

# THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST ILLUSTRATED

## LETTER IV

Near Lambertsville, N. J. Feb. 17th 1831.

Brother Beebe: - My views of the Image of the Beast come now in course. But to arrive at this, it will be necessary previously to notice the two Beasts mentioned in the preceding part of the chap. [Rev.13] And as the views I have of the several parts of this chapter, differ considerably from the exposition which Dr. Gill gives of this part of the prophecy, and which is generally received by the Baptists as correct; it is incumbent on me to state some of my reasons for dissenting from him.

According to the Doctor, the first beast, or the one with seven heads, designs the temporal power of the Pope; the second beast, designs his spiritual power, and the Image of the Beast designs the whole of Popery, or what was denoted by the two beasts. It requires but a little discerning comparison of this exposition with what is said in the scriptures concerning these several things, to discover its total inconsistency. In the first place, he makes the Pope or beast to arise to his temporal power, and to receive from the dragon his power, seat, &c., of course to rule over the nations in temporals, before ever he is seen arising in his ecclesiastical or spiritual tyranny; whereas it is manifest that it was by the exercise of their ecclesiastical tyranny, that the Bishops of Rome arrived at their temporal authority. Secondly, it is evident that the description of this beast as given from the 4th to the 8th verses, can only relate to the ecclesiastical usurpations of the Pope. It is as the successor of Peter, vicegerent of God, &c., that the Pope is worshipped. As such he assumes those blasphemous titles, &c., alluded to in the declaration, that he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, &c. And it was only in this relation that power was given him over all kindreds and tongues; for as a temporal sovereign he at most exercised a jurisdiction over three of the ten kingdoms, into which the Empire was divided, denoted by three horns being plucked up by the roots before him. Dan.7:8. And this indeed the Doctor evidently explains the verses referred to. Thirdly, Dr. Gill, in order to carry out his views, remarking on ver.11, which begins thus: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth," &c., immediately subjoins, "the same with the first, only in another form; the same for being and person, &c." I have not much confidence in that exposition, which directly contradicts the declaration of the text. The Scripture not only directly calls it another beast, but describes its origin as different, being from the earth, whereas the other was out of the sea, and the description goes on to represent it as distinct from the

first beast; speaking of it as directing an image to be made of that beast, &c.

Fourthly, his explaining the Image of the Beast, as designing, either image worship, which was introduced, or the two beasts combined,. I am sure can never be received as consistent, by any but by those who read the exposition as though it must be true, because the production of a great man, and who therefore do not step to examine for themselves.

I will now give briefly as I can, my views of these beasts and the Image. The beast which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, I have already spoken of as distinct from these beasts, and as denoting Antichrist; as he is the more generally manifested, being arrayed against the kingdom of Christ.

Antichrist, as assuming the name of christian, in distinction from the Jewish and Pagan Antichrists, was first manifested, systematically arrayed against that kingdom which is not of this world, in the national establishment of Constantine.

The beast which John saw arise out of the sea, and which is described in this 13th chapter [Rev.13:1-10,] I think denotes Popery in all its power. It is said to rise out of the sea, to denote its coming into power out of that convulsion of the nations occasioned by the influx of the barbarians, which was indeed comparable only to the commotion of the troubled ocean. See Rev.17:15. He has the seven heads and ten horns of the beast from the bottomless pit, to show not only that he occupied the same seat with that beast in his previous manifestation, namely: Rome; but also that in this beast Antichrist was most fully and distinctly manifested. He is represented as having in part the likeness of the leopard, the bear, the lion and the dragon, to show that he was the antitype of the little horn of Daniel's vision, and also that this was the intervening general power, before which the nations of the earth should bow, between those four extensive monarchies, and the universal establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, signified in the vision, by the coming of the ancient of days, and the judgment being given to the saints of the Most High, &c. See Dan.7:14 & 22. It's further said that the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. By the dragon I understand with Dr. Gill, Satan as he was enthroned in the Pagan Empire, and as he continued to annoy the church through the influence and opposition of Paganism; which power and authority, together with his seat — Rome — he transferred to Popery when that arose, and now waged war through this channel against the saints and Church of God. John further had a view of one of the heads of this

