....	1	W.....	10 (W equals v plus v, 10)
i.....	1	h.....	0
		i.....	1
D.....	500	t.....	0
e.....	0	e.....	<u>0</u>
i.....	<u>1</u>	Total	666
Total	664		

Was Ellen Gould White the “Beast”? Your system of counting Roman numerical values says—YES.

You deliberately disregard the law of Roman numerals in your endeavor to besmirch the character of the pope. That law declares that a letter or letters placed before one of greater value subtracts therefrom, while a letter or less placed after one of great value adds thereto.

Goldstein ended by saying: “I submit that common courtesy, if not Christian decency, ought to prompt you to cease offending Catholic-Christians by withdrawing from circulation papers, books and pamphlets in which the pope is called the 666 in the Book of Revelations.”⁴⁰

We pass over Goldstein’s allegation that Seventh-day Adventists built their church on Ellen G. White, though all their basic doctrines are from the Bible and none from her writings. Instead, we note how glibly he could assert, with a wicked tongue in his cheek: “You deliberately disregard the law of Roman numerals . . .” On the contrary, they must have been startled by his eccentric application of such numbers.

Let us note how he himself failed to apply the law “that a letter or letters placed before one of greater value subtracts therefrom.” Why did he not in the name *Gould* subtract the *u* (5) from the *l* (50) or the *l* (50) from the *d* (500)? If so, her total would certainly have been less. Also spurious was his idea that *W* numerically equaled *VV* (5 + 5 = 10). This letter did not exist in the original Roman alphabet.

We have already, in our first volume, dealt with Goldstein’s novel method of calculating Roman numerals. Amongst other things, we referred to the

learned Dr. Eric W. Weisstein and also Latin syllabification, so we need not here repeat ourselves. Whatever Goldstein thought, *vicarius Filii Dei* does have a number value of 666. And involving Ellen White is irrelevant; the meaning of the Apocalyptic number must fit into a larger context: Rev. 13 as a whole, as well as other Bible prophecies about the Antichrist. If, as we maintain and as history has demonstrated, these predictions concern the papacy, the calculation also needs to be limited to pontifical titles.

Barely a month after the foregoing letter from his Boston domicile, David Goldstein was in Jackson, Michigan. On 20 July 1935, after a six-day campaign of open-air meetings in that town, he wrote to its local Seventh-day Adventist pastor to repeat his allegations, requesting his church not to circulate “a slander against the Vicar of Jesus Christ.” Of the draft for this letter, too, we have JPEG images. It was probably done in haste and greatly in need of an editorial hand. Its left-hand margin is peculiar; its spacing, bizarre; its grammar, barely literate; and the title with which it is concerned, repeatedly misspelled as “Vicarious Filii Dei.”

Once more, Goldstein denied that it was “the official title” of the pope and asserted that it “does not total 666 according to the right use of Roman numerical values.” To this he added: “Instead of the pope, whose name is not ‘Vicarious Filii Dei,’ being the 666 in the Book of Revelation, your ingenious method of reckoning you will find that the ‘seer’ and ‘prophetess’ who is the mother of Seventh Day Adventism, whose name is Ellen Gould White is the 666.”⁴¹

Though English teachers will wince on reading this patch of purple prose and may itch to correct David Goldstein’s grammar together with his spelling, his meaning and intention are perfectly clear.

The next month, on 16 August 1935, he resurfaced more elegantly in a letter to the editor of *The Commonweal: A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs*. This journal, founded in 1924 by Michael Williams (1877-1950), was and remains a classy publication for Catholic lay people.⁴² Its copy editors did a fair if not complete job of cleaning up Goldstein’s text.

He said: “The Seventh Day Adventist sect is small in numbers but its adherents have a propaganda spirit it were well for the Catholic laity to emulate. Their animus centers against the Catholic Church as the cause of the change of the Sabbath to Sunday. They are continually circulating papers and books and delivering talks in which the Pope is declared to be ‘the beast,’ the ‘666 in the Book of Revelation.’”

He surveyed his conflict with them and mentioned his interview with “a murderer incarcerated in Lufkin, Texas, a ‘convert’ to the sect, who was using his artistic talents to paint tiaras with the inscription on them, ‘Vicarius Filii Dei,’ which is held to total 666. Again, recently, while in Michigan where *Present Truth* was being widely circulated and an address being delivered on the Pope.”

Goldstein counseled the Catholic laity on how to rout the Seventh-day Adventists by writing to the “letter-box sections of our daily papers.” He also

listed the arguments that ought to be used, including the ideas that *vicarius Filii Dei* was not the official title of the pope and that it “does not total 666 according to a proper tabulation of Roman numerical values.” Again he showed how 666 allegedly applied to Ellen Gould White, concluding: “Thus not the Pope but the founder of the Seventh Day Adventist sect is the terrible creature depicted in the Book of Revelation, according to their own system.”⁴³

XIV

On 1 December 1935, Aquinas Knoff, a priest assisting Bishop Noll as an editor of *Our Sunday Visitor*, in an answer to a question tried to summarize the conflict between Roman Catholics and Seventh-day Adventists.

He began with the 18 April 1915 statement that *vicarius Filii Dei* “was actually on the mitre.” According to him, this title was wrong; since the pope had from AD 494 onward been called *vicar of Christ*. On the other hand, “since the Bishop of Rome is actually all the title implies, by the divine appointment of Christ Himself, Who is the Son of God, no logical objection can be urged against the equivalent ascription, ‘Vicar of the Son of God.’” But there was no inscription “on the triple crown of the Popes, as anyone who will take the trouble to examine the photographs of the tiara can easily determine for himself.” According to Knoff, the trouble with the Seventh-day Adventists was that for many years they had “professed to find what nobody else has found; and they have recently even employed a man to draw pictures of the imaginary tiara (with the alleged inscription prominently displayed), as the letter of Mr. David Goldstein, in OUR SUNDAY VISITOR of June 2, 1935, states.”⁴⁴

At this point, Knoff derailed from truth into falsehood, unless he was just muddled or ignorant. Perceptive readers who note this fact will henceforth be warned against him. Before proceeding, let us show just what we mean.

Goldstein at Lufkin, Texas, had not found a Seventh-day Adventist *employee* drawing an inscribed tiara. During 1935, he discovered—in jail—a convert who sometimes did so. This man had been accused of murder and was possibly awaiting death on the electric chair.

It is true that almost thirty years earlier, in 1907, another artist who did work for a Seventh-day Adventist publishing house had used a photograph of a tiara to produce a picture which showed “The Pope’s Tiara” with *vicarius Filii Dei* written on it. Below this illustration, were printed the words: “FROM PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN THE VATICAN MUSEUM.” This, however, was followed by a peculiar event. Both the Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee,⁴⁵ and the Pacific Press Publishing Company, Mountain View, California,⁴⁶ in that single year, 1907, put out two separate editions. These were identical—except for p. 699. The first edition contained the bogus tiara inscribed with *vicarius Filii Dei*. The second showed the real tiara photographed and without those words.

How did this happen? Photographs from Italy had been obtained by

William W. Prescott (1855-1944), “vice-president of the General Conference, chairman of the Review and Herald Publishing Association board, and editor of the *Review and Herald*.”⁴⁷ Taken by evangelist C. T. Everson of England, they showed that “the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* did not appear anywhere on the tiara or on any other crown used by the pope.” Prescott published this material,⁴⁸ according to his biographer, Gilbert M. Valentine, who also successfully submitted a Ph.D. dissertation on him.⁴⁹

“Sometime later, when the Southern Publishing Association released the revised edition of Uriah Smith’s *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation* [1907], Prescott was horrified to the core to find that the house had used his photographs and that an artist had added the words *vicarius Filii Dei* to the coronation tiara. Confronted with the incriminating evidence, the General Conference gave immediate orders to stop the printing of the book until the publishing house had removed the fraudulent photograph. Such forgery, Prescott argued, was just as bad as anything the Catholic Church itself might have attempted.”⁵⁰

We are not surprised that Aquinas Knoff would bring this up almost three decades later. But he failed to mention that after 1907 no further editions published by the Seventh-day Adventist Church exhibited the doctored tiara—and, as we have seen, he mixed up the artist who had drawn the picture with the murderer whom Daniel Goldstein’s had met in 1935.

Having noted Knoff’s inaccuracy, we are hardly impressed with his cocksure section entitled “History of This Lie.” He was very picky about an article of 1920 which found *vicarius Filii Dei* in Gratian’s Decretum. This was by Carlyle B. Haynes, who Knoff said was “somewhat confused.” He also crowed at an item in *The Watchman*, the Seventh-day Adventist publication, which apparently in error referred to a *pope* Gratian.⁵¹ And so on.

Knoff’s piece culminated in a venomous attack on Mrs. E. G. White, the so-called “founder of the Seventh-Day Adventist sect,” whom he taunted for lacking formal education and called “a confirmed plagiarist” dependent on “second-hand sources” like J. A. Wylie” as well as “an imbecile.”⁵² Highly emotional, this material is all heat and no light.

We note, however, that it nowhere disputes the fact that *vicarius Filii Dei* had a numerical value of 666, as David Goldstein had done. For this, Aquinas Knoff, as a better educated man, was too clever.

XV

On 3 August 1941, a few more years having passed, the milder Bishop Noll himself returned to the fray. He was reacting to *The Mark of the Beast*, a pamphlet which he said identified the pope in relation to this mark and applied Rev. 13:17-18 to him.

Amongst other things he said: “To give color to their accusation enemies of the Church publicize something that is not at all true, namely that the Pope’s tiara is inscribed with the words ‘VICARIUS FILII DEI’, and that if letters in

that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666.” To this he added: “As a matter of fact the tiara of the Pope bears no inscription whatsoever.”

He again referred to Reginald Ernest Hull, who “gave a Latin ending to his two Christian names and then figured out what the sum total would be if he translated the letters into Roman numerals, and 666 eventuated. Your own name might spell that number.” Noll also explained this in detail,⁵³ a repetition with which we will not trouble the reader.

Interestingly, like Knoff before him, Noll avoided the morass of using Roman numerals like David Goldstein. Had he done so, he would have spotted the problem inherent in *Reginaldus Ernestus Hull*. According to the Goldsteinian method, ILD in *Reginaldus* require subtracting either the *I* (1) from the *L* (50) or the *L* (50) from the *D* (500) in *Reginaldus*. That, of course, would have spoiled this particular bit of Catholic fun.

XVI

But we must return to Goldstein. In *What Say You?* (1945), his magnum opus, he rehashed the same arguments that he had used before. Only now, a decade later, he fitted his utterances to another pontiff: “Vicarius Filii Dei (Vicar of the Son of God) is a title and not a name. . . . the name of the present Pope is Pius XII and not Vicarius Filii Dei.”⁵⁴

Alas! Alas! Both Goldstein and others like him have been blatantly mistaken, for they are contradicted by somebody much greater than any of us, the One who inspired the Apocalypse. In Rev. 17:5, the beloved apostle tells us about the great whore he has seen and says: “Upon her forehead was a *name* written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:5). Apart from *Babylon*, her name includes these other words. And in Rev. 19:13, 16, where the Redeemer is described as he comes again—to save his people from the Antichristian Beast assisted by its allies—we read: “His *name* is called The Word of God” . . . “And he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a *name* written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” In these verses, we have added the emphasis, but all those capital letters were supplied by the translators of the King James Version. The word *name* in Revelation can therefore unmistakably also mean *title*.

What Say You? reiterated the old theme of whether or not *vicarius Filii Dei* was inscribed on the tiara. For Goldstein, this had become indissolubly bound up with the Historicist idea that the pope was the Antichrist, as preached by Seventh-day Adventism. But from the previous year of 1944 Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and Revelation* had begun to roll off the presses with a text revised—amongst other things—to omit any reference to either the miter or the papal crown. Now it asserted and continues to do so to our day: “This title, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, or some equivalent form of it, has appeared so frequently in Roman Catholic literature and rituals for centuries, that it scarcely seems necessary to

add other proofs of its validity and importance.”⁵⁵

About the latter point, we beg to differ. Continuing queries and uncertainties, even on the part of some Seventh-day Adventists, have prompted us—assisted by outstanding researchers in the twenty-first century—to do much additional research and write this present book.

In 1945, Goldstein, also persisted in his new-fangled method of reckoning with Roman numerals and wrote about Seventh-day Adventists that “only ignorance of how Roman numerals are figured, or dishonest enumeration of the value of the letters, can account for saying that Vicarius Filii Dei totals 666, as that title only totals 650”⁵⁶—although he himself had previously said it was 664.

At this time, he spoke of “Adventist Reckoning,” which is precisely the same thing as ordinary or traditional Roman numerals, in contrast with “Correct Reckoning,” that is, his own method. Here are his calculations:

Adventist Reckoning

V	I	C	a	r	I	V	s	f	I	L	I	I	D	e	I			
5	1	100			1	5		1	50	1	1	500		1	=	666		

Correct Reckoning

V	I	C	a	r	I	V	s	f	I	L	I	I	D	e	I			
	94				4			49	1	1	500		1	=	650			

Thereupon he perversely said: “The Mother of the Sabbatarian sect is Ellen Gould White, and the numerical value of her name is exactly 666 according to Seventh Day Adventist mode of reckoning” and added for her the table we have already shown, but horizontally.

Goldstein concluded with a question which he supposedly found funny: ““Who is the Anti-Christ?” I know not, neither does anyone else. The only 666 I know of is advertised on the auto highways as a cure for coughs and colds.”⁵⁷ Ho-hum.

Meanwhile this ardent Jewish campaigner for the Roman Church had also been contributing a column to *The Pilot*, the archdiocesan paper of Cardinal Archbishop Richard J. Cushing. During 1956, just two years before Goldstein expired, this material was republished as *My Boston Pilot Column*. Apart from bearing Cushing’s imprimatur, this book also contains his Foreword. In this ninth book by the lay writer and campaigner, the archbishop surveyed that convert’s “fifty years of sanctity,” calling him “a gifted and magnetic speaker.” He also praised Goldstein’s “formidable learning, indefatigable zeal, and matchless courage.” About those who read the book, Cushing said: “In these pages they will find true wisdom, apostolic zeal, and loving persuasion.”⁵⁸

What we really find is folly, nastiness, and downright lying.

An example of the latter concerns the Great Disappointment, about which

Goldstein hilariously piled together several falsehoods: “When 1844 passed without the coming of Our Lord, the Millerites discarded their Ascension Robes, **and ceased sighing about the ‘Lord a-coming, to the Old Church yard, on the resurrection morn.’** Miller apologized for his false predictions, and returned to his former Baptist sect.”⁵⁹ But there were no ascension robes, and though Miller admitted his mistake, he never needed to apologize.

In *The Pilot*, Goldstein had contributed little to his former actual arguments, except to emphasize that Seventh-day Adventist tithing and Sabbathkeeping were part of the Mosaic law. This, he was careful to point out, included related observances such as “the Jewish Sabbatical Jubilee, which follows the year after the seven agricultural Sabbatical years, when debts are annulled; when man is given back the possessions that had been taken from him.”⁶⁰ Previously he had called this the Old Law, which was now defunct.

Again he referred to “murderer Glenn W. Warren” and his tiara drawings as well as the Goldsteinian method of reckoning Roman numerals, which for *vicarius Filii Dei* gave a total of only 650.

New, however, were the epithets with which Goldstein regaled his readers. He said that after Millerism had collapsed, “some Adventists, foremost being **Ellen Gould White, the ‘inspired prophetess,’** afflicted with an acute attack of Sabbatarianism, started the Seventh Day Adventist sect.”⁶¹ He called the 666 reckoning for *vicarius Filii Dei* “a numerical insult,” which was “absolutely false.” Emotionally, he said to a real or hypothetical questioner who might have tormented him: “And get this into your head before you take another puff out of your dopestick, my dear Anti-Catholic Sir, the tiara worn by the Pope has neither a title, a name, nor any other lettering inscribed upon it. Hence nothing on the Pope’s tiara can be reduced to the mystic number ‘six hundred sixty-six,’ or any other number.”⁶²

What is particularly weak and dishonest about this extract is that, as mentioned above, Uriah Smith’s revised work, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (1944) had dropped all references to the pontifical tiara twelve years before this book by David Goldstein was published under the auspices of his archbishop. Further, subsequent Catholic writers steered clear of the peculiar way in which this eccentric had calculated Roman numerals.

For instance, in 1988 Karl Keating, the already mentioned full-time lay apologist and director of Catholic Answers—in a position similar to that of Goldstein—acknowledged: “The Letters of *Vicarius Filii Dei* do indeed add up to 666.”⁶³

Also insightful are remarks in the *Sunday Visitor* on 11 July 2004 by Thomas J. Craughwell, a Catholic professional writer credited with more than fifty books.⁶⁴ Under the heading “Poppycock about the popes,” he again referred to the old allegation about the *vicarius Filii Dei* being inscribed on the pontifical tiara. Going all the way back to the *Our Sunday Visitor* issue of 18 April 1915, he said: “Unfortunately, in regard to the 666 fable, this newspaper made a gaffe. Actually, two gaffes,” and detailed them as follows:

A reader had inquired about those words allegedly appearing on the pope’s

crown, to which “The newspaper replied, ‘The letters inscribed in the Pope’s mitre are these: *VICARIUS FILII DEI*, which is the Latin for VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD.’ It was a flat-out blunder on the part of the OSV staff of that day, compounded years later when another editor on his staff, unwilling to risk the dissemination of misinformation, made the rash decision to remove the offending issue from OSV’s news archives.”⁶⁵

However, Craughwell himself apparently did not notice that the original question had been asked, not in the pages of *Our Sunday Visitor*, at Huntington, Indiana, but in *The Examiner* published by Hull at Bombay in faraway India. Nor had it originated with a Catholic reader but a Protestant, probably a Seventh-day Adventist. Craughwell also failed to mention that sixty years had now elapsed since the revision of *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (1944) excised all reference to the pope’s miter or tiara.

Was this oversight accidental? We think not. Arguing about an alleged inscription on the pontiff’s headgear, a side issue of relatively minor importance, had provided a convenient stratagem for blurring the focus on the main issue: the status of *vicarius Filii Dei*, which in the context of both Rev. 13 and history can refer to only the papacy and to nothing or nobody else.

XVII

After David Goldstein, others have continued to preach and write against the Seventh-day Adventist position that the 666 of Rev. 13:18 refers to *vicarius Filii Dei*. Catholic apologists are still doing so, in a conflict that will no doubt last until the Second Coming.

We, however, must here retain our focus on the earlier period which we have just described, especially its culmination in 1935 and a few years subsequent to that date. At least behind the scenes, the arguments of men like Hull, Noll, and Goldstein greatly impacted on those who were leading the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To say that it produced a crisis is no exaggeration.

Chapter Thirty-Four
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS DOUBT AND ADAPT

I

These Catholic arguments troubled the denomination's leaders and intelligentsia. Particularly awkward were Goldstein's strident, repeated challenges of 1935.

The man in the hot seat was Francis D. Nichol (1897-1966), editor of *The Present Truth*. It was actually Frank A. Coffin (1884-1961), his editorial predecessor from 1922 to 1933,¹ who had "published an article alleging that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was the pope's official title." But the repeated Goldstein challenge to prove this contention ended up on Nichol's desk.

A conscientious scholar, he asked William W. Prescott, vice-president of the General Conference, chairman of the Review and Herald Publishing Association board, and editor of the *Review and Herald*, "for any proof that he knew of to help him justify the claim. The professor responded that there was none. He had studied the issue carefully when he was editor of the *Protestant*. His renewed study in the six weeks since Nichol had written only confirmed the fact. The claim, he said, rested on a discredited forgery, 'The Donation of Constantine' published in *The Decretum of Gratian*. The actual title of the pope was *Vicarius Christi*, which could not be made to apply to 666."²

II

At that time, nobody among Seventh-day Adventists had a more illustrious name for intellect and scholarship than Prescott. He was now an octogenarian, perhaps inclined to the *idée fixe*, but still brilliant. He sported a most unusual curriculum vitae. A graduate of Dartmouth College, New Hampshire—a prestigious Ivy League college founded in 1769—"he had taught Latin and Greek while still in his last year in the academy . . ." Later, "With his acceptance of the presidency of Battle Creek College (1885-1894) he entered upon a career unique in many respects in SDA history. While still president of Battle Creek College he helped found Union College and became its first president in 1891. He appointed principals for the two institutions to act while he was absent from one or the other. Then late in 1892 he assumed the presidency of the newly founded Walla Walla College. Thus he was simultaneously president of three colleges in that year."³

Prescott's mind was highly critical, in perhaps both a positive and a negative sense, although his memory could at times be subtly unreliable. Of this fact, Arthur L. White, Ellen G. White's grandson, has left a record. He wrote: "At a meeting of the Bible and history teachers held in Washington, D.C., on August 1, 1919, (following the Bible Conference), Elder W. W. Prescott declared: 'I contributed something toward the revision of *Great Controversy*. I furnished considerable material bearing upon that question."⁴

According to White, however, that is not what really happened. When plans were afoot in 1910 to republish the book, both its author and the publishers wanted to improve it where necessary. As she wrote on 25 July 1911: “When I learned that *The Great Controversy* must be reset, I determined that we would have everything closely examined, to see if the truths it contained were stated in the very best manner, to convince those not of our faith that the Lord had guided and sustained me in the writing of its pages.”—EGW to FMW, July 25, 1911.

While on a trip to Washington, her son, W. C. White, had already in early April 1910 conferred with W. W. Prescott about this project. That made sense, for the professor “was then editor of *The Protestant Magazine* and as *The Great Controversy* had considerable to say about the Roman Catholic Church, it was logical that he should be asked to look the book through . . .” But W. C. White was also somewhat reluctant to involve him, because of “the views that he held in regard to inspiration.”⁵ That is, Prescott used to believe in verbal inspiration and Ellen G. White did not.

About this, a footnote explains: “While president of Battle Creek College in the 1890s, Prescott had espoused the views in regard to inspiration of Professor Francois Gausson, a Swiss theologian. On this, W. C. White commented: ‘The acceptance of that view by the students in the Battle Creek College and many others, including Elder Haskell, has resulted in bringing into our work questions and perplexities without end, and always increasing. Sister White never accepted the Gausson theory regarding verbal inspiration, either as applied to her own work or as applied to the Bible.’ W. C. White to L. E. Froom, January 8, 1928, published in the Appendix of *Selected Messages*, Book 3, pp. 454, 455.”⁶

Therefore, Ellen G. White welcomed editorial suggestions for improving the diction, mechanics, and other aspects of her book—provided it remained essentially unaltered.

Prescott on 26 April 1910 sent in a 39-page double-spaced letter containing a large number of suggestions. If adopted, some of them “would have resulted in sweeping changes in the book” and were, “after careful consideration,” rejected. W. C. White explained that “Only a little more than half of the 105 suggestions were accepted and a large part of these related to precision of expression or called for supporting references or Appendix Note explanations.”⁷

To show what a nitpicker Prescott could be, we refer to only one of his objections. In the 1888 edition of *The Great Controversy*, Ellen G. White had written: “Satan tampered with the fourth commandment.” But Prescott pointed out that “In other places the change of this commandment is referred directly to the pope or the papacy.” Here the publisher’s reaction was: “Negative. This rather quibbling criticism was ignored, for none could misunderstand the intent of the author, who elsewhere in the book attributed the change to the papacy under the influence of Satan.”⁸

Prescott exaggerated with his 1919 suggestion that because he had

“furnished considerable material,” he contributed substantially toward revising *The Great Controversy*. Excessive modesty does not seem to have been one of his faults.

III

When the crisis over 666 and *vicarius Filii Dei* arose in 1935 and the years that followed, W. W. Prescott’s voice was one that his denomination could not ignore. As already described in Volume I, a high-level meeting took place—at his insistence—on 16 April 1936 in the office of Charles Henry Watson, the General Conference president, chief executive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other prominent men who attended were M. E. Kern (Secretary), F. D. Nichol, L. E. Froom, I. H. Evans, F. M. Wilcox, W. P. Elliot, and A. W. Cormack.⁹

The pontiff, said Prescott, had only one official title, namely *vicarius Christi*, adopted at the Council of Florence in 1439. Although he acknowledged the existence of *vicarius Filii Dei*, he denied its official status. As reasoning, this is as powerful as admitting the existence of English in America while denying its officiality.

According to Valentine, “His careful research and weighty evidence convinced at least Watson and Evans, but others (predictably) thought the issue needed further study. The matter was shelved, but with the understanding that in the meantime ‘the interpretation should not be repeated.’ It seems that very few ever heard anything about the decision. The use of the number continued to be popular, and right up to his last days Prescott was still corresponding with authors who advocated it. He felt deeply disturbed that people would put the credibility of the church at stake by continuing to apply 666 to a nonexistent title of the pope.”¹⁰

One item in the foregoing is, however, totally incorrect: the statement that “the matter was shelved.” On the contrary, as James Lamar McElhany (1880-1959), a later General Conference president, wrote in 1943:

“As far back as 1936, plans were laid by [Watson] the President of the General Conference to give study to the historical evidences for the interpretation of Rev. 13:18. His Secretary was assigned the responsibility of directing an extensive research in the leading libraries of the world for the best historical evidence that could be found to throw light on the interpretation of the ‘number of the beast.’

“With the cooperation of experienced workers, such research has been carried on in the libraries of the United States, England, France, Germany and Italy.”¹¹

But Prescott had raised the ante. From saying that *vicarius Filii Dei* was not an official title he went on to assert that it was a nonexistent title. It also seems that he was a dogmatic man, impatient of qualifying nuances. Let us, in any case, test his claim about *vicarius Christi* and the Council of Florence.

Meeting over a period of several years (1438-1445), it was actually a

continuation of the Council of Basel, which Pope Eugenius IV had transferred to Ferrara, where proceedings began on 8 January 1438. But a year later plague drove the delegates from there to Florence. This Council focused on healing the breach between the Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches. The delegates from the East agreed and signed, but “after their return to Constantinople, many of the Greeks repudiated the Reunion.”¹²

Vicarius Christi originated as a title of the emperor Constantine and only centuries later was appropriated by the pontiffs, as shown in Volume II. But now at last these men from the city on the Bosphorus, besieged by the Turks, agreed to let the pope have it. They were desperately trying to get Western military assistance to save them. When this did not materialize, Constantinople fell in 1453.

But let us now see what Henry Edward Manning, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster—who surely knew what he was writing about—had to say about that fifteenth-century council and just how he himself related to those titles.

In 1871, referring to Vatican I, he stated: “We renew the definition of the Oecumenical Council of Florence, in virtue of which all the faithful of Christ must believe that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of Blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is true *Vicar of Christ* [*Vicarius Christi*] . . .” (Emphasis added.)¹³

So far, so good, for Prescott’s position. But elsewhere in the same book Manning used both titles as synonyms, as he often did. Fervently believing in the independence of the Papal States and stricken to the heart when they were eliminated, he wrote:

They are dissolving the temporal power of the *Vicar of Christ*. And why do they dissolve it? Because governments are no longer Christian. The temporal power had no sphere, and therefore no manifestation, before the world was Christian. What matter will it have for its temporal power, when the world has ceased to be Christian? For what is the temporal power, but the condition of peaceful independence and supreme direction over all Christians, and all Christian societies, inherent in the office of *Vicar of Christ*, and head of the Christian Church? When the Civil powers become Christian, faith and obedience restrained them from casting so much as a shadow of human sovereignty over the *Vicar of the Son of God*. They who attempt it now will do it at their peril.¹⁴ (Emphases added.)

The rule of *il Papa Re*, the pope-king, had begun with his spurious though empowering Donation of Constantine; and for this the title *vicarius Filii Dei* was indispensable.

Among those present at the April 1936 meeting which Prescott had called for, were Froom and Nichol. The latter, as editor of *The Present Truth*, had been the repeated target of Goldstein’s vitriolic pleasantries. Froom was also concerned by Prescott’s statement that there was no evidence for *vicarius Filii*

Dei as an official title of the pope. Froom was at work on the massive research that would within a decade culminate in his four-volume masterpiece, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (1946–1954). Soon he would be returning to Europe to gather additional data for this work, but the problem raised by Prescott was also on his mind.

IV

In the meantime, other church members beyond the eastern shores of the Atlantic had already begun their contribution to the research that Watson had mandated. On 1 June 1936, *La Revue Adventiste* (The Adventist Review)—which described itself as the organ of French-speaking Seventh-day Adventists—carried two short but striking paragraphs signed with the initials J. V. One of them said: “The *Revue*’s readers will not be upset to see the photographic reproduction of the page from *Dizionario di Erudizione Storico-ecclesiastica* by Gaetano Moroni Romano (second Adjutant of the Chamber of Pope Pius IX), in which is to be found the information that enables one to read, in one of the 9,000 items at the Vatican, the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei*.”¹⁵

The writer also explained that for this data he was indebted to M. F. Jagueneau of Nantes in western France who had visited a bookshop of the Sacred Heart at Turin, northern Italy, where his attention was drawn to this Italian ecclesiastical dictionary. Also printed, together with J. V.’s remarks, were the title page and parts of pp. 120-121. As we have also shown in our chapter on the years just before and during the nineteenth century, Moroni mentioned various papal titles. One of them was *vicarius Filii Dei*.

J. V. was obviously a scholar of a very high caliber, but who was he? It could only have been the veteran Jean Vuilleumier (1864-1956), who had edited both *Les Signes des Temps* (The Signs of the Times) and *La Revue Adventiste* until his retirement in 1932. Born at Tramelan, Switzerland, he was the son of Albert Frederic Vuilleumier (1835-1923), who had in about 1867 embraced Seventh-day Adventism as preached by the church’s first though unofficial foreign missionary M. B. Czechowski.¹⁶ Jean Vuilleumier was a polyglot missionary, evangelist, Bible teacher, translator, and editor. The places of his labor had included South America; Battle Creek, MI; and Quebec. At the time of writing this insightful little article, he was—after fifty years of service to his church—again living in his native Switzerland.¹⁷

In the next year, the March 1937 issue of *The Watchman Magazine*, a Seventh-day Adventist paper published at Southern Publishing Association at Nashville, Tennessee, contained “The Number of a Man” by its assistant editor Frank A. Coffin. This was the concluding part of his “Messengers of Doom,” which had appeared in the February issue. Three items in his article are most relevant to our discussion.

First, he quoted, in Latin, the most vital part of the Donation containing *vicarius Filii Dei*, as recorded in the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, amended by Pope

Gregory XIII and published at Lyons in 1622. For this, he also provided an English translation. Second, he maintained that the pope had several synonymous titles. To illustrate this point, he referred to *The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ* and *Petri Privilegium* by Manning in the nineteenth century. Citing the former book, Coffin showed that “throughout Cardinal Manning’s work the titles, ‘Vicar of Christ,’ and ‘Vicar of the Son of God,’ are one and the same, as ought to be clear merely from a consideration of the identical meaning of these two phrases.” Third, regarding the idea of Petrine primacy and apostolic succession, Coffin stated: “It is upon this claim to supremacy, this claim that the pope is Vicar of the Son of God, that the whole papal structure rests; for if the pope is not Vicar of the Son of God, he is without any authority whatever. Whether it be expressed as ‘Vicar of the Son of God,’ ‘Vicar of Christ,’ or ‘Vicar of God,’ it is the same claim. Each one of these terms was coined by the papacy and applied to the pope.”¹⁸

This last statement is not entirely correct. *Vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ) was not coined by the papacy but—as we have indicated—filched from the Byzantine emperors. But for that time the *Watchman* article was generally very good; though not as Prescott saw it, since Coffin was plunging a dagger into the heart of his pet argument, which denied that *vicarius Filii Dei* was officially a papal title. After all, this is what he had maintained before prominent people, some of them real scholars, in Elder Watson’s office on 16 April of the previous year. Prescott must have found this intolerable. Thereupon, for circulation behind the scenes, he wrote a negative review of Coffin’s article.

Apart from nitpicking, for which he had a special talent, Prescott argued that the *Corpus Iuris Canonici*—and therefore Gratian’s Decretum containing the Donation—had no real authority in the Roman Church. He substantiated this idea by citing, amongst other things, the following from a Catholic Encyclopedia: “Considered as collections, the ‘Decree’ of Gratian, the ‘Extravagantes Joannis XXII,’ and the ‘Extravagantes communes’ have not, and never had, a legal value, *but the documents which they contain may possess and, as a matter of fact, often do possess, very great authority*” (our emphasis added).¹⁹

For the full import of this quotation, its second part is vitally important, yet Prescott failed to deal with it. What he dwelt on much was the supposition that *vicarius Christi* was the only *official* title of the pontiffs, from the time of Innocent III (reigned 1198-1216).²⁰ Apparently it never occurred to him that popes, being royalty, could have several titles, which as a matter of fact has always been the case. Nor did he seem to notice that originally *vicarius Christi*—as we have shown—had been invented for himself by the emperor Constantine. But *vicarius Filii Dei* is a uniquely papal title.

Prescott displayed a great deal of erudition, by referring to all manner of authorities, among them von Döllinger, from whom he quoted several times. That parading all this knowledge was in some way ineffectual may be deduced from a circumstance that he failed to mention. Von Döllinger’s ideas had in

several instances been rejected by the Roman Church, which eventually excommunicated him. Prescott stressed the fact that the Donation was a forgery,²¹ yet failed to acknowledge the essential point that all the same it had provided a basis for centuries of papal power, secular as well as ecclesiastical.

For the rest, he really skirted the particular issues that Coffin had raised but was eager to have them put down. He therefore circulated his negative review to prominent Seventh-day Adventist administrators and scholars.

V

One of its recipients was Jean Vuilleumier, already doing research for the committee on the Beast's name and number. He, however, was not going to let Prescott get away with what he was doing.

Having been alerted to Coffin's article in *The Watchman Magazine* of March 1937, Vuilleumier took up his pen and responded brilliantly. At the time of writing, he was probably lodging at an hotel or in a private house quite close to Paris; for his manuscript ends with both his name and an address: Avenue du Centenaire 66, La Varenne, Seine, France.²² Most probably this was in Vitry-sur-Seine, which with present-day transport is just a few minutes away from the city itself.

Vuilleumier began by referring to a challenge from "a Catholic prelate, in the United States" for Seventh-day Adventists to prove that *vicarius Filii Dei* "was ever used in any official or authentic way"; since the document in which it occurred was a forgery. "I understand that in the March 1937 number of the *Watchman Magazine* a contributor has taken up this challenge, seeking to prove the validity of this title. On the other hand, a recent paper signed by Prof. W. W. Prescott, takes strong exception to the conclusions of this article. Having myself recently made some research along that line, at the Paris National Library, I feel prompted to bring in my testimony on the matter under discussion."²³

We admire Vuilleumier's impeccable English, rare among non-native speakers, but even more the trenchant and orderly mind of this 73-year-old scholar. He analyzed the issue under five headings:

"I. What is Gratian's *Decretum*, and what is its authority in the Catholic Church?

"II. What is the *Corpus juris canonici* which, in the XVIth century, incorporated the *Decretum*, and what is its standing in the Catholic Church?"

"III. What are the *False Decretals* from which both the *Decretum* and the *Corpus* borrowed the document containing this title?

"IV. What is *Constantine's Donation*, in which this title first appears, and which successively passed into the *False Decretals* in the IXth century, into the *Decretum* in the XIIth century and into the *Corpus canonici* in the XVIth century?

"V. Can these source documents be taken as establishing VICARIUS FILII DEI as an official title of the Papacy?"²⁴

In this last section, Vuilleumier first summarized his findings: “From the foregoing, we have learned that the title *vicarius Filii Dei* has been handed down to us, as one of the titles of the papacy, through a period of one thousand years, and that with the silent sanction of one hundred fifty popes. Armed with this fact, Seventh-day Adventists might, it would seem, quietly face the challenge of any and all the Catholic prelates of America and of the entire world.”²⁵

Zooming in on Prescott’s main argument, “the plea made by Catholic theologians that canonical collections, taken as a whole, like the Decretum, ‘have never been recognized by the church as official collections,’ and have ‘never had legal value or sanction,’” he asked: “May not this plea be reasonably laid on the shelf if it be true that ‘actions speak louder than words’?” Quoting von Döllinger in a French translation, Vuilleumier pointed out how in the Middle Ages by the time of Innocent III, “the papal system, raised to a pinnacle BY THE FALSE ISIDORE, by the Gregorian school AND BY GRATIAN, finally reached absolute domination.”²⁶

What is more, according to von Döllinger, whom Vuilleumier quoted, “as late as 1570, the Roman correctors of the Decretum appointed by three popes declared that this work had been entrusted to them ‘IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE UNSHAKEN AUTHORITY OF THIS MOST USEFUL AND IMPORTANT CODE. (Admonition to the reader.)’ Such were the prestige and the respect which surrounded this book honey-combed with errors and overflowing with falsifications.”²⁷

And so, said Vuilleumier, it is “no wonder if the hierarchy rejects the Donation document now that it has been exploded. It is a well-known fact that useful though disreputable instruments—like spies, for instance—are always disowned by the governments that use them. It is very common, but not very honorable, to repudiate wrong principles or false documents after one has taken advantage of them to his heart’s content.” But “Let the objectors prove that the Catholic Church has ever passed condemnation upon the official textbooks—for such they are—upon which she has built her usurped power for nearly a thousand years. Let them show that she has ever published a list of the false documents therein contained, and that she has ever repudiated the title VICARIUS FILII DEI. Is there a shadow of evidence that this has ever been done?”²⁸

And, Vuilleumier added: “Prof. Prescott’s paper insistently stresses the fact that Constantine’s Donation is ‘fictitious,’ ‘unreliable,’ ‘discredited’ and ‘fraudulent,’ that it is a ‘palpable, absolute forgery.’ True, and yet the papacy has allowed this forgery to circulate over all Europe and to hold the place of honor in its theological schools for hundreds of years. She has encouraged and used innumerable editions of these collections. All this makes her case infinitely worse, without in the least weakening the conclusion about the title VICARIUS FILII DEI.”²⁹

Indeed. And to this Vuilleumier could also have joined a statement by

Thomas Hodgkin, a redoubtable authority on ancient Italian affairs: “The story of the Donation of Constantine fully told would almost be the history of the Middle Ages. It was hidden, as it were, for a time under a bushel, and was not made so much use of by the Popes of the ninth and tenth centuries as we should have expected. But towards the end of the eleventh century we find it put in the forefront of the battles by the advocates of Hildebrand’s world-ruling papal theocracy. Under Innocent III, Gregory IX, Boniface VIII, it is constantly appealed to in support of their pretensions to rule as feudal suzerains over Italy, over the Holy Roman Empire, over the world. For three centuries after this, the canonists take the Donation as the basis of their airy edifices, some expanding, some restricting its purport, but none of them apparently entertaining any suspicion of the genuineness of the documents itself.”³⁰

Admittedly, Christopher B. Coleman—who quoted this passage in an abbreviated form—demurred and said: “This far overshoots the mark,” for which he gave his reasons.³¹ While also averse to exaggerations, we nevertheless invite the reader to ponder the relevant chapters of our own book. We think they show there was much truth in Hodgkin’s remarks, not only as they concern the Middle Ages but also for the “three centuries” that followed them.

Vuilleumier was absolutely right about the Donation as well as the *vicarius Filii Dei* title embedded in it.

VI

And so was Thomas Marion French (1883-1949), associate editor of the *Review and Herald* from 1934 to 1938. This was a versatile man, who had amongst other things been a missionary on the African Gold Coast—present-day Ghana—and president of the Natal-Transvaal Conference, South Africa, after editing the *Signs of the Times* in that country. He had also been a Bible teacher at Stanborough Park Missionary College, England; headed the school of theology at Atlantic Union College in the eastern United States; and became chairman of the Bible department at Walla Walla College, WA. He finally served his church as president of the West Virginia Conference (1939-1942) and then the East Pennsylvania Conference (1942-1943).³²

About the same time as Vuilleumier made his input, French produced his “Notes on the Number of the Beast.”³³ He wrote in a similar vein as his fellow believer from Switzerland.

Regarding the Roman Church, he cited or referred to several specific authorities as well as *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

French also quoted from or glanced at Protestant writers. The latter included J. A. Wylie and Christopher B. Coleman. Interestingly he also found *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 identifications in Elliot and Shimeall who cited Robert Fleming, as well as H. Gratton Guinness, Samuel Hanson Cox, T. W. Christie, and Thomas Whitemore. Concerning these Protestant non-Seventh-day

Adventists, we have ourselves listed and discussed a much larger number of them from the eighteenth to the late nineteenth century, in Appendix III. We therefore need not detail what French had to say about them, except to note that with this material he was moving well beyond Uriah Smith.

The following paragraph in French's Notes has great merit:

“A Title Which Applies to All Popes

“Vicarius Filii Dei is the title the Catholic Church conferred on the apostle Peter, who they claim was the first Pope. Again and again they have said [by quoting the spurious Donation], Peter was constituted the Vicarius Filii Dei on earth. Of the titles Vicarius Dei, Vicarius Christi, Vicarius Filii Dei, etc., the last of these is the only one we find ascribed to Peter, of whom the Popes are said to be successors. Since Peter was constituted Vicarius Filii Dei, the popes, whom they claim to be his successors, are all Vicars of the Son of God, while the other titles, Vicar of Christ, Vicar of God, Vicar of Jesus Christ, are but variations of this same title.”³⁴

As we have shown, however, *vicar of Christ* originated as a title bestowed upon himself by the emperor Constantine. But *vicar of the Son of God*, in Latin or any other language, was from the beginning and for many centuries a title invented for and almost exclusively used to magnify the pope, as both the world's religious supremo and a temporal king. It has almost never been applied to anybody else.

And here is most of French's

“SUMMARY

“The very foundation of the Papal system is the primacy of Peter, that Peter was constituted the Vicar of the Son of God. This title is found in that document (The Donation of Constantine) which was used from about 752 till the 17th century in establishing and maintaining the temporal power of the Popes. This title was employed in a letter of Pope Leo IX to the Patriarch of Constantinople. It was inserted in Gratian's Canon Law. When Gratian's work was revised by order of Pius V and the revision was approved and declared faultless by Gregory XIII in 1580, following the Council of Trent, the title appeared in that book of Canon Law. It appeared in the history of Labbé, an outstanding Catholic historian of the 17th century. The document containing it was vigorously defended by Binius, a notable scholar and canonist of the 17th century. The title was listed among the titles of the Pope in the theological work of Ferraris in the 18th century. Manning employed the title repeatedly in the 19th century. . .”³⁵

This is very good. In the foregoing chapters, we have demonstrated, with many quotations, that the Latin *vicarius Filii Dei* (and its translations into other languages) remained a potent tool for the establishment as well as the maintenance of pontifical power until the very end of the Papal States in 1870 and beyond. Even then, as this book shows, it was not extinguished, since

several writers—even some churchmen—kept on using it well into the twentieth century.

VII

While Vuilleumier, French, and others were making their inputs to the committee on 666, whose chairman was Warren Eugene Howell (1859–1943), Froom—having gone to Europe—also remembered the title issue raised by Prescott. He therefore brought it into his research. About to return to America, as the storm clouds of World War II were already gathering, on 29 August 1938, he wrote from London, England, to Howell. The latter was a scholar and an author in his own right as well as the General Conference secretary (from 1930). He had also become the “chairman of the committee appointed to revise Uriah Smith’s *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*.”³⁶

Froom, as already cited in Volume I, concluded: “In the hundreds and hundreds (literally!) of papal documents and pictures of tiaras and other papal implements which I have examined I have never found an authentic use of the title by a papal leader, save in the forged Donation of Constantine in the Decretum of Gratian. I have studied coins and medallions and pictures and documents in Rome, and Vienna, Geneva, Paris, London, Berlin, and I have had the assistance of skilful men in these different places, not only Adventist experts in Latin, but I have appealed to the finest experts in those institutions without any result.”³⁷ This seemed like a confirmation of what Prescott had been maintaining.

But about the non-use of *vicarius Filii Dei* except in the Donation as transmitted by Gratian’s Decretum, both men were mistaken. Anselm II (1036–1086) and Deusdedit (d. between 1097 and 1100) compiled collections, each of them known as a *Collectio canonum*. Obviously these documents anteceded Gratian’s Decretum, which first appeared in 1140.

Further, Froom and Prescott failed to grasp the impact of the fraudulent Donation on Europe and the rest of our planet for more than a millennium. They had also paid limited attention to the fact that Latin was not the only language in which to look for the title. As we have demonstrated, it was also used extensively in other languages like English, French, Italian, Spanish, and German.

Froom’s phrase “a papal leader” is obscure. Did he mean a *pope*? If so, he was still wrong. As is well known, one pontiff, Leo IX (1002–1054, reigned from 1049) did both use and apply to himself the title *vicarius Filii Dei*, almost a hundred years before Gratian was born or could prepare his Decretum. This pope appealed to the Donation and explicitly used that title. According to the dates we have mentioned, it could be found in the *Collectio canonum* by Anselm II—or an earlier source.

French’s “Notes on the Number of the Beast,” which we cited above, contain a partial translation of Pope Leo IX’s letter in 1054 to Michael Caerularius, Patriarch at Constantinople, with which the pope attempted to

subordinate the Greek Orthodox Church to himself.³⁸

The translator helping French was Bertha Shanks Chaney, the first wife of Frank L. Chaney (1872-1963). The last mentioned was for a time the dean and an English teacher at the Seventh-day Adventist Washington Missionary College (later Columbia Union College).³⁹ We have slightly adapted the supplied words in brackets, lightly edited the punctuation, and deleted her last word: *etc.* Otherwise her text is intact. But because it breaks off after the title, leaving the passage incomplete, we have continued the passage with a piece from Coleman's translation (though this may be based on a somewhat different manuscript). Altogether, this reads as follows:

But lest perhaps until now some scruple of doubt may remain to you, and lest you may lightly suppose that with absurd and old-womanish tales the holy Roman seat wishes to vindicate itself and to defend in some measure its honor unshaken, a few words from the privilege [Donation] of this same Constantine with the golden cross placed above the venerable body of the heavenly keybearer [the apostle Peter], we will make known in the presence of all [the things] by which truth will be established and falsity confounded: so that all members of the Catholic mother may have knowledge that we are of the teachings of this Peter, who says of himself in his epistles: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty," 2 Peter 1:16, and that we impress upon you not so much an official report as those things which are disclosed by sight itself and by touch.

Surely, having been admonished, recall to mind because this same glorious chief [Constantine] in his spoken privilege, after his clear and perfect confession of the faith and his unadulterated commendation of his baptism, promulgated the special authority of the holy Roman church, saying:

We have considered it suitable, together with all our satraps, and with the general senate, with the aristocrats also and the united people subject to the glorious Roman empire, that just as the blessed Peter is seen to be constituted *Vicar of the Son of God* in the world,⁴⁰ . . . so the Pontiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a supremacy greater than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity is seen to have conceded to it, choosing that same chief of the apostles and his vicars to be our constant intercessors with God. And to the extent of our earthly imperial power, we have decreed that his holy Roman church shall be honored with veneration, and that more than our empire and earthly throne the most sacred seat of the Blessed Peter shall be gloriously exalted, we giving to it power, and dignity of glory, and vigor, and honor imperial. And we ordain and decree that he shall have the supremacy as well over the four principal seats, Alexandria, Antioch,

Jerusalem, and Constantinople, as also over all the churches of God in the whole earth. And the Pontiff, who at the time shall be at the head of the holy Roman church itself, shall be more exalted than, and chief over, all the priests of the whole world, and according to his judgment everything which is provided for the service of God and for the stability of the faith of Christians is to be administered.⁴¹

VIII

Froom in his search for a document in which “a papal leader” applied *vicarius Filii Dei* to himself was, however, hampered by another problem: usually it was not the custom for popes to apply such titles to themselves. He may, though, eventually have come to realize this by pondering a letter that the editor of *America*, the national Catholic weekly published by the Jesuit order, had written to him about the pontiff’s titles, no doubt in answer to his query:

“The titles of his office are: Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ [not Vicar of Christ], Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of Vatican City.

“These are the official titles [let us note this plural] pertaining to the incumbent of the Apostolic See of Rome, that is, pertaining to the Pope.

“The Pope does not, however, at any time make use of any of these titles. In ordinary missives and documents he signs his name with the letters ‘PP’ after it, an abbreviation for Papa or Pope.

“In more formal documents, such as a Papal Bull, the Pope signs himself simply as ‘A Bishop of the Catholic Church’—Ego PIUS [I, Pius], Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopus. He applies no other titles to himself than that of a Bishop.”⁴² This seems to be an indication of royalty. Spanish kings have even gone further. Traditionally they have omitted both their first and last names, simply signing: *Yo el Rey* (I, The King).⁴³

This custom of popes not to apply titles to themselves may go back for many centuries. Nevertheless, Leo IX, who lived almost a thousand years ago, did not observe it. Elsewhere we mention John XXII (d. 1334) and Paul VI in the twentieth century, who also referred to themselves as vicars of the Son of God. Other Catholic writers, however, could and did apply that and other titles to the pope. The first, of course, was the monk or cleric who originally forged the Donation to benefit Stephen II (III).

But let us return to Vuillemier and French. They found themselves up against a man with an ingenious mind and a bee that kept on buzzing in his bonnet. *The Ministry* of March 1939 published a Prescott article under the heading “The Official Title of the Pope.” This was two full years after Coffin’s article in *The Watchman*. Prescott now said that not all Catholic writings were authoritative, only some historical documents which conveyed “the doctrinal standards” of the Roman Church. Of these, he first mentioned three:

“1. The Ecumenical Creeds, which the Roman church holds in common with the Greek, excepting the Filioque clause, which the Greek rejects as an unauthorized, heretical, and mischievous innovation.

“2. The Roman or Tridentine Creeds, in opposition to the evangelical doctrines of the Reformation. . . .

“3. The modern papal and Vatican decisions in favor of the immaculate conception of Mary, and the infallibility of the Pope. These were formerly open questions in the Roman Church, but are now binding dogmas of faith.”⁴⁴

To this, he added a fourth standard:

“The code of Canon Law, prepared by the authority of Pius X and issued by Benedict XV, 1917, contains definition of Catholic doctrine and rules of Catholic practice. It takes the place of the code prepared by Gratian, professor of canon law at Bologna in the eleventh century. Gratian’s compilation, which, according to [von] Döllinger, is ‘filled through and through with forgery and error,’ Papsthum, p. 55, with the additions made to it by Gregory IX, 1234, and later popes, was together with Leo X’s bull, cast by Luther into the flames, 1520. The code issued by Benedict XV was made by papal bull, the binding law of the church, and any one attempting to change it was threatened with the wrath of Almighty God and the apostles Peter and Paul. To the documents as thus enumerated, the student must go who would make sure what the authoritative teachings of the Roman church are.”⁴⁵

In passing, we observe that Prescott, for all his insistence on consulting only Catholic writers to establish what the Roman Church believed, was not averse to quoting Protestant sources when it suited him. One of them was Philip Schaff (1819-1893), “a Swiss-born, German-educated Protestant theologian and a historian of the Christian church, who, after his education, lived and taught in the United States.” Another was David Schley Schaff (b. 1852), his son, a professor of church history at various American seminaries.⁴⁶

More important is the fact that with that last quotation Prescott sought to dispose of Gratian’s Decretum, because the *Codex Iuris Canonici* of 1917 had laid it aside. It does not, as we have already observed, contain the title *vicarius Filii Dei* or refer to it in any way.

Supposedly, if a pontiff reigning after the Papal States had collapsed, decided to snap his fingers and declare that the Decretum was no longer valid, we must simply take his word for it. But, despite his Donner und Blitzen, Benedict XV was no more infallible in 1917 than Gregory XIII in 1580 when he proclaimed the utter perfection of the revised Decretum in the *Corpus iuris canonici*.

Moreover, Prescott by his article left both Vuilleumier and French unanswered.

We remind the reader of our earlier reference to statements by Catholic canon lawyers who commented on John Paul II’s *Codex Iuris Canonici* (1983). Discussing the problems associated with the title *vicar of Christ*, they admitted that for centuries it had applied to emperors as well as bishops, before being appropriated by the pontiffs. Furthermore, since Vatican II it again refers

not only to the pope but to all bishops. As a papal title, it is neither unique nor more official than any other.

IX

On 30 August 1939, a landmark meeting took place in the office of the General Conference president, J. L. McElhany, who had succeeded C. H. Watson. Only members of the committee on 666, headed by his secretary Warren E. Howell and including L. E. Froom, attended. Absent was Prescott, who was not a member. The proceedings were highly confidential and began at 9:00 a.m. For two hours, Howell read a digest of forty-two pages, prepared from data supplied by Coffin, Froom, Vuilleumier, French—which we discussed above—and others. In that morning session, the only questions allowed and answered were those that called for clarification. At 1:30 p.m. on the same day, the committee met again to discuss the document. All of this was noted in the four-page official minutes of the “Hearing on 666.”⁴⁷

About the various statements made at that meeting, we especially note the following:

L. E. Froom believes that the interpretation of prophecy is fundamental to our message. Some have made too strong statements regarding the title. He said that he had searched everywhere in the libraries of Europe, in collections of coins and medallions and other records, and he did not find even a trace of the title. The Donation of Constantine is a forgery, but has been made the foundation of the papal system without question. He believes that the research should be continued.

M. E. Kern appreciated the document as containing much valuable matter. He understands that there is no question on our interpretation as being correct, but we are faced with substantiating statements made in our publications and on the platform. We ought to hold strictly to the truth, and should cease making extreme statements. If we leave out the Donation of Constantine as *someone* has suggested, there is no basis for our interpretation [emphasis added]. It is probably the greatest document employed in the foundation of the papal system. Radio talks, speeches, and publications repeatedly speak of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ. We should not keep forever silent to our people on the subject. We should appoint a small committee to carry on further study and research, and also to prepare some statement to give to our people.⁴⁸

As a result of “these and other discussions, it was *Agreed*, To appoint a small committee to prepare something for publication soon as their first work, and also to carry on further research, the committee to include J. L. McElhany as chairman and someone as vice-chairman.”⁴⁹

Subsequently a manuscript for publication was actually prepared and readied for the editor who was to oversee its printing, but the process was interfered with and the booklet never appeared. When we deal with that

unfortunate turn of events, we will need to look more closely at this 1939 document. We shall therefore not here consider it further, except to note that its first page and a quarter consists of a "Statement of the Case." Its point of departure was David Goldstein's challenge printed in *Our Sunday Visitor*, addressed to Noll, its editor, on 2 June 1935. Also mentioned are *The Present Truth*, Jean Vuillemier's piece in *Revue Adventiste* and Frank A. Coffin's article in the *Watchman Magazine*.

X

Holding this in abeyance, we first turn to other, rather dramatic developments, as described in what is known as the "The Quasten Document on *Vicarius Filii Dei*," by Robert F. Correia (1915-1996).

In the early 1940s, he heard that F. D. Nichol and other leading Seventh-day Adventist scholars had a serious problem that went well beyond the question of whether or not *vicarius Filii Dei* was inscribed on the pope's tiara or miter. As Correia understood it, the fundamental question was: Is or has it been a papal title at all? It was rumored to him that Nichol had consulted Seventh-day Adventist scholars both in America and around the world, but nobody could help him.⁵⁰

Some men in the General Conference had also begun to wonder whether the statement in *Our Sunday Visitor* on 15 November 1914 constituted authentic documentation, it being alleged that "in the very next issue of *Our Sunday Visitor*, the editor published a denial indicating that he was mistaken about what was mentioned in the previous issue regarding the Pope's title."⁵¹

Who was Robert F. Correia? He was a married theology student at La Sierra College, Southern California, who during 1941 heard of the problem facing the General Conference committee on 666.

To make ends meet, he had to work at the nearby Loma Linda hospital. One of the patients whom he looked after as a night nurse was John Luis Shaw (1870-1952), a former missionary; editor; principal of Union College, Claremont, South Africa; and General Conference treasurer. During his retirement, he also "served for a time as chairman of the board of the Loma Linda medical school."⁵²

What follows here is based on (though mostly not directly quoted from) a narrative about Correia's adventures created while he was living in retirement at Claremont, Virginia, after thirty-seven years of service as a Seventh-day Adventist minister,⁵³ i.e., later than 1980. We have two very similar variants of this document. At the end of each are the typed words "Robert F. Correia" and "P.O. Box 207, Claremont Virginia, 23899." Each is likewise headed THE QUASTEN DOCUMENT ON VICARIUS FILII DEI, in capital letters. But the first variant also contains, immediately after the heading, the lowercased words "by R. F. Correia." Further, on this document, at the end he has squeezed in his very characteristic signature. Where and how did we obtain these variants?

I personally first acquired a copy of the signed version from a table in the entrance to the Seventh-day Adventist church at Pharr, southmost Texas. This was shortly after I had, with perplexity and displeasure, learned from the Senior Sabbath School quarterly of 8 June 2002 that the 666 highlighted in Rev. 13:18 supposedly did not really refer to *vicarius Filii Dei*—according to a prominent denominational scholar. (Chapter 42 focuses on this issue.) A photocopy of the second variant was mailed to me by Dr. William H. Shea, to whom Reva, Robert F. Correia’s 95-year-old widow, had lent the original on 6 August 2011. After copying it, he mailed it back to her. From this second variant, the words “by R. F. Correia” had been deleted. At the end, it also gives his name and address, typewritten, but without a signature. Otherwise the text of the two variants is identical and obviously done on the same word processor with exactly the same typeface and individual letters.

Incidentally, according to Correia’s 1997 obituary, he was a very diligent retiree. His activities included “programs about dinosaurs, science and the Bible, and heaven and other worlds,” which were greatly appreciated by the young people at the St. Petersburg church that he attended. For about three years, he “was also a volunteer typist for the E. G. White Estate and assisted in putting her writings on computer disks.” Another service which he performed was as “the state chaplain for the South Hampton Correctional Center for a year.”⁵⁴

Variant two originated approximately half a century after the events recorded in it. We must, however, now return to that hospital ward at Loma Linda, California, back in 1941.

It is about midnight, and we find Elder Shaw unable to sleep. When his nurse, the youthful Correia, asked him why he was so restless, he answered: “I’m very worried. For many years we have been preaching that the Pope has the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* which adds up to 666 and now we have been challenged officially by the Catholic Church to prove this allegation by producing not some Protestant testimony; but reliable Catholic sources.”

Correia decided to drive to the East and lend a helping hand. With his wife [Reva, whom he had married in 1938] and all their belongings piled into their ’29 Ford, he negotiated the many hundreds of miles between California and the distant East. Although the document says nothing about it, it must have been a wearisome journey, often on gravel or dirt-track roads; since the network of rapid, well-paved interstate highways of today was yet to be constructed. He turned up at the General Conference headquarters in Takoma Park, Washington, D.C., with a letter of introduction from Elder Shaw to Elder Howell, who was very skeptical but allowed him to get involved.

After enrolling at Washington Missionary College, Correia began his research. This led him and an Italian-speaking fellow student to the Catholic Apostolic Legation, where they posed as seminary students who wanted to know what title was used at papal coronations. They were told that it was *vicarius Christi*. Correia then asked to see the chapel that the pope had used for his devotions when he visited America while he was still the pontifical

Secretary of State. For this, he obtained a letter of introduction to the Catholic Welfare Conference.

After viewing the chapel, Correia thought again about the statement in *Our Sunday Visitor* on 15 November 1914 that *vicarius Filii Dei* was inscribed on the papal miter. But a photocopy of this article had failed to impress the relevant General Conference committee. One of its influential members insisted this source was unreliable, for allegedly the next issue of *Our Sunday Visitor* contained a statement by the editor that he had been mistaken about the pontiff's title as reported on 15 November 1914.

And so Correia and his student buddy, Conrad A. Stoehr (1921-2005) from Brazil, decided to find back copies at the Library of Congress. In passing, we note that Stoehr was naturalized as an American citizen and changed his name to C. Donald Stevens during 1952. He became a medical doctor after studying at Monterrey, Mexico, and then a psychiatrist, subsequent to a residency in the United States.⁵⁵

At the Library of Congress the two friends learned that these items were available only at *Our Sunday Visitor*'s publishing house in Huntington, Indiana.

Therefore, they skipped classes and on the not-so-good roads of the nineteen-forties drove through the night, reaching their destination the next day at noon. Changing into black suits, they again assumed the guise of Catholic seminary students. The editor was not in, but his secretary showed them through the publishing house and the files of *Our Sunday Visitor*. But the volume for 1915, in which the denial was supposed to have appeared, was missing. It was locked up in the editor's safe; however, the secretary had the key and brought out the file.

There were also a few extra, loose copies of the magazine. One of them was for 18 April 1915! This was the one that had allegedly retracted the statement about *vicarius Filii Dei* being on the papal miter. Correia found that it contained no such retraction. Now, 18 April 1915 also happened to be the day when Correia was born, which made him boldly beg the secretary to give it to him. She did so, together with a few subsequent issues, which his buddy had been going through. These also failed to retract the statement of 15 November 1914.

The two students drove back with their trophies to Takoma Park, Washington, D.C. There the men of the special General Conference committee were amazed. "When it was verified that we returned with the only extra original copy of *Our Sunday Visitor* [*sic*] as well as two of the following issues proving there was no denial of the Pope's title of *Vicarius Filii Dei*, the brethren asked, 'How was it possible to get these valuable issues?' We indicated that it was not us but God who was with us and whose blessing made it possible."

At this juncture, "the committee assigned Elders Yost and Andreasen as our mentors to advise and direct us to see if something else could be turned up at Catholic University," right there in Washington, D.C. After a few weeks of

preparatory study and correspondence with that institution, bearing documents which it had mailed them, Correia returned to his quest. Again he put on a black suit like a Catholic seminarian, this time accompanied by Benjamin J. Mondics (1916-1962), a young American Seventh-day Adventist minister. They penetrated into the presence of Dr. Johannes Quasten, S.T.D. (1900-1987). This excellent scholar was professor of Ancient History and Christian Archaeology in the School of Sacred Theology.

They questioned him about Gratian's *Decretum*. He told them: "Gratian was used and accepted for many centuries as a legitimate Catholic source; but in recent years, his work is considered by most scholars as non-authentic." Nevertheless, Quasten acknowledged: "The Pope has many titles. Although *Vicarius Filii Dei* is not as common, it is however an ancient title and should be accepted by any good Catholic scholar."

And now came the climax of the Correia saga. "Suddenly I realized that his excellent testimony was insufficient because it was only verbal. Speaking to him, I said: 'Dr. Quasten, I have a friend who has been working on this project who could not be here today. We accept your appraisal but for the sake of my colleague, would you be kind enough to write a simple statement that this is a recognized and accepted title?' Dr. Quasten questioned, 'Is this necessary?' I responded, 'If this is a legitimate title, why not admit it in writing?' Instead of using his typewriter, Dr. Quasten pulled out his pen and in his own handwriting wrote on official Catholic University stationery [*sic*] the following: 'The title *Vicarius Christi*, as well as the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* is very common as the title of the Pope' and signed his name."

Returning to General Conference headquarters, Correia and Mondics presented this document to committee members, who could hardly believe their eyes, but promptly took action. First, they forbade both Correia and Mondics ever again to show up at the Catholic University of America, because they "had been dealing with the Jesuits." Second, a lawyer and a notary were called in. Quasten's handwritten and signed statement, beneath the letterhead of the Catholic University of America, were notarized under the Correia and Mondics signatures—in the nation's capital city, on 10 March 1943.

Incidentally, though many Catholic scholars are Jesuits, Dr. Quasten was not one of them. This was made plain in a letter from Brother David Richardson, O.S.C., Secretary to the Archivist at the Mullen Library, Catholic University of America. Writing to Doug von Kriegelstein on 2 June 1998, in answer to a query about Monsignor Quasten, he provided a fine life sketch of him. He concluded by saying that this eminent German scholar had been "a Roman Catholic diocesan priest and not a member of a religious order or congregation."⁵⁶

Some readers of Correia's "Quasten Document" are bound to have ethical concerns with the way in which he and his companions acquired all this information by impersonating Catholic seminarians, although—wherever they could—they avoided telling outright lies. In this, they acted rather

like Rahab of ancient Jericho and Joshua's two spies, whom she had hidden from her king, in the prelude to the Israelite invasion of Canaan (Joshua 2).

However that may be, at this distance in time we think their cloak-and-dagger methods were perhaps not altogether necessary. We now know that the best information about *vicarius Filii Dei* lay concealed, not in a twentieth-century office at Huntington, Indiana, or even Dr. Quasten's head at the Catholic University. It was waiting in the large array of documents that we have now unearthed and present in Appendix III.

XI

But back in the 1940s neither of those students Correia and Stoehr nor Pastor Mondics—nor anybody else—had access to much of the material which we now possess. They worked with the means at their disposal. Stoehr, perhaps with Correia's concurrence, decided to check Dr. Quasten's statement by visiting another Canonist, Dr. Stephan Kuttner, who at that time was also at the Catholic University of America. Not wanting to be identified too closely, he gave the address of the Berlitz School of Languages in Washington, D.C.⁵⁷

Stephan George Kuttner (1907-1996) was born in Germany of Jewish descent but "was raised as a Lutheran and converted to Roman Catholicism as a young man. He received his law degree from Berlin University in 1931 . . . Two years later he fled Nazi Germany for Italy, where he worked as a research fellow at the Vatican Library and taught at the Lateran University in Rome. In 1940, he emigrated to the U.S. with his young family. He was a professor at Washington, D.C.'s Catholic University of America from 1940 to 1964." Then he taught at Yale and afterwards "became the first Director of the Robbins Collection in Roman and Canon Law in the University of California, Berkeley School of Law."⁵⁸

On 27 March 1943, he wrote to Stoehr as follows:

I am sorry I could not give an earlier attention to your request concerning the papal title of *Vicarius Filii Dei*. And I have not been very successful in my researches on this point.

As you will realize, it always is far more difficult to establish a negative than a positive fact. But from the materials I have perused—treatises and hand books on Church History, Fundamental Theology, Canon Law; and the medieval collections of papal laws—I come to the conclusion that the above-mentioned title is not used by documents and writers of the early times. While the expressions *Vicarius Christi*, *Vicarius Dei* were commonly used in the sources, including the important dogmatic decisions of the Council of Florence (1438/45), and in particular the dogma of Infallibility as defined in the Vatican Council (1870), that other expression is not found, to my knowledge, except in the canon *Constantinus Imperator* (of which you showed me the Photostat). This text, however, is a forgery of the ninth century, feigning the establishment of the Papal States by Emperor Constantine after his conversion. While this text was

believed to be genuine throughout the Middle Ages, it has been long since abandoned by the Church. Everybody agrees now that the foundation for the Papal States was laid in the eighth century by the Frankish King Pippin, father of Charlemagne.

I might be, of course[,] mistaken. It is impossible to check on each and every document; but so far no other trace of *Vicarius Filii Dei* has turned up. Theologically, there is no reason for this; the term could be applied equally well as *Vicarius Christi*. I am inclined to suppose that the reasons for not using it were of a purely phonetic and metric nature. The three words, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, with nine syllables and three accents, are less impressive to the ear than the two other terms of but two words and two accents each.⁵⁹

This flatly contradicted Quasten's written note. We think, besides, that Kuttner was deliberately lying when he said of *vicarius Filii Dei* that the title "is not found, to my knowledge, except in the canon *Constantinus Imperator* (of which you showed me the Photostat)." As an expert in Canon Law who owing to his background could read at least Latin, English, German, and Italian, he surely would have been acquainted with some of the material and many of the facts presented in our book. That pseudo-argument about the "nine syllables and three accents" is tongue-in-the-cheek nonsense. We can imagine Dr. Kuttner chuckling to himself as he wrote it and think he was, apart from being very learned, a wily man and rather like Daniel Goldstein, who was also Jewish and a convert to Catholicism.

It is, moreover, possible that Stoehr by personally turning up at the Catholic University, in addition to the Correia-Mondics duo, had aroused suspicion with the repeated query about *vicarius Filii Dei*. Kuttner and his colleague Quasten could even have been comparing experiences, with the latter realizing ruefully he had been tricked into writing his statement. Who, after all, were those "seminarians," if not Seventh-day Adventists? It was people like them who were always harping on that theme!

In a further chapter, we will read more about Correia and see what eventually happened to the notarized document which had crowned his endeavor.

XII

While the committee of three appointed on 30 August 1939 was doing its work behind the scenes with further research, to prepare a text for publication—and Correia with his friends embarked on their adventures—others also, more openly, continued to make known their thoughts on 666 and related topics.

Prominent among these was French, who at the Conference Session of the Columbia Union, Pittsburgh, PA, in February 1942 presented seminars on Daniel and Revelation.⁶⁰ Looking over a copy of his notes, we are truly impressed. While not agreeing with every detail of what he taught, we have

nevertheless discovered in him a kindred spirit. All those years ago, Professor French expressed a variety of ideas and conclusions that are also to be found in our book—although we arrived at them independently and before we had the pleasure of reading his work. Many of his questions and remarks are still entirely relevant today.

About the number of the Beast, he asked: “Is it worth while, or is it necessary, for us to endeavor to discover the number of the beast? Those who will stand on the ‘sea of glass’ will have got the victory over the beast and ‘over the number of his name.’ Do you suppose it is possible that they will have had victory over the number of his name without any of them knowing what it is?”⁶¹

Regarding papal nomenclature, he said: “The highest title held by the head of the Roman Church is Vicar of Christ, Vicar of God, Vicar of the Son of God, or Vicar of Jesus Christ. These are modifications of the same title, as is indicated by a quotation from Cardinal Manning’s work entitled, ‘The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ.’

“In a single paragraph the pope is designated the ‘Vicar of Jesus Christ,’ and the ‘Vicar of the Son of God.’ All through Manning’s book these titles are used interchangeably. So when the title Vicar of Christ or Vicar of God is employed, it means the same as Vicar of the Son of God, (Latin, VICARIUS FILII DEI), from which we take the numerical value of the letters as 666.”⁶²

With reference to this title, French wrote further:

“The first use of the title Vicarius Filii Dei which we have found appears in the famous ‘Donation of Constantine’—a document drawn up by a Catholic priest about 752-774, and used for a thousand years in establishing and maintaining the pope’s temporal supremacy. This document was forged, but nevertheless it was of Roman Catholic origin, using Catholic terminology. It was confirmed by popes, included in canon law, and defended by leading Catholic historians and canonists.”

With quotations from and references to Coleman’s *Discourse of Lorenzo Valla on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine*, French said of the Donation: “In this document, brought forth to establish the temporal power of the Popes about 752-774, the title Vicarius Filii Dei appears, and it is found in all the copies we have examined.”⁶³

He also stated: “Authorities say that ten popes endorsed and made use of the ‘Donation’ in defending their pontifical rights and privileges.”⁶⁴ To substantiate this statement, he amongst other things quoted a paragraph from Christopher B. Coleman’s *Constantine the Great and Christianity*, who himself was indebted to von Döllinger:

“It was referred to as valid or used by many popes, including Leo IX, Urban II, Eugenius III, Innocent III, Gregory IV, Innocent IV, Nicholas III, Boniface VIII, and John XXII. Though Gregory VII apparently did not use it, his representative, Peter Damiani, did so. It may possibly have been in the mind of other popes who exacted oaths from prospective emperors that they would preserve all the rights and possessions granted by all previous emperors

to the see of St. Peter, and may also have influenced Hadrian IV.⁶⁵

As our book has demonstrated, two of these pontiffs—Leo IX and John XXII—personally, in writing, referred to the Donation and also expressly used *vicarius Filii Dei*. By doing so, they applied it to themselves and claimed that this was what they were. About the other popes mentioned, those who with reference to the Donation attributed the title to them were good Catholics and staunch supporters.

Responding to objectors who queried the validity of Gratian's *Decretum*, French maintained the papacy validated it by an official act in the sixteenth century, just after the Protestant Reformation had badly shaken up the ecclesiastical establishment. After the Council of Trent, Pope Pius V commanded the revision of the *Decretum Gratiani*. This was completed in the pontificate of Gregory XIII, who "wrote a preface to the revised edition in 1580," in which he explained: "We have demanded care in redacting, correcting, and expunging," with the result that "the Decree itself, without glossae, exists now entirely freed from faults and corrected and illuminated by several annotations, by deputies chosen by us as stated before . . ." And "In this revised and approved work of Gratian, called by Gregory XIII canon law, we find the title 'VICARIUS FILII DEI.' It appears in the body of canon law."⁶⁶

As an important witness to the existence of the title, French referred to Lucius Ferraris, who in his 1772 *Prompta Bibliotheca* quoted the key passage from the Donation that contains it. He pointed out, moreover, that *vicarius Filii Dei* still occurred in the 1890 edition, revised and enlarged.

He also cited other Catholic writers, whom we need not deal with here, and summarized his argumentation as follows:

The very foundation of the Papal system is the primacy of Peter, that Peter was constituted the Vicar of the Son of God. This title is found in that document (the "Donation of Constantine" which was used from about 752 till the 17th century in establishing and maintaining the temporal power of the popes. The title was employed in a letter of Pope Leo IX to the patriarch of Constantinople. It was inserted in Gratian's Canon Law. When Gratian's work was revised by order of Pius V and the revision approved and declared faultless by Pope Gregory XIII, in 1580, following the Council of Trent, the title appeared in that book of Canon Law. It appeared in the history of Labbé, an outstanding Catholic historian of the 17th century. The document containing it was vigorously defended by Binius, a notable scholar and canonist of the 17th century. The title was listed among the titles of the pope in the theological work of Ferraris in the 18th century. Manning employed the title repeatedly in the 19th century. There is good evidence that Gregory [XVI] took the title and used it on his mitre during the years from 1831-1846, and the title appears in the revised and enlarged theological work of Ferraris, published in 1890.

The title VICARIUS FILII DEI was conferred by Rome on the apostle Peter, therefore, according to Roman Catholic doctrine, all the successors to Peter hold the title. It is the highest title in the Catholic system, and one which applies equally to all popes. It is successive and each pope comes into possession of it as soon as he is elected and crowned.

Though obtained by fraud, by forgeries, the title and crown are still held by Rome. What has she that she did not obtain falsely?⁶⁷

XIII

In what almost seems like an eerie forecast of an erroneous position which would be adopted by Samuele Bacchiocchi sixty-three years later, French wrote that already in his time there was “a trend toward a change of our old positions on the mark of the beast.” This equated the name of the Beast with its mark. To support this new position, its unidentified proponent(s) supported it with an appeal to Rev. 13:17 in the American Revised Version: “Save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name.”⁶⁸

As French pointed out, however, “It will be observed that the word ‘even’ is a supplied word in the A. R. Version. It appears in none of the ancient manuscripts. The correct word is ‘or’ as seen in the Authorized Version. At the very time this new position arose, there appeared a cursive manuscript a century older than any of the uncial manuscripts, and it contains the word ‘or’. This manuscript is called the Chester Beatty Collection.

“It will readily be seen that if the mark is the same as the name of the beast, then it could not be Sunday observance, as has been held by our people. . . .”⁶⁹

In 2005, Bacchiocchi wrote: “But Revelation 13:17 clearly suggests that the three are essentially the same. ‘The mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name’ (Rev. 13:17; NIV).”⁷⁰ But the phrase *which is* of the New International Version, like the word *even* of the American Revised Version, is not in the original. Near the beginning of this book, in Volume I, we likewise appealed to the Chester Beatty Collection to authenticate the King James reading: “. . . the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

XIV

During 1943, a few months after French had presented his seminars at Pittsburgh, PA, and in the same year as Correia’s adventures reached their climax, Southern Publishing Association brought out *Facts of Faith*, by Christian Edwardson (1873-1944). A Norwegian-American, he had immigrated with his parents to the State of Minnesota at the age of ten. As a young man, he was a colporteur for a decade and then served as a minister at various places, including the Scandinavian Tabernacle in Minneapolis. He spent his final years in research and writing. Building up a personal library of about 3,000 volumes, he authored several books, in Swedish and Danish-Norwegian as well as English.⁷¹

His *Facts of Faith* is almost like material from Vuilleumier as well as French and some others rolled together, but greatly augmented. Indeed, it goes well beyond them. Some of its chapters deal with topics like the change from Sabbath to Sunday, “The Two Mysteries,” the 1260 year-days, the Jesuits, the Antichrist, and the marks that identify him. Others survey the history of the Lord’s people who refused to conform to the great Mediterranean apostasy: Waldensians and Celtic as well as Indian and Scandinavian Sabbathkeepers. The book concludes by peering into the future of unfulfilled prophecy concerned with America and Catholicism. Its last two chapters are “The Mark of the Beast” and “The Image to the Beast.”⁷²

For the breadth of his research, Edwardson was impressive; for the depth of his thought, at times profound. We have already noticed this in his rebuttal of the Romanist idea that the pope cannot be the Antichrist, since he does not deny that “Christ is come in the flesh” (2 John 7)—which we dealt with previously under “Clovis Converted” (Volume I).

With the same remorseless logic, *Facts of Faith* examines the claim that 666, the number of the Beast, cannot refer to *vicarius Filii Dei* because this is not an authentic papal title; occurs in the *Donatio Constantini*, a forgery; and depends on Gratian’s Decretum, which itself has never been officially endorsed by the Catholic Church.

In four pages,⁷³ Edwardson shone illuminating rays into the fog that had obscured this topic. Quoting Romanist sources, including a Catholic Encyclopedia, he showed how the Decretum had mutated into an authoritative *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Part of his text is the following:

“Pius V appointed (1566) a commission to prepare a new edition of the ‘Corpus Iuris Canonici.’ This commission devoted itself especially to the correction of the text of the ‘Decree’ of Gratian and of its gloss. Gregory XIII (‘Cum pro munere,’ 1 July, 1580; ‘Emendationem,’ 2 June, 1582) decreed that no change was to be made in the revised text. This edition of the ‘Corpus’ appeared at Rome in 1582, *in aedibus populi Romani*, and serves as exemplar for all subsequent editions.’—*Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, art. ‘Corpus Iuris Canonici,’* pp. 392, 393.”⁷⁴

It retained the passage from the Donation together with the title *vicarius Filii Dei*. In the Preface of this work, Pope Gregory XIII is quoted as asserting that “this canonical law thus expurgated, may come restored to all the faithful . . . kept perpetually *integral* and incorruptible, *motu proprio*, and from our certain knowledge, and from the plenitude of the apostolic power to all and singly in the dominion of our sacred Roman Church”—*Preface to Corpus Iuris Canonici, Gregorii XIII, Pontif. Max. Auctoritate; in editions of 1582, 1613, 1622, and 1879.*⁷⁵

Since Gregory XIII had said that Gratian’s Decretum was now “without flaw,” according to Edwardson it in this manner acquired official status, to which he added: “We cannot see how any consistent Catholic can deny the authenticity of this title without denying the infallibility of the pope.”⁷⁶

That, we think, is very persuasive, though it apparently failed to make

Prescott give up his objections.

Edwardson also discussed the report on 18 April 1915 in *Our Sunday Visitor* that the words *vicarius Filii Dei* were inscribed on the papal miter.⁷⁷ But, as we have discovered and shown, this was a garbled version of what Ernest R. Hull, the Jesuit editor of *The Examiner* in Bombay, had originally recorded. Arthur Preuss, a Catholic journalist in America, then copied and slightly altered his account. By the time *Our Sunday Visitor* printed it, the statement had mutated further and now read as its own declaration. As a matter of fact, however, it originated with a Protestant—most probably a Seventh-day Adventist—whose own authority would ultimately have been Uriah Smith! It had all been a peculiar misunderstanding, a comedy of errors, though everybody took it most seriously.

Edwardson, unaware of its origin, was not the only one who simply attributed that claim to *Our Sunday Visitor*. For instance, Howell included it in the 42-page document that he, on 30 August 1939, had read to the committee concerned with *vicarius Filii Dei* and 666. It was even supported by a photocopy.⁷⁸ But the 43-page successor document of 1943 omitted it.

XV

That is also true of the 1944 revised version of Uriah Smith's *Daniel and Revelation*, which the Seventh-day Adventist Church has from then on been issuing as its standard text. It discusses *vicarius Filii Dei* with a short historical overview of its use as a papal title, supported by various authorities. But it says nothing about its ever being inscribed on a physical object, such as the pope's miter or the tiara or anywhere else.⁷⁹

McElhany had also planned to have a booklet published for his church's ministers and other employees. Having seen its manuscript, we think that on the whole it was a valuable piece of work—but it never saw the light of day. What happened?

The answer is largely provided by copies in our possession of documents that include official minutes.

The Committee on 666, which had begun its work on 30 August 1939, had a follow-up meeting on 17 January 1943 at 1:30 p.m. Its acting chairman was William Henry Branson (1887-1961), who would in 1950 succeed J. L. McElhany as General Conference president. After listing those who were present, the typed minutes have a handwritten note "Added: . . .," including T. M. French.

To readers who may wonder why such a long time elapsed between the two meetings, we point out that these were all busy men. One of them, secretary W. E. Howell, was simultaneously also helping to prepare the 1944 revision of Smith's *Daniel and Revelation*. According to a 1946 letter from Marwin R. Thurber,⁸⁰ book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Howell condensed the essence of the material collected by the Committee on 666 into the "less than five pages" that conclude Chapter 13,

which deals with the name and number of the Beast.⁸¹

XVI

We now look at the minutes of the meeting on 17 January 1943. The following paragraph gives the conclusion which the committee came to:

A document entitled “the Number of the Beast” had been prepared by the Secretary by way of a suggestive deduction from the material in a 42-page document making a report on the findings in research work on 666 as read to a group of 24 August 30, 1939, the group including the editors present in an editorial council as recorded in the minutes of that date. In the document read in the present meeting the position was taken that we are not dependent upon the title VICARIUS FILII DEI being inscribed on the Pope’s tiara or its having been adopted by an official enactment as *the* or *a* title of the Pope, but that the practice of the Roman Catholic Church, including nine of the popes, and many Catholic writers in using the Donation of Constantine containing the title as applied first to Peter and then his successors, for more than seven hundred years as a valid document, affords a substantial basis for our interpretation of 666 as the number of the beast. The Donation of Constantine has been preserved unchanged from the eighth century to the present hour in the canon laws and ecclesiastical documents of the Church.⁸²

Unfortunately the last sentence failed to note that from 1917 the *Corpus* [Collection] *Iuris Canonici* had been replaced by the *Codex* [Code] *Iuris Canonici*, which omitted the Donation. Besides, the words “applied first to Peter and then his successors” should have been “applied first to Peter and then his *alleged* successors,” or something to that effect. Otherwise it was well put and true. Also, as indicated elsewhere, the *Codex Iuris Canonici* ultimately still rests largely on foundations laid by *Corpus Iuris Canonici*. Most importantly, the committee did not content itself with mere argumentation but also focused on the *practice* of the papacy over so many centuries. That is, the use and significance of *vicarius Filii Dei*—plus its translations into other languages—must be tested not just by documents, which people can contradict or reason about but by history, which is incontrovertible.

The minutes conclude with the following resolution:

“AGREED, That a committee of three with power to act be appointed by the General Conference Committee to edit and publish the larger document of 42 pages, adding to it some directive summarizing of the evidence found, to be put out in a pamphlet and distributed to our workers by the General Conference gratis, so as to afford our workers opportunity to examine the evidence available and thereby draw their own conclusions.

W H BRANSON, Acting Chairman
W E HOWELL, Secretary⁸³

The next day, H. T. Elliot, secretary of the General Conference, sent a Memorandum to “Prof. W. E. Howell” to relay the important fact that on 18 January 1943 the General Conference Committee had received the report from the Committee on 666, with its suggestion “that this material be printed in a large leaflet, containing all the documents collected, and a smaller leaflet summarizing the documents, these leaflets to be made available at General Conference expense to all workers; but that before publication the material be carefully edited by a committee of editors to be appointed by this General Conference Committee, these editors to report to the large committee that has worked on this matter.” This ends with a resolution: “Voted, That M. L. Andreasen, W. E. Howell and T. M. French be appointed to edit the material that has been collected on interpretations of ‘666’.”⁸⁴

XVII

The subsequent work on this project is indicated by a handwritten note at the bottom of the above-mentioned Minutes of the Committee on 666: “Com. of 3 met Jan. 27, received the 42 p. document and appointed W E Howell to revamp it. Met again Feb. 10/43 and approved revamped copy, to be manifolded and distributed to GC Com for authorization to publish. Distributed Feb. 22.”⁸⁵ This would have been one of Howell’s last contributions, for 1943 was the year when he died. He was never to see in print the revised *Daniel and Revelation* of 1944, or the “large leaflet, containing all the documents collected, and a smaller leaflet” summarizing the material on which it was based.

