

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST ILLUSTRATED

LETTER II

Near Lambertsville, N. J. Jan. 5th 1831.

Brother Beebe: - After a longer lapse of time than I had intended, I resume my pen to give you a further statement of my views relative to the two Witnesses, &c. Having already given my reasons for believing that the true gospel ministers are represented by these two Witnesses; I am now to notice the place and time of their being slain.

1st. The place of their being slain: I remarked before the Association, that the general notion was that the Witnesses would be slain only in those countries which are under the power of the Pope; but I presumed the place of their being slain would be that, wherein they are principally found bearing their testimony for the truth; and that as a retreat has been provided for the church, in her wilderness state, in this country, since her being driven from the valleys of Piedmont, here we of course shall find the Witnesses.

I will enlarge a little upon these several points: 1st. The notion that the Witnesses are to be killed only in the dominions of the Pope, is probably taken from what is said in Rev.11:7 & 8. "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." This being understood to be the same beast with the one described in Rev.13: 1. But I think rather that this is the same with the one described, Rev.17:3,8,14; and which is there distinguished from the church of Rome, represented by the woman seated upon it, and is therefore distinct from the beast in chapter 13:1. But again, another objection to the idea of the Witnesses being killed in this country, may arise from the circumstance that this beast was designed to represent the Roman Empire. It is true that the Roman Empire as the fourth beast in Daniel's vision [Dan.7:7,] is represented by each of these beasts, but by each as standing in a peculiar relation to the church of Rome. In chap. 13, as I may have occasion hereafter to illustrate, the Romish church is particularly characterized as succeeding to the seat of the Empire. But in the passages referred to in chap. 11 and 17, the Roman Empire under particular circumstances, is brought to view as sustaining that church in her bloodshed and adulteries, and raising her to power. What the particular circumstance connected with the Roman government is, which constituted it "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit," is an important and difficult point to decide. But I will submit a few remarks upon it. The seven heads of the beast,

besides representing the seven mountains or hills on which Rome was built, answered to the seven forms of government which had or should exist in that city, and "the beast that was and is not, is the eighth and is of the seven," Rev.17:9,11. Hence it was neither of the seven forms of government as such, which constituted this beast. And yet it is said, the beast was, whilst the sixth head was still in power, and therefore before the seventh or eighth had succeeded; consequently before the Pope had arrived to his power. A particular difficulty in deciding upon this subject arises from the two dates which present themselves to our minds, either of which might be supposed the one assumed in this description of the beast, namely; the period at which the revelation was made to John, or the period at which the church of Rome shall be seen riding into power as the eighth head or form of government. The idea perhaps, which would be the most readily received, is that the period at which the Apostle wrote, was the date here assumed; hence the Imperial is considered the sixth form of government; that is, that the Pagan Emperors constituted the sixth head. But what in this case, should this beast be, that it was then said, it "was and is not." If the Roman power as such be supposed to be the beast, it was then but just passing the meridian of its glory; if the persecuting edicts of the Emperors, be supposed to constitute this beast, John was at this time suffering under them in his banishment to the Isle of Patmos. Besides, I think it would be difficult for anyone to show in what sense either, could be that, on which the church of Rome rode into power, or was seated. I am therefore, from these and other considerations, led to the conclusion, that the time of the beast of chap. 13, "rising up out of the sea," or of Popery's coming into power, was the period or date assumed. Indeed I think the kingly government of the Ostrogoths, which succeeded the fall of the Western Empire, properly constituted the sixth distinct form of government; and the provincial government under the Eastern Emperors which followed, was of course the seventh. If we consider that union of Church and State which was established by Constantine, as represented by this beast, we shall find the description given of it to correspond. This union was certainly sufficiently irrational to be viewed as beastly; and it must have been a device of hell, [certainly not of heaven] and therefore "ascended out of the bottomless pit." And it was manifestly this union which raised the church of Rome to its worldly power; she is therefore fitly represented as seated upon this beast. Again viewing this union as constituting the beast "that shall ascend out of the bottomless pit," and at the time, which I have supposed assumed as the date of the prophecy, it might correctly be said, "The beast that was" — it had existed under the reign of the latter Emperors — and is not — this union not existing in form, that is, by law, under the Ostrogothic kings — and yet is — for the power and wealth which had been lavished on the churches and Bishops,

especially on the church and Bishops of Rome, gave a worldly influence, still increasing through their artfulness, beyond even what they had possessed under the Emperors – "and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." This union being still to be more completely manifested as the birth of hell, and as a scarlet colored or bloody beast, when the Popes should assume the temporal government of Rome and the adjacent districts and should exercise an authority over the kings of the earth, equal to what the Caesars had possessed. Hence the Popish, should then become an eighth form of government, and yet completely identified with the seven, being still the government of Rome. Hence also in the 11th verse, the Popish power is designated by this same Beast; this Beast existing in its fullest rage in that power; and also in chap. 13: 1, by a similar Beast. As this union of Church and State, of Religion with Politics, constitutes this Beast; wherever this union has existed there we have seen this Beast red with the blood of saints. Should this union then once be formed, directly or indirectly, in this country, here the Beast will be found, ready to devour the Witnesses. "The streets of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom," &c., may denote those places, where the power of Antichrist is publicly displayed, whether that power be displayed in a mitred head, or in a more complex form, like Missionary Conventions or a Sunday School Union; as the streets of Rome was the place where the Roman Emperors used to display their power and glory. To this application, the description given, will be found by a little reflection, to correspond.

