

THE BEAST AND HIS IMAGE

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#1 The majority of Bible Students seem to be afraid to study the Revelation. A few go to the opposite extreme and make a hobby of its study. These often become dogmatic and consider their ideas are the only correct ones. Both extremes should be avoided. This wonderful book was given to us for a purpose, and its study should not be entirely neglected. On the other hand we should not be too positive especially about prophecies yet to be fulfilled. Most of us at some time or other have been very positive that certain things would occur, only to find we were wrong. Let us remember that this can happen again!

#2 In this study we are trying to follow certain rules rigidly. Wherever possible, Scripture should be interpreted with Scripture. No prophecy of the Scripture should be of private interpretation (2 Pet 1:19). Any interpretation must fit all Scriptural statements on the subject. Then one will buttress another and the conclusion will be harmonious. It must also harmonize with the general Plan of God. We have tried to be careful to consider the writings of Brother Russell, that faithful and wise servant, but to follow his own suggestion and prove all things. We already know the meanings of many Bible symbols, such as "mountains," "seas," etc., which will be of considerable help. The paragraphs have been numbered for reference.

#3 Daniel gives the Scriptural definition of a symbolic beast. "These great beasts which are four, are four kings which shall arise out of the earth" (Dan 7:17). He was referring to the four universal empires of kingdoms. A "beast" in symbol is a kingdom (verse 23) or government. We believe it can be proven that this symbol holds whenever used in prophecy.

#4 A "beast" is a most apt symbol of governments, especially those which existed in the past. A literal beast is brutal, using any means, fair or foul, to devour or destroy weaker animals. The great kingdoms and governments have done the same thing. Military power has been used against defenseless people to carry out the oppressive programs of haughty kings. Great power was used especially against those who dared to oppose the whims and unreasonable desires of autocratic rulers. Yes, a "beast" is certainly a fitting symbol of these governments.

#5 Daniel's vision of the four beasts was an outline of human history covering the Times of the Gentiles. It begins with literal Babylon and ends with the setting up of Christ's Kingdom. This great prophecy is the framework or skeleton into which other prophecies must fit.

#6 The first three "beasts" are Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece (Dan 2:37,38; 8:20,21). We know from history that the Roman Empire succeeded Greece. This fourth empire was to continue until displaced by Christ's Kingdom (Dan 2:44). We should expect no other universal empire or kingdom in between. There were only four "beasts".

#7 The first three empires rose and fell in a relatively short period of time, less than four hundred years. The fourth continued over two thousand years. During this long period of time, the Roman Empire underwent changes in forms of governments. The highlights of its experience are noted in prophecy, some in Daniel 7, such as "the little horn" (vs. 24). Chapters 8, 11 and 12; also Revelation 12, 13 and 17, explain important features of the history of the fourth universal empire. If we get the correct interpretation, all the details will harmonize.

#8 Rev 17:3 pictures a woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast. History tells us that the Apostate Church controlled the Roman Empire for a very long time. She did not control it all the time. It existed before she appeared, and her control ended in 1799 when Napoleon took the pope a prisoner. The fifth universal empire, Christ's Kingdom, had not yet taken its power. The Roman Empire existed before and continued after the time when it was under control of the Apostate Church.

#9 Speaking of the beast which the woman rode, Rev 17:8 says, "The beast that thou seest was and is not." The scarlet colored beast of Rev 17:3 had existed, but had ceased to exist at the time of the vision of Revelation 17. The period when the beast was corresponds with the time the woman was riding it. The "is not" period was after she lost control of the beast.

#10 The beast of Revelation 17 therefore is not the entire fourth beast of Daniel 4, because Daniel's fourth beast continued on, even when the scarlet colored beast ceased to exist. The scarlet colored beast pictures Daniel's fourth beast for a particular period only. It is like a "close-up" picture of a building. Such a picture does not show the entire structure, but gives prominence to the details of a certain portion only. Even so, the beast of Revelation is a close-up view of the Roman Empire when it was under the control of the Apostate Church. This will be shown clearly by a careful study of Revelation 17:9-11.

#11 Many seem to think that the seven heads of verse 9 are the same as the seven kings of verse 10. One commentator (Uriah Smith, Adventist) says that verse 10 should read, "These (the seven heads) are seven kings." This conclusion is not borne out by the Scriptures. The common version of verse 10 reads "and there are seven kings." The Diaglott agrees, saying "And the kings are seven." The conjunction "and" shows plainly that the "kings" of verse 10 are separate and distinct from the "heads" while verse 11 indicates that the beast on which the woman sits is only one of the seven "kings." This will become clearer as we study verses 10 and 11 in greater detail.

#12 We believe the article in the WATCH TOWER of 1883 (R472) interprets verse 9 most satisfactorily, identifying the Roman Church as the "woman." This together with vs. 18 proves the Universal Rule of the Apostate Church. "Seven" is a number symbolic of completeness, while "mountains" are symbols of kingdoms. Together (vs. 9) they picture universal rule.

#13 Furthermore, Rome was known as the "seven hilled city." This would connect the woman's control with the Roman Empire and also show Rome to be her headquarters. This literal application, and exception to the generally symbolic character of the Revelation, seems justified in this case. It is important to positively identify the Apostate Church because of its deceptive claims to be God's Kingdom, and its remarkable counterfeit of the true kingdom. The double fulfillment, literal and symbolic, clinches the point beyond all shadow of doubt. The Roman Church is the only one which could fulfill the vision.

#14 Let us now see what is said about the seven "kings" of verse 10. Five were fallen at the time the vision was being fulfilled. The sixth was then in control. The seventh was yet to come and would continue for a short time. Verse 11 then explains that "the beast that was and is not" (of vs. 8) would be the eighth and also of the seven. Being the eighth indicates that he would come after the seventh.

#15 But how could there be an eighth if there were only seven kings? The phrase "is of the seven" explains. One of the seven kings appears twice. There are eight distinct periods, but only seven kings because one king rules in two of the periods. This one, the eighth, is definitely stated to be the "beast (vs. 8) that was and is not." This eighth verse also makes it clear that this beast appears twice because it will ascend out of the bottomless pit. This will be its second appearance, and also make it the eighth king of verse 11. It will also be "of the seven" because it ruled previously. At the time of the vision's fulfillment it "was and is not." It had been in power, but its power had ceased. However, it was to ascend or come back to power a second time and go this time into destruction. Obviously it was one of the five which had fallen (vs. 10) but would reappear and become the eighth king, yet one of the seven because it had ruled before.

#16 We believe that the most reasonable explanation of the seven kings is that they represent various forms of government which controlled the Roman Empire successively during its long history. The fourth beast of Daniel covered the entire period of the Roman Empire until Christ's Kingdom took over. Historians show the form of government changed during that time. This prophecy recognizes seven distinct forms. The scarlet colored beast of Revelation 17 was itself one of these forms or "kings" (vs. 11).

#17 The form of government is of utmost importance to the people living under it. Today there is conflict between Totalitarian and Democratic forms of government. Those who have lived under both forms know the great difference between them. Both govern the people but the manner of rule is entirely different. The form of government is much more important than the individuals who do the ruling. The individuals may pass off the scene, while the form continues. It is not surprising therefore that the Scriptures should recognize these successive forms of government under the symbolism of kings, rulers, for certain it is that those forms ruled the Roman Empire.

#18 We will now endeavor to define the form of government which subsisted during the time the Apostate Church controlled the Roman Empire. For a long time it was called a Christian government. We know that it was only a false or pseudo-Christian government. It was a counterfeit of the earthly phase of the true kingdom of God. The Apostate Church joined to her head, the Pope, was the counterfeit spiritual phase, also the man of sin (B-277). The spiritual phase controls the earthly, being pictured by the woman riding the Scarlet Colored Beast.

#19 This so-called Christian government was supposed to rule by divine right, ordained by God to govern the earth. This involved forcing the people to obey what were thought to be Christian teachings and punishing all dissenters. Actually, as we know, it was a base counterfeit and administered by depraved human beings. It was oppressive, brutal and in some ways worse than so-called heathen kingdoms. This form of government certainly deserved the scriptural title "the scarlet colored beast." Scarlet represents sin (Isa 1:18).

#20 In the picture the woman sat upon the beast or controlled it. The Apostate Church used the governments of the earth to force her control upon the people. The military and police powers of the various nations were used by her to persecute so-called heretics. Under her influence and false teachings, the Roman Empire took the form just described, a pseudo-Christian form which oppressed the people. The symbol of "the scarlet colored beast" is most appropriate to this form of government.

#21 In the last paragraph on page 354 of Volume 2, STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, we read, "Papacy was rising, supported by the Roman Beast (people)." How could the people be the beast? We know that people can be, and occasionally are, beastly, in attitude and conduct. In mobs and race riots, large groups of people become beastly. They get that way because of certain influences acting upon them. Under the false teachings and influence of the Apostate Church the people became beastly and did their part in the persecuting of saints.

#22 The Woman "sat upon many waters" (Rev 17:1). The waters are "peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues" (vs. 15). This indicates her influence and control. She also sat upon the Beast. She sat upon both. In view of this it seems reasonable to combine the two, people and government, into one symbol, the Beast, as suggested in B-354 (above). Actually a government and its supporting people are combined. There can be no government without the support of a considerable portion of its people. In its broadest sense, the term "kingdom" includes the subjects or people governed by it.

#23 This adds much to our understanding the full meaning of the symbolic Beast. It was the Beastly attitude of the people that lifted the "form of government" from the realm of mere ideology and gave it life. The Beast that the Woman rode was actuated by the false theory that the governments of earth were parts of Christ's Kingdom, God's divinely appointed rulers. The people, both rulers and ruled, sincerely believed this theory. Their attitude and consequent action gave life to this form of government.

#24 The political organization which ruled New York for a time is known as the Tammany Tiger. Whenever this term is mentioned, we think of a number of things together. The character of the organization, its corrupt practices, the zeal and fanatical loyalty of its supporters all come to mind. We think of its influence and power over the people, knowing that the support of the people gives this system life. When this support is withdrawn, reporters say, "Tammany" is dead even though the organization is maintained. We can even say that "Tammany" was one of many forms of government which ruled New York from time to time. This illustrates what seems to be the meaning of the Scarlet Colored Beast of Revelation 17. It was a pseudo-Christian form of government which ruled the Roman Empire while the Apostate Church was in control. This form was beastly and had considerable life because both the leaders and the people believed it was of divine appointment.

#25 We must now give attention to the ten horns of Rev 17:12-17. Verses 13 and 17 explain that these have one mind and give their power and strength to the Beast. They supported the false Christian form of government and gave it power. We are also told that God had caused them to agree in this matter because by so doing the words of God (prophecies) would be fulfilled. In addition, the ten horns were to make war with the Lamb. They would lose in this battle. They were also to hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, and burn her with fire. It is evident that these things all cannot occur at once. They represent the activity of the horns over a period of time. Keeping this in mind will help us to understand the vision.

#26 Verse 12 reads: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." Some have interpreted this to mean that in the end ten rulers or dictators would rise and receive power for a short time during which they would destroy the harlot. It was taught by some that this was happening in the Second World War. We know now that this did not occur. The Apostate Church is still here.

#27 It must be admitted that a casual reading of verse 12 does convey the thought of ten rulers arising in the end. Casual or surface readings are not always correct, however. (The ordinary reader, for instance, considers that Luke 17:21 proves the idea that the Kingdom of God comes with the conversion of each sinner. A more careful study, keeping in mind that Jesus was speaking to unbelieving Pharisees, teaches an entirely different thought.)

#28 In the last paragraph of B-354, Brother Russell gives an interpretation that seems to fit all the requirements. He suggests that the ten horns are kingdoms which for a time supported Papacy but who later changed their course and gradually took away its temporal power. We will see as we study step by step that this is in harmony with other prophecies, especially Daniel's vision.

#29 In an earlier publication entitled "The Three Worlds" (long since out of print), Brother Russell explained that the expression "one hour" (Rev 17:12) could with equal propriety be translated "the same hour." The Greek word, "*hora*," while usually translated hour, is also rendered "*season*" in John 5:35 and 2 Cor 7:8. The word "*one*" is translated from the Greek word "*mia*" which, according to Young's Concordance, is the equal of "*heis*." This latter word is also translated "*some*" or "*certain*." Thus the phrase could be translated a "*certain season*." Since they give their power and strength to the Beast (vs. 13, 17), their power is exercised in conjunction with it. Therefore, they receive their power the "same hour" or season with the Beast.

