

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18)

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### CAN A SAVED PERSON BE LOST?

One of the most famous of all religious questions is this: "Can a saved person be lost?" or, "Once we are saved, can we ever be lost?" Theologians have haggled over this question for decades—even centuries, and yet there is a very wide divergence of opinion that remains upon the subject. Whole camps of the denominational world side up with the "yes" answer, while an equally large segment of Christendom affirm that this is not possible? What really is the answer? To begin with, we ought to assert here that *this is not the right question!* In all honesty, the question is never brought forth in the Scripture in this precise fashion. One might object that such a statement is a mere technicality—but this question is a technical question, and thus demands a technical Scriptural precedent—and *there simply isn't any!* To begin with, there is too much ambiguity in the question. For instance, who are the "saved"—what is meant by that term? One that has, perhaps, openly identified with a local congregation? Maybe it alludes to those whose heart has been effected by grace, or that have admitted to the public that they believe Jesus is the Christ; or, perhaps, it refers to those that have had some sort of religious experience, or that have entered into some specific ministry to the "church". It may be that men are speaking of those that feel they are saved, or of those that really have no quarrel with the statements of the Scripture; or those that have reformed their external habits and attend church regularly. Just what is meant by the word "saved"! Does it mean to imply that those that once claim identification with the Lord are automatically reserved without any equivocation whatsoever unto eternal life? You see, the answer to the question largely depends upon the interpretation that one places upon the word "saved". To begin with, one will be hard pressed to find the word "saved" used in the noun form in the Word of God, such as "the saved". Further, when it is used in the verb form, it often applies to the time antecedent to our actual profession of faith—prior, as it were, to our actual embracement of the Lord: "God hath saved us and called us with a holy calling." (II Tim. 1:9); "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8); ". . . according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:5). Now in these texts, profession is seen as the means through which the Lord Himself implemented His own salvation, which was actually given to us in Christ Jesus *before the world began*. "Saved", then, has a *retrospective* application which is associated with the profession and the embracement of Christ by the believer, and yet which is separate from him.

Secondly, the word "saved" is used in an active sense—as though it were not yet fully accomplished: "We are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24); ". . . by which (Please turn to page 2)

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## Can A Saved Person Be Lost?

(the Gospel) ye **are** saved, if ye keep in memory what I have preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:2). Too, the word "saved" is used in a future sense, of something that is yet to be experienced: ". . . being justified, we **shall be** saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9); "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we **shall be** saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10).

There is, then, a past, a present, and a future sense of "saved" in the Scriptures — something that the questions we have stated do not take into account! We have it expressly stated that some that were once "saved" and were later "destroyed": "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, **having saved the people** out of Egypt, **afterward destroyed** them that believed not" (Jude 5). In answer, therefore, to the question of those that are saved, we may safely say that it is possible for those that were once saved to be destroyed — we have a particular record of the Lord God doing precisely that. The language is not vague — not ambiguous; it is very plain, and it is addressed to those that have associated themselves with the Lord's Christ. Further, we have an example of some personalities that once occupied a very high state in the heavenly hierarchy; "And the angels which **kept not their first estate**, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day" (Jude 6). Not only, therefore, may one not rely upon a past deliverance as a guarantee of the future, but **there is no safety in position**. The angels, that were in close proximity to the

very Throne of the Living God were not "spared" when they "sinned" (II Pet. 2:4). In view of these assertions of truth — expressly given to the church to keep her from assuming safety when it was not warranted — the question about whether or not a saved person can be lost becomes trite and meaningless because of its variance with the entire nature of Scripture. It is, indeed, an incorrect question, and is not deserving of an answer.

To grant to us a larger perspective, there is not a single place in all of Holy Writ where the slothful, the indolent, the wicked, the faithless, or the unfaithful are given **any** element of assurance — not a single spark of promise for good is set forth to them. In fact, condemnation is **consistently** promised for such as that — and there are no exceptions. One that is slothful, for instance, has no right to ask whether or not he will be saved. There is no question about his state; as a wicked and slothful servant that is "unprofitable" to his Lord and Master, he has "outer darkness", and "weeping and gnashing of teeth" to anticipate with absolutely **no** doubt whatsoever (Matt. 25: 26-30). God is nowhere — I emphasize strongly **NOWHERE** — declared as a Rewarder of them that are slothful; as One that grants eternal life to those that are unprofitable! That is a concept that is foreign to every single phrase and teaching of the Word of God! **The whole thrust of the Scripture is against the ungodly; against the unbelieving; against the faithless; against the slothful; against the unprofitable.** And yet, there are literally myriads of preachers that stand in pulpits Lord's day after Lord's day, week after week, month after month, offering assurance and confidence to those that live at such a remote distance from the Lord that it is to be heartily questioned that they have ever advanced beyond the state of "sinners of the gentiles" (Gal. 2:15). What sort of religion is this that has arisen to comfort the unfaithful; to speak words of confidence to the unprofitable, and to comfort those that are slothful! Where is there a precedent for such activity — yea, where is there the slightest or most remote hint that such a thing is at all in order. Where is there **anything** but warnings and summons to repentance and threats of doom issued to the wicked and slothful servant? Is it not expressly stated that those that are slothful will even have that which "they seem" to have wrested from their possession and given to the faithful? (Luke 8:18).

Another clear emphasis of Scripture is that nothing but good is promised to the faithful; the persevering; the believing! There is no hint of evil for them! Those that are in a state of believing; i.e., "contending for the faith that was once delivered" (Jude 3) — these are said to be in a position where "nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:35-38). The "sheep" which hear the voice of the Son of God and follow Him are said to be secure to the point where no one shall be able to pluck them out of His hand (John 10:28-29). This is a glorious prospect to those that are living and walking by faith (II Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20) — not to those that **have** lived or walked that way, but to those that **ARE** living and walking by faith. Your standing before God may accurately be assessed according to your **present** faithfulness;

### "What God Hath Joined Together, Let Not Man Put Asunder"

There are some matters—great truths—which the Lord God Almighty has joined together: things that can, by no means, be effectually divided asunder. We take this space to name a few of these Divinely joined truths.

1. Faith and works—James 2:22
2. Grace and Truth—John 1:14
3. Grace and peace—I Cor. 1:3
4. Christ and His church—Ephesians 5:30-32
5. Repentance and faith—Acts 20:21
6. Repenting and being baptized—Acts 2:38
7. Predestination and being conformed to image of God's Son—Romans 8:29-30
8. Suffering and reigning—II Tim. 2:12
9. Repentance and the remission of sins—Luke 24:47
10. Believing and being baptized—Mark 16:16
11. Not believing and being damned—Mark 16:16
12. Labor and rest—Heb. 4:11
13. Humility and exaltation—Matt. 23:12

It is the work of Satan to attempt to unite what God has divided, and to labor to divide what God has united. Let the saints of the Most High be aware of this malicious and cunning attempt of Satan, and leave united what God has united, and divided what God has divided.

your **present** dependability; your **present** love and embracement of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Let us address ourselves to the matter of assurance — that is really the subject set before us. Assurance, by its very nature, can never be enjoyed by anyone that is not living by faith — that is not living in a spiritual awareness of the God of Heaven and His Son Christ Jesus. **This assurance is produced by faith:** “In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence **BY THE FAITH OF** (which comes from) Him” (Eph. 3:12); “I know Who I have **BELIEVED**, and am **PER-SUADED**. . .” (II Tim. 1:12); “Let us draw near with a true heart in **FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH**” (Heb. 10:22). Further, assurance or confidence springs forth from righteousness: “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the **effect of righteousness** quietness and **confidence** forever” (Isa. 32:17). In such a context to offer the remotest concept or illusion of confidence or assurance to the slothful becomes a transgression of the greatest magnitude. It has wrought no benefit for the wicked servant, but only serves to lull him into the sort of complacency which God Almighty has pledged Himself condemn. Such lives do not compliment the death of our Lord Jesus, the love of God, or the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We do not speak of assurance to the wicked and disobedient, but of the wrath of God. We do not call them to quietness and assurance, but to repentance! It is the faithful, the obedient, and the good stewards of the manifold grace of God that receive such balm from Gilead — we refuse to share it with those that trod under foot the Son of God, putting Him to an open shame, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace!