beast, as wounded to death, and again of this deadly wound as being healed. Dr. Gill thinks that this denoted the destruction of the imperial government, which he considers the sixth head of the beast; and that the healing of this wound, was the introduction of Popery. The Doctor must have forgotten that he had already given it as his opinion that the whole beast which John saw rise out of the sea designed Popery in its secular power, and that he had assigned several reasons to show that this beast could not be designed to denote the Roman Empire, and that among other reasons assigned, he remarked that the arising of this beast, was showed to John as something future, whereas the Roman Empire was already in power, and also that the duration of this beast, be forty and two months, did not agree with the time of the Roman Empire. It is very strange that the wounding of one of the heads of this beast, should denote an event which took place before the beast came into existence. Besides if this beast had been in existence when the Roman Empire was overturned, the forty and two months of its duration must have expired before this time. Further, it does not appear very consistent, that the sixth head, should be represented as being healed when according to the Doctor's exposition, it was totally taken away, and what he considers the seventh head, brought into power. The healing of this head, whatever it be, must denote the restoring of the same head to its power. Dr. Gill afterwards notices with some approbation, the opinion of some, that the wounding of this head, denoted the wound given to Popery by the Reformation. But that I wound has never been healed, besides it was not properly a wound inflicted by a sword. I should suppose by his head's being wounded, &c., that we are to understand the wounding of the power of the beast in some shape, and I think by the expression, one of his heads, we may understand, that usurped headship, or influence, which the Popes held over the kingdoms of Europe, in distinction from their authority over the Catholic church. Hence, as I remarked before the Central N. J. Association, I think there has no event taken place since the establishment of Popery, which bears any comparison to the wound which Bonaparte gave to the power of the Pope, especially if we allow, as I have just supposed, that by this head we are to understand the secular power of the Pope, or the superiority he assumed over the kings of Europe. Bonaparte certainly did, by his sword, completely prostrate that power, so as to oblige the Pope to submit to his will. And this wound has since been healed; that is, the Pope's authority has been re-established over those States which were previously under it.

The Beast which arose out of the earth having two horns like a lamb, as already intimated, I consider to be, as the text describes it, another Beast, that is, a Beast distinct from the first.

I did not state before the Association what I considered this Beast to be. And indeed I feel a delicacy in giving my opinion now, upon it, not only because of its being so new, but also on account of the violent opposition it will meet with, should it be generally known; and still more because I suppose it will be construed, though unjustly, as unchristianizing all who have been connected with this Beast. {\*The fact that from the commencement of the reformation, down to this time, many eminent christians, including Luther, at any rate, in the number, if not Calvin, have belonged to those churches which make up the two horned Beast, I gladly acknowledge. But I at the same time confidently believe, the time not to be far distant, when all real believers will be brought out of them, either by death, or by being convinced of the errors on which they are founded, and those churches will then be left mere loathsome carcasses, made up wholly of carnal professors. Why the Lord has suffered his true visible church, so long to languish, and to be composed of so small a company of the poor of the flock, whilst so great a number of his heaven born children, have been permitted to turn aside to the flocks of his companions, must remain a mystery, at least till the time of the sounding of the seventh Angel. See Rev.10:7,11 & 15. Yet when we discover from prophecy, the purpose of God, to suffer his church to remain in this oppressed wilderness state during the thousand two hundred and sixty years, we see the necessity of her remaining for that period, a little flock, and consequently of a great portion of her Lord's children, being suffered to treat her with neglect and contempt. Unless we were to suppose that during this period the salvation of God was narrowed down to a much smaller compass, than we would wish to believe the case, or than we have reason to believe.) But as the Beast has been particularly described by Divine inspiration, and as I think I discover it; well answering the description, existing among us, {and I have had it for several years under consideration) I will state my opinion. Should I be mistaken; it will not be more than has happened to others who have given their views of prophecy. Neither will my views of this Beast be more unpopular than were the views which the Waldenses, in their day, held concerning Anti-Christ or the Beast; the correctness of which, every year's experience since, has confirmed. In a word, In a word, I consider the Reformation, or the Reformed Churches, designed by the two horned Beast. Its description: It was seen coming up out of the earth. By the earth in chap.12, as distinguished from heaven, I understand the Romish Church, as distinguished from the Gospel Church. "There was war in heaven ... and the dragon, that old serpent ... was cast out into the earth." Dr. Gill explains this of the dragon's being driven out from the throne of the Empire, by Constantine becoming Christian, &c.; hence he had power only with the baser class of the inhabitants. If this was the case, how

