

THE BEAST'S DOMINION OVER EARTHLY KINGS.*

For God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast, until the word of God shall be fulfilled.—REV. XVII. 17.

THE occasion of this day's solemnity hath been long and well known, and we have often in this place spoken of it; and it were a thing not unseasonable for the day to set out in its lively colours that facinorous† act, which will scarcely be credible to posterity. It exceeds my conceit to set it out in the right colours. I have therefore taken a text tending that way, and serving for our present purpose.

It pleaseth our blessed Saviour, out of his love to his church, not only to give directions what to do and what not to do, what to believe and what not to believe, but to foretell likewise all future calamities, that so the church might be fore-armed, and might not be surprised with terror upon the sight of some sudden or strange accident, as especially the flourishing estate of Antichrist. He therefore foretells all, both the beginning, the growth, the strength, the proceeding, and at last the destruction of that man of sin.

The church in this world is always under some prophecy, it is always under somewhat that is unfulfilled; for until we come to heaven, there is not an accomplishment of all prophecies.

This Book is a setting down of prophecies of future events to the end of the world.

* 'The Beast's Dominion' is one of the three gunpowder-plot anniversary sermons contained in 'Evangelical Sacrifices' (4to, 1640). Its separate title-page is as follows:—'The Beasts Dominion over Earthly Kings. A Sermon preached upon the 5th of November, in remembrance of Our Deliverance from the Papists Powder-Treason. By the late Learned and Reverend Divine, Rich. Sibbs. Doctor in Divinity, Mr. of Katherine^e Hall in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher to the Honourable Society of Grayes-Inne. Revel. 16. 14. For they are the Spirits of Devils working Miracles, which goe forth to the Kings of the earth. London, Printed by T. B. for N. Bourne, at the Royall Exchange, and R. Harford, at the Bible in Queenes-head Alley in Pater-noster-Row. 1639.' As explaining and qualifying the unmeasured language of the present and kindred sermons, it may be permitted me to refer to my Memoir of Dr Sibbes, Vol. I. p. lxiii.—G.

† That is, 'wicked to excess.'—G.

This chapter sets out in lively colours the state of the pontificality, the state of Rome, under the bishop of Rome, the pope, and not the state of Rome under the heathen emperors. It sets down likewise the judgment of God in this life upon this beast, and upon the whore that sits upon the beast.

The description is large in the former part of the chapter. It would take up a great deal of time to unfold that; but because I have divers other things to speak of, I will pass that by.

The judgment of God upon the beast and whore, is set down partly in the verse before the text: 'The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast,' &c.

Here the judgment is set down, what it is and by whom it shall be: by the ten horns, that is, the ten kings. And, secondly, what they shall do; and that is set down in order.

First, These ten horns, these ten kings, western kings, 'they shall hate the whore.'

Hatred is the beginning of all actions that are offensive; for it is the strongest and stiffest affection of ill, as love is the strongest of good affections. 'They shall hate the whore;' it is not only anger, but hatred.

'They shall make her desolate and naked:' that is the second degree. They shall leave her; they shall strip this strumpet of her ornaments and strength, whereby she set out herself.

'They shall eat her flesh:' that is the third. That is, what they have given her before to enrich her withal, that which made her in such well liking, that which commended her, that which is her living, the riches of the pope's clergy, gotten, most of it, by ill means, they shall take from her.

But that is not all, but there is a higher degree than all this: 'they shall burn the whore with fire.'

So that in the foregoing verse you see is set down what the judgment is, and who shall be the executioners of this judgment.

But why must all this come to pass? He riseth to the highest cause: 'God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree with one consent to give their kingdoms to the beast.' God afterwards put into their minds to hate the beast.

So that in this verse is the severity and the mercy of God, his justice and his goodness. His severity in putting into the hearts of these kings to agree with one consent to give up their kingdoms to the beast. A great judgment so to beset them. But here is a limitation of that severity at last, till the time come, until the word of God shall be fulfilled; that is, until they shall cease to be thus deluded by the bishop of Rome, and then they shall begin to hate the whore as much as ever they were deluded by her, 'and shall eat her flesh, and consume her with fire.'

For the explication of these words, they being somewhat hard, I will spend a little time to unfold them. And, first, I must shew who is this beast.

'For God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast.'

The beast is mentioned in three places in the Revelation: in the ninth chapter there is mention of the beast coming out of the bottomless pit; and in the thirteenth, of the beast that rose out of the sea; and here in

this seventeenth, of a scarlet-coloured beast, 'having seven heads and ten horns.'

The beast, in a word, is the state of Rome, sometime under the heathenish emperors, sometime under the pontificality. The question is, Whether the beast here spoken of be the state of Rome under the Roman persecuting emperors before Christianity prevailed much, or the state of Rome under the usurpation of the bishop of Rome?

I answer, undoubtedly it is here meant of the state of Rome as it is upheld, the whore; the beast, that beast; for it is meant here of one that seduced by lying miracles, of one that should come in a mystery, of one that should deal with fornication and such courses.

Now heathenish Rome, it overcame men by violence and by force, and not by whorish insinuations, by drawing them on to idolatry. It is said in the fifth verse that upon her forehead was a name written, 'Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots.' Babylon in a mystery, and this mystery is a great word too with them. The mystery of the mass; in everything there is a mystery; all their ceremonies are mysteries. This word 'mystery' therefore, in the forehead of the whore, sheweth what beast it is that is here meant.

It is observed by divers writers, that in the frontlet of the pope's diadem there is written this name, 'Mysterium,' as in Julius the Second's time; but afterwards, when they smelled that he was construed thereby to be the very whore, they razed out that, and put in Julius Secundus, &c.*

'And she sits upon many waters.' 'She sits.' Mark, the Spirit of God will not suffer us to err. What is the regiment† of the pope called? 'Sitting.' Such a pope sat so long; the whore sits in the very phrase. And what is the seat called? The see of Rome, the see of antichrist. Divers other particular things there are to shew that he means Rome, that is, the state of Rome under the bishop of Rome, to be the beast here spoken of.

Especially considering the connection of this chapter with that following, where is set down the final destruction of this beast. Now we know that heathenish Rome ended long ago; therefore that beast which is here meant must needs be that which follows in the next chapter, and therefore it must needs be Rome as it is under the bishop, the pope of Rome.

