

# The Catholic Record.

"CHRISTIANUS MIHI NOMEN EST, CATHOLICUS VERO COGNOMEN."—"CHRISTIAN IS MY NAME, BUT CATHOLIC MY SURNAME."—St. Pacian, 4th Century.

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Pastoral Letter on the Jubilee

JAMES VINCENT CLERY, S.T.D.,  
By the Grace of God, and favor of the Apostolic See,  
BISHOP OF KINGSTON.

To the Reverend Clergy of His Diocese.

DEAR REVEREND FATHERS,—

In sending to you some time ago our Most Holy Father's Encyclical, whereby he has promulgated a General Jubilee for this year, and asking you to proclaim it to your respective congregations, we promised to give you, as soon as the severe pressure of other important duties would permit, an official instruction upon the nature of the Jubilee and the conditions prescribed for gaining it. We now proceed to fulfill our promise.

NATURE OF A JUBILEE.

Each fiftieth year in the Hebrew calendar was ordained by God through Moses to be a year of Jubilee; that of joy and gladness among the people of Israel, because it heralded the universal remission of debts, the release of slaves from bondage, and the restoration of every forfeited inheritance. Those temporal privileges of the ancient Jubilee, great though they were and dearly prized, were but a shadow of the good things to come (Heb. 10 ch. 1 v.), in the Christian Dispensation. In so much as the spirit is superior to the flesh, and the treasures of heaven surpass those of earth, the gifts and graces proffered by the Christian Jubilee are incomparably better than those for which the Twelve Tribes of Israel yearned with expectancy and eager longing at the approach of the fiftieth year. The Sovereign Pontiff, greater than Moses in power and authority, whom the Eternal Son of God has constituted His earthly Vicar, and to whom He has entrusted "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," with discretionary power to "bind and loose" the souls of men in every sphere of Christian life, and in every order of obligation between them and their Creator (Math. 16 ch.), has in solemn form proclaimed to all the children of the Church, the Israelites of the New Law, a Jubilee of higher and holier promise than that of Moses. For now we are assured of plenary remission of more oppressive debts, release from more degrading bondage, and reinstatement in the unspokeably better inheritance of the sons of God, forfeited by transgression of the divine commandments.

GENERAL REMISSION OF DEBTS.

The debt incurred by mortal sin is the most oppressive of all burdens upon the soul of man. Its gravity cannot be computed. A man may accurately sum up his financial liabilities and ascertain his standing with his creditors. But the sinner's indebtedness to Divine Justice is immeasurable. Let us explain this fundamental principle of morals. It is far-reaching, and in the present day, when self-concocted doctrines are agitating the Protestant sects around us with the theory of abolishing hell and eternal punishment, it may be useful to develop it for our people's instruction.

The measure of the guilt of personal offence is proportioned to the dignity of the person offended, and the relation between him and the offender in the order of dominion and dependence, beneficence and duty. Now, the Majesty of the Lord God is infinite; and the sinner who rises up in rebellion against Him, and with full knowledge of His Omnipotence and Omnipresence, says "I will not serve," is a lowly creature, a worm of the earth, dependent wholly on the Creator; his unity for existence and life and light and power of motion, and every faculty of mind and body. Who shall estimate the magnitude of the debt contracted by this wretched, ungrateful creature, who, to gratify his corrupt passions, turns his back on the God of Heaven, and in His very presence defies His power and scorns His friendship and His gifts? Human reason, antecedent to faith, has recognized the infinitude, as philosophy terms it, of the guilt of wilful resistance to the commands of the King of Heaven, and the utter inability of the sinner to make adequate atonement by his own personal efforts or sacrifices, for the debt of personal offence against the Supreme Majesty of God. Our holy faith teaches that, if all mankind were gathered together and offered as a grand holocaust to expiate the debt incurred by a single mortal sin, their offering would be insufficient to cancel it. We should not therefore be surprised at the terrible examples recorded in Holy Writ for illustration of the justice of God avenging itself upon sinners, upon the angels in heaven, upon our first parents in paradise, upon the whole human family in the torrents of the deluge, upon the votaries of impurity in the conflagration of the Pentapolis, upon the Jewish murmurers in the desert, and upon all the nations of the earth delivered over by the anger of God to pagan darkness and confusion, and to the strife and slaughter of wars and bloody revolutions throughout the long course of four thousand years. The modern unbeliever impugns the doctrine of eternal punishment and hell fire because he views sin from the human side only, as the act of a creature, limited in

