
The Number and the Name —

Vicarius Filii Dei and the 666

AN UNUSUAL STATEMENT—On pp. 85-86 of the June 2002 *Senior Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly* (reprinted on the next page of this tract), several remarkable claims are made:

(1) The number 666, in Revelation 13:17-18, could apply to the names of lots of people. That is not true. The number can only be applied to a relatively few individuals. Select 100 names and see how many fit 666; probably only one or two.

(2) The number probably only refers to “humanity”; that is, all human beings. We will let the official English Bible of the Roman Catholic Church refute that claim:

“Six hundred sixty-six. The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number.”—*Revelation 13:18 in the Rheims-Douay (Rheims-Douai) Bible.*

THE NUMBER OF A MAN—According to the Bible, it is the number of a certain human being—a “man,”—not everyone in the world! To say it is everyone makes a mockery of Revelation 13:17-18. Read it again. According to the *Quarterly*, everyone is the beast power!

What “man” would that be? By the magnitude of the description in Daniel 7 and Revelation 12 and 13, the name would obviously apply to the official title of a “man” who, by virtue of his office, could continue on, century after century. That man would be identified as the beast of Revelation 13 and its counterpart, the little horn of Daniel 7. The Bible evidence for the identification of the last verse in Revelation 13 is conclusive.

But, since 1941, there has, in addition to our denomination, also been another organization which has denied that those verses do not apply to the pope.

(In all of the quotations, italics are theirs and bold and bracketed comments are ours.)

THE 1941 DENIAL—Our *Sunday Visitor* has, for over a hundred years, been the largest Roman Catholic weekly in America. In its August 3, 1941 issue, the *Visitor* declared for the first time that Vicarius Filii Dei is not on the pope’s tiara. Here is the statement:

“A pamphlet has come to me entitled ‘The Mark of the Beast.’ It identifies the Pope with this ‘mark’ referred to in Revelations XIII. 17, 18.

“It is too bad that the Seventh Day Adventists, who are so sensitive to criticism themselves, should circulate a pamphlet so antagonistic to the Catholic Church.

“The question you ask has been answered many times, although not in recent years in this paper. If we have recourse to the best Biblical scholars or exegetes, we find them applying the test from Revelations to Nero, the arch-persecutor of Christian-

ity in the first century. To give color to their accusation, **enemies of the Church publicize something that is not at all true, namely that the Pope’s tiara is inscribed with the words ‘VICARIUS FILII DEI,’** and that if letters in that title were translated into Roman numerals, the sum would equal 666.”

[Nero (A.D. 37-68) only ruled the Roman Empire from A.D. 53 to 68, and it was not until 64 that he began persecuting Christians (as a pretext to cover the rumor that he himself was responsible for the burning of Rome that year). After a brief four years in which Christians were persecuted, Nero committed suicide when the citizens of Rome arose in revolt.]

“As a matter of fact, the tiara of the Pope bears no inscription whatsoever. [More on this later.]

“Sometime ago a clergyman by the name of Reginald Ernest Hull gave a Latin ending to his two Christian names and then figured out what the sum total would be if he translated the letters into Roman numerals, and 666 eventuated. Your own name might spell that number.

“Here is the manner in which it was done: Reginal[d]us Ernestus Hull: From his first name four numerals were drawn I L D V; from his second name only the letter V was extracted; from his surname the three Roman numerals, namely V L L.”

[In the above paragraph, they made up a fictitious name, and then latinized the first and middle names (but not the last!), by twice added “us.” Then they included the “d” which should not properly be latinized.]

“Now the Roman numeral “D” stands for 500; the L stands for fifty and since there are three ‘Ls’, they would effect [wrong word: should say “result in”] 150; the three ‘Us’, which are identified with a ‘V’ would mean 15 more, and the letter ‘I’ would signify one—the total 666.