For the latter, the final manuscript ran to 43 pages and differed from its predecessor in several ways. It eliminated references to David Goldstein’s challenge, Bishop Noll, and Coffin’s response, adding a Foreword by McElhany and four final observations. Also largely left out were the names of Seventh-day Adventist contributors or older writers cited in the 1939 document like the German F. A. Dörner, the Anglo-Saxon C. P. Bollman, H. A. St. John, T. M. French, W. E. Read, and L. E. Froom, as well as most references to the Francophone J. Vuilleumier. The manuscript does, however, on p. 20 graciously mention that Bertha Shanks Chaney Englished Pope Leo IX’s Latin letter (at least in part) and on p. 40 that Vuilleumier translated a text from Italian.⁸⁶

On the other hand, the document is replete with material quoted from authorities who had written in Latin, English, German, French, Italian, and even other languages. Most of it was translated for the benefit of the intended audience, especially ministers and evangelists in North America.

The last part of the manuscript summarizes seven findings, very similar to though not fully identical with those of Vuilleumier in 1939. It has also added four important observations. We quote in full:

PART IV
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

After the brief telescopic survey of historical evidence on the Donation of Constantine, bearing the title VICARIUS FILII DEI in its bosom through twelve centuries to our day, we may revert to a more definite consideration of the title itself. Bearing in mind that the title is always retained in the Donation of Constantine wherever that document is recorded or used or cited, a brief summary of our findings on the donation:

1. Constantine's *Donation* was composed between the years 752 and 774.
2. It was quoted to Charlemagne by Pope Hadrian, in 778.
3. It became part of the *False Decretals* forged about 844-50.
4. It was incorporated in Gratian's *Decretum* about 1148.
5. It became an integral part (with Gratian's *Decretum*) of the *Corpus juris canonici*, official canonical Compendium and text-book of the Catholic Church, in 1500, and published up to 1879.
6. It is included in Ferraris's *Ecclesiastical Dictionary* revised up to 1890 and published by the Vatican in Rome.
7. The canonists, the apologists, the bishops, the popes, the universities and the whole clergy have successively used the *Donation*, the *False Decretals*, the *Decretum*, and the *Corpus juris canonici*, in order to establish the claims of the hierarchy and the supremacy of the pope through the centuries.

There is no shadow of discoverable evidence, and there is no claim, that the papacy has ever disowned, formally or otherwise, a single assumption found in these fundamental documents.

Thus the title VICARIUS FILII DEI has been handed down to us through more than a thousand years, with the silent sanction of 150 popes, as the original title of Peter, and both claimed and used, with variations that are equivalent in meaning, to designate his so-called successors on the papal throne to this day.

Observations.—

1. It is therefore not too much to affirm that the title VICARIUS FILII DEI is the *key* to all that the Donation of Constantine has been used to accomplish in building up the papal primacy and the constitution and polity of the Roman Catholic Church as it stands today. As being the key we have every right to calculate the numerical values of its letters to the exact total of 666. In doing so we may reckon that we have heeded the counsel of the Scriptures to "count the number of the beast," which is "the number of a [representative] man."

2. To establish the identity of the number-bearing beast, we are not at all dependent on proving that the number-bearing title was ever adopted by official enactment as either *the* or *a* title of the pope. The original text of the Donation of Constantine proves that the title was first applied to Peter,

the so-called first pope, and that it was intended to apply to all his successors. Essentially, that is, with variations in wording but no difference in meaning, it is freely used by priest and prelate, bishop, archbishop, and cardinal, to designate the pope in both official and unofficial writings and speech. *Use* through the ages speaks more loudly than creed or decree.

3. It is not necessary to prove that this title has ever appeared on any pope's tiara or miter, or over the door of the Vatican. There is reason to believe it has, as evidence given further on will show. There is some ground for believing, too, that record of such use has been erased from the pages of history. Whether so or not in either case, we are in no sense dependent on such proof or such use to confirm the correctness of our interpretation of the number-bearing title.

4. To point out that the number 666 can be counted in the names of certain historical or living men or women, has no bearing whatever on the case. Use of this number is only one, and in fact a less important one, of the many means of identifying the beast in the Scriptures and in history. For 666 to have any weight in a man's name, he must first be a representative man, and must then meet all the other tests for identifying the beast.⁸⁷

XVIII

But this work, with its excellent findings and observations, never saw the light of day. It died an unnatural death, killed off by Merwin R. Thurber, the finicky book editor of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, who had the gall to say "no" to the president of the General Conference together with its whole executive committee. As he explained it to J. L. McElhany three years later in his letter of 25 November 1946, it had been with him for "some time awaiting disposition." He said: "I realize the manuscript was read by the members of the General Conference Committee and voted to be published at a regular meeting of the committee. However, my conscience will not allow me to pass for publication any manuscript about which I have a question without consulting those who may have authority to settle the questions."

This was in response to the fact that McElhany had been obliged to see him personally⁸⁸ and prod him into giving further attention to it.

What was it that weighed so heavily on Thurber's conscience? He mentioned a few general problems he could see and then listed seven of a more specific nature.

It vexed him that the Committee in its study of *The Number of the Beast* had not included "certain usable material," gathered by Froom for his "history of prophetic interpretation." On the other hand, he declared: "I am not suggesting by this that any part of Elder Froom's material should necessarily be included in the manuscript. I do not know the nature of his material and I am sure that he has felt no urge that it be included in this document. My concern is that it shall not be ignored."⁸⁹

He was also unhappy because "the manuscript as a whole has not been

examined *critically* by anyone not in direct connection with the Committee,” which implied that the experts on it were perhaps not so bright. Here we suspect the residual influence of Prescott, who had died in 1944, but when he was the board chairman of the Review and Herald Publishing Association he used to be Thurber’s boss. It troubled the latter that he could see no “editorial changes in the manuscript. I am led to this conclusion because of the fact that I have a copy of the original document as it was passed to the General Conference Committee and I find that the copy submitted for publication is practically identical, with the exception of the introduction.” That this is untrue we could see from our comparison of the 1939 and 1943 documents. The difference is quite noticeable. And on our photocopy we observed editorial changes as well as additions written into the text.⁹⁰

Here are some of Thurber’s specific criticisms: the document is too long, too repetitive, and also perhaps too complicated: “I do not believe the average preacher in this denomination would know how to present the number of the beast any more efficiently and carefully after reading this document than before.” This, it seems, did not credit Seventh-day Adventist ministers with too much brain power.

Worst of all was the sniping at Jean Vuilleumier. Thurber said the Committee had leaned too much on this man’s material. But we have shown that many others also contributed to the manuscript. Thurber did not like the inclusion of “a long list of editions of Gratian’s *Decretum* in the Paris National Library. It seems to me that if such lists are to be given, books in other national libraries should also be listed—at least the lists in the British Museum and Library of Congress should be included.”⁹¹ But, *mirabile dictu*, directly beneath the editions of Gratian’s *Decretum* that Vuilleumier had found in the National Museum at Paris, the manuscript also lists the seven “editions of *Corpus Juris Canonici* found in the British Museum, with the passage from the Donation of Constantine containing *Vicarius Filii Dei* as it appears in each.”⁹²

And what can we say of the following anti-foreigner theological nationalism? “Brother Vuilleumier approached the subject with his background in the French language. Most of his sources are French books and other publications. I have no quarrel with the use of sources in various languages, but since the Seventh-day Adventist denomination started with the English language and since this document is being published in English, it seems to me we should use the English language sources at least as much as we use other modern European languages.”⁹³

So what was Thurber’s solution for all these alleged defects? “I humbly suggest that a group of men be appointed to go over the manuscript critically and either recommend or do this work that needs to be done.”⁹⁴

As if to emphasize the need for burying this project in another committee, he wrote: “I am returning with this letter all the material from Professor Howell’s files which you authorized Miss Paul to let me have. It seems best to keep this material all together.” To this, he added a final paragraph which we do not find convincing: “I am personally desirous of seeing something

published that will clarify our position on the number 666. I hope that attention may be given to it soon, and that we may proceed with the publishing of a brochure that will aid and instruct our workers in dealing with this point.”⁹⁵

And that was the end of it. To our knowledge, no such material was ever published. All that hard work of gifted researchers who had toiled between 1935 and 1943 in both America and abroad remained just a dream. At various times, it had involved contributions by C. H. Watson, J. L. McElhany, and W. H. Branson, three successive General Conference presidents. All of these important men were deeply concerned with discovering the truth about 666. But the final result of their endeavors was frustrated. It remained hidden under a bushel, from which we have now partly retrieved it.

But their work was not all in vain. For one thing, the revised text of *Daniel and Revelation*, which first appeared in 1944, discontinued all references to an inscription on the papal tiara. For another, a few of us in another generation more than six decades later have benefited by it, inspired—as we have also been by the entire tale about the warriors for truth who lived at that time—to pursue the same objective, with this book, which we trust will be a worthy successor of the brochure that never was.

Chapter Thirty-Five
CATHOLIC USE OF *VICARIUS FILII DEI*
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I

The great red Dragon, the devil (Rev. 12:9), was very, very angry with “the woman,” the people of God, whom he had persecuted through the ages, from before and especially since the birth of Christ. But to protect her, the Lord had placed a part of her beyond his reach, “in the wilderness,” for 1260 year-days (vs. 6), where she was nourished during “a time, and times, and half a time” (vs. 14), that is, for 3½ prophetic years. This period, referred to several times throughout each of our three volumes, extended from 538 to 1798.

In the end time—the last years of earth’s history—the great adversary would go forth “to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17). These people, starting as a tiny group in 1844, had soon revealed their temerity by joining battle with him and his great favorite, the Antichristian Beast, to whom he had given “his power, and his seat, and great authority” (Rev. 13:2). It was the devil’s design that, as throughout the Middle Ages, Christendom should both honor and worship this entity and therefore him. Even more, it was his plan that after the healing of the great wound which the Beast had sustained in 1798 “all the world” would wonder after it (vv. 3-4).

But the Remnant, who according to another Scripture “keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12), were intent on energetically resisting his design. Increasingly enabled to understand both history and the future, this people—especially their evangelists—warned everyone who would listen. For the time being, both the great Fiend and the papacy were powerless to crush them in their home base, America, where the separation of church and state safeguarded free speech, together with religious liberty. Therefore, until the United States could be seduced into forming the image of the Beast (Rev. 13:11-17), with a draconic Sunday law and civil penalties against the disobedient and gainsayers, the warfare was necessarily limited to arguments about theology and what had really happened in the past.

In reviewing the early twentieth century, as he contemplated the efforts of Hull, Preuss, Noll, and especially David Goldstein, Satan was probably on the whole rather pleased. He had driven the Seventh-day Adventists into a defensive posture and some disarray within their ranks. It must also have thrilled him that the efforts of the General Conference were so neatly thwarted and their pestilent brochure kept from being published.

Meanwhile, his servants were also beginning to thrust the Donation into the background and to deemphasize the title *vicarius Filii Dei*, which had frankly become an embarrassment; for these Seventh-day Adventists harped on it so insistently. Therefore, this bit of tell-tale evidence had, at least for the time being, to be hidden as much as possible. Eliminating it from 1917 and

onward by substituting the *Codex Iuris Canonici* of the Roman Church for its centuries-old *Corpus Iuris Canonici* was, as viewed from the Dark Side, an excellent first step.

On the other hand, individuals, not only laymen but even prelates, could not be controlled so easily. At the very time when Seventh-day Adventists were forced to read up on Gratian's Decree, the Donation, papal titles, and related topics—girding themselves for a ding-dong theoretical battle—the title *vicarius Filii Dei* or its translations was still, to some extent, being used in practice. This is what we must now survey.

II

Quite suddenly in 1914, the First World War erupted, with appalling slaughter and a devastation that afflicted most of Europe. In the midst of this tragedy, we meet Léon Bloy (1846-1917), a French novelist, essayist, pamphleteer, and poet. Beginning as a member of the Symbolist school, he reflected in his later works “a deepening devotion to the Roman Catholic Church,” to which he reconciled a number of intellectuals—though various prestigious French authors soon became his enemies.¹ Bloy was a man with passionate convictions, but his ardent adherence to the pope's religion failed to extinguish within him the fierce flame of nationalism that also burned in him.

In *Au seuil de l'Apocalypse* (On the Threshold of the Apocalypse), 1913-1915, he poured out hatred for the German invaders of his country during the Great War, calling them *swine* and worse. But what really made his French blood boil was to hear that the Vatican, via Cardinal Gasparri, its Secretary of State, had declared absolute neutrality in the conflict. Pope Benedict XV was therefore, as Bloy interpreted this decision, not taking a moral stand against any issues connected with the war, including many atrocities committed by the enemies. To Bloy, it was unthinkable that the pontiff, whom he called the *vicair du Fils de Dieu*, could do such a dastardly thing. He wrote: “I ask myself what kind of Pope has been sent to us?”² More than that, on 4 February 1915, he said about the pontiff: “He is *infallibly* mistaken, that is for sure.”³

Another work by Bloy in that period was *Dans les Ténèbres* (In the Darkness), published posthumously at the end of World War I. It contains a chapter, “Les Apparences,” of great poetic beauty, in which he pondered the difference between what seems to be and what really is. We are all, he asserted, deceived in our comprehension of objects as well as our fellow human beings; and it takes nothing less than death to teach us that we are invariably mistaken. Only God knows the meaning of things, including history and the individual events that shape our lives. What will one day remain of those German soldiers whom their criminal emperor flung out by the million to trample on and enslave the world? And what will remain of us? As for the pontiff, the 260th successor of Saint Peter, we do not know whether he casts or is himself just a shadow. Yet he is the only one among the *vicaires du Fils de Dieu* who in *urbi et orbi* proclaimed the neutrality of our Lord Jesus Christ. He

is a mere phantasm of a pope, like the emperors, kings, or republics crowding toward the red portal of the Apocalypse, which is going to open wide on the abomination of hell.⁴

Bloy's *Au seuil de l'Apocalypse* was popular in France, for by 1921 it was going through a fifth edition. In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, he influenced many authors of various countries, among them famous figures like Franz Kafka and Maurice Maeterlinck; while our time, too, is witnessing a revival of interest in his work.⁵

But we think that Bloy's books were probably not being read by English-speaking Seventh-day Adventist writers in America—who for the greater part were theologians or administrators—like J. L. McElhany, F. D. Nichol, or William W. Prescott, and others whom we have already discussed.

At the end of the Great War, “by 1919 the papacy lacked the prestige it had enjoyed under Pope Leo XIII, and Benedict was excluded from the peace negotiations.” Nevertheless, eventually (with Bloy already dead), “official relations” were resumed between the pontiff and France, and “a British representative was accredited to the Vatican for the first time since the 17th century.”⁶

III

Another country where that notorious title persisted was Spain. In a little more than a century, it had lost its empire and was convulsed by no fewer than three bloody conflicts, known as the Carlist wars. The first one was waged in 1833-1840, the second in 1847-1849, and the third in 1872-1876.⁷ The immediate cause was a question of royal succession. Pretenders, both named Don Carlos (the second the grandson of the first), strove to ascend the throne. But much more was involved: the rich and privileged classes, supported by the Vatican as well as the local Catholic hierarchy, fought with the utmost cruelty to maintain their privileges and possessions at the expense of the poor. Carlism, loathing the influence of American and French revolutionaries, strove to eradicate “atheists and Liberals.” It demanded “absolute submission to the Pope and absolute devotion to the King.”⁸

As previously noted, when we dealt with León Carbonero y Sol's *La Cruz* of 1872, the Spaniards in those days at times still called the pontiff the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*. During that year, a short-lived first Republic was set up, but it lasted only until the end of 1874. The Second Republic, a very socialist regime, continued from 1931 until 1939 and was overthrown in the abominable Spanish Civil War, when perhaps as many as a million people lost their lives. In this period, that title resurfaced.

The supporters of the Second Republic had broken free from the control of the wealthy and the shackles of the church, attempting to establish a more equitable setup that would benefit the poor. For the Carlists, this was another opportunity to fight for a monarchy and against secularism. They therefore supported General Francisco Franco (1892-1975), who invaded from Spanish

Morocco in 1936 and within three years crushed the republican forces.

He was assisted by fighters, especially airmen, sent by the Italian Fascists and German Nazis. The republicans, who politically covered a spectrum of liberals, socialists, and anarchists, were also helped by international volunteers as well as “a small communist movement divided among followers of the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin and his archrival, Leon Trotsky.” France, at first, and Mexico also provided aid. But in August 1936, a number of countries signed “a nonintervention agreement,” though it was “ignored by Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union.”⁹

The republicans and their supporters were no match for Mussolini’s and Hitler’s aviators, who dropped their bombs on military as well as civilian targets, including schools and hospitals. Spanish blood flowed copiously on Spanish soil. Democracy was ruthlessly eliminated and the domination of the Roman Church reestablished.

Franco, *el Caudillo* (the Leader), ruled the country for almost forty years and even saw to it that after his death the monarchy would be reestablished—to preserve “at least the basic structure of his regime.” But having ascended the throne, Prince Juan Carlos soon began to dismantle Franco’s system. He “encouraged the revival of political parties.” Within three years of the dictator’s death, “the country had become a democratic constitutional monarchy.”¹⁰

In the half century preceding the Civil War, between 1874 and 1931, Catholicism, “though losing every year its influence with the poor, was gaining steadily in riches and in political power,” especially with the assistance of the Jesuits. As ever before, they pursued their policy of winning over the rich and the mighty in the land. With their investments, they were also economically astute. By 1912, “according to Joaquín Aguilera, Secretary of the Fomento, they controlled ‘without exaggeration one-third of the capital wealth of Spain. They owned railways, mines, factories, banks, shipping companies, orange plantations . . . And there is a Spanish saying: *El dinero es muy católico*: ‘Money is a good Catholic.’”¹¹

On the other hand, “over more than two-thirds of its surface, Spain was ceasing to be a Catholic country.” The majority of people only used the church for ceremonies connected with birth, death, and marriage as well as great festivals; yet “they expressed open incredulity on Church dogmas, never attended mass and never confessed.” By 1931, “according to Father Francisco Peiró only 5 per cent of the villages of New Castile and Central Spain attended mass or carried out their Easter obligations: in Andalusia the attendance of men was 1 per cent: in many villages the priest said mass alone.” The attitude of the working classes and the petite bourgeoisie in the towns toward the priests and monks was more than indifferent: they hated them.¹² The conflict was never only political but also a revolt against Catholic Christendom, for “the feeling that rises most quickly to the surface in every Spanish revolution is anti-clericalism.”¹³

Franco had the unqualified backing of the Vatican. His revolution was a

kind of Crusade, a holy war, intended to restore a religious state of affairs a good deal like the Middle Ages, with church and state in close cahoots.

Accordingly, after bombers blessed by priests had rained down death from the sky to blast the ill-equipped republican forces, who went down to defeat, the learned Archbishop Isidro Gomá y Tomás (1869–1940)—Primate of the Roman Church in that country since 12 April 1933—was a very busy man. He strenuously superintended the reestablishment of a virtually extinguished Catholicism in Spain. Sometimes he found his task very difficult, since Franco’s regime was not always as cooperative as he had hoped it could be. According to an article in *Time* magazine on 15 January 1940, the year when he died, Gomá complained in a pastoral letter: “There are parishes where hardly 5% of the men and no more than 20% of the women go to Mass; nor is the percentage of those who go to confession and do their Easter duties much greater.” Force, it would seem, had its limitations. Moreover, to the government censor, this data looked very bad and so he suppressed the pastoral letter, nor would he allow it to be read in the churches.¹⁴

A special high point of Gomá’s career occurred a little before General Franco’s takeover. In a bull dated 6 January 1933, Pope Pius XI (1857–1939, reigned from 1922) had proclaimed an extraordinary Holy Year for the period between April of that year and the same time in 1934. The faithful were summoned to the Vatican, where indulgences would be dispensed to them. For this occasion, Catholic Action mobilized a thousand young people of Spain to participate, which they did from 12 to 19 March 1934. Gomá accompanied them. On their return, he wrote about this experience in a pastoral letter “Our Pilgrimage to Rome.” This was published in *El boletín eclesiástico del arzobispado de Toledo* (The Ecclesiastic Bulletin of the Archbishop of Toledo), pp. 89-97, on 15 April of that year.¹⁵

Gomá expressed himself in suitably medieval style, particularly where he described high mass in St. Peter’s. He referred to “the most special presence of God in that place, the altar where the sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Redeemer was being repeated over and over again, the sepulcher of Saint Peter, on which the immortal edifice of the Catholic Church is established: *You are Peter*. . . and the dwelling place of the *vicario del Hijo de Dios*, the historical personification of the magisterium, of the priesthood, and of the power of the same Jesus Christ in the world.”¹⁶ (Emphasis added)

This grand pronouncement fell within the period when pontifical power was reviving after the blow inflicted during 1870, with the loss of the Papal States. Pius XI was concluding “concordats that strengthened and united Catholicism in countries suffering the aftereffects of World War I, including Latvia (1922), Poland (1925), Romania and Lithuania (1927), Prussia (1929), and Austria and Germany (1933).” The last mentioned was with Adolf Hitler. But most important was the Lateran Treaty, signed on 11 February 1929 with Mussolini, which created an independent Vatican State. “Concurrently, a concordat established the validity of church marriage in Italy, provided compulsory religious instruction for Catholic schoolchildren, and declared

Roman Catholicism to be Italy's only religion of state."¹⁷

Many prophetic interpreters have seen this event and its consequences as a fulfillment of Rev. 13:3: ". . . and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."

In 1939, Pope Pius XI went the way of all flesh, and his disciple Gomá followed in 1940; but eighteen years later the pontiff was once again hailed with that title. On 5 May 1957, *La Nación* of Mexico City carried a very knowledgeable article by Giovanni Decio—evidently an Italian cleric—entitled "En el Centenario de Pío XI" (On the centenary of Pius XI). It begins as follows:

"This month marks the completion of the first centenary of the birth of the 261st Successor of the Fisherman from Galilee, His Holiness Pius XI. Many titles have been used to designate him, and not without a well-merited reason.

"It is certainly no small thing to be the *Vicario del Hijo de Dios* on earth, to be helped by the Spirit from on High and also to rely on the illuminated precedent of a tradition with a centenary repeated twenty times."¹⁸

IV

This use of the translated *vicarius Filii Dei* by Bloy and later by the Primate of Spain occurred when Seventh-day Adventist leaders in America were struggling to establish the status of the title and to verify that it really existed—especially in response to David Goldstein's challenge.

And it was a mere eleven months after Gomá had referred to Pius XI as *vicario del Hijo de Dios* that Goldstein's letter to Bishop Noll appeared in *Our Sunday Visitor* of 2 June 1935 to assert about the same pontiff: "Vicarius Filii Dei is not the pope's title, though he is the vicar of Jesus Christ Who is the Son of God."¹⁹

And how did Pope Pius XI react to Gomá's pastoral letter? If the head of the Catholic Church in Spain, the pontiff's appointee, had been in error, he would surely have been made to retract. Yet nothing like that happened. Instead, the pontiff seems to have been well pleased; for on 16 December 1935 he elevated Gomá by making him a Cardinal.²⁰

This prince of the Roman Church was more than the Archbishop of Toledo and Catholic primate in Spain. At one time a seminary professor, he had amongst other things also been considered an excellent theologian. In 1983, the two volumes of *El cardenal Gomá: pastor y maestro* (more than 800 pages in all) were published to perpetuate his heritage. Its Prologue is by one of Gomá's successors, Marcelo Gonzales Martín (1918–2004), another Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo and Primate of Spain from 1973 to his retirement in 1995.²¹

Dr. Gonzales complained that it was too narrow a view to emphasize Gomá's role in the events surrounding the Spanish Civil War. "He was inspired in the classical theology of Saint Thomas and other great theologians."²²

Notwithstanding Goldstein's protestations, this Prologue stands as an

excellent endorsement in a Catholic country of both the book about Gomá and the title *vicario del Hijo de Dios* contained in it. And so does the already cited piece which was published by *La Nación* of Mexico City, in the country just below the United States border, more than two decades later, when Goldstein was already 87 years old, the year before his death.

Just three years after he had descended into his grave, Goldstein was also contradicted by his more scholarly coreligionist Joseph H. Fichter, professor at Loyola University in New Orleans, a Jesuit with a doctorate from Harvard and author of more than thirty books. In his *Religion as an Occupation: A Study in the Sociology of Professions* (1961), Fichter said about the Roman Curia, which assists the pontiff: “An important aspect of official ecclesiastical status that distinguishes it from every other type of authority is its almost sacred character.” In a footnote, he explained his remark as follows: “This is obvious in the fact that the Church was divinely established and the Pope is the *vicar of the Son of God* on earth.” (As always with this title, we have added the emphasis).²³

Fichter’s work was published under a bishop’s imprimatur at Notre Dame University.

V

What followed was even more amazing.

During 1965 and 1968, Pope Paul VI (1897-1978, reigned from 1963) used the title *vicarius Filii Dei* in *Acta Apostolicae* (Apostolic Constitutions). Each such document, issued over the centuries, is “the highest level of decree issued by the Pope, in the form of a Papal bull. “The next highest category, after an Apostolic Constitution, is an Encyclical Letter.”²⁴ Incidentally, the most recent Apostolic Constitution was the decree by Pope Benedict XVI on 4 November 2009 to enable groups of priests to become Roman Catholics while preserving their Anglican traditions.²⁵ Perhaps most importantly, it allowed these men to remain married, though this did not apply to bishops, who will have to be celibate.²⁶

Pope Paul VI not only made use of the title *vicarius Filii Dei*; he also applied it to himself. We have already referred to two previous pontiffs who had done the same: Leo IX in the eleventh and John XXII in the fourteenth centuries. We have the PDF Latin texts of both the 1965 and 1968 Apostolic Constitutions in which Paul VI did so.

The following are English translations, but the bracketed material gives the original words. The full Latin text appears in the Notes.

CONCERNING FERNANDO PÓO (RÍO MUNI)

A few territories having been removed from the apostolic curacy of Fernando Póo, a new apostolic curacy is established, “Río Muni” by name.

PAUL [VI] BISHOP

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
FOR A PERPETUAL MEMORIAL OF THE MATTER

We who by the power and will of the most high God have obtained the chief place within the Church of Christ, Vicars of the worshipful Son of God here on earth and successors of Peter [the Latin original has, without italics, *Filii Dei* hic in terris *Vicarii Petrique successores*], though we are unequal in every part of our office to sustaining so great a burden, nevertheless are spurred on with the greatest zeal and anxiety so that the Christian faith and venerable religion of Christ may be proclaimed to all tribes and peoples and nations, and “may run and may be glorified” through all parts of the earth (2 Thess. 3, 1)

Given from the Citadel of Gandolfi, near Rome, on the ninth day of the month of August in the year of the Lord 1965, the third of Our Pontificate.

IACOBUS A. Card. COPELLO GREGORIUS P. Card. AGAGIANIAN
S. R. E. Cancellarius *S. Congr. de Prop. Fide Praefectus*

Franciscus Tinello
Apostolicam Cancellariam Regens

Franciscus H. Ferretti, *Proton. Apost. Decanus*
Caesar Federici, *Proton. Apost.*²⁷

BAFIANAE

Which was the apostolic prefecture of Bafia elevated to diocesan rank, “Bafiana” by name.

P A U L [VI] B I S H O P

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD
FOR A PERPETUAL MEMORIAL OF THE MATTER

Of the worshipful Son of God Vicar [the Latin original has, without italics, *Adorandi Dei Filii Vicarius*] and Overseer, to whom the eternal divine power has given the highest place of the holy Church, we have surely regarded nothing at any time more holy, nothing more solemn, nothing more religious, than that we should with every art kindle in the breasts of mortals that fire, which He here descended to arouse, and chose to have aroused most vigorously. . . .

Given in Rome, at St. Peter’s, on the eleventh day of the month January, in the year of the Lord 1968, the fifth of Our Pontificate.

ALOISIUS Card. TRAGILIA GREGORIUS P. Card. AGAGIANIAN
S.R.E. Cancellarius *S. Congr. de Prop. Fide Praefectus*

Franciscus Tinello
Apostolicam Cancellariam Regens

Iosephus Del Ton, *Proton. Apost.*
Eugenius Sevi, *Proton. Apost.*²⁸

Readers unacquainted with Catholic terminology may wonder what an *apostolic prefecture* (also known as a *prefecture apostolic*) is and how it is related to other ecclesiastical structures. It is a missionary area, headed by a priest, where the Roman Church is not yet sufficiently developed to have a *diocese*. If a prefecture grows and flourishes, it is elevated to an *apostolic vicariate* under a titular bishop. The final step is to establish it as a *diocese*.²⁹

On his *Catholic Hierarchy* website, “dedicated to our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, gloriously reigning,” David M. Cheney provides further background data. Bafia is located in the African country of Cameroon. The Prefecture Apostolic of Bafia, falling under the Archdiocese of Yaoundé, was erected on 6 July 1965 and elevated to the Diocese of Bafia on 11 January 1968.³⁰ The latter is the date that appears in the heading of the pontiff’s decree.

Also of interest is the fact that a papal bull is usually designated by the first two, three, or four Latin words with which it begins. According to this tradition, the one about Bafia would be referred to as *Adorandi Dei Filii Vicarius*.

The next pope was John XXIII (1881-1963, reigned from 1958). Elected at the age of 77, he became famous for convoking the Second Vatican Council and for his desire to reunite Protestantism as well as other non-Catholic Christians with the Roman Church.

Not so well known is his acceptance of or acquiescence in what the papal newspaper, *l'Osservatore Romano*, published about him on 7 November 1958, just after his election. Speaking French, the new pontiff was giving an audience to correspondents and special envoys of the international press. After reporting on that occasion especially the pope's very gentle and sweet demeanor, the unnamed writer reflected in Italian on the idea that the Supreme Pontiff bore immense responsibilities, of which he was well aware, "giacché egli *rappresenta, in terra, il Figlio di Dio, Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo*" (since he represents, on earth, the Son of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ) (emphasis added).³¹

Such statements reveal that the popes still cherished a basic theology like that of their predecessors for so many centuries. Lately to be sure, they and their supporters have not been using *vicarius Filii Dei* or its translations as they used to do. And yet they have at times resorted to very similar semantic equivalents, which demonstrate that fundamentally the pontiffs still think much as in the time of Pepin the Short.

Another pontiff, Pope John Paul II (1920-2005, reigned from 1978), when interviewed by Vittorio Messori, an Italian Catholic writer of many religious books and articles, used similar language during 1994. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, the chapter entitled "The Pope: A Scandal and a Mystery" describes the pontiff, with his concurrence, in precisely the same way: "The leader of the Catholic Church is defined by the faithful as the Vicar of Jesus Christ (and is accepted as such by believers). The Pope is considered the man *on earth* who *represents the Son of God*, who 'takes the place' of the Second Person of the omnipotent God of the Trinity" (emphasis added).³²

Like his predecessors, John Paul II was still on the same theological wavelength as Pope Stephen II (III)—and allegedly Pope Sylvester I—more than twelve hundred years ago. He did not, however, explicitly use the title *vicarius Filii Dei* as they had done. Nevertheless, in the following words attributed to these twentieth-century pontiffs, we have slightly adapted variants of the title as it originally appeared in the Donation:

Latin	Italian	English
<i>Vicarius</i>	<u>rappresenta</u>	<u>represents</u>
<i>Filii Dei</i>	il Figlio di Dio	the Son of God
<i>in terris</i>	in terra	on earth

The only change is that in the original *vicarius* = "representative" is a noun, while in Italian as well as English this idea is expressed as a verb.

A year before these interviews with Messori, John Paul II (1978-2005) was addressing his cardinals and others at the Vatican Basilica, on Tuesday, 28 June 1983, to celebrate a special jubilee of the Roman Curia. His Italian homily in brief reviewed the history and basic thinking of his church, with special praise for Mary, whom he called a most holy person. His penultimate paragraph referred to Christ as the “Son of the Father and her Son.” The climactic, final two sentences appealed for general collaboration in promoting the interests of the Catholic Church. He said the Lord required this “of us all, members of the Roman Curia: of you, my collaborators: of me, *vicario del Figlio*. Always, with the help of God, through the intercession of the Mother. Amen.”³³ (Emphasis added)

On Tuesday, 21 October 2003, John Paul II uttered related sentiments in English, when he spoke at a Public Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals. Addressing his “Brother Cardinals,” he restated the papal claim that the Bishop of Rome walked in the footsteps of the Apostle Peter. He said: “In exercising his ministry, the Successor of the Fisherman of Galilee counts on your faithful collaboration; he asks you to accompany him with prayer, while he invokes the Holy Spirit so that communion among all whom the Lord ‘has chosen as *vicars of his son* and constituted pastors’ may never lessen (*Roman Missal*, Preface of the Apostles, I).”³⁴ (Emphasis added)

John Paul II having died, his successor Benedict XVI on 20 April 2005 in his first message “at the end of the Eucharistic Concelebration with the members of the College of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel,” made the same claims and likewise linked his ministry with Mary. Addressing the cardinals, and everybody else who might be witnessing this event on radio or television, he mentioned—according to the first paragraph of his published text—his two very different emotions: “On the one hand, a sense of inadequacy and human apprehension as I face the responsibility for the universal Church, entrusted to me yesterday as Successor of the Apostle Peter in this See of Rome. On the other, I have a lively feeling of profound gratitude to God who, as the liturgy makes us sing, never leaves his flock untended but leads it down the ages under the guidance of those whom he himself has chosen as the *Vicars of his Son* and made shepherds of the flock (c.f. *Preface of Apostles I*).”³⁵ (Emphasis added)

Vicario del Figlio is, of course, not quite the same thing as *vicario del Figlio di Dio*, nor is *vicars of his Son* identical with *vicars of the Son of God*, but these expressions are closely related and synonymous. And the spirit inspiring them is much like the one that originally prompted and through the centuries upheld the spurious Donation of Constantine.

Chapter Thirty-Six
MAJORING IN MINORS

Before Uriah Smith or the Seventh-day Adventist Church were born, just after the French Revolution of 1789—more than two hundred years ago—some Protestant writers began to publish a double claim about *vicarius Filii Dei*. They not only pointed out that the title had a numerical value of 666 but also asserted that it adorned the pontiff’s miter or tiara. And throughout most of that period the Roman Church, especially during the twentieth century vis-à-vis Seventh-day Adventists, has vigorously denied it.

If this tale of the inscription could have been proven true, it would have been devastating and a truly major matter. It would have shown up the pope dramatically by emphasizing *vicarius Filii Dei* as his title of first preference. Therefore, Seventh-day Adventists searched high and low for positive proof. Some of them dared to go into Catholic sanctuaries and seats of learning. We have already related the escapades of the youthful Robert F. Correia. We soon will tell of an earlier and even bolder adventure by evangelist Charles T. Everson, who in 1905 penetrated into the pontiff’s private chambers at the Vatican.

We have, however, explored the statement in *Our Sunday Visitor* of 18 April 1915 about the title on the miter or tiara and shown how it really originated, not with a Catholic writer or editor but with a Protestant—almost certainly a Seventh-day Adventist missionary in India! So this whole debate, prolonged over decades, even until our day, has been largely fruitless and futile.

In 1943, the high-level committee chaired by General Conference president J. L. McElhany, correctly concluded—and once more we quote from one of its observations—that “it is not necessary to prove that this title has ever appeared on any pope’s tiara or miter, or over the door of the Vatican. . . . We are in no sense dependent on such proof or such use to confirm the correctness of our interpretation of the number-bearing title.”¹

Unfortunately the document containing this conclusion was never printed. But the final, revised edition of Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and Revelation*, published from 1944 to the present day, omits all references to *vicarius Filii Dei* being inscribed on the pope’s miter or tiara, or anywhere else.

Admittedly, this remains a fascinating, an even spectacular topic—especially when it is illustrated with beautiful color photographs, as in Samuele Bacchiocchi’s DVD’s.² But for Seventh-day Adventists the miter/tiara issue has become a minor matter. As shown in the foregoing pages, we now have much better evidence for that notorious title: its actual use in a historical context for more than a thousand years, not only in Latin but in the leading languages of Europe.

Resurrecting that old story about the inscription is to major in minors. And all that quibbling based on the difference between the tiara and the miter, or merely focusing on an incriminating object, is now just a red herring, which

confuses the issue. As a Chilean Seventh-day Adventist scholar, Carlos Olivares, has put it: “El debate en cuestión se centra en la existencia histórica del título, no tanto en la inscripción o en la ausencia de éste en alguna de sus coronas” (The debate in question centers on the historical existence of the title, not so much on the inscription or its absence on any of his crowns).³ Exactamente!

It is also well to notice how, when this issue is raised, Catholic apologists can make Seventh-day Adventists major in minors. To show what we mean, let us for a moment delve back almost seventy years to a 1941 utterance in *Our Sunday Visitor*: “To give color to their accusation enemies of the Church publicize something that is not at all true, namely that the Pope’s tiara is inscribed with the words ‘VICARIUS FILII DEI’, and that if letters in that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666.”⁴

How cunningly this sentence mingles a probable fact with a deliberate falsehood! In that period, up to and including the 1940s, the pontiffs were still using the tiara—though they stopped doing so about forty years ago. After Vatican II, Pope Paul VI laid it aside.⁵ Therefore, at least since then, the question of an inscription on the tiara is completely passé, as Seventh-day Adventists need to know. But that writer in *Our Sunday Visitor* was downright dishonest in linking this issue with a denial “that if letters in that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666.”

For Seventh-day Adventists to take such mixed-up reasoning seriously is to be backed into a corner where they themselves can major in minors.

Unfortunately, however, we need to inquire as to whether there ever was a *vicarius Filii Dei* inscription on any papal tiara, perhaps in the nineteenth century, if not earlier. The history of this issue as well as reader expectations compel us to embark on such a course, although it is really a side-issue.

Chapter Thirty-Seven
THREE ARE SAID TO HAVE SEEN IT

I

Many have been the references to persons who observed *vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on a papal miter or tiara. But with just two exceptions, all those who wrote about it were derivative authors. These events were reported to have occurred about half a century apart. First there was an English gentleman and officer, who is said to have witnessed the inscription on a miter or tiara worn by Pope Pius VI before 1798. Then, according to documents written sixty years later, Pope Gregory XVI was seen in 1845 with such a tiara on his head.

Both these sets of sightings referred to a period before Uriah Smith became a Seventh-day Adventist. In those years, the denomination that he would join in 1852 had not yet been organized and was still struggling into existence. Joseph Bates (1792-1872), one of its great pioneers, first issued his 48-page tract, *The Seventh-day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign*, in 1846,¹ which was also the year in which Pope Gregory XVI died.

No credible instance of genuine or possible sightings exists from a later time.

II

We have already noted some non-Catholics who reported the one in the eighteenth century. Let us, however, now do so somewhat more completely. Appendix III mentions more than twenty such writers who said *vicarius Filii Christi* appeared on a papal miter or tiara/crown. Let us look at seven of them who said basically the same thing, together with a Romanist reacting against their assertions.

1. **1799, 1 January.** An item under “Anecdotes” of the London-based *Evangelical Magazine* stated: “Some time ago an English officer, happening to be in Rome, observed on the front of the Mitre, which the Pope wore at one of the solemnities of their worship, this inscription: VICARIVS FILII DEI. It instantly struck him,—perhaps this is the number of the beast. He set to work, and when he had selected all the numerals, and summed them up, he found, to his great astonishment, that the whole amounted precisely to six hundred threescore and six. What stress is to be laid on this I shall not say.” This was followed by a table containing only the letters that have numerical values.²

2. **1809.** Ten years later, *Evangelicana, or Gospel Treasury*, a Boston book, republished the previous item from *The Evangelical Magazine* of 1 January 1799. It used exactly the same wording and table, with only a few punctuation changes.³

3. **1817, 2 August.** A correspondent under the pseudonym CANDIDUS, employing tables, analyzed the numerical values of the Hebrew *Romiith*,

the Greek *Lateinos*, and the Latin *Vicarivs Filii Dei*. In each case, the total is 666. Here, too, the last mentioned title was linked with an eyewitness account of a man who had seen it in the eternal city. This is how CANDIDUS related it: “Finally a gentleman on a visit at Rome, viewing a procession of the Pope, observed on his mitre the Latin words VICARIVS FILII DEI, the *Vicar of the Son of God*. This, as every one knows is the peculiar title claimed by the Pope, as head of the church. The gentleman had the curiosity to number the letters, and to his astonishment, found them as follows:”⁴

4. **1832, 5 May.** *The Catholic Telegraph*, a Cincinnati-based paper with the mission of explaining and defending the Roman Catholic Faith, contained the following sarcastic comment by its Irish-born editor, James Ignatius Mullon (1793-1866): “The number of the beast has been discovered, by the religious feelings of a set of pretended seers, who like the brawlers of Baal, in olden times, assume the garb of the Prophets without their inspiration. An English officer, in the fervour of his devotion during a short visit to Rome, is made to discover on the Mitre of the Pontiff, (though he wears a Tiara) the convenient motto, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, (the Pope has no such title, being only *Vicarius Christi*.) the numerals of which, when summed up, make 666” Then, ironically, Mullon remarked: “Now we, without going to Rome, having considered the matter attentively, discover this awful characteristic on the foreheads of the very clerical gentlemen, who have made themselves so merry on their new prophetic combination. VARIII PREDICATORES NOVAE RELIGIONIS. *The discordant Preachers of the Reformation.*” A table of numerical equivalences follows, after which the little article ends triumphantly with the letters *Q.E.D.*⁵ Mullon was skeptical of this report about the English officer, though he did not challenge its truthfulness directly.

5. **1832, 1 Sept.** A. T. J. [Anne Tuttle Jones] Bullard (1808-1896) produced a 250-page book, *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, in which she—like others both before and after her—quoted from the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1 Jan. 1799 about the title *vicarius Filii Dei* on the pope’s tiara and the English officer (she called him a “gentleman”) who had calculated its numerical value as 666⁶ Her book is the only work by non-Seventh-day Adventists which Uriah Smith quoted on this topic in his 1865 *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, as well as all its subsequent editions.

6. **1848.** Citing Cruden, Thomas Whittemore (1800-1861), a Universalist, accepted that “the number of the beast, or the number of the name of the beast, stands for the numerical value of the letters that compose his name.” He rather thought the entity that the writer of the Apocalypse had in mind was Nero. The Talmud, he said, contains a Hebrew form of that wicked emperor’s name with a numerical value of 666. He also, from the *Gospel Treasury* (1809), reproduced the piece about the English officer who had visited Rome and, observing the words *vicarius Filii Dei* on the pope’s miter, worked out its letter values, totalling

666. He did not, however, attach particular importance to this, except as “a very striking illustration of the ingenuity which has been displayed in obtaining the beast’s number . . . ,” though also “to show the very singular *coincidence* of numerals in that title.”⁷ (Emphasis added)

7. **1850.** Like Whittemore, E. D. Rendell, a minister of the Swedenborgian New Church, attached no importance to Historicism and its method of calculating the numerical values to be found in names or titles. In a footnote of his *Antediluvian History*, he referred to “the sentence VICARIVS FILII DEI, on the frontlet of the triple crown of the Pope.” But the fact that in Roman numerals this title equals 666 was for him of no consequence. This, he said, had previously been established by Robert Hindmarsh, an earlier Swedenborgian, who in his *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, p. 184, wrote of discovering one hundred and fifty such “coincidences.”⁸ In 1852, Rendell’s book was, with different pagination, republished in Boston.⁹

8. **1894.** *Profetiorna om Babylon och Vildjuret i Uppenbarelsesboken* (Prophecies about Babylon and the Wild Beast in the Apocalypse) appeared in Stockholm. Amongst other details, the subtitle contained the words *Antikrist* (Antichrist) and *Det Mystiska Talet 666* (The Mystic Number 666). This is a Swedish translation of English writings, apparently compiled from H. Grattan Guinness. The author dealt with a number of interpretations, pointing out that they had begun with *Lateinos*. A footnote stated: “An English officer of high rank, who in the year 1799, by a special favour, had been given the opportunity, while in Rome, of getting a close view of the Pope’s jewels and precious things, in this way discovered, that the papal tiara bore this inscription: ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei.*’” Guinness also gave the numerical values of the letters V, I, C, L, and D, with a demonstration that they totaled 666.¹⁰

These were not seven individual sightings, with a Catholic gainsayer. They are all based on the statement in the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1 January 1799, though it is possible that Rendell was referring not to Pope Pius VI but to Pope Pius IX; because he mentioned the tiara rather than the miter.

Fascinatingly, the Catholic rebuttal of 1832 was published in the same year as Anne Bullard’s book. That was also when Uriah Smith was born. From 1865 and for many more editions of his *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, he would keep on quoting from her book.

III

The second set of sightings was reported by Donald Eugene Scoles (1864–1907), a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist, in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* of 20 December 1906 in his article titled “The Pope’s Crown.” He wrote about two men who personally told him they had seen the pope’s tiara in

Rome with the words *vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on it. They were M. De Latti, a former Catholic priest who had somehow become a “Sabbath-keeper,” and Balthazer Hoffmann (1828-1912), a retired Presbyterian minister.¹¹ (Here and elsewhere, we use this original spelling of his name, though also *Hoffman* where he or his sources did so.)

Although these two men, who lived in different states, most probably never met each other, they separately—about eight years apart—substantially bore the same testimony.

The Scoles report was startling news for the international community of Seventh-day Adventists. We find it also reprinted in the Australasian *Union Conference Record* of 18 March 1907,¹² and more significantly in the 1907,¹³ 1912,¹⁴ 1918,¹⁵ 1921,¹⁶ 1936,¹⁷ and 1941¹⁸ versions of Uriah Smith’s *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, issued by several Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses. All these texts are virtually identical, with the same pagination. This was a new, revised edition of that book, which appeared for the first time after the author’s death in 1903.

Here is Scoles’s account as published in the 1907 *Daniel and the Revelation*:

I have met two men who declare that they have seen this specific crown; and their testimony is so perfectly in agreement that I am convinced that what they saw is true. The first man was M. De Latti, a Sabbath-keeper who had previously been a Catholic priest, and had spent four years in Rome. He visited me when I was pastor in St. Paul, Minn., several years ago. I showed him my tract, “The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast.” He at once told me that the inscription was not correctly placed in my illustration. He stated that he had often seen it in the museum at the Vatican, and gave a detailed and accurate description of the whole crown. When my tract was published, I was ignorant of the arrangement of the words of the Latin inscription, hence, in the illustration of the crown, placed them in one line. Brother De Latti at once pointed out the mistake, and said the first word of the sentence was on the first crown of the triple arrangement, the second word on the second part of the crown, while the word *Dei* was on the lower division of the triple crown. He also explained that the first two words were in dark-colored jewels, while the *Dei* was composed entirely of diamonds.

During a tent-meeting which I held in Webb City, Mo., I presented the subject, “The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast.” I used charts to illustrate it, one being a reproduction of the crown as Brother De Latti had described it. A Presbyterian minister was present, Rev. B. Hoffman, and when I described the crown, he spoke out publicly and made a statement to the congregation, saying that while in Rome studying for the priesthood, he had seen this very crown, and noted its inscription, and that the word *Dei* was composed of one hundred diamonds. I met him and learned his name, and visited him at his home, and was convinced from his description that

this was the identical crown that Brother De Latti had seen, but which has been denied by many. I then asked him for a written statement, and he gave me the following:—

“*To whom it may concern:* This is to certify that I was born in Bavaria in 1828, was educated in Munich, and was reared a Roman Catholic. In 1844 and 1845 I was a student for the priesthood in the Jesuit College in Rome. During the Easter service of 1845, Pope Gregory XVI wore a triple crown upon which was the inscription, in jewels, *Vicarius Filii Dei*. We were told that there were one hundred diamonds in the word *Dei*; the other words of some other kind of precious stones of a darker color. There was one word upon each crown, and not all on the same line. I was present at the service, and saw the crown distinctly, and noted it carefully.

“In 1850 I was converted to God and to Protestantism. Two years later I entered the Evangelical Church ministry, but later in life I united with the Presbyterian Church, of which I am now a retired pastor, having been in the ministry for fifty years.

“I have made the above statement at the request of Elder D. E. Scoles, as he states that some deny that the pope ever wore this tiara. But I know that he did, for I saw it upon his head.

“Sincerely yours in Christian service,

(Signed) “B. Hoffman

“*Webb City, Mo., Oct. 29, 1906.*”¹⁹

In the 1907, 1912, 1918, 1921, 1936, and 1941 *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*, this material was inserted before the piece from Anne T. J. Bullard’s book, *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, which Uriah Smith had used for all his editions. But *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* published during and after 1944—and still printed in our time—eliminated all references to either set of sightings. Nowadays most readers do not realize that these statements ever existed. Later we will try to establish why this deletion took place. First, however, we need to look more closely at the Scoles account.

IV

De Latti had visited Scoles while the latter ministered at St. Paul, Minnesota, about eight years before the evangelist’s 1906 article. A City Directory of 1898 listed him as the pastor of a Seventh-day Adventist congregation which held its services in St. Paul’s Y.M.C.A. Hall.²⁰ That January, he was also at the Market Hall conducting an evangelistic series about the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation.²¹ Hoffmann must therefore have written his declaration at Webb City some eight years after De Latti’s explanation. Because of the distance in time and space which separated these two witnesses, collusion between them can be ruled out.

A cynic might suggest that the evangelist was a liar who made up this entire story. But such a thing is difficult to believe of that dedicated, untiring

worker for his Lord, as we note from the following.

After Scoles's original article, in the same *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* of 20 December 1906, we read his account of a five-weeks' evangelistic effort at Webb City, MO, which resulted in ten baptisms. Together with his helper, F. F. Bliss (a former Methodist minister), he then proceeded to pitch his tent in the neighboring Carterville, despite the lateness of the season. Six people decided to accept what the evangelist and his companion were teaching, and others were "hopeful." But winter was upon them, so they closed the meeting on 17 November. Scoles reported: "At present writing [we] are stormbound under some five inches of snow and sleet, which has broken down the large tent and damaged it considerably." Yet undismayed by such a detail, Scoles wrote what may well have been the last words ever to go from his pen into print: "I rejoice in the privilege of being a worker in this last great message. It never looked brighter to me than it does now."²² That is the kind of man he was.

A little more than two months after his article and optimistic words, Don Eugene Scoles was dead. A paralysis [caused by cerebral hemorrhage] had struck him down at the beginning of February 1907. On the 12th, he died in Kansas City, Missouri.²³ His body was returned to Washburn of the same state, since this was his hometown. There, in its Prairie Cemetery, the funeral service was conducted on 13 February 1907,²⁴ and he awaits the resurrection.

V

In addition to Hoffmann's letter of 29 October 1906 which Scoles had reproduced, there is another signed on 12 March 1908. It also deals with the *vicarius Filii Dei* inscription, answering a query from Dr. W. S. Butterbaugh (1866-1963), a Seventh-day Adventist physician interested in theology.

Amongst other things, Hoffmann declared: "When a student studying for the priesthood, I visited Rome October 1st. 1844." As a child in his native country of Bavaria, he had been "thoroughly instructed in the catechism of the Catholic Church, and was taught that the Pope is Christ's vicar, proxy, or representative over the whole of Christendom. In 1844-45 when I was in Rome, Gregory XVI was the reigning Pope, the supposed successor of St. Peter." In that city,

On Easter day 1845 I visited St. Peter's Church eager to see the wonderful spectacle of the great feast and the celebration of Papal High Mass. Gregory XVI was sitting on a high throne gilded with gold. He was dressed in scarlet and white robes surrounded by his Cardinals; and all taken together would surpass in vanity and display the most magnificent pomp and splendor that the world ever beheld in a worldly monarch! What a contrast to that of *poor* Peter of Galilee! His many Cardinals were dressed in scarlet and crimson robes and were kneeling and kissing the tip of his golden-laced slippers in great reverence and adoration! On his threefold or tricolor [*sic*] crown of gilded gold were the letters in precious

stones pearls and diamonds:

VICARIUS.
.FILII.
.DEI.
Gregorius XVI.

There was one word on each of the three crowns. The first two words consisted of jewels surrounded by pearls. We were informed that the word DEI consisted of one hundred diamonds. *I know that this is a fact, for I saw the crown and read the title with my own eyes.* In connection with this scene, one cannot help but recall to mind the words of Paul: “So that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, *showing himself that he is God*”. II Thess 2:4. As true as the sun shines brightest at noon-day, this incident of worldly display and vain glory on the part of Gregory XVI is but one of the many scenes or steps in the process of the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the development and manifestation of the Antichrist of the Bible.

The Pope’s Flag and seal is not the cross, but the pretended keys and tricolor [*sic*] crown, as you will see on the enclosed passport which was given me on the 29th. of May 1845 when I left Rome for home, fully satisfied and forever enlightened in both mind and heart of the wickedness and folly of this counterfeit system of religion! Veni vidi viki [*sic*].²⁵

Hoffmann said he had been deeply shocked. What he saw that day helped him turn away from the Catholic Church. A photocopy of a passport (really a visa), somewhat indistinct, confirms his stay at Rome, which lasted for eight months, within the pontificate of Pope Gregory XVI. That pope died a year later, on 1 June 1846.²⁶

The Presbyterian Ministerial Directory (Northern) of 1898 reveals that Hoffmann joined this denomination in America during 1872. Becoming one of its pastors, he ministered to German churches at Holton and Arlington, Kansas, for five years. He then served churches at Summit and Prosperity, Missouri, and afterwards (again in Kansas) the Salem congregation at Claflin, from 1893 to 1898. These are the years with which the Presbyterian records end.²⁷ Most probably, Hoffmann retired in 1898; for he was then seventy years of age. According to his death certificate, he was—when he died at the age of 84 in Joplin, MO, on 1 February 1912—a retired minister. The next day, he was buried at the nearby Webb City, MO.²⁸ This is where Scoles had held his last evangelistic campaign and met him. It is also where Hoffmann lived as a retired minister and signed his statement of 29 October 1906. By the time he died, he had been a Presbyterian pastor for forty years.

The Hoffmann account has, however, been fiercely assailed, for instance in a Wikipedia article of 5 July 2010.²⁹

Of the various points that it raises, many have already been dealt with in our book. Some are misleading or downright erroneous. In passing, we mention only two of them: 1. “The earliest extant record of a Protestant writer on this subject is that of Professor Andrews Helwig in 1612.” No, it was 1600. 2. “The Roman Catholic Church has consistently denied the existence of such a title for Popes and labeled it an ‘anti-Catholic myth.’” This is absolutely untrue. As we have demonstrated, a surprisingly large number of important Catholic clerics have over the centuries used it, not only in Latin but also—as copiously shown—in other languages, like English, French, Italian, Spanish, and German.

Incorrect, too, are certain statements about Seventh-day Adventists. Again we mention two of them. 1. “In 1866, Uriah Smith was the first to propose the interpretation to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” No, it was in 1865. 2. Only the names of Drs. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez and Samuele Bacchiocchi are cited to prove that “today, some seventh-day Adventists scholars reject the interpretation.” These, however, make up a very small percentage of Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpreters.

Highly literate, this fast-growing denomination has a large array of intellectuals everywhere on the planet. The absurdity of such a claim becomes clear from a brief statistical survey.

In 2010, the baptized Seventh-day Adventist membership of 16.3 million³⁰ worldwide was larger than the total population of many countries. It was, for instance, more than the inhabitants of Switzerland (approx. 7,804,800),³¹ Belgium (10,423,493, July 2010 est.),³² or Portugal (10,735,765, July 2010 est.).³³ Although it still fell a little short of the 16,558,674 people who during 2010 lived in the Netherlands,³⁴ Europe’s most densely populated country, the denomination’s Sabbath School membership of “over 25 million,”³⁵ quite comfortably exceeded that number. Apart from their numerous colleges, Seventh-day Adventists also have more legitimate universities than many countries do, with eight in the United States alone.³⁶ Have their scholars here and abroad been polled to establish just what they believe about this topic? They have not.

Compared with Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists constitute one of the smaller churches, although it is equally international. Their denomination now has about as many as or more baptized members than the Southern Baptists (16,266,920), America’s largest Protestant body, whose membership seems, however, to be declining.³⁷

Seventh-day Adventists, on the other hand, are multiplying, though largely in countries outside North America. They now probably constitute the largest body of Sabbathkeepers on the planet since early Christian times. At present, just their baptized membership also exceeds that of all the Jews in the world.

Of these, according to Ner LeElef, there are at present 13.3 million. But the “Jewish population growth worldwide is close to zero percent.”³⁸

Most Seventh-day Adventists basically still adhere to what their church has believed for the past century and a half. Prominent among but not limited to them are international scholars like Drs. William H. Shea, P. Gerard Damsteegt, Alberto R. Timm, Richard M. Davidson, Samuel Koranteng-Pipim, Loren Nelson, Harold Erickson, and Frank Hardy. Further, the Seventh-day Adventist public evangelists we have spoken to mostly just keep on teaching that equivalence, in spite of what a few dissenting pundits might say. The Wikipedia article, however, fails to mention such facts.³⁹

Whatever may or may not be true about a *vicarius Filii Dei* inscription on pontifical headgear, the title itself—in Latin as well as other languages—has, with considerable frequency, been employed for many centuries, which this book has demonstrated. And as for the suggestion that only minority groups within the Seventh-Adventist Church still think the number 666 of Rev. 13:18 refers to *vicarius Filii Dei*, we may with Shakespeare’s King Henry IV on his deathbed say: “Thy wish was father . . . to that thought.”⁴⁰

VII

An older version of the Wikipedia article, downloaded 20 March 09, contained a stinging criticism of Hoffmann’s testimony:

“Though *supposedly* a former Catholic seminarian he used the wrong terminology to describe the Catholic Easter rite, using the Protestant term ‘Service’ rather than the Catholic ‘Mass’. . . . No explanation was given as to how a *supposed* ex-Catholic who *supposedly* once studied for the priesthood could fail to know the correct Catholic terminology for the ceremony *he claimed* to have witnessed.” (Emphasis added) This is personally venomous. The threefold *supposed/supposedly*, together with the words *he claimed*, suggests Hoffmann was a blatant liar, who had never studied for the priesthood or even been a Catholic.

Other paragraphs have it that it was physically impossible for him to make out any details on the tiara, especially because he would have sat too far away from it. “If he was a Catholic seminarian in the 1840s, Hoffman would have fallen afoul of the rigid court and ecclesiastical rituals of St. Peter’s Basilica and found himself placed far from the Pope behind rows of ordained priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, ambassadors, courtiers, papal nobility and royalty. From such a vantage point he would have been hard-pressed to see a papal tiara closely enough to have read writing on it.”⁴¹

That expression, “*If* he was a Catholic seminarian . . .” (emphasis added), again implies that Hoffmann was a liar. Although we do not claim the retired Presbyterian minister was fully like Christ, this word choice contains the Satanic *if* which the devil used against Jesus on the mount of temptation, when he said: “*If* thou be the son of God . . .” (Matt. 4:3-6, emphasis added). And we shall answer, as our Lord did, with the formula: “It is written,” for apart from

Hoffmann's statement handed to Scoles, read in conjunction with his letter to Butterbaugh, surprisingly much printed material from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—as far back as the time of Pope Pius VI—has survived to vindicate him, at least on several key points.

We have before us facsimile images of more than a dozen relevant books, a number of them related to the Grand Tour, “the traditional travel of Europe undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men of means. The custom flourished from about 1660 until the advent of large-scale railroad transit in the 1840s, and was associated with a standard itinerary.” For wealthy young Englishmen it was a “post-Oxbridge [Oxford University + Cambridge University] trek through France and Italy in search of art, culture and the root of Western civilization.” After 1840, when “rail and steamship travel made the journey less of a burden,” youthful Americans joined their ranks.⁴²

For many such people, Italy became a special magnet. An additional factor was the warmer climate, which attracted those who had health problems, especially tuberculosis. The chief attraction was Rome, the center of that ancient empire which had for a millennium ruled the Mediterranean world and, at one time, even Britain. And not a few of those who went there were also drawn to St. Peter's, together with other monuments of papal religion and power. Let us now, in some detail, take a look at a few of these.

1793

The earliest whom we need to consider is Sir James Edward Smith (1759-1828), an English botanist and founder of the Linnaean Society as well as a Fellow of the Royal Society. He traveled the Grand Tour through the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Switzerland between 1786 and 1788. Although he mostly wrote about botany,⁴³ his *Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*, published in 1793,⁴⁴ amongst other things tells of the pontiff's Easter celebrations. A second edition of Smith's book, with some additions and corrections, appeared in 1807.⁴⁵ However, we here prefer to quote from the first one, since it reflects the papacy of Pius VI in all its glory—the year before the French Revolution broke out—and it is unaffected by possible authorial hindsight:

April 8 (Easter Sunday) was a day of great expectation, and it exceeded every thing yet exhibited.

At nine we went to St. Peter's, where a most superb throne of crimson velvet was prepared for his Holiness behind the high altar, that is, between it and the tribune. The altar was adorned with candlesticks and statues of pure gold, each at least six feet high, and rich carpets were spread from it to the foot of the throne. The Pope soon came in his crimson velvet chair borne on men's shoulders, and with the two superb fans of white peacock's features carried, as usual, behind him. He wore a fine *tiara*, and was preceded by the cardinals and other dignitaries of the church in their full dress; among them the Greek patriarch, with his mitre something like an

imperial crown. Eight different *tiaras* and *mitres* were carried before the Pope, all rich in pearls and precious stones of great value. On one of them his name, Pius VI. was embroidered. All these were placed on the altar. The Swiss guards were in armour, as on the preceding Thursday morning at the chapel.

During the first part of the service the Pope sat in a small throne on one side of the great one, and between that and the altar. Here he was dressed with great ceremony, by a number of assistants, with much more magnificent robes than those in which he came, except that *he exchanged his fine tiara for a plain mitre of cloth of gold*, and seated himself on his grand throne. He then performed *high mass*, being sometimes at the altar, sometimes at his throne, as occasion required. The lessons were chanted in Latin first, and then in Greek, by a handsome Greek priest with fine dark unpowdered hair, who performed his function with much grace and dignity. Afterwards his Holiness administered the sacrament, that is the wafer only, to the cardinals and the principal civil magistrate, having first taken it in both kinds himself. The wine he sucked out of the cup through a gold pipe, an ancient custom, of which I leave those who are learned in ecclesiastical lore to shew the reason. This ceremony being concluded, he was carried in his chair, making the sign of the cross to the people as he went along, round to the other side of the altar, where he paid his devours as usual; and was then conveyed upstairs to the great front window of the church, from whence he gave his benediction as on the preceding Thursday; the great bell ringing, the guns of St. Angelo firing, and the soldiers being drawn up in the great area before the church, which, as well as the inside of that building, was crowded with immense multitudes of people.

I never in my life saw any magnificence or dignity which could convey an idea of what the Pope exhibited in this morning's business. All the decorations were so complete in their kind, so truly superb and elegant, that no shew could be finer; and the whole exhibition was so much calculated to inspire veneration and awe, as well as admiration, that surely nothing human could exceed it. Certainly no sovereign, who pretends to mere temporal authority, can ever assume such dignity; nor can any scene of action be found comparable to the stupendous temple where this ceremony was performed.

The throne and its accompaniment were immediately removed; and thus ended the devotional ceremonies of the holy week.⁴⁶ (Emphases added)

VIII

Since this grand display of pontifical pomp and power more than two hundred years ago concerned Pope Pius VI, it lay sixty years further back in time than what Hoffmann said he saw. It is more relevant to the first sighting

referred to above, as reported by the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1799 and later by Anne T. J. Bullard in 1832, which described how an English officer-gentleman—probably also on a Grand Tour—reputedly saw *vicarius Filii Dei* on a papal headdress. From 1865 and for more than another thirty years, Uriah Smith mentioned this episode in the various editions of his *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation* and other publications. As we have shown, moreover, Gaspard Monge, representing the French Revolution, derisively called Pope Pius VI the *vicaire du Fils de Dieu*.

Sir James Edward Smith's description corroborates Hoffmann's account in several ways.

First, it clearly shows that, as far back as Pius VI's time, the Easter Sunday celebration on 8 April 1787 was about much more than High Mass, though this was included. The pope and his cardinals were putting on a grand show, even holding court, with ambassadors as well as other foreign dignitaries and many visitors in attendance, after which the pontiff addressed the populace outside his window.

Hoffmann has been criticized for referring, in the statement he wrote for Scoles, to "the Easter *service* of 1845" (emphasis added). If at the time he really were a seminarian, he would supposedly not have used such a *Protestant* word but have called it "the Catholic 'Mass.'" But in his letter to Butterbaugh, he also mentioned the latter—and described Gregory XVI on an opulent throne, like Pius VI before him.⁴⁷ Hoffmann knew exactly what he was talking about and clearly differentiated between the celebration as a whole and the High Mass that formed part of it.

Second, in his 1793 *Sketch of a Tour on the Continent*, Sir James E. Smith described Pius VI's eight tiaras and mitres, "all rich in pearls and precious stones of great value" and told how—for High Mass—"he exchanged his fine tiaras for a plain mitre of cloth of gold."⁴⁸

A quibbling argument in the Wikipedia *Vicarius Filii Dei* article is that pontiffs "never wore papal tiaras while celebrating Mass."⁴⁹ That is certainly true. In the piece we have read, however, the pope did have a tiara on his head, except during High Mass, when he wore a miter.

1802

The *Sketch of a Tour on the Continent* by Smith, presumably a Protestant, was republished in 1807. But within a few years it was trumped if not eclipsed by *A Classical Tour Through Italy*. John Chetwode Eustace (c. 1763-1815), the author of this fascinating book, was a Catholic priest. Before his ordination in Ireland at Maynooth College, where he taught rhetoric, he had studied at Douai, France. Besides French, he had a good command of Latin and even Italian. Linguistically and through his connections with the Roman Church, he therefore had an excellent entrée to Western Europe, especially the Italian peninsula.

In 1802, during the pontificate of Pius VII, Eustace accompanied three

students from England, John Cust, Robert Rushbroke, and Philip Roche, as their guide on a Grand Tour. As he and his companions pursued their journey, he “wrote a journal,” which subsequently provided the material for his book. Excellently written and first published in 1813, *A Classical Tour Through Italy* consists of two volumes, comprising more than 1200 pages. It made him famous, “and he became a prominent figure in literary society, [Edmund] Burke being one of his chief friends.” By 1841, it went through seven editions in England.⁵⁰

This work was also anthologized at home and reissued abroad. For instance, F. Campbell’s *Flowers of Literature* (1824) contained “High Mass in St. Peter’s” by Eustace,⁵¹ alongside many other writers, some of whom are still famous today, like Byron, Shelley, and Keats.⁵² In 1837, *A Classical Tour Through Italy* by Eustace was as a whole reprinted at Paris from the sixth London edition.⁵³

Here is an extract from Volume I of the original 1813 text, with Eustace’s italics—except for those that we have added in expressions concerned with the miter and the tiara, as well as the word *service*:

The daily *service* of St. Peter’s is performed in a large and noble chapel, that might perhaps, without impropriety, be dignified with the appellation of a church, by a choir consisting of an arch-priest, thirty-eight prebendaries, fifty minor canons or chaplains, besides clerks, choristers and beadles. The grand altar under the dome is reserved for the use of the pontiff, who on such occasions is always attended by the college of cardinals with their chaplains, the prelates attached to the court, and the papal choir or musicians, who form what is called the pontiff’s chapel, or *capella papale*. As there is no regular chancel in St. Peter’s, a temporary one is fitted up for such occasions behind the altar, of a semicircular form covered with purple and adorned with rich drapery. In the middle raised on several steps stands the pontifical chair. The seats of the cardinals and prelates form a curve on each side. . .

When the pope celebrates divine *service*, as on Easter Sunday, Christmas Day, Whit Sunday, St. Peter and St. Paul, &c. the great or middle doors of the church are thrown open at ten, and the procession, formed of all the persons mentioned above, preceded by a beadle carrying the papal cross, and two others bearing lighted torches, enters and advances slowly in two long lines between two ranks of soldiers up the nave. This majestic procession is closed by the pontiff himself, seated in a chair of state supported by twenty valets, half concealed in the drapery that falls in loose folds from the throne; he is crowned with his *tiara*, and bestows his benediction on the crowds that kneel on all sides as he is borne along. When arrived at the foot of the altar, he descends, *resigns his tiara*, kneels, and *assuming the common mitre* sets himself in the episcopal chair on the right side of the altar, and joins in the psalms and prayers that precede the solemn *service*. Towards the conclusion of these preparatory devotions his

immediate attendants form a circle around him, clothe him in his pontifical robes, and *place the tiara* on his head: after which, accompanied by two deacons and two sub-deacons, he advances to the foot of the altar, and bowing reverently makes the usual confession. He then proceeds in great pomp through the chancel and ascends the pontifical throne, while the choir sings the *Introitus* or psalm of entrance, the *Kyrie Eleison* and *Gloria in excelsis*, when the pontiff *lays aside his tiara* and after having saluted the congregation in the usual form, *the Lord be with you*, reads the collect in an elevated tone of voice, with a degree of inflection just sufficient to distinguish it from an ordinary lecture. The epistle is then read, first in Latin then in Greek; and after it some select verses from the psalms, intermingled with Alleluias, are sung to elevate the mind and prepare it for the gospel. The pontiff then rises, gives his benediction to the two deacons that kneel at his feet with the book of the gospel, and *resigning his tiara*, stands while the gospel is sung in Latin and in Greek; after which he commences the Nicene creed which is continued in music by the choir. When the creed and the psalm that follow it are over, he descends from his throne, and approaching the altar with the same attendants and the same pomp as in the commencement of the *service*, he receives and offers up the usual oblations, fumes the altar with frankincense from a golden censer, and then washes his hands; a ceremony implying purity of mind and body. He then turns to the people, and in an humble and affectionate address begs their prayers; and shortly after commences that sublime form of adoration and praise called the preface, because it is an introduction to the most solemn part of the liturgy, and chaunts it in a tone supposed to be borrowed from the ancient declamation and very noble and impressive. The last words, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of armies," &c. are uttered in a posture of profound adoration, and sung by the choir in notes of deep and solemn intonation. All music then ceases, all sounds are hushed, and an awful silence reigns around, while in a low tone the pontiff recites that most ancient and venerable invocation which precedes, accompanies and follows the consecration, and concludes with great propriety in the Lord's Prayer, chaunted with a few emphatical inflections.

Shortly after the conclusion of this prayer, the pontiff salutes the people in the ancient form, "May the peace of the Lord be always with you," and returns to his throne, while the choir sings thrice the devout address to the Saviour, taken from the gospel, "Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." When he is seated, the two deacons bring the holy sacrament, which he first reveres humbly on his knees, and then receives in a sitting posture: the anthem after communion is sung, a collect follows, and the deacon dismisses the assembly.

The pope then offers up his devotions on his knees at the foot of the altar, and borne along in the same state as when he entered, passes down the nave of the church, and ascends by the Scala Regia to the grand gallery in the middle of the front of St. Peter's. His immediate attendants surround

his person, the rest of the procession draws up on each side. The immense area and the colonnade before the church are lined with troops and crowded with thousands of spectators. All eyes are fixed on the gallery, the chaunt of the choir is heard at a distance, the blaze of numberless torches plays round the columns and the pontiff appears elevated on his chair of state under the middle arch. Instantly the whole multitude below fall on their knees, the canons from St. Angelo give a general discharge, while rising slowly from his throne, he lifts his hands to heaven, stretches forth his arm, and thrice gives his benediction to the crowd, to the city and to all mankind; a solemn pause follows, another discharge is heard, the crowd rises, and pomp gradually disappears. This ceremony is without doubt very grand, and considered by most travellers as a noble and becoming conclusion to the majestic *service* that precedes it. In fact every thing concurs to render it interesting; the venerable character of the pontiff himself, the first bishop of the Christian Church, issuing from the sanctuary of the noblest temple in the universe, bearing the holiness of the mysteries, which he has just participated, imprinted on his countenance, offering up his supplication in behalf of his flock, his subjects, his brethren, his fellow creatures, to the Father of all, through the Saviour and Mediator of all. Surely such a scene is both edifying and impressive.⁵⁴

In reflecting on this piece, we note that like James E. Smith's description of 1793 it concerns the Hoffmann testimony indirectly. Eustace described a ritual of 1802, and the pontiff in question was not Gregory XVI but Pius VII. About him, the reader may remember that later, for his burial, the funeral orator P. D. Gioacchino Ventura at Naples called him a *vicario del Figliuol di Dio*, as shown above. A great deal of what Eustace wrote agrees extremely well with both Smith's passage . . . and Hoffmann's two explanations.

These paragraphs thoroughly refute the sneering criticism in the older Wikipedia article already mentioned. "Though supposedly a former Catholic seminarian he used the wrong terminology to describe the Catholic Easter rite, using the Protestant term 'Service' rather than the Catholic 'Mass.'" But Eustace, who was undoubtedly a Catholic priest of the most learned sort, employed exactly that word, no fewer than five times. He wrote about "the daily *service*," "divine *service*," "the solemn *service*," "the *service*," "the majestic *service* . . ." Protestant terminology, forsooth!

Within that magnificent Easter display, mass was also celebrated. Pope Pius VII came along and wore his tiara, which Eustace really dwelt on. For the pontiff to officiate at the Eucharist, it was removed from his head and a miter put on it. Eustace in fact described how throughout the proceedings the tiara was donned and doffed, not once but several times. He, too, described a lofty, splendid throne, just like Hoffmann more than a century later.

Most probably the first among those who during a Grand Tour saw Pope Gregory XVI in St. Peter's, just two years after his election, and left a record of the experience was Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867).

This was an "American author, poet, and editor who worked with several notable American writers including Edgar Allan Poe and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He became the highest-paid magazine writer of his day." Much thought of in his time, he is now largely "a footnote in relation to other authors," especially his more famous sister Sara, whose genius he grossly underrated, refusing to forward her career—although as a widow she had become destitute and was "publicly denounced by her abusive second husband." She wrote delightfully under the pseudonym of Fanny Fern,⁵⁵ for instance in *Ruth Hall* (1855).

N. P. Willis, in at least two editions, left behind collections of letters from abroad. Published as *Pencilings by the Way* in London during both 1835 and 1846, they show us Gregory XVI in matchless splendor. Willis's vividly written Letter XVIII is dated April, 1833:

The ceremonies of Easter Sunday were performed where all the others should have been—in the body of St. Peter's. Two lines of soldiers, forming an aisle up the center, stretched from the square without the portico to the sacred sepulcher. Two temporary platforms for the various diplomatic corps and other privileged persons occupied the sides, and the remainder of the church was filled by thousands of strangers, Roman peasantry, and contadini (in picturesque red bodies, and with golden bodkins through their hair,) from all the neighbouring towns.

A loud blast of trumpets, followed by military music, announced the coming of the procession. The two long lines of soldiers presented arms, and the esquires of the pope entered first, in red robes, followed by the long train of proctors, chamberlains, mitre-bearers, and incense-bearers; the men-at-arms escorting the procession on either side. Just before the cardinals, came a cross-bearer, supported on either side by men in showy surplices carrying lights, and then came the long and brilliant line of white-headed cardinals, in scarlet and ermine. The military dignitaries of the monarch preceded the pope—a splendid mass of uniforms; and his Holiness then appeared, supported in his great gold and velvet chair, upon the shoulders of twelve men, clothed in red damask, with a canopy over his head, sustained by eight gentlemen, in short violet-coloured silk mantles. Six of the Swiss guard (representing the six Catholic cantons) walked near the pope, with drawn swords on their shoulders, and after his chair followed a troop of civil officers, whose appointments I did not think it worth while to inquire. The procession stopped when the pope was opposite the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, and his Holiness descended. The *tiara* was lifted from his head by a cardinal, and he knelt upon a

cushion of velvet and gold to adore the “sacred host,” which was exposed upon the altar. After a few minutes he returned to his chair, his *tiara* was again set on his head, and the music rang out anew, while the procession swept on to the sepulcher.

The spectacle was all splendour. The clear space through the vast area of the church, lined with glittering soldiery; the dazzling gold and crimson of the coming procession; the high papal chair, with the immense fan-banners of peacocks’ feathers held aloft; the almost immeasurable dome and mighty pillars above and around, and the multitudes of silent people, produced a scene which, connected with the idea of religious worship, and added to by the swell of a hundred instruments of music, quite dazzled and overpowered me.

The high mass (performed but three times a year) proceeded. At the latter part of it, the pope mounted to the altar, and, after various ceremonies, elevated the sacred host. At the instant that the small white wafer was seen between the golden candlesticks, the two immense lines of soldiers dropped upon their knees, and all the people prostrated themselves at the same instant.

This fine scene over, we hurried to the square in front of the church, to secure places for a still finer one—that of the pope blessing the people. Several thousand troops, cavalry and foot-men, were drawn up between the steps and the obelisk, in the centre of the piazza; and the immense area embraced by the two circling colonnades was crowded by, perhaps a hundred thousand people, with eyes directed to one single point. The variety of bright costumes, the gay liveries of the ambassadors’ and cardinals’ carriages, the vast body of soldiery, and the magnificent frame of columns and fountains in which this gorgeous picture was contained, formed the grandest scene conceivable. In a few minutes the pope appeared in the balcony over the great door of St. Peter’s. Every hat in the vast multitude was lifted and every knee bowed in an instant;—half a nation prostrate together, and one gray old man lifting up his hands to Heaven, and blessing them!

The cannon of the Castle of St. Angelo thundered; the innumerable bells of Rome pealed forth simultaneously; the troops fell into line and motion, and the children of the two hundred and fifty-seventh successor of St. Peter departed *blessed*.⁵⁶

The italics of this last word were original with Willis. We have added only the emphasis on “*tiara*.” About this, we note that a cardinal removed it before Gregory XVI knelt to adore the bread of the Eucharist. Then it was put back on his head. Willis said nothing about the pontiff wearing a miter while he performed High Mass, though according to the extracts that we read above, especially from Eustace the Catholic priest, we may suppose that he did. What chiefly drew Willis’s attention was the pomp and circumstance, the rich vestments, all that glitter and gold, the people prostrating themselves, and—

amongst other details—the tiara.

April, 1843

The next witness we call in this investigation was likewise an American, Joel Tyler Headley (1813-1897). One of his *Letters from Italy*, collected and published under that title, is headed with this date. He was even more precise, for just before “April, 1843,” he wrote the words “Saturday before Easter and Easter Sunday. Rome.” Who was this author and why was he in the eternal city?

Answers emerge from contemporaneous writings, especially two anonymous books, *The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. J. T. Headley. With a Biographical Sketch and Portrait of the Author* (1849)⁵⁷ and *The Beauties of J. T. Headley. With a Sketch of His Life* (1851).⁵⁸ The latter was reprinted as recently as 2009. Both works reveal a fascination with his style as well as the way in which, as he journeyed rough ancient countries, he could imaginatively see many layers of a much-peopled past and superimpose them on the present.

From the former book, we glean the following:

Mr. Headley was born on the 30th of December, 1814, at Walton, in New York, where his father was settled as a clergyman. . . . He commenced his studies with the law in view, but changed his plan; and after graduating at Union College, became a student of theology, at Auburn. He was licensed in New York, and a church was offered him in that city, but his health was feeble, and his physician dissuaded him from attempting to preach. Unwilling, however, to abandon his profession without an effort, he took charge of a small church in Stockbridge, in Massachusetts, where he thought he could give himself the most favorable trial, but after two years and a half, broke down completely, and planned a European tour and residence for his recovery. He went to Italy in the summer of 1842, intending to spend the winter there, the summer in Switzerland, and the next winter in the East. The state of his health, however, led to some modification of his design; he remained in Italy only about eight months, traveled some time in Switzerland, passed through Germany and the Netherlands, went into Belgium, thence to France, then over England and Wales, and finally home, having been absent less than two years. His health being worse than when he went abroad, he gave up all ideas of following his profession, and turned his attention to literature.

His first publication was a translation from the German, which appeared anonymously, in 1844. In the following year [1845], he gave to the press *Letters from Italy and the Alps and the Rhine*; and in 1846, *Napoleon and his Marshal*, and *The Sacred Mountains*.

Mr. Headley is one of the most promising of the youthful writers of this country. He has shown his capacity to write an agreeable book, and to write a popular one. His *Letters from Italy* is a work upon which a man of

taste will be gratified to linger. . . .⁵⁹

Indeed. But against the background of the foregoing extracts from works by previous visitors who also saw and reported on the pontiff in action, we must limit ourselves to a few significant and interesting passages. We hope, however, that from these the reader will gather not only insight but pleasure.

“*Easter Sunday*. This is the last great day of the Popish feast; and the Pope celebrates high mass in St. Peter’s. This is done but three times in the year—this day—the festival of St. Peter and Paul—and Christmas. To-day also the Pope wears the Tiara or triple crown.”⁶⁰

If not particularly elegant, these three sentences are usefully informative. Michael Scheifler of Hawaii in an Internet article mentioned Headley, amongst others, to prove how mistaken Bacchiocchi had been when he asserted: “that popes have worn the tiara only during the coronation ceremony, not for other religious ceremonies.”⁶¹

In passing, we observe that Bacchiocchi made frequent mistakes, perhaps as a result of inadequate research. There are two further errors in the passage from which this quotation was derived: The heading proclaims: “Uriah Smith was the first to identify 666 with *vicarius Filii Dei*. No, it was Andreas Helwig in 1600. And after him, but before Uriah Smith, a large number of non-Seventh-day Adventists did the same. (See Appendix III.) Bacchiocchi also stated: “It was only considerably later in 1884 that Uriah Smith first identified the number 666 with the pope’s title *VICARIUS FILII DEI*.”⁶² No, that date, too, is wrong. It should have been 1865, which we have demonstrated.

It is, moreover, peculiar how Bacchiocchi could—on the basis of such mistakes—triumphantly conclude: “As the latest popes have shown good judgment in doing away with the coronation ceremony and with the use of the tiara—both sad reminders of past popes’ attempts to act as temporal rulers—so it has been wise for our Adventist church to abandon the traditional numeric interpretation of *VICARIUS FILII DEI* which lacks both exegetical and historical support.”⁶³ This has in it yet another error: the [Seventh-day] Adventist Church has not given up the numeric interpretation of *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Bacchiocchi often erred, not least so when he criticized or referred to Seventh-day Adventist writers, like Uriah Smith, as in the foregoing Newsletter, circa 2004. He was still at it in 2008, the year when he died. In late February or early March, he made what may have been his most egregious mistake, asserting:

“The sources cited by Uriah Smith to support his identification of the number 666, with the pope’s title *vicarius Filii Dei* are the accounts of two eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen the inscription on the pope’s tiara while in Rome. Elder D. E. Scoles of Washburn, Missouri, personally met these two eyewitnesses and wrote their story. Uriah Smith quotes this story in his book *Thought [sic] on Daniel and Revelation*.” In the paragraphs that

follow, Bacchiocchi gave their names: M. De Latti and B. Hoffmann. Then he made **An Evaluation of Uriah Smith's Sources**, asserting: "The credibility of the two testimonies used by Uriah Smith, is undermined by several inaccuracies."⁶⁴

Right here, about this entire line of reasoning, we must say: Stop! Uriah Smith never wrote a single word about Scoles, De Latti, or Hoffmann; for that great prophetic expositor died in 1903. The piece about them first appeared in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* on 20 December 1906 and was added to the 1907 edition of *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation* by the publishers. Smith had died four years earlier!