#30 The expression "not yet" (vs. 12) indicates a future fulfillment but the time depends on the standpoint one takes. Brother Russell suggested in "The Three Worlds" that the standpoint for this verse should be taken when John had the vision, about 96 AD. At that time the ten horns had not risen (Dan 7:24). The Roman Empire did not divide until the fifth century, and it was not until Papacy united the ten kingdoms that they gave their power and strength to the Beast. When the vision was given to the Revelator, the ten horns had not yet received this power.

#31 This means that the standpoint changes in chapter 17. The earlier verses take the standpoint at or soon after the Woman lost control of the Roman Empire. The Beast is then in the abyss or "is not" condition. Verse 12 would then carry us back about 1700 years to the time when John saw the vision. We know that prophecy does sometimes change standpoints (B-227).

#32 It will help us to consider what the horns are to do. A very important part of their work was to make this harlot "desolate and naked," as well as to "eat her flesh and burn her with fire." This is plainly a gradual work. This gradual work has been going on steadily ever since 1799 when Napoleon took the Pope a prisoner. Ever since 1870, when the last vestige of temporal power was gone (B-356), her prestige has been waning. The extent of the desolating can be most clearly seen by comparing her present condition with the past when she crowned and uncrowned kings.

#33 The ten horns or divisions of the Roman Empire have, in a large measure, done this desolating by the simple process of taking to themselves the right to rule. Formerly they conceded her right to appoint to them their dominion. Since Napoleon's time they no longer recognized her in this capacity. Thus they gradually took away her prestige and changed the attitude of the people toward her. Today no one thinks of her as anything more than a church.

#34 Now since the horns have been doing this desolating work for more than a century, it is not consistent to expect that they are to receive future power for this work.

#35 The Diaglott footnote on Rev 17:12 says the word "yet" is omitted by the *Codex Alexandrine manuscript*. This throws some doubt at least on the authenticity of the very verse which seems to give difficulty. One single Greek word "*oupo*" is properly translated "not yet." To omit only the word "*yet*" the above manuscript would have to use another Greek word, probably "*ou*" which is translated "*not*" 1270 times. It will be readily seen that the two words are quite similar ("*oupo*" and "*ou*"), and as error is not improbable.

#36 If the word "yet" is omitted, the text will read, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings which have not received a kingdom but receive authority as kings the same season with the beast." The passage would then mean that the ten were not kings in the usual sense, especially when compared with the universal empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and the earlier stages of Rome. The ten kings had authority as kings, but they gave their power and strength unto the Beast (vs. 13, 17). In the strict sense it would thus be true that they have not received a kingdom in their own right.

#37 If the word "yet" belongs in the inspired text, we must understand that in Rev 17:12 the Revelator was taking his standpoint early in the Gospel Age. Thus there are two reasons why we cannot accept the idea that the horns will rise in the future, even though a casual reading seems to convey this thought. First, the work of desolating the Woman has already progressed to a very considerable extent. Second, Daniel's visions show that the Empire would be divided into ten parts not merely at the close of the age but even when Papacy, the "little horn" took its power. History shows that the Roman Empire was divided when the Church took control. We understand therefore that the ten horns of Rev 17:12-17 are division of the Roman Empire. While the woman is in control, they support her; but when she loses her power, they change their course. They then commence a gradual work of making her desolate.

#38 Before completing Revelation 17, let us consider Revelation 13. We believe it can be proven that the Beast of Revelation 13 is the same Beast as described in Revelation 17, except from the standpoint of time. Revelation 13 describes its beginning and rise to power, while Revelation 17 pictures it much later, when it has gone into the abyss or "is not" condition.

#39 Rev 13:1 states that this Beast rose up out of the sea. The sea is a symbol of a restless, fluid mass of people. The Roman Empire at this time was in a greatly weakened condition. After many invasions by hordes of barbarians from the north, Western Rome fell in 475 AD. This was the time when the ten horns arose (Dan 7:24). This dividing caused the people to be in the condition symbolized by the "sea." The Beast, a counterfeit Christian government ridden by the Woman, the Apostate Church, took control. The Empire continued to be divided into approximately ten divisions, but these were gradually unified because they agreed in giving their power to the Beast (Rev 17:12-17). Thus the Beast rose up out of the "sea."

#40 Rev 13:2 says that this Beast was like a leopard and had the feet of a bear and a mouth like a lion. It will be remembered that in Dan 7:4-6, the first three beasts resembled a lion, a bear, and a leopard. The new Beast of Rev 13:2 had certain characteristics of each.

#41 The lion is called the king of beasts. Ancient Babylon, symbolized by a lion (also by a head of gold in Dan 2:37,38), was similarly a glorious kingdom from man's standpoint. The Beast of Revelation 13 was for a long time considered glorious and wonderful by man (vs. 3, 4). A lion is noted for its strong mouth and ability to devour. This Beast readily devoured others. Dan 7:20, refers to its mouth saying that it would speak very great things.

#42 The Beast of Revelation 13, had feet like a bear. A bear's feet have qualities unusual for most large animals. It is able to stand on its hind legs and walk like a man. It is said that a bear sometimes uses its feet to hug its prey to death. The Beast of Revelation 13, had certain characteristics like this. Walking as a man suggests the use of human wisdom to guide the course rather than using brute strength alone, as the average pagan government did. Dan 7:8, suggests that the Little Horn had eyes as a man. This indicated far-seeing perception. However, the Beast also had great crushing power, "wearing out the saints of the Most High." In some respects it was like the Medo-Persian Kingdom (bear) which was noted for its strategy and persistency. Medo-Persia had considerable patience, taking its time to divert the waters from under literal Babylon's wall, so that it might conquer that massive-walled city. The Beast of Revelation 13 was likewise persistent and relentless in overcoming all opposition.

#43 The Beast was like a leopard, which has spots on its body. The policies of the "Beast" varied according to the requirements of the particular locality over which it governed. In the countries where the educated and liberal people predominated, its methods were more refined than in the countries where the majority were ignorant. In this way it held all classes. Greece, the original empire symbolized by the leopard (Dan 7:6), was noted for its learning, piety and wisdom. The great philosophers and educated men flourished there. The "little horn" of Dan 7:8,21, which is another symbol of the Beast of Revelation 13, had "eyes of a man" indicating far-seeing wisdom and learning.

#44 The form of government pictured by the Beast of Revelation 13 and 17, was the masterpiece of Satanic wisdom (B-358). The Adversary took the characteristics of the Ancient Empires which best suited his purposes and combined them in this, his masterpiece. The qualities represented by the lion, the bear and the leopard were all used to advantage.

#45 Rev 13:2 says that the Dragon gave the Beast "his power and his seat and great authority." The *Diaglott* word-for-word translation reads, "The power of himself and the throne of himself and authority great." The power and throne and authority that the dragon himself had was given to the new beast. We know from history that when the Apostate Church took control of the Roman Empire, its form of government changed. Previously it had been irreligious or pagan, permitting almost any heathen gods which the people desired. It was this which gave its power to the Beast and therefore scripturally represented by the Dragon.

#46 The purely civil power as represented by the dragon did not pass out of existence for we find in Rev 13:4, that the people worshiped the Dragon as well as the Beast. The civil power had formerly opposed the spread of Christianity (so-called). Now the same power was used to support what they regarded as the Kingdom of God on the earth. The people who believed this could naturally appreciate and worship the civil power for doing such a "good work (?)." Fallen humanity has ever been impressed by a show of military power and now that it was enlisted on the side of God's (?) Kingdom, it was natural that they should worship this civil power as represented in the Dragon.

#47 They worshiped the Beast also by saying, "Who is able to make war with him?" The new form of government which the people thought was God's Kingdom, would seem to them an invincible combination. The Church of Christ, as they understood the matter, was in control. The people knew not that this Church was Apostate and the kingdom was a base counterfeit of Christ's future Millennial Kingdom. Its success in bringing the whole Roman Empire into unity would naturally call forth their worship. The people were further deceived into worshiping the Beast because it did not immediately manifest its beastly character. It began its persecutions after its power was consolidated. It drew to itself the worship of the people when conditions were favorable.

#48 Verse 3 states that one of the heads was wounded to death but the deadly wound was healed. The seven heads of Rev 13:1, seems to correspond with the seven kings of Rev 17:10 (not the seven heads of Rev 17:9. See pars. 11-13). Kings are heads of countries (Psa 110:6). The words may be used interchangeably. We found that the Roman Empire had seven successive forms of government. One of these, called "heads" in Revelation 13, had a deadly wound which was later healed. We know that the Reformation caused a most serious crisis in the Roman Catholic Church. It would naturally follow that a similar crisis would come to the Beast which she rode or controlled. The Beast or counterfeit Christian government was greatly weakened by the liberty of thought which was started by the Reformation. Nearly everyone considered the Roman Church to be the true Spiritual Phase of Christ's Kingdom. To call this into question would also weaken and tend to destroy the idea that the kingdoms of earth were really the Earthly Phase of God's Kingdom. This idea or form of government (which God called the Beast) thereby received a deadly wound.

#49 Some historians have said that the real Reformation was dead fifty years after it started. Dan 11:32 (C-37) indicated that many would cleave to the Reformers by flatteries. Some rulers accepted Protestant ideas and the Reformers fell into the old error of joining with the kings of the earth. The good work was slowed down and the "wound" was healed. Had the real reform continued, this "wound" would not have been healed. A gradual cleansing of the Sanctuary went on as predicted in Dan 8:14, but this did not destroy the Beast. In due time God used Napoleon to bring the Beast's activity to an end (C-39). This occurred in 1799 AD when the 42 months of Rev 13:5 ended. At this time the Beast went into the abyss (Rev 17:8).

#50 Verse 3 closes with the thought that all the world wondered at the Beast. This was no doubt caused by the healing of the wound which probably came as a surprise to many. Verse 12 will throw further light on this part of our subject.

#51 Revelation 13:5 explains that this Beast, the counterfeit Christian form of government was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies (Dan 7:20). This government was called The Kingdom of the Living God, the great One who Created all things. No pagan kingdom ever made such an extravagant claim. Up to this time the Roman Empire permitted many rival Gods. The Beast certainly spoke great things when it claimed to be the Kingdom of the One true God. It spoke blasphemy, because this claim was false.

#52 The Beast was given power to continue forty-two months. In Dan 7:25 and 12:7, this period is called "a time, times and the dividing of times." This is three and one-half years, which equals forty-two months. The same period of time is called 1260 days in Rev 12:6, because, during the Beast's power, the true Church in the flesh had to be miraculously fed in the wilderness condition. Twelve hundred and sixty literal days are equal to three and a half years of 360 days each, or forty-two months of thirty days each. These 1260 days are symbolic of 1260 years from 539 AD to 1799 AD. During this time the counterfeit Christian government was in control. This government had power to persecute God's true people (Rev 13:7; Dan 7:25) as well as power over all kindred's and tongues and nations.

#53 Revelation 13:6 explains the blasphemy in greater detail. Most people think that blasphemy simply means vulgar profanity. The Bible uses the term differently. The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy (John 10:33) because He claimed to be the Son of God when they considered Him only an ordinary man. They said, He tried to make himself God. This proves the Scriptural meaning of the term "blasphemy." Study B-306 carefully to prove this. It is attributing to oneself what really belongs to God. The counterfeit kingdom of God certainly blasphemed God and His name in this sense. Its pronouncements were all made in the name of God, as though they were His decrees.

#54 The Beast also blasphemed God's tabernacle and those who dwelt in heaven. This refers to the true people of God, the footstep followers of Jesus. These are God's Temple (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16), who are seated in heavenly places (Eph 2:6). The Apostate Church set up its own man-made priesthood which was given considerable authority over the people. The Beast, a counterfeit Christian government, recognized this man-made priesthood as the divinely instituted religious representative of God on the earth. Actually it was only an imitation of the true Royal Priesthood which in the Millennial Age will represent God. The true Priesthood will then be God's representative--God's tabernacle with men (Rev 21:3). Only God has the right to authorize such representatives. Therefore the Beast blasphemed God and His tabernacle when it proclaimed to be the humanly instituted priesthood as God's representatives.