“The first thirty Popes lived in the golden age of Christianity and [it is claimed] twenty-nine of them died martyrs for Christ. [In reality, there were no “popes” until at least 400 years after the death of Christ, because until that time, no single bishop ruled the other churches.] Imagine any one of them being designated the beast of the Apocalypse [the Catholic Bible name for the book of Revelation]. Among the 262 Popes who ruled over the Catholic Church from the time of Christ, all but four or five, even according to the unwilling admission of unfriendly historians, were among the holiest men of their times. [An astounding statement for its inaccuracy. Entire books have been written about the evil doings of the popes.] The few unworthy ones,

who were placed on the throne of Peter reached that position through the intrigue of civil rulers. [Also untrue; they generally paid heavy bribes to get elected, and then repaid themselves from the papal treasuries; sometimes assassination was used.] Only five Popes have ruled over the Church during the greater part of the last century and every person, unless he be absolutely uninformed or ignorant, would rate them among the saintliest people. [This article was written while Pope Pius XII was

collaborating with Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.] We say 'unless the person were uninformed or ignorant,' designedly, because the lives of these Popes have been written by Protestants as well as Catholics.

"It is very strange that people can regard themselves as religious and still engage in an apostolate of vituperation and slander."—*Our Sunday Visitor*, August 3, 1941, p. 7.

1941 ARTICLE CAREFULLY WORDED—According to the above article, in 1941, the pope's tiara does not have the words *Vicarius Filii Dei* on it. The denial is carefully worded; (1) It only speaks about the papal tiara (his jewel encrusted gold crown; "tiara" is Latin for metallic crown), and does not mention the pope's mitre (his cloth cap). Both the tiara and the mitre are in the shape of a triple crown, signifying that he is the ruler of heaven (which is blasphemy), earth, and under the earth (where purgatory and hell are supposed to be located). (2) The denial is also careful not to mention what might have been written on the tiara in the past. We will learn below that, by official Catholic statements, the name has for centuries been on both the tiara and the mitre! We will also learn that the 1941 *Visitor* did not mention what was written on the mitre—because only 26 years earlier the *Visitor* said the name was on the mitre!

AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT HAS THE NAME—The so-called "Donation of Constantine" is one of the most famous forgeries in the Roman Catholic history. Yet it is, nonetheless, an important document, dating back over a thousand years. The Donation was obviously written by the priests at the Vatican, and not by Constantine. (In later centuries, even the papacy admitted that Constantine did not write it.) This document states their view of the official title of the pope, from Peter onward:

"As the Blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted **vicar of the Son of God** on the earth, so the Pontiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a supremacy greater than the clemency of our earthly imperial serenity as seen to have conceded it."—*Donation of Constantine*, quoted in Christopher B. Coleman, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine*, p. 13. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn., p. 12.

The above is a translation from the Latin. Here is the original:

"Sicut B. Petrus in terris **vicarius Filii Dei** esse videtur constitutus, ita et Pontifices, qui ipsius principis apostolorum gerunt vices, principis potestatem amplius quam terrena imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur, concessam a nobis nostroque imperio obtineant."—*Ibid*, p. 13.

THE TITLE IN 1439—Here is an official declaration of the Council of Florence, held in Florence, Italy over 560 years ago:

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“We define that the Holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff holds the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, and the true vicar of Christ; the head of the whole church, and the father and doctor of all Christians; and that to him, in the blessed Peter, was given, by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed, rule, and govern the universal church, as is contained also in the acts of the ecumenical councils, and in the sacred canons.”—*Council of Florence, Session XXV, July 6, 1439, Definitio, in J.D. Mansi, ed., Sacrorum Conciliorum [Holy Councils], Vol. 31, Col. 1031 [translated from the Latin].*

THE TITLE IN 1862—A noted Catholic author wrote this 140 years ago:

“The highest power in the world, the Vicar of the incarnate Son of God . . . sat in his tribunal.”—*Henry Edward Manning, The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, 2nd ed., London: Burns and Lambert, 1862, p. 46.*