How well I know that many will charge me with having taught that the believer is not secure — nothing could be further from the truth. The believer is safe in Jesus! But, then, that is our whole point. A believer is not someone that **HAS** believed, but someone that **DOES** believe. It is not someone that **has** walked by faith, but someone that **DOES** walk by faith. This is not a matter of the erection of theological fences, but of declaring the whole counsel of God. To those that are cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart (Acts 14:23), we declare that joy awaits you in the morning! God has pledged Himself to honor your faith in the “regeneration”: your labor “is not in vain in the Lord” (Psa. 30:5; Matt. 19:28; I Cor. 15:58). It is true, all theology to the contrary withstanding, that the **promises are inherited through “faith and patience”** (Heb. 6:12). Any individual — however apparently devout, however moral, however apparently religious, that is not walking by faith (by an awareness or conviction of the unseen (Heb. 11:1), or by “patient continuance in well doing” seeking for “glory, honor, and immortality” (Rom. 2:7) — I say, that such a person has no warrant for expecting promises or even a single solitary promise of good! The promises are **not** for him; they are **not** made for him; they have **not** been given to him! The Lord has reserved them for the faithful and the patient; those that have learned to possess their souls in patience (Luke 21:19). You see, the real issue here is faith and patience, not the promises! God has committed Himself firmly, surely, confidently — but only to the faithful! Whether an individual can go into the kingdom and come out of it is

not the issue; it is not the question! It is not relevant to bring up the query concerning the ultimate safety of those that once professed faith; that once began the race. **The emphasis in the Word of God is not on starting the race, but on finishing the race; not on beginning, but ending!** The express words of Jesus are that “he that endureth **unto the end** shall be saved” (Matt. 10:22). The point in question is not whether or not God will be faithful — it is whether or not **man** will be faithful! “Well”, asserts the sophist, “The real believer will not be unfaithful!” But that is begging the question! The angels that fell were **real** angels; they had a real estate; they left a **real** habitation. The children of Israel that were destroyed **really** left Egypt by faith; they **really** did cross the Red Sea; they **really** did eat **real** manna, and drink **real** water out of a **real** rock. They were all **really** baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (I Cor. 20:1ff). Judas did leave a very **real** “bishopric”; he **really** was “numbered” with the twelve, and **really** did “obtain part of this ministry” (Acts 1:17). His participation was so real, in fact, that it was necessary for his place to be filled by another (Acts 1:16-26). Let men cease from raising false issues; suppositions that root more in fleshly interpretations than in apostolic declarations!

Let none misconstrue these words to mean that believers are to live in constant fear of being cut off from God. What we are saying is that the question of whether or not those once saved can possibly be lost is not a proper question. Now, if one wishes to ask the question, “Can any man pluck them out of His hand?” — we answer, No! “Can anything separate us from the love of God?” — No! “Is He able to keep us from falling and present us faultless before His Throne with exceeding joy?” — Yes! “Is our labor vain in the Lord?” — No! “Is He faithful that has promised?” — Yes! On the other hand, “will not the fearful and the unbelieving have their part in the lake of fire?” — Yes! “Will the Lord delight in any soul that draws back?” — No! “Does that soul that draws back, draw back to perdition?” — Yes! “Does a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation await those that sin willfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth?” — Yes! These are truthful questions and truthful answers! May there be a restoration of not only sound Scriptural answers, but sound Scriptural questions — there is abundant room for improvement in both areas!

### The Word of Truth Is Now Quarterly

Beginning with this issue, The Word of Truth will be a quarterly publication. This has become necessary due to a set of circumstances which we were unable to control. However, we do feel that the Lord has approved of this change, after much deliberation and prayer. The quarterly issue will be significantly larger than the monthly, and thus the reading material will remain substantially the same over the period of a year. We ask for the prayers of the saints, that this work might continue to be used of the Lord, and that the Word of God might run, and have free course.

## THE TWO BEASTS OF REVELATION — PART II

“And I beheld **another** beast coming out of the earth . . .” Revelation 13:11

This second beast speaks of another power that is antithetical to the kingdom of heaven; a power that is set in opposition to the King of kings and Lord of lords. This is quite clear from the term “ANOTHER beast”! Let us here observe a few distinguishing marks of this other beast. 1. He rose out of the earth, not out of the sea as did the first beast (Rev. 13:11a). 2. He had horns like a lamb — a peaceful appearance rather than the fierce likeness of a leopard, lion and bear, which characterized the first beast (13:11b). 3. His speech was that of a dragon; i.e., inconsistent with his appearance, but in conformity with his character (13:11c). 4. He was of the same order as the first beast, exercising “all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast” (13:12). 5. He wrought great wonders and phenomenon upon the earth, soliciting the attention of men (13:13). 6. His chief power is not military in nature but delusive; for “he **deceiveth** them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do” (13:14). 7. He had power to activate the “image of the beast”, i.e., to restore the kind of power and authority signified by that first beast, and to restore men’s allegiance to it (13:15). 8. He caused all to receive a “mark” of approval in either the hand or the forehead (13:16). 9. He had power to stop trading and the procurement of goods for those not having the “mark” (13:17). 10. For those endued with wisdom, this second beast has the number of a man — “six hundred and sixty six” (13:18).

### General Observations

Although this personage is characterized quite differently from the first, it IS called “ANOTHER beast”. What we have here is **the Divine description of a not-so-apparent foe of the church**. “ANOTHER” — “BEAST”; both terms sharply alert us to the fact that this is a foe — an enemy!

1. Observe that this enemy rose out of “the earth”, not the sea, as did the first beast. He is **not** the result of tumult and social agitation, but of tranquility and peace. **Satan does initiate particular assaults against Christ’s church in both troublous and peaceful times!**
2. See this beast’s appearance — it seems harmless, for he has “two horns like a lamb”. He is, in fact, simulating the appearance of Christ, and yet is in truth Christ’s fierce enemy! This is a new form of attack from Satan — not apparent, but one of disguise; infiltrating the church with “false prophets”, “crept in unawares” (II Pet. 2:1-2; Jude 4).
3. His words are those of a dragon, not a lamb (13:14-16); i.e., they are subverting, perverse, evil, devilish. This is Satan’s ultimate means of perverting the church — deception; **the art of persuasion employed to constrain men to depart from the Living God**. It is as old as the masterful delusion that he perpetrated in Eden’s Garden (Gen. 3). It is the means through which he jarred the morality of David, and led Israel to commit idolatry and fornication

at the very foot of Mount Sinai. “**Speaking**” has always been Satan’s strongest arsenal; it has succeeded where force and external militancy have utterly failed.

4. The second beast promotes allegiance to the first beast — zealously and effectually (13:12, 14, 15, 17). In short, this is Satan’s way of gaining allegiance to political power — which is but another way of gaining worship for himself (13:4). Thus did a State church arise with the state in preeminence, given first honor (re: ROMAN Catholic Church). **Political power was honored through a structured religious system that conformed perfectly to its standards**. While it is true that this perverted religion did not always honor political power in particular, it did in principle — and with Satan that is all one and the same. People began to think of the church in terms of fleshly power and distinctions. The heavenly rule became clouded and of little relevance. Divine terms were ascribed to mundane potentates (“His holiness”, “Reverend”, “His Eminence”, “Father”, etc.). Thus was the first beast honored and worshipped by proxy, subtle though it was.
5. So effectual is the promotion of the worship of the first beast that those who are not so identified with have no power to buy or sell (13:16-17). Remember that we are speaking of a **worldly religious system**; a principle of religion based upon the established methodizations of earthly government, and in firm alliance with the kingdoms of this world. This evil work of the “Dragon” will accept one or both of two kinds of allegiance. Firstly, a mark upon the hand, secondly a mark upon the forehead. The mark upon the hand speaks of zealous service, even though hearty agreement with the principles of the second beast may be absent. The mark upon the forehead denotes an acquiescence with the ways of the second beast, even though service may not be present. Now, the second beast settles for either of these two. He has no quarrel with those that promote his cause, even though they may not thoroughly agree with it; nor will he stigmatize those that agree with his devilish ways while not openly manifesting devotion to him. How unlike the kingdom of heaven which demands a mark upon the forehead and in the hand; i.e., involvement of the whole heart and practical separation from the course of this present evil world; “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Tim. 2:19).

### Some Points Of Difference And Similarity Between The First And Second Beast

While the two beasts operate under the influence of the Serpent, Satan, and are firmly aligned against the Lord and against His Christ, there are some distinct differences to be observed between them. 1. The first makes war, the second deceives by means of miracles. 2. The first succeeds by force, the second by persuasion. 3. The first rules

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## THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE OF SUFFERING

It is an incontrovertible fact that mankind has an inherent aversion to suffering; it is not pleasant, and consequently it is the general consensus of human judgement that it is not good. Our thinking, by nature, is intrawoven with the concept that what causes pleasure is good, and what causes pain or discomfort is bad. But these notions are not correct, and must be supplanted by higher and more precise values. Too much of life in its most beneficial sense begins with what appears to be bad — suffering. Life itself, for example, is evidenced in suffering: the mother bringing forth children in travail, sorrow, and pain. Our bread is earned by the sweat of our face. Few worthy accomplishments are not preceded by rigorous effort, and tiring activity. And yet, men without the Spirit of the Living God balk at suffering, doing all within their power to avoid it. Now, it is lamentable, yet true, that this pseudo-evaluation of life has permeated the church of the Living God. Compromise with the world, together with the creation of sundry false doctrines, are often nothing more than a concerted effort to avoid suffering. It has been well put by the Apostle Paul; “As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; **only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ**” (Gal. 6:12). Here, then, is a case where religious instruction was offered — yea, where meticulous orders were given—not out of any sense of conviction, but in order that no opposition might be experienced. You see, **there is something in the Gospel which leads the most casual embracer to realize that hearty embracement will bring some degree of opposition, some element of persecution.** Compromise in teaching, compromise in living; compromise in appearance — this is nothing more than a deliberate effort to avoid the “offence of the cross” (Gal. 5:11). It cannot be controverted at any level that the “pure religion and undefiled” (Js. 1:27) which our Lord Jesus has introduced into this world is the very antithesis of the spirit of this world! Those that have been made “partakers of Christ” (Heb. 3:14) cannot possibly be at peace with this world, or be found acceptable to this world without denying the Lord and departing from the faith! The “Divine Nature”, of which believers have partaken (II Pet. 1:4) **cannot** be blended with the spirit of this world. It is higher in respect to aspiration, broader in respect to scope, deeper in respect to breadth, and narrower in respect to fleshly leniency. Make no mistake about it, “he that is a friend of the world is **the enemy of God**” (Js. 4:4).