It is said in the thirteenth chapter that this beast made the former beast to speak, did enliven and quicken the former beast. So indeed this beast, Rome considered under the pope, which succeeds that beast, Rome as it was under the Roman emperors, quickens the former beast; for now all is as glorious as ever it was in heathenish Rome. For after that the Goths and Vandals had possessed Rome, the pope put some life into the empire of Rome, and did himself become emperor. For indeed the emperor of Germany, though he be entitled King of Rome, yet that is but a mere titular thing; the eagle is deplumed of her feathers, of her authority; it is only the title he bears. And if any emperor come to Rome, the pope will make him swear fealty; and he must not long stay in Rome, he cannot endure that.

And it is well said in the Revelation that this beast is the image of the former beast, for the pope is altogether like the emperors almost in everything. For the emperors were crowned, the pope for failing hath three crowns; the emperors had their scarlet, this is a purple-coloured whore in scarlet. They spake the Latin tongue, and forced all nations almost to

* Cf. note d, Vol. V. p. 539.—G.

† That is, 'government.'—G.

speak Latin, as a monument of their slavery; so all in the popish church is in Latin, their prayers in Latin, all in Latin, even for the simple and sottish people to use. Ancient heathen Rome had their grave senators, the pope hath his cardinals. The heathen emperors, as Domitian and others, would be adored as gods; so likewise is the pope of Rome adored. And mark the slight, he hath a crucifix upon his feet, and kings must kiss that; and so with adoring of the cross they adore his person, as they did Heliodorus, that heathen emperor (*a*). Thus in everything almost they agree with ancient Rome, and in many other things I might run over their likeness to the former beast.

Now this beast, to describe him a little better, that we might know what these kings did, when they gave up their kingdoms and thrones to the beast, it is said in the thirteenth chapter that the dragon gave power to the beast. The dragon is the devil; and as he wrought effectually in the former beast in heathen Rome, to make war with the saints, so is this beast, pontifical Rome, stirred up, and acted by the devil, the dragon, to persecute the church. So that this beast hath the power and the spirit of the dragon, the devil himself.

And that you may discern that I do them no wrong, consider how the dragon and this beast, which is moved, and led, and acted by the spirit of the dragon, agree in their courses. I will name two or three to you.

The dragon's course is to make us distrust God. You know how in paradise he taught our first parents to distrust the word of God: 'Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,' Gen. iii. 5. So the force of popery is to dishonour and to discredit God's truth, to put out the people's eyes, to lead them blindfold, to make the Scripture a matter of error and heresy, and bid the people take heed of it; as if God meant to deceive them, to go beyond them in giving them his word; as though it were not a word of salvation. As the dragon himself said to Christ, 'If thou wilt fall down and worship me, all these will I give thee,' Mat. iv. 9, so the pope takes upon him the dragon's power. These that will be good sons of their church, these and these preferments will he give them, when he hath as much right to them as the devil had to those.

The devil fell from heaven at the preaching of the word, at the preaching of the gospel. The apostles, when they returned from preaching, told our Saviour that they saw Satan fall down like lightning (*b*). So antichrist falls by the preaching of the gospel, by the breath of the Lord's mouth. He is not able to stand before it no more than Dagon before the ark. The word preached is as fire to consume him. So he is like the dragon in that.

In disposition he is like the dragon. The devil is a liar and a murderer from the beginning, the father of lies. So likewise the pope is a liar; all popery is nothing but lies. Therefore, 2 Thes. ii. 11, it is said, 'they are given over to believe lies.' Popery is a grand lie. It is a lie in the primacy; * for it came in by forgery and intrusion. It is a lie in purgatory, which is a mere conceit. It is a lie in their miracles, which they have devised to maintain their false worship with. It is a lie in their works of supererogation, that they can fulfil more than the Law requireth. So that all popery, consider it distinctly from our religion, because they have that which we have, and some patches of their own, consider it by itself, it is a mere lie.

Besides that, they maintain the doctrine of equivocation, which is a lie, a justifier of lies, which is worst of all.

* That is, in the pope as claiming to be successor of Peter.—G.

And to murder: this present day and occasion tells us that murders come from them. Their doctrine maintains it; and they make orations in commendations of traitors, as Sixtus Quintus did in praise of him that killed Henry the Third, king of France, and the bloody massacre of France is pictured up in the pope's court (c). As the devil is a liar and a murderer, so is this son of the devil, who is led by the spirit of the dragon; in disposition they are alike.

In course of life they are alike. The dragon is said to draw the third part of the stars of heaven down to the earth; that is, to draw men which were as the stars of heaven, to make them deny their religion. So this dragon, this pope, the instrument and vassal of Satan, he draws the third part of the stars from heaven, and he draws men from the love of the truth by preferment and honour. Men that are learned, men that are otherwise of excellent parts, he draws them from heaven to earth; that is, he draws them from the knowledge of the truth and goodness to earth, and lower than earth too if they do not repent, even to hell itself, from whence he came. Thus I might go on to shew that this beast is Rome under the pontificality, and not Rome under the heathen emperors; likewise that this beast is acted, led, and guided by the spirit of the dragon, by reason of the resemblance which it holds parallel with him in these and other things. So much for explication of this beast.

But why is the state of Rome called the beast?

Daniel first knew the great empires: the one of Babylon, called a lion; the Persian monarchy, a bear; the Grecian, a leopard; but here in this chapter is a strange beast, that hath all the cruelty and fierceness of all those monarchies, called therefore a beast for her fierceness and cruelty.

God's church, they are sheep and lambs. Christ himself the Lamb of God; the opposite church of antichrist, a beast, a cruel beast. If you go to plants, God's church are lilies; the opposite kingdom are thorns. If you go to fowls, God's church are doves, turtles, mild and gentle; the opposite church are eagles and birds of prey.

But I say they are called beasts for their cruelty. The state of Rome under those heathenish emperors was a beast; and in those ten persecutions the emperors are rightly called beasts. So likewise Rome papal is a beast. Our religion, true religion entertained, makes of beasts men; the true knowledge of Christ alters their natures, turns lions into lambs, as the prophet saith, Isa. xi. 6. But the popish religion, it makes of men beasts, makes them worse than themselves. For these gunpowder traitors, many of them, as they were by birth gentlemen, so their dispositions were gentle and mild, divers of them, not of the worst dispositions, only that bloody religion made them worse than their nature was. So I say papal Rome is a beast, and popish religion makes men beasts.

