The idolatry of the nominal Christian Church is  
paving the way for the idolatry of Antichrist. Imagine  
a council of Christian bishops expressing themselves  
thus concerning images! “We who believe in the one  
God in three Persons, embrace images with veneration. Be those who do otherwise accursed! Be those  
who refuse this, expelled the Church! . . . We take  
under our care, and venerate images. We smite with  
a curse those who will not. Whoever shall adduce  
passages of Scripture concerning ‘idols’ as if applying  
to images worthy to be adored, let them be accursed!  
Accursed be they who call images—the fit objects of  
our worship—‘idols.’ Accursed be they who say  
that Christians worship images as their gods! Accursed  
be they who knowingly commune at the Lord’s Supper  
with the enemies of images worthy to be adored, or who  
deface or dishonour images!” Yet thus spake the  
second Council of Nice. *Ancient Christianity*, ii. 219.  
Of this decree Rome has ever stood as the defender.  
 The Wild Beast’s power and blasphemous claims do  
not arrive at their fullness till after the last traces of  
even corrupted Christianity are swept away. Hence  
Rev. xvii. 6 is fulfilled, ere this angel is sent.  
 No doubt a perception of the true meaning of the  
Wild Beast and his image made the worship of the  
emperors a thing so awful and horrible to the Christians.  
It was something which in their day had not arrived at  
its dreadful association with Satan’s bodily presence  
and miracle, as it will hereafter; but they saw by this  
means how abhorred such adoration was by the true  
God. Indeed, the believers in Jesus arose just in time  
to prevent the Roman empire from becoming that  
putrid corpse, on which the judgments of God in destruction should be poured.  
 We have seen the *crime:* next follows the *punishment* decreed of God.