Cardinal Manning (1808-1892) was a prolific defender of Catholicism. Later in the same book, he said this:

“So in like manner they say now, See this Catholic Church, this Church of God, feeble and weak, rejected even by the very nations called Catholic. There is Catholic France, and Catholic Germany, and Catholic Italy, giving up this exploded figment of the temporal power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. And so, because the Church seems weak, and the Vicar of the Son of God is renewing the Passion of his Master upon earth, therefore we are scandalised, therefore we turn our faces from him.”—*Ibid, pp. 140-141.*

Manning is writing in English, but in Latin, “Vicar of the Son of God” is Vicarius Filii Dei, just as the phrase occurs in the Donation of Constantine, where it is applied to Peter.

THE NAME ON THE TIARA IN 1939—The 1941 *Visitor* article denied that the name was on the papal tiara (gold crown) in 1941. But, according to the following article, the name (“Vicarius Filii Dei”) was on the tiara only two years earlier, in 1939,—when it was placed on the head of Eugenio Pacelli, crowning him as Pius XII:

“What the papacy aimed at was not simply to be a temporal power by reason of sovereignty over a little Italian state, but to exercise a universal sovereignty over all sovereigns by reason of the spiritual office of the pope, who was to be the master and arbiter of all other temporal authorities.

“The development of that ideal, the partial achievement of it, and some of the reactions against it are what we must now consider. Lest this should seem to the modern reader a threshing over of old straw and a discussion of dead issues, there should perhaps be inserted here a reminder that all the popes of the last six centuries have worn the triple ti-

ara. According to present-day Roman Catholic authorities, its three crowns signify ‘universal episcopate, supremacy of jurisdiction, and universal supremacy.’ In the coronation of all popes—including Pius XII, on March 12, 1939—the tiara is placed on the candidate’s head with the words [in Latin]: ‘Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns and know that thou art Father of princes and kings, Ruler of the world, Vicar of our Saviour Jesus Christ.’ If this phraseology had not been sanctified by long usage, it would not have been coined in this generation to express the relation of the pope to the political and social order; but it would not have been created in the first place if it had not meant then what it says—‘Ruler of the world.’”—*Paul Hutchinson and Winfred E. Garrison, 20 Centuries of Christianity: A Concise History, 1st ed., 1959, p. 120, Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, p. 120.*

TIARA ESTABLISHED—Contrary to what the 1941 *Visitor* claimed, we have established that the pope’s special name is written on his golden crown. But is anything written on his “everyday crown,” the papal mitre?

THE 1914 VISITOR STATEMENT—The answer was written 27 years earlier in the same publication! Notice that the *Visitor* does not deny, but admits that the title is in the pope’s mitre, and that it totals 666. So the title is not only on the golden tiara (crown), but it is also on the pope’s mitre (the cloth cap shaped like three crowns on top of one another):

“Is it true that the words of the Apocalypse in the 13th chapter, 18th verse refer to the Pope?”

“The words referred to are these: ‘Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six.’ The title of the Pope of Rome is Vicarius Filii Dei. This is inscribed on his mitre; and if you take the letters of his title which represent Latin numerals (printed large) and add them together they come to 666:

VICARIVS FILII DEI
5 1 10 15 150 11 500 1

“Add these together and the result will be 666 . . . Almost every eminent man in Christendom, who has enjoyed the privilege of possessing enemies, has had his name turned and twisted till they could get the number 666 out of it.”—*Answers to readers’ questions in Our Sunday Visitor, November 15, 1914, p. 3.*

ONLY ONE RATIONALIZATION—Notice that the above 1914 *Visitor* denial was the boast that nearly everyone’s name can, in its Latin numeral equivalents, be tallied up to 666. That is also the same argument put forth by the 1941 *Visitor* article and our June 2002 *Quarterly!*

THE 1915 VISITOR STATEMENT—Only five

months later, the *Visitor* once again admitted that **Vicarius Filii Dei is inscribed on the papal mitre;**—and once again used the very same argument in an attempt to explain away the fact:

“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.’**”—*Answers to readers’ questions in Our Sunday Visitor, April 18, 1915, p. 3.*

THEY FULLY ADMIT IT—The question in the 1914 *Visitor* asked *whether Revelation 13:18 refers to the pope.* Significantly, to answer the question the *Visitor* called attention, not to the word, “pope,” but to his official title, **Vicarius Filii Dei**, as embroidered into the very fabric of his three-level cap.

