

THE UNITED STATES AND THE PAPACY IN PROPHECY

Revelation 13:1: "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name."

Step by step God's prophet is revealing Christ to us. Though we may not see His beautiful form with our eyes, we can trace His footsteps in the affairs of history, including our own current history. This chapter presents truth that is intensely interesting and vitally important. Since "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:12), we know that the Bible itself will interpret the various symbols here brought to view. Let us permit the Bible to make itself plain to us.

In Bible prophecy the sea means "peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). A beast, likewise, is a symbol of a nation, or a kingdom (see Daniel 7:17, 23). And as a beast's head is what governs him, so the seven heads of this beast would mean its different forms of government, seven being the number of completeness.¹ The ten horns are explained clearly by Daniel himself they are the ten nations that would arise out of the fourth great world empire, Rome (Daniel 7:24).

But this kingdom in Revelation 13 cannot be an ordinary political nation, because John saw written upon his heads "a blasphemous name." The dictionary defines blasphemy as "indignity offered to God in words, writing, or signs; also, act of claiming attributes or prerogatives of deity." Blasphemy has to do with religion, not politics. Therefore the "beast" is a religious power, that is, a church which has grown out of a kingdom.

As to which religious power or church it is, the following verses will make it clear. The divine Author of Revelation will not leave us uninformed:

Revelation 13:2: "Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a

¹ The seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman empire are: kingly, consular, decemvirate, dictatorial, triumvirate, imperial, and papal.

lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”

A little key can open a big lock, because it is made to fit. The books of Daniel and the Revelation fit together as a lock and key, each one interpreting the other.

For example, Daniel describes four great beasts he saw in vision—a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a strange one more like a dragon than anything else. The lion was a symbol of Babylon, rich and majestic; the bear was Medo-Persia, cruel and blood-thirsty; the leopard was Greece, clever and swift. Daniel identifies these three by name (Daniel 2:38; 8:20, 21); and the fourth beast, all-powerful, was a symbol of the empire which followed Greece, the pagan Roman Empire.

The “beast” we see in this chapter combines the characteristics of the four preceding world empires. He receives his “power, his throne, and great authority” from the “dragon,” a symbol of the Roman Empire, while back of pagan Rome stood “the devil, and Satan.”

But a new thing happened to the Roman Empire which had never before happened in history: midstream in its history it changed its official religion, and its character changed from a political to a religious power. As the emperors became weaker, they moved their capital from Rome to Constantinople.

This left an empty place which the Bishop of Rome was quick to fill. Soon he began to lord it over the other bishops, and to take to himself the prestige which the former emperors of Rome had exclusively enjoyed. This is how the “dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.” One writer says, “Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the ‘giant form’ of the Roman Church.”²

The identification of papal Rome as the “beast” in this chapter becomes more certain as we read further the words of the prophet John:

Revelation 13:3-7: “I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ And he

² Alexander Clarence Hick, *The Rise of the Medieval Church*, (New York: Burt Franklin, 1959), p 150.

was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”

Again the prophet Daniel will help us to unlock the mystery of this prophecy. In Daniel 7 he describes the “little horn” power identically with this “beast.” Note the similarities between Daniel’s “little horn” and John’s “beast”:

1. The “little horn” blasphemes God. “He shall speak pompous words against the most High” (Daniel 7:25).
2. The “little horn” also makes “war with the saints” (Daniel 7:21).
3. Power was given to the “little horn” to continue for three years and a half (Daniel 7:25), or a total of 42 months ($3 \frac{1}{2} \times 12 = 42$). This same period of time is referred to in Revelation 12:6 as 1260 days, each day in prophecy representing a year, as we have seen previously.

