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The Seventh Disputation

WHETHER IT CAN BE PROVEN THE POPE OF ROME IS THE ANTICHRIST

I. Although various enemies have always harassed the militant Church on earth, enemies by whom it has suffered countless evils (some open and disclosed, publicly presenting themselves enemies of the Christian name, others hidden and disguised, attacking Christ under the name of Christ Himself). Nevertheless, that implacable Satan, the well-known adversary of our salvation, has stirred up no one more lethal and ever more horrible than the Antichrist himself, who, by joining cunning to the art of deceit practiced by his disciples, was destined to attack the doctrine and kingdom of Christ in a revolt against Christ through infamous apostasy. Hence it follows that of all the controversies engaged between us and the Pontiffs, none presents itself to be of greater importance in confirming the necessity and righteousness of our separation. Nor is there a point of debate more profitable than that which centers on the identity of the Antichrist, since, indeed, it is without doubt quite certain that he himself is diametrically set in opposition to Christ so that no communion is permitted with him. Therefore, if we can establish once and for all that the Pope, (who is thrust upon the universal Church as the judge of all controversies, the presider over Councils, the administrator of Kingdoms, the bridegroom of the Church and the Vicar of Christ), is that renowned Antichrist whom Scripture describes and in whom the prophecies are synchronous, then it will be apparent to anyone to conclude in agreement with us that we had by necessity separated from him and his fellowship and that no reconciliation can henceforth be permitted with him.

II. Moreover, it is this very topic, with which we concern ourselves and now undertake to prove, which constitutes the fifth and last exposition. And it should be noted that the more diligently we pursue this subject, the greater the zeal and effort of our busy adversaries in spreading darkness around us hereupon, depicting the Antichrist with traits and characteristics foreign to the Pope, in a feigned attempt to distance the Pontiff from appearing the only likely suspect. Hence, false marks have been attributed to the Antichrist by which Christians are led into error, just as the Jews attribute false qualities to the Messiah in order to lead the people away from saving knowledge of Christ. However, if we sincerely and carefully direct our attention to the subject at hand, it will prove to be an easy matter to drive away the darkness which our adversaries bring forward disguised as truth. For it is out of the light of the divine Word that we shall expose their works of darkness, laying claim to the true solution to this mystery of iniquity. That this goal may be attained more satisfactorily, we deem it necessary to prove two critical hypotheses. First, we will prove in thesis what sort of person the Antichrist should be, whom we seek to identify; secondly, we will prove just who it is that Scripture points to with an eager finger. To support the first thesis, we will reveal, for all eyes to see, the true marks and characteristics of the Antichrist. Subsequently, we will exhibit their application in their proper context, that the Antichrist may be detected. The former will have to be sought from Scripture, the latter from fulfilled events and experience.

III. The Many Ways in Which the Name Antichrist May Be Used.

Truthfully, before we undertake the matter, two precepts must be stated regarding the name itself. First, the expression *Antichrist* may be taken in a general sense, meaning any adversary of Christ, who places himself in opposition to Christ for whatever reason; be it in one head of doctrine or in many heads. In this sense, Scripture speaks, not so much

to signify one particular enemy of Christ, but rather designating enemies both masked and familiar. On this account John testifies that in his day there were many Antichrists (1 John 2:18), pointing out those heretics by this appellation because they either denied the divinity of Christ or denied His Incarnation.

Second, that the expression Antichrist may be taken singularly δειτικός [deictic] to denote a certain notable adversary of Christ, one to whom this name κατ'εξοχην [eminently] belongs, and in whom various marks coincide, which are rarely found in others. It is regarding this particular meaning we do now argue. Furthermore, we deem it necessary to amplify the meaning of Antichrist taken in this second sense. For the term Antichrist implies two meanings: (1) That he is an Enemy and Rival of Christ; (2) That he is his Vicar. The definition of the prefix αντι [anti], indeed, introduces both, which, when used in conjunction with a noun, means, on the one hand, before, and on the other hand, against. It can also mean in place of, and, indeed, a substitute, as in ανθύπατος, a proconsul: 'one who holds the place of the consul'; also αντιδείπνος, as found in the writings of Lucianus: as 'a guest as a substitute;' that is to say, 'filling the place of another who did not come as invited;' also ανταδελφος, as 'one who is in the place of a brother'; also αντιψύχος as 'one who desires to die in place of another'; and similar things.

Additionally, it can mean opposition and hostility; as does αντικειμενος [adversary], αντιδικος [enemy], αντίπαλος [rival], and so forth. Both meanings must apply here. In this regard, the Antichrist certainly presents himself as the great adversary of Christ, in so far as he makes himself equal to Christ as a rival by professing to hold the place of Christ on earth as his Vicar. It is to no other purpose, but that he might attack Christ more easily, that Satan thrusts the Antichrist into the office of Vicar of Christ, thereby disguising him under an outward form of godliness. Thus, the first postulate, which presupposes the Antichrist

coming in opposition to Christ, is also dependent on, and cannot be separated from, the second postulate, which presupposes the Antichrist coming as Christ's Vicar.

IV. We recognize these meanings because the coming of this Antichrist, properly so-called, was already prophetically foretold to the Church by the Holy Spirit; once by Paul in II Thess. 2, again by John in Revelation 13, 17, & 18 (sometimes under the figure of *Whore*, other times under the figure of *Beast*). His coming had been foretold by Daniel himself in the Old Testament, but under the similitude of Antiochus Epiphanes, that prowling beast, of whose tyranny against the Jewish Church was a type and foreshadowing of the Antichrist's prowling against the Christian Church. But in this premise there is the greatest dissension. Our adversaries sternly deny that it can lawfully be said by men of God that their Pope is the one designated and described as the Antichrist. Let us, indeed, firmly establish that the Antichrist's marks and characteristics perfectly apply to no other. While we maintain this truth, it must not be thought we do this with any desire of malicious slander, according to the opinion of those who hold this to be our view, who accuse us daily as eternally damned heretics, attacking us with six hundred false accusations. Rather, we defend our views out of pure necessity, that we might satisfy our consciences, which indicate to us that which is in conformity to the Word of God, and that we might prove irresistibly the just necessity of our separation from the Roman Church; lest it appear our ancestors had left her communion, (in which they had been born and reared), for a vain and frivolous reason, and lest we be regarded in the same errant manner, because we also reject any return to Rome or reconciliation with her.

V. It is the Common Opinion of Protestants the Pope is the Antichrist.

This is the united and unswerving opinion of Protestants which they themselves expressed in numerous confessions: The Helvetic Confession, Article 17; The Belgic Confession, Article 36; The Scotch Confession, established in the year 1581 in the assemblies of their kingdom, to which the Royal Majesty his family and others have subscribed as an example to all good men, to the glory of God; The Bohemian Confession, published in the year 1535, article 3; The Anglican Confession, in the year 1562, to which the Academies of Oxford and Cambridge publicly approve, together with the most learned bishops and theologians. Also, one who alone is the equal of them all, King James VI, in his apology for the Oath of Fidelity, and in his exhortation to the heads of state and princes. The French Churches have sufficiently testified to their belief regarding this topic, when, before the Vapincensi National Synod in the year 1604, an article was approved by unanimous consent, which was added to their Confession, declaring their thoughts in these words:

"Since the Roman Bishop sets himself up as monarch of the worldwide Christian Church, appropriating to himself the supremacy over all churches and pastors, and because his insolence and pride are such that he calls himself God, (Can. satis. Dist.96. L. 1. Sacr. caerem. cap. de Benedensis); and that he wishes to be worshipped (the Lateran Council, last session, 1. iii. 9,10); and that he apportions all power to himself in heaven and earth; and that he disposes of all ecclesiastical matters without restraint, as he wills; and that he establishes the articles of faith as he wills; and that the authority of Scripture is subservient to his authority; and that their interpretation is his to give without restraint, as he wills; and that he exercises the traffic of souls; and that he releases as free, men bound by vows and oaths; and that he institutes

new cults in the worship of God; and that pertaining to civil matters, he tramples the legitimate authority of magistrates by giving, taking and transferring kingdoms - we believe and assert that he is the true and real Antichrist, the son of perdition, 2 Thess. 2:3, foretold in the word of God, Zech. 11:16-17; 1 John 4:3; Rev. 13:11, the Whore clad in purple, Rev. 17:1, sitting on seven hills in the great city, Rev. 17:9, firmly holding authority over the rulers of the earth, Rev. 17:18, and we wait expectantly for God, when according to his promise (which has already begun), finally destroys him, broken and conquered by the Spirit of his mouth and by the glory of his coming, 2 Thess. 2:8."

One cannot pass from here without mentioning the Augsburg Confession, for instance, the fact that it ascribes the marks and signs of Antichrist to the Pope, especially due to his abusiveness [Disputed Articles, Listing the Abuses That Have Been Corrected]; that the apology of this confession, offered to the Emperor in the same Augsburg councils by the common name of 'confessions,' clearly professes that the Pope is the Antichrist in the sections, *On the Church*, p. 149, *On the Marriage of Priests*, pp. 240-41, and *On Human Traditions*, pp. 208-9, as Nicholas Hunnius offered as firm proof in his accusatory rebuttal Jesuit., chap. 3. Bellarmine acknowledges the consensus of all Protestants in this opinion (book 3, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chap. 1). "All heretics of this era teach similar things, especially Luther, The Magdeburg Centuries, Illyricus, Musculus, Beza, Bullinger," etc.

VI. All Agree Antichrist is to be Found in the Temple of God

Lest we seem to assert these facts for no reason, it must, indeed, now be shown that all the marks by which the Antichrist is described in Scripture converge only on the Roman Pontiff. By our so doing, no

honest person will be able to examine these marks closely without easily observing them reflecting, as if in a mirror, the Pope himself. Moreover, although a variety of marks are frequently enumerated, nevertheless they can all be traced back to these three unique marks: *Place*, *Time* and *Person*. In certain passages of Scripture the Holy Spirit designates the *place* or *seat* in which the Antichrist was to sit. In other verses the Holy Spirit indicates the *time* in which the Antichrist ought to appear. In several passages, the Holy Spirit describes various traits and actions of the *person*, by which he ought to be clearly recognizable.

Pertaining to the *Place*, it may be indicated in one of two ways, *general* and *specific*. *General*, in that, according to Paul, the man of sin will sit in the *temple of God*, 2 Thess. 2:4, as God. It is clearly apparent this is to be understood in no other way than the mystical temple, that is, the *Church*, which appears throughout Scripture by this name, Eph. 2:21; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3:15-16. I know the temple of God is frequently taken to mean the Jerusalem temple, as considered by the Jews sacred to God, Matt. 23:16; Luke 1:9. But whatever the Pontiffs babble to support their view of a fictitious Antichrist who will supposedly arise from among the Jews, it cannot be applicable here in that sense. Agreeing with this error is Grotius, who tries with the worst exegesis to distort the words of Paul to mean something contrary, in order to placate and flatter the Roman Pontiff. But Paul speaks of the aforementioned temple's profanation [i.e., that of the profanation of the Christian Church] as one to be feared and avoided by Christians, not the desecration of the Jewish temple, which, for Christians, held a different relevance. More precisely, its [the Jewish temple] desolation was to be viewed by Christians not as an event to be feared, but rather as an event proving the prophecy of Christ had its fulfillment, for the ordinances of the Law were now entirely repealed. Nor were they to mourn the fact of the Jerusalem temple's profanation, inasmuch as

these Christians knew the abomination of desolation must take place according to the prophecies of Daniel and Christ, and that the Jerusalem temple must [as a result of this abomination] be destroyed within a short time. Thus, their attitude was to be one of anticipation.

Secondly, it is obvious the Jerusalem temple cannot be referred to by Paul [in 2 Thess. 2:4] because from the prophecy of Christ, Matt. 24:2, we learn it was to be entirely destroyed by the Romans so that not even one stone was to be left upon another, inferring that the Jewish temple was to be perpetually forsaken, not ever to be restored. When Julian the Apostate tried to accomplish a rebuilding of it for the Jews, in compliance with his hatred of Christianity, they all paid the penalty for the rashness and impiety of their Titanic work, begun with wicked daring. They were forced to abandon their efforts because of an earthquake and avenging flames, as Socrates notes, book 3, chapter 20, Sozomen, book 5, last chapter, and others.

Thirdly, although it is true the Jerusalem edifice is frequently called the temple of God in the Old Testament, nevertheless, after the death of Christ, which annulled the need for any further performance of temple rites and ordinances, it could no longer truthfully retain the name or nature of the temple of God.

Fourthly, in this verse the Antichrist, (whom the Pontiffs by no means deny is meant in this passage of Scripture), is not understood to reside at Jerusalem, but at Rome, as will be seen presently. Nor is he understood to reside among the Jews, but rather to sit in the Christian Church, inasmuch as he is prophesied to attack Christ, not openly, but hypocritically and covertly.

VII. So therefore, it is said the Antichrist would *dwell in the temple of God* because it was in the Church where he would be a usurper, claiming both dominion and absolute rule (as Thomas notes), because

he was to take the first seat (as Theodoret notes). Truly, we understand that for God to sit is for God to rule.

And the Apostle himself so indicates that Antichrist would exercise, by his own authority, complete dominion. But this dominion is not one described as that of a pagan tyrant who openly wages war against the Church of God, that is, against all those who profess to be Christians, regardless of their orthodoxy or lack thereof. Rather, the prophecy speaks of one who would rule in the Church itself, that is, within the professing universal Church, so that the warfare which rages will be internal, as in a civil war, not external. Nor should the observation of Augustine be ignored from *The City of God*, book 20, chapter 19, who wished it said that the Antichrist was not only understood to sit *in the temple*, but as is expressed in the Greek, εἰς ναὸν θεοῦ, *for or as the temple of God*, as if Antichrist himself were the temple of God, the Church. In much the same way today we say, 'he sits for' or 'as a friend,' that is, 'just as though the friend,' etc. Certainly, there are times when that particular meaning of εἰς may be substituted for that of ἐν, as they are frequently synonymous. Nevertheless, nothing prevents us from not retaining its real and primary meaning, especially when expressed regarding the tyranny of the Antichrist, which he is prophesied to exercise not only *in* the Church, but *against* the Church.

VIII. The real life fulfillment of this prophecy shouts as it converges on the Roman Pontiff. For when the Pope confesses himself Christian, nay, rather calls his own body the Christian Church, universal and apostolic, thus is it truly stated that he resides in the temple of God. First, because:

- The Pope has set his seat in the Christian Church,
- The Pope appropriates to himself the primacy over the whole Church,

■ The Pope takes for himself not only the name of the Church, but with its name its privileges and all authority, as if he alone [with his faithful] were the temple of God, which is the [true] Church, [the Christians outside his belief system being viewed as heretics and schismatics].