had he power to persecute the woman, the church of Christ? See ver.13. In some other parts of the New Testament, heaven denotes the gospel Church; understanding it used in this sense here; then whilst the visible gospel Church remained connected with the establishment, the dragon had influence in the Church to raise up wars, as in the case of the Arian heresy, &c. But when the true Church was separated from the establishment, the dragon was left with only the earthly or carnal part of professors; hence he ceased to raise wars in the establishment, and used his influence to raise persecutions against the Donatists and other members and churches which had separated from the establishment. It is true that in the estimation of carnal professors it would rather appear that Michael and his angels were cast out, than that the dragon was; but not so in the estimation of the children of grace. To be permitted to meet with brethren whom they fellowshiped, separated from others, and to have that worship unclogged with that mass of human inventions which had been obtained in the worship of the establishment was cause of rejoicing and praise to the poor Donatists, even whilst persecuted. Hence I fee justified in supposing that by the earth, out of which this Beast arose, we are to understand the Catholic Church as distinguished from the Gospel Church. And it is a well known fact that the Reformed Churches came out of this corrupt Catholic Church. They carry the mark of their origin from this earth in their frontlets, by denominating themselves Reformed Churches. Secondly, this Beast has two horns like a lamb, by which I understand Luther and Calvin, the two eminent leaders of the Reformation. These horns were indeed lamblike; for they appeared to be, and indeed were, in several respects contending for the simplicity of the gospel of Christ. "And he spake as a dragon." The language of the dragon was, that all should be conformed to him in religion. So said the Reformers, Luther and Calvin; they could give no toleration to the poor Anabaptists, nor to any that differed from them. The same language has in times past, been held, by all the Reformed churches where they have had power to exercise this dragon-like disposition. We see the Lutheran historian, Mosheim, whilst he in one case, vol.4, pgs. 442 & 443, more than half acknowledges the Anabaptists to be the descendants of the Waldenses, yet he gives currency to almost every base calumny against them, and what is wanting in him is fully supplied by his Calvinistic translator, Maclain, in his notes. Mosheim represents these Anabaptists as suffering death in its worst forms in all the countries of Europe, and preferring it to a retraction of what he calls their errors. And this suffering was under penal laws in the enacting of which, the Lutheran state of Saxony, took the lead, and was followed by other states and among the rest, the Calvinistic magistrates of Switzerland, and the Hollanders. See notes to pg. 419, vol. 4. Again he tells us, pg. 498, "There were certain sects and doctors against whom the zeal, vigilance and severity

of Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists, were united, and in opposing whose settlement and progress, these three communions, forgetting their dissensions, joined their most vigorous counsels and endeavors. The objects of their common aversion were the Anabaptists and those who denied the Divinity of Christ, and a Trinity of persons in the Godhead." This I think was speaking like the dragon; but witness further, the putting to death of Servetas by Calvin, and the persecution of the Dissenters by the Church of England, and of the Baptists and Quakers by the Congregationalists in New England.

"And he exerciseth all the power of the first Beast before him." 1st. In requiring the temporal authorities to compel by law the observance of their religious forms. 2nd. In raising the ministry, above the churches, and transferring to them principally the government of the churches. 3rd. In requiring the ministry to be supported by taxes levied upon all classes of people. 4th. In claiming the direction of the consciences and the pastoral care over all persons, from the infant upwards, within the bounds of their parishes. All which has been practiced by the Reformed churches. Hence the Reformers retained the beastly nature of the Catholic church; in that they taught a union of the church and the world, and of the kingdom of Christ with the government of the world.