Now let us inquire if the papacy fulfills these points laid down in the Bible:

1. Does the papacy blaspheme God, or assume the titles and authority of God? When Jesus forgave people their sins, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy, saying, “Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” Luke 5:21. A Roman Catholic writer says, “The priest holds the place of the Saviour Himself, who, by saying, ‘Ego te absolvo’ [Latin, I absolve thee], he absolves from sin. . . . To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . But what only God can do by His omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying, ‘Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis.’”³

The same writer says further: “But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests—HOC EST CORPUS MEUM (Latin, This is My body)—God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes wherever they call Him. . . . They move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose, eat

³ Alphonsus de Liguori, *Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, (Brooklyn: Redemptorist Fathers, 1927), pp. 34-36.

His flesh, and give Him for the food of others. . . . The priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator.”⁴

A Roman Catholic encyclopaedia says: “The pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the Vicar of God. . . . The Pope is as it were God on earth.”⁵ As late as 1894 Pope Leo XIII said: “We hold on this earth the place of God Almighty.”

2. Did the papacy “make war with the saints . . . to overcome them”? During the time when the papacy was supreme in Europe, historians tell us that millions of people were put to death because they would not acknowledge the papacy as God’s true church on earth. Pope Martin V (A. D. 1417-1431) said to the king of Poland regarding the Christian followers of John Huss: “Make it a duty to exterminate the Hussites. Remember that these impious persons dare to proclaim the principles of liberty.

“They hold that Christ came on earth to abolish slavery; they call the people to liberty. . . . Burn, massacre, make deserts everywhere, for nothing could be more agreeable to God, or more useful to the cause of kings, than the extermination of the Hussites.”⁶

2. How long did the papacy continue in supreme power in Europe? The Roman Emperor Justinian made a decree that the bishop of Rome, the pope, should be the head of all the churches. This decree went into effect in the year A.D. 538 when the Ostrogoths were driven from Rome. In that year began the temporal power of the papacy, which continued unabated through the struggles of 1260 years, until the fateful year A.D. 1798 when the French general, Berthier, entered Rome, proclaimed a republic, and took the pope prisoner. Many people thought the papacy was dead.

But not so! We shall see in a few moments how this “deadly wound” is being “healed” in our time. During the years of its supremacy, “all the world marveled” after the papacy. The great mass of mankind trembled before its haughty arrogance. Life in Europe in the Dark Ages revolved around the Roman Catholic Church. Superstition and fear held the people captive until a measure of relief came in the great Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27, 32.

⁵ Lucius Ferraris, *Prompta Bibliotheca*, Article “Papa,” Vol. VI, (Venice: Gaspar Storti, 1772), pp. 26-29.

⁶ L. M. de Cermenin, *The Public and Private History of the Popes of Rome*, Vol. II, pp. 116, 117.

It was France that had supported the Papacy during the period of the Reformation and following. But during the French Revolution, when Pope Pius joined the coalition of European powers against France and put an army in the field, France turned against the Papacy. She sent an army against the Pope and in 1798 defeated him and took him captive to France and put him in prison where he died the next year. The temporal power of the Papacy was overthrown. Napoleon ordered when Pius VI was sick that if the pope died no new pope was to be chosen, and that the Papacy was to be discontinued. So when Pius died in the French fortress of Valence, half of Europe thought that "with the pope the Papacy was dead." Not only this, but the French Revolution seized church property, abolished the work of the priests, and put the church under a ban. In Germany in 1803 all church property was taken over by the secular power, and in 1806 the Holy Roman Empire ceased to exist. Thus the deadly wound was received.

Instead of this destroying the Papacy we find that a new Pope was chosen after the death of Pius. In 1814 the pope was given liberty to settle his own policy, and the property of the Church was restored to the Papacy again. With the urgent wish of all nations to restore peace and religion after the revolution the majority looked to the Pope for help. In 1820 Ultramontanism arose to assist Papal supremacy. The Oxford movement led many back into the church. The Vatican Council in 1870 declared Papal infallibility. Pope Pius X (1902-1914) stamped out modernism, and Pius XI made the Lateran Pact (1929) with Mussolini and restored against the States Church. The deadly wound was healed.