Secondly, the Pope reigns in the Church in order to destroy and attack the Church itself. And in order that the fulfillment of the prophecy might correspond to its prediction, the Pontiffs retain the very word sitting to designate their reign. For to sit in the Church is an idiom peculiar to the Pontiffs. As long as any of them are said to have sat, it may be interpreted to mean as long as he has held the honor of the papal office, which is still identified by the epithet, Holy See [i.e., Holy 'Seat,' derived from the Latin 'sedes']. Although we, indeed, say the Pontiff sits in the Church of God, it does not then follow that the Roman Church is the true Church. For here the general and specific sense must be distinguished, as must its corresponding antecedent and subsequent name.

When the seat of Antichrist is said to be the Church, this must not be understood in a general, composite sense, as if by the term *Church* we are to understand it to mean that it is at one and the same time the Church of Christ and of Antichrist, which is inconsistent. Rather, we are to understand it in a specific, particular sense, whereby we are to look to a seat which had once been the Church of Christ, but which has now been made the seat of Antichrist. It is stated in this manner by Isaiah 1:21, *The faithful city is now called a harlot* because what had once been faithful became a prostitute through apostasy. Thus, it is said, *the blind are said to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk*, [Isa. 32:3, 35:5; Matt. 11:5], describing the cured souls by their prior condition before the Lord miraculously healed them. Likewise, the Roman Church, which is necessarily the seat of the Antichrist, was before, at one time, true, announcing its faith throughout the world [Romans 1:7-8]. It continued

faithful for centuries as long as it held to sound doctrine and attacked heresies. It is during this period that we deny it had been the seat of the Antichrist. Indeed, but when it defected from the truth with the passage of time, introducing strange, alien doctrine, we also say it is then that it deserted being the Church of Christ, instead becoming the seat of the Antichrist.

IX. The Seat of the Antichrist is Babylon Rome

The specific place is Babylon, the great επτάλοφος [seven-hilled] city, which in John's day held power over the kings of the earth, and which, by her cup of fornications, was destined to inebriate all people, intoxicating them with the blood of the saints. By using the preceding argument this is proved to be a fitting description for Rome alone - not Pagan Rome (which could not slide back into heathenism), but for Christian Rome, which fell into Apostasy – therefore, it is not necessary we delay in proving this any further. Only one question remains to be settled, one which has been brought forward by Bellarmine, Leonardus Lessius, and others, namely that the seat of the Antichrist could not be Rome, but Jerusalem, because in the streets of the great city the bodies of two witnesses are said to lie, which are “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, and where, in fact, their Lord was crucified,” (Rev. 11:8). Christ was crucified not at Rome, but rather at Jerusalem, our adversaries say. Additionally, they tell us, by that great city, Jerusalem must be understood, because the great city is nowhere stated in Revelation in a different or lesser sense. But we, on the other hand, believe that great city is most suitably consistent with the city of Rome, (which is mystically called Babylon elsewhere), as it is here spiritually called Sodom, due to the abominable filthiness raging there, and Egypt; because of its moral blindness, idolatries and cruelty. Nor does any opposition stand which argues Scripture states the Lord to have been crucified there, for this can be understood in a threefold manner:

1. *Specifically*, concerning Christ himself, because He was crucified under Roman sovereignty and authority, including the auspices of the Roman state. Certainly, the Roman state is not bound by the walls of the city Rome, but is extended to all provinces subjected to its rule.
2. *Mystically*, in Christ's members, whose sufferings Christ considers his own, Acts 9:4-5; Col.1:24.
3. *Spiritually*, by reason of sins, are called wicked apostates by the Apostle, Hebrews 6:6, for *they willfully crucified the Son of God afresh*, that is, insofar as they could possibly do so.

Already Rome is the head of that great apostasy, as we shall state later. Therefore, [in Rev. 11:8] Christ is principally viewed crucified spiritually. Need we further remind, how, in the Mass they affix Christ to the cross, daily, offering him as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead?

X. The Time of the Antichrist's Revealing

Since the place or seat of the Antichrist has been discovered as we have just proved, now the *time* of his revealing - when he was to occupy that seat - must be examined. This is a point of contention which is not any less bitterly disputed. For the Pontiffs' delay the time of his coming all the way up until the end of the world. Just as the Jews contend that Christ is not yet revealed, so those Romanists imagine the Antichrist still to come, appearing and raging only in the distant future, near the culmination of the age. But we, indeed, persist in saying the Antichrist has already appeared and is clearly visible, and is not, as our opponents insist, someone to be revealed only near the end of the world. Paul disproves their theory, because already in his day Antichrist had begun to increase in power, 2 Thess. 2:7, when he says *the mystery of iniquity ἤδη ἐνεργεῖται doth already work*. John corroborates this fact, 1 John

2:18, by stating at that time *there are many Antichrists in the world*. This could not be said unless the foundations of that horrible apostasy had been laid. I, in point of fact, admit this has been done secretly and in a concealed manner, so that it is not an easy task to note the moment of his birth, because Satan, the architect of this mystery, has gradually - through various forerunners and corruptions of doctrine - spread the foundation of this tyranny.

Therefore, it is called the *mystery of iniquity*, the opposite of the *mystery of godliness*, which taught the birth of Christ only through revelation, so that the μυστηριωδης [mysterious] nature of his birth was similarly concealed and hidden, not open and disclosed. Thus, this truth does not refute our premise, (which will be stated later in fuller detail), that the Antichrist's birth was also to be a mystery, concealed and hidden until revealed in his time. It ought not to seem astonishing if, even as the beginnings of many things lie hidden from our view, in time their growth and development become visible and apparent to us. Such are the seed beds of corruption planted in republics, sciences, languages and similar things, which begin small and concealed. Yet in their progress and development they manifest as quite immense. In like manner is the corrupt Church. Whence we understand the mystical birth of the Antichrist was kept obscure by divine decree, so as not to be a birth which was to be revealed, but rather one which was to be kept μυστηριωδης, until such time as he was decreed to be revealed and encountered, as the son of perdition.

XI. Who or What Holds Back and Restrains?

Moreover, Scripture refers the time of this revelation to that period which occurs when that which holds back, τὸ κατέχον, is taken out of the way, namely the *dispersion of the Roman empire*. For so Paul states, 2 Thess. 2:7-8, *And now you know what holds back, for the mystery of*

iniquity is already at work, μόνον ὁ κατέχων ἄρτι ἕως ἐκ μέσου γένηται καὶ τότε ἀποκαλυφθήσεται ὁ ἄνομος, to such a degree that he who now holds back, holds back until such a time as he is taken out of the way, then the Lawless One will be revealed, etc. Care must especially be taken to perceive who it is that holds back, who impedes the manifestation of the Antichrist. This can be explained in two ways: (1) as he who impedes and hinders, such is the way Chrysostom explains, and after him Oecumenius, or (2) he who firmly holds the rule or commands, as Augustine wants. Each meaning has a place here. Such is the case of the emperor who, by holding the power of Rome, has detained or impeded the revelation of the Antichrist. For how was Antichrist to rule Rome so long as the emperor controlled the affairs of state? Therefore, ὁ κατέχων, or, in other words, the Roman emperor must be taken out of the way thereby making the way clear before the Antichrist could be revealed. Indeed, Paul expresses this sometimes in the neuter gender by τὸ κατέχων, verse 6, whenever he indicates the authority of Rome, or, sometimes in the masculine gender, μόνον ὁ κατέχων, verse 7, whenever the emperor himself is indicated. Nor must the force of the word μόνον be neglected: he only now impedes until such a time as he is taken out of the way, as if this was the sole obstacle, and once he was removed, the Antichrist was to be revealed. Indeed, we conclude from Revelation 17 that this and no other was the mind of Paul: (a) that the Roman emperor is understood by τὸν κατέχοντα and (b) that the time in which Antichrist was to be revealed refers back to the time of the divided Roman empire, dispersed among ten kings designated by ten horns, who were about to give birth to the Beast's kingdom. This is confirmed from the fact that the Antichrist is established as the last head of the Beast, and the fact that he was not able to become the successor unless the sixth head died, namely that of

the emperors who were ruling at that time and taken out of the way. Nor did the ancients have another opinion.

XII. For although some ascribe τὸν κατέχοντα [that which restrains] to the Spirit and grace which could impede that apostasy [which interpretation is prevalent today] while others ascribe it to the decree of God who has appointed each his own times, nevertheless, most by far agree with our interpretation. Greek schools explain it by the throne of the Romans, now impeding the rule. So, Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, chapter 34: "Only let him hold fast who now rules, until he is out of the way, who can only be the Roman State, whose breaking apart and dispersal among ten kings will produce the Antichrist, and then will the evil one be revealed." And also regarding the same subject, *Apology*, chapter 32: "And there is," he said, "another greater necessity of praying for the emperors, even for the stability of the entire empire and for the affairs of the Roman state, because the greatest force threatening the whole world and threatening horrible calamities at the very end of the age we know to be delayed by the continued existence of the Roman empire. Therefore, we are unwilling to put it [the prophecy] to the test, which is why we pray for the delay of the Antichrist by favoring the permanence of the Romans." Tertullian testifies elsewhere the faithful pray for a delay of the end, not for an extension to the end of the world which certain ones incorrectly wished, but for the delay of the end of the Roman empire, whose dissipation would be followed by the appearance of the Antichrist.

Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lecture 11 [sic: 15], "But this aforesaid Antichrist is to come when the times of the Roman empire shall have been fulfilled." Chrysostom also expressly relates this same view, claiming Paul spoke obscurely ἀρχὴν τῶν Ρωμαίων [of the Roman authorities] "because he didn't want to assume enmities and useless dangers in vain." Oecumenius and Theophylactus follow Chrysostom in

reference to these words, *Only let him who holds sway, hold sway*. "That is," he says, "the Roman Empire will be removed from the midst, then the Antichrist will take its place." Ambrose, on 2 Thess. 2, said, "And then the evil one will be revealed; the Apostle says Antichrist would appear after the fading of the Roman empire." Hiero to Algasi, controversy 111, so expresses it: "Only when the Roman empire is absent, which now exercises dominion over all peoples, when it is out of the way, indeed, then Antichrist will come," which he confirms in Jeremiah, chapter 25. And Bishop Gaudentius of Brescia, as he himself said, when Rome was seized and what is more - consumed by fire - he understood the western empire was approaching its end. "He who held sway is out of the way," he said, "and do we not understand the Antichrist nears?" Augustine, *City of God*, book 20, chap. 16, although he confesses he does not know what it is which holds sway, yet those words, *only he who holds sway, will hold sway*, he believes can be rightly interpreted as signifying the Roman empire, "as if it were said, he who rules, let him rule until he is out of the way, that is, taken out of the way, and then the evil one will be revealed, whom no one doubts signifies Antichrist." Sedulius Scottus on 2 Thess. 2, "He who is king of the Romans holds the rule, let him hold his own rule until he is out of the way, that is, until the kingdom which he now holds is taken out of the way. This will occur before the Antichrist is revealed, and was said regarding the Roman empire, and besides, they say Paul did not want to write this openly lest he commit calumny because he would have appeared to wish ill befall the Roman empire, when the eternal empire was awaited." Anselm, *The Interlinear Gloss*, Nicholas of Lyra, Thomas, and not a few of our other adversaries acknowledge the same thing.

XIII. Since, indeed, this interpretation is once and for all settled, it remains to be proved that this prophecy has been fulfilled for a very long time, that is, the dominion of the Roman emperors (which

impeded the appearance of Antichrist), has, in fact, been taken out of the way, and as a result of the empire's removal, the Antichrist, as a necessary consequence, has been revealed. Although it may by no means seem necessary to prove, since the actual real life occurrence shouts at its fulfillment (even if we hold our silence), I know our adversaries are shouting back that, on the contrary, the Roman empire has not yet been removed, and so accordingly, the Antichrist is still to be awaited.

In point of fact, doubt is easily removed if we distinguish between the old and new empire; namely, the order of the old emperors, coinciding with the time of Augustus (as we shall see directly), and the series of new emperors, which had its beginning at the time of Charlemagne. Indeed, I profess the new empire still remains, retaining the name and portion of the image of the former, but the old Roman empire has been gone for quite some time. That this prophecy can only be referring to the ancient Roman empire, Paul proves in many ways.

First, in speaking of that empire which stood in his day (not a future empire), impeding the revelation of Antichrist, Paul states, "he who holds sway," not, "he who *will* hold sway." So, it was impossible that the new [Holy Roman] emperors, who did not yet exist, could be the ones then ruling the empire or hindering the Antichrist. It could only be the old emperor Paul described, who controlled the affairs of state at that time.

(2) The Apostle discusses how the empire was able to hinder the manifestation and resulting dominion of the Antichrist. How then is it that a monarch, holding the title and name of emperor, reigning in Germany, is able to impede the revelation and dominion of the Antichrist at Rome, or at Jerusalem (where the Pontiffs would set it), and where the emperor has no jurisdiction?

(3) According to the Apostle John, the empire which impedes the revelation of the Antichrist was the sixth head of the [first] Beast, the Roman state. But the new emperors were the heads of the German state, not the Roman state, nor can they be called the sixth head, but rather only a certain image and shadow of it. The second Beast, that is, the Antichrist, authorizes the making of an image, gives it life and causes the image to speak.

(4) The empire, about which Paul speaks, was to be divided into ten horns or ten kings. But it is only in the new empire, comprised of those divided ten segments, where they are called kingdoms. Nor is it expected that this new empire would re-divide, resulting in the rise of ten more kings.

(5) Roman emperors, about whom the Apostle wrote in the Revelation, preceded the Antichrist and hindered his appearance. Antichrist, the second Beast, succeeded them, exercising all their power. Truly, the new empire is the image of the former Beast, whether of the empire itself or of the Roman state, which formation of the image the Antichrist oversees, making it speak also. Therefore, the empire spoken of by Paul must be more ancient, as its author.

(6) Not a few Pontiffs, overcome by the force of truth, agree with us here.

Jacobus Faber Stapulensis concurs: "Where now, please, is the Roman monarchy? Who is it that holds the reins of the world-empire, when we see the present monarchy lacking its head?" And most clearly of all, Alphonso Salmeron: "The Roman empire has for a long time now been overthrown. For he who is now the Roman emperor is the faintest shadow of the ancient emperor in that he does not even control the city of Rome. And indeed, the Roman emperors have ceased for many years." Justinian: "Long ago the Roman empire was driven back into

these straits, so that it scarcely holds a certain thin shadow of the empire." Baronius, on the year 476, par. 1, commenting on the emperor being Greek and the consuls not even Roman, said, "Thus the west empire, which was Roman, has entirely collapsed, falling headlong to the barbarians." Jacob Baradaeus, also in accord, vol. 1, book 4, chap. 4, regarding the Jews denying that the Christ has come because the Roman empire still stood, said, "It is retorted [to the unbelieving Jews] that the monarchy of the Romans no longer exists as has been proved."

