

Reply to Bacchiocchi's #90-92 Attack

PART ONE OF THREE

Bacchiocchi now claims that he has stopped attacking our historic beliefs and the Spirit of Prophecy; yet now that this decision has supposedly been made—he continues his attack on those very same points. Let our leaders beware: This man is not to be trusted. He says he has stopped promulgating error, yet it is not true. He is continuing right on.

Hopefully, this will be the last study I will have to make on this matter. We place it on the internet, to counteract the terrible effect of his words.

In his *Endtime Issues*, #86-89, Samuele Bacchiocchi directly attacked the integrity and accuracy of both our historic prophetic beliefs and the writings of Ellen White.

In response, we published a seven-part tract set (*Reply to Bacchiocchi's August 2002 Attack [WM-1120-1126]*), which gave so much information that Bacchiocchi rather quickly changed direction.

In spite of having earlier promised that, in the next issue of his newsletter (#90), he would add still more new concepts to his “expanded” view of our historic 1260-year prophecy, in #90-92, Bacchiocchi suddenly veered away from that plan. Instead, he ultimately announced that he would no longer publish additional variant views on the 1260-year prophecy.

WHY DID BACCHIOCCHI PULL BACK?

Why this strange reversal? What has happened?

One possibility: Some have suggested that my seven-part series, with all the information it provided, so shocked Bacchiocchi himself that he decided to cease his attempt to change our doctrinal beliefs.

A second possibility is that he was counseled by superiors not to make the mistake of agents before his time. Let me explain:

We mentioned earlier [WM-1120, p. 2] that Rome made a mistake when it permitted its leading agent in Britain in the mid-nineteenth century to come out too openly with his attacks against the doctrines of the Church of England.

Instead of continuing his work quietly, influencing one thought leader after another as well as students at Oxford University, John Henry Newman (1801-1890) moved too fast. Like Bacchiocchi, Newman first attended a college of his own denomination (Trinity College at Oxford). Like Bacchiocchi, he then began working as a minister in his church. Like Bacchiocchi, he then journeyed to Rome (1832-1833). Like Bacchiocchi, upon returning to church duties he immediately began working with fellow agents at the university (Oxford), to mold the minds of students and influential leaders in the church. Like Bacchiocchi, he later began publishing his newsletters which gradually unveiled his revised

religious positions. Like Bacchiocchi, he used them to win the hearts of many members of his denomination.

It is highly significant, that in order to allay questions as to his loyalty to the church, some of Newman's newsletters were directed “against popery and dissent.” Yet in those papers he offered a revised position as to where the Church of England should be standing: Newman maintained that his denomination was not in opposition to Rome, as commonly thought. Instead, he said it held the position of “*Via media*”; that is, the Anglican Church held an intermediate position—halfway between Protestantism and Rome. Pretty clever way to bring Englishmen closer to the pope!

This compromising view was published in his *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church* (1837) and his *Lectures on Justification* (1838). In his famous *Tract No. 90* (1841), Newman advocated an interpretation of the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (the doctrinal foundation of the Church of England) which closely paralleled those decreed by the Council of Trent (which, as you know, is the doctrinal formulation of Rome)!

You will recall that I stated, in the previous study on Bacchiocchi, that carefully placed agents in high places have the help of researchers and writers back at the Vatican to help them prepare their written materials. What Newman was writing had the subtle brilliance of a team of Jesuit ghost writers.

But unfortunately, in *Tract No. 90* Newman had gone too far. He had already experienced so much success, that he was emboldened to issue that newsletter. However, it provoked so much controversy, that his position as a leading professor at Oxford was in danger. Newman could still have drawn back, as Bacchiocchi has now done. But, instead, Newman came out openly, left the Church of England, and joined the Catholic Church on October 9, 1845. Almost immediately, he issued his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, in defense of his change.

But Newman had gone too far. Even though it eventually won him a cardinal's hat (1879), he had separated himself from the church he was trying to lead back to Rome.

Another person who made a similar mistake was Desmond Ford when, in October 1979, he openly attacked historic Adventist beliefs in that Sabbath afternoon Adventist Forum lecture at Pacific Union College, where he held a professorship.

(By the way, you would be interested in knowing that Newman was fascinated by the early church “fathers” and founded many of his teachings, not on Scripture but, on those uninspired writings; Bacchiocchi is now doing the same thing when, in #86-89, he pits statements by early “church fathers” against inspired statements in *Great Controversy*. The truth is that those earliest “fathers” who advocated Sundaykeeping were partly converted Christians who hankered to be like the world. The true Christians kept the Bible Sabbath for centuries, as stated in *Great Controversy*, pp. 52-53.)

A third possibility is that Bacchiocchi was in danger of no longer being permitted to preach in Adventist churches. It is true that the denomination cannot legally cut off a retired worker's pension; but, through the conferences, they are able to notify local churches that Bacchiocchi is henceforth barred from Adventist pulpits worldwide.

If that threat was made, and it very well may have been, Bacchiocchi would have to choose between continuing the open attack in his newsletters or being able to continue his profitable speaking appointments to Adventist churches and special gatherings throughout the world.

At any rate, Bacchiocchi's decision was made: He agreed to stop the attack—while (as we are discovering in #90-92) actually continuing it more subtly, so he could continue to preach in Adventist churches throughout the world.

His half-disguised skepticism will henceforth be able to continue influencing thousands of church members.

Every month he sends out his skeptical newsletters. (He claims that 20,000 are on his mailing list [*#91, p. 2*].)

Every year, he holds nearly 50 two-day meetings in various parts of the world field. Bacchiocchi's newsletters #90-92, alone, listed 13 two-day meetings he would hold near the end of 2002: In addition to five major ones in the U.S. (Loma Linda; Thousand Oaks [home of Adventist Media Center]; Phoenix; Battle Ground, Washington; and Lexington, Kentucky), his overseas meetings would include Calgary, Canada; London, England; Rome, Italy; Melbourne, Australia; Kingston, Jamaica; and a "Union Wide Congress" in Korea.

"When I asked Andrews University for an early retirement on July 1, 2000 [Bacchiocchi's 62nd birthday], my intent was to devote myself more fully to research and writing. What has happened since then is that I have accepted so many speaking engagements, that I have spent far more time traveling than researching. During this past year, for example, I have been [sic.] conducted seminars practically every weekend."—*#92, p. 7*.

Personally, I do not believe Bacchiocchi has time to write much of what is in those newsletters. They are too detailed, and he spends too much time on the road, traveling to and fro from one meeting series to another. Figure the math for yourself: one two-day meeting per week, plus one day to get there and another day to return home (or travel to the next appointment). I believe he has a ghost writer or two helping him. At times, he cites lengthy bibliographies of sources he refers to. In one paragraph in #90-92, Bacchiocchi mentioned that he had a large stack of books for a research study he was about to do.

