

THE NUMBER 666 – a chapter from the book ‘Facts of Faith’ by Christian Edwardson.

The Scripture gives us still another earmark of this power. We read: “Here is wisdom. 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.” “The number of his name.” Revelation 13:17, 18. The note below the eighteenth verse in the Douay, or Catholic, Bible says: “Six hundred sixty-six. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”

CATHOLIC AUTHORITIES

In our examination of this subject we shall first consult Roman Catholic authorities to ascertain what sacred title they apply to the pope to denote his official position and authority. Any one at all familiar with authentic Catholic authors knows that their paramount and constant claim for the pope is that Christ appointed St. Peter to be His vicar, or representative on earth, and that each succeeding pope is the lawful successor of St. Peter, and is therefore the “Vicar of the Son of God” on earth. This official title in Latin (the official language of the Catholic Church) is “Vicarius Filii Dei.” We find this title used officially in Roman Catholic canon law, from medieval times down to the present. In the earliest collection of canon law we read:

“Beatus Petrus in tetris Vicarius Filii Dei videtur esse constitutus”-“Decretum Gratiani,” prima pars, dist. xcvi. Translated into English this would read: “Blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted vicar of the Son of God on the earth.”-“Decretum of Gratian,” part 1, div. 96, column 472, first published at Bologna about 1148, and reprinted in 1555. Translation by Christopher B. Coleman, Ph.D., in “The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine,” p. 13. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922.

The Catholic Encyclopedia says of Gratian: “He is the true founder of the science of canon law”-Vol. VI, art. “Gratian,” p. 730.

The same Catholic authority says: “The ‘Decretum’ of Gratian was considered in the middle of the twelfth century as a corpus juris canonici, i.e. a code of the ecclesiastical law then in force.”-Id., Vol. IV, art. “Decretals,” p. 671.

It further states: “It must be admitted that the work of Gratian was as near perfection as was then possible. For that reason it was adopted at Bologna, and soon elsewhere, as the textbook for the study of canon law While lecturing on Gratian’s work, the canonists labored to complete and elaborate the master’s teaching.”-Id., Vol. IX, art. “Law, Canon,” pars. “D” and “E,” p. 62.

Different popes added their own decrees to the collection of Gratian, as the following quotation will show:

“Thus by degrees the Corpus Juris Canonici took shape. This became the official code of canon law for Western Europe during the Middle Ages, and was composed of six books, namely, the Decretum of Gratian (about 1150), the Decretals of Gregory IX (1234), the Sextus of Boniface VIII (1298), the Clementines of Clement V (1313), the Extravagantes of John XXII (about 1316), and the Extravagantes Communes, which contained laws made by succeeding popes.”-“The Papacy,” Rev. C. Lattey, S. J., page 143. Cambridge, England: 1924.

After the Council of Trent, Pope Pius V had this “Canon Law” revised. “Pius V appointed (1566) a commission to prepare a new edition of the ‘Corpus Juris 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 Juris Canonici,” pp. 392, 393. It was reprinted verbatim in 1613 and 1622.

This is the standard text of canon law for the whole Roman Catholic Church. Pope Gregory XIII wrote July 1, 1580, in his preface to this corrected edition:

“We have demanded care in rejecting, correcting, and expurgating The Decree itself, without the glosses, exists now entirely freed from faults and corrected, ... as much the one without the glosses as the entire one with the glosses... all recognized and approved... this body of canonical law firmly grounded and incorrupted according to this model printed at Rome by Catholic typographers We wishing to proceed opportunely, so that this canonical law thus expurgated, may come restored to all the faithful... kept perpetually integrid 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 Juris Canonici, Gregorii XIII, Pontif. Max. Auctoritate; in editions of 1582, 1613, 1622, and 1879.

Of this corrected “Corpus,” or canon law, “published in 1582... by order of Gregory XIII,” and established by his authority, we read:

“The text of this edition, revised by the Correctores Romani, a pontifical commission established for the revision of the text of the ‘Corpus Juris,’ has the force of law.”-Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, art. “Decretals, Papal,” p. 672, par. 3.

Notice that this revised edition of canon law “has the force of law.” In this canon law, which Pope Gregory XIII had corrected by “the plenitude of the apostolic power,” so that it is “entirely freed from faults,” we find the same statement: “Beatus Petrus in terris vicarius Filii Dei esse videtur constitutus.”-Corpus Juris Canonici, Gregorii XIII, Pontif. Max. Auctoritate,” Distinctio 96, Column 286, Canon Constantinus 14, Magdeburg, 1747.

