

BEYOND

THE NINETY-FIVE THESES



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A compilation of historical and current news articles
with an editorial commentary by
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BEYOND the Ninety-Five Theses

October 31, 2017, for all intents and purposes, marks 500 years since Martin Luther, the popular Protestant Reformer, posted his renowned “Ninety-Five Theses” on the church door at Wittenberg, Germany. Much has happened in the intervening centuries. Attitudes have changed. Details have been forgotten. Protests have been silenced. And, it may be argued, that history has been rewritten. The question that begs to be answered is whether any positive change has come about as a result of Luther’s challenge of the status quo.

Religious institutions continue to herald their importance, but ostensibly have failed to convey in a meaningful way the necessity of Divine instruction and authority. Whether under the guise of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, or a host of other religions, it is increasingly apparent that the audiences which they assert charge over are largely naïve of the doctrines and practices that they purport to believe in—let alone the origin of those doctrines and practices. No wonder then, that spiritual ignorance abounds, and as the Holy Bible plainly states:

Amos 8:11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

This “famine,” combined with an increasingly permissive attitude where reconciliation is the herald and doctrinal differences have less and less import, only makes more slippery the downward course of spirituality and moral consciousness.

In effect, matters that were once viewed as “black or white” are now considered more and more in meaningless “shades of gray.”

Even within the ranks of Catholicism—which makes the extravagant and unscriptural claim as God’s “Universal” church—the view of “Recognize and Resist” is a reality. Those of traditionalist (pre-Vatican II) viewpoints, including Sedevacantists who believe the office of the Holy See has been vacant since 1958 (Pius XII being the last truly legitimate pope), sense that “Modernism” is a threat to spirituality. But valid as this assessment may be, a careful examination of the “traditional” track record of Papacy, long before Vatican II, is needed to reveal the inconsistencies and contradictions within the Catholic church.

The small Catholic stronghold of Guam (80% Catholic) is now experiencing issues that highlight these divergent viewpoints, which may well point to systemic

circumstances in Christendom. The *Fox News World* article “Guam Catholic Church Sees a ‘Perfect Storm’ of Controversy,” April 2, 2017, reports on allegations of sexual abuse by its Archbishop and on a controversial but popular European lay Catholic movement (the “Way”) that is straying outside the traditional boundaries of orthodox Catholicism. These profound issues are not likely to be resolved in the halls of the Vatican or other similar institutions.

(<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/04/02/guam-catholic-church-sees-perfect-storm-controversy.html>;
http://archives.sspx.org/miscellaneous/sedevacantism/little_catechism_on_sedevacantism.htm;
<http://www.cmri.org/sedevac.htm>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbjzFWBPG9c>)

Another article entitled “Americans Love Jesus But Struggle With the Church” by *Prophecy News Watch*, May 29, 2017, takes a careful look at a new study published by the Barna Group (barna.com), which indicates church attendance is currently on the decline. In an attempt to explain this phenomenon, two possibilities are advanced:

“Some speculate that adults attending conservative churches decide to stay home when the church’s teaching comes into conflict with their increasingly liberal beliefs.

It is possible that the opposite is true as well with mainline churches that have been increasingly liberal in recent years, at times to the point of contradicting Biblical teachings.

This second theory is borne out by the fact that attendance in mainline churches continues to decline while attendance in smaller, Bible-teaching churches has actually seen an uptick in recent years. As mainline churches liberalize away from God's word in some cases, some Christians switch congregations while others make the personal decision to stay home and maintain their faith away from organized religion.”

(http://prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=1268)

When these matters are viewed from a higher vantage point, there are two distinct paths from which the “believer” may choose. The one path, which affords the least resistance, is that of “unity.” But the proverbial question that begs to be answered is whether such “unity” should be at any cost. A sensibility must be employed regarding this idea of unity, but compromise concerning spiritual matters, especially principles, must never exist.

Unfortunately, there is little basis for such optimism as the contradiction between teaching Scripture and an increasingly permissive attitude becomes manifest in the Christian world. In an article published by *Prophecy News Watch*, entitled “Church of England Affirms Transgenderism With 'Gender Transition' Service,” it

is clear that there are deliberate efforts afoot by the LGBT community to challenge all historically conservative church positions related to gender. But what is most disconcerting is that there is a popular majority in support of such change:

“In a landmark move, the Church of England has voted to allow a ceremony reaffirming a parishioner’s baptism under a new name. These types of re-christenings for transgendered people were a compromise for those who requested second baptisms but were told that a Christian can only be baptized once.

A re-christening has the similar effect of inserting gender-identity politics into the centuries-old traditions of the Church as part of the latest move to liberalize and subvert the Church and its doctrine.

The Vicars of the Anglican Church will use the ‘services of welcome’ to officially pronounce a transgendered person’s name before God.

Chris Newlands, Vicar of Lancaster Priory Church, was the clergy member to propose the motion on behalf of transgendered people who are not represented in Church leadership.

His statement said, ‘I hope that we can make a powerful statement to say that we believe that trans people are cherished and loved by God, who created them, and is present through all the twists and turns of their lives.’

The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of the change.”

(http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=1412)

No wonder then that many of the more “liberal” denominations go so far as to condone women and LGBT in leading church positions.

Matters have gotten out of hand as described in a *World Net Daily* article entitled “U.K. Gov’t Demands ‘Queer Theology’ in Seminaries,” written by Bob Unruh on July 20, 2017:

“An executive agency of the United Kingdom’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office has issued a report recommending that seminaries include ‘queer theology’ in their courses and that even Sunday schools teach ‘LGBTI beliefs.’

The stunning document, released by Wilton Park, an agency of the Foreign Office, also recommends that the Bible be reinterpreted ‘to make it compatible with LGBTI ideology.’

The Barnabas Fund, an organization that supports persecuted Christians worldwide, was surprised and more than a little worried.

'The recommendations, if implemented, would massively reverse freedom of religion across the globe,' the group said."

(<http://www.wnd.com/2017/07/u-k-govt-demands-queer-theology-in-seminaries/>)

Clearly, this liberal agenda has already made its inroads into society, from the young who are easily influenced to those in the highest of church offices who are in a position to influence many others.

In a September 2017 article by Olivia Rudgard, published in *The Telegraph*, "A boy wearing a dress to school is 'not a problem,'" stated Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"Speaking on LBC radio the most senior cleric in the Church of England said he would tell a concerned parishioner that 'they should help their child understand.'

He said: 'I would say to them, I don't think that's a problem.'"

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/09/21/justin-welby-boy-wearing-dress-school-not-problem/>)

Included in this upheaval of morality is the cover-up of the alarming pedophilia abuses by Roman Catholic priests as exposed and reported by the *Boston Globe*. What will come next? If the *Boston Globe* report is correct, which states 6% of priests are susceptible to or guilty of such atrocities, the number of the "guilty" would be unimaginable and the number of the victims innumerable! This is just one example of immorality and indiscretion among the many denominations and religions worldwide.

(<http://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/movies/spotlight-movie>)

The Apostle Paul would have a lot to say about LBGT and pedophilia in the priesthood today, let alone other more obvious immoralities among parishioners:

Eph. 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be ONCE named among you, as becometh saints.

In "Crossroads for Catholicism," an article in *The Trumpet*, July 2017, it was noted that Roman Catholicism is facing a possible schism over the issue of divorce and remarriage. Wealthy German Catholics want to loosen restrictions while others remain opposed. Richard Palmer, the author, notes that much is at stake, and this matter cannot be easily resolved.

(<https://www.thetrumpet.com/15836-crossroads-for-catholicism>)

In contrast to a path toward “unity,” at nearly all moral and doctrinal cost, there is a more conservative stance that is being advanced. The mantra, if it might be described as such, is that there is one indivisible body of truth that must not be compromised. Unfortunately, there are numerous claims regarding what constitutes that singular body of truth. As already cited, Papacy would have everyone believe that Catholicism is the true “universal” religion and that virtually every human being is subject to the Roman pontiff as stated in *Unam Sanctam*—papal bull of Pope Boniface VIII promulgated November 18, 1302:

“...We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.”
(<https://www.evangelicaloutreach.org/unamsanctam.htm>; Bowden C, *Catholic Dictionary*)

With this in mind, nearly 500 years ago, a devout papist was enlightened to the corrupt practices of Catholic leaders, including the pope himself. That individual, Martin Luther, a priest and monk, had by a series of fortuitous events not only come to see that “the just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) but also that the leading Christian institution of his day—of which he himself had been a staunch adherent—had failed its parishioners.

