

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

(Lk. 11:14-28)

[Poem Vol. 2, pp. 721-4, Vol. 3, pp. 78-9 – Gospel Vol. 4, pp. 313-5, 454-5]

Jesus enters the house, He greets Judas who seems to be busy sorting out the kitchenware, and He then goes straight to a kind of low dark store-room beside the oven.

« Get the sick man to come out » orders Jesus.

A Pharisee, who is not from Capernaum, but whose standoffishness is even worse than that of the local Pharisees, says: « He is not sick, he is possessed. »

« That is still a disease of the spirit... »

« But his eyes and tongue are bound... »

« It is always a disease of the spirit that expands to limbs and organs. If you had allowed Me to finish you would have realised that that is what I wanted to say. Fever is in the blood when one is ill, but after the blood it attacks this or that part of the body. »

The Pharisee does not know what to retort and becomes silent.

The possessed man has been led before Jesus. He is motionless. Matthew was quite right. He is greatly impeded by the demon.

People are gathering in the meantime. It is incredible how, particularly during the hours that I would call of relaxation, people were so quick in gathering where there was something to be seen. The notables of Capernaum are now there, and among them there are four Pharisees, Jairus is also there, and, in a corner, with the excuse of supervising order, there is the Roman Centurion, and citizens from other towns are with him.

« In the name of God, depart from the eyes and the tongue of this man! I want it! Set him free! You are no longer permitted to have him. Go away! » shouts Jesus stretching out His hands while giving the order.

The miracle begins with a howl of rage from the demon and ends with a cry of joy of the cured man who shouts: « Son of David! Son of David! Holy and King! »

« How can this man know that it was He Who cured him? » asks a scribe.

« It's all a farce! These people are paid to do that! » says a Pharisee shrugging his shoulders. [...]

« But they are honest, and I am honest, too. And we do not cheat anybody, in no way. Much less in matters of faith. We do not take the liberty of doing that, because we fear God and we have understood what is pleasant to God: honesty. »

The Pharisees turn their back to Jairus and they attack the relatives of the cured man: « Who told you to come here? »

« Who? Many people, who had already been cured, or their relatives. »

« But what did they give you? »

« Give? The assurance that He would cure him. »

« Was he really ill? »

« Oh! Sly minds! Do you think that all this is feigned? If you do not believe it, go to Gadara and inquire about the misfortune of the family of Anna of Ismael. »

The irritated people of Capernaum are in tumult, while some Galileans, who have come from near Nazareth say: « And yet He is the son of Joseph, the carpenter! »

The citizens of Capernaum, being faithful to Jesus, shout: « No. He is what He said and what the cured man has just said: "Son of God and Son of David". »

« Do not increase the excitement of the population with your statements! » says a scribe contemptuously.

« And what is He, then, according to you? »

« A Beelzebub! »

« Ugh! Tongues of vipers. Blasphemers! You are possessed! Heartless men! You are our ruin. Do you want to deprive us also of the joy of the Messiah? Usurers! Arid stones! » A real uproar!

Jesus, Who had gone into the kitchen to drink some water, appears on the threshold in time to hear once again the stale stupid accusation of the Pharisees: « He is a Beelzebub because demons obey Him. The great Beelzebub, who is His father, helps Him and He drives out demons only through the assistance of Beelzebub, the prince of demons. »

Jesus descends the two little steps of the threshold and comes forward. He stops erect, severe and calm in front of the group of scribes and Pharisees and staring at them with keen eyes He says to them:

« Also on the earth we see that a kingdom divided into opposed parties becomes weak internally and can be easily attacked and laid waste by nearby countries that make it their slave. Also on the earth we see that a town divided into conflicting parts does not flourish and the same applies to a family, the members of which are divided by mutual hatred. It falls to pieces and becomes a useless nibble, which is of no use to anybody, and the laughing stock of fellow citizens. [...]

But they are united by one mind and one will: "to rule". Even amongst them there must be differences, aversions, rebellions. But they lie at the bottom. On the surface they are one block, without cracks or perturbations. They all want the same thing and they are successful because of that. And they will be successful as long as they want the same thing.

Consider that example of human cohesive shrewdness and say: if the children of this world are like that, what will Satan be like? The Romans are demons, as far as we are concerned. But their heathen satanism is nothing compared to the perfect satanism of Satan and his demons. In their eternal kingdom, without time, without end, with no limits to cunning and wickedness, where they rejoice in being detrimental to God and men, and to be harmful is their very life and their only cruel painful enjoyment, they have attained with cursed perfection

the fusion of their spirits in one will: "to be harmful". Now if, as you state, to insinuate doubt about My power, Satan is the one who helps Me because I am a minor Beelzebub, does it not follow that Satan is divided against himself and his demons, if he drives them out of the people possessed by him? And if he is at variance with his followers, can his kingdom last? No, it is not so. Satan is very shrewd and does not damage himself in the hearts of men. The aim of his life is "to steal - to damage - to lie - to offend - to upset". To steal the souls of God and the peace of men. To damage the children of the Father grieving Him. To lie in order to mislead. To offend in order to rejoice. To upset because he is disorder and cannot change. He is eternal in his being and in his methods.

But answer this question: if I drive out demons in the name of Beelzebub, in whose name do your sons drive them out? Are you willing to admit that they are Beelzebub as well? If you say that, they will consider you slanderers. And if their holiness is such that they will not react to your accusation, you will condemn yourselves confessing that you think that you have many demons in Israel, and God will judge you in the name of the children of Israel accused by you of being demons. Therefore whoever may pass judgement, in actual fact they will be your judges, where judgement is not suborned by human pressure.

If, instead, as it is true, I expel demons through the Spirit of God, that would be evidence that the Kingdom of God and the King of that Kingdom have come to you. Which King has such power that no adverse force can resist Him. Thus I bind and compel the usurpers of the children of My Kingdom to depart from the place they have occupied and give Me back the prey so that I may take possession of it. Is that not what is done by one who wants to enter a house inhabited by a powerful man, to take his property, rightly or wrongly acquired? It is. He enters and ties him, and then he can plunder the house. I tie the dark angel who has taken what is Mine, and I take away from him the good property he has stolen of Me. And I am the only one who can do it, because I alone am the Strong One, the Father of the future century, the Prince of Peace. »

[...] That is why I say that those who are not with Me are against Me, and those who do not gather with Me, scatter. Because I am He Who I am. And he who does not believe that, which was already prophesied, sins against the Holy Spirit, Whose word was announced by the prophets, and it is neither false nor wrong, and must be believed without resistance.

I solemnly tell you that as long as the strong man watches in arms the hall of his house, he is sure of everything which is in it. But if one stronger than he is comes, or if he leaves the door unguarded, then the stronger man will defeat him and disarm him, and when he is deprived of the weapons on which he relied, he loses heart and surrenders and the stronger man makes him a prisoner and takes his spoils. But if man lives in God, through loyalty to the Law and justice practised holily, God is with him, I am with him, and no harm can befall him. Union with God is the weapon which no strong man can overcome. Union with Me is certainty of victory and of abundance of eternal virtues through which he will be given an eternal seat in the Kingdom of God. But he who turns his back on Me or becomes My enemy, rejects thereby the weapons and certainty of My Word. He who rejects the Word, rejects God. He who rejects God invokes Satan