#55 In Revelation 13:7 we are told that the Beast would make war with the saints and overcome them. Pagan Rome had indeed persecuted the saints, but this persecution did not overcome them. In fact, the persecution under Pagan Rome caused Christianity (both wheat and tares) to increase. It grew to such an extent that the worldly wise Constantine saw the political advantage of espousing Christianity. Pagan persecutions troubled but did not overcome the saints. Daniel 7:21 says the "little horn" would make war with the saints and prevail against them. Dan 7:25

explains that they would wear out the saints of the Most High and "be given into his hand" for three and a half "times." The "Beast" ridden by the Apostate Church was so successful in war with the true people of God that shortly before the Reformation it was announced that all heresy (?) had been extinguished. This corresponds with the Sardis period of the Church's history. "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." (Rev 3:1). This was certainly overcoming the saints, wearing them out and prevailing against them. The "Beast" used deceptive subtle methods when contrasted with the open opposition of Pagan Rome. The "Beast's" persecutions also covered a much longer period of time and killed many more people.

#56 In Revelation 13:8 we read, "All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." Dan 8:10 explains that the "Little Horn" would cause craft to prosper. Deception was the outstanding characteristic of the Beast, the counterfeit Christian government. It was the masterpiece of the great deceiver, Satan. When the beast was at the height of its power, Satan came the nearest to achieving his ambition. At this time his deception was so successful that all but a few true Christians worshiped the Beast thinking it was the Kingdom of God on the earth. What could be more discouraging and disheartening to God's true people? How futile their witnessing would seem to be! Persecutions coming from a system which nearly everyone believed was God's Kingdom certainly wore out the saints of the Most High (Dan 7:25). Yet there were a few even in "Sardis" who would walk with Christ in white because they were worthy! (Rev 3:4).

#57 Revelation 13:9 seems to be a special warning for true Christians of that time. "If any man have an ear, let him hear." In the darkest hour of the dark ages it was especially timely. Only a very few had the hearing ear at all. These were advised to encourage their spiritual senses and not become dull of hearing (Heb 5:11).

#58 Verse 10 divides the Lord's people of that time into two classes. The Beast was a system of bondage and captivity. Those who were for (in favor of) this system (Rev 13:10 Diaglott) and led others into the captivity, would themselves go into captivity. They would lose their Christian liberty and be deceived by the Beast. "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage" (2 Pet 2:19).

#59 "He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword." This is a reminder of Jesus' words to Peter (Matt 25:52). A Christian should not take up literal weapons in defending his position even to do the Lord's work (See R5922). We can readily see that in those times when the true saints were enduring such subtle and unrelenting persecution, they would need considerable faith and patience. Hence the words, "Here is the patience and faith of the saints."

#60 Verse 11 introduces a two-horned beast. We believe it can be shown that this represents the English government as suggested by Brother Russell (R3698). Verse 12 states that this beast would exercise the power of the first beast, the one we have been considering. It follows that the Beasts will be alike at least in some respects. The first was a counterfeit Christian government ridden and controlled by an Apostate Church. The ten horns gave their power to the Beast. The two-horned beast claimed also to be the Kingdom of God on the earth. The two horns were England and Ireland. It was under one Church, called "The Church of England and Ireland." Thus both horns were recognized. This title was held for 333 years (1538-1871).

#61 The first beast arose from the "sea," symbolizing restless, irreligious masses of people (see par. 39). The two-horned beast, on the other hand, arose out of the earth, symbolizing a more stable, orderly, and professedly religious condition. It began when Henry VIII seceded from Papacy. The people were in a comparatively stable condition at the time because they themselves were not particularly involved in the King's quarrel with the Pope. The "beast," therefore, arose out of the earth, symbolically.

#62 The two horns were like a lamb because they were peaceably inclined. This is probably intended as a contrast to the ten horns which supported the Beast on which the Apostate Church rode. These ten were divisions of the Roman Empire and were mostly barbaric. Even after they were united under the Beast they were especially warlike. Southeastern Europe has probably seen more blood shed than any other portion of the civilized world. England has been more peaceable and has used different methods in building up her empire.

#63 The two-horned beast spoke like a dragon, like a civil power. In England the real rulers were kings and queens, with the Church taking a somewhat secondary role. This was just the opposite from the first beast, where ecclesiastical power was in the lead. The two-horned beast was like the first in claiming to be God's Kingdom on earth. The Church had a very important part in the government, but the civil power predominated.

#64 Some might question why England should be singled out as the two-horned beast. Why not Germany or some other country with a Protestant State Church? For one thing, the Church of England is different from all other Protestant churches. It was merely a secession from Papacy, and began only because Henry VIII had a quarrel with the Pope.

No doctrinal questions were involved, even though it started in 1531, only a few years after Luther's withdrawal from the Roman system, when reform was "in the air." The Church of England was not started in the helpful, purifying atmosphere of doctrinal reform as was the case with other Protestant denominations. Even today the English Church is more like the Church of Rome than any other.

#65 This Church had a much more definite part in the government than any other State-supported church of Protestantism. This was manifested only a few years ago when the Archbishop of Canterbury effectively stopped Edward VII from becoming King because he insisted on marrying contrary to the Church's regulations. This definite connection with a church makes England's government fit the picture of the two-horned beast. The remainder of the prophecy will confirm this we believe.

#66 The zeal of the Reformers caused a widespread knowledge of the evils of the clergy. The Church of England and Ireland, seeing this, finally moved to correct some of its doctrines and practices. Even then it acknowledged and repudiated the grosser evils only. By correcting some of the most serious faults, the popular demand for reform was satisfied. People in general feel that religious systems are all right if their powers are properly exercised. A comparatively small amount of reform satisfies them. The Papal System, noting this, later discarded some of its worst evils and the people then thought that it, too, was satisfactory. Thus the action and example of the two-horned beast caused the people to worship the first beast, thus fulfilling the last part of verse 12.

#67 This verse states that it was the "earth and them which dwell therein," who worshiped the first beast. The "earth" is probably symbolic of the conservative element of society as contrasted with the "sea," the restless, fluid masses of people. The "sea" class have less of the world's good things and are therefore not so much interested in who controls. The "earth" class have a great interest in the present order of society because of the advantages they derive from it. This class therefore favored both beasts because their interests were protected by them. The "earth" class worshiped both counterfeit Christian governments because this class sincerely believed in these governments as being most satisfactory.

#68 Verse 12 mentions the fact that the wound in the first beast was healed (See also verse 3). It was the policy of limited reform instigated by the two-horned beast which caused the healing of the wound. Had the Reformers been able to continue exposing errors and evil, the great System would surely have gone into destruction at that time. The partial reform satisfied popular demand, and the people settled down to worship both beasts about as before.

#69 Verse 12 states that the two-horned beast exercised all the "authority" (Diaglott) of the first beast. The government of England persecuted the saints. History records the sufferings of dissenters and the public burning of Bibles. It was claimed that these dissenters were being punished by God for heresy and opposing His Kingdom. People in general who watched the protestors would reason that if these zealous ones were really in God's favor, He would protect them and prosper their work. But when the beastly power triumphed over such zealous ones as Tyndale, it would seem that this System was executing the fiery judgments of God, as they claimed. Thus the two-horned beast did wonders and made "fire come down from heaven in the sight of men" (vs. 13).

#70 The English Government (prompted by the Anglican Church) was like the first beast in its claim to be God's Kingdom. It was a zealous champion of the idea that Kings rule by divine right. This idea, once admitted, justifies persecution of all opposition. It becomes the duty of the government to use its military and police powers to enforce obedience, to what is supposed to be God's Kingdom. Thus the persecution was considered to be pleasing to God because it would further His cause. This was a most serious blasphemy and from the true standpoint of God both were beasts.

#71 Verse 14 tells about the deceptive work of the two-horned beast. It deceived by doing miracles, unusual things, things different from the natural course of expected events. The English Government backed by a church very similar to the Roman Catholic System was able to do much more than other governments. This was due to the fact that its people really believed the kings were appointed by God as noted above. Many remarkable things were done, apparently miracles or signs, because supposedly done in His name. Those were done in the "sight" (presence--Diaglott) of the first beast, while this beast was active.

#72 The particular miracle of unexpected things was its telling the people to make an image of the beast which had the sword wound. Here was a government joined to a Protestant church urging the people to make an image of what it was supposed to oppose. This was certainly strange, unexpected, a miracle. We cannot understand that this would be said in the exact words stated. Had it been said plainly "make an image" the people would certainly have been angered and rebelled. The civilized world remembered all too well the dark ages when the beast was in full control.

#73 The suggestion to make the image would come in a subtle form. The early part of verse 14 states that the two-horned beast would deceive the people in saying: "Make an image." Most likely it would be suggested by action and example. Experience proves the truth of the proverb "Actions speak louder than words." Actions bring results which people can see plainly. Results cannot be denied, hence they are more convincing than words.

#74 The resurrection of Jesus was a most effective sermon to the spirits in prison (1 Pet 3:19). God's prophets and holy angels had preached that God would reward His faithful, but there was no visible proof to verify their statements. The resurrection of Jesus proved the point conclusively to spirit beings who could actually see Jesus in His glorified condition. Here is one specific Scriptural example of preaching by action. This form of preaching is especially successful with fallen angels and men who lack faith. "Seeing is believing," they say. In this they differ from God's true people to whom God's Word is enough. Our prophecy (vs. 14) has to do with worldly people to whom actions and results speak more effectively.

#75 To understand how the beast said, "make an image," we must consider the condition existing among Protestants shortly after the Time of the End (1799). In the early years of the Reformation there were but few divisions among Protestants. The number of sects increased gradually until the Time of the End when knowledge began to increase (Dan 12:4). This caused people to question the old doctrines more and more, with the result that many new sects were formed. The old denominations also were divided. The trend was in the direction of liberal and independent thinking. This tendency caused Protestantism to divide more and more. It caused alarm among the conservative element, the "earth" class. This class did not comprise the true Christians, which "sit in heavenly places with Christ." Neither was it the "sea" class which has no special interest in the present social order as such. The conservative element has a special interest in maintaining the present social order because of the advantages it affords. We need not assume that the "earth" class was entirely selfish in this matter, but sincerely felt that the present order was best for all classes of people.

#76 Whatever may have been the reason, they were greatly concerned over the divided condition of Protestantism. They would naturally think, "If every one believes as he pleases and would start individual groups, the church would lose her voice of authority. Such condition will endanger civilization. It will be definitely harmful to Christendom. Skepticism and unbelief will be the natural result."

#77 When these things troubled the "earth" class, it was but natural that they should think about the Papal System and the Church of England. These organizations had no such difficulties. Their policies and practices stamped out heresies effectively. Their systems were not divided.

#78 The Protestants were still bitterly opposed to the Roman Catholic System and would not knowingly follow its example. The Church of England was different. It was Protestant (so-called) and favorably regarded by those opposed to Papacy. The policies and practices of England and the Anglican Church thus became an example to unorganized Protestants. Their actions and the results they achieved suggested that those Protestants should follow their example in some respects at least.

#79 The failure of the Miller Movement in 1844, set the stage for forming the image. Religious people in general were disappointed over the failure of Christ to appear as Miller had thought. They were ready to discard all prophetic teachings of the Bible. The time was ripe to formulate a set of orthodox doctrines and in this way discourage unbridled Bible study.

#80 The Evangelical Alliance was formed in 1846 for this very purpose. Its doctrinal platform was broad enough to allow each orthodox denomination to hold to its own peculiar teaching. The proponents no doubt felt they were allowing considerable liberty, though actually all who studied the Scriptures with open minds would be excluded. Among the principal errors which the Alliance insisted upon were the Trinity and the natural immortality of the soul. Even today all Fundamentalists and most Modernists hold these doctrines as basic and sacred.

#81 We must not get the idea that this organization exercised beastly powers immediately. Rev 13:15 indicates that the giving of life would be a separate matter. In this respect it was like Adam—first formed, and then infused with life. The image had a very small beginning, somewhat like the "Man of sin" (2 Thes 2:3). This mystery of iniquity had already begun to work in Paul's day (2 Thes 2:7). At that time it was probably no more than the ambitious ideas of some brethren to become the head of the church. To Paul's keen spiritual insight, this small beginning was to develop into a most serious danger to true Christians. God, through His Spirit, caused Paul to see and write down this prophecy. History records the growth of the great Man of Sin. This was the Apostate Church joined to the false Christ, the Pope (B-277). The first beast of Revelation 13 was also a result of the same small beginning of the "mystery of iniquity." The Man of Sin (false church and Pope) set up a counterfeit Kingdom of God on the earth. This, as we have seen, was the first beast.