Martin Luther’s “Ninety-Five Theses” are most often associated with the criticism—verily, condemnation—of the practice of selling indulgences. The sale of papal indulgences in effect were:

“...a way to reduce the amount of punishment one has to undergo for sins.”
(Peters E., *A Modern Guide to Indulgences: Rediscovering This Often Misinterpreted Teaching*)

Or as expressed from the Catholic Catechism:

“The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.... An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin. Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.”

(<http://www.end-times-prophecy.org/catholic-church-false-doctrine.html>)

Reading a reliable biographical sketch of the infamous Roman Catholic friar Johann Tetzel makes apparent the corrupting influence of power and greed.
(Gieseler J., *A Compendium of Ecclesiastical History*; Hagenbach K., *History of the Reformation*, vol. 1)

The oft-repeated pronouncement accredited to Tetzel, “As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs,” surely speaks to his motivation—hardly one that could be characterized as “spiritual.” While Papacy has now distanced itself from such a flagrant assertion, it is quite apparent that no such

distancing was considered back then while the money flowed into the church coffers.

Luther, though still a papist, was appalled by the sale of such indulgences, especially because those of his own congregation were purchasing certificates of pardon and expecting absolution of their sins—not because they were penitent and wished to reform but simply based on the authority of the indulgence.

Luther refused them absolution, and he warned them that unless they should repent and reform their lives, they must suffer the consequence of their sins. Perplexed by the contradiction, some papal followers boldly demanded of Tetzels that their money be returned to them. Tetzels responded with anger and “stormed from the pulpit, employing insults and curses; and to strike the people with greater terror, he had a fire lighted several times in the market-place, declaring that he had received an order from the pope to burn all heretics who presumed to oppose his most holy indulgences.”

(D'Aubigné J. H. M., *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, book 3)

As some devout Romanists saw validity in Luther's arguments, Papacy and the Roman church—as the so-called “infallible” mouthpiece of God—not only were being forced to address the matter of “indulgences” that Luther had put the spotlight on, but also were being forced to address the greater issue of “faith.” For by this time in church history, certain pious individuals, such as John Wycliffe (AD 1320–1384) and John Hus (AD 1369–1415), whom Luther had been influenced by, had stirred up the pot with religious thinking that contradicted the Romish church.

It is noteworthy that John Wycliffe was the translator of the first English version of the Bible (circa AD 1367), though no parts of it were published until AD 1731. William Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament, on the other hand, was published in AD 1526.

Luther's assertion, supported by Scripture, that “the just shall live by faith” was the candle that would light the Protestant Reformation, as recounted in *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* by Ellen Gould White, a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

(<http://whiteestate.org/books/gc/gc.asp>)

She quotes extensively from J. H. Merle D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* and *The Life and Times of Martin Luther*:

“Luther was ordained a priest and was called from the cloister to a professorship in the University of Wittenberg. Here he applied himself to

the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues. He began to lecture upon the Bible; and the book of Psalms, the Gospels, and the Epistles were opened to the understanding of crowds of delighted listeners. Staupitz, his friend and superior, urged him to ascend the pulpit and preach the word of God. Luther hesitated, feeling himself unworthy to speak to the people in Christ's stead. It was only after a long struggle that he yielded to the solicitations of his friends. Already he was mighty in the Scriptures, and the grace of God rested upon him. His eloquence captivated his hearers, the clearness and power with which he presented the truth convinced their understanding, and his fervor touched their hearts.

Luther was still a true son of the papal church and had no thought that he would ever be anything else. By God's Providence, Luther was led to visit Rome. He pursued his journey on foot, lodging at the monasteries on the way. At a convent in Italy, he was filled with wonder at the wealth, magnificence, and luxury that he witnessed. Endowed with a princely revenue, the monks dwelt in splendid apartments, attired themselves in the richest and most costly robes, and feasted at a sumptuous table. With painful misgivings, Luther contrasted this scene with the self-denial and hardship of his own life. His mind was becoming perplexed.

At last he beheld in the distance the seven-hilled city. With deep emotion, he prostrated himself upon the earth, exclaiming, 'Holy Rome, I salute thee!' 'No one can imagine,' he wrote, 'what sins and infamous actions are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. Thus, they are in the habit of saying, 'If there is a hell, Rome is built over it: it is an abyss whence issues every kind of sin.'

By a recent decretal an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees 'Pilate's staircase,' said to have been descended by our Saviour on leaving the Roman judgment hall and to have been miraculously conveyed from Jerusalem to Rome. Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to shout to him, 'The just shall live by faith' (Romans 1:17). He sprang to his feet and hastened from the place in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time, he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened and were never again to be closed to the delusions of the Papacy. When he turned his face from Rome, he had turned away also in heart, and

from that time the separation grew wider until he severed all connection with the Papal church.”

Very little, if anything, has changed in the intervening centuries, both naturally as well as spiritually speaking. What Luther saw and what brought him to despise the Papacy upon his visit to Vatican City differs little from circumstances today. Perhaps there are fewer of the crown jewels on public display (to minimize the egregious display of wealth) and the absence of the notorious triple “beehive” tiara bearing the Latin inscription “*Vicarius Filii Dei*” (see elaboration below), but the same “reality” is still present! Luther would be outraged if he were to see Bingo and cake sales sponsored by the church in Wittenberg—“modern” era practices not at Wittenberg today but certainly present elsewhere. These events are reminiscent of what our Lord condemned within the precincts of the Temple—the House of God:

Matt. 21:12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

Matt. 21:13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

As noted dramatist George Bernard Shaw once stated:

“If history repeats itself, and the unexpected always happens, how incapable must man be of learning from experience.”

Thus, in a remarkable but not altogether unexpected way, we find that history has done just that. A *New York Times* article, “For Catholics, a Door to Absolution Is Reopened,” published February 9, 2009, and written by Paul Vitello, states:

“The announcement in church bulletins and on Web sites has been greeted with enthusiasm by some and wariness by others. But mainly, it has gone over the heads of a vast generation of Roman Catholics who have no idea what it means: ‘Bishop Announces Plenary Indulgences.’

In recent months, dioceses around the world have been offering Catholics a spiritual benefit that fell out of favor decades ago—the indulgence, a sort of amnesty from punishment in the afterlife—and reminding them of the church’s clout in mitigating the wages of sin.

The fact that many Catholics under 50 have never sought one, and never heard of indulgences except in high school European history (Martin Luther denounced the selling of them in 1517 while igniting the Protestant

Reformation), simply makes their reintroduction more urgent among church leaders bent on restoring fading traditions of penance in what they see as a self-satisfied world.

‘Why are we bringing it back?’ asked Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of Brooklyn, who has embraced the move. ‘Because there is sin in the world.’

Its revival has been viewed as part of a conservative resurgence that has brought some quiet changes and some highly controversial ones....

The indulgence is among the less noticed and less disputed traditions to be restored. But with a thousand-year history and volumes of church law devoted to its intricacies, it is one of the most complicated to explain.

According to church teaching, even after sinners are absolved in the confessional and say their Our Father’s or Hail Mary’s as penance, they still face punishment after death, in Purgatory, before they can enter heaven. In exchange for certain prayers, devotions, or pilgrimages in special years, a Catholic can receive an indulgence, which reduces or erases that punishment instantly, with no formal ceremony or sacrament.

There are partial indulgences, which reduce purgatorial time by a certain number of days or years, and plenary indulgences, which eliminate all of it, until another sin is committed. You can get one for yourself, or for someone who is dead. You cannot buy one—the church outlawed the sale of indulgences in 1567—but charitable contributions, combined with other acts, can help you earn one. There is a limit of one plenary indulgence per sinner per day.

The return of indulgences began with Pope John Paul II, who authorized bishops to offer them in 2000 as part of the celebration of the church’s third millennium. But the offers have increased markedly under his successor, Pope Benedict, who has made plenary indulgences part of church anniversary celebrations nine times in the last three years. The current offer is tied to the yearlong celebration of St. Paul, which continues through June.

The indulgences, experts said, tend to be advertised more openly in dioceses where the bishop is more traditionalist, or in places with fewer tensions between liberal and conservative Catholics. Even some priests admit that the rules are hard to grasp.

'Confessions have been down for years and the church is very worried about it,' said the Rev. Tom Reese, a Jesuit and former editor of the Catholic magazine *America*. 'Indulgences are a way of reminding people of the importance of penance.'

'The good news is we're not selling them anymore,' he added.

[A parishioner] Karen Nassauer, 61, said she was baffled by the return to a practice she never quite understood to begin with. 'I mean, I'm not saying it is necessarily wrong,' she said. 'What does it mean to get time off in Purgatory? What is five years in terms of eternity?'