Each lecture series includes three meetings. Describing them, Bacchiocchi says:

"The seminar usually consists of three presentations, given on Friday evening, Sabbath morn-

ing, and Sabbath afternoon. During the next few weeks, I will be setting up my 2003 calendar of speaking engagements, and I will be glad to reserve a special weekend for a rally in your church."—*#91, p. 24*.

So, giving three or four lecture series a month, Bacchiocchi finds time to give about 150 lectures a year. And this is done in addition to supposedly researching and writing his lengthy newsletters.

THE ATTACK GOES UNDERGROUND

Henceforth, Bacchiocchi will be more careful. But he has not abandoned his attacks on Ellen White's writings and our historic beliefs. He has just gone underground and will continue doing the same as he has done for years at Andrews.

Frankly, he is doing the same as our new theology pastors and teachers are doing all over the world: subtly asking questions, leaving lingering doubts hanging in the air, then moving on to the next point in his presentation.

We find abundant evidence of this skepticism in his three latest newsletters, *Endtime Issues #90-92*—even though they were sent out after his apparent decision to hold back on publishing skepticism.

Bacchiocchi has not backed down at all! Every one of his charges against Ellen White's accuracy and his new positions on the 1260-year prophecy, which he stated in #86-89, are repeated in #90-92! Indeed, later in this present study, we will learn of two new errors of his (both mentioned in #92), which were not mentioned in #86-89! One is that the 1260-year prophecy ends at the Second Coming of Christ! The other is the standard new theology error about the Investigative Judgment.

SEVERAL KEY POINTS IN #90-92

In newsletter #90, Bacchiocchi said he had received so much negative mail, including hints that some leaders were suggesting he might be a heretic, that he was postponing publication of his lengthy study on the 1260-year prophecy until eight fellow teachers at Andrews could first check it over, and he could receive further reactions. He then told the responses of the eight (most of which were in agreement with his views), and also repeated many of his earlier accusations against the accuracy of Ellen White's writings and our historic 1260-year prophetic interpretation.

In newsletter #91, Bacchiocchi announced that he would be postponing the presentation of his 1260-year study indefinitely, or until a competent group of church scholars could be appointed by the General Conference to consider them. He then returned to additional extended questioning of our historic 1260-year teaching.

In newsletter #92, Bacchiocchi reiterated his #91 decision, replied to some of the suggestions that he might be a heretic, and then resumed his questioning of our historic 1260-year doctrine—even though, in

the previous letter, he said that he would no longer do so!

Let us now examine more closely the points Bacchiocchi brought out in these latest newsletters. Frankly, his presentations continue to be as heretical as his three earlier issues:

BACCHIOCCHI'S STATED REASON FOR BACKING DOWN

"During the past five weeks I spent over 200 hours researching and writing the essay entitled 'An Amazing Sevenfold Prophecy.' This study is designed to examine the seven Bible texts (two in Daniel and five in Revelation) mentioning the prophetic period of three and a half times/1260 days/42 months. I began the research at home and I did some of the writing in Singapore and Malaysia . . . I was determined to complete the first installment and e-mail it you as soon as I returned from overseas. The first draft of this Bible study . . . was completed about three weeks ago."—#90, p. 1.

Bacchiocchi had written a 25-to-30-page paper, in which he had planned to present additional new positions on the 1260-year prophecy. But he says he will not present it. (In one place he says the research paper was "25 pages" in length [#90, 1]; in another, he said "30 pages" [#92, p. 10].)

You might wonder what Bacchiocchi was planning to present in the forthcoming 1260-year study, which he will not present after all. He had already stated that this prophecy applied both to the papacy and to Islam (thus nicely turning the spotlight from Rome to, what Bacchiocchi considered to be, a very evil power).

I suggest that Bacchiocchi was planning to present a radical new approach to the seven Bible passages which mention the 1260-year prophecy (*Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2; 11:3; 12:3; 12:6; 13:5*) and apply some verses to one governmental power and some to still others (in addition to Islam), in such a way that the papacy would be pushed off even further to the sideline.

"My intent is to ascertain if these seven prophecies allow for a broader application both in time and scope."—#92, p. 10.

Bacchiocchi's objective has been threefold: (1) to apply the 1260 years to other world powers; (2) to start and stop the time prophecy at dates different than A.D. 538 and 1798 (more on this later); and (3) to spread out the time factor (by spiritualizing it, as he did in a previous newsletter), so that it no longer is 1260 years in length.

"The issue is . . . whether all the seven prophecies of the three and half times/1260 days/42 months apply EXCLUSIVELY to the period of papal supremacy between 538 to 1798. Is it possible that some of them might include also other anti-god powers, like Islam, that have persecuted God's people and promoted false worship? Furthermore, do the dates of 538 and 1798 really support the respective establishment and downfall of papal su-

premacy, as taught in our Adventist literature?"—#92, p. 13 [full caps his].

Part of Baachiocchi's radical approach is the theory that the 1260-year prophecy reaches beyond 1798—even to the date of the Second Advent!

"The termination point of these sevenfold prophecies is the judgment and/or the establishment of God's Kingdom—events that transcend 1798."—#92, p. 13 [initial caps his].

But Bacchiocchi says he decided not to do so.

"But I changed my mind when I opened my mail box, because I found some very offensive messages, accusing me of departing from the Adventist faith. One message informs me that at a campmeeting in the Northwest, "the Friday evening sermon addressed the emerging attack by Samuele Bacchiocchi against the Seventh-day Adventist prophetic interpretation."—#90, p. 1.

Notice that it was the letters which were offensive, not his strange new positions! Bacchiocchi always considers himself the innocent, persecuted one. He can trample all over our historic teachings, and the Spirit of Prophecy as well, and that is all right. But let someone protest at what he is doing, and he views them as the troublemakers. In these three newsletters, Bacchiocchi repeatedly does this.

"My letters were misconstrued by some fellow believers."—#90, p. 1.

"The false accusations have greatly saddened me."—#90, p. 2.

"My wife feels that there is no need to have to suffer again for a research on a prophecy which is foreign to the vast majority of Seventh-day Adventists."—#91, p. 1.

Notice that it is only a "few" that are criticizing him. He says they are the "conservatives."

"Why am I being accused of departing from the Adventist faith by a few conservative fellow believers?"—#90, p. 2.

Later, in #91, Bacchiocchi concludes that the problem is that some believers have "hate." If they had "love," they would tolerate his erroneous theories and be glad to let him spread them everywhere.

"One of the most troubling realities of our time is the hate factor which is pervasive in the political, social, racial, international, and religious realms. The divisive and destructive effects of the hate factor is impossible to calculate, because it manifests itself in countless ways.

"Many people could be categorized by whom they hate most. Republicans and Democrats are known for displaying their hate for each other."—#91, p. 7.