duration and intensity and in its influence for evil against the order of life appointed by Divine Providence. But the principle we have been expounding is irrefutable. The unbeliever may not distinctly advert, or may perhaps shut his eyes to the fact, that sin is committed in the personal presence of Almighty God and in defiance of His authority. How forcibly and eloquently is not this expressed by the Royal Prophet in the 138th Psalm, the most sublime of the whole Psalter: "Whither shall I flee from Thy spirit? or, whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there. If I descend into hell, Thou art there. If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. And I said: Perhaps darkness shall cover me, and night shall be my light in my pleasure. But darkness shall not be dark to Thee; and night shall be light as the day. The darkness thereof, and the light thereof, are alike to Thee." This is precisely the reason why every deliberate transgression of the Divine command shall be adjudged treason against the Divine Majesty, and the sentence pronounced beforehand by the Son of God shall operate throughout Eternity, despite the objections of the unbeliever and the sophist: "Go ye accused into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels" (Matt. 25 ch. 41 v.) To a Christian congregation, newly converted to the faith, St. Paul addressed this word of warning: "If we sin wilfully, after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is now left but a certain terrible expectation of judgment and the rage of fire" (Heb. 10 ch. 26 v.).

It is not truly wonderful, therefore, that any man possessed of faith, who is consciously himself such grievous accountability in the sight of God, and sincerely believes in God, in the presence and power and justice of God, and man's total dependence for every moment of life upon the free will of his offended Maker, and reflects for an instant upon the awful consequences of an unprovided death, can lie down at night and give himself to sleep, not to be held that he is Satan's captive, governed in all his movements by Satan's wicked will? Yes; this is exactly what he is to be told by you, dear Rev. Fathers. It is what the Holy Ghost has said of sinners, "They are held captive at the devil's will." They are in deed doing their own will, and must answer to the Sovereign Judge for every act of theirs. But it is the devil that controls their will. He suggests the evil thought; he arouses the dormant passion; he paints the imagination with foul fancies; he recalls the memory of former unlawful enjoyments, and prompts their repetition—of former resentment, and whispers revenge; he awfully arranges the convenient occasions of time, place, company and tempting circumstance; he calls the mind's attention to the double-meaning word, and the suggestive disguises of fashionable dress, and other incentives of unchaste thought happily unnoticed by the "clean of heart"; he dominates effectually over the sinner's mind and directs his daily course of conduct hitherward, though the sinner may be all the while unconscious of the presence and active influence of the Evil One, who "holds him captive at his will." Our Saviour styled Satan the Father of Lies, and everywhere in Scripture we are warned against his craftiness and his snares. He is "the old serpent." He will not reveal himself nor disclose his plans to the sinner, whose complete and irretrievable ruin he aims at accomplishing by repetition of sin, and the consequent growth of vicious habits that shall be impossible to cure, except by a miracle of grace.

If Satan was able to conjure up foulest phantasms of carnal concupiscence within the soul of St. Paul so vividly and seductively that he, the vessel of divine election, the Apostle of loftiest inspiration, had need to pray, and pray, and pray a third time for grace to stand firm in his holy resolution of serving God to the end of his life in perfect chastity, (2 Cor. 14 ch.) what hope is there for the sinner who seldom or never prays, and who is actually Satan's slave, "held captive at his will" that he shall escape the sun and lustful enchantments of the Old Seducer? Heretical teachings are declared by Holy Writ to be "doctrines of devils," (1 Tim. 4 ch.) and, since they are invariably put forward with loud pretension to purer truth and superior knowledge of the mind of God than is possessed by the infallible Church, St. Paul informs us that, to give plausibility to this impious fallacy, "Satan himself transformeth himself into an angel of light," (2 Cor. 11 ch. 14 v.) Would it be any wonder if the youthful sinner, who is actually "in the snares of the devil, held captive at his will" should gradually become fashioned in his ideas, religious as well as moral, in conformity with the spirit of his master, this "Angel of Light" from whose inspiration all heresies proceed? Too often has it happened in Canada, that prolonged indulgence in criminal passion has led to the total abandonment of the faith. This is final reprobation. It is Satan assured of his captive for all eternity. Let us not deceive ourselves. No strength of intellect, no brightness of intellect, can withstand the deceptive colouring of false principles reflected on the soul by this "Angel of Light," should God, in His inscrutable wisdom and justice, be pleased to leave man unprotected before the Tempter. Adam and Eve in the days of their innocence, when Reason had not yet been clouded by sin, failed to maintain themselves against him in truth and rectitude. But the specious sophistry of the Tempter they were led to believe that the religious restraint imposed