#82 The Evangelical Alliance also had a small beginning. God's wisdom enabled Him to see what it would turn out to be. Through prophecy God gave it an appropriate name right at the start. There is no reason to think that the founders of the alliance had any idea of exercising beastly powers when they formed the organization. They did not realize that they were starting a beastly thing. The first part of Rev 13:14 shows plainly that they were deceived in this matter. Regardless of their motive, however, divine prophecy shows that what they started would result in a beast with life and power, an image of the first beast.

#83 When the image receives life, it speaks and causes those who do not worship the image to be killed (vs. 15). We are not told exactly what the image says when it speaks. Because it is an image it will most likely speak "great things and blasphemies" similar to the first beast (Rev 13:5). This beast claimed to speak in the name of God and was especially bitter against the saints. We can be reasonably certain that the image will do similarly when it receives life. Its utterances of course will be suited to the condition of the time. The work of the first beast was done in the Dark Ages and its methods were crude compared with what we may expect from its image.

#84 Many of the Lord's true people were literally killed by the first beast. Many more had their reputations destroyed and their works evilly spoken of. We cannot be too sure in advance just how the image will kill those who refuse to render worship. The word "kill" must mean more than the usual opposition which any faithful Christian receives. There would be no point in calling special attention to something which has occurred all down the Gospel Age. The Revelation indicated that his was one of two particular things which the image will do when it receives life. For instance Luke 21:25 does not refer to literal "sea and waves" because these have always "roared" and therefore would not be a sign of the end of the age if taken literally. Pointing out something that occurs continually could not be a sign of a particular event that was to occur at a specific time. Similarly, we should expect that the killing which the image does will be more than the destruction of character, etc., since this has been experienced in the entire Gospel Age.

#85 The first beast made war with the saints and overcame them (Rev 13:7). It was to wear out the saints (Dan 7:25). We saw (par. 55) that this was fulfilled in the Sardis period of the Church's history. This church "had a name that it lived, but was dead" (Rev 3:1). It was dead principally because it was unable to let the light shine. Being shining lights is "the chief business of life, to which life itself is subservient" (Manna Aug. 28). Anything that stops a Christian from doing this, his most important work, would seem to be aptly symbolized by "killing." The image may kill literally or in this symbolic manner.

#86 Verse 17 seems to confirm the thought that the killing would be an enforced cessation of the true Christian's work. No man will be able to buy and sell unless he has a certain mark. Buying and selling are trading. Jesus commissioned His servants to "trade" (Luke 19:13 Diaglott). Later he reckons with them to see how much each one had gained by "trading" (Luke 19:15). Each of the servants is to use up his justified humanity (with its energy, time, influence, all) in helping others to know God through His Word. Paul traded his life, his all, and brought great "increase" in the knowledge of God to many people. By the same means he developed himself as a new creature. He certainly gained much by "trading." In the prophesy under consideration, those who did not have the mark would be hindered from such trading. In this way the Lord's people would be rendered powerless for such trading, their chief business in life. This would seem to be aptly symbolized by "killing." It seems probable that this restriction will occur at the very close of the Gospel Age, in which case it would synchronize with the "night when no man can work."

#87 People of all classes, small and great, free and bond, will receive a mark in their right hands or in their foreheads (Rev 13:16). True saints will be the exception. Most likely the "mark" is the "mark of the beast" (Rev 16:2). The Berean Comments on this last verse suggest that the "mark" means the "characteristics of the beast." The English word "character" is derived from a Greek word meaning engrave or mark (Dictionary). We sometimes hear the expression "it has all the ear marks" referring to certain characteristics. The text evidently means that people will be caused to take on the characteristics of the beast--intolerance, hate, persecution. This will most likely be done under conditions of stress when necessity will seem to justify such an attitude.

#88 The "mark" is to be on the forehead or in the right hand. The intellectually inclined are probably those who receive the mark on their foreheads. This would mean that their methods of reasoning were similar to those used by the people who supported the first beast. It was reasoned that punishment of heretics was necessary to uphold God's kingdom. This was characteristic of the first beast. Those who receive the mark of the beast will reason and act along the same lines.

#89 The "right hand" signifies power of holding or control (Rev 1:20). The Berean Comments on Rev 13:16 suggests that those who received the mark in their right hand would give "support with their influence and means." These are under their control, symbolized by their right hand.

#90 The Diaglott translation of Rev 13:16 reads: "To give themselves a mark." This indicates a measure of intelligent cooperation. By their own reasonings and actions they give themselves the "mark." This does not mean that they know what they are doing. If they did know, it would contradict the statement of vs. 14, that the people are deceived into doing these things. As is true in the case of most Bible prophecies, these things will come about by apparently natural means. Conditions at the time of fulfillment will be such that those people will feel that drastic means are justified. Civilization and Christianity as they understand it, will be in danger of collapse. Some of the methods that the beast used in the past will be tried in an effort to uphold present conditions. Thus they give themselves the mark or characteristics of this beast.

#91 In view of the symbolic nature of the whole vision, it is reasonable to conclude that the "buying and selling" of verse 17, is also symbolic as explained in paragraph 86. Only those who have the mark of the beast or his name or the number of his name could buy or sell, receive and impart information, especially on religious things. The control of propaganda is becoming more and more important. Freedom of speech must be restricted more and more as the subversive elements of society grow bolder in proclaiming their views.

#92 The latter part of verse 17 shows two other classes who will be able to buy and sell at that time. These are in addition to those who have the mark. One class has the "name of the beast." The other has "the number of his name." Servants were said to have the name of their master or owner. This is also true of the servants of God (Rev 22:3,4). Those who have the name of the beast would therefore be its servants.

#93 The others have the number of his name. Before considering this, we will give some attention to verse 18 which is intended to help us interpret the first beast. Its number is the number of a man, and this number is six hundred and sixty-six (666). The explanation given on page 37 of "What Pastor Russell Said, His answer to Hundreds of Questions" seems most reasonable. There are three Latin words inscribed on the Pope's crown: "Vicarvis Filii Dei." The meaning of this is "The Vicar of Christ." This is what Roman Catholics believe about the Pope, that he is reigning in Christ's stead.

#94 If from this inscription, VICARVIS FILII DEI, we take the letters having value as Roman numerals, they total 666, thus:

V	=	5
I	=	1
C	=	100
A	=	0
R	=	0
V	=	5
I	=	1
S	=	0
F	=	0
I	=	1
L	=	50
I	=	1
I	=	1
D	=	500
E	=	0
I	=	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	=	666

#95 Note that this number is "the number of a man." The Pope in his official capacity (not personally) is the Man of Sin (B-277). He is called this in 2 Thes 2:3 because he usurps the place of Jesus, the real Head of the True Church. The True Church was to remain a virgin during the Gospel Age. The false church committed sin when she accepted an earthly head, the Pope. The two thus became one in a Scriptural sense (1 Cor 6:16). Together they were called The Man of Sin.

#96 Our text does not say that the beast of Rev 13:1-10 is the man, but merely that it has the number of a man. As we have seen, the beast was a pseudo-Christian government, but it was ridden by the "woman" or Apostate Church. The beast, the earthly phase of the counterfeit kingdom of God was controlled by the Man of Sin. We sometimes hear the expression, "I've got his number," meaning we know or understand the person. Jesus was "numbered with the transgressors" (Isa 53:12) or counted with them. So the beast was properly counted with the Man of Sin and said to have his number. We have already considered Rev 13:1-10 in detail, and found that the description fits the counterfeit Christian government perfectly. Verse 18 now confirms this, and connects it up with the Roman Church.

#97 Returning now to the first phrase of verse 17, those who have the number of his name would seem to include all the lesser dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church, including local priests. These are all under the Pope and are really his servants. These, with the others mentioned in verse 17, will be permitted to "trade" in spiritual things. The only ones not permitted to "buy or sell" will be those who recognize the image of the beast in its true character, another counterfeit kingdom of God on the earth. These few will not be permitted to let their light shine. In this way they will be killed figuratively (See par. 85).

#98 We will now consider Rev 17:10,11 again. It will be recalled (par. 15), that the fifth king was "the beast that was and is not." This was the beast that the woman, or Apostate Church, rode. The beast was the counterfeit Christian government, a form which the Roman Empire took for the time when it was under the control of the Apostate Church. This beast went into the abyss in 1799, and was then in the "is not" condition. However, it was to ascend out of this condition (the abyss--Rev 17:8) and become the eighth king yet of the seven because it had ruled before (Rev 17:11).

#99 We have just noted from Revelation 13 that an image of the first beast was to be formed. When given life, it would do things very similar to the first beast. Combining this with the fact that the beast of Revelation 17 would appear again as the eighth king, it seems reasonable to conclude that the eighth king would be the image of the beast. The fifth king, "the beast that was and is not" (Rev 17:8) was the first beast of Rev 13:10. The eighth king which is one of the seven because it is the beast "that was and is not" will be the image of the beast of Rev 13:14,15. This means that the pseudo-Christian form of government will again come into control, but apparently for a brief season only. The seventh king continues a short space, but the time allotted to the eighth is not stated. It simply comes out of the abyss and goes into destruction.

#100 It is important to note that the beast and the woman are pictured separately in Revelation 17, even though she rides and controls it for a long period of time. The beast being a form of government could appear again without being controlled exclusively by the Roman Church. The form of government would be similar even though controlled by others who made the same claim of being the Kingdom of God, ruling for Him. We shall later see that there are good reasons to believe the Roman Church will have some power and influence in connection with the vitalized image of the beast. This however, is determined from other Scriptures and is not necessary to fulfill Rev 17:8,11. It cannot say that the woman rides the beast when it reappears as the eighth king. The beast is simply the form of government, supposedly Christian but actually a base counterfeit, beastly in character. Rev 13:14-18 pictures the second appearance as an image of the first beast, while Rev 17:8,11, pictures it as the same beast appearing twice because actually the form of government is the same. This is appropriate because Rev 17:10,11 describe the important forms of government which the Roman Empire takes in its long period as the fourth Universal Empire pictured in Daniel.

#101 Before considering the eighth King, or the image of the beast in greater detail, let us look at the sixth and seventh kings (Rev 17:10,11). Since the Revelator gives no description of these, we must try to discover from history what the Revelator meant by these. What we offer about these two kings must be considered as only suggestions which seem, in our judgment, to fit.

#102 The first thing to note is that consistency demands that since the first five kings represent forms of government, the sixth and seventh must likewise represent forms of government. After the fifth king went into the abyss in 1799, there have been two general forms of government which had control over Rome and Central Europe. The first was a sort of Democratic form in which the people elected their rulers. The second is State Socialism or Totalitarianism. In this form the people are subject to the State and are virtually slaves. Both forms spread from Rome to Central Europe, the old Holy Roman Empire (the "fourth beast" of Dan 7).

#103 When the Pope was taken a prisoner by Napoleon in 1799, a Republic was organized in Rome (C-42). Some monarchs were later restored, but the real power was increasingly put into the hands of Premiers elected by the people. It seems reasonable to begin the "sixth king," the Democratic form of government at this time. The fifth king, the "beast that was" there entered the "is not" condition, because religious persecutions practically ended them. We shall also see that the time of the "sixth king" was one in which human brutality decreased and there were fewer

great wars. In fact, by 1900 it was almost universally thought that humanity was too civilized to have many more wars. During this time the "beast" was peculiarly in the "is not" condition. Five "kings" had fallen and the next would be the seventh. The sixth was therefore in control. It was the Democratic form of government.

#104 The "time of the end," beginning 1799 AD, (Dan 12:4) brought about great changes in human affairs. The Apostate Church was gradually made desolate of temporal power. Knowledge on every subject increased steadily from that time on. Old ideas of government and religion were questioned and rejected as soon as proven wrong. The idea that kings ruled by divine right lost its power to strike fear into the hearts of the people. Autocratic kings gradually lost their powers as the people insisted on having a voice in their governments. People demanded equality and greater liberty. In fact, liberty became the watchword of the nineteenth century. The United States set the pattern for the world in this respect. The New World, with its vast frontiers and plenty of "living room," encouraged capitalism, free enterprise and individualism. For a time everything prospered and nearly everyone enjoyed better living conditions. It seemed the ideal form of government had been found. It was expected that conditions would continue to improve, and that soon the whole world would be free to rule themselves under the Democratic form of government.