Now, once these truths are squarely faced and admitted, it will at once be seen that suffering to some degree — however tolerable and bearable it may be — is absolutely inevitable! This is so true, so fundamental, that it is stated by the Holy Spirit; “Yea, and **all that shall live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution**” (II Tim. 3:12) — that is an axiom of the Kingdom of God; a saying that is truly “worthy of all acceptance!” In all of Holy Writ there cannot be found a place where that principle is denied, controverted, contested, or held forth as even remotely questionable! In fact, our Lord Jesus is set forth as the preeminent

example of this very truth; “. . . but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto WERE YE CALLED: because Christ also SUFFERED for us, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, that ye should follow His steps . . .” (I Pet. 2:20-21). Suffering is, in fact, something that is “given” unto us on the behalf of Christ: “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, **but also to suffer for His sake**” (Phil. 1:29). We see from this that suffering is a sort of stewardship — something that is given to us in order to the glory of God, and in order to equip us for glory. As it is written; “**If we suffer with Him; we shall also reign with Him**” (II Tim. 2:12).

### Fellowship In Suffering

It is written; “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and **the fellowship of His sufferings**, being made conformable unto His death” (Phil. 3:8-10). The embracement of the truth has a high price tag; once received, everything else is reduced to “dung” — refuse: worthless matter and rubbish! When this is experienced, one is thrust into a very real fellowship with the Son of God; a fellowship appropriately termed the “**fellowship of His sufferings.**” Here is the believer; a partaker of the Divine Nature, an inhabiter of an eternal realm, a citizen of an heavenly country. His life is now within a superior realm, his affections are set on more notable, more lasting things! And yet, he remains, in a very real sense, in this world — a world that is at enmity with God, which stands in open rebellion against Him. Here in this world temporal pleasures and temporal appetites confront us, and suffering and agony of heart ensue. It is something that cannot be avoided unless one denies the Lord or departs from the faith! What this is, in fact, is dying; the experience of being made “conformable” to the death of Christ. That is the negative view. The positive view is that we are being readied for glory. You see, the “fashion of this world passeth away” (I Cor. 7:31), and the believer has been united to a kingdom that “cannot be shaken”, which shall remain after heaven and earth have passed away (Heb. 12:27). While in this unshakeable realm the confrontation of the temporal brings invariable suffering, incontrovertible shakings of soul. There is a jarring of the spirit created by the jangling of this present evil world; and when that “jangling” is contested with the full vigor of the soul by faith, the result is suffering. Now, **suffering is not to be confused with defeat**, anymore than travail is considered the equivalent of abortion. Because the surgeon’s knife causes pain does not mean that a more free and unencumbered life will not follow. **That pain, that suffering, which exists in the breast of every believer is the experience of death to the world; of the crucifixion of the old man; of the mortifying of our members that are upon the earth** (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). However, in the Kingdom of God, death is only in order to res-

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## SHOULD THE BIBLE BE MADE MORE PLAIN?

During the past decade there has been a veritable flood of new translations and paraphrases of the Scriptures. Religious bookstores and "spiritual" financial hucksters are making quite a haul out of this new fad which is sweeping the country. In a day when intellectuality and scholasticism is at an absolute high—when even elementary school textbooks are written in mature type language—in a day like this, we are being told that the Scriptures need to be made more simple; that it is now necessary to reduce them down to the common speech of the people in order that they might be grasped. The tragedy of this whole thing is that many people actually believe this barrage of mental garbage that is being perpetrated upon the public. On the one hand, we are told of man's increase in intelligence; of the alarming ability of youngsters to grasp profound problems covering everything from the field of mathematics to the field of human relations; while we are also being told that people simply cannot understand the Bible—that it needs to be made plainer. And so it is that Bibles are available in about every type of language one can conceive—from the familiar and acceptable King James Version, to the language of the pervert and the simpleton. Well, what ought we to observe concerning these things?

Firstly, let us set the facts more clearly before our minds. To begin with, here is a lamentable and prevailing ignorance of the things of God. With all of the Bibles in all of the simplified language, the ways of God are less known today than they have ever been in the history of this country. The farmer of long ago without a formal education, that plowed and hoed in a field for twelve hours a day, knew more of the Scriptures, more of the ways of God, than the above average college graduate (including theological graduates) of our "enlightened" day. The fact is that people are not reading the Bible in general—simplified versions or otherwise. To cover up for this slothfulness, quick and "easy-to-understand" texts have been provided—sort of like an instant spiritual meal. Now people do not really have to study the Scriptures or search them; they no longer have to apply their hearts and minds to wisdom to learn the ways of God. **Now, our contention is that people of this caliber deserve the Word of God even less than the Jews of old who turned away their hearts from the Gospel message (Acts 13). In fact, they have judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and are no longer worthy of having the message at all.** The way of God, in such a case, is to present them with a language that they **cannot** understand, rather than one which they may apparently more readily understand (Isa. 28:8-11). My personal preference would be to give a wicked and an adulterous generation a Bible in a foreign language that was thoroughly incomprehensible to them—that would be God's way. Then when they were desirous to know the Lord and His Word in truth, a copy of the Scriptures could be presented to them that would not only call for **their** diligence, but also for earnest and heartfelt inquiry from those that know the Lord. If this seems cruel and heartless, it is not nearly so cruel and heartless

as to pretend there is an interest in the things of God when the heart is really riveted to the earth. **It is better for men to be brought to their senses than to face the judgement of God against pre-  
tence and be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"** (Mark 9:56ff).

Secondly, **it is not true that people do not understand the Scriptures—that is a subterfuge to cover for insincerity.** The word of God—in the King James form—is understandable to **any** inquirer. Permit me to demonstrate this truth. Let us go to the Law—it is the "schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Gal. 3:24); it is the grand preparer for the Gospel. Is it understandable? "Thou shalt not kill"—is that plain enough? "Thou shalt not steal"—how about that? Is the mind able to grasp it? Is there a further breakdown of language that is required, for instance, to understand "Thou shalt not commit adultery"? How about the summary of the Law; "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of thy heart, with all of thy strength. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-40). Is there a person of sound mind anywhere that will plead ignorance to the meaning of those words? But, let us take some words from the Apostles themselves. How about "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:21). Or, "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God concerning you" (I Thess. 5:17). Are the words "Set your affection on things above, and on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2) plain enough? Did Paul wrap these words in scholastic obscurity; "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8). "O, but the book of Revelation—that is too difficult to understand", cries one self-justifying sophist. Hear the word of the Lord from this hard-to-understand book; "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4); "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead" (3:1); "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent" (3:19); "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death" (21:8), etc. "Well", encounters the objector, "those things are fairly plain, but there are many other things which are not so easy for me to grasp—things which are over my head." Well, thou pretender, the same thing may be said of the daily newspaper—and yet do you discard that with an insistent demand that the printer make it plainer; that they issue a sort of "Paraphrased Tribune" for you? No—you read what you can understand—what you are interested in, even if it is only the comic page or the sports. But wait— isn't that the real problem with you objectors to the old King James Bible—you simply aren't really interested?

Incidentally, if you do object to the old type English language, I'm afraid that you are betraying something of a lack of interest. Who ever heard of a move in intellectual circles to have Shake-

*(Please turn to page 16)*

## The Two Beasts of Revelation — Part II

(From page 4)

through fear, the second by craftiness. 4. The first teaches to worship the dragon, the second teaches to worship the first beast. 5. The first openly slays its opponents, the second puts men under social ban. 6. The first derives his power from the dragon, the second from the first beast. 7. The first blasphemes openly, the second also deceives.