Notice that there is nothing wrong with his views, only with the people opposing them.

"Unfortunately, the hate factor is present even in our Adventist church. The hate mail received from ultraconservative fellow believers after post-

ing the newsletters 87 and 88, have made me forcefully aware that the hate factor is far more real than I had ever imagined. It is amazing how a disagreement over the interpretation of a prophetic time period like the 1260 days, can fuel so much hate.”—#91, p. 8.

In fact, the people opposing his views are being used by Satan.

“During this past 10 days I have spent first in London, England, then in my native city of Rome, Italy, I have been reflecting on why is the hate factor so pervasive in the whole fabric of our society. It is evident that Satan is having a field day in seeing the abundant harvest he is reaping from the seeds of hate and discord he has sown since the beginning of time.”—#91, p. 8.

Bacchiocchi laments that, if these people would be converted, they would stop opposing his work.

“How can we overcome the hate factor? There is no magic way to eradicate hate from the human heart and replace it with the love. What is needed is a change of heart that can only be accomplished by the miracle of the Gospel. When we accept the Good News that “while we were yet sinners Christ dies for us” (Rom 5:8), then our hearts are filled with the love of God: “God has poured out His love into our hearts by His Spirit” (Rom 5:5). When the love of God is poured out in our hearts, then the hate factor is replaced by the love factor. We learn to love.”—#91, p. 8.

THOSE WEAK-MINDED FEW

Bacchiocchi claims to have a readership of 20,000 (#91, p. 2), of which 2,000 have written letters praising him (#90, p. 3) and that only “about 40 or 50” of them have complained (#90, p. 3). But he claims that, because objections are only heard from this extremely tiny percentage of quibblers (1/400th of his total readership), he will stop presenting his doctrinal novelties. To add to the oddity of this, he essentially likens that 40 or 50 to ignorant rabble who have little education, no interest in using their brains, or listening to him when he opens his mouth.

Regarding his readers, Bacchiocchi says:

“The vast majority of them are educated people with inquiring minds, appreciative of fresh attempts to understand more fully prophecies, there is a significant minority who are greatly distressed by any proposed modification of traditional beliefs. For them to tinker with traditional interpretations is tantamount to heresy. In good conscience I cannot ignore the concerns of these committed fellow believers. To do so would show a lack of pastoral understanding.”—#91, p. 2.

Bacchiocchi assures us that he is giving up because of a pitifully small number of critics.

“Many of you readers have told me to ignore such accusations, which after all come from a relatively small number of people. Comparing to the over 2,000 messages of appreciation received for the latest newsletters, the negative messages were relatively few, amounting to no more than forty or fifty of them. The vast majority of the subscribers to this newsletter are people with an inquiring mind who appreciate being challenged with new ideas. I consider it a privilege to minister to these people.”—#90, p. 3.

This miserable few “are easily threatened by any new idea” (#90, p. 3). They “accept traditional teachings and interpretations without any questioning” (#90, p. 3). “This mentality fosters intellectual and spiritual stagnation rather than growth” (#90, p. 3). “My ultimate goal is to encourage some fresh thinking on how to make our interpretation of this sevenfold prophecy more credible” (#90, p. 3). But in spite of his best efforts to subvert our faith, “no matter how I present this study, some will find a way to attack and defame me” (#90, p. 3).

OUR IGNORANT LEADERS

As we have discovered above, Bacchiocchi speaks very disparagingly of his few ignorant critics. Apparently, such are near worthless trash, which must be tolerated.

One wonders why then is Bacchiocchi acceding to their demands for him to stop his attacks. The reason is that, elsewhere in #90-92, Bacchiocchi concedes that some of that “few” include prominent church leaders whom he fears to displease.

—Well then, putting all this together, we discover that Bacchiocchi considers those of our leaders who disagree with him to be rather stupid individuals who lack “inquiring minds,” are “threatened by new ideas,” have “intellectual and spiritual stagnation.”

You need to tell the conscientious leaders of the church what Bacchiocchi thinks of them. You need to also tell them that, even after he agreed to stop attacking our historic teachings and the Spirit of Prophecy, in #90-92, he is continuing to do so! He is now going beyond that and slurring our conscientious leaders as well.

QUICK TO NAME THOSE ON HIS SIDE

Some of our leaders oppose Bacchiocchi’s message. Bacchiocchi clearly states that they are among “the few.”

“Two additional reasons finally convinced me to shelve this research for the time being. The first reason is the negative criticism of a few concerned fellow believers, some of whom are church leaders.”—#92, pp. 1-2.

“In *Endtime Issues*, No. 88, I made a plea for a balanced understanding of Ellen White by accept-

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Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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ing her prophetic gift, while at the same time recognizing her limitations. These proposals have been interpreted by some of our church leaders as a drifting away from the Adventist faith.”—#92, p. 9.

Yet there are other leaders whom, Bacchiocchi says, heartily endorse his work. He readily names those who endorse his ideas.

In #92, p. 10, when a “false report” was sent from the NAD to Florida Conference not to permit Bacchiocchi to speak in their churches, Bacchiocchi contacted the NAD which denied having sent such a message.

“Elder Harold W. Baptiste, our NAD secretary, graciously called me back and reassured me that he never heard of such an instruction given by the NAD office. He concluded that someone must have fabricated such a false rumor.”—#92, p. 10.

Tell our church leaders that, if in any way they endorse Bacchiocchi's teachings, he will name them in his newsletter. He is desperate to be able to continue his lecture tours while continuing his newsletters.

SCRIPTURE VS. TRADITION

As do his fellow liberals in our church, Bacchiocchi consistently uses code words to confuse issues and avoid the appearance of a direct attack on our historic teachings and the Spirit of Prophecy. One is “tradition.” Whatever solid beliefs we may have held in the past, whatever is written in the Spirit of Prophecy—it is all tradition, in Bacchiocchi's opinion, and unworthy of our consideration today.

“There are new truths to be discovered. But at this time it is practically impossible for me or any Adventist Bible [“scholar”; he accidentally omitted the word] to undertake such an in-depth study, because any new discovery is expected to support traditional interpretations. Such a criteria negates the possibility of honest, objective research. Ultimately, we must decide whether we want to be true to SCRIPTURE or TRADITION.”—#92, p. 11 [full caps his].

That paragraph is a masterpiece of the Catholic deceptive art. Bacchiocchi is telling us that all our earlier teachings, beliefs, practices, and books amount to little more than a heap of tradition. We need our scholars to get us out of this mess. (If you ask our liberals who they define as our “scholars,” you will learn that it is the men who have gotten Ph.D.s in religion from outside universities—the very ones who, in the process, have had their faith and beliefs corrupted.)

The way our scholars will “rescue us” is to sweep aside all this “tradition” and provide us with new interpretations of Scripture.