#105 As time went on, the faults of Democracy and Capitalism became manifest. The common people were enjoying more and more of the good things, the capitalists were growing rich. "Rugged individualists" and clever people actually had most of the advantages. This class, of course, claimed that their cleverness and initiative benefitted all classes of society, and therefore they deserved the high profits. "Didn't all people have the same opportunities?" they argued. The common people, especially the working class, did not agree with this reasoning. They could see that the new industrial barons and gigantic trusts exercised as much or more control than the old autocratic kings. Theoretically the people were free, but actually they were dependent upon their employers. They did not have to work, but starvation would come to them and their families if they did not work. Thus they were actually wage-slaves. This was particularly manifested during periodic depressions which brought misery to the hundreds of thousands who were thrown out of work. Democracy and Capitalism, like all human plans had failed to give to all people liberty and real equality. The aristocracy of "blue bloods" had been merely replaced by an aristocracy of wealth.

#106 God had decreed however, that the cause of equality would continue. In 1874 Christ descended "from heaven with a shout" (1 Thes 4:16; B-146). This was a shout of encouragement for the masses to stand up and demand their rights, real and fancied. Strong's Concordance is even more specific than Young's, defining the word shout as a "cry of incitement." It is indeed a cry of incitement to battle, class against class; and the battle will not end until the whole social order goes down. The poor, the workers, the "have-nots" continue to demand more and more of their real and fancied rights. The "haves" are forced to give up more and more, but the "have-nots" demand still more. Human selfishness knows no bounds and is the same in both classes. The demand for equality has continued with more or less regularity and will continue as a definite trend in human affairs until the old system goes down. In fact, it is this that destroys the old order.

#107 As the faults of Democracy and Capitalism became evident, the people began to listen to those who proposed Socialism as a new form of government, which would give equality to all. At each U.S. presidential election the Socialist party candidate received an increasing number of votes. Businessmen and property owners began to fear the outcome. The first World War in 1914 intervened and temporarily changed this trend, especially in the United States. Men power were drained into armies and the great demand for war material gave work for everyone. The income of workers increased because of higher wages and much overtime. This averted serious depressions and checked the spread of Socialism in America.

#108 World War I affected the rest of the world differently. It weakened all of Europe. God's lease of power to the Gentiles ended, and the rulers (especially of Central Europe) lost their thrones. Italy retained its King, but he had little power because of the violent strife between many factions within his kingdom. Finally in 1922, the king established Mussolini as premier. He soon became the real ruler of Italy. He put down all opposition and brought about a kind of prosperity, due to a large military program.

#109 Of greater interest to prophetic students is the fact that Mussolini established the modern Totalitarianism in power. We believe that this is the seventh "king" or form of government which was to control the fourth "beast" of Daniel 7. This form of government has caused more trouble than anything else in history. It is still the chief worry of the statesmen of the world's democracies. The various names -- Fascism, Marxism, Communism -- can be ignored since the form of governments is essentially the same, regardless of which dictator is in control. It is almost directly opposed to Democracy, especially in the matter of property control. Democracy recognizes the individual's right to control property and business. In Totalitarianism everything is owned by the State. The State is supposed to exist for the benefit of the common people instead of the rich. This form of government therefore appealed to the working class. It promised security from depressions and control of prices. All this of course seemed wonderful to the "have-nots." However it took away personal liberty because the State (actually a dictator) was supreme. Thus began the active conflict between two rival forms of government. The battle is still raging today.

#110 Mussolini prospered in Italy and became an example for others who aspired to become dictators. The Treaty of Versailles left Germany impoverished and staggering under a heavy reparation debt. The people there resented this and were ready to accept any leader who promised relief. This, together with the world-wide depression of the early thirties, made it possible for Hitler to get control of Germany. Industrial leaders helped Hitler, feeling that this would establish a wall against Communism. Hitler brought prosperity to Germany mainly by building a huge war machine.

#111 In the meantime Japan had followed Mussolini's example of dictatorship and had built a strong army and navy. In 1931, they proceeded to conquer Manchuria. The only official protest to this encroachment of China came from the United States Secretary of State, and he was not supported by his own country in the matter. The Democratic countries did not even apply economic sanctions, by refusing to supply war materials. The Dictators took all this to mean that they could go ahead and make war on any small nation they chose. Mussolini followed with a disgraceful war on little Ethiopia. Only feeble protests came from the Democratic nations, and some talk of economic sanctions, but no action. Then Hitler began gobbling up territory, which was met by appeasement after appeasement until England finally declared war. The failure of Democracies to protest vigorously against wars of conquest actually strengthened the dictators and the cause of Totalitarianism. Democracies could at least have refused to supply materials which would be used to prosecute war. It is not our business to discuss here the right or wrong of the war. We merely note that the policy of the Democracies strengthened Totalitarianism and brought on World War II. This great War was fought mainly to put down the Dictators.

#112 It was believed that the menace of Totalitarianism would end with the war, but it did not. Since Russia was an ally of the Democracies in the war, the leaders hoped that she would not attempt to spread her ideology outside of her boundaries. This however was a vain hope, as we all realize by this time. Totalitarianism has spread to many nations of Central Europe, and may spread further. This form of government, which started with Mussolini in 1922, grew to be the greatest single menace the modern world has known. (The Russian revolution occurred before Mussolini, but the dictatorship of one leader did not begin in Russia until Lenin died and Trotsky had been expelled.)

#113 At the moment Totalitarianism seems destined to spread further, but we cannot be sure. We need not assume that it will conquer the whole world. Experience has proven that speculation based on news reports usually turns out to be wrong. Things of the immediate present always loom larger than they really are. This tends to distort our perspectives. Several times in World War II, it seemed certain that Hitler was about to achieve his objectives. This proved wrong and is now all but forgotten. As prophetic students of God's long-range plan let us not be similarly carried away by temporary anxieties and fears caused by human reasoning. In fact, there are some things which indicate that Totalitarianism may not spread much further.

#114 Russia's strength appears greater than it really is. Her unity is maintained not only by a ruthless stifling of all opposition and the fear of secret police. Even the leaders are afraid to trust each other. (See article entitled "The Scared Men in the Kremlin," Readers Digest, October, 1946) The people are kept in subjection by the same fear as well as by an appalling ignorance of conditions in the rest of the world. Knowledge continues to increase, as predicted by Daniel. Fear and respect for constituted authority decrease continually in this day of the Lord. Russia and her satellite countries seem to be an exception to the two trends which are so prevalent elsewhere.

#115 We can see why God permits Russia to escape this general increase of knowledge and loss of fear. She is playing a very important part in weakening the Democracies. As long as Russia is united and aggressive, the fear of communism continues this weakening work. Communists embarrass the leaders of the Capitalist countries repeatedly by pointing out the inability of Democracy to establish peace. Human hopes are dashed to pieces again and again by Russia's veto of nearly every proposition which comes before the United Nations. All this causes people to lose confidence in their leaders and the systems of government under which they live. On the other hand, Russia's attitude does not strengthen the cause of Totalitarianism in the Democratic countries. In fact, it seems to have the opposite effect of opening the eyes of the people to the subtle dangers of dictatorship. This causes thinking people to lose confidence in all leadership. We may therefore expect Russia to have power and to spread out enough to carry out as much of this weakening as it necessary to bring in the next feature prophesied in God's Word. When Russia's work has been done we may expect her to succumb to the same conditions which are breaking down human leadership in the rest of the world. As explained in paragraph 106, knowledge and the demand for liberty and equality are to increase more and more until these break up the old order. This increase is manifested clearly in the present strength of this labor element in both England and the United States.

#116 The present conflict between Totalitarianism and the Democracies is demonstrating the weaknesses of both. Absolute governmental control fails because it does not utilize the great creative power of individual initiative. Democracy fails also, because it is unable to place any limit on individual selfishness. This is proven in the United States by the inability to stop rising prices. Each wants to "get while the getting is good," regardless of the effect

on others. The argument is, "Let others look out for themselves," which really is selfishness. The Totalitarian system is similarly proving its inability to better human conditions. The battle between the two ideologies is highlighting the failure of both in a way which all people can see. With most people "seeing is believing" and it adds to the sum total of experiences which humanity is receiving in this Day of the Lord. The selfish leaders and partisans of both sides are not learning much along this line, but millions of ordinary people are finding out. Some thinkers and leaders are showing that they realize clearly the faults of both Democracy and Totalitarianism. While the greatest benefit of this experience will probably come in the Millennial Age, it is playing an important part in preparing for the next form of government, the eighth. As people see the weaknesses of both systems they will withdraw support from both and will be looking for something better. Thus they are being prepared for the next development.

#117 Each new form of government was hailed by many as the real solution for the world's troubles. Each was given a certain amount of trial and found wanting. As the weaknesses of each became manifest, the stage began to be set for the next one. The present struggle between Democracy and Totalitarianism is also preparing the way for the next form of government, the eighth "King." The crude and ruthless methods of Hitler and Stalin are forcing more and more people to appreciate Liberty and the simple moral values of right and wrong. Russia's flagrant disregard of these is continually focusing attention on them. The basic moral principles, equality, justice, mercy and truth, shine out in marked contrast to the "iron curtain" of secrecy and the slave labor camps. The selfish, barbaric acts of the Godless leaders are causing thinkers to realize that man must recognize a higher power than himself. Communism is forcing these issues to the front in spite of the natural lethargy of the people. The majority prefer to work at their business and devote their spare time to pleasure, without bothering about moral issues. The threat of Communism however is a real one which they cannot ignore. The danger of its spreading to this country troubles them because their property would be taken away. Moral principles of right and wrong are thus being high-lighted before the people in spite of their unwillingness to actually champion these principles. This has even brought about a revival of interest in religion. All of these changes of conditions are necessary preparations for the eighth and final form of government.

#118 As a proof of the attitude of thinking people toward religion is actually changing, we quote from TIME, April 7, 1947 page 81. (Also LIFE of the same date):

"Materialism and science-worship are in full retreat, eminent scientists leading the chase."

#119 The READER'S DIGEST of December, 1946, published a condensation of a little book entitled "Man does not stand alone." Its author, a scientist proved the existence of a Supreme Intelligent Creator. Popular demand forced the publishers to print a special edition of the little book. People are really interested in this subject.

#120 This change in popular attitude has come about in a relatively short period of time. Only eighteen years ago an editor was quoted in the LITERARY DIGEST, (Jan. 25, 1930) as saying he "dared not quote the Bible lest a hundred critics pounce on him." Now all this has changed. For several years LIFE magazine has been publishing Easter and Christmas editorials often using Scriptures for a heading. These articles usually stress the need for man's acknowledgment of responsibility to God. No secular magazine would do this repeatedly unless a substantial proportion of its readers approved of such articles. A recent Gallup Poll (READER'S DIGEST, Nov. 1947, p 55) discovered that 96% of Americans believe in God. All these things prove that people are changing from the complacent, self-satisfied attitude so general in the two decades before World War II.

#121 The last "king" of Rev 17:10,11, will be another counterfeit Christian form of government (Pars. 98-100). The people could not be deceived by this system if they were in a Godless, materialistic attitude. For this reason the change in the popular thinking is preparing the way for the last deception. The magazine TIME (Mar. 17, 1947, p 71), in reviewing a new book entitled, "A STUDY OF HISTORY" makes the following statement about the author's work:

"Mr. Toynbee has shattered the frozen pattern of historical determinism by again asserting God as an active force in history. His assertion implicit throughout the 3488 pages implied another; the goal of history however dimly sensed in human terms is the Kingdom of God. That aspiration redeems history from being a futile tragedy of blood."

#122 This book written by a worldly historian (not a churchman) and favorably commented upon by secular editors shows again that the trend is away from atheism and the extreme materialism so prevalent before World War II. We can agree that the goal of history is the real Kingdom of God, though we know it will not come in the manner expected by the historian. His idea is that humanity is finally learning from hard experiences that in order to survive they must do right to each other. Their wars and struggles with evil are also teaching them the need of trusting in a higher power than themselves. Thus they are gradually learning righteousness and coming to a recognition of God. Since these principles were taught by Jesus, the historian naturally connects this up with the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is to cause God's will to be done on the earth. Mr. Toynbee's idea is that this will come about by human effort under what he probably believes to be God's guidance.