XIV. Therefore, since the empire is necessarily understood as being that of the old empire, it must be clearly concluded that when this empire ended the Antichrist was to be revealed. Certainly, the outcome corresponded exactly to the prophecy. For, as a result of the revealing of the Antichrist, the empire began to weaken in the West, becoming infamous due to the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff, which gradually exposed his true identity. And so, as the emperors descended the throne, the Roman Pontiffs ascended the throne. In point of fact, we can note three unique stages to the end of the empire resulting in its being taken out of the way:

The first stage was when the seat of the empire was transferred by Constantine, A. D. 331, from old Rome to the new seat of Constantinople, leaving the Pontifical seat vacant at that time. But more precisely, if we can place our trust in the words of the Pontiffs themselves, Constantine yielded the city to the Pontiff, "judging in the city itself the monarchy of the Roman Pontiffs with both powers," Dist. 96, c. Constantine.

The second stage is when, after the division of the empire into East and West, with Rome abandoned, not only did the emperors of the West place their seat in Ravenna or Milan, thus departing out of the way or

withdrawing, but they were also removed out of the world in the year of Christ 475. It was at that time when, with the western empire overthrown by the Goths, the very ancestral line of its emperors obviously perished with Augustulus II, whose line, above all others, impeded the revealing of the Antichrist. Augustulus II was forced to abdicate by Odoacer, King of the Heruli. Neither in Rome nor in the entire western empire was there to be another emperor, until 325 years later when the Roman Pontiff set up a new empire in the west, as if an image of the old. Although the Goths ruled for at least seventy years by armed force, nevertheless, the Roman kings did not defer to them, nor are the Goths to be counted among the heads of the Roman state, but rather among the enemies of the Roman state and empire.

The third stage is seen when the Greek emperors regained Rome and Italy from the hands of the Goths, first by the efforts of Belisarius, then of Narses. After the expulsion of the Goths in the year 552, whatever jurisdiction the Greeks held in Italy and Rome was lost through the wiles of the Popes, approximately in the year 727. The Popes, having extorted various αξιωματα [offices] from the emperors, and having usurped the title of Universal Pontiff, obtained the highest primacy in the Church from Phocas, the assassin. The Popes were thus able to exercise their tyranny in the west, growing and advancing to the height of that supreme power which they still hold today.

XV. Indeed, this mystery could not be accomplished or remain a mystery if it were revealed either all at once or in a single moment of time. But though its gradual progress, little by little, in varying degrees be hidden to many, we are able to discern the Antichrist. Thus, this mystery can be seen in its many stages:

First, we see the conception of the mystery of the Antichrist, which was already beginning to operate from the time of the Apostles, Satan being

a prelude to him, followed by the Neronian persecutions, through the numerous heresies kindled by false theologians, then by the various contentions arising in the Church by those striving to be first; such as was Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence, 3 John 9.

Second, we note the birth and revelation of the Antichrist, which began to be observed around the year 606, at the time of Boniface III, who not only obtained the title of Universal Bishop from the murderous Emperor Phocas, a title which the emperor Mauritius had previously ceded to Constantinople, but even secured headship of all Churches from his Roman seat. Thus, in this way did Pope Boniface occupy the spiritual monarchy.

Third, the Antichrist may be perceived growing into adulthood by observing the Pontiffs from the days of Boniface III through those of Benedict IX or Gregory VII around the tenth century, as the Antichrist claimed the temporal monarchy for himself.

Fourth, the Antichrist is regarded as flourishing and reigning in the most foul darkness of the Papacy from Gregory VII until the Reformation of Luther.

Fifth, the Antichrist can be seen decreasing and crumbling from that time when, little by little, his foundations were undermined by the sound of the evangelical trumpet until entirely consumed in the glorious coming of Christ.

These two periods of the Antichrist's destruction are noted by the Holy Spirit. The first was begun through the Spirit of the mouth of Christ, that is, through the Word of the Gospel, which, from the time of the Reformation must echo throughout the world. Next, his destruction is seen in the glorious appearing of Christ, II Thess. 2:8, for so it is designated by ἐπιφανεία τῆς παρουσίας for certainly the illustrious

coming is rightly designated παρουσία ἐπιφανής. A more glorious coming cannot be imagined than that which is to occur on that crucial day. For when, little by little, in several stages, the Antichrist was to arrive at the height of his impiety, in like manner was he to be diminished and weakened, while evangelical truth was being restored to its original state. This restoration is seen in the miraculous resurrection of the two dead witnesses who were awakened, [Rev. 11]. Nor was the outcome not foretold. For to the extent that the Papal empire was to experience such a great fear of the Reformation, in exactly the same way the strength of the Antichrist is to be weakened by the preaching of the divine Word in the last days. It is common knowledge the Papal empire experiences this fear daily. In this regard, Bellarmine complains frequently, preface of the volume *Controversies*, and book 3, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chap. 21: "From the time the Pope was declared to be Antichrist, his power did not increase, but always decreased more and more."

XVI. The Person of Antichrist: Apostasy a Key Character Trait

In the third place, the *Person of Antichrist* must be examined so we might see what kind of nature he ought to have and by what characteristics he is described by the Holy Spirit. Several characteristics come to mind, but we single out only the extraordinary and more notable ones. The first is *Apostasy*, which is attributed to him by Paul, 2 Thess. 2:3, ἐὰν μὴ ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀποστασία πρῶτον "Unless the falling away [apostasy] comes first and that man of sin be revealed." On the one hand, in this context Apostasy might indicate the accursed Apostate himself, the abstract posited for the concrete, which is what Chrysost., Theodor., Oecum., Jerome, and others want; or, it may be taken in the concrete, as Augustine: "Unless the fugitive [from the truth] will have first come." Nor do the Pontiffs deny this. Bellarmine, book 3, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chap.2 says, "The Greek interpreters and Augustine are

in complete agreement in their teaching that, according to Paul, the Antichrist himself is able to be recognized by apostasy." So do Suarez, Malvenda, and others of our adversaries agree. Therefore, the trait of rebelliousness is understood as being a singular and notable characteristic of the Antichrist. The Pontiffs would have us believe it is a political apostasy from the Roman empire referred to here. But that is impossible, first, because the apostasy is of a religious nature, not political, and second, because the apostasy in question is not one which need be called by a new name, because this apostasy is understood to be the defection from God, the true faith and religion once professed. Paul himself explains, 1 Timothy 4:1: "The Spirit says clearly that in the latter times ἀποστήσονται τινες τῆς πίστεως certain ones will commit apostasy [depart] from the faith." Most of the Fathers support us on this point (Chrysost., Theophyl., Oecumen., Theodor.), the last of whom calls ἀποστασία 'the estrangement from God.' Augustine concurs, *City of God*, book 20, chap. 19, as does Cyril of Jerusalem, Catech. 11 [sic:15]. From the Pontiffs, Thomas, Lyra, Alcazar, Suarez, vol. 2, q. 59, art. 6, dist. 34: "Although most Latins understand this to be about the defection from the Roman empire, nevertheless, it is more properly understood regarding the defection from Christ," etc. This is the point of view which Paul infers. Specifically, defection from the faith once previously accepted. Indeed, all heretics who lack faith in one or more of the fundamental heads of orthodoxy are considered apostates, but here Paul speaks of a certain notable defection, universal, as it were, whose head and chief was to be the Antichrist, so that most, if not all, heads of the faith are overthrown. Most certainly this is the force and emphasis of the clause here cited.

XVII. Although it is certainly understood that apostasy is a significant and notable characteristic of Antichrist, we must not conclude that every sort of defection from the faith, including a public denial of

Christianity, which other religions are known for, is meant here. Nor is the force of our original argument lost because of the lack of an apparent defection from the faith on the part of the Papacy. The Pontiffs desire they be eliminated [as suspects] because they do not specifically deny Christ. However, any extraordinary defection from the faith certainly suffices for one to be considered apostate, although one does not totally deny the faith. In this way, the word, ἀποστασία, corresponds to the Hebrew, תִּמְרָדוּת, meaning 'rebel,' in which sense the Reubenites and Gadites, because of an altar erected near the Jordan River, are said to have apostatized or to have rebelled against the Lord, Joshua 22:18-19. It was not, mind you, that the children of Israel believed these tribes to have completely thrown off religion, but because they were performing religious rites in a place other than that established by God, the Israelites separated themselves from those brethren who were rebellious to the mandate of the Lord. Thus, even if Christianity is not absolutely denied, defection from the faith is still considered very real if the errors in question are of capital import, especially if idolatrous cults are introduced against it. To be sure, idolatry in Scripture is so often designated as apostasy and defection. In which case we are to understand that the apostasy of the Antichrist is not that of complete abnegation of Christianity, but, on the contrary, he is said to make his seat in the temple of God, that is, in the Christian Church, in order to exercise his tyranny. And it is in the name of Christianity that he will deceive, introducing his cursed apostasy.

XVIII. This mark of apostasy, above all others, applies to the Roman Pontiff. Nor is the required burden of proof difficult to establish. For the Pope, as the head and founder of this universal apostasy, has verily defected from the faith of Christ: partly through errors and innumerable heresies introduced in dogma; partly through superstitions ordained in rites; partly through idolatry firmly

established in cult worship, as was seen before in Disputations 1-4. Bellarmine, book 3, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chap.2, cries out in protest, "Even if," he said, "we were to ascribe to the thesis of Calvin's [that the man of sin can be identified by] a widespread apostasy from the faith, and that for many years the kingdom of the Antichrist was already forming and gathering momentum, it would not, without further evidence, follow that the Pope is the Antichrist; for the question would still remain: Who is it that has defected from the faith and religion of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church or the Protestant Churches?" Truly, we willingly embrace the proviso that those found in apostasy are the ones we should consider and suspect carrying on a relationship with the Antichrist. Therefore, it behooves us to earnestly examine those on both sides to determine who has kept the faith of Christ and who has defected from it. If our adversaries are able to show that it is we who have left the faith of Christ, apostatizing from the truth, we will not attempt to defend our position so as to prevent this sign of Antichrist from being thrust upon us. However, if we can show, more clearly than the midday light, that the Roman Catholics themselves are the ones guilty of the crime of apostasy, would it not hold true that this defection be justly charged against them, and not as they complain that they have been unfairly injured by our accusations? Moreover, by comparing the doctrine handed down on both sides, we easily prove this fact.

Christ wills that sola Scriptura, θεόπνευστος, [inspired by God], be received by us as the perfect rule of faith and morals. The Pope denies that Scripture alone is an adequate rule of faith, unwritten traditions must be attached. These traditions, together with Scripture, are to be equally adopted and venerated. They are to be held alike in reverence as the means of influencing godliness. Christ wishes His word to be believed on its own because it does not take its authority from man. In

our estimation, the Pope wishes the authority of the word to be derived from his Church. Christ wishes no supreme judge would be acknowledged in ruling on controversies other than God speaking in Scripture. The Pope sacrilegiously claims this prerogative for himself. Furthermore, Christ teaches He alone is the Mediator, appointed by the Father, and who alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life, without whom no man can come to the Father. Yet the Pope forces innumerable mediators upon us. Mediators who, he says, are to reveal the way into heaven for us. Also, Christ testifies there is no other sacrifice apart from His own; no other satisfaction by which we may obtain remission of sins and the reward of salvation. But the Pope insists on human punishments and satisfactions, while demanding a new propitiatory sacrifice called the Mass. Though Christ established that men are to be saved by grace through faith alone, the Pope includes works as well. Whereas Christ institutes only two sacraments, the Pope decrees seven. Christ ordains that no one but God be the object of worship and adoration, yet the Pope worships creatures as well. Christ declares himself the sole head and groom of the Church, but the Pope grants this to himself as well. Christ subjects himself to the magistrates, ordering his servants to be likewise subject. Nevertheless, the Pope subjects the magistrates, rulers and emperors to himself. Let us not, indeed, neglect to make note that there are numerous other heads of doctrine in which they differ from us. Can it truly be said that those who teach such doctrines and defend such dogmas keep the faith of Christ? Or are they not adjudged guilty by the deserved demerits of defection and the fact of apostasy?

XIX. The Doctrines of Demons Elaborated

To confirm this most obvious apostasy, the Apostle is especially effective in the passage, 1 Tim.4:1-3, where, speaking of the apostasy of the last times, he says, “the Spirit expressly says that in the last times

certain ones will defect from the faith, listening to erring spirits and *doctrines of demons*, speaking deceitfully in hypocrisy, whose consciences are cauterized with a red-hot iron. They will prohibit matrimony and will order the abstaining from foods," etc. These words, most worthy of our remembrance, are those by which Paul delivers the prophecy of a certain future apostasy of the visible Christian Church in the last times, its defection from the faith, as opposed to the great mystery of godliness described in the last line of the proceeding chapter. At first, he gives a general characterization of this mystery when he says certain ones will depart from the faith, listening to erring and deceiving spirits, πλάνοις, or, as others understand, πλάνης, spirits and seducers into error. It is of no matter whether demons are accustomed to be so designated, 1 John 4:1 ff., or whether, no less satisfactorily, the erring and false doctrines themselves are here to be so understood by the voice of the spirit, 1 Cor. 14:32; 1 John 4:1-3. "Do not believe any spirit whatsoever," that is, any doctrine whatsoever; and in the same place the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Antichrist are mentioned as synonymous with the doctrine of God and that of the Antichrist. Immediately, Paul points out these erroneous doctrines are the *doctrines of demons*, by which we are to understand that idolatrous worship is their chief head. For it is in this cult that the essence and soul of that immense apostasy is deservedly found. Idolatry is that unique mark of apostasy, by which it may be distinguished from all other blasphemies, sects and heresies throughout all ages and times. For, according to the Apostle, just as embracing the Christian faith is to turn oneself from idols to the true and living God, 1 Thess. 1:9, so, too, defecting from the faith is to turn oneself to idols, abandoning the living God, and his Son Jesus Christ. Whence, in the Revelation Mystery Babylon is described under the mark of Harlot and Mother of fornications, that is, of idolatries.