Yes, that paragraph is a masterpiece of deception. Here is their working definitions: “Scripture” is the Bible, but only as explained away by liberals who no longer believe historic Adventism. “Tradition” is the Bible as explained by our pioneers and the Spirit of Prophecy.

In reality, true “Scripture” is the words in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, as they read; and true “tradition” is man's comments about either.

Bacchiocchi and his associates thus cause Scripture and tradition to trade places. In their hands, Scripture becomes tradition and their traditions become Scripture.

“There is a significant minority who are greatly distressed by any proposed modification of traditional beliefs. For them to tinker with traditional interpretations is tantamount to heresy.”—#91, p. 2.

“For them, a committed Adventist is one who accepts traditional teachings and interpretations without any questioning.”—#90, p. 3.

BACCHIOCCHI SAYS HE IS NOT TRYING TO MAKE ANY CHANGES

“In recent weeks, a new false allegation has been circulating, namely, that I am drifting away from the Adventist faith by promoting teachings contrary to our beliefs.”—#92, p. 8.

“Simply stated, the new false accusation is that I am drifting away from the Adventist faith because of what I have written in two recent newsletters.”—#92, p. 9. [He cites #86 and #88 as the two newsletters, but does not mention #87 or #89.]

Speaking to the weak-minded few who misunderstand his objective, Bacchiocchi makes this remarkable statement:

“It was not my intent to be divisive or to question the integrity of our Adventist message.”—#91, p. 2.

Frankly, only weak-minded people would believe that Bacchiocchi was not questioning the integrity of the message!

“For me to be a committed Adventist means to constantly seek new ways to make our beliefs more relevant.”—#91, p. 2.

“Our attempt to lump [sic., “lump”] together the seven references to the three and a half years/42 months/1260 days, applying all of them exclusively to the period of papal domination between 538 to 1798, poses some biblical and historical problems that we need to resolve.”—#91, p. 4.

Ellen White predicted that men would arise who would want to “new-model the message.”

EIGHT TO EXAMINE IT FIRST

In order to buy time while trying to gauge the amount of opposition from church leaders, Bacchiocchi said he would let eight fellow teachers at Andrews check over his 25-to-30-page research paper on the 1260-year prophecy, before he presented it.

“I decided to postpone the posting of the study I had worked so hard to prepare. Rather than adding fuel to the fire, I felt it was wiser to ask 8 competent and committed Adventist scholars to evaluate the first installment of my study. Their comments will be mentioned shortly . . . My plan is to re-work this study during the next few weeks on the basis of the comments received.”—#90, p. 1.

“In a month or so I hope to post this study, after revising it and expanding it in accordance to the constructive criticism received from 8 competent scholars. You will see that the Little Horn is like a monster with several tentacles, that have manifested themselves in different ways during the course of human history. The ultimate intent of this study is to strengthen our Adventist interpretation, by making it more credible.”—#90, p. 2.

Bacchiocchi says “the Little Horn is like a monster with several tentacles.” That is not what Daniel 7 and 8 says. It is a single horn. Bacchiocchi would transform it into many horns: the papacy; Islam; and probably communism; Hinduism; paganism; and more besides.

THE EVALUATION BY EIGHT TEACHERS

Bacchiocchi selected eight typical Adventist Bible teachers, thus conveniently providing us with a cross-sectional insight into the beliefs of our college and university Bible teachers:

“Let me briefly introduce the eight Adventist scholars who have graciously taken time in their busy schedule to evaluate my paper. With one exception, their comments were rather favorable, though each reviewer raised important questions for me to consider.”—#90, p. 4.

1 - LaRONDILLE AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's first reviewer was Hans LaRondelle.

“The first one to respond was Hans LaRondelle, D. Th., who is a retired Professor Emeritus of Theology at Andrews University Theological Seminary.”—#90, p. 4.

Bacchiocchi says LaRondelle is now retired, living in Florida, but continues to teach “extension schools in different parts of the world.” These extension schools enable the new theology teachers at the Seminary at Andrews University to spread to foreign workers its “Good News of no obedience required to the law of God,” along with erroneous teachings about Daniel 7-9, our Sanctuary Message, and the reliability of the Spirit of Prophecy.

According to Bacchiocchi, LaRondelle fully concurred with his heresy.

“LaRondelle's review of the essay was very posi-

tive. He wrote: ‘I have read your essay and thank God for the breath of fresh air. I have been waiting for such a breakthrough for many years. The traditional interpretation of Dan 7 and 8 became almost too tortuous for me. You have spoken well of me - thank you - and have read my intentions (concerning the year 538) correctly. I have met quite a few of our thinking Adventists here and in Europe who are questioning the traditional exegesis of Daniel 8. I will tell them now about your essay by e-mail. . . . I fully concur with your academic method to let the sacred text speak for itself.’—#90, p. 4.

By LaRondelle's own words, Bacchiocchi's apostasy is a “breath of fresh air,” a “breakthrough” to replace our “traditional interpretation of Daniel 7 and 8.” LaRondelle adds that he will work earnestly to help spread the heresy throughout Europe. (LaRondelle can speak one or more European languages.)

In 1981, during a weeklong visit to Andrews to xerox some materials in their library, I was told by students that LaRondelle was solidly new theology. For years he has done his best to lead thousands of the future ministers of our church down the wrong path.

2 - JON PAULIEN ALSO AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's second reviewer was Jon Paulien.

“Another reviewer is Jon Paulien, Ph. D., who is serving a [sic., “as”] Professor of New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary. He has authored of [sic., omit “of”] several books, including *What the Bible Says about the End-time*. He has contributed the essay of this newsletter. The essay is excerpted from his newly released book *The Day that Changed the World*. This is a book you will love to read and share with your friends, especially those who do not profess to believe in God. You can buy single copies at any Adventist Book Center for only \$2.49 or by the case of 100 copies for only \$159.00. This is great value for Christmas giving! If you do not live near an [sic.] ABCs you can order the books . . .”—#90, p. 4.

Beware of any book which Bacchiocchi recommends or sells! Each one will subtly twist your mind toward new theology. Later in this present report, we will quote a statement which candidly admits that “several recent Adventist books cited in the previous newsletter” (#91, p. 2) teach the same things Bacchiocchi believes! Paulien's book must be one of them, since Bacchiocchi praises it so heartily. Come to think of it, every book Bacchiocchi mentions, he always praises heartily! (Notice that he is not telling you to purchase the *Conflict Series* or purchase and hand out *Great Controversy* to the lost. Instead, he questions its inspiration.)

“Paulien has been of great help to me. He spent several hours, not only to read my paper, but also to counsel me on how to deal with this controversial time prophecy . . . He wrote: ‘I think you did a terrific job inductively, but you have not yet interacted with the wealth of secondary literature that

addresses the same issues you address.”—#90, p. 4.