What we have in the second beast is the epitome of the wisdom of this world; delusion, persuasive, devilish (Js. 3:15). We are not to be deceived by its failure to perfectly comport with the image of the first beast. While there are very real differences between them, there are equally some very common characteristics. 1. They are both opponents of God, Christ, and the church. 2. They are both haughty, heaping attention unto themselves. 3. They both impose affliction upon those that give no heed to them. 4. They both try the patience and faith of the saints. 5. They both exercise an exceeding broad power and influence. 6. They both are apparently phenomenally successful by earth's standards.

### Who, Then, Is The Second Beast?

It is, in a word, FALSE RELIGION; the world disguised as a lamb, the earth garbed with the dress of the church of God. It is Satan attacking the church from within. It is a sort of philosophizing religion that appeals to men's rationalistic powers, but not to their hearts, thereby deluding them. There are many that can withstand the vicious and bloody assaults of a political empire that cannot stand under the powerful influence of religious delusion. Thus we are warned to "mark them that cause division, and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17-18). "For" there are "many which corrupt the word of God" which bear no real association with the apostles of Christ, even though they appear to be of that holy and sacred number (II Cor. 2:17). How often we are warned of this matter of delusion and spiritual falseness! "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ . . ." (II Cor. 11:3-4); "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ . . ." (II Cor. 11:13-14); "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14); "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words! . . . Let no man beguile you of your reward. . . . For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers. . . . These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you . . ." (Col. 2:4, 18, 19; I Tim. 1:3-7; Tit. 1:10-11; I Jno. 2:26).

Of particular note is the alliance of this false church with the government of this world. It sings the praise of this world's order of rule, and promotes its worship. How many of God's saints have suffered under state oriented churches (Martin Luther, John Bunyan, etc.). It is noteworthy that when the head of the government is

also the head of the church (as with the church of England), it is not always to the advantage of truth, for the government consistently appears prominent. In our day we have a queen that is not only over the state, but also over the church. It takes little analysis to detect which phase of her rule is preeminent!

Under such a diabolical union, Martin Luther was branded a heretic simply because the truth he spoke was at variance with the politico-religio tradition of his day. This was, in fact, a vain attempt to restrict him from buying and selling the truth because he refused the "mark of the beast". John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress, was jailed in excess of fourteen years because he refused to pray out of a state-church prayerbook. He refused the "mark", and thus was restricted in the purveyance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Such a day is that in which we live! Truth can hardly be traded unless allegiance is formed with some official religious institution — **one that is recognized by the world**. Wherever this spirit enters into the church, a banning of the faithful always takes place ("I wrote unto the church; but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the preeminence along them, receiveth us not . . . prating against us with malicious words; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (III Jno. 9-10). **False religion is absolutely pervaded with the "loveth to have the preeminence" spirit, and that necessitates the pronouncement of its total beastliness** — harmless though it may appear to the untrained and unschooled spirit.

### Pride — The Nature Of The Beast

Pride is inordinate self esteem (Rom. 12:3), and it is the chief trait of **both** beasts! Now God has particularly (though not exclusively) associated this wicked attribute with mighty men — with earth's concept of power and self esteem (I Sam. 2:3-4). **This is the trait of Satan transmitted to earthly dominions, both political and religious in scope**. The Lord warned Israel of this evil tendency of being lifted up with pride (Deut. 8:11-20). It causes men to forget that they are, in fact, but men, not God (Psa. 9:20)! Thus do they heap honor unto themselves; "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever, and their dwelling places to all generations; **they call their lands after their own names**" (Psa. 49:11). "Saint Paul's Church", for example, might appear to men to be honoring of the Apostle Paul, but rest assured that Paul would not so regard it: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul. . . . Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:12-13); "For while one saith, I am of Paul. . . . **ARE YE NOT CARNAL?** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye have believed, even as **THE LORD GAVE TO EVERY MAN**" (I Cor. 3:4-5). Far from honoring the Apostle, therefore, the affixation of his name upon institutions and congregations degrades and demeans his apostleship; and if this be so of the chiefest of the apostles, what can be said of the current practice of tagging one's own name upon

institutions which they have authored? It is a manifest token of pride — devilish pride. Lutherans, Calvinists, etc. . . . the magnitude of such a transgression cannot be measured by mortal minds! Of course, we are swift to point out that, for the greater part, denominational names were not assigned by the men they purport to follow. There is, also, that deplorable phenomenon of which Solomon spoke; “Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness; but a faithful man, who can find” (Prov. 20:6)? The clear implication of this text is that proclaiming one’s own goodness is a clear indication of faithfulness!

I have taken this time to emphasize the **nature** of pride — that it is dealt with in the Scriptures: that tendency of men to assert themselves beyond lawful measure. It is this trait that characterizes the beast — pride. Again, I do, want to underscore that this trait is particularly associated with the rulers of the earth: “Talk no more exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. The bows of the MIGHTY MEN are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength” (I Sam. 2:3-4); “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the **KINGS OF THE EARTH UPON THE EARTH**” (Isa. 24:21).

This particular spirit had pervaded Judaism when our Lord Jesus was among men. As it is written; “The Scribes and Pharisees . . . love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi . . .” (Matt. 6:1-12; “Beware of the scribes, which love to go in **long** clothing, and love salutations in the market places, and **chief** seats in the synagogues, and the **uppermost** rooms at feasts” (Mark 12:38-39). High positions were coveted, along with the honor which only mere man can confer; “Beware of the scribes which desire to walk in **long** robes, and **love greetings** in the markets, and the **highest** seats in the synagogues, and the **chief** rooms at feasts” (Lk. 10:45-46). Our Lord set forth the distinction between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of heaven in these words; “Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. **BUT SO SHALL IT NOT BE AMONG YOU: BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL BE GREAT AMONG YOU, SHALL BE YOUR MINISTER: AND WHOSOEVER OF YOU SHALL BE THE CHIEFEST, SHALL BE SERVANT OF ALL, FOR EVEN THE SON OF MAN CAME NOT TO BE MINISTERED UNTO, BUT TO MINISTER, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY**” (Mk. 10:42-43). It is stunning how absolutely contradictory this principle is to the vast majority of christendom! Scarcely a religious system or organization can be found that does not operate exclusively on the basis of the kings of the Gentiles. How many religious gatherings are held where the potentates of various churches and religious institutions are granted and even compete for front seats on the platform. Is all of this as innocent as some would have us believe? I speak not now of a mere legal prohibitive structure of recognition, but of a spirit — the spirit of

the second beast — which has saturated the professed church from one end to the other. This is the spirit of the second beast!

In our day, men have originated complete and large educational institutions which train men for “top” positions; for positions of exaltation and recognition. Take away that factor from our religious colleges and seminaries, and the ranks would thin to such an alarming degree that the institutions would have to close their doors. “Uppermost seats” are still being sought; men still love to be recognized in the marketplaces, both of commerce and of religious bartering. Thus do we hear “Reverend”, “Doctor” (a favorite of our contemporary sophists), etc. Competition and quests for titles and notable positions are so commonplace that few are alarmed any longer at the presence of this phenomenon — even though the Lord of glory explicitly and pungently warned and taught against such things! **This is the spirit of the beast!** It is saying that the earth’s concept of authority and dignity is right — even though it is diametrically opposed to the kingdom of heaven. We are, in fact, taught by the Holy Spirit to react precisely the opposite to this spirit; “Mind not high things, but **condescend** to men of **low estate**” (Rom. 12:16). Humility of view is taught; “If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, **let him become a fool** that he may be wise” (I Cor. 3:16); “For if any man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal. 6:3). Earthly concepts, therefore, of “big”, “successful”, “great”, “important”, etc., are to be zealously rejected and abandoned by the faithful for the “truth as it is in Christ Jesus.”

Without laboring too long upon this point, behold how pride permeates the last times, which are described as “perilous”; “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” Now this may appear to denote irreligious individuals — but **it rather is a minute description of a religious order of things; “HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE POWER THEREOF”** (II Tim. 3:1-5). Here is the spirit of the second beast prophesied by Paul — a system of religion possessing the very form, or outward shell of godliness. Orthodoxy, professional rigidity in religiosity — and yet far from God! **Self** interests served; **self** ambitions propagated; **self** exalted, and Christ abased! “Lovers of **their own selves**, covetous, proud, heady (headstrong), high-minded — all denoting a strong devotion to earthly pursuits which make for self-exaltation! There is also that element of **rebellion** which inevitably accompanies self-interest: “disobedient to parents, unthankful, truce-breakers.” There is also that beastly quality of indulging the appetites of the flesh, however base they may be: “unholy, without natural affection.” This also leads to an inability to control one’s self; with the eventual total absence of temperance, or self control; “incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.” **THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF THE SECOND BEAST**, and while it may not be



evidenced in its most depraved stages around you, if it is nurtured and entertained, this spirit has the capability of plummeting to depths of wickedness unimaginable. It was, for instance, the religious institution that crucified the Lord of glory, stoned Stephen, had James beheaded, and the apostles imprisoned — **organized religion; form without power!**

On the other hand, those that feed the flock of God are not to “lord it over God’s heritage” (I Pet. 5:3) — they are **not** to have an authoritative or dictatorial spirit — that is the spirit of the beast! It is the spirit of ambition, when self-will replaces God’s will. In such a case, everything rests upon the preservation of the institutional name, its work and its honor — like the spirit that prevailed at the building of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). It should be of especial interest to the saints to hear what the Lord has to say about earthly ambition; “Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth” (Isa. 5:8); “Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and **CANNOT BE SATISFIED**, but gathereth unto himself all nations, and heapeth unto him all people” (Hab. 2:5); “Woe unto him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil” (Hab. 2:9); “How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only” (Jno. 5:44); “From whence cometh wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not” (Js. 4:1-2); “And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not . . .” (Jer. 45:5). Furthermore, Jesus checked this Gentile-attitude among His very own disciples when He perceived that they had disputed among themselves concerning which one of them would be the greatest. “If any man desireth to be first, the same shall be **last** of all, and **servant** of all . . .” (Mk. 9:33-37); and yet, this spirit which Jesus rebuked is all about us — the very spirit of the earth, of Satan, and of the two beasts: the second beast in particular.

