

(v) Had a Look more Stout than His Fellows (v 20)

The historian Robinson bears witness to the fact that the Papacy did indeed become the mightiest power in Mediaeval Europe: "Besides the emperors at Constantinople and the various German kings, there grew up in Europe a line of rulers far more powerful than any of these, namely, the Popes . . . We must follow this most powerful and permanent of all the institutions of the later Roman Empire into the middle ages. We must stop first to consider how the Western, or Latin, portion of Christendom, which gradually fell apart from the Eastern, or Greek region, came to form a separate institution under the Popes, the longest and mightiest line of rulers that the world has ever seen." (*Mediaeval and Modern Times*, pp 40, 41)

Mark the historian's words: "the mightiest power"; "most powerful and permanent"; "the longest and mightiest line of rulers"!

(vi) Uprooted Three Kingdoms (vv 8, 20, 24)

(See Chart No. 6—Map of European Kingdoms)

From the time of Constantine (A.D. 306-337), to that of Justinian (A.D. 527-565), a long and violent struggle continued between the two largest factions of the Church: (a) Those who supported the Bishop of Rome against (b) those who embraced the doctrines of Arius, a heretical priest of Alexandria. The Emperors of Eastern Rome, whose capital was now in Constantinople, were foremost in championing the Catholic cause. The strife was often bitter and bloody. Most of the barbarian nations, to whom the Roman Empire had now yielded, bowed to the authority of the Bishop of Rome. But the Heruli, the Vandals and the Ostrogoths challenged his sovereignty. They were confirmed Arians. The first Arian "horn" was uprooted in A.D. 493 when Theodoric, leader of the Ostrogoths, crushed the power of the Heruli in Italy. A generation later, under the impact of Justinian's forces, fighting the cause of the Roman pontiff, the last two barriers to Papal supremacy collapsed in this order:

The Vandals in A.D. 534.

The Ostrogoths in A.D. 538.

Henceforth the very names of these three kingdoms disappear from European history. They have no modern successors.

(vii) Spoke great words against the Most High (v 25)

To such incredible lengths did the Papal Church go, when intoxicated with the wine of power, that a frail mortal, the Bishop of Rome, was exalted and worshipped as "another God on earth"! He was further declared to have power to forgive sins against God, and authority to "change even the precepts of Christ"!

Think of it! . . . A feeble man, who forgets, and makes mistakes—like other men; who needs food and drink and sleep—like other men; who gets tired and ill, and grows old, and at last dies—like other men; who sins grievously, and needs to be forgiven—like other men; such a man was given Divine titles and honours and finally declared to be "infallible"! . . . Such is the delirium of power!

Thus the very institution which should have been a spokesman for God became a mouthpiece for the Prince of Darkness, to "speak great words against the Most High".

(viii) Wore Out the Saints of the Most High (v 25)

It is conservatively estimated that during the Middle Ages, 50,000,000 martyrs perished under the Papal sword. For centuries the soil of Europe was crimsoned with martyr blood. Great armies were raised and crusades were launched for the sole purpose of exterminating the so-called "heretics". The world still shudders at the memory of the "Inquisition", but how many remember that this inhuman tribunal was both the creation and the tool of the Papal power?