Moreover, it is not without reason that such idolatries are called διδασκαλίαις δαιμονίων [doctrines of demons], both originally and actively, because the Devil is the author and inventor of them, for from him, as the Spirit of error and the Father of lies, all false doctrines and idolatries primarily arise; both objectively and passively, according to the substance and object of these doctrines. For these doctrines revolve around the worship of demons in the minds of the Heathen, as Joseph Mede, homily 50, explains. It is not without reason that Mede, and others after him, demonstrate that what is called the teaching of the Lord is from the Lord, as is the teaching about baptism and the laying on of hands, Heb.6:2. Thus, it will be noted that the idolatrous theology of the Gentiles concerning demons is predicted to be restored among Christians. Moreover, demons among the Heathen were Deastri, or inferior Gods, middle Gods between the highest Gods and mortal men, as Plato clearly states in the Symposium. Plutarch also notes this regarding the absence of Oracles, who were considered advocates or mediators of men, without whom "one was not allowed to approach the highest Gods," as Plato says in the same place. Apuleius speaks of the Demon of Socrates, "They carry the petitions and good deeds of men heaven-ward, while carrying the gifts and aid of the Gods earth-ward. By so doing they do not usurp the sovereignty of the heavenly Gods." And again, "All things happen by the will, power and authority of the Heavens, although by the compliance, effort and ministry of Demons." And there is much more about this theology of the Gentiles. Note the works of Plutarch, *On the Absence of the Oracles*, Apuleius, loc. cit., Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries*, and especially Augustine, book 8, *The City of God*. So it is not without reason these are called the doctrines of demons, for objectively demons were the objects of worship of that cult, and subjectively because the content of

that entire cult's worship was directed to the demon himself, the evil spirit.

This the Apostle shows clearly in I Cor. 10:20 when he said, *These things the Gentiles sacrifice*, unbelievers sacrificing, *they sacrifice to demons*, that is, to evil spirits. Indeed, they do not do this intentionally, for they thought they worshipped true Gods. But, in reality, they were worshipping demons through their sacrifices to the extent that they obeyed and explicitly followed the demonic ritual. And all the authority which is exercised in the cult, whether by those who speak oracles or who minister, is exercised through the outworking of demons, who devote themselves to receiving worship through images, Psalm 96:5. Whence Paul, in the same place, makes mention of the cup of demons as opposed to the cup of the Lord which, instituted by the Lord, was imbibed for the honor of the Lord, while, on the contrary, the chalice of demons was imbibed for the honor of demons. By this symbol and through this rite, wine was consecrated to demons. Verily, it is most assuredly established, in fulfillment of the prophecies, that these things which had a central place in the theology of the Gentiles exactly predict the idolatrous worship now customary in the Roman Church, specifically the cult of the Saints and Angels. He cannot but be blind who does not see this demonstrated at length by the most learned Mede, and just recently by the celebrated theologian, Pierre Jurieu.

XX. But it is not enough for Paul to simply give a description of this apostasy, for afterwards he adds, for a clearer understanding, a description of persons and means by whom and through which this defection was to be introduced; wherefore he proposes that those who abandon the faith, adhering to erroneous spirits, will do so by speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience cauterized, prohibiting marriage, and abstaining from foods. Indeed, these words are commonly accustomed to being expressed intransitively with relation

to the persons mentioned in the above verse, that these would be liars because of their hypocrisy, they would possess a cauterized conscience, they would prohibit contracting marriage and would command abstinence from foods. But the syntax of the verse is contrary to this interpretation because these persons described, who are about to defect, verse 1, are expressed both in the nominative and genitive case. Therefore, they are much more readily understood transitively so that those genitives are governed by the words ἐν ὑποκρίσει [in hypocrisy]. For this reason, the medium or way in which those doctrines of demons were to be introduced for the purpose of seducing men is expressed as being through the means of hypocrisy or the deceit of liars. Admittedly, it seems especially amazing that Christians, who possess not only the light of reason, but also the light of the Word, can offer assent to such false and fatal doctrines, as are the doctrines of demons. It shows the ability of Satan to commend and persuade, as he uses these two media, hypocrisy and falsehood or fables, by means of his ministers. The former exhibits a false devotion and piety, while the latter manifests pseudo-miracles, by which men are most easily taken in. Moreover, by each of the medium described, it is clearly apparent that these erring doctrines of demons have, in fact, already been introduced and established in the Christian Church. He must clearly be a stranger unacquainted with ecclesiastical history who does not know this. For, hence, with the veil of humility and contrived piety, he fortified the idolatrous cults of the holy remains and images. Truly, from then on, by means of false miracles and false omens, by fabulous legends, by deceptive writings and false suppositions, he became more and more rooted in the hearts of men. These deceptions the Antichrist's ministers accomplished through cunning and ψευδολόγων [speaking lies], innumerable frauds as imposters, who, though displaying the outward appearance of piety and humility are, in actuality, hypocrites.

Nevertheless, despite their pious exterior, their inward nature would prove to be unsound, polluted and contaminated, the result of a seared conscience, branded as if by a cauterizing iron, making them harsh, callous and shameless. Certainly, the marks of prohibiting marriage and prohibiting food condoned by these liars allow us to easily identify them. Thus, it is with good cause that Paul singles out these particular laws of celibacy and fastings, which have demons as their authors, and which are so contrary to divine teaching. These doctrines which have been introduced against the Christian Church by these most powerful men, have resulted in the fulfillment of this particular prophecy to the highest extent and degree. Indeed, it is well known that idolatry arose in the Church the same time celibacy and monastic life were instituted, having the same founders, namely Paul [of Thebes] and Anthony {of Egypt}, Patriarchs of the monks of the fourth century.

XXI. Thus, we need not delay our investigation into the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy of apostasy in the last times, since the reality of its fulfillment shouts at us by looking nowhere but in the Roman Church itself. For it is here where one may find the defection from the faith, erring spirits, and the doctrines of demons teaching compulsory idolatry, doctrines which remain firmly embedded to this day. And it is also here that we may find the hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences having been cauterized, introduced the laws of celibacy and fastings. It is a certainty these marks fit the description of no other than the Pontiff and the Roman Church. It is also just as certain that these marks cannot be attributed to us. For we have neither defected from the faith once delivered to the Saints, nor have we introduced erring doctrines or idolatries, nor have we forbidden marriage to anyone, nor prohibited the use of foods. But who would doubt that these apply to our adversaries? It is clear *they* attest to these doctrines and practices. Nor does it exculpate their guilt by attempting to divert attention away

from them to the heretical Christian Tatiani, Encratites, Marcionites, and Manichees, who all damned marriage and the use of certain foods. Of course, by accusing others as the guilty parties it in no way excuses the guilt of the Roman Church, unless they can prove they neither shun marriage nor foods. But more importantly perhaps, Paul's text pertains not to the apostasy of the Christian Church in the early centuries, but to the last times in which it would rise up. Also, Paul places his focus on those who were vested with the authority to decree the abstinence of foods and the forbidding of marriage. So, although the aforementioned heretics did indeed teach and condemn such things, they did not have the far-reaching authority and power to decree and compel as the Pontiffs do. It is a vain thing, indeed, to argue, as our opponents do, that Paul only speaks of 'some,' *τινες*, he says, *ἀποστήσονται* [departing from the faith]; [indicating, they say, a small portion, which would exclude the worldwide Roman Catholic Church]. For, besides the fact that the Apostle was including in his prophecy the early beginnings of that apostasy, it is obvious that this pronoun does not exclude a multitude. Rather, it precludes the interpretation of universality in an absolute sense. Thus, the pronoun 'some' indicates that all are not absolutely and without exception apostate, because God has always had his own people [the elect], whom He keeps immune from error. It is also clear that in Scripture 'some' are taken to mean 'many;' compare John 6:60 with verse 64; Romans 11:17 with verse 32; 1 Cor. 10:7-9 with Exodus 32:3; Numbers 14:1 with 25:4.

XXII. The Person of Antichrist: The Enemy of Christ, But Not an Open Enemy

Furthermore, out of this apostasy arise two more marks of the Antichrist noted by Paul: his *Attack* on Christ, and his *Exaltation*, that is, *ὁ ἀντικείμενος* [the one who withstands and opposes] and *ὁ υπεραίρωμένος* [the one who uplifts himself], an *Enemy* and *Rival*. He

must be an enemy of Christ, who attacks His doctrine, but not as a public and open enemy, with a γυμνη [naked] κεφαλη [head], [i.e., who does not wear a mask], who they say attacks the headship of Christ, but rather one who is acknowledged to be the Antichrist who is disguised and hidden. He accomplishes this by professing to be *for* Christ, but in truth shows himself to be *against* Christ, Αντίχριστον.

Under the pretext of a vicar, he usurps the authority of the Lord, casting Him from His rightful throne. Hence, this apostasy is called μυστήριον τῆς ἀνομίας, *the mystery of iniquity*, and on the forehead of the Babylonian harlot is inscribed the name *Mystery*, Rev. 17:5, because the impiety of the Antichrist must be mystical, that is, *cloaked in the name of piety*, as the *Ordinary Gloss* well maintains. For this reason the Antichrist must creep into the Church through underground tunnels, and in this way, by the specious pretense of religion and godliness, establish his dominion. On this account, the Antichrist, under the subtle pretext of piety, certainly views the golden cup of the Babylonian Whore as the opportunity to prescribe superstitions to the drunken - superstitions which he renders attractive under the name of mysteries. Therefore, he is proclaimed as coming "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness or seducing iniquity," 2 Thess. 2:10. In the same manner, the Antichrist is presented as πλανος [*Deceiver*], *Imposter*, and *Seducer*, 2 John 7, who certainly could deceive the most keen sighted, who must seduce the inhabitants of the earth, Rev. 13:14, who speaks ψευδολόγος εν ὑποκρίσει [lies in hypocrisy], 1 Tim. 4:2, and who, by the cunning pretense of piety in conjunction with a profession of Christianity, is able to more adroitly seduce men, leading them away from Christ. For, if the Antichrist were to attack Christ in open War, who, then, would not be able to discern the enemy of Christ? Therefore, tell me please, what mystery would there be, and what wisdom would be needed to recognize such an Antichrist?

Thus, the Antichrist must be the enemy of Christ, not manifest, but hidden and secret, who would attack Christ under the Christian name, and who, under the horns of the Lamb-like Dragon, would vomit forth blasphemies. In similar fashion, traitors exhibit the name of their king and his authority, in order to deceive his subjects more readily. So, too, does the Antichrist and other apostates exhibit the name of their King, Jesus, and His authority, for the express purpose of deceiving Christians, Rev.13:11. This same principle is foreseen in Scripture by describing false prophets as ravenous wolves who put on the skins of sheep, Satan transforming himself into an angel of light, and his ministers who also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, 2 Cor. 11:14-15.

XXIII. Moreover, we wonder who could be so naive as to deny the Pontiff is the Adversary of Christ after having fully investigated this mystery of iniquity, which is so obviously hostile to the mystery of godliness. Nor is it, we assert, necessary to bring forth many new proofs to explain this opposition, after having already offered sufficient proofs in the preceding heads pertaining to his defection from the faith, his introduction of cultic worship, and his claim to supremacy in Church government. There are, of course, countless other errors we could enumerate, as many new as there are old. Errors which all show him for the apostate he is. But let it suffice for now to observe, as far as his mediatory office is concerned, in what way the Pontiff opposes Christ:

- (1) Generally, through introducing other mediators and intermediaries, whom he delegates to that office, and
- (2) Specifically, in his claim to infallible authority as God's prophet.
- (3) Furthermore, the Pope opposes Christ by creating a priesthood with the power to offer the sacrifice of the Mass and to forgive sins.
- (4) Lastly, the Roman Pontiff opposes the kingdom of Christ, the power and rule of which he usurps here on earth.

What is more, his attack on Christ is not open, unlike that of the Jews and Mohammedans, but rather it is a mystery, hidden, veiled by the cloak of Christianity, under the pretext of a vicar. Our adversaries cannot refute our logic and conclusion. How vehemently they argue the Pope cannot possibly be the Antichrist by virtue of the fact that he is no enemy of Christ, but comes in the name and religion of Christ, professing himself to be His servant and vicar. They do not see how it is possible he could deny Christ in practice while professing him in words, or how, under the veil of piety, he could offer men to drink the poison of iniquity.

XXIV. Another Mark of the Antichrist: He Exalts Himself Above Christ

Just as the Antichrist displays his adversarial nature by ἀντικείμενος, fighting against Christ, he displays his pride and arrogance by ὑπεραιρόμενος, emulating the glory of Christ, even exalting himself above Christ. For thus Paul states in 2 Thess. 2:4, ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον Θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ καθίσει, "Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or Spirit, so far as he sits in the temple of God, manifesting himself to be God." This we interpret to signify that the Man of sin, the Son of perdition, would exhibit such pride, although a son of the earth, that he would show himself to be greater than all that is called God; that is, when speaking of the kings and princes who in Scripture are called gods, Ps. 82:1,6; John 10:34. This was also found to be true when referring to the august majesty of the Roman emperors who were called gods, as one can often see written on the coins of Augustus. Moreover, the *Compendium of Dio* teaches, "He wanted to be called Romulus, but for the sake of turning aside ill-will, lest the name of any king seem too embellished, he preferred to be called Augustus. Those things which are in the category of high office and cult are called 'August,' to indicate a condition above that of mortal men.

Whence they who were Greek emperors were called σέβαστον, as if to say, "the holy one of God," Dio, book 53. Nor do we limit the pride of the Antichrist by admitting he exalts himself over those who are called Gods on earth. For he also places himself above those who are invoked as gods in the heavens: the Angels and Saints. Nor does the extent of his arrogance stop there, insomuch as he sits in the temple of God claiming for himself supreme, universal and divine power to rule the Church, he manifests himself to be God on earth.

XXV. So as we progress from hypothesis to thesis, noting the primacy and dominion, sometimes temporal, sometimes spiritual, of the Pontiff, which he has appropriated to himself by his own authority, who could be more fitting as the Man of sin? Who today does not know that he shows himself to be above kings and princes, nay, over emperors themselves, while he appropriates the authority to crown them or dethrone them at will, of absolving their subjects from their oath of fidelity, or of transferring their kingdoms to others, as was shown at length, Disput. 5. Does he not show himself above angels, whose judge he boasts he has been appointed, when he claims he has the right to rule over them as his subjects? Innocent IV in C. Canons: "Every creature is subject to the author of the canons, who is also the vicar of the Creator; whose power was created greater than all power, extending itself to heavenly things, earthly things and to things of the underworld, so that all knees are bent to him," etc., Anton. Summ., p. 3, 1. 22, c. 5. Clement VI, in his Bull pertaining to the Jubilee year, ordered the blessed angels to carry directly to heaven the souls of those who, after having stated they were coming to Rome for the purpose of pilgrimage, died on the journey, but had by chance confessed on the way: "We directly order the angels of Paradise to lead the soul into the glory of Paradise after that soul has been completely absolved from

Purgatory." This extract is from the works of Balseus on the life of Clement VI.

Does the Pope not show himself above the Saints when he wishes to render final judgment on souls, by either ascribing them to the catalogue of saints or by marking them off the book of life?

Additionally, in the same way and according to the Pontificals, when the Pope, the Deified God, if I might usurp the word used by Tertullian in accordance with his own judgment, decides not only the degree of veneration and honor owed the saints, but even the degree of their sanctity and divinity, "So that, unless God has pleased men, he would not be God," as Tertullian said, *Apol.* c. 5.

