

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST ILLUSTRATED

LETTER III

Near Lambertsville, N. J. Jan. 29th 1831.

Brother Beebe: - Agreeably to the remarks at the conclusion of my last letter, I will now state some of those circumstances which led me to think that the reign of the Beast, or the thousand two hundred and sixty days, or years commenced at an earlier period than A D. 606.

1st. I would observe that the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which I think the sixth head of the beast, or distinct form of government established over Rome, ended A D. 552. Then the seventh head, or a provincial government, under the Eastern Emperors commenced. For though the Lombards afterwards got possession of the greater part of Italy, yet they did not of Rome, nor of Ravenna, the residence of the Exarch, the provincial governor. Indeed at this time the Bishops of Rome seem to have exercised the principal jurisdiction over Rome both civil and ecclesiastical, and therefore was in this sense of the seven, or as many understand it, the seventh head.

2nd. The Western or Roman Empire was conquered, and divided into ten distinct kingdoms, signified by the Ten horns, both of John's Beasts and of Daniel's fourth Beast, as early as A.D. 486, and hence the way was prepared for the little horn of Daniel to spring up. Dr. Robertson, as quoted by Jones in his history of the Waldenses, says; "Such however, was the extensive influence of the Papal intrigues, that there were few among the princes of the Western Empire, that were not virtually brought into a state of subjection to the authority of the Bishops of Rome, before the close of the fifth century." And during the sixth century we find not only the Bishops of Constantinople contending for the honor of an equal dignity with the Bishops of Rome, and also Kings and Emperors striving to resist the power of the Bishops of Rome; from all which, it is evident that the little horn, during this century, had arisen with a mouth speaking great things, &c., although its power was not as yet admitted by all, neither had the three horns fallen before it. See Dan.7: 20-24.

3rd. The event of the taking away the daily sacrifice, and the setting up the abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of by Daniel chap.8:11-13, 11:31, & 12:11. These passages appear to have a threefold reference: 1st. The expressions as they stand in chapters 8 & 11, primarily related to the taking of Jerusalem and polluting the Temple by Antiochus Epiphenus. 2nd. They also applied to the taking of Jerusalem by the Romans. See Matt.24:15. The abomination in this case designing the images of the eagle on the Roman

standards. And 3rd. To the establishing of the power of the beast. See Dan.12:11. It is in reference to this third application that I would consider these expressions. The abomination that maketh desolate, in the former applications referred to the setting up of images, and before the conclusion of the sixth century, we not only find images set up in most of the churches, and in some instances worshipped, but also that the worshipping of relics, and praying to departed saints, &c., had come into general use. If the setting up of those things was not an abomination according to the Old Testament use of that word, I know not what would be. And these absurd rites, certainly made desolate the churches where they obtained of everything like pure and vital religion; and became the rallying point for desolating the assemblies of the real saints, for the observance of them was the standard of orthodoxy, and the non-observance of them the ground for persecution.

Again, the Mass was substituted in the place of the Lord's Supper by Gregory the Great, before the conclusion of the sixth century. In submitting to this innovation, the Roman worshippers lost sight of the one complete sacrifice made by the Lord Jesus Christ, as taught in the Lord's Supper. Hence the daily sacrifice may be said to have been taken away. At any rate, if these circumstances, without the grant of the Emperor Phocas, be not considered as completely establishing the Pope as the Beast, still they are such as irresistibly lead us to the conclusion, that the Church of Christ, not being able to submit to such abominations, had before this period, [that is, A D. 600] separated themselves from all connection with those who submitted to the power of the Roman Pontifs. Accordingly, Mosheim speaking of the Donatists, a sect whom in conformity to the Catholics, he terms heretics, but who are by Jones, in his history, represented as a body of christians who had two or three hundred years before this separated from the established church on account of its impurity, and had hitherto kept themselves from the corruptions of the Catholics, though having their churches intermixed among the others, especially in Africa, and had adhered to the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel. Mosheim, I say, speaking of these says, "In this century the church of the Donatists dwindled away to nothing, and after this period no traces of it are any where to be found." This he ascribes to the success of Gregory's schemes to put them down. But from what he just before says of them, I can account for their thus disappearing only upon the ground of their having retired from the storm into the wilderness. And they in all probability, passed over into Spain, and from thence into the valleys of Piedmont. See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. Cent. 6th. Part 2nd. ch. 5th