IX

But let us return to Headley in St. Peter's on that Easter Sunday of 1843. Like Eustace the Catholic priest who had been there forty years before him, he saw the cardinals and a pope arrive, the latter borne along with "the Peacock feathers nodding behind him." About this, he wrote: "I will not weary you with a detailed description of the mass and communion, and other ceremonies of the day; for it would simply be saying that his Holiness knelt on a crimson and gold cushion—that now he laid aside, or rather *had* laid aside, his *tiara*, and put on his *mitre*, and now vice versa—that there were benedictions, and genuflections, and chantings, and incensings, and *nonsensings* of every sort."⁶⁵

Eventually, when the pope went out onto the balcony to bless the crowd, Headley watched them prostrating themselves and the soldiery on their knees, while silence enveloped the concourse. "But the last word was scarcely spoken, before they were on their feet—drum and trumpet pealed out their joy—the cannon of St. Angelo answered them, and the bells threw in their clang to swell the jubilee—the multitude began to sway and toss and disperse—and all was over." The pious "had been blessed, but their condition had not been bettered; and I thought of what a vetturino whom I once engaged said to me—'The people,' said he, 'are taxed so that they cannot live, and all the country is filled with misery and poverty, and all the return they get from the Pope is his benediction once a year. Ah,' he added, with a scorn it was well his Holiness did not see, 'non è un benedizione è un maledizione;' 'it is not a *benediction*, but a *malediction*."⁶⁶

For all that Headley was a Protestant clergyman, he found the enchantment of St. Peter's almost overwhelming, for "At sun-down, if not too tired, you can return and stroll over the marble pavement, and listen to the vespers that, chanted in a side chapel, come stealing sweetly out into the amplitude, and float away among the arches in ravishing melody. The lamps are burning dimly before the altar—twilight is deepening over the glorious structure, and forms in strange costumes are slowly passing and repassing over the tessellated floor. The heart becomes subdued under the influence of sight, and sound, and a feeling almost of superstition will creep over the sternest heart.

The gloom grows deeper, leaving nothing distinctly seen, while that vesper hymn steals forth on the bewildered ear, like a strain from the unseen world.”⁶⁷

But on that Sunday evening, Headley’s disdain revived, together with his anti-papal Historicism.

He saw the entire outside surface of St. Peter’s illuminated beautifully by four thousand four hundred lanterns.⁶⁸ When at last the Cathedral bell struck nine and loudly, solemnly pealed out over the city, a thousand four hundred and seventy-five torches were suddenly kindled, adding their light to the lanterns.⁶⁹ “This you say is a glorious spectacle; yes, but it is on *Sabbath* [Sunday] *evening*—the successor of the apostle—the spiritual head of the church—the ‘vicegerent of God on earth has sanctified the Sabbath by this glorious illumination in honor of the Son of God!’”⁷⁰

The next night came the Girandola, fireworks to honor the pontiff. As Headley looked at this further display, an Italian stranger suddenly stood by his side, complaining that “An imbecile, yet oppressive government monopolized all the wealth of the state, and expended it in just such follies as these, while genius starved and the poor died in want.” This person, who proved to be both intelligent and earnest, remarked with a “withering sneer, ‘another day of our Master, another *day of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*’” Headley was startled by that boldness and satire on such an occasion, “and I trembled lest his imprudence should bring down on him the vengeance of papal power.” But soon the stranger said “Addio,” shook Headley’s hand and melted into the crowd. Looking back on that night and their talk, the author wondered at “the conversions to Catholicism of English and Americans in Rome,” who could obviously not penetrate through the pomp and display to the social rotteness beneath.⁷¹

Instead, it made this splendid writer turn away to ponder the entire sweep of history in the so-called eternal city from earliest Christian times to his own:

But it is now late at night—the noise and magnificence of the day are over. Rome is once more asleep, and the same moon that shone on the ancient capitol, looks mournfully down on the few columns that stand in the Old Roman Forum. In the ancient circus of Nero, all this religious pomp has been to-day. Around St. Peter’s is now the gathering and the greatness—formerly it was around the Coliseum. But today the Coliseum has been forgotten; no foot has sought its falling corridors. The gladiatorial shows have been exchanged for popish ones; and the Roman Eagle that flew over the old city, has been smitten down by the Cross, and Pagan Rome has become Christian Rome. What revolutions time effects! His chariot wheels, as they roll along, drag down thrones and empires, and leave on their ruins a Christian Emperor and a Christian government. They roll on, and Christianity is stretched in the dust, and its fragments lie scattered over the wreck of its foe. They will still roll on, and another scene is to be displayed on the ruins of both, and more glorious than either.⁷²

This last sentence looks forward to the Second Coming, after which Christ will eventually and forever rule our entire planet. We see that more clearly in the expanded version of this 1843 Letter, which was later reproduced in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Rev. J. T. Headley*. There it adds these words:

“Ruins may be piled on ruins, till history, ‘with all its volumes vast,’ seems to have but one page; yet there is one throne and one kingdom yet to be erected, which shall stand the assaults of time and never grow old. Prophecy is true, though we cannot discern how it is to be accomplished. The ‘Man of Sin’ is to be slain, though we cannot see the sword lifted for his destruction. All human experiments fail, but the final Divine experiment will end the chaos of human errors, and bring order and light into the moral world.”⁷³

And here we must end our quotations from the fascinating Mr. Headley, though we note that the italics are all his own—except for the words *tiara* and *mitre*, which we have emphasized. We need to hasten on.

1845

This is the year when Hoffmann said he saw Pope Gregory XVI wearing a tiara with the inscription of *vicarius Filii Dei*.

In the foregoing passages, we find that neither the New Yorker nor Headley referred to any such thing. At least the latter just mentioned but was insufficiently interested in dwelling on the papal headgear, for as shown he had other concerns. At the distance where he found himself, he may not have been able to make out any lettering that could have adorned it. But more probably the jeweled, inscribed tiara did not yet exist in 1843.

If so, this would dovetail with a present-day account of the tiaras. In 1798, at the time when Pope Pius VI was forced into exile—where he died—the invading French troops “stole or destroyed all the ancient papal tiaras owned by the Holy See.”⁷⁴ For three years, the Papal States remained abolished. But Napoleon Bonaparte, who negotiated with a more accommodating Pius VII, to a limited extent restored them by the Concordat of 1801, which “was formally promulgated on Easter day, 1802.”⁷⁵

The new pontiff had already been elected at Venice under Austrian protection on 14 March 1800.⁷⁶ But the church at the Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio where this happened, “lacked a papal tiara with which to crown him. At short notice, a temporary tiara was manufactured using papier-mâché, and local aristocratic ladies donated their private jewels to decorate the new temporary crown.”⁷⁷

This was a stop-gap solution: “The new tiara was intended to be temporary, but it continued in use for a number of decades.” Despite the Concordat, conflict soon developed between Pius VII and Napoleon, who was the First Consul and in 1804 made himself Emperor of France. He believed his country needed the Catholic religion but also had Gallican tendencies,⁷⁸ as previously

discussed.

“Although Napoleon did donate a replacement tiara to Pius VII some years later, made with jewels stolen from the tiaras destroyed by his troops in 1798, the new tiara was deliberately made too small and too heavy to be worn.” However that may be, “A new silver papal tiara to replace the destroyed ones was only manufactured in 1820, but the papier-mâché tiara continued in usage for decades afterwards, its lightweight design making it a comfortable alternative to the heavier silver alternative for popes as they aged. It was finally officially retired from usage in 1845, when a new lightweight tiara was manufactured for Pope Gregory XVI. Contemporary reports suggested that Pope Gregory viewed it as demeaning that the Vicar of Christ should be seen wearing a crown made not from gold or silver but from mere crushed paper.”⁷⁹ Yet we recall that during his Passion, our Lord was not ashamed to wear a crown of thorns for us.

It was, however, not only the popes who wore a fake tiara. A larger one was also placed on the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus—worshiped by the ancient pagan Romans as their supreme deity, whom later Catholic Romans modified and ardently kept on venerating as Peter in the Basilica that bears his name. Originally, its hand had held a lightning bolt, but this was transformed into the keys that “indicate the power of the Apostle to open the doors of heaven to all believers, as well as to admit unbelievers to the regions of the lost.” Over many centuries, innumerable lips have kissed away several toes—especially the big one—which were replaced. The account of the early 1900s from which we have drawn this explanation adds: “and if you will look at the foot carefully you will see that the present toe is considerably worn.”⁸⁰

Selina Martin, an Irishwoman⁸¹ who lived at Rome for three years, also wrote about it on 17 January 1820:

Being the anniversary of the finding of St. Peter’s chair, or as is more generally said, that on which our Lord delivered to him the keys of heaven, a grand festival is held at the church, only to be surpassed in show and ceremony by those of St. Peter’s day and Easter Sunday.

The bronze statue of Jupiter Capitolinus, now called St. Peter, having undergone no other change than that of the keys, instead of the thunderbolt, in the right hand, was dressed in the richest papal robes. The tiara is studded with precious stones, or rather, I should say, with paste, in imitation of them, for the French had dexterously substituted the one for the other. The quantity of finery with which this black figure is loaded, makes its ugliness more conspicuous. It is seated on a chair, the right foot extended forwards, which is worn bright with kissing, for that homage is paid by every Roman Catholic, man, woman, and child, who approaches it; children, when not tall enough to reach it, being held up for the purpose by some one present.

The chair, suspended over the high altar, is cased in brass, and was this day illuminated with greater splendour than usual, as well as the shrine in

the inside of the Baldechino. It was left open to discover the golden sarcophagus of superb workmanship, which is said to enclose the remains of St. Peter. Large golden lilies hold the lights which are kept always burning round it. The Baldechino stands under the dome. It is one hundred and twenty-two feet high, supported by four spiral bronze columns.

The pope was carried on his chair in grand procession; two great fans of white peacocks' feathers were held waving above his head. He was thus conveyed to the foot of the statue, (or idol, may I not call it?) until he too should offer adoration. I was shocked at seeing on the back of the pope's chair, a dove painted, surrounded by rays, to represent the Holy Spirit.⁸²

1846

Just a few years after Headley, Michael Vicary (1815-1892), a minister of the Anglican Church in Ireland, was also at Rome. As stated by the title of his book, he resided there in 1846,⁸³ the year after Hoffmann said he saw Pope Gregory XVI wear a tiara with *vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on it. Less than two months later, the almost 81-year-old pontiff was dead, to the end an autocrat—as he had been throughout his career.

Like others we have cited, Vicary observed him on his throne, as well as the cardinals, the priests, the religious attendants, the ambassadors, the multitudinous worshipers, and the tourists, who all flocked to St. Peter's to see him. Therefore, we refer to only a few additional items that we think are relevant to this discussion.

Vicary wrote: "The superb cathedral of St. Peter's, at all times abounding with objects of unequalled interest and beauty, is never more engaging or more attractive than upon the two great festivals of the Christian world—that which is designed to commemorate the birth, and the resurrection of our Lord."⁸⁴ He witnessed both the 1845 Christmas and 1846 Easter services.

As he watched, he saw the cardinals "go one by one to pay homage, or to make their obeisance to the Pope, probably to renew their fealty, when his foot is reverently kissed by each."⁸⁵ In mentioning this detail, Vicary agreed with Hoffmann when writing to Dr. Butterbaugh in 1908. The lordly cardinals have not always stooped so low. But the Anglican minister was witnessing an event that marked the juxtaposition of religious with temporal power. The spectacle was, "in fact, the holding of a court rather than a service of the Church. The Bishop of Rome truly presides at the altar, but beside him is the tiara; he wears the mitre, but he is the crowned head of the best part of Italy."⁸⁶

Gregory XVI's "efforts to consolidate papal authority within the church were matched by his support of traditional monarchies throughout Europe."⁸⁷ During his final years, he may have been filled with forebodings by the egalitarian tendencies gathering around him like an ominous cloud, especially on the island south of his domain. In January 1848, it would burst as a "series of republican revolts against European monarchies, beginning in Sicily, and spreading to France, Germany, Italy, and the Austrian Empire."⁸⁸

After his daytime observation of the pontiff, Vicary also went to see him a few hours later. This is what greeted his eyes:

The procession is formed in the same manner as in the morning. The space between the military is speedily filled by ecclesiastics; the cardinals, in greater number and variety, with their trains well twisted, attended by their chaplains, each bearing a mitre, take their posts. The Pope's chair is in readiness, and he soon ascends it, smiling complacently upon those who are near him. The canopy and the fan are erected, and bishops, priests, and sacristans follow in the rear. Now the *mitre* is removed from the Pope's head, and a crown or *tiara* is placed thereon. He for a while takes leave of the bishop, and appears in the character of a temporal prince, or crowned head. This crown is not showy; the groundwork is white silk, upon which are many diamonds and some other gems: there is but little gold. The top is surrounded by a cross of brilliants.⁸⁹ (Emphasis added)

X

We again consider Hoffmann. In his already quoted statement of 1906 prepared for D. E. Scoles, he said, six decades after Vicary:

“During the Easter service of 1845, Gregory XVI wore a triple crown upon which was the inscription, in jewels, *Vicarius Filii Dei*. We were told that there were one hundred diamonds in the word *Dei*; the other words of some other kind of precious stones of a darker color.” To Dr. Butterbaugh, he wrote in 1908: “There was one word on each of the three crowns. The first two words consisted of jewels surrounded by pearls. We were informed that the word *DEI* consisted of one hundred diamonds [*sic*].” In the same letter, he said the underlying tiara was made of “gilded gold.”

Apart from that bit about the inscription, Hoffmann's narrative on the whole agrees rather well with that of Vicary. However, the Wikipedia criticism, mentioned above, asserts: “Hoffman claimed that the word *Dei* was spelt in diamonds. Papal tiaras traditionally were made from silver (either solid silver or a tight mesh), laid on top of a felt inlay. No explanation was given as to how colourless diamonds could have been seen against a silver backdrop. Hoffman maintained that the lettering was on the silver, not attached to the crowns. Meshed tiaras consisted of such a tight mesh that it was not possible to thread diamonds on such a tight mesh without risking serious damage either to the tiara or the diamonds. (*see an example of the meshing on the 1877 Palatine tiara*). It would not be possible to attach diamonds, freestanding, to solid silver other than by a form of glue that would damage both the silver and the diamonds. Yet Hoffman's description claims that the three layers of jewels were somehow freestanding and not part of the three crowns.”⁹⁰

But nowhere did he write that “the lettering was on the silver.” He said the tiara was made of “gilded gold.” Further, why must we suppose that those were *colourless* diamonds? This type of gemstone comes in many varieties. “Diamonds vary from colourless to black, and they may be transparent,

translucent, or opaque. Most diamonds used as gems are transparent and colourless or nearly so. Colourless or pale blue stones are most valued, but these are rare; most gem diamonds are tinged with yellow. A 'fancy' diamond has a distinct body colour; red, blue, and green are rarest, and orange, violet, yellow, and yellowish green more common."⁹¹

And what about the crucial point that Hoffmann mentioned an inscription while Vicary did not? The main reason could have been that the latter was simply too far away to make it out, though skeptics are bound to retort that it did not exist.

All the aforementioned accounts are compatible with what Hoffmann wrote. But has anybody ever physically found a papal tiara inscribed with the words *vicarius Filii Dei*?

Our next chapter will seek to answer this question.

XI

Before we pass on to it, however, let us briefly return to M. De Latti; for about him we have been unable to discover anything in Federal and State census records or those concerned with immigration, birth, or death. This can perhaps be accounted for in two ways.

First, he might have been a visitor who crossed into the United States from and later returned to Canada. In those days, this was extremely easy and could have been accomplished without even showing a passport. Second, he may not have been an Italian De Latti but a Frenchman or a Belgian with a similar-sounding name. Extensive research on this, however, has failed to produce a conclusive result.

Chapter Thirty-Eight
TIARAS GALORE, BUT NARY A ONE
WITH VICARIUS FILII DEI

I

One day in Rome during early 1905, a visitor at the Vatican could have observed the curious spectacle of a Seventh-day Adventist minister—accompanied by a guide and a photographer—on his way to the pontiff’s private chambers. This was Charles Theodore Everson (1874-1956), who “From 1902 to 1909 . . . conducted evangelistic meetings in Italy and helped to organize the work in that country.”¹

But why, on that day, was he there at the Vatican? We will let him explain himself: “From persons in various countries I have received inquiries about the inscription, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which is commonly believed to be inscribed upon the tiara of the pope. And with the view of responding to these various inquiries and settling a much discussed question, I have made a special effort to gain the desired information.”²

One of these queries had come from William W. Prescott, editor of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. He, too, was concerned with this issue, as he explained: “Some time ago one of our correspondents inquired whether the inscription, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, was actually found upon the tiara of the pope. We then wrote to Brother Chas. T. Everson, one of our workers in Rome, asking him to give us some authoritative information upon this subject. In reply Brother Everson has sent us the article which appears on pages 10, 11. The illustrations are from photographs forwarded by Brother Everson, and may be depended upon as being absolutely reliable. It was only by an unusual combination of circumstances that he was able to obtain them, as everything pertaining to the pope’s insignia of office is carefully guarded. We are sure that the article will be read with much interest.”³

And so it would be, by us as well. But let us first be careful to note its date: 27 July 1905, for the chronology of Everson’s foray into the papal apartments is significant.

It occurred before “The Pope’s Crown” by another evangelist, D. E. Scoles, whose article was to appear in the same journal seventeen months later, on 20 December 1906. That is, Everson would not as yet have known about the De Latti/Hoffmann testimonies, nor did he refer to Pope Gregory XVI. His adventure as well as the piece about it also preceded Ernest R. Hull’s 1910 article in *The Examiner* of Bombay, adapted and republished a little later during the same year by Arthur Preuss in *The Catholic Fortnightly Review*, or John F. Noll’s version in *Our Sunday Visitor* of 1912—all of which we have already discussed.

The questions about *vicarius Filii Dei* directed to Everson and which he addressed were all concerned with the first sighting during the eighteenth century, mentioned by Uriah Smith in his 1865 *Thoughts Critical and*

Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation as well as later, to the end of his life in 1903. In edition after edition, he had cited Anne Tuttle Jones Bullard's book, *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century* (1832), though he never mentioned her name.

Everson had seen the tiara upon the head of the pope on various occasions and carefully observed it. Sometimes he would sit very near and even used an opera glass yet never found that title on it. "But in order to leave no possible room for doubt in this matter, I sought to gain the opportunity of seeing the tiara privately and of examining it minutely."⁴

Everson had twice officially asked permission to look at the tiaras close up, but the Vatican functionaries twice refused him. The first time he was turned down resolutely despite a card he had from the private secretary of Cardinal Mariano Rampolla (1843-1913), the former papal Secretary of State who was then heading the Congregation of the Holy Office⁵—because the "pope had forbidden absolutely any one's seeing privately his apparel."⁶ Nevertheless, Everson eventually persuaded some "underlings," to conduct him right into the pontifical quarters, accompanied by the pope's official photographer.

"One morning quite early we ascended the long staircase leading to the apartments of the pope, traversed the hall where the pope holds his private audiences, passed through the Sistine Chapel and other noted rooms, and finally arrived at the private apartment of the pope, and stopped in the room where the pope dresses himself for the great functions in Sistine Chapel. Here we were given an opportunity of seeing the tiara close at hand."⁷

II

This is the stuff of which mystery tales are woven. We suddenly find ourselves there with Everson, and a delicious shiver runs up our spine as we—with him—suppress the constant urge to look over our shoulder, wondering just where Pope Pius X could be at this time. What if all at once he emerged from a doorway or came walking along. . . ?

At the same time, the reader must involuntarily wonder why, despite the pontiff's opposition, Everson was able to penetrate into his chambers. One idea could be that he was bribing a guide. But this venture happened so openly that other explanations also suggest themselves.

For instance, the inner circle at the Vatican—perhaps including the pope himself—had been alerted to the quest of the over-persistent Seventh-day Adventist. And suddenly they realized what a golden opportunity they had of stage-managing the situation to bamboozle not only this man but, through him, perhaps his entire denomination. They knew well enough what its evangelists were preaching about *vicarius Filii Dei* and its numerical value.

So they showed him exactly what they wanted him to see: just three tiaras. None of them bore the inscription he was hoping to find. But published Catholic accounts from the early twentieth century prove that these were by no means the only tiaras at the Vatican in those days.

Twenty years after Everson's account, on 5 July 1925, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1849-1985), carried a sensational item headlined: "St. Peter's Is Robbed of Priceless Treasures." Its author, George Seldes, of the Chicago Tribune Press Service, had written it at Rome the previous day, on 4 July 1925. In this report, he said the police were looking for two Italian-American burglars, who had posed as pilgrims and got away with many opulent items.

Pope Pius XI "detailed Cardinal Gasparri [Vatican Secretary of State] to inspect the treasury and to check up and make an inventory so as to ascertain the real value of the objects carried away." He did so, together with Cardinal Del Val, in the presence of the police. "Cardinal Del Val afterwards told the press that the burglars had overlooked an old church closet in which were two papal tiaras adorned with hundreds of stones of all kinds, and also a papal miter in which the central stone is a diamond easily worth \$10,000."⁸

III

Charles Everson was looking for an object that was impossible to find: the papal headgear mentioned in all the editions of *Thoughts Critical and Practical, on the Books of Daniel and the Revelation*, by Uriah Smith throughout his writing career. That tiara had been lost irretrievably, a hundred years before the evangelist surreptitiously stole up those stairs to the room where the miters and tiaras were kept.

A few Seventh-day Adventist writers have supposed that somewhere such a splendid tiara still exists, perhaps secreted in a hidden recess of the Vatican. This, however, is pure fantasy, which we need to step away from. Even if such a thing were true and in Everson's time it could still have been found, the subsequent controversies which we have described would surely have caused Catholic apologists to do away with all the remaining awkward evidence. Third—and we cannot emphasize this enough—our focus should not be on splendid physical objects with writing on them but the fact that the title is, as it were, inscribed on the popes themselves.

Are we suggesting that there never were, at any time, tiaras with the words *vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on them? Not at all, but in the past century we will find nothing substantial about them. Our search for such tiaras needs to reach much further back than Everson's time. Above all, we should not—as our previous chapter has pointed out—confuse the two sets of sightings already referred to: in the late 1700s under Pope Pius VI and again in 1845, when the reigning pontiff was Gregory XVI.

IV

The surreptitious visit to the papal apartments at the Vatican was an act of religious espionage, a little like Correia's undercover work at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., a generation later. To some extent, it too, was a quixotic misadventure. In Everson's *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* account of 27 July 1905, he also wrote: "However, I shall not leave the

question at this point, but shall endeavor to prove in another article that also upon the tiara was found the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* at one time.”⁹ But such an article never appeared.

In 1905, when the twentieth century had barely begun, no tiara with the inscription *vicarius Filii Dei* could be traced. And this has remained true from that time to the present. On the other hand, Seventh-day Adventists were beginning to multiply, which made the Catholic hierarchy sit up in alarm, becoming more aware of them and especially those among them who said the number 666 described in Rev. 13:18 referred to the papacy. This new church had now taken up the Historicist torch increasingly cast aside by an older Protestantism. Most disturbing of all was that Seventh-day Adventists did so not only in North America but were establishing themselves all over the planet.

That prominent papalists in the early twentieth century were beginning to notice them at a high level was also suggested by Ellen G. White. Within months of Everson’s visit to the pope’s apartment, she startlingly wrote on 23 March 1906, in a hitherto unpublished letter: “Satan’s power of seduction has been continually a school of education in deception, fraud, and all unrighteousness. All this is given in the printed volumes that I have sent out to our people, and they are being scattered all through the world. The pope has called for one of these books, *Great Controversy* [1888], that he may condemn the heresies that are in it.”¹⁰

V

We believe that Everson searched for something that had long since gone out of existence. Why do we say so? Because all the beautiful tiaras existing in the time of Pope Pius VI had been demolished by the Napoleonic invasion which led to that pontiff’s expulsion from the Papal States in 1798, as several Catholic sources make plain. Let us look at this evidence.

We begin with the 1856 edition of the *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica, da san Pietro sino ai nostri giorni* (Dictionary of Historical-Ecclesiastic Scholarship, from Saint Peter until Our Days), compiled by Gaetano Moroni Romano, an Italian papal knight and second adjutant to Pope Pius IX. This Dictionary, under “Triregno pontificale” (Pontifical Triple Crown), in almost forty pages provides a lengthy survey of the tiara throughout its history.¹¹

One of the tiaras that Pope Pius VI had inherited formerly belonged to Clement III (1693-1769, reigned from 1758).¹² In 1782, Pius VI embellished it and its accoutrements in silver and gold, with many precious jewels, including big pearls and “nine big diamonds.” In the time of this pontiff there was also, for general use, a lighter triple crown. He had it made in 1780. It had a “cross of diamonds, with a top of emeralds, and below it a big rounded pearl that formed the world, with glittering rose diamonds. Pius VI besides made two costly miters, and modernized those of St. Pius V and of Paul V.” But

Napoleon Bonaparte, who commanded the Republican occupation troops in the Papal States during February 1797, imposed tributes on Pius VI, who found paying them most painful since they had so recently been made more beautiful. The jewels of the triple crowns, of the miters, and of other pontifical ornaments were taken from him by the French. He tried to save some of them, but they snatched them all away, especially when General Berthier invaded Italy, and dethroned the pontiff, whom he imprisoned on 20 February 1798.¹³

Years later, Albert Battandier, an Apostolic Protonotary, in his French *Annuaire pontifical Catholique* (Pontifical Catholic Yearbook) of 1907 recalled this experience. He wrote: “All the precious tiaras of the Vatican, which had been restored and embellished by Pius VI, were taken by the French in 1798, and of them nothing remains except the memory and the description that Moroni gave of them in his *Dizionario* under ‘Triregno.’”¹⁴

The next pope, Pius VII (1742-1823, reigned from 1800), negotiated with Napoleon and signed the Concordat of 1801, which restored Catholicism as France’s chief religion. But in 1802 the French, without consulting the Vatican, attached restrictions “forbidding the exercise of any papal jurisdiction in France without the permission of the government.” To this, the pontiff objected. In 1804, on going to Paris for Bonaparte’s consecration as emperor, he tried to have the restrictive “articles modified. He was unsuccessful, and thenceforth relations between Pius and Napoleon rapidly deteriorated. Rome was occupied by French troops in 1808, and Napoleon declared the Papal States annexed to France (1809). Pius bravely excommunicated the invaders on June 10, 1809, and was taken prisoner the following July, remaining in exile until the invasion of France by the allies in 1814.”¹⁵

As part of this controversy, Emperor Napoleon I in 1810 repromulgated the Gallican articles imposed by Louis XIV on 23 March 1682, as our second volume has shown.

But according to a report on 26 June 1805 in the *Diario di Roma* (the Roman Daily), no. 51, Napoleon had also for his coronation sent to Pius VII a triple crown with its trappings. This present was magnificently resplendent with sapphires, emeralds, rubies, diamonds, and gold. We read of this in *L’Unità Cattolica* (Catholic Unity) of 24 February 1878.¹⁶ This tiara had already been described in Moroni’s *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica* (1856).¹⁷ A good deal later, Albert Battandier’s *Annuaire pontifical Catholique* of 1907 again referred to it. In this, we read that Pius VII after the events of 1814—when Napoleon was defeated—resumed his control of the Papal States. At that time, some jewels originally taken from Pius VI were returned to Pius VII. Monsignor Gregorio also brought the Napoleon tiara into his chamber. “But on viewing this tiara that reminded him of so much suffering, Pius VII without looking at it told the prelate to put it on one of the tables of his closet, without otherwise seeming to attach any further importance to it.”¹⁸ This tiara has survived, but it does not have *vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on it.

The gorgeous tiara and miters of Pope Pius VI, one of them presumably

displaying that title, no longer exist; therefore, Everson could obviously not find anything with those words on it. The jeweled triple crown or miter of the first sighting by the English officer-gentleman before 1798 had been eliminated definitively.

VI

Concerning the Napoleon tiara, there were further problems, touched on in the previous chapter: the crown was too small for Pius VII (1742-1823, reigned from 1800) and uncomfortably heavy. Bonaparte, allegedly arranged it all on purpose. However this may be, we find that according to Moroni, its eight-pound weight was a real issue.¹⁹

Another early report about that crown was published on 4 July 1846 in *The Tablet* by Frederick Lucas, a Roman Catholic writer and its sole proprietor. He said Pius IX was crowned with the tiara “which Napoleon presented to Pius VII,” adding “There is another given by the last Pope, Gregory XVI.”²⁰

A later source, the *Defiance Democrat* of 18 July 1878, had this to say about that crown: “The history of Papal Tiaras within the present century has not been uneventful. In 1805 Napoleon presented Pope Pius the VII with the earliest that is now supposed to exist. It was of pearl-colored velvet, with three costly gold rings, which were each set with precious stones of various colors. The stones were each surrounded with brilliants, and the three rings were each bordered by a single row of pearls matching one another with extraordinary exactness. The apex of the tiara was of pure gold studded with pearls and rubies.”²¹

Though this pontifical headpiece has survived, it did not remain untouched by the ups and downs that affected the Papal States in the early and middle nineteenth century. Also in 1878, a mere five months before the report in the *Defiance Democrat*, *L’Unità Cattolica*—the Italian publication to which we have already referred—reported as follows:

“In the insurrection of 1831, Gregory XVI had so great a threefold crown hidden to save it from sacrilege when it was feared in Rome that the rebels would succeed. When the public had calmed down, the threefold crown was retrieved from its hiding-place, but it was found to have suffered: its velvet bottom had been ruined and various stones and pearls had been lost.” A vexed Gregory XVI in 1833 entrusted the task of repairing the damage to Annibale Rota, an honest and intelligent jeweler, who finished his work in 1834.²² According to Moroni’s *Dizionario* (1856), the tiara was damaged because a trusted person had buried it under the soil in a house.²³

The explanation in the subsequent *Defiance Democrat* of 1878, agrees with this closely: “In 1831 Gregory XVI caused it, with several other valuable possessions of the Vatican, to be hidden for fear of plunder by the mob, and when, a few months afterwards, order was restored and the hidden articles were dug up, it was found that the velvet of the tiara was quite spoiled, and

that a great many of the gems were altogether lost. Gregory XVI is said to have been extremely vexed at this, and he ordered the jeweler Hannibal Rolta [*sic*], in the year 1833 to repair the tiara as best as he could. This was done accordingly; but the restored work of art was found to weigh no less than eight pounds, and to be too heavy for the august wearers.”²⁴

Due to those repairs, the Napoleon crown became an altered version of its former self. Because of this fact, Everson was right in asserting: “There is no tiara extant that was worn before 1836.”²⁵ None that had existed in the time of either Pius VI or Pius VII.

As for the weight of the Napoleon tiara (eight pounds), Moroni said that Pius VII had a lighter one made of cardboard. It, too, was adorned with silver, gold, and jewels. Three later pontiffs used it: Leo XII (1760-1829, reigned from 1823); Pius VIII (1761-1830, reigned from 1820), whose pontificate lasted for only twenty months; and Gregory XVI (1765-1846, reigned from 1831).

The last mentioned, an aristocrat, believed that wearing a cardboard crown was beneath his dignity. Gregory XVI therefore had another one made for use in papal functions. According to Moroni, it was light and ornamented modestly, perhaps because in those troublous times the Vatican could not afford to spend too much on such a project. Nevertheless, this triple tiara was embroidered in gold and decorated with real gems.²⁶

We do not know, however, whether this is what Hoffmann would have seen. The papal crown that he referred to was perhaps more magnificent. Could there have been another, more splendid one? There was, and its existence was widely reported. We read about it in several French, British, and American publications from the very year during which Hoffmann said he had viewed it and on it the inscription *vicarius Filii Dei*.

The first report about that tiara which we have found is a three-line item published in the Parisian newspaper *La Presse* on 10 June 1845. It reads: “Queen Cristina has just, it is said, presented to the pope a tiara valued at more than 100,000 francs, to which she has with her own hands added some embellishments.”²⁷

The next report appeared nine days later in *Willmer & Smith’s European Times* of 19 June 1845. According to its masthead, this ambitious newspaper of Liverpool, England, was “prepared and published on the fourth and nineteenth of every month for transmission by all the steam ships sailing for the United States, Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Egypt, India, China, and New South Wales.”²⁸

The third report was *The Boston Daily Atlas* of 4 July 1845. Under the heading “Spain,” its correspondent in Madrid had sent a report about the tensions with Rome. This is how he put it:

“The Government had, it is said, forwarded its ultimatum to the Court of Rome, with instructions to its agents there to demand their passports, unless its proposal were accepted. Meanwhile the Queen mother is about to send his Holiness the Pope a magnificent crosier, worth 17,000 duros. The ‘Memorial

Bordelais' states that her Majesty had already presented his Holiness with a tiara, which has cost 4,000£, and which her 'piety and devotion' had induced her further to adorn with her own hands."²⁹

The fourth publication to carry a very similar report, a month later, was *The New York Evangelist* of 7 August 1845. It said: "A Madrid paper states that Queen Dowager Christina has made a present to the Pope of a tiara, worth 100,000 francs, and is about to send his Holiness a crosier, worth 17,000 duros, (about £3500.)"³⁰ The use of the pound sign indicates that *The New York Evangelist* was recirculating an item from a British paper.

Most probably all these very similar pieces were derived from a single Spanish source in Madrid. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to trace it.

A problem of premier importance needing resolution is the date on which Queen Dowager Christina's present reached Pope Gregory XVI in Rome. If he received it before Easter 1845, it could have been the one that he wore at the service which Hoffmann wrote about. If not, it was not. There is a time lag between Easter 1845 and these reports, but in the case of the *La Presse* item appearing on 10 June 1845 it is not large. Getting the tiara from Spain to Rome would have required some time.

The reader may wonder why information took so long to reach America? This can be readily explained with reference to the fact that the telephone did not yet exist, and even the telegraph was a new-fangled invention. Samuel F. B. Morse patented his code of dots and dashes in 1837, and the first telegraphic service was inaugurated in 1844. But it was only in 1848 that "the Associated Press was formed in the United States to pool telegraph expenses, and in 1849 Paul Julius Reuters in Paris initiated telegraphic press service (using pigeons to cover sections where lines were incomplete)."³¹

International news from Europe had to be conveyed by ship, a fact to which two of these accounts refer. We have already noticed that *Willmer & Smith's European Times* did so. The front page of *The Boston Daily Atlas* even gives the name of the ship that transported its news. It was the "Royal Mail Steamer ACADIA," which crossed the Atlantic "in a few hours over 13 days . . . by this arrival we have received our usual files of London and Liverpool papers," as well as "letters from our Foreign Correspondents."³²

But who exactly was the "Queen Dowager Christina," also described as the "queen Mother"? She was Maria Cristina de Borbón (1806-1878), the widow of King Ferdinand of Spain³³ (1784-1833). After his death, she began to rule as regent with absolute power on behalf of her daughter, the future Queen Isabella II (1830-1904). However, this arrangement did not endure; "within a few days the First Carlist War began," on behalf of the late king's brother, Carlos Maria Isidro, who also claimed the throne. Maria Cristina resigned the regency in 1840 but tried again "to participate in the political life of the country during the reign of Isabella II." This attempt failed, "and Maria Cristina was compelled to go into exile in 1854."³⁴

That was the woman who donated a splendid tiara to Pope Gregory XVI. Since she adorned it with her own hands, she may also have added the words

vicarius Filii Dei. Is it possible that this was the crown which Hoffmann saw and not the more modest one that the pontiff had made for himself? We do not yet know. As pointed out, the answer to this question depends on when Maria Cristina's gift reached the pope, before or after Easter.

Incidentally, a Protestant may assume that there is such a thing as a single tiara worn by the pope at his coronation and on other occasions. That, however, is far from the truth. "Many tiaras were donated to the papacy by world leaders or heads of states, including Queen Isabella II of Spain, William I, German Emperor, Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria and Napoleon I of France. The tiara provided by the last was made from elements of former papal tiaras destroyed after the capture of Rome, and was given to Pius VII as a 'wedding gift' to mark Napoleon's own marriage to Empress Josephine on the eve of his imperial coronation. Others were a gift to a newly elected pope from the See which they had held before their election, or on the occasion of the jubilee of their ordination or election."³⁵

Among these names, we in passing note that of Isabella II, Maria Cristina's daughter. But her present went to Gregory XVI's successor, Pius IX, in 1855.³⁶ It therefore does not fit into the time frame that we are considering.

Another mystery is that no source which we have been able to consult says anything about the Maria Cristina tiara. This excites our suspicion that, if the pope had it by Easter and did use it and it bore a *vicarius Filii Dei* inscription, it was later deliberately broken up to conceal the evidence. By then, a large number of Protestant writers had dwelt on the fact that the title belonged to the pontiff and had a number value of 666.

For lack of clarity about the date, we must, however (at least for the present), exclude Maria Cristina's splendid triple crown, which leaves us with only the one that Gregory XVI's jeweler had made for him. But that one also no longer exists. The three Catholic authorities whom we have mentioned made this clear.

According to Moroni's *Dizionario* (1856 edition), the new pontiff, who succeeded Gregory XVI in 1846, could not use his predecessor's tiara. Moroni said Pius IX had it damaged/junked (*guastare*) in 1855, "and instead made the present larger and richer one, assuming it for the first time in Easter of the Resurrection of the same year."³⁷

L'Unità Cattolica (Catholic Unity) of 24 February 1878, says virtually the same,³⁸ and therefore need not here be quoted word for word.

Neither statement tells what happened to the material of the discarded tiara, but it is logical to assume that it was retained and reused in creating the beautiful one belonging to Pius IX. Battandier said as much in 1907. First he mentioned the three crowns that existed at the beginning of the new pontificate in 1846: the Napoleon tiara, the Isabella II tiara, and Gregory XVI's tiara. Of this one he said: "Since the last mentioned was too small, he [Pius IX] had it remade and first wore it on the day of Easter in 1855. Of this, we present the photo,"³⁹ which appears on the next page of Battandier's book.⁴⁰

Various Seventh-day Adventists have been very much interested in finding a tiara with the words *vicarius Filii Dei* on it—for more than a century, since Charles T. Everson searched for it in 1905.

We do not deny that there may have been such a triple crown in the time of Pius VI, nor do we ignore what Donald E. Scoles recorded about the accounts of M. De Latti or Balthazer Hoffmann. But none of this is provable, for no tiara with that inscription can be shown to exist today. Further, as we have also shown, *Our Sunday Visitor* has no value for deciding this issue.

All the material in its various issues is derivative, ultimately from Ernest R. Hull's piece in the Bombay *The Examiner* of 18 June 1910, via Arthur Preuss, who had produced a botched version of it a few months later in *The Catholic Telegraph*. And, strangely, even Hull had based his ironic remarks on a letter written by a Protestant, most probably a Seventh-day Adventist! Besides, 1910 is later than 1905, which was Everson's date.

It is irrelevant whether or not that expression has ever appeared on any miter or tiara. Admittedly, Uriah Smith repeatedly referred to this example. Which can, of course, lead to the suggestion that he might never have identified *vicarius Filii Dei* with the number 666 if he had not read about it in *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century* by Anne T. J. Bullard.

That is most unlikely, for very many other writings of the nineteenth century with such an interpretation, which are cited in this book, have done the same. To support this statement, we mention the following facts.

Uriah Smith was a Millerite before, in 1852, he joined the Sabbatarian Adventists,⁴¹ who later renamed and organized themselves as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is reasonable to believe that after the Great Disappointment of 22 October 1844 he kept up some cordial links with and continued reading literature by his former fellow-believers. This would especially have applied to the writings of Joshua V. Himes (1805-1895), "the great publicist, promoter, and organizer of the Millerite movement, and in many ways its leading figure." He had "launched *The Signs of the Times* in 1840, . . . brought out a second and a third edition of Miller's *Lectures*, and was thenceforth in charge of the publication and the distribution of Adventist literature." In the 1870s, he became an Episcopal minister, yet "he maintained generally friendly relations with the SDA's."⁴²

Himes also published *The Advent Herald*. On 15 July 1848, in the year when Sabbatarian Adventists were holding conferences to determine their doctrinal stance about the Fourth Commandment,⁴³ his journal contained an article entitled "The Number of the Beast." For the convenience of its readers, it mostly reproduced a redactor's Appendix to Robert Fleming's *Apocalyptic Key. An Extraordinary Discourse on the Rise and Fall of Papacy* (1793). For further bibliographical details, please refer to Appendix III under Robert Fleming, Jr.

This book features the Hebrew word *Romiith*, the Greek *Lateinos*, and the Latin *vicarius Filii Dei*, all of them with a numeric value of 666. The writer in *The Advent Herald*, presumably Himes himself, was skeptical of such material. He wrote: “the difficulty has been, not in finding a name to which this number will apply, but in selecting from the multiplicity of names to which it will apply with equal plausibility.”⁴⁴

To a large extent, the so-called difficulty evaporates when the number highlighted in Rev. 13:18 is contextually related to the rest of the chapter, other Biblical passages, and historical events. Unfortunately, however, Himes did not seem to realize this fact.

All the same, the 16-year-old, impressionable Uriah Smith, could read what Himes had reproduced from Fleming’s redactor: “It is to be observed, as a singular circumstance, that the title VICARIVS FILII DEI, (*Vicar of the Son of God*,) which the popes of Rome have assumed to themselves, and caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes the number 666, when deciphered according to the numeral signification of its constituent letters. Thus, . . .” Which is followed by a horizontal table demonstrating this point. That may well have lodged and incubated within Smith’s subconscious mind, awaiting his future writing, when he would also discover what Anne Bullard had to say about the title.

Smith also consulted other Protestant authors. For instance, in March 1871, on the emperor Justinian, he quoted from *The Apocalypse* (1827) by George Croly,⁴⁵ which likewise mentions the number value of *vicarius Filii Dei*.⁴⁶ In 1881, writing about the ten Germanic divisions of the Roman Empire, Smith cited Bishop Loyd, Bishop Newton, Dr. Hales (with reference to Machiavelli), and [George Stanley] Faber.⁴⁷ In *The Sacred Calendar of Prophecy* (1828), the latter also admitted that *vicarius Filii Dei* numerically equals 666.⁴⁸ Though Faber as well as Croly—like Himes—dismissed this computation as insignificant, Smith, perusing their texts, would have noticed it.

Whether or not the title ever appeared on any miter, tiara, or other object is really beside the point. What is vitally important is that *vicarius Filii Dei* and its equivalents in other languages have often through the centuries been used by both Protestants and Catholics to describe the pontiffs (a few popes have even applied it to themselves)—as abundantly shown in this book.

We note, moreover, that the men who revised Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and the Revelation* in 1944, almost seventy years ago, deleted all tiara inscription references, which was very wise of them.

Chapter Thirty-Nine
NUMEROLOGY AND CATCH-ALL IDEALISM

I

Numbers, as ordinary folk regard them, are largely useful for counting and calculating in various ways. But even a brief visit to the Internet will quickly reveal that others also see them as symbols that affect their personal lives and are tied up with the destiny of the world. Known as numerology, this is similar to astrology and occult practices. It is, in fact, a can of worms and not in good odor. Viewing it with distaste, we open it reluctantly and only because some interpreters have injected number symbolism into their interpretation of Bible prophecy.

Numerology has ancient and seemingly respectable roots. In the West, it was apparently planted by Pythagoras (c. 580-500 BC), the famous Greek thinker and mathematician, who lived in southern Italy, “His philosophy enshrined number as the unifying concept necessary for understanding everything from planetary motion to musical harmony. Given this viewpoint, it is not surprising that the Pythagoreans attributed quasi-rational properties to certain numbers.” His devoted followers “attached significance to perfect numbers—i.e. those that equal the sum of their proper divisors. Examples are 6 (whose proper divisors 1, 2, and 3 sum to 6) and 28 (1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14). The Greek philosopher Nicomachus of Gerasa (flourished c. AD 100), writing centuries after Pythagoras but clearly in his philosophical debt, stated that perfect numbers represented ‘virtues, wealth, moderation, propriety, and beauty.’ (Some modern writers label such nonsense numerical theology.)”¹

And nonsense it is, but before we move on to considering it further, let us note that—quite contrary to those who have thought less coherently than Pythagoras and his disciples—6 is a perfect number and originally was alleged to symbolize very wholesome qualities.

But the numerology of a later time degenerated into peculiar ideas. One of these is that 6, and supposedly 666, represents imperfection, degeneracy, and rebellion, because human beings were created on the sixth day. Similarly strange is the belief that world history is predicted in the measurements of the Great Pyramid at Giza in Egypt. Allegedly these also affect us personally. We need not enter into the details here but rather turn to the numerology of the swastika, for it is more relevant to our topic.

II

Thousands of years before Hitler and his Nazis adopted it as a good luck symbol for their party, varieties of it performed the same function in the ancient world. Both left-facing and right-facing swastikas have abounded, especially in the Far East. Indeed, the word *swastika* is derived from the Sanskrit *svastika*.” Its basic sense is still suggested by its etymology, being “composed of *su-* meaning ‘good, well’ and *asti* ‘to be.’” It represents “any

lucky or auspicious object, and in particular a mark made on persons and things to denote good luck.” It also appeared on other continents. For instance, a photograph of a “Cilocco Indian Agricultural School basketball team in 1909” shows players of whom several have swastikas on their jerseys, for the symbol was also used by some Native Americans. In Europe, it still appears on the flag of the Finnish Air Force. It adopted the swastika as its emblem in 1918, and has not removed it, although in several countries it is illegal to display it.²

At first, that symbol was probably devoid of an association with numbers, but as the centuries wore on it acquired a numerology. This is how Rabbi Yonason Goldson in his article “The Perfect Number” described it: “Ironically, the greatest corruption of the symbolism of perfection and satisfaction presents itself in the form of the swastika, whose name derives from the same etymology as *sheva* and *soveya*. Originally a far-eastern symbol for abundance, the swastika takes its form from four sevens positioned around a common point, suggesting the abundance and satiety represented by the number seven cast forth to the four corners of the earth.” But, “with their Aryan ideology of a master race, the Nazis twisted the ideal of striving toward spiritual perfection into a superficial caricature. Convinced of their own perfection, they committed themselves to the obliteration of all higher purpose and moral values.”³

Even stranger is the *triskelion* and its numerological mutation. It began as “a motif consisting of three interlocked spirals, or three bent human legs, or any similar symbol with three protrusions and a threefold rotational symmetry.” Like the swastika, it originated thousands of years ago, appearing down to the present in many cultures. It is, for instance, still “the national symbol of the Isle of Man.” But it also, for many people, changed from a good luck symbol to an emblem of evil. “Nazi Germany adopted a variation on the triskelion as the insignia for the 27th SS Volunteer Division Langemarck, composed mainly of Belgian volunteers.” And the “Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), a South African white supremacist paramilitary group, has used a flag featuring three black sevens that form a design reminiscent of the triskelion, in a white circle with a red background.”⁴ When accused of using a three-legged swastika as a neo-Nazi symbol, members of the AWB would point out that it was three sevens, the symbol of utter perfection.

So is the swastika still an emblem of good luck, prosperity, and fortune? In some quarters it may be. What is certain, however, is that most Jews today, with the terrible Holocaust behind them, will gag at the very idea. And so will many of us, who have lost loved ones in World War II.

III

With numerology, we can prove anything. We have seen that 6 has been variously regarded as a perfect and an imperfect number, symbolizing good or evil qualities. Now let us do the same with 7.

Catholicism teaches and in Medieval times emphasized that there were 7 deadly sins. And what do we make of the 7 last plagues predicted in Rev. 16? Whether they will be a good or a bad thing surely depends on people's viewpoint. The wicked, who will constitute the majority, are certainly not going to like them.

Let us, moreover, note that—numerologically speaking—it is possible to argue that 7 is an evil, in fact a Satanic number. We find that the great red dragon of Rev. 12, which is primarily the devil himself, has 7 heads, and so does the Beast of Rev. 13, as well as the Scarlet Beast of Rev. 17.

In the Apocalypse, 7 is certainly important, structurally and to denote completeness. Sometimes in the Bible it even indicates moral perfection, though not always. For instance, neither Satan nor the Beast is perfect, nor is their dominion ever absolute. We should, in any case, not make too much of it.

We especially note that no number is in itself either good or evil, nor does the Bible say that it is. Therefore, no sound reason exists for injecting numerical theology into the study of prophecy.

IV

For many authors, the unbiblical 777 is a symbol of perfection, in contrast with 666, which allegedly represents imperfection or depravity. Some have likewise regarded 888 as specially significant. In all these cases, a tripling of the number has been alleged, despite the fact that the original Greek of Rev. 13:18 does not reflect such a procedure. As previously shown, for six hundred and sixty-six the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament all have the equivalent words in full as ἑξακοσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (hexakosioi hexēkonta hex), or three distinctly different letters, χξϛ' (chi xi stigma). That is, nothing of this so-called tripling is Biblical.

But let us see to what lengths theological absurdity can go in the writings of even such an eminent man as Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903). A fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge University, he also acquired "a fellowship of the Royal Society. His *Life of Christ* (1874) ran through 30 editions in as many years. In 1876 Farrar became canon of Westminster Abbey and in 1883 archdeacon. He was dean of Canterbury from 1895 until his death,"⁵ as well as Chaplain in Ordinary to Queen Victoria.⁶

He had learned his Greek, like other British gentlemen of his day who studied at their leading universities; therefore, he knew about the χξϛ', three different symbols that do not even vaguely resemble one another. Nonetheless, when in *The Early Days of Christianity* (1882) he tried to say what Rev. 13:18 meant, he came up with a most peculiar explanation.

In a long chapter, he sought to prove that the Antichrist of the Apocalypse

was Nero. Most of the early Gentile Christians were unable to tell exactly what that verse referred to. And yet,

there stood the strange number before them.

χξζ'

The very look of it was awful. The first letter was the initial letter of the name of Christ. The last letter was the first double-letter (*st*) of the Cross (*stauros*). Between the two the Serpent stood confessed with its writhing sign and hissing sound. The whole formed a triple repetition of 6, the essential number of toil and imperfection; and this numerical symbol of the Antichrist, 666, stood in terrible opposition to 888—the three perfect 8's of the name of Jesus.

But Jewish readers, and, as we have said, it was to Jewish readers that the Apocalypse was primarily addressed, would find none of the difficulties which perplexed their Gentile fellow-Christians. The Apostle had warned them that the solution did not lie so much on the surface as was usual in similar enigmas. Every Jewish reader, of course, saw the Beast was a symbol for Nero.⁷

Obsessed with his Preterism, Farrar apparently saw nothing peculiar about putting Satan between our Saviour and his cross. He also thought of the Apocalypse entirely in Historical-Critical terms and its author's Hebraic background, as though John had not been inspired by the Lord himself or also wrote for non-Jewish readers down through the ages. He went on to say:

“Every Jewish reader, of course, saw that the Beast was a symbol for Nero. And both Jews and Christians regarded Nero as also having close affinities with the serpent or dragon. That Nero was intended would be as clear to a Jew as that Babylon meant Rome, though Rome is never mentioned. He would not try the name Nero Caesar in Latin, because *isopsephia* (which the Jew called *Gematria*) was almost unknown among the Romans, and their alphabetic numeration was wholly defective. He might try Νέρων Καίσαρ [Nerōn Kaisar] in Greek, but it would not give him the right number. Then, as with a flash of intuition, it would occur to him to try the name *in Hebrew*. The Apostle was writing as a Hebrew, was evidently thinking as a Hebrew.”

Farrar stated that “no Jew ever thought of Nero except as ‘*Neron Kesar*.’” But how could he know this? Jews of that time did not in any case speak Hebrew, the synagogue language, but Aramaic. But no, reality had to yield to a fanciful idea. Therefore, the numeric value of the *Greek* characters χξζ' needed to be reckoned in *Hebrew* letters,⁸ in a language which Gentile Christians could not read!

We are astounded. How could that learned and highly honored man of the Victorian era, in pursuit of a false interpretation, ignore what stood written there before his eyes and contort his thinking to such an extent? Let us note, however, that his basic idea was unoriginal, derived from predecessors both

recent and further back in time. And at least one of them indulged in thinking every bit as peculiar as his own. Let us look at some of his antecedents.

V

Frederick Brodie (1823-1896), was a Scottish civil engineer converted to the Plymouth Brethren who became a lay preacher for them as well as a Dispensationalist writer. In *The Revelation* (1880), just two years before Farrar, he referred to the interpretation that 666 represented *Vicarius Filii Dei* or possibly *Lateinos*, fingering the papacy. But about this he had his doubts, for he wrote: “Never was excommunication from Popery so severe.” He observed: “The number of the wild-beast has been a sort of bone of contention among all parties, and been accredited to various individuals with much ingenuity; but one thing is evident, and that is, its symbol of imperfection, being one short of seven,—the symbol of perfection. The number of Jesus, according to the Greek method of notation is 888, the perfection of resurrection.”⁹ However, Brodie fuzzily failed to show just how he could simply move on from 6 to 666, 7 to 777, and 8 to 888.

Similar reasoning appears in *Waymarks in the Wilderness and Scriptural Guide* (1864), a monthly magazine published intermittently from 1854. That was the year when its editor, James Inglis (1813-1872), a New York Baptist minister, first introduced Dispensationalism to North America.¹⁰

He said: “The Hebrew name from which our own word ‘seven’ is derived, signifies ‘fulness’ or ‘perfection.’” Etymologically this is a most peculiar statement. *Seven* is not derived from a Semitic Hebrew word but from old Germanic *seofon*. This error makes us distrustful of Inglis’s mental caliber. He went on to assert: “A curious illustration of it, in the way of contrast, has been suggested in an explanation of these remarkable words in Rev. xiii.18, ‘Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is 666,’—a thrice repeated number, which falls short of seven, the number of perfection, applied to him in whom human failure and imperfection will be most conspicuous—666—signal failure where human power and ambition shall go their utmost length to glorify the creature.”¹¹

Like other numerologists, he displayed no awareness of the fact that in New Testament times Mediterranean writers did not use the Hindu-Arabic system of numbers and that three 6’s cannot be fitted into Rev. 13:18. What is also very strange in Inglis is that he could oppose the year-day principle expressed “in the popular maxim of prophetic interpretation that ‘a day stand for a year’” by asserting: “But in opposition to this we venture to affirm that there cannot be found in the word of God a single passage in which a day stands for a year.”¹² Nevertheless, Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6 are two such passages.

Despite a strong imperial Roman presence everywhere along the eastern Mediterranean almost two millennia ago, those nineteenth-century numerologists—like others today—ignored or objected to the idea that a Latin name could be suggested by a text that was written in Greek. But they did not

have the same problem with discerning Hebrew number symbolism in it! Of this, we have found a further example in *Biblical Fragments* published in 1821. Its author was Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck (1778-1856).

Née Galton, she was a colorful personality. At what in those days was considered a spinsterish age of 28, she was married to Lambert Schimmelpenninck, a Dutch tobacco merchant, in 1806. Her family “considered her a ‘mischief-maker,’ with Francis Galton [her nephew] saying that she ‘broke off eleven marriages.’” On the positive side, this intellectual woman was a writer of the British anti-slavery movement.¹³

She was, besides, from her first publication in 1813, “an aesthetic theorist and a religious writer, an apologist for the French Jansenist movement connected with Port Royal, and later for the Moravians. Each of these groups of believers offered an example of religious leadership by women. She also has enduring interest as an autobiographer.”¹⁴

Nowadays, Mary Anne would probably have been regarded as a feminist. She certainly wrote about “women’s capacity for sublime fortitude and social action” as well as “dissenting women’s poetry.” In religion, she was “a Quaker turned Methodist turned Moravian.” Her upbringing as a strict Quaker left traces in her writing.¹⁵

This background could have influenced her strongly spiritualized and Hebraistic chapter, “On the Number of the Beast, 666,” in *Biblical Fragments*. We note in passing that this book was dedicated “to those British ladies who, in this age of high mental cultivation and Christian profession, justly consider it as an indispensable part of a liberal education both to cultivate a taste for Biblical literature themselves, and to inspire a taste for it in the young persons in their own families.”¹⁶

Ms. Schimmelpenninck believed that all Hebrew words, including the numerals, were ultimately rooted in verb structures and also that “every name of a number receives its appellation, in Hebrew, from some associated analogy or quality.” But she also extended this beyond that language, which becomes strongly evident in what she had to say about 7 and 8. The former, she maintained, had a root meaning of being *filled*, *satisfied*, or *completed*. “Thus seven means the complete number, probably because the world was created in six days, and on the seventh was the sabbath of rest. In many natural objects, too, the number seven seems to prevail, as in that of the colours in the rainbow, and the notes in the musical scale; in both which instances the colour or note succeeding the seventh, or, in other words, the octave, is always a reduplication of the first.” As for 8, she said it was “the *superabundant* or *overflowing* number.”¹⁷

A quaint example of her reasoning is found in what she wrote about the Messianic prophecy of Micah 5:2-6, which mentions “*seven* shepherds and *eight* principal men, who shall lay waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and deliver us from the Assyrian.”¹⁸ From this, she took an interesting leap into the New Testament, asserting that “the four evangelists, with St. Peter, St. James, and St. Jude, all our Lord’s associates on earth, make the seven

shepherds, and were all said to have been pastors of particular churches; and if we add to the number St. Paul, miraculously called by our Lord after his ascension, as the eighth, we then have likewise the eight principal men.”¹⁹

Emphasizing that “though the New Testament is written in Greek and not in Hebrew, it is written by Hebrews, and proceeds on Hebrew principles,” she continued: “Seven meaning the perfect or complete number, the number six, which just falls short of it, is the *imperfect number*, and is the type of incompleteness; just as eight which exceeds the perfect number, is of superabundance.” But six, according to her strange if interesting Hebrew etymology, “is the number of exultation and pride, but yet of incompleteness: six being the highest number of working days, but not the seventh or day of rest,—the highest number of labouring years, but not the sabbatical year of freedom.” Therefore, in seeking to understand what Rev. 13:18 has to say about the Beast, “you will find him full of works,—six days of works complete, abundance of them, 6, but the seventh is wanting.”²⁰

And further: “Such is the number of the beast; it is the number of *a man*. It is at once the number of pride and exultation, and yet of imperfection and incompleteness. It is all that fallen human nature can give; it is what the vain heart of man delights in, when it looks upon its own works, and calls them very good; but, alas! it all falls short.”²¹

We are not at all pleased with Ms. Schimmelpenninck’s parenthesis: “and calls them very good,” for it directly quotes and parodies the Lord’s own words after he had made the world and utterly satisfied looked back on six days of creation (Gen. 1:31); for everything—man included—was perfect. And here the number six had nothing to do with sin and imperfection.

Furthermore, unfortunately for her reasoning, 6 is not 666. But she bridges the gap by asserting several times that the latter is six tripled,²² which—as we know now—was definitely not the case.

VI

In 1848, two books opened a window on varieties of numerology from a more distant past.

The first was *Sparkles of Glory or Some Beams of the Morning Star* by John Saltmarsh (d. 1647). A new edition, it reprinted a work that had originally appeared in his death year, shortly before Great Britain became a republic under the lord protector Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) and two years before the Puritans beheaded Stuart King Charles I (1600-1649).

Saltmarsh, born in Yorkshire, was “a radical English religious and controversial writer and preacher.” He was somewhat of a poet and in his time even “a renowned prophet.” Believing in universal salvation, he “argued strongly for religious toleration and liberty of conscience.”²³ His *Sparkles of Glory* contains just such a plea in its dedication “To the High and Honorable Court of Parliament.”²⁴ This he also applied to Roman Catholics, which can be seen from his argument that when Christianity came into existence “there was no such thing as *Ministers* in the *Church of Rome* or of *England* as to this

successively pretended *Ordination*; but *Priests*, and *Bishops*, or *Episcopacy*, and *Priesthood* . . .”²⁵

From such a writer, it is hardly to be expected that he would interpret the Beast of Rev. 13 as the papacy. Saltmarsh was not a Historicist, though in a seven-page “Additional Concerning Antichrist and the Mystery of Iniquity,” he did quote relevant texts: Mark 13:22; 2 Thess. 2:2, 4, 9; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 13:11, etc.; Rev. 17:2, 3, etc.; and 1 John 4:3.²⁶ His interpretation, however, was purely Idealistic, with an admixture of numerology. In what follows, he highlighted each of the italicized words to make a particular point:

. . . the *appearances* of this *man* of *sin* are many and divers, therefore called many *Antichrists*; and as this *man of sin* opposes the *Lord Jesus* in *spirit* and *light* he is called the *beast*, that *ascends* out of the *earth*, or the lowest part of the *Creation*, the *flesh*; and by the *fire* or *fleshly* counterfeiting of the *Spirit*, which he works in the sight of them that dwell on the *earth* or of those that are in the *flesh*, he *deceives*; And yet such is the *power* of this *beast* or this *spirit of flesh*, as it constrains *men*, and *compels* them, and overcomes them wholly to its own *power*, making such in whom it reigns to receive a *mark* in their *hand* and *foreheads*, that is, to *own* and *profess* this *fleshly wisdom* and *actings*, and to practise and put forth the power of it against *Christ* in *Spirit*.²⁶

He explained Revelation 17 in very much the same way:

And this is that *whore* too, for when the *spirit* of *man* is departed from *God*, and the *life* of *God*, it is become an adulteress, having left its *first love*, or *husband*, which was the *Lord* himself, and sits upon a *beast*, even upon the *flesh*, a *beast* of *scarlet colour*, that is, *bloody* and *persecuting* the precious and spiritual appearances of the *Lord Jesus*, and this is a *beast* of *seven heads* and *ten horns*, which *heads* and *horns* are but figures of carnal *wisdom* and *power*, and the *seven* and *ten* figures of *perfection* and *completeness*, as to the *man of sin*; for the *number* of the *beast* is the number of a *man*, and yet his number is but 666, that is, is but a number of weakness and *imperfection*, and *work*, or *bondage*; not the number of *God* or of *seven*, which is *perfection* and *rest*.²⁷

How strange that 7, applied to the Beast as well as to God, should remain a perfect number—and yet somehow really be 666, which supposedly signifies “weakness and *imperfection*”! Nor did Saltmarsh say just why this had such a symbolic meaning. Apparently for him, too, 666 was essentially the same thing as 6.

The other book that appeared in 1848 and to which we also wish to refer is *The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts* by David Thom (1795-1862). A life sketch posthumously published with his *Sermons* in 1863 reveals that he was a very devout Christian and minister cherishing largely Calvinist ideas, except on one point. For this, the Scottish Presbyterian Church—which had ordained him—during 1825 tried him in its ecclesiastical court and excommunicated him as a heretic. What was his offense? He had suggested and afterwards increasingly taught that nobody, however wicked, would be lost but that all people would be saved through the merits of Christ. That is to say, he was a Universalist (though never a Unitarian).²⁸ Together with parishioners who greatly loved him Thom established a separatist congregation, which built their own chapels, first in Bold Street and later in Crown Street, Liverpool.

He had an orderly, trenchant, and very subtle mind, sometimes given to delicious irony. Extremely well informed, he did painstaking research, which made him internationally famous. Two prestigious German institutions of higher learning awarded him honorary degrees—Heidelberg University both an M.A. and a Ph.D. in 1848, and the University of Jena a D.D. in 1849.²⁹

The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts (1848) is interesting for two reasons: it touches on Thom's own ideas about the Antichrist predicted in Rev. 13, but it also delves into what expositors of previous generations have believed. Some of their views directly concern our present topic. We need to note, moreover, that in much of this Thom was seeking to prove that the number in Rev. 13:18 is 666 and not 616, as some writers have suggested. This is a subtext that we will ignore because it is here irrelevant.

Let us first refer to Thom's personal interpretation. In this book, it is rather tentative. He wrote (and the italics are all his own):

I might, for instance, suggest that for anything peculiar in an Apocalyptic number, an Apocalyptic reason alone should be sought for and obtained. Now, in the Book of Revelation itself, is not such a reason presented to us? One of its most remarkable pieces of machinery is, the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials or bowls. That is, the number *seven thrice told*. (I may be reminded of *seven spirits*, and *seven candlesticks* also. True: but they are not introduced exactly as the other *three sevens* are.) Now, by the generality of commentators, in the seven seals [seventh seal,] are the seven trumpets understood to be involved; and in the seven trumpets, [seventh trumpet,] the seven vials. The application of this clearly is—may not the use of *three sixes* by the inspired writers have had some sort of reference to the *three sevens* just mentioned? These three sevens imply perfection. *It is done*. May not the corresponding three sixes, as coming short of seven, imply imperfection?³⁰

There we have it again: the numerological fallacy of three 6's and three 7's

in 666 and 777 respectively! Also, the Lord's injunction to calculate the *name* of the Beast is ignored and other, irrelevant matters are dragged into the discussion.

That, moreover, is not the whole story. A fuller version of what Thom thought would presumably have appeared in Part II of *The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts*, but this was never completed. Yet we can complement it by looking at the life sketch included with his *Sermons* (1863). In it, two letters deal with this issue.

Dated 13 November 1848, the first explains how in a night season Thom connected the first Beast of Rev. 13 with 2 Thess. 2:1-11. Before him arose the sinful presumption of acting as God, and it came to him that 666 numerically corresponded to the Greek expression βία ἁμαρτίας (*bia hamartias*), *The strength of sin*.³¹

Twelve years later, Thom according to another letter of 2 January 1860—just two years before his death—pondered the religious and political turmoil in Italy. He thought the temporal sovereignty of the pontiff might well come to an end. But “not having regarded for many years the Pope as the Antichrist,—or the Church of Rome as Babylon,—it would be to me of little importance, as to the destruction of these two powers, that even the Church of Rome herself were soon to be overthrown.”³² These were his reasons:

Taught by Rev. xi. 8, followed up by xii. 7 to 9, and other passages of that wonderful Book, I have long perceived that the Harlot, Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, &c. of prophecy, is the *Jewish or Old-Testament Church* fallen, or cast out of Heaven, and the kings of the earth, with whom she had committed fornication, are *believers of the truth. They shall reign on the earth. S.S. passim.*

From this adulterous connection, has sprung a whole brood or spawn of Fleshly Churches. See Rev. xiii. 18, and Rev. xvii. throughout. As to the first, you may consult my solution of the *number of the beast*, and contrast what is said of it at the close of Rev. xiii, with the one true Spiritual Church, at the beginning of Chap. xiv. In Chap. xvii you have the filthy mother, the fallen Jewish Church, with her filthy brood of apostate Fleshly Churches, falsely called “Christian,” placed before you. Of these harlot daughters, unquestionably the Church of Rome is first and foremost, inheriting all the vices, impurities and abominations of her harlot mother.

In the entirety of these Fleshly Churches, established and dissenting, among whom there are, it is to be hoped, many righteous Lots, who are earnestly enjoined to come out of them, you have presented to you Antichrist, as a whole; understanding, of course, that antichrist first shewed himself in the opposing Jewish Church. See 2 Thess. ii. 1; 1 John iv.³³

When he wrote those words, Thom was already blind and his health was failing. His excommunication was still a bitter memory, and he evidently took a dim view of most if not all organized religions. Therefore, Protestant

churches were no better than the papacy, but the poor Jews for him remained the chief culprit.

VIII

More interesting is Thom's survey of older prophetic interpreters in his book of 1848. He painted on a vast canvas, not all of which concerns us here. We refer to and comment on three of these authors. Their numerology, as well the Idealistic texts in which we often find it embedded, is thought-provoking—though sometimes it becomes hilarious.

The first is Beda mostly called Bede or the Venerable Bede (672/673-725), a Catholic saint. Nowadays he is best known for his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (Ecclesiastic History of the English People). But “during his lifetime and throughout the Middle Ages Bede's reputation was based mainly on his scriptural commentaries, copies of which found their way to many of the monastic libraries of western Europe.” Of these, “his earliest biblical commentary was probably that on the Revelation to John (70?-709).” We also note that “in this and many similar works, his aim was to transmit and explain relevant passages from the Fathers of the Church” and that Bede's “interpretations were mainly allegorical.”³⁴

Thom quoted him via Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), the Jesuit writer, though we prefer to go to him more directly in *The Explanation of the Apocalypse by Venerable Bede* (1878). This English translation is by Edward Marshall (1815-1899). On Rev. 13:18, Bede asked: “Who is ignorant, that the number six, in accordance with which the world was created, signifies the perfection of work? And this, whether simple, or multiplied by ten, or a hundred, demonstrates the fruit of the same perfection to be sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold. The weight of gold also which was brought to Solomon every year was six hundred and sixty-six thousand talents. The seducer [the Antichrist], therefore, will presume to exact for himself the offering which is rightfully due and paid to the true king.”³⁵

Whatever else they have sometimes been, the best of Catholic writers have often been extremely clever. More than twelve hundred years have passed since Bede was pondering the number 6 and asked: “Who is so ignorant . . .?” Alas, that in our time we need to repeat that question!

On the other hand, we find several things in Bede that we cannot approve of or which are bizarre. For instance, he said: “The mark, that is, the note and name of the beast and the number of his name are one,”³⁶ which we believe to be an error—and here we observe how ancient it is. Commenting on Rev. 13:1, he declared: “the seven heads are the same as the ten horns,” which is nonsense. And even worse as we see it is his explanation of the creatures that made up the composite Beast according to Rev. 13:2: “**Leopard**. He is represented as like a leopard, because of the diversity of the nations; **a bear**, because of his malice and fury; **a lion**, because of his strength of body and pride of tongue.” That is pure Idealism, but then he added what could be considered a Historicist element: “We read in Daniel of the kingdom of the Chaldeans being compared to a lioness, of the Persians to a bear, of the Macedonians to a leopard.”³⁷

Beda did not seek to be original but rather built on books that had been written by older, mostly Catholic writers. In the Preface to his translation, Marshall said: “The chief characteristics of Beda’s method of exposition may be thus stated. The several visions are considered not to be successive, but contemporaneous, with occasional recapitulations, and to represent the condition of the Church in all ages, under different aspects. The thousand years, in the twentieth chapter, are interpreted of the present period of the Church’s existence, in accordance with the opinion of St. Augustine, in the second part of his *De Civitate Dei* (About the City of God). . . .”³⁸

From this, it is clear that Idealism has for a very long time been a part of Catholic prophetic interpretation.

About the idea that 6 is really a perfect number and tripled in Rev. 13:18, Thom also cites Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772).³⁹ Since we deal with him elsewhere in this book, we need not repeat ourselves here, except to point out again that according to Swedenborg the numerological perfection of 6 is inverted through falsification by the Protestant clergy, whom he detested.

The final author whom we wish to cite who is quoted by Thom from Bellarmine is Rupertus—evidently Rupertus Meldenius, also known as Peter Meiderlin and Peter Meuderlinus (1582-1651). He was a Lutheran theologian who taught that

by the number 666 is not to be understood the name of Anti-Christ, but that triple prevarication, or false and treacherous procedure on the part of the devil, which, in the person of Anti-Christ, is to receive its full accomplishment. The reason according to him being, that as the number *six* does not reach to, but comes short of the number *seven*,—in which last number alone rest and blessedness are to be found,—therefore *six* is emphatically the number of a creature, by means of its prevarication or deviation from truth, coming short of rest. Now the devil has been chargeable with a threefold prevarication; or, rather, one and the same prevarication he has on three different occasions exhibited. For, the first time he played false was, when he sinned against himself. His second act of this kind was, when, in the garden of Eden, he induced man first to commit transgression; the former six having thereby been carried up from the place of units, to the place of tens. His third and last act of prevarication is still future, and will take place when, through the instrumentality of Anti-Christ, he will succeed in seducing the whole world. Then to the 6 units, and the 6 tens, shall the 6 hundreds be added: the figure 6 then taking its last and highest place.⁴⁰

Rupertus, like so many prophetic expositors in the generations that followed him, ignored what the Lord had so plainly said: “Calculate the name of the Beast.” Instead, he asserted: “by the number 666 is not to be understood the name of Anti-Christ.” He was directly contradicting the Bible. Consequently, he fell into the numerological trap of Rev. 13:18, which in the original completely lacks the three 6’s on which he built his strange Idealism.

We conclude by briefly taking a closer look at this approach to prophecy. It inherently lacks a historical dimension, for it is not dependent on or necessarily connected with time, yet it can—as the foregoing pages have shown—quite easily accommodate numerology as well as Catholic Preterism and Futurism. (Protestants, who from the early nineteenth century have abandoned Historicism and also adopted these schools, often refer to the latter as Dispensationalism.) Therefore, our chapter title uses the expression *catch-all* Idealism.

An Idealistic interpretation is the view that the seven churches of the Apocalypse, named in Rev. 2 and 3, portray all Christians through the ages. And it is certainly true that after the message to each of them from Jesus, the faithful and true witness, the Bible says: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” In other words, his praise as well as his warnings are not limited by space, time, or a particular congregation. They are even for individual believers who have the characteristics described.

But this should not be taken too far. There really were congregations at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Their Lord would not have been so cruel as to use their names to criticize the shortcomings mentioned in any of these messages if his character sketches were not literally true. Historically, then, the seven churches did exist, but the book of Revelation is not limited to them or their time. It also and mostly also foretells the future, for in the chapter immediately after the letters to them, we read: “After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter” (Rev. 4:1).

It is therefore reasonable to adopt the view that the seven congregations are also types of and describe the Church throughout the centuries to the end of time. This fits in well with the whole tenor of the Apocalypse, as well as Historicism. This is a continuistic school of interpretation, which is able to demonstrate that prophecy is gradually fulfilled throughout the entire Christian era, matched age after age with predicted events. These have actually occurred, and we observe them in the concrete happenings recorded by history, not in vague and arbitrary Idealism, or in ill-conceived Preterist and Dispensationalist explanations, or in fanciful, farfetched numerology.

Chapter Forty
MORE NON-HISTORICIST WRITERS AND INFLUENCES

I

According to an anonymous writer in *The Sunday Oregonian* of 22 April 1888, modern Spiritualism began on 31 March 1848, when two young girls, Katherine and Margaretta Fox, of Hydesville in Arcadia, NY, began to communicate with supernatural beings. These purported to be the dead, although according to the Bible the deceased are totally unconscious. For instance, Ecclesiastes 9:5 says: “The dead know not any thing.” Therefore, these “supernatural beings” could not have been but were only impersonating the dead.

A precursor of Spiritualism was Emanuel Swedenborg, author of *Apocalypsis Revelata* (Apocalypse Revealed), 1766, whom we dealt with in Volume I and also briefly referred to in the previous chapter. He claimed to be “in full and open daily conversations of the most familiar character with spirits and with angels.” As he lay on his deathbed in 1772, he “predicted that in about eighty years from that time there would be a general revelation from the spiritual world which would bring his teachings into general notice and confirm their truth.” This was seventy-six years before the Fox sisters responded to the mysterious rappings and were soon called “spiritual mediums,” which unleashed amazing consequences. One was that spiritualists described predictions by Swedenborg and others as prophecies to validate their new religion, which spread all over the United States and Europe with great rapidity. And then there was “the great financial success of the Fox girls,” which brought into play the familiar American bandwagon effect, for “‘mediums’ quickly sprang up all over the country, and were soon multiplied by hundreds, and even by thousands.”¹

Swedenborg’s writings were, according to him, inspired by a bright and shining person who had appeared to him and said he was Christ—though we believe it was a demon who came to dictate his deviant interpretation of prophecy. He taught that nothing in the Apocalypse was literally true. Absolutely everything was symbolic, including each and all of the numbers.

Catch-all Idealism found in him yet another and drastic proponent. It has netted and entangled unscripturally-minded people of many persuasions: medieval Catholics; Preterists, Dispensationalists, semi-Historicists, and Universalists; Ecumenical Christians; and some who are inclined to Spiritualism.

Theologically Swedenborg was akin to the Neo-Platonists as well as Origen (c. 185-c. 254), who must receive much of the praise or blame for promoting Idealism in contrast with Historicism. In England, his earliest disciples included Robert Hindmarsh (1759-1835) and Elias De la Roche Rendell (1803-1876). As already related, it was in the early 1790s that Hindmarsh, through *The New Magazine of Knowledge*, first published his

master's Idealistic views about the Apocalypse and his rejection of Historicism. With it came a revival of Platonic and Neo-Platonist thinking in England.

Later Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888) brought Swedenborgianism to America, where it influenced Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), and other New England Transcendentalists.

II

This was not, however, the only channel through which ancient Greek pantheism entered Britain and the United States. Augmenting it was its powerful reappearance via the two greatest English poets of the early nineteenth century, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and his friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1771-1834). Together they "helped launch the English Romantic movement" with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*.² This happened in 1798, which according to Historicists completed the 1260 year-days and began the Time of the End.

Wordsworth was undoubtedly the greatest English poet of his century. In fact, "it is probably safe to say that by the late 20th century he stood in critical estimation where Coleridge and Arnold had originally placed him, next to John Milton—who stands, of course, next to William Shakespeare."³ Wordsworth's Platonism, including the idea of reincarnation, is plain from a poem with a very revealing title, "Ode, Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood." Amongst other things, it says:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home . . .⁴

For lovers of literature, this is beguiling stuff, and so are the following pantheistic lines, composed on 13 July 1798:

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,

And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.⁵

Like Wordsworth, Coleridge virtually came to worship nature. In “Frost at Midnight,” also published during 1798, he addressed his baby son who was lying in a cradle by his side. He said that unlike his father, who had originally been a city dweller (“pent ’mid cloisters dim”), the boy would grow up in a lovely rural environment.

But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.⁶

Poets who imaginatively blend religion with philosophy have often through the centuries been mighty instruments for good or evil. In the Bible, we find men like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and David, the sweet singer of Israel. The Lord was able to use these dedicated and consummate poets as prophets. But on the dark side there have been others, like Homer and Virgil, who through their epic masterpieces invented much of Greek and Roman religion. Plato likewise began his career as a poet. After he had supposedly turned his back on his art, he nevertheless continued to practice it by writing his philosophical dialogues in poetic prose. With these, he has mesmerized his readers for twenty-four centuries. Similarly, these two Englishmen worked their magic on the minds and hearts of their compatriots.

Coleridge, the son of a minister, for a time considered becoming one himself and leaned toward Unitarianism. Before he incorporated a noticeably pantheistic world view into his poetry, when “he met Wordsworth in 1797, the two poets freely and sympathetically discussed Spinoza, for whom Coleridge always retained a deep admiration.”⁷ Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), a famous Dutch-Jewish philosopher, was excommunicated from the synagogue for heterodox ideas. He taught that “God is the infinite, necessarily existing (that is, uncaused), unique substance of the universe. There is only one substance in the universe; it is God; and everything else that is, is in God.”⁸ Spinoza also identified God with Nature.⁹ He has for centuries “been regarded—by his enemies and his partisans, in the scholarly literature and the popular imagination—as a “pantheist”,¹⁰ though some grounds exist for denying it.¹¹ Both Wordsworth and Coleridge, nature addicts, found Spinoza fascinating.

Coleridge went on to become the greatest literary theorist of his generation.

As a boy, he had read Virgil's Latin poetry for amusement. As a student at Cambridge, he could peruse a book in the morning "and in the evening he would repeat whole pages verbatim." In 1794, he left the university without completing his degree, a college dropout like Wordsworth a few years earlier.¹² But what a talker Coleridge was and how he enchanted, then and afterwards, many who heard him!

Having collaborated with Wordsworth on *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, he traveled to Germany. He first spent "four months at Ratzeburg, afterwards removing to Göttingen to attend lectures. A great intellectual movement had begun in Germany. Coleridge was soon in the full whirl of excitement. He learned much from Blumenbach and Eichhorn, and took interest in all that was going on around him." He stayed in that country for nine months and mastered German so well that he could translate literary works from it. He brought back Neo-Platonist ideas and an enduring preoccupation with philosophy. After returning from Malta, to which he had first gone in 1804, he professed "a return to Christian faith, though still putting on it a mystical construction, as when he told Crabb Robinson that 'Jesus Christ was a Platonic philosopher.'" At this stage he was much in sympathy with the historico-rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament, as carried on in Germany . . ." For England, he fathered "that higher criticism which had already in Germany accomplished so much in the hands of Lessing and Goethe." Consequently, "in the latter part of his life, and for the generation which followed, Coleridge was ranked by many young English churchmen of liberal views as the greatest religious thinker of their time."¹³

III

One of the men who, according to Benjamin G. Wilkinson,¹⁴ were charmed by Coleridge, was William Milligan (1821-1892), a Scottish Episcopal clergyman. He must now demand our attention, since his views about Revelation have influenced others after him, even some Seventh-day Adventist writers.

In 1845, during a spell of illness, left his post as a minister and went to the University of Halle, Germany, where he imbibed additional Higher Critical ideas. "After his return to Scotland and his resumption of his clerical duties he began to write articles on Biblical and critical subjects for various reviews. This led to his appointment in 1860 to the professorship of Biblical criticism in the university of Aberdeen." During 1870, he was made a New Testament member of the committee for revising the King James Bible, which resulted in the Revised Version.¹⁵ For 1882, he was the Moderator for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.¹⁶ A further honor befell him when he was invited to deliver the Baird Lecture of 1885¹⁷ at either Glasgow or his own university. Its contents reveal the vast scope of his learning, which ranged over the centuries and different countries. Of this, a striking instance is that in the *Presbyterian Review* for April 1884 he mentioned a pamphlet by "Dr. D.

Völter, Repentant in the University of Tübingen” and its review by “Prof. Warfield of Allegheny, Pa.”¹⁸

The Baird Lecture of 1885 in reality comprised a series of lectures, which very clearly reveal that Milligan’s approach to prophecy was not only Higher Critical but also rather Swedenborgian. In thirty-four pages, he explicitly sought to debunk Historicism along with most of Futurism and Preterism.¹⁹ With the last-mentioned two, we need not here concern ourselves. But for us Historicism is another matter.

Milligan aptly described it as the “continuously historical interpretation” of Revelation, with the papacy as its centerpiece. For him, this was completely unacceptable, yet none of his reasons is compelling. We mention a few of them. First, Historicism disagrees with his analysis of how the book was planned, conceived, and structured.²⁰ He said it had “no connection with its own age; and nothing has been more conclusively established by recent Biblical inquiry than that even a prophetic, to say nothing of an apocalyptic, book must spring out of the circumstances, and must directly address itself to the necessities, of its original readers.”²¹ This is a Historical-Critical argument, which is fatally flawed. It assumes that the Bible is largely the Word of man and not the Word of God. Also, the Almighty supposedly cannot foretell the future. This is rank infidelity, since in many places the Bible claims that he does.

Having, at least to his own satisfaction, thrust aside Historicism, Futurism, and Preterism, Milligan presented an Idealistic approach. He said the Apocalypse “becomes to us not a history of either early or mediaeval or last events written of before they happened, but a spring of elevating encouragement and holy joy to Christians in every age.”²² Therefore, “we are both entitled and required to interpret in a *spiritual* and universal sense that language of the Apocalypse which appears at first sight to be material and local” (emphasis added).²³ Further: “There is the same spirituality and universality in St. John’s conception of the Church.”²⁴

This is just what Elias De la Roche Rendell, a Swedenborgian, had said in 1852, a mere thirty-three years earlier, when he commented on the number 666 of Rev. 13:18. He was echoing the sentiments of Robert Hindmarsh. Rendell, like Milligan after him, preferred a “spiritual” explanation, for “such *numbering* was significant of man, attempting from himself, to ascertain the quality of faith and virtue in the church” (his own emphasis).²⁵

It is, however, a curious fact that Milligan himself deposited the seed for the destruction of his Idealistic hypothesis within the pages that describe it. He said there was a “renouncing on the part of the apostle of any attempt to indicate the number of days or years or centuries which were to pass before the end.”²⁶ Also, that the book of Revelation nowhere indicated how long the interval might be “between the beginning and the consummation of the Christian age.” So much would happen in between. “But it is precisely of the extent of this interval that the Apocalypse says not a single word.”²⁷

Such utterances amaze us. They are refuted by very specific time prophecies in that book. The most important one is presented by three successive chapters as 1260 days/42 months/3½ years (Rev. 11:3; 12:6; 13:5). All these figures point to the same period of 1260 calendar years, though they can be harmonized only if a prophetic day is symbolically equated with a literal year according to an ancient formula stated in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6. (If this equivalence is not applied, the sum cannot be made to work out; for there are not 1260 days in 3½ calendar years. A literal calculation must be based on the fact that the actual number of days in a year is 365.2422. Therefore: $365.2422 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days; not 1,260 days. The result is an 18-day discrepancy!)