And if we direct our attention to other areas, such as the numerous objects of worship the Roman Church claims worthy of veneration, such as the images of the cross, relics of the saints, altars, the sacrament of the altar, which is commonly called the body of the Lord, does the Pope not show himself superior when he consecrates and authorizes their cultic worship? In so doing, these idols honor him, and moreover, if I may use the expression, they then become subject to him. Hence, in the papal processions, the crucifix is displayed as an outward symbol of his high office. Yet God, the humble Messiah Himself, was carried by a lowly beast of burden, while the Pope, in a conceited display of pomp, is borne on high on the shoulders of princes.

XXVI. Antichrist Rules as God in the Place of God

Truly, such vain displays of pride and arrogance make a mockery of the holy God when the Roman Pontiff is seen acting in the place of God, sitting in the temple of God as God, showing himself to be God. It seems incredible that anyone but an insane man should behave in such an unlikely manner, taking both the name and authority of God upon himself. Nevertheless, he has been revealed, discovered and exposed

as one who comes as the representative of God with the power of God, claiming both titles and honors proper to God alone. These he ascribes to himself by his own authority and decree. And indeed, as far as his names are concerned, it cannot be denied that throughout the writings of the Pontiffs, the Pope is called God, as was already seen previously, Disput. 3.

- Gloss of Canon Law Extr. John 22 expressly calls *the Pope our Lord God*. Pope Nicholas, as cited by Gratian, Dist. 69, chap. 7, says, "It is manifestly and satisfactorily shown that the Pope can neither be bound by the secular power nor loosed by it, since it is self-evident that God cannot be judged by men."
- Stapleton, in Preface to Gregory, chap. 13, *Princip. Doctrin.*, names the Pope "the best, the greatest, and most supreme Spirit on earth."
- P. Blond., book 3, *To a Restored Rome*, said, "All leaders of the world honor and worship the Pope as the highest God."

Whence according to Canon Law, throughout we find these impious words, "Because the opinion of the Pope and the opinion of God is one opinion, there is but one tribunal between God and the Pope. And because no one has authority from God apart from that bestowed in the Pope, there is but one court of God and of the Pope, for the Pope judges as if he were God. Therefore, his opinion may be opposed by no one."

- Augustine, Triumph. question 6, 1; Tiber. Deci., vol.3, respon. 14, numer. 57; Menoch. cons. 51, numer. 13, "The Pope has divine status. Whatever he approves or disapproves, all must approve or disapprove."
- Gloss. Dist.19, "No one should question the Pope, even if he should lead innumerable people headlong into hell with him."

- Dist.40, "The Pope holds all mortals subject to himself. Every human creature is under obedience to him."

Extra. De Major. C. *Unam sanctam*, and innumerable similar statements which would be too tedious to mention corroborate this. Nor can these impious blasphemies be excused under the pretext that they are but oratories or panegyric hyperbole not to be taken for dogmas. For not only do these have the consent of the highest approved teachers of their Church, in addition to the fact they were introduced through Popes' councils into canon law and utilitarian books, but who doesn't know such epithets have been attributed to the Popes by their flatterers. The Popes not only did not refuse such names, but they willingly endorsed them, not once seeing fit to delete these blasphemous and contumely appellations from their authoritative books. Ironically, their zealous acuity in cutting off and censoring good writers by instituting *Forbidden Indexes* was lax and blind when it came to themselves.

Indeed, in claiming the right to appropriate the name of God to themselves, they not only claim the attributes of God, but also lay claim to the titles of Christ the Lord. Nor does Bellarmine deny this, *On Councils: Their Nature and Authority*, book 2, chap. 17, "All names," he says, "which are attributed to Christ in the Scriptures, from which source it is established that he rules over the Church, are all attributed to the Pontiff." Hence, if Christ is called Head, Spouse, Foundation, supreme Shepherd of the Church, Prince of the faith, Lord of the House of God, Lion from the tribe of Judah, Root of David, etc., everyone generally acknowledges that these names are no less attributed to the Pontiff. In vain does one introduce the argument that the Pope also calls himself the servant of servants. Of what benefit is it for the Pontiff to use feigned humility in calling himself the servant of servants, when in reality he proves himself to be insufferably prideful by claiming the

authority of the Lord of Lords? This is how the Bishop of Trier views it, in a complaint about Pope Nicholas, in Aventinus' works, Annal. 4, "You display the mask of the Pontiff before you, but you exercise tyranny under the clothing of a shepherd we sense a wolf. The title, Pope, misrepresents you as parent [Papa], for by your deeds you show yourself as Jupiter. Although you say you are the servant of servants, you also assert yourself to be the Lord of Lords," etc.

XXVII. But, in reality, the names of God which the Popes use are insufficient in and of themselves to prove the fulfillment of prophecy, unless it can be shown that with them comes the alleged authority and power of God. Truly, who can doubt that the Pope, as if God, has appropriated the power necessary to bring to bear obedience to his authority? For does he not rule in the place of God, boasting that he has acquired all power in heaven and earth? And does he not hold the right to establish laws and commanding consciences? Does he not boast himself to be infallible and sinless, the supreme interpreter of Sacred Scripture, and the supreme judge of controversies, from whom it is not lawful to appeal? Does he not make what is sinful sinless, and conversely? Does he not desire absolute power? Or does he not conduct himself in place of God when he boasts himself the Lord and Monarch of the whole world, who controls the triple kingdom of the heavens, earth and underworld; whose seal is the Papal tiara with the triple crown richly embellished, which seal is the seal of a king. And does he not hold the highest power over kings and princes, even emperors themselves, both in spiritual and temporal matters, so that he can topple them from their thrones and transfer kingdoms at his good pleasure? Does he not present himself even above God, when by his own authority suspends the authority of Scripture, and grants to himself the right of dispensing and abrogating both divine and human laws, as exemplified in his releasing men from oaths and vows, and

determining degrees of blood relationships [so that marriages may be deemed licit or illicit as he decrees]? Does he not claim the right to dispense with many other lawful precepts, all against the teaching authority of the Apostles because he is greater than the Apostles? And can he not do away with the teaching of the Old Testament by the fact that he is greater than all its authors? Does not the Pope abrogate the various commands of Christ while introducing those contrary to them, transferring to himself the authority of dispensing with the precepts of Christ at will? And finally, does he not punish with greater condemnation sins committed against himself and his regime than those committed against Christ? If this is not sufficient evidence to convict the Pope of ruling in the place of God, then what, pray tell, is?

XXVIII. The Person of Antichrist: the Man of Sin.

So we must conclude that the Pontiff reveals himself the Man of sin, the son of perdition, and exempt from the law, which Paul attributes to Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3. Indeed, he is properly called the Man of sin, first, because of the fact that although he usurps the title of holiness, he himself is a notable sinner, sins which the Pontifical writers do not attempt to conceal when they describe the most serious crimes of the Popes, and second, because he is the author of the sins of others. Indeed, he is the son of perdition, not only passively, because he is devoted to perdition after the fashion of Judas, who betrayed the Lord with a kiss, John 17:12, but also actively, because, as the destroying angel of the abyss, he seduces others to join him in the same bottomless pit of perdition, Rev. 9:11. Finally, he is given that new title, ὁ ἄνομος, the Lawless One, because he presents himself as one exempt from the Law, namely, who is freed from all laws, who can be judged by no one, though he may judge all others; who thinks it is permissible to do whatsoever he pleases, so that his will always takes precedence over God's will and law. Nor does he allow, under any circumstances,

investigation into his character and actions; for his actions, of whatever kind, are to be regarded as beyond reproach and lawful, as is his character to be regarded as unblemished and sanctified - in fact, the very essence of holiness itself. "The Pope is not subject to any law," is among the Papal positions stated in the writings of Hostensis [Bishop of Ostia]. "He has the preeminent, complete, absolute and unlimited power which cannot be opposed, by which power he rules all things, whether it be above the law, outside the law, or against the law because he is as God on earth," etc. Tiber. Deci., book 3, resp. 14; Bertachi repert. Dictione Papa. Glossator Gratian, Causa 9, Quaest. 3, Canon Nemo., "The Council cannot judge the Pope. Even if the whole world were to publicly oppose him, the Pope must halt their rebellion by Papal decree." The Canon continues to explain, "The Pontifical judge may be judged neither by emperors, clergy, kings nor by the people." Whence comes that impious desire of daring anything. Dist.40, Canon *Si Papa*, "No mortal may presume to find him at fault because, as the judge of all men, the Pope may be judged by no one."

XXIX. The Person of Antichrist: His Mark the Mark of the Beast

To this lawlessness of the Antichrist also belongs the abomination of idolatry, of which he must have been guilty, on account of which John calls his seat the name of a harlot, the mother of fornications. Indeed, we have already proved this name to be most deservedly thrust upon the Roman seat, Disput. 2-4, so it is not as if we have failed to address this particular point. Therefore, we now move to our fifth point, which focuses on the *Number* and *Mark* [characterem] of the Beast.

Revelation 13:16-18 states: "He makes all," John speaking of the second Beast, "small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark in their right hand, or on their foreheads, so that no one may buy or sell except he who has the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name. This is wisdom: he who has understanding let him count

the number of the Beast; indeed, it is the number of a man, and his number is 666." I do not wish to inquire more deeply than is necessary as to the meaning of the former beast. Not a few hold him to be the old Roman empire under Pagan emperors, while the majority feel him to represent the rule of Antichrist, which we will describe more fully later. It is in this view that Bellarmine agrees with us, book 3, *de Ponti.*, chap. 15, "The same Antichrist," he says, "is expressed by two beasts: one, by reason of regal power and tyranny, by which he will forcefully assemble his men; the second, by reason of the magic arts he employs, through which means he will, with cunning, seduce men." Let it suffice to say that we designate the Beast ascending from the earth as the Antichrist, not in the sense of it symbolizing his title of monarch and earthly prince, so as to represent his temporal power, but rather his spiritual power which symbolizes his office both as pseudo-prophet and seducer, which Bellarmine notes, *loco cit.*, who must imprint his mark on the forehead and right hand of each and every one of his people, without exception, regardless of status, wealth, gender and age. It is as if by that symbol, the solemn token of his absolute power over all, he will mark all his worshippers. It is through the Antichrist that the Devil, that counterfeit God, imitates Christ. For as Christ is said to mark all his own people on their foreheads with the seal of God, Rev. 7, in order to distinguish them from the sons of this generation, so, too, does the Beast desire to mark his own.

XXX. Interpreters disagree what this mark is. Indeed, it is certain the Holy Spirit is alluding to the ancient custom of inscribing a stigma on the hand. Or it can also be referring to the military term for soldiers' names who are inscribed on the skin of the victor, according to Veget., book 2, c. 5. Or it could possibly be ascribed to those destined for public service; or those who had been handed over to servitude, upon whose foreheads were burned stigmas, not only for punishment due to

contumacy, but also for classification. In that way slaves were distinguished by their master's stigma, which were literally impressed upon them, resulting in their being called inscribed or branded or stigmatized. We must not then conclude that the Pontiffs wish a literal visible mark would be imprinted on foreheads and right hands, which seemingly might fit this enigmatic and prophetic mark, as it does the so-called Stigmatics. It serves our purpose that any token which shares this common quality of the Mark be proposed as a possible solution.

Whether we understand it to mean the conformity of life and doctrine of Antichrist, as do Dionysius the Carthusian and Albert the Great, or with Thomas, the profession of an illicit cult by which those disposed to be followers of the Antichrist are distinguished from others; and by this they subject themselves to him, as if by a military oath and voluntary servitude, in order to come under and advance his authority by public declaration and work. For these reasons it is of import that we recognize that the mark imprinted on the forehead and right hand symbolizes faith and works. So notes Augustine, *City of God*, book 20, chap. 9; Primasius on Rev. 13, and others. In this same way, Christ marks his own; partly by an internal mark, namely by the Spirit who gives efficacious faith with charity, 2 Tim. 2:19; Eph. 4:30, and partly by an external mark on the forehead, Ezek. 9:4; Rev. 9:4, through the profession of faith, and on the hand through practice, so that they, by publicly professing the truth are shown to be not ashamed of the Gospel, Rom.1:16.

XXXI. This posited, it is not difficult to find that mark [characterem] among the Pontiffs. For even if we accede to the wishes of our adversaries by remaining silent concerning the sign of the cross, which sign they impress on the forehead by their right hand, as is their custom to distinguish Catholics from the Reformed; and granted that we remain silent respecting the chrism of confirmation, which all must

receive on their forehead from the Bishop, [by the sign of the cross], the necessity of which is so great that they say, "without confirmation by the Bishop, one cannot be a Christian," De Consec. dist. 5, A. Ut Jejun.; and granted that we remain silent even about the sacrament of holy orders, in which a mark [by the sign of the cross] is said to be impressed through anointing on the forehead and the right hand, which is said to be indelible, and without which no office or benefice may be held, we ask: Is there a single person who does not know that one cannot be received into the Roman communion who is unwilling to be subject to the Pope? And which subjection and obedience is necessary to salvation? Whereby one need only observe the Roman profession of faith ordered by Pius IV, as if introducing a new Roman symbol by which mark the faithful are distinguished by their solemn submission vow, promising themselves to the Pope. Decreed by the Council of Trent and contained in the Bull of Pius IV, we find the model of the oath of profession of faith. This we have already shown in Disput. 1: "I, N., with firm faith believe and I profess," etc. This oath binds the confessor to be subject to the Pope in order that he be deemed faithful and in communion with him. This oath also binds that person to the observance of its cultic rituals and to the traditions of the Roman See; traditions such as the worship of the saints, images, the cult of relics, the adoration of the cross and the Eucharist, the frequent Masses, pilgrimages to holy places, etc. Such a one has the Roman mark [characterem]. It is in this sense that the author of 2 Maccabees 4:10 calls the observance of the Gentile rites a Grecian mark, by which the Greek or Gentile religion is distinguished. In conclusion then, this profession of Papism is the means by which the Pope binds his own through public promise or special oath, and is rightly called a *Latin mark*.

