314 Kingdom (*Regnum*)

Kingdom is triple. One is inside us which we must conserve. Another is against us which we must avoid. Another is above us which we must desire.

The first of these is our soul about which, Luke 17[:21]: “Behold the kingdom of God is within you.” And it is that kingdom which is very dear to God. For when he lost that through our sin he came down from heaven into the world where he suffered many adversities, Luke 19[:12]: “A certain nobleman went into a far country.” and certainly this kingdom now redeemed through Christ which we have the necessity to conserve well because continually the world attacks it with the concupiscence of the flesh and the concupiscence of the eyes, Luke 21[:10]: “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.” Therefore, we remember that, Apo. 1[:5-6]: “Who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood ... And has made us a kingdom to God.”

¶ The second kingdom which is against us, is the world which we must avoid because it is dark, Apo. 16[:10]: “And his kingdom became dark.”

Again, because the duration is brief, Job [14:5]: “The days of man are short.”

Again, nothing is carried away from this kingdom, Dan. 4[:28]: “Your kingdom shall pass from you.” For these reasons it ought not to be loved.

¶ The third kingdom which is above us we ought to follow and that is heaven, about which Matt. 5[:3]: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

¶ This kingdom was ours, but we lost it by our sin. Therefore, if we must recuperate it, it is necessary to build on the example of King Cleomenes[[1]](#endnote-1) who placed three thrones for deciding some case. So, because he could appeal from the first to the second, from the second to the third, in which third no one was condemned, unless he was too wicked.

So, God has three thrones. The first where it is dangerous to plead, because there it is pled through a brief concerning right choice that we are justified, Mark 10[:14] it is said that “of such is the kingdom of the heavens.” But if we assert this, it can be alleged against us that we have justly lost that kingdom through such works which the Apostle says we will be deprived of the kingdom of God, Gal. 5[:19-21]: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness,” etc., up to “they shall not obtain the kingdom of God.” Therefore, it is doubtful to plead in that curia, according to that of the Psal. [9:5-6]: “You have sat on the throne, who judges justice. You have rebuked the Gentiles, and the wicked one has perished.”

Therefore, it is safer to appeal to the second throne which is wisdom, about which Heb. 1[:8]: “Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Where we can plead by a brief of recent dispossession. For when the boy is baptized the habit of faith is given to him through which he is placed in possession of the kingdom of heaven, James 2[:5]: “God loves the poor in this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom of heaven which God has promised to them that love him.” But if we plead there, it is to be feared lest a wise judge should say that brief has no value because at the time of baptism we were placed in possession but under condition. If, namely, that we renounce the devil and his pomps. But who is he that fully keeps that pact. And certainly, violators are not worthy of the kingdom, according to that, Luke 9[:62]: “No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Because of this it is safer to appeal to the throne of mercy where we must plead by a brief of the death of the ancestor, that is, of Christ who acquired that kingdom by a double law, namely, by hereditary law, because it happens that a legitimate heir of the father and the law of passion or purchase. We however are heirs and coheirs of Christ, Rom. 8[:17]: “Heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” By that brief, quickly it shuts out the seeking devil, by which law he sold the kingdom of God. Jesus responds that by hereditary law he possesses that, but in so far as he bought it with his blood, he could sell it as coheirs.

Again, of the kingdoms of the heavens, one is superior in the fatherland and is called the Church triumphant, about which Matt. 8[:11]: “Many shall come, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”

Another is lower on the journey and it is called the Church militant, about which it is said the angels are present and collect from their kingdom all stumbling blocks.

Another is interior in the soul about which, Luke 17[:21]: “The kingdom of God is within you.”

Another is exterior in Scripture about which it is said, [Matt. 21:43]: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof.” But the kingdom of the heavens which is the present Church to this extent is double or with two parts because it is of clerics and laity.

Of which the first, God spiritually sold it to himself, Exod. 19[:5-6]: “For all the earth is mine. And you shall be to me a priestly kingdom.” But alas because in the Psal. [45:7]: “Kingdoms were bowed down.” For the princes of the world who should defend it from natural justice and from the oath given in the reception of their knighthood, repress it and oppress it. Nor perhaps is it a wonder because the ecclesiastics and the seculars do not come together according to customs, but from the beginning the carnal ones have persecuted the spiritual ones, as Cain and Abel, Ismael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, then and now, Gal. 4[:29]: “But as then he, that was born according to the flesh, persecuted him that was after the spirit; so also it is now.” Therefore, out of fear and sorrow we can seek to get out of stupor, especially when Christ says in Luke 11[:17]: “Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to desolation.” For the kingdom of the Church in this way is divided because hardly one loves another. Sometimes one professed purges another professed, etc. Therefore, it is no wonder if today men of the Church are in contempt and derided.