“Moreover, custom has even given to several apocryphal canons of the ‘Decree’ of Gratian the force of law”-Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, art. “Corpus Juris Canonici,” p. 393.

In “Corpus Juris Canonici Emendatum et Notis Illustratum Gregorii XIII. Pont. Max.,” “Lvgdvn, MDCXXII,” or “the Canon Law of Pope Gregory XIII, of 1622,” with the Pope’s own “Preface,” in which he assures us of its being without flaw, we find the same: “Beatus Petrus in terris Vicarius Filii Dei esse videtur constitutus”-Column 295.

We cannot see how any consistent Catholic can deny the authenticity of this title without denying the infallibility of the pope. What more authority can they desire?

<p>Before going further let us apply the rule laid down in the Catholic Bible for counting the number of his name. It says: “The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”-Note under Revelation 13:18. In Bible times they did</p>	<p>V = 5 i = 1 c = 100 a = 0</p>
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not use figures. We can still see on dials of old clocks, in numbers given above chapters in the Bible, and in dates inscribed on cornerstones, certain nutactical values given to some of the letters. In Latin, I stands for 1, V for 5, X for 10, L for 50, C for 100, D for 500, and M for 1,000.	r = 0
Originally we had no U, but V was used for U, and V is often used for U today on public buildings, such as "Public Library," and our W is still written as a double V, not as a double U.	i = 1
	u = 5
	s = 0
	F = 0
	i = 1
	L = 50
	i = 1
	i = 1
	D = 500
	e = 0
	i = 1
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The next Catholic authority we shall quote is F. Lucii Ferraris, who wrote "a veritable encyclopedia" in Latin, of which several editions have been printed by the papal church at Rome. The American Catholic Encyclopedia says of Ferraris's great work that it "will ever remain a precious mine of information"-Vol. VI, p. 48. From this unquestionable Catholic authority we shall first quote its Latin statement, and then give the English translation:

"Ut sicu! Beatus Petrus in tetris vicarius Filii Dei fuit constitutus, ita et Pontifices eius successores in tetris principatus potestatem amplius, quam terrenae imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur." ("As the blessed Peter was constituted Vicar of the Son of God on earth, so it is seen that the Pontiffs, his successors, hold from us and our empire the power of a supremacy on the earth greater than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity")-"Prompta Bibliotheca canonica juridica moralis theologica" etc., Vol. VI, art. "Papa," p. 43. Printed by the Press of the Propaganda, Rome; 1890,

Henry Edward Cardinal Manning of England, an extensive Roman Catholic writer, of high esteem in his church, applies the same title to the pope, only using it in its English translation. He says of the popes:

"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 So that 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.

"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"- "The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ," pp. 231,232, second edition. London: Burns and Lambert, 1362.

The same year, this book was translated and published in Italian, with the sanction of the church attached to it. The title "Vicar of the Son of God" appears on pages 234 and 235 of that edition. Philippe Labbe, "a distinguished Jesuit writer on historical, geographical, and philological questions" (Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII, pp. 718, 719), in his historical work "Sacro-sancta concilia ad regiam editionem exacta," Vol. I, page 1534 (Paris: 1671), uses "Vicarius Filii Dei" as the official title of the pope.

Coming down to our own times, we shall call to the witness stand a modern advocate of the Roman Catholic cause. Our Sunday Visitor, of Huntington, Ind., in its issue of April 18, 1915, gives clear testimony in this case. We quote it in full:

"What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope's crown, and what do they signify, if anything? "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. Christ, before His ascension into heaven, appointed St. Peter to act as His representative. 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.'

"Enemies of the Papacy denounce this title as a malicious assumption. But the Bible informs us that Christ did not only give His Church authority to teach, but also to rule. Laying claim to the authority to rule in Christ's spiritual kingdom, in Christ's stead, is not a whit more malicious than laying claim to the authority to teach in Christ's name. And this every Christian minister does."- "Our Sunday Visitor," April 18, 1915, thirteenth question under "Bureau of Information," p. 3.