XXXII. The fact that it is, indeed, said that the Antichrist would forbid "anyone from buying and selling, who will not take the mark," is clearly understood to have had its actual fulfillment in the Pontifical rule, rather than in some future event. Let Gregory VII be our witness, who, as the authority over William the Conqueror said, "he did not permit anyone to buy or sell anything whom he perceived did not obey the Apostolic See," in the writings of Bertold. *append. ad Herm. Contr.*, the year 1084. Alexander III, who in the Turomensi Synod wrote against those who had withdrawn themselves from subjection to the Roman See, declared that "when they have been identified, it is forbidden to offer them shelter or protection, or to transact business with them," etc., William of Newburgh, *Chronicle of English History*, book 2, chap. 15). Likewise, the Lateran Councils held against the Albigense inhabitants, "We decree that the Albigenses, with their defenders and harbourers, be subject to anathema, and we forbid, under the pain of anathema, anyone presuming to have them in their homes or on their land, or to support them, or to do business with them," *Decret. Greg.*, book 5, vol. 7, chap. 8. Martin V, who best fulfills this prophecy, writes in his *Bull of the Damnation of Errors of Wycliffe and Huss*, a Bull added to the Acts of the Council of Constantine, strictly prohibiting "that men of this kind have houses, raise families, enter into contracts, exercise wholesale business, trade, or be permitted the comforts of humanity with the faithful of Christ." Such was the Bull of Paul III against Henry VIII, king of England, because he had declined the yoke of the Pontiffs. This Bull, directed to all Christians, forbade "that they have business dealings with Henry and his subjects, or enter into contracts with him," etc. The accuracy of this prophecy was proven to be fulfilled to the letter according to the statement of Carthusianus, who says concerning this topic, "Christians at that time," that is, at the time of the Antichrist, "will be shunned as if excommunicated, and buying and selling will not

be allowed, with the exception of those sealed with the mark of the Antichrist." And furthermore, we must note that these decrees persist today among the Pontiffs. For their grievous dogmas readily confirm this fact, "that it is legal to plunder a heretic for his goods," Caus. 15, quaest. 4, Glossa. "It is legal for a father to disinherit his son for being held a heretic. The sons are allowed to assume legal responsibility from a heretical father. Nor is it the duty of a wife to render goodwill to a heretical husband," the writings of Simanchus. According to Bellarmine, book 5, *On the Roman Pontiff*, chap. 7, "It is permissible for subjects to refuse obedience to their heretical Lord. It is forbidden for Christians to tolerate a heretical king if he should attempt to compel his subjects to embrace his heresy." And we must add that according to the judgment of the Roman Pontiffs, anyone is determined to be a heretic, even the most orthodox, if his faith does not agree with their faith, and with that of the Church of Rome.

XXXIII. The Person of Antichrist: The Number of the Beast

To the Mark is added the *Name and Number of the Beast*. These may be understood in a variety of ways: on the one hand, exegetically and interconnected, so that these three terms may be considered synonymous to the extent that the latter term is drawn out of the former term, as not a few agree that it seems to be clearly insinuated in Rev.13:17, where these three concepts are connected: "No one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, or the name of the Beast, or the number of his name," that is, a name having this number; whence elsewhere there is simply the mention of a mark, Rev. 14:9, or of the mark of the name of the beast, verse 11, or of the mark and the number of his name, Rev. 15:2.

And on the other hand, whether these three terms are viewed distinctly as different things, so as one may be more highly regarded than the

others, the Mark, indeed, in general denotes the profession of Antichristian worship; the Name signifies the proper title of the Beast by which the Beast is distinguished from other beasts; and the Number of the name indicates the number expressed by such a name. It is certain these terms all have the same objective, doubtless so that by this profession, name and number unique marks of anti-Christianity are designated.

Moreover, this name is not a personal one, but a mystical and common Gentile name, not unlike the name of the Roman or Latin state, whose final head must be Antichrist. This premise we should not doubt, especially if the name Roman or Latin included the necessary number of the Beast. The number of his name is so-called because the letters from which the name is composed attain that number. This conforms with the practice of the Hebrews and the Greeks, who often used their letters to symbolize numbers. Certainly, one reason it is called the number of a man is because its computation is known to men who already use such methods, their intellect being capable of grasping its meaning. It is in this same way that the phrase, *the measure of a man*, Rev. 21:17 is used, meaning that which is customary and easily understood by men. We see the same concept expressed in Isaiah 8:1, *the reed pen of man*, meaning either that which is frequently used and may be understood by men or because it is the property of a man having the understanding to count. Moreover, this name and number is expressed either as three whole words, ἑξακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα ἕξ, as the distinguished transcript of Montanus holds, or by three Greek numerals, χξς; X having the numerical value of 600, ξ having the numerical value of 60, and ς having the numerical value of 6, the total number being 666. Not only do the Reformed follow this method of computation, but so do nearly all the Pontiffs. Whence Suarez, book 5, Chap. 19, no. 11, "Regarding the name of the Beast, all teach it will be

of a type consistent with the letters whose total value, according to the Greek system, would contain the number 666." Nor is this a recent idea. Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp, testifies, book 5, chap.30, "that those who had seen John face to face, have taught that the number of the name of the beast, according to the computation of the Greeks through the letters contained in it, is six hundred and sixty six."

XXXIV. Moreover, although before the arrival of Antichrist it would have been difficult to grasp the mystery of that number, as Irenaeus himself admitted the difficulty in predicting the name before the fulfillment of the prophecy, "that it is more certain and less risky to affirm the name upon the fulfillment of the prophecy rather than to speculate and rashly guess whatever names one pleases", we maintain that today, by following that accepted and popular method of computing through numeral letters, we are not introducing some obscure, unknown methodology. We also do not wish to sidetrack the issue at hand by reviewing and refuting various opinions of interpreters who have tried to uncover the mystery of that number. Incidentally, we should note that their opinions seem hardly appropriate and clearly foreign to the context, for we desire the name and number of the Beast consist, not so much in the numerical value of the letters, but in doctrines; and that the method of counting be not so much considered literal as figurative for anti-Christian doctrines and practices, by which the manipulative works of the Beast and the Antichrist are distinguished. We also hold to a finite notable number, not an indefinite one, so that it might be demonstrated that the errors and blasphemies of the Antichrist are neither light nor few.

But the comment of Hugo Grotius is perhaps the strangest of all, when he persists in offering the emperor Trajan as the solution, one whose most widely known name was Ulpius, ΟΥΛΠΙΟΣ, which name totals the number 666, if at the end he writes not Σ, which is worth two hundred,

but ζ, which is always used for the senary number. We cannot help but ask, why would Trajan be alluded to in this prophecy rather than other Caesars who were much worse and caused the Church much more harm? Again, why would the third persecution be noted above the others? Thirdly, the number, name and mark all refer to the same person. Grotius himself admits that Trajan did not require a mark, [thereby eliminating him as the solution to the mystery]. Finally, why is it that Grotius suggests we look for the number in the common praenomen Ulpus and not in the name Trajan? And last but not least, ΟΥΛΠΙΟΣ is not equivalent to 666 because the final sigma, in whatever way it might be written, whether Σ or σ or ζ is always equivalent to 200. Thus, Ο signifies 70, Υ 400, Λ 30, Π 80, Ι 10, Ο 70, Σ 200, which make the sum 860.

XXXV. Therefore, we dismiss these opinions, while holding firmly to the popular and more commonly accepted view which maintains that the Pontiff, his rank and his rule, are correctly described by this prophecy. In fact, we may compute his name in either Greek or Hebrew, the two languages by which God gave his oracles and prophecies, shrouding them in mystery, yet the sum of their letters will yield the same result. For, if the computation is made in Greek, which is quite appropriate considering the Revelation was written in Greek to Greeks, no other suitable name occurs than the name *Lateinos*, Λατεινός, as Irenaeus conjectured. And, if the name *Romanus* should be counted in the Hebrew characters, it will mean either Roman seat or Roman, as John Foxe determined. Moreover, the Hebrew term comprises the same meaning as that of the Greek term. For Romanus or Lateinos is the name of the aforementioned Beast and is that name which the Pope imposes on all his disciples. It is on this self-same Beast that all these and additional marks of Antichrist converge; i.e., such marks as causing the whole earth which follows him to wonder; his blaspheming the

name of God; and the great power he holds over the heads of all peoples and tongues, etc. That this name contains the number 666 in both Greek and Hebrew is not a point of dispute:

$$\Lambda = 30$$

$$\alpha = 1$$

$$\text{T} = 300$$

$$\text{E} = 5$$

$$\text{I} = 10$$

$$\text{N} = 50$$

$$\text{O} = 70$$

$$\Sigma = \underline{200}$$

$$666$$

Thus, the Roman Pontiff and his Seat is undoubtedly indicated. For he is truly Latin who holds the remains of the Latin empire and the ancient seat. By no small coincidence, he does not allow public worship to be conducted in any other language than Latin; nor does he publish his official documents and decrees in any other language. Also, the Eastern Orthodox call the Roman Church by the name Latin Church, as seen in the general councils where this distinction was meticulously made between the western fathers or bishops, called Latins, while the rest were called Greeks; so accurately does the result agree with the prophecy. And that his seat is also in Rome is a fact borne out by his forefathers.

From this interpretation arises the timely conclusion that it is not necessary to consider the subtle and ingenious method devised by the very famous Potter, whereby an extraction of the square root of 666 is

attained by the root number 25 multiplied by itself, with the fraction 41 remaining; in the same way the number 144, the number of the assembly of virgins of New Jerusalem is derived from the square root, 12, multiplied by itself. We see this number several times in the description of the heavenly Jerusalem, to which are ascribed in the Revelation 12 foundations, 12 gates, 12 angels, 12 tribes, etc. In similar fashion, Potter, for several reasons, finds the number 25 unique to the Papacy. We, however, choose to set aside this opinion because the overwhelming preponderance of the evidence points to the aforementioned names.

XXXVI. Bellarmine and other adversaries argue in vain when they protest that the name *Latinus*, when meaning *Roman*, is not written in the Greek language with 'ει' but rather with a simple iota [ι] which would then render a

different number. This opinion neglects the fact that Irenaeus, who undoubtedly knew Greek competently since he wrote in Greek, holds this: "The name Λατεινός," he says, "is very consistent with the facts because this appellation has a very sound authority, for Latins are they who now rule." It has also been a longstanding custom with the Greeks to convert the Greek letter Iota into a diphthong 'ei' when placed before the letter Nu, as are the names Antoninus, Sabinus, Latinus, and numerous others. Joseph Scaliger notes this as seen in Eusebius' *Chronicles*, p.106. And it is noted that ancient Romans employed the diphthong 'ei' for Iota, which we have been using now for a very long time, such as *queis*, *preimus*, *capteivei*, which are seen in the works of Plautus, etc. Quintus Ennius is another Roman author who has it written thus, *Quamprimum Caseei, populei tenuere Lateinei*.

In response to this rebuttal, our adversaries would remind us that there are several other names which give the sum of 666. However, we argue

not from the name of the Beast alone, but from the name as it correlates to the numerous other marks of the Beast. This cannot be said of the other suggested names. Add to this the fact that the name Latin or Roman is the name of the first Beast. Any other name containing the number 666 is sought in vain unless it reflects this essential point. Finally, even Bellarmine wrongly concludes that if Latin should be the name of the Antichrist, "it ought to be unique to him and familiar as such. Yet the name Latin is not unique to the Pope, but is, instead, a common one. And neither is it familiar, because the popes never refer to themselves as Latins." He adds that whatever the solution to the name of the Beast, it should be unique to the Antichrist alone. But our solution, he contends, reflects the name of the first Beast, the Roman state, in a gentile and common usage, not one distinctive to a god.

XXXVII. Distinguishing Marks of the Antichrist: He Works Lying Miracles

This mark of Antichrist focuses on his accomplishments and works, especially the miracles and signs which are attributed to him. Paul says, 2 Thess. 2:9, *Whose coming will be in all power and signs and wonders.* As does Rev. 13:13, *And he will do great signs.* This is confirmed by Matthew 24:24, *False Christs and False Prophets will rise up and will show great signs and wonders, etc.,* which Bellarmine, Malvenda and others admit refer to the Antichrist. Moreover, Paul explains further the nature of these signs when he calls them τέρασιν ψεύδους, lying wonders [2 Thess. 2:9]. Bellarmine rightly observes, book 3, *de Pont. Rom.*, chap. 15, this can be understood either with respect to their origin, by reason of the efficient cause because they are from Satan, the Father of lies, who is unable to display true miracles, which truth Paul notes when he states that the coming of Antichrist *would be with the efficacy of Satan in all power and lying wonders;* or formally, with

respect to their intrinsic nature, because they will be deemed incredulous and legendary, though figments of the imagination of lying men, or portents of false spirits, which is why they are said to be done in the presence of men, Rev. 13:13, that is, false signs which appear to be real, yet manage to avoid the detection of onlookers because they are cunning pseudo-miracles. And finally, teleologically, by reason of their end purpose because their intent is to strengthen the lie.

Moreover, this is the primary reason the Antichrist works these lying wonders: to win men over through belief in his lies; lies which lead men from truth to error, as Chrysostom and Augustine explain.

XXXVIII. It is not difficult to truly understand that the fulfillment of these prophecies terminate in the Pontiffs. Who does not know of the pretense of miracles claimed by the Latins spanning centuries? And what other religion utilizes such claims as part of its dogma? The Jews claim no such modern-day miracles; the Turks do not attempt to propagate their religion by virtue of miracles, but by force and arms; the Orthodox are content with the miracles of Christ and the Apostles, thereby seeking no other. And although they believe the manifestation of miracles was necessary for the birth of the Church so that infidels would be converted to faith by them, nevertheless they do not believe miracles are necessary in order for modern converts to profess faith in the established Church, so that "he who still seeks miracles in order to believe, is himself a great miracle by his unbelief, even though the world believes," as Augustine says in *The City of God*, book 22, chapter 8. And he who "doesn't believe despite the evidence for miracles which have been performed in the past, would believe much less even if new miracles were presented to him," as Thomas Stella in Luke 2:29 correctly observes.

On the other hand, the Pontiffs boast of their own miracles. More precisely, their custom is to place them among the special signs of the

Church. Hence, one is only considered illustrious and holy among them who has worked miracles. Furthermore, all venerable relics and images worthy of pilgrimage and honor by the faithful are those which have purportedly worked miracles. But whatever their claims to miracles, we Reformed Protestants say they are lying wonders because:

(1) they do not adhere to biblical teaching, but rather strengthen and perpetuate error and falsehood. This alone proves their prevarication, leading men from the truth of Christ into the lies of Satan, while containing some portion of truth.

(2) For the most part they are mere illusions, fraudulent claims and deceits, the outworking of either evil spirits or wicked men, hyperbolized for gain and advantage, which can be proven by several examples.

(3) Despite any apparent basis of truth, these alleged miracles cannot rise above the forces of nature, but must instead be attributed to the portents of demons or the wonders of magicians. This inescapable truth alone proves the falsity and vanity of the alleged miracles they claim performed by their saints.