#123 We can rejoice that leading thinkers and many others are advancing a step by recognizing an Intelligent Creator. They still endorse the evolution of man, however, and Historian Toynbee's idea is really along those lines. He believes that man has been slowly stumbling upward in learning righteousness. The new feature is that the evolution has been under God's supervision. After tracing this supposed evolution through man's past the historian naturally hopes that it will progress until man learns to obey God and keep His commandments. A one-volume condensation of Mr. Toynbee's history is a best-seller, indicating that he has struck a responsive chord in popular thought at this time.

#124 The idea that the Kingdom of God will come by evolution through man's learning to obey God has a natural appeal to thinking people at this time. It seems like a practical solution of the world's pressing problems. The fact that more people are turning to religion (Pars. 117-120) makes it seem as if the ideal can actually be achieved. When people were getting more and more materialistic such an idea would appear to be wishful thinking. Now the new popular attitude will give encouragement to those who hope along these lines. We know that human efforts can never cause all people to keep God's commands, but if an increasing number believe that they should be kept, and promise to try, it will seem hopeful for a time. Continued fear of Communism and of atomic war will easily bring about this condition.

#125 When "the beast that was" reappears, the people will "wonder." Those "whose names are not written in the book of life" will be deceived. What will first be hailed as a real Christian government turns out to be a "beast," the eighth "king" and soon goes into destruction (Rev 17:11). The same thing was at first thought to have happened when the "beast" of Revelation 13 was formed. To human wisdom the prospect of Christianity taking over the barbarous heathen kingdoms was most encouraging. Gradually the people were disillusioned as the form of government showed its true colors and became the most beastly ever known. The fact that the people "wondered" when the "beast" reappears indicates that a similar program will be followed. We rejoice that it will be present for only a short time and then go into destruction. We are also happy to know that the true Kingdom of God will then shortly take control.

#126 We have already noted that the pressure of fear is causing thinkers and some others to realize that mankind must recognize God and keep His commandments (Pars. 117-124). We may expect this trend of thought to increase as the time of trouble increases in intensity. The people led by secular thinkers and a few religious leaders are pretty sure to demand some definite action to enforce God's commandments as they see them. Some program along the line suggested by Mr. Toynbee (pars. 122-124) may be proposed. If such a program is adopted and makes some progress, it will be hailed as the long-promised Kingdom of God on earth. When this occurs, it will soon turn into the eighth "beast" and cause the people to wonder (Rev 17:8,11).

#127 The sixth and seventh forms of government were each in their turn demanded by the people. The increase of knowledge caused them to demand freedom from civil and religious oppression. Democracy was reluctantly granted by those in power. Experience and the continued increase of knowledge demonstrated the faults of Democracy. The people then began to insist on more and more government regulation to curb industrial barons and monopolies, and Socialism was thought to be the panacea for the world's troubles. Again they were disappointed as they experienced Dictatorship of the most ruthless sort. The weaknesses of both Democracy and Totalitarianism are now being clearly manifested (Pars. 116, 117). As a result, more and more people are desiring something better. Continued pressure of fear will change this desire into a demand for action. Thus the last "king" of Rev 17:11 will come into being by the same general process as the sixth and seventh.

#128 This process of the people's experiencing the failure of one human ideal after another and demanding something better, is an important part of God's program at this time. It is judging civil and religious institutions before the bar of "public judgment" (D-76, D-12). It accomplishes two other things. First, it weakens and partly destroys the old systems because people simply will not support what they see is wrong and detrimental to their interests. Second, as they see the failure of all human efforts they will be prepared for the real Kingdom of God. It is absolutely necessary that the lesson of human inability be thoroughly learned before they will really call upon God for help. The process of enlightening the people through their own actual experience in trying to solve their problems thus does many things. It is not surprising that it is also used of God to fulfill prophecy by bringing in the last three "kings" of Rev 17:10,11.

#129 We do not mean to say that every human being is turning to belief in God, or that every person is seeing the failure of both Democracy and Totalitarianism. There are extremists of all shades from the "far left" to the "extreme right." As each champions his particular "ism" the faults of all are manifested more clearly. This necessary work is being performed by these extremists. The expression "the people" is intended to denote the great majority between the two extremes. As this great majority experiences one failure, they demand that something else be tried. As the demand becomes more insistent, there are always leaders who endeavor to give the people what they demand. For this reason prophetic students do well to watch the trends of human thought. These trends usually are indicative of the next development.

#130 As a class the religious leaders are among the most backward of all peoples today. Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, they are blind to the real signs of the time (Luke 12:56). Bible prophecies mean nothing to most of them. They prefer to maintain their comfortable "status quo" but this is impossible today. The steadily increasing light of Christ's Presence forces them to change a little. Their change of attitude may be described as "backing away" from their traditional beliefs. Instead of turning their backs upon them by admitting obvious inconsistencies, they say as little as possible about doctrine. In this way they actually leave the old teachings because unless doctrine is set forth continually it is not remembered nor believed in. We know from our own experience that we must study the Truth continually or it will slip away from us. Therefore when ecclesiastical leaders quit preaching the old doctrines, they are actually backing away and leaving.

#131 While the religious authorities are endeavoring to resist changes and give the impression of holding to the "faith of the fathers," people in general have a different attitude. A poll showed that while 96 per cent believed in God, 42 per cent, admitted that they had not been to church in the past month. Church attendance in all countries except England has increased somewhat but not in proportion to the increase of belief in God. This shows that the people are not getting what they want from the Churches at the present time. They do not want the old creedal uncertainties but a vital religion which will cause people to respect the rights of others and avoid war. Fear of another war is primarily responsible for this desire. Similarly the scientists who are turning from materialism to a belief in God are not showing any interest in the old theological squabbles. There is no reason whatever to look for a revival of interest in the old creeds. The light of Christ's Presence has manifested their inconsistencies and made them obsolete even though they may never be formally denied. The demand is for a practical religion which will solve the world's problems.

#132 People in general still regard the churches as God's representatives ("different roads to heaven") and as the demand for a "practical religion" increases it is but natural that they will look to churches to do their part. As already noted (pars. 117-126) the pressure of fear is causing thinking leaders and some thinking people to realize that mankind must recognize God and keep His commandments or perish. This trend will increase as the time of trouble goes on and people will demand action from both civil and ecclesiastical leaders. The religious authorities have so far been able to "sit tight" and avoid open discussions of their creeds. They have been able to straddle most controversial issues and take refuge in the popular idea that their institutions are of God. This condition is about to change because we know they must also be destroyed before the earthly phase of God's Kingdom takes control. As we study the subject it appears that their final destruction will come about by the insistent demands of the people for a "practical religion" that will cause men to really worship God. The ecclesiastical leaders will be forced into making an attempt which will fail, but at the same time will manifest conclusively that their organizations are not of God. The people will then destroy them, along with all other human organizations.

#133 We have already noted that Rev 17:8 indicates that all whose names are not written in the book of life will be deceived and caused to wonder (par. 125). The religious leaders will also be deceived. They will be forced by popular demand to try to save civilization and will not realize until too late that their action is the very thing that will destroy them. They will also be deceived because their efforts to cause people to obey God will meet with some measure of success for a time. This is sure to follow because the people who make the demand will surely lend their support. The seemingly "practical religion" will prosper under such conditions for a time, and more and more people will hail it as the great hope. Even the most reactionary ecclesiastic will eventually get behind the movement. These will also be deceived because a great doctrinal compromise will be effected whereby each organization will hold to its own historical creed and maintain its own organization. Thus they will all be deceived into cooperating with what later turns into destruction for them.

#134 The first chapter of Nahum shows God's jealousy and vengeance on His adversaries. This jealousy of course is particularly against those called by His name, Nominal Christendom. Verse 10 says: "While they be folded together as thorns they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." This shows that all God's enemies (organizations) will be brought together for final destruction. Being folded as thorns indicates forced union without heart harmony. While cooperating for mutual protection, they will still be thorns in one another's sides. In the past we evidently looked for too much organic union, i.e. one organization merging with another. Apparently the organizations will remain more or less intact, but unite by cooperation in a common work.

#135 The following quotation from Msgr. Sheon's radio address (TIME, Feb. 3, 1947) shows that even Roman Catholics are thinking of a union of this sort.

"Jews, Protestants and Catholics should unite against a common foe. It is not a unity of religion that we plead for that is impossible when purchased at the cost of unity of truth, but a unity of religious peoples... We may not be able to meet in the same pew--would to God that we did--but we can meet on our knees."

#136 This suggestion coming from a high ranking Catholic is quite significant because up to this time the Roman System has been cold to any proposal of cooperation with Protestants. It shows how the pressure of fear can bring about changes which once seemed most unlikely. As fear increases, union by cooperation is almost sure to come. It has already worked in smaller projects. Jews, Protestants and Catholics cooperated in war service work, and even in the Chaplain service. In many cities they work together to raise money for Community funds.

#137 In view of Nahum 1:10 it is not difficult now to foresee a "union of religious peoples" as suggested by Msgr. Sheon. The trend from materialism to belief in God is paving the way for such a union. It is true that some Protestants are renewing the battle for separation of Church and State, also that some Catholics are opposed to any cooperation with other religions. This cannot be said of the majority of people who more and more consider each religious group as one of several ways to the same goal. This majority will make the demands which the leaders under pressure of fear cannot resist. Furthermore, as already noted, the ecclesiastic authorities will themselves be deceived. When the time is ripe the religious groups will be willing to cooperate in the hope of saving themselves and civilization. But as noted by Nahum, they will then be "devoured as stubble fully dry."

#138 The fact that they are "fully dry" shows that before the destruction there has been a gradual drying of sap which gives life to any kind of vines. We have already noted that Rev 17:16 pictures the gradual desolating of the apostate Church since 1799. This corresponds with the gradual drying up of the thorny vine of Nahum's prophecy. We have seen this happen. The final end of the Apostate System is to come by violence as indicated in Rev 18:21; "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down and shall "be found, no more at all." The two Scriptures harmonize when rightly understood. Rev 17:16 describes the gradual weakening or drying up while Rev 18:21 pictures the final devouring or destruction. Verses 8, 10 and 17 of Revelation 18 plainly convey the thought that destruction is both sudden and unexpected. Isa 47:9,11 emphasizes this saying: "These two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood...desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know." (Know: to ascertain by seeing.--Strong).

#139 This gradual weakening inwardly while outwardly maintaining an imposing appearance is in accord with facts of history. Beginning in 1799 the kings desolated her by refusing to accord any temporal rights. Democracy, the sixth "king," or form of government, weakened her by advocating the liberty of individuals to support or not support the Church. Previously the governments helped her by punishing "heretics." Democracy further weakened her by its policy of separation of Church and State. All her temporal power was lost as well as the support which many had rendered because of fear. The seventh "king," Totalitarianism, went further than Democracy. It pursued a course of active opposition against all religion. The fear of Communism and destruction by atomic power in the hands of Godless dictators is now causing her to consider cooperating with even non-Christian religions (Par. 136). This cooperation will result in her destruction. Thus we see her gradual weakening has taken place and the preparation for her final burning as stubble fully dry is also discernible. Her daughters, the various Protestant systems, have been weakened in much the same way.

#140 While the weakening has gone on gradually, the Churches have been able to maintain an imposing appearance. People regard the systems as God's organizations and as bulwarks of moral strength, especially when compared with Godless Russia and her concentration camps. There is also a vague respect for the systems because of their antiquity. Many have a kind of pride in belonging to the Church which their parents supported. Most people would resent being called a non-Christian. It is readily seen that support rendered for such reasons is deceptive and can quickly disappear. Before the weakening occurred, people really believed in the old fear doctrines and felt it necessary to belong to a Church. The great systems were able to cause some punishment of heretics. Most of them were backed up by government. Now all this has changed. People support the Churches but for entirely different reasons. There is an appearance of strength which is illusive, and aptly pictured by the dry thorny vine of Nahum's prophecy. This apparent strength keeps the organizations together until the time for their final devouring as "stubble fully dry."