'It faded away with a lot of things in the church,' said Bishop DiMarzio. 'But it was never given up. It was always there. We just want people to return to the ideas they used to know.'

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/10/nyregion/10indulgence.html>)

Those ideas were originally forged on December 4, 1563, at the Council of Trent (Session 25) where it was decreed:

"Whereas the power of conferring indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church, and she has, even in the most ancient times, used the said power delivered unto her of God; the sacred holy synod teaches and enjoins that the use of indulgences, most salutary for Christian people and approved of by the authority of sacred councils, is to be retained in the Church; and it condemns with anathema those who either assert they are useless, or who deny that there is in the Church the power of granting them."

(Chapin J., *The Book of Catholic Quotations*)

But all the history concerning the sale of indulgences or modern-day donations to obtain them, to the end that it might also serve as a revenue stream is—as proverbially expressed—"only the tip of the iceberg." In his book *The Vatican Billions*, Avro Manhattan opens his financial inquiry into the Catholic church with the simple but powerfully expressive statement:

"Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was the poorest of the poor. Roman Catholicism, which claims to be His church, is the richest of the rich. Indeed, the wealthiest institution on earth."¹ (author's notation: see Thesis #86) (<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/1611-King-James-Bible-Introduction.phpwhite>)

¹Luke 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

The contradiction could not be any plainer. Even our Lord's instruction to one having great possessions could not have been clearer:

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Yet, so many of Papacy's adherents will turn the blind eye—or, worse yet, take glory behind the facade of wealth and worldly influence. As Avro Manhattan, further notes:

“The splitting of this giant religious system into three distracted portions, Roman Catholicism in the West, the Orthodox church in the Near East, Protestantism in the Northern Europe, to a very great extent became a reality very largely because of the economic interest which lay hidden behind high-sounding dissensions between the simmering rival theological disputations. ...the Roman Catholic Church's persistent ignoring of the fundamental command of Christ concerning the riches of this world caused irremediable harm to the spiritual interests of Christendom at large; and, even more than that, ignited revolts, provoked revolutions and promoted destructive wars which were to scar the western world for hundreds of years, up to our own days.”

Obviously, Papacy did not achieve her temporal and political power overnight. Constantine's law concerning acquisition of land by the church (AD 321) was one of the earlier defining moments for the church to secure temporal wealth.

321 July 3	CT 16.2.4	36	Constantine	Every person shall have the right to leave property to the Catholic Church in his will.
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(<http://www.fourthcentury.com/imperial-laws-and-letters-involving-religion-ad-311-364/>)

However, this alone was not the precedent. Rather, it can be observed that it is also the culmination of centuries of political maneuvering and numerous “small” steps.

In Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons Or the Papal Worship Proved to Be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife*, it is apparent that the “character” of the Papacy—even as a modern-day corporation, which interestingly is legally characterized as a personal entity—is a reflection of the personal attitudes held by those who are at its head.

(http://ldolphin.org/PDFs/The_Two_Babylons-Alexander_Hislop.pdf)

Thus, we see that these attitudes became embedded into Christianity with the help of the then Emperor Constantine (recognized by Orthodox and Byzantine Catholics as a “Saint”) from their early roots in Paganism. Constantine’s intentions should immediately be suspect—let alone his relationship with God—by the fact that:

“Constantine had his eldest son Crispus put to death by poison, and had his wife, the Empress Fausta; killed at the behest of his mother, Helena. Fausta was left to die in an over-heated bath. Their names were wiped from the face of many inscriptions and references to their lives in the literary record were erased.”

(http://www.answers.com/Q/Did_Constantine_murder_his_own_son_and_wife?_slide=5)

Reason alone should question whether such a notorious man would be chosen by God for His cause. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul had expressed in the 1st Century AD:

2 Thess. 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work....

As the late Rev. Alexander Hislop also expressed, this “mystery of iniquity”:

“...was brought in secretly, and little by little, one corruption being introduced after another, as apostasy proceeded, and the backsliding Church became prepared to tolerate it, till it has reached the gigantic height we now see, when in almost every particular the system of Papacy is the very antipodes [meaning, the direct opposite] of the system of the primitive Church.” (http://ldolphin.org/PDFs/The_Two_Babylons-Alexander_Hislop.pdf)

One of these “small steps” in the early Christian church was the development of the “Nicolaitan spirit”—a spirit of “lording over another.” This attitude, which was held predominantly by the leaders in the Early Church, later became evident in church bulls and dogma, which were used to control their parishioners. In the first of the Seven Apocalyptic Churches (Ephesus), Jesus himself rebukes the professed church by making the plain—if not altogether condemning—statement:

Rev. 2:15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

How could it be that those who profess the name of “Christ” would be of such a spirit, when Christ himself stated:

Mark 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

Our Lord's instruction stands in stark contrast to the *Unam Sanctam*, as quoted earlier:

“We declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.”

As recorded by the Apostle John in the last book of the Bible, thus giving an emphasis on circumstances in the “End-Time”:

Rev. 13:17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Rev. 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number² of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six [i.e., 666].

²The Latin inscription “*Vicarius Filii Dei*” renders this mystical number “666.”

(<http://biblelight.net/claims.htm#INSCRIBED>)

The three levels of this specific “beehive” tiara (there are numerous tiaras) claim to signify the triple power of the pope as father of kings, governor of the world, and Vicar of Christ, as well as his authority “above, on, and below” the earth.

As elaborated upon by Frank Shallieu, in *The Keys of Revelation*:

“The Council of Trent, as is well known, declared the *Latin Vulgate* to be the only authentic version of Scripture, and doctors at the council preferred it to the Hebrew and Greek text itself—though the latter was written by the prophets and the apostles. For over a thousand years the Roman Church Latinized everything, and to a large extent still does use the Latin: in the *Mass, prayers, hymns, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, titles, inscriptions, and councils*.

The ‘number of his [the beast’s] name’ (verse 17) is ‘the number of a man,’ the ‘man of sin’ (2 Thess. 2:3). In other words, the first beast is the Man of Sin, the Papacy, as heretofore shown. Since according to the prophecy this mystical number is the number of a man, the suggestion is that the number is to be derived from the name or title of some particular symbolic man. The most plausible explanation, noted by others, is a certain Latin title the pope has taken to himself and allowed others to apply to him. The title is ‘*Vicarius Filii Dei*,’ that is, ‘Vicar of the Son of God.’ Vicar, meaning ‘instead of’ or ‘substitute,’ describes the pope acting as the representative on earth

of God or Christ. Jesus' death on the Cross is sometimes spoken of as a vicarious sacrifice, meaning a substitutionary sacrifice, namely, a man's life for a man's life. The letters of this title, which the Latins used as numerals, add up as follows:

V =	5					
I =	1	F =	0			
C =	100	I =	1	D =	500	
A =	0	L =	50	E =	0	Total = 666 (the number of the Man of Sin)
R =	0	I =	1	I =	1	
I =	1	I =	1			
V =	5					
S =	0					

(Note: In Latin, the 'U' of *Vicarius* becomes a 'V,' and the double U [W] is actually a double 'V'.)

The following testimony that this title was formerly inscribed on the papal crown was given by the late Elder D. E. Scoles, of Washburn, Mo.:—

'I have met two men who declare that they have seen this specific crown; and their testimony is so perfectly in agreement that I am convinced that what they saw is true. The first man was M. De Latti, a Sabbath-keeper who had previously been a Catholic priest, and had spent four years in Rome. He visited me when I was pastor in St. Paul, Minn., several years ago. I showed him my tract, "The Seal of God and the Mark of the Beast." He at once told me that the inscription was not correctly placed in my illustration. He stated that he had often seen it in the museum at the Vatican, and gave a detailed and accurate description of the whole crown. When my tract was published, I was ignorant of the arrangement of the words of the Latin inscription, hence, in the illustration of the crown, placed them in one line. Brother De Latti at once pointed out the mistake, and said the first word of the sentence was on the first crown of the triple arrangement, the second word on the second part of the crown, while the word *Dei* was on the lower division of the triple crown. He also explained that the first two words were in dark-colored jewels, while the *Dei* was composed entirely of diamonds.'

Because of Luther's disruption of the status quo, on January 3, 1521, Pope Leo X issued the papal bull *Decet Romanum pontificem* ("It befits the Roman Pontiff"), which excommunicated Martin Luther.

With this decree, it was now much easier for Luther to finally sever all ties to the church he had once supported. As cited by Philip Schaff in his book, *History of the Christian Church, Volume VII. Modern Christianity. The German Reformation*:

“§ 48. Luther burns the Pope’s bull, and forever breaks with Rome. Dec. 10, 1520. ...he [Luther] wrote a Latin and German tract, ‘Against the bull of Antichrist’²⁸¹....”

