

*world empire of Rome.* This is the *beast out of the abyss or out of the sea* (xi. 7; xiii. 1, 2). This identification is almost universally recognized by modern scholars. Its genesis we may readily understand. From the time of Pompey, who captured Jerusalem B.C. 63, the Jews had learned to fear and hate Rome. In the Pharisaic Psalms of Solomon (about B.C. 50), Pompey is called "the dragon" (ii. 29). The fourth beast of the book of Daniel the Jews had come to interpret as referring to Rome. Now, at a time when Rome, under Nero, had become violently hostile to Christianity and had brutally tortured and slaughtered multitudes of Christians, we can understand how a Christian prophet should have clothed the Christian horror of Rome and Nero under the vigorous though veiled and enigmatical apocalyptic form supplied by current Jewish thought, and called Rome "the beast," as the incarnation of brutal strength and cruelty.

To this beast Satan delegates his dominion over the world, and the world worships the beast. "And they worshipped the dragon because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him?" (xii. 2, 4).

How clearly this describes the actual conditions of those times. Old religions had practically perished or were at least near to vanishing away. All power, civil and sacred, was concentrated in Rome and its emperor. The emperor was deified and worshipped. This worship of the emperor was the test of loyalty. And Christians had to make choice. If they consented to offer incense to the bust of the emperor, they thus proved their imperial loyalty and