#141 Nahum 1:10 says also they are "drunken as drunkards" at the time of their destruction. False ideas of a particular kind will stupefy the minds and reasoning powers of the leaders at that time. Figurative drunkenness may be illustrated by the attitude of thousands of Americans toward stock speculation in 1928 and 1929. They were intoxicated with the idea that buying and selling stock would provide an easy living. The hope of life without work rested upon a false foundation. There was just enough apparent evidence to give some basis for their hope. They knew people personally who had gotten rich this way. Hadn't their own stock already advanced in price? As long as these conditions continued it was impossible to reason with people whose minds were stupefied by much false hopes. In this particular thing they acted like an intoxicated man. We also know that Mussolini and Hitler were likewise figuratively drunken with power, so that they hoped to conquer the world.

#142 Conditions which bring "the beast that was" out of the abyss will cause the religious leaders to be similarly drunk. There will be just enough progress and success in enforcing "practical Christianity" to revive their hope of world conquest. As the time of trouble increases in intensity, it will become evident that mankind must either try to keep the Golden Rule or perish. Enough people will then support some "Christian program" to give a basis for hope of success. The Churches will receive more than their usual support from the people and the governments. This apparent success will go to their heads and stupefy their ordinary worldly reasoning powers. They will lose their usual prudence in straddling issues as they now do. There is no indication that they will receive temporal power. They will have only sufficient influence to intoxicate them preparatory to destruction. Just as some people become drunk on only a little liquor, so these will be stupefied with only a little power but great expectation of world conquest.

#143 Revelation 18:21 gives a good description of Babylon's final destruction. It is illustrated by a mighty angel taking up a stone like a great millstone and casting it into the sea. Babylon will be thrown down with violence and be found no more. The taking or lifting up makes possible the violent destruction in the sea of anarchistic masses of people. The lifting up or exaltation with some power and influence also causes the drunkenness described in Nahum 1:10. Rev 18:7 explains that she will receive torment and sorrow because she says "in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." Note the present tense of the verbs "sit" and "am." In paragraphs 6 and 7 of the 1916 Foreword to Volume VI, Brother Russell interpreted this as future. Verse 8 opens with the word "therefore" indicating that it is because of this attitude that her plagues will come so suddenly. She has been exalted enough to revive her old pride and this pride and haughty spirit goes before the fall (Prov 16:18). This comes naturally because pride stupefies the senses and makes a person reckless. Babylon will have sufficient temporary success and influence to make her say inwardly that she is not a widow. Her theologians may even say that the little season of Rev 20:8 is about to end (B-353, 1st par.). This temporary exaltation will cause her sudden, violent destruction, pictured in both Rev 18:21 and Nahum 1:10.

#144 Revelation 18:9,10 explains that the kings of the earth would lament over her destruction because of the help she had given them. This certainly has not occurred to any great extent as yet. During the dark ages the kings and monarchs "committed fornication and lived deliciously" with her. She kept the people in subjection to the rulers by causing them to believe in the divine right of kings. This worked to the mutual selfish advantage of both the kings and the Apostate Church. But in 1799 the same kings withdrew their support and hated the harlot and gradually desolated her (Rev 17:16; pars. 28, 32-34). They certainly would not lament for the destruction which they themselves caused. They were then glad to throw off her yoke and rejoice in their own power. Shaken by the two world wars and the encroachment of Communism, their attitude has changed. Self-confidence has been displaced by fear of civilization's failure and the loss of life itself in atomic warfare by Godless dictators. The world's leaders, industrial as well as political, are most fittingly called "kings" at this time. "Motor kings," "steel kings," etc. now have a large share of the power and influence once possessed by monarchs alone. These are gradually being led by the fear-producing conditions to realize the need of a "practical religion" to save civilization as well as their own enterprises. They will then cooperate with the religious systems in an attempt to enforce this "practical Christianity" (pars. 117-136). This attempt will meet with enough success to raise the hope of saving civilization. It will be hailed as the long-promised Kingdom of God on earth. This temporary success will last only a little while, for Babylon will be destroyed violently in the sea of human passion (Rev 18:21). Thus the hopes of earth's kings will be dashed to pieces, and they will stand afar off fearing their own destruction (Rev 18:9,10). The great ones will not help Babylon lest they share her fate. They lament because their union with Babylon seemed the last hope of saving themselves and civilization.

#145 The new combination of religious and civil powers will not exercise beastly powers immediately. Only after getting the confidence of many people could this be done. Like the first "beast" of Revelation 13, it first consolidates its power (Pars. 124, 125). Most likely the thinkers and leaders who formulated the plan will themselves be deceived. They felt that surely the Churches could be trusted to establish the principles of Christianity which the religious leaders had preached for centuries. Only after giving these leaders authority will the mistake be discovered. "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder...when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" (Rev 17:8). Religious liberty has long been taken for granted. Therefore when the Church leaders use their authority to persecute, as in the dark ages, the people will wonder. The thinkers of twenty or thirty years ago were similarly deceived in regard to Socialism. There is a long list of disillusioned liberals who now see that leaders from the poor classes have become the world's worst dictators. These are due to receive another disappointment when the religious leaders receive power.

#146 It need not be assumed that the Churchmen planned all this beforehand. In harmony with Nahum's prophecy they become drunken with some power, expectation of conquering the world and pride. Like most human beings, a little power goes to their heads. We can see how this would especially be true of the Roman Catholic Church. They still feel that they are the only true Church and that all human beings are subject to the Pope. With such an attitude only a little power and influence will cause them to think the time has come to exercise their

authority again. They will justify this on the ground that they are God's representatives. While forced to cooperate with Protestants, they may regard this as a temporary expedient, to be tolerated only for a time. Her cunning policies and past dealings suggest that she will work with Protestants with treacherous intentions. At any rate, they will be "folded together as thorns." They will also be stupefied as drunkards. Having been so long without any real power, the little influence they are given will quickly go to their heads. Babylon's hope of again ruling the world will revive, and she will say "I sit a queen and am no widow." When in this condition, her destruction will come suddenly "as stubble fully dry" (Nahum 1:10).

#147 In the last effort to save organized society, the leaders will give the Churchmen some support hoping that the religious organizations can control the discontented masses of mankind. This effort will meet with some success. Fear-producing world conditions will cause a substantial number of people to recognize God (in their own way) and try to keep the Golden Rule. Temporary changes in mass thinking have occurred before. Between 1910 and 1920, many people who once opposed Prohibition suddenly changed and caused its adoption. Later they changed again and caused its repeal. The last effort to save civilization by "practical Christianity" will also receive temporary support. At this time the effort will meet with a measure of success and the religious leaders will become drunk with pride. Then they will exercise their power in a way not expected--they will persecute all dissenters, those who have not the "mark of the beast" (Rev 13:14-18). Thus the image of the beast receives life and does things similar to the first beast (Rev 13:1-10). The same thing is pictured in Rev 17:8,11 as the beast returning from the abyss (the "is not" condition) (par. 99)

#148 The image of the beast will function only a short time and then go into perdition. People are now too enlightened to permit it to rule for centuries as in the dark ages. They will support the Churches in the hope that these institutions can curb man's selfishness. When Church leaders turn into dictators, the people will first "wonder" (Rev 17:8) and then see their mistake and withdraw their support. Babylon will then be destroyed with violence in the raging sea of anarchistic masses of people. Her true character will then be clearly manifested to all. She will no longer be able to masquerade as God's representative on earth. The superstitious reverence they now have must be destroyed. We can see God's wisdom in causing her destruction to come in this way. If Babylon's final end had come by a gradual loss of membership, people wouldn't have understood her real character so well. Experience is the best teacher for most people. When she is given an opportunity to make good her claims and then fails, there will be no question that she is an impostor. God's method of causing a gradual weakening first, then permitting a temporary exaltation preparatory to a sudden violent end will settle the matter permanently. "He will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time" (Nahum 1:9).

#149 Thinking people will be disappointed when the last effort to save civilization fails. It seemed such a practical solution to the world's difficulties. No one can deny that IF all people could recognize God and try to keep His commandments, their troubles would speedily end. But this IF cannot be realized by human effort alone because of ingrained human selfishness. The majority of either rich or poor will not sacrifice their interests to do God's will. Under the stress a sizable number will promise and try for a while, but when they see others going about their own selfish interests, they will quit too. Past experience proves this. Only the real Kingdom of God can really enforce righteousness. Under His wise plan, mankind, especially the generation which goes through the time of trouble, will have learned that all human forms of government are faulty. The last three "kings" of Rev 17:10,11, --Democracy, Totalitarianism and Nominal (counterfeit) Christianity--will all have had their day. The experience will make people ready for God's kingdom.

#150 The kings of the earth, - industrial, financial and political - will be disappointed at Babylon's destruction because she was a help to them. Rev 18:10 says they "committed fornication and lived deliciously" with her. For a brief time they will again use her for selfish advantage as in the old days when she caused people to believe in the divine right of kings. The deception may take a different form suited to the times but in principle it will be the same. It will be called the Kingdom of God on earth, and the great ones will of course be called benefactors (Luke 22:25). Then Babylon together with earth's great ones will temporarily stem the rising tide of anarchy. She will again turn the natural religious instincts of the people to the selfish advantage of herself and the kings. Her deception will succeed for a short time only. It is worthy of note that the kings of earth do not lament out of sympathy nor do they give her any help in her hour of destruction. They stand afar off for fear of sharing her fate. Their last collaboration with her causes a real danger along this line. Apparently the people will be so angered when they recognize her true character that they will spend their energy and thought on causing her violent destruction first. The kings will later be devoured by the fowls of heaven (Rev 19:17,18). These fowls seem to be the radical element who will take a special delight in devouring them.

#151 The merchants of the earth also lament over her destruction (Rev 18:11-19). These would seem to represent the clergy who are suddenly thrown out of lucrative employment by her destruction. "No man buyeth their merchandise any more" (vs. 11). They have sold spiritual things at a great profit and many were "made rich" (vs. 15).

People have for centuries paid dearly for what were thought to be spiritual things. Suddenly people find out that these earthly organizations are not of God at all, and they refuse to buy the merchandise any more. The "shipmasters and sailors" (vs. 17-19) may refer to individual religious groups who for a time rode on and above the sea of anarchistic masses. While they are not a part of the great Roman Church, they benefit indirectly from her. "They are made rich by her costliness" (vs. 19). All the churches together contribute today to the popular idea that people should have some religion and that all serve a good purpose. When Babylon goes down all the individual groups--"shipmasters" (denomination heads), "sailors" (loyal leaders) and religious people themselves ("company in the ships") -- will stand afar off and cry at her burning (vs. 18). Popular respect for religion and the superstitious reverence for the great systems will be a thing of the past. In the true Kingdom God and Christ will be worshiped instead of human institutions. When God spreads His feast of fat things, the people will voluntarily say, "Lo this is our God" (Isa 25:6-9).

#152 The final combining of earth's civil and religious leaders is described in Rev 19:19-21 as a gathering against Christ for the final battle. According to Daniel 2:44, and Rev 11:15, Christ takes over the Kingdoms of this world while they are still active. He then proceeds to destroy them. This whole period is a war with many individual battles, the last of which results in the "beast" being "taken." When this war is over, our Lord will be recognized as the greatest strategist of all time. He is maneuvering the forces of battle so as to destroy the enemy decisively (Nahum 1:9). At the same time, He is guiding human affairs so that the people will learn some important lessons by actual experience. They have been and still are trying various human schemes to save civilization. As each fails, another lesson is learned. Each weakens the old order as the people withdraw their support. This feature of Christ's strategy is accomplished by the increase of knowledge, the brightness of His presence. The last lesson of human inability will come when the Churches not only fail to save civilization, but join with civil powers in becoming the "final beast." This is clearly pictured by the fact that the "beast" is cast alive into the "lake of fire." It will be active up to the moment of its destruction. In this way the last lesson will be most vividly impressed. The Apostate Church is destroyed with violence (Rev 18:21). The counterfeit Christian form of government, masquerading as Christ's Kingdom, is also "taken alive." Under Christ's strategy this finally comes out into the open and manifests its true character as a "beast" similar to the "beast" of the dark ages. The people, after a brief period of wonder at its reappearance (Rev 17:8) cause it to go into perdition (vs. 11).