3 - RANKO STEFANOVIC AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's third reviewer was Ranko Stefanovic. Stefanovic heartily approves of Bacchiocchi's errors. One would think he would not want Bacchiocchi to trumpet his support to Adventists everywhere. Yet these men are very bold in their defiance of our historic beliefs.

“In his review Ranko wrote: ‘The information presented in your paper is factually documented and the evidences are weighty. I find the concerns you have expressed to be very similar to mine while I was writing my commentary on Revelation. Also, your perception regarding my position is very correct: I avoided assigning any date to the threefold time designation [of the three and half years/1260 days/42 months] in Revelation. I agree with you that A.D. 538 has been exaggerated; in order to get that date, the year 1798 was established first, and then the 1260 years were deducted from it.

“Especially enlightening for me was the way you have clarified historically the origin of the Little Horn (pp. 7-8). I wished I had known these informations [sic.] earlier to incorporate them into my commentary (as you know I am not a church historian). I am totally in an agreement with you about the method of studying the Bible prophecies.’”—#90, p. 5. [Bracketed note is Bacchiocchi's.]

Incredible! Ranko writes a doctoral thesis on the book of Revelation, and yet he says he knows little or nothing about church history!

4 - ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's fourth reviewer was Zdravko Stefanovic. Stefanovic, who teaches Bible at Walla Walla, is the only one of the eight not teaching Bible at Andrews. After praising a book by Stefanovic, Bacchiocchi says that Stefanovic gave him a copy of an article he wrote, which says that the “three and a half times” is symbolic! Bacchiocchi says this is exactly what he, himself, believes:

“For the purpose of my research on the three and half times prophetic period of Daniel 7:25, Zdravko recommended me his article ‘*The Presence of the Three and a Fraction: A Literary Figure in the Book of Daniel*,’ published by the Andrews University Institute of Archeology . . .

“I found this article most helpful. It offers a compelling explanation for the origin of the “three and half times” prophetic period, based on the literary structure of the book of Daniel. Three and a half times is a broken numerical sequence that expresses progression and sudden termination of the power of the Little Horn. Essentially this is my interpretation of the symbolic meaning of this prophetic period.”—#90, p. 5.

In my earlier tract study on Bacchiocchi's teachings,

I wrote this about his spiritualizing away of the “three and a half times.”

“He then says this:

“A more satisfactory interpretation of the prophetic period of three and a half years is suggested by its symbolic usage to represent, on the one hand the time of domination of the Antichrist, and on the other hand the protection of God's people in time of persecution.”—#86, p. 22.

“‘Three and a half is half of seven, which is the number of God's completion and perfection. Half of seven suggests incompleteness and limitation.’”—#86, p. 22.

“Bacchiocchi then mentions that Elijah's famine and Christ's ministry each lasted only three and a half years.

“The attacks against Christ lasted only three and a half years. Why? Because half a week stands for incompleteness, limitation. The forces of evil were limited by God and could not accomplish the complete destruction of Christ and His work.”—*Ibid*.

“This is the kind of strange reasoning we find in papal documents: Because Christ's ministry lasted three and a half years, therefore He was only partly destroyed! Perhaps Jesuits may believe that Christ was partly destroyed at Calvary, but we don't.”—*Reply to Bacchiocchi's August 2002 Attack-Part 4*, p. 16 [WM-1123].

Anyone mentioned by Bacchiocchi in his newsletters becomes infamous. His friends err in determining to unite with him in his work.

5 - ROY GANE PARTLY AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's fifth reviewer was Roy Gane. He concurred with a portion of Bacchiocchi's theory, but Bacchiocchi's comment about his review is not precise enough for us to know where Gane stands on this matter. However, Bacchiocchi praises Gane's books, and that is a signal to us.

“Another reviewer is Roy Gane, Ph. D., who is serving as a Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages at Andrews University Theological Seminary. He is the author of several books. His latest one, *Altar Call*, offers a popular and insightful study of the relevance of the sanctuary for our Christian life today. You will find this book a delight to read. It will open your mind to the deeper meaning of the message of the sanctuary for today. You can order this insightful book . . .

“Gane's comments on my paper were very helpful. He agrees with me that the Little Horn of Daniel 8 has an earlier origin and broader scope of that of Daniel 7, but he feels that the symbolic nature of the prophecy does not rule out the possibility that a real, delimited span of time could be in view.”—#90, p. 5.

6 - ROBERT JOHNSTON AGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's sixth reviewer was Robert Johnston.

Recently retired from teaching at the Seminary for several decades, Johnston heartily endorsed Bacchiocchi's theories regarding the 1260-year prophecy. This is unfortunate, for we had hoped for better things from Johnston.

"Another reviewer is Robert Johnston, Ph. D., who recently retired as Professor of New Testament at Andrews University Theological Seminary. He has served as Chairman of the NT Department and contributed numerous articles to scholarly journals. He is highly respected for his keen analytical mind.

"Johnston's reaction to the paper was quite positive. He wrote: 'I have read your paper and find nothing shocking about it. Your approach may well be a way forward in prophetic interpretation, and I am not uncomfortable with it. One may find this or that detail with which to quarrel, but the overall concept seems reasonable to me.

"Staunch traditionalists, however, will most likely react negatively. But a traditionalist by definition is one who fears anything new. If you are willing to face their wrath you may want to send this paper abroad, though it needs some polishing.' Frankly, I wish that a way could be found to expand and strengthen our prophetic interpretations without stirring the wrath of our concerned fellow believers."—#90, pp. 5-6.

7 - JACQUES DOUKHAN DISAGREES WITH BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's seventh reviewer was Jacques Doukhan. He definitely disagrees with Bacchiocchi's key errors about the 1260-year prophecy, and stands in defense of our historic beliefs: (1) Doukhan applies the little horn only to the papacy. (2) He places the dating as A.D. 538 to 1798. (3) By inference, we can assume that Doukhan also rejects Bacchiocchi's attempt to spiritualize away the three and a half years and split the seven Bible passages about the 1260-years, applying one to one political power and another to something else.

"Another reviewer is Jacques Doukhan, Ph. D., who is serving as Professor of Hebrew Old Testament exegesis and Jewish studies at Andrews University Theological Seminary. He has authored several books, including two on the book of Daniel: *Daniel, The Vision of the End* and *Secrets of Daniel* . . . Doukhan firmly believes that Daniel's three and a half times prophetic period, refers exclusively to the time of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798. He writes: 'A study of prophetic chronology brings us to the year C. E. 538. Italy is completely rid of the Arians, especially the Ostrogoths . . . From now on, the church has no more adversaries and is free to do as it pleases' (*Secret of Daniel*, p. 109)."—#90, p. 6.

8 - KEITH MATTINGLY'S RECOMMENDATION TO BACCHIOCCHI

Bacchiocchi's eighth and last reviewer was Keith Mattingly, chairman of the Religion Department at Andrews and a professor of Old Testament. Mattingly counseled a middle-of-the-road course: He urged Bacchiocchi to go ahead and publish the rest of his 1260-day study; but, in doing so, he should not deny the accuracy of our historic positions, but only recommend his positions as an alternate view.

