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# The Catholic Record.

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### CLERICAL.

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### PASTORAL LETTER

TO THE REV. CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE, ON THE CHURCH, THE BIBLE AND THE POPE.

James Vincent Cleary, S. T. D., BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND FAVOR OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE, BISHOP OF KINGSTON.

DEAR REV. FATHERS:—

Addressing you upon the subject of Christ's Spiritual Kingdom and the monarchy of the Pope, let our exordium be the exordium of the Prophet Daniel:

"Blessed be the name of the Lord for eternity and for evermore; for wisdom and fortitude are his, and he changeth times and ages, taketh away kingdoms and establisheth them; giveth wisdom to the wise and knowledge to them that have understanding. To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise thee."

Such was the fervent outpouring of the prophet's soul in praise and thanksgiving to God for the revelation made to him respecting the foundation of the Catholic Church, the Messiah's everlasting kingdom, in the fulness of time. It was given him to see the predestined succession of the four most glorious monarchs of antiquity, symbolized respectively by gold, silver, brass and iron, each of their originating in blood and ending in blood, all devoted to idolatry, and all made instrumental by divine arrangement in preparing mankind for the advent of the greatest of all kingdoms, to which none shall succeed, because it shall never have an end.

The Chaldean Kingdom, the first doomed to destruction by the armed hosts of Cyrus, the Medes; the "silver" kingdom of the Medes and Persians was destined in turn to perish by the sword of Alexander, of Macedonia; the Macedonian kingdom of "brass" should next arise and flourish and rapidly dissolve into petty principalities that shall be reduced to subjection by the valiant warriors of Republican Rome; and the Roman, "the fourth kingdom," said the prophet, "shall be as iron breaketh into pieces and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these." 40 v. Even so it came to pass; and Rome, having transformed itself into a monarchy, and attained the zenith of its power, became the unconscious instrument of God's mysterious design in preparing the way for the establishment of the new Kingdom, the universal sovereignty of the union of all the nations of the known world under one central government, with one law and one language common to all, and an elastic State Religion that tolerated all forms of worship, false and true, and inscribed on its roll of Imperial Deities the Gods of all subject peoples, not excluding the true God of Israel or the "Unknown God" of the Athenians. Acts 17, chap.

PROPHETIC VISION OF THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

"In the days of those kingdoms," said Daniel, expounding the "mystery revealed to him in a vision of the night":

"The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and his kingdom shall not be delivered up to another people; and it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these kingdoms; and itself shall stand for ever."

Five distinctive characteristics of the Messiah's kingdom are here specified. 1st. All former kingdoms were founded by men, slaughterers of their fellow-men; the Messiah's kingdom shall be "set up by the God of heaven." It shall be divine in its origin.

2nd. The former kingdoms, each of them built upon the ruins of its predecessor, ended in terrible destruction, the vengeance of blood in expiation of blood; the kingdom set up by the God of heaven "shall never be destroyed," says the prophet. It shall be absolutely indestructible.

3rd. The nations composing the former kingdoms passed in succession under the domination of strangers; the kingdom of God's foundation is divinely guaranteed that it "shall not be delivered up to another people." It shall maintain its sovereign autonomy throughout all time, independent of all and every nationality.

4th. The former kingdoms bound many nations together by iron chains of military despotism and laws of ruthless oppression, regardless of the natural rights and liberties of men; the kingdom foretold to Daniel "shall break in pieces and shall consume all these kingdoms;" that is, it shall wage war upon the olden system of civilization based on force, and shall conquer and bring under its world-wide dominion the whole territory of Imperial Rome. It shall be a Catholic kingdom proclaiming a new and peaceful civilization.

5th. This God-created kingdom shall not share the fate of kingdoms founded by human agency. The political

world shall suffer endless change. States shall rise and fall. Monarchies, oligarchies and republics shall supplant one another, as internal sedition or the chances of war may determine. But no hostile force from within or without shall avail against the Messiah's kingdom. It shall neither dissolve by decay nor be reduced by arms; it shall not forget its constitution nor forfeit the allegiance of its people; it shall continue unchanged and unchangeable, ever the same. "Itself shall last for ever."

It shall be indefeasible in its unity and divine constitution.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIVING ROCK ON WHICH HIS SPIRITUAL KINGDOM IS IMPERISHABLY FOUNDED.

The origin of the Messiah's kingdom is described by the prophet Daniel as follows:

"A stone was cut out of the mountain without hands. . . . The stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. . . . According as thou sawest," said the prophet to the Chaldean King, "that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and broke in pieces the clay, and the iron, and the brass, and the silver and the gold, the Great God hath shown what shall come to pass hereafter." (45 v.)

This mysterious "stone" deserves our most attentive consideration. It was foretold not to Daniel only, but, before his day, to the Royal Palmist, Psalm 117, and the prophet Isaiah, 28 chap. 16 v., and subsequently to the prophet Zachary, 3 chap. 7 v. It is manifestly symbolical, as the prophetic revelations generally are, and might not be easily explained, had not Jesus Christ, his Evangelists and Apostles, unfolded its meaning.