Another circumstance which leads me to expect the termination, at least, of

the wilderness state of the Church, if not of the reign of the beast before A D. 1866, arises from two prophecies in Daniel. The one is found Dan.8:13,14, where we have a period of two thousand and three hundred days, given for the daily sacrifice to be taken away, [as in vs. 11] and the sanctuary and host to be trodden under foot. At the termination of this period the sanctuary is to be cleansed. The vision which Daniel relates in this chapter seems to be a more particular description of some of the events included in the vision of the four beasts, as in the preceding chapter. The Little Horn of this vision, no doubt, primarily represented Antiochus Epiphanes, who was an eminent type of Antichrist, or the beast from the bottomless pit. And therefore whilst the days of this prophecy, taken literally, may designate the time of Antiochus' assaults upon the Jews, the same, taken prophetically will denote that number of years, and point out the period when the Church of Christ, the antitype of the sanctuary, shall be purged, from the errors she has contracted from antichrist, and shall see coming up out of the wilderness. And if this period commence (with the commencement of the 70 weeks, or 490 years of chap.9:27, [which seems the proper period to date its beginning, since the vision commences with the dominion of the Medes and Persians,] we shall recollect that the 490 years terminated with the crucifixion of Christ A.D. 32, that is, allowing for the four years of error in the beginning the christian era, we shall find the 2300 years terminating A D. 184. Thus subtracting 32 from 490 leaves 458, which taken from 2301 leaves 1842.

The other prophecy is contained in Dan.12:6-12. It appears to me evident that this prophecy embraces in its scope the deliverance of the Church from the oppression of the beast, and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, and their subsequent conversion. And to the last event I consider the third period, or one thousand three hundred and five and thirty days as referring. Hence the expression, in reference to Daniel's people, blessed is he that waiteth and cometh! &c. Consequently the second period, or thousand two hundred and ninety days of vs. 11, must refer to the destruction of the Mahometan power, preparatory to the restoration of the Jews. And the time, time and a half or thousand two hundred and sixty days, of vs. 7, is, as in other parallel passages, to be referred to the deliverance of the gospel church. If then we may suppose that the reign of the Eastern Antichrist, or Mahometan power is, as is generally admitted, of the same duration as that of the Western or Papal Antichrist, that is, thousand two hundred and sixty years; then as the Mahometan era commenced in A D. 612, it must terminate in A D. 1872. Consequently the thousand two hundred and ninety days will then end. Hence as the scattering of the power of the holy people, or the oppression of the church of Christ, will terminate thirty years earlier, it must terminate in A D. 1842; the same time at which the 2300 days, according to the preceding

calculation, end. And therefore the 1260 years of the church's being in the wilderness, must have commenced in A D. 58; From the circumstance of these two prophecies, which commence different times terminating at the same time, one might conclude, that this is the important period, when the wilderness state of the church shall end, or at least when the last scattering of the holy people shall take place in the slaying of the witnesses. But still I must confess that I do not feel all that confidence in this calculation which I could wish. Did it terminate ten years later, that is, in 1852 instead of 42, I should feel more confidence in its correctness. For the pontificate of Gregory the Great, that is, from A D. 590 to 600 appears to me as the more probable period during which the Church retired to the wilderness. On the other hand, I know not what more consistent references can be made of these prophecies, if we allow them to have any reference to gospel times, nor what more correct calculations can be made upon the dates therein given. And from their connection with the other prophecies of Daniel, I do think they have a reference to gospel times. Indeed allowing 1842 to be the period of slaying the witnesses, as hinted above, then 45 or 6 would be the time of their being raised, and it might still be 5 or 6 years more before the church would clearly be manifested as coming up out of the wilderness. And although the tenth part of the city shall fall at the time of the witnesses rising, still it might not be before 1866 that Babylon would be utterly thrown down. {* On further reflection it appears to me evident, that as A D. 606 was the period, not when the Popes of Rome first assumed the prerogative of being universal Bishop, but when their arrogant pretensions were confirmed by the decree of the Emperor, so the termination of the 1260 years from that date, that is, 1866, will be the period when the ten horns, or kingly powers into which that empire was divided, shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, &c. Rev.17:16. Hence as the killing and raising of the witnesses, the great earthquake, by which a tenth part of the city shall fall; the sounding of the seventh angel, and the proclamations that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, &c. see Rev.11:7-15, must all precede the final destruction of the beast; they must of course take place before A D. 1866.} And this having different beginnings and terminations to the period of a prophecy, is not uncommon. Thus the 70 years of the Babylonish captivity, may be referred to different dates for its commencement, according to the difference of captives being carried away from Jerusalem, and to each of these captives there was a correspondent returning of the Jews from Babylon as under Zerubbabel, Ezra &c.

