**“The Papacy. Established in A.D. 538” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 4, 5.**

E. J. Waggoner

Says the prophet: “And they shall be given into his hands until a time and time and the dividing of time.” The “they” of course refers to the “saints of the Most High” and the “time and times and the dividing of time,” then, indicates the period of papal supremacy; for we have already seen that the little horn symbolizes the Roman Catholic power. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.1}

In the first place we may notice that in the Douay Bible, as well as in the Revised Version, “time and times and the dividing of times,” is rendered, “time, and times, and *half* a time.” We have no need to conjecture what this means, for the Bible is its own interpreter. In Revelation 12:14 we find the same period of time mentioned: “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Now in verse 6 of the same chapter the same event is brought to view in these words: “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.” From these two verses we learn that “a time, and times, and half a time” is only another expression for twelve hundred and sixty days. Then the little horn of Daniel 7 was to have supremacy for twelve hundred and sixty days. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.2}

But the question now arises, “Is it possible that only twelve hundred and sixty days, three years and a half, covers the whole time which the prophecy allows to the papacy?” We answer, No; and the explanation is simple. The prophecy is symbolic; four mighty empires are represented by beasts; the Roman Catholic power is represented by a little horn of one of the beasts. It is obvious, then, that the prophecy would not be consistent if it should express the duration of those powers in literal years. The time would be out of proportion to the nature of the symbol representing the power. Therefore it is evident that the time must also be symbolic. We inquire, then, What is the standard of time when used in symbolic prophecy? In Ezekiel 4:4-6 we read the answer:- {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.3}

“Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; *I have appointed thee each day for a year*.” {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.4}

Since all prophecy of Scripture proceeds from the same source, and is not of private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20, 21), the interpretation of the same symbol in every prophecy; therefore the “time, and times, and half a time,” or twelve hundred and sixty days, indicate just twelve hundred and sixty years. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.5}

The next question to be settled is, When does this period of time begin and end? There are several dates given by various authors to mark the rise of papal supremacy, but 538 A.D. seems to be the one that has the only just claim to consideration. The prophet in describing the rise of the little horn, says “He shall subdue three kings.” Daniel 7:24. This is in explanation of the fact that three horns were to be plucked up before it. Of course the only powers that would be rooted up to do make room for the Catholic power would be those were all opposed to it. Now long before 538 A.D., paganism, as a State religion in the Roman Empire, was dead. Since the time of Constantine, and had been nominally Christian. The barbarous tribes by which the empire was divided into the ten parts, also embraced the Christianity of the empire. Says D’Aubigne:- {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.6}

“Already the forests of the North poured forth the most effectual promoters of the papal power. The barbarians who had invaded the West and settled themselves therein,-but recently converted to Christianity,-ignorant of the spiritual character of the church, and feeling the want of an external pomp of religion, prostrated themselves in a half savage and a half heathen state of mind at the feet of their chief priest Rome.”-*Hist. Reformation, Book 1, chap. 1, part. 31*. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.7}

But not all of these tribes were favorable to the pretensions of the bishops of Rome. Some of them, especially the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths, were Arian in faith. The contest between the Catholics and Arians was bitter and unrelenting, and so long as these powers held Italy and the adjacent country, no Catholic bishop could rule in Rome. In the year 494 A.D., the power of the Heruli was annihilated by the death of one Odoacer. From that time it is impossible to trace them in history. In 534 the Vandals were conquered by Belisarius, the general of Justinian; and in 538 A.D., Rome, which until that time had been in possession of the Arian Ostrogoths, was occupied by the Roman army, and the Catholic religion was established. These conquests are described in detail in the 39th and 41st chapters of Gibbon. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.8}

When the last of these Arian powers were overthrown (A.D. 538), previous imperial decrees concerning the bishop of Rome could go into effect. Speaking of the way in which the fallen bishop gradually usurped power over other churches, D’Aubigne says:- {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.9}

“To silence the cries of the churches, Rome found new allies. Princes who in those troublesome times often found their thrones tottering, offered their adherence to the church in exchange for her support. They yielded to her spiritual authority, on condition of her paying them with secular dominion. They left her to deal at will with the *souls* of men, provided only she would deliver them from their enemies. The power of the hierarchy in the ascending scale, and of the imperial power which was declining, leaned thus one toward another, and so accelerated the twofold destiny. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.10}

“Rome could not lose by this. An edict of one Theodosius II. and of Valentinian III. proclaimed the bishop of Rome ‘ruler of all the churches.’ Justinian issued a similar decree. These decrees did not contain all that the popes pretended to see in them. But in those times of ignorance it was easy for them to gain reception for that interpretation which was most favorable to themselves.”-*I., paragraphs* *29, 30*. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.11}