**Satan is actually extending himself — his own person — in the beasts;** promoting the pride and power with which he tempted the Lord Jesus in that lone wilderness when our Lord was with the “wild beasts” (Matt. 4:8; Mark 1:13). In view of these things, whether we are the world’s largest or smallest church is really of no consequence whatsoever! I fear **such distinctions are recognized only by earth** — certainly not by heaven! Nor, indeed, are we to strive for such distinctions. It is, after all, the Lord that “**ADDS**” to the church (Acts 2:41ff), and I am persuaded that His additions and those reported by the organized church do not necessarily coincide.

### Why So Much Detail Concerning The Second Beast?

Throughout the remaining portion of Revelation (chapters 13-20), it is the second beast which

confronts us. This indicates several things worthy of our observation. 1. The fact that the second beast is not **APPARENTLY** a “beast” calls for greater and more deliberate discernment — therefore more details are given concerning his influence. 2. We perceive this is a greater and more fierce foe of the church. 3. **We are more liable to fall under delusion than under military force.** 4. The second beast is more lasting, more dominant, more perpetual, **for persuasion is always more far reaching and lengthy than military conquest.** 5. We have strong indication that the second beast does not appear to be so linked to the worldly order as he is in reality. 6. We conclude that he works very craftily, not so openly as his predecessor. 7. Here we have evidence that more alertness is required on the part of the saints; more diligence, more spiritual judgement, more watchfulness in order to purity. 8. We should see with clarity that **the church’s history is more effected by delusion than by bloody persecution.** It was not the slaying and persecution of the early believers that so alarmed Paul — not hardships of the body that befell them — but their possible deception (II Cor. 11:3; Gal. 3:1; Tit. 1:11; II Tim. 2:14, 18).

The fact, therefore, that so much attention is devoted to the power and work of the second beast summons us from beds of complacency and sloth. It is the Lord’s way of sounding the trumpet in Mount Zion. Our Father does not concern Himself with trivia. He does not fill our ears with empty words. When He speaks long it is due to the absolute importance of the matter, as well as our inherent proclivity away from that very importance!

### The Four Principle References To The Beast

Throughout the remainder of the book we shall find four principle references to the beast. These references refer to certain facets or manifestations of the beast and his influence. They are as follows: 1. The **image** of the beast (13:14, 15; 14:9, 11; 15:21; 16:21; 19:20; 20:4). 2. The **mark** of the beast (13:16, 17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4). 3. The **number** of the beast (13:17, 18; 15:2). 4. The **name** of the beast (13:17, 18; 15:2; 14:11; 17:5). Permit me to briefly comment on the general concepts that are set forth by these terms.

**Firstly**, observe that these do not speak of the beast himself, but rather they are all four “**OF THE BEAST**”. We observe, therefore, that **the beast does not confront men directly, but indirectly** — with an image, a mark, a number, a name: the master of indirection! Here is a graphic picture of subtlety; the beast accrues worship and honor to himself and to the first beast without men really knowing what he is doing — truly the spirit of the old deceiver himself! **The image of the beast** speaks of a duplication of his form or character — a precise representation of him, though not exactly him! **Man does seem to have more of an affinity for facsimiles and likenesses than for the real thing!** And so it is with this “strong delusion” of the second beast; it is based upon an “image”, not even the beast himself.

**The mark of the beast** speaks of the means of identification with him; **it is that which links the beast with his deceived ones;** the constituents of

his kingdom are so identified with him. It speaks not of a literal and physical mark — that violates the very principle of **delusion** which we see operative here. **The mark is as deceptive as the beast himself**; it is a clouded and hidden means of associated men with that which God has condemned!

**The number of the beast** speaks of the nature of limitation which characterizes the beast. His number will denote the true **scope** of his influence; the real depth of his power.

**The name of the beast** speaks of the very nature or character of the beast — what he is really like underneath all of the deceptive presentations of himself which he offers to men that have not received the “love of the truth that they might be saved” (II Thess. 2:11-12).

We may also observe the following. Firstly, the beast is **CREATIVE**, therefore he has an image. Secondly, the beast is influential, therefore he has a mark. Thirdly, the beast is specific, therefore he has a number. Fourthly, the beast has particular and specific characteristics, therefore he has a name.

By way of brief elaboration, let us observe that God also has some of these characteristics. Firstly, God too has an “Image” (Col. 3:10; Rom. 8:20; Heb. 1:3; I Cor. 11:7; 15:49; II Cor. 3:18; 4:4; Col. 1:15). Secondly, God also has a mark; Ezek. 9:4, 6; Rev. 7:3; Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Cor. 1:22). Thirdly, our Heavenly Father also has a Name (Rev. 22:4; 3:12; 14:1; 19:12). Now, you will at once observe in all of these texts that these things are associated with the people of God; they are never spoken of in complete isolation from the saints of the Most High God. You will also note that the image, the mark, the number, and the name of the beast is associated with the children of Satan. **WHAT WE HAVE PICTURED HERE IS UNIQUE LANGUAGE WHICH DENOTES THE PROPAGATION OF THE BEAST AND HIS NATURE AMONG MEN — THE TRANSMITTAL OF HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER TO ADAM’S SONS, EVEN AS THESE WORDS DENOTE THE TRANSMITTAL OF THE NATURE OF GOD HIMSELF TO HIS OWN SONS!**

But observe this single deviation; God is nowhere depicted as having a number! Why? Simply because there is no particle of limitation with God; no segment of His character which may be fully discerned; no part of Him which may be fully and thoroughly diagnosed. Numbers are used to denote limited quantities and concepts; to identify particular segments — but God cannot be so identified! Even as God’s people, bearing the image of God, “cannot be numbered” (Rev. 7:9), so is the character of God beyond full comprehension; unsearchable and past finding out are His judgements (Rom. 11:30-33).

Let us observe, now, the number of the beast: it is “666”. Immediately, I desire to observe the **extreme smallness** of that number in comparison with the holy numerics of this book of the Revelation: “And I heard the number of them that which were sealed an **hundred and forty four thousand**” (Rev. 7:4); “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders; and the number of them was **ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of**

**thousands**” (5:11)); “After this I say a great multitude, **which no man could number . . .**” (7:9). We may firstly observe, therefore, that this beast, successful though he may appear, actually has no real effect upon the purpose of God. **His name denotes his character, his ministry, and the scope of his influence; it is all subject to a very precise measure of limitation; in short, he is under the government and control of the Almighty God.** How could one with a number of “666” contend with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; or even with an hundred and forty four thousand, not to say anything of a multitude which no man can number. We also conclude that our Lord Jesus shall not be outdone by the serpent; his numbers are larger than the dragons! In the words of Scripture: “For the desolate hath **many more children** than she which hath an husband” (Gal. 4:27), and again; “But where sin abounded, grace did **much more** abound” (Rom. 5:20).

Limitation is, of course, the very mark of Satan’s whole order; his time is “**SHORT**”, and even he is acutely aware of this fact; “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, **BECAUSE HE KNOWETH THAT HE HATH BUT A SHORT TIME**” (Rev. 12:12). The time is termed “short” not because of the brevity of chronological time alone, but because Satan’s work has particular and specific limitations — boundaries, as it were, that have been set up by the Lord God of heaven. We have this truth pictured for us often in Revelation: “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” (Rev. 13:5-6); “And it was **GIVEN** unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them” (13:7). All of this language graphically denotes the very essence of limitation and restriction which characterizes the entire rule of “the beast”. His power is **given**, his mouth is **given**, his apparently successful warfare is **given**! But let us here probe deeper into,

### “The Number Of His Name”

It is written; “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six” (13:18). The phrase “Here is wisdom” can concern either verse seventeen or verse eighteen. A great deal rests upon how we view it. If it is spoken in connection with the thought of verse eighteen, it means that the person that can identify the beast is truly wise. If, on the other hand, it is connected with verse seventeen, it signifies that it truly requires wisdom to overcome the anathema of the second beast; i.e., to learn to overcome his ban and deal only in the truth, buying it and selling it not!