²⁸¹ Widder die Bullen des Endchrists, Weimar ed. vol. VI. 613-629.”

The continued deliberate effort on the part of Papacy to suppress truth is manifest in the Original 1611 Preface to the King James Bible. In the 1611 preface, the translators viewed Papacy as the “Man of Sin” and in opposition to the general distribution of God’s Word:

“So that, if on the one side we shall be traduced [meaning, slandered] by Popish persons at home or abroad, who therefore will maligne us, because we are poore Instruments to make GODS holy Trueth to be yet more and more knowen unto the people, whom they desire still to keepe in ignorance and darknesse....”

(<https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/1611-King-James-Bible-Introduction.php>)

Along a similar line, as noted in the preface to *The Emphatic Diaglott* (a word-for-word English translation of the Greek, originally published in 1864, based on the Vatican Manuscript No. 1209):

“It is generally admitted by all critics that the Authorized or Common version of the Scriptures [i.e., the King James Version] absolutely needs revision. Obsolete words, uncouth phrases, bad grammar and punctuation, etc., all require alteration. But this is not all. There are errors of a more serious nature which need correction. The translators of the Common version were circumscribed and trammeled [meaning, restricted and deprived of freedom of action] by royal mandate; they were required to retain certain old ecclesiastical words which, accordingly, were left untranslated. Thus the minds of many who had no means of knowing the meaning of the original words have been misled and confused. Biblical criticism, however, during the last two hundred years, has done much to open up and elucidate the Word of God....”

(Wilson, B., *The Emphatic Diaglott*)

Truth once again took a back seat when Galileo dared to entertain the idea that the Earth moves around the sun, in opposition to accepted church dogma. Tried by the Inquisition in Rome in 1633, he was characterized as “vehemently suspect

of heresy” and required (upon bended knee, in subjection to the powers that be) to “abjure, curse, and detest” those opinions, and he was ultimately placed under “house arrest” for the term of his life.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_affair)

Those who would defend the Roman Catholic church will assert that this tribunal was not claiming infallibility when judging Galileo and that torture, or the threat thereof, was not employed. However, only minimal research into the historical record is necessary to realize how frequently different methods of coercion, including and most notably torture, were used by the “Holy(?) Office of the Inquisition.”

In the *Acts and Monuments of These Latter and Perilous Days, Touching Matters of the Church*, otherwise more popularly known as *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, there are numerous accounts of those faithful souls who died because they resisted the Papacy. Other authors have assessed and criticized these atrocities as found on *The Protestant Reformation: the past-the present-the future*:

(<http://rekindlingthereformation.com/2017/08/01/quotes-concerning-the-bloody-history-of-papal-rome/>)

John Daniel (Author):

“Through relentless torture, starvation, genocide, massacres, burning at the stake, against every conceivable fury of [Papal] Rome, they [i.e., the ‘seeds of protest’] could not be extinguished. History estimates that over one hundred million people lost their lives during that time of [Papal] Roman tyranny. Is it any wonder that God graphically describes this onslaught of [Papal] Rome as her being ‘drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus’, and calls her the ‘Beast’?

...For the unbiased researcher, history reeks of the butchery of Romanism, where whole cities and populations were unmercifully wiped out, just because they worshipped God in a manner that was different from Roman Catholicism.”

Charles A. Bolton (Ex-Roman Catholic priest):

“What has turned my soul against Roman abuse of power is the way in which it has tortured and burned such saints of God as Joan of Arc, hundreds of the Albigensian martyrs in France in the 12th century, the Knights Templar, John Huss [Czech Jan Hus], the Dominican Savonarola, the Dominican Giordano Bruno, [and] the Anglican bishops Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer. The Inquisition has promoted at least two wholesale massacres: [hundreds of] thousands of Protestant Waldensians in

northern Italy, and thousands of Protestant Huguenots by the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France. More than 30,000 of the most cultured Protestants of France were put to the sword on the night of St. Bartholomew, August 24, 1572. At the news [of this brutal, bloody massacre], the Pope had cannons fired, proclaimed a jubilee, ordered a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving to be sung, and struck a special medal to commemorate the glorious 'victory'."

Peter de Rosa (Ex-Roman Catholic priest and author):

"Of eighty popes in a line from the thirteenth century on, not one of them disapproved of the theology and apparatus of Inquisition. On the contrary, one after another added his own cruel touches to the workings of this deadly machine."

Dave Hunt (Christian apologist, speaker, radio commentator, and author):

"To wring out confessions from these poor creatures, the Roman Catholic Church devised ingenious tortures so excruciating and barbarous that one is sickened by their recital....

The Medieval Inquisition had flourished for centuries when Pope Paul III, in 1542, gave it permanent status as the first of Rome's Sacred Congregations, the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Inquisition. Known more recently as the Holy Office, its name was changed in 1967 to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.... Therefore it is not surprising that the Office of the Inquisition still occupies the Palace of the Inquisition adjacent to the Vatican, though under its new name, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Its current Grand Inquisitor, who reports directly to the pope, is the former Archbishop of Munich, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, whom *Time* [Magazine] has called 'the world's most powerful cardinal [and] the Catholic Church's chief enforcer of dogma...."

Returning to the matter of Galileo: If not considered at the time—an "infallible" judgment—why then did it take the Papacy until 1965 to revoke its condemnation of Galileo? Surely, it was apparent long before 1965 that the Earth, in fact, does move around the sun....

"April 12th, 1633, chief inquisitor Father Vincenzo Maculano da Firenzuola, appointed by Pope Urban VIII, begins the inquisition of physicist and astronomer Galileo Galilei. Galileo was ordered to turn himself in to the Holy Office to begin trial for holding the belief that the Earth revolves

around the Sun, which was deemed heretical by the Catholic Church. Standard practice demanded that the accused be imprisoned and secluded during the trial.

On June 22, 1633, the Church handed down the following order: ‘We pronounce, judge, and declare, that you, the said Galileo... have rendered yourself vehemently suspected by this Holy Office of heresy, that is, of having believed and held the doctrine (which is false and contrary to the Holy and Divine Scriptures) that the sun is the center of the world, and that it does not move from east to west, and that the earth does move, and is not the center of the world.’

Along with the order came the penalty: ‘We order that by a public edict the book of Dialogues of Galileo Galilei be prohibited, and We condemn thee to the prison of this Holy Office during Our will and pleasure; and as a salutary penance We enjoin on thee that for the space of three years thou shalt recite once a week the Seven Penitential Psalms.’”

(<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/galileo-is-convicted-of-heresy>)

“I, Galileo Galilei, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei of Florence, aged seventy years, being brought personally to judgment, and kneeling before you, Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords, Cardinals, General Inquisitors of the Universal Christian Republic against heretical depravity having before my eyes the Holy Gospels which I touch with my own hands, swear, that I have always believed, and, with the help of God, will in future believe, every article which the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome holds, teaches, and preaches.... Because it has been signified to me that the said doctrine that I held is repugnant to the Holy Scriptures.

Namely that, I held and believed that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth is not the center and is movable. I am willing to remove from the minds of your Eminences, and of every Catholic Christian, this vehement suspicion rightly entertained towards me, therefore, with a sincere heart and unfeigned faith, I abjure, curse, and detest the said errors and heresies, and generally every other error and sect contrary to the said Holy Catholic Church....”

(http://www-history.mcs.st-andrews.ac.uk/Extras/Galileo_confession.html)

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that these “Dark Ages,” or as they are now more commonly referred to as the “Middle Ages” (5th–15th centuries AD), were in large part synchronous with Papacy’s 1,000-Year Millennium³—roughly, AD 800, when Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne “Emperor of the Romans (West)” to AD

1798 when Napoleon took Pope Pius VI captive to Valence, France, where he died August 29, 1799. It is no surprise that Bible Societies began to flourish in the following years (after the Papacy had previously done all in its power—including burning Bibles and Bible translations—to keep the Word of God from the “ignorant” masses).

³“The Papal Millennium

As the true Kingdom of the true Christ is to last a thousand years, so the Papal counterfeit looks back upon the period of its greatest prosperity, which began A.D. 800 and closed in the dawn of the present century, as the fulfilment of the Millennial reign foretold in Rev. 20. And the period since, in which Papacy has gradually lost all of its temporal power, suffered many indignities from nations formerly its supporters, and been greatly despoiled of territories, incomes and liberties long claimed and possessed, Romanists regard as the ‘little season’ of Rev. 20:3,7,8, at the close of the Millennium, during which Satan was to be loosed.