Well, I will not enlarge myself in the uses of this point, because I shall speak of it afterward, if the time will give me leave, only this, have nothing to do with this beast, keep out of her paws, keep out of her claws. A lion, or a cruel beast, may seem to be calm for a while, but a lion will, as we say, shew a lion's trick once a year. Meddle not, therefore, with this beast. It is a beast. So much for that, what the beast is, the state of Rome under the bishop of Rome.

'For God hath put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast.'

Whose? The angel sets down in the verse before, 'the ten horns, the ten kings, the ten western kings.' Whether it be a certain number for an

uncertain, or whether it be a certain number, I will not dispute of now, but take it so as it cannot be disputed against, a certain number for an uncertain. A number of the western kings gave up their kingdoms for a while to the beast, until the word of God should be fulfilled.

But mark the phrase, 'God put it into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast.' Will God put it into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast? Why, then, the pope of Rome need not pretend Constantine's donation,* that he three hundred years after Christ gave unto them many territories about Rome; but they may depend upon a higher donation, 'God put it into the hearts of the kings to give up their kingdoms to the beasts.' Here is a higher title than the donation of Constantine.

But we must know that this is not meant, as if God gave him a right by putting into the hearts of the kings to give up their kingdoms to the beast, but God seeing these ten horns, these ten kings to be in a sinful estate, who deserved to be left of him, and to be given up to further illusion, and by withdrawing his grace to give them up to the occasions of sin, so this seducing beast and whore, he put into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast.

But this must be a little cleared. Is God the author of sin? 'God put it into their hearts.' He did not only rule the events, 'but he put it into their hearts,' &c.

I answer, the phrases of the Scripture are well enough known in this kind. 'God gave them up to a reprobate sense,' Rom. i. 21. The falling of the people from Rehoboam, it is said, 'it was of the Lord;' and God bade Shimei rail. Divers such phrases there are in the Scripture. How must these be understood? Thus: not that God doth allow or command any thing that is evil, much less that he doth infuse any evil into men, so that when it is said he put these things into their hearts, here is neither an outward command nor an inward infusion. What is it, then? Here is a finding of them in an evil and sinful estate, and God useth that evil, and mischief, and wickedness that he finds to his own end and purpose; he infuseth no malice or evil, but finding of it, he useth it to his own particular end and purpose, and makes way and vent for it upon particular occasions. These ten kings, he infuseth no love of superstition into them, but finding them evil, and not as they should be, subjects of his kingdom, and misliking his sweet government, it was just with God to give them up to be slaves to the beast, and by consequence to the devil himself, that spake and wrought by the beast. So I say God took away the impediments, and opened a way to their evil disposition. He used their evil disposition to this or that particular thing, even as a workman that finds an ill piece of timber, he makes not the timber ill, but when he finds it ill, he useth it to his own good purpose; and as a man, it is Luther's comparison (*d*), as a man that moves a horse that is lame, he doth not put lameness into the horse, but useth him to his own purpose being lame, so God, finding these men evil in the general, he directs this ill into particular courses, to work itself this way and not that, in this particular action, not in that. For God, although he be not the author of evil, yet he is the orderer of it; and he determines and directs it both to the object and also to that end which he pleaseth,

In a word, consider sin in three distinct times: before the commission, in it, and upon the performance. *Before*, God doth not command it, nor infuse it, but disallow and forbid it. *In* the sin, he permits it to be done.

* That is, 'gift.'—G.

How? By subtracting of his grace in not working, then by offering occasions that are good in themselves, and thirdly, by tradition, by giving men up to Satan; as here the beast is given up to Satan, and the kings are given up to the beast. So that God gives men up by subtraction of his grace, and by tradition; and then he doth uphold them in the committing of sin, upholds the powers. And when it is done, applies them to this particular, and not to that particular. In the doing of it, he limits it, he sets the bounds of it, both for the time of it, as also for the measure of it, as here in the text, 'Thus long shall the ten kings give up their crowns to the beast, and thus far shall they go, until the time come that the word of God shall be fulfilled.' So he limits sin in the committing of it, both for the measure and also for the time. 'The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the back of the righteous,' Ps. cxxv. 3.

Thus you see the meaning of the words, 'God will put into their hearts;' that is, by withdrawing of his grace, which they deserved by their sinful courses; and offering to them this man of sin, this beast, which shall come with such efficacies of error, so that his grace being withdrawn, and they given up to the devil, to Satan and the beast, they shall without doubt be deluded and seduced, but with this limitation, until the time come that the word of God shall be fulfilled.

I might be large in this point, but it is not so suitable to the occasion, only somewhat must be said for the unfolding of the text. So much, therefore, for that.

'God put into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast.'

They agree all unto it; and therefore it was not a thing done by force. Rome and the heathen emperors did compel men, did overcome men by force of arms. These agree. It was a voluntary and a free act in them. Necessary it was in regard of God's judgment, but it was free and voluntary in regard of themselves; for with one consent they gave up their kingdoms to the beast.

Thus having unfolded the meaning, we come to observe some truths and conclusions that do arise out of the words. I will not mention all, or the most that might be observed, but only some special.

'God put into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast.'

Here, first of all, from this ariseth, *God's special providence in ill*. In the greatest evil that can be, there is his special providence apparent: 'God put into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast.' Observe here many acts of his providence, the withdrawing of his grace, the giving them up to Satan, and to ill occasions; the presenting them with good occasions, which, meeting with an ill disposition, makes them worse; for good occasions meeting with an ill disposition makes it worse, makes it rage the more, as the stopping of a torrent makes it rage and swell the more; as also the limitation of all this, 'until his word shall be fulfilled.' Thus in this work, heaven, and earth, and hell meet in one action. Thus it was in that great action of the crucifying of our blessed Saviour. There is the action of God in giving his Son to be a sweet sacrifice, and the action of Judas, and the devil in him, betraying of Christ, and the action of the soldiers in crucifying him. Saint Augustine, in the unfolding of this point, of the providence of God in evil, observes how many may concur in one action, God without blame, man without excuse (*e*). God without blame; he finds men ill, and leaves men deserving to be left; he takes away his grace, and as a judge gives men up to Satan. Man without excuse, because

man works willingly : 'They with one consent gave up their kingdoms to the beast.' That is the first.