"And causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first Beast whose deadly wound was healed." There is certainly some difficulty with me in deciding as to the precise meaning of the Holy Spirit in this passage. By "the earth and them which dwell therein," we may understand as before, the Catholic Church, and those dwelling in Catholic countries. Previous to the Reformation it appears that in all the countries of Europe there were many persons groaning under the civil and ecclesiastical tyranny with which they were burdened. When the Reformation broke out, many supposed they were now to be relieved. Hence the commotion at Munster which the Paedobaptists talk so much about as being the origin of the Baptists. But when the Reformers and those Governments connected with them, instead of soothing the wounded feelings of these persons who had been goaded on by oppression to excesses, by giving them assurances of the enjoyment of a liberty consistent with the spirit of the gospel, they calumniated them as enemies to all government, and then made use of armed force to put them down; and when afterwards the Reformation settled down in religious establishments without any toleration to dissenters, it seemed to blast the hopes, and dispirit the minds of those, who had been looking for relief; and led all dwelling in Catholic countries, excepting such as had an experimental acquaintance with

the Kingdom of Christ, tamely to settle down in submission to Popery. Or by the "earth and them," &c., we may understand, the governments of the world and the subjects thereof. And though the reformed churches are distinct from the Catholic, as the daughters are distinct from their mother; yet they have brought so much from their mother church, which is contrary to the work of God, that none can implicitly submit to what they have taught, without in effect acknowledging the supremacy of the Church of Rome. As for instance, the doctrine concerning the divine right of kings to govern. From whom did they obtain this right? From no other than the pope, who established all the original reigning dynasties of Europe; that is, of all the ancient ten kingdoms. The establishing of religion by laws, and giving governmental preference to specific forms, embracing particular creeds, &c., has the same origin with the preceding. The same may be said of the superiority of the ministry over the churches; and of their being acknowledged as a clerical class; of the ministry being supported by legal provisions; of infant membership; of changing the ordinance of baptism into sprinkling; of implicitly confiding in the instruction of the clergy because of their peculiar learning, and other things which might be named. And all the civilized governments, other than the Catholic and Greek, with the exception of our own, have been influenced to respect these things under one modification or another as of divine origin, whereas they wholly emanated from Popery. And it seems they are determined to give our government no rest, till they shall have inducted it into these principles, by causing it to establish by law, the first day of the week, as the sabbath, or at least, to give a legal preference to those who thus regard the first day; and it is very doubtful whether they stop here. Indeed the causing the earth and them that dwell therein, &c., may imply that all the governments, and all the carnal professors, within the range of this Beast, will submit to this order of things. Yea it may have special reference to our government; for the other governments have only been caused to continue their homage to the Beast.

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. I do not understand by this, material fire; but as the fire coming down and consuming the sacrifices of Elijah was a decisive evidence that he was the prophet of the true God; so the accompanying of the preached word, by the power of the Holy Ghost, so as to make the word as the fire and the hammer to break the rock in pieces, is an evidence that the Lord owns the word preached, and is generally considered an evidence that he owns the preacher. But this is not a fire which the Lord sends down; it is a fire which the Beast maketh come down. Hence it must refer to those great revivals which the preachers of some of the reformed churches are so famous for getting up and carrying on by human exertion, and which like the fire in

the case of Elijah, even burn up the stones and the dust, and lick up the water, or seem so to do. And these revivals are in the sight of men; they are public things. They not only are frequently appealed to as evidences of God's peculiar favor to that church, to this and that doctrine, and are trumpeted abroad; but they are viewed in this light by the multitude. Hence it is said in the next verse, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles (or wonders) which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast.

We thus come to the direction which this Beast gives, to make an Image, &c., the examination of which I shall again have to defer to another letter.

I remain your friend and brother,

SAMUEL TROTT.