And the dates which mark the beginning and the close of Papacy's Millennium of ignorance, superstition and fraud are clearly shown in history. A Roman Catholic writer thus refers to the beginning of this religious empire: “The coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of the West, by Pope Leo, A.D. 800, was really the commencement of the Holy Roman Empire.’”

(Russell C., *Studies in the Scriptures: The Time Is at Hand*, vol. 2; Wilson P. H., *A History of the Holy Roman Empire*)

Beyond historical record, the Bible had long before prophesied that Papacy as a civil power—now manifest as the Vatican State and characterized in Holy Writ as the “beast” (Rev. 13:17), along with Roman Catholicism as a sacerdotal power, characterized in Holy Writ as the “woman Jezebel,” (Rev. 2:20) and their head, the pope—would have persecuting power for a period of 1,260 years (i.e., AD 539–1799). The Jewish calendar had thirty days in each month, and 360 days to the year; thus, each expression, the three and one-half years and the forty-two months, consisted of 1,260 days. In these prophecies, a day is symbolic of a year (Num. 14:34, Ezek. 4:6):

Dan. 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Dan. 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

Rev. 11:2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Rev. 11:3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

Rev. 12:6 And the woman [the true church] 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.

Rev. 12:14 And to the woman [the true church] 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 [“a time” or 360 + “times” or 2x360 or 720 + “half a time” or 180 = 1,260], from the face of the serpent.

Rev. 13:5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months [42x30=1,260].

Thus, the Bible indicates that Papal dominion began its rise in AD 538/539 when the pope exercised his newly found authority after the expulsion of the Ostrogoths. There had been little to challenge the status quo for these 1,260 years, until, by Divine Providence, the pope was taken prisoner by Napoleon's army under General Berthier in 1798. Napoleon's subsequent act of crowning himself king—being the final blow—humiliated the Papacy. Napoleon's defiant act contradicted centuries of precedent when the church had rule over the state, and the pope alone would have authority to crown the king. The “1,260 days,” were thus a clear fulfillment of prophecy.

Fast forward. Given the historical character of the Papacy as expressed in the preface to the original 1611 King James Version of the Bible, it should come as no surprise that the Papacy, including Pope Innocent (hardly innocent) the XII, refrained from condemning the horrific atrocities perpetrated against the Jew—for fear of reprisal or, more likely, for concern over the loss of tax revenue allocated to the Catholic church by the (Nazi) German government. Even after the end of

WWI, lingering questions remain regarding the matter of Catholic priests facilitating the escape of war criminals to South America. Though a partly fictionalized account, the 2002 movie “Amen” gives a sense of the time and circumstances that led to a profoundly desolate time in the history of mankind—when evil seized the sensibilities of those in military uniform and priestly garb except for those few that would be ruled by a rightly exercised conscience.

Rev. 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Luther’s “Ninety-Five Theses” struck a far deeper note than just condemning the matter of profiteering.

Quoting further from *The Great Controversy*:

“While one day examining the books in the library of the [Wittenberg] university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence. He had heard portions of the Gospels and Epistles, which were read to the people at public worship, and he supposed that these were the entire Bible. Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God's word. With mingled awe and wonder he turned the sacred pages; with quickened pulse and throbbing heart he read for himself the words of life, pausing now and then to exclaim: ‘O that God would give me such a book for myself!’ Angels of heaven were by his side, and rays of light from the throne of God revealed the treasures of truth to his understanding. He had ever feared to offend God, but now the deep conviction of his condition as a sinner took hold upon him as never before.

An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God led him at last to enter a cloister and devote himself to a monastic life. Here he was required to perform the lowest drudgery and to beg from house to house. He was at an age when respect and appreciation are most eagerly craved, and these menial offices were deeply mortifying to his natural feelings; but he patiently endured this humiliation, believing that it was necessary because of his sins.

After his return from Rome, Luther received at the University of Wittenberg the degree of doctor of divinity. Now he was at liberty to devote himself, as never before, to the Scriptures that he loved. He had taken a solemn vow to study carefully and to preach with fidelity the word of God, not the sayings

and doctrines of the popes, all the days of his life. He was no longer the mere monk or professor, but the authorized herald of the Bible. He had been called as a shepherd to feed the flock of God, that were hungering and thirsting for the truth. He firmly declared that Christians should receive no other doctrines than those which rest on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. These words struck at the very foundation of papal supremacy. They contained the vital principle of the Reformation.”

As the Reformation gained traction, Papacy was now under pressure—there was now a new mission to convert the masses and bring them to God and godliness. In response to their loss of parishioners to the Protestant church, the Catholic church launched the “Counter-Reformation.” Among the primary targets for the Catholic church was China. The Jesuit China mission was founded by Francis Xavier (AD 1506–1552) who, like Ignatius of Loyola (AD 1491–1556), was from the Basque region of Spain. Although Francis Xavier’s wish to enter China was never fulfilled, his efforts inspired fellow Jesuits. The first Jesuit missionaries in late imperial China arrived in the southern provinces of the empire in the mid-sixteenth century.

Bringing Christianity to China was ostensibly commendable, but the underlying motives of increasing membership in the church and trying to suppress the Reformation movement certainly were not.

“See, sir, from this chamber I govern not only to Paris, but to China, not only to China, but to all the world, without any one to know how I do it.”
(Michelangelo Tamburini, fourteenth Superior General of the Society of Jesus [i.e., Jesuits] from January 31, 1706, to February 28, 1730).
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelangelo_Tamburini)

As earlier expressed, the Papacy was very plainly taking advantage of a gullible and ignorant populace. The Papacy had been quite literally capitalizing upon the fear of its parishioners with, among a variety of economic ploys at its disposal, the sale of Papal Indulgences. Under the plea of raising funds for the erection of St. Peter’s Church at Rome, indulgences for sin were publicly offered for sale by the authority of the pope.

Luther had, in effect, overturned a rock. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., captured the essence of such a moment when writing the prose entitled “The Truth”:

“Have you ever, when walking about out of doors, found some big flat stone that has lain no one knows how long, just where you found it, surrounded by grass that forms as it were a little fence around it—and have you not,

obeying some sort of feeling, thought that it has been there long enough, put your stick or your finger or the foot under its edge and overturned it?

What a scene, and what an unexpected and disagreeable surprise for a little colony, the very existence of which you did not imagine before you observed the sudden confusion and anguish of its inhabitants when overturning the stone! No sooner is the stone overturned, and the wholesome daylight entered to the compressed and light shy society of creeping things under it, then every one of them possessing legs—and many of them have a whole lot—run wildly about and push against each other and everything in their way, and it ends with a universal general rush for the subterranean hiding places from a circuit poisoned by the sunlight.

Never imagine that you can overturn an old lie without causing a terrible confusion and alarm among the sickening little world living under it!

Every real idea and every real subject bring one or another to gasp. And having regained the breath he will probably begin to misuse it for blasphemy. These are the best proofs you can get that you have expressed a truth for which the time was ripe.”

So it was with Martin Luther’s timely theses. Many dignitaries, of both church and state, were convicted of the truthfulness of his theses, but they soon realized the acceptance of these truths would involve great changes. As noted in *The Great Controversy*:

“To enlighten and reform the people would be virtually to undermine the authority of Rome, to stop thousands of streams now flowing into her treasury, and thus greatly to curtail the extravagance and luxury of the papal leaders. Furthermore, to teach the people to think and act as responsible beings, looking to Christ alone for salvation, would overthrow the pontiff's throne and eventually destroy their own authority. For this reason, they refused the knowledge tendered them of God and arrayed themselves against Christ and the truth by their opposition to the man whom He had sent to enlighten them....

Luther trembled as he looked upon himself—one man opposed to the mightiest powers of earth. He sometimes doubted whether he had indeed been led of God to set himself against the authority of the church. ‘Who was I,’ he writes, ‘to oppose the majesty of the pope, before whom ... the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled? ... No one can know what my heart suffered during these first two years, and into what despondency,

I may say into what despair, I was sunk.' But he was not left to become utterly disheartened. When human support failed, he looked to God alone and learned that he could lean in perfect safety upon that all-powerful arm."

Clearly, from Papacy's perspective, "cutting off the head" was the best strategy. Stop Luther and, in effect, the Reformation is stopped. To their chagrin, this lowly monk was eloquent and well versed in Scripture and reasoning; consequently, it was important that their most talented representative be put to the task.