The question, a few months later, *asked whether the letters in the “pope’s crown” had any meaning.* The answer revealed that the mitre *is one of his crowns*, and once again talked about that title on it. **The reply also stated that every bishop of Rome, since Peter, has had that title. It is his permanent name.**

Notice that never—never—, **in any of their statements, does Rome deny that Vicarius Filii Dei is the pope’s official title!**

How can we be sure that **Vicarius Filii Dei** is the official title of the pope? We can know it because it is the only phrase written on both of his crowns!

BASIS OF THE POPE’S AUTHORITY—The rest of the above 1915 statement explains why the papacy cannot abandon that title: **It gives the pope his authority to rule.**

“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.”—*Ibid.*

The most important doctrine of Romanism is the claim that the one man, the pope, rules in the place of God. And that is the claim by which you can identify him as the beast of Revelation and the little horn of Daniel 7. His special qualities are fourfold: a different kind of temporal kingdom, blasphemy against God, the changing of God’s law, and the persecution of God’s people (Dan 7:8, 20-21, 24-25; Rev 12:13-17; 13:5-7).

POWER IN PLACE OF GOD—As vicegerent of the Son of God, the pope has power to change God’s law and to decide who will go to heaven and to hell.

“The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws . . . Petrus de Ancharano [d. 1416] very clearly asserts this in *Consil. 373, no. 3 verso*:

“The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man, but of God, and he acts in the place of God upon earth, with the fullest power of binding and loosing his [God’s] sheep.”—*Lucius Ferraris, “Papa,” art. 2, in his Prompta Bibliotheca [Handy Library], Vol. 6, Venice; Gaspar Storti, 1772, p. 29 [translated from the Latin].*

“We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty!”—*Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, “The Reunion of Christendom,” dated June 20, 1894, translated in The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, New York: Benziger, 1903, p. 304.*

THE MEANING OF THE CROWNS—Both his tiara and mitre are shaped like three crowns on top of one another. **It is of highest significance that the “Vicarius” phrase is on those crowns. The crowns symbolize the basis of his authority; the phrase, Vicarius Filii Dei, states it.**

“Hence the Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions [Latin: inferorum; hell].”—*Op. cit., p. 26.*

Would you like to be the king of hell? The pope says he is. Perhaps that is so; he has sent more people there than all others in history, holding a single, titled office.

BACKGROUND OF THE CHANGEOVER—It is an intriguing fact that the papacy decided in 1941 to stop bragging about the name on the papal tiara; and, instead, they began telling people that the number 666 could apply to most anyone’s name. It made that decision 61 years ago because of publications distributed by our own denomination.

That made our church a target for conquest, for we were about the only major denomination which was still denouncing the pope.

Vatican II (1962-1965) was a major event. A number of our leaders attended and initiated friendly contacts at Vatican headquarters. From 1965 to the present, we have sent special representatives to World Council of Churches headquarters, in Geneva, to meet with Protestant and Catholic leaders. Agreements have been made. Now we no longer apply the 666 to the pope. For more on this, we refer you to the following books of ours:

Seventh-day Adventist/Vatican Ecumenical Involvement
Book 1: History—80 pp., 1999 \$6.00 + \$2.50 8-1/2 x 11
Book 2: Documents—133 pp., 1999 \$11.00 + \$2.50 8-1/2 x 11.