Let us now look at what Milligan said specifically about the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse in *The Book of Revelation*, first published during 1889.²⁸ We have Google downloads of the 1893 British²⁹ and 1896 American³⁰ editions. The latter is a facsimile reprint of the former, which we quote from here.

In this book, Milligan asserted again that the first Beast of Rev. 13 was “not Rome, either pagan or papal.” It was supposedly “not any single form of earthly government, however strong; not any Roman emperor, however vicious or cruel; but the general influence of the world, in so far as it is opposed to God, substituting the human for the Divine . . .”³¹ Applying the Historical-Critical method, Milligan speculated about what might have been going on in the mind of John, who apparently just fabricated the Apocalypse all by himself. He thought the apostle was probably remembering how abominably Jesus had been treated by the Jewish leaders, as in Pilate’s judgment hall. Indeed, as he put it, the apostle “had seen the Divine institution of Judaism, designed by the God of Israel to prepare the way for the Light and the Life of men, perverted by its appointed guardians, and made an instrument for blinding instead of enlightening the soul.”³² But John, said Milligan, had seen “the same thing in Heathenism. It is by no means improbable that when he speaks of *the image of the beast* he may also think of those images of Caesar the worshipping of which was everywhere made the test of devotion to the Roman State and of abjuration of the Christian faith.” And “yet we are not to imagine that, though St. John started from these things, his vision was confined to them. He thinks not of Jew or heathen only at a particular era, but of man; not of human nature only as it appears amidst the special circumstances of his own day, but as it appears everywhere and throughout all time.”³³

When he came to the number 666 in Rev. 13:18, Milligan switched from Historical-Critical thinking to an Idealistic interpretation. At the same time, he sought to justify the abandonment of the Biblical seventh-day Sabbath and substituted Sundaykeeping in its stead. He said: “The number six itself awakened a feeling of dread in the breast of the Jew who felt the significance of numbers. It fell below the sacred number seven just as much as eight went beyond it. This last number denoted more than the simple possession of the

Divine. As in the case of circumcision on the eighth day, of the ‘great day’ of the feast on the eighth day, or of the resurrection of our Lord on the first day of the week, following the previous seven days, it expressed a new beginning in active power. By a similar process the number six was held to signify inability to reach the sacred point and hopeless [*sic*] falling short of it. To the Jew there was thus a doom upon the number six even when it stood alone. Triple it; let there be a multiple of it by ten and then a second time by ten until you obtain three mysterious *sixes* following one another, 666; and we have represented a potency of evil than which there can be none greater, a direfulness of fate than which there can be none worse.”³⁴

But nowhere in all of this did Milligan, an Episcopal minister, suggest that the Apocalypse had been inspired by a God who truly exists and can actually foretell the future. It is speculation, pure and simple. And, ironically, the triple sixes are nonexistent in the Greek original, as other passages of our book demonstrate.

Milligan also believed the mark, the name, and the number of the Beast in Rev. 13 are identical: “In speaking of the subserviency of the second to the first Beast, the Seer had spoken of a *mark given* to all the followers of the latter *on their right hand, or upon their forehead*, and without which no one was to be admitted to the privileges of their association or of buying or selling in their city. He had further described this mark as being either *the name of the beast or the number of his name*” (Milligan’s own italics).³⁵

IV

Another powerful influence on prophetic interpretation during the second half of the nineteenth century was Joseph Augustus Seiss (1823-1904). His parents were Moravian, but he himself became a Lutheran minister, an editor, and the writer of many books. He was also “one of the most eloquent preachers . . . possessing a style that was clear, ornate, and forceful.”³⁶ From his pen we have *The Apocalypse: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ* in three volumes. This became a much-published and widely read work, of which at least the first volume was copyrighted in 1865. According to its Preface, it was by 1869 into its twelfth edition. The title page explains that 5,000 sets were involved. It also says: “Total number published 30,000 sets (90,000 volumes).”³⁷

Fascinatingly 1865 was also the date when the first edition of Uriah Smith’s *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* appeared. Like *The Apocalypse* by Seiss, it, too, was often reissued—with minor revisions, together with the addition of a volume on Daniel.

Smith, as we have seen, espoused Historicism, originally derived from his Protestant forebears and augmented by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Among his immediate predecessors was William Miller, who authored a Dissertation on the *Twelve Hundred and Sixty Days of Daniel and John*. Much in this booklet could just as well have been written by Smith or Ellen G.

White. In it, we find, amongst other things, the beginning and ending dates of 538 and 1798 for the 1260 year-days, a tie-up with 2 Thess. 2, and the idea that the papacy is the Little Horn of Dan. 7, the Antichrist.³⁸

But Seiss was very different. Though a Lutheran, he was also—as his book shows—a Futurist affected by Idealism. We especially note this on several pages which set out his numerology starting with one and ending with twelve. This section is introduced as follows: “There is a sacred significance in numbers: not cabalistic, not fanciful; but proceeding from the very nature of things, well settled in the Scriptures, and universally acknowledged in all the highest and deepest systems of human thought and religion.”³⁹ After a seven-page discussion of the twelve numbers, Seiss repeated and enlarged this claim by stating: “But I will not linger among these numbers. I have said enough to show that they have an important significance, rooted in the nature of things, and acknowledged in the Scriptures and in the common language and thinking of the great mass of mankind. They are not inventions of men, but expressions of God and his works. They also furnish new and forcible evidence of the truthfulness of the estimate of this book which I have given—to wit: that it is the book of the consummation—a divine picture of the fullness and winding up of all God’s dispensations in this world.”⁴⁰

With most of this, we totally disagree; often it is wishful thinking with no Scriptural foundation; in some places, it plainly smells of gobbledygook. But let us see what Seiss taught about just a few of these numbers.

“*Three*,” he said, “is the number of individual completion. It is composed of three numbers, each of which is in itself *one*, and which multiplied together still make only *one*.” Therefore, it refers to the Trinity, to the family, and even religion, which is “knowledge, action, and experience—three-one.”⁴¹ *Ach, so!* But is *eleven* not likewise composed of eleven ones and *thirteen* composed of thirteen? But we let Seiss continue:

“*Four* is the worldly number. It proceeds from three, and includes three. And as three represents the Trinity—the highest, and the perfect—four designates that which proceeds from the Trinity, and is dependent thereon: the creation, the universe. Hence, the world resolves itself into four elements: fire, air, earth, and water,” etc. The Bible, we note, does not indulge in this kind of talk. And as we now know there are not four but many more elements. But Seiss plunged on with his numerology. Some of it is trivial, some of it strings together Scriptural references; yet he strangely clinched his argument with an appeal to heathenism: “And to the Oriental philosophers, four is always the figure of the universe, especially of the world. There is therefore no mistaking of this number.”⁴²

What about *five*? According to Seiss, it represented “progress, but incompleteness.”⁴³ We can, however, skip his further details, though they bridge us over into a crucial paragraph, which we need to quote in full:

Six is the Satanic number. As the darkest hour immediately precedes the dawn, and the darkest years are the last before the millennial Sabbath, so the number immediately preceding the complete seven is the worst of all. The sixth body in the solar system is a shattered one. The sixth epistle to the Churches tells of an hour of universal trial and suffering; the sixth trumpet destroys the third part of men; and the sixth vial introduces the unclean spirits who gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to the war of the great day of God Almighty. Antichrist's number is three sixes: six units, six tens, and six hundreds—666—the individual completion of everything evil. And Christ was crucified on the sixth day, which is still the common execution day, and is popularly regarded as the most unlucky of the seven.⁴⁴

And there we have it: Dispensationalism in all its glory, though with an Idealist ingredient, precisely as Uriah Smith was setting the capstone on his church's Historical interpretation, when he first wrote that the number of Rev. 13:18 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*.

But let us look further at what Seiss had to say:

“*Seven* is the number of dispensational fullness. It is the complete in that which is temporary—not the finally complete. It carries with it the idea of sacredness in that which relates to this world. It is the Trinity and the created in contact—the divine Three with the worldly four. Hence, it is always connected with whatever touches the covenant between man and God, worship, and the coming together of the Creator and the creature. Hence the sacred number.”⁴⁵ As William H. Shea put it where he commented on Origen's allegorizing method: It is like a wax nose, which can be twisted in any way one likes to mean whatever one pleases, as Seiss here also demonstrated abundantly.

But that was not yet the end of his numerology: “*Eight* is the number of new beginning and resurrection. The eighth day is the beginning of a new week. The Jewish child was circumcised the eighth day, which was its birth into covenant relations. Noah was “the eighth person,” and his family consisted of eight, and they started the new world after the flood. Christ rose from the dead on the eighth day. David was the eighth son of Jesse, and he established a new order for Israel. In the eighth year, the Jews were to sow the ground again as the fresh beginning of a new septenary. The eighth head of the beast was the revival of the seventh. Our Sunday, which celebrates the new creation which began in the Saviour's resurrection, is the eighth day, the first of the new week. And the eternal order of blessedness is to begin with the eighth thousand years from Adam.”⁴⁶

That is—according to Seiss—in the hereafter, Sundaykeeping will presumably continue forever and forever.

But how is it then that to those who really obey their Lord by keeping the Ten Commandments, the final, climactic chapter of Isaiah promises

something quite different? There we read: “For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” Isa. 66:22-23.

Volume II of Seiss’s lectures on the Apocalypse in their 1901 edition provides us with further details about his thinking. He said, in his dogmatic way: “The Beast is supernatural; the False Prophet is supernatural; and the image, though made by man, likewise takes on of the supernatural; and all the *savants* of the time agree and maintain that it is even so.”⁴⁷ Further: “The ‘mark’ itself is at once a number and a name.”⁴⁸ As for the Beast, it is “the Devil’s Messiah . . . the great impersonated lie of the universe.” It is, however, “not the Pope; for not all under the Pope are lost.”⁴⁹

When it comes to explaining Rev. 13:18, Seiss—at least in the 1901 edition—was rather coy about the number 666. He said: “The arithmetic of it, and the hidden indication which it carries of the precise man who is to be the final Antichrist, need not concern us”; for “our business is rather to reckon up the number of the Beast as to his moral identification.”⁵⁰

To this he added: “The figures 666 may spell *Nero Caesar* in Hebrew, and ‘*the Latin*’ in Greek; but whether this is certainly what the Spirit meant, no one can now tell; neither would it help us if we knew. The wisdom here, as required by us, is the wisdom to detect and discern the antichristian badness, the ill principles which lay men open to Antichrist’s power, the subtle atheism and unfaith by which people are betrayed into his hands. *Six* is the bad number, and when multiplied by tens and hundreds, it denotes evil in its greatest intensity and most disastrous manifestation. This number of the Beast’s name thus gives his standing in the estimate of Heaven, and fixes attention on that rather than on the numerical spelling of the name he bears on earth.”⁵¹

We find it peculiar that Seiss, who interpreted the Apocalypse from the standpoint of Dispensationalism and hence was a Futurist, would refer to Hebrew and Greek numerology, even in a Preterist sense—and yet say nothing about the Latin *vicarius Filii Dei*. As we have shown, not only the Seventh-day Adventist Uriah Smith but also a large number of other Historicist Protestants were publishing this conclusion at the very time when Seiss was lecturing about and presumably studying the Apocalypse.

V

Although with different backgrounds and preoccupations, Milligan as well as Seiss, who were contemporaries, at times resorted to Idealist numerology. They were not alone in doing so.

In 1895, Charles Augustus Briggs (1841–1913) also declared about 666: “It seems to me that it is a symbolic number; 666 is a straining after the holy number 7,” and falling short of it in every particular, marking the beast

therefore and his subjects as deceivers.”⁵²

What was this man’s general theological stance? As a student in Germany, he imbibed the Higher Critical ideas of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), who did not believe that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible and said the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke were based on a hypothetical source document.⁵³ Dr. Briggs—who came to head the newly endowed Department of Biblical Theology at Union Seminary, New York—in his inaugural address on 20 January 1891 “openly attacked the Bible. ‘There is nothing divine in the text—in its letters, words, or clauses,’ he said. Higher Criticism had found errors, he said, and we must meet them.” Two years later, after a heresy trial, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church excommunicated him.⁵⁴

In harmony with his Higher Criticism, Briggs traced the Messianic idea through half a dozen hypothetical sources which he believed underlay the book of Revelation. All of them were supposedly worked over in four editions to produce the final text. In his “Table of the Original Documents of the Apocalypse,” he separately located the Epistles, Seals, Trumpets, Bowls, Beasts, and the Dragon. A final, seventh column represented his hypothetical Redactor.⁵⁵ Consequently he also said the number of the beast “seems to come from the final author and to be an interpretation of the original.”⁵⁶ In other words, this part of the prophecy was not divinely inspired! Nevertheless, Briggs thought it was “a symbolic number.”

VI

Though both Milligan and Briggs were learned in a Higher Critical sense, another even more erudite writer was not impressed by their explanation of 666. He was an Irishman, Robert Henry Charles (1855-1931), who after studying at both Queen’s University, Belfast, and Trinity College, Dublin, had doctorates in literature as well as divinity. He “left parochial work in 1889 to devote himself to biblical research and became the greatest authority of his time in matters of Jewish eschatology and apocrypha. He became a canon at Westminster Abbey in 1913 and archdeacon there in 1919.”⁵⁷

Where he discussed the notorious number in his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (1920), he added a footnote to mention “several recent scholars (Milligan, *Baird Lecture*, p. 328; Briggs, *Messiah of the Apostles*, 324),” and others, who “take the number as having a symbolical force, as signifying the one who persistently falls short of perfection (*i.e.* the number 7), and support this view by the parallel of 3½ years, or the period of the Antichrist’s reign, as symbolizing the destruction of evil within the half of the perfect period—seven. But to this it may be objected, why was 666 chosen? and not simply 6 or 66?”⁵⁸

Indeed. But, of course, the answer of these and other expositors would be that the 6 was tripled to indicate intensified imperfection or evil. On the other hand, Charles could have retorted that in the Greek original Rev. 13:18 contains only a single, solitary six, not three sixes.

VII

Another German, whose work was tinged with Idealism and has a bearing on our subject was Gustav Adolf Deissmann (1866-1937), an influential Protestant theologian whose best known work was on the Greek language used in the New Testament. He wrote: “If I may here venture to propose a solution, 616 (= Καῖσαρ θεός [kaisar theos], ‘Caesar god’) is the older secret number with which the Jews branded the worship of the emperor. 666 is perhaps a Christian adaptation of the Jewish number to bring it into (subordinate) harmony with 888 (= Ἰησοῦς [Iēsus], ‘Jesus’).”⁵⁹

Obviously Deissmann paid no attention to David Thom’s very able refutation of the 616 hypothesis in *The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts* (1848), which our previous chapter refers to.

VIII

A background development which in those years impacted on prophetic writers was a large-scale apostasy in many denominations. This is well described by George R. Knight, who used to be a professor of church history at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. In *Apocalyptic Vision and the Neutering of Adventism* (2008), which he considered his most important book, he bluntly declared that some denominations had neutered themselves and feared that Seventh-day Adventism was on its way to doing the same. Here is part of his perspective on the other churches:

“The best example of religious neutering in the modern world is Protestant liberalism, which by the 1920s had divested itself of such ‘primitive’ ideas as the virgin birth, Christ’s resurrection, the substitutionary atonement, miracles, the Second Advent, creationism, and, of course, a divinely inspired Bible in the sense that it had information from beyond the human realm that could be obtained from no other source but divine revelation.”⁶⁰

Knight noted the consequences by quoting from Kenneth L. Woodward’s *Newsweek* article of 9 Aug. 1993, entitled “Dead End for the Mainline Religion?: The Mightiest Protestants Are Running Out of Money, Members, and Meaning.” Knight concluded: “The *eventual* result was shrinkage by the millions in America’s mainline denominations. Between 1965 and the early 1990s, for example, Presbyterian membership plummeted from 4.2 million to 2.8 million members, a 34 percent drop. During the same period Methodism went from 11 to 8.7 million, Episcopalianism from 3.6 to 2.4 million, and the Disciples of Christ from 2 to 1 million—21 percent, 34 percent, and 50 percent declines, respectively.”⁶¹

IX

Many Protestant writers perpetuated the tradition so eloquently established by men like Milligan, Briggs, and others who cherished similar ideas. We do

not need to dwell on all of them. We rather skip down to the seventh and eighth decades of the twentieth century to a period when Idealism more decidedly began to affect Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation as it relates to Rev. 13. For this, let us consider just two expositors, Leon Lamb Morris (1914-2006) and Ray Frank Robbins (1916-2003).

We first zoom in on Dr. Morris, “a leading evangelical New Testament scholar,” who wrote *The Revelation of St. John* (1969). He “authored or co-authored over fifty books and was the editor of the *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* series.” He also helped to produce both the *New International Version* and the *English Standard Version*.⁶² After initial studies in his native Australia, he went to England. There he acquired Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees in London.⁶³ Later he returned to that country, where he “received his Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge in England.”⁶⁴ He proved to be an ecumenically-minded man who “identified with many interdenominational organizations.”⁶⁵

Morris found the methods for explaining the number 666 in Rev. 13:18 both devious and bizarre. Therefore, he thought it more likely to discover its meaning in the symbolic sense of 6,⁶⁶ which supposedly refers to the fact that unregenerate man is persistently evil.⁶⁷

From this, it would, however, be incorrect to suppose that Morris was an out-and-out Idealist. According to the 1987 second edition of his book, he adopted an eclectic approach to interpreting the Apocalypse. Surveying Preterism, Historicism, Futurism, and Idealism, he in one way or another found fault with each of these views and concluded: “It seems that elements from more than one of these views are required for a satisfactory understanding of Revelation.”⁶⁸

About Preterism, Morris pointed out that “some variant of this view is adopted by most modern scholars.” It has, he said “the merit of making the book exceedingly meaningful for the people to whom it was written. And it has the demerit of making it meaningless for all subsequent readers (except for the information it gives about that early generation).”⁶⁹ So much at least is true, and there are further objections to Preterism that we look at elsewhere in our book.

Morris likewise thrust at Historicism. For instance, he fingered a common approach of its proponents to the Apocalypse. “They see its symbols as setting out in broad outline the history of western Europe and as stretching right on until the second coming of Christ.” As an example, Morris pounced on a sentence from the doctoral dissertation by Beatrice S. Neall, a document to which we must also still refer.⁷⁰ Historicism is, however, concerned with much more than Western Europe, as many of our chapters have amply demonstrated.

Morris also faulted pure Idealism, which would have it that “the whole book is concerned with ideas and principles” according to Milligan, whom he explicitly cited. To this, he added: “But its refusal to see a firm historical anchorage seems to most students dubious to say the least.”⁷¹

Nevertheless, Morris seemed to move precisely toward Idealism in the following passage: “Other solutions are put forward, but none has won wide acceptance. It is possible that such solutions are on the wrong lines and that we should understand the expression purely in terms of the symbolism of numbers. If we take the sum of the values represented by the letters of the name *Iēsous*, the Greek name ‘Jesus’, it comes to 888; each digit is one more than seven, the perfect number. But 666 yields the opposite phenomenon, for each digit falls short.”⁷²

But Morris, like Milligan, Briggs, and others before them, as well as subsequent writers like Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, needed to answer the already quoted question of that most learned Robert H. Charles in 1920, ninety years ago: “Why was 666 chosen? and not simply 6 or 66?” To which he humbly added that for him “the origin of this number is not yet clear.”⁷³

The twice-repeated “each digit” in Morris’s book is an exegetical blunder. As with other writers, this implies a triple or threefold 666, which cannot be harmonized with the Greek text of Rev. 13:18.

Idealism is also distinctly present in the work of Ray Frank Robbins. In his heyday, he was New Testament and Greek professor at the New Orleans Baptist Seminary, with a Ph.D. from the Scottish University of Edinburgh,⁷⁴ where—amongst others—he would have met with Milligan’s ideas. Robbins taught classes on the Apocalypse and, apart from several other books, wrote *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, published in 1975.⁷⁵ The next year, he was one of the three speakers at a five-day Revelation Bible Conference. Sponsored by the Sunday School Department of the Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, this “was attended by about one hundred pastors and lay persons.”⁷⁶ We here refer to what he said on that occasion.

In his chapter entitled “A Book of Imagery, Numbers, and Symbols,” Robbins said the writer of Revelation used numbers in his own way. This was really based on a numerology thought up in about 500 B.C. by Pythagoras, who had also “started a system of religion. He expressed his religious ideas with numbers and his system spread over the Eastern world. It went as far as China and India, and the Jews also adopted this system.” Here, according to Robbins, are some of the symbolic equivalents:

1 was “used to represent unity, unique, alone, independent, self-existent.”

2 “meant companionship, added courage, increased strength, added power, etc.”

3 “was the divine number, not only in Judaism, but in other religions as well.”

4. was “the cosmic number. . . . It referred to the world as we would call it today.”

7 “was the number of completing. It was 4 and 3 added; the divine and the world. This is everything. This is spirit and matter—everything.” . . .

“There also was some breaking up of these numbers. Three and one half was an insidious number. It was a breaking of the complete number, the 7.

And also 6 fell short of the perfect number, 7.”⁷⁷

Again we are presented with a system derived from paganism. In this, however, Robbins made three dubious statements. First, he said that in the scheme developed by Pythagoras “numbers were used to express religious ideas because vocabularies were limited.”⁷⁸ This is nonsense. Ancient Greek, in which that famous geometrician and philosopher wrote, was reputed always to have a word for everything. Second, Pythagoras actually regarded 6 as a perfect number. Third, Robbins indulged in suppositious Historical-Critical thinking where he imagined the reactions of readers almost two thousand years ago, for whom primarily the apostle John must be supposed to have written the Apocalypse. He stated: “Numbers in the Revelation and in other apocalyptic writings meant something different from what they do to us. When we see a 5 or an 8 or a 10, we think of mathematics but they thought of ideas.”⁷⁹ For this, he presented not a shred of evidence.

As for Rev. 13:18, Robbins said that “worship is common to humanity. Its number is 666. Ingenious attempts have been made from the second century to work out some person.”⁸⁰ But wait a minute! What evidence can he or anyone produce to prove the allegation that 666 is a symbol of humanity and therefore hints at human worship?

Robbins asserted that “six in the Jewish law of numbers had the hiss of the serpent. It fell short of perfection, fell short of the complete number. So, 666 simply says imperfection, or the perfection of imperfection. False religion is the height of man’s imperfection. He is trying to create a religion in which he can be his own god.”⁸¹ This prophetic Idealism represents a variation on Milligan and other similar authors. Robbins’s serpent is apparently derived from Frederic W. Farrar’s, who in the nineteenth century ago imagined that he saw its writhing and hissing in the Greek letter ξ (xi).

X

Almost ninety years ago, on 1 September 1922, an interpretation in harmony with the foregoing appeared in *The Fortnightly Review*, a Catholic paper. It cited W. J. L. Sheppard, who earlier that year in *Theology*, a London “monthly journal of historic Christianity,” expressed the opinion that “the Beast is ‘Humanity in all ages, apart from God, unregenerate, evil, inimical to Him and to His Church.’” This writer thought “that amid the efforts to discover a literal and contemporaneous solution both of the meaning and nature of the Beast of the Apocalypse, and the number itself, the age-long application of the symbols has been lost sight of.”⁸²

To promote this idea, Catholicism over the past few generations has been gratefully availing itself of the assistance provided by Protestant writers. For instance, a 1925 tract entitled *Adventists and Russellites: Their Charges Refuted*, printed by *Our Sunday Visitor*, quoted a number of Protestants who had rejected Historicism. Among them, we discover Milligan and Briggs.

Of the former we read: “Dr. Milligan, in the Expositor’s Bible (page 296), says that ‘it is impossible to speak of the papal church as the guide, the counsellor and the inspirer of antichristian efforts to dethrone the Redeemer, and to substitute the world or the devil in His stead. The papal church has toiled, and suffered, and died for Christ. Babylon never did so.’”⁸³

Even more curious was the approval reserved for the other man: “So great has been the confusion resulting from attempts to interpret the number that, as Dr. Hitchcock said, ‘Today, Protestant scholars, such as Dr. Briggs, in his *Messiah* (p. 224), content themselves with pointing out that 666, compared with 777, is a symbol of imperfection, and implies a contrast with Messiah’s number, 888, as given in the Sibylline Oracles, i. 328.’”⁸⁴

And that collection consists of predictions concocted by “certain Jewish and Christian writers from about 150 BC to about AD 180.” Among these were Theophilus of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria (Origen’s predecessor), who fraudulently imbued the much earlier pagan Sibylline prophecies with Christian properties. “In the Oracles the sibyl proved her reliability by first ‘predicting’ events that had actually recently occurred; she then predicted future events and sent forth doctrines peculiar to Hellenistic Judaism or Christianity.”⁸⁵

Here, in this extra-Biblical numerology, we may have found an original source for the alleged imperfection of 6.

XI

For centuries the Roman Catholic Church believed that the 666 in Rev. 13:18 represented the letter value of the Antichrist’s name. This became enshrined in the Douay New Testament of the Challoner-Rheims Version, which was, however, revised in 1941 and replaced by *The New American Bible* during 2000.

Its present-day footnote explains: “Each of the letters of the alphabet in Hebrew as well as in Greek has a numerical value. Many possible combinations of letters will add up to 666, and many candidates have been nominated for this infamous number. The most likely is the emperor Caesar Nero (see the note on 13,3), the Greek form of whose name in Hebrew letters gives the required sum. (The Latin form of this name equals 616, which is the reading of a few manuscripts.) Nero personifies the emperors who viciously persecuted the church. It has also been observed that ‘6’ represents imperfection, falling short of the perfect number ‘7,’ and is represented here in a triple or superlative form.”⁸⁶

While this Bible preserves the Preterist stance of the Roman Church, it also in that last sentence mentions an alternative Idealistic view. But before its 1941 revision, the Catholic English Bible had for more than three hundred years explained 666 as numeral letters and nothing else.

Its New Testament, known as the Douay-Rheims Version, was originally published in 1582. Created during the Counter-Reformation, with Dr. Gregory

Martin as the chief translator, its main purpose was to hit back at Protestant English Bibles, from the time of William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536), whose own complete New Testament had first appeared in 1526. The Douay-Rheims commentary on Rev. 13:18 tried to refute the so-called heretical doctrines of the Reformers, who taught that the pope was the Antichrist. Its note began as follows: “*The Number 666*. Forasmuch as the auncient expositors and others do thinke (for certaine knowledge thereof no mortal man can have without an expresse revelation) that his name consisteth of so many, & such letters in Greeke, as according to their maner of numbering by the Alphabete make 666
...⁸⁷

Two hundred years later, this text was revised from 1749 onward by Dr. (Bishop) Richard Challoner. He brought its spelling up to date, “modernized the diction and introduced a more fluid style, while faithfully maintaining the accuracy of Dr. Martin’s texts. . . . The notes included in this version are generally attributed to Bishop Challoner.”⁸⁸

At that stage, the Catholic Bible still fully adhered to the principle of letter-numeral equivalence, as did Protestants of the Historicist school. In 1914, the text for this remained unaltered,⁸⁹ though the notes were greatly abbreviated. About the number in Rev. 13:18, the Challoner revision says: “The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”⁹⁰

The text was also still the same in 1935, when former Seventh-day Adventist General Conference President and author William A. Spicer (1865-1952) in his *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* quoted from it, remarking: “The Douay (Catholic) Bible has a note on this eighteenth verse: ‘Six hundred sixty-six. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.’”⁹¹

What *The New American Bible* of 2000 says about 666 contains an addition to, though it is not a substitute for, traditional Catholic Preterism. As shown, it did not originate with the Roman Church, since it represents an extra, Idealistic element, borrowed from other non-Historicist writers—Protestant, Swedenborgian, Pantheistic, and the like.

XII

Increasingly since the early 1800s, the scholarly world has been abandoning prophetic Historicism. Coupled with this is an infusion of Idealist elements, which reached its high-water mark with writers like Milligan, Seiss, and Deissmann, in the later nineteenth or early twentieth century. In them, we noted not only remarks about 6 being tripled but also praise for a tripled 8. They thought this number was even more perfect than 7. Milligan linked it with Sunday, when the Lord’s resurrection occurred.

But these men failed to consider the fact that the number 8 is also important outside Christianity. As mentioned in Volume I, the ancient Gnostics used it when referring to the *ogdoad* (their eightfold god, the *pleroma*). Likewise in the Far East, China as well as Japan, it has been and

remains significant.

We read of this on 24 February 2010 in Kathryn Westcott's fascinating report which she headed with the question; "Why is the car giant Toyota not Toyoda?" Regarding China, she referred to "The start date and time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, on 8 August, at 8.08." (That is, 888!) Japan derived much of its culture and partly even its writing system from China. For many modern Japanese, this is no longer a big deal; but for the Toyoda dynasty, which founded and still controls the largest motor company in the world, it certainly has been. It turns out that "the word Toyota is associated with the lucky number eight, according to the company's English-language website." This is mirrored in a fact of how the Japanese write that name. In both the katakana and hiragana symbols of their syllabary, eight brush strokes are required to do so.⁹²

The numerological argumentation of Milligan, Seiss, Deismann, and others about 6, 7, and especially 8—whether single or triple—is mingled with paganism.

XIII

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which those writers flourished, also saw the rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with its continued insistence on Protestant Historicism. To this, it added the view that a clear distinction exists between the mark of the Beast and its number. Both concern the papacy, yet they should never be confused with each other.

During 1849, Joseph Bates with *A Seal of the Living God* wrote that the mark of the Beast described in Rev. 13:16 refers to a future Sunday law, which will bring persecution upon Sabbathkeepers. Here is how he put it:

"FOREHEADS, meaning public profession, or character, Ex. 28:36-38; Rev. 9:4; 13:16. [The fulfillment of] This last text is still in the future, and has a direct bearing on this very sealing message. This [is the] ungodly power from which God's people have been called out, Rev. 18:4. [It] will yet, as it now appears, enact a law for the express purpose of making all bow down and keep the Pope's Sabbath, (Sunday,) and all who do not, will have to cease their intercourse, for this law will not allow them to buy or sell, 17th verse. This will test the power there is in the true Sabbath, "the seal of the living God. I say amen, and amen."⁹³

Ellen G. White has likewise, in various passages, explained the mark of the Beast as Sundaykeeping enforced by legislation, especially in her most important book, *The Great Controversy*, for example its twenty-fifth chapter.⁹⁴

Bates was not, however, the first to write that the mark of the Beast was Sunday worship. This prophetic interpretation originated long before either he or Ellen G. White was born. It antedates them and the Seventh-day Adventist Church by at least two centuries.

Thomas Tillam (?-1676), a British minister who observed the Biblical

Sabbath, once fled because of and was twice imprisoned for his beliefs. Due to religious bigotry in the time of King Charles I, he emigrated to America as a religious refugee. Sighting its shore, he was inspired to write a touching poem entitled “Upon the First Sight of New England, June 29, 1638.”⁹⁵

He was following in the footsteps of the Pilgrims and planned on remaining in America, but when the king was overthrown and beheaded, a Commonwealth—what we today would call a republic—was established. It was ruled over by Oliver Cromwell and dominated by Presbyterian Puritans. Tillam hurried back to England, where he believed he had work to do; but he was to find that he had exchanged exile for imprisonment, on two occasions.

The first time was at the instigation of Puritans who did not like his teachings.⁹⁶ The second time came later, under Charles II (1630-1685), a dissolute king with Catholic tendencies, after the monarchy had been restored. “In 1661, and now a Baptist,” Tillam “left England for good and settled in Heidelberg, Germany, the leader of a small, communal religious group.”⁹⁷

During his first imprisonment in 1656, he wrote *The Seventh-Day Sabbath Sought out and Celebrated*, which was published the next year. Together with a prefatory Epistle, it is a book of almost two hundred pages. Its lengthy subtitle includes references to the Little Horn of Dan. 7:25 and “the Christians glorious Conquest over that mark of the Beast, and recovery of the long-slighted seventh day.”⁹⁸ After the Epistle, the first page repeats a variant of its title as follows: *The Seventh Day Sought Out and Celebrated, by Saints obtaining Victory over the Mark of the Beast*. There Tillam also said: “The first Royal Law that ever Jehovah instituted, and for our Example celebrated, (namely his blessed *Seventh-day Sabbath*,) is in these very last days become the last great controversy between the Saints and the Man of sin, *The Changer of Times and Laws*.”⁹⁹ He asked his Protestant readers who were rejecting the Sabbath: “Have you got victory over the Beast, and beheld the Holy One tumble down his Image, and will you now lose all your labours for want of a compleat victory over the *Marke of the Beast*, which is so visible and legible in the head of the little Horn, *The changer of Times and Laws*” [?]¹⁰⁰

An interesting question now arises: Was Joseph Bates and, through him his fellow believers, influenced by Tillam’s book? We cannot yet be sure but make the following observations.

The nascent Seventh-day Adventist Church first accepted the Biblical Sabbath through the labors of a Seventh Day Baptist, Rachel Oakes (1809-1868) in Washington, New Hampshire.¹⁰¹ Bates became a Sabbathkeeper through a *Tract, Showing That the Seventh Day Should Be Observed As the Sabbath*, reprinted from the *The Hope of Israel* (28 February 1845). Its author was Thomas M. Preble, a Freewill Baptist turned Millerite. He was keeping the Sabbath, after perhaps receiving it “from Mrs. Rachel Oakes or someone else in Washington, New Hampshire.” (In the middle of 1847 Preble unfortunately gave up the Sabbath and turned against it.)¹⁰²

The Seventh Day Baptist tradition, which Tillam also came to accept, exerted a powerful influence on the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Would

Bates not have read his book and told others about it? It was, after all, Tillam's magnum opus and copies of it could still have been extant. Lacking media like radio and television, people in those days were great readers and often imported books from England. And how remarkable it is that the short title of Ellen G. White's prophetic masterpiece, *The Great Controversy*, is the very phrase which also appears in Tillam's book!

A possible argument against the idea that *The Seventh Day Sought Out and Celebrated* influenced Bates is its being printed in England, two hundred years earlier. The attrition of time would certainly have been at work. Jerry Stevens has, however, from the Internet acquired data which suggests that it probably had a circulation in America, perhaps even better than in Britain. The WorldCat database lists one hundred and two libraries that "claim to own Tillam's book in either microfilm or hard copy format." But of the six copies still extant in print and catalogued, five are on the North American continent. Only one is overseas, at Edinburgh University, Scotland. Another is at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada. The rest are in the United States. The details follow. (We have augmented Jerry's work by adding, in brackets, information about their origin.)

1. Hanover College, Duggan Library, Hanover, Ind. [founded in 1827]
2. Earlham College, Richmond, Indiana [founded as a Quaker boarding school in 1832]
3. Union Theological Seminary, New York [founded in 1836]
4. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo [founded in 1909]¹⁰³

Tillam's book was certainly still known to Seventh Day Baptists. As late as August 1902, the title is mentioned in a historical paper presented at Ashaway, Rhode Island, when their General Conference was celebrating its centenary. Under the larger heading of "The Sabbath in England," we read:

"Rev. Thomas Tillam was a pastor of a Sabbatarian church in Colchester [Essex] as early as 1657. In that year he wrote a book entitled, 'The Seventh-day Sabbath sought out and celebrated, or the Saints last Design upon the man of sin.' On page 113 of this book there is 'A hymn celebrating the Lord's Sabbath, with joyful communion in the Lord's Supper by two hundred disciples at Colchester, in profession of the Law's precepts (Ex. 20) and the Gospel's principles (Heb. 6.)'

"Although we know but little about Elder Tillam, this church is evidence enough of the progress of Sabbatarian ideas, and the steadfastness of their defenders even in those times of fierce and persistent persecution."¹⁰⁴

Possibly on the basis of the 1910 work containing this material, the Review and Herald Publishing Association in its fourth edition of the *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week* by J. N. Andrews, augmented by L. R. Conradi, noted: "In 1658 Thomas Tillam was minister of the Seventh-day [*sic*] Baptist church at Colchester, and published a book, 'The Seventh-day Sabbath Sought out and Celebrated.'"¹⁰⁵

It is at least plausible that Joseph Bates might have known about Tillam's book and some notions in it. It is in any case remarkable that two important ideas which would one day blend in the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of Rev. 13 for the first time emerged in the seventeenth century, within the span of a single human lifetime. In 1600, Andreas Helwig first taught that the Apocalyptic 666 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*, a title of the pope. A little more than fifty years later, in 1656, Thomas Tillam, a Sabbathkeeper, warned against Sunday observance, calling it the mark of the papal Beast.

Helwig had died just thirteen years before Tillam recorded his insight, but strangely these two interpretations did not at that time mesh. Almost two centuries were still to elapse before the time of the end, when prophetic knowledge would increase, as predicted in Dan. 12:9. It was then that the Remnant Church more fully understood the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse and clearly distinguished between the mark, the number, and the image of the Beast.

What Seventh-day Adventists teach about final events as predicted in the Bible is the last of the major Historicist bastions still standing. That, however, is also being stealthily undermined and—at least as Satan plans it—destined to fall.

Against the foregoing background, let us now more fully consider how some Seventh-day Adventist expositors have in their dalliance with catch-all Idealism been creating difficulties for their church.

Chapter Forty-One
EARLY IDEALIST INTRUSIONS AND REBUTTALS

I

The Seventh-day Adventist Church not only espouses but resulted from a Historicist interpretation of prophecy. This becomes very clear from the doctoral dissertation by P. Gerard Damsteegt, a very thorough Dutch scholar. Under the title *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*, it went through six printings between 1977 and 1995. This work of more than three hundred pages focuses sharply on a thirty-year period (1844-1874). To wrap up his research, Damsteegt concluded: “This study indicates that one of the most important factors in the emergence of SDA was the powerful influence of a historicist hermeneutic which allowed for an interpretation of contemporary events as signs of Christ’s coming within a harmonious theological system. This is the reason why SDA could successfully develop after the failure of the 1844 prediction.”¹

Historicist Seventh-day Adventism maintains that its existence is foretold and its mission described by the Apocalypse, especially in three chapters: Rev. 12-14. Applying the year-day principle made clear in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, this denomination explains the time periods of 1260 days, the 42 months, and the 3½ years in those chapters, linked with Dan. 7:25, 12:7.

The woman clothed with the sun symbolizes the Lord’s people, while the remnant of her seed who keep God’s commandments and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:17) is the end-time church, with which Seventh-day Adventists identify. The great red dragon is Satan who works through the empires, kingdoms, and republics of this world to persecute those who are faithful to what the Most High requires. The beast is the papal system; the two-horned beast, a future apostate America which will make an image—a virtual replica—of it. Those who refuse to worship it through obedience to an international Sunday law will eventually have to face the death penalty. (Rev. 13:15)

The three angels’ messages provide additional clarification of the role to be played by the end-time church in proclaiming God’s final invitation and warning to the world. The third of them contains a fearsome hellfire threat for those who worship the beast and his image by receiving a mark in their right hand or forehead. Here the remnant is identified as those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. 14:8-12). This, too, Seventh-day Adventists believe is a role that they will have to play.

The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation is the classic embodiment of these interpretations. For those who believe that Ellen G. White was an inspired writer it is important to note that—according to the Office of Ellen G. White Publications—Uriah Smith and this work received no fewer than fifty endorsements from her pen, all or nearly all of them within his lifetime.²

Two of them are very striking:

“The interest in ‘Daniel and Revelation’ is to continue as long as probationary time shall last. God used the author of this book as a channel through which to communicate light to direct minds to the truth. . . .” (MS 174, 1899)

“Everything that can be done should be done to circulate ‘Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation.’ I know of no other book that can take the place of this one. It is God’s helping hand. (MS 76, 1901).”³ This is not to say that Uriah Smith was directly inspired like a prophet, that he never erred, or that Ellen G. White agreed with everything he had written. But these statements do constitute a claim that by and large he was correct in what he had written. They also imply that his Historicism regarding the papacy could be depended on.

Idealistic alternatives cannot be harmonized with such utterances from her pen. In fact, if Smith and others like him have been wrong about the mark, the number, and the name of the Beast as well as the third angel’s message, her credibility is also torpedoed. If so, she must go down with them.

More is involved than a general endorsement of Smith’s position. In *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan*, Ellen G. White said very much the same as he had written. It is true she did not present the 666 = *vicarius Filii Dei* identification. Nevertheless, the Historicist basics are all there: the apocalyptic time periods (1260 days, 42 months, 3½ years, etc.), the papal Beast with Sunday as its mark, and America as the two-horned beast, which will lead the world in persecuting Sabbathkeepers.

The Smithian prophetic interpretation undoubtedly becomes more vulnerable if Seventh-day Adventists can be persuaded that Ellen G. White was not really an inspired writer.

II

Major attempts to debunk her began just a few years after her death, subsequent to a special Bible Conference held on 1-19 July 1919 and a Teachers’ Council from 20 July to 1 August. A chapter in *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (1998) by the erudite Herbert E. Douglass refers to them. “About sixty-five people attended these two meetings, not all present for both. About twenty-eight teachers are listed in attendance at the Council, representing fourteen colleges (2- and 4-year).”⁴ Chairing the Bible Conference was Arthur Grosvenor Daniells (1858-1935), General Conference President since 1901.⁵ The people present to a large extent were the Seventh-day Adventist intelligentsia of their day.

According to Dr. Douglass, stenographers transcribed the lectures presented as well as much of the discussions. They produced “a massive record of 1,494 pages. However, nearly half of these pages are duplicates, with the first copy totaling 1,308 pages. Of the 1,308 pages, about 1,100 are from the Bible Conference, the remainder from the Council.” These minutes in their totality are now also available online from the official archives of the General

Conference. Having printed them out, we find their numeration a little different from the Douglass tally, but it is near enough.

Because some of the viewpoints were highly controversial it was suggested that the minutes not be made generally available to ordinary Seventh-day Adventists. Daniells concurred: "I sometimes think it would be just as well to lock this manuscript up in a vault, and have anyone who wishes to do so come there for personal study and research."⁶

That was done, and the material was rediscovered only in the 1970s and republished in 1979 by *Spectrum*, a journal put out by Seventh-day Adventists critical of their own denomination. This text has generated a seemingly never-ending tide of articles and books about Ellen G. White by both friends and foes. We need to note, however, that *Spectrum* through selective quotation threw into relief a much limited portion of the very many topics discussed during those 1919 sessions.

Some of the reactions prompted by the *Spectrum* revelations have been extremely critical and even poisonous. In this context, we can obviously not step too deeply into all the issues raised; it is a veritable morass that would detain us far too long. Nevertheless, we briefly focus on the central issue of inspiration and also note that it is bound up with a larger question: whether or not the Bible is inspired and just what we mean when we say that it is.

This also came to the fore in the discussions of 1919. Some who attended maintained that only the ideas expressed in the Scriptures and in the writings by Ellen G. White were inspired, but not their exact wording. Others, however, insisted on word-for-word or "verbal inspiration." As Douglass put it: "*This fundamental contention lay at the bottom of the discussion in 1919*" (his italics).⁷

Prominent during those discussions was William W. Prescott (1855-1944), to whom we have already referred in this and our first volume. He "had been given a major role in presenting many subjects." But this was surely to give the fox the run of the henhouse, for it had been "Prescott who helped to promote the theory of verbal inspiration while he was president of Battle Creek College in 1891."⁸

Especially *The Great Controversy* offended him, both in its genesis while it was being prepared for its first, 1888 edition and how it was revised before being reissued in 1911.

About the 1888 version, he mentioned a conversation with W. C. White, the author's son, who "told me frankly that when they got out "Great Controversy," if they did not find in her writings anything on certain chapters to make the historical connections, they took other books, like "Daniel and the Revelation," and used portions of them; and sometimes her secretaries, and sometimes she herself, would prepare a chapter that would fill the gap."⁹ Unfortunately this is a recollection filtered through and possibly edited by Prescott's mind. It suggests that Ellen G. White did not actually write the whole of *The Great Controversy* and fails to mention the crucial fact that she most carefully dealt with, oversaw, and took responsibility for everything that

went into it.

This criticism also implies that she should not have asked for or received assistance, even editorial help, in writing such a major work. Whoever has produced a lengthy book or academic dissertation which had to be shepherded through the publication process knows that such a position is both unreasonable and silly, except perhaps for those who believe in verbal inspiration.

Regarding the 1911 edition, Prescott demurred about details such as the identity of Apocalyptic Babylon. In one case, which to him was important, it concerned the addition of the word *alone*. This is how he put it: “My interpretation was, (and I taught it for years in *The Protestant Magazine*) that Babylon stood for the great apostasy against God, which headed up in the papacy, but which included all minor forms, and that before we come to the end, they would all come under one.” Such, he thought, had not been the teaching of *The Great Controversy*, but was added only through its revision “by just that one word added.”¹⁰

This seemed to satisfy him, though it remains a subtle point. Before the Great Disappointment of 1844, the Millerites (including Ellen G. White) had—because of their belief in an imminent Second Coming—been expelled from the Protestant churches to which they used to belong. Therefore, they began to proclaim the Second Angel’s Message of Rev. 14:8. The cry went up: “Babylon is fallen!” and now they grouped such Protestant denominations with the intolerant papal church. Rev. 17:5 supports this idea by speaking of “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS.” There is not, in other words, a single ecclesiastical whore; she also has daughters. This is what both the 1888 and 1911 editions were about.

Unless we are much mistaken, Prescott in saying “that before we come to the end, they would all come under one” was predicting universal domination by the Roman Church. But Ellen G. White foretold a threefold union between Catholics, Protestants, and Spiritualists. Did she by inserting that word *alone* really change her position? We think not, but the answer to that question will depend on a future the exact details of which are as yet unknown.

What is, however, becoming ever clearer since both her 1888 and 1911 editions is how accurately she foretold the events that lay beyond the lifetime of carping critics who during those dog days of summer in August 1919 expended much heat on supposed blemishes in her book. An additional century of history, as predicted by her and the Bible’s prophecies, has unscrolled a good deal further. The men of that generation have long since descended to their rest in cemeteries all over North America and elsewhere. But how accurate Ellen G. White has been! Amongst other things predicted in her book, various Protestant churches have already united and are ecumenically reaching across the abyss to clasp the hand of the Roman power, which has made a mighty comeback since it received its head wound in 1798.

Besides, before the 1919 meetings, Ellen G. White had as it were preempted both Prescott and others like him. She emphatically rejected verbal inspiration for either her own writings or the Scriptures, as early as 1886—even before the first edition of *The Great Controversy* could be published. A good deal of what she wrote on this topic is to be found in our Appendix IV, and we need not repeat it here.

About inspiration, further statements of unmistakable clarity, which say much the same, can be found in her “Author’s Preface” to the first edition of *The Great Controversy* itself, during May 1888.¹¹ For the revised edition of 1911, the “Author’s Preface” was renamed “Introduction.” Its text has otherwise remained identical.

She said: “The Bible points to God as its author, yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characters of the several writers. The truths revealed are all ‘given by inspiration of God’ (2 Tim. 3:16), yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by his Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of his servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.” Only the Ten Commandments are of purely divine composition, having been written by God himself. “But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that ‘the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ John 1:14.”¹²

The character or personality, the endowments, the background, and the time frame of the several human authors affected what they wrote; though the Most High wove it all together to meet the similarly differing readers in their own particular circumstances. This is not exactly how she put it, but we think that is just what the following passage tells us: “Written in different ages, by men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in mental and spiritual endowments, the books of the Bible present a wide contrast in style, as well as a diversity in the nature of the subjects unfolded. Different forms of expression are employed by different writers; often the same truth is more strikingly presented by one than by another.” But “the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.”¹³

In this way, “The treasure was entrusted to earthen vessels, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language; yet it is the testimony of God; and the obedient, believing child of God beholds in it the glory of a divine power, full of grace and truth.” On the other hand, “as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced readers, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the

thoughtful, reverent student, with clearer insight, discerns the underlying harmony.”¹⁴

But what of the ways in which Ellen G. White used material, especially history, by other writers? This was most important to many who attended the 1919 meetings. Again we quote from and refer to her “Author’s Preface”/“Introduction.” We think the following is especially insightful:

The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages, are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay. This history I have presented briefly, in accordance with the scope of the book, and the brevity which must necessarily be observed, the facts having been condensed into as little space as seemed consistent with a proper understanding of their application. In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but except in a few instances no specific credit has been given, since they are not quoted for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has occasionally been made of their published works.

It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing upon coming events. Yet viewed as a part of the controversy between the forces of light and darkness, all these records of the past are seen to have a new significance; and through them a light is cast upon the future, illumining the pathway of those who, like the reformers of past ages, will be called, even at the peril of all earthly good, to witness "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."¹⁵

The issues linked with inspiration as discussed during the 1919 meetings included Ellen G. White’s use of material from Protestant historians, so-called plagiarism, copyright, and minor blemishes—real or imagined—in her text.

Some readers, both within and outside the ranks of Seventh-day Adventists, despite her explanations, nitpick *The Great Controversy*, intent on discovering in it discrepancies or contradictions. They have faulted her for modest and succinct incorporations of material from other writers without using quotation marks, accusing her of plagiarism and a disregard of copyright.

Such anachronistic critics really condemn her for being a child of her time. She did not ignore copyright, but in nineteenth-century America the laws governing it differed greatly from those that apply today. As for the habit of

incorporating material from other writers without acknowledgement, she shared it with many older writers, such as William Shakespeare. Our fourth Appendix discusses these and related matters in some detail.

Here we must add that Biblical scholars are often woefully ignorant of how literature works, something which that great apologist for Christianity, C. S. Lewis—originally an atheist—also complained about. Concerning this topic, we refer the reader to our *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*.¹⁶

Most enlightening is *Luke, a Plagiarist?* (1983) by George E. Rice, an expert Greek scholar and former New Testament professor in the Theological Seminary at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. He was also an Associate Secretary for the Ellen G. White Estate at the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His book shows that those who wrote the Bible have likewise quoted from the work of others without mentioning the fact. Of the Gospel writers, two did so on a colossal scale: “Thus, for instance, 91% of the Gospel according to Mark are reproduced by Matthew and Luke.”¹⁷

Dr. Rice demonstrated, moreover, how differently and with what varying emphases these three men portrayed the life of our Lord. In the process, they rearranged and adapted their material, seeming even to alter it. For instance, the Roman centurion who had witnessed Jesus’ death on the cross, according to both Matthew and Mark, exclaimed: “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matt. 27:54; Mark 15:39). But according to Luke, the centurion said: “Certainly this man was innocent!” (23:47). And here is Rice’s comment:

“Surely a minor discrepancy, but as we shall see, a very important one. The statement of the centurion fits into a *series* of alterations made by Luke that present to us his understanding of the rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders. The importance of what the centurion said is seen by way of contrast. The religious leaders saw Jesus as guilty and deserving death. The Roman centurion represented the position of the pagan Roman government—Jesus was innocent of any crime worthy of death.¹⁸” (Emphasis added)

It is possible, of course, that the centurion made both statements, which Luke discovered through his research, so that he could quote the one which best suited his intention in writing his account. But this lets him off the hook too easily. The fact is that a careful study of all four Gospels reveals not one or two but many such discrepancies. Of these, the best known concerns a demoniac, who one day confronted Jesus and his disciples. They had crossed the Lake of Galilee and disembarked on its eastern shore. The Lord commanded the devils to leave the man but allowed them to enter a herd of pigs, which promptly ran over the cliff and drowned in the water below. That and more is what Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39 record, but according to Matt. 8:28-34 there were really *two* demoniacs, of whom one was particularly prominent.

Well-intentioned readers who do not believe in verbal inspiration can explain these differences, which is also possible in relation to Ellen G. White’s *Great Controversy*, but malignant ones will not—even though her

discrepancies are fewer than those of the four Gospels.

IV

Prescott ignored a good deal of what she had written and certainly her endorsement of Uriah Smith. We have already noted how ardently he rejected the *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 identification, with the argument that it was not the pope's official title, which he said was *vicarius Christi*. He also emphasized that in dealing with such matters, we needed mostly to confine ourselves to Catholic sources, which was strange for a Protestant. Further, he was one of the earliest Seventh-day Adventist writers to fall under the spell of Idealist prophetic interpreters. We look at him a little further.

In *The Spade and the Bible* (1933), he wrote:

In *Revelation* John stated plainly that the number of the name of the beast which he mentioned was 666, i.e., the total of the numerical value of the letters of his name was 666, and in this numerical puzzle his real name was concealed.

Many suggestions have been made by various writers in the effort to discover the real name thus concealed. Those who regard the emperor Nero as symbolized by the beast have tried to solve the difficulty by spelling the emperor's name with Hebrew letters and then adding the numerical value of these letters according to Hebrew usage. Those who interpret the beast as representing the Roman papacy, have taken from the Latin phrase "Vicarius Filii Dei" (the Vicar of the Son of God) the letters which have a numerical value, and find that their total is 666. They therefore conclude that this phrase indicates who the beast is. The difficulty with both of these explanations is that they resort to another language than the Greek, while the people of John's time employed the Greek "gematria" [letter-numeral equivalence]. A satisfactory solution of this concealed name would be recognized if a personal name written in Greek could be found whose "gematria" would be 666, and whose character and work would fulfill the specifications of the prophecy.

While it throws no particular light upon the question under discussion, yet it is worth noting that the numerical value of the name Jesus, written in Greek, is 888. If, as seems clear from the connection, the beast whose number is 666 is an opposer of Jesus the conquering Lamb of the book of Revelation, we are justified in declaring that the triple eight is the irresistible answer to the triple six.¹⁹

One of the sources cited by Prescott was Deissmann, whose use of 666 and 888 we have already described. But what of the "triple six" and "triple eight" that he referred to? Prescott may have derived them from one of the other Idealist books that we have surveyed. Prominent among them was the much-republished *Apocalypse* by Joseph A. Seiss, who linked the number 888 with Sundaykeeping, in both the here and the hereafter. Surely Prescott should have

noticed how incongruous it is for a Seventh-day Adventist to find himself in such intellectual company.

As with these writers, their precursors, and their successors, this is the weakest link in all such talk about Rev. 13:18. In various passages, our book shows that this is an error, plain and simple, based on a misunderstanding of the number systems of the ancient Mediterranean world when the Apocalypse was written. Three sixes are totally absent from the Greek original. As for the “triple eight,” it is another fantasy, to which a similar criticism applies.

Let us now consider Prescott’s two other requirements, which he telescoped together in a single sentence: “A satisfactory solution of this concealed name would be recognized as a personal name written in Greek.” But why? Let us see. He first said:

“The figures now generally employed to indicate numbers were unknown to the Greek-speaking world. They used the letters of their alphabet, a definite numerical value being assigned to each letter when thus employed. It thus came about that when one desired to refer to a person and yet to conceal his usual name, he could do so by mentioning the number which represented the total numerical value of all the letters composing his name.”²⁰

Of the Mediterranean peoples that was certainly true, but it also applied to Latin, just as it did to Greek and Hebrew.

Prescott continued: “The excavations of Pompeii have brought to light so-called wall-scribblings, made at the very period when the New Testament was written, which show that such numerical puzzles were then current. Two examples are cited and the Greek translated by Deissmann.”²¹

The latter actually, quoting A. Sogliano, called them *graffiti* and provided both the Greek text and an English translation: “Amerimnus thought upon his lady Harmonia for good. The number of her honourable name is 45.”²² The man who wrote that piece would have been a Roman, since Pompeii is just outside Naples. He may have used Greek for one of two reasons: it was the fashionable thing to do and that part of Italy had been colonized from Greece.

We note, however, that Deissmann cast an even wider net of references. For instance, he wrote: “Franz Bücheler has proved how widespread the habit was at that time, and a passage in Suetonius (*Nero*, 39), hitherto obscured by false conjectures, has been cleared up by his brilliant discovery that the name ‘Nero’ is there resolved numerically into ‘matricide.’”²³

Suetonius was born in A.D. 69, a year after the death of Nero, whom he wrote about in *De vita Caesarum* (About the Life of the Caesars). This work, which treats of the Roman rulers from Julius Caesar down to Domitian, is in Latin.²⁴ Prescott, reading Deissmann, should have noticed this detail and not been so dogmatic that the letter-number equivalence of Rev. 13:18 could only refer to a name in Greek.

It is fascinating how closely Prescott’s ideas resembled those of the nineteenth-century John Dawson Gilmary Shea (1824-1892), a one-time Jesuit who became “the preeminent American Catholic historian of his day.”²⁵ From 1888 until his death, the latter also edited *The New York Catholic News*,²⁶

which Prescott is likely to have read.

Shea exhibited both polish and arrogance: “A correspondent in Massachusetts sends us a solution of the Number of the Beast, which is circulating among the unlearned and the unwise in that state of vaunted knowledge. It makes the name of the man whose number is that of the beast to be ‘Vicarius Filii Dei.’ Unfortunately for the silly jackanapes who gets off this amusing absurdity, St. John wrote in Greek and could not have referred to a Latin, French, English or German name. He must have referred to a Greek name. In the next place Vicar of the Son of God is not a name, but a title, and a modification of a Latin title of the Pope, not that generally used.” This appeared in *The New York Catholic News* on Sunday, 21 January 1892, p. 4.²⁷ The “silly jackanapes” may well have been a Seventh-day Adventist. Incidentally, a month after writing this passage, Shea was dead.

As for the assertion that “Vicar of the Son of God is not a name, but a title,” we have already demonstrated from the Greek text that in two passages the Apocalypse itself uses the word ὄνομα (onoma), “name,” to mean a title: Rev. 17:5 and Rev. 19:13, 16. Furthermore, *vicarius Filii Dei* is not, as Gilmary Shea declared, “a modification of a Latin title of the Pope.” Not at all. Our book has shown abundantly that it has for centuries been applied—by Catholics—to the Bishop of Rome, not only in Latin but also in other languages like French, Italian, Spanish, German, and English.

We have one more thing to say about Prescott’s departure from Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation. In startling contrast with previous writers of his denomination since the middle 1860s, he jumbled together the mark, the name, and the number of the Beast. He did so twice within the same paragraph. Thinking they were really identical, he declared:

“The same apostle John, who foresaw that the time would come when it would be necessary for those who would engage in commerce to accept from the beast his mark (*charagma*), containing his name or the number of his name, was also shown a group of the followers of the Lamb standing with Him on Mount Zion, ‘having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.’ A vital issue is presented in these statements. Which shall be accepted, the mark (the name) of the beast, or the name of the slain Lamb and the name of His Father?”²⁸

V

It was just three years after Prescott’s book had appeared that he insisted on the momentous meeting in the office of Elder Watson, the General Conference President, on 16 April 1936. A previous chapter has already dwelt on some of its consequences, so we shall not repeat the details here. We merely remind the reader that in the aftermath of that meeting with Prescott, several Seventh-day Adventists scholars spent much time on discussions and research about *vicarius Filii Dei* as well as many topics related to it. An important result was an official, though never published, document of forty-two pages, read and

approved at another meeting in the office of the new General Conference president, J. L. McElhany in August 1939.

VI

There were, however, also other papers. Also during 1939, Henry F. Brown (1892-1987), a Seventh-day Adventist missionary and minister, presented his 49-page *Vicarius Filii Dei: An Examination into the Use of This Title*.²⁹ Amongst other things, he briefly summarized the conclusions reached by Prescott, French, and Froom. Then, after saying there were grounds for still maintaining that the name in Rev. 13:18 might refer to *vicarius Filii Dei*, he suggested that we should do so guardedly; for on the basis of statements by Ellen G. White “we are distinctly told that all on this subject is not understood.”³⁰ Thereupon Brown cited her as well as a considerable number of non-Seventh-day Adventist writers to support his own opinion: that 666 is probably a title of *Satan*.

As a sample of the latter idea, let us consider what he quoted as well as what he omitted from *The Apocalypse* by Joseph A. Seiss, whose numerology we have previously referred to. Brown reproduced the paragraph asserting that “*six* is the Satanic number,” but failed to mention another important set of statements by Seiss. The latter had also declared that “*eight* is the number of new beginning and resurrection” and further that “our Sunday, which celebrates the new creation which began in the Saviour’s resurrection, is the eighth day, the first of the new week.” Again, what strange intellectual company for a Seventh-day Adventist, and a minister at that!

Among the statements from Ellen G. White that Brown appealed to, the following is most relevant. She wrote: “Satan is working to the utmost to make himself as God and to destroy all who oppose his power. And today the world is bowing before him. His power is received as the power of God. The prophecy of the Revelation is being fulfilled, that ‘all the world wondered after the beast.’ Revelation 13:3.”³¹

After quoting this statement, Brown remarked: “(Let it be noted in parenthesis that the beast here is Satan.)”³² But we beg to differ. Let us observe the context, first by turning to the Bible and then to the writings of Ellen G. White.

The Apocalypse says: “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. *And they worshipped the dragon* which gave power unto the beast: *and they worshipped the beast*, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:1-4, emphasis added). In other words, bowing

down to the papal Beast is indirectly to worship Satan, who empowered it.

The devil is, of course, the ultimate Antichrist, which Ellen G. White implied. But she did not simplistically say that the Beast is Satan himself, which is evident from reading *The Great Controversy* as in Chapter 35, entitled “Aims of the Papacy.”

Brown’s argumentation was defective. To say the least, he was patching onto Historicism peculiar elements that cannot be harmonized with it. Furthermore, like others before and after him, he quoted selectively from Ellen G. White, and only when it suited him to do so, while rejecting the idea that she was inspired.

This he made startlingly plain in his “Reminiscences [sic] from a Long Life: An Oral History” (1984), when at the age of 92 he was looking back on his life and ministry. Throughout his career, he had kept on recording her so-called inconsistencies and contradictions. He found his skepticism confirmed and strengthened when *Spectrum* partially republished the minutes of the 1919 meetings that we have already discussed.

Together with approval or praise for many dissident Seventh-day Adventists, Brown became poisonous in his comments on the charge of her alleged plagiarism. Quoting Jeremiah 23:30 (NIV): “I am against the people who steal from one another words supposedly from me,” he said: “Mrs. White is the only person that I know that had that weakness. I don’t suppose there is anyone in this world that has done as much borrowing and plagiarizing as Mrs. White. She is the only pretended prophet that gathered from others a vast library of purloined material.”³³ To put it in plain English, by this he meant she was a great thief and deceiver.

But as we have pointed out, a large number of older authors—including quite a few who wrote the Bible, especially the Gospels—incorporated other people’s text into their own without saying that they were doing so. Some did it on a truly colossal scale. The 91 percent of material from Mark which Matthew and Luke swallowed up is a record hard to beat. And were Matthew the tax-collector and Luke the doctor also thieves?

However spectacular, several of Brown’s remarks excite our astonishment. For instance, he said that according to Robert Olsen “the Denomination now accepts that more than 50%—and some say almost 100%—of *Great Controversy* was not of her own thoughts; it was borrowed from other sources.”³⁴ We think this is a whopper. In any case, does “borrowing” include theological ideas and commonly accepted facts? If so, that is a pointless percentage. No sensible person is completely original, and Ellen G. White after all herself explained that she had not invented all the historical data in her book. Often she leaned on other Protestant writers. But that 100 percent cannot be correct, since it suggests that not even Ellen G. White’s predictions were her own.

A further troublesome point is that Henry F. Brown rejected the year-day principle,³⁵ which placed him beyond the pale of Historicism.

So far as we have been able to determine, his interpretation that 666 is

really the mark of Satan, rather than a reference to a title of the pope, was not imitated by other denominational writers. Nevertheless, the existence as far back as 1939 of his numerological views on the number 6 constituted another symptom that all was not well with Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation.

VII

Much more solid, as both a member of his church and a scholar, was Thomas M. French, to whom we have already had more than one occasion to refer. As part of a lecture during the Columbia Union Conference Session at Pittsburgh, PA, in February 1942, he said:

There is a trend toward a change of our old positions on the mark of the beast.

The reading of the American Revised Version is followed in this new position: "Save he that hath the mark, *even* the name of the beast or the number of his name." Verse 17.

It will be observed that the word "even" is a supplied word in the A.R. Version. It appears in none of the ancient manuscripts. The correct word is "or" as is seen in the Authorized Version. At the very time this new position arose, there appeared a cursive manuscript a century older than any of the uncial manuscripts, and it contains the word "or". This manuscript is called the Chester Beatty Collection.

It will readily be seen that if the mark is the same as the name of the beast, then it could not be Sunday observance, as has been held by our people.³⁶

French did not mention any name, yet there can be little doubt as to whom he meant. Let us just note that *The Spade and the Bible* by Prescott appeared in 1933 and the Chester Beatty papyrus in 1934, a year later.

VIII

The 1940s and the early 1950s witnessed signal reaffirmations of Historicism by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1944, it issued a revised and standardized version of *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* by Uriah Smith.³⁷ That year also marked the centennial of the Great Disappointment, when the denomination had its beginnings. Also published just after the Second World War, from 1946 to 1954, were the four volumes of LeRoy Edwin Froom's masterpiece, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*.³⁸

By and large, divergent views on prophecy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church went underground, until their reemergence during the 1970s and afterwards.

Chapter Forty-Two
A FEW LATER HISTORICISTS WHO GOT IT WRONG

I

On Sabbath, 8 June 2002, in a Senior Sabbath School class, a battering ram thudded against the walls of a Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation that had been standing for a hundred and thirty-seven years. In 1865, Uriah Smith had first brought into his church the Protestant idea that *vicarius Filii Dei*, a papal title, had a numeric value of 666. According to him, Rev. 13:18 pointed a finger straight at the papal system as the Antichrist predicted by both the Apocalypse and other Biblical passages. This swiftly became the denomination's standard view. But those who attended the Sabbath School class that morning suddenly found that this bastion, especially popular with their evangelists, was being assaulted.

Even more amazing was the fact that the principal author of the lesson (assisted or endorsed by others) was no less a personage than Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, the new Director of the Seventh-day Adventist Biblical Research Institute (BRI), which is “a resource of biblical scholarship for the world church.” He had been elected to this position on 27 September 2001, after serving as an Associate Director for the previous nine years.¹ Rodríguez was Director for almost ten years, retiring on 30 June 2011.

Such Sabbath School lessons, which teachers—mostly lay people—present in Seventh-day Adventist churches all over the globe, are based on preparatory material studied throughout the preceding week. We here concern ourselves with paragraphs appearing under Thursday, 6 June 2002, and Friday, 7 June. With small adjustments to the typographic outlay, we cite only the relevant portions (the full text can be read online):

Thursday June 6

THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST (Rev 13:16-18; 14:1).

. . . The beast is opposed to God's law and even modified it by changing Sabbath observance to Sunday. . . .

Why do we say that those who keep Sunday do not have the mark of the beast now? Why is it important that we make this point clear?

The number of the beast. The mark, the name, and the number of the beast are closely related (Rev. 13:17). Many suggestions have been made to explain the meaning of 666. Here we must be very careful. The Bible does not say that the number is the added numerical value of the letters of a name. Some see in the meaning of 666 a symbol of humanity separated from God. Humans were created on the sixth day, and the number can stand as a symbol for humanity without divine rest (the seventh day).

Humans have claimed ultimate independence from God (the cause of their fall), and even now they do not want to find rest in Christ.

Over the years, numerous Bible students have come up with various explanations for the 666. Some found significance in the fact that if you added up the numbers of letters in the name of a former president of the United States, Ronald Wilson Reagan, it came to 666; others saw meaning in that, years ago, all the buses in Jerusalem had 666 on their license plates. This is futile speculation that adds nothing toward understanding truth. The important point is that God's Word has given us enough information to know what the key issues are and who the players will be in the last days, even if we do not know all the details for now, such as the precise meaning of 666.

Friday June 7

FURTHER STUDY: Ellen G. White, "God's Law Immutable," *The Great Controversy*, pp. 438-450; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 2, pp. 330-349; 377-399; 413-416)

Please note the following points in conclusion to this week's study:

1. *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God). Since the Reformation, this papal title has been used to calculate the number 666. But there are several questions that should make us cautious. First, it is not clear that this title is an official one. Second, there is no clear indication in Revelation 13 that the number is based on the numerical value of the letters of a name. The phrase 'it is the number of a man' (vs. 18, NIV) could be translated 'it is the number of [humanity]'; that is, of humans separated from God. Third, those who insist on counting the numerical value of letters confront the problem of deciding which language will be used. Because the text does not identify any language, the selection of a particular one will be somewhat arbitrary. At the present time, the symbolism of intensified rebellion, six used three times, and total independence from God seems to be the best option. Time will reveal the full meaning of the symbol.²

From Volume I and onward, we have already dealt with and exposed the fallacies inherent in almost all of these issues. We particularly noted that Rev. 13:18 does not, in the original, say anything about a triple or threefold *six*. Every Greek manuscript has either $\chi\xi\zeta'$ (chi xi stigma) or the three words written in full: $\text{\textepsilon}\xi\alpha\kappa\omicron\sigma\iota\omicron\iota \text{\textepsilon}\xi\eta\kappa\omicron\nu\tau\alpha \text{\textepsilon}\xi$ (hexakosioi hexēkonta hex), that is to say, *six hundred and sixty-six* or—as the Authorized Version puts it—“Six hundred threescore and six.” In New Testament times, the ancients of the Mediterranean world who wrote Hebrew, Greek, or Latin would have been incapable of even understanding 666 as three sixes. This is based on the Hindu-Arabic number system introduced into Western Europe in about 1200,

more than a millennium after the book of Revelation had been written.

Let us add an even more serious consideration. Interpreting the Apocalyptic number as “intensified rebellion and total independence from God” is another way of suggesting that the Beast is not the pope or the pontifical system. Why do we say this? Rev. 13:17-18 tells us that the name of the beast has a numeric value. *Six hundred threescore and six* is based on the name of the Beast. Consequently, in accordance with the paragraphs quoted, the name of the Beast must be “intensified rebellion and total independence from God” or just generic human depravity. In that case, the Beast of Rev. 13 cannot be the papacy.

Such is our conclusion, though Rodríguez—basically a Historicist—is sure not to agree with it. We know this from a page-long statement that he wrote in March 2008 and after an e-mail inquiry from us had forwarded to us during October 2010. With a few additional ideas, Rodríguez still maintained the position published in the 2002 Sabbath School Quarterly. In this later piece, he did, however, also say: “There is no question in my mind that the symbol applies to the papacy, but whether or not it stands for one of the names of the pope is a different question.”³

With his Idealistic interpretation of 666, the last two verses in Rev. 13 are nevertheless made to contradict the first two.

In Rev. 13:1-2, we read that the Beast has seven heads and ten horns as well as lion, bear, and leopard characteristics, all of which point the reader back to Dan. 7. (Since the leopard has four heads, it and the other three creatures taken together have seven heads. The last of them has ten horns.) Dan. 7 extends and augments Dan. 2, which deals with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream about four great world empires, to be followed by the Kingdom of God. Contextualizing Rev. 13:1-2 within the rest of the Bible necessitates a fully Historicist interpretation. But the idea that Rev. 13:17-18 identifies the Beast as “intensified rebellion and total independence from God” cannot be harmonized with those prophecies in Daniel. It is Idealistic material—derived from non-Seventh-day Adventist sources—ahistorical and incompatible with Historicism.

We are puzzled, moreover, to know just how people can actually *worship* “intensified rebellion and total independence from God.”

II

The statements of 6 and 7 June 2002 and the subsequent discussion on Sabbath, 8 June, heralded the bold entrance of an alien allegorical, Idealistic interpretation into Seventh-day Adventist eschatology. This is utterly at variance with and corrosive of Historicism. Even worse, it contradicts and tends to set aside the three angels’ messages described in Rev. 14. These build up to and climax in the third angel’s message of verses 9-11, with a backward glance at Rev. 13:18. It is especially on these Scriptures that Seventh-day Adventists base their claim to be the Saviour’s end-time Remnant church.

Rev. 14 brings to view an eschatology referred to as the third angel's message, which centers in verses 8-12. Here we find a wake-up call, a dire warning, to the entire planet. It threatens perdition and doom for all who in the final conflict consent or submit to obeying the Antichrist and his sidekick depicted in Rev. 13, thereby turning their back on God through a rejection of the Decalogue. Loudly the angel calls out: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand," namely all "who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name," it will be hellfire for them (vv. 10, 11). In contrast, salvation is announced for those who accept the Lord and "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (vs. 12); for they will stand on the celestial "sea of glass," having "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name" (15:2).

Much more, then, is involved than a mere method of prophetic interpretation. What we have here is a whole cluster of *doctrines*: righteousness by faith, the Biblical Sabbath, the need for an unswerving obedience to the Most High which will defy a death decree, the Second Coming, and the Lord's response to those who persecute his people.

Let us, moreover, raise two further points.

First, we note the last part of the concluding sentence under Thursday, 6 June: ". . . even if we do not know all the details for now, such as the precise meaning of 666," and also—under Friday, 7 June—the statement: "Time will reveal the full meaning of the symbol." This suggests that after almost a hundred and fifty years of Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation, preceded by Historicists all the way back to Helwig in 1600-1612, everybody has failed to determine what 666 stands for. That is, unfortunately all of them lacked the wisdom which Rev. 13:18 says is necessary for calculating the name of the Beast.

Second, we ask: "But is it really such a big deal?" It could be argued that it intrinsically does not really matter whether a little bit of Idealism is patched onto the Historicist view on 666.

We totally disagree. What people believe affects their actions. The pieces quoted above, which we call the Rodríguez statements, have played a role in leading people astray—even out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and right into the Church of Rome.

III

Of this we have found a striking and sad example on a blog entitled *Seventh-day Adventist to Roman Catholic: Our Journey into the Catholic Faith*. This is about Brandon and Tara, a couple who turned away from their family and denominational roots to find, as they thought, a deeper spirituality and greater happiness through conversion to Romanism. In citing them, we retain their awkward orthography and punctuation.

Under "About Us," we read:

“I am a fourth generation Adventist, my parents, grandparents, and so on . . . are all Adventist. I was raised SDA, I got very interested in Adventism in my teens, and wanted to become a pastor. I was pretty orthodox until my early 20’s, in fact possibly a little legalistic.

“My wife Tara was also raised Adventist. Her parents and siblings are Adventist, her grandparents are Adventists, and so are aunts and uncles. Most of her elementary school days were spent in Adventist school. In seventh grade, however, her brothers and her [*sic*] relocated to the local public schools, only later to switch back to SDA Schools, including Southern University.”⁴

Nonetheless, they allegedly saw much in the doctrines and ideas of their church that they found troublesome. We need not trouble the reader by dealing with them all, but confine ourselves to two of them that are relevant to this book and which Brandon and Tara closely linked together under the same heading, “Is the Pope the Anti-Christ?”

Samuele Bacchiocchi is with approval shown to have rejected the so-called errors in Ellen G. White’s *Great Controversy* (1888), revised for its 1911 edition. (We discussed his criticism in Chapter 13 of Volume I, which our readers may wish to look at again to refresh their memory.)

According to this couple, Bacchiocchi was “a noted Adventist Theologian.” Indeed, as they put it, “he is considered by some to be the church’s foremost authority on Catholicism, since by his claims; he grew up in Italy and went to school at Roman Catholic schools, studying under a Jesuit professor. If Dr. Bachiocci [*sic*] is correct in his assertion that the papacy did not begin or gain supremacy in 538, which he is; and if he is correct that the papacy did not cease, or experience the downfall of the papacy in 1798, which he is, then applying the 1260 year prophecy to the Vatican is wrong. This disproves Adventism’s use of both Dan 7 and Revelation 13 to justify this incorrect assertion.”⁵

Immediately after this, the blog goes on to say: “Let’s look at another popular assertion by Adventists that we can hear at revelation seminars, bible lessons, and books. An Adventist teaching has been that one of the titles of the Pope comes out to equal 666 in numerical meaning. The problem is that now, apparently, the Church is backing off this teaching as being misleading. Notice the quote below from the SDA Sabbath School Quarterly, Q2, 2002.”⁶

At this point, the same paragraphs that we cited above under both 6 and 7 June are reproduced and the following remark is added triumphantly: “It appears that even though the SDA church has been using this for years as a ‘proof’ in their revelation seminars and even the Bible Commentaries, the church is beginning to be honest about the truth. Again the Adventist church is agreeing with what the Catholic Church has been claiming for centuries.”⁷

And here is Brandon and Tara’s general conclusion:

“The Adventist Church has claimed for years that the Pope is the little horn of Daniel, the beast of Revelation Chapter 13, and even had titles that added up to 666, luckily the church is now backing off of this. The information I have presented here today, is extremely simple and only deals with a small

slice of the problems in the Adventist teachings about prophecy and the anti-Christ! It is only another un-truth told by the Adventist Church. Most protestant churches have been honest enough to abandon this long ago, Adventism will too someday, but for the time being they are still propagating these sad errors.”⁸

This shows how everything that Seventh-day Adventists publish in articles, books, or on the Internet is scrutinized and used not only against them but to bolster the appeal and power of the Beast. The explanation under 6 and 7 June 2002 in that Quarterly helped to sway this couple into the arms of the Roman Church. For such reasons, we find the cited Sabbath School material reprehensible.

IV

Also in 2002, the *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation* was published at Berrien Springs, MI, making points that are similar to those of the Rodríguez statements.⁹ Its author, Ranko Stefanović, later became professor of New Testament at Andrews University, chairing the Department of Religion and Biblical Languages.¹⁰ Amongst other things, his book says: “The number 666 of the beast from the earth is ‘a human number’ (or ‘the number of a man’), thus having something to do with human rather than divine characteristics and qualities. It is the typical number of Babylon. Six symbolizes a falling short of the divine ideal symbolized in the number seven. It appears that the triple six stands for the satanic triumvirate in contrast to the triple seven of the Godhead in Revelation 1:4-6.”¹¹ A major difference is that Stefanović applied the number, not to the first but to the second Beast of Rev. 13, which we find exegetically peculiar.

Also, we need to take issue with “a human number” as a translation for the words ἀριθμός ἀνθρώπου (*arithmos anthrōpou*) of the original, together with related errors, which we discuss in Appendix VII.

This view regarding 666 in the Sabbath School lesson as well as the Stefanović book clashes with the Historicist interpretation that the entity depicted in the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse must be the papacy. It does not just concern a single verse but impacts on everything that goes before and what follows it. It contradicts not only Uriah Smith, but also what J. N. Andrews and many other Seventh-day Adventists of past generations have taught. Additionally, it repudiates their many Protestant forerunners who likewise said that the Beast was the Bishop of Rome. As already shown, a large number of them even concluded explicitly that 666 stands for *vicarius Filii Dei*.

In his text as well as his Endnotes, Stefanović mentioned several colleagues and antecedents with conceptions similar to his own.

These writers were also referred to by Samuele Bacchiocchi, who likewise expressed himself on that wavelength, also in 2002, as we will see in the next chapter. Four years later, he wrote: “What I have attempted to do in the second part of the lecture, is to build upon the recent research of outstanding Adventist scholars like Jon Paulien, Ph.D., Ranko Stefanović, Ph.D., Hans LaRondelle, Ph.D., Beatrice Neal[1], Ph.D., and Angel Rodriguez, Ph.D. These scholars offer valuable insights into the symbolic meanings of the cryptic number 666. I have largely adopted and expanded their insights, especially by examining the symbolic use of numbers in Revelation.”¹²

Doctorates obviously fascinated Bacchiocchi. But in reality none of the writers whom he listed went quite as far as he did. Amongst other things, he boldly rejected the idea that the mark of the beast was Sundaykeeping imposed by future legislation, as his church had maintained for much of its existence.

He said: “Traditionally Adventists have interpreted the Mark of the Beast to be the enforcement of Sunday observance and the Number 666 of the Beast the papal title *VICARIUS FILII DEI*, allegedly inscribed in the papal tiara. We shall see that this interpretation poses a problem because it differentiates between the Mark and Number of Beast [*sic*]. Such a differentiation can hardly be justified exegetically, because the text suggests that the Mark, the Name, and the Number are essentially the same thing.”¹³

This statement is true in asserting that Seventh-day Adventists have interpreted the Mark of the Beast as Sundaykeeping enforced by a future blue law. It is, however, problematic in mentioning the 666 identification as *vicarius Filii Dei* together with its being inscribed on the papal tiara. Although Uriah Smith did refer to them in the same context, these are two different ideas. It is perfectly possible to believe in the identification *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 and to doubt or reject the tiara story. But much more serious is Bacchiocchi’s second sentence claiming that “the Mark, the Name, and the Number [of the Beast] are essentially the same thing.”

This flies in the face of what virtually all other Seventh-day Adventist writers and evangelists have been maintaining for more than one hundred fifty years. After Joseph Bates, to whom we have already referred, one of the first persons to identify the Mark of the Beast as Sunday legislation was George W. Holt (1812-1877), a former Millerite minister. After 1844, he was “one of the first to embrace the new sanctuary and Sabbath positions”¹⁴ that characterized the remnant which would later be organized as Seventh-day Adventists.

In the March 1850 issue of *The Present Truth*, published by James White at Oswego, NY, Holt in a letter wrote: “The Papal beast commanded that the first day of the week should be holy time. The God of heaven has said, ‘The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God’ and has commanded us to

keep it holy. Now those who submit to, and reverence the institution of the Pope, receive the mark of the beast, but those who throw off the last vestige of Papacy, and reverence God, by keeping his Holy Sabbath, will receive the mark, or seal of the living God.”¹⁵

The next month, a long article entitled “The Third Angel’s Message” by James White as editor endorsed this view. In a section entitled “What Is the Mark of the Beast?” he said about the pontiff:

“The saints, times and laws were given into his hand for 1260 years. He was permitted to trample down the Sabbath, and the saints for that time. The former he caused to be desecrated and the latter put to death.

“Then as the observance of the first day as a day of holy rest, instead of the seventh, is a mark of the beast, it undoubtedly is the *mark* mentioned in the solemn message of the third angel.—This is strongly established by this plain fact that the mark of the beast is in direct opposition to keeping the commandments of God.”¹⁶

Only fifteen years later, in 1865, did Uriah Smith begin to take the same position, which he maintained for the rest of his life. *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, the final 1944 edition, deals with this topic at length.¹⁷

More than thirty years after, Bates, Holt, and James White had identified the Mark of the Beast as Sunday observance enforced by law, Ellen G. White in *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (1888) also described it as such. Here is one of her forceful statements:

“Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that ‘all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond’ (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator’s rest demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts.”¹⁸

Since then and up to the present, numerous writers and evangelists have in harmony with Ellen G. White continued this identification. But Prescott in 1933, Ranko Stefanović in 2001, Diestre Gil in 2004, Bacchiocchi in 2005, as well as others after them have brushed it aside by muddling together the mark, the name, and the number of the Beast. (The basis and sources for saying so can be found in this, the previous, and the next chapters.)

We here remind our readers of a perceptive statement by Thomas Marion French, whom we cited in a previous chapter. During February 1942, while Prescott was still alive but sixty-three years before Bacchiocchi, that insightful Seventh-day Adventist Bible teacher, writer, and evangelist, had declared: “It will readily be seen that if the mark is the same as the name of the beast, then it could not be Sunday observance, as has been held by our people. . . .”¹⁹

Denying the validity of *vicarius Filii Dei* for interpreting Rev. 13:18, it was Prescott who also—at least by implication—had rejected the Seventh-day Adventist belief that one day the United States, in league with the Roman

Church, would make a national Sunday law and persecute Sabbathkeepers. With Bacchiocchi, this rejection became explicit. If these men are right, Uriah Smith together with Ellen G. White and numerous other Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpreters since the nineteenth century, have been wrong. There will consequently be no religious persecution of Christians by other Christians in this country or elsewhere on this planet. And for that matter the two-horned beast cannot be America, but must refer to something different from what Seventh-day Adventists have been supposing. To keep on proclaiming such things would be just some old-fashioned foolishness from the nineteenth century, which is no longer appropriate in this enlightened age!