Continuing in *The Great Controversy*:

"This arrangement was finally effected, and the pope's legate was appointed to hear the case. In the instructions communicated by the pontiff to this official, it was stated that Luther had already been declared a heretic. The legate was therefore charged 'to prosecute and constrain without any delay.' If he should remain steadfast, and the legate should fail to gain possession of his person, he was empowered 'to proscribe him in every part of Germany; to banish, curse, and excommunicate all those who are attached to him.' And, further, the pope directed his legate, in order entirely to root out the pestilent heresy, to excommunicate all, of whatever dignity in church or state, except the emperor, who should neglect to seize Luther and his adherents, and deliver them up to the vengeance of Rome....

Here is displayed the true spirit of popery. Not a trace of Christian principle or even of common justice is to be seen in the whole document. Luther was at a great distance from Rome; he had had no opportunity to explain or defend his position, yet before his case had been investigated, he was summarily pronounced a heretic, and in the same day, exhorted, accused, judged, and condemned. All this occurred by the self-styled 'holy father,' the only supreme, infallible authority in church or state!

When the prelate saw that Luther's reasoning, was unanswerable, he lost all self-control, and in a rage cried out: '...retract! Or if you do not, I shall send you to Rome to appear before judges commissioned to take cognizance of your affair. I shall excommunicate you with all your partisans, with all who are or may be favorable to you, and reject them from the Church. All power has been given me in this respect by the holy apostolic see. Think you that your protectors will stop me? Do you imagine that the pope cares anything for Germany? The pope's little finger is stronger than

all the German princes put together.' And he finally with 'an air of dignity, said to Luther, in a haughty and angry tone: 'Retract, or return no more.'"

By this time, the Reformer's writings and his doctrine were spreading to every nation in Christendom. The work spread to Switzerland and Holland, and copies of his writings found their way to France and Spain. In England, his teachings were received as the word of life. To Belgium and Italy also, the truth had extended. Thousands were awakening from their deathlike stupor to the joy and hope of a life of faith. *The Great Controversy* states, "A new bull appeared, declaring the Reformer's final separation from the Roman Church, denouncing him as accursed of Heaven, and including in the same condemnation all who should receive his doctrines." It goes on at length to capture the political maneuverings of the Papacy (as represented by its Prelate Aleander) against Luther, including accusations of "sedition, rebellion, impiety, and blasphemy," all made with the ultimate hope that an imperial edict would sentence Luther to death. "In Luther's errors there is enough," he declared, to warrant the burning of "a hundred thousand heretics."

Despite the obvious railroading of Luther, the new Emperor Charles V was forced to concede that an open debate between Luther and the church was not in the best interest of all concerned (except Luther's). The Emperor wrote to the elector (of Saxony at Wittenberg) that if Luther would not retract, he must remain at Wittenberg. Luther's conviction remained steadfast: "Expect every thing of me—save flight and recantation. I cannot fly, still less can I recant."

Prelate Aleander thus had unrestrained opportunity at the assembly of the Diet of Worms, in Germany, AD 1521, (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diet_of_Worms) to denounce Luther before all the dignitaries and princes of the realm, while Luther was restricted to Wittenberg and not permitted to defend himself and the cause to which he devoted his life. But despite this unfettered opportunity by Aleander to cast the church in the most favorable light, he did not convince all that were in attendance. Duke George of Saxony ("Hardly one of the secular German princes held as firmly as he to the Church." – *Wikipedia.com*) a determined enemy of Luther, nonetheless, stood up in the assembly and without reservation, said:

"These are some of the abuses that cry out against Rome. All shame has been put aside, and their only object is ... money! money! money! ... so that the preachers who should teach the truth, utter nothing but falsehoods, and are not only tolerated, but rewarded, because the greater their lies, the greater their gain. It is from this foul spring that such tainted waters flow.

Debauchery stretches out the hand to avarice.... Alas, it is the scandal caused by the clergy that hurls so many poor souls into eternal condemnation! A general reform must be effected."

(D'Aubigné, J. H. M., *The Life and Times of Martin Luther*)

As Ellen Gould White noted:

"Martin Luther was not present; but the voice of One greater than Luther had been heard in that assembly.... Henceforth the contrast between truth and error would be more clearly seen, as they should take the field in open warfare. Never from that day would Rome stand as secure as she had stood."

Luther was finally summoned—against the objections of Aleander—to appear at the Diet of Worms. In response to concerns expressed by his supporters, Luther stated:

"The papists...have no wish for my arrival at Worms, they only wish my condemnation and death. No matter, pray not for me, but for the Word of God. Before my blood is cold, thousands throughout the world will be called to answer for having shed it. The most holy adversary of Christ, the father, and generalissimo of homicides, insists on having my life. Amen! Let the will of the Lord be done. Christ will give me His Spirit to vanquish these ministers of error. I despise them during my life, and will triumph over them by my death. They are doing all they can at Worms to compel me to retract! Here then will be my retraction: I once said, that the pope was the vicar of Christ; now, I say that he is the enemy of the Lord, and the apostle of the devil."

To Luther's devout supporter, Melanchthon, whom he discouraged from accompanying him, Luther said:

"If I do not return, and my enemies put me to death, O, my brother, cease not to teach, and remain firm in the truth. Labor in my stead.... If you live, it matters little though I perish."

Thus, the Reformer and his companions set out from Wittenberg to the Diet at Worms:

"At length Luther stood before the council. The emperor occupied the throne. He was surrounded by the most illustrious personages in the empire. Never had any man appeared in the presence of a more imposing assembly than that before which Martin Luther was to answer for his faith.

'This appearance was of itself a signal victory over the papacy. The pope had condemned the man, and he was now standing before a tribunal which, by this very act, set itself above the pope. The pope had laid him under an interdict, and cut him off from all human society; and yet he was summoned in respectful language, and received before the most august assembly in the world. The pope had condemned him to perpetual silence, and he was now about to speak before thousands of attentive hearers drawn together from the farthest parts of Christendom. An immense revolution had thus been effected by Luther's instrumentality. Rome was already descending from her throne, and it was the voice of a monk that caused this humiliation.'

In the presence of that powerful and titled assembly the lowly born Reformer seemed awed and embarrassed. Several of the princes, observing his emotion, approached him, and one of them whispered, 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.' Another said, 'When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, it shall be given you, by the Spirit of your Father, what ye shall say.' Thus, the words of Christ were brought by the world's great men to strengthen His servant in the hour of trial. Luther was conducted to a position directly in front of the Emperor's throne. A deep silence fell upon the crowded assembly. Then an imperial officer arose and, pointing to a collection of Luther's writings, demanded that the Reformer answer two questions 1) whether he acknowledged them as his, and 2) whether he proposed to retract the opinions which he had therein advanced. The titles of his books having been read, Luther replied that as to the first question, he acknowledged the books to be his. 'As to the second,' he said, 'seeing that it is a question which concerns faith and the salvation of souls, and in which the word of God, the greatest and most precious treasure either in heaven or earth, is involved, I should act imprudently were I to reply without reflection. I might affirm less than the circumstance demands, or more than truth requires, and so sin against this saying of Christ: "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." [Matt. 10:33]. For this reason I entreat your imperial majesty, with all humility, to allow me time, that I may answer without offending against the word of God.'

In making this request, Luther moved wisely. His course convinced the assembly that he did not act from passion or impulse. Such calmness and self-command, unexpected in one who had shown himself bold and

uncompromising, added to his power, and enabled him afterward to answer with prudence, decision, wisdom, and dignity that surprised and disappointed his adversaries and rebuked their insolence and pride.

'Most serene emperor, illustrious princes, gracious lords,' said Luther, 'I appear before you this day, in conformity with the order given me yesterday, and by God's mercies I conjure your majesty and your august highnesses to listen graciously to the defense of a cause which I am assured is just and true. If, through ignorance, I should transgress the usages and proprieties of courts, I entreat you to pardon me; for I was not brought up in the palaces of kings, but in the seclusion of a convent.'

Those who stubbornly closed their eyes to the light and were determined not to be convinced of the truth, were enraged at the power of Luther's words. As he ceased speaking, the spokesman of the Diet said angrily: 'You have not answered the question put to you.... You are required to give a clear and precise answer.... Will you, or will you not, retract?'

The Reformer answered: 'Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. **Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen.**'

His words were not without effect. On the day following Luther's answer, [King] Charles caused a message to be presented to the Diet, announcing his determination to carry out the policy of his predecessors to maintain and protect the Catholic religion. Since Luther had refused to renounce his errors, the most vigorous measures should be employed against him and the heresies he taught. 'A single monk, misled by his own folly, has risen against the faith of Christendom. To stay such impiety, I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my treasures, my friends, my body, my blood, my soul, and my life. I am about to dismiss the Augustine Luther, forbidding him to cause the least disorder among the people; I shall then proceed against him and his adherents as contumacious heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and by every means calculated to destroy them. I call on the members of

the states to behave like faithful Christians.' Nevertheless, the Emperor declared that Luther's safe-conduct must be respected and that before proceedings against him could be instituted, he must be allowed to reach his home in safety.