Although Bacchiocchi does not tell us what Mattingly's position is, it is clear he is recommending that Bacchiocchi publish the rest of his errors for Bacchiocchi's 20,000 Adventists to read, something Doukhan was solidly opposed to.

BACCHIOCCHI'S TEACHINGS ARE ALSO IN OTHER ADVENTIST PUBLICATIONS

"Frankly, the reaction of our concerned fellow believers surprised me, because after all what I suggested in the newsletter *No. 86* on "*Islam and the Papacy in Prophecy*," is to broaden the scope of the nature and time of the Little Horn, by including other anti-god powers such as Islam. This suggestion is not new, because several recent Adventist books cited in the previous newsletter, view the 1260 days prophetic period to be more *qualitative* rather than *quantitative*."—#91, p. 2.

"The research of other Adventist scholars defending the same view, has favored the wide acceptance of an earlier origin of Sunday. This positive experience has given me reason to assume that the same thing would happen, when presenting my research on the 1260 days prophecy, especially since other Adventist scholars have published similar views in our church publications."—#91, p. 4.

"Does the humiliation and excommunication of Pope Vigilius legitimately support the establishment of papal supremacy in 538? It seems to me that we have some problems that we need to address. These problems are recognized by committed Adventist scholars. In the newly released study, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, published by Andrews University in 2002, Ranko Stefanovich [sic.], intentionally avoids mentioning the dates of 538/1798, because he told me that he encountered the same problems that I have. The same is true of the recent books by Hans LaRondelle and Roy Naden, both of whom shared with me the same concerns."—#92, p. 14.

More on their inconsequential "concerns" about Pope Vigilius (537-555) later in this report. The fact remains that our outside-university-trained Bible Ph.D.s appear to have a stealth campaign in operation. Our publishing houses are hungry for something to print besides children's fiction, and gladly accept books authored by

Reply to Bacchiocchi's #90-92 Attack

PART THREE OF THREE

Continued from the preceding tract in this series

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our Bible teachers.

“Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*. This book is by far the best commentary on the Book of Revelation that our Adventist church has ever published (645 pages). This commentary is an outgrowth of Ranko Stefanovic [sic., “Stefanovic’s”] doctoral dissertation on Revelation. Stefanovic is serving as Professor of New Testament at Andrews University. I highly recommend this timely book. Copies may be ordered . . .”—#91, p. 25. [Stefanovic’s book is also praised in #90, p. 4.]

BEWARE OF ARTICLES QUOTED IN BACCHIOCCHI’S NEWSLETTER

Beware of article reprints from other Bible teachers in Bacchiocchi’s newsletter! From time to time, he quotes full-length essays written by men whom he knows to share his errors.

Jon Paulien provided an essay for Bacchiocchi’s *Endtime Issues*, #90, yet we already learned that Paulien wrote to Bacchiocchi: “I think you did a terrific job inductively” (#90, p. 4). By “inductively,” Paulien means that Bacchiocchi did a good job thinking through his errors about the 1260-year prophecy.

Hans LaRondelle will provide an article in a later issue of Bacchiocchi’s newsletter (#91, pp. 10-11).

Roy Gane will also provide several articles, taken from one of his books (#90, p. 5).

BACCHIOCCHI DECIDES NOT TO PRESENT THE STUDY

In #90, Bacchiocchi said he would postpone the remainder of his 25-to-30-page study on the 1260-year prophecy until he had submitted it to eight others to examine. This gave him time to test the reactions of church leaders to the errors he had already published.

The response was not good. Among “the few” opposed to what he had done—were a number of influential church leaders.

“To the disappointment of many, I have decided to postpone indefinitely the posting of the continuation of my research on this amazing sevenfold prophecy.”—#91, p. 1.

“I decided to follow the wise counsel of my dear wife, Anna, who from the very beginning told me not to deal with this controversial prophecy . . .

“Two additional reasons finally convinced me to shelve this research for the time being. The first reason is the negative criticism of a few concerned fellow believers, some of whom are church leaders. Reading their criticism it became evident to

me that any modification of our traditional Adventist application of the 1260 days prophecy to the period of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798, is clearly seen as a repudiation of our Adventist faith. Several have told me that I am on the road to apostasy.”—#91, p. 2.

“Several subscribers [said] that this newsletter is not the appropriate forum to discuss the broadening and strengthening of the 1260 days prophecy.”—#91, p. 2.

Clever wording. He will not publish the rest of his unusual ideas, because doing so would broaden and strengthen the prophecy.

BACCHIOCCHI ASKS FOR A GC-APPOINTED COMMISSION

Bacchiocchi then did something even more clever. He is now asking the General Conference to appoint a special commission to examine his 1260-year study. He promises to abide by its decision, and will not publish any more of it until then.

Bacchiocchi well-knows that such an investigative committee will never be appointed. First, our leaders do not want another Glacier View. Second and even more important, they are well-aware of the fact that the greater number of our outside-university-trained Bible teachers believe errors similar to Bacchiocchi’s.

So Bacchiocchi has neatly passed the buck.

“A reexamination of our traditional Adventist interpretation of the sevenfold prophecy in question is needed. Our attempt to lump [sic., “lump”] together the seven references to the three and a half years/42 months/1260 days, applying all of them exclusively to the period of papal domination between 538 to 1798, poses some biblical and historical problems that we need to resolve.

“But the resolution cannot be accomplished in isolation by one or even a few independent Adventist scholars. What we need is an official commission of trusted Adventist scholars and administrators, who are appointed by the General Conference to undertake this project. Few [sic., “A few”] days ago I wrote a letter to the Director of the Biblical Research Institute, proposing for their consideration the convocation of such a commission or consultation. If and when this commission convenes, I will be glad to report on its deliberations.

“Let there be no illusion. Our concerned fellow believers will not automatically accept any possible modification of the traditional interpretation of this time prophecy, even if proposed by a commission set up by the General Conference.”—#91, p. 4.

The last paragraph, above, was added to place the

blame for the whole problem back on the stubborn “conservatives” who are too mulish to abandon our historic positions. They are the troublemakers, not the noble men like Bacchiocchi who are trying to improve our doctrines, which he considers to be only flimsy “traditions.”

“My plan was to continue the investigation of this amazing sevenfold prophecy. But, when I read the negative reactions to my initial proposal from few [sic., “a few”] influential church leaders, I felt that the wisest thing for me to do at this time is to abandon this research project altogether . . . I will not investigate the 1260 days prophecy until specifically asked by an official commission appointed by the General Conference. I want to enjoy some peace in the sunset years of my life by acting in harmony with our church leaders.”—#92, p. 11.