The second is this, *that the will of man may be swayed by divine governance, and yet notwithstanding work most willingly and freely.*

Here God puts into their hearts to do this, and yet they willingly and with one consent gave their crowns to the beast.

God first hath his providence in ill, and then that providence is such that it doth not rob man of his liberty, because God finding man in an ill course, he forceth him not to this or that particular ill, but directs him only : 'The hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters,' Prov. xxi. 1. A man when he findeth a river of water, he doth not make the stream, but only makes way that it may run this or that way, as it pleaseth him. So God finding the hearts of kings, or the hearts of any, as the rivers of water, he opens vent that they should run this and not that way; that they should be given to this, and not to that. Here is the action of God, and yet the free liberty of man.

But how could this be free, when they could not avoid it?

I answer, They were not privy to God's directing; they worked not in conscience* of God's moving, but they followed their own lusts and will. Between God's work and man's will there is always sin. God never works immediately in man's will; for man's will is free, but man's sinful free will is the next cause in sin. Although God put it into their hearts, yet he found them sinfully disposed.

And then, the judgment is not bound or tied. The hearts of these kings told them that they might give their crowns or not give them to the beast. Their judgment saw they had reason to do it, though their judgment were corrupt. So a sinner sees reason to do this or that, and although it be corrupt reason, yet it moves him at that time. His judgment is not bound up, but God lets his judgment be free, though he take away his heavenly light, and so he judges perversely. That is the second.

The third is, *that it is a terrible judgment of God to be given up to a man's own will, to leave a man to his own consents.*

It is here spoken by way of judgment, that 'God put it into their hearts to give up their kingdoms to the beast.' And indeed so it is a terrible judgment.

There are some objections to be taken away for the clearing of this weighty point.

How is it a judgment or a punishment when it is voluntary? 'They willingly gave up their kingdoms.'

I answer, The more voluntary and free a man is in sin, the more and greater the judgment is; and as when sin is more restrained, either inwardly by the Spirit, and by the conscience, or outwardly by the laws and terror, the more mercifully God deals with men. So the more free the current of the disposition runs in ill ways, the more wretched a man is.

Yea, but will the heart of some atheistical person presently say, What punishment is it, as long as I have liberty in evil, and meet with no hindrance in my courses, and feel no harm, but rather the contrary, as many that get their riches by ill means, and those great papists, those great usurpers, we see what estates they get to themselves?

I answer, Spiritual judgments are so much the greater, by how much they are less sensible, because if they be not sensible to us here, they will be the more sensible to us hereafter. And those that have their will most

* That is, 'consciousness.'—ED.

here, shall suffer most against their will hereafter. It is the greatest judgment in this world for a man to have his will in sinful courses. He that shall make an idol of his will, especially a man that is in great place of honour, that shall make all ways serve for the accomplishment of his will when he hath it, he is the most miserablest man in the world; for he that hath his will most in courses unjustifiable, shall suffer most against his will when he cometh to a reckoning. Such men therefore are the more miserable, because such taking themselves to be absolute persons, and their ways the best ways, though they have many determents from their base courses, yet they will hear no counsel, and therefore the harder to be reclaimed. It doth not therefore take away from their punishment, but rather aggravate it.

I beseech you, let me press this a little, that these judgments are great judgments, although we do not feel them, when with a free consent we give ourselves unto ill. It is a heavy judgment when God leaves us to our own lusts, and takes away the guidance of his Spirit. We had better that God should give us up to the devil for a while to be tormented; we had better be in hell, if a man might come out at a certain time, than to be given up all our life-time to do with our own consent and will, that which is liking to our own will and lust, because by yielding to our own will we yield to the devil that rules in a man's affections and will. For a man's affections, when they are carried to evil, they are the chariots of Satan. When the devil sees excessive sinful affections, as excessive sinful joy and delight in sinful pleasures, he being about us, is always carried in these affections, and carries us also strongly in the ways that lead unto eternal perdition.

We judge, when a man suffers some outward punishment, as casting into prison or the loss of his sight, oh, he is in a fearful case; but what is the case of a man blinded by Satan and his own lusts? a man that is a slave to his own base affections, and by consequent to the devil, which rules in his affections, and so consequent to damnation? a man that lies under the wrath of God, that hath no heart to repent? If a man had spiritual eyes to consider the case of that man, he would never pity so much the case of those men that suffer outward losses, as he would pity those which he sees to live, and oftentimes to die, in evil courses of life.

This should therefore be an use of direction to us, that seeing we hear that God rules the hearts of men; that he takes away his Spirit, and leaves men to occasions, we should pray to God to rule our hearts himself. Lord, take thou the rule of our hearts, to govern them thyself. It was a good prayer of the ancient church: 'O God, from whom all holy desires and all good counsels do proceed,' &c. (*f*). Indeed, it is he from whom all good counsels do proceed. These ten horns, they were ten kings. No doubt but as they were men of great place, so of great parts; but without God's Spirit, without his light, the greatest and the wisest man is but mad. He is as a man out of his wits, puzzled in darkness, and knows not which way to go. When God gives men over to their own lusts, to their blind affections, they lead men to judgment, and they must needs fall into the pit.

Let us desire God to put into our hearts holy desires, holy purposes, for from him all holy desires come. Let us desire him not only to govern our estate, and to preserve our bodies from danger, but, Lord, keep thou our hearts. We cannot keep our hearts of ourselves. Do thou bend our understandings, bow our affections and our wills, that they may run in the right way.