Yet Charles had deliberately rejected the truths presented by Luther. 'I am firmly resolved to imitate the example of my ancestors,' wrote the monarch. He had decided that he would not step out of the path of custom, even to walk in the ways of truth and righteousness. Because his fathers did, he would uphold the Papacy, with all its cruelty and corruption. Thus, he took his position, refusing to accept any light in advance of what his fathers had received or to perform any duty that they had not performed.

After his departure, still desirous that his firmness should not be mistaken for rebellion, Luther wrote to the Emperor: 'God, who is the searcher of hearts, is my witness,' he said, 'that I am ready most earnestly to obey your majesty, in honor or in dishonor, in life or in death, and with no exception save the word of God, by which man lives. In all the affairs of this present life, my fidelity shall be unshaken, for here to lose or to gain is of no consequence to salvation. But when eternal interests are concerned, God wills not that man should submit unto man. For such submission in spiritual matters is a real worship, and ought to be rendered solely to the Creator.'

He had not been long absent from Worms, when the papists prevailed upon the Emperor to issue an edict against him. In this decree Luther was denounced as 'Satan himself under the form of a man and dressed in a monk's frock'. It was commanded that as soon as his safe-conduct should expire, measures be taken to stop his work. All persons were forbidden to harbor him, to give him food or drink, or by word or act, in public or private, to aid or abet him. He was to be seized wherever he might be and delivered to authorities. His adherents also were to be imprisoned and their property confiscated. His writings were to be destroyed, and, finally, all who should dare to act contrary to this decree were included in its condemnation.

The elector of Saxony and the princes most friendly to Luther had left Worms soon after his departure, and the Emperor's decree received the sanction of the Diet. Now the Romanists were jubilant. They considered the fate of the Reformation sealed.

God had provided a way of escape for His servant in this hour of peril. A vigilant eye had followed Luther's movements, and a true and noble heart

had resolved upon his rescue. It was plain that Rome would be satisfied with nothing short of his death; only by concealment could he be preserved from the jaws of the lion. God gave wisdom to Frederick of Saxony to devise a plan for the Reformer's preservation. With the cooperation of true friends, the elector's purpose was carried out, and Luther was effectually hidden from friends and foes. Upon his homeward journey he was seized, separated from his attendants, and hurriedly conveyed through the forest to the castle of Wartburg, an isolated mountain fortress. Both his seizure and his concealment were so involved in mystery that even Frederick himself for a long time knew not whither he had been conducted. This ignorance was not without design; so long as the elector knew nothing of Luther's whereabouts, he could reveal nothing. He satisfied himself that the Reformer was safe, and with this knowledge he was content."

Thus, Martin Luther was granted—or providentially given—an extension to his Reformation work until his death in AD 1546 at the age of 62.

In retrospect, we see a man who was a living example of what the Apostle Paul expressed to the Romans:

Rom. 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (New Revised Standard Version)

Luther's exposure and condemnation of the practices of the orthodox church, "the match" that set afire the Protestant Reformation, has now, for all intents and purposes, burned out.

As expressed in October 2015 by Elizabeth A. Eaton, the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Five hundred years ago, wars were fought over the very issues about which Lutherans and Roman Catholics have now achieved consensus."

Further, at a Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference hosted by Kenneth Copeland, January 21, 2014, in Fort Worth, Texas, Bishop Anthony Joseph "Tony" Palmer, a South African Bishop with the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches and a longtime friend of Pope Francis, who was sent by him as a special envoy to this Annual Ministers' Conference, assertively declared, "Brothers and sisters, Luther's protest is over. Is yours?"

Clearly, a number of Protestant churches have stopped protesting, but what about the Catholic church? In 1999, the Catholic and Lutheran churches signed a joint declaration on the doctrine of justification as an attempt to narrow the

theological divide between the two faiths. And, more recently, a 100-page document entitled “From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017, Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Joint Commission for Unity” addresses the efforts of the Catholic and Lutheran churches toward unity. The question that again begs to be answered is “Unity at what cost?”

If only Martin Luther were here today. What he and other devout Christians had personally sacrificed in order to effect meaningful doctrinal reform has been all but entirely lost amidst politicking and an ever-growing ecumenical movement inasmuch that the pope may be a participant at the Wittenberg commemoration in October 2017.

Luther’s “Ninety-Five Theses” were hardly just about “Indulgences” and “Justification by Faith”; they challenged the role that the pope and clergy in general had with regard to the forgiveness of sin. They challenged the believer to live a life of repentance. They sought reform from what historically was the Nicolaitan spirit (Rev. 2:6,15) of “lordship” over another. And as Luther’s 62nd thesis points out: “The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.”

Whatever time might remain before God’s Kingdom is made manifest—and the long-sought-for answer to the Lord’s Prayer is realized: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10)—it is clear that religious ideologies will play a very large part in future events.

The motto of the Protestant Reformation (inscribed in Geneva, Switzerland, on the Reformation Monument)—“Light After Darkness” or “After Darkness, Light”—speaks volumes of what transpired when the Reformation was on the rise. As expressed in *Christianity and History: Essays* by Elmore Harris Harbison:

“These words have captured something of the Reformers’ conviction that God was intervening again in history before their eyes, cleansing His Church, and bringing light out of darkness.”

This kernel thought of “light out of darkness,” which became the motto of the Reformation, is attributed to a passage from the Book of Job, as translated from the Latin, or Vulgate, version:

Job 17:7-12 My eye has grown dim from grief, and all my members are like a shadow. The upright are appalled at this, and the innocent stir themselves up against the godless. Yet the righteous hold to their way, and they that have clean hands grow stronger and stronger. But you, come back now, all

of you, and I shall not find a sensible person among you. My days are past, my plans are broken off, the desires of my heart. They make night into day; 'The light,' they say, 'is near to the darkness.' (Vulgate version)

This principle is one that occurs elsewhere in Scripture, including the ministry of Jesus. His words clearly speak to those circumstances past, as well as future, where it is manifest that the darkness hates the light (John 3:20):

Matt. 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Matt. 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Strong's G4864. συναγωγή sunagoge: an assemblage of persons; specially, a Jewish "synagogue" (the meeting or the place); by analogy, a Christian church: — assembly, congregation, synagogue. (Strong J., *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*)

Matt. 10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Matt. 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Matt. 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you....

Matt. 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved....

Matt. 10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known....

Matt. 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul....

Until the hearts of men have been purged, and the ideologies and beliefs of men have been put to the test, nothing less than a continuation in the decline of moral values should be expected. Martin Luther so valiantly sought and fought for true faith—not the faith that was established upon creeds and practices of the church but upon the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, and for the grace that He supplies through His Son:

1 Cor. 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1 Cor. 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1 Cor. 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

1 Cor. 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The "fire" of anarchy and lawlessness in the coming "time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1) is what will purge the false ideologies and beliefs of men—even as the refiner purges the dross:

Mal. 3:2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap.

Thus, as history so often repeats itself, there will be a time yet future that will not be unlike the "Dark Ages," in which times those, like Luther and other valiant reformers of the past, will challenge the status quo.

Indeed, not only as the Reformers of the past faced unimaginable persecution at the hands of Papal power, so likewise the Scriptures prophesy of this future rise of persecuting Papal power, characterized as an "hour" of power:⁴

Rev. 17:8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Rev. 17:9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

Rev. 17:10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

Rev. 17:11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Rev. 17:12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

⁴Papacy's resurgence to a persecuting power and its geographic location upon the seven hills of Rome are explained in *The Keys of Revelation* by Frank Shallieu (pp. 447–451).

These dark days were foretold of by our Lord:

Luke 18:8 I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find [the] faith on the earth?

Ultimately—not unlike the motto of the Reformation (“*Post tenebras lux*”)—“the light that will follow the darkness” will first be made manifest in Jerusalem, the “city of the great King” (Matt. 5:35)—not Vatican City.

Isa. 60:2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

The glory of God will “rise” upon the Holy Remnant of Israel at the end of Jacob's Trouble:

Isa. 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

When the light comes on Israel, the Earth will still be in darkness and the people in gross darkness. But, this declaration, “arise, shine,” shows that a definite time is coming in God's plan when He will establish His Kingdom in power and great glory.