Revelation 13:8-10: "And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

Peter says the same thing: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Peter 1:19, 20. The sense here in 13:8 is "the book of life written from the foundation of the world." Those who have not retained their names written in the Lamb's book of life are subject to worshiping the beast. The reassurance for God's elect is that in the midst of their powerlessness

against the beast, they are still in the keeping providence of God, having been there since the foundation of the world.⁷

As we saw in chapter 11, the French had come to believe that the Roman Catholic Church was their enemy. Napoleon's army marched into Italy, determined to put an end to the papacy. Berthier took the pope a prisoner in 1798. Thus the papacy which had led others into captivity was itself led into captivity.

But the world has largely forgotten the bitter lessons taught in the Dark Ages. It has forgotten that the noontide of the papacy was the world's midnight. Today the papacy is making a remarkable comeback in world power. Through all the new nations of the Third World and in the Western nations, her tremendous rising power is plain to be seen. In many countries she controls education. She is building lofty and massive cathedrals, opening her arms to welcome millions of converts to her faith.

And other churches outside the Roman fold are looking to her for leadership. The Rt. Rev. John Moorman, Anglican leader, said that if there is to be a final unity among the churches, "there will have to be a central head of the church, and that head will clearly have to be the bishop of Rome." With the threat of world destruction if a nuclear war breaks out, men everywhere sense the need for unity and a renewal of spiritual life. They look upon the Roman Church as the only possible leader. Although the Roman Church once was wounded, the wound is being healed today.

Pope John Paul II's great popularity was seen in his unprecedented visits to America, visits "impossible" two or three decades earlier. A commission of Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians recommend the union of the two churches, to heal their 450 year separation. This plan would unite 760 million Roman Catholics and 65 million Anglicans, including 3 million American Episcopalians. Even Baptist Dr. Billy Graham has said that he sees the Pope of Rome as the one who should head up a union of all the churches.

The time is very near when "all who dwell on the earth will worship him," except those whose names are "written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." But as we see the great masses turning toward Rome, including Protestant churches which separated from her during and after the Reformation, we must not imagine that everyone is following in that direction. God has a

⁷ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, (Moody Press, Chicago: 1995), p. 166.

people who will remain loyal to His Word. According to Revelation eventually there will be only two classes on earth: those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and those who yield to "the beast" of chapter 13.

In recognizing the application of these prophecies, we honor the many self-sacrificing and sincere adherents of the Roman Catholic Church. It is neither fault-finding nor bigotry to recognize the plain truth of God's word in the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. The prophecies identify the papacy as a system. It is the outworking in history of a principle that operates in every human heart the natural desire for exaltation and power over our fellows.

Many non-Catholics are equally as prone to compromising with the world as were the early Catholic fathers. Eusebius said: "In order to render Christianity more attractive to the pagan Gentiles, the priests adopted the exterior vestments and ornaments used in the pagan cult." This policy of compromise and prostitution of truth has also produced the impotent confusion pervading modern Protestantism.

A Catholic writer said recently: "It has often been charged usually by the narrower sort of Protestant controversialist—that Catholicism is overlaid with many pagan incrustations. Catholicism, it must be added, is ready to accept the accusation—and even to make it her boast. . . . It regards the process as willingness to absorb the true, the good and the beautiful, wherever they may be found, and to indulge all harmless human propensities. The great god Pan is not really dead; he is baptized."⁸

We assume no holier-than-thou attitude. We all need the grace of Christ to overcome this natural proclivity in all our hearts. History is our story, but for the grace of God. And God's purpose of grace is to let us see into our own hearts through the enlightenment of history.

"He who has an ear, let him hear," warns the prophet John. Now is the time to yield ourselves fully to the Lamb who was slain for us. The crisis that is fast developing will test to the utmost the patience and faith of the saints, but God will have a people who stand loyal to His truth in the face of the opposition of the world.

Revelation 13:11-14: "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence,

⁸ Theodore Maynard, *The Story of American Catholicism*, pp. 37, 38; imprimatur, [then] Archbishop Francis J. Spellman).

and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.”