And to stir us up to this the more, we must know, that that evil which

we do not, we are beholding to God for, as much as for the good we do. Why do not men, having an ill disposition and corrupt nature, do ill? Because God offers not occasions of ill. If God should offer occasions, they would commit the evil as well as others. It is God that puts into men's hearts to hate that evil. If God should take away his Spirit, men would not hate evil when occasions are offered, as these men did not when the occasion was offered: 'They gave up their kingdoms and thrones to the beast.' So that we are beholding to God for all the ill that we do not; either it is his not offering occasions, or else his giving us strength in the occasions. This we forget. We are apt to say, This wicked man hath done this; this good man is fallen into this; this man hath done that. But where is our devotion at this time? We should rather say, Lord, it was thee, for causes thou best knowest; for if thou hadst left me, especially when occasions were presented and offered, and there was a correspondent corruption in my heart to close with the occasion, I had fallen into the like sin. It was thy keeping, and not my goodness.

One thing more; the beast is expressed before in chap. xiii. to be led by the devil. So that howsoever the devil, who by St Paul is called the god of this world, and the pope the subordinate vicar to the devil, and so by consequence he is the devil, for the devil, the dragon rules him. Howsoever, I say there be the devil, the god of this world, and the pope in this world, the vicar of that dragon; yet there is but one monarch, one that rules all, both devil and pope, and all the wicked limbs of both to his own ends. It was God that put it into the hearts of these kings to give up their kingdoms to the beast. It is he alone that is absolute, that gives up the liberty of the chain, both to men and devils: thus far they shall go, and no further. It is a good saying of the schools, That there is no ill so ill, as there is good that is good: there is not any ill so strong as God is good, but every ill must come under the government of God. The devil himself, nor the vile heart of man, cannot go out of his rule, yet may run out of his commandments. But then it runs into his justice. He may go against the revealed will of God, but then he runs into his secret will. There is no ill in that degree that God is good; but every ill is in somewhat, and from somewhat, and for somewhat, that is good, as it is over-ruled by God. The crucifying of Christ, which was the worst action that ever was, yet it tended to the greatest good, viz., the salvation of mankind. So this giving to the beast of these ten thrones by these ten kings, it was a sin and a punishment of their sin; but it was for a good end, as we shall see afterward, if the time will give leave.

This should teach us absolute dependence and subjection to this great God. They need fear no creatures that fear God. They need fear no devil, nor Turk, nor pope, nor all the limbs of them; for God is the absolute monarch of the world. He can do what he will; and if God be on our side, who can be against us? It is said he is a wise politician that can make his own ends out of his enemies' designs. The great governor of heaven and earth can do so. He can put a hook into the nostrils of the leviathans of this world, and can draw them and rule them as he pleaseth. They may do many things, but it shall be all to accomplish his ends and purposes. They shall do his will. God put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfil his will; he put it into their hearts to agree to give up their kingdoms to the beast, and so they did submit themselves to anti-christ for a great while.

In the next place, it is expressed how this came: 'They gave their king-

doms to the beast.' We are to see how far faulty these kings were, and how far faulty the pope, the beast, was, to whom they gave their kingdoms. For it may be objected that these men they did but obey God, for he put it into their hearts; and for the pope, they offered their kingdoms to him, and who would not receive offered gold? But here is a deal of devilish deceit. For, first, God gave them over to themselves, and they gave themselves and their kingdoms to the beast. What then was sinful in them? This, to give their kingdoms to the beast.

This, they betrayed their kingdoms. Here is a wrong to God, a wrong to themselves, and a wrong to their subjects. A wrong to God, whose vicegerents they were. Did he give them their kingdoms to give them to his enemy, to give them to the beast, and by consequence to the devil? Doth God raise up men to rule that they should enthral themselves and their kingdoms to the beast, to give them to God's enemies? No; kings reign by him. The pope saith, By me. Is their constitution of men? No, kings reign by God; they derive their authority from him: 'It is he that hath power over kings,' Dan. ii. 21. They reign not if he will, and they may rule if he will, by his will permitting, else no man can reign. 'By me kings reign.' If, then, they reign by him, it is a treason against God to betray the kingdoms that he hath given them into the hands of his enemies. It is a wrong to Christ. Whereas they should kiss the Son by kisses of subjection; as princes use to do in the eastern countries, to fall down and kiss their sovereigns' toes, they do in this the clean contrary.

Here is a wrong to themselves. They betray their own authority; that when God hath made them kings to rule they will be slaves; and it is a great sin for a man not to maintain his standing, as it is well observed by his Majesty, who, if ever prince did, doth vindicate himself, and challenge his regal authority: and it shall continue, and make him live even to the world's end (*g*). It is the greatest sin for a man to betray himself. Every man is to maintain that place and standing that God hath set him in. These ten horns they wronged themselves and their place; God made them kings over their people, and they become slaves to an antichristian priest.

It was a great wrong to their subjects. Kingdoms, we know, follow their kings; and if Jeroboam make Israel to sin, all Israel will quickly sin. Diseases come from the head; if the head be naught,* there will be a disease in the body ere long. A greater stone being tumbled down from a hill, it carries lesser stones along with it: so great kings, when they fall themselves, they draw their kingdoms after them (*h*). Therefore the phrase of the Scripture is, 'God put into their hearts to give,' not only themselves, but their kingdoms, to the beast. For commonly the idol of the people is their king, and, being led by sense and not by faith, they fear him more than they fear God; and their own restraint more than they fear hell; and so they come to this damned religion by depending upon him. Therefore it is a wrong to the people, knowing they are so slavish by nature and wanting faith, are fearing, terror-led by the present command of their king. Thus it was a wrong in these kings every way.

But the pope, the beast, what was to blame in him? He did but take that which was offered him. 'They gave their kingdoms to the beast.'

I answer, Indeed, he took that which was offered him, but he abused these kings, he abused the Christian world. He had no title to these kingdoms, but was a fraudulent possessor of them, because he came to them by a slight.† He raised himself to the popedom by the ruins of the

* That is, 'naughty,' = diseased.—G. † That is, 'sleight,' = craft.—G.

empire ; for, upon the divisions of the empire, the emperor having enemies in the east, he was fain to rest in Constantinople, and thereupon Rome being much neglected, at last was overrun by the Goths and Vandals ; and the pope, taking occasion of the absence of the emperor, set up himself, thus raising himself by the ruins of the empire ; and then, he being established, set up Pepin, father of Charles the Great, and put down Childerick ; who, being a weak prince, he deposed, and set the other up, that he might gratify him so. So he collogued* with princes.†

And then again, he won‡ respect and authority from the horns by diabolical and vile courses. For, first, he abused their understandings, keeping them from the Scriptures, and then he abused their affections, and drew them this way and that way with toys.§ They gave him great matters, and he gave them indulgences and pardons, and consecrated grains, (i) and such like things.