Isa. 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Psa. 30:5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

And as the Apostle Peter long ago expressed:

2 Pet. 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

To a friend of the Reformation, Luther wrote:

“We cannot attain to the understanding of Scripture either by study or by the intellect. Your first duty is to begin by prayer.”

Luther's ministry (and that of other early Reformers) and his "Ninety-Five Theses," which declared the authority of Scripture over meaningless church bulls and dogma, are, in effect, a basis for what lies **BEYOND**. Clearly, the Holy Bible includes many yet-unfulfilled prophecies; however, the current events that so many Christians are witness to, should be an indication that the time is indeed short. When religious and political rulers cooperate, as in Luther's day, and as was the case in connection with the demise of Jesus, it should be plain that the "Great Time of Trouble" (Dan. 12:1, Matt. 24:22), which will precede God's glorious Kingdom, is near at hand. As the proverb aptly expresses—history will once again repeat itself!

Isa. 8:12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

To the reader we advise, as did Jesus to his disciples:

Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.



The Ninety-Five Theses

(<http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>)



Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore, he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

- 1 When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
- 2 This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
- 3 Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh.
- 4 The penalty of sin remains as long as the hatred of self (that is, true inner repentance), namely till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
- 5 The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.
- 6 The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring and showing that it has been remitted by God; or, to be sure, by remitting guilt in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in these cases were disregarded, the guilt would certainly remain unforgiven.
- 7 God remits guilt to no one unless at the same time he humbles him in all things and makes him submissive to the vicar, the priest.
- 8 The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to the canons themselves, nothing should be imposed on the dying.

- 9 Therefore the Holy Spirit through the pope is kind to us insofar as the pope in his decrees always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.
- 10 Those priests act ignorantly and wickedly who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penalties for purgatory.
- 11 Those tares of changing the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory were evidently sown while the bishops slept (Mt 13:25).
- 12 In former times canonical penalties were imposed, not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.
- 13 The dying are freed by death from all penalties, are already dead as far as the canon laws are concerned, and have a right to be released from them.
- 14 Imperfect piety or love on the part of the dying person necessarily brings with it great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater the fear.
- 15 This fear or horror is sufficient in itself, to say nothing of other things, to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.
- 16 Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ the same as despair, fear, and assurance of salvation.
- 17 It seems as though for the souls in purgatory fear should necessarily decrease and love increase.
- 18 Furthermore, it does not seem proved, either by reason or by Scripture, that souls in purgatory are outside the state of merit, that is, unable to grow in love.
- 19 Nor does it seem proved that souls in purgatory, at least not all of them, are certain and assured of their own salvation, even if we ourselves may be entirely certain of it.
- 20 Therefore the pope, when he uses the words "plenary remission of all penalties," does not actually mean "all penalties," but only those imposed by himself.
- 21 Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.
- 22 As a matter of fact, the pope remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to canon law, they should have paid in this life.
- 23 If remission of all penalties whatsoever could be granted to anyone at all, certainly it would be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to very few.
- 24 For this reason most people are necessarily deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.

- 25 That power which the pope has in general over purgatory corresponds to the power which any bishop or curate has in a particular way in his own diocese and parish.
- 26 The pope does very well when he grants remission to souls in purgatory, not by the power of the keys, which he does not have, but by way of intercession for them.
- 27 They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.
- 28 It is certain that when money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased; but when the church intercedes, the result is in the hands of God alone.
- 29 Who knows whether all souls in purgatory wish to be redeemed, since we have exceptions in St. Severinus and St. Paschal, as related in a legend.
- 30 No one is sure of the integrity of his own contrition, much less of having received plenary remission.
- 31 The man who actually buys indulgences is as rare as he who is really penitent; indeed, he is exceedingly rare.
- 32 Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.
- 33 Men must especially be on guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to him.
- 34 For the graces of indulgences are concerned only with the penalties of sacramental satisfaction established by man.
- 35 They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional privileges preach unchristian doctrine.
- 36 Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.
- 37 Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.
- 38 Nevertheless, papal remission and blessing are by no means to be disregarded, for they are, as I have said (Thesis 6), the proclamation of the divine remission.

- 39 It is very difficult, even for the most learned theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the bounty of indulgences and the need of true contrition.
- 40 A Christian who is truly contrite seeks and loves to pay penalties for his sins; the bounty of indulgences, however, relaxes penalties and causes men to hate them -- at least it furnishes occasion for hating them.
- 41 Papal indulgences must be preached with caution, lest people erroneously think that they are preferable to other good works of love.
- 42 Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend that the buying of indulgences should in any way be compared with works of mercy.
- 43 Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
- 44 Because love grows by works of love, man thereby becomes better. Man does not, however, become better by means of indulgences but is merely freed from penalties.
- 45 Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.
- 46 Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.
- 47 Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.
- 48 Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.
- 49 Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.
- 50 Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.
- 51 Christians are to be taught that the pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica of St. Peter, to many of those from whom certain hawkers of indulgences cajole money.
- 52 It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.

- 53 They are the enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.
- 54 Injury is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or larger amount of time is devoted to indulgences than to the Word.
- 55 It is certainly the pope's sentiment that if indulgences, which are a very insignificant thing, are celebrated with one bell, one procession, and one ceremony, then the gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.
- 56 The true treasures of the church, out of which the pope distributes indulgences, are not sufficiently discussed or known among the people of Christ.
- 57 That indulgences are not temporal treasures is certainly clear, for many indulgence sellers do not distribute them freely but only gather them.
- 58 Nor are they the merits of Christ and the saints, for, even without the pope, the latter always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outer man.
- 59 St. Lawrence said that the poor of the church were the treasures of the church, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.
- 60 Without want of consideration we say that the keys of the church, given by the merits of Christ, are that treasure.
- 61 For it is clear that the pope's power is of itself sufficient for the remission of penalties and cases reserved by himself.
- 62 The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.
- 63 But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last (Mt. 20:16).
- 64 On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.
- 65 Therefore the treasures of the gospel are nets with which one formerly fished for men of wealth.
- 66 The treasures of indulgences are nets with which one now fishes for the wealth of men.
- 67 The indulgences which the demagogues acclaim as the greatest graces are actually understood to be such only insofar as they promote gain.

- 68 They are nevertheless in truth the most insignificant graces when compared with the grace of God and the piety of the cross.
- 69 Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of papal indulgences with all reverence.
- 70 But they are much more bound to strain their eyes and ears lest these men preach their own dreams instead of what the pope has commissioned.
- 71 Let him who speaks against the truth concerning papal indulgences be anathema and accursed.
- 72 But let him who guards against the lust and license of the indulgence preachers be blessed.
- 73 Just as the pope justly thunders against those who by any means whatever contrive harm to the sale of indulgences.
- 74 Much more does he intend to thunder against those who use indulgences as a pretext to contrive harm to holy love and truth.
- 75 To consider papal indulgences so great that they could absolve a man even if he had done the impossible and had violated the mother of God is madness.
- 76 We say on the contrary that papal indulgences cannot remove the very least of venial sins as far as guilt is concerned.
- 77 To say that even St. Peter if he were now pope, could not grant greater graces is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.
- 78 We say on the contrary that even the present pope, or any pope whatsoever, has greater graces at his disposal, that is, the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written. (1 Co 12[:28])
- 79 To say that the cross emblazoned with the papal coat of arms, and set up by the indulgence preachers is equal in worth to the cross of Christ is blasphemy.
- 80 The bishops, curates, and theologians who permit such talk to be spread among the people will have to answer for this.
- 81 This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult even for learned men to rescue the reverence which is due the pope from slander or from the shrewd questions of the laity.
- 82 Such as: "Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?" The former reason would be most just; the latter is most trivial.

- 83 Again, "Why are funeral and anniversary masses for the dead continued and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded for them, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"
- 84 Again, "What is this new piety of God and the pope that for a consideration of money they permit a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God and do not rather, because of the need of that pious and beloved soul, free it for pure love's sake?"
- 85 Again, "Why are the penitential canons, long since abrogated and dead in actual fact and through disuse, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences as though they were still alive and in force?"
- 86 Again, "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus [Croesus], build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?"
- 87 Again, "What does the pope remit or grant to those who by perfect contrition already have a right to full remission and blessings?"
- 88 Again, "What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?"
- 89 "Since the pope seeks the salvation of souls rather than money by his indulgences, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons previously granted when they have equal efficacy?"
- 90 To repress these very sharp arguments of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy.
- 91 If, therefore, indulgences were preached according to the spirit and intention of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved. Indeed, they would not exist.
- 92 Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace! (Jer. 6:14)
- 93 Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!
- 94 Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.
- 95 And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).

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