We have already seen how the “sea” represents large populations of people. The “earth” must therefore be the opposite—an uninhabited part of the world out of which some remarkable new nation was to “come up” about the time that the papacy was being led into captivity at the time of its “deadly wound” in A.D. 1798.

What great nation was rising to prominence and power about the time when the 1260 years of papal supremacy ended in 1798? There was only one prominent nation arising at that time in a largely uninhabited part of the world, and that was the United States of America, which declared its independence in 1776, and which was experiencing its early beginnings by 1798. This nation arose in the New World, a vast continent of largely uninhabited land. The rise of this great republic from colonial beginnings is one of the most phenomenal in the history of nations. It has “two horns like a lamb,” suggesting the youthful character of the young America, and its twin principles of civil and religious liberty which helped so much to develop the nation into a prosperous world power.

Unlike the horns on the other beasts or kingdoms, these two horns have no crowns upon them. The founders of America determined to learn a lesson from Europe’s past history, by creating a new nation without a king.

The United States Government *as it was originally founded*, is beautiful [*sic.*] described by the word of the Lord, as a beast coming up having two horns *like a lamb*. That is a correct description of the United States Government as it was originally founded, and as it stood, upon the principles which characterized it,—the two grand principles of civil and religious freedom: separation of religion and the State; no king, and no pope.

Of all the symbols used in the Word of God to illustrate earthly governments, this is the only one that is given the mild and gentle characteristics of the lamb. And this is the word which God has set down as descriptive of the United States Government as it stood in its original beauty, grounded upon the principle which God himself

announced, the absolute separation of religion, and particularly the Christian religion, from the jurisdiction or cognizance of the State.

But an anomaly appears; a change occurs. This beast having two horns "like a lamb" comes to speak "as a dragon." In the first half of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, the papacy is represented under the symbol of a beast which has by no means the characteristics of a lamb; and which receives its power and its seat and its great authority from "the dragon," which, in the twelfth chapter, is declared to be "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." The symbol then, having two horns like a lamb yet speaking like a dragon, shows that the original character of the Government becomes so changed that the spirit of Satan is manifested instead of the characteristics of a lamb.

Our teaching has always been, and it is yet, that the scripture statement that the beast had two horns "like a lamb," is descriptive of the United States Government *as it was originally founded*. And it has been, our constant endeavor to keep the Government of the United States inseparably attached to these principles. Had this been done, benefits and blessings would from this nation have flowed forth to the nations of the earth beyond the highest dreams of the far-seeing, noble men who, under God, were instrumental in founding the Government as it was founded.

But the people of the United States, forgetting these principles, and losing sight of the high destiny and the wondrous privileges that God had set before them, have allowed these principles to be subverted, and have allowed the Government in its words and laws to be turned aside, so that already the oppressive, cruel voice of the dragon has been heard. And the same scripture goes on to tell how that this voice will yet further be heard in speaking, and causing that as many as do "not worship the image of the beast should be killed."

But what a pity that its character changes from that of a "lamb" to a "dragon" who "exercises all the power of the first beast." Here we see that America will yet become a persecuting power, and will reach out to grasp the hand of the papacy. So close will be the union between the two that he will cause "the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."

The healing of the papacy's deadly wound has been a gradual one; but the most significant step was taken on February 11, 1929, when Premier Mussolini restored to the papacy its temporal power, and the pope again became a king. An official witnessing the signing of the agreement between Mussolini and the papacy said, "We are now

witnessing the signing of this document. As the ink flows from these pens it is healing the wound of fifty-nine years.”

Meanwhile, the American nation continues to grow in power. The spirit of all the peoples of the world somehow comes to the surface there. Not yet has that nation taken the step that the Book of Revelation says it will take. Not yet has it enforced “worship” of the “beast.” But we may know that the time is near.

The “image to the beast” is a copy of the system that made the papacy supreme in the Dark Ages. That system was a union of church and civil government, so that the church had power to enforce its dogmas through the arms of the magistrates and police.