What, then, if Bacchiocchi and these other men are right, does the mark of the Beast refer to? and: What is the Beast? They said or suggested that the number and the name were not concerned with the papacy more than any other entity but merely signify human imperfection. Further, if the mark of the Beast is the same thing as its number and name, it also means imperfection. Accordingly, it has nothing to do with the pope, at least not more than with anybody else. That is to say, the Beast is not the papacy. Rev. 13 is merely about human imperfection in a vague, generic sense! Or perhaps we ourselves are the Beast.

Bacchiocchi further concluded that *all* the numbers in the Apocalypse are symbolic.²⁰ This, too, is alien to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and derived from writers outside the denomination. Whether he was aware of it or not, one of these was Dr. Emanuel Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century spiritualist—and the demon who dictated that idea to him.

Chapter Forty-Three
**IDEALISM MORE BOLDLY INVADES
THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH**

I

Robert F. Correia, who with Benjamin J. Mondics had daringly obtained Dr. Quasten's signed statement that *vicarius Filii Dei* was indeed a papal title and saw it notarized on 10 March 1943, was concerned about it. When visiting Washington, D.C., during 1962, he dropped in on Walter Raymond Beach (1902-1993), the General Field Secretary of the General Conference, and asked him what had happened to it. Afterwards he returned to Brazil, where he was a missionary. On 11 October 1962, Beach wrote to him at his address in Manaus on the Amazon. Amongst other things, he told him that after a long and painful illness Mondics had died and was buried the previous day. About the Quasten document, he reported:

Since you were in my office I have had further correspondence with Dr. Daniel Walther and the Andrews University, and he returned to me the two documents that you and Brother Conrad Stoehr and Brother Benjamin Mondics obtained on the title, *Vicarius Filii Dei*. These documents are interesting, and we are happy that you brethren were able to secure them for the church. We have discussed this matter in the meeting of the Officers, and have looked carefully at the documents. We feel the best way to handle these documents is to ask Andrews University to file them in the library vaults. Doubtless it is there that they will be best cared for. We are having photostatic copies made and filed here at the General Conference office too. Thus, our research group can have access to them and the documents will be available for the preparation of photostatic copies in behalf of Andrews University students.¹

We have no record of what Correia thought on receiving this information but suspect that he was rather disappointed. Putting their precious material in a vault and just filing copies of it surely did not indicate that much was being done about a discovery which he regarded as momentous. It certainly had little impact on the writers of the next two decades, whom we must now consider.

II

In our first volume, we referred to Roy Allan Anderson's *Unfolding the Revelation* (1974), especially focusing on what he had to say about magic squares and the number 666, which he related to the pagan priests of ancient Babylon. We note that he also quoted directly from William Milligan in *The Expositor's Bible*, Vol. VI, p. 890.

But our third chapter, about "Magic Squares and the Sun God," shows that no real evidence exists for attributing the magic square that concerns the

number 666 to Babylonian priests, beyond a possible though tenuous linkage via the Jewish Kabbala of the European Middle Ages. As a preface to what follows, the readers may find it useful to refresh their memories by rereading those pages. They are relevant to our discussion in three ways:

1. This magic square intrinsically demonstrates numerical perfection. Therefore, it seriously undermines the Idealistic supposition that either 6 or 666 is an imperfect number.

2. The Nakiel involved in the magic square of 666 is equal to 111, so that six nakiels demonstrably make up 666. Which is to say, there are not 3 sixes in 666, as various authors have suggested, but 111.

3. The magic square of 666 astrologically applies to the sun as the fourth or central “planet.” The Mithraic *dies solis* (“day of the Sun”), which we still call Sunday, has for many centuries been a papal institution. Consequently the magic square of 666 is compatible with or at least does not clash with the interpretation that this number in Rev. 13:18 refers to *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Nevertheless, Anderson found it significant that when Babylonian affairs are mentioned in the Bible, the number 6 is prominent, not explicitly but by implication. Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold, described in Dan. 3, was 60 cubits high and 6 cubits wide. “In chapter 4 the ‘tree’ that represented Babylonian power is mentioned just 6 times. Belshazzar met his doom while praising the gods of ‘gold,’ ‘silver,’ ‘brass,’ ‘iron,’ ‘wood,’ and ‘stone’—6 in all.”²

About this, some of the argumentation is insubstantial. For instance, Daniel did not fully record the statue’s measurements. He failed to say how thick it was from front to back. That would probably not have been an ungainly 6 cubits. It is interesting that there were six substances of which the gods were made, but by itself this is a trivial fact. Then, too, 60 consists of *ten* 6’s.

As previously indicated, Milligan, whom Anderson cited, read Revelation through Historical-Critical spectacles, thereby rejecting Historicism. To this he linked Idealist numerology to indicate, amongst other things, that since the Saviour’s Resurrection—and forever afterward—Sunday observance has taken the place of Sabbathkeeping. He also argued: “The *number* then is important, not the *name*” (author’s own emphasis).³

To his credit, we can say that Anderson did not abandon Historicism or go all the way along the road mapped out by men like Milligan, who had also muddled together three separate items mentioned in Rev. 13. About the author of the Apocalypse, Milligan concluded: “He had further described this mark as being either *the name of the beast or the number of his name*” (author’s own emphasis).⁴

Anderson still maintained that *vicarius Filii Dei* was “particularly significant,” although he also mentioned many other identifications for 666. In this, he was no longer fully following the path pioneered by Uriah Smith. And yet, in his follow-up volume, *Unfolding Daniel’s Prophecies* (1975), Anderson in chapter after chapter still remained a Historicist. For instance, the one entitled “Prophetic Panorama of History to Be” weaves together a tapestry

that stretches from Nebuchadnezzar twenty-five centuries ago to 1962 and the Vatican's interest in the European Common Market.⁵

In 2006, Anderson's work was posthumously republished together as a single volume, now named *Unveiling Daniel and Revelation*. In October 2007, a functionary of the Biblical Research Institute reviewed it with general though not complete approval. About Rev. 13:18, he said: "Another item to be taken *cum grano salis* [with a grain of salt] is Anderson's claim that *Vicarius Filii Dei* 'Vicar of the Son of God' is one of the pope's official titles (p. 306). While this title is used at various times, his official title is *Vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ)."⁶

But no grain of salt is necessary. That negative talk about *Vicarius Filii Dei* and preference for *Vicarius Christi* betrays, we think, an influence emanating from William W. Prescott. Against the background of the facts presented above, such reasoning is, however, now passé. *Vicar of Christ*, invented and used by ancient and medieval emperors as well as ordinary bishops, even modern ones, is not an especially pontifical title and certainly not the sole *official* one.

The time has surely come to rid ourselves of the bee in the bonnet that W. W. Prescott carried around with him and so insistently tried to foist on our denominational thinking many decades ago.

III

A problem besetting Seventh-day Adventist scholars has been a lust for learning as the academic world sees it, at universities where even the religion department has often been tainted with Darwinism, theistic evolution, Higher Critical attitudes toward the Bible, or other elements that are foreign to the beliefs of their church. When these institutions belong to more or less conservative Protestant denominations, they nevertheless have their own slant on prophecy. They are likely to reject Historicism in favor of a Preterist and/or Idealist approach. If, as is usually the case, they are staffed with Sundaykeepers, their view of prophecy will certainly differ from that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For them, it must be odious even to consider that they are part of Apocalyptic Babylon. Refusing to accept the Biblical Sabbath, they would therefore reject the idea that the mark of the Beast and the third angel's message have anything to do with Sunday laws. Such mentors cannot fail to counter what they see as errors on the part of the ambitious Seventh-day Adventists who willingly come to study under them.

While there can be advantages in having some teachers receive training at secular institutions or universities of other churches, there is also considerable danger. Deviant ideas can march or creep undetected into our schools and thinking from any college which does not strictly take the Bible as its guide. Martin Luther, himself a professor with a doctorate, warned about this almost five hundred years ago:

"I am much afraid that the universities will prove to be the great gates

of hell, unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures, and engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.”⁷

IV

From 1983 and onward, Idealistic intrusions into Seventh-day Adventism became uncomfortably common. That year marked the appearance of a doctoral dissertation by Beatrice S. Neall, a Seventh-day Adventist scholar. She was Associate Professor of Religion at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska. Amongst her accomplishments, she was a member of the Daniel and Revelation committee set up by the General Conference of her church. Her dissertation was entitled *The Concept of Character in the Apocalypse, with Implications for Character Education*.⁸

Dr. Neall wrote two decades before Rodríguez, Bacchiocchi, and others like them, but half a century after Prescott, who had preceded them all. About Rev. 13:18, she stated her position quite clearly: “6. Six hundred sixty-six, the number of the beast. Irenaeus was the first who attempted to ‘reckon the number of the beast’ through the process of gematria, that is, assigning numerical values to the letters in a name. *The methods used since then have been so devious and the suggestions so bizarre that it is more likely the meaning is to be found in the symbolic value of the number six itself.* Since seven is the perfect number, six, being one short of seven, is the symbol of sin.”⁹ And also: “*It demonstrates that unregenerate man is persistently evil.* The beasts of Rev. 13 represent man exercising his sovereignty apart from God, man conformed to the image of the beast rather than to the image of God. . . . man apart from God becomes bestial, demonic.”¹⁰ In both of these quotations, we have added the emphases.

Neall, who was destined to become very influential, bolstered these assertions with footnotes that cited various non-Seventh-day Adventist writers. One of these was Leon Morris, dealt with in a previous chapter. She also referred to antecedents from her own church, of whom at least Desmond Ford—who hailed from Australia—is no longer in good odor.

In the previous chapter, we noted P. Gerard Damsteegt’s finding that Historicism was foundational to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He had written his *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* during 1977 for his doctoral dissertation.

But the very next year saw the appearance of another dissertation, by Desmond Ford: דַּנְיֵאל (*Daniel*), which did not fully harmonize with his denomination’s traditional view. The book contains a Foreword by F. F. Bruce, the Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, under whom Ford had been awarded *his* Ph.D. His dissertation was on *The Abomination of Desolation in Biblical Eschatology*.¹¹

Though Ford was generally a Historicist, this work also contains elements of Preterism. After many discussions and conflict, often acrid, his ministerial credentials were terminated—for doctrinal reasons which were often the outgrowth of his views on prophecy. One of these, which is of prime importance to Seventh-day Adventism, concerns the nature of the heavenly sanctuary.

We will not here enter into the tangle of those controversies but do note that Beatrice S. Neall in 1983 seemed to prefer Desmond Ford's views on eschatology to those of P. Gerard Damsteegt.

Surveying these facts, we note the role of doctoral dissertations written or research done at non-Seventh-day Adventist universities in the Netherlands, Britain, and America. These ventures have at times resulted in wholesome conclusions. But some of these institutions and the learned works produced at or influenced by them involuntarily cause us to remember our Lord's rebuke to the believers at Thyatira, one of the seven congregations in the Apocalypse to whom he addressed his letters. Jesus generally commended their conduct and faithfulness to the gospel but also said: "Nevertheless I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants . . ." And: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:20, 29).

V

We do not allege that Neall or all the Seventh-day Adventist writers affected by her ideas have fully endorsed Idealism in expounding the Apocalypse. They have not. But they have considerably weakened their interpretation of Rev. 13 by blending it with Idealistic elements. This is illustrated by the following statement by a likeminded Seventh-day Adventist writer, who does not want to be named:

"The idea that the number 6 symbolizes man is not exactly mine. There are many people who think so. In the text of the book itself, I give some reasons for thinking so. On the other hand, for me the calculation of *Vicarius Filii Dei* as 666 is not a forceful proof of the pope being the Beast of the Apocalypse. There are other more forceful proofs. There are people who calculate 666 in various ways, including an application to Ellen White. For this reason, I do not use that argument, although it is also a valid argument."

The last six words quoted proclaim the basic Historicism of such an expositor, but feebly. It also betrays some mental confusion. Why, we ask, does *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 remain "a valid argument," if faulted in such ways? Also, if it nevertheless retains its validity, why should it not be used?

It is theologically dangerous to infect Historicism with Idealistic thinking. It is like smallpox or leprosy. Catching a little of it threatens severe sickness and even death for the entire body.

At the least, it makes the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church ambiguous, illogical, self-contradictory, implausible, and even lays them open to ridicule. Let us look at how this features in “Sealed Saints and the Tribulation,” also by Neall, her Exegetical Study in a 1992 *Symposium on Revelation*, published by the General Conference Biblical Research Institute. Referring to pages 149-153 of her 1983 dissertation, she wrote: “The mark of the beast consists of the beast’s name upon the forehead or hand ([Rev.] 13:17).”¹²

But since the 1860s most Seventh-day Adventist prophetic expositors have maintained that fundamentally the mark of the Beast will be a national Sunday law which will one day be enacted by the United States government. America will then also urge other countries to follow her example, which will culminate in international legislation and a death decree against Sabbathkeepers who fail to submit to it. The name of the beast, however, is something else. Represented by the fateful number of Rev. 13:18, it refers to a papal title.

That sentence by Neall represents the mark and the name of the beast as one and the same thing. This is a startling contradiction of what her church has been teaching for more than a hundred and fifty years, though it harmonizes with various statements from outside it—such as the one by William Milligan that we have already cited. He said the Seer who wrote Revelation “described this mark as being either *the name of the beast or the number of his name.*”

And yet, just two pages further on in her “Sealed Saints and the Tribulation,” Neall clearly presented the traditional Seventh-day Adventist teachings about this subject. She stated: “A study of the mark of the beast (Rev 13 and 14) and the seal or name of God (7:2-3; 14:1) reveals that the commandments of God are a primary issue in the conflict” and “it appears that the mark-seal issue has to do with the violation of the commandments of God on the one hand, and the keeping of them on the other.”¹³ Also: “While the sealing angel of Revelation 7:2-3 impresses upon the faithful the external sign of their allegiance to God—observance of the true Sabbath—the first and third angels of Revelation 14 exhort the world to worship the Creator and shun the mark of the beast, that is, to keep the true Sabbath and not the substitute day of worship (vss. 6-12).”¹⁴

Sunday observers who reject the third angel’s message naturally find what Seventh-day Adventists teach about the mark of the beast rather horrible and prefer another interpretation. It is, however, highly inconsistent for Sabbathkeepers of the Remnant Church to say that the mark is the same thing as the name of the Beast, while maintaining that it refers to a Sunday law.

We now need to look at some other Seventh-day Adventist scholars who in dealing with Rev. 13:18 have espoused or at least flirted with the Idealist explanation.

In 1992, the Biblical Research Institute of the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference published a 37-page research paper entitled “The Saints’ End-Time Victory Over the Forces of Evil.”¹⁵ Its Australian-born author, William G. Johnsson (1934-), was the editor of his church’s most influential, world-wide paper, the *Adventist Review*. With a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, he had formerly taught at Vincent Hill School and Spicer College, India, and from 1975 to 1980 at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. He was Professor of New Testament Studies and Associate Dean of the Seminary.¹⁶

While “The Saints’ End-Time Victory” may generally be regarded as a Historicist analysis, it contains a number of ideas that are in conflict with what most Seventh-day Adventist scholars and evangelists have until recently taught. They all relate to the Beast of the Apocalypse. We also deal with them elsewhere, so here we will just mention them and comment very briefly.

First, his article confuses the mark and the name of the Beast where it asks and answers: “What is this ‘mark’? It centers in the *name* of the sea monster. This is shown by the following: (1) We may translate the phraseology in verse 17 as ‘the mark—the name of the monster or the number of his name’ . . .”¹⁷ If this is true, the mark cannot refer to Sunday legislation.

Second, the statement “Computations that require a change of language, doing the arithmetic in Hebrew or Latin, also seem to go beyond the [Greek] text.”¹⁸ This implies a line of thinking that regards the Apocalypse as a book intended principally for its first readers. The title *vicarius Filii Dei*, which especially concerns us, does, of course, go beyond the text—like all predictive prophecy. But if the Bible is inspired by an omniscient God, it may be supposed that he also took into account the future role of Latin in the Roman Church.

Third, the following twofold argument is doubly flawed: “Any explanation of the cryptic number will have to be tentative. It is possible that the inscription *vicarius filii dei* of the papal tiara is the name indicated by the prophecy, as many Seventh-day Adventist expositors have taught. But *in my view* the text suggests that 666 is the code for the name of the sea monster, which is blasphemy. It points to a parody of perfection: imperfection upon imperfection, despite the beast’s monstrous claims.”¹⁹

“The Saints’ End-Time Victory” was the first chapter in a multi-author series about Rev. 12-14. As far as possible, the various writers tried to reach consensus about their views, voting on one another’s drafts. They did not, however, always agree with everything in their colleagues’ articles, according to William H. Shea, Associate Director of the Biblical Research Institute (1986-1999), who was on the committee that dealt with this material.²⁰ Therefore, we have added our emphasis to the foregoing citation.

Two years later, “The Saints’ End-Time Victory Over the Forces of Evil” was reprinted as a supplement to the *Adventist Review*. An introductory paragraph describes it as “an abridgement.”²¹ This is generally true, but Johnsson also inserted additional matter into the last paragraph cited above. It now read as follows:

“Any explanation of the cryptic number will have to be tentative. Many Seventh-

day [Adventist] expositors have thought that the alleged inscription *vicarius filii dei* on the papal tiara is the name indicated by the prophecy; however, more than 80 years ago W. W. Prescott showed how flimsy is the historical evidence for this interpretation. *In my view* the text suggests that 666 is the code for the name of the sea monster, which is blasphemy. It points to a parody of perfection: imperfection upon imperfection, despite the beast's monstrous claims." (Emphasis added)

The validity of the equation $666 = \text{vicarius Filii Dei}$ has nothing to do with its being inscribed on a tiara or anywhere else. It depends on its attribution to the popes by important Roman Catholic dignitaries or sometimes even the pontiffs themselves. Of this, there have been more than enough examples, as this book shows. Further, Rev. 13:18 challenges the reader to identify the Beast by calculating its human name, not to characterize it.

Johnsson received a strong reaction from Robert F. Correia. Now eighty and very near the end of his earthly life, he wrote a splendid letter, which we reproduce in its entirety. In it, we have cleared up a few minor typographical blemishes.

January 30, 1995
P.O. Box 207
Claremont
Virginia 23899

My esteemed colleague, Elder W. G. Johnsson:

Through the years, I have followed your important contribution to our church with great admiration and appreciation. You have a very unique responsibility as Editor of our Church Paper to monitor the pulse of our church and report on the condition of the body and from time to time to guide us in various matters. In November 1994, a Review Supplement, page 11, carried your comment on the "Cryptic Number 666":

"Many Seventh-day expositors have thought that the alleged inscription *vicarius Filii dei* on the papal tiara is the name indicated by the prophecy; however, more than 80 years ago W. W. Prescott showed how flimsy is the historical evidence for this interpretation. In my view the text suggests that 666 is the code for the name of the sea monster, which is blasphemy."

Closer examination of the evidence indicates 666 involves more than "the code for the name of the sea monster." While the Bible reveals 666 is the number of the beast, it also specifically states that 666 is not only the number of a man; but also the number of his name.

Despite our appreciation of Elder Prescott's scholarship, after his time, additional documentation from reliable Catholic sources has provided verification of pertinent information revealing that *vicarius filii dei* is accepted by Catholics as a legitimate title of the Pope.

Our documentation for *vicarius filii dei* no longer is "flimsy". It is substantiated by the testimony of Dr. Quasten, a foremost scholar and authority

from The School of Sacred Theology of Catholic University and two reliable statements from *Our Sunday Visitor*, the largest Catholic weekly in America. Doctor Joseph Fenton also of the School of Theology of Catholic University commenting on *Vicarius Christi*, the more modern title of the Pope by which he is crowned, wrote: “Vicarius Filii Dei is a manifest synonym of *Vicarius Filii Dei* [sic].” Catholic sources deny the present tiara bears any inscription; but never do they negate *vicarius filii dei* as a proper and legitimate title of the Pope and admit that any informed Catholic scholar should recognize it as such. After all, the Bible does not place the number on his tiara. The Bible specifies 666 is the NUMBER OF THE BEAST, the NUMBER OF A MAN, and the NUMBER OF HIS NAME. (Rev. 13:18; 15:2, emphasis supplied)

With more recent documentation on *vicarious* [sic] *filii dei*, how significant [is] the Catholic Douay Version comment on Rev. 13:18, “The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.” In any case the Bible makes it plain: “that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first and that MAN OF SIN BE REVEALED, THE SON OF PERDITION.” 2 Thess. 2:3 (“the man of sin . . . represents the papacy” GC 356). (emphasis supplied)

Fraternally yours,

Documents included.

R. F. Correia²²

As shown above and elsewhere in this book, this is very similar to our position—although we arrived at it without any knowledge of Correia’s letter, which was brought to our notice very recently. Johnsson, due to “a huge volume of mail” that had arrived in his office, answered with a form letter on 17 March. It does not bear Correia’s name but was found among his papers after his death. These were the most important points made in it:

1. The interpretation of the beast from the sea in Revelation 13 is not at stake. In my paper “The Saints’ Victory in the End-time”, I laid out 18 points of identification that come from the text itself. These points make clear that the Papacy is intended by the sea beast, as I also indicated in the paper. Thus, as I see it, the historic Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of Revelation 13 is not threatened if we cannot use the Vicarious [sic] Filii Dei for the 666.
2. I have preached evangelistically and taught in Bible class the Vicarius Filii Dei interpretation and have no wish to abandon it. My only concern is that Adventists use arguments that can be supported from both the Bible and history. If we can come up with sound historical support for Vicarius Filii Dei, I shall be delighted.
3. My reading of Prescott’s work gave me a jolt. He served as editor of a strongly Protestant (anti-Catholic) magazine that the Church published early in the century, but after much search in church history sources failed to find the evidence for Vicarious [sic] Filii Dei that he expected to find.²³

Johnsson's concluding sentence before the salutation was: "It would be wonderful if, as a result of these discussions, some researcher would discover the historical evidence that will make our case clear to all."²⁴

We can hardly imagine that Correia was satisfied with this reaction. Two years later, on 7 December 1996, he died. In his last months, he was still preoccupied with prophetic research and no doubt kept on thinking about the Quasten document and how it had been acquired. After more than half a century, he also remained apprehensive of revenge by the Jesuits against whom he had then been warned. One of his final handwritten letters, dated 21 June 1996, to a hitherto unidentified person touched on this theme.

My Esteemed Colleague:

It is my pleasure to share with you this material. Because of the sensitive nature of dealing with high ranking Jesuits, I have been advised by my G.C. advisors to be extremely cautious as far as my personal identification is concerned. Thus, I request that you use good judgment regarding my name. You can say a fellow S.D.A. researcher was an active participant in this project.

Yours Always

R. F. Correia²⁵

Now, of course, he rests in his Lord, beyond the reach of Jesuits or anybody else who could do him harm.

In 2011, Dr. Johnsson expressed himself as follows: "I am delighted that Adventist scholars have taken up the challenge of finding stronger support for our position regarding the mysterious number 666. The new evidence [about the use of *vicarius Filii Dei*], which you briefly shared with me, seems convincing."²⁶

VII

C. Mervyn Maxwell in *The Message of Revelation for You and Your Family*, Vol. II (1985), which has been widely read and also circulated by colporteurs, was not quite sure whether *vicarius Filii Dei* could really be the name of the Beast. On the whole, he did, however, adhere to the ordinary Historicist explanations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church but also mentioned additional views.

One possibility that he touched on was the solar connection represented by what he thought were the sun-seal amulets of ancient Babylonian priests. He quotes one of the two that are to be found in Anderson's book.²⁷ He also reproduced paragraphs from Neall, in which she patched Idealism onto the Historicism traditionally taught by her church.²⁸

Six is legitimate when it leads to seven; it represents man on the first evening of his

existence entering into the celebration of God's creative power. The glory of the creature is right if it leads to the glory of God. Six hundred sixty-six, however, represents the refusal of man to proceed to seven, to give glory to God as Creator and Redeemer. It represents man's fixation with himself, man seeking glory in himself and his own creations. It speaks of the fullness of creation and all creative powers without God—the practice of the absence of God. It demonstrates that unregenerate man is persistently evil. The beasts of Rev. 13 represent man exercising his sovereignty apart from God, man conformed to the image of the beast rather than to the image of God. Man apart from God becomes bestial, demonic. . . .

The mark of the beast, then, is a rejection of the sovereignty of God—the Sabbath principle which is designed to encourage man to seek his dignity not in himself or in nature, but in communion with God and participation in God's rest. It is the Sabbath which distinguishes between the creature and the Creator, which reveals who deserves worship and who does not. It is the Sabbath which demonstrates God's sovereignty and man's dependence. Six hundred sixty-six by contrast is the symbol of the worship of the creature rather than the Creator.²⁹

All the same, Maxwell asserted: "Viewed in the light of this interpretation, *coercive* Sunday observance [is] *defiantly* linked with a determination to worship God *in our own way*" (his emphases).³⁰

VIII

During the final decade of the twentieth century, Hans LaRondelle in *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* (1997) also cited Neall. He had trouble with "gematria, which assigns a numerical value to every letter in a chosen language, thus adding up the letters of a word." As mentioned in our first volume, we also find that word problematic. *Gematria* is both anachronistic and derogatory. Perhaps, as used by some writers, it is intended to be.

Dr. LaRondelle, however, was bothered for reasons of his own. First, he rejected the calculation of a name "because John nowhere in the Apocalypse uses gematria as a method."³¹ But that is incorrect, for it inheres in the Greek text of Rev. 13:18 itself. As also discussed in Volume I, the very word $\psi\eta\phi\iota\sigma\alpha\tau\omega$ (*psēphisatō*) means "to count *or* reckon," like its Latin equivalent *calcularē*, based on *calculus*, "a pebble," from which *calculate* in English is derived—according to the latest *Merriam Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (bundled together on a DVD with the 2010 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*).

Second, LaRondelle said the possibilities of this method "are almost unlimited." Amongst others, as he pointed out, the number 666 has been assigned to both Luther and Hitler. He could also have mentioned the curious case of Procter & Gamble, which we discussed in Volume I. Such coincidences are plentiful, but the context of Rev. 13 and other Bible

prophecies eliminate them as irrelevant.

LaRondelle noted that “most Bible scholars prefer the symbolic interpretation of the number 666,” and amongst others quoted from p. 154 in Neall’s book,³² a passage which we have already cited. He failed, moreover, to distinguish between legitimate numerical equivalents based on Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and arbitrary systems, some of which are downright dishonest.

A good case in point is the name *Luther*. More than one Catholic has tried to read 666 into the great Reformer’s name, but to do so they had to misspell it. In his survey of such identifications, Francis Wrangham gave an example of this as far back as 1816. He referred to Cardinal Francis Romulus Bellarmine (1542-1621), who “from the *Chronologies of Genebrand*” cited לְלוּתֶר (Lulther).” This, of course, inserts an extra *l*. No doubt because of that, the learned Englishman added wittily: “The name *Bellarminus Jesuita* [‘Bellarmine the Jesuit’] doth more elegantly by far yield us the number of the Beast, thus written in Hebrew”—which is followed by a string of characters in that language—“notwithstanding, I confess, Bellarminus is not the Beast as yet, though perhaps he cleave to his horn.”³³

Thomas Bell more than two hundred years ago and Hermann J. Gräber, who died in the late nineteenth century, also dealt with this issue adequately. We, too—like them—maintain that a valid interpretation needs to be contextualized within Rev. 13 and other prophetic Scriptures, which that chapter so obviously reflects. We need not here repeat our argumentation as set out in Vol. I of this book.

But did LaRondelle abandon Historicism as taught by his church? The testimony of *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible* shows that he did not.

For instance, he wrote: “The monstrous image in 12, repeated in Rev. 13 and 17, develops the fourth monster in Daniel 7. This implies that Dan. 7 is one of the main taproots of Rev. 12, 13, and 17. Daniel 7 is gradually unfolded and amplified in Revelation 12, 13, and 17 for the church age.”³⁴ He pointed out that futurist or dispensational expositors “completely ignore the relevance of Revelation for the church of the ages.” However, “if Daniel presents the perspective of an historical sequence, then the more adequate approach would be the continuous-historical fulfillment, which the historicist school attempted to follow.”³⁵

LaRondelle thought and taught that “only from the perspective of a continuous-historical development can the antichrist of Daniel, 2 Thessalonians, and the Apocalypse be located in the stream of history,” although regrettably “this approach is often ignored by modern theologians and exegetical scholars.”³⁶ Also valuably helpful is his finding that the “verbal and thematic correspondences between Rev. 13 and 14 indicate that the threefold message of Rev. 14 is dependent on the proper understanding of Rev. 13.”³⁷

We see, then, that LaRondelle retained a Historicist framework. But he failed to discern that certain elements from Idealism cannot be fitted into it.

Now we turn to three Seventh-day Adventist writers associated with Andrews University at Berrien Springs: Drs. Samuele Bacchiocchi (1938-2008), Jonathan (commonly called Jon) K. Paulien, and Ranko Stefanović. The ideas of these men had a good deal in common, though with elements that also sharply differentiated them.

Bacchiocchi was a church historian, inept in the field of prophecy. Explaining Revelation was not his forte, and he should have left it alone. Instead, he kept on propagating his offbeat ideas in Endtime Newsletter after Newsletter and as a public lecturer from many an international podium. We note, however, that the other men—whose expertise did not include either church or general history—also influenced him, as he explained on 10 December 2005:

“The latest research project began when Prof. Jon Paulien, Chairman of the NT Department at Andrews University Theological Seminary, and Prof. Ranko Stefanović, Professor of NT and author of the widely acclaimed *Commentary on Revelation*, invited me to investigate the question of THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST. The plan was for me to share my findings on Tuesday, November 8, 2005, with their three seminary classes on ‘Revelation’ meeting on the same day. Both professors were eager for me to investigate the use of the papal title *VICARIUS FILII DEI*—VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD, both in official documents and on papal tiaras. The aim was to establish if the numerical value of the letters of this title, represent a legitimate identification of the number 666.”³⁸

Bacchiocchi thought very highly of these men. In 2006, he called “Prof. Jon Paulien and Prof. Ranko Stefanović, two foremost Adventist experts on the book of Revelation.”³⁹ But he reserved his highest accolade for the former, of whom he said: “Personally I esteem Prof. Paulien as the leading Adventist authority on the prophetic books of the Bible.”⁴⁰

In 2008, his final year, Bacchiocchi also declared: “This research on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*, was commissioned by Prof. Paulien himself. He asked me to trace historically the origin and use of the Pope’s title *Vicarius Filii Dei* and of the number 666. I spent six months conducting this investigation which was professionally taped at the Andrews University Towers Auditorium.”⁴¹ But Bacchiocchi’s reference to other authors, and especially Jon Paulien, should not always be taken at face value. That was determined through personal correspondence with Paulien in late October 2010. He wrote:

I make no claim to be a professional historian, so I expect the work of others to clarify the historical issues regarding *Vicarius Filii Dei*. The challenge there has been the lack of compelling evidence in the past combined with errors and overstatements on the part of those who do favor that view. Since students were not satisfied with what they were

hearing from me or anyone on the subject of VFD I asked the most available and qualified Adventist historian in the field of Roman Catholic history to visit the class and share what he knew (Bacchiocchi). I did not ask him to do further research, but the task excited him and he put in quite a bit of time and I thought the historical result was quite helpful. In fact, *my impression was that his research strengthened the case for VFD rather than weakened it.* When he decided to create a video to highlight that work, I agreed that what I had heard from him would be helpful for the church and gave my little blurb at his request. *What I did not know at the time of taping was that the video had a second part in which he delved into the biblical issues, where he was less competent.* While I think there is a lot of validity in the study of numerology based on the biblical and ancient context, I don't see it as an either/or situation, as he did. The number 666 can fit in with the spiritual message of the Book of Revelation and yet also have a historical locus at the time in history prophesied. The combination of spiritual meaning and historical fulfillment in the same symbol can be seen in my published work on Armageddon, for example (a strong Mount Carmel theme in the story of Revelation, a very real and historical fulfillment in the final battle). *So I was dismayed when I saw Bacchiocchi take the same evidence that encouraged me and dismiss VFD out of hand. My current position is that VFD is the best available explanation of gematria on the number 666, but it is far from airtight or compelling.* Perhaps your work will upgrade my assessment just as Bacchiocchi's historical work did.⁴² (Our emphases added)

Paulien, the author of several books about prophecy, has in fact not yet published on the issue of 666 as representing *vicarius Filii Dei*.⁴³ We therefore await his definitive conclusions.

X

As a prophetic interpreter, Bacchiocchi veered away sharply from the Historicism of his own Seventh-day Adventist Church over many generations, by boldly introducing several Idealistic elements.

On 6 July 2002, a month after the Rodríguez statements had appeared in that notorious Sabbath School lesson, he asked: "Why do Daniel and John the Revelator use the three and half [*sic*] years period to represent the persecution and protection of God's people during the time of the Antichrist? Most likely because three and half [*sic*] is half of seven, which is the number of God's completion and perfection. Half of seven suggests incompleteness and limitation. In other words, the forces of the Antichrist are limited, and will not reach their scope of the complete destruction of God's people. God will have the final word and triumph over the forces of evil. This is the final message of Daniel and Revelation."⁴⁴

For Seventh-day Adventists, the 1260 prophetic days have been the central time prophecy of the interlinked predictions in both Daniel and the Revelation. This is the period of domination by the Little Horn, its *locus classicus* being Dan. 7:25. Mentioned in seven Bible texts, it has alternatively been expressed as 1260 days, 42 months, and 3½ years.

We read of a fearsome, blasphemous power destined to persecute the saints for “a time and times and the dividing of time.” Historicists have long interpreted the 1260 prophetic days as calendar years, beginning in A.D. 538 and ending in 1798. The Little Horn would “think to change times and laws.” As history has shown, this refers to the papacy; for it tampered with the Ten Commandments, especially the fourth one.

Bacchiocchi, however, caviled at 538 as the beginning date of 1260 year-days, saying, moreover, that in this period God’s people were protected as well as persecuted. Further, he thought the Little Horn represented not only the papacy but also Islam.

Such was the baneful fruitage of discarding the Historicist view on the 1260 prophetic days—as well as rejecting the interpretation that the number 666 refers to the Roman pontiffs and to nobody and nothing else. This opened the way for supposing that the Beast of Rev. 13 could also be Islam.

Three years later, on 10 December 2005, Bacchiocchi did acknowledge that “contrary to the criticism of our detractors, the phrase VICARIUS FILII DEI has been used historically as a major papal title, and possibly it was also inscribed in some papal tiaras or mitres.”⁴⁵

He even noted “the importance of the Donation of Constantine,” despite its being a forgery, because it “was used by 10 popes over a period of six centuries to assert, not only their ecclesiastical supremacy over all the churches, but also their political sovereignty over what became known [as] the Papal States, which included most of Italy.”⁴⁶

Nevertheless, he cast aside the letter-number equivalence between *vicarius Filii Dei* and 666. In doing so, he abandoned much of Historicism. With this, the author of *From Sabbath to Sunday* (1977) had come to a strange pass. (That was generally a fine book, despite a few blemishes, like its six-page acknowledgment of an early Roman Catholic primacy during the second century, as discussed in Volume I.)

And he went even further:

In this prophecy we are told the endtime generation will receive the mark of the beast. We are told that the mark of the beast is the name of the beast, and the name of the beast is its number 666. In other words, the mark, the name, and the number 666 of the beast are essentially the same. Of the three, the number 666 is most important because it provides the code to decode the name and mark of the Beast.

The call is for wisdom to understand the Number 666 of the Beast, rather than the Name or the Mark of the Beast. Apparently the reason is

that the meaning of the number 666, is also the meaning of the name and mark of the beast. The fact that the three constitute an indissoluble unity, should warn Bible students against attributing one meaning to the Mark of the Beast and a different meaning to the Number 666 of the Beast.

For example, traditionally Adventists have interpreted the Mark of the Beast to be the enforcement of Sunday observance and the Number 666 of the Beast the papal title *VICARIUS FILII DEI*, allegedly inscribed in the papal tiara. We shall see that this interpretation poses a problem because it differentiates between the Mark and Number of Beast [*sic*]. Such a differentiation can hardly be justified exegetically, because the text suggests that the Mark, the Name, and the Number are essentially the same thing.⁴⁷

Bacchiocchi also adopted a nonliteral, Idealist view of numbers in the Apocalypse: “My study suggests that numbers are used in Revelation as human analogies to help readers grasp truths that transcend human comprehension.” This is Idealism pure and simple.

Bacchiocchi’s examples include the 144,000 as well as the measurements of the New Jerusalem.⁴⁸ He came to believe that “the endtime showdown is not about names or numbers per se, that is, Sunday versus Sabbath, First Day versus Seventh-day, but about what these two days represent: *Self-centered worship* versus *God-centered worship*. It is within this context that THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST must be understood.”⁴⁹

Whether Bacchiocchi noticed it or not, an important implication for his own denomination, the Seventh-day Adventists, is that according to his eschatological views they lose their prophetic time slot as the last or end-time church: “. . . the remnant of her [the woman’s] seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17), the ones “that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12).

As for Bacchiocchi’s idea that the Little Horn could represent Islam, it eventually got him into hot water with many readers of his Newsletters. During the 2008 presidential elections, such thinking caused him to target Barack Obama, as is evident from his *Endtime Issues* Newsletter No. 215 and onward. In No. 216, he wrote:

“In the latter part of this study on the prophetic significance of the forthcoming presidential election, I will discuss the possible prophetic role of Obama, if elected, in advancing the cause of Islam in the USA. We shall see that from a prophetic perspective, the Papacy and Islam, are the two major protagonists of the endtime showdown over false worship.

“Simply stated, this study suggests that while President Bush during the past 8 years fostered immensely the influence of the Catholic Church in America by surrounding himself with Catholic intellectuals, advisers,

speech writers, theologians, politicians, and electing Catholic Federal judges, Obama, if elected, may do the same for Islam. His Muslim roots and the secret support he is receiving Muslim [sic] who have organized preregistration drives in their Mosques, is well-documented.”⁵⁰

Later in 2008, Bacchiocchi, on the point of flying to London for a lecture tour, admitted ruefully: “The last two newsletters no. 215 and 216 generated an unusual volume of responses.” He had angered many American readers who supported the Democratic Party. Yet he persisted with his “suggestion that Obama will foster the expansion of the presence and power of Islam in America” and in his “expanded interpretation of the Antichrist to include Islam in addition to the Papacy.”⁵¹

Again a large number of his readers responded negatively. And so, in the last Newsletter that he would ever write, Bacchiocchi wryly remarked: “I come from Rome, but I do not claim infallibility. I can only claim that I have given considerable thought to this subject. The credibility of my prediction will soon be tested during the next four years. I would appeal to those who disagree with me, not to become disagreeable. Just be patient and watch for the Signs of the Times. At the end of the next four years, please get back to me and tell me if I was right or wrong in interpreting the role of the Papacy and Islam in the final showdown over worship.”⁵²

Of course, there can be no getting back to Bacchiocchi this side of eternity. As he composed this final Newsletter in London, he had already lost his battle against cancer and soon flew back to his family in America. Just seventeen days later, on 21 December 2008, he breathed his last. He had relentlessly driven himself to work until the very end. As for Barack Obama, we are now watching both the signs and the events of the times as they affect his presidency. So far, after two and a half years, he has become ever more entangled in warfare against militant Islam. It was he during 2011, not George W. Bush, who spearheaded the assassination of Osama Bin Laden, hiding out in Pakistan, and his al-Qaeda successor Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen, in Yemen.

XI

Ranko Stefanović, Paulien’s student, colleague, and friend, was one of the threesome at Berrien Springs, where Bacchiocchi also lived. Stefanović wrote the *Revelation of Jesus Christ*, a commentary that runs to more than six hundred pages⁵³ and appeared in 2002. It is a sumptuous hardcover, put out by Andrews University Press, and must have cost a pretty penny. Its back is blurbed with recommendations, three of them by Beatrice Neall, Hans K. LaRondelle, and Jon Paulien. The last mentioned also wrote the Foreword. The book was published during the same year that the Rodríguez statements appeared under 6 and 7 June 2002 in the Sabbath School Quarterly already referred to. We have not been able to establish the connection, if any, between these two writers.

The *Revelation of Jesus Christ* exhibits scholarship which at times is impressive but often becomes problematic by obscuring its basic Historicism. Its discussion of Rev. 13 is spoiled by the author's view on the heads and horns in Rev. 17, which we contest. Above all, the *Revelation of Jesus Christ* is negatively affected by elements that cannot be harmonized with Historicism. Let us show what we mean.

Stefanović accepted that the 1260 prophetic days were really years, which applied to "the Medieval and post-Medieval ecclesiastical authoritarian rule." But about the latter he refrained from being explicit, preferring wherever possible not to name the papacy. This is his reason: "Applying the seventh head of the sea beast to the Medieval ecclesiastical power is inadequate. History equally depicts the same behavior of religious-political oppression and intolerance by the newly established Protestant orthodoxy in the Western world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by religious intolerance."⁵⁴ This brings into his picture a need for understanding the heads and horns described in Rev. 17 as he does.

We have a straightforward reason for rejecting, about these features, such explanations by Stefanović and others. The seven heads and horns appear in Dan. 7 and, in spite of shifting emphases, essentially retain their original identity throughout and are a paradigm for the Apocalypse. But where are the seven heads in Dan. 7? Let us count them. Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Rome are each represented by one head, which totals three. The Greeks have four heads, for that is how they loom large on the symbolic leopard beast. Therefore, allocating a single head to that ancient people is a mistake. A similar thing happens in Dan. 8, where four horns represent the Greeks. This is not the place for further details on the ramifications of this topic; therefore, we reserve it for a further book, which is planned to succeed this one.

Anyhow, it is not really necessary to try and solve the riddle of Rev. 17 in order to understand Rev. 13, though in both cases the Bible says that wisdom is required for doing so (Rev. 13:18 and Rev. 17:9).

Let us now note how Stefanović tacked onto his Historicism Idealistic elements originating outside his church.

In a previous chapter, we quoted from his *Revelation of Jesus Christ* a statement to the effect that 666 in Rev. 13 is a symbolic number, a "triple six" representing "the satanic triumvirate in contrast to the triple seven of the Godhead in Revelation 1:4-6." In this connection, he cited Philip Edgcumbe Hughes (1915-1990), an Australian clergyman, scholar, and editor, who also worked in South Africa, England (where he was ordained and amongst other things taught at Tyndale Hall, Bristol), and America. He moved to the United States in 1964, where he died, after teaching at various seminaries.⁵⁵

It is interesting that Hughes had a career somewhat similar to that of Leon Morris, his compatriot, who also went to England. As shown, besides, a number of immigrant scholars and lecturers from Australia have strongly impacted on Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation after coming to America.

But what did Stefanović imbibe from Sundaykeeping Hughes? Very much, it would seem, as is evidenced by Hughes's following paragraph:

"The number six has understandably been regarded as a symbol of man, in that it falls short of seven, which is the divine number. On this basis the threefold six may be understood as indicative of a human or humanistic trinity, that is to say a counterfeit of the divine Trinity, with all the pretensions to supreme power and authority that such a counterfeit implies. It may perhaps be inferred from the context that this pseudo-trinity is that of Satan (the dragon) plus antichrist (the first Beast) plus the false prophet (the second Beast), who are united in the one diabolical objective, namely, to dethrone the Creator and to enthrone the creature and to substitute the image of the beast for the image of God in man."⁵⁶

In support of his ideas about Rev. 13:18, Stefanović also quoted from *The Concept of Character in the Apocalypse, with Implications for Character Education* by Beatrice S. Neall (1983), p. 154:

"As Beatrice S. Neall suggests, the number 666, 'represents the refusal of man to proceed to seven, to give glory to God as Creator and Redeemer. It represents man's fixation with himself, man seeking glory in himself and his own creations. It speaks of the fullness of creation and all creative powers without God—the practice of the absence of God. It demonstrates that unregenerate man is persistently evil. The beasts of Rev 13 represent man exercising his sovereignty apart from God, man conformed to the image of the beast rather than to the image of God. Man apart from God becomes bestial, demonic."⁵⁷

Unfortunately there is no such thing as a "threefold six" in the Greek original of Rev. 13:18, which this book shows repeatedly. People in the ancient Mediterranean world, like John who wrote the Apocalypse, did not use Hindu-Arabic numerals as we do; it was a system totally alien to him. Stefanović, like others mentioned in this and the previous chapter or elsewhere in this book, committed and embroidered on an arithmetical error. The solar magic square of 666 in a striking manner demonstrates the same thing. That notorious number actually consists of not 3 but 111 sixes!

Stefanović also concurred with the dangerous view that the mark of the Beast is the same thing as its name. This is how he put it in his analysis of Rev. 13:17: "'The mark, that is, the name of the beast, or the number of his name.'" Such a reading is supported by the codex Alexandrinus. However, some other important early manuscripts attest the inclusion of the word 'or' in the text: the earliest Greek manuscript P¹⁷ reads as 'the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name,' and Sinaiticus reads it as 'the mark of the beast or his name or the number of his name.' Despite the strong manuscript support for the inclusion of 'or,' it appears that the reading of Alexandrinus (which is asserted to be the best witness) is more accurate. It places 'the name of the beast' in apposition to 'the mark'; in other words, the mark consists of the name of the beast."⁵⁸

There is something perverse about such an elevation of that reading in the

Codex Alexandrinus. Why, if there is—as Stefanović acknowledged—“strong manuscript support for the inclusion of ‘or’”—would he not accept it? With this, he also ignored the larger context of Rev. 13. So for him, “the mark consists of the name of the beast,” which is also what Beatrice S. Neall as well as her non-Seventh-day Adventist antecedents had asserted. If so, this prophecy can have nothing to do with Sundaykeeping or a future Sunday law imposed on America and the rest of the planet.

Nevertheless, Stefanović in contemplating Rev. 14—which directly follows and links up with Rev. 13:18—stressed that “worship of the beast and the reception of his mark stands as the antithesis to obedience to God’s commandments, the substitution of the obedience to the satanic trinity for the obedience of God.”⁵⁹ He also linked Rev. 14:12 with Rev. 13:10 and Rev. 12:17, to show that the saints in question are “the remaining ones of the woman’s offspring who keep ‘the commandments of God’ and have ‘the testimony of Jesus,’” a people who will be “characterized by their obedience to God in keeping his commandments.”⁶⁰

Here he spoke like a good Historicist of his church, except for a certain coyness about the Beast and some fuzzy writing. But what is that antithesis, that “obedience to the satanic trinity” in contrast with “obedience to God’s commandments” supposed to be? According to such reasoning, it cannot be a Sunday law, just as the Beast cannot really be the pope—although, perhaps, he must be.

XII

Elements of Idealism in Seventh-day Adventist publications have not been limited to large books or scholarly articles. They have also appeared in smaller works intended for evangelistic purposes or public distribution. We briefly deal with two of these.

The first is a brochure in magazine format: “The Amazing Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation,” special issue, *These Times*. It was originally put out by the Southern Publishing Association of Nashville, TN,⁶¹ an establishment defunct since 1980, when it merged with the Review and Herald Publishing Association in Hagerstown, MD.

The 1979 edition of this little work comprised eighty-four pages. From 1983 to the present, the Review and Herald Publishing Association has been reprinting it with a briefer title, *The Amazing Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation*, edited and reduced to sixty-six pages. In 1979, it already contained the following paragraph:

“When Sunday observance is enforced by law, *then* the issues will be clearly drawn between the religion of God and that which comes from man. Only then, with the issues thus clearly drawn, will Sunday observance become the mark of the beast. Those who then accept this mark will also accept the ‘name,’ or character, of the beast and the ‘number of a man.’ This number, 666, is eminently man’s number. Six falls short of seven, the number of

completeness and perfection. While the seventh-day Sabbath is God's own sign of His completed work, the number six represents that which falls short."⁶²

On that point, the 1983 text says exactly the same as before. Apart from its confused and clearly Idealistic utterance, the Historicism of this booklet is not in doubt. It mentions the 1260 year-days as a period beginning in 538 and ending in 1798. It boldly identifies Catholicism and the papacy as the Beast. In color, it even depicts two pontiffs, Pope Pius VI and John Paul II. It also says the two-horned beast from the earth is a future America, which will strangely mingle church and state. What is said of Sabbathkeeping and Sunday observance is fully in accord with Seventh-day Adventist Church prophetic interpretation for more than a century.

Nonetheless, the 1983 edition repeats exactly the same passage⁶³ that appeared in the special issue of *These Times* in April 1979, which strikes a discordant note. No evidence is given as to just why *six* must be "eminently man's number" or represents "that which falls short." Above all, during 1979 as well as from 1983 to the present, *vicarius Filii Dei* has been conspicuous by its absence. Just who brought this Idealism into that publication is still unclear. It was, in any case, twenty-four years before the Rodríguez statements of 2002. We think it probable that this was the reemergence of ideas which had receded into the background in 1944 and gone underground with the demise of William W. Prescott.

XIII

Bolder are the sections headed "The Number 666" and "The Meaning of 666" in a later, undated 48-page booklet published by the American *Signs of the Times*, also for distribution to the general public. It was translated from Spanish.

Under "The Number 666," we find the statement that "the number 6 represents humanity, and it relates to imperfection." The reason given for saying so is that the Bible often uses it "in contexts having to do with humanity, our human nature, our works, our inheritance, and our destiny." This, as our next chapter will show, is not the entire truth. We also read: "Thus, if we want to know the meaning of the number 666 in Revelation 13, we can't depend on mental gymnastics and fanciful speculations. We can't attribute its meaning to whomever or whatever we may wish. For one thing, we've already seen that the beast itself is a religio-political power that is identified by the number 666."⁶⁴

This touches on the principle of contextuality, the importance of which we have also emphasized. Elsewhere the "religio-political power" is obliquely identified as the Roman Church via the Little Horn of Dan. 8. This is related to chapters in the Apocalypse through a quotation from the Catholic archbishop of Reggio addressing the Council of Trent in 1562.⁶⁵

The booklet actually illustrates contextuality in a striking paragraph: "One

day I was asked to pick up someone at the airport. Unfortunately, I'd never met this man and had no idea what he looked like. Friends who knew him said, 'He's tall, wears a beard, and has a large mole on his forehead.' I knew that, given these characteristics, he should be fairly easy to recognize. I scanned the passengers as they came off the concourse. Some of the men were tall but had no beard; others with a beard were short. Finally I spotted a tall man with a beard who also had a large mole on his forehead. He was easy to recognize, because I knew the characteristics to look for."⁶⁶

Very good! Applied to Rev. 13, this principle can also—as we ourselves have shown in several passages—be used to validate the equation 666 = *vicarius Filii Dei*. That is not, however, what happens in this publication, which becomes apparent under the next heading: "The Meaning of 666." The following passage is a non sequitur:

"So what does 666 mean? The first thing to note is that it is a triple repetition of the number 6. This suggests that the power represented by this number represents an anxious human desire to reach divine perfection. It assumes divine attributes for itself, but it's only a human power."⁶⁷

No, the first thing to note is that 666 is not a triple repetition of the number 6. By and large, however, the interpretation of this booklet is based on Historicism. But here is an Idealistic appendage, possibly inspired by the Rodríguez statements of 2002 and originating outside the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It has nothing to do with the context of Rev. 13, including Daniel and other Bible prophecies.

XIV

Idealistic conceptions about the number 666 in Rev. 13:18 have also spread abroad to other writers of the extensive Seventh-day Adventist global village, most notably the Spanish-speaking world.

In Spain, Antolín Diestre Gil—with a doctorate in Theology from the Catholic Theological Faculty of Barcelona—wrote a massive two-volume work entitled *El sentido de la historia y la palabra profética* (The Meaning of History and the Prophetic Word).

We translate a key sentence from his second volume. Commenting on Rev. 13:18, he said: "The meaning of the name is expressed by means of a numerology which means the same as the name. Inspiration has chosen that triple 6 so that we may discover in contrast with triple 7 a message enclosed in numeric code, which must coincide with the meaning of the Name or the Mark of the Beast; since the mark or the name or the number is the same thing."⁶⁸

Here we have two errors. First, as pointed out before, in the original the Bible does not contain a triple 6 (or a triple 7). Such ideas are extrinsic to it, injected into the text. This is not exegesis but eisegesis. Second, it is a grievous error to equate the mark with the number of the Beast.

Idealist ideas, amalgamated with Historicism, surfaced even more blatantly in South America. During 2004, *Advenimiento: Revista Bíblico-Teológica de*

la Universidad Adventista de Chile (Advent: Biblical-Theological Review of the Adventist University of Chile), published a lengthy article under a title which we here translate: “The 666 and the ‘Vicarius Filii Dei’ in Adventist Interpretation: Present-day Challenges,” by Carlos Olivares.

He minimized the consensus since Uriah Smith of earlier Seventh-day Adventism about *vicarius Filii Dei*. Instead, he maintained: “A la luz de la historia y documentos oficiales, hoy en la iglesia adventista no se admite como veraz el título, prefiriendo una interpretación simbólica” (In the light of history and official documents the title is not, in today’s Adventist Church, admitted as a true one, a symbolic interpretation being preferred).

And here is his Conclusion, which we have also Englished. After noting that the earliest Seventh-day Adventist writers said nothing about *vicarius Filii Dei*, it asserts several things with which we cannot agree.

Consequently, the date for the emerging of “Vicarius Filii Dei” in the Adventist literature of the pioneers, and their contemporaries, occurred in 1865 with the publication of the commentary on Revelation by Uriah Smith. Before this date, commentary was varied, and markedly favored the understanding of 666 as the “six hundred and sixty-six sects” that constituted apostate Protestantism. After this date, the majority interpretation inclined toward the papal title “Vicarius Filii Dei.”

The interpretational and historical implications of this understanding are specific. *Historically no support exists for indicating that the official title of the pope at any time was or at present is “Vicarius Filii Dei.”* This is even recognized amongst Adventist scholars. *The official title of the papacy is “Vicarius Christi,” not the one quoted by Smith.*

The Adventist church has perhaps inherited such an interpretation because so many books, journals, the Sabbath School, and Bible studies testify to it. This was as noticeable at the time when J. N. Loughborough was alive as in the years that followed. Especially when one considers the context of church organization, which occurred in 1863, two years before Smith’s publication. The one that freely and tidily canalized the interpretation.

Even though nowadays this explanation has changed considerably in three of the sources referred to (books, Sabbath School and journals), it is necessary to restructure the information contained in Biblical studies. In the light of history and official documents, *the Adventist Church today does not acknowledge the title as genuine, preferring a symbolic interpretation*, in accordance with the imagery of the book, which points to *the imperfection or humanity of the number*. All the same, it must be recognized that even though no explicit definition of this symbolic interpretation exists among scholars and denominational commentators, this does not compensate for the

lack of historical exactitude of the title referred to. This therefore leads to an exegetical need to study and analyze extensively the meaning of the number. In the sense that it is not necessarily fulfilled in “gematria,” but that it could be understood within *the same symbolic framework* as the one within which the seven (cf. Rev. 1:4; 1:13, 20), the hundred and forty-four thousand (cf. 7:4; 14:1), or other numbers in the Apocalypse (cf. 4:8; 7:1; 11:3; 13:1) are understood.

The challenge, then, is not simply to abandon this interpretation in Biblical studies with new members who are born or join us. Especially since we recall that *there are no concrete sources on which this assertion is based*. On the contrary, the identification of the papacy with the first Beast of Rev. 13 (cf. 13:1-18) is not established by the validity or erroneousness of this title, but through the specific and general details that arise from the prophetic content of the Bible. It is to be lamented that for many it should be easier and more attractive to support the prophetic fulfillment of the papacy with the mathematical calculation of “Vicarius Filii Dei,” instead of systematically developing with the Bible its rise and fall. A connection that is notoriously made up at the expense of the truth, and that does demonstrate the “wisdom” and “understanding” which John calls for in the understanding of 666 (Rev. 13:18).⁶⁹ (Emphases added)

With the ideas expressed by the italicized statements in this passage, we have dealt enough in the foregoing pages. We therefore chiefly summarize what has already been said.

1. *Historically no support exists for indicating that the official title of the pope at any time was, or at present is, “Vicarius Filii Dei.”* This is not one statement but two interlocked opinions. First, the issue of officiality is misleading. In fact, the pontiff does not have any single “official” title. Like other royalty—for he is a king—he has several appellations. Copiously illustrated in this book, one of them has for centuries been *vicarius Filii Dei*, in Latin as well as several other languages.

2. *The official title of the papacy is “Vicarius Christi,” not the one quoted by Smith.* This title was invented by Constantine, who applied it to himself, as did other emperors who succeeded him. Bishops also came to use it. Admittedly, in Medieval times, the pontiffs limited it to themselves; but nowadays an ordinary Catholic bishop is again a “Vicarius Christi.”

3. *The Adventist Church today does not acknowledge the title as genuine, preferring a symbolic interpretation.* This is much too blanket an assertion, giving excessive credit to a minority opinion, however influential some of its advocates might be.

4. *The imperfection or humanity of the number.* Yes, yes, but *all* of us are human, imperfect, sinful, and sometimes inclined to rebellion! Therefore, according to this idea, the invitation in Rev. 13:18 to those who

have wisdom to calculate the name of the Beast is really meaningless. If that text refers to generic depravity instead of identifying the Antichrist of Rev. 13, it cannot be concerned with the papacy.

5. *Symbolic framework.* This means that not only 666 but that none of the other numbers in Revelation should be taken literally. If so, perhaps there will not really be seven last plagues, and perhaps the 3.5 years, 42 months, and 1260 days, as well as the 1,000 years, are just “symbolic.” As we have seen, that also came to be Samuele Bacchiocchi’s position.

6. *There are no concrete sources on which this assertion is based.* This is simply untrue. Our book has presented massive evidence to the contrary.

On many pages in Volume I as well as Volume II, we have cited Catholic and even some Seventh-day Adventist writers who argued that *vicarius Filii Dei* was not an “official title” of the pope. It is therefore refreshing to note the following forthright and brilliant rebuttal by church history professor Gerard Damsteegt of the Seminary at Andrews University:

“A name is official when it appears in an official document. Was the Donation of Constantine ever considered an official document by the Roman Catholic Church? Of course it was. Issued and supported by the papacy, it was for centuries considered an official document in the papal strategy to prove the monarchical power of the papacy!”⁷⁰

XV

Eight years after the Idealistic Rodríguez statements under 6 and 7 June 2002 in the Senior Sabbath School Quarterly, they acquired greater permanence as part of a more authoritative work, the *Andrews Study Bible* (2010).⁷¹ Most praiseworthy is the text on which it is based: the New King James Version (NKJV). A modernization of the old King James Version (Authorized Version), this is the best translation available in present-day English.

With its commentary on the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, the *Andrews Study Bible* is, however, problematic and troublesome in several ways. While it notes a linkage with Dan. 7, it downplays Historicism, overstressing the idea that the dragon, the (sea) Beast, and the second (land) beast constitute a parody of the Trinity.

The comments on Rev. 13:1-18 call them “a false trinity,” with the earth beast “an apparent third player in a false end-time trinity.”⁷² This is also a thoroughly Catholic explanation. As a previous chapter has pointed out, Archbishop John Francis Noll, founder of *Our Sunday Visitor*, said so in 1930—more than eighty years ago. He asked: “Who are the dragon, beast, and false-prophet of Apocalyptic chapters 12 and 17?” and answered: “They make up together, as it were, an ‘infernal trinity’ in sharp contrast to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

On Rev. 13, the *Andrews Study Bible* refers to the papacy only once, obliquely, by saying: “Protestant scholars through the centuries have identified this beast with the papacy of the Middle Ages.”⁷³ But that comment raises great difficulties. First, it suggests that Protestant scholars have interpreted the sea Beast largely in Medieval

terms, which is completely untrue—as our book demonstrates. Second, nothing is said about the fact that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has strongly endorsed the idea that the first Beast of Rev. 13 was and remains the papacy. We note that both Uriah Smith’s *Daniel and Revelation* and Ellen G. White’s *Great Controversy* do so.

Similarly we demur about an idea embedded in the comment on vs. 11. Elements in this verse, it says, “have suggested to many interpreters that the description of this beast is a reference to the United States of America, as a Protestant nation with its religious influence.”⁷⁴ Well and good. But why does the commentary not mention that it is Seventh-day Adventist writers and evangelists who have been making this identification? It is, indeed, their special domain. Expositors belonging to other churches almost never say such a thing.

Vss. 16-17 declare that the mark of the Beast is “The counterfeit of the seal of God,” which the compilers say is the Sabbath.⁷⁵ Fine, but why is there such a resounding silence about Sundaykeeping, which will one day be enforced by an economic boycott and ultimately a death decree? This, after all, is what Seventh-day Adventists have consistently taught about the mark of the Beast.

Worst of all is the comment on Rev. 13:18. The NKJV says: “Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. His number is 666.” The word “calculate” is excellent, which we have also previously indicated. This text tells the reader how to identify the (sea) Beast, whom the second (land) beast will support and serve.

But how does the *Andrews Study Bible* explain that verse? It says: “666. God’s number in Revelation is seven, so multiples of the number six may represent and emphasize counterfeit and falling short (see notes on vv. 1-17). Note the sixes in Dan. 3:1.”⁷⁶ That is vintage Idealism, wrapping up what is otherwise a chapter interpreted, however defectively, along Historicist lines.

We have shown, however, in this as well as our first volume, that there are no “multiples of six” in the original. The Greek manuscripts all have either χξζ’ (chi xi stigma) or the three words written in full, ἑξακοσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ (hexakosioi hexēkonta hex)—that is to say, *six hundred and sixty-six* or, as the Authorized Version puts it, “Six hundred threescore and six.”

In New Testament times, the ancients of the Mediterranean world who wrote Hebrew, Greek, or Latin would have been incapable of even understanding 666 as three sixes. Likewise, it is difficult for some present-day learned scholars to enter into the mindset of people whose arithmetical system lacked a zero. About them, our researcher Stephen D. Emse asked: “Why can’t they see the obvious, that it is 600, 60, 6—not 3 sixes?”⁷⁷ Indeed, and it is not *three* sixes but 111 of them.

And we think it highly objectionable that this comment in the *Andrews Study Bible*—like the chapter generally—says nothing about *vicarius Filii Dei* or its numerical value of 666, as many Seventh-day Adventist writers and evangelists have taught for almost a century and a half since Uriah Smith began to call attention to it.

Seemingly, this *Study Bible* marked the triumph of Idealism in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but fortunately that is not the case.

Chapter Forty-Four THE BASTION RESTORED

I

On 9 August 2006 at Camp Au Sable, near Grayling, Michigan, Kenneth Jørgensen, a Norwegian doctoral student at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary of Andrews University, who now teaches at the European Bible School in his native country, presented a paper entitled *A Case for "Vicarius Filii Dei."* Of this, there are three variants: notes received at Camp Au Sable, a reworked variant which Jørgensen prepared in December 2006, and the version finally published in September 2007. Because of its greater accessibility, the last mentioned is the one from which we will be quoting.

Jørgensen made many of the same points that the reader can find in these pages. More than that, his and our ideas are directly interrelated. In both the December 2006 and the September 2008 variants he acknowledged direct indebtedness for some of his items. He added, with reference to "That Notorious Number" (of which *The Truth About 666* is an improved and much expanded version): "De Kock's essay is the best Adventist contribution on the number of the beast I have come across, and I recommend it as an excellent complementary essay."¹ On the other hand, it was Jørgensen who drew our attention to the crucial fact that 666 does not consist of three sixes.

About *vicarius Filii Dei* as the meaning of the notorious number in Rev. 13:18, he said: "This Latin name/title, found in several Catholic sources and used by several popes, yields gematrically 666 from the Latin alphabet. [Uriah] Smith's interpretation remained standard among Adventist commentators until very recently, when an increasing number of Adventist scholars have begun to question and reject this approach."² He mentioned most of them and their publications, chronologically, from Beatrice S. Neall in 1983 to Ángel M. Rodríguez in the 2002 *Sabbath School Quarterly*.

Jørgensen argued compellingly against the idea that 666 symbolized "humanity, rebellion, and imperfection." The same applied to 6, on which 666 was supposedly based. He pointed out that nothing in the Bible sustains such ideas. In fact, at times it suggests just the opposite. It is also true that "contrary to the claim of some symbolic interpreters, sixty rather than six is the foundational number in ancient Babylonian mathematics."

As to the Scriptures, in Rev. 4:8 "six is explicitly associated with something perfect and heavenly," since each of the four living creatures has six wings. The same applies to the Creation story in Gen. 1.

About this, Samuele Bacchiocchi—together with other Seventh-day Adventist scholars—were attempting "to make the case that there is something inherently negative with [*sic*] the number six." He had alluded to this number in the creation story of Genesis chapter one. But in his rebuttal, Jørgensen pointed out: "A close reading of the creation story shows that what happened

on that memorable day, when both animals and humans were created was completely positive. In fact, God Himself evaluates His work on that day and describes it as ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31). There is no indication of rebellion during its entire course of twenty-four hours. The fall of man is portrayed two chapters later. Throughout the Bible there is no firm indication that six represents any of the characteristics which the symbolic school of interpretation alleges it represents.”³

It could therefore be argued that *six* is a theologically perfect number, as it is in arithmetic. That, as Jørgensen said, was precisely how ancient Roman Catholic and Orthodox writers saw the matter: “Interestingly, early influential Christians, such as Augustine [354-430], Methodius [d. 311 or earlier], and Origen [c. 185-c. 254] believed the number six represents perfection. In fact, the ancient pagan world, including the masters of mathematics agreed.”⁴

II

To this he might have added what we previously pointed out about Bede or Bede (672/673–735), who also commented on the perfection of the number. We here augment our previous quotations. In his *Explanatio Apocalypsis* (The Explanation of the Apocalypse), which Froom called “the earliest British explanation of the Revelation,”⁵ Bede asked: “Who is ignorant, that the number six, in accordance with which the world was created, signifies the perfection of work?” In the Bible, he also found other examples to indicate the excellence of this number: “The weight of gold also which was brought to Solomon every year was six hundred and sixty-six thousand talents.”⁶ And about the sixth foundation of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:20), he explained: “The sard, which is entirely of a blood-red colour, signifies the glory of martyrs, of which it is said, ‘precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,’ and is with reason put in the sixth place, seeing that our Lord was incarnate in the sixth period of the age, and was crucified on the sixth day of the week for the salvation of the whole world.”⁷ Indeed, “perfection of action is often designated by the number six, especially as in this number the work of the world was consummated.”⁸

But how does the Antichrist fit into this picture? Bede’s answer is based on Irenaeus’ word *Teitan*, although he gives it as *Titan*—which, among the Greeks referred to “‘a giant’ . . . And it is thought that Antichrist will usurp this name, as if he excelled all in power, boasting also that he is the one of which it was written, ‘He rejoiced as a giant to run his course. His going forth is from the highest heaven.’”⁹

The idea that 6 is a perfect number persisted down to the time of the Protestant Reformation.

In 1516, Martin Luther was lecturing on Ps. 85:10 (actually Ps. 84:11 in the Latin Vulgate). He discovered within it thanksgiving, prayer, and prophecy, with its great fulfillment in Christ the Redeemer. Pondering the parallelism of the verse “*Mercy* and *truth* have met each together;

*righteousness and peace have kissed*¹⁰ (emphasis added), Luther noted that its key words can be grouped together in a sixfold way:

mercy truth	righteousness peace
mercy righteousness	truth peace
mercy peace	truth righteousness

He said that with an inverted order, these words can even make up a twelvefold arrangement. “And so you have the number six, the number of perfection. Or the most sacred number twelve of the apostles.”¹¹

The *perfection* of *six* is likewise stated in the commentary notes that accompany the 1599 edition of the Geneva Bible. Known to Shakespeare and brought to America by the Pilgrim Fathers, it largely formed the basis for the 1611 Authorized (King James) Version.

Its Historicist note on Rev. 13:18 refers to “Popish wisdom.” Amongst other remarks, it says: “That cruel beast Boniface the eighth, doeth commend by the number of *six* those Decrials which he perfected, in the proem of the *sixth* book. Which book (saith he) being to be added unto five other books of the same volume of Decrials, we thought good to name *Sextum* the *sixth*; that the same volume by addition thereof containing a *senary* [Latin *senarius*, consisting of *six*], or the number of *six* books (which is a *number perfect*) may yield a *perfect* form of managing all things, and *perfect* discipline of behaviour. Here therefore is the number of the beast, who empowereth from himself all his parts, and bringeth them all back again unto himself by his discipline in most wise and cunning manner.”¹² (Emphases added)

In passing, we note that this explanation was printed just one year before Andreas Helwig’s *Antichristus Romanus* (1600) launched the idea that 666 referred to *vicarius Filii Dei*.

Two hundred and fifty years after Luther and one hundred and sixty-seven since the Geneva Bible, this idea of numerological perfection is still reflected in *Apocalypsis Revelata* (The Apocalypse revealed) [1766] by that strange Spiritualist, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772).

Though he, a redoubtable numerologist, applied the number of Rev. 13:18 to Evangelicals rather than to Catholics, his thinking resembled that of Bede and other predecessors in two ways. First, Swedenborg saw it as a perversion of excellence, since 666 “signifies that the quality is this, that every truth of the Word is falsified by them.” Second, he gave many examples from the Bible to show the perfection indicated by the number 6.¹³

On this point, Augustine of Hippo, Methodius, Origen, Bede, Luther, the Geneva Bible, and Swedenborg were agreed. As we have also mentioned, the mathematician and numerologist Pythagoras—half a millennium before Christ—held the same opinion. That is, for more than two thousand years, the number six was regarded as a symbol of

perfection. This view is rooted in an arithmetical fact and goes back to an even remoter past, being first discovered by Babylonian mathematicians who lived before Nebuchadnezzar: 6 is divisible by 1, 2, and 3 as well as itself. The idea that it must denote imperfection is purely fanciful and of much more recent vintage. Its history goes back perhaps a mere two hundred years.

One writer wanted it both ways, for he regarded the number 6 and its multiples as both perfect and imperfect, somewhat like Swedenborg. He was Ethelbert William Bullinger (1837-1913), “an Anglican clergyman, Biblical scholar, and ultradispensationalist theologian.”¹⁴ His *Number in Scripture* (1894) contains a peculiar sentence: “If six is the number of secular or human perfection, then 66 is a more emphatic expression of the same fact, and 666 is the concentrated expression of it; 666 is therefore the trinity of human perfection; the perfection of imperfection; the culmination of human pride in independence of God and opposition to His Christ.”¹⁵

His work must have been widely read, for it has often been reprinted down to the present. In the paragraph cited, the reader will recognize several Idealistic opinions, which also appear in the writings of other expositors—including Seventh-day Adventists and their Sundaykeeping mentors, whom we have referred to. The only difference is that Bullinger knew about the perfection of 6 while insisting on the numerological “perfection of imperfection”!

III

At Camp Au Sable, Jørgensen also focused on the error of “666 transubstantiated into 6 6 6,” that is as *six-six-six*. He pointed out, as we have also done, that the Revelator could not represent those numbers in figures as we do nowadays. If he wanted to represent what we call 666, he either had to write out the words in full—ἑξακόσιοι (*hexakosioi*, six hundred) ἑξήκοντα (*hexēkonta*, sixty) ἕξ (*hex*, six)—or use three letters: χξζ’ (*chi xi stigma*). Both variants appear in ancient manuscripts.

The three sixes do not exist in the Greek New Testament; it is only how we represent the number, according to the system inherited from the Arabs. The *only six*, in the way John wrote that text, is the last one.

Jørgensen was not the only Historicist who spoke at Camp Au Sable. Five other scholars also did so: Dr. Richard M. Davison, Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Chair of the Old Testament Department at the Seminary, Andrews University; Dr. Alberto Timm, church historian and theologian at São Paulo Adventist University College in Brazil; Dr. Frank Hardy, editor of the journal *Historicism* for six years; Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer, formerly Chair of Theology, Antillian College, Puerto Rico, as well as professor at various Adventist universities or colleges in the U.S.A., France, and Latin America; and Edwin de Kock.¹⁶ On that occasion, the last mentioned did not speak about 666 but presented a four-chapter overview of prophetic interpretation through the centuries, from Jesus to the present

time.¹⁷

All of this was arranged by and under the auspices of the Michigan Conference, which was reacting against the Idealist challenge that had reared its head among Seventh-day Adventist scholars. This tendency had manifested itself in many places over many years. But through the activities of writers at or near Andrews University it had found a new focus. Being at Berrien Springs, this was geographically in the Michigan Conference, which was now challenging them.

IV

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only major denomination still holding out against the Preterist, Futurist, and Idealist assault by Protestant as well as Catholic opponents. It has become the last bastion of an embattled Historicism. Latterly it also has to contend with ever bolder prophetic naysayers within its own ranks. The outlook is daunting, the future seemingly bleak.

We are, however, cheered by the counteroffensive that is now under way.

The Michigan Conference has shored up the bastion and has been leading the charge. Others already mentioned have joined in. One agency has been ADVENTISTS AFFIRM, a self-supporting, conservative body of Seventh-day Adventists, headquartered in Berrien Springs.

Signs are appearing that the reaction is spreading.

Some of them may be detectable in the sermon preached at Atlanta, Georgia, by Dr. Ted N. C. Wilson, the new General Conference President, on 3 July 2010. It is true that he did not explicitly refer to his church's traditional Historicism or the Idealist elements which tend to undermine it, but he did say:

“Our church has long held to the Historical-Biblical method of understanding scripture, allowing the Bible to interpret itself, line upon line, precept upon precept. However, one of the most sinister attacks against the Bible is from those who believe in the Historical-Critical method of explaining the Bible. This unbiblical approach of ‘higher criticism’ is a deadly enemy of our theology and mission. This approach puts a scholar or individual above the plain approach of the scriptures and gives inappropriate license to decide what he or she perceives as truth based on the resources and education of the critic.”¹⁸

Many eyes are now on Pastor Wilson and others in his administration whom he has gathered around him. Will he or they take a more explicit stand to maintain the time-tested Historicism of the Seventh-day Adventist Church or through silence and inaction allow a more Idealistic paradigm to take its place?

Fortunately, above all, it remains a fact that the vast majority of public evangelists, pastors, and lay people who lecture on or hold seminars about prophecy are standing firm. Although at times they may be perplexed by utterances to the contrary, they yet persist in presenting *vicarius Filii Dei* as the best explanation for the 666 of Rev. 13:18.

And then, of course, there is our book, which in this battle holds up their arms.

Chapter Forty-Five
A RESURGENT PAPACY

I

As demonstrated in many of its chapters, this book is by no means limited to a consideration of *vicarius Filii Dei* in Latin and other languages. It has a larger framework, indicated by its full title, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy*. Concerning the latter theme, we again invoke the test of history and of contemporary affairs.

Our most recent chapters might to some minds suggest that we are chiefly engaged in a contest of opinions. But no, events must validate or contradict what we or others have suggested, in accordance with the ancient Roman adage, “facta, non verba”; and actions do speak more loudly than words.

We begin by noting again that Roman Catholic pressure against the Seventh-day Adventist position on *vicarius Filii Dei* as set out by Uriah Smith has, for many years, been relentless. A recent example is a December 1993 piece by James Akin in *This Rock*, a magazine of Catholic apologetics. This Texan, who legally altered his name to Jimmy, had been converted to the Roman Church about a year before he wrote his article.

In “Changing the Sabbath,” he objected to Seventh-day Adventists identifying Catholicism with Babylon and focused on two further points which especially concern us: *vicarius Filii Dei* and the mark of the Beast.

About the former, Akin said it was not a title of the pope, although “it is similar to one of his authentic titles, *Vicarius Christi*.” Besides, “many people’s names can be made to total 666.” Having previously dealt with both these issues, we need not here repeat ourselves. We therefore just remind our readers that the problematic *Vicarius Christi* is not a uniquely papal title and the fateful number must be interpreted in the context of Rev. 13 and related Scriptures.

Akin, apparently a more likable man than crusty old John Gilmary Shea, was unhappy with the fact that Seventh-day Adventists have for more than a hundred and fifty years been interpreting the mark of the Beast as a future law to enforce universal Sunday observance. He objected because “Scripture pictures the mark of the beast as the number of a man’s name, not a day of the week.” In fact, according to him, “identifying Sunday worship as the mark of the Beast is exegetically impossible. Revelation 13:16-18 pictures the mark as a number on the foreheads or right hands of the Beast’s worshippers and states it corresponds to a man’s name (v. 17).”¹

Confusing the mark and the number of the beast is an old error, originally confined to Sundaykeepers, including Roman Catholics; but within a few years after Akin it would surface even among a few Seventh-day Adventists, in writings referred to above.

II

When Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner and exiled in 1798, Historicists recognized these events as a fulfillment of prophecy. The Antichristian Beast had seemingly sustained a fatal head wound. It kept on bleeding for another seventy-two years, until the Papal States expired in 1870. Several writers predicted that the papacy would soon become extinct. Let us look at a few examples.

David Austin (1760-1831), a Presbyterian minister who later preached for the Baptists and then for the Congregationalists, from 1791 onward became interested in end-time events. In *A Prophetic Leaf* (1798), he suggested as a name for the Antichrist *Ludovicus* in addition to *vicarius Filii Dei*, each with a numerical value of 666. For expositors of that time, these two powers were closely linked. Austin wrote: "In the demolition of the power of the Beast, we find Lewis [Louis] the 16th and the Bishop of Rome both taken alive: their dominions overturned, and their scepters removed." He optimistically expected the nexus between the throne and the altar to be severed "throughout all the regions where the antichristian connexion between Kings and Priests doth exist" and thought "the stone which the Providence of God is now hurling against the feet of the Image which are of iron and of clay may be a prelude to a total demolition of the whole antichristian fabric."²

Five years later, during 1803, William Fowler Miller (1768-1818), a Presbyterian-Congregational pastor in a book entitled *Signs of the Times, or the Sure Word of Prophecy*, likewise looked forward to the elimination of the papacy. Afterwards, he thought, the millennium would follow, although he did not think all this would happen soon; for ". . . nearly two hundred years are yet to roll away, before the last great and utter destruction of the city of Rome and the papal government will be accomplished; and nearly fifty years before the Pope's ungodly claim of 'Universal Bishop,' 'Vicar of the Son of God,' and infallibility will be given up . . ." (emphasis added).³

In 1803, on 24 November, Miller also preached a Thanksgiving sermon on these topics. Like Austin, he pointed out that both *vicarius Filii Dei* and *Ludovicus*, the Latin for *Louis*, had a numerical value of 666.⁴ It was, he said, "the French Monarchy, which confirmed the Pope in his pompous, Antichristian title, the Vicar of the Son of God; and made him *superior to all human judicature*." But now the First Consul of the Republic (Napoleon Bonaparte) had become his judge. "By this extraordinary change of power, the Pope is no longer, the Vicegerent of God upon earth, the Vicar of the Son of God." According to Miller, "the great day of God's wrath is come upon Mystical Babylon."⁵ (Miller's own emphases)

An anonymous writer, styling himself "A Friend to True Religion," in 1810 continued this interpretation. After a survey of papal error and cruelty "since the days of the apostles," he likewise focused on the French

Revolution and its aftermath. He identified the Roman Church with the Apocalyptic “woman sitting on the scarlet colored beast, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; Rev. 17.” Exultantly he declared: “No more shall the mitred crown and power of the self stiled *Vicarius fili [sic] Dei*, (the vicar of the Son of God,) the assumed title of the Bishop of Rome; sitting once as a Queen, being no widow, and seeing no sorrows, (Rev. 18.) no more will this power awe all Europe; no more shall her kings hold the bridle and the stirrup for the proud pontiff of Rome . . .” (emphasis added).⁶

But the era of the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte passed, while the papacy—however bruised and bleeding from its wound—survived. And now the eyes of prophetic writers swiveled to the nationalists seeking Italian unification. On this basis, Samuel Hanson Cox, professor extraordinary of Biblical and Christian History at New York’s prestigious Union Theological Seminary, wrote in 1844: “It is doubted by some eminent scholars, if the popedom will exist a quarter of a century longer.” He called the pope the “triple Tyrant,” and said that for the Papal States the pontiff could not secure from his secular allies “adequate protection against the swelling indignation of his own subjects. But he is in the last stages of an incurable consumption. His life is only a dying process, and the symptoms of senility, and decay, and dissolution, are multiplied and aggravated on the limbs and features of the execrated body. Its doom is certain and its end is nigh.” With pity, Dr. Cox was thinking of deluded Catholic laymen and asked:

Can Americans read the History of the Popes—and yet believe them to be the prophets of heaven and the hallowed masters of the earth! Can they accord to the present dominant *Gregory* [XVI, reigned from 1831 to 1846], the pompous titles which he claims—VICARIUS FILII DEI, VESTRA SANCTITAS, SERVUS SERVORUM DOMINI, ET DOMINUS REGUM IN ORBE TERRARUM [Vicar of the Son of God, Your Holiness, Servant of the Servants of the Lord, and Lord of the Kings on Earth], with other profane and blasphemous appellations without end! A temporal prince as well as a spiritual tyrant, the sword and the keys are quartered on his arms, and significantly united in all his public influence—as it has been for nearly eleven hundred years. From Leo or Gregory the Great, from Hildebrand, from Borgia, to the present time, has this huge ANTICHRIST been enthroned and dominant among the nations. But his days are limited and near their close.⁷ (Cox’s italics for pontiff’s name)

For these four and other Protestant writers of the nineteenth century, the papacy had virtually become synonymous with the Papal States. It was, moreover, clear that this territory would soon be swallowed up in a united Italy and be taken away from the pope. What is more, according to their

end-time scenario, Christ would soon come and set up his kingdom on earth, to be followed by an earthly millennium. Misled by an excessive preoccupation with the events of their day and an incorrect theology, they failed to notice the second part of Rev. 13:3: “And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; *and his deadly wound was healed*; and all the world wondered after the beast” (emphasis added).

III

The year 1844, when Cox’s predictions were published, was also the seminal year for Seventh-day Adventists, who in 1863 became a distinct denomination. This Remnant, in contrast with the writers we have quoted, expected and foretold a mighty resurgence of papal power.

Also confident that pontifical fortunes would recover, even to the point of reviving the Papal States, were some Catholic writers. We have already mentioned Augustin Canron, who in 1894 foretold that the dispossession of the pope, the *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, would soon be over. Here are two additional examples.

In 1854, after a request by Wagner Publishers,⁸ Bonifazius Gams of Hildesheim produced his continuation into the nineteenth century of de Bérault-Bercastel’s *Histoire de l’Église* (History of the Church), with special emphasis on Germany. Apart from writing this kind of book, he was also an academic; on the title page he styled himself a “Professor Dr.”

Surveying a little more than fifty years since 1798, he wrote in his Introduction about “the *Statthalter des Gottessohnes*, who sits at the right hand of the majesty on high and to whom all power has been given in heaven and earth. Seized by impious hands, he [the pope] was led away from the inheritance of the Apostle-sovereign Peter, which through a long series of centuries had been assigned to him and his predecessors to administer. For years, he was held in the harshest captivity, hindered by one person from ruling the Church whose government had been entrusted to him by God himself, while the inheritance of the Apostle-Sovereign Peter was laid as a present in the cradle of an immature child.”⁹ It is startling how intimately Gams identified the pope with the Redeemer. This passage evidently refers to both Pius VI and Pius VII, the villain of the piece being Napoleon Bonaparte.

Gams surveyed the great damage inflicted on his church. In the stormy French Revolution and the great wars it unleashed, as well as the peace arrangements that they generated, “the Church’s old external thousand-year-old structure disappeared from the face of the earth. . . . Archbishopsrics and bishopsrics in large numbers, equipped with rich estates, as well as innumerable monasteries and endowments and other pious foundations in the service of religion [were] secularized, that is, withdrawn and destroyed.” Ruined holy buildings, dilapidated or destroyed, lay widely strewn over many countries: from Messina to Gibraltar, from Southern France to the Baltic, and onto the Russian steppes. There were places where no candles on Catholic altars could

be burned and no incense go up to honor the sacred Trinity or for the spiritual repose of the dead.¹⁰ Napoleon's forces had reached into all these places.