But it is even better to hear their own witnesses testify against this most grievous fraud. "Occasionally it occurs in the Church," says Lyra on Daniel that, "the greatest deception which misleads the people is that of fictitious miracles performed by priests and those who believe in them for temporal gain." Gabriel Biel, *On the Canon of the Mass*, C.49, says that "God permits miracles, which are the work of demons, to occur while men meditate, gazing on images, for the express purpose of deceiving the unfaithful." "[Miracles which allegedly occur] in the beloved Sacrament," says Alexander of Hales, in 4 sent. q. 53, "is clearly either of human or demonic origin." The honorable confession of Melchior Cano pertains to this very point, when he complains profusely

in book 2 *De Locis Theologicis* that the exploits of the saints are contaminated by false and exaggerated stories. He states, "A great number of our people serve their own biased passions [toward their favorite patron saints] by willfully fabricating legends to the extent that it is both shameful to them and disgusting to us." He then adds that such accounts were invented to deceive for gain, and, after enumerating several other points pertaining to this topic, he puts forward the argument found in the *Golden Legend*. He says, "a man possessed of an iron face and lead heart, who is devoid of a serious and prudent spirit, was the author of the accounts of the signs and miracles which we read about more often than genuine miracles. Certainly, the numerous books containing the legends of the saints perpetuate these myths, such as Vincent of Beauvais' *Mirror of History*, St. Anthony, Conformities of Francis, etc.

To confirm this very point, we can see the evidence of an increase of statues in churches, the Stations of the Cross, the laughter and the various commotions and disturbances, even the manifestation of [the Sorrows of Mary through] anguished tears, groans, and public confessions, frequent visions of Christ, Mary and the Apostles, false healings of diseases, and thousands more similar lies and mockeries, which the Pontiffs all use to further ensure their rule and dominion. Hence, a variety of idolatries crept into the Church, such as the adoration of statues, the celebration of Masses and Prayers for the Dead, the fictitious flames of Purgatory, and the trafficking of Indulgences, all of which necessitated the invention and dissemination of innumerable falsehoods. If we had not seen with our own eyes the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy terminating in the Roman Pontiffs, where he speaks of God sending "an efficacious error so that they might believe falsehood," 2 Thess. 2:11, clearly it would seem too incredible that men, imbued with extraordinary reasoning powers, having been

enlightened by the light of the Gospel, would have been capable of becoming so deranged as to allow themselves to be led away into errors so foul by believing such obviously gross and fetid miracles. Therefore, fraudulent claims and deceptions are an integral part of this topic, through which means the Pontiffs have been very busy promoting and confirming their empire, whether by falsifying and corrupting the books of trusted authorities, or by concocting false revelations, or in disseminating false legends attributed to their saints and relics, or by innumerable other fables which the lineage of Popes support. All these accusations have been proven by our side, Protestants such as Daniel Chamier, chiefly in book 16, *On Antichrist*, chap. 9 - 14, and the celebrated Pierre Jurieu in *Legitimate Prejudices Against Popery*, pp.12 ff.

XXXIX. Distinguishing Marks of the Antichrist: Cruelty and Violence, Greed and Debauchery

The Cruelty and Violence of the Antichrist follow swiftly on the heels of his fraud and deception in signs and miracles. These marks reveal themselves in Antichrist's tyrannical rule and persecution of true believers, described in Scripture as "a Beast to whom was given power to make war on the holy people and overcome them," Rev. 14 [sic: Rev. 13:7]; and as "a woman drunk with the blood of the martyrs," Rev.17, about whom we have already spoken in Disput. 5 & 6. We may add to those marks debauchery and riches, when he is portrayed as a "Woman clothed in purple and scarlet and overlaid with gold and pearls," Rev. 17:4, in whom all who had ships on the sea are said to be made rich from her abundance, Rev.18:16, 19. Truly, we ask, where can one find all these prophecies fulfilled, even to the letter, but in the Roman Pontiff and his Curia? Who cannot help but observe the *Patrimony of Peter* which mocks Peter, along with the entire world, as it openly displays the enormous luxury enjoyed by its Court and Pontifical Curia,

bringing forth treasure of every kind of riches, in addition to receiving immense income from its property holdings, among other means. Who is not forced to acknowledge, that none but that woman clothed in purple and scarlet aptly fits the description of a queen who boasts herself free of all sorrow? And to prove how overwhelming the evidence of her guilt, we need not speak of the venality of her Ecclesiastical offices, or her Annates, or of her selling the Episcopal Pallium, or of her sale of dispensations, or of her money-making Jubilees, or her sale of indulgences, or the Taxae Cancellariae, where all vile crimes are absolved for monetary payment; and by innumerable other wiles by which the Antichrist is accustomed to scrape together wealth, lawfully and unlawfully, making almost the entire world accountable to him and liable to taxation.

XL. We could, of course, augment our arguments further by utilizing weighty Scriptures from Daniel, such as those pertaining to the synchronicity between Antiochus and the coming Antichrist; but there will be occasion to speak of them elsewhere. We believe firmly that all the proofs which have thus far been brought forth and explained are more than sufficient to prove that those marks and characteristics by which Antichrist, his kingdom, and his rule are delineated in Scripture by the Holy Spirit, agree and harmonize exactly in none other than the Roman Pontiff. But he who is still not satisfied may consult with the other great names among Protestants. For most learned men everywhere, who examined the evidence without bias, unanimously pronounced the same verdict. We speak of such men as His Supreme Majesty James, King of Britain, in his royal work and Apologia to the princes; Duplessis-Mornay in his *History of the Papacy*, William Whitaker, Francis Junius, Lambert Danaeus, Daniel Chamier, Lewis du Moulin, Nicolas Vignier, Powelius, George Downname, Samuel Maresius, Joseph Mede, and several others. And finally, the most erudite

theologian, Pierre Jurieu, in his book, *Legitimate Prejudices Against Popery*, and in *The Accomplishment of the Prophecies*, when Part 1 was published the year before, where he explains his argument that the Papacy is the Antichrist with such high degree of accuracy and strength of reasoning that after his harvest is reaped there is barely place given for any gleaning.

XLI. Roman Catholic Testimony: The Pope is the Antichrist

In order for us to strengthen our case against the arguments of our adversaries, we will now produce and publicize proofs from the testimony of the Pontiffs themselves, Pontiffs who openly acknowledge the Antichrist to be him who occupies the seat of the Pope in the Roman See. In approximately A. D. 600, Pope Gregory I clearly insinuated this to be the case, when John, the Patriarch of Constantinople, usurped the title of Ecumenicus [Universal Bishop] which the Pope characterized as contemptuous. In his Epistle to the Emperor Mauritius, book 4, letter 30, "Moreover, I say confidently that anyone calling himself universal priest, or desires to be so called, shows himself, by this self-exaltation, to be the forerunner to the Antichrist because by this display of pride he sets himself superior to others, etc." And in letter 36, "The king of pride is near and it is a sacrilege to say, but an army of priests have been prepared for him, to serve as enslaved soldiers, who have been ordained to exalt him, who willingly present themselves submissive to him and under his obedience."

Toward the end of the tenth century appears the splendid testimony of Arnulf, Bishop of Orleans, who, during the Synod of Rheims, wept over the wretched state of the Church in his day, saying, "O Rome, you are to be mourned, who once brought the bright glories of the Fathers to our ancestors, yet in our day have poured forth monstrous smoking darkness [which will last] into future ages." After mentioning various

depraved Pontiffs, the likes of the Octavians, Bonifaces and other monsters of their ilk, as he calls them, concludes at the last, "Reverend Fathers, who do you regard this man to be, who sits on such a lofty throne? And I ask, how do you regard this man glittering in purple and gold attire? For there is no doubt that if he is destitute of charity, and if he is proud by virtue of his own intellect, then he is the Antichrist sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

These were the iron and lead ages about which Baronius laments, beginning approximately with the year A. D. 900, in which the harlots Theodora and Marozia actually ruled the impotent Church, thrusting monsters into the Pontifical Seat, book 5, *Ecclesiastical Annals*, "For nearly 150 years, about fifty Pontiffs, from John VIII until Leo IX, were found gravely wanting in sharing the virtuous nature of their ancestors, themselves Apostles of apostasy rather than Apostles of the apostolic succession." The Antichristian empire arrived at the beginning of the eleventh century, at the time of the reign of Gregory VII. This fact has been recognized and publicly testified to by numerous men living then, as Aventinus recalls in book 5 of his *Annals of Bavaria*, "Many slander Gregory in front of the assembly; they curse Hildebrand; they declare him to be the Antichrist who, under the appearance of piety, raves; he simulates caring for the public good by awarding himself honorable titles; he foments the work of Antichrist under the title of Christ; in Babylon he sits in the temple of God; he is extolled above all that is worshipped, as if he were God; he boasts that he cannot err," etc. In the thirteenth century, Emperor Frederick concurs, according to the writings of Pietro della Vigna, book 1, *Letters*, where he asserts, "that the Pope is the Beast who rises out of the sea, a great Dragon seducing the world, and is the Antichrist," etc. He also confirms this sentiment in a letter to the German Princes, Aventinus, book 7.

There is also the memorable testimony of Eberhard, Bishop of Salzburg, who, in the Council of Ratisbon, demonstrates by several arguments [to his fellow bishops] that all the marks of Antichrist are found in the Pope [Gregory IX]. This testimony is also contained in the same book 7. He prefaced his remarks by stating Christ gave us a token by which he [the Antichrist] should be recognized from the rest as having abandoned the pursuit of peace. Eberhard continues:

"With the greatest effort, Jesus also admonished that we avoid false Christs, false prophets who, clothed in sheep skin with the name of Christian and a Pontifical title, desire to rule and deceive us. It is fitting they are recognized by their thorny works, especially avarice, debauchery, strife, hatred, envy, wars, the desire to have dominion, and blind ambition. Can there be a more obvious meaning to these words which our heavenly Emperor prophesies? He can only be pointing to the Pharisees and Scribes of Babylon who, under the title of Supreme Pontiff, we discern, unless we are blind, a most savage wolf whose skin feels as the skin of a Shepherd. One hundred and seventy years earlier, Hildebrand first laid the foundations of the rule of Antichrist, under the peaceful appearance of religion, but, in reality, was the first to inaugurate this nefarious war which has been faithfully continued by his successors," etc. "He who is the servant of servants desires to be Lord of Lords, as if he were God; he despises holy assemblies and the councils of the brethren, nay, rather of his own Lords. He speaks great things as if he were God and is ever scheming and plotting in his heart how to strengthen his rule. To this end he changes laws, he enacts his own, he corrupts, he plunders, he defrauds, he kills; that morally depraved man whom they are accustomed to call the Antichrist, upon whose forehead is written the name of contempt, I am God, I cannot err; he sits in the temple of God and his domain is far and wide."

Eberhard elaborates further in the same book previously cited. It would take far too long to report all the testimonies which appeared in the subsequent centuries corroborating the truth of the papal Antichrist; whether we were to cite the works of Petrarch, or Marsilius of Padua in respect to his *Defender of Peace*, part 2; or Nicholas of Clemangis, *On the Corrupt State of the Church*; Alvarus Pelagius, Theodoric of Nieheim, Mantuanus, Vesalius, The University of Groningen, and not a few others. These testimonies we omit because they have already been published by others. Let it suffice to say that the opinions held by our constituents concerning the papal Antichrist are not novel by any means, but have been expressed for centuries by those who have been raised in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church herself.

XLII. Adversaries' Arguments for a Future, Unknown Antichrist Expounded

Yet our adversaries persist in defending the opposing view, striving always to obscure that most clear truth. Their main arguments may be summarized thusly:

(1) First, that Antichrist would be a single, unique individual whose revealing would occur at the end of the world, after the Gospel is preached throughout the world, Matt. 24:14, and after the desolation of the Roman empire, that he might reign for three and one half years.

(2) Second, that he would be of Jewish descent, and would restore the temple, circumcision, the Sabbath and other legal ceremonies.

(3) Third, that Enoch and Elijah would come as the two Witnesses spoken of in Rev. 11.

(4) Fourth, that he would openly deny Christ and his incarnation, 1 John 2:22, and attack all the teachings of our Savior. Since, they allege, these

things cannot be said of the Pope, nor can he [the Antichrist] be known since he has not yet come.

(5) Fifth, that the Fathers views differ widely from our view. For many are of the opinion that the passage of Paul, 2 Thess. 2, must be understood to speak of Caligula and Simon Magus, and that the Revelation must be understood to speak of Trajan, Apollonius and Domitian.

XLIII. Futurist Single Person Theory Refuted: Antichrist a Succession of Men Holding the Papal Office

Regarding our opponents first point, they falsely theorize that Antichrist need be one, single, unique person, when, in fact, one person can represent a succession of persons, and not be limited to a literal numerical single person. In this way does Paul speak of ὁ κατέχων [the one who restrains it, 2 Thess. 2:7] designating the Roman emperor, in a general sense, or the authority of the empire, and not any one emperor in particular. So, the term one may sometimes be understood to mean one certain individual, a unique, singular man. Or it may be understood to mean one person who holds a civil or ecclesiastical office, in a sense never to die, because he is always succeeded by another. It is by this latter interpretation that we say the Antichrist is one, for the following reasons:

(1) Because the mystery of the Antichrist was already working at the time of the Apostle, 2 Thess. 2, which argument could not be maintained if the Antichrist has not yet been revealed to us, limited to one specific person only.

(2) Because the Antichrist ought to be the founder and noted head of a universal apostasy, 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 13:16, which could not to be the

work of just one man in one short time span, but of many men over centuries.

(3) Because what are described mystically in Scriptures as Beasts are not literal single individuals, but rather single states of bestial men. We see this principle exemplified by the four Beasts of Daniel 7. The four Beasts are four kingdoms: a) Assyrian, which is represented by the lion; b) Persian, by the Bear; c) Macedonian, by the leopard; and d) Roman, by the terrible Beast. In like manner, the Ram represents the kings of the Medes and Persians; the He-goat, kings of the Greeks.

(4) The seven heads of the seven-headed Beast are not seven individual rulers of the Roman state, but the equivalent number of governments or special forms of the regime which would control the state. Truly, the Antichrist ought to be the last head of this Beast, not as a single, individual ruler, but rather as a unique form of [ecclesiastical] headship whose rule is the entire empire.

(5) Because his principality is called *Babylon* and *the great City*, it presupposes a rule by many in succession, because a) its rise and great deeds could not happen during the rule of only one man, and because b) the spirit of the Antichrist is not contained in one single individual, but is already seen working through many, 1 John 2, 4.

(6) Finally, because the Antichrist was to be revealed once the Roman empire was eliminated, and is to be destroyed only by the glorious coming of Christ, logic necessarily demands the Antichrist not be one man only, but a succession of many.