Since the time of the “deadly wound” of the papacy, the nations of the world have generally broken away from any form of domination by the church. Men everywhere have believed that civil government should be free from religious control. They have awakened to realize the truth of Jesus’ command that church and state should be separate: “Render to Caesar [the government] the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). The American Constitution guarantees the complete separation of church and state, enabling the people to obey this command of Jesus.

But the Book of Revelation says that the time is coming when America will repudiate the principles which have brought her success, and that she will induce other nations to follow her example. Then will come a revival of the oppression and persecution that was so common during the Dark Ages.

Does this seem unlikely in this modern age of “freedom” and light? Humanity’s boasted progress is only skin-deep if underneath human nature is still evil. As wars, bloodshed, riots, drug abuse, crime and natural disasters increase, the world’s rulers will naturally be at their wits’ end to know what to do. Very easily they can turn in crisis to the Roman Church for moral and spiritual leadership. The fulfillment of these closing verses of this chapter is only a step away from us:

Revelation 13:15-17: “He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. And he causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”

The “mark of the beast” is not a physical mark made by a hot brand, or a daub of paint, nor is it a peculiar type of dress. It is a religious mark, a sign of a certain attitude of heart. What could this mark be which is so certain to bring such terrible disaster on its receivers?

In chapter seven we have noted that the seal of God is the holy Sabbath of the Lord. The keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath distinguishes those designated by John as “saints.” The “mark of the beast” is the counterfeit of God’s true mark, subtly designed to deceive as many people as possible. Many millions of people are in grave danger of receiving the mark of the beast while they presume that they are safe in following the majority in religious practice.

Daniel 7:25 reveals how the papacy has attempted to change God’s law by the substitution of another day of rest for the day chosen by God. It would not be fair to accuse the papacy of this crime unless she herself were willing to admit its truth. Catholic authorities openly admit that they alone are responsible for the change of God’s holy Sabbath. Here are a few examples:

“Question: Have you any other way of proving that the [Roman] church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“Answer. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her—she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”⁹

Says Leo J. Trese, an apologist for the Roman church:

“Nothing is said in the Bible about a change of the Lord’s day from Saturday to Sunday. We know of the change only from the tradition of the [Catholic] Church—a fact handed down to us from earliest times by the living voice of the [Catholic] Church. That is why we find so illogical the attitude of many non-Catholics, who say that they will believe nothing unless they can find it in the Bible and yet will continue to keep Sunday as the Lord’s day on the say-so of the Catholic Church.”¹⁰

The mark of the beast has not yet been enforced. Not yet has the world been brought to its final decision. We must take our stand on one side or the other—either to stand wholly on the side of Christ in

⁹ Stephen Keenan, *A Doctrinal Catechism*, page 174 (New York: Edward Dunigan & Brother, 1848).

¹⁰ *The Faith Explained* (Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, 1971), p. 243

obedience to His commandments, receiving His holy seal; or on the side of rebellion against the truth of God's Word.

Some who have heard and who know the truth may yield to the threat of poverty when they are forbidden to buy or sell unless they have the mark of the beast. Although they know better, they may choose to bow to apostasy. Such will receive the mark of the beast in their hands.

There are others who sincerely believe a lie, and presume that the majority must be right in spite of the clear declarations of Holy Scripture. Such may yet receive the mark in their foreheads.

Miracles will be performed in order to convince people that they must go against their conscience in accepting the "mark of the beast." "He performs great signs so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do" (Revelation 13:13, 14).

With many uninformed people, miracles are a final and convincing test of God's favor. They have never realized that Satan and his angels have power to work miracles, just as the heathen magicians in Egypt in Moses' day counterfeited the genuine miracles which Moses performed by God's power (see Exodus 7:10-12). They are sincerely not aware that the Bible says that Satan will work miracles: "No marvel; for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Miracles are not a test that God has sent one with a message. The test is whether or not the messenger teaches the full truth of God. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" Isaiah 8:20.