Now, I confess that I am inclined toward this latter view, although I also embrace the first! As the first beast is overcome by patience and faith (13:10), so the second beast is overcome by true spiritual wisdom and understanding. There is a plea for such protective wisdom in the Scriptures (I Cor. 2:11-14; I Jno. 2:20-27; 4:6; Eph. 4:13-14, etc.). If it is true that the second beast deceives, then it is equally true that discernment and un-

derstanding are required to overcome his prowess; they are indispensable for the survival of the soul!

Wisdom must also be employed in discerning his number; i.e., in identifying who the beast is! The meaning of this verse is simply this; the beast may be identified — identified **so that he may be overcome**; and the person who so identifies him is wise. He is not speaking here of some sort of mental gymnastics; not of a scholastic accomplishment! **True wisdom, in this case, lies in not only being able to detect the second beast, but to avoid his influence and overcome his power!** It is stated that his number is "the number of a man". There are several possible meanings which may be attached to this phrase. 1. This is a number which signifies a **particular man**. 2. It is a number which may be **reckoned by men**; i.e., a mystery which can be solved by mortals. 3. It is a number which is **peculiar of mankind**, in contradistinction to Satan or angels. 4. This is a number which is **according to man's mode of reckoning** (in comparison with the Lord's mode of reckoning, with whom a thousand years is as one day and one day as a thousand years). 5. We may have here a number which designates **the order of men**.

Now, men of understanding have plied their wisdom in deciphering the meaning of this numeric appellation, and have ascribed a variety of personalities to this number. Faber, for instance, declared that the number signified "Apostate", speaking not of a specific person, but of the great enemies of the church, the apostate ones; i.e., that the most successful wars against the church have been waged by her own defectors. W. Jones, on the other hand, declared that this number spelled out the first letters of the phrase, "Christians, strangers to the cross"; i.e., that it spoke of costless discipleship; of that form of religion without power which permitted one to be deeply religious without paying any price — no mortification of the members that are upon the earth was required, no cross bearing, no suffering, no denying of self. The Roman papists thought that this number signified Luther, chiefly because he shook the foundations of her crumbling empire. A brother Hales declared that it was the number of Mohamet, that great deceiver who claimed to be the Holy Spirit incarnate, and who converted men to his hybrid religion by means of violence. Scot asserted that the number spelled out the words "Marked out for destruction"; like the brute beasts, to which Peter alluded, that were made to be taken and destroyed (II Pet. 2:12). Others declare that the letters in the Hebrew add up to the name of Balaam, that wicked prophet who prophesied for gain, and thus did wrongly. Wordsworth took the stand that this was the number of the world — next to seven, but severed by an impassable gulf. Clark and other astute students of the Word have determined that the letters reveal the numerical value of the words "The Latin Kingdom", evidenced at first in pagan Rome, and epitomized and crystalized, finally, in papal Rome, or the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Other identifications range from Caligula, Trajan, Julian the Apostate, Genseric the Vandal, Pope Benedict IX, Pope Paul V, John Calvin, Beza, Napoleon, Nero, human rule and power, and on and

on! It seems that given any amount of time, the letters may be used to connote the numerical significance of almost any person or thing. If the Greek language doesn't supply the answer, switch to the Hebrew or the Latin language. If again the numerical significance does not come out right, leave out a few words, etc. What shall we say to these things?

Let us make a general observation of all of these interpretations, for there is something that they all hold in common. **This number speaks to all interpreters of the church's foes; chiefly of those that have apostasized from the faith — wolves, as it were, in sheep's clothing.** This was, of course, crystalized in the Roman apostasy and departure from the truth wherein man's conscience was "seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (I Tim. 4:2-3). It is this form of religion — false, and yet parading under the pretense of truth — that fabricates the most serious jeopardy to men's faith. It is through this means that Satan has overthrown the faith of many (II Tim. 2:18) and plunged them into the hopeless night of drawing back unto perdition. It is this form of religion that exerts tremendous influence upon the efforts of men to propagate the truth, which forms a sort of restrictive belt about all spiritual activity. It is this form of religion that is most conducive to the blighting stigma of lifeless organization; where form takes the place of power, and external order and precision supplant life and vitality of spirit.

### Some Objections To This Being A Single Man

It seems clear to this author that a single individual — a specific man — is not meant here. I am aware that a vast segment of christendom are looking for a single dynamic individual which shall answer to this number, but have strong reasons for being dissuaded from that view. 1. "We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places, against the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12). Particular men are only **secondary** opponents, **not** primary ones; and in view of this it would seem preposterous that so much emphasis would be given to one particular man. 2. Secondly, man is too insignificant to receive such notoriety. "**All flesh is grass**" (Isa. 51:12), be it influential flesh, dynamic flesh, or just plain putrid flesh. At **no** point are we to "fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:6). 3. The scope of influence is far too large for a personality. It speaks more of a system, of a pattern of devilish thought; of a principle of evil leaven that pervades religious circles. 4. Were this to speak of a man in particular — one specific individual — it would certainly be a departure from the normal warnings of Scripture. Paul did not warn of Nero, nor Peter of Herod — though both were prolific opponents of the church; fiercer, perhaps, than even the enlightened minds of the twentieth century can conceive.

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(Signed) Given O. Blakely

### What We Are Dealing With Here

We are dealing with a principle here, a kind of a kingdom. It is identifiable; it is after the order of men; i.e., men may deduce what it is, once given some information from above. This second beast is the kind of power that works after the order of men, not God. It is (like both political and religious kingdoms) of man, for man, and to man. It does not have a God-mark upon it, but the mark of man. It is of note that God associated Himself with the seventh day, and man with the sixth day (Gen. 1:27, 31). The number 666 is

truly shy of perfection — never permitting an entrance into rest (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11). Such a picture of religious deception is this! It has much to offer; six full days of creation, as it were — but it can never cause one to enter into “rest” (Heb. 4:3). It is filled with limitation, and is absolutely insignificant in comparison to heavenly numerics — like the Assyrian armies were to the chariots of fire that were round about Elisha (II Kings 6: 14-17).

In conclusion, the truly wise person is the one that can avoid the snare of the second beast; that does not fall into the pit under the guidance of the “blind” (Matt. 15:14).

### THE GETHSEMANES OF MOSES AND CHRIST By Richard Ebler

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Exodus 32:30-32).

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:36, 39).

Moses had a “Gethsemane experience,” so to speak, just after the Israelites had forged and worshipped the golden calf. Although God had delivered the chosen people out of Egypt by a mighty hand with signs and wonders, they rebelled at the foot of Mt. Sinai and pressured Aaron into making “gods which shall go before us” (Exodus 32:1-6).

Moses came down the mount with the ten commandments written in tables of stone by the finger of God and found the commandments had been broken before they were delivered. Idolatry and immorality were flagrantly being practiced with nakedness, dancing, and singing. Moses broke the tablets of the law before their eyes, burned the golden calf, ground it to powder, sprinkled the gold dust on the water of an adjoining stream, and made thousands drink of it. He sent the children of Levi to slay 3,000 of the idolaters. Aaron's life was barely spared from the wrath of God.

Then Moses went up to the top of Mount Sinai to make an atonement for the people, but he took no sacrificial lamb. He went alone. He offered **himself** for the sins of the people.

This was indeed a mountain-top experience, full of majesty, mystery, and profoundness. It can only be understood by the heart, not by the intellect. It does not fit into any theological mold, whether hyper-Calvinist or Arminian. It stands by itself as a monument to the great heart of Moses, who rose above the order of legalism on this occasion. He was a man ahead of his time.

The only other recorded human example of this kind of sacrifice is the apostle Paul who

could wish himself accursed from Christ for his fellow Israelites, if they could somehow be saved thereby (Rom. 9:3). Both Moses and Paul could feel this way about the Israelites because they knew that God had made ancient promises to Abraham which made the destiny of this people a crucial issue. This was not mere sentimentality.

Moses' largeness of heart is further evidenced by the fact that God offered to destroy the whole nation and make a new nation from the loins of Moses himself. Moses turned down this offer and interceded for the people, in spite of the fact that the people had done nothing to deserve the favor of Moses.

The case of Christ in Gethsemane is much more familiar to most people. What Moses did was great, but it only foreshadowed a greater act of self-sacrifice which was accomplished by Christ as He struggled alone in the garden. Here was the greatest battle ever fought in history. It was the battle fought between Christ's human nature which drew back at the terrible suffering which was before Him, and His Divine nature which moved on to complete the will of God. Jesus offered himself to God on our behalf and got the victory inwardly before going with poise to face trial and to suffer.