#153 Rev 19:20 says the "false prophet" was taken with the "beast" and both were cast alive into the lake of fire. The "false prophet" first comes to our attention in Rev 16:13 but is not described there. The verse we are now considering (Rev 19:20) identifies it as the "two-horned beast" of Rev 13:11-13. How? Our verse explains that the "false prophet" wrought miracles and deceived, which is exactly what the "two-horned" beast did (Rev 13:13,14). This explanation makes it clear that the two names are applied to the same system. The term "false prophet" is used in the final stages of its existence to describe its later characteristics more accurately. It will be recalled that the "two-horned beast" was the English Government in combination with the Anglican Church. We have noted (pars. 60-71) how this combination differed from other Protestant systems. It caused Bibles to be burned and was in many respects like the first "beast" (Rev 13:1-9). It fits the picture given in Rev 13:11,12. As time went on, its policies changed, especially in the matter of persecuting dissenters. When the first "beast" went into the abyss in 1799, there came to the world an unprecedented era of liberty (Pars. 104, 105). England and the Anglican Church followed this trend and in many respects became leaders in the new form of government, Democracy and Capitalism. She was a leader in free world trade. For a long time London was the financial center of the world. Her astute statesmanship and policy of maintaining control through a balance of power made her the real world leader. Democracy and free capitalism worked out to her particular advantage and she became an outstanding advocate of this form of government. She taught that this was the ideal form, allowing liberty for all. She prophesied that this would therefore be established in the whole world. Before 1914 it seemed as though it would be realized (Par. 105). It was in this that she was a false prophet. Democracy and free capitalism will not solve the world's problems. Only God's Kingdom can do this.

#154 While England now has a Labor government, it isn't by any means Totalitarian. The people do not want to come under Communistic dictatorship. During the 1946 Coal Strike, a miner was asked why he refused to work even for the Labor Government which had taken over the mines. His answer was, "We still have the bosses." This proves that he did not wish to come under any dictator at all. ("Wildcat" strikes here in the United States prove the same point). His attitude was expressive of that of the working people all over the free world. This method of reasoning has come to the common people as a result of the Second Presence of Christ. It came because of His "shout" of encouragement to the masses to stand up for their rights, real and fancied (1 Thes 4:16). It was also a "cry of incitement" to battle (Strong's Concordance). There began the great war, class against class, which will continue to weaken the old order until its final destruction (Par 106). It is a mistake therefore to conclude that every victory of Labor is an indication of the advance of Communism. On the contrary, it is a part of the great leveling process, a breaking down of the control of some human beings over others. Every step in this direction is toward anarchy and will finally break up all man-made organizations.

#155 The arguments advanced by supporters of the "false prophet" still look good to the thinkers of the free countries. As people see how Totalitarianism actually worked out in Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, they are forced to conclude that Democracy is preferable. The supporters of Capitalism say it is the only system that has worked. It cannot be denied that under Democracy the people actually have liberty of thought and conscience. Bible Students can agree that Democracy is superior to Totalitarianism, but must dissent when we are told that it is God's solution to man's problems. Knowing what God really intends to do, forces us to class the advocates of Democracy with the "false prophet" however well-meaning these advocates may be. Democracy may be humanity's best answer to world problems, but it is not God's answer. England and its Anglican Church is therefore a false prophet because it made such great claims for Democracy. It may be that the United States is included with England in the "false prophet" because of their close connections in espousing Democracy and free enterprise. This is only a suggestion, but one which will bear watching. All signs point to an increasing participation by the United States in world affairs. It is most likely to continue to fight the spread of Communism and thus help England. This however does not change the fact that England is the "false prophet" of Rev 19:20 because she did the very things specified in this verse.

#156 When the "beast" is "taken," the "false prophet" is "with him." They are also both "cast alive" into the lake of fire. This clearly indicated active cooperation at the time of the sudden destruction. This harmonizes with Rev 13:15 where the "two-horned beast" (later called the False Prophet) gives life to the image of the beast. Both will be alive and active at the same time. The False Prophet will cause the religious elements to cooperate with civil powers and industrial kings in the last effort to save the present order. This will meet with a measure of temporary success and renew the hopes of the leaders in stemming the rising tide of anarchy. This temporary success means a new lease on life to the False Prophet, causing it to be active ("alive") when conquered. The union of the religious and civil powers will unexpectedly turn into the "beast that was," the same persecuting combination that oppressed the people in the dark ages. Thus the "beast" will also be alive when "taken" with the False Prophet. Thank God that its life will be very short the last time. It comes out of the abyss and goes into perdition (Rev 17:8,11).

#157 The image of the beast does not receive life until it exercises persecuting powers and kills those who have not the mark (Rev 13:15). Up to this time, it exists in the embryo stage only. While in this incipient stage God calls it the image of the beast because He knows what it will turn into when given life. "He calls those things which be not as though they were" (Rom 4:17). Adam was not a man until he actually received the breath of life though God called him a man before infusing his body with life. This is also true of the image of the beast. It was formed in 1846 under the name Evangelical Alliance. This later became the Federated Council of Churches. Whatever name it takes and may take in the future, it is in principle the organized representative of Protestantism. It is so regarded by the people today. The Council of Churches was given free radio time with the idea that it represented the Protestants of the United States.

#158 From God's standpoint the image of the beast represents Protestants more in respect to their opinions and utterances respecting world problems. From time to time they state their position in governmental policies and other temporal matters. This is entirely out of order for organizations purporting to represent God. It is really participating in the kingdoms of this world and therefore displeasing to God. Furthermore, it is this very cooperating in world affairs that will give life to the image. They will have their chance to help in saving the present order, and this will require definite participation with the Government. For this reason Protestantism's representative is called the image of the "beast," especially in its proclamations respecting present world conditions. God knows what it will turn into when it receives life and power.

#159 Similarly the "beast that was" is Catholicism's representative whenever Papacy's opinion is stated on governmental subjects. Since 1799, when the Apostate Church ceased to control kings and to persecute saints, the "beast" went into the "abyss." The counterfeit Christian form of government there ceased to have life and power. As an ideology, however, it continued to exist. It had many advocates who hoped it would come back to life. These advocates gave expression to their hopes and secretly did what they could to restore its power. To use a modern term, it went underground. Many Catholics still believed in the old counterfeit Christian form of government even though it did not have its former power. In its underground condition (the bottomless pit or abyss of Rev 17:8), its ideology and purposes were the same but it lacked power to enforce its purposes. This explains Scriptures like Rev 16:13, which speak of its activities after going into the abyss but before its reappearance. In a similar way the image of the beast had an embryo existence in the hopes and utterances of Protestants who believed the Church must participate in world affairs to accomplish anything. The idea of this participation is exactly the same whether advocated by Protestants or Catholics. Hence the one system is really the image of the other.

#160 Those who worship either of these are warned in Rev 14:9-11 that they will have special trouble in the presence of the Lamb and the holy angels. This locates the trouble at the Second Advent of Christ. We know from other Scriptures that God does not physically torment any one with fire and brimstone. Those who worship and actively support religious systems, however, will be tormented by the destruction of their beloved organizations. This will be especially true of those who engineered the final union and cooperation with governments. When this last effort to save civilization fails they will be tormented with greater fear than ever. The "smoke" or remembrance of this torment will never be forgotten. When the people get the true blessings from God's Kingdom they will never forget to contrast the true with the false (counterfeit) Kingdom. The false will always "suffer" by comparison. In this way Satan, the "beast" and the "false prophet" will be forever tormented (Rev 20:10). This is no doubt one of God's provisions to cause people to forever appreciate His wonderful blessings. The people will have had such vivid, first hand experience with these enemies that even the slightest suggestion of deviation from righteousness will awaken a realization of danger. They will remember with disgust the old systems of deception. In their minds and words they will thus torment their old enemies. At the same time, they will remember the torments of those who worshiped the beast and its image. The many who consider the Churches as God's instruments for saving the world will be tormented by her destruction. This torment will never be forgotten. Thus the "smoke" of their torment will ascend up forever. Much of this remembrance will be in the minds of the very ones who at one time did worship the false systems. They will ever remember their feverish efforts to save civilization, and their anguish and torment when their human systems finally sank into the sea of anarchy. Their frantic efforts to bolster up the tottering world orders are shown by the last part of Rev 14:11: "They have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and its image." These are the ones who believe the Church must participate with the world governments to save civilization. This is to them "practical Christianity." Such will have many anxious days and nights before they succeed in their efforts. Even then their triumph will be so short they cannot rest, for the beast will immediately go into destruction. Then their torment of fear will begin.

#161 The image of the beast before receiving life pictures developments from the Protestant angle. It represents particularly the element which advocates Church participation in world affairs. This was a new idea to Protestants, but actually it was the same principle on which the Roman Church ruled the world for centuries (pars. 158, 159). It is pictured in Rev 17:8 as "the beast that was." This was forced out of control in 1799. There it entered the abyss or underground condition and existed only as an ideal or hope until it revives and becomes the eighth "king" of Rev 17:11. This idea of world domination is really the same whether advocated by Protestants or by Catholics. When the two systems finally fold together "as thorns" for destruction, (Nahum 1:10) (pars. 134-137) the image receives life and the "beast that was" comes out of the "abyss." The two merge into one as the advocates cooperate in a joint effort to establish Christianity (?) as a world religion. They will again join with the civil powers and persecute all opposition. Thus they establish a "beast," a counterfeit Christian government. It is pictured from the Protestant standpoint in Rev 13:14-18 as an image of the first beast (Rev 13:1-10). The development from the Papal viewpoint is pictured in Rev 17:11 as a revival of the "beast that was." It has already been noted (par. 100) that nothing in this prophecy indicated that the "woman" would ride the "beast" when it reappeared. The "beast" is the form of government regardless of who champions and controls it. Other prophecies, especially Nahum 1:10, show that Protestantism and Catholicism will cooperate just before their destruction. This has been fully considered in pars. 137, 138.

#162 The following quotation from the last paragraph on page 580 (also 581) of Vol IV STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES shows what Brother Russell expected to transpire when the image of the beast would receive life.

"In harmony with this (Matt 24:23-25) we find in Rev 13:14-18 a prophecy of a special combination of influence by which Protestant denominations will be unified and, though separate, yet be brought into cooperation with Papacy, in a manner that will give both increased powers, and deceive many into supposing that the new combination will be God's instrumentality for doing the work predicted of Messiah, and that it is thus his representative."

#163 Brother Russell pointed out how Papacy, the Antichrist, as well as other Churches counterfeited the genuine Messiah so as to partially deceive many for centuries. He then noted that these deceptions had been failing for some time. Fewer people were believing that theirs was the only true Church. But he believed that Matt 24:23-25 was given to warn God's people of a future great deception which would "deceive if possible the very elect." He implied that this last deception which will be even more subtle and extensive than those of the past since both Catholics and Protestants are to be involved in the same deception. As long as they are divided, their power is limited. But when they at last cooperate in the same work, the people are bound to be impressed by their combined strength. Their strength will be still greater when the governments and great leaders lend their support and encouragement. When this combination agrees in advocating a "practical religion" which promises to curb man's selfishness and end wars, the people will naturally fall in line. Such a program will surely meet with a measure of success like all "drives" do in wars or times of stress. This temporary, apparent success, together with the united backing of all factions of Christendom will deceive "many." This combination will say in substance, "I am Christ." It will claim to be the Kingdom of God on earth, "God's instrumentality for doing the work predicted of Messiah."

#164 Only the very elect will escape this deception. These know that no present human organizations, however well meaning, are God's representatives. Their knowledge of His Plan will keep them from being deceived. This does not mean that they will escape trouble. In fact, the image of the beast will cause them considerable trouble. They will refuse to receive the "mark of the beast" and thus be unable to "buy or sell" religious information. They will not conform to the standardized religion especially in the matter of cooperating with present human institutions. Because of this the true saints will be killed (Rev 13:15). This "killing" will mean a forced cessation of their "chief business in life," letting the light shine (MANNA Aug. 28). They may also be killed literally in this "night when no man can work" (Pars. 84-92). To true saints this will mean deliverance and glory. The Church will then be complete. Shortly after this, the world will wake up to the fact that they were deceived by the image of the beast. When the true character of the religious systems is recognized, they will be destroyed by the people themselves (Par. 148). Thus the great counterfeit Christian government will come to a conclusive end. This affliction shall never rise again (Nahum 1:9) because the people will be so completely disillusioned (Par. 160). When the true Kingdom of God is manifested, it will be so different that people will soon say, "Lo, this is our God!"