I am now to give my views of the Image of the Beast, and the probable manner of the witnesses being slain in this country. But before proceeding to this I will close this letter with some additional remarks relative to the witnesses being

slain in this country. Since writing the last letter I have had an opportunity of examining Dr. Gill on the subject, and he has helped me to some additional reasons for believing my position correct, although contrary to his design.

He, speaking upon the dead bodies of the witnesses being in the street of the great city, &c. [Rev.11:8,] observes that, "As the street of a city denotes a public open place in it, a place of concourse and resort, the dead bodies of these witnesses being said to lie here, may denote the publicness of their silence, disgrace and contempt." Now is not this country completely like a public street in this respect, being a place of free and public resort for persons from all the nations of Europe? And the event of the witnesses being put down here, would be more generally noticed and gloried in, than the same event in any other place, because the eyes of all Europe are upon us, watching the movements of our government.

Again, the Doct. remarks, "Or else this street may design some part of the Romish jurisdiction, and Great Britain may be particularly designed; for where should the dead bodies of the witnesses lie but where they are slain; and where are they, at least where are so many as in these islands?" Dr. Gill did not live in this day, to be acquainted with the spread of the gospel of these United States. But to pursue his remarks, he adds, "It may be objected that Great Britain is not a part of the sea of Rome, does not belong to the jurisdiction of it. To this it may be replied, that in this last war of the Beast, the outer Court will be given to the Gentles, the bulk of the reformed churches will fall off to Popery, and their countries again fall into the hands of the Pope, and among the rest Great Britain." I have no doubt that the British Government, and the other Protestant governments of Europe will again give their power to the Beast, for a little season, being of the original ten kingdoms or horns into which the Roman Empire was divided. But instead of the bulk of the reformed churches, either in Europe or in this country, going off to Popery, I think it a far more probable supposition, that they will be engaged in erecting the Image of the Beast and giving life and power to it. Again, the Doct. says, "The fears of Dr. Goodwin seem to be too just and well grounded, that the prophecy in Dan.11:45 respects our island, which speaks of Antichrist planting the tabernacle of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, or the mountain of delights, &c. Now where has God such a mountain of delight, or a people that are the darling of his soul as here? Where in all the globe is such a spot where God has so many saints?" To these several questions I answer that the United States in all these surpass Great Britain. And certainly there is no country like this so much a mountain of delights, where God has delighted to shower down blessings both spiritual and temporal, and to crown them with civil and religious liberty. Dr. Gill further asks, "What place between the seas is there to which these characters can agree but Great Britain?" "Here then," says

he, "Antichrist will plant the tabernacle, &c., but it will be but a tabernacle or tent; it will be but for a short time, as it follows, yet he shall come to his end and none shall help him." It is true that Great Britain is an island in the sea; but the expression between the seas, does not appear to me a natural description of its situation. But when we recollect that in Scripture language the ocean is called sea, we have but to look on the map of North America to be convinced how appropriate the above expressions are to the situation of the United States.

We see our country completely between the seas, extending its borders from shore to shore completely from the Atlantic across to the Pacific. And may I not retort the question and ask, what other country is situated like this, between the seas? But by Antichrist, as the antitype of Antiochus, whose reign is described in that 11th chap. of Daniel, from ver. 21 to the end; I understand it not in the limited sense, as denoting a beast, that arose from the sea, Rev.13:1, but in his more general opposition, as designated by the beast from the bottomless pit, as described in the preceding letter.

Yours affectionately,

SAMUEL TROTT.