2nd. To the remark I made before the Association; namely, That the witnesses would be killed wherever they are principally to be found, I will just add, that it appears to me a self-evident proposition, if the Witnesses be, both to be killed, that wherever the principal portion of them may be found; bearing their testimony; there they will be killed.

3rd. The conclusion that they are principally to be found in this country, because here the church is sheltered in her wilderness state, is, I still think, a correct one. For those who are witnesses for gospel truth and order will of course be found standing in gospel order. If so, they will have their standing in connection with gospel churches; the churches being the candlesticks from which the gospel light is to shine forth.

The same facts which I noticed in the former letter as proving that the Witnesses had not as yet been killed, prove that the Church is still in the wilderness. This being admitted, and the Church of Christ being found in this country, it will, or ought to be admitted, that she is here in her wilderness state, as in other places where she is found. But the idea which I advanced before the Association was, that this is peculiarly the place of her retreat, since her expulsion from the valleys of Piedmont. To this point I will confine

the few remarks I shall offer upon this subject. I have not found the idea thus advanced, simply upon the fact that her situation is in the wilderness, for that might denote no more than that she is in a scattered and oppressed situation, but what I principally rest it upon, is, that which is said in Rev.12: 6. "And the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place prepared of God," &c. It is this prepared place that I lay the chief stress upon. That the valleys of Piedmont were a place prepared of God for the retreat of his Church, from the rage of the Beast, is generally admitted. But the time; times and half a time, that the church was to be nourished from the face of the Serpent were not ended when she was driven from this place of refuge; for, as I have already showed, her time of being in the wilderness, or of being fed in her prepared place, must run nearly parallel with the Beast's being in' power. Where then shall we find a prepared place, after the former retreat was broken up? Europe, even including England, did not afford a place where she might be in safety from persecution. But when we turn our eyes to America, we discover not only a retreat, but a place bearing evident marks of having been prepared of God. Roger Williams, as early as in 1644, had obtained from the Earl of Warwick, a free charter for the now State of Rhode Island, by which equal freedom was secured to all religious denominations. This was eleven years previous to the severe destruction of the Waldenses in 1655; and forty-two years previous to the final expulsion from the valleys of Piedmont by the French armies. The religious freedom secured in the charter granted to Rhode Island and Providence plantations, was such as had never before been enjoyed by any State or Kingdom. And certainly the hand of God must be acknowledged as peculiarly manifested in providing this asylum for his oppressed church. The subsequent dispensations of God towards this country, in granting us a free national constitution, and in continuing us in the enjoyment of the liberty thus granted; whilst the other nations of the earth, all have been burdened with religious establishments, speaks volumes to me, in confirmation of the fact, that this is a place prepared of God as a retreat for his Church from the thralldom and persecution of the Mother of Harlots, and of her daughters, however different others may view this subject. Indeed, I have in times past thought, that as God hath hitherto preserved our government from giving its power to the Beast, by intermeddling with religion, the whole storm raised by the Beasts, and which will terminate in their destruction, would pass by without molesting us. But I now see several reasons for altering my opinion. One, besides that already noticed, I will mention. The visible church, having been greatly prospered in this good land, with increase and peace, has like her prototype Jeshurun "waxed fat and kicked," she has become weary of the government of Zion's King, and is desirous of being like the nations, or religious sects around, and of choosing a king from among them.

2nd The time of the Witnesses being slain. We are told, Rev.11: 7, that "when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." That is, as I understand it, when they shall have prophesied during the period mentioned, verse 3, of a thousand two hundred and sixty days, or years. If then we would fix with certainty upon the time at which this period commenced, there would be no difficulty in calculating when it would end. It is evident however, that it will end at least three years and a half before the reign of the beast terminates, as for that length of time their dead bodies are to be unburied previous to their being raised up again. It is also manifest that there is such an intimate connection between the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and the reign of the beast, as that the one could not have long preceded the other in its commencement. Hence I remarked before the Association, that as it was generally acknowledged, the beast must have been fully manifested when the Pope was declared Universal Bishop, by the Emperor Phocas, in the year 606, his reign must of course terminate in 1866, and therefore as the Witnesses must be slain at least three years and a half previous, it cannot be more than thirty-two of three years before this event will take place. I made these observations, and left it for them to enquire for themselves, how this Divine prophecy would correspond with their boasted triumph of the Sunday School and Mission cause over every obstacle, till they shall have brought in full orb'd, the latter day glory. I moreover stated certain reasons I had for believing that the reign of the Beast must have commenced at a still earlier period. But as my sheet is full, I must defer the recital of them till another opportunity.

I remain yours,
SAMUEL TROTT.