Here are some similarities and differences between the self-sacrificial offerings of Moses and Christ:

#### Similarities:

1. They both were men of insight. They both knew the terrible cost of what they were doing in offering themselves. Therefore they both trembled on the brink and hesitated just before making the offer. Moses had an unfinished sentence . . . a pause, a final consideration before taking the plunge. Christ, with a greater work to do and with even **more** insight than Moses, asks God to let the cup pass, if it is possible.

2. They **both did indeed** make the offer. Moses said, "If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Christ said, "Thy will be done." In both cases it was a noble, large-hearted, self-sacrifice for those who did not deserve it.

#### Differences:

1. Christ's offering was a sinless offering. Jesus had spotless purity which Moses did not have. Moses was indeed a very holy man, but we read that he "found **grace**" in God's sight. Jesus, on the other hand, had this testimony by a voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." Moses **found grace**. Christ **had merit**. Christ as a spotless lamb, could die for **other's** sins.

2. Christ was Divine, while Moses was human. As a Divine offering, being the Son of God, His death would have infinite worth.

3. Moses offered himself for the nation of Israel. But Christ offered himself for all mankind. Christ's was a broader work.

4. Christ was born for this very thing, to offer himself as a ransom for many. Moses came into the world to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and to the promised land. The purpose of God was different in the two men.

5. Christ's offer was accepted; Moses' offer was not. Moses' offer was good, but Christ's was better.

## ARE BABIES A CURSE?

The following article appeared in the Chicago Tribune on February 16, 1976:

*"Ban the babies from church", urges an Ohio clergyman. "Bawling babies unrestrained or unremoved by rude parents are the greatest obstacle to the people of God hearing the Word of God since the barbarians invaded Christendom in the 5th Century."*

*But there has been a stiff outcry of rebuttal to his suggestion. He should "pick on somebody his own size instead of innocent children and parents of them," says the Rev. James Thurman, of Kenosha, Wis.*

*"Suffer the little children to come unto me," reminds Rose Ann Dantone of Peoria, Ill.*

*THE SERIOMIC controversy was sparked by the Rev. Frank E. Fortkamp, of Columbus, Ohio, in an article in U.S. Catholic, a national magazine published by the Claretian Fathers. He says it's time to stop the "infant invasion of the churches." "Fie on Father Fortkamp," says the Rev. James J. Doyle, of Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He said babies are "here to stay. My plan: Let's outshout them! Let's our motto be 'Preacher Power!'"*

I do now know James Doyle, but wish to register my hearty agreement with him on this subject. Soft spoken preachers have long been an obstacle to the Kingdom of God, in this editor's opinion, and when they can be outshouted by babies, it appears plain to me that babies are not the problem, but preachers. A few points to ponder follow.

1. The ancient Scriptures were read before "all the congregation of Israel, with the women **and the little ones**" (Josh. 8:35.)
2. It is written then "Judah stood before the Lord, **and their little ones**, their wives, and their children" (II Chron. 20:13).
3. Holy men of old have sought a right way not only for themselves, but for "**their little ones**" (Ezra 8:21).
4. Our Lord Jesus said; "Take heed that ye despise not one of **these little ones**; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:10).

Too often contemporary religion is accompanied by a disdain for children. I personally have attended many Bible studies in which it was thought comely to isolate the children in another room. Many congregations actually ask that children be removed from the general service. Why are these things so? Let there be an awakening in the professed churches; **the truth sanctifies children as well as adults!** The Spirit of our God moves upon the hearts of young as well as old! Not only that, a **holy environment will provoke inquires by children**; it will help to develop their concepts of life, enable them to speak properly about things of God and the people of God as they grow older, and give them a certain interest in the ordinances of the Lord which will be forfeited to a large degree by removing them from such an atmosphere. There are few blessings as tender as a little child saying "Hello Brother——", or of the children participating in prayer and the singing of the songs of Zion. Let us not deprive them of this ministry! Raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!

## PUNGENT POINTS

The proclamation of the Word of God is not meant to be a religious lecture; it is to be "preaching"; it is to be "teaching"! It is not an appeal to the intellect, it is a message for the heart which will, if received, elevate and sanctify the mind! Preaching is not meant to be merely interesting, captivating the curiosity of scholastic men, but it is the bold and forthright declaration of things as they are—whether received or not! It is to be done zealously, with the heart, and with the mouth. If ever there was a time to seek deliverance from monotones and silence, it is when the Word of God is preached! It is akin to a rescue operation, and is to be accompanied by energy and a total absence of casualness!

\* \* \*

"What are the requirements for one becoming a preacher of the Word of God?" Firstly, the individual so desiring **must have something to say**; there must be a burning in his heart to speak what he has seen and known. Preaching is not a mere profession—it is a stewardship; a stewardship of something that God has given. Secondly, he must **have a desire to declare the truth**—a desire that cannot and will not be suppressed by the failure of men to honor him. If these two elements are missing, no amount of scholastic training can make him a minister. Perhaps men—even religious men—may make an administrator out of an individual, but never a preacher! It is quite true that there are literally myriads of "preachers", so called, that are nothing more than business administrators. They have nothing to say, and they say nothing. They only administer and guide the functions of the organization. Such men ought to be known as businessmen, not preachers; professional administrators of earthly things, but not ministers of the Word.

\* \* \*

"How many souls have you won to Christ"? That is a common question among evangelicals—and yet it is a strange one. You see, the tally has not been taken yet. Every convert must pass through the fire of God's judgement (I Cor. 3), and be tested to see whether or not he is mere combustible material ("wood, hay, stubble"), or of eternal worth ("gold, silver, precious stones"). Everyone that makes a profession, bows his head and prays, or gives some other form of external commitment, is not necessarily "won". "The day shall declare it, of what sort it is", declares the Holy Spirit in regards to the converts of men; and until that day, a count is premature, to say the least. If the Apostle Paul did not keep a tally of those he had brought to an external commitment (I Cor. 1:14-15), we seriously doubt the advisability of those of decidedly lesser stature doing so!

\* \* \*

"What does the Bible say about infant baptism"? The answer is simple—absolutely nothing! Not a single word!

\* \* \*

The thought has occurred to me that many are concerned about what they should name their church—what title should be given to their congregation. This work should strictly comport with the policy of God to **name things according to**

**their character.** Our Lord Jesus was so named, the prophets and other holy (as well as unholy) men were so named; i.e., in accordance with their character. In view of this, some excellent names of congregations with which I have come into contact would be as follows: "The First Church Of Lukewarm Professors"; "The Congregation Of Evil Doers"; "The Church Of The A.M. Service"; "The First Church Of Part-Time Attenders"; "The Church Of The Short And Convenient Service"; "The Congregation Where Members Do Not Sing"; "The Church Where Members Do Not Pray"; "The Unholy Church"; "The Congregation Where The Word Of God Is Withheld From the People"; "The Church Specializing In Athletic Events"; "The Synagogue Of Satan." While these appellations might well seem humorous—or even an offence to many—rest assured that this is precisely how the Lord God evaluates a church; this IS how He names them!

\* \* \*

The reading of the Scripture should always be accompanied with a firm resolve to obey the Lord in some area; to seek to please and honor Him within the fabric of our lives! Never should we read the Bible complacently, or without the interest of our intellect, emotion, and will!

\* \* \*

If it is true (and it surely is) that "Christ died for sinners", then it is true that Christ died for me! And, if it is true that "Christ died for me", "loving me and giving Himself for me", then it is true that I have access to the Living God through faith. I must exploit this knowledge daily in order to possess victory over the temptor.

\* \* \*

The one thing in earth that is absolutely uncontested by every mortal is the inevitability of death. It is as though the Lord had stamped the knowledge of that appointment (Heb. 9:27) upon the conscience of every man. And yet, there is no truth so much avoided as this sure matter. Surely this reveals to us the deadness of man by nature, and his alienation from the Living God apart from life in Christ Jesus.

\* \* \*

If it is true that our Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear—and that is the truth beyond all controversy (I Cor. 10:13)—then we need not fret concerning the future, or worry about coming circumstances. This ought to be especially precious to us mortals that are so prone to neglect present duties while we are filled with concern about tomorrow. Child of God, **believe** that the Lord will **not permit you** to be tested beyond your ability. Believe that, it is the truth! The Lord has committed Himself in Holy Scripture on this point!

\* \* \*

Loving the Lord is not a mere feeling; it is not a pragmatic emotion. It is **obeying** the Lord—**keeping** His commandments. "For this is the love of God, that we **keep His commandments**: and His commandments are **not grievous**" (I John 5:3). This means that **our love of the Lord may be measured by the effect that His commandments have upon us.** If they are grievous and hard to be

received, then our love for the Lord is small. It matters little what assertions we may make to the contrary. If we must be exhorted sternly to obey the commands of the Lord; if we stand in need of continual rebuke and correction, it is our love that is defective, not our knowledge! **Wayward souls are not loving souls.** It seems to me that this truth should be sounded forth with strength from time to time to clear the air of the noisy professions that come from questionable disciples. By the same token, it serves to further clarify who the real believers are!