The Archangel Gabriel, the same who had announced to Daniel that seventy weeks of years, or seventy times seven years, should elapse before "vision and prophecy should be fulfilled," visited a priest, named Zachary, in Jerusalem, about thirty years before the expiration of that term, and announced the near advent of the Saviour-King and the miraculous mission of his Precursor, who should be born of Elizabeth, the venerable old priest's aged and sterile wife. Six months later, the same heavenly messenger announced to the Virgin Mary that the Holy One, the Son of God, should be conceived and born of her by the silent agency of the Holy Ghost upon her and the overshadowing of the Most High.

"He shall be great," said Gabriel, "and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David, his father; and he shall reign in the House of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1 chap.)

Here is the beginning of the kingdom foretold by Daniel to be "set up by the God of heaven." Its King and Founder shall be, not man in mere humanity, sent of God, with powers borrowed of God; he shall be "the Son of the Most High," God Himself Made Man, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity. His throne shall be the throne of David, "whose inheritance is the nations, and his possession the boundaries of the earth." Psalm 2. "He shall reign in the House of Jacob for ever," having for his subjects the true Israelites of every race and generation, who are made heirs by faith of the promise given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that in their seed "all nations shall be blessed." Gen. 12, 26 and 28 chapters, Romans 9 chap. end. "Words of glorious promise! Absolute exemption from the law that has marked for every earthly institution, and for the earth itself, its final day of doom and dissolution! "Why have the nations raged, and the peoples devised vain things? The Kings of the earth stood up, and the princes met together, against the Lord and against his Christ. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them." Psalm 2. Thus it is, and thus it shall be. When every monarchy and every government now playing its part in the public affairs of men, with more or less of justice and more or less of iniquity, shall be buried in ruin, Christ's indestructible kingdom shall stand unshaken amid the wreckage of the world of politics; yea, "heaven and earth shall pass away;" Mark 13 chap. 31 v. But the divine word spoken to the Virgin concerning her Son's kingdom, "shall not pass away." "Of his kingdom there shall be no end." It shall pursue its mission to the day of the world's doom, and having "fought the good fight" and gathered in the last of the elect, it shall be transferred wholly to heaven, to reign with God in eternal peace.

All the supereminent greatness of Christ's kingdom is derived from the Incarnation. The divine life of its Founder shall energize and inform it as the Godlike attributes of indestructibility, universality, absolute sovereignty and indefeasible unity. Herein we find the counterpart and explanation of Daniel's prophetic "stone cut out of the mountain without hands," to which he makes repeated emphatic reference, as the principle of vitality and development in the foundation of the Messiah's Kingdom. It is the Eternal Word, the second Person of the Trinity, descending from His Father's invisible mission, and made incarnate in the Virgin's womb by the operation, wholly spiritual and Godlike, of the Holy Ghost, without the agency of man. The "stone," humble of dimensions in its excision from the mountain, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth;" for the Son of God in his Incarnation humbled himself to the extreme of littleness and abjection, a babe in the manger, a malefactor on the cross, a morsel of food for men's mouths in the Sacrament of the altar; but his inward possession of the power of the Godhead displayed itself to the eyes of mankind in the marvelous diffusion of his kingdom

over the whole earth after he had exchanged the humiliation of the grave for the glory of his risen life and the triumph of his Ascension. Three of the four Evangelists, Matthew (21 chap. 42 v.) Mark (12 chap. 10 v.) and Luke (20 chap. 17 v.) relate how the Lord Jesus Christ quoted the prophecies of himself whom the High priests of the Synagogue rejected, but whom God the Father, the Supreme Architect of religion, had selected for the primary stone of the edifice, to be set "in the head of the corner." St. Peter, also, standing before the Supreme Court of "Ananias, the High Priest, and Caiaphas, with the rulers and ancients and scribes," cited the prophecies of the mystic "stone," as familiarly understood among the Jews, to be the type of the Messiah, and boldly declared "the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you crucified, he is the stone, rejected by you, the builders, which is become the head of the corner." Acts 4 chap. In his first Papal Encyclical, addressed from his Primal See of Rome to the Churches of the East, St. Peter again quotes the prophets in proof that Jesus Christ is "the chief corner-stone" of the Church; whence he draws the lesson worthy to be taken to heart by every Catholic, that, if we would "grow unto salvation," we must "approach the living stone," and be ourselves also "living stones," built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter, 2 chap. What a noble conception of our dignity, as members of the Catholic Church, is set forth in these solemn utterances of Christ's first Vicar! "What a stimulus to holiness of life! Every "stone" in the living edifice of faith: he it great or small, be it placed conspicuously in honor upon the front portals, or concealed from human notice amidst the solid mass, rests on God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter, 2 chap. 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