Then again, he would oft force them to yield by excommunications, and many false titles of Peter's successor and Peter's chair ; so, by the terror and dread of excommunication he awed them.

Again, he wrought by subtilty, joining with one prince against another, setting one against another ; and, if he joined with any party, he had such a slight that he would be sure to make him a slave to the papacy, one way or other, or else he would excommunicate him ; and then, before they should be absolved, they must either pay a great sum of money, or else they must go such a voyage, or set such men or such on such an enterprise.

And then again, he gave dispensations to sell souls ; and so men might do what they would, they should have pardon, otherwise they should have excommunication.

And then again, he had preferments for the sons of the horns ; cardinals' places for their second sons, that they should be great princes ; he had high places for them.

Then again, he laid his foundation on false grounds. He would be universal bishop ; and the church could not err ; and all of them must fetch and determine of their matters from him ; and appeal must be made to none but to him ; and in certain cases none could satisfy the conscience but him. So that he greatly raised his authority by these false and cozening means ; and all that yielded to him were a deluded company of people, that were deluded by the false and subtle courses he took. And therefore, although they gave their kingdoms to him, yet he possessed them by a fraudulent title ; the means he used were diabolical.

'They gave their kingdoms to the beast, till the word of God should be fulfilled.'

Well ! we see here the judgment of God upon the Christian world. It was not only a judgment upon these kings, as they were kings, but God punished the people's sin in the slavery of these kings to the beast.

See here the judgment of God upon kings and princes for not esteeming, as they should do, the glorious gospel of Christ ; for they, both princes and people, had it, but they esteemed it not, but delighted in untruths ; therefore God gave them up to believe lies.

We are not, therefore, over much to pity our ancestors. Though they deserve pity, yet we excuse them overmuch this way ; for certainly God is just in his judgment, who, seeing them delight in lies more than in his

* That is, 'entered into league,' = plotted.—G.

† These are the commonplaces of history now.—G.

‡ Printed 'wan.'—G.

§ That is, 'trifles.'—G.

truth, took away his grace, and gave them up to this beast, that they should give up their authority, both prince and people, to him. And because they would not be ruled by God's will, thinking themselves wiser than he, he appointed them to be ruled by one that should be ruled by the devil; for the devil was in the pope, and who would serve the devil if he knew it? But because they would not yield unto Christ's sweet government, therefore he gave them over to a government fit for them, even to be governed by the beast.

I beseech you take notice of this point. When we entertain not the glorious gospel of Christ, the good word of God, that word that declares salvation unto us, and which is an instrument to work grace in us, to fit us for heaven; that word that is the seed and the food of our new birth, the evidence of our inheritance; that good word which is the greatest jewel under heaven; when we do not value that, it is the greatest error that can be, and it is just with God to give us up to this and to that error, if not unto popery, yet unto some one error that the devil is in, and contrary to the Spirit of God. Do ye think, if a master should see his servant take ill courses, and would not do according to his appointment and admonition, that he would not leave him to take his own course, and so let him do his own will, that thereby he might see his folly in not being ruled by him? So it is just with God, when he sees that we do not make much of his gospel, of his soul-saving gospel, that we will not have that alone, but traditions with it, and that, besides Christ, we must have other mediators, as if Christ were not rich enough, it is just with God to give both prince and people up to the beast. Let us, therefore, make much of the gospel. What moved God to give up the eastern empire, those glorious churches in Saint John's time, unto the Turk? Nothing but this: they did not value the gospel. What moved God to give up those western kings to Romish antichrist,—for those two, the Turk and pope, are twins; they had their beginning at once, about seven hundred years after Christ,—what moved this, but only, when God had dealt graciously with them at the first, and gave them his truth to save their souls, which is the most comfortablest thing in the world to have God discover what he means to do with us, and what he would have us to do, when he discovered his will to them, and saw them leave his will, saw them leave gold, and take dross, prefer the traditions and wisdom of men before the wisdom of God, it was just with him to give them up to believe lies.

'They gave their kingdoms to the beast' (mark the limitation here 'until') 'until the word of God should be fulfilled.'

I see I cannot make an end of the text. A little further, and so I will conclude.

Here is an 'until;' here is a stop. The devil and the beast had their time to seduce the kings, and the kings had their time to be seduced, and to give up their kingdoms, but God hath his time, Christ hath his time. Christ gives his enemies time, and then takes time himself, 'until the time that the word of God shall be fulfilled.'

We see here, then, a mixture of mercy with justice; that after God had given them up justly, not only the eastern empire, but also the western kings to the pope, yet notwithstanding here is an 'until.' God limits ill not only for the measure of it, but also for the time of it. God at length turns the stream of things; so that these kings that were thus abused and baffled by this man of sin, this beast, at last they grow wise, by the instinct of God, and hate the beast as much as ever they loved her.

So, then, this is the point, that the same God that by divine providence gave way to these kings to abuse the doctrine of the gospel, and that gave way to these people, that were unthankful, to yield themselves in such slavery to the pope, yet notwithstanding, in mercy, God at the last put into the hearts of these kings to withdraw their necks from this yoke, and to put their necks under Christ's yoke.

This 'until' hath had a beginning many years ago, for we know, to omit other kings of other countries, King Henry the Eighth, of famous memory, take him without those things we cannot upbraid,* now he was a man of great and excellent parts, as he was of great vices. He was an excellent instrument of Christ to unhorse the pope, to shake off his government, to hate the whore, and to eat her flesh; that is, to overthrow the monasteries, those cages of unclean birds, and those Peter pence, those exactions; for indeed the pope made England his ass to bear his burdens. It would move any man's patience to see how pitifully the popes of Rome have abused this island, so that we may now truly say, as Christ saith, 'If the Son make you free, you are free indeed,' John viii. 36. Christ hath made us free, the gospel hath made us free, and ever since the coming of the gospel we have flourished. King Henry shook off the yoke first, and after him King Edward, and after him Elizabeth of blessed memory, and now our gracious king. So that this 'until' it begun long since to hate the beast, and to eat her flesh. One thing there is yet undone, 'to burn her with fire.' If they hate the beast, and eat her flesh, this will come too, to burn her with fire; even the ten kings that were subject to her before shall do that.