To show plainly the object of these wars against the Arian powers, and what was gained by them, we make two brief quotations from Gibbon. After having rehearsed the defeat of the Vandals and the capture of Carthage by the Romans, the historian speaks as follows concerning Justinian:- {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.12}

“He received the messengers of victory at the time when he was preparing to publish the pandects of the Roman law; and the devout or jealous emperor celebrated the divine goodness, and confessed in silence the merit of his successful general. Impatient to abolish the temporal and spiritual tyranny of the Vandals, he proceeded without delay to the full establishment of the Catholic church. Her jurisdiction, wealth, and immunities, perhaps the most essential part of the episcopal religion, were restored and amplified with a liberal hand; the Arian worship was suppressed, the Donatist meetings were proscribed; and the Synod of Carthage, by the voice of two hundred and seventeen bishops, applauded the just measure of pious retaliation.”-*Decline and Fall, chap. 41, par. 11*. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 74.13}

The victory of Belisarius over the Ostrogoths (A.D. 538) is thus described:- {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 75.1}

“The Goths consented to retreat in the presence of a victorious enemy; to delay till the next spring the operations of offensive war; to summon their scattered forces; to relinquish their distant possessions, and to trust even Rome itself to the faith of its inhabitants. Leuderis, an aged warrior, was left in the capital with four thousand soldiers; a feeble garrison, which might have seconded the zeal, though it was incapable of opposing the wishes, of the Romans. But a momentary enthusiasm of religion and patriotism was kindled in their minds. They furiously exclaimed that the apostolic throne should no longer be profaned by the triumph or toleration of Arianism; that the tombs of the Cæsars should no longer be trampled by the savages of the North; and without reflecting that Italy must sink into a province of Constantinople, they fondly hailed the restoration of a Roman emperor as a new era of freedom and prosperity. The deputies of the pope and clergy, of the senate and people, invited the lieutenant of Justinian to accept their voluntary allegiance, and to enter the city, whose gates would be thrown open for his reception.... The first days, which coincided with the old Saturnalia, were devoted to mutual congratulation and the public joy, and the Catholics prepared to celebrate, without a rival, the approaching festival of the nativity of Christ.”-*Id., paragraphs 22, 23*. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 75.2}

These quotations show most conclusively that in A.D. 538 the bishop of Rome did become literally “the pope,” *i.e.*, the father, or head and ruler, of the churches. The last opposing horn had then been plucked up, and the papacy was free to enter upon that career of ecclesiastical tyranny which it had long been preparing; and the “mystery of iniquity” which had been working so long was given full liberty. {BEST March 1, 1889, p. 75.3}

**“The Papacy” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times 4, 6.**

E. J. Waggoner

Since the supremacy of the Papacy was to continue twelve hundred and sixty years, it is evident that it must have been checked in the year 1798 A.D. Let us see if at that time anything happened to justify this conclusion. From “Chambers’ Cyclopedia,” article “Pius,” we quote:- {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 89.1}

“At length the [French] Directory ordered the invasion of Rome; Berthier entered the city, February 10, 1798, and took possession of the castle of St. Angelo. Pius [VI.] was called on to renounce his temporal sovereignty, and on his refusal, was seized, February 20, and carried away to Siena, and afterwards to the celebrated Certosa, or Carthusian monastery, of Florence. On the threatened advance of the Austro-Russian army in the following year, he was transferred to Grenoble, and finally to Valence on the Rhone, where, worn out by age and by the rigor of confinement, he died in August, 1799, in the eighty-second year of his age and the twenty-fourth of his pontificate.” {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 89.2}

Thus we see that from 538 to 1798 A.D. there were twelve hundred and sixty years of unbroken power, plainly fulfilling the prophecy. At that time the power of the Papacy was broken; indeed, it might well have been thought to be utterly destroyed. In March 1800, however, another Pope was chosen, and the Papacy has continued ever since, but with diminished power. Immediately after the enunciation of the dogma of Papal infallibility, July 21, 1870, Victor Emmanuel took advantage of the withdrawal of the French soldiers from Rome, to make that city the capital of his kingdom. Accordingly he entered it on September 20 of the same year, and that day marked the close of the temporal dominion of the Pope of Rome, who ever since has sulked in the Vatican, where, in order more effectually to work upon the sympathies of the people, he professes to be a prisoner. From his retreat, like Bunyan’s aged Pope in his cave, he growls out at those who despise his pretensions, “You will never mend till more of you be burnt;” for his one ambition is the restoration of the Papacy to its former power. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 89.3}

Whether this dream will ever be fully realized is not indicated in the prophecy under consideration; yet that, before the end, the power of the Papacy will increase far beyond what it is at the present, is plainly set forth in these words: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” Daniel 7:21, 22. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 89.4}