Later, when Roman Catholic authorities discovered that Protestants were making use of the foregoing statements to identify the Papacy with the antichristian power of Revelation 13:18, they attempted to repudiate the contents of their former article. But that article was not written by some contributor to their paper; it appeared in the "Bureau of Information," for which the editorial staff was responsible. And on page two of that paper appeared sanctions for the editor from Pope Plus X, dated May 17, 1914; from the Apostolic Delegate, John Bonzano, dated April 27, 1913; and from J. H. Alerding, Bishop of Fort Wayne, Ind., dated March 29, 1912. If statements made under such high authorities are not trustworthy, we would respectfully ask if their present denials are any more so?

To one versed in Catholic teaching and practice, there is nothing uncommon in such denials, where the interest of the Church is at stake. Cardinal Baudrillart's quotation on pages 64 and 245 of this book shows that some Catholic authors "ask permission from the Church to ignore or even deny" some historical facts, which they "dare not" face; and we read in "History of the Jesuits," by Andrew Steinmetz, Vol. 1, p. 13, that their accredited histories in common use, 'with permission of authority,' [are] veiling the subject with painful dexterity"-London: 1848.

We shall here refer to one other similar denial. In the Roman Catholic paper, Shepherd of the Valley, there appeared an article by the editor, in which he stated: "If Catholics ever attain, which they surely will, though at a distant day, the immense numerical majority in the United States, religious liberty, as at present understood, will be at an end." A Protestant lecturer, who made use of this quotation, was bitterly arraigned in a double-column front-page article in the Catholic Standard and Times for his false statements regarding Catholics; for, it pointed out, if he had finished the quotation with the words which followed, "so say our enemies," it would have reversed

its meaning. The incident would have passed off at the expense of the Protestant lecturer, had not the Western Watchman of July 24, 1913, continued the quotation still further, declaring:

“The whole quotation should read: ‘If Catholics ever attain, which they surely will, though at a distant day, the immense numerical majority in the United States, religious liberty, as at present understood, will be at an end. So say our enemies; so say we.’” - Quoted in “Protestant Magazine,” October, 1913, p. 474.

Why those who tried to deny their former statements should leave out the words, “so say we,” is very evident. But what can we think of those who publicly deny facts to screen their church from unfavorable public opinions, unless they act from the motive that “the end justifies the means,” and that “heretics” have no moral right to facts which they would misuse.

We shall therefore continue to believe that the editors of Our Sunday Visitor, in its issue of April 18, 1915, page three, were perfectly honest and well informed on the subject, and that the later denials are of the same class as those mentioned above.

Our Sunday Visitor in the aforementioned quotation makes use of Vicarius Filii Dei and “Vicar of Christ” as synonymous terms, and Cardinal Manning does the same in his book, “Temporal Power of the Pope.” It cannot, therefore, be maintained, as some do, that Vicarius Christi is the only mode of spelling used as the title of the pope, although the shorter rendering is used more often for brevity’s sake. In fact Vicarius Christi is composite in its origin, Vicarius being Latin, while Christi is Latinized from the Greek. It would hardly seem probable that learned Romanists would adopt such a composite title to the exclusion of the pure, dignified, Latin title, Vicarius Filii Dei, which has been in use among them for centuries.

Of late, Catholic apologists have argued that the “name of the beast” in Revelation 13’ 17, 18 is a personal name of a single individual, such as Nero, and not the official title of a series of men: as that of the popes would be. But this would be entirely out of harmony with the context, for how could one man make war with God’s people, and overcome them in every country, so that he would have power “over all kindreds, and tongues,, and nations”? Revelation 13:7. Then, too, that power was to continue forty and two months (v. 5), which those apologists claim to be literal. But how could one man accomplish such a world task in forty-two literal months?

These forty-two months are twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days (Revelation 11’ 2, 3), and in prophecy a day stands for a year (Ezekiel 4:6). (Even Catholics acknowledge that a day in prophecy stands for a year. See note under Daniel 9’ 24-27 in the Douay Bible.

Father Reaves says: “The prophet’s weeks are, by all interpreters of the Holy Scriptures, understood to include years for days”-“ Bible History,” p. 345.) The forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, of Revelation 13:5 are therefore twelve hundred and sixty years, during which, this power was to continue. But would not that period be quite a long time for one man to live? This attempt made by Roman apologists to screen the Papacy from being detected as the antichristian power of Revelation 13 appears too shallow to be seriously asserted by men who have made a thorough study of Bible prophecy.