We see wickedness shall not thrive always. It shall not always be night, but the sun shall arise at the last. Impostures shall not always abuse the world. Their madness shall be made manifest at length, as Paul saith, 2 Tim. iv. 18. This is our comfort, that there is an 'until,' a time prefixed of God to discover and to lay open all impostures; and now the time is come that most of this should be fulfilled. Some of these words of God are fulfilled. The beast is hated; and now the beast is known to be the beast, to be cruel. Witness the blood of saints, the murder of kings, those horrible acts that are allowed from Rome. The beast, I say, is now discovered and hated.

The affections that are due to the beast is hatred. If ever we hated anything, we may hate the state of Rome. It is a beast, and the object of hatred, and ever was; and if ever, I say, we hated anything that was deservable of our hatred, it is that. Why? Do we not hate a harlot? Do we not hate an old strumpet, an old painted strumpet? Do we not hate her that is a bawd? There was never bawd, there was never whore, that did the thousandth part of that harm that this bawd, this beast, this whore of Rome hath done, drawing so many thousand souls to hell.

Of all the judgments that ever were since the beginning of the Christian world that God hath visited the pride and wickedness of men with, there was none so grievous as to suffer this man of sin to rule in the church. The spiritual judgment of the papacy it is the greatest judgment of God that was ever inflicted upon any.

We hate them that misuse us under the pretence of love, that cheat and cozen us, and we delight in their punishment. There was never cheater, never cozenner like this. And surely so God hath fulfilled his word, that

* That is, 'exaggerate.' We have here an excellent example, awaiting in Richardson, *sub voce*, of the use of this word in this (now obsolete) sense.—G.

she is hated even in our children, that know but the grounds of religion, to whom Christ hath shined by the evidences of his truth, that have the Spirit of God in them. They hate those impostures, those abuses of Christian religion, with which this beast hath deluded the Christian world, which shews that they have a contrary spirit to the Spirit of God. And indeed so they have; for, besides their own base government, they maintain the corruptions of men, feeding the pride and vanity of men's natures with outward, formal, empty things; so that the very weak ones, even children, now they hate the whore, hate her impostures, hate her cruelty, hate her lying, and all.

I see the time is past: I can go no further, but will draw to an end, only a little to stir us up. Shall God then reveal and discover this painted strumpet, this bawd, and shall we labour to conceal her ill? shall we daub, shall we make her better than she is? Shall we hinder God's purpose? God's word is, that she shall be revealed; the princes shall hate her, and consume her with fire. Let every one of our purposes help God's purpose, and providence, and decree in this point. That this shall be, it is God's purpose; and whosoever stops it, certainly they bring the judgment of God upon them. Those that would rear up Jericho again, we know what befell them; and they that rear up Rome, that begins now to be discovered, they bring the judgment of God upon them. God will perform this as well as he performed the other. As he put it into the hearts of these kings to betray their kingdoms to the beast, so he will put it into their hearts to hate the whore.

Now that we may hate her, let every one labour in his place: ministers in their place to lay open their impostures, their cozenings, and all their filthiness, whereby they deceive the people; magistrates in their place to countenance the ministers, to see the laws executed as they may. These that through ignorance are seduced, that are not Jesuited, for there is no hope of them; but others, their persons many times in the policy of state may have favour, but not their religion.

Let us all take heed that we grow in knowledge: let us labour to make more of the gospel of Christ. The more Christ appears in glory, the more antichrist will appear in shame. Let us labour by prayer, and not give God over by prayer, to plant the love of the truth in our hearts, to entertain the truth with love, to value it according to the respect it deserves at our hands, and let us labour to be moulded into that truth, to obey it; else, though we have it, yet if we do not love it, if we be not transformed into it, though our wits and parts be never so great, we may be seduced to error. God gave over these kings, men of great place and of great parts, —because they did not love the truth,—to believe lies.

My purpose was to have shewed the danger, if we do not further God's purpose in discovering this wicked antichrist: a state wherein the devil, the dragon, is effectual, and this book wondrously sets down the danger. It is another manner of danger now to relapse, and to apostatize, after the appearing of the glorious gospel of Christ, than it was a hundred years ago under darkness; and we know it to be so. Of all the judgments in this world it is the greatest for God to give up a man to decay in his love to the truth, to affect* this cursed religion, that the sentence of God hath passed upon, and it must be fulfilled, 'That they shall hate the whore, and burn her with fire, that she shall be left desolate and naked.'

But you may object. Alas! how is that likely to be, when we see now

* That is, 'love,' 'choose.'—G.

what strength the beast hath gotten, and how he ruffeth in the world at this time ; how he triumpheth and trampleth the poor church under his feet ?

Well, it is but a living before death. Undoubtedly Babylon is fallen, it is 'fallen,' saith John in his time, Rev. xiv. 8 ; that is, it is as sure to fall as if it had fallen already. The word of God hath said so. The power of man cannot hinder it. He hath put it into the heads and hearts of the kings to betray their kingdoms ; he shall also put it into their hearts and heads to hate and burn the whore with fire at the last. It must be so. The angel said it was done, as if it were done already. It is as sure as if it were done. Therefore let us never take scandal at the flourishing state of the enemies of the church abroad ; let us never dislike our religion for that. Babylon is fallen. The time will come when it shall be done. Heaven hath concluded it, and earth cannot hinder it ; no, nor hell neither : God hath said it, and shall not he do it ? It is the word of him that is Lord of his word ; because he is Lord of hosts, and Lord of the creatures. It is the word of him that is Lord of lords, that is Lord of heaven and earth, Lord of all things. He hath said that Babylon is fallen ; and therefore it must be so, he being Governor and Lord of all things, and of his word too, that can make all things prove serviceable to his purpose. Let us comfort ourselves, therefore, as if it were present, and not take offence at the state of the beast, and the whore's flourishing, but present him to yourselves as he is set out in the text. See him growing, see him rising, see him decaying, and at last see him cast into the bottomless pit, to burn in the lake of fire for ever. It is, you see, the word of God from heaven, that he is fallen, and cast into the earth as a millstone, and shall never rise again. He shall never quicken * again. Heathen Rome was quickened by papal Rome : the pope quickened the former beast ; but there shall never be beast after this Rome, and therefore he is said in this chapter, 'to go into destruction ;' that is, he, and his state, and all without repentance, shall so go into destruction, that there shall never be other beast.