Actually, the papal head kept on bleeding after no fewer than three revolutions which shook both France and Europe, in 1790-1800, 1830, and 1848.¹¹ And yet, as Gams exultantly pointed out, it survived. So, in fact, did all the Catholic religious orders, fervently laboring for their church. For example, there were more than 4,000 Jesuits and 12,000 Franciscans. Much missionary work was also being done, amongst others by 5,000 nuns, whose work extended as far as China.¹² As Gams was writing, the major Catholic countries, the empires of Austria and France as well as the kingdoms of Spain and Naples had again begun to treat their church as a major power.¹³

That was in 1854. The Antichristian Beast could not be killed so easily, whatever some Protestant expositors of prophecy thought would soon be happening. Perceptive Catholic writers knew that somehow their church, together with its pontificate, would survive.

The Messenger of the Sacred Heart (1885), published thirty years later in England, with the "approbation and blessing of his lordship the Bishop of Southwark," contained a piece entitled "The Triumph of the Pope," castigating the new Italian government, which had "robbed Pius IX of his small temporal dominion."¹⁴

This is what that publication predicted: "It [the national Italian government] will fall to pieces of its own corruption, as a thing which has never possessed the blessing of God; and when it perishes, there will not be a single upright heart to mourn its fall. When the calm voice of the *Vicar of the Son of God* has pronounced sentence on a human institution, that *neither we nor any of our successors can ever sanction it*, faith will see that the thing so condemned cannot long be favoured with prosperity."¹⁵ Here *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart* used italics instead of quotation marks. It was a statement by the pontiff, probably Pius IX.

The united Italy, finalized in 1870, did not disintegrate, yet by and large it was the Catholic—not the Protestant—prediction that was fulfilled. The most vital part of the Papal States (originally appropriated through the spurious Donation) revived after almost sixty years, in 1929. Now known as the Vatican State, it is probably the most remarkable and powerful little country in the world.

Geographically it is a city within a city, a small piece of Rome, a mere 109 acres (44 hectares) in extent, inhabited according to a 2004 estimate by only 920 people—mostly priests and nuns. It also has extraterritorial privileges, including "more than 10 other buildings in Rome and to Castel Gandolfo, the pope's summer residence in the Alban Hills." Accordingly, the Vatican "is the world's smallest fully independent nation-state," created "to enable the pope to exercise his universal authority."¹⁶

The Vatican, although its importance is belied by its diminutive size, is now the headquarters of an ecclesiastical, financial, and political superpower, with a billion Roman Catholic subjects worldwide whom it claims as its own. This endows the pontiff with unprecedented clout all over the planet. At a pinch, in fear of eternal damnation if they disobey, all these people are expected to owe their first allegiance, not to their own country but to the pope.

We wish all this were just a quixotic fancy, yet the power of that statelet on the Tiber was recently highlighted by a single spectacular event.

The late Pope John Paul II had the largest funeral that this world has ever witnessed. It was watched by billions of people from all over the planet in what may to date have been the greatest live telecast. Attending these solemnities were, apart from Roman Catholic clerics, special ecclesiastical dignitaries from other faiths and religions. Three were very special. First there was the Archbishop of Canterbury, who heads the Anglican Communion. None who held this office had ever attended a papal funeral since the Church of England broke with Rome in the sixteenth century. Next there was Patriarch Abune Paulos, “the head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church,” which had never been represented in this way before. Lastly, and most important, there was Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I from Istanbul (Constantinople), heading the Eastern Orthodox family of churches. “This was the first time an Ecumenical Patriarch attended a papal funeral since the Great Schism”¹⁷ more than a thousand years ago, in 1054.

Since its establishment, an ever-increasing number of countries had been sending ambassadors to the Vatican State. On this occasion, the more than 200 foreign officials who came included many of the greatest political heavyweights from around the globe. “Among the most familiar faces worldwide were the current and former Presidents of the United States, the President of France, the King and Queen of Spain, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Chancellor of Germany, the Prince of Wales and the United Nations Secretary-General. Also attending were Mohammad Khatami of Iran and Israeli President Moshe Katsav.” The only high-ranking emissary from a first-rate power lacking in this dazzling Who’s Who of planetary eminence was somebody to represent the People’s Republic of China, that Communist country not having been invited.

For American viewers, no spectacle was more amazing than to see their three most recent heads of state, Presidents George H. W. Bush, William Jefferson Clinton, and George W. Bush, on their knees before an uncoffined papal corpse in the Rite of Visitation.¹⁸

It may be retorted that this was just part of the passing media parade, with superficial manipulation by the Catholic propaganda machine. But we do not think so. On such occasions, the presidents, kings, and other rulers on this planet fully realize what their actions may suggest to a world that watches them on a television screen. There were and are non-sentimental, solid reasons

for taking the Vatican very seriously at a time like this. These are rooted not only in the demographic but also the economic and political realities of the Roman Church. Because to most readers these are not well known, we need to look at them in the perspective of the past eighty years and of our own time.

V

The real power of a country can often be gauged by its financial strength. Therefore, the story of modern Vatican wealth is a fascinating, almost unbelievable tale. It begins in Italy with a bargain struck between Pope Pius XI and Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) on 11 February 1929, just before the Great Depression. The latter event not only devastated the financial world but also caused the greatest reversal of papal fortune in all human history. It made the Vatican immensely rich.

The unification of Italy in 1870 had threatened the Catholic hierarchy with financial disaster. Together with the Papal States, it lost the revenue that they used to generate. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Vatican's annual budget was "a little under \$4 million," and "by the outbreak of World War I, expenses were outrunning income." Soon the church had to cut into its reserves.¹⁹ In the half-century between 1870 and 1922, the papacy stood with its "back to the wall."²⁰

But then Mussolini came riding up to its rescue, like a corpulent knight in shining armor. Today that fascist dictator has largely faded from the memory of the world, if not of his native country, yet—as subsequent events would prove—he became a key figure in shaping our planet's history; for it was his hand that began to mend the fortunes and to restore the power of his church for the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. Nino Lo Bello (1922-1997), an American author and journalist who specialized in writing about the Vatican, went so far as to say that Mussolini "was to do more for the Vatican than any man, any cleric, any Pope, in all history."²¹ We think that in this respect he ranks at least with Pepin the Short of France, who flourished more than twelve hundred years ago.

In February 1929, Mussolini and the papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, signed a Treaty and concluded an agreement known as a Concordat²² between the Italian government and the Vatican. These documents were destined to have far-reaching consequences.

Mussolini required the pope to renounce all claims to the former Papal States and demanded Catholic support for Fascism. The latter he obtained through Article 20 of the Concordat, whereby "all Italian bishops were required to take an oath of allegiance to Il Duce."²³

Undoubtedly such a provision went against the grain of the hierarchy, yet both Pius XI and Gasparri—"a hard and sly negotiator who could be relied upon to extract the best possible terms from the government"—reasoned that such a concession would probably harm their interests only in the short term. Probably, "fascism would not last very long [and] the

Church would emerge as the winner.”²⁴

This was a shrewd evaluation. Within a few years, Italy in alliance with Adolf Hitler went to war against the Western Allies. Soon these invaded and began to conquer Il Duce’s country. Mussolini, his Fascist regime abruptly ended, plunged into the abyss. On 28 April 1945, the Italian Partisans shot him and his mistress Clara Petacci near Lake Como. Their corpses, hanging in the Piazza Loreto, Milan,²⁵ suffered abuse at the hands of an angry mob.

But back in 1929, Mussolini, unaware of his grisly future, was elated by the support that his treaty and Concordat were exacting from the Catholic Church.

For his part, the dictator undertook to compensate the pontiff for the loss of the Papal States, by granting numerous privileges. His government recognized the Vatican as a sovereign country and Catholicism as Italy’s only official religion; it also gave the papacy 750 million lire in cash plus 1,000 million lire in State securities,²⁶ that is, about 90 million U.S. dollars as ready money and 150 million in government bonds—together with tax exemption. Other benefits included government salaries for Catholic priests, no fewer than 30,000 by 1975, apart from “the thousands who are paid by the Ministry of Public Instruction as professors of religion, which is a required subject in all Italian schools.”²⁷

Recognizing the Vatican as a *city-state* has, since then, brought it the widespread international prestige and power to which we have referred. Though physically just a piece of Rome, it is now—with the possible exception of the White House in Washington, DC—the most influential spot on the planet, swarming with ambassadors from all over the earth. At the time of its creation, perceptive clerics like Bishop Charles Francis Buddy of San Diego in California rejoiced. He said: “We can thank God today for a man like Mussolini.”²⁸

The signing took place in the Lateran Palace, “on the site of the hall where Leo III had greeted Charlemagne.”²⁹ This agreement with the Italian state survived the defeat of fascism. Fifty-five years later, on 18 February 1984, a revised Concordat was signed in the Villa Madama, Rome, a Renaissance palace owned by the Italian government, Bettino Craxi acting for his state and Cardinal Secretary Casaroli for the Vatican. It “left intact the tax-exempt status of the Holy See.”³⁰

William C. Standridge from the Independent Faith Mission pointed out that even more was involved: indirect papal control of Italy itself, for “since the founding of the republic in 1948, the country has been under the domination of the Christian Democratic party, whose only reason for existence is to do the Church’s bidding.” According to the same author, “no man has ever become Prime Minister of Italy since that time without the Pope’s approval.”³¹

Mussolini was also handing the Roman Church the greatest financial nest egg in all of human history. Its timing could not have been better. Just eight months after the signing of the Treaty and Concordat, on Black Thursday, 24 October 1929, the American stock market crashed,

obliterating \$30 billion of investments. This unleashed a series of events that by 1932 caused a full depression.³²

In America and all over the planet, a multitude of businesses collapsed, resulting in an unemployment that swiftly filled the world with frantic and hungry people. Eric Francis Hodgins (1899-1971), American author, editor, and publisher, expressed this picturesquely: “The whole economy of the United States clapped a hand over its heart, uttered a piercing scream, and slipped on the largest banana peel since Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations*.”³³ Bread lines and soup kitchens brought relief, but some still starved and even in America fought one another “like animals over garbage.”³⁴

But for a small minority of shrewd investors who had the necessary cash, it brought spectacular enrichment. Suddenly inflation ended. Money promptly recovered its buying power. Prices dropped spectacularly. For debtors, this was a calamity, producing numerous bankruptcies, but what a splendid opportunity it created for clever businessmen with money and faith in the future!

This can be illustrated from the experience of J. Paul Getty (1892–1976), the oil magnate, who later explained his methods. He realized that “many entirely sound companies with fine potentials were selling at only a fraction of their true worth.”³⁵ His shrewdness paid off marvelously. For instance, his first stock in Tide Water Associated Oil Company cost him only \$2.12 per share in 1932. By 1937, its value had risen to \$20.83 per share—almost a tenfold increase in just five years. He went on to become a billionaire and according to *Fortune* magazine of October 1957, “the richest man in the world.”³⁶

But that title really belonged to an even wealthier personage, the pope, for Mussolini’s endowment grew to stupendous proportions. Within a few years, the Catholic Church became the largest investor and richest entity in the world. To start it off, it had at its disposal far more cash than Paul Getty—\$90 million—and an equally clever financial genius. He was Bernardino Nogara (1870-1958), a Jewish banker, who managed the Vatican’s investments,³⁷ which in Italy were tax-free. In 1939, after only ten years, the newly elected Pope Pius XII was amazed to learn that through Nogara’s skillful manipulations “the original indemnities of \$90 million-plus had been parlayed into a multifaceted business empire that topped \$1 billion in value.”³⁸

For twenty-seven years, from 1929 to 1956, this financial wizard guided the Vatican’s money matters. The hierarchy prized him so highly that Cardinal Spellman of New York once declared, “Next to Jesus Christ the greatest thing that has happened to the Catholic Church is Bernardino Nogara.”³⁹

In his enthusiasm, the American prelate seems to have overlooked important figures like the scholarly Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the lordly Pope Gregory VII (c. 1020-1085), and even the Apostle Peter—whom his colleagues have so often claimed as one of their own.

Nowadays the most impressive holdings of the Roman Church are in America. Details about this and other aspects of Catholicism emerge from the writings of Baron Avro Manhattan (1914-1990), an aristocrat born in Milan,

Italy, of American and Swiss/Dutch parents. “His friends included H. G. Wells, Pablo Picasso, George Bernard Shaw, and scientist Marie Stopes.” Amongst other distinctions, “he was a member of the Royal Society of Literature, Society of Authors, Ethical Union, P.E.N., British Interplanetary Society, etc.” He authored more than twenty books, especially about the Vatican.⁴⁰

According to Manhattan, “by June, 1965, the Catholic Church had accumulated a minimum of \$80 billion in real estate of the total 325 billion dollars’ worth of privately owned real estate in the U.S. And that is 25 per cent of all privately owned land. Of this, 56 per cent is held in trust for the Vatican. By 1972, the combined assets of the U.S.’s five largest industrial corporations totalled about \$46.9 billion. Those of the Catholic Church between \$80 and \$100 billion. This made it the mightiest corporation of the U.S., a colossus before which the wealth of even the most powerful American concerns shrinks into insignificance.”⁴¹

In the European Middle Ages, wealth was largely limited to real estate, a major basis of the economic power wielded by the Roman Church. Today, however, its strength is also much concerned with banking and the financial sector. A spectacular example has been the Bank of America. This is one of the largest such institutions in the United States and the world. It began with “Amadeo P. Giannini (1870-1949), the Italian Catholic fruit and vegetable peddler.”⁴² At first it was called the Bank of Italy; its present name, of course, is much more patriotic for Americans. Its funding was assisted by the Jesuits, whose economic acumen is hardly inferior to their educational brilliance. In 1983, they still apparently owned 51 percent of its stock.⁴³

By 1984, Catholicism’s worldwide assets dwarfed even the amounts referred to above. According to the front flap of the dust cover in Malachi Martin’s *Rich Church, Poor Church*, its fortune amounted to \$300 billion, amongst other things, “gold deposits that exceed those of many industrial nations. Real estate holdings larger than the total area of many countries. These are only some of the riches of the Roman Catholic Church.”⁴⁴

Manhattan made an even more comprehensive claim, namely that if this fortune continued to grow as in previous years, the papal power would by the year 2000 “own, control and have a say, directly or indirectly, in at least one-third of all the sources of wealth of the western world.”⁴⁵

That, of course, would make it richer than any single country—including America. It would also mean a complete restoration of the economic clout that the historical Antichrist used to have in the period before the Reformation. And money is power. What is unique is that this is all in the hands of the Roman Church itself, without kings and emperors having a finger in the pie as they did throughout the Middle Ages.

It is true that since Nogara in the early twentieth century the Vatican also had financial ups and downs, as well as sordid scandals. We do not need to dwell on them here. Interested readers can read details provided by other authors. A notable book is *The Vatican Exposed: Money, Murder,*

and the Mafia (2003) by Paul L. Williams, who apart from his Ph.D., has a Master of Divinity in Church History from Drew University, NJ.⁴⁶ He showed how despite some setbacks Catholic finances keep on flourishing.

VI

In other areas, too, the Vatican possesses potential levers of awesome power that could one day be used spectacularly: in American government and judicial affairs. For this, the potential has in just the past few years been growing quite remarkably.

According to a survey mentioned in *Religion Today* on 8 January 2001, “Catholics still dominate the U.S. Congress. There are 150, including 91 Democrats and 59 Republicans, among the 535 members of the 107th Congress . . . Catholics have been the largest religious bloc in the legislative branch since 1964, said Albert Menendez of Americans for Religious Liberty, a church-state separation group that conducts the survey. ‘They’re going to stay in first place probably forever.’”⁴⁷

It is true that Congress still has a majority of Protestants; but these are often divided and hardly a coherent group. Besides, the ecumenical ideal has made many of them prone to cooperation with Catholics and to safeguard what they often call Judeo-Christian values.

A remarkable change is that people in the United States, traditionally a Protestant country, no longer think it strange that their politicians should be adherents of the Roman Church. In 2007, the House of Representatives even acquired a Catholic Speaker, the Italian-American Nancy Patricia D’Alessandro Pelosi, who after the Vice President was second in the line of presidential succession.⁴⁸ And both the Democratic and Republican parties were for the 2008 presidential elections fielding Catholic candidates. For this office, neither Rudy Giuliani nor Joe Biden was successful. The latter, however, later became Vice President. That John F. Kennedy had also been a Catholic would seem, for a majority of Americans, to have made such individuals completely acceptable.

Furthermore, for the first time ever, six of the nine Supreme Court justices, including their chief, are Roman Catholics. It is part of President George W. Bush’s legacy that he nominated two of them: John Glover Roberts in 2005⁴⁹ and Samuel Alito in 2006.⁵⁰

We do not doubt the worth and excellent qualities of these functionaries. Nevertheless, their position is beclouded by a potential conflict of interest: a dual allegiance, to both America and the papacy. These loyalties are incompatible with each other, for no two entities can be further apart. The United States is a republic based on democratic principles. Its Constitution has incorporated a Bill of Rights, which safeguards liberties that are dear to the individual: free thought, free speech, and a free choice in religion as well as politics. Separation between church and state is a hallmark of this country. In contrast with that, the papacy is a dictatorial monarchy, and has no bill of

rights. Above all, it has never recognized a separation between church and state or the rights of individual conscience when these conflict with Catholicism.

In many areas of life, an unbridgeable chasm yawns between the papally prescribed and the American way of life. It would take us too far from our present theme to launch into many details. Let us refer to only one area in which a conflict of interest with Catholic thinking is inevitable: parochial as opposed to public schools. This issue has already divided our society for a century and a half.

A hundred years ago, Jeremiah J. S. Crowley—a former priest—maintained: “I assert that it is the set purpose of the great majority of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in America to destroy, root and branch, the present system of American public schools.” Beyond that, “the largest possible share of the public school tax funds” was to be secured for Catholic parochial schools, employing nuns and monks as their teachers. “The ultimate result would be *the supremacy of the Catholic Church in secular teaching* by virtue of Her strong organization and great resources through her various teaching orders” (emphasis added). Crowley also told of the coercive methods used by papists to enforce compliance by their parishioners, who mostly did not want to send their children to parochial schools. The worst case was that of William Henry Elder, Archbishop of Cincinnati. In a letter to both the clergy and laity subject to him, he decreed that it was a mortal sin for parents to have their children attend a public school without his permission. He also forbade confessors to grant absolution to such parents, which meant that one day—unless they changed their attitude and actions—they would go to hell. Furthermore, children could be admitted to first Holy Communion only after having spent at least two years in Catholic Schools. “This Statute,” Elder said, was enacted in Our Synod in 1898, and we regret that it has not always been observed.”⁵¹

A century later, via the voucher system such support with taxpayers’ money for largely Catholic, parochial schools was espoused by George W. Bush. Not coincidentally, during his troubled presidency he also on more than one occasion went to consult Pope John Paul II, before whose body he later kneeled in final obeisance.

We find, then, more than twelve hundred years since the papacy through a spurious document blended so-called Petrine primacy with temporal dominion, that this theology is still in a somewhat altered form essentially intact. The stock exchanges, banking, and other organs of capitalism have replaced the feudal system; therefore, outwardly some things—especially the economic system—are different. Yet the papacy is fundamentally the same, and its Luciferian one-upmanship will and can never change.

And the present signs of the times suggest it is well on its way to achieving planet-wide domination, when even American presidents have begun to bow down to it. Soon the whole world will be wondering after the Beast.

CONCLUSION

Exit the Beast

I

Twenty-six hundred years ago, the prophet Daniel in vision saw the “four winds of heaven” striving on “the great sea” (Dan.7:2), an ancient name for the Mediterranean. From its depths, he saw four strange animals emerge and was especially perplexed by the last of them, a terrible ten-horned Beast. As a heavenly being explained, it would wage war on and seek to destroy the saints of the Most High. According to Rev. 13, several centuries later, John the Beloved saw a similar creature climbing up out of the water.

This time, however, it had not only ten horns but also seven heads, which shows its affinity with the dragon introduced in the preceding chapter. The Bible makes it clear that the sea Beast derives its spurious authority and seat of power from this Satanic and pagan Roman source, not from the Son of God as it would claim.

This Beast, like the one that Daniel had seen, was also destined to afflict and maul the people of God. A comparison of Scripture with Scripture shows that this entity is the mystery of lawlessness which the apostle Paul had warned about. He said that in his day it was already stirring into life. The historic Antichrist would sit in the temple of God, the church, and assume divine status, enduring until the Second Coming.

Unlike those men, we are not prophets, but living in the end time we are able to compare their predictions with history, seeing clearly the very features that God through them declared would over the ages characterize the Beast.

We have noted that the actions of the pontificate over almost two millennia most remarkably fulfilled those prophecies. It did indeed persecute and often for long periods devastate the saints of the Most High, being the very entity that Daniel, Paul, and John had foretold. The heyday of its power filled up 1260 prophetic year-days, 42 months, or 3½ years, that is, from A.D. 538 to 1798. Then it suffered an almost fatal head wound, when General Berthier, representing the French Revolution, deprived Pope Pius VI of his Italian territories, the Papal States, and sent him into exile, where he died.

II

History has a threefold bearing on Bible prophecy and especially the book of Revelation. First, it validates the claim of the Apocalypse itself that it foretells the future (Rev. 1:1; 4:1; 22:6), by actual events unfolding through the ages. Second, such fulfillment contradicts and dismisses the Idealistic view that the book is really a series of homilies, sermons that have nothing to do with time. Third, for the same reason, it upholds Historicism, also known as the Historical-Continuistic method of interpretation, and dismisses Preterism as well as Futurism. Both of these display or imply immense chronological gaps, a vast silence about events between John’s time

and the Second Coming.

Only Historicism accounts satisfactorily for the prophecy of Rev. 13, with which we have been chiefly concerned, together with related passages from elsewhere in the Bible. This we will now demonstrate.

III

The prophecies of Daniel, in chapters 2 and 7 of his book, provide the master key to Bible prophecy. To a considerable extent, they unlock the meaning of Rev. 13. This was not the work of a moment, a day, or even a year; but of centuries. Let us take a backward look at this.

The basics for understanding Daniel were already fully present in the writings of Hippolytus (c. 170-c. 235), an early Christian bishop who lived only two hundred years after the birth of our Lord. He seems to have been the bishop of Porto, the ancient Portus Romanus, a harbor town about fifteen miles from Rome, on the northern side of the Tiber estuary.¹

A learned scholar and ante-Nicene theologian, he wrote a number of works which dealt with prophetic interpretation, including a substantial commentary on Daniel,² a largely lost treatise on the Apocalypse, and his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*.³ The last mentioned contains an astounding passage quoted in translations from the Greek original by several writers. The following is from a Catholic website:

“The golden head of the image and the lioness denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard, meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander’s time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Antichrist in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ.”⁴

The most remarkable point about this passage is its time of writing, more than 1750 years ago. Rome was still ruled by pagans; Constantine had not yet accepted Christianity; and the breakup of the Western empire lay more than two centuries in the future. Hippolytus did, however, live in a very unstable period, which historians call the Troubled Century. Numerous assassinations plagued the throne of the Caesars, while the barbarians invaded the empire repeatedly.

In passing, let us salute the courage of this learned man, for he knew that by expressing himself in such clear terms, he was exposing himself to martyrdom,⁵ which he ultimately could not escape. The capital was only fifteen miles away from his home, and it was treason to foretell the end of Roman domination, precisely because at that time this seemed quite plausible.

Simply on the basis of the Bible's prophecies, Hippolytus boldly declared "the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise;" and, indeed, the prophecy does say the beasts represent kings or *kingdoms* (cf. vv. 17 and 23). The ten horns symbolized the European powers of his future. Hippolytus also stated that the Antichrist would appear "in their midst." He knew these different states would survive to the end, the Second Coming of Christ. It is almost uncanny how closely events have borne out his interpretation.

Being well versed in the Scriptures, he would certainly have known that the last apostle had written: "As ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists" (1 John 2:18). He would therefore have recognized that this word could be applied to more than one apostate system. The aged John's preoccupation had been Gnosticism, but Hippolytus—like most believers through the ages—also knew that Bible prophecy focused specially on one particular Antichrist.

Even before Hippolytus, Jewish rabbis had made an identification similar to his. Following the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and his legions in A.D. 70, as well as the failure of Bar Kokhba's rebellion sixty years later, "Roman rule was regarded with little enthusiasm, the 'reign of Esau' or Daniel's Fourth Beast, and prayers for its ending were offered in the synagogues."⁶

Hippolytus's North African contemporary, Tertullian (c.160-240), made an identical interpretation: "The Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten, shall introduce Antichrist."⁷ This was also the idea of Lactantius (c. 250-c. 330), a generation later.⁸

Among pre-Constantinian Christians, these had become widely held interpretations of what the future would bring. And did the events that followed their time not vindicate their views? They certainly did. The Western Roman Empire broke up into ten Germanic states, symbolized by ten horns. These were then violently reduced to seven. First Odovacar's kingdom in Italy was eliminated. Later Vandal power in North Africa was demolished. After that, the Ostrogothic domination of Italy was destroyed. In all three cases, the greatest beneficiary was the papacy, the Little Horn that came up in their midst. (Dan. 7:7-8, 20-21)

Whether in relation to the Beast or its additional horn, some medieval Christians began to identify the Antichrist with the Roman pontiffs. These interpreters included the Albigenses of southern France.⁹

Over the centuries, from an early period, powerful voices also went up within Catholicism to equate the Antichrist with wicked pontiffs.

A striking example was Arnulf, bishop of Orleans. During a council meeting arranged by the French king in 991, he attacked the degenerate popes who were then disgracing the Vatican. Arnulf said the reigning pontiff, "clad in purple and gold, was 'Antichrist, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself as God.'"¹¹

Two hundred fifty years later, another prominent Catholic that made this

identification was Eberhardt II (d. 1246), Archbishop of Salzburg. In support of his emperor, the famous Frederick II, this cleric distanced himself from the Roman pontiff and at the Council of Regensburg in 1240 roundly declared that the papacy was the Little Horn.¹²

Henry Charles Lea (1825-1909), a multitalented writer of several books about the Middle Ages and the Inquisition, said that Eberhardt II had, like other Germans, contemptuously ignored Pope Gregory IX, who wanted them to elect another emperor to replace Frederick II, who had rebelled against him. For this reason, Eberhardt II died in 1246 “under excommunication.” His body “lay at Radstadt until 1288,” for 42 years, “when it was finally brought to Salzburg and magnificently interred.”¹³ That was thirteen popes later. The temper of the times had changed, and Gregory IX was no more.

This was not an isolated case, nor was the topic confined to theological writings. In the High Middle Ages, several Catholic poets—including some of the greatest who have ever lived—portrayed specific popes as Antichrist. Among them were Jean de Meun (c. 1275), the Frenchman who finished the *Romance of the Rose*, a vastly popular work in those days, and two great Italian writers, Jacopone da Todi (c. 1230-1306) and Dante Alighieri (1265-1321),¹⁴

Were these men right by interpreting the Apocalypse in such ways? A candid review of papal history can leave no real doubt that they were.

Let us now consider the year-day principle in interpreting prophecy. It was Jewish scholars who first invoked it to explain the seventy weeks of Dan. 9 and afterwards to interpret all of Daniel’s longer time periods.¹⁵

As far as we know, the earliest Christian writer who applied it to the 1260 years was the twelfth-century Joachim of Floris (c. 1135-1202), one-time abbot of the Cistercian Abbey at Corazzo, Italy. Following him, two centuries later, Walter Brute of England in the fourteenth century also explained the 1290 and 1335 days of Dan. 12 as literal years. Then, in about 1440, Nicholas (Krebs) of Cusa (1401-1464), was the first to apply the year-day principle to the longer 2300 days of Daniel 8:14.¹⁶

Both Joachim and Nicholas were good Catholics and became very famous. The latter, a polymath, was a Cardinal.¹⁷

Walter Brute (flourished 1391-1393), however, was a Reformer, a learned Welsh layman educated at Oxford University. There “he became acquainted with [John] Wickliff, with whom he formed an intimacy, and fully entered into his views respecting the reformation of the church.” He returned to his native Wales, where he was tried for heresy by Dr. John Trevnant, Bishop of Hereford. Brute presented a written testimonial. “In this defence, he also took opportunity to prove that the pope was Antichrist spoken of in Scripture; and that the Roman church was Babylon the Great, whose fall he described and proved in a lucid manner.” The judges dismissed him “without examination,” for some unknown reason, “perhaps for fear of violence from his followers.”¹⁸

Regarding the prophetic year-days, we note, however, that these Medieval men did not, like many Protestants of a later period, teach that the 1260 days

would extend from 538 to 1798. For instance, Joachim of Floris “identified the 1,260 days with the period between the advent of Christ and 1260 A.D.,” and Walter Brute “said the 1,260 and 1,290 days of prophecy were so many years, to be reckoned from the Hadrian desolation of Jerusalem to his own day.”¹⁹ But an important point is that they espoused the year-day principle and were Historicists.

Such, too, were the Reformers of the sixteenth century and later, into the early nineteenth century, as well as the Seventh-day Adventist Church which succeeded them.

The papacy did not perish in 1798, though the French Revolution inflicted on it a deadly, apparently mortal wound. It recovered, gradually at first but since 1929 to a most remarkable extent. Today the Roman Church claims to have a billion members and is also accumulating vast possessions and power. Already the world is “wondering” after the Beast, exactly as Rev. 13:3 predicted. In fact, the papacy is well on its way toward world domination.

Historicist Seventh-day Adventists have in their interpretation of Rev. 13, been expecting such developments since the middle of the nineteenth century. Most tellingly, we read of them in Ellen G. White’s “Aims of the Papacy,” a chapter of *The Great Controversy*. Amongst other things, she wrote:

“The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side. See the increasing number of her churches and chapels in Protestant countries. Look at the popularity of her colleges and seminaries in America, so widely patronized by Protestants.”²⁰

She also said America, symbolized by the two-horned beast depicted in the last part of Rev. 13, would yet through Sunday legislation support the Roman Church. “But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a restoration of her power. ‘I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.’ Verse 3.”²¹

When did she write these words? She completed the book containing them in 1888, with slight revisions in 1911, and died in 1915. But when did the papacy sign its agreements with Mussolini? Fourteen years later, in 1929. And only after that date has the world been witnessing the amazing resurgence of papal power, which we have already described.

Of course, the Vatican has not yet been able to achieve the goal of world domination, nor has America helped it do so by creating for it a Protestant look-alike, which prophecy calls the image of the Beast. The United States will not only institute this new order of things at home but also influence or compel the rest of the world to do the same. That time is still future.

Meanwhile, Heaven anticipated such wickedness by raising up beforehand a church to speak out against it. Rev. 12 depicts the people of God through the

centuries as a glorious woman clad with the sun. The devil, after failing to destroy the Saviour, turned his attention to her. But the true church survived his onslaughts by fleeing into the wilderness beyond the reach of Rome. There she remained for 1260 prophetic days or “a time, and times, and half a time,” or 3½ prophetic years.

After that period had elapsed in 1798, Satan “went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 12:17). These enemies of the great red dragon also feature in Rev. 14:12, where we read: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Now the context is the three angels’ messages mentioned in the preceding verses. The last of them concerns the end-time refuseniks, who resolutely will not worship the image of the Beast and spurn its mark, the Sunday sabbath. A great burden of the third angel’s message is to warn the world loudly and in no uncertain terms:

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb . . .” (Rev. 14:9-10).

An evil confederacy will yet decree death for those who refuse submission to legislation aimed at compelling their conscience. But to this, the Lord on high responds with the most fearsome threat contained in the Bible. And eventually after Jesus has repossessed this blood-bought world, the Beast and the False Prophet (the Two-horned Beast), together with the Dragon, will meet their end in that terrible lake of fire (Rev. 20). Tormented with them will be those who have joined in persecuting the commandment-keeping people of God and worshipped the Beast or his image, receiving on their hands or foreheads the mark that brings damnation.

IV

The baleful number 666 is also part of the Bible’s dire warning and end-time scenario. Like Uriah Smith and many others before him, we believe that it stands for *vicarius Filii Dei*, a papal title fraught with dark pontifical power.

This identification has likewise been strikingly validated by history. Together with the ecclesiastical and secular pretensions that it represents, this title has been much in evidence for more than 1200 years, as amply demonstrated in this book.

It still remains tremendously important, for those who at the end of time want to be among the Lord’s redeemed must gain the victory over this number as well to avoid the seven last plagues and inherit the kingdom. John wrote:

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God” (Rev. 15:2).

On the other hand, there is no support in either the Scriptures or common sense

for the Idealist numerology that our previous chapters have dealt with. By confusing people, it detracts from what God has to say about the matter. We especially need to discard the myth that there are three 6's in 666. In the original Greek of Rev. 13:18, the number does not appear in that form.

Therefore, if three characters are really required, the reader needs to remember the three-lettered truth about

ΧΞϚ.

In passing, we note that when Ranko Stefanović revised his *Revelation of Jesus Christ* (2009), he still clung to the contrary viewpoint. Perhaps to rebut Kenneth Jørgensen's 2006 critique, which we have already discussed, he wrote about the notorious number of Rev. 13:18: "It consists of the triple six clearly expressed in Greek: *hexakosioi hexēkonta hex*."²² This would mean that because *hexakosioi*, like its English equivalent *six hundred*, contains the word *six*, it is equal to *six*. Likewise *sixty* is equal to *six*. And so, of course, is *six* itself. That is to say, $600 = 6$, $60 = 6$, and $6 = 6$, which leads to the interesting conclusion that 600, 60, and 6 are all one and the same number! Really?

If Bible prophecy foretells the future, as it claims to do, Historicism is a much better paradigm than Idealism or Preterism and Futurism. As this affects Rev. 13, including the interpretation of 666, we always need to remember the vital principle of contextuality, details of which we finally here repeat.

Three dimensions of context are meant. The first is *intratextual*, that is, verse 18 is studied as part of and within Rev. 13 as a whole. The second is *intertextual*, which concerns the fact that elements of that chapter demonstrably allude to other Scriptures. The third is *extratextual*: the words and symbols of Scripture reach out beyond themselves toward the actual events of history.

This third dimension is the special province of Historicism. Only in partial ways, with awkward chronological gaps as well as other expedients, can Preterist and Futurist interpretations strive to establish their value as prophecy which actually foretells what is to be. Full-blown Idealism does not even try to do so. (It does, however, render stopgap assistance to make up for the deficiencies of Preterism and Futurism.)

Applying these considerations to the multilingual identification of the 666 in Rev. 13:18 with *vicarius Filii Dei*, as this book has done, reveals that it is a uniquely papal title, representing a claim to planet-wide secular power as well as ecclesiastical supremacy, over more than twelve centuries.

V

For hundreds of years, especially since the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Church has striven strenuously to nullify the idea that the papacy is the Antichrist. It has especially resented the fingering of the papacy

through references to *vicarius Filii Dei*. To do so, it has been relying on Preterism (its favorite), Futurism, Idealism, and every other method at its disposal.

We saw how the Belgian marquis de Chateleux reacted to David E. Delhove's numeric identification of it at Gitwe in 1925. He depended on the idea that other names can also give us that number, supposedly even Reformers like Luther and Calvin. More than eighty years later, Catholic apologists are still at it, exploiting that factor. But now their repertoire includes arguments based on numerological Idealism. On 4 November 2007, two of them, Sean Hannity, Fox News channel host, and priest-author Edward L. Beck, C.P., were discussing the last verse in Rev. 13, about "The Mysterious Nature of Three Numbers That Nobody Wants to Repeat."

Layman Hannity asserted: "In the final book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, it tells of impending doom, the end of time when a great war between the forces of good and evil will be fought. Ultimately, God will triumph, but the personification of evil comes at this time and in the form of the Antichrist or the Beast, bearing the number 666. Revelation's chapter 13 mentions that the people will receive the mark of the beast in their right hand or forehead."

He further said the Bible was not clear about what the mark would be, to which Beck added that everybody would interpret it differently: "It's a religious imagery of poetry almost that tries to explain a deeper truth about goodness and evil."

Hannity continued: "For church followers, 6 is seen as representing that which is short of perfection and a representation of sin. Repeated three times, such a number is made complete. It is also argued that 666 might represent an unholy trinity. The Bible is full of 7's to symbolize completeness. Six could symbolize the incomplete power of evil."

Beck agreed: "In the scripture, God is related to the perfect number 7. In the Book of Revelation, it says that the beast is man, the beast is human kind. We are 666. And there's the potential for evil in all of us. We will always be less than 7."

A good Catholic Preterist, he also alleged that numerologically 666 referred to the Roman emperor Nero. "That is a veiled way of talking about Nero."

Thereupon Hannity said: "Some have even linked the number to the holiest of Catholic institutions," to which Beck replied: "Actually, it was Pope John Paul II. If you look at his Latin name, Ioannes Paulus Secundo, and you take the Roman numerals from that name, guess what they add up to? 666. If you take the Latin name that refers to all popes, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which means *vicar of the Son of God*, if you take the Roman numerals out of these, guess what they add up to? 666."

(However, in the nominative case, which the context properly demands, the Latin referring to the late pontiff should really have been Ioannes

Paulus *Secundus*, which gives a total of 671. *Secundo* in the dative or ablative case is here a spurious form.)

At the end of the interview, Beck said: “The deeply important lesson of the Book of Revelation and the whole notion of 666 is a force. I think what this lesson is, from the Book of Revelation, is that good will overcome it, but we have to be vigilant about it.” Hannity concluded: “So is 666 nothing more than a symbolic warning of evil in all of us? Or are the numbers truly the embodiment of the devil himself or maybe the mark of the beast is just ‘Beyond Belief.’”²³

VI

We are disturbed to find how closely this Catholic interpretation is matched by ideas in the writings of some Seventh-day Adventist scholars, whom we have had the sorrow and misfortune to discuss. For such striking similarities, they were indebted to the same Idealist sources.

But do any of these things matter? As we have shown, the effect is to undermine the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the three angels’ messages, especially the one that unmasks the papacy as the Beast and its mark as a future, national Sunday law, which will unleash a terrible persecution for those who obey the Fourth Commandment.

About this, we also need to note that more is involved than merely intellectual differences of prophetic interpretation; our personal salvation and eternal survival are at stake.

When Sabbathkeepers are turned away at the gasoline station or arrested and jailed for disloyalty to the government because they dare to speak out against a now international Sunday law, the end of human probation will be very near. That may well, dear reader, be your last chance to avoid the perdition awaiting those who obey a human ordinance rather than God. Soon a death decree will follow for those who remain loyal to him by fully obeying his commandments. Then it will be, alas, too late; for this will be the sign that the door of mercy has closed, when our Saviour is to say:

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev. 22:11-12)

Notes

Volume I

The Story of the Great Apostasy

INTRODUCTION

Enter the Beast

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PART 1

The Basics

1. An Early Expectation of the End

No notes.

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with great accuracy; next it fits the papal order as such, at once and always, which none of the Pontiffs will deny; thirdly it is not odious, nor vile, as imposed on him by adversaries, but for himself especially honorable and venerable . . .).

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PART 3 The Pope Becomes a King

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32. Uriah Smith’s Unique Contribution

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Concerning Notes 27 and 28: The case of Paul VI is very interesting, for he lived in an era when the Roman Church was trying to hide the title and several Catholic writers denied that it had ever existed. This material was dug up on the Internet by Michael Scheifler of Hawaii. Steve Emse of Scotland, Connecticut, bought the book containing this material and supplied me with PDF images.

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Hail, holy land, wherein our holy Lord
hath planted his most true and holy Word.
Hail, happy people, who have dispossessed
yourselves of friends, and means, to find some rest
for your poor wearied souls, oppressed of late
for Jesus' sake, with envy, spite, and hate.
To you that blessed promise truly's given
of sure reward, which you'll receive in heaven.
Methinks I hear the Lamb of God thus speak:
"Come, my dear little flock, who for my sake
have left your country, dearest friends, and goods,
and hazarded your lives o'th raging floods.
Possess this country, free from all annoy.
Here I'll be with you, here you shall enjoy
my Sabbaths, sacraments, my ministry,
and ordinances in their purity.
But yet beware of Satan's wily baits.
He lurks among you. Cunningly he waits
to catch you from me. Live not, then, secure
but fight 'gainst sin, and let your lives be pure.
Prepare to hear your sentence thus expressed:
'Come ye my servants of my Father blessed.'"

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Appendix I

About This Book

I

A 64-page booklet *Finding the Lost Prophetic Witnesses* (1946) by LeRoy Edwin Froom explained just how in 1933 his quest began for the material eventually used to make up his four-volume masterpiece, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation*. Well funded by the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he began in America and then expanded his search, undertaking two extensive trips to Europe during 1935 and 1938. On that continent, many doors of premier research institutions swung open to him—amongst others in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Torre Pelice, Rome, and the Vatican. Frequently they were unlocked by diplomatic documents he had brought with him from the U.S. government as well as the German embassy, Washington, D.C., or letters from leading American librarians. He was assisted by a galaxy of fellow-believers with the necessary language skills, including a knowledge of Latin. Later, after World War II, he did follow-up research in 1948.¹ The result was a rich harvest of notes and photostats (an invention later supplanted by photocopies), which laid the groundwork for his lectures at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Berrien Springs, Michigan, and his subsequent magnum opus.

At first glance, the genesis and essence of my work could not have been more different. Unlike Froom, I was not employed by nor did I enjoy the financial backing of my church. My financial resources were meager, mostly a small pension, supplemented by my wife's income. For the most part, I remained in southernmost Texas, making only a few trips within America. Additional background was, however, provided by my previous travels in Africa, Europe, Crete, and the Middle East. I myself provided most of the language skills (augmented by some overseas help with Latin), and largely relied on wonderful researchers and a few very fine editors.

On the other hand, over the past seven years I have had at my disposal splendid interlibrary facilities, personal books on prophecy acquired over many years, and digital images from a marvelous store of rare publications—some of them many centuries old—at leading colleges, universities, research institutions, and great libraries in both the United States and abroad. This was made possible by the Internet, through which my researchers or I myself could pay virtual visits to even more places than Froom was able to visit. (Did he go to both Glasgow and Edinburg in Scotland, Västerås in Sweden, or Bombay, in India?) Further, we downloaded many a Google book with spectacular material which he certainly never saw, since he did not refer to it.

Despite the differences between *The Truth About 666* and Froom's

Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, these works have three things in common.

First, they both began in response to a deviation by Seventh-day Adventist writers from their church's traditional views on prophecy or its history after the Great Disappointment of 22 October 1844. On that day, Christ did not come as Baptist preacher William Miller (1782-1849) and his interdenominational followers had predicted, after which most of this movement disintegrated. One remnant group, however, concluded that 22 October 1844 was prophetically a correct date, but the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Dan. 8:14 did not refer to this earth at all. Instead, it marked the entrance of Jesus our High Priest before his and our Father into the most holy place of a heavenly sanctuary for its Yom Kippur or judgment phase. This remnant formed the nucleus of what would later become the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In Froom's time, Louis R. Conradi (1856-1939), a former president of its European Division, had for various reasons turned against and left the denomination to become its fierce opponent. That was in 1932. Amongst other things, he instigated "some forty questions . . . concerning early denominational events and pioneer names. They pertained chiefly to the decade of 1844-54."² These queries and the doubts they incited caused the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference to send Froom on his initial quest through North America in 1933. Afterwards this led him far beyond the problems created by Conradi to much more extensive research, which made him travel eastward over the Atlantic.

The researches for the present book began just after the publication of my *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001). What eventually was to become *The Truth About 666* is above all a response to a Sabbath School lesson on 8 June 2002.³ The details that it raised are dealt with in their appropriate place.

The problem during the late twentieth- and the early twenty-first century is a rejection by some Seventh-day Adventist scholars of an important detail in their church's prophetic eschatology: the idea that Rev. 13:18 refers to the papal title *vicarius Filii Dei*, with its numerical value of 666. Originating in Protestant circles outside the Millerite movement, this identification first penetrated into Seventh-day Adventist circles through *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (1865) by Uriah Smith (1832–1903). That was just two years after 1863, when the Seventh-day Adventist Church had been formally organized, and just twenty-one years subsequent to 1844. The new denomination was still constituting itself.

By adopting additional doctrines like the seventh-day Sabbath, it had already moved beyond the Millerite tradition. Now, with the *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666 formula, it further expanded its Historicist horizon with an antipapal emphasis derived from the Protestant Reformation, together with its precursors of earlier ages. Smith quickly became the premier prophetic expositor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Posthumously revised in 1944 and retitled *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation*, his book is

still a standard work on the topics that it addresses. And since its forerunner in 1865 pointed out that *vicarius Filii Dei* had a numerical value of 666, the public evangelists of the Seventh-day Adventist Church have largely continued to do the same.

Actually, more is involved. Immediately after Rev. 13:18, the next chapter introduces the Three Angels' Messages, which culminate in a dire warning against the Beast. According to Seventh-day Adventists, this threefold announcement with "the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"—as well as a character sketch of a people "that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus"—accurately delineates their worldwide mission (Rev. 14:6-12). But if they should be wrong about *vicarius Filii Dei* and the papal values for which it stands, are they really, as they claim, the Remnant foretold in the Apocalypse? If not, they have no Biblical grounds for existing as a denomination.

As happened in the case of Conradi's criticism and Froom's quest, it has again become necessary to consider 1844 and its aftermath.

Second, as with Froom, my writing grew and grew. His photostats and notes initially produced a series of seminary lectures, followed by his four-volume *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*. What was eventually to become *The Truth About 666* began as part of a single chapter on Rev. 13. Later it morphed into a longer study, *That Mysterious Number*. It now encompasses three volumes.

Third, both Froom and I had providential help in doing our research. Details about its operations in his experience make up many pages of *Finding the Lost Prophetic Witnesses*. It is an inspiring work. I could also write a separate booklet about providential assistance. This is hardly the place for all its details, but here are four examples of it.

1. The adult Sabbath School lesson of 8 June 2002 deeply upset me. Prepared and approved by denominational writers, it shoved aside what Uriah Smith—together with his nineteenth-century colleagues—had concluded, namely that the 666 in Rev. 13:18 referred to the papal title *vicarius Filii Dei*, which has this numerical value. More than that, it also debunked a much older and more venerable basis for such a conclusion. This is what the Sabbath School lesson said:

"*Vicarius Filii Dei* (Vicar of the Son of God). Since the Reformation, this papal title has been used to calculate the number 666. But there are several questions that should make us cautious. First, it is not clear that this title is an official one. Second, there is no clear indication in Revelation 13 that the number is based on the numerical value of the letters of a name. The phrase 'it is the number of a man' (vs. 18, NIV) could be translated 'it is the number of [humanity]'; that is, of humans separated from God. Third, those who insist on counting the numerical value of letters confront the problem of deciding which language will be used. Because the text does not identify any language, the selection of a particular one will be somewhat arbitrary. At the present time,

the symbolism of intensified rebellion, six used three times, and total independence from God seem to be the best option.”⁴

All these issues are dealt with in this book. What struck me first about this statement was the suggestion that Seventh-day Adventist evangelists and others have for a hundred and fifty years been wrong in presenting to their audiences or readers the formula *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666. Perhaps, in fact, they should also abandon the ideas of men like Martin Luther and stop telling people that the papacy is the Antichrist!

I was still most unhappy a week later at the Pharr Church in southernmost Texas. But as I stepped into the foyer, I found on the table a mimeographed copy of a document by Robert F. Correia, “The Quasten Document on *Vicarius Filii Dei*.” Though undated, it was signed and also—according to its address—an old, perhaps the original version of it.⁵ It began to answer some of my questions.

2. In 2006, Jerry Stevens, at that time the editor of *ADVENTISTS AFFIRM*, unprompted by me, began to work on his Timeline. Through the Internet, he ransacked the archives at Seventh-day Adventist institutions, including Avondale in Australia, as well as nondenominational colleges and universities all over the world. This made it possible to look at every edition of Uriah Smith’s works, especially his books on Daniel and the Revelation, as well as his statements in the *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. Beyond that, Jerry continued his search into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. All his discoveries he shared with me, as I did mine with him.

3. Also in 2006, near the end of it, a most remarkable event occurred at the breakfast table in my own home. I had just said to my wife Ria: “Well, I have finished checking the PDF manuscript of *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, which now includes ‘That Notorious Number,’ a chapter on *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666. A little later this morning, I must take it to the printer.”

A bare twenty minutes after that, while we were still sitting there, the telephone rang. It was a stranger, Stephen D. Emse, from a town called Scotland in Connecticut. He had read “That Notorious Number on a Web page,” where Dr. Frank Hardy kindly placed it with my permission. Steve said to himself: “This must be a Seventh-day Adventist.”

Doing further Google searches to trace me, he found my telephone number in Samuele Bacchiocchi’s *Endtime Issues No. 87* (1 August 2002). The latter had published this a mere two months after the notorious Sabbath School lesson mentioned above. Although Bacchiocchi set out and defended several ideas that Steve found repugnant, he also wrote:

“You might be interested to learn about a major study recently published on this subject. The title of the book is *CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY*. The author, Edwin de Kock, is a retired Adventist professor from South Africa, now living in Texas. He has done a masterful job in reconstructing the historical setting

of the controversy between Christ and the Antichrist. In many ways this study is an apologetic defense of the historical Adventist interpretation of the Antichrist. When completed the study will consist [sic] of three volumes.

“I do not agree with everything de Kock wrote, but, as a church historian, I am very impressed by his historical reconstruction of events related to the outworking of the Antichrist. You can order now the first volume (390 pages) by contacting the author directly.”⁶ My former postal and e-mail addresses followed, plus my telephone number, which fortunately remained the same.

Intrigued by Bacchiocchi’s recommendation, Steve immediately called me. I told him I was about to publish a second book which would, as a chapter, include that piece on *vicarius Filii Dei* = 666. He then informed me that he was also troubled about this topic and had already been researching it. In fact, he had found a great deal of new material about it but did not know what to do with it. I said: “Send it to me, brother!”

The sequel was amazing, the more so since Bacchiocchi was already turning away from “the historical Adventist interpretation of the Antichrist,” and questioned the dates 538 and 1798 in relation to the period of 1260 prophetic days, as well as other matters. Yet it was he who made it possible for Steve to find me. This, I believe, was ironically providential; and perhaps, in heaven, somebody chuckled.

Steve lives within driving distance of some twenty colleges and universities, among them Yale and Harvard, with their magnificent libraries, at which old or otherwise rare publications are housed. Through the Internet, he has also been in touch with several of the same institutions visited by Froom between the two World Wars. In not a few cases, he purchased special items from beyond the Atlantic, as actual or electronic publications. Furthermore, prowling through cyberspace, he Googled up and—in part or as a whole—was able to download digital books, the originals of which are lodged in great libraries at Berlin, the Vatican, Oxford, and other places. Some of these were unvisited by Froom. Consequently neither he, nor any other Seventh-day Adventist researcher, could see the many additional texts that Steve unearthed and passed on to me. Amazingly these included all three editions of *Antichristus Romanus* (The Roman Antichrist), which appeared in 1600, 1612, and 1630, by Andreas Helwig. This was the first man who noticed that in Roman numerals *vicarius Filii Dei* had a number value of 666. Until now, no Seventh-day Adventist scholar even knew about the existence of the 1630 edition. Steve likewise brought to light a large array of writers after Helwig but before Uriah Smith who all explicitly demonstrated that *vicarius Filii Dei* numerically equaled 666.

Another gift from Steve was my own developing ability to Google and download an abundance of additional texts.

4. One morning as I woke up, a thought—or was it a voice in my mind?—directed: “Also look at that title of the pope translated into other languages.” I

did so and alerted Steve. Over the next few years, a stunning avalanche of data was added to our store. As European writers down from the Renaissance period increasingly switched to their own languages, the Latin *vicarius Filii Dei* was paralleled by *vicaire du Fils de Dieu* in French, *vicario del Hijo de Dios* in Spanish, *vigario do Filho de Deos* in Portuguese, *vicario del Figlio/Figli[u]ol[o] di Dio* in Italian, *Vikar/Stellvertreter des Sohnes Gottes/Statthalter des Gottessohnes* in German, *vicar of the Son of God* in English, etc. These appear in many texts over more than four hundred years. The Italian one that calls Pope Pius II (1405-1464, reigned from 1458) the *vicario del Figliuol di Dio* is from before the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century and was written in April 1459.

I find it difficult to think that the impulse to search for such translations and historically contextualize their use through so many ages was just my own idea. It, too, I believe, was providential.

II

The reader will, however, chiefly wonder just how this book differs from many others on similar topics.

Nowadays it is still common for writers—both fierce opponents and even some friends of the Vatican—to show how for centuries the Donation was used to further papal pretensions to power, both ecclesiastical and secular; but though they incidentally quote the title as part of the text, they never focus on it. Apart from some indications in Helwig’s work, we have found none who actually discussed *vicarius Filii Dei* and its significance within the context of that document in relation to papal history since the eighth century.

This is also true of Seventh-day Adventist scholars. A good example was V. Norskov Olsen (1916-1999). First educated in his native Denmark, he also gained qualifications from other countries. At Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, he obtained—amongst other things—a B.D. degree. Then he went on to study further at prestigious institutions outside his church. An M.Th from Princeton Theological Seminary was followed by a Ph.D. from the University of London and a D.Theol. from the University of Basel in Switzerland. He became “professor of church history, academic dean, provost and president at Newbold College, England.” Later he similarly served at Loma Linda University, California. “His professional responsibilities included professor of church history, chairman of the Department of Religion, academic dean, provost and president of the two-campus University from 1974 to 1984.” When he retired, he remained as “a Scholar in Residence at Loma Linda University actively engaged in research and writing.” Important fruitage of his life work was his *Papal Supremacy and American Democracy, the Roman Catholic Cornerstone and Stumblingblock and American Democracy: Its Religious Roots and Heritage* (1987).⁷

That is a scholarly book. Amongst other merits are what it says about the development of Canon Law right down to 1983. It also deals with the role that forgeries played in establishing both the Papal States and papal power. Olsen even specifically discussed the spurious Donation of Constantine, yet linked with it only the titles *vicarius Dei* (vicar of God) and *vicarius Christi* (vicar of Christ).⁸ But he remained totally silent about *vicarius Filii Dei*, though it explicitly appears in that document. Nowhere in his work did he ever mention it.

My book, on the other hand, blends a detailed awareness of the part that the Donation played for more than a thousand years in European and world affairs with special attention to the title *vicarius Filii Dei*. With this, I think its insights are—up to the present—unique.

It also seeks to remedy a defect on the part of Seventh-day Adventist expositors. With or without an awareness of Helwig's contribution, many of them have made much of that title and 666 as its numeral value; yet to the present they have not grasped its pivotal role in papal history.

For some Seventh-day Adventist scholars, the fraudulence of the Donation has been a major stumbling block. This was certainly the case for Froom on 29 August 1938, when he wrote a letter from London to Warren Eugene Howell (1859–1943), Secretary of the General Conference President. At that time, Howell was heading a committee for revising Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*.

Froom said: "In the hundreds and hundreds (literally!) of papal documents and pictures of tiaras and other papal implements which I have examined I have never found an authentic use of the title [*vicarius Filii Dei*] by a papal leader, save in the forged Donation of Constantine in the Decretum of Gratian. I have studied coins and medallions and pictures and documents in Rome, and Vienna, Geneva, Paris, London, Berlin, and I have had the assistance of skilful men in these different places, not only Adventist experts in Latin, but I have appealed to the finest experts in those institutions without any result."⁹

It is clear that Froom was greatly frustrated by the status of the Donation as a forgery and was unable to look beyond this fact. He and his colleagues should have asked precisely by whom and for what purpose this document had been concocted. They should also have inquired about its role in past events.

III

A major problem for Seventh-day Adventist and many other prophetic interpreters has been historical inadequacy, with an inclination to see Christianity too much as a western European and American phenomenon. Vividly I remember my telephone conversation round about 2001 with a respected professor who had written several books about prophecy and often lectured overseas, though now he was retired from our Seminary. I

happened to mention the early church in both Syria and Mesopotamia. Before the nineteenth century, the latter—also known as the Church of the East—was the most missionary-minded branch of Christianity. With its headquarters outside the Roman as well as the Byzantine empires, its work extended to the West into Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Southern France; to the East into Mongolia as well as China; and South right down to the Malabar coast of India. But about the entire Church of the East, the learned doctor said: “I have never heard of it.”

One Seventh-day Adventist scholar who knew very much, writing about it and the Gospel that it proclaimed in these other countries was a Canadian, Benjamin George Wilkinson (1872-1968). He was a versatile man: evangelist, conference president, theologian, and author. Perhaps even more significantly, he was dean of theology at several Seventh-day Adventist institutions: Battle Creek College; Union College, Nebraska; and Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University), near the American capital. “After a time as president of the East Pennsylvania Conference he gave 24 consecutive years of service to Washington Missionary College, serving as president from 1936 to 1946.” Wilkinson’s active work for the church amounted to “56 years of service.” Formally, he was the denomination’s most learned man at the beginning of the twentieth century, earning his Ph.D. in 1908,¹⁰ the first Seventh-day Adventist to do so.¹¹ He is largely significant for three reasons.

First he was “a participant in the 1919 Bible Conference which was a highly significant event within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Like other conferences at the time amongst Fundamentalists it discussed the nature of inspiration, both of the Bible and Ellen G. White. Wilkinson was representative of the conservative faction at the conference, arguing that Ellen White’s writings are inerrant. Other leaders such as A. G. Daniells argued that White’s writings do contain errors, but still supported biblical inerrancy.”¹² This issue is still plaguing Seventh-day Adventists, and in passing I address it on some of these pages, but also through Appendix IV.

Second, Wilkinson was very knowledgeable about Bible translations. His insightful work, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, appeared in 1930.¹³ We summarize it as follows. He insisted that the original King James Bible was superior to the English Revised Version of 1881-1885 as well as its transatlantic variant, the American Revised Version (1901). The same, according to him, applies to many subsequent translations, since they have similar characteristics. He also dealt with ancient versions and the underlying manuscripts of the original languages. He argued strongly to vindicate the Greek New Testament known as the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text) which Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536), the paramount Renaissance scholar, had edited and published in 1505. Wilkinson rejected the manuscripts that scholars began to focus on in the nineteenth century and which powerfully influenced the American Revised Version. These are the fourth-century *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus* as well as the fifth-century *Codex Alexandrinus*. He said

they were related to the manuscripts that the emperor Constantine I had commanded to be made but which were influenced by Origen (c. 185-c. 254) with his heretical ideas.

According to Wilkinson, Erasmus knew about much of this tainted material while preparing the *Textus Receptus* but rejected it. The translators of the *Authorized/King James Version* were also aware of it.¹⁴ Wilkinson debunked the idea that the *Sinaiticus* tradition was unknown before Konstantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874) “discovered” its manuscript in the monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai during 1844. Instead, he argued that it is “a brother of the Vaticanus,” which had for centuries lain in the papal library. This was, in fact, the material on which Jerome during the fourth century based his Latin *Vulgate*. In the time of King James I, “the translators of 1611 had available all the variant readings of these manuscripts and rejected them.”¹⁵ As Wilkinson pointed out, moreover, the fact that the *Codex Sinaiticus*, the *Codex Vaticanus*, and the *Codex Alexandrinus* were written in uncials (“capital” letters) is not so impressive. The revisers also had available another one hundred and twelve such manuscripts, but the majority “ignored these and pinned their admiration and confidence practically to two,—the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.”¹⁶ A large number of these men belonged to or were influenced by the Catholicizing Oxford Movement. The result of their labors was “36,000 changes in the English of the King James Version, and very nearly 6,000 in the Greek Text. And for the most of these changes the Vatican and Sinaitic Manuscripts are responsible.”¹⁷

But this tradition also underlies a great deal of the Latin *Vulgate*, the official Roman Catholic Bible, translated by Jerome (c. 347-419/420). The main burden of *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* is that new translations like the American Revised Version were greatly influenced by the *Vulgate* via what Wilkinson called the Jesuit *Douay-Rheims* translation into English. This was first published during 1582. Its 1749-1752 edition was revised by or under the supervision of Dr.—later Bishop—Richard Challoner (1691-1781),¹⁸ which Wilkinson was also well aware of. He quoted Cardinal Wiseman as writing that “in nearly every case, Challoner’s changes took the form approximating to the Authorized Version.”¹⁹ Therefore, “if you seek to compare the Douay with the American Revised Version, you will find that the older, or first Douay of 1582, is more like it in Catholic readings than those editions of today,” although “even in the later editions, you will find many of these corruptions which the Reformers denounced and which reappear in the American Revised Version.”²⁰

On many pages, Wilkinson compared the translations of specific texts. The following two specimens with his comments are of special interest:

“XVI. *Hebrews 7:21*

“(1) KING JAMES BIBLE. ‘(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever *after the order of Melchisedec*.)’

“(2) JESUIT VERSION. ‘But this with an oath by him that said unto him: Our Lord hath sworn, and it shall not repent Him’ Thou art a Priest forever.’

“(3) AMERICAN REVISED. ‘For they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but he with an oath by him that saith of him, ‘The Lord sware and will not repent Himself, Thou art a priest forever).’

“The phrase ‘after the order of Melchisedec’ found in the King James Bible is omitted in both the other two versions.”²¹ That is, neither the Catholic Bible nor the *American Revised* indicates that the office of Jesus as our heavenly *High Priest* (compare with vs. 26) and only Mediator is unique.

“XVII. *Rev. 22:14*

“(1) KING JAMES BIBLE. ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.’

“(2) JESUIT VERSION. ‘Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.’

“(3) AMERICAN REVISED. ‘Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city.’

“This passage, in the King James, gives us the right to the tree of life by keeping the commandments. The passage was changed in the Rheims New Testament. It was restored by the Authorized, and changed back to the Rheims (Jesuit Bible) by the Revised.”²² The New Testament of the *Revised Standard Version* in 1946 did the same. It also failed to mention Melchisedec.

But in 1982 the New King James Version, which is staunchly Protestant, reverted to the readings of both *Rev. 22:14* and *Heb. 7:21*, as contained in the Authorized Version—although the Challoner-Rheims revision of 1941, in its 2000 reprint still omits the reference to Melchisedec and persists in saying: “Wash their robes.”²³

Wilkinson also dealt with an issue that directly concerns *The Truth About 666*:

“IX. *A Substitute Number for the Beast: ‘616’ or ‘666’*

1. *Rev. 13:18*

“KING JAMES: ‘And his number is six hundred threescore and six.’

“REVISED: ‘And his number is six hundred and sixteen’ (margin).”

The same reference to 616 has persisted in the *Revised Standard Version* from 1946 to the present. Wilkinson’s comment was:

“Throughout the ages, the certainty of this number, ‘666,’ and the certainty of applying it to the Papacy, has been a source of strength and comfort to Protestant martyrs. Behold the uncertainty and confusion brought into the interpretation of this prophecy by offering in the margin the substitute number ‘616.’ Did not the Revisers by this change strike a blow in favor of Rome?”²⁴

To show how shamelessly they had acted in even mentioning this variant,

Wilkinson quoted from *The Revision Revised* (1883) by John William Burgon (1813-1888), Dean of Chichester, who acquired a doctorate from the prestigious Oxford University. Burgon's book republished his three articles against "I. The New Greek Text, II. The New English Version, and III. Westcott and Hort's New Textual Theory."²⁵ Burgon was a learned conservative who rejected rationalism, the Romanizing of the Anglican Church, Darwin's Evolution, Unitarianism, and textual criticism that undermined the Scriptures.²⁶ In many ways, he was like Wilkinson and on such topics perhaps his mentor.

Burgon asked: "But why is not the *whole* Truth told ? viz. why are we not informed that *only one* corrupt uncial (c):—*only one* cursive copy (11):—*only one* Father (Tichonius): and *not one* ancient Version—advocates this reading?—which, on the contrary, Irenaeus (A.D. 170) knew, but rejected; remarking that 666, which is 'found in all the best and oldest copies and is attested by men who saw John face to face' is unquestionably the true reading.¹ Why is not the ordinary Reader further informed that the same number (666) is expressly vouched for by Origen,²—by Hippolytus,³—by Eusebius:⁴—as well as by Victorinus—and Primasius,—not to mention Andreas and Arethas? To come to the moderns, as a matter of fact the established reading is accepted by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles,—even by Westcott and Hort. *Why* therefore—for what possible reason—at the end of 1700 years and upwards, is this, which is so clearly nothing else but an ancient slip of the pen, to be forced upon the attention of 90 millions of English-speaking people?"²⁷

After several further arguments, Burgon added this question: "Was the intention only to insinuate one more wretched doubt—one more miserable suspicion—into minds which have been taught (*and rightly*) to place absolute reliance in the textual accuracy of all the gravest utterances of the SPIRIT: minds which are utterly incapable of dealing with the subtleties of Textual Criticism; and, from a one-sided statement like the present, will carry away none but entirely mistaken inferences, and the most unreasonable distrust?"²⁸

All this, and more, is accurately quoted in Wilkinson's book, with only the superscripted reference numbers omitted and a comma added after *viz.*²⁹

Wilkinson's work had a great influence on "David Otis Fuller's book, *Which Bible*, which helped to popularize King James Only beliefs."³⁰ It is, however, misleading to say that *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* "was edited to hide Wilkinson's Adventist beliefs",³¹ for this suggests that it was he himself who did so. While his book was intended for a larger readership, its title page identifies him as the "Dean of Theology, Washington Missionary College, TAKOMA PARK, D.C." He even quoted from *The Great Controversy* and in a footnote identified the author as E. G. White.³²

I do not myself believe the Authorized (King James) Version is perfect, yet on the whole it is very accurate and from a literary point of view an

unsurpassed masterpiece of literature. For those who are comfortable with and even relish Elizabethan English, nothing else in the language rivals its emotive impact. Therefore, I mostly quote from it (also because its copyright has expired). I did discover, however, that sometimes the *New King James Version* (NKJV) is more correct. This especially applies to the word ἀνομία (anomia), which means “lawlessness,” as in 2 Thess. 2:7, Hebrews 1:9, 1 John 3:4, and other significant contexts, which the appropriate chapter of this book addresses. In most cases, the *Authorized/King James Version* translated *anomia* as “iniquity,” which does not accurately reflect the original.

The Preface of the NKJV, published in 1982, reveals that Wilkinson was in 1930 fifty years ahead of his time—and Burgon a full century. Some later scholars have now also moved beyond the heritage of Westcott and Hort. About the manuscripts involved in the translation of the NKJV, its editors have written: “Even though many are late, and none are earlier than the fifth century, most of their readings are verified by ancient papyri, ancient versions, and quotations in the writings of the early church fathers. This large body of manuscripts is the source of the Greek text underlying the King James Bible. It is the Greek text used by Greek-speaking churches for many centuries, presently known as the *Textus Receptus*, or Received Text, of the New Testament.”³³

Our Authorized Bible Vindicated reveals an acquaintance with both ancient and nineteenth-century publications which for 1930 was rare among Seventh-day Adventists. Via Google, I have recovered and checked a considerable number of Wilkinson’s sources about the Waldensian Bible in the Romaunt language. His references to Leger, Desanctis, and Gilley are most accurate, in support of his statement that “The Agents of the Papacy have done their utmost to calumniate their character, to destroy the records of their noble past, and to leave no trace of the cruel persecution they underwent.”³⁴

As shown in one of my chapters, Froom also did research about the Waldensians and seemed to pick up where Wilkinson left off, without referring to him. He would surely have been aware of the material in *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* by his fellow Seventh-day Adventist.

Wilkinson, an intellectual giant, was well ahead of his time in his own denominational circles. His knowledge of ecclesiastical history and other religious matters also characterizes his *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness*,³⁵ which first appeared in 1944. Its scope is vast, with chapters encompassing Christianity in many areas which his coreligionists have until recently largely overlooked. Of these I have already mentioned several: Syria, Mesopotamia, Mongolia, China, and India; but also Ethiopia, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Vaudois valleys in the Cottian Alps, and other places.

Specialists may look askance at such a vast gamut and sometimes wonder about Wilkinson’s accuracy. To reassure myself, I have on this point also Googled up and recovered many of his sources, ancient as well as modern, especially from that wondrous store of nineteenth-century publications by Protestants which he consulted. I have also from the same period downloaded

additional books. He can be charged, I found, with surprisingly few and scarcely any serious errors.

IV

All human productions, including research results, are imperfect. Even the most careful Ph.D. dissertation—which this is not—has its Error Quotient (E.Q.). No matter how well it is done, it will have blemishes in it. And the longer a book is, the more this is bound to be the case.

Most worrisome to the conscientious writer is not the occasional typo or even a wrong date. When discovered, the former is an irritant; the latter, a pang. But some mistakes can be downright horrible. This is how Charles Kuralt, that wanderer through his beloved United States, who could write so delightfully, expressed it at the beginning of his *America* (1995): “Errors may remain; if you write enough words, one or two of them may jump up and bite you. I hope I have made it through this volume unbiten, and if I haven’t, I apologize.”³⁶ After checking and rechecking the contents, mechanics, structure, style, and substance of *The Truth About 666*, I trust that by and large it also has a low E.Q.

Primary sources lie at the heart of this book. However, since it encompasses two thousand years of history, secondary sources also inevitably play their part.

Academic purists might prefer the omission of encyclopedias, such as the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and especially *Wikipedia*, which only began in 2001. At some universities, the latter is still frowned on. But nowadays *Wikipedia* has competent editors who guard the integrity of its articles. They require sources and exclude malicious contributors and vandals. Supposedly “every Tom, Dick, and Harry” can write for *Wikipedia*, but why would they? Ignoramuses have limited incentives for expressing themselves about matters of which they know nothing, and amateurish efforts are swiftly eliminated. This unique corpus now runs to many millions of entries and as the largest encyclopedia in human history represents a repository of data far exceeding the *Britannica*.

It might be supposed that the latter is more accurate. After all, its construction and improvement extended over more than two hundred years. Indeed, it contains a good number of articles by world authorities in their respective fields. Therefore, we prize and use it. Nevertheless, it is not necessarily more accurate than *Wikipedia*. Copious examples on the Internet have demonstrated this fact in some detail. All the same, the *Britannica* can generally be depended on—although it is notably deficient in its coverage of Protestant writers.

But what about the very many other websites with which cyberspace is populated? They are no better. From this, a reactionary could conclude that researchers must shun the Internet altogether and limit themselves to printed books and journals. Unfortunately these, too, are liable to error. Worst of all

are church histories, which mostly if not always betray a crass denominational bias.

Primary sources have frequently also been perverted or tainted with forgery, a widespread problem over the centuries. For instance, Barbara Tuchman, an eminent author, asserted: “Any historian with even the most elementary training knows enough to approach his source on the watch for concealment, distortion, or the outright lie.”³⁷ And Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart, a British military writer, recounted how generals as well as others in high places—concerned about their place in history—retrospectively edited, destroyed, or altered the official records of World War I. He went so far as to say that “nothing can deceive like a document.”³⁸

All this is not, however, ground for despair or lapsing into skeptical silence. It has simply spurred me and my helpers on to do as good a job as we could and reminds me of the ancient Roman adage that to err is human, though to persist in a mistake is diabolical. In any case, I believe that the cumulative witness of these volumes is correct and basically sound.

Notes

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2. LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Finding the Lost Prophetic Witnesses* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), p. 11.

3. Ángel Rodríguez et al., “The Mark and Number of the Beast,” Study for Thursday and Friday, 6 and 7 June, “Great Apocalyptic Prophecies,” theme of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, Second Quarter 2002 (Silver Spring, MD: Office of the Adult Bible Study Guide of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists).

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7. V. Norskov Olsen, Back Cover, *Papal Supremacy and American Democracy, the Roman Catholic Cornerstone and Stumblingblock and American Democracy: Its Religious Roots and Heritage* (Loma Linda/Riverside, CA: Loma Linda U.P., 1987).

8. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

9. LeRoy E. Froom, Letter to W. E. Howell, 29 August 1938 (Washington, D.C.: General Conference Archives), Number of the Beast Committee, 1943, RG 261, Book Editorial Files.

10. SDAE, s.v. “Wilkinson, Benjamin George.”

11. *Wikipedia*, s.v. “Benjamin G. Wilkinson,” downloaded 11/27/09.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Benjamin G. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (Washington, D.C.: June 1930).

14. Ibid., pp. 78-83. 15. Ibid., pp. 81-82. 16. Ibid., p. 174.
 17. Ibid., pp. 174-175.
 18. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Richard Challoner," downloaded 11/28/09.
 19. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, p. 69.
 20. Ibid., p. 70. 21. Ibid., pp. 97-98. 22. Ibid., p. 98.
 23. *The New American Bible*. 1987 (World Catholic Press, printed in Korea, 2000).
 24. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 213-214.
 25. John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised*. Three Articles Reprinted from *The Quarterly Review*: I. The New Greek Text, II. The New English Version, III. Westcott and Hort's New Textual Theory, etc. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1883).
 26. "Who Was Dean John William Burgon?" *The Dean Burgon Society: In Defense of Traditional Bible Texts*, A Pamphlet by Dr. and Mrs. D.A. Waite, www.deanburgonsociety.org, downloaded 11/28/09.
 27. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 135-136. 28. Ibid., pp. 136-137.
 29. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 214-215.
 30. *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Benjamin G. Wilkinson." 31. Ibid.
 32. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 60-61.
 33. Preface, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN, etc.: Thomas Nelson, 1982).
 34. Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated*, pp. 32-35.
 35. Benjamin George Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness*, 1944 (Brushton, NY: Teach Services, 1994).
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 37. Barbara Tuchman, "The Final Solution," *Practicing History: Selected Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 121.
 38. Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn from History?* 1944 (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1971), pp. 21-22.

Appendix II

Catholic Documents Over More Than 1,000 Years Containing the Title *Vicarius Filii Dei*

Abbreviations:

DG = *Decretum Gratiani* (Gratian's Decretum),

CJC = *Corpus Juris Canonici*

PNL = Paris National Library

BM = British Museum, London

1943 = Howell et al. (see below)

Manuscript editions

c. 850, Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals

1054, *Constitutum Constantini*, used by Pope Leo IX

1087, Deusdedit, *Collectio Canonum*

c. 1140, *Decretum Gratiani*

Later handwritten copies until the invention of printing c. 1450

Printed editions

Argentina edition, 1471, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Argentina, 1472, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Moguntia, 1472, 1 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Venice, 1474, 3 vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Basilea, 1476, 2 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Rome, 1476, 1 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Venice, 1477, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Rome, 1478, 1 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Nürnberg, 1483, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Argentina, 1484, 1 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)

Venice, 1486, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Venice, 1489, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Venice, 1491, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Basilea, 1500, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Rome, 1502, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Lyons, 1506, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Paris, 1507, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Paris, 1511, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Paris, 1511, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)

Paris, 1512, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Venice, 1514, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1517, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1517, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1519, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1519, *CJC* (1943)
 Paris, 1523, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1526, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1533, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1538, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1542, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1550, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1552, 2 vol. octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1553, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1561, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1570, 2 vol. octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Rome, 1582, *CJC*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cited
 by Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*
 Venice, 1584, octavo, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1584, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1584, *DG*, BM (1943)
 Lyons, 1591, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 Paris, 1601, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Lyons, 1606, *DG*, New York Library (1943)
 Paris, 1612, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1612, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 Rome, 1613, *CJC*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cited
 by Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*
 Lyons, 1613, folio, *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Rome, 1622, *CJC*, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, cited
 by Christian Edwardson, *Facts of Faith*
 Rome 1628, *Constitutum Constantini* quoted in Luca Castellino,
 Elucidarium Theologicum de Certitudine Gloriam Sanctorum
 Canonizatorum
 Paris, 1671. Labbé, Philippe, and Gabriel Cossart, *Sacrosancta*
 Concilia ad Regiam Editionem Exacta, Columns 1519-1542
 Venice, 1677, 2 quarto vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Paris, 1687, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 Paris, 1695, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 Paris, 1705, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 Rome, 1717, Coloniae Munatiana, *CJC*, BM (1943)
 1772, Ferraris, *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*. See 1890 below
 Rome, 1726, 2 folio vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)
 Torino, 1752-57, 4 quarto vol., *DG*, PNL (1943)
 1844, Migne, *Patrologiae* (Opera Constantini Magni),

Vol. I, New York Library
Paris, 1855, quarto, *DG*, PNL (1943)
Leipzig, 1879, *CJC*, BM (1943)
Rome, 1890, Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca Canonica Juridica
Moralis Theologica nec non Ascetica Polemica Rubricistica
Historica* (Vatican Congregation of Propaganda)

Warren Eugene Howell, Chairman *Daniel and Revelation* Revision Committee, incorporating input from other researchers, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1943. Obtained from the Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. (Slightly adjusted, with a few corrections.)

Some of this material was obtained before World War II and may have been destroyed in that conflict.

Note: According to a statement on its website, The library of Harvard Law School, rare books section, has “nearly 225 editions of *Corpus juris canonici*”(www.law.harvard.edu/library/collections/special/books/index.php, downloaded 8/13/07).

Appendix III

Mostly Protestant, Non-Seventh-day Adventist Publications

In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries
Mentioning *Vicarius Filii Dei*
As a Title of the Pope,
A Majority of Which Equate It with 666

1. **1715.** Michael Geddes, Chancellor of the Church of *Sarum*, considered the artful ways in which the Catholic hierarchy had elevated and advanced itself at the expense of those who truly sought to serve the Lord. Among the pieces considered was “Constantine’s *Donation*,” which he quoted in Latin, “as it lies in a Letter of Pope Leo IX’s written about the Year 1050.” In its first two lines, we find the words: “Ut sicut B. Petrus in terris *vicarius Filii Dei* videtur esse constitutus” (As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted *Vicar of the Son of God* on earth) (emphasis added).¹

2. **c. 1726.** John Richardson (1647-1725?) delivered a series of thirty-nine ecclesiastic lectures in Latin. The nineteenth one was entitled *Edictum Constantini, quo Romam & occiduas Provincias Pontifici concessisse dicitur, spurium est & fictitium* (The edict of Constantine, by which Rome and the Western provinces are said to have been handed over to the Pontiff, is spurious and fictitious). This was part of the ongoing debate with the Roman Church that had begun when Lorenzo Valla first debunked the so-called Donation in 1440. It was still raging, now between Catholics and Protestants. Richardson quoted from it, including the words *Sanctus Petrus Vicarius Filii Dei* (Saint Peter the Vicar of the Son of God). He was indignant about the pretension that the Roman pontiff supposedly had authority over “*omnes Regiones Occidentales*” (*all Western Regions*).² Because of their Classical education, well-educated people in eighteenth-century Britain were generally able to read Latin.

3. **1735.** Thomas Pyle, Minister of *Lynn Regis* in *Norfolk* and Prebendary of the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, England, demonstrated—with the aid of two tables—that the Greek word *Lateinos* and the Hebrew *Romiith* both had the numerical value of 666. Quoting the words “Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast” (Rev. 13:18), he remarked that this did not mean “the Man of *deep Learning*, or the great *Philosopher*, but the *honest* and *good Man*.” Along with the Apocalyptic “*Secret* there is a *Rule* to find it out by, viz. *counting the Number*, or finding out that *Word*, or *Words*, the several *Letters* whereof, (being so many distinct *Numbers*,) added together, will show that

the *Name, Title and Character* by which this *Beast*, or corrupt *persecuting Power*, was usually known.” What he did not refer to was *Vicarius Filii Dei*, yet he set an example for subsequent writers in English, who sometimes cited him.³

4. **1735.** In Hamburg, a Latin work appeared by a German writer, Johann Christopher Wolf, who styled himself Wolfius. This book, Jo. Christophori Wolfii *Curae Philologicae et Criticae in SS. Apostolorum Jacobi Petri Judae et Johannes Epistolas Hujusque Apocal.*, contains both philological and critical notes on the writings of James, Peter, Jude, and John. Concerning the latter, Wolf dealt with the Epistles as well as the Revelation. Amongst other writers, he referred to Helwig, whose work for the first time appeared under the pseudonym of M. Carolus Aglaeonius Irenochoraeus in 1600 (Gryphiswaldiae) as *Apodictica tractatio quaestionis, Num certum aliquid Anti-Christi nomen existet, cui numerus illi Apocalypticus DCLXVI respondeat?* (An apodictic treatise on the question whether there exists any certain name of Anti-Christ which agrees with the Apocalyptic number 666?). Wolf, to highlight Helwig’s discovery, had the title printed as VICarIVs FILII Del, which gives prominence to the letters that have numerical values.⁴ It was probably through this book that Helwig’s ideas were brought to the attention of British writers. Another factor could well have been the close relations between Germany and England, which had monarchs of largely German extraction from the time of George I (1660-1727) to the First World War, when the British public became infuriated by the fighting in the trenches and the horrific death toll. George V (1865-1936) belonged to the House of Wettin von Saxe-Coburn and Gotha and was even a cousin of the hated Kaiser Wilhelm II. He quickly renamed his family Windsor, after a castle of no particular renown.

5. **1751.** The learned Charles Chais (1701–1785), born and educated in Geneva, was a gifted pastor of the French Reformed congregation at the Hague. On the occasion of the 1750 Catholic jubilee in Rome, he wrote a series of letters especially against the indulgences proclaimed by Benedict XIV (1740–1758). Chais held that the doctrine which they represented was as absurd as it was dangerous and unchristian.⁵ There is no such thing, he said, as an immense treasury of merits derived from both Jesus Christ and the saints that the Saviour has committed to the Roman pontiff, as the *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu*, to dispense at his pleasure.⁶ We should rather, through the blood of Christ, have full confidence in the indulgence of the Supreme Judge, who will forgive us as a Father forgives his child who serves him.⁷

6. **1753.** A Deist publication opposing atheism, referred to various religious leaders and said this about the pope: “The Bishop of *Rome* stiles himself *Vicarius Filii Dei*, the *Vicar of the Son of God*.” It also hinted at, though it did not discuss, “the number of the *Beast*, *Apoc.* xiii. 18.”⁸

7. **1759.** James Ferguson (1710-1776) was a most remarkable example

of self-education. Famous for inventing and improving astronomical as well as other scientific instruments, this Scot was accorded a high honor: membership in the Royal Society of London.⁹ He also “sometimes turned his attention to theological subjects.” Because of his outstanding ability in calculation, these included prophecy and the question of “the NAME AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST.” His biographer, Ebenezer Henderson, “copied it in 1831 from a MS of Ferguson’s in the possession of the late William Upcott, Esq., Islington, London.” Ferguson included three tables establishing the numerical value of *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. He pointed out that in his time this last mentioned was a title recognized by Catholics: “The Papists call the Pope VICARIUS FILII DEI (*The Vicar of the Son of God*). And, if we take the sum of all the numeral letters in these three words, we shall find it also to be 666.”¹⁰ Ferguson may have been the first in Britain to equate *Vicarius Filii Dei* with 666. His biographer also wrote: “Ferguson introduces the *motto* on the Palace of the Pope at Rome, viz. ‘*Vicariivs Dei Generalis in Terris*,’ (the Vicar General of God on Earth),” which—as Ferguson demonstrated—likewise has a numerical value of 666.¹¹

8. **1765.** A Jew, who with a glance at Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* derisively called himself Rabby Shylock, mentioned in verse an idea that was current in the England of his day:

The title, say they, assum’d by the pope,
Is th’ undoubted proof of his being the beast.
Vicarius Dei Filii, forsooth, he is stil’d,
Which God’s Son’s vicar in *English* implies:
The *Roman* cyphers if we but pick out,
Six hundred they will make three-score and six.