Third, it can be asked, out of stupor, how the kingdom of the Church will stand. For if we consider the ancient state of the Church how it was ruled and regulated by devout men and how to its control now dissolute and undevout men are promoted. We can well sorrow and ask how its kingdom will stand. Indeed, Christ in the Lord’s prayer teaches us by praying to seek the more stable kingdom when it is said, “Your kingdom come,” Matt. 6[:10]. Where Augustine, *Epistola* 89,[[2]](#endnote-2) we must hope that his kingdom will come. But another is rather to hope that he will make us worthy of his kingdom, lest perchance, he may come, and he may not come to us. For he will not come to many of whom it will be said that of Matt. [25:41]: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire.” But he will come to the good because in them he reigns and will reign. But the devil reigns in the evil, whose reign however is rather tyranny than a reign. because a good king reigns for the utility of his subjects, a tyrant indeed for his own utility and the harm of others. Wherefore Chrysostom, *Homilia*, 13,[[3]](#endnote-3) it is a true kingdom, when the king desired men to be under him, and the men desire to be under him. Who however forces men to be under him, is not a true king, but a tyrant. Therefore, although God has all men under his power, however he receives only those so wishing, but the devil however much he is able compels men to be under him and makes their willingness.

¶ Therefore there are two kingdoms of God and the devil. Wherefore Chrysostom, *Homilia*, 34,[[4]](#endnote-4) because he gave himself to men, how would he not give the companionship of his kingdom. But it is required that to this kingdom one supports himself if he ought to have it, according to that of Matt. 11[:12]: “The kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent bear it away.”

¶ The figure for this is in Dan. 4[:31] Nabugodonosor by hard penance recovered his kingdom. Wherefore among the others three kinds of men particularly acquire the kingdom of heaven.

First, they who put down arrogance through true humility. Just so there is no ascent of the body except not grown from the egg, nor from a child, Matt. 18[:3]: “Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

¶ Again, Matt. 7[:21]: “Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father.” And Luke 12[:32]: “Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.” The flock properly is not of the mild and small animals.

¶ Third, they acquire the kingdom because they detest avarice through true poverty. Just as a ship is unloaded and come to a port, Matt. 5[:3]: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” And Matt. 19[:24]: “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. [1] Cor. 6[:9]: “Know you not that the unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God?” James 2[:5]: “Hath not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom” of heaven.

Third, they acquire the kingdom who repress carnal concupiscence by integral chastity, just as nature orders pure things above, and impure below, Eph. 5[:5]: “No fornicator, or unclean,” and it follows, “has inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” 1 Cor. 15[:50]: “Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God.” And Gal. 5[:19]: “The works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication,” etc. Matt. 19[:12]: “There are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven.”

1. Cleomenes, [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Sermo De Scripturis*, 58.2.2 (PL 38:394): Optamus etiam venire regnum ejus: veniet, et si nolumus; sed optare et orare ut veniat regnum ejus, nihil est aliud quam optare ab illo, ut dignos nos faciat regno suo, ne forte, quod absit, veniat, et non nobis veniat. Multis enim non est venturum, quod tamen venturum est. Eis enim venturum est, quibus dicetur, Venite, benedicti Patris mei, percipite regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. Illis non veniet quibus dicetur. Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum (Matth. XXV, 34, 41). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* homilia 14, cap. 6 (PL 56:712): Nam vere justum regnum est, quando et rex vult homines habere sub se, et cupiunt homines esse sub eo. Quando autem rex per violentiam cogit esse sub se, illud quantum ad veritatem non est regnum, sed tyrannis. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Mattheum* hom. 35, ex cap. 20 (PG 56:825): Qui enim seipsum donavit hominibus, quomodo regni sui societatem non donabit? Petentis negligentia reprehenditur ubi de dantis misericordia non dubitatur. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)