And that that shall help this destruction forward, shall be the course that themselves take. God as he hath decreed their destruction, so he hath appointed that their own plots, which they have devised for their own maintenance, shall turn to their confusion. Do you not think that the ruin of the pope will be by the Jesuits, who are grown, by their pressing themselves, and by their pragmatistical meddling into princes' affairs, by their drawing and assuming all business to themselves, and by their striving and bringing all to their profession, to such hatred of the world, that even these means, which they themselves take, will be the means of the overthrow and downfall of popery ? As the counsel of Ahithophel was the means to infatuate him, so their own courses will cause their own overthrow.

In the powder treason, they thought they had been made for ever, but God turned their wickedness upon their own heads. And now in these later times we may see that God takes his cause into his own hands ; and you know who spake it by observation, Haman's wife, 'If thou begin to fall, thou shalt not prevail, but shalt surely fall before him,' Esther vi. 13. So if God take the matter into his own hands, as he hath done already, let them fear. For they shall surely fall and not prevail, until he hath wrought his work in Sion ; until he hath thoroughly purged his church, they shall prevail. There is a little time allotted them, but it is nothing. Let us see by the eye of faith what this book saith of them, that they shall be

* 'That is, 'live,' = 'be made alive.'—G.

destroyed ; and let us look on the courses they themselves take which will cause their destruction. Was there ever anything that weakened popery so much as this desperate attempt that we now celebrate this day ? Indeed, if we go to an ignorant papist, and tell him what doctrine they teach, and what upholds their doctrine, tell him of the powder treason, ask him concerning the traitors, he will mince the matter, Oh, they were unfortunate gentlemen, &c. But how did Sixtus Quintus mince the matter when they had success in the massacre in France ; when many thousands of people were slain against the law, slain under pretence of being married and bidden to a marriage ? (j) He was so far from disallowing the act, as that he caused it to be pictured in his palace. So if these had achieved this, they had not been unfortunate gentlemen ; they had been made, they had been sainted, as some of them are, St Garnet ! St Devil !* If the devil himself will help them, and further popery, he shall be sainted ; and if they be never so base, yet for their rebellion and destruction of kings, they shall be sainted by them. Will not this provoke men to hate the beast and the whore, to make her desolate and naked, and to eat her flesh, and to burn her with fire ?

Well, the time is past, I cannot finish the text as I thought to have done. To speak to the particular occasion I need not, it is yet fresh. And what should we speak of the gunpowder treason ? The Jesuits and priests, having the devil for their midwife, they are big of such like plots ; hell, Rome, and Satan, and the Jesuits, those frogs of the bottomless pit, they are full of devising such attempts. But I rather thought to speak against popery, against the beast and her religion at this time, than rhetorically to amplify that act of theirs, when indeed we are ready to have a new one continually, for they are always plotting and devising, I mean those Jesuits. Our comfort is to look to the Scripture, to look here what shall be the end of these frogs and of the beast. Ere long they shall be cast into the burning lake. Let us bless God that we live under this government, of so gracious a prince, that hath more weakened the pope by his learned writings, than ever any prince did.† So much for this time.

* Cf. note *ooo*, Vol. II. page 535.—G.

† Cf. note *g*, page 534.—G.

NOTES.

(a) P. 520.—‘Kings must kiss that . . . as they did Heliodorus.’ Query, the private secretary of the Emperor Hadrian, and himself subsequently prefect of Egypt ? Sibbes’s name of ‘emperor’ would make it seem so : but the trait would better suit the haughty Heliodorus, author of the famous romance at the end of which he has proudly told that he was of the family of priests of the Syrian god of the sun (Τῶν ἀφ’ Ἡλίου γένος).

(b) P. 520.—‘The apostles, when they returned from preaching.’ This is a singular slip on the part of Sibbes. It was Jesus who thus ‘saw’ Satan ‘fall,’ whatever the mysterious words may mean. The apostles told how the ‘devils’ had been subject to them. Probably this was running in Sibbes’s mind at the time. Cf. Luke x. 18, *et seq.*

(c) P. 521.—‘As Sixtus Quintus,’ &c. The murderer of Henry III. (on August 1st 1589) was Jacques Clement, a Dominican friar. In Henry III. the House of Valois became extinct. By the ‘bloody massacre’ is no doubt intended that of St Bartholomew. The papal approbation, if we may not say exultation, on both occasions is a commonplace of history.

(d) P. 522.—‘And as a man, it is Luther’s comparison, that moves a horse.’ The ‘comparison is common to various of the early Fathers, *e. g.* Augustine and Basil, also Lombard, as well as Luther. Dr John Boys has worked it in very well, with much additional lore, in shewing how the Spirit is said to lead in temptation. Cf. Works, p. 234 (1629).

(e) P. 523.—‘St Augustine, in the unfolding of this point, of the providence of God in evil.’ See the reference to Boys in previous note (d). The reconciliation often recurs in Augustine.

(f) P. 525.—‘It was a good prayer of the ancient church, Oh God, from whom all holy desires and all good counsels do proceed,’ &c. One of the *memorabilia* of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

(g) P. 527.—‘His majesty, who, if ever prince did, doth vindicate himself.’ Sibbes seems, from this and other tributes, to have held a high opinion of James I. (VI. of Scotland). Let this be placed against more modern depreciations.

(h) P. 527.—‘Kings . . . they draw their kingdoms after them.’ Probably the author was thinking of Horace’s line—

‘Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.’

(i) P. 528.—‘Consecrated grains.’ Query, the ‘wafer’ of the host?

(j) P. 533.—‘Sixtus Quintus.’ Tillemont has pronounced this pope ‘the most extraordinary man of his time (1585).’ Sibbes would seem to refer to the great massacre on the ‘*Festival*’ of St Bartholomew, Aug. 24. 1572; but the then reigning pope was Gregory XIII. Cf. note *c supra*. G.