“I have asked the director of the Biblical Research Institute to discuss the matter with our General Conference President Jan Paulsen. He is by far the most competent, trained theologian that our Adventist Church has ever had as a president. He hold [sic., “holds”] a doctorate in theology from Tübingen University.”—#92, p. 14.

I am somewhat astonished that our president graduated from Tübingen. The German universities, including Tübingen, are notorious for their worldly theology. Higher critical theology (including source criticism and form criticism) was born in nineteenth-century Germany, and those universities continue to be entrenched in it.

German Hegelian theology (based on the teachings of W.F. Hegel) began at Tübingen under the direction of F.C. Baur, Eduard Zeller, and Adolf Hilgenfeld. The modernist theories of the “Tübingen School,” as it was called, included the error that most of the New Testament epistles were written in the second century A.D. and tell us nothing about theology in the first century A.D.

Another set of errors also developed there, under the leadership of a Catholic faculty headed by J.A. Mohler and K.J. Reifelewich, which eventually became the leading learning center for German Catholics. In more recent times, K. Bihlmeyer and K. Adam have headed up this Catholic faculty. If I graduated from Tübingen, I surely would not want it known.

So Bacchiocchi has promised our leaders to no longer present errors about our doctrinal beliefs or subtle attacks on the integrity of the Spirit of Prophecy. Will he do that? If he does not, you should write—not him—but the General Conference leaders. Tell them that Bacchiocchi’s permission to preach in our pulpits should be canceled. Under the threat of that happening, it could well-force him to stop undermining our beliefs and those sacred books.

THE 666 CONTROVERSY IS MENTIONED

Bacchiocchi twice mentions the strange error about 666 in the *Second Quarter 2002 Senior Sabbath School lesson*. It is obvious that he is definitely in support of the error, and that he pities the foolish wretches who

choose to accept “traditional teachings and interpretations without any questioning.” He says that, doing so, has the effect of destroying both their minds and their closeness to God. Pretty strong words; read them for yourself:

“The fact is, however, that I cannot ignore the negative criticism coming from concerned fellow believers, who are easily threatened by any new idea. The attempt of the recent Sabbath School Quarterly on *The Great Apocalyptic Prophecies* (April, May, June 2002) to propose that the number of the beast “666” in Revelation 13:17, may be “a symbol of humanity separated from God” (p. 85), rather than the numerical value of *Vicarius Filii Dei*, generated a flood of negative responses. I received many messages from concerned fellow believers who felt that the authors of the quarterly were departing from the Adventist faith. For them a committed Adventist is one who accepts traditional teachings and interpretations without any questioning. This mentality fosters intellectual and spiritual stagnation rather than growth.”—#90, p. 3. [His page references are to the Quarterly.]

“A case in point is the new interpretation of the number 666 of the Beast of Revelation 13, which was proposed in the recent *Sabbath School Quarterly* on *Great Apocalyptic Prophecies* (April, May, June 2002). Contrary to the traditional interpretation of 666 as being the numeric value of the Pope’s official title, VICARIUS FILII DEI - a title which is often used in official papal documents - the *Sabbath School Quarterly* proposed that 666 may be “a symbol of humanity separated from God” (p. 85). “At the present time, the symbolism of intensified rebellion, six used three times, and total independence from God seem to be the best option” (p. 86).

“This new interpretation has greatly upset our concerned fellow Adventists who have expressed to me their disappointment. For them this departure from the traditional interpretation is devastating because they believe that it deprives them of the most compelling identification of the papacy as the beast of Revelation 13. The new interpretation is posing problems also for our evangelists. Some of whom may not yet [be] prepared to modify their PowerPoint diagram of the numerical value of VICARIUS FILII DEI. Yet, this is the price we must be willing to pay if we want to ensure that our teachings are biblically and historically accurate.”—#91, pp. 4-5.

Did you notice the incongruity in the above statement? It was rather obvious. Bacchiocchi, whom everyone agrees is well-acquainted with the Vatican (!), made this very helpful statement:

“The traditional interpretation of 666 as being the numeric value of the Pope’s official title, VICARIUS FILII DEI - a title which is often used in official papal documents.”—#91, p. 4.

Some Catholic authorities, since 1920, have denied that fact. We are happy that Bacchiocchi admits it. First,

Bacchiocchi tells us that VICARIUS FILII DEI is indeed (1) the pope's official title and (2) the title often used in official papal documents.

But then, in the next paragraph, he says something different:

"Yet, this is the price we must be willing to pay if we want to ensure that our teachings are biblically and historically accurate."—#91, p. 5.

He says that we must abandon that identification of the pope, since it is neither Biblical nor historical! Yet he has just explained that the title is very historical. I have noticed that people who entertain error tend to use strange logic to arrive at their theories.

THE CONTROVERSY OVER DATES

The starting date of the 1260-year prophecy is questioned by Bacchiocchi. He says it cannot be A.D. 538. Jacques Doukhan, quoted earlier, nicely summarized the truth:

"Doukhan firmly believes that Daniel's three and a half times prophetic period, refers exclusively to the time of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798. He writes: 'A study of prophetic chronology brings us to the year C. E. 538. Italy is completely rid of the Arians, especially the Ostrogoths . . . From now on, the church has no more adversaries and is free to do as it pleases' (*Secret of Daniel*, p. 109)."—#90, p. 6.

In our preceding study (*Reply to Bacchiocchi's August 2002 Attack [WM-1120-1126]*), this matter of events in and around A.D. 538 was discussed at great length. But we will briefly notice his latest objection:

In #90, 91, and 92, Bacchiocchi complains that A.D. 538 cannot be the correct date for these reasons:

(1) Emperor Justinian selected Pope Vigilius (537-555)—the pope in 538—and his successor (Pope Pelagius; 556-561). —*But many times, over the centuries, kings and councils had a part in selecting popes.*

(2) Justinian brought Vigilius to Rome, where he remained for eight years and signed a doctrinal decree supporting a theological error (Monophysitism, the teaching that Christ only had a divine nature). —*Many other times a pope would travel here or there, be invaded by armies, or have to flee for his life.*

(3) Vigilius was weak in character. —*The great majority of all the popes were weak in character!*

(4) Vigilius was excommunicated by a private gathering of some Western bishops in North Africa. —*Many popes later on were also excommunicated, poisoned, or slain.*

(5) The Arian Lombards later invaded Italy, from time to time, over the next century. —*Many invasions of Italy occurred throughout later centuries.*

(6) In A.D. 754, Pope Stephen (752-757) visited Pepin, king of the Franks in Paris, and crowned the king. In return, Pepin helped subdue the remnant of the Lombards. —*Repeatedly, one ruler or another in Europe would save the pope from great danger.*

—Therefore, Bacchiocchi says A.D. 754 should be

the date, not 538.