Shylock skeptically thought he could also, if he manipulated it a little, find that number in a title of the king; but for us that is beside the point. He witnessed to what Protestants were teaching at that time.¹²

9. **1766.** *Apocalypsis Revelata* (The Apocalypse Revealed) was published at Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Its author, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), thereby and on that date became a great gainsayer of Historicist prophetic interpreters. A famous polymath, he turned his back on science after April 1745, when a personage who said he was Christ “in a waking vision” told him “to abandon worldly learning.”¹³ This being first appeared to him “in a strong shining light, and saying, ‘I am the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer. I have chosen thee to explain to men the interior senses of the sacred writings. I will dictate to thee what thou oughtest to write.’” Swedenborg had many supernatural communications, often in a trance. As he put it, “I have conversed with apostles, departed popes, emperors, and kings; with the late reformers of the Church, Luther, Calvin and Melanchthon, and with others from distant

countries.”¹⁴

Those who believed that Swedenborg was inspired and accepted his teachings founded the Church of the New Jerusalem, also known as the New Church. This body denies the doctrine of the Trinity and understands redemption in ways that are alien to traditional Christian theology. Also according to Swedenborg, the Second Coming predicted in Rev. 1:7 would not be literal but the Lord’s revealing of himself. As for the statement “*and every eye shall see Him*,” it “signifies, that all who are in the understanding of Divine Truth from affection will acknowledge Him. In the spiritual sense, an eye does not mean the eye, but the understanding . . .”¹⁵ And “death is the casting off by man of his material body which has no share in the resurrection.”¹⁶

Using allegorical methods of interpretation much like Origen (c. 185-c. 254), Swedenborg was able with large-scale spiritualizing to make anything mean anything else. His most notable contribution was applying this peculiar method to numbers as well as other entities. Far from using the formula *Vicarius Filii Dei* = 666, he thought the Beast was not the papacy; instead, the name referred to the Reformed Church, and the number symbolized perfection subverted. He wrote: “The Number six hundred and sixty six is used, because in that number six is *tripled* . . .” (emphasis added).¹⁷ Based on Arabic numerals, this idea inherently clashes with the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman number systems employed in the time of John, who wrote the Apocalypse—as also afterwards by Western Europeans for many centuries to come. With such reasoning, Swedenborg seems to have fathered much of present-day prophetic Idealism for Roman Catholics and Protestants alike, including some Seventh-day Adventists.

10. **1768.** Thomas Newton (1704-1782) was the bishop of Bristol. His redactor explained that in 1754 he “lost both his father and his wife. He distracted his mind from his grief by composing his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, which ran through eighteen editions, and was translated into German and Danish.”¹⁸ Seeking to understand Rev. 13:18, Newton especially favored *Lateinos*, first proposed by Irenaeus, but he also mentioned both *Romiith* and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. The latter, inserted by Newton’s redactor, refers to Pyle’s *Paraphrase*, p. 104. In tabular form, as a footnote, *Lateinos* and *Vicarius Filii Dei* are shown to have a numerical value of 666.¹⁹

11. **1769.** *The Town and Country Magazine* published a brief letter from F. J. Guion, a correspondent of Bath, England, worded as follows:

“*To the Printer of the Town and Country Magazine.*

“SOME time ago I met with the following curious observation, which (if you think proper) you may insert in your entertaining Miscellany.

“The pope’s inscription is *vicarius Filii Dei*; or, vicar of the son of God: the numerical letters in which, if valued and summed up, make the exact number in Revelations. chap. xiii. verse 18. thus,” . . .

After these words, a narrow vertical table on the right side displays the

title with number values next to the letters V, I, C, U, and D, wherever they occur, as well as a total of 666.²⁰

12. **1778.** John James Bachmair pondered the meaning of 666 and pointed out that *Ludovicus*, the Latin for *Louis*, had this numerical value, although he was a little doubtful: “Who would say, that the king of France is Antichrist?” Bachmair also said, however, that “other learned men” had someone else in mind to whom they applied the prophecy “and to find this number in the letters of his name, or in his title, or in both. So, for instance, as the pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, they formed his title thus: VICARIUS FILII DEI. It is true, the number of 666 is contained in these words . . .”²¹

13. **1780.** Preaching on Isa. 59:19, Thomas Bell made very sensible remarks about names with a numerical value. “If any man’s name among us had the letters *J, V, X L, C, D.* they would amount precisely to 666; but what relation would this have to the subject? Surely, none at all. For we must argue, not from the name only, but from the name joined to other marks of the beast; which cannot be said of other names. For, in vain is any other name sought containing the number 666, unless it be also the name of the beast. A name of that nature, joined with other characters of the beast, must strike strong with conviction; but separated from them it amounts to nothing . . .”²² In this way, more than two hundred and fifty years ago, Thomas Bell enunciated the vital principle of context.

14. **1782.** John Moxon, a compiler of interesting odds and ends, asserted: “The Pope styles himself “VICARIUS FILII DEI.” [period *sic*] that is, *Vicar of the Son of God.* Now the numerical letters contained in such title, being sum’d together, just make up the number of the beast;—as per example, . . .” whereupon he provided a vertical table with the name and its numerical letter equivalents, totaling 666.²³

15. **1790, July.** *The New Magazine of Knowledge Concerning Heaven and Hell, and the Universal World of Nature*, carries a query from J. J., about the correct method of calculating the number of the Beast, according to Rev. 13:17, and 18.²⁴ In response, Robert Hindmarsh (1759-1835), the owner and printer of this paper, declared: “It has generally been supposed, that the beast spoken of in the 16th chapter [*sic*] is the Pope of Rome; and in this many have been confirmed by the circumstance of the Pope’s name, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, making the number 666.” But Hindmarsh, an ex-Methodist, who during the previous two years had led out in the formal founding of Swedenborgianism and whose priest he now officially was,²⁵ would have none of that. He was a gainsayer, who thought this was “a trifling mode of explanation,” since it “may be extended to an hundred other names.” According to him, “The book of Revelation treats solely of the destruction of the present Christian church, both among Roman Catholics and Protestants; and afterwards of the establishment of a new church, called the New Jerusalem.” Everything in the Apocalypse was figurative. Therefore, “By the name of the beast, and the number of his

name, is meant the quality of the doctrine; and by the beast itself is meant the doctrine of faith alone, as received among the laity; for the beast here alluded to, is the beast that rose out of the sea, verse 1 of this chapter, by which is signified that faith among the laity, or common people of the church; whereas by the beast that rose out of the earth, verse 11, is signified the same faith as received by the clergy.”²⁶ Replicating Swedenborg’s interpretation, Hindmarsh wrote:

*And his number is six hundred threescore and six, signifies that every truth of the Word is falsified by the Protestant doctrine of faith separate from good works. The number 666 signifies all falses and evils in one mass; the reason of which signification is as follows. All numbers in the Word signify things and their qualities: thus the number 6 denotes full, being predicated particularly of truths and goods thence derived; but in the opposite sense, of falses and evils thence derived; for that number is compounded of 2 and 3 multiplied together, and the number 2 is predicated either of goods or evils, and the number 3 either of truths or falses, according to the subject treated of. Now every compounded number bears the same signification, as the original simple numbers from which it arises either by addition, multiplication, or triplication . . . in order that this signification might be extended to its full complement, or highest pitch, therefore the number 6 is tripled so as to produce 666; for 6 multiplied by 1, is 6; 6 multiplied by 10 is 60; and 6 multiplied by 100, is 600; which added together amount exactly to 666: by which triplication is signified the full, total, and complete measure of falses and evils from beginning to end, so that in the present Christian church, as a church, there no longer remains the smallest degree of genuine truth or good.*²⁷

But 666 can be 6 *tripled* only when figures are written in *positional* notation, with numerals 1 to 9 plus the zero sign, which the Arabs derived from the Hindu system and later transmitted to the West. With Roman numerals, this procedure is impossible.

16. **1791, 3 August.** A correspondent of the *New Jersey Journal*, under the initials A. B., wrote to Mr. Shepard Kollock: “As the *beast* described in the 13th Chapter of Revelations, is generally supposed to mean the Pope of Rome; this opinion seems well supported by the numbers in the name assumed by the Pope when compared with the last verse,” which he proceeded to quote. Then he continued by saying, “The name or title assumed by the Pope is VICARIUS FILII DEI in English *Vicar of the Son of God*.” Then he set out the table analyzing the numerical value of the letters that make up these words, the total being 666.²⁸

17. **1792.** Robert Hindmarsh was at it again, in conflict with Historicism. According to him: “Many commentators have puzzled both themselves and their readers in attempting to unfold the signification of the

number 666: but I believe they are all agreed in applying it to the Romish church exclusively. Herein, however, they are much mistaken; for the whole chapter, in the spiritual sense treats of the Reformed churches only.”²⁹

I remember to have read, some years ago, many curious explanations of the number 666, all having reference to the titles of the pope, in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, or in some other way alluding to the church of Rome. The words, *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Vicarius Generalis in Terris*, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, with various others, were by dint of numeral powers, and such like calculations, all made to produce the exact complement 666. At that time I thought some attention was due to those ingenious speculations; but on further inquiry I soon found, that not only the names above mentioned would make up the required number, but perhaps an hundred and fifty other names, that could no more be supposed to have any connection with the contents of the Apocalypse, than the *man in the moon*. I then saw, that *all such explications* could not be the effect of that wisdom spoken of in the 13th chapter, and to which we are invited; but that there must be some other hidden meaning, with which the learned were unacquainted. It did not satisfy me, that *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, or even *Ludovicus*, made up the complement 666, when other words were to be found, that did the same, such as *Joseph Smith*, *Tomkins*, *Benjamin Bennet*, and what is singular enough, the *Rev. Jos. Priestley*; for by the magical power of numerals I can bring them all to sing the same song, *six hundred and sixty six*.³⁰

Actually, none of these English names qualifies, if Roman numerals are used; the first three all total more than 1,000, as guaranteed by the letter *m*, while *Rev. Jos. Priestley* produces a measly 52. The general argument is more impressive: according to the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman methods of reckoning, too many names can have a numerical value of 666—although, as is shown elsewhere in this book, contextuality eliminates them all, except *Vicarius Filii Dei*.

But Hindmarsh had a very subtle mind. He also said: “The Apocalypse, like every other book of divine inspiration, is couched in *natural* terms, to represent and point out *spiritual* things; and here is as great a distinction between the *type* and *antitype*. Now the *antitype* and *type* ought never to be understood as existing in one and the same *gradus*, but in two distinct, *discrete* modes of being.”³¹ By *spiritual* he meant symbolic. He illustrated his point as follows: “Thus, when in scripture it is said, that *seven* or *ten kings* shall arise; that a *beast had seven heads and ten horns*, &c. &c. we are not to understand, that in the accomplishment of this prophecy there shall literally arise *seven* or *ten kings*, or there shall be any *real beast with seven heads and ten horns*, for this would be confounding the *antitype* with

the *type* in the same gradus, or same *mode of existence*; but we are to understand, that the prophecy will be accomplished when *what is signified by seven or ten kings*, and when *what is signified by seven heads and ten horns*, shall take place in the church; and this is placing the *antitype* in a *degree or mode of existence above the type*.³²

To Historicists, most of this is more or less acceptable, though words like *type* and *antitype* may cause them to raise their eyebrows. But according to Hindmarsh: “All the prophecies in the Apocalypse are of this sort” (emphasis added) and “I believe there is not a single prophecy either in the Old or New Testament, but what it’s [*sic*] accomplishment ought to be understood as principally belonging to the internal sense; though I will admit, that many of them have also been literally fulfilled.”³³ Thereupon he cunningly suggested that the numbers were also symbolic, by referring his readers to Swedenborg’s writings and his own explanation in the *Magazine of Knowledge*,³⁴ cited above.

18. **1793.** The redactor of *Apocalyptical Key*, a well-known book by Scottish pastor Robert Fleming, Jr. (1660-1716), appended a supplemental statement in which he assigned to 666 the numerical value of the name *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which the popes “have assumed to themselves” and “caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican.”³⁵

19. **1793.** During the French Revolution, William Linn, D.D. (1752-1808), Presbyterian minister, first chaplain in the U.S. House of Representatives and college president, in a series of discourses published the next year maintained that Daniel’s Little Horn, Paul’s Man of Sin, and John’s Beast were, as “is generally agreed by all Protestant interpreters” the same. Linn cited the Greek *Lateinos*, the Hebrew *Romiith*, and the Latin *Vicarius Filii Dei*, and for each provided a vertical tabulation that works out the same numerical value, with a total of 666.³⁶

20. **1793.** An anonymous, obviously very diligent compiler, brought out a work entitled *Prophetic Conjectures on the French Revolution*. He extracted his ideas from the writings of prophetic interpreters over two centuries: Archp. Brown, 1551; Rev. J. Knox, 1572; Dr. T. Goodwin, 1630; Rev. Chr. Love, 1651; Archbp. Usher, 1655; Dr. H. More, 1663; Rev. P. Jurieu, 1687; Rev. R. Fleming, 1701; Rev. J. Wilson, 1742; Dr. Gill, 1748. In the Introduction, he gave four vertical tables, with the numerical value of *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Ludovicus*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. About the last mentioned, he said: “A late writer has also remarked, a very singular circumstance, that the title VICARIUS FILII DEI, which the popes of Rome have assumed to themselves, and have caused, as is said, to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes the number 666, when decyphered.”³⁷ Froom also mentioned this compilation.

21. **1794.** The aforementioned work was republished in America. Four vertical tables again worked out the numerical value of *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Ludovicus*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*, each of them totaling 666.³⁸

22. **1796.** French Huguenot refugee Étienne Gibert (1736-1817) served as

minister of the Royal Chapel and as rector of St. Andrews on the island of Guernsey in the English Channel. In his *Reflections sur l'Apocalypse*, he—like others before and after him—dealt with the numerical value of *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Ludovicus*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Writing just a few miles from France at the time of the Revolution, he bore in mind that his ancestral country had had sixteen kings named Louis, each regarded by the papacy as its eldest son. Nevertheless, Gibert concluded that these monarchs did not meet the other specifications of the Antichrist. For instance, they did not have seven heads and ten horns. About the last mentioned name, he said: “Le pape se dit être *Vicarius Filii Dei*; le vicaire du Fils de Dieu: & la valeur des lettres de ce titre, est 666” (The pope says he is the *Vicarius Filii Dei*; the vicar of the Son of God: & the value of the letters of this title, is 666). On the pages we have surveyed, Gibert mentioned *Vicaire du Fils de Dieu* no fewer than four times. In a footnote on p. 189, he gave the table that works out the numerical value of *Vicarius Filii Dei*.³⁹

23. 1797. J. Buel printed and sold, perhaps also wrote, “an account of the dissolution of the present European system, according to the prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel, and John, in the Revelations and Others.” Concerning 666, the author inclined to the opinion that it might apply to both Islam and Christianity. About the latter he said: “In regard to the Popes, as every new one took a new title, the number is made to agree with that which they universally assumed, as well as with the church itself. The name they assumed, is VICARIUS FILII DEI: which title is inscribed over the door of the Vatican at Rome, and contains the number.”⁴⁰

24. 1797. Also published in that year was *La vérité des oracles de l'apocalypse, ou la révolution française* (the Truth About the Oracles of the Apocalypse, or the French Revolution) by P. Montoposé.⁴¹ He called France “ma patrie.”⁴² Because of this and other internal evidence, he obviously hailed from there, but we have been unable to discover more about him. Since he believed in the year-day principle, applied the 1260 prophetic days to the Roman power, and railed against the Inquisition,⁴³ he must have been a Protestant. He was also indignant at “idiots” who said the Beast of Rev. 13 was the National Convention and applied to it the number 666. He retorted by referring them to experts about the Greek language and its arithmetic. In a footnote, he added: “It is striking that in the Latin language this very number should also be significant. Take all the Roman numerals of the name VICARIUS FILII DEI which the Popes give to themselves, and there you will find it precisely. DCLVVIIIIII.”⁴⁴ He also had what after two centuries must be considered quaint ideas, since he focused too much of the Apocalypse on the French Revolution and its aftermath. For instance, he said the first trumpet surely sounded the taking of the Bastille. The hail and fire mingled with blood depicted “the effects of the musketry and cannons.” (Rev. 8:7)⁴⁵ What is more, during the imminent thousand years of peace, France “will one day probably be the center of a new Jerusalem.”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Montoposé was a witness to that title being applied to the Roman pontiffs.

25. **1798.** David Austin (176 0-1831), first a Presbyterian minister, who later preached for the Baptists and then for the Congregationalists, from 1791 onward became interested in prophecy. “In answer to a question as to the number of the Beast, or Rome papal, Austin suggests *Ludovicus* and *Vicarius Filii Dei*, ‘the Chief Vicar of the Court of Rome.’”⁴⁷ For expositors of that time, these two powers were closely linked.

26. **1799, 1 January.** An item under “Anecdotes” of the London-based *Evangelical Magazine*, contained the following statement: “Some time ago an English officer, happening to be in Rome, observed on the front of the Mitre, which the Pope wore at one of the solemnities of their worship, this inscription: VICARIVS FILII DEI. It instantly struck him,—perhaps this is the number of the beast. He set to work, and when he had selected all the numerals, and summed them up, he found, to his great astonishment, that the whole amounted precisely to six hundred threescore and six. What stress is to be laid on this I shall not say.” This was followed by a table containing only the letters that have numerical values.⁴⁸

27. **1799.** Henry Kett, a Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford (as well as “one of his Majesty’s preachers at Whitehall”), quoted several verses from Rev. 13 and in a footnote said: “Various have been the conjectures concerning this mystical number—*Vicarius Filii Dei*, a title which the Popes have assumed to themselves, and caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes 666, when decyphered according to the numeral signification of its constituent letters. *Lateinos* (the word mentioned by Irenaeus), *Romiith*, and *Ludovicus*, each contains the same numbers. See [Thomas] Pyle [1674-1756] on the Revelations, p. 103. and Fleming, p. 140.”⁴⁹

28. **1803, January.** An uneasy calm had settled over Europe. Even Britain was formally at peace with Napoleon Bonaparte, First Consul and dictator of France. His machinations would, however, in May of the same year unleash a new war between those two countries.⁵⁰ *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* therefore had many themes to place before its readers. One of them was to contemplate recent events and assess the contemporary situation in prophetic terms.

On invitation, the pseudonymous Anti-Consul in a letter to the editor sought to explain the Apocalypse, with a hard look at the papacy as Antichrist. “We are admonished to find out his name, because his name is communicated to his servants and is to be avoided. Rev. xiii. 18.” In less than two pages, the letter—a masterpiece of conciseness—mentions several attempts at interpreting 666, among them *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Ludovicus*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. These titles, Anti-Consul said, were an indication of “the chief instruments or men employed.” But in Hebrew the number also suggested the “mystery of concealment of the truth . . . introduced into England by latinizing the service in the year 666.” According to Gibbon, however, “there were 666 knights in the service of the Latins in the Crusades.” On the other hand, the square root of 666 is

approximately 25, which has often been prominent in papal affairs. Anti-Consul thought that all these interpretations might have some validity: “To sum up the whole, there appears reason to consider Antichrist as a wolf in the clothing of a lamb; that he has two comings, first as under St. Peter on the fall of ancient Rome, secondly upon the fall of Papal Rome, as under new governors, or a new governor who shall carry on the war against Christ in the Holy land after the destruction of the papacy. The proper seat of Antichrist is the western empire, Thus may all the discordant opinions of commentators who have not distinguished between the two characters of Antichrist be reconciled, and we may be warned against *the Envoy of God* as plainly as against *the Vicar of the Son of God*” (author’s own italics).⁵¹

29. **1803.** A correspondent under the pseudonym Anacharsis, wrote a letter to Messrs. Samuel Gilbert and Thomas Dean of *The Boston Weekly Magazine*. Under “Varieties; Literary, Philosophical, and Miscellaneous,” Anacharsis said of the pope: “Now if we count the numbers contained in his title, we shall find they amount to six hundred three score and six.

‘VICar I Vs fILII Del’”

Beneath this, lying on their side, are the numerical equivalents and their total of 666.⁵²

30. **1803.** William F. Miller, A.M., pastor of a Presbyterian-Congregational church in Windsor, Connecticut (not the founder of the later Millerites), wrote *Signs of the Times, or the Sure Word of Prophecy: A Dissertation on the Prophecies of the Sixth and Seventh Vials, and on the Subsequent Great Day of Battle, Immediately Preceding the Millennium*. In this work, he looked forward to the elimination of the papacy, after which the Millennium would follow; but he did not think that this would happen soon, for “nearly two hundred years are yet to roll away, before the last great and utter destruction of the city of Rome and the papal government will be accomplished; and nearly fifty years before the Pope’s ungodly claim of ‘Universal Bishop,’ ‘*Vicar of the Son of God,*’ and infallibility will be given up . . .” (emphasis added).⁵³

31. **1804.** In a sermon, William F. Miller continued in a similar vein as in his *Dissertation*. The italics and capital letters of the following paragraph were all his own. He considered that the Papacy’s “*pompous titled name* was certainly numbered in prophecy, *by numeral letters*, in three different languages,” by which he meant the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin words that others had also designated. We find the following especially striking: “What, then, is *the high sounding pompous name*, which the Bishop of Rome, as Antichrist, has assumed in the Christian Church? Is it not well known, to all people acquainted with ecclesiastical history, to be literally expressed in these Latin words, VICARIUS FILII DEI, in English, *The Vicar of the Son of God*? Is not this the Pope’s pompous signature, in *the Bulls* of the Church? Does he not by this great name ‘*Lord*

it over God's heritage,' 'change times and laws,' and 'wear out the saints of the most High?' I appeal to the well attested history of the world, in confirmation of the proof. Here, then, we have his name appropriately defined, in Latin. It cannot be easily perverted. *Its number and character are conspicuously definite.* It contains the exact Latin numerals of 666; and thus the number is counted." To this, he added, on the right hand of the text, a vertical table to show the details, the total being 666.⁵⁴ On another page, Miller referred to Napoleon's confiscation of the Papal States and assuming "the power of nominating to office all the Bishops in France and her dependencies," to which he added: "By this extraordinary *change of power, the Pope is no longer, the Vicegerent of God upon earth, the Vicar of the Son of God.*"⁵⁵

32. **1805.** Johann Heinrich Jung (pseud.: Heinrich Stilling), world-renowned German ophthalmic surgeon, businessman, economist, polymath, novelist, popular autobiographer, and theologian, wrote about the number of the beast, which totals 666. He mentioned the Greek word *Lateinos*, "in der Inschrift an der päpstlichen Krone [in the inscription on the papal crown], *Vicarius Filii Dei,*" *Ludovicus,*" and so forth (emphases added). He thought, however, that the real meaning was still unknown and awaited the future.⁵⁶

33. **1808.** This was the Boston republication date for *A Dissertation on the Prophecies, That Have Been Fulfilled, Are Now Fulfilling, or Will Hereafter Be Fulfilled, Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years* by George Stanley Faber (1773-1854). Based on its second London edition of 1806, it had not been much altered since it first appeared in 1804. Faber, an Oxford-educated Anglican clergyman, "throughout his career . . . strenuously advocated the evangelical doctrines of the necessity of conversion, justification by faith, and the sole authority of scripture as the rule of faith." He was also the writer of some thirty theological books. "His treatises on the Revelations and on the Seven Vials belong to the older school of prophetic interpretation." Some of his views on the Apocalypse, however, were highly controversial.⁵⁷

Faber thought the first Beast of Rev. 13 was not papal but pagan or secular Rome. For him, it was the second Beast that represented the popes. These were therefore not the Antichrist, however bad their system was. The image of the beast was secular Rome revived under a worldly, indeed an atheistic power.⁵⁸ For this view, also in relation to the final verses of Daniel 11, Faber was attacked by other expositors. "Two of my positions, which were impugned with peculiar acrimony, were *the application of Daniel's wilful king to infidel France, which I conceived to be the great Antichrist of the last days; and the reference of the remarkable expedition [by Napoleon] against Palestine and Egypt, not to the king of the north, but to this willful king.*"⁵⁹ In the words of his supporter Bishop Horsley who predeceased him, Faber taught "that Palestine is the stage on which Antichrist, in the height of his impiety, will perish."⁶⁰ Now, Napoleon and

all his military designs have long since been nullified by time, so we need not further concern ourselves with this line of thought—although we note in passing that Faber “was a contemporary of John Nelson Darby and his writings had an influence on Dispensationalism.”⁶¹

But this view of the three entities in Rev. 13 also fashioned his interpretation of the last verse in that chapter. Amongst other things, he said: “Two of the papal titles, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, and *Vicarius Dei generalis in terris*, have each been found to comprehend *the number 666*: but yet neither of them can be *the name* intended by the Apostle; because neither of them is *the name of the temporal beast*, neither of them is *the proper name of a man*, and neither of them can obviously be borne by *each individual Papist*.”⁶² Faber’s identification of three beasts in that chapter is refuted by the Apocalypse itself, which shows there are only two. The second one requires the world to worship the first, whose number is 666. This fact is established through a comparison of Rev. 13:3 with Rev. 13:14, which both mention a deadly wound that would be healed. Further, the Book of Revelation also regards a title as a name (Rev. 17:5; Rev. 19:16). But Faber was mentally set in his ways. He therefore merely mentioned—and spurned—the *Vicarius Filii Dei* interpretation, settling for Irenaeus’s old view: “*Lateinos is the very name of the beast* intended by the Apostle. I shall endeavour therefore, agreeably to the deductions made from the apocalyptic description of it, to point out why *Latinus*, and *Latinus* alone, is *the name* of which we are in quest.”⁶³ Perhaps the best evaluation of Faber nowadays is contained in the remark that “his works show some research and careful writing, but are not of much permanent value.”⁶⁴

34. **1809.** After ten years, *Evangelicana, or Gospel Treasury*, a Boston book, republished the item that had appeared in *The Evangelical Magazine* of 1 January 1799. With a few punctuation changes, it used exactly the same wording about the English officer in Rome who was said to have observed *Vicarius Filii Dei* on the front of the pope’s miter. It was accompanied by the same table to show that the title had a numerical value of 666.⁶⁵

35. **1809.** Edward Williams (1747-1826) had a varied and picturesque career. A stonemason by trade, he nevertheless acquired letters after his name as a doctor of divinity. He was especially known for “preserving, and maintaining, the literary and cultural traditions of Wales,” where he was born. Adopting the bardic name of Iolo Morganwg, “he was widely considered a leading collector and expert on medieval Welsh literature in his day.”⁶⁶ He was a rather gifted poet—celebrities like President George Washington acquired his two-volume *Poems, Lyric, and Pastoral*—but unfortunately he largely misapplied his talent to forging “ancient” verse, as became evident after his death. He did, however, in 1792 establish “the Gorsedd, an assembly of Welsh poets, which merged with the Eisteddfod, created by his rival William Jones. He also contributed certain ceremonial aspects to the

Eisteddfod, likely culled both from his own imagination and the Masons.”⁶⁷

Williams had a theology of his own, “a fusion of Christian and Arthurian influences,” proposing “a theory of concentric ‘rings of existence’, proceeding outward from Annwn (the Otherworld) through Abred and Ceugant to Gwynfyd (purity or Heaven).”⁶⁸ But he strongly disliked and sought to debunk the even more extravagant oddities of Swedenborgianism, as in *An Essay on the Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace* (1809). In a lengthy footnote, he cited Robert Hindmarsh, on the doctrine of correspondences whereby “numbers, as well as names, in the holy word, are significative and correspondent,” and his *Letters to Dr. Priestley* (see above under 1792). In this book, Hindmarsh had written: “I remember to have read, some years ago, many curious explanations of the number 666, all having reference to the titles of the Pope, in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, or in some other way alluding to the church of Rome. The words *Lateinos, Romiith, Vicarius generalis Dei in terris, Vicarius Filii Dei*, with various others, were by dint of numeral powers, and such like calculations, all made to produce the exact complement 666.”⁶⁹

Though his own theology was offbeat, Williams rejected the idea that à la Baron Swedenborg there would be “no *second coming* of our Lord, no *last judgment*, no *resurrection*, in the sense they have been always understood by the Christian church.”⁷⁰ He likewise scoffed at the so-called Science of Correspondences, as when Hindmarsh explained that “wherever mention is made of a *horse*, it invariably signifies the *understanding*; and a *chariot* means *doctrine*.”⁷¹ Or that “by a lamb, a sheep, a goat, a calf, and an ox, are meant innocence, clarity, and natural affection; that by mountains, hills, and valleys, are meant the higher, the lower, and the lowest things relating to the church; also, that by Egypt is signified what is scientific, by Ashur what is rational, by Edom what is natural, by the children of Ammon the adulteration of truth, by the Philistines faith without charity, by Tyre and Sidon the knowledges [*sic*] of goodness and truth, by Gog external worship without internal,”⁷² etc. For Williams, “the whole science of correspondences, if properly analysed, seems nothing else than the well known doctrine of *analogy* abused, and carried to an extravagant length.”⁷³ Therefore, he concluded: “As to the instances produced, of *horse* signifying *understanding*, and so on, according to the science of correspondences, I leave it with every intelligent reader to judge whether they are the effect of *scientific* knowledge, or of whimsical credulity?”⁷⁴

36. **1809.** Robert Fleming’s *Apocalyptic Key* (see the entry for 1793) was republished a second time. It again equated *Vicarius Filii Dei* with 666. Here “Explanation of the Mark of the Name of the Beast” was changed to “Frontlet of the Beast.” This, too, was an editorial addition and not part of Fleming’s original work, but it did show what various Protestant expositors were thinking in the early nineteenth century.⁷⁵

37. **1810.** A writer who styled himself A Friend to True Religion surveyed the carnage in Europe but also reflected that “the mitred crown and power of the self stiled *Vicarius Filii Dei*, (the vicar of the Son of God,) [emphasis

added] the assumed title of the Bishop of Rome,” would no longer lord it over its kings or affront the Jews with his idolatrous religion.⁷⁶

38. **1810, April.** According to William R. Smith and M. Canan, in “The Number of the Beast” of *The Huntingdon Literary Museum, and Monthly Miscellany*, “Our daily papers have lately been teeming with proof, that Napoleon Buonaparte is beyond question the Beast mentioned in the Revelations. Chap. xiii. Ver. 16, 17, 18.” They, however, wanted to remind their readers that some years earlier the same passage had been applied to the Pope, with just as much “credit and cavil” by both “its advocates and opponents.” This is how they put it:

It is, I believe, generally understood, that the beast, mentioned in the Revelations, is typical of the Popish See. There are three verses in those writings relative to the mark and number of the beast, very peculiar indeed; and various have been the elucidations. Permit me to remark, that the Pope carried on his cap the following title, Vicarius Filii Dei; or as others say, Vicarius Dei generalis in terris. Now, the numerical letters in either of these inscriptions, summarily make up the number six hundred, three-score and six; which is said to be the number of the beast—the number of a man. “Here is wisdom.” Let him that hath understanding, or (as the Bible of 1599 gives it) Wit, count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six.

V i c a r i u s F i l i i D e i
5 1 100 1 5 1 50 1 1 500 1 . . .⁷⁷

39. **1810.** French Laurence (1757-1809) was highly regarded in his day, a professor of Civil Law at Oxford University, a Member of Parliament, and Edmund Burke’s “closest and most intimate political disciple.”⁷⁸ He was also an erudite Classicist as well as a deep, indefatigable researcher,⁷⁹ with “numerous avocations.”⁸⁰ One of these was Biblical Studies for many years, especially as they concerned the Apocalypse.⁸¹

His *Critical Remarks on Detached Passages of the New Testament, Particularly the Revelation of St. John* was published posthumously a year after his death. Though fragmentary, it is an impressive survey two centuries ago of prophetic interpreters from Irenaeus onward, as well as of different Protestant schools. Amongst other things, Laurence scrutinized the theory that 666 in Rev. 13:18 concerns a time period of papal domination and other numerological approaches. He did not totally dismiss them, but pointed out arithmetical errors and historical data that controvert them. More interesting are the book’s words and expressions with a number value in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, including *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*—the last mentioned “assumed by the Popes, and said to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican.”⁸² A cautious man, Laurence did not say which of these identifications he preferred, nor did he need to. In his day, it was normal for Protestant prophetic expositors to accept or at least to respect a number of

them simultaneously. All the same, it is plain that Laurence was a Historicist and regarded the papacy as the Antichrist. We note, moreover, that he was probably the first person in England who explicitly mentioned Wolfius.⁸³ This is the writer who had transmitted Helwig's insight that the numerical value of *Vicarius Filii Dei* was 666.

40. **1812**, 28 Nov. *The Christian Monitor, and Religious Intelligencer* referred to the Byzantine emperor "Justinian II [c. 669-711] kissing the toe of pope Constantine I [reigned 708-715], because he was reputedly the imperial *vicar of the Son of God*" (emphasis added).⁸⁴ A rift had already been developing between Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox Church, but a reconciliation then took place, although that cruel emperor and his family were murdered shortly afterwards.⁸⁵ The episode occurred before the Donation of Constantine was produced, which incorrectly suggests that the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* is older than that forgery.

41. **1814-1815**, winter of. Dr. Amzi Armstrong (1771-1827), Presbyterian minister and educator, in *A Syllabus of Lectures on the Visions of the Revelation*, held that "the 666 is the number of the Latin man—yielded by the three names *Romiith* (Hebrew), *Lateinos* (Greek), and *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Latin)."⁸⁶

42. **1815**. Amzi Armstrong's *Syllabus of Lectures* was published in book form. In a footnote, he pointed out that though the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin titles all have a total numerical value of 666, *Vicar of the Son of God* "is the chief distinguishing title by which the Church of Rome has universally chosen to designate their supreme head, the pope."⁸⁷

43. **1815**. Influenced, perhaps, by the military prowess of his nation in defeating Napoleon, John Hawkins produced *A Treatise on the Second Chapter of the Prophet Daniel; Together with Thoughts and Reflections on Some Other Parts of the Sacred Writings*. On the title page, this is followed by the sentence "Tending to show that Britain is the Kingdom which Daniel declares that the great God of Heaven will set up, and that it is the Kingdom of God." Hawkins identified the first Beast of Rev. 13 with Catholicism and its pontiff, mentioning *Vicar of the Son of God* twice on a single page. He then demonstrated that this has a numerical value of 666, together with other titles in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin: *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *Vicarius generalis Dei in terris*, and *Ludovicus*.⁸⁸

44. **1815**. A pseudonymous writer, calling himself An American Layman, surveyed the history of the papacy. Amongst other things, he said (with an obvious glance at the Donation): "The Church of Rome defended, by violence, the empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institution of the Inquisition, or holy office: and as the reformers were animated by the love of civil as well as religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own interests with that of the clergy, and enforced, by fire and the sword, the terrors of spiritual censures. In the Netherlands alone, more than one hundred thousand of the subjects of

Charles the 5th are said to have suffered by the hands of the executioner; and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius.”* “Bishop engaged against bishop; and even St. Peter’s chair was divided against itself, there being, at one time, three Popes, each claiming to be the *vicar of the Son of God*, and the true and infallible successor of the holy apostles.” In a footnote about Grotius, he referred to Gibbon, 6 vol. 495.⁸⁹

45. **1816.** John Hewlett, chaplain to the Prince Regent, who also performed other ecclesiastical functions, produced a five-volume Bible commentary. About the words: “His number is six hundred threescore and six,” he said—without giving reasons for such an opinion—“it is evident that it must be some Greek, or Hebrew name.” He especially favored *Lateinos*, first proposed by Irenaeus, but also liked *Romiith*, presenting tables for both to illustrate their numeric equivalence to 666. He did acknowledge: “It is remarkable also, that the Roman numerals, DCLXVI, consisting of just six letters, which, by pairs, represent the three sixes, should compose the number in the text. Others ingeniously make out the same sum, by adding up the numeral letters in the words VICARIVS FILII DEI, on the frontlet of the Pope’s triple crown. Thus; V+I+C+I+V+I+L+I+I+D+I=666.—See *Abp. Newcome*, and other fanciful conjectures in Lowman.”⁹⁰ This word choice, however, betrays some skepticism on the part of the author. We are, in any case, puzzled as to how “three sixes” can be found in DCLXVI, since Arabic and Roman numerals are such incompatible systems.

46. **1817, 2 August.** A correspondent under the pseudonym *Candidus*, employing tables, analyzed the numerical values of the Hebrew *Romiith*, the Greek *Lateinos*, and the Latin *Vicarivs Filii Dei*. In each case, the total is 666. Here, too, the last mentioned title was linked with an eyewitness account of a man who had seen it in the Eternal City. This is how *Candidus* related it: “Finally a gentleman on a visit at Rome, viewing a procession of the Pope, observed on his mitre the Latin words VICARIVS FILII DEI, the *Vicar of the Son of God*. This, as every one knows is the peculiar title claimed by the Pope, as head of the church. The gentleman had the curiosity to number the letters, and to his astonishment, found them as follows:”⁹¹

47. **1820.** In Froom’s *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* four insightful pages deal with *Messiah’s Kingdom, Or, A Brief Inquiry Concerning What Is Revealed in Scripture, Relative to the Fact, the Time, the Signs, and the Circumstances of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ* by John Bayford. This writer “was most active in the Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, and with Henry Drummond was one of the joint patrons of Joseph Wolff, making possible his extensive missionary journeys.”⁹² Amongst other things, Bayford also revised and edited the *Missionary Journal and Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Wolf, Missionary to the Jews. Written by Himself.*⁹³

A considerable number of Bayford’s prophetic interpretations resemble

those that Uriah Smith would later incorporate in his books on prophecy and need not here be dwelt on. He did, however, also in several points differ from what Seventh-day Adventists came to believe. For instance, he maintained the 1260 year-days would extend from 529 to 1789, the latter being the year of the French Revolution.⁹⁴

A more serious divergence concerns the entities of Rev. 13. Bayford believed the first Beast was “a new Roman power,” exhibiting “the western, or Latin empire, under a new character.” He thought this culminated in the Holy Roman Empire.⁹⁵ As for the second, two-horned beast described in that chapter, he said it was “intimately connected with the first: and it exhibits the ecclesiastical power arising from out of the earth, or from out of a carnal and worldly profession of christianity [*sic*], connecting itself with the civil power of the ten kingdoms, gaining the ascendancy over it; and converting the civil power of the state into an instrument of oppression and persecution, against all those who would not submit themselves to its creed.”⁹⁶ From this, we would gather that Bayford regarded the second Beast as the papacy or Catholicism. But no, for him the latter system corresponded to the *image* of the Beast, which he explained as follows. The second Beast “sets up an image, or likeness to the first Beast, which image he calls The Holy Roman-Catholic Church. He declares that church to be infallible, and assumes the like infallibility to himself, also as the sovereign Pontiff of the church; and declares both himself and the church to be proper objects for religious veneration and worship . . .”⁹⁷ Bayford found it difficult to interpret the number and the name referred to in Rev. 13:18 and therefore dismissed all the interpretations that were then extant, including *Latinus*—suggested by men like Faber—because “the number 666 belongs to the two-horned or ecclesiastical beast. A title, assumed by the Pope, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which contains 666, has been suggested, and it is free from the preceding objection, but, perhaps, it is hardly satisfactory, and it may be, that the true name remains yet to be discovered.”⁹⁸ We note the candor and hesitancy with which Bayford expressed himself. Obviously muddled about the two beasts and the image, he could also have no clarity about the number that is a name.

48. **1826.** In *A Summary of Christian Instruction*, an anonymous writer stated: “The predictions which relate to the grand apostacy [*sic*] of the Christian church, will be found among those which are least liable to misconstruction. The rise, plenitude, and real character, the decline and final overthrow of the Papal dominion, are distinctly described in the following Scriptures: Dan. II. & VII. 2 Thess. II. 1 Tim. IV.1-5. Rev. XII. to XIX. Joel III. Zech. XIV.” In a lengthy footnote, he presented and numerically analyzed *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei* in tabular form, with each totaling 666. He regarded the last mentioned as “the most remarkable coincidence.”⁹⁹

49. **1827.** Obtaining his degrees from Trinity College, Dublin, George

Croly (1780-1860), an Anglican clergyman, was also much given to historical and literary pursuits. After “moderate success as a poet,” he went on to “popular success with his novel *Salathiel*” in 1828,¹⁰⁰ just a year after *The Apocalypse of St. John* had appeared.

Croly identified the first Beast of Rev. 13 as the papacy, but said the second one was the Inquisition. The date for this, according to him, was 1198, when Innocent III became pope.¹⁰¹ For Croly, that year was crucial, because it was allegedly 666 years from 533.¹⁰² The latter date, he said, began the 1260 year-days of papal supremacy which ended in 1793.¹⁰³ He maintained the number 666 “is *not* the name of a man, nor contained in a name of any kind; it is a *date*, and, to a certain degree, a description; its purpose is to mark the birth of the Inquisition, and to connect that birth with the Papacy.”¹⁰⁴

Therefore, he flatly stated: “The words *Lateinos* and *Romiith* are useless; and belong to the heap of merely curious coincidences.”¹⁰⁵ In an explanatory Appendix he expanded on this idea: “The conjectural extravagancies on the number of the beast would make a long and erudite treatise. The mystical notions annexed by the Jews and Greeks to letters and numbers excited this fruitless ingenuity; and one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the subject is the variety of words which numerically correspond to the 666 . . .”¹⁰⁶ And: “The Latin names are still more numerous and equally useless. “*Vicarius Filii Dei.*”—“*Ludovicus.*”—“*Silvester secundus.*”—*Linus secundus.*”—*D. F. Julianus Caesar Atheus,*” &c.”¹⁰⁷

The calculation 533 + (January) 666 = 1198 is correct, but the Inquisition originated not in the latter year but during 1184, when “Pope Lucius III required bishops to make a judicial inquiry, or inquisition, for heresy in their dioceses, a provision renewed by the fourth Lateran Council in 1215.”¹⁰⁸ But Rev. 13:17-18 does say that the number of a *name* is to be calculated. The erroneous date is a serious blemish in Croly’s book, though he did attest the existence of *Vicarius Filii Dei*, which has a numerical value of 666.

50. **1830.** In *The Budget of Truth*, John BurrIDGE quoted from the editorial addition to Robert Fleming’s *Apocalyptic Key*, referred to above: “The title which the popes of Rome have assumed, and caused to be inscribed over the VATICAN door, exactly makes the number 666, when deciphered according to the *numerical* and literal amount of the letters composing their title.” He also himself displayed, in big capitals, the words VICARIVS FILII DEI, together with the figure for each letter, plus the total in both Arabic and Roman numerals.¹⁰⁹

51. **1830, 5 June,** in *The Protestant*. This was “the first Journal published in America devoted to the antipapal controversy.” It was founded in January of that year by George Bourne (1780-1845), who edited it and also went on to originate the Protestant Reformation Society. Emigrating from England as a dissenter clergyman, he became a

Presbyterian minister in Virginia but was defrocked in 1818—“given the right boot of fellowship”—for his persistent and uncompromising stand against slavery. He had brought this with him from the Old Country, where he had moved in the same circles as “the Wilberforces, Clarksons, Buxtons, and their compeers.” For his abolitionism, Bourne was often persecuted in America. Later he became a Dutch Reformed minister in New York, where he also published *The Protestant*.

Blessed with an “exceedingly retentive” memory, he was a much-prized extempore preacher, linguist (especially in Hebrew), editor, republisher, and the author of more than twenty books. He even had great mathematical ability. One of his works was the *American Textbook of Popery, and Illustrations of Popery*. “It was the result of forty years of study. It is the concentrated information derived from over seven hundred volumes of writings of the most noted doctors, bishops, deans, cardinals, saints, and popes of the Romish Antichurch, and of the Greek, Oriental, and English Church, and of the ‘Fathers’ and historians of the first four centuries.” Of him it was said that “he was a living concordance, gazetteer, Bible dictionary, etc.” Unsurprisingly, “very few men surpassed him in the variety and extent of his literary acquirements.” Such were the credentials of George Bourne.¹¹⁰

Both below its general masthead and after its heading for each individual issue, *The Protestant* displayed the words Δευρο, δεῖξω σοι την πορνην την μεγαλην, γεμουσην ονοματων βλασφημιας (deuro, deixō soi tēn pornēn tēn megalēn, gemousēn onomatōn blasfēmias, “come, I will show you the great harlot, full of names of blasphemy.”) This sentence is not an actual quotation from the Greek New Testament but was put together from elements in Rev. 17:1-3. *The Protestant* of 5 June contained an anonymous, intriguing statement, no doubt written by Bourne himself:

“NUMBER OF THE BEAST.—The Pope of Rome styles himself ‘Vicarius Filii Dei,’ which signifies Vicar of the Son of God. The numerical letters of this title exactly make up the apocalyptic number of the Beast. Revelation 13,18.

V. 5. I. 1. C. 100. A.—R.—I. 1. V. 5. S.—F.—I. 1. L. 50. I. 1. I. 1.
D. 500. E.—I. 1. Total 666.”¹¹¹

During 1830, the Roman pontiff in question was Pius VIII, who might have arrested Bourne’s attention through his involvement with American church affairs. This pope “approved the decrees of the Council of Baltimore (October 1829), the first formal meeting of U.S. bishops.” Just six months after this issue of *The Protestant*, Pius VIII died, on 30 November.¹¹²

52. 1830, 11 September in *The Protestant*. A follow-up article, also most probably by George Bourne, combines a discussion of two chapters in the Apocalypse, Rev. 13 and Rev. 17. The former is about the number that is a name, the latter concerns a great prostitute named Babylon. For

the understanding of both mysteries, the Bible says wisdom is required. In this little two-page article, Bourne was a good deal more comprehensive than in his previous piece, referring to two entirely different interpretations, though he expanded on only one of them. First, he pointed out, without comment, that “in the year 666, Pope Vitalianus ordered the Roman worship to be performed every where in the *Latin Tongue*.” Next, he mentioned, discussed, and with tables demonstrated that seven expressions in four languages all have a numerical value of 666. These are the Hebrew *Sethur: Mystery* and *Romiith: Roman*; the Greek *Apostates: Apostate*, *Lateinos: Latin Man*, and *He Latine Basileia: The Latin Kingdom*; the Latin *Vicarius Filii Dei: Vicar of the Son of God*; and the Arabic *Catoolike Lateen: Latin Catholic*.¹¹³ In passing, however, we note—as Uriah Smith would also do a few decades after Bourne—that only one of these, *Vicarius Filii Dei*, meets the Apocalyptic specification of being a definite name or title.

53. **1832**, 1 May. *The American Christian Expositor*, “conducted” by Alexander McLeod, D.D., first says: “*Vicarivs Filii Dei*—The number of the beast in the Revelation of John, which the Spirit of God declares to be six hundred, three score and six, has long engaged the thoughts of wise and good men. Some remarkable coincidences have been found out, especially with respect to the words *Lateinos*, in Greek, and *Ludovicus*, in Latin.” *The American Christian Expositor* then goes on to quote directly from *The Evangelical Magazine* of 1 Jan. 1799 the piece about the English officer who was reported to have observed in Rome the inscription *Vicarivs Filii Dei* on the pope’s miter.¹¹⁴

54. **1832**, 1 September. A. T. J. [Anne Tuttle Jones] Bullard (1808-1896) produced *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century*, a 250-page book, in which—like others both before and after her—she quoted from the *Evangelical Magazine* of 1 January 1799 about the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* on the pope’s tiara and the English officer (she called him a “gentleman”), who had calculated its numerical value as 666.¹¹⁵ Most probably, she had read this in *The American Christian Expositor*, published four months earlier. Her book is the only work on this topic by a non-Seventh-day Adventist that Uriah Smith quoted in his 1865 *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*. He continued doing so in all its subsequent editions until his work was posthumously revised.

55. **1833**. A year after the Bullard book, the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society published another one which contains a very similar story about the English officer. By Harvey Newcomb (1703-1863), this volume is entitled *The Great Apostasy: Being an Account of the Origin, Rise and Progress of Corruption and Tyranny in the Church: Embracing a Particular Description of the Anti-Christian Doctrines and Tyrannical Power of the Church of Rome*.¹¹⁶ Newcomb was an American teacher, clergyman, editor, and author, who “wrote 178 volumes, of which fourteen are on church history, the others being chiefly books for Children.”¹¹⁷ *The*

Great Apostasy may have been specially commissioned as a follow-up publication to Anne Bullard's work. Its title page states that it was "Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and Revised by the Committee of Publication."

In the passage under consideration, Newcomb first explained: "After the division of the Roman empire into Eastern and Western, the Greeks called the people of the Western church Latins. All the worship of the church of Rome is performed in the Latin language. The Bible is read only in Latin. The priests and people pray in Latin. The Greek word for Latins is *Lateinos*; and according to the method of numbering practiced among the Greeks, the word contains the exact number of 666. The Hebrew word which denotes the Roman kingdom, or Roman beast, is *Romiith*. This word according to the method of numbering practiced among the Jews, contains also the exact number of 666."

Then he continued: "Some time ago, an English officer, while at Rome, saw the following words printed on the front of the crown or mitre, which the Pope wore, in some of his religious ceremonies: '*Vicarius Filii Dei.*' This means 'Vicar of Christ;' or 'In the place of Christ.' He thought perhaps it might be the name of the beast; so he took all the numerical letters, and added together the numbers which they contained. The whole amounted to exactly 666. Thus:—"

The next paragraph is headed by three separate words, VICARIVS. FILII. DEI., followed by Roman numerals and their equivalents in Arabic figures, with a total of 666.¹¹⁸

56. **1831–1846.** Likely during the pontificate of Gregory XVI, M. De Latti according to his own testimony spent four years in Rome where he studied for the priesthood. He stated that he often saw the papal crown in the Vatican museum and gave "a detailed and an accurate description of the whole crown," with particulars about the words *Vicarius Filii Dei*. He said "the first word of the sentence [*sic*] was on the first crown of the triple arrangement, the second word on the second part of the crown, while the word *Dei* was on the lower division of the triple crown. He also explained that the first two words were in dark-colored jewels, while the *Dei* was composed of diamonds entirely."¹¹⁹

57. **1835, April.** *The Protestant Penny Magazine*, published in Dublin, Ireland, contained a short but powerful piece—a little more than two pages—by an anonymous writer. Its heading is "The Number of the Beast."¹²⁰

This begins by showing that "it was very usual among the ancients, as it was in the time of St. John, to represent names or titles by numbers corresponding to the letters of the name or title." The first example cited concerns Jupiter, chief of the pagan Graeco-Roman gods, whose number was 717, "as being the amount of the numbers which his title of 'Ἡ Αρχὴ [*hē archē*] or *the beginning*, gives." We then read: "So Barnabas, companion of St. Paul (Epis. c. 9), would express the words 'Jesus crucified,' by 318, the number found in ΙΗ, the first letters of Jesus' name in Greek, and T

representing the cross.”¹²¹ The numerical equivalences of both cases are demonstrated in tabular form.

The article goes on to consider *Λατεινος* (*Lateinos*), proposed by Irenaeus, with its numerical value of 666. The next long paragraph focuses on the fact that the Catholic Church Latinized “every thing—mass, prayers, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, being all conceived in *Latin*.” This language was also used for “Papal councils.” The most recent of these, the Council of Trent, decreed that the Latin Vulgate, a translation, “should be considered the only authentic version of the Scriptures, which is accordingly preferred by their ecclesiastics to the Hebrew or Greek text, the very text in which the prophets and apostles wrote the Scriptures.” And then there is “*Romiith*, the name in Hebrew for *Roman Beast* or *Roman Kingdom*, containing exactly, as *Λατεινος* [*Lateinos*], the number 666—a damning coincidence!” To this the author added: “Again, the Pope has assumed the title of *Vicarius Filii Dei*, ‘The Vicar of the Son of God,’ which title astoundingly bears numerical letters, amounting exactly to the number of 666!”¹²²

The article finally reminds its readers that the inscription above the head of the dying Saviour was “written in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin* characters.” Therefore, likewise, “as the false tares bear a resemblance to the goodly grain, so doth the numerical name of this Antichrist, this usurper of Christ’s dominion, bear a tare-like resemblance to the inscription on the Saviour’s cross, in its also being found written in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*.” The closing paragraph is a single line: “So let it be engraved on his tomb with his age:—” After this, evidently for a papal epitaph, we find the drawing of an oval seal containing, in the alphabets of their original languages, the words *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Also in the drawing are the number 666, *annus natus* (the year born), and 1260.¹²³

58. **1835, 14 May.** *The Ohio Observer* carried an article, “The Mystic Number,” originally published in the *St. Louis Observer*, by a writer who called himself Waldo. He briefly discussed names with a numerical value of 666, especially Irenaeus’s *Lateinos*, the Hebrew *Romiith*, and two Latin expressions: *Ludovicus* as well as *Vicarius Filii Dei*. He noted that “there must be a correspondence in the character as well as the number; otherwise the name could not be applicable.” He also distinguished between a proper name and an *appellative*, which is “common to all of a class.” *Vicarius Filii Dei* belonged to the latter category, and “a popish priest will be the last to deny this.” Even more: “Here then is an office claimed, and a name assumed, of which if a man doubts the right and propriety he is no longer a Roman Catholic.” To this, Waldo added that these letters “may be, as they often have been, seen emblazoned on the very front of the mitre, worn by the Pope on festival occasions.”¹²⁴

59. **1836, December.** *The Baltimore* published a strongly anti-Catholic article, which designated the pontiff as Antichrist. The anonymous author explained the meaning of this word as follows: “Christ taught that all men should read the Scriptures; the Pope teaches that all men should not read them.

Christ taught that all men should drink wine in the Sacrament; the Pope withholds it from the laity, and says all men should not drink it. Christ taught his followers to love their enemies; the Pope teaches his followers to burn them for heretics. Christ says thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve; the Pope says thou shalt worship and serve saints and angels, images and relics. Christ taught his followers to call no man on earth Lord and Master; the Pope teaches men to call Him both Lord and Master. In these things the opposition of the Pope to Christ chiefly consists.” Historically speaking, these charges are true; but nowadays all Catholics do drink the wine and are allowed to read the Bible, though only in conjunction with explanatory material provided by their church. The article also dealt with papal titles. The author, having collected thirty from different sources, asserted that most of them were blasphemous, for they really only apply to God. Then he focused on a few with the numerical value of 666, amongst them *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. This last one the pope allegedly “wears on his mitre.”¹²⁵

60. **1837.** Frederic Fysh (1805-1867) of Queen’s College at Cambridge, became an Anglican clergyman and a prolific writer on prophecy. His anti-Catholicism is very evident in “*The Beast and His Image.*” Or *The Pope and the Council of Trent*. According to the title page, this is “A Commentary Upon Revelation XIII.”¹²⁶ Fysh believed all three entities described in that chapter were variants of the papacy. According to him, the first Beast is the pope; the second, two-horned beast, the Jesuits; and the image of the beast, the Council of Trent.¹²⁷ He telescoped together the mark, the name, and the number, as—amongst other things—is intimated by the subheading to one of his chapters: “The Name of the Pope Counted in Latin. The Mark of His Name.”¹²⁸

Over several chapters, rather repetitively, the book deals with titles and descriptions of the Roman Pontiff in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. In one place, after considering several of them, we read: “The *number* is in each 666. This number is indeed fatal to the Pope. He styles himself

VICARIUS FILII DEI
(VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD)
VICARIUS GENERALIS DEI IN TERRIS
(VICAR-GENERAL OF GOD ON EARTH)

and both these names contain the number 666.”¹²⁹

61. **1838,** 20 May to 7 June. When the final speech was over, Tresham Dames Gregg (?1800-1881), an Anglican clergyman, jumped onto a table in Dublin’s Round Room of the Rotundo, and shouted stentoriously: “*Victoria, Victoria*—See how they run!!” The debate about the rival merits of his church and of Roman Catholicism had lasted for nine days. It was, however, his opponent, Thomas Maguire (1792-1847), the Catholic priest—together with his chairman—whom the majority were cheering. Even a Protestant gentleman audibly demurred. He quietly remarked: “Mr. Maguire modestly retired, like a man conscious of victory; but Mr. Gregg behaved like one

conscious of defeat.”¹³⁰ The priest, a popular preacher, had proven to be learned and extremely knowledgeable about the Bible, witty, and most formidable. A defeat had been inflicted on the “New Reformation, a movement of evangelical Protestants who were making a strong bid to win over poverty stricken Catholics to Protestantism.”¹³¹

In one speech, on the sixth day of the debate, Gregg had called Catholicism an apostate church, the Apocalyptic woman Babylon, and referred to the number 666, which identifies the Antichrist. He said that “innumerable” names corresponded to it: “*Vicarius filii Dei in terra*, the vicar of the Son of God upon earth, makes 666. *Vicarius generalis Dei in terra*, the vicar-general of God upon earth, makes up 666. *Divinis infallibilis*, the divine infallible, constitutes 666. *Latinus lingua sede veste*, Latin in language, capital and dress, makes 666; and a hundred others of the titles which are given to the Pope and the Catholic Church.”¹³²

When his turn came to speak, Maguire deftly sidestepped this issue, partly through attacks on the Church of England about several other matters, particularly marriage and celibacy. Supposedly, according to a prediction in the Bible, Catholicism taught that men should not marry; but it actually insisted that matrimony was holy, a sacrament, which Anglicans no longer acknowledged. This opened the way for ugly things like divorce. Nevertheless, as the shrewd Maguire pointed out, they still required celibacy for the Fellows of Trinity College, right there in Dublin. If these got married, they lost their academic position and employment. But “Did not Jesus Christ, according to your own argument, give them liberty to marry, and yet your church tyrannically, hypocritically, and inconsistently prevents them from marrying—What a beautiful piece of contradiction your whole system is? Why does your church, which seems to be anxious to encourage matrimony, insist that the Fellows of Trinity College shall remain bachelors—a *corporation* of bachelors? Is it not a wonder that what you recommend to me, who has taken a vow, you will not permit them, who have taken no vows to enjoy? Your church will not allow them to marry—they can get no wives—why are they kept in a state of ‘celibacy’ against their wills? Answer me that, dear Mr. Gregg.”¹³³

Regarding the prophecies, Maguire said they could not apply to the pontiff; for the Antichrist was an evil man who had not yet appeared. The 3½ years, 42 months, or 1260 days mentioned in Daniel and Revelation were literal, not symbolic time. After all, “Does not Jesus Christ declare that the reign of Antichrist shall be short? ‘For the sake of the elect his days shall be shortened.’ (Matt. xxiv. 22.)”¹³⁴ This must have struck home forcibly to the audience, both Catholic and Protestant; for it so happened that in that very year of 1838 Dr. James Henthron Todd (1805-1869), the Regius Professor and an Anglican, was teaching virtually the same things at Dublin’s Trinity College.¹³⁵ Futurism, a Catholic invention, was giving birth to Protestant Dispensationalism.

With such an argument Gregg could not cope, and Maguire no longer had

to deal with the problem of *Vicarius Filii Dei*. What did not arise, and at that time still remained unnoticed, was the fact that three and a half calendar years do not consist of 1260 days, which therefore could not be literal. According to the Gregorian calendar, the year comprises 365 days, except when there is a leap year. The actual number is 365.2422 days. We must therefore calculate as follows: $365.2422 \times 3.5 = 1,278$ days; not 1,260 days. There is an 18-day discrepancy!

Gregg lived to the ripe old age of eighty-one. For Maguire, however, the aftermath was not so long or sweet. He was murdered in 1847 at the age of fifty-five, through arsenic poisoning. The culprits could never be found. “While it’s possible that he may have been poisoned by Orangemen because of his opposition to the New Reformation movement it is also possible that he may have been the victim of the Molly Maguires, whom he had strongly opposed in the Ballinamore area.”¹³⁶ The Mollies were a secret society of Irishmen, who fought against exploitive landlords. Reportedly, their local leaders sometimes dressed like women.

62. **1839**, Oct. *The Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine* published “The Number of the Beast Is 666. Rev. xiii. 18.” It mentioned eight different titles or descriptions, with that numerical value, which had at different times been applied to the papacy: 1. VICARIUS GENERALIS DEI IN TERRIS (“Vicar-General of God upon Earth”), 2. VICARIUS FILII DEI (“Vicar of the Son of God”), 3. PAVLO V. VICE DEO (“Paul V., God’s Vicar”), 4. SILVESTER SECUNDUS (“Silvester Secundus—the Pope who first commenced the crusades”), 5. LATEINOS (“the Greek word for Latin”), 6. HE LATINE BASILEIA (“the Greek for Latin or Italian kingdom”), 7. BENEDIKTOS (“the Greek name for the Pope who generalized the monastic life”), 8. ROMIITH (“the Hebrew word for Roman, in which the Papists glory”). We note in passing that it was not the learned Sylvester II (c. 945-1003) but Urban II (c. 1035-1099) who launched the first Crusade.¹³⁷

63. **1839**. In *Popery, An Enemy to Civil and Religious Liberty*, fourth edition, the learned Dr. William C. Brownlee (1784-1860) of the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church, New York, inveighed against the pontifical system as an enemy to both civil and religious liberty. He pointed out that its power structure was hierarchical, buttressed by a claim “to damn the souls of all refractory and rebellious men!” The “Popish prelates have, for a thousand years, claimed this terrific prerogative. Why, they rear it on the first element of the system. Every priest represents the bishop; and every bishop represents the Pope; and the Pope is ‘*Filii Dei Vicarius,—The Vicar of the Son of God upon earth.*’ Hence, whatever Christ does, that does the Pope, or his vicars. This doctrine is unequivocally laid down by the Council of Trent, in their *Catechism*, p. 260.”¹³⁸

For readers not initiated into the mysteries of Latin grammar, we point out that *Filii Dei Vicarius*—like *Vicarius Dei Filii* used by Rabby Shylock in 1765—are synonymous with the more usual *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Its numerical value of 666 is also identical.

64. **1840, 19 May.** Robert W. Landis from Allentown, PA, wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Evangelist* pointing out that the pope as “the Man of Sin” had three titles, רומיית Romiit[h], *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*, each with a numerical value of 666. About the last mentioned, he said it was an inscription “upon the Pope’s mitre,” or “has been till lately; I know not whether it has ever been changed.” Landis mistakenly thought he was the first to notice that “THREE LANGUAGES, (the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin,) unite to fasten it upon ‘his Holiness,’ of Rome.”¹³⁹

65. **1841.** A second edition is published of *The Reformation: A True Tale of the Sixteenth Century* by Anne T. J. Bullard. It repeats the account of an English gentleman who saw the pope in Rome with *Vicarius Filii Dei* inscribed on his tiara and calculated its numerical value as 666.¹⁴⁰

66. **1842.** In *The Great Apostacy Identical with Papal Rome*, Joseph F. Berg discussed *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*, each of them with a numeral value of 666. He referred to “an objection, with which the Papist will be ready to meet us. ‘Antichrist is uniformly designated as a particular person, a single individual; now there is a great series of *Popes*, and consequently the Pope cannot be Antichrist.’” But Berg contended that such an argument “involves the papist in an awkward dilemma.” He believed in apostolic succession, based on the text, “Thou art Peter, and upon *this* rock I will build my church.” Accordingly, Catholics argue that this refers not only to the apostle himself but also “the *line of popes*, whom they call Peter’s successors.” Well, then, “why may not the ‘Man of Sin,’ ‘Antichrist,’ &c. designate a series of persons holding the same office . . . ?”¹⁴¹

67. **1842.** Richard C. Shimeall (1803-1874), rector of St. Jude’s Episcopal Free Church, New York City, who had no connection with and opposed the Millerites, yet was “intimately acquainted with early nineteenth-century British Advent Awakening expositors,” wrote about various Bible prophecies and, in *Age of the World*, explained the infamous number as follows: “[The number] ‘666’ ‘is applied alike to *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*, identifying the Latin church, in addition to the name *Maometis*.”¹⁴² He also wrote: “It is to be observed as a singular circumstance, that the title, *vicarivs filii dei* (Vicar of the Son of God), which the Popes of Rome have assumed to themselves, and caused to be inscribed over the door of the Vatican, exactly makes the number of 666, when deciphered according to the numeral signification of its constituent letters, thus:” [Inserting the customary tabulation]. Appended was a lengthy footnote, in which Shimeall twitted a “querist” with the following sardonic reply:

“Sir,

“In answer to your observation and queries, permit me to say the things I have asserted are stubborn, clear facts, not mere suppositions or fancies.

“The inscription in question, was actually written over the door of the Vatican at Rome in express Latin words and characters, as inserted in this publication, *Viz.*, VICARIVS FILII DEI; and those Latin words and characters contain Latin numerals to the amount of 666, exactly corresponding with

the number of the beast.

“With respect to the supposition you have conjured up, that the Pope might be called *Vicarius Christus*, or *Vicarius Christus Filii Dei* (a sort of gibberish that is neither Latin, German, nor English,) it is a matter I have nothing to do with. Mr. D. may adopt these or any other fancies to amuse himself, and to screen the head of his holiness; but when he has done all, this question will still remain to be answered. Have those inscriptions ever appeared over the door of the Vatican at Rome?

“As to Mr. D—’s attempting to obscure the number of the beast 666, contained in the numerals of the words VICARIUS FILII DEI, by objecting to a V; however the Pope or his emissaries may be obliged to him for his kind exertions on their behalf, yet I presume neither of them will condescend to appear his humble fool in Latin, for the sake of sheltering themselves under his ignorance of the Latin alphabet and the ancient inscriptions.”¹⁴³

68. **1844.** Archibald Bower, who wrote a *History of the Popes* until A.D. 1758, was a Jesuit convert from the Roman Church to Anglicanism. He produced the first comprehensive and satisfactory Protestant multivolume book on this subject in English. The title page describes Bower as “formerly public professor of Rhetoric, History, and Philosophy, in the Universities of Rome, Fermo, and Macerata, and in the latter place counsellor of the Inquisition.” This work was continued to the nineteenth century by Samuel Hanson Cox (1793-1880), professor extraordinary of Biblical and Christian History at Union Theological Seminary, New York. In his Introduction, Cox referred to the efforts of Young Italy to free the Papal States and unite their country. He foresaw that it would be “speedily redeemed from the tyrannous incubus of ages.” He said: “It is doubted by some eminent scholars, if the popedom will exist a quarter of a century longer.” Cox hoped that Providence would, amongst other means, employ this book “to consummate his end.” He asked: “Can Americans read the History of the Popes—and yet believe them to be the prophets of heaven and the hallowed masters of the earth! Can they accord to the present dominant *Gregory* [XVI], the pompous titles which he claims—VICARIUS FILII DEI, VESTRA SANCTITAS, SERVUS SERVORUM DOMINI, ET DOMINUS REGUM IN ORBE TERRARUM, with other profane and blasphemous appellations without end!” In a footnote, he translated these titles as “THE VICAR OF THE SON OF GOD; YOUR HOLINESS; THE SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD; THE LORD OF THE KINGS OF THE WHOLE EARTH.”¹⁴⁴

69. **1845**, 23 March. Balthazer Hoffmann, a retired Presbyterian minister in a signed statement dated 29 October 1906 declared that during the Easter service of 1845, he had seen Pope Gregory XVI wearing a triple crown upon which was the inscription, in jewels, *Vicarius Filii Dei*. On 12 March 1908, he repeated this explanation in answer to a letter from Dr. William S. Butterbaugh (1866-1963), a physician with a strong theological interest. Together with that of M. De Latti, Hoffmann’s testimony had first been

published in a *Review and Herald* article of 1906 by Don Eugene Scoles.¹⁴⁵ This was then reprinted in the Australasian *Union Conference Record* of 18 March 1907, as well as in the 1907, 1912, 1936, and 1941 versions of Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*, issued by several Seventh-day Adventist publishing houses.

70. **1845**, 3 April. *The Jubilee Standard*, published by Samuel S. Snow (1806-1870), whose editorial assistant was B. Matthias, contains a little unsigned article, THE NUMBER OF THE NAME OF THE BEAST. It begins by quoting Rev. 13:18 and then says: "The pope of Rome is the personification of Anti-christ—the head and representative of the Man of Sin. He wears a mitre with this inscription: "VICARIVS FILII DEI," i.e. *The Vicar of the Son of God*; a name or title which he impiously assumes, and which contains the exact number 666. Selecting the letters in this name used by the Latin's [*sic*] in numbering we give their numerical value thus:—" which is followed by a vertical table containing only the letters that have numeric value, with a total of 666. *The Jubilee Standard* appeared in the aftermath of the Great Disappointment, from March to August of 1845. Snow, a one-time Congregationalist had been a Millerite minister. Subsequently, however, he "proclaimed himself to be Elijah the prophet. He soon separated himself from Adventism in every form."¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, this journal was read by ex-Millerites. We find it fascinating that its *vicarius Filii Dei* explanation closely resembles what Uriah Smith would twenty years later come to adopt. As a child, he had been impressed by the Millerite movement and may well have read this piece, although he never referred to it. But it could have lodged in his subconsciousness and afterwards influenced him.

71. **1847**. Archibald Bower's *History of the Popes* was republished, with an Introduction and a Continuation by Samuel Hanson Cox. Related to Gregory XVI, this contains the same titles, including *Vicarius Filii Dei*.¹⁴⁷

72. **1848**. Citing Cruden, Thomas Whittemore (1800-1861), a Universalist, accepted that "the number of the beast, or the number of the name of the beast, stands for the numerical value of the letters that compose his name." He rather thought the entity which the writer of the Apocalypse had in mind was Nero. To substantiate this, Whittemore referred to the Talmud, which contains a Hebrew form of that wicked emperor's name, with a numerical value of 666. But he also, from the *Gospel Treasury* (1809), reproduced the piece about the English officer who reputedly visited Rome and, observing the words *Vicarius Filii Dei* on the pope's miter, worked out its letter values, with a total of 666. Whittemore did not, however, attach importance to this, except as "a very striking illustration of the ingenuity which has been displayed in obtaining the beast's number . . .," though also "to show the very singular coincidence of numerals in that title."¹⁴⁸

73. **1848**. An entire book, in two volumes (though only the first was

ever published), dealt with *The Number and Names of the Apocalyptic Beasts*. Its author, David Thom, was a minister in Liverpool, England, but he had been granted his doctorate by the prestigious Heidelberg University, Germany. He looked at the various names and titles with a sharply critical if not jaundiced eye. He thought, perhaps a little fancifully, that Irenaeus had made up *Lateinos* by adding the syllable *tea* to *Linus*, the first bishop of Rome—to coincide with his Latin title *Linus Secundus* (Linus the second), of which the numeral value is 666. About *Vicarius Filii Dei*, he remarked that according to Wolf[i]us (Wolf, Gryphiswaldiae, 1600) this explanation was first proposed under a pseudonym by one M. Carolus Aglaeonius Irenochoraeus in *Apodictica tractatio quaestionis, Num certum aliquid Anti-Christi nomen existet, cui numerus illi Apocalypticus DCLXVI respondeat?* (Whether there exists any certain name of Anti-Christ which agrees with the Apocalyptic number 666?). Thom included the table to show this but thought its author, who we know was Andreas Helwig, “indulges in the language of the most arrogant boasting, using such expressions as—‘Behold now the words which I present to you! Here the monster stands confessed! He corresponds, in all respects, to what in holy writ it was forshewn he should be . . .’” This was, to be sure, the language of exultation, equivalent to Archimedes’ *Eureka!* But to call it “arrogant boasting” was, we think, unwarranted. About this title, Thom also quoted [Adam] Clarke, according to whom it is, however, expressed as *Vicarius Christi* (Christ’s Vicar) or *Vicarius Jesu Christi* (Vicar of Jesus Christ).¹⁴⁹

74. **1851.** Elias de la Roche Rendell, a Swedenborgian minister of Preston in Britain, was another naysayer. He referred to and quoted from Robert Hindmarsh’s *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, repeating much from the printer-founder of the New Church, including his argument against the numerical method of explaining 666, together with the assertion that a hundred and fifty names could have this value. Rendell added that he himself also preferred a “spiritual” explanation, for “such *numbering* was significant of man, attempting from himself, to ascertain the quality of faith and virtue in the church” (his own emphasis). He acknowledged the most common explanations of his time were that it represented the names *Vicarius Filii Dei*, “on the fontlet of the triple crown of the Pope,” as John Hewlett had put it; *Lateinos*; and *Romiith*. But these, he asserted, were just coincidental, like “*Joseph Smith, Tomkins, and Benjamin Bennet*.”¹⁵⁰

Of course, the number values of those English names are all well in excess of 666. Nevertheless, these Swedenborgian arguments and their derivatives, continued and adapted by later writers, were to prove most influential down to the present, undermining the Historicist explanation.

75. **1851.** The fourth edition of *Horae Apocalypticae; Or, A Commentary on the Apocalypse*, Vol. III, appeared. It was the work of E. B. Elliott, former vicar of Tuxford and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, England. Of the titles that have a numerical value of 666, he

personally favored *Lateinos*, but in a lengthy footnote also detailed several more, among them *Paulo V. Vice-Deo* and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. Concerning the latter, he referred to the statement by Fleming's redactor (1793) that *Vicarius Filii Dei* was "inscribed by some one of the Popes over the door of the Vatican." He attributed this expression to Irenochoraeus, which was Helwig's pseudonym in the first edition of his book (1600). Elliott could have found this information in *Curae Philologicae et Criticae* (1735) by Wolfius. Of further interest is a title that he originally received in a letter from his "late lamented friend *Robert Money, Esq.* of the Bombay Civil Service. It is the Arabic word *Catoolikee Lateen*, of which the numerals are as follows:" Then, in the script of that language, Elliott gave the number value of each letter as well as the total, which is 666.¹⁵¹

76. **1854.** An author identified only as E. B. has his *Sunday Afternoon, Or, Questions, Pictures and Poems upon The Old Testament Scriptures. For the Use of Parents and Teachers* published in London, UK. This provided a "Summary of Daniel's Prophecy," in which the main ideas for chapters 8-12 are—with a few exceptions—remarkably similar to those of Seventh-day Adventist writers like Uriah Smith. The main difference was that the Little Horn of Dan. 8 is identified as "Mahomedanism." For Chapter 9, it has "The prophecy of the Messiah; the time fixed for his appearing, a day standing for a year." Below these items, we find a "Summary of the same prophecy by the apostle John." Again, the explanations for Rev. 12-19 are akin to those of Smith and implicate the papacy, although the lamb-like beast is equated with "Loyola, or the Jesuits." After this, we read *An Explanation of the Mystical Number 666 (Rev. xiii. 18) in Roman figures, from the Latin language* and the words, "VICARIVS FILII DEI," or "Vicar of the Son of God," the name usurped by the pope." This is followed by the title and its numerical analysis, which totals 666.¹⁵²

77. **1855.** A pseudonymous writer, calling himself *A Cambridge M.A. Layman*, commented on the composite beast of Rev. 13. He said, "By the seven heads, the ten horns, and ten crowns, the Papacy is referred to, and that the kingdoms of Europe were to be under the temporal as well as spiritual influence of this virtual beast . . ." Its name was blasphemous, and in a footnote the author gave "the 'Vicarius Filii Dei, of the Vatican.'"¹⁵³

78 **1856, 15 July.** Edward Nangle (1799-1833), Protestant minister and editor of an anti-Catholic journal in western Ireland, published an extract from a private letter, in which a correspondent in Rome under the date of 29 May described the great pomp investing the "Head of the Church." He also said that "over one of the doors of the inner court of the Vatican," there was an inscription which called the pope the *Vicarius Filii Dei*.¹⁵⁴

79. **1857.** Excellent argumentation about the number of the Beast appeared in a work by Herm[ann] Joh[ann] Gräber (1814-1904), pastor at Meiderich. Published in Heidelberg, Germany's prestigious university town, his *Versuch einer historischen Erklärung der Offenbarung des*

Johannes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Auslegungen von Bengel, Hengstenberg und Ebrard (An Attempt at a Historical Explanation of John's Apocalypse with a Special Focus on the Interpretations by Bengel, Hengstenberg, and Ebrard) amongst others surveyed various names that supposedly identified the Beast, beginning with Irenaeus. Many, however, should, according to Gräber, be discarded; for they are fanciful, being simply the product of human ingenuity. Also incorrect were attempts by others to attribute a name to the Beast; he must choose it for himself. It should, moreover, be in the language of the Antichrist. Such considerations eliminate many titles, names, and attributions, including Irenaeus's *Lateinos* as well as *Romiith*[h]. Most eminently suitable was *Vicarius Filii Dei* (Representative of the Son of God), which numerically equals 666. Chosen, applied to itself, and often used by the papacy, it is in Latin, the ecclesiastical language of the Roman Church. Amongst other things, Gräber said: "The pope, not as an individual and person, but as a bearer of the power of the papacy, must even bear it openly on his forehead. This is the case with the name: Vicarius filii dei, that is, Representative of the Son of God, which name formerly (I report according to oral reports, whether they are true, I dare not assert) even appears to have stood in large golden letters over the main entrance of the Vatican, until a few years ago (according to reliable information) all inscriptions of the Vatican were removed and replaced with others." It was also blasphemous, expressing the quintessence of pontifical claims.¹⁵⁵

80. **1860.** An illuminating work by William Elfe Tayler appeared: *History of the Temporal Power of the Popes; Showing the Crimes by Which It Was Originally Acquired, and Afterwards Enlarged*. He described how the fraudulent Donation of Constantine became the basis for adding further territories to the Papal State. Charlemagne, on the strength of that forgery, virtually doubled its size. He produced a Donation of his own. As if all this were not enough, some later popes produced additional spurious documents. "In the prosecution of their determined purpose to rank amongst the monarchs of this world, no means seem to have been too base for the pretended *Vicars of the Son of God*" (emphasis added). The papacy also added "*three other forged documents of the Holy See, viz., the donation of Louis the Pious, Constantine the Great, and Otho I*" (author's emphasis).¹⁵⁶ The pontiffs kept on quoting and using the original Donation. "In fact, kingdoms were given away by these pretended masters of the world, on the strength of it—as Ireland to our Henry II., by Pope Adrian IV."¹⁵⁷

81. **1863.** The anonymous British author of "*Come Hither, I Will Shew unto Thee The Condemnation of the Great Harlot That Sitteth upon Many Waters*, mentioned various Hebrew, Greek, and Latin names with a numerical value of 666, including *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*.¹⁵⁸

82. **1864.** The *Zion's Herald and Wesleyan Journal* in Boston reprinted

a *Morning Star* article entitled “The Mark of the Beast.” It states that *Vicarius Filii Dei* appears on the pope’s mitre and demonstrates that this title has a numeric value of 666. It also says: “This agrees with the Scripture assertion, that the number or mark is in the forehead.” We note that here the number is identified with the mark instead of the name.¹⁵⁹

83. **1864.** Prof. Dr. Johann J. Herzog, assisted by Protestant theologians and scholars in Germany, issued a religious encyclopedia. One of its articles discusses numbers as used by the Hebrews. It considers the occurrence of 666 in both Rev. 13:18 and the Old Testament (1 Kings 10:14 and Ezra 2:13). Afterwards it also deals with the conjunction of 7 + 1 and various meanings of 8 obtained in this way. One of them is about the seven heads of Rev. 17:9-11. These are equated with the developmental stages of the Beast. During its sixth phase, it coincided with the Roman Empire; during the seventh, it had greater power and displayed more cunning, for some time masquerading as the *vicarius Filii Dei*; but during the eighth it would, in self-idolatry and open rebellion against God, attempt to found an absolute world monarchy, until the final judgment dealt with it (Rev. 17:10, cf. 2 Thess. 2:3, etc.).¹⁶⁰

84. **1866.** The Cambridge-educated T. W. Christie (1821-1900) brought out a book on the Apocalypse, in which he maintained that Rev. 13 dealt with “no less than four beasts, or, rather three beasts and an image of one of them, which must not, though one against God, be confounded personally while we trace the vision. *First*, Satan is the great beast, the dragon, ever known by his colour, ‘red’ and ‘scarlet,’ and his origin, ‘from the bottomless pit’ (chap. xii. 3; xiii. 2; xvii. 3, 8). *Secondly*, ‘The beast out of the sea,’ its ten horns crowned, or the fourth beast of Daniel Christianized, and used by Satan as his head and horns during the second woe (verse 1; chap. xvii.). *Thirdly*, ‘The beast out of the earth,’ or a spiritual monster to resuscitate and give life to, *Fourthly*, ‘An image of the beast’ out of the sea in its politico-religious essence (verses 1, 11, 14, 15).”¹⁶¹ Much of this is for us an unfamiliar Historicism. Only part of it can here be touched on. It acknowledges that the 1260 days of Revelation are as many years, but after identifying the ten Germanic peoples with present-day countries, it asserts: “Their history also tells us that that empire received apparently a fatal wound of a twofold nature when Constantine, A.D. 325, and again the empire, A.D. 385, formally abandoned Paganism, and embraced baptized Christianity; and again when it broke up into those ten kingdoms.”¹⁶² Thereupon, “after one thousand two hundred and sixty years, though the man of sin, the visible head who first caused the image to be made and exacted homage for it, is now fallen, and the ten horns hate his peculiar feature of the image (chap. xvii.), does not the image remain? And is not the beast entire, even in this Protestant England, one of the ten horns thereof?”¹⁶³ Christie, who believed in predestination as an essential doctrine, railed against and regarded as antichristian other brands of Protestantism different from his own, especially Arminianism with its

doctrine of free will.¹⁶⁴ All the same, he did say: “The first Bishop of Rome, ‘the beast out of the earth,’ who first made the spiritual image, thus assumed it openly before Christendom, in his native Latin, ‘Vicarius Filii Dei,’ vicar, or substitute, of the Son of God. These letters, taken as numerals, fulfill John’s Prophecy.”¹⁶⁵

In his text, this is followed by several tables that show the numerical equivalents of names: *Vicarius Filii Dei*, but also *apostatēs* (apostate), *Lateinos*, and *hē latinē basileia* (the Latin kingdom), to which is added: “And in like manner the Hebrew ‘Romiith.’” The passage ends with an admonition: “There, we repeat, it stands, brethren, the great Christianized beast: the great Christian apostacy [*sic*], not the little horn alone, whom they vilify, but themselves included; for it is the ten-horned beast, the Latin kingdom for one thousand two hundred and sixty years, England included . . .”¹⁶⁶

85. **1867.** Shimeall put out another book under a different title, which also contains the identical statement about *Vicarius Filii Dei* being inscribed over the door of the Vatican, as well as the footnote response to the Querist, cited above.¹⁶⁷ It seems to be largely a reprint of his *Age of the World*.