Genuine miracles wrought by God are performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. Satan has been studying for thousands of years how he may prepare to deceive the world by a false spirit that will pretend to be the Holy Spirit, but which will lead away from the true Christ and His word. Already the teachings of Spiritualism have penetrated into many of the popular churches, and thousands are receiving a strange spirit which they suppose is the Holy Spirit, but which is really a wonder-working spirit sent from the enemy. Unless we are rooted and grounded in the truths of God's Word, we shall be swept away by the overwhelming delusions of these last days.

But not now, as anciently, will it be decided by the miracle of bringing down fire from heaven; for miracles will be wrought in

support of error and for the purpose of deceiving “them that dwell on the earth” into supporting and enforcing the first-day sabbath, and to supply the lack of evidence for the Sunday institution in the Word of God. And among other such “proofs,” will be the miracle described in Rev. 13:13.

Let it be noticed also that Spiritualism is not the only religious power which claims to exhibit wonders through the agency of the dead. The papal church stands conspicuous in making a like claim. She points to many miracles claimed to have wrought by her dead “saints” and certain “relics” of the dead which she places at times on exhibition. And no reader of current news can have failed to note the marked revival of superstition and of belief in the supernatural which is taking place as the result of these exhibitions and claims, and of the work of individuals who manifest what seems to be miraculous powers of healing, and the like.

With all this the State will join itself in an alliance with the forces of religion. There will be not only a union with the papacy, but with this wonder-working power of recent development in the spiritual domain. So that not only will there be the religious despotism resulting from the adoption of papal principles, but this will be reinforced by the tremendous influence upon the public mind of miracles wrought for the support of its evil doctrines and demands. In this miracle-working power is introduced the direct agency of the devil; and with these forces united for the enforcement of religious legislation and the extermination of religious and civil liberty, that State will be plunged into ruin as utter and complete as the devil himself can make it.

The Lord has added in this chapter more truth that confirms our faith. It is as if He knows that this truth revealed in this chapter is a great surprise to many people. Just in case there may be some lingering doubt whether they have truly found the beast and his mark, He will give the number of the beast so that all can be as sure who he is, as though he had a passport or tax number. Let us note the last verse:

Revelation 13:18: “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 Romans of John’s day spoke and wrote Latin, which the papacy still uses today. This language used the same Roman characters which we use in writing, but it also employed the same characters for numbers (I is 1, II is 2, V is 5, L is 50, C is 100, et cetera). Adding up

all the numeral letters in one's name or title in Roman times equalled his "number," a common practice among Latin-speaking people. The Roman Catholic Bible (Douay version) has a note on this verse: "Six hundred sixty-six. The numerical letters of his name shall make up this number."

What is the official title or name that the papacy claims as his by right? For centuries the title of the Pope of Rome has been understood to be Vicarius Filii Dei, which means "Vicar of the Son of God." In view of the fact that the Son of God Himself declared the Holy Spirit to be His Vicar on earth (John 14:16-18), this title appears rather presumptuous. These Latin words are found in a Latin document which for hundreds of years the papacy claimed was written by the Emperor Constantine, granting the papacy temporal authority in Rome, and supreme spiritual authority over all the churches. Even after the document was proved to be a forgery, the papacy still maintained that God had given to the popes the position and title of "Vicar of the Son of God," Christ's personal representative here on earth.

Cardinal Henry Edward Manning said of this ancient document and title:

"The manner of conceiving and of speaking, in those simple ages, so represented the providential fact of the donation of God. God gave the Vicar of His Son [the Pope] the possession of the city in which thirty of his predecessors had sealed their testimony with their blood. The donation of Constantine consisted in the simple providential fact . . . an impulse from God Himself."¹¹

Thus a modern cardinal upholds this ancient Latin document and title as an expression of God's will and appointment. Vicarius Filii Dei—666.

¹¹ *The Cross and the Flag, Our Church and Country*, pp. 24, 25.