In reply, I suggest that any thoughtful student of church and secular history of Europe (and I have read both for many years) knows that, for centuries, there were continual gains and losses for the papacy—and for every other nation! This occurred repeatedly, year by year, decade by decade. It is still happening. Examples of papal losses and victories for most every year in the past nearly 1700 years could be shown.

But, out of all the conflicts; gains and losses of the papacy; strong popes and weak ones; apostate statements by popes; assassinations of popes and murders by them; and several conquests of Rome and the Vatican—the fact remains that A.D. 508 and 538 marked special occasions when papal power began to be more fully felt, and A.D. 1798 clearly marks when the wound was received.

The papacy took part in innumerable wars and was invaded repeatedly throughout the greater part of the entire 1260 years! The papacy has experienced serious gains and losses in credibility and power over and over again since 1798.

Bacchiocchi can complain all he wants, but our safety is in staying with the prophetic time spans worked out by our pioneers, and—and—confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy. I fully believe the Spirit of Prophecy is a wiser source of confirmation of prophetic dating than is Mr. Bacchiocchi.

In one paragraph, Bacchiocchi says the dates need to be changed; in another he says they are only "symbolical" and do not apply to any particular time. Is this the man we are to look to for infallible conclusions? Not only does he want to change the dates, he also wants to change the identity of the little horn!

By the way, according to Bacchiocchi, the students in Adventist schools—grade schools, high schools, and on up to college graduation—are never taught anything about the 1260-year prophecy (unless, of course, he "educates" them before they leave Andrews).

"In fact, in the last college Bible class that I taught at Andrews University in the Spring of the year 2000, only 3 of about 60 students had ever studied the prophecies of the 2300 and 1260 days. The new generation of Adventists know very little about these time prophecies which they find it difficult to relate to the concerns of their Christian life."—#91, pp. 1-2.

According to the last sentence, above, it was wrong of God to give us the 1260- and 2300-year time prophecies, because reading about them somehow harms our "Christian life."

It is a tragedy that, for 26 years (#92, p. 12), our church let this man instruct our future ministers and workers at Andrews University.

BALANCING ELLEN WHITE

I mentioned earlier that Bacchiocchi carried on the same attacks in #90-92 that he did in #86-89. One is his continued disparagement of Ellen White and her

writings:

“Sometimes there can be inaccuracies in the messages of the prophets.”—#90, p. 2.

There is a need, he says, for “developing a balanced understanding of Ellen White’s prophetic gift. This indeed was the intent of my newsletters” (#90, p. 3).

BACCHIOCCHI’S VIEW OF THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

In #92, although Bacchiocchi gives only passing mention to the Investigative Judgment, that which he says is revealing. It shows he is solidly in the new theology “justification alone without obedience” camp. Notice these phrases, in which he describes how Christ is working out our salvation during this “pre-advent judgment.” (He never calls it the “investigative judgment.”) There is no mention of an examination of sin or that men are judged by the law of God (see *Great Controversy*, pp. 479-491).

In the first quotation, below, he gives half of the truth. In the second, he affirms his belief that the atonement was finished at the cross.

“This judgment is the outworking of the message of the Gospel which contains the Good News that God not only justifies penitent sinners in this present life, but also vindicates them on the day of His judgment.”—#92, p. 3.

“Christ is actively working to bring to consummation the redemption already accomplished on this earth.”—#92, p. 2.

SABBATH IN THE EARLY CENTURIES

Bacchiocchi says Adventists and *Great Controversy* are wrong because they teach that “Sunday observance began in the fourth century” (#91, p. 2). I have been a baptized Adventist for 57 years, and it has been common knowledge to our people that Sunday sacredness, in the worship of the Persian god Mithra, existed before the time of Christ. We have also known that, as *Great Controversy* states (p. 52), all true (true) Christians kept the Sabbath before the time of Constantine. We also know that apostate, worldly Christians at Alexandria and Rome were worshipping on the Mithraic Sunday as early as the second century. Bacchiocchi is wrong; there is no error in *Great Controversy*, pp. 52-53.

TEACHING ROME WHAT IT BELIEVES!

Exactly what is this great victory that Bacchiocchi claims to have accomplished at that Jesuit university?

He explains it here:

“I spent five years at the Pontifical Gregorian University investigating how the papacy led Christians away from Sabbathkeeping into Sundaykeeping.”—#92, p. 13.

“During the five years I spent at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, on numerous occasions I stood up to defend our Adventist doctrines.

In fact, I labored persistently with my Adviser, Prof. Vincenzo Monachino, to lead him to accept **the Biblical and historical validity of the Sabbath**. On the day of the defense of my dissertation, it was thrilling for me to hear Monachino admit publicly that after spending two years with me he had changed his mind and come to accept the origin of Sundaykeeping **as a post-apostolic phenomenon**.”—#90, p. 2.

In a later paraphrase (#92, p. 12), Bacchiocchi says that, on the day he defended his doctoral thesis, Monachino finally reached the point of accepting “**the post-apostolic origin of Sundaykeeping**.”

Do you see it? Bacchiocchi’s pretended accomplishment is a grand hoax. He supposedly spent five years trying to teach Catholic theologians what they already believe!

A fundamental teaching of Protestantism is that Christ and the Apostles changed the Sabbath to Sunday. But a cardinal doctrine of Rome is that the Catholic Church changed the Bible Sabbath to Sunday afterward! —Bacchiocchi did not teach it to them!

This fact is the basis of their power and authority to reject Bible teachings and place Tradition above Scripture. The keystone event in papal history establishing this principle occurred on January 18, 1562, when Archbishop Gaspar del Fosso clarified the matter at the opening of the last session of the Council of Trent. Please! Please! Get out your copy of *Beyond Pitcairn*, and read for yourself the story (pp. 133-135). It is because of del Fosso’s speech, that Trent made Tradition superior to Scripture. It is because of it that every Catholic catechism since then repeatedly and boldly teaches—exactly what Bacchiocchi claims Catholics did not know until he taught it to them in Rome in the 1970s: the “**Biblical validity of the Sabbath**” and the “**post-apostolic origin of Sundaykeeping**.”

They declare that, although the true Sabbath is the only weekly holy day in the Bible, the Catholic Church changed it, thus proving its authority to institute festivals and command non-Biblical doctrines. Read their statements for yourself: *Beyond Pitcairn*, pp. 114-121.

GREGORIANA CLOSED TO NON-CATHOLICS

I will conclude with this: In #92, p. 8 (and again on p. 9), Bacchiocchi mentions that the Gregoriana has decided to “close its doors to non-Catholics.” We doubt if it ever opened them to any non-Catholics, other than Bacchiocchi!

WE CHALLENGE Bacchiocchi to provide us with the names, addresses, and church offices of any other non-Catholics—beside himself—who ever attended the pope’s oldest and largest Jesuit spy university, the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. —vf