on their liberty by God was not reasonable; that disregard of it would not be a mortal sin, the divine declaration to the contrary notwithstanding; and that superior knowledge of good and evil was attainable only through transgression. How many Catholics are seduced now-a-days by the self same sophistry of Satan into wilful disregard of the laws enacted by the Church for the safety of faith and virtue in the matter of Education.

Nothing more distinctly illustrates the power of Satan for deception of the human intellect than the appalling darkness of error and vice with which he has succeeded in overspreading the entire world in the ages that preceded the advent of Christ. Through the corruption of men's hearts he opened the way to perversion of their intelligence, and effectually dethroned God from His place of honor and authority in the minds of men everywhere outside Judea, and erected a throne for himself instead, substituting demon-worship for the adoration of the God of heaven as the established religion of all the nations of the wide earth. (Pa. 95, 5 v.; 1 Cor. 10 ch.) So thoroughly did he corrupt the fountains of truth and virtue that where was the living God loved, or adored, or known; nowhere was the least respect shown to the primary laws and maxims of natural morality that dictate duty between man and his Maker, between parent and child, husband and wife, master and servant, between neighbor and neighbor, between the spirit and the flesh in the inner domain of man's individual existence. Even philosophy and its glorious seats of learning and its masters of mighty genius and imperishable fame of scholarship, surrendered the rights of reason to the universal empire of devil-worship and idolatry. By their writings and oratorical lectures they preserved indeed the tradition of not a few maxims of the natural law of truth and virtue; but through guilty cowardice, for which St. Paul declares them "inexcusable," they withheld the knowledge of God from the outer world, and were found worshipping with the crowd in the temples of Mercury and Bacchus, and Venus and their baptismal vows, their Christian manhood. They will perhaps confess that a mysterious change has come over them, that their power of self-control is diminished, their resolution is enfeebled, their passions have developed into unnatural activity, and their fortitude has given way to helplessness in presence of every casual temptation. Tell them that these are the plain symptoms of diabolical agency upon their souls. Urge them to take advantage of the Jubilee, and be delivered at once and forever from this bondage of the devil. Warn them not to despise this extraordinary grace. It may be the last call of God. Point out the fearful danger of choosing deliberately to remain in this state, and not to become friends of the God of Heaven.

THE DEVIL'S POWER TO HARM MAN BODILY.

Bid them seriously to remember that the Devil is man's sworn enemy, and that he possesses in his fallen state all the natural powers, physical and intellectual, with which God endowed him in his superior order of Angelic excellence at the beginning of creation, long before the earth was made. Our Lord Jesus Christ frequently referred to his great power, styling him "the Prince of this world," the "armed Strong One, who holds his Court," and can be dislodged by no one less powerful than the Son of God; the formidable opponent of the Bishops of the Church, and, in particular, of the Pope, who are saved from his terrible assaults only by the special and exceptionally assured protection of Jesus praying with all His might of intercession for them at His Father's throne. (John 12 ch.; Luke 11 ch.; Luke 22 ch.) St. Paul calls him the "Ruler of the world of this darkness," and the "Emperor of Death," who had bound mankind in life-long servitude by Death's mysterious terrors. (Eph. 6 ch. Heb. 2 ch.) St. Peter describes him as "Our adversary, the devil, who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5 ch.) Truly it is the Mercy of Almighty God alone that restrains this arch-enemy of mankind from slaying every captive sinner and dragging his soul into the fiery abyss without a moment's respite in which to cry to God for pardon. How thankful should we not be that Satan cannot do what he likes with his poor captives! The Book of Job records how eagerly he sought to destroy that holy man, over whose sinless soul he had no claim. He asked God's permission to take all his worldly substance from him. God consented, but with a reservation, which is to cry to God for pardon. How thankful should we not be that Satan cannot do what he likes with his poor captives! The Book of Job records how eagerly he sought to destroy that holy man, over whose sinless soul he had no claim. He asked God's permission to take all his worldly substance from him. 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