\* \* \*

Real discipleship consists of abandoning everything that **conflicts** with following the Lord; of not permitting any **competitive** influence to remove our minds from that steadfast purpose of obtaining "the prize". Firmness of purpose and of resolution in such a case have pervaded the heart as a result of spiritual illumination; the veil being lifted from our eyes so that we may behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. This is transcendent to mere institutional zeal; it does not require artificial stimulation, but is constrained by the love of Christ.

\* \* \*

In a manner of speaking, man can have as much of the Lord as he desires. The Lord has beckoned us to "come", to "seek", to "ask", to "knock". At no point will asking be met with a lack of reception; "Ask and ye shall receive". At no point will seeking be met with a frustrating search; "Seek, and ye shall find". At no point will knocking be met with a closed door; "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you". Further, the Lord declared that "Everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8). Well, dear reader, have you stopped asking? Then you have stopped receiving! Have you stopped seeking? Then you have stopped finding! Have you stopped knocking? Then you have stopped finding open doors! On the other hand, if you still are asking, you still are receiving. If you still are seeking, you still are finding. If you still are knocking, it is still being opened to you. You may gauge your spiritual fervor by the response you are receiving from the Lord! Now, be encouraged to ask much, seek much, knock much! You will not weary the Lord!

\* \* \*

Solitude with the Lord is a cure for many of the inward ills that plague the child of God. It is good to "come apart" from time to time to spend time with the Lord. Even our Lord Jesus left the multitudes from time to time to pray "alone". While this may not be conducive to fame, it is conducive to godliness.

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## The Spiritual Principle of Suffering

(From page 5)

urrection; suffering is in order to reigning; mortification is in order to exaltation!

This experience is a fellowship with Christ because it is the means through which we are effectually and experientially joined with Him. In a very real sense, we are actually "partakers of

Christ's sufferings" (I Pet. 4:13), and that is "the fellowship of His sufferings", or "being made conformable to His death."

## Suffering Is A Result, Not A Quest

Suffering with Christ is not something we seek after; not something that we strive to accomplish! We do not provide the world to persecute us, or labor to be unacceptable to those about us. Rather, we count things that are personal gain to us, things that minister to pride and vanity, as "loss". Suddenly, we find that personal earthly achievement and recognition are not nearly so important as the earth has taught us! Our quest is for fellowship, for the resurrection. In short, our aim is to "win Christ"; and when that is our quest, suffering is the result. It is clear to me, and beyond all controversy, that **all that draw back from suffering — in short, that deny Christ — are doing nothing more than admitting their preference of this world.** They have not resolved to "win Christ", to appropriate Him in the fullest possible degree, and to be made like unto Him to the glory of God. There remains in them the vestiges of the Adamic nature which yet maintains the ascendant position in their life. They may choose to call their manner of life wise, and an effort to reach the lost, to not appear as though they are overly peculiar — or whatever. But we that know the case all too well know that **they do not want to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.** They do not want the stigma of the cross upon them — that mark of death to this world. But for all that "labor to enter that rest", who "seek a city which hath foundations", and who aspire to a "better country, that is an heavenly", there comes that inevitable experience of suffering and sorrow. It is not pleasant, but it is good! It is not necessarily a source of rejoicing of itself, but it does enable the righteous to lift up their heads and rejoice, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

We have here interpreted the reason why so much religion does not result in suffering to some degree; it is simply because it is **not at variance with the world**; it is not the result of union with the Lord Jesus; it is not a quest to win Christ; it is not a labor to be made conformable to Christ's death. It is a pseudo-Christianity which blends earth and heaven vainly, and strives to make friends with the very enemies of Jesus. Away with such religion! It is a reproach unto the Savior Who Himself suffered at the hands of godless men, "leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps". Make your earnest effort to "win Christ"; to "know Him" — really "know Him"; to actually be made "conformable to His death", and to really experience the "power of His resurrection". The path that will follow will be no different than that which saints of all ages have experienced. In fact, you will be drawn into a sweet and rich fellowship which knows no equal this side of glory. Holy men and prophets shall be your companions, for we are admonished to "take the prophets who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an example of **suffering affliction**" (Js. 5:10). What a holy band with which to be identified. Is it not better, more noble, more lofty, than the company of mere wealthy, influential, or exalted men upon this earth. Given my choice be-

tween an earthly potentate of the grandest order, and humble Amos the prophet, a gatherer of sycamore fruit who followed the flocks, I shall without contradiction choose the latter. Why? Because that fellowship of suffering includes the Lord Jesus Himself, the apostles, and holy men of all ages, and brings with it the Divine guarantee of reigning with Jesus!

### A Matter For The Younger

There are many voices crying for the hearts of our children; for the energies of youth. The business world calls for them to extend themselves for financial enterprises. The athletic world bids for their talents of dexterity and physical adeptness and discipline. The scholastic world pleads for their minds. The sphere of pleasure calls out for their indulgence. O, young person, can you not hear those cries — pleas for your allegiance, your devotion, your energies? And yet, amidst the sound and jangle of those contradictory voices there rises the voice of the Lord; high and above them all it soars, and pierces to the very quick of your heart. God calls for your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength! The Lord Jesus calls for your life, your love, your affection. The Holy Spirit pleads for your attention, your emotion, your intellect, your will! There is a wooing of the Lord which flows from the Word of God and from the living apostles that have embraced the Lord Jesus Christ; it calls for you to evaluate all that the world has to offer as refuse, garbage, "dung." The Lord tells you that this world is passing away; that all that is within it is temporal; fleeting! He tells you of another world that shall soon burst upon us with glory and splendor at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the words of Scripture that voice cries; "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Prov. 3:1-4).

It seems to me that the church has been dilatory in its responsibility to summon the young to this high and holy calling. There is too much professionalism that dominates the summons to younger believers. Rather than a conformability to Christ's death, exalted positions and respectable offices are held forth as notable aims. Let there be a call to spirituality among young men and women! Counting things of personal gain but dung; possessing a fervent desire to "win Christ". His fellowship is worthy of your effort; the life which He imparts, the promises that He pledges — these are a matter of His glory, and of your benefit. Throw yourself into this life in the Spirit, you that are young in years. Grow up with the Lord Jesus. Seek that high and more eternal maturity which shall usher you into the very pres-

ence of God and the Holy angels, together with the Lord Jesus Christ and the redeemed of all ages. Compromise not! Let your light shine in the school, with your friends! Press toward the mark at all times: labor to be found acceptable with the Lord. You will suffer, but it will not be intolerable. The Lord will press closer to you, draw nearer to your heart, be more in your experience as you suffer for His Name sake. Take not suffering as an equivalent of misery — it is not! It is the story of conflict; the conflict of the world order with the Spirit of God. But it is a victorious conflict for the faithful, for it results in reigning with Jesus. Join, youngster, join!

### Should The Bible Be Made More Plain?

(From page 6)

peare's literature presented in a paraphrased fashion, or written on an amplified level? Has anyone requested that Alford Lord Tennyson's poetry, or that of John Milton, be stripped of its poetic form and placed in a more understandable format? If not, why not? In the sports field would you have them call a "ball" an "errant pitch" or a "misdirected throw", and a "strike" a "perfectly executed throw" or a "baseball thrown over the legitimate strike zone"? Isn't every field characterized by its own language; its own nomenclature? And do the adherents to that particular field demand that there be an updating of the language periodically? Of course not!

Now, it is not that we are against different translations or commentaries upon the Scriptures many supposed translations are actually only commentaries on the Bible). We have many of them in our personal study. It is the **exaltation** of them as well as the derogation of the older versions to which we object. We feel very strongly that it is not only an unfair, but a **dishonest** appraisal of the case. **It is not the words of Scripture that are so difficult, but the concepts of Scripture; and no amount of re-translation or culturizing of the text can remove the conflict between the wisdom of his present evil world and those heavenly concepts.**

An honest and a good heart goes a long way toward granting a fuller understanding of the Scriptures. It is this type of heart in which the Word of God grows and bears fruit to the glory of God (Luke 8:15). We urge that men relinquish dishonest hearts; that they squarely face the truth of their natural alienation to the Living God, and that they receive the Lord God's truthful diagnosis of their persons. Once this is done, the Scriptures become alarmingly plain. No longer will undue concern be registered because of things that are not understood; but, rather, there will be conviction because of the things that ARE understood. **The great secret to spiritual growth, in this connection, is simply to act upon the knowledge that we do possess; to shape our lives according to the understanding that we do have.** However small, in our estimation, our understanding of spiritual things may be, if we act upon it, obeying the Lord and the direction of the Spirit to mortify the deeds of the body, our understanding will grow. Our Lord Jesus taught us; "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine. . . ." (Jno. 7:17). That alone will compensate for multitudes of translations, so called!