86. **1868.** In “*Ecce Agnus Dei*” or *Christianity without Mystery*, an anonymous writer made an attack on two Irish members of the British parliament, Sir John Gray and B. Whitworth, together with Sir F. Crossley for supporting the disestablishment of the Anglican Church. The first mentioned “could not find adequate words to thank Mr. Spurgeon” for supporting this idea. Evidently this was the famous preacher C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), who had more than once changed denominations and was perhaps a little ecumenically minded, so the writer condemned him, too: “At p. 137 *Mr. Spurgeon* is shown to be a mistaken, and therefore a *false* teacher; and the same fundamental errors attach to them all. The Papist to spread Popery, and the Non-conformist his false notions, are in friendly union under a Ritualistic leader.” He then went on to excoriate the Roman Church. First he pointed out that it insisted on its own infallibility, denying that salvation was possible for anyone who did not belong to it. He continued: “Its head is the Pope, who calls himself (and every member of the Church must admit that he is) the ‘Vicar of Christ,’ VICARIUS FILII DEI, *Vicar of the Son of God*; and it is a remarkable coincidence that in these words the numerical letters added together make 666, the number of the beast mentioned in the Revelation of St. John (xiii. 18).”¹⁶⁸

87. **1874, October.** In a Letter to the Editor of *Armoury: A Magazine of Weapons for Christian Warfare*, T. H. Aston, an Anglican correspondent from Birmingham, England, detailed the “Distinctive Principles of the Reformation.” They center in the Bible, to which every individual may appeal, justification by faith through Jesus’ merits, civil and religious liberty, and rejecting the “most heinous offence of idolatry.” To these, the

Roman Church contrasts its own principles, of which Aston mentioned four: *I.* It believes “that both tradition and development have a binding authority.” From this is derived the use of relics with a belief in spurious miracles, saleable indulgences, the doctrine of purgatory, the Virgin Mary’s so-called Immaculate Conception, and other additions not to be found in the Scriptures. *II.* Salvation is limited to Roman Catholics. *III.* “Heretics are to be coerced whenever practicable and expedient.” The Church, “wherever possible, should wield an absolute supremacy.” This has given rise to “the atrocities of the Inquisition,” while it has extenuated and justified “terrible breaches of morality and honesty.” *IV.* “That the Pope is the *vicar of the Son of God*” [emphasis added]. To this is added the worship of wafers at masses, prayers to the Virgin Mary, the bowings before images and crosses, and invoking saints created by that church. Aston ended his letter with a powerful appeal: “Be warned, O men! against departing from the pure worship of the prayer-hearing and the living God. It is a fearful denunciation, ‘God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.’”¹⁶⁹

88. **1875.** C. C. Bombaugh in his *Gleanings for the Curious from the Harvest-Fields of Literature: A Melange of Excerpta* had a section called “Puzzles.” Under this, we read “The Number of the Beast,” which is immediately followed by *VICARIUS FILII DEI* plus a horizontal row of figures, added up to 666, without any discussion, as though this were self-evident. Then the author said: “Among the curious things extant in relation to Luther is the covert attempt of an ingenious theological opponent to make him the apocalyptic beast or antichrist described in Revelation ch. xiii.” This antagonist was Fevardent (presumably François Feuardent, 1539-1610). However, to equate the Reformer’s name with 666, he had to use a system totally different from that of Roman numerals. After all, according to these, the first letter of *Martin Luther* equals 1,000. And Fevardent even had to modify the last name to Martin *Lauter*, which he said had been the original spelling.¹⁷⁰

89. **1875.** James H. Braund considered various titles applied to the pontiff through the ages. Charlemagne, he said, designated him as *God’s Vicar*, adding: “The most important and popular name under which that title was proclaimed, and is now known, is vicar of Christ, or vicar of the Son of God, or *in the language of the Romans*, *VICARIUS FILII DEI*.” Thereupon Braund referred to the statement in Fleming’s *Rise and Fall of Papal Rome* “that this particular title was not only assumed by the Roman pontiff, but was also inscribed over the door of the Vatican, it is eminently satisfactory to find that ‘Vicarius Filii Dei’ meets the next and only condition remaining to be satisfied, by expressing, in numeral letters, the number 666. Thus—” And the words in capitals are set out horizontally across the page, and under them the various figures, totaling 666. He also mentioned the fact that the inscription over the Saviour’s head on the cross, was trilingual, finding it “not a little remarkable that the *kingdom*,

race and name of this barbaric-adjudged vicar and usurper of his attributes are also authoritatively inscribed by the mystic number 666 in those three languages. And so he also displays *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, together with *Vicarius Filii Dei* in three adjacent vertical columns.¹⁷¹

90. **1878**, 22 June. Under the heading THE POPE—"ARMAGEDDON," in the Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean*, a reader with the initials E. L. asked about the number of popes to date and: "What is the word in English that Baldwin in 'Armageddon' gives the beast of Revelations, on page 342?" The editor answered: "The Latin Kingdom," but also stated: "It is further said by some writers that the Pope wears upon his pontifical crown, in jeweled letters, this title: '*Vicarius Filii Dei*,' which means in English, 'Vicegerent of the Son of God:' and the numerical value of this title in Latin is just 666."¹⁷²

91. **1881**, March. J. C. Phillips, owner-editor of *The Testimony*, published in London, mentioned and briefly discussed five names that he attributed to the "image-beast" of Rev. 13, which he said was the papacy. These are *Lateinos*, *Romiith*, *H Latine Basileia*, *Vicarivs Dei Generalis In Terris*, and *Vicarivs Filii Dei*. Each has, as he demonstrated, the same number value of 666—in Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. About the last mentioned, he claimed it was "cut in stone" as an inscription "upon the basilica of St. Peter's."¹⁷³ He also mentioned the Little Horn of Dan. 7 and went on to say that the Roman Church had "Protestant daughters (Rev. xvii. 5)." With these, he linked "the God-dishonouring doctrine of natural immortality, eternal torment, &c.," believed by Catholics and most Protestants alike. According to Phillips, the latter would also be branded with the number "six hundred three score and six"; for "it matters not by what name schismatics and separationists may call themselves; so long as they hold fundamental dogmas in common with the Papacy." All of these together he described as "apostate Christendom."¹⁷⁴

92. **1881**. In *A Key to the Apocalypse*, an anonymous writer repeated the three most common expressions with a numerical value of 666 that Protestants applied to the pope: the Hebrew *Rumiith* [*sic*], the Greek *Lateinos*, and the Latin *Vicarius Filii Dei*. About the last mentioned, he said the pope "has assumed [it] to himself, and caused it to be placed over the door of the Vatican, his residence."¹⁷⁵ As the reader may have noticed, this was at least the fourteenth assertion mentioned in this Appendix which made that or a similar claim. Beginning with the 1793 supplement to Robert Fleming's book and William Button's as well as an anonymous compiler's repetition in the same year, it was also cited as follows by: J. Buel, 1797; Henry Kett, 1799; French Laurence, 1810; John Burr ridge, 1830; Richard C. Shimeall, 1842, 1867; Edward Nangle, 1856; E. B. Elliott, 1851; Hermann J. Gräber, 1857; and James H. Braund, 1875. Because of the near identical wording in each case, it is reasonable to say that this originally had a single source.

93. **1885**. The second of three volumes on chronograms by James Hilton,

a Fellow of the prestigious London Society of Antiquaries, contains a whole chapter entitled “The Number 666.”¹⁷⁶ One of the many items, culled from various authors, mentioned in it is *Vicarius Filii Dei*. In this, the letters V, I, C, I, V, I, L, I, I, D, and I are printed as enlarged capitals to show the 666 equivalence.¹⁷⁷ This bears witness to the existence of that title with such an interpretation during or before the author’s lifetime. But it does not mean that Hilton personally endorsed it, for his survey ends with the statement: “Enough is given in this chapter to show that little reliance can be placed on a method of interpretation which is capable of leading to widely differing conclusions.”¹⁷⁸

94. **1890.** A book on sex education for young women by Melville C. Keith, M.D., mingles theology with utter candor about female physiology and anatomy—including illustrations. *The Young Lady’s Private Counselor. The Care of Mind and Body* incorporates material which the physician author described as “Studies for Young Ladies on Subjects Concerning Themselves. By Many Mothers.” Keith said people had two natures, *The Bodily* and *The Spiritual*.¹⁷⁹ He gave much attention to methods for curbing the sexual appetite, such as 1. Prayer to God, 2. Fasting, 3. Washing, 4. Labor and Exercise. He also considered diet important: avoiding stimulating items like tea, coffee, alcoholic beverages, meat, eggs, oysters, seasoned food, all fish, peppers, onions, garlic, potato dishes, pastry, lobster, crab, too much milk, and so on.¹⁸⁰ By fasting, he meant “the total abstinence from food or drink for some stated time which may be longer or shorter.”¹⁸¹ Even water had to be avoided.¹⁸² Keith advocated individualistic non-denominationalism, having no use for churches and suchlike bodies. “If you are once tied to a society, that society will be the boundary of your life. If you do not ally yourself with any human organization, but depend wholly on the Lord Jesus, you will be IN THE CHURCH—although you will not belong to any human organization.” All that is needed is the Bible and the Holy Spirit.¹⁸³ He asserted that Protestants belonged to two classes. Some, believing in the new birth, were good. Others, however, were just hypocrites. But he came down very hard on the Roman Church, we think excessively so. According to him, its members were all of “one class; the class that has never been born again.”¹⁸⁴

In a footnote, he added: “It may be thought an expression of prejudice to assert that all the Roman Catholics are advocates and followers of the great beast of the Bible. But such is the fact. In the XIII. chapter of Revelation is found our authority, eighteenth verse.

“The solution to this is in ‘the number of the man.’

“The pope of Rome wears on his tiara the words, worked in diamonds, *Vicarius Filii Dei*.”

Following these statements is a detailed table showing how in Roman numerals this title has a numeric value of 666.¹⁸⁵

While some of Keith’s ideas may suggest that he was a Seventh-day Adventist, others show that he was not. In his prophetic interpretation, he

could, however, have been influenced by Uriah Smith's book on Daniel and the Revelation, especially the sentence: "The pope of Rome wears on his tiara the words, worked in diamonds, *Vicarius Filii Dei*." Previous Protestant writers apparently do not in this context mention *diamonds*.

95. **1894.** *Profetiorna om Babylon och Vilddjuret i Uppenbarelseboken* (Prophecies about Babylon and the Beast in the Apocalypse) appeared. Amongst other details, the subtitle contained the words *Antikrist* (Antichrist) and *Det Mystiska Talet 666* (The Mystic Number 666). This is a Swedish translation from English writings by H. Grattan Guinness, apparently culled from his writings, translated into Swedish, and published at Stockholm. The author dealt with a number of interpretations, pointing out that they had begun with *Lateinos*. A footnote stated: "An English officer of high rank, who in the year 1799, by a special favour, had been given the opportunity, while in Rome, of getting a close view of the Pope's jewels and precious things, in this way discovered, that the papal tiara bore this inscription: '*Vicarius Filii Dei*.'" Guinness also gave the numerical values of the letters V, I, C, L, and D, with a demonstration that they totaled 666.¹⁸⁶

96. **1896.** J. F. Duncklee, in his work on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, focused on *Vicarius Filii Dei*. He translated this as "Vicegerent of the Son of God," and showed that the Latin original had a numerical value of 666. He also said this name was "emblazoned upon his miter in glittering letters."¹⁸⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century, that claim was repeated over and over again—with a frequent Protestant confusion of the pope's miter with his crown, the tiara, or other headgear. The authors and their books are too numerous for even a brief recapitulation, so we just mention the dates, under five headings. *Miter*: 1799, 1809, 1817, 1832, 1833, 1835, 1836, 1840, 1841, 1845, 1848, 1864, 1896; *Crown*: 1805, 1810, 1816, 1833, 1831-1846, 1845, 1851, 1878; *Tiara*: 1832, 1890, 1894; *Frontlet*: 1809, 1816; *Cap*: 1810.

However, we think there have been only three actual "sightings," one by the English officer first reported in 1799 and two by De Latti and Hoffman in 1831-1846. The rest is derivative, including the 1832 statement in A. T. J. [Anne Tuttle Jones] Bullard's book, which Uriah Smith quoted during 1865 and in his later editions.

Notes

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4. Jo. Christophori Wolfii *Curae Philologicae et Criticae in SS. Apostolorum Jacobi Petri Judae et Johannes Epistolas Hujusque Apocal.* (Hamburg: Jo. Christopher Kisner and Georg Piscator [Fischer?], 1835), p. 548.
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6. *Ibid.*, pp. 916-917. 7. *Ibid.*, p. 930.
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21. John James Bachmair, *The Revelation of St. John Historically Explained, Not Compiled from Commentators and Other Authors, but an Original* (London: Frye, Couchman, and Collier, 1778), p. 265.
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Appendix IV

Ingredients, Scope, and Structure of

The Great Controversy

By Ellen G. White

The magnum opus of Ellen G. White (1827–1915), as well as her favorite book, is a blend of theology, history, and prophecy. It has two authors, a particular American woman—highly intelligent, self-educated, ultimately a powerful intellectual—who lived in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, as well as the Eternal One addressing all who inhabit this planet during the time of the end. It also has a particular scope and structure. Let us briefly consider the nature, interplay, and significance of these factors.

1. Theology, History, and Prophecy.

The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan is concerned with more than what is normally regarded as prophecy, although—especially in its final chapters—predicting the future is also prominent.

Its theology was not an invention of Ellen White or even her colleagues of the young Seventh-day Adventist Church, who worked on it during the nineteenth century. Garnered into this book is a rich harvest of what outstanding Christian thinkers have taught in ages past. In several ways, the author was an old-fashioned, unreconstructed Protestant, untouched by the ecumenical ideas—with their largely Catholic inspiration—that have become so prominent in our day.

From childhood, Ellen White absorbed the viewpoint of the sixteenth-century Reformation, together with its precursors and those who followed afterwards: the Waldenses, Wycliffe, Hus, Luther, and Wesley. All these were among her heroes. To reject her writings, including this book, is to a considerable extent to turn one's back on the Reformation.

The Great Controversy hews close to the Scriptures. Its purpose is not theological originality but doctrinal soundness. In this, it transmits a magnificent tradition handed down by thousands of those who, through many, many ages, have loved their Lord and often even died for Him. At the same time, the Holy Spirit superintended the way in which Mrs. White recorded those insights.

Although the historical element is based on what the Lord revealed to his servant in dreams and visions, much of it is not directly inspired. She followed up on what was shown to her by reading a variety of historians, such as J. H. Merle d'Aubigné and J. A. Wylie, amongst others. Samuele Bacchiocchi has suggested that there are historical inaccuracies in *The Great Controversy*, because its author allegedly used *Uriah Smith's*

Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation and “followed his lead”—although he was “a very poor historian.”¹

For none of these allegations, has Bacchiocchi provided any supporting evidence. Let us rather, as a sample, look for ourselves at one of her chapters, “Luther’s Separation From Rome.” In these twenty-five pages, she cites at least the following five sources: J. H. Merle d’Aubigné, C. L. Gieseler, K. R. Hagenbach, [William Carlos] Martyn, and J. A. Wylie. No trace of Uriah Smith can be found.

Because Ellen White has made use of sources, she has often been criticized, especially by nitpickers who either fault the authors whose material she incorporated or accuse her of plagiarism. But if she had bypassed the historians, skeptics would have been even more scornful, rejecting her descriptions as figments of a fevered imagination.

This is a case of being damned if she did and damned if she did not.

2. The Different Faces of Inspiration.

It is not easy to say just how inspiration functions, because it concerns the supernatural and the mysterious activities of the Holy Spirit. The best way to examine it is to observe it at work in producing the Scriptures. We find that it does not always operate in the same way.

Some of the most authoritative and valuable pieces in the Bible are not inspired at all. Most notable of these is the Decalogue, spoken directly to the entire Israelite nation and then personally written by God. The Ten Commandments are not a mediated document. They are the only part of the Bible written by God Himself. Much in the four Gospels is quoted from what Jesus said. In such cases, the Holy Spirit has directed the inclusion of such material in the Bible instead of dictating it.

Other contents are of purely human and sometimes diabolic origin. Quotations from wicked persons like Cain, Ahab, Caiaphas, and even Satan abound, as do statements, edicts, and letters from pagans such as that impudent Rabshakeh, who represented Sennacherib outside the walls of Jerusalem during the Assyrian siege when Hezekiah was king. Such, too, was the nasty decree by pagan Nebuchadnezzar against all who dared to speak anything amiss about the God who had saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:29). But we also read the chapter-long testimony by the same, now humbled monarch after his seven years’ insanity and conversion (Daniel 4). Vitaly important was the decree of King Cyrus, whom the Lord had stirred up to order the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. This document was transcribed into two parts of the Bible, namely 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23, and Ezra 1:1-4. That Ellen White in writing *The Great Controversy* would sometimes follow a similar procedure is not surprising.

Inspiration always operates to communicate truth, but prophecy is not its only mode.

Sometimes the person whom the Lord or His angel addresses hears an actual voice, as in the dramatic story of the child Samuel (1 Samuel 3:2-15). This is not just a general impression or a mere conviction, like that of preachers during sermon preparation.

A human being can have a divinely inspired dream or a vision, in which God or angels speak. The person who has such an experience can then recount it with the addition of the words, “thus saith the Lord.” Objects or actions are actually seen and then described in words of the speaker’s or writer’s choice. Ellen White eventually claimed to have had about 2,000 prophetic dreams or visions.² If so, what she wrote should be taken very seriously. If not, she was a dreadful liar.

In passing, we note that dreams and visions are not confined to full-time, professional prophets. For instance, Joseph, Jesus’ foster father, had five inspired dreams instructing him to marry Mary, flee to Egypt with the infant Saviour, and later to return and live in Nazareth. Similarly, the Adventist evangelist Joseph Bates and Annie Smith in the same night had nearly identical dreams, which led to her conversion. This was undoubtedly the Spirit of Prophecy at work, yet none of these people was a prophet.

The way in which the historical portions of the Bible were produced is especially instructive for understanding the same element in *The Great Controversy*. In such cases, the Holy Spirit apparently did not resort to visions, nor did He dictate what words were to be used. Instead, He ensured that His chosen instruments’ writing would be accurate, based on eyewitness accounts or historical records. A typical refrain in the book of Kings is the following: “Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?” (2 Kings 10:34).

However, the Scriptures only occasionally mention such sources. Usually when an author takes material from one part of the Bible and reuses it in another, he does not tell us that he is doing so. This brings us to the carping of critics against Ellen White for sometimes following the same procedure, in the belief that it somehow discredits her work.

For example, Isaiah 2 is practically identical with Micah 4, which could make us wonder why a prophet would quote another prophet’s prediction, without giving his source, as though it were his own. In the four Gospels, especially the first three, reusing somebody else’s words without attribution is a widespread phenomenon. Matthew swallowed and reproduced entire sections of Mark, often more or less verbatim, without ever alerting his readers to the fact. Only Luke, a more learned man, acknowledged that his work was based on research (Luke 1:1-4). Much of Revelation, about a third, consists of quotations or allusions—again mostly without mentioning the sources.

In secular circles, too, this neglect of attribution has through the ages been a common literary technique, for instance of the Greek dramatists,

who used and reused the same stories, characters, and themes. Later writers like Virgil, Dante, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot also did so. Frequently they incorporated into and enriched their masterpieces with bits and pieces, semi-quotations, references, and paradigmatic elements from eminent predecessors. As is well known, Shakespeare almost never invented a plot of his own. He brilliantly revamped the works of others, whom posterity has forgotten. His remarkable contemporary, Francis Bacon, is another case in point. This is how Catherine Drinker Bowen explained a method that he, and others like him, followed:

“It was a custom of the day for readers to copy out, in their commonplace books, whatever pleased them in other men’s works. Often enough these diligent copyists neglected to cite the author’s name and ended by simply appropriating what they found. One cannot look on it as plagiarism with Bacon, because somehow he transformed the material; he called this the hatching out of other men’s creations.”³

Those who object to this method of writing on anachronistic grounds that such writers were ignoring copyright (a recent invention) or plagiarized in a disreputable way are simply manifesting an ignorant, curmudgeonly attitude.

All the same, this type of thing does raise questions about inspired writers. What, for instance, should we think of Luke’s acknowledgement that he wrote as a result of diligent research? Surely, the Holy Spirit could just have dictated to him the entire Gospel that bears Luke’s name.

It seems that when dealing with history, even if inspired writers do supernaturally see some events, they are also required to fill in the details through ordinary human methods, like background reading and research. Here and there, the resultant text may include some minor discrepancies, apparent or even real. The following is a well-known case. In Mark 5:1-19, we read about Jesus meeting a man possessed by many demons, whom He drove out but allowed to enter and drown an entire herd of swine. Matthew 8:28-34, however, in describing the same occasion, informs us that there were actually two demoniacs.

Now this is exactly the kind of thing that happens when two or more witnesses give testimony in a court case. If their versions did not to some extent differ from each other, the judge would immediately suspect collusion. Therefore, such minor variants in the Gospel accounts—and there are many of them—are not a weakness. They are evidence of authenticity. If the story of Jesus were a fiction, those who concocted it would have been very careful to avoid the smallest possible discrepancy.

Here is another example. When Jesus was crucified, Pilate wrote out a superscription that was nailed above the Saviour’s head. We read about it in all four Gospels. But in each case the wording is a little different, even though they are in substantial agreement.

Only those who believe in verbal inspiration would be stumped to explain such divergences adequately. We only need to remember that

though the Scriptures are the Word of God, they were authored by human beings, each with a different perspective. Ellen White explains this well:

“The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God’s penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

“It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man’s words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the Word of God.”⁴

If this applies to the Scriptures, should we be surprised or distressed to find that Ellen White for a new edition of *The Great Controversy* revised the text and in some instances worded it differently?

One critic born and raised overseas has pointed out that where in an older version she had written, “The 1260 years of papal supremacy began with the establishment of the papacy in A.D. 538, and would therefore terminate in 1798,” she changed this for the 1911 edition to read: “The 1260 years of papal supremacy began in A.D. 538, and would terminate in 1798.” He thought this was because it had been brought to her attention that the papacy had actually originated a few centuries earlier. He is, however, mistaken due to his insufficient grasp of the English language.

The word “establishment,” in the older edition was a technical term, which many American readers of the eighteenth century and some of nineteenth would have grasped. It also occurs in the Constitution of the United States: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” But by the twentieth century more and more people began to argue about that word. In the First Amendment, it was not meant to be a synonym for “establishing.” Instead, the establishment of religion refers to adopting a particular denomination as a state church. And that is what the Byzantine emperor, Justinian I, did: He appointed the pope in Rome as the head of the Mediterranean Church.

About this point, the different editions really agree, but Ellen White had a passion for clarity and wanted to avoid misunderstanding, so she updated her book for a new generation of readers.

Those who created text that became part of the Bible apparently never wrote while they were dreaming or in vision. They did so afterwards. Sometimes there may not even have been any such supernatural manifestations. For instance, we have no evidence that Luke produced his Gospel as a result of dreams or visions. The contrary seems to have been the case, but he was aided in his work by the Holy Spirit.

Early in her public ministry, Ellen White explained that the words she chose were her own, and yet when writing them she was just as dependent on guidance from the Holy Spirit as when she had the dreams or visions. She was also careful to enclose any words spoken to her by an angel “in marks of quotation.”⁵ A prophetic writer should strive to be as accurate, as true to what was shown, as possible. On the other hand, the same thing can linguistically be expressed in many ways. For instance, it does not really matter whether one says, “The Lord showed me . . .” or “It was revealed to me by the Lord . . .” or “I saw that . . .”

The writer may use prose or verse. Some ancients who wrote the Bible, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, preferred poetic form, which involved an intricate arsenal of skills: prosody, figures of speech, and so on, as in Lamentations. Nevertheless in all this, he or she must never deviate from truth.

For instance, Daniel had a vision and needed to describe the third beast in it. He used his own language, but however he put it he had to bring out that it was a leopard with four wings and four heads. He could say, “I saw a leopard with four wings and four heads,” or “before me there appeared a four-winged leopard, which also had four heads.” Semantically these are acceptable equivalents. He could not, however, report without lying: “I saw a leopard with four wings and five heads.” Therefore, to maintain that prophets are not verbally inspired does not suggest that they are not confined within certain limits. The basic question is: Did the Most High, an angel, or the Holy Spirit really speak or show something to the person concerned?

3. Ellen White’s So-called Copyright Infringement and Derivative Material.

Within the scope of the present article, it is impossible to deal fully with this issue. Let us just note that some who jump so blithely into the arena to argue about Ellen White’s dependency on other writers are recycling old statements (often inaccurate), rumors, gossip, and even downright lies. Some twentieth-century critics have fallen prey to the most notorious of these. Just a few years ago, a correspondent of mine—a retired, prominent minister—told me: “The book *In the Steps of St. Paul* had to be withdrawn because the publishers of a similar book threatened to sue for copyright infringement. . . . Unfortunately, now that the copyright has expired, the book has been produced by photocopying the book and hundreds of readers will regard it as verbally inspired.”

Such allegations are blatantly untrue and were brilliantly refuted by Francis D. Nichol half a century ago in his *Ellen G. White and Her Critics* (1951). Here is part of what he said about *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson, from which Ellen White supposedly quoted so copiously, infringing copyright:

“There were no copyright relations between the United States and Great Britain until the issuance of the Presidential proclamation on July 1, 1891, which proclamation extended copyright protection to the works of British authors upon compliance with the provisions of the United States copyright law. (The Conybeare and Howson book was first published in England in 1851-52.) British authors residing in England whose books were published prior to that date could not secure any copyright protection in the United States, hence their works were in the public domain as far as United States publishers were concerned.”⁶

Consequently, there never was a genuine threat to sue for copyright infringement. Nichol tells how C. D. Holmes, employed by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, established this fact. On 15 January 1924, he wrote as follows to the T. Y. Crowell Company of New York City, which had in the meantime reissued the Conybeare and Howson book in the United States:

“Some years ago you published a book entitled ‘Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul.’ In 1883 a book was printed by the Review and Herald Publishing Co., of Battle Creek, Mich., entitled ‘Sketches from [*sic*] the Life of Paul.’ For a long time it has been claimed that because of a similarity of ideas and words in several instances in this book, you at one time threatened prosecution unless the book was withdrawn from circulation.

“This report is now being scattered about in printed form and I should be pleased to know if there is any truth in it. Any information that you can give me regarding this matter will be greatly appreciated.”⁷

On 18 January 1925, the Crowell Company replied: “Your letter of Jan. 15th received. We publish Conybeare’s LIFE AND EPISTLES OF THE APOSTLE PAUL but this is not a copyrighted book and we would have no legal grounds for action against your book and we do not think that we have ever raised any objection or made any claim such as you speak of.” Nichol photographically reproduced this letter on p. 456 of his book and also quoted it on the adjoining page.⁸

But what about the charge that as a result of this “scandal” our church withdrew the book from further publication? It is unnecessary to weary the reader with the details, which all appear in Nichol. I simply state what happened back in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Our denomination continued selling both *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* by Conybeare and Howson (as it had been doing all along) and *Sketches From the Life of Paul* by Ellen White.

When the stocks of the latter book were exhausted, it was not reprinted. Why? Because for the new edition Mrs. White first wanted to expand the contents, especially by including material on the ministry of the other apostles. She had already been planning such changes in 1903, but other work prevented an early completion of this project. Finally her revised version came out in 1911 under its new title, *The Acts of the*

Apostles.

And how much of *Life and Epistles of St. Paul* did Ellen White actually incorporate into her own book? “Direct quotations of words, phrases, and clauses, plus any accompanying close paraphrase, constitute about 7 per cent of *Sketches From the Life of Paul*.”⁹

Space will not here permit a detailed analysis of derivative material in *The Great Controversy*. Let us, however, ask about just two of Ellen White’s historical sources, both of them originally published in England, which lie before me as I write: J. H. Merle d’Aubigné’s *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (1846) and James A. Wylie’s *The History of Protestantism* (1878). American copyright, of course, did not apply to either British book, since both appeared before 1891, as did the original printing of *The Great Controversy* (1888).

And did she quote immensely from these works? A little math will show that it cannot have been all that much. My copy of *The Great Controversy* has 694 pages (main text), of which less than half describes the early Church, the Dark Ages, the Reformation, and its European or British aftermath. The focus of the rest is largely on America, doctrinal matters, and prophecies about the future. But d’Aubigné’s work consists of 867 and Wylie’s of 2,112 pages, neither of them concerned with the United States.

Obviously the 210 pages that she devotes to the Reformation in Continental Europe and England could hardly have engorged and ingested the massive quantity of material that they presented. Besides, her sources were by no means confined to d’Aubigné and Wylie.

She was extremely selective in what she used.

4. Adaptive, Apt to Learn, an Excellent Mind.

The year 1798, concluding the 1260 prophetic year-days, began an unprecedented period in our planet’s history: the time of the end. Throughout the nineteenth century and down to the present, this has brought a veritable avalanche of ever-accelerating, sometimes mind-boggling changes. With this, too, came new approaches to scholarship and research.

Side by side with these developments, a keener sense of intellectual property has developed. Authors understandably feel entitled to payment for the fruit of their labors, and publishing houses want to make as much money as possible. Right now, however, this is becoming a formidable barrier to the easy, electronic dissemination of knowledge that recent technology has made possible. We may well be on the verge of another swing in the pendulum between copyright extremism and the unfettered freedom with which a writer like Ellen White began her career.

At first, late in the nineteenth century, she still seems to have been unaware of the need to indicate her sources, but as soon this was pointed

out to her, she did so—as in the present Introduction to *The Great Controversy*—and explained: “The great events which have marked the progress of reform in past ages, are matters of history, well known and universally acknowledged by the Protestant world; they are facts which none can gainsay.”

This history, as she pointed out, she has condensed, in accordance with the scope and purpose of her book; for after all she was dealing with more than past events. “In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted.”

She was also frank, not secretive, about passages that lack quotation marks or attribution: “In some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject.”¹⁰

It is the latter procedure that has caused some people, used to our day’s copyright rules and lawsuits, to raise their eyebrows. Such a reaction just displays their ignorance about how the authors of the past believed they could freely use what their predecessors had created.

At any rate, she was adaptive and apt to learn, which is surely a highly commendable trait in everybody, including a servant of the Lord.

To the foregoing paragraphs, something else can be added: a misguided though sometimes well-intended emphasis on the fact that Ellen White, due to an accident, left school at the age of nine.¹¹ For this reason, she was supposedly uneducated, remaining a third-grader all her life.

How silly! The history of literature demonstrates abundantly that neither the ability to write, nor intellect, is determined by class attendance. Mark Twain (1835–1910) left school at the age of twelve.¹² The formal education of Charles Dickens (1812–1870) was “interrupted and unimpressive”; it ended when he was fifteen.¹³ George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) started with some private tutoring, but “basically rejected the schools he then attended and by age 16 he was working in a land agent’s office.”¹⁴ Even William Shakespeare, whom many professors and other enthusiasts in both Britain and America regard as the world’s greatest writer, never attended a university.¹⁵ We cannot even be sure that he finished high school; it is a matter of conjecture.

How could these geniuses, despite such handicaps, have fared so well—and laid the groundwork for countless lesser figures to obtain their PhDs and launch their university careers? The main answer is twofold: innate ability and self-study. For instance, Shaw deliberately educated himself in the reading room of the British Museum and by attending lectures as well as debates.¹⁶ Ellen White built up and diligently used “a personal library containing nearly 2,000 books.”¹⁷ To say “Her education ended with a brief period at the Westbrook Seminary and Female College

of Portland, Maine, in 1839”¹⁸ is quite misleading.

She was, as stated at the outset, highly intelligent, self-educated, ultimately a powerful intellectual. It may be objected that she nevertheless continued to bear some scars from her limited schooling because she used literary assistants—what we today would call editors—to help her with spelling and other matters. That, however, is common among writers, irrespective of their academic background. Many of them are indifferent spellers and especially poor at punctuation. Nowadays the larger, reputable publishing firms employ a whole tribe of editors, each with a specialized function.

The fact that Ellen White resorted to literary assistants proves her eminent good sense, as does her reuse of older material in her files, when she was producing a book. What is especially amazing is that with her busy schedule as a letter-writer, counselor, and itinerant preacher, she was still able to finish such a plethora of publications. She is said to have been perhaps the most prolific female writer who ever lived.

Only people with narrow mental horizons in both her time and ours can fault her procedures. Unfortunately they included men like A. G. Daniells (1858–1935), whom critics delight to quote, because he knew Ellen White and her husband, being their secretary for almost a year—and because he eventually became a General Conference President. However, his education at Battle Creek College in 1875 lasted for only one year,¹⁹ nor did he grow intellectually as she did. Ellen White was a genius. Daniells was not.

5. Scope and structure of *The Great Controversy*.

This work goes well beyond human history. As its full title suggests, it is ultimately about Lucifer’s fall and a cosmic war, conducted mostly here on planet Earth, between himself and the Creator-Redeemer. Apart from the first advent and what it accomplished, the brunt of this conflict has been borne by Christ’s faithful followers through the ages.

The Great Controversy especially deals with the Protestant Reformation and its aftermath.

Ninety percent of its pages and all its forty-two chapters, apart from the first four, cover the period that begins with John Wycliffe (c. 1320–1384) and ends with Paradise regained. That is less than seven of the twenty centuries that constitute our era. Furthermore, although the book makes use of history, it is even more concerned with contemporary events and the future. In a sense, it is also a rather American book, to judge from the fact that 60 percent of its contents—from chapter 16 onward—largely have a New World setting. Historically this comprises fewer than four hundred years. Yet this country is vitally important, in accordance with the interpretation of the second Beast of Revelation 13.

These facts harmonize with Ellen White’s own statement in her

Introduction: “It is not so much the object of this book to present new truths concerning the struggles of former times, as to bring out facts and principles which have a bearing on coming events.”

The Great Controversy largely omits the history of the early church. A single chapter, “An Era of Spiritual Darkness (The Apostasy),” in twelve pages touches on a detail here and there about the first three hundred years, as well as the fourth, the sixth, the eighth, the eleventh, and the thirteenth centuries. Occasionally the author highlights a name: Constantine, Gregory VII, Henry IV. Other important figures like Justinian are omitted, as is data about the ten Germanic peoples. In this section, we have thematic writing, not a history of events set out in fine chronological sequence.

All this has certain implications. One is that for other researchers, living in our time, a huge terrain and a vast expanse of time remain to be investigated and described, as I have attempted to do in my *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001) and *The Truth About 666*.

Conclusion

The Great Controversy is the greatest Seventh-day Adventist book that anyone has ever written. Weaving together cosmic, religious, historical, and predictive elements with an often magnificent style, it has survived for more than a century. Distributed all over the world and translated into scores of languages, it has maintained its relevance. It is a book about yesterday, today, and forever.

Notes

1. Samuele Bacchiocchi, “The Credibility of Ellen White,” *Endtime Issues Newsletter* No. 151, 11 July 2006.
2. EB 06. s.v. “White, Ellen Gould Harmon.”
3. Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Francis Bacon: The Temper of a Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 83.
4. Ellen G. White, Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886), *Selected Messages*, Bk. 1, p. 21.
5. White, *Review and Herald*, Oct. 8, 1867, p. 260, quoted in Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics*, p. 461 (see full reference in endnote 6).
6. Francis D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics: An Answer to the Major Charges that Critics Have Brought Against Mrs. Ellen G. White* (Takoma Park, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1951), p. 454.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 455. 8. *Ibid.*, pp. 456, 457. 9. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
10. Introduction, GC, pp. xi, xii.
11. EB 06. s.v. “White, Ellen Gould Harmon.”
12. Dust jacket, *Mark Twain: Short Stories and Tall Tales* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, an Imprint of Running Press, 1993).
13. EB 06, s.v. “Dickens, Charles.”
14. *Ibid.*, s.v. “Shaw, George Bernard.”
15. *Ibid.*, s.v. “Shakespeare, William.”

16. Ibid., s.v. "Shaw, George Bernard."
17. "1919 Bible Conference Minutes Concerning Ellen G. White—Introduction," www.christiancommunitychurch.us (downloaded July 25, 2006).
18. EB 06, s.v. "White, Ellen Gould Harmon."
19. SDAE, s.v. "Daniells, Arthur Grosvenor."

Appendix V

Dissenters of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries Opposing the Historicist Equation

Vicarius Filii Dei = 666

1. **July 1790.** A counterblast against all antipapal identifications was provided by R[obert] Hindmarsh of the Swedenborgian New Church in a self-printed journal, *The New Magazine of Knowledge Concerning Heaven and Hell, and the Universal World of Nature*. He said “the circumstance of the Pope’s name, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, making the number 666” was a “trifling mode of explanation,” because apart from the pontiff it “may be extended to an hundred other names.”¹ He preferred what he calls a “spiritual interpretation.” As he saw it, 666 was directed against the teaching *that man is justified and saved by faith without the works of the law*. It meant “that every truth of the Word is falsified by the Protestant doctrine of faith separate from good works. The number 666 signifies all falses [*sic*] and evils in one mass.”²

2. **1792.** In his self-published *Letters to Dr. Priestly*, Hindmarsh again interpreted Rev. 13 by applying the ideas of Emmanuel Swedenborg, whom many Christians have found peculiar, especially due to his constant communication with the spirit world. Hindmarsh rejected the Protestant application of the number 666 to the papacy. Instead, he said, “the whole chapter, in the spiritual sense, treats of the Reformed churches only.” He did mention *Lateinos, Romiith, vicarius Generalis Dei in terris, and vicarius Filii Dei*, but added: “I soon found, that not only the names above mentioned would make up the required number, but perhaps an hundred and fifty other names, that could no more be supposed to have any connection with the contents of the Apocalypse, than the *man in the moon*.” And so he applied the Swedenborgian “science of correspondences,” concluding that 666 “is called the *number of a man*, because number signifies quality, and man signifies wisdom and intelligence, but in the opposite sense, as in the present case, self-derived wisdom; for it is said of those who separate faith from charity.”³

3. **1808.** George Stanley Faber, vicar at Stockton-upon-Tees in England, in *A Dissertation on the Prophecies, That Have Been Fulfilled, Are Now Fulfilling, or Will Hereafter Be Fulfilled, Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years*, wrote that “various names have been pitched upon as *this name of the beast*,” each with a numerical value of 666. For him, the ten-horned Leopard-like creature of Rev. 13 was the pagan Roman Empire, which he called “*the temporal beast*.” Therefore, the papacy could only be the second or two-horned beast: “*the second apocalyptic beast perfectly accords with that of the catholic church of Rome, the spiritual empire regular and secular, of which the Pope is the head*.” Faber found the interpretations often suggested,

Vicarius Filii Dei, *Vacarius* [sic] *Dei generalis in terris*, and *Romiith*, unacceptable; for they did not apply to Pagan Rome. He went on to say: “*Lateinos* is the very name of the beast intended by the Apostle.” Another point he made was that the appellation suggested by 666 “must be a name, borne, along with some superstitious badge or mark, by every member of the beast . . .” (Author’s italics) This betrayed a confusion of the Beast’s name, as represented by its number, with its mark.

4. **1811.** Faber’s *Dissertation on the Prophecies* appeared in a further American edition with another publisher. Basically he made the same points.⁴ We note the importance he attached to a correct identification of the seven heads in the Apocalypse for contextualizing the name referred to. In this, he had a point that is awkward for modern historicists, who are still struggling to explain them aright. However, a comparison of Rev. 13:11-18 with further scriptures, especially Rev. 19:20, makes it clear that the mark, the name, and its number cannot apply to the second Beast, but to the first one. Therefore, the name must refer to the papacy.

5. **1814.** John Edward Clarke mentioned *Vicarius Filii Dei*, but this did not impress him, since—as he pointed out—many expressions have been shown to reveal a numerical value of 666. Against those that are based on Latin, he used a Preterist argument: “All such can be of but very little authority, as no evidence can be produced that the Romans numbered in this way so early as the days of the apostles.” He also tended to discount *Vicarius Filii Dei* because he thought “the form in which it is used is *Vicarius Christi* . . . or *Vicarius Jesus Christi*.”⁵

6. **1817.** Apparently a Preterist, William Roy, indicated that Rev. 13 referred to the Roman emperors. He also said that the name “is the same as the mark of beast.” This man had a very original if not such a judicious mind. About *Vicarius Filii Dei*, Vicar of the Son of God, he certainly came up with a novel argument—which nobody else since then has apparently seen fit to repeat: “As every minister of Christ who is stationed in any particular place or parish, is the vicar of the Son of God, it is as applicable to him as to the Pope.” Then he further obfuscated the topic by analyzing, in parallel columns, the numerical value of *Romiith*, *Lateinos*, and *Vicarius Filii Dei*. To this he added: “But if these names are all applicable to the Pope, and are interpreted in the above manner, his number must be 1998, instead of 666; and as the name of none of the Roman emperors or Popes can be interpreted to signify the number made use of in the next clause, it must have reference to the age of the beast, or to the number of his years and days.”⁶

7. **1828.** Faber, having become Rector of Long-Newton, again dismissed names like *Vicarius Filii Dei*. One reason he gave is peculiar: they are too easy to calculate. “A computation of this nature requires no *wisdom*: the veriest school-boy, with a slate and a pencil, is fully equal to the task.” No, it must be more subtle, displaying “what St. John describes as *calculative wisdom*.”⁷ And so Faber took over Francis Wrangham’s proposal: the word *Apostatès* [sic], “the Apostate,” which he said was a name. Yet these men did not use its

normal spelling ἀποστάτης (*apostatēs*), with a separate middle *s* followed by a *t*; that would be too simple. Besides, its numerical value was 1160. Instead, he imagined that these two letters must be contracted together, as in Greek they sometimes can be. Accordingly, he wrote the word as ἀποζάτης (*apozatēs*, “apostate”). [Since our present-day computers mostly lack those letters exactly as he used them, we have here substituted: ζ = ς.] Now, the contracted cipher is numerically equal to 6; therefore, the word—as Faber chose to write it—has a numerical value of 666!⁸ This is what he regarded as wisdom, though we think it smacks of Gnostic subtlety. Despite all suchlike ingenuity, however, *Apostatēs* is not the title or name of anybody, emperor or pope. Dangerously misleading is the fact that Faber also equated the name, represented by its number, with the mark of the Beast. He said: “The name and the mark are substantially *identical*: for the mark is no other than the impression of the name, which (we are told) was branded upon the foreheads of the beast and of all his subjects.”⁹ This idea, which Faber shared with others of his time like William Roy, would influence writers of the future—several of whom at that time did not yet exist, including Seventh-day Adventists only to be born in the distant twentieth century.

8. **1833.** Faber, no doubt having been criticized for the views expressed in his previous three publications, tried again, like Shakespeare’s King Henry V at the battle of Harfleur: “Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more.” Again this indefatigable prophetic interpreter, who was now Master of Sherburn Hospital and Prebendary of Salisbury, insisted that the correct name of the Beast was and could only be *Apostatēs*. Therefore, *Vicarius Filii Dei* and the like must “be thrown aside” because they were “utterly and inherently inappropriate.” Why? Because they did not apply to the Roman Empire, which in Faber’s scheme was what the Leopard Beast referred to.¹⁰

9. **1852.** E. D. Rendell, a Boston clergyman, admitted that, together with *Lateinos*, *Vicarius Filii Dei* was the most general interpretations of the number 666 in his day and was linked to the papacy. To this, he added *Romiith*. Yet he objected to these explanations on two grounds. First, they betrayed “a very worldly view” and, second, there were just too many possibilities. He cited the Swedenborgian Rev. Robt. Hindmarsh, referred to above, and the “hundred and fifty names that could no more be supposed to have any connection with the contents of the Apocalypse, than the man in the moon.” “Rendell preferred a “spiritual” explanation, for “such *numbering* was significant of man, attempting from himself, to ascertain the quality of faith and virtue in the church.”¹¹

Notes

1. R[obert] Hindmarsh, *The New Magazine of Knowledge Concerning Heaven and Hell, and the Universal World of Nature; Or, Grand Museum of Intellectual, Rational, and Scientific Truths* (London, UK: R. Hindmarsh, July 1790), p. 210.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212.
3. Robert Hindmarsh, *Letters to Dr. Priestly* (London, UK: R. Hindmarsh, 1792), pp. 284-289.
4. George Stanley Faber, *A Dissertation on the Prophecies, That Have Been Fulfilled, Are Now Fulfilling, or Will Hereafter Be Fulfilled, Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years*, Vol. I, First American from the Second London Edition (Boston: Andrews and Cummings, 1808), pp. 171-176.
5. J[ohn] E[dward] Clarke, *Dissertation on the Dragon, Beast, and False-Prophet, of the Apocalypse; in which the Number 666 is Satisfactorily Explained* (London, UK: Duncan and Cochran, etc.), pp. 59, 60.
6. William Roy, *The Key of David, to Open the Door of Revelations: Being a Critical and Scriptural Comment, on the Book of Revelations* (Albany; E. & E. Hosford, 1817), pp. 202-204.
7. Faber, *A Dissertation on the Prophecies, That Have Been Fulfilled, Are Now Fulfilling, or Will Hereafter Be Fulfilled, Relative to the Great Period of 1260 Years*, Vol. I of two vols., Second American from the Second London Edition (New York: Evert Duyckinck, and M. and W. Ward, 1811), p. 172.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
11. E. D. Rendell, *Antediluvian History, and Narrative of the Flood, as Set forth in the Early Portions of the Book of Genesis* (Boston: Otis Clapp, 1852), pp. 223, 224.

Appendix VI

Philosophy as Theology

I

About the Trinity, let us specify our own stance. Like other Seventh-day Adventists today, we believe in the Redeemer's eternal preexistence and that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute what Ellen G. White called "the heavenly trio." In them, dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead." As for our Lord, "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived"; and his divinity "is the believer's assurance of eternal life."¹ We do not, however, use any ancient Greek or Latin words to define our position.

Ellen G. White, although she was one of the pioneers who founded her denomination, did not, however, establish its fundamental doctrines. Instead, to this day, "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word."²

These words introduce the official list of Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. For further emphasis, this idea is also formally expressed as the denomination's preeminent teaching. The doctrine of the Trinity follows it.

1. Holy Scriptures:

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to man the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the authoritative revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12.)

2. Trinity:

There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension, yet

known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation. (Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 14:7.)

3. Father:

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. Son:

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

5. Holy Spirit:

God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ's life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth. (Gen. 1:1, 2; Luke 1:35; 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:11, 12; Acts 1:8; John 14:16-18, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:7-13.)³

Superficially this resembles Catholic Trinitarian dogma, but if required to comment on it, the Roman Church would have to reject it as heresy, for several reasons. First, it seeks to base Seventh-day Adventist teachings entirely on the Bible; it fails to mention the ecumenical Councils of the

fourth century and subsequent argumentation by theologians, great or small. To Catholicism, this is anathema, since it insists on tradition as an equal basis for its beliefs. Second, the Seventh-day Adventist teaching about the Father seems to overemphasize his role as “the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation,” which could be taken to suggest that both the Son and Holy Spirit are in a sense subsidiary to him. A theologian of the Roman Church could fault this as Arianism or no better than semi-Arianism. Third, the terminology is wrong. Catholicism has always fiercely insisted on using specific terms for its Trinitarian dogma. Here are three very relevant paragraphs from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994):

250 During the first centuries the Church sought to clarify its Trinitarian faith, both to deepen its own understanding of the faith and to defend it against the errors that were deforming it. This clarification was the work of the early councils, aided by the theological work of the Church Fathers and sustained by the Christian people’s sense of the faith.

251 In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the Church had to develop its own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin: “substance,” “person” or “hypostasis,” “relation,” and so on. In doing this, she did not submit the faith to human wisdom, but gave a new and unprecedented meaning of these terms, which from then on would be used to signify an ineffable mystery, “infinitely beyond all that we can humanly understand.”⁸² [82. Paul VI, *CPG* § 2.]

252 The Church uses (I) the term “substance” (rendered also at times by “essence” or “nature”) to designate the divine being in its unity, (II) the term “person” or “hypostasis” to designate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the real distinction among them, and (III) the term “relation” to designate the fact that their distinction lies in the relationship of each to the others.⁴

The opinion of Pope Paul VI (1897-1978, reigned from 1963), which is cited under 251 above, does not harmonize with the facts as shown in our chapter on the Germanic interlude. Historically the Roman Church did submit its faith to human wisdom, especially to the philosophical ideas of men like Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, as well as the Gnostics, from whom it derived its present-day terms like *substance*, *hypostasis*, or *essence*. These and other words essentially retain their original meanings. On the other hand, for the reasons already mentioned, Seventh-day Adventists surely are—from a Catholic point of view—Protestant heretics.

But let us now slip back in time, returning to eighteen centuries ago, and witness the unfolding of the Trinitarian drama.

We begin by noting a curious fact. As opposed to the concept that it

expresses, the word *Trinity* is nowhere to be found in the Bible. The dogma itself was formally first defined at the Council of Nicaea in 325, presided over by Constantine I, the recently converted emperor. It was reemphasized by the second ecumenical council at Constantinople in 381 under Theodosius I. The preceding as well as the subsequent deliberations and developments generated fierce theological controversy, involving the Athanasian party or so-called Orthodox Christians, outright Arians, and semi-Arians.

Did those ancient Trinitarians largely dwell on what the Bible says about the topic? They did not. For them, it really came down to hair-splitting arguments focusing on words in Greek, especially ὁμοούσιος (*homoousios*), “of the same οὐσία (*ousia*),” and ὁμοιούσιος (*homoiousios*), “of a similar *ousia*.” The reader will observe that these terms are distinguished from each other by a single letter: ι (*i*), which in Greek is called the *iota*. This difference “gave rise to the popular expression, ‘it makes not one *iota* of difference.’ To Orthodox Christians, however, the *iota* was of great importance. Both Arianism and semi-Arianism were condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325).”⁵

There is also the distressful detail that the triumphant so-called Orthodox Christians of both the Eastern and Western churches persecuted those who dared to persist in these other beliefs. To do so, however, they needed imperial support. But unfortunately for them, the emperors who followed Constantine I at times preferred Arian or semi-Arian ideas, so that the same medicine was meted out to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Trinitarians. This part of a lengthy story we need not here relate. Instead, we take a closer look at *homoousios* and *homoiousios*, for which people were subjected to much pain and tribulation.

The first of these terms suffers from a serious defect: it is totally unbiblical, since it does not occur in the Scriptures.⁶ At first *homoousios* was also ambiguous, but after various theologians over many years had leapt through mental hoops it came to mean, as Catholics put it, “of one and the same substance,”⁷—which goes back to Aristotle’s *substantia*. This word does not, however, as some readers might think, refer to anything material; it is derived from ancient Greek philosophy. More specifically it is a term in metaphysics, “the philosophical study whose object is to determine the real nature of things—to determine the meaning, structure, and principles of whatever is insofar as it is.”⁸

That *homoousios*, “of the same *ousia*,” is not in the Bible was specifically pointed out in the Fourth Creed of Sirmium—the so-called Dated Creed—of 359, when Constantine’s son Constantius II (317-361) was emperor. On that occasion, a semi-Arian bishop, Basil of Ancyra (d. 364), was seeking to reconcile the two warring theological parties. A year earlier, he “and a small group of bishops proposed the formula *homoiousios*, “of similar substance.”⁹

But what is the unscriptural *ousia* all about? It means “being,” derived from το εἶναι (*to einai*). A literal translation is “the to be.” English lacks this type of construction—and can do perfectly well without it. On the other hand, for speakers and writers of ancient Greek, *to einai* was a nifty and

intellectually useful expression. Parallel are the much later *das Sein* in German and *el ser* in Spanish. They all mean “the to be.” Because Latin does not have a word for “the,” it cannot add it to *esse*, which also means “to be.” It does, however, have an equivalent for *ousia*, the word *essentia* (essence), which—as we have noted—the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* mentions as an equivalent for *substance*.

But do these constructions really refer to anything at all, or are they just learned-sounding verbiage, metaphysical bubbles in the wind?

Often the verb *to be*, on which the Greek word *ousia* and its equivalents in other languages are based, is merely a verbal hyphen. While words like “run,” “destroy” or “pronounce,” have the reality status of something that can be physically verified, the same is not true of “is.” It is a mental thing, an element of grammar rather than of meaning. Without words before and after it, it is null and void, like a hyphen that has nothing on either side of it. In the present tense, some languages omit it altogether. Russians, for instance, do not say, “he is a tourist,” but, “he tourist.” This also happens in Hebrew, in which most of the Old Testament was written.

What did the men of Nicaea or Constantinople know, and—for that matter what do we know—about the ultimate nature of things and especially of God? Long before those Councils, Moses had warned the Israelites: “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). The apostle Paul had also warned his early Christian readers: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8). Paul was well acquainted with all aspects of the Greeks’ culture, including their philosophy. Unfortunately, however, most of the Mediterranean church ignored this good advice.

And so its theologians occupied themselves with hair-splitting topics, especially in the time of Constantine and for centuries to come. They did well to reject the Arian idea that the second Person of the godhead was a created being. But persecuting fellow Christians for such and even minor differences of opinion was despicable. The men of Nicaea should rather have concentrated on what Jesus called “the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith” (Matt. 23:23). They could, moreover, have fruitfully positioned themselves against the growing apostasy from Biblical truth that characterized the mainline church of their time.

But no, the Great Apostasy through its scholars strained at the iota gnat in *homoiousios* and swallowed the *anomia* camel, sabotaging God’s holy Law. It had done so particularly by replacing the Sabbath with Sunday and introducing idolatrous images for people to bow down to.

Since, however, those theologians were not interested in reforming the imperial church but rather sought to advance its power as well as their own, we look a little more closely at the murky waters into which they preferred to wade from that time onward.

II

Seven hundred years before the Council of Nicaea, the great pagan philosopher Plato (428/427-348/347 B.C.), a charming stylist, had beguilingly written about the metaphysics of “τὸ εἶναι, being, existence.”¹⁰

In ancient Alexandria, Egypt, at the beginning of the Christian era, his thinking had a great influence on Philo Judaeus (15-10 B.C.–A.D. 45-50), a “Greek-speaking Jewish philosopher, the most important representative of Hellenistic Judaism.”¹¹ Using allegorization, he tried to harmonize the writings of Moses with those of the Greek philosophers, especially Plato. For such efforts, he is also “regarded by [some] Christians as a forerunner of Christian theology.”¹²

Later, Platonic thought received a further impetus in Alexandria through the work of Plotinus (205-270), who founded Neoplatonism.¹³

These topics kept on preoccupying men’s minds throughout the Middle Ages and beyond. The medieval scholastics speculated endlessly on them, debating the differences between “substance” and “accident.” And did concepts really correspond to entities in some transcendent reality or did they only exist in the mind?

From the eighteenth century onward eminent philosophers have been increasingly skeptical about *ousia/substantia*. David Hume (1711-76) denied its existence altogether, and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) concluded that substance and accident did not refer “to anything in the world, but rather to man’s way of ordering his experience.” That is, they are only categories of the human mind.¹⁴ In stature, these two men are comparable to the best of the ancient Greek philosophers.

All the same, a Platonic influence continued right into the twentieth century, as can even at times be observed in Existentialist book titles. A leading proponent of this school was Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), “the foremost philosopher of mid-20th-century France”—both an atheist and a Communist—who founded his philosophical method on existential psychoanalysis. He titled his major work *L’Être et le néant* (1943)/*Being and Nothingness*, (1956). For the Christian Existentialist Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), “the method of philosophy depends upon a recognition of the mystery of Being (*Le Mystère de l’être* [1951; *The Mystery of Being*, 1950-51]).” Like its equivalents in Greek, German, and Spanish, *l’être* means “the to be.” Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), a great name in Phenomenology, was concerned with “the manifestation or disclosure of Being in itself.” His masterpiece is *Sein und Zeit* (1927; *Being and Time*, 1962). To designate existence, he also used the word *Dasein*. As a noun, it literally means “the to be there.”¹⁵ Though these writers were more concerned with humanity than a transcendent world, they were still clearly dependent on *ousia* concepts and terminology.

But they were rebutted by more practically minded thinkers like the

Logical Positivists, who formulated their “philosophical doctrine in Vienna in the 1920s, according to which scientific knowledge is the only kind of factual knowledge and all traditional metaphysical doctrines are to be rejected as meaningless.” Therefore, they held “that the ultimate basis of knowledge rests upon public experimental verification rather than upon personal experience” and “the ‘great unanswerable questions’ about substance, causality, freedom, and God are unanswerable just because they are not genuine questions at all. This last is a thesis about language, not about nature, and is based upon a general account of meaning and of meaninglessness. All genuine philosophy (according to the group that came to be called the Vienna Circle) is a critique of language . . .”¹⁶

A strong influence on this school of thought was Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), “regarded by many as the greatest philosopher of the 20th century.” He himself was also born and reared in Vienna but went to England during 1908. After meeting Bertrand Russell at Cambridge in 1911, he concentrated on questions of logic and meaning. Back on the European continent and fighting for Austria during World War I, he was converted under the influence of Leo Tolstoy’s *The Gospel in Brief* (1883). He also concluded that the truths of ethics, aesthetics, and religion “were inexpressible; insight in these areas could be shown but not stated. ‘There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words,’ Wittgenstein wrote.” And ultimately, for him, the same applied to logic. One result of his thinking was *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1911), a very famous book. In 1929, he returned to England, where he lectured at Cambridge University. He then progressed beyond and criticized the *Tractatus*, concluding that an “inflexible view of language . . . underlie most philosophical confusions.” He realized “that language has many uses and that words can be used quite meaningfully without corresponding to things.”¹⁷ Indeed, indeed!

But in the fourth century such insights did not yet exist, or were not allowed to prevail, at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and Ludwig Wittgenstein would not be born for many hundreds of years. In the meantime, at least for the Catholic Church with its *ousia/substantia* obsession, Platonic or otherwise Aristotelian ideas prevailed and helped to shape its theology. This is borne out by two learned works from the late nineteenth century.

The first is *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, which comprises the 1886 Bampton lectures by Charles Bigg (1840-1908), an English clergyman and later “Regius professor of ecclesiastical history in Oxford University.”¹⁸ Reissued in 2004 as a paperback, this book includes an enthusiastic review according to which Dr. Bigg “was a century ahead of his time, and very informed on French and German scholarship on the subject of this book.”¹⁹ Bigg pointed out that “to Gnostics is due the importation of the words οὐσία [ousia], ὑπόστασις [hypostasis], ὁμοούσιος [homoousios] into theology.”²⁰

This is startling and helps us to understand why the so-called semi-Arians, many of them learned bishops from the East, rejected the word *homoousios*.

They knew perfectly well that it was bound up with the speculations of pagan Greek philosophy, syncretism, even quasi-Christian Gnosticism.

Also enlightening is what Bigg had to say about *hypostasis*, another term that played a prominent part in the Trinitarian controversy. He showed what a quagmire of contradictions this word produced, by tracing its usage from Origen's Greek to Tertullian's Latin, with a glance at the role that the law courts played. According to Bigg, the theological distinction between the terms *hypostasis* and *ousia* "is purely arbitrary." In the Latin West, the words *Persona* and *Substantia* were used. But "of these terms, *Persona*, a singularly material word, belongs not to the schools but to the Latin law courts, and means 'a party,' 'an individual,' with all his legal duties and rights. *Substantia* is a translation of *Hypostasis*. Thus it came about that the same word, which in the metaphysical East signified Person, was employed by the prosaic and law-loving West for Substance; an unhappy confusion which gave rise to much acrimonious debate."²¹

Just two years after Bigg, another great scholar of his time, Edwin Hatch (1835-1889), presented his seven Hibbert lectures for 1888, entitled *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages on the Christian Church*. This book and his previous works "provoked no little criticism on account of the challenge they threw down to the high-church party, but the research and fairness displayed were admitted on all hands." In fact, his Bampton lectures of 1881 "were translated into German by [Adolf von] Harnack,"²² a meticulously critical church historian of that time.

Dr. Hatch was much on the same wavelength as Bigg and likewise discussed the confusion generated by the terms *hypostasis*, *ousia*, *persona*, *substantia*, and so on.²³ It is therefore unnecessary to weary the reader with his additional details. In passing, we do, however, note that Hatch comprehensively considered the roles of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, as well as that of the Hellenistic Philo Judaeus, who had straddled the fence between pagan metaphysics and Judaism. Among the Christians, Hatch referred to Origen, Athanasius, and many more.

Two of his statements merit special attention. Like Bigg, he pointed out that the term *homoousios* "occurs first in the sphere of Gnosticism," buttressing this idea with a footnote reference to Harnack.²⁴ Eventually he said:

"But I do not propose to dwell upon the sad and weary history of the way in which for more than a century these metaphysical distinctions formed the watchwords of political as well as of ecclesiastical parties—of the strife and murder, the devastation of fair fields, the flame and sword, therewith connected. For all this, Greek philosophy was not responsible. These evils mostly came from that which has been a permanently disastrous fact in Christian history, the interference of the State, which gave the decrees of Councils that sanction which elevated the resolutions of the majority upon the deepest subjects of human speculation to the factitious ranks of laws which must be accepted on pain of forfeiture, banishment or death."²⁵

After all these centuries, most people have cooled to this issue, though much blood was shed over it. Many readers may even shrug it off as abracadabra. Others who have read some metaphysics, can—like the famous old Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131)²⁶—in weariness turn from the topic, muttering:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.²⁷

Like others, the Goths evidently did not like the word *homoousios*, nor did the other Germanic peoples who refused to accept Catholicism—and they were killed off for this and other reasons. Their theological writings were likewise destroyed, so that they could themselves forever after be labeled as Arians.

We, however, believe that they are among those to whom the Apocalypse refers where it says: “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:9-10). The response was: “And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled” (vs. 11).

So let it be. We, too, desire them to have those white robes, and therefore refuse to insult their memory by calling them Arians.

Notes

1. Ellen G. White, “*Evangelism as Set Forth in the Writings of Ellen G. White*. 1946 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1970), pp. 614-617.

2. Introductory Statement, *Twenty-eight Fundamental Beliefs*, Official website of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental, downloaded 9/25/09.

3. Ibid.

4. “III. THE HOLY TRINITY IN THE TEACHING OF THE FAITH,” *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (English trans. for the United States of America, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana, imprimatur of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger), p. 66.

5. EB 09, s.v. “Semi-Arianism.”

6. Charles Freeman, *The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason*. 2002 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 196.

7. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Homoousion,” www.newadvent.org, downloaded 09/15/09.

8. EB 09, s.v. “Metaphysics.”

9. Freeman, *The Closing of the Western Mind*, p. 180.

10. Liddell and Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*. 1889 (Oxford, UK.: Clarendon, 1961), s.v. “οὐσία.”
11. EB 09, s.v. “Philo Judaeus.” 12. Ibid.
13. EB 09, s.v. “Plotinus.”
14. William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980), s.v. “Substance.”
15. EB 09, s.v. “Existentialism.”
16. EB 09, s.v. “Logical Positivism.”
17. EB 09, s.v. “Wittgenstein, Ludwig.”
18. Charles Bigg, D.D., *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria: Eight Lectures Preached Before the University of Oxford in the Year 1886, On the Foundation of the Late Rev. John Bampton, M.A., Canon of Salisbury* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press; New York: Macmillan and Co., 1866).
19. Book Review from Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Kessinger Publishing Paperback, February 2003), www.amazon.com, downloaded 09/15/09.
20. “Results of Gnosticism,” Lecture I: “Origen,” Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 35, footnote 1.
21. Ibid., pp. 163-165.
22. *Love to Know: Classic Encyclopedia*, based on the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., 1911, s.v. “Edwin Hatch,” www.1911encyclopedia.org, downloaded 09/15/09.
23. Edwin Hatch, D.D., Reader in Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford, ed. by A. M. Fairbairn, D.D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, The Hibbert Lectures, 1888: *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church*. 3rd. ed. (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1891), pp. 269-282.
24. Ibid., p. 274. 25. Ibid., 279-280.
26. EB 09, s.v. “Omar Khayyam.”
27. Edward Fitz Gerald [var.], trans., “Rubaiyát of Omar Khayyám,” *The English Parnassus: An Anthology Chiefly of Longer Poems, with Introduction and Notes* by W. Macneile Dixon and H. J. C. Grierson. 1909 (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1947), stanza 27, p. 702.

Appendix VII

Translating the Word *ανθρωπος* (*anthrōpos*)

I

About this topic, the webpage of Herb Kersten, a televangelist living in Melbourne, Australia, on 30 April 2011 asserted:

“In the MSS the original Greek does not say ‘it is the number of a man’—it says ‘It is a human number’ or ‘it is the number of humanity’. The key take-away the Greek gives us is that six hundred sixty and six is not a particular person such as a single male. For example, the Seventh-day Adventist church has always interpreted Mark 2:27 to mean ‘the Sabbath was made for *mankind*’ based on the Greek word “anthropos” (Strong 444) even though the KJV reads ‘made for man’. But when it comes to Rev 13:18 where the same Greek word “anthropou” is used (Strong 444) some readers wish it to mean a single male man, even though the context of Rev 13 is about an apostate *system*. We cannot have it both ways . . .”

As a matter of fact, we can have it both ways, as we will show. But first we need to untangle elements in this paragraph. Kersten, heading a self-supporting ministry (Herb Kersten Evangelistic Alliance), is a powerful public speaker. His influence has extended to many parts of the world. Kersten is a layman and not a Greek scholar. However, in 2011 Ranko Stefanović “advises HKEA on the book of Revelation.”¹ Moreover, the webpage document cited above contains the following statement: “Herb Kersten’s material for his presentation on six hundred sixty and six was to some extent drawn from the commentary *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* by Dr. Ranko Stefanovic, pages 416-418 and 427-428.” We think it was his most important single source.

II

We begin by reproducing in the original the part of Rev. 13:18 that contains the word and construction referred to:

ὁ εχων νουν ψηφισατω τον αριθμον του θηριου· αριθμος γαρ ανθρωπου εστιν [ho echōn noun psēphisatō ton arithmon tou thēriou: arithmos gar anthrōpou estin], Rev. 13:18.

Now let us consider the various ways in which this has been translated. All the italics are ours.

The traditional English Bible, published exactly four hundred years ago and still cherished by very many readers, translates this as follows: “Let him that hath understanding *count* the number of the beast: *for it is the number of a*

man” (Authorized [King James] Version, 1611). For the key phrase, a latter-date modernization preserves exactly the same wording: “Let him who has understanding *calculate* the number of the beast, *for it is the number of a man*” (New King James Version, 1979). We note, however, that now the word *calculate* is preferred. As a translation, this is an improvement.

But what, in this context, does the word *man* mean? We turn to Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon: Under *ἄνθρωπος* (*anthrōpos*), it has “*man*, Latin. *homo* (not *vir*) . . .”² And so we use another dictionary and look up the words *homo* and *vir*. Apart from “man,” the former means “a human being” and the latter a “male person.”³ This is reflected in Jerome’s famous translation of A.D. 382, the Vulgate, which for centuries was the standard Roman Catholic Bible:

“qui habet intellectum *computet* numerum bestiae *numerus enim hominis est*” (let him *count* the number of the beast).⁴

From this, we see that in the Greek the word *anthrōpos* means “a human being” or, we can also put it, “a person.” A male person on the other hand is an *ἄνθρωπος* (*anēr*). *Of a man* is *ἄνδρος* (*andros*). Does that mean that the King James as well as the New King James Versions have mistranslated the word by using the word *man*? Not at all. In the English language, *man* has often and for centuries also meant *a human being* or *a person*, which some may now deplore; nevertheless, it remains a fact.

Other languages often also have separate words that show this difference, which makes their translations of Rev. 13:18 clearer, as in the following:

“Wer Verstand hat, der *überlege* die Zahl des Tieres; *denn es ist eines Menschen Zahl*” [of a human being] (German, Martin Luther’s translation, revised in 1956).⁵

“Die het verstand heeft, *rekene* het getal van het beest; *want het is een getal eens menschen* [of a human being]” (Dutch, 1618).⁶

“Wie die verstand het, laat hom die getal van die dier *bereken*, *want dit is die getal van ’n mens* [of a human being]” (Afrikaans, 1933).⁷

The last mentioned, derived from seventeenth-century Dutch, is written and spoken in many parts of South Africa. It is the youngest of the Indo-Germanic languages and Greek one of the oldest, but what its translation says remains very close to the original.

Kersten, with reference to Rev. 13:18, objects to the fact that “some readers wish it to mean a single male man.” In this, he has a point—a minor one. But the question arises: is a male man not also an *anthrōpos*? Of course, he is. Both men and women are *ἄνθρωποι* (*anthrōpoi*), “people.” Otherwise what do we do with such a text as Heb. 9:27: “. . . it is appointed unto men [*ἄνθρωποις*, *anthrōpois*] once to die, but after this the judgement”? Surely it is not only the males of our species who die and must appear before the tribunal of God.

III

Against that background, what shall we say of Kersten's following dictum: "In the MSS the original Greek does not say 'it is the number of a man.'"? No, this does not hold a drop of water. Even worse is the rest of his sentence: "it says 'It is a human number' or 'it is the number of humanity.'"

Ancient Greek was famous for its word-making ability. It therefore did not lack adjectives meaning *human*. We have found three of them, all derived from *anthrōpos*: *ανθρωπειος* (*anthrōpeios*), *ανθρωπικος* (*anthrōpikos*), *ανθρωπινος* (*anthrōpinos*).⁸

Now up to 1973, the Revised Standard Version, an ecumenical Bible, did contain the translation that Kersten prefers: "Let him who has understanding *reckon* the number of the beast, *for it is a human number . . .*"⁹ However, sixteen years later, by 1989, the Protestant and Catholic scholars involved reversed themselves to produce a much better translation: "Let anyone with understanding *calculate* the number of the beast, *for it is the number of a person . . .*"¹⁰

The New American Bible, an official Catholic publication with several Nihil Obstats and Imprimaturs, says much the same: "One who understands can *calculate* the number of the beast, *for it is a number that stands for a person.*"¹¹

It is flat wrong to assert that *αριθμος ανθρωπου* (*arithmos anthrōpou*) means *a human number*. The original says: "it is the number of a person," a human being, whose gender depends on the context. And what about Kersten's other idea that *arithmos anthrōpou* must be translated: "it is the number of humanity"? No, This is thrusting into the text an extraneous idea which simply is not and does not belong there.

IV

Let us now consider his following assertion.

"The Seventh-day Adventist church has always interpreted Mark 2:27 to mean 'the Sabbath was made for *mankind*' based on the Greek word 'anthropos' (Strong 444) even though the KJV reads 'made for man'. But when it comes to Rev 13:18 where the same Greek word 'anthropou' is used (Strong 444) some readers wish it to mean a single male man, even though the context of Rev 13 is about an apostate *system*."

That should really have been *humankind*. The essence of this objection has already been dealt with in the foregoing paragraphs. Let us, however, point out that in Mark 2:27 the Greek has a different construction from that of Rev. 13:18.

το σαββατον δια τον ανθρωπον εγενετο, και ουχ ο ανθρωπος δια τον ανθρωπον [to sabbaton dia ton anthrōpon egeneto, kaj ouch ho anthrōpos dia ton anthrōpon] (Nestle-Aland text).¹²

The word τον (*ton*) means *the*. It occurs in this text but is lacking in Rev.

13:18. New Testament Greek lacks the indefinite article, that is to say a word which corresponds to *a* or *an* in English. Therefore, the correct translation is “of *a* human being.” But what does “*the* human being” mean? For this, there is no equivalent in English. It says: “The sabbath was made for *man*, and not *man* for the sabbath.” For English, *humankind* would therefore be a reasonable translation. But in this case, too, the German, Dutch, and Afrikaans renderings are better:

“Der Sabbat is um *des Menschen* willen gemacht, und nicht *der Mensch* um des Sabbats willen” (German).

“De Sabbat is gemaakt om *den mensch*, niet *de mensch* om den Sabbat (Dutch).

“Die sabbat is gemaak vir *die mens*, nie *die mens* vir die sabbat nie (Afrikaans).

In all these cases, the words *Mensch/mensch/mens* mean *the human being*, just like ὁ ἀνθρώπος in Greek. Again, this can be either a male or a female.

Incidentally, we are not suggesting that German, Dutch, or Afrikaans is generally superior to English—although these languages do at times avoid the ambiguity of the word *man* in some of our Bible translations.

V

Now let us finish by considering Kersten’s weightiest objection: “Some readers wish it to mean a single ~~male~~ man, even though the context of Rev 13 is about an apostate *system*. We cannot have it both ways . . .” (Our strikethrough, with a view to what has gone before).

Is the antichrist of that chapter a system or a particular person? It is both. Theologically as well as in its governmental structure, Catholicism centers in the Roman pontiff.

As already pointed out in the previous pages, at their coronation pope after pope is told: “Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam” (thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church), Matthew 16:18, 19. These words are also inscribed within the rotunda of St. Peter’s at the Vatican. Our inquiry ranging over all history throughout the Christian era reveals that the pontiff is not simply who he is, a particular human being, but allegedly—through apostolic succession—an avatar, a kind of continuously reincarnated Peter.

Apologists for the Roman Church express this a little differently, though their explanations amount to the same thing. For example, when Lucio Ferraris (fl. 1748-c. 1763) pondered the Donation of Constantine, he certainly had Peter in mind. Citing that document, he even modified its text by adding a phrase: “Ita et Pontifices eius successores” (so also the Pontiffs, *his successors*).¹³

The papacy is indeed a system. It is also a series of men who through the centuries have claimed to be the apostle Peter, each of them a so-called *vicarius Filii Dei*. Besides, at the very end it will be one particular pope.

Notes

1. "HKEA Board," www.hkea.org.au, downloaded 7 May 2011.
2. Liddell and Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (1889. Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon, 1961).
3. *Cassell's Compact Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary*, Abridged from Cassell's *Latin Dictionary*. 1927 (London: Casell, 1958, 15th ed. 1958).
4. Rev. 13:18, *Latin Vulgate New Testament Bible*, www.vulgate.org, downloaded 5/7/11.
5. Rev. 13:18, *Die Bibel oder de ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, Nach der deutschen Übersetzung Martin Luthers. 1956 und 1963 (Stuttgart, Ger.: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1971).
6. Rev. 13:18, *Bijbel. Dat is de Gansche Heilige Schrift, vervattende al de Kanonijke Boeken des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments*. Door last van de Hoog-Mog. Heeren Staten Generaal der Vereenigde Nederlanden, en volgens het besluit van de synode nationaal, gehouden te Dordrecht, in de jaren MDCXVIII. en MDCXIX. (London and Amsterdam: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1861).
7. Rev. 13:18, *Die Bybel. Dit Is die Gansche Heilige Skrif Wat Al die Kanonieke Boeke van die Ou en Nuwe Testament Bevat*, 1933. 4th ed. (Bybelgenootskap van Suid-Afrika, Posbus 6215, Roggebaai, Kaapstad, 1957).
8. Liddell and Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 71.
9. Rev. 13:18, *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version*. An Ecumenical Edition. 1946 (New York: Collins, 1973).
10. Rev. 13:18, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1989). The verso after the title page shows that this gender-inclusive version was produced by "the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America." It also bears the 1991 imprimatur of Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.
11. Rev. 13:18, *The New American Bible* (World Catholic Press, A Division of Catholic Book Publishing Corp., printed in Korea, 2000).
12. Mark 2:27, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, cum apparatu critico curavit EBERHARD NESTLE novis curis elaboraverunt Erwin Nesle et Kurt Aland. 1898 and 1927. 25th ed. (Stuttgart, Ger.: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1963).
13. "Papa," F. Lucii Ferraris *Bibliotheca Canonica Iuridica Moralis Theologica nec non Ascetica Polemica Rubricistica Historica*. Editio Novissima Mendis Expurgata et Novis Additamentis Locupletata. Tomus Sextus, P-R (Romae ex Typographia Polyglotta S. C. de Propaganda Fide, MDCCCXC), p. 43, col. 2.

Prophetic and Other Publications

by Edwin de Kock

The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy (2011). * Book, \$39.95. Data CD, \$19.95.

The Identity of 666 in Revelation (2012), **Video DVD (author on Power Point). *** \$14.95.

Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation (2012). ***Book, \$20.00. Data CD, \$14.95.

Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History (2007) plus 13 other items. ****Data CD, \$19.95.

The Use and Abuse of Prophecy (2007). Book, \$14.95.

*Ranging over the entire Christian era, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* is a penetrating 874-page book in three volumes for both scholars and lay people concerned about past, present, and future events. This is the most comprehensive work on prophecy and history ever produced by a Seventh-day Adventist, with the assistance of excellent researchers and scholars. About the earliest Christian centuries, it agrees with and defends Ellen G. White's *Great Controversy* as well as Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*, but it adds much that neither of them dealt with.

For instance, the Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths were not really Arians. Most of them were ancient Sabbathkeepers, who stood in the way of papal supremacy. Therefore, they had to be eliminated. The popes were supported by the kings and emperors of Europe in persecuting those who opposed the Roman Church. For centuries, the pontiffs also struggled to dominate these rulers.

With amazing new discoveries in Latin as well as five other languages, this book vindicates Uriah Smith's conclusion that the 666 in Rev. 13:18 really refers to *vicarius Filii Dei* (the vicar of the Son of God). This title first appeared during 753 or soon afterwards in a document known as the *Donation of Constantine*, which was forged by the papacy to claim ecclesiastic supremacy as well as secular domination. The narrative of *The Truth About 666* is enlivened by many fascinating episodes. For instance, it shows that the people of Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, speak Portuguese, while the others speak Spanish, due to a papal decision based on that fraudulent manuscript.

This book is a storehouse of brand-new discoveries. One of its treasures is an Appendix with material quoted from more than eighty non-Seventh-day Adventist writers, mostly Protestants who lived and labored before Uriah Smith. They testified to the fact that *vicarius Filii Dei* was indeed a papal title. Most of them also showed that it had a number value of 666.

Very many Catholic writers also bore witness to the fact that the popes

have for more than a thousand years been called the *vicars of the Son of God*, in Latin as well as the other leading languages of Western Europe.

In its third volume, this book discusses the problem of some Seventh-day Adventist scholars who now say that 666 does not refer to the pope but only means human sinfulness or imperfection. Some of them also claim that the number, the name, and the mark of the Beast are one and the same thing. By implication, there will therefore be no Sunday laws, nor will America cooperate with the papacy in its pursuit of world domination. Such ideas undermine the third angel's message, suggesting that Seventh-day Adventists are not really the Remnant Church of prophecy. As *The Truth About 666* demonstrates, these scholars have most unfortunately been influenced by writers from outside their church: Sundaykeepers, Protestants and Catholics, as well as others, including Spiritualists.

***The Identity of 666 in Revelation* (2012), Video DVD. The author had been invited by the Adventist Theological Society (Southeastern Chapter) to lecture on this topic pursuant to the publication of his book, *The Truth About 666 and the Story of the Great Apostasy* (2011). This is a copy of his Power Point presentation with a subsequent session of questions and answers in a very full Lynwood Hall Chapel at Southern Adventist University, College Place, Tennessee, on Saturday, 14 January 2012, at 3:30 p.m.

****Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012) looks penetratingly at the woman Babylon depicted in Rev. 17. She rides a Beast with seven heads and ten horns, the identity of which has so far eluded all Historicist prophetic interpreters. Amongst other things, this work examines nine interpretations by Seventh-day Adventist writers, showing that these unfortunately fail to solve the mystery of Rev. 17:10 and related Scriptures. It presents a brand-new Historicist explanation and resolves a number of awkward problems concerning the beasts and horns described in Dan. 8.

*****Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001). This work only, as a single item, sent by e-mail attachment, \$10.00, but it is also available on a data CD for \$19.95, which additionally contains 13 further items:

1. An updated revision of *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History*, originally printed in 2001. (440 pages.) While in print, it was prescribed for Master of Divinity classes at the Seminary, Andrews University, at least three times by two professors. This work only, as a single item, can be sent as an e-mail attachment, \$10.00. But the price for the whole data CD is \$19.95.

2. "The Role of Prophecy in Our Lives" (28 January 2008) by Ria de

Kock, which was originally published in the South African *Signs of the Times*. Amongst other things, this article surveys the totality of her husband's prophetic writing in the English language.

3. *Africa and the Bible* (1988, revised in 2006). Israel first became a nation in Africa and was partly Egyptian. That ancient continent is also where the first Bible writer was born and the infant Jesus found shelter. Africans have played a significant role in salvation history. An uplifting read for black people everywhere in the world. *Africa and the Bible* is a revised and considerably augmented version by Edwin de Kock of *Africa in the Bible*, an undated pamphlet by Fares Muganda, a Tanzanian church leader and evangelist.

4. "About Diet, Law, and Holy Days," a four-page letter written to a non-Seventh-day Adventist scholar during 2006 to answer his e-mail query about Rom. 14:5-6. This concerns its larger context in both that chapter and the rest of the Bible.

5. "Ingredients, Scope, and Structure of *The Great Controversy* by Ellen G. White," 27 July 2006. Amongst other things, this deals with nonverbal as opposed to verbal inspiration, the prophetic writer's use of sources, and so-called plagiarism.

6. "Why People Were Created with Freedom of Choice," 28 May 2005, a short, unpublished article. It shows that choice extends beyond religion; it is what makes us human. Without it, we would be robots, lacking all real freedom and creativity, even on the most humble level of everyday life.

7. "Prophecy Validated by Events," ADVENTISTS AFFIRM, Fall 2005. This validates the Seventh-day Adventist explanation of the two-horned beast described in Rev. 13:11-17 within its historical context, showing how ridiculous it must have seemed during the nineteenth century, even as late as the first World War (1914-1918), and yet how feasible it is today.

8. "Letters About Inspiration" (c. 2003), to a correspondent. Three forms of inspiration mentioned or discussed are: *The Lord or His Angels Speak Directly to the Prophet*, which "often takes the form of an actual voice"; *The Prophet Has a Dream or a Vision* but describes the objects or actions seen in his or her own words; and *Guidance in the Writing Process*. An example of this is the Gospel according to Luke, who did diligent research and also quoted extensively from his predecessors.

9. "A Dispensationalist Calculation Error," *Ministry* magazine, August 2002. Amongst other things, this article demonstrates that Futurism is based on bad arithmetic in claiming that the 1260 days, 42 months, and 3½

years of Daniel and Revelation are literal time. That is, the math for fitting this period into Dan. 9:27 is wrong.

10. “The Main Reason for the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” an unpublished article (c. 2000). It surveys the interaction of Jews and Arabs over the centuries. Among the myths debunked is the idea that all people in the Middle East who speak Arabic are descendants of Hagar, Abraham’s concubine.

11. “How Pieter Wessels and My Mother Became Seventh-day Adventists,” a Vespers talk on 26 January 1996 in Inchon, South Korea, at the SDA English Language Institute where Edwin de Kock was teaching English as a second language as well as Bible classes. Pieter Wessels was an Afrikaner who lived at Kimberley in the Northwestern Cape Province of South Africa during the last part of the nineteenth century. In that area, where the richest diamond strike in the world had been made, he was one of the men whom this made very wealthy. Wessels discovered the true Sabbath from his own reading of the Bible and soon not only pioneered but also funded the Seventh-day Adventist Church in his country. De Kock then told how his mother likewise discovered the Sabbath by reading the Ten Commandments on her own. He went on to tell how for him these events were linked, because they also caused him to meet his wife Ria who was born within thirty-five miles of Kimberley.

12. “The Best Book About the Sabbath” (*South African Union Conference Lantern*, 1 June 1987) relates how in 1935 Susanna E. de Kock (born Olivier) discovered the truth about the Sabbath by reading the Ten Commandments and afterwards became a Seventh-day Adventist. At that time her five-year-old son, the future writer of *The Truth About 666*, understood what she was doing and decided to follow her example.

13. “Three Golden Calves” (*South African Union Conference Lantern*, November 1979). A cautionary tale of an event from more than three thousand years ago. It traces the destructively evil influence of the golden calf, which the high priest Aaron made at Sinai, on Israel’s subsequent history.

14. “The Influence of Most Fiction, Whether in Books, Movies, or Plays,” adapted from a sermon preached in a South African Church, during the 1960s or the 1970s. The main point was: “Story books, movies, and plays very often destroy a love for the Bible and sacred things. Our main concern should not be where the reading or viewing takes place (at home or in a theater), but the pernicious influence of fiction.”

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The Author

Edwin de Kock (1930-) also wrote *Seven Heads and Ten Horns in Daniel and the Revelation* (2012), *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy* (2007), and *Christ and Antichrist in Prophecy and History* (2001). The first of these awaits evaluation. The last-mentioned two have both been well accepted in the United States and elsewhere, used by evangelists, and prescribed for Seminary classes. Scholars as well as ordinary readers have delighted in his pleasant style, blended with research ranging over centuries. He displays a grasp of history, contemporary world affairs, and a polyglot culture that are unusual among writers on prophecy. He has also published in Afrikaans and Esperanto, the International Language. In the latter, he is one of its most famous original poets. A good deal of his poetry has been translated into other languages, including English.

De Kock's fascination with prophecy and history is virtually as old as his Adventism, beginning in his native South Africa more than seven decades ago. It culminated in almost twenty years of intensive research, which is still continuing. He has academic qualifications in theology, literature, education, and speech. In Israel, on Crete, and in Europe, he visited great museums, cathedrals, art galleries, and important sites connected with the contents of his books.

He has lectured internationally and been interviewed on radio and television in several countries, including the Esperanto service of Radio Vatican. The last mentioned was about his Adventism.

Professionally he was an educator for more than thirty-five years in South Africa, South Korea, and the United States, especially as a college teacher. He finished this career as a writing professor at the University of Texas–Pan American, in 2000. His wife Ria, whom he married in 1954, did the same kind of work at the last-mentioned institution from 2004 to 2012. Their two sons and their families also live in America.