For several years it seemed as though every vestige of the power of the Papacy was irrecoverably gone; but “the Scripture cannot be broken,” and now, although it has no territorial dominion, there is no kingdom on earth that approaches it in power. The Pope rules not only the vast host of Catholics in every land under the sun, nearly all of whom hold their allegiance to him above that which they owe to their civil rulers, but he rules nations. Not alone is his influence supreme in Catholic countries, but governments professedly Protestant look to him for help in difficult places. Germany, which so long opposed him, is now virtually subject to his dictation; England has invited him to help her settle her troubles with Ireland; the Czar of Russia has made overtures to him, as he needs his help in dealing with nihilism. When the papal delegates came to America to bring to Cardinal Gibbons the insignia of his office, a government vessel was sent out to meet them, and, on its return with them on board, the papal flag floated from the mast-head, in the place of the stars and stripes. On the occasion of the jubilee of Pope Leo XIII., Sweden and Italy were the only nations that did not send him presents and congratulations. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.1}

The *Christian Union* (January 26, 1888) said that the presentation to Pope Leo XIII. of a copy of the Constitution of the United States, by the President, was “a sensible way of discharging what was, under the circumstances, almost a matter of national obligation.” And it gave, as a reason for this extraordinary statement, the still more extraordinary statement that “the Pope is a temporal prince, and the amenities which are paid to temporal princes are due him.” It further said: “It is not impossible that the time may come when the old antagonism of the Catholic and the Protestant may appear insignificant in view of the deeper antagonisms which shall make them essentially one.... Stranger things have happened in history than such a change of attitude as would be involved in the following of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.2}

About the same time the Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field, editor of the New York *Evangelist* (Presbyterian), said through his paper:- {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.3}

“The late President Hitchcock [of Union Theological seminary] often said to us when we discussed the dangers to society from socialists and communists, that we might yet come to look upon the Roman Catholic Church as the most conservative power in the country, if, by its influence over the Irish, it should keep them from running into the excesses by which so many of the French and Germans were carried away.... Here is a tremendous power exercised over millions of our countrymen, and it is the height of folly and fanaticism to alienate it from us by standing always in an attitude of antagonism.” {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.4}

Other Protestant divines say that Catholicism is the only power that can stay the tide of socialism and anarchy, and openly counsel an alliance between Catholicism and Protestantism. In the *Christian at Work* (April 12 and 19, 1888) Prof. Charles A. Briggs, of Union Theological Seminary, New York, had an article entitled, “Is Rome an Ally or an Enemy, or Both?” in which he noted a few points of difference in matters which he considered non-essentials, but said: “In all matters of worship we are in essential concord with Roman Catholics, and we ought not to hesitate to make an alliance with them so far as possible to maintain the sanctity of the Sabbath as a day of worship,” etc. And again:- {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.5}

“It is true that there is a great deal of immorality in the Roman Catholic Church in some countries, and we think it may be shown that as a rule Protestantism is productive of better morals than Romanism; but this, after all, is a question of more or less, and, to say the least, Protestantism has little to boast of. On all these questions it is of the highest importance that the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches should make an alliance.” {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.6}

As showing the progress toward this alliance, it is necessary only to state that during “Holy Week” of 1888, union services of the Catholic and all the Protestant churches were held in various cities in the United States. Various Protestant journals speak of the Pope as “Holy Father,” with him “a long reign and Godspeed in liberalizing policy,” and in many ways show their willingness to allow him whatever he may claim. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.7}

One more item, and it is a most significant one, must suffice on this point. In “Protestant” Germany, in the city of Cassel, where the majority of churches are Lutheran, a Rev. Thummel was indicted sometime in the year 1888, for attacking the Papacy and calling the Pope antichrist. In moving for nine months’ imprisonment for Mr. Thummel, the prosecuting attorney said:- {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.8}

“The defendant refers (or appeals) to Dr. M. Luther. First, it must be considered that Luther lived three hundred years ago, and that meanwhile the customs, the tone, and tastes, etc., have changed. If Luther lived to-day, and should say and write the same things that he did then, he would undoubtedly, by reason of section 496 of the Penal Code, be condemned.” {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.9}

History is making rapidly, and the student of prophecy will not have long to wait to see what shall be the end of all these things. Of one thing he may be certain, that “the triumphing of the wicked is short,” and when the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth shall say, “I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow,” then shall her plagues come upon her in one day,-death and mourning, and famine, and “she shall be utterly burned with fire.” The more rapidly the power and influence of the Papacy revives, the sooner will the Lord consume “that Wicked” with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of is coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8); and then “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Daniel 7:27. {BEST March 15, 1889, p. 90.10}