XLIV. Nor is our opponents' position proved, for instance, from the passage John 5:43, where they would designate Antichrist as ἄλλος, 'another' who comes in his own name, who is not sent by God, and who makes a pretense of divine mission, whatever that might be. Juan

Maldonado states its interpretation as *anyone other*; Alphonso Salmeron agrees: *About anything that can be understood*. Cornelius Jansen understood that *this has been fulfilled quite often*. The Greek word ἄλλος never means a certain individual, except with the article added, or from the eloquent circumscription, Matt. 5:39, turn to him και την αλλον, that is, *the other*; also in John 20:8, ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής, *the other disciple*; and in Matt. 4:21 he saw ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφούς, *two other brothers*. The antithesis to this truly concludes nothing, for in John 5:43 the pronoun 'I' in 'I am come in my Father's name,' and the pronoun 'another' in 'another shall come in his own name,' have dissimilar subjects: 'I' means a certain unique individual person, to be sure, but it does not necessarily hold true that 'other' is understood to be equally expressive as one unique particular person. For example, we see in John 21:18, *another will gird you*, where 'another' does not clearly mean one specific person, but one without specification. Likewise in 1 Cor. 3:10, "I, as a skilled architect, have laid the foundation, another builds upon it," that is, *whoever*, without being specific. One and many are opposites [yet may coexist together in one idea], as does the [one] good shepherd when compared with the many thieves and wolves.

Nor can it be argued that since Christ is unique, the Antichrist must be unique in the exact same way. For, although Christ and Antichrist are both heads of their respective Churches, with a body of priests who serve them, Christ is immortal, always remaining the one unique Head, while Antichrist is mortal who, upon his death, must be succeeded by another, who fills his vacant seat.

Indeed, by no means is the singular numerical individuality of the Antichrist reckoned from a prefix article placed before his name. This erroneous postulate is not taught by the Apostle in II Thess. 2:3 & 2:8, [where he calls the Antichrist] 'the man of sin, that Wicked' because

[Greek grammar recognizes that] a definite article is placed before an indefinite subject as frequently as it is before a definite subject. In Matt. 12:35, 'the good man' and 'the evil man' pertain indefinitely to any and every good man or evil man, not just expressly about one. Besides, take the example of Mark 2:27, where the Greek is rendered ὁ ἄνθρωπος, *not the man on account of the Sabbath*. This often occurs elsewhere. Yet in English we translate it to mean 'man' in a congregate sense. Contrariwise, if the article does pertain to someone certain and definite, it does not necessarily mean one, literal, single individual, but may be used as a manner of speech, both expressly and determinately. Thus, τὸ κατέχον [that which is restraining] means not only an individual person, but the Roman Empire in general; and ὁ βασιλεύς of the kingdom, means not only a specific king, but the king of any certain region. In other words, the same genus or species. Finally, such an article is often not placed next to διακριτικῶ, or δείκτικος and ἐξαιρετικῶς to signify more clearly and conspicuously that which is in each one, whether a good or evil man, and that which is said about the phrase, κατ' ἐξοχὴν [par excellence]; just as the Devil is called ὁ πειράζων [the tempter], ὁ πονηρὸς [the evil one], even though evil men and [human] tempters are also meant. In this sense, the Antichrist is rightly said to be ὁ ἄνομος [the lawless one] and ὁ ἄνθρωπος αμαρτίας [the man of sin].

XLV. Antichrist is not coming at the end of world: He is here now.

Our adversaries have gratuitously contrived to place the revealing of Antichrist at the end of the world, even though in Paul's time the web of that nefarious mystery was already being spun. The resultant rise and reign of the Papacy has proved the present fulfillment of those prophecies. Nor is the false thesis of a future Antichrist supported by Matt. 24:14, where the end, [which they take to mean the advent of

the Antichrist], is not yet come until the Gospel is preached worldwide. By 'the end' may mean either the end of the age or the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, before this occurs, the Gospel must be preached throughout the world. In fact, Paul testifies that this has already taken place in his time, Col.1:6. Or, 'the end' may refer to the desolation of the Roman empire, which we have already proven happened centuries before. Or perhaps that phrase is used because the Antichrist is said to be awakened in the last times [1 Tim.4: 1]. We must note that the last times are mentioned in diverse ways in Scripture:

(1) Sometimes for *the end of time*, in which sense ἐσχάτη ἡμέρα, the last day, means Resurrection Day and the end of the world, John 6:39, 11:24; 1 Peter 1:5.

(2) Sometimes this is meant as a period and duration of time, such as that period which comprises the duration of time between Christ's first and second advents, simply designated the last times, Acts 2:17, Hebrews 1:2, 1 Peter 1:20, because it is the last dispensation of God, after which no other is to be expected, only eternity.

(3) Or due to the fact that the unknown duration between advents has various periods, the last period is, therefore, especially and comparatively called the last time, that is, of the final last times.

In this sense, Paul says, 1 Tim. 4:1, that there would be apostasy, ἐν ἰστέροις καιροῖς, *in latter times*, and Peter says, 2 Peter 3:3, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν, *in the last days* mockers would come. But those last times are not to be understood as immediately preceding the last Judgment, as in one short time span of a few years, but should be understood as designating some remarkable interval of time which must precede the end of the world.

Whence, although it was truly said the Antichrist would rise in the last days, it cannot be necessarily concluded from that statement, that 'the end' [Matt. 24:14] may be interpreted as preceding the end of the world by only a few years, as the Popes would have us believe, but only that he [the Antichrist] will be manifested in the last period of time.

XLVI. Antichrist's Reign of Terror Not a Mere 3 ½ Years: Protestant Year-Day Principle Established

Indeed, this will be more clearly established after we have responded to the objection of our adversaries regarding the duration of Antichrist, which they restrict to three and a half years, from Rev. 12:6. It is here that a woman is said to remain in the desert for 1260 days. They also quote Rev. 13:5, where it is said that power is given to the beast to make war on the saints for 42 months. However, this explanation is erroneous because Scripture is not speaking of natural days, consistent with the literal meaning of the term 'day,' but instead speaking mystically of prophetic days which represent the number of years. It is in this sense that Daniel's seventy sevens are proposed as relating to weeks, signifying weeks of years, not literal days.

Additionally, we can prove the error of our opponents' premise simply by showing the impossibility of the fulfillment of the predicted events within such a short time span. According to the Pontiffs, the Antichrist must conquer the whole world, overwhelm all Christians, abolish the whole cult of the Christian religion, reestablish Jerusalem and its temple a second time, unite with Gog and Magog, and complete other similar tasks which are impossible to accomplish in so short an interval. And when we examine the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding the truth of the matter, we find that:

(1) Ten kingdoms would arise at the same time together with the beast;

- (2) Peoples and innumerable nations would worship him;
- (3) He must wage war with the saints and overcome them;
- (4) He must force all inhabitants of the earth to his worship, not by force of arms, but by the wiles of seduction;
- (5) That the harlot must sit on the Beast for such a time until all the inhabitants of the earth are intoxicated with the wine of her whoredom, and the kings fornicate with her, and the merchants grow rich with the wealth of her delights.

We ask, who cannot help but see the impossibility of accomplishing all these events in a mere two or three years? Logic dictates a far greater time interval, which may be understood either as indefinite, as is seen in certain places in Scripture, or definite, as it seems to indicate in others.

XLVII. Antichrist not a Jew

As to the origin of the Antichrist, our opponents speculate that he will be a Jew, descending from the tribe of Dan. This is pure fabrication, contrived by some of the Church Fathers and is without substance. Even Bellarmine gives this notion no credence. For if the Antichrist were to be a Jew, how could it be said that through apostasy he would defect from the faith, a faith which he never possessed, sitting in the Church, a Church to which he was never joined? Truly, this hypothesis which proposes the Antichrist will descend from the tribe of Dan is weak and futile for several reasons: Rev. 7:4 demonstrates there is no mention of Dan among the sealed 144 thousand. Nor does Manuel de Sa deny this truth when he states it cannot be explained why that particular tribe was omitted. Indeed, despite the fact that they insist so strenuously that the Antichrist will have his seat in Jerusalem, restoring the temple and reinstating the legal ceremonies, it is contrary to the

words of Christ, who teaches the Jerusalem temple will never be built a second time, Matt. 23:38; 24:2; Luke 19:44, and is contrary to the words of Scripture which nowhere speak of the restitution of the cult of Leviticus now abolished by the Gospel. Therefore, the temple in which the Antichrist is said to sit, cannot be the Jerusalem temple, accursed to eternal desolation, but must be the Church of God, also called the temple of God in Scripture. It is the professing Church where the Antichrist is to penetrate, setting up his most holy seat, as we have before proved by numerous arguments.

XLVIII. The False Story of Enoch and Elijah Propheying for a Literal 3 ½ Days

No better is their story of Enoch and Elijah. Our adversaries cite Genesis 5:24 and Malachi 4:5 in support of their contention that these two will leave Paradise and reincarnate at the end of the world, opposing the Antichrist. He kills these witnesses, but after three days they resurrect from the dead, while all watch as they are assumed into heaven, Rev. 11:3 ff. The certainty of this interpretation being nothing more than a fairy tale is proved by the fact of the deep silence of Scripture regarding their alleged translation into Paradise. Indeed, Scripture tells us that after Enoch walked with God, that is, after he lived in the world piously and blamelessly, he was no longer seen because God took him to Himself, certainly to heaven lest he see death. Nor does the passage of Ecclesiasticus 44:16 teach otherwise; indeed, the Vulgate version holds that "he was taken into paradise to give repentance to the nations." But the Greek version expresses otherwise: it is said only that he was "an example of repentance to later generations," so that they would learn to understand by this example and enjoy fitting glory. Indeed, it is expressly said that Elijah was taken into heaven, 2 Kings 2:11, where, mortality put aside, he put on immortality, nor was he able to be

further subject to death, that is, by the hands of the Antichrist or otherwise, or to ever have need of resurrection.

Nor is this argument able to be elicited from Rev. 11:3, where mention is made of two Witnesses who were slain and afterwards revived, because these Witnesses are none other than those few pious ancient Christians who defended the truth of the gospel before Reformation times, who were divinely roused to resist the Antichrist.

The Reformers were those who appeared to rise, as it were, from the dead, to carry on the witness against the Antichrist and for Gospel truth after the massacres of those ancient Christians. And finally, Malachi did not write of a personal, literal Elijah, but a mystical one, who some time ago appeared in the person of John the Baptist, as Christ declares in Matthew 11:14.

XLIX. Antichrist's Attack and Denial of Christ is Hidden and Implicit; Not Open and Explicit

We now address our opponents' fourth response against the truth of the Papal Antichrist. In contention is the interpretation of Scripture which predicts Antichrist's assault and denial of Christ. Is it to be understood as open and explicit as far as external profession, or implicit and hidden as far as the actual truth of the matter? We Reformed hold firmly that the Antichrist must deny Christ, not in the first, but in the second manner; that he must be a disguised enemy of Christ, who, under the pretense of the name of Christ would rule over the Church of Christ, attacking the person of Christ, His offices and His good works. It must not, therefore, be expected that the Antichrist would openly profess himself the enemy of Christ, although in reality he shows himself to be such, nor would he boast himself to actually be the Christ, which the pseudo-christs did [and still do to this day]. Instead, he would appropriate for himself the very things which are Christ's alone, which

we have shown the Popes have actually done, by citing numerous proofs. Augustine's observation on this point is well taken, "Let us not be attentive to the tongue, but to the facts. Similarly, Antichrist is a liar, who by his mouth professes Jesus Christ, yet by his deeds denies him." Thus, when the Pope usurps the triple office of Christ, [Prophet, Priest and King], he destroys Christ's Gospel by his own traditions, also destroying Christ's redemption by his own indulgences, purgatory, masses, and rewards; all this while verbally professing Jesus to be the Christ. Notwithstanding his profession, he must be regarded as having denied Christ, together with the Father, by his very deeds and works.

Furthermore, the Pontiffs contend that as it is said, "that the Antichrist would abolish the sacrifice of the Mass," introducing "the abnegation of baptism." Indeed, in Daniel 11:31, it is foretold that Antiochus was to abolish the continual sacrifice which was offered daily under the Law. Once again, reality reflects the true nature of this dispute, for the Antichrist is said not to abolish the sacrifice of the Mass, but rather to institute the idolatrous worship of the God Maozim, about which the Angel speaks, chapter 11:38, and is understood by many with regard to Antiochus' Jupiter Olympus, who was viewed as the chief and most powerful of the Gods. This statue was placed in the Jerusalem temple in order to force the people's compliance to its cultic worship, 2 Maccabees 6:2. So, with respect to the Antichrist, it is most appropriate he be traced back to the idolatry of Rome, but also to the [wafer] God of the Mass, who, truly, was unknown to the Fathers, and then to the Angels and Saints, whom as protectors and helpers and υπερασπιστής [defenders] they are worshiped, honoring them magnificently with gold, silver and precious things, that is to say, and with grand external ostentation, through the abundant offerings [of the deceived]. For we see in the Pontiffs' customary practice whereby the vowel points and meaning of the original Hebrew text מַעֲזִיזָה is replaced by the Greek

Septuagint translation υπερασπιστήν, and the Latin Vulgate translation by *protectorem*. This is readily seen in Psalms 27:1, 28:8, and 31:2, 4, where the word 'defender' is used to translate the Hebrew word 'strength,' [thereby sharing the glory of Christ with the Angels and Saints whom they also call 'defenders.']

L. Argument Using the Church Fathers Against the Protestant Interpretation Answered

The argument used by our detractors to prove us wrong pertains to the interpretations of the Church Fathers, who were not prophets whose divine testimony was to be believed, but were instead interpreters proposing only what they surmised the prophecies to mean. This truth Augustine notes in book 20, chapter 19, *The City of God*. Nor is it to be surprising that, based upon the current events of their day, events which had not yet provided a light by which to understand the prophecies, they are at variance, expounding many strange meanings from prophetic truth. For it is well known to all that it is by far easier to observe the fulfillment of a prophecy than it is to predict that which has yet to be fulfilled. The latter is of divine revelation relegated to the few, while the former is known by actual experience set in our midst, [for all to see and understand]. Whence, if the Fathers were not qualified to sit as final Judges in controversies of their day, much less should they sit as Judges in this controversy, one which is relevant to our times only.

Even today there are those among learned men who try to distort the passages of Paul and John in order to favor the interpretation of the Pontiffs. Hugo Grotius publicly attempted to do this by utilizing a new, and until now, unheard of fabrication. Here is a man remarkable in learning, but in religion always of dubious faith. Besides, his deviant interpretations do not correspond to the beliefs of the Pontiffs, who disregard them in favor of the Antichrist Scriptures accepted by the

Reformed. The vanity of such futile imaginings has been abundantly proved by us, and by others, not the least of which is the famous Samuel Maresius, so that we need not now digress to refute it.

Therefore, having been persuaded that the Pope is the Antichrist, and since truly it is clear from the words of Scripture that this be so, we must conclude that our secession from his communion is consummately necessary and that it is quite impossible that there be a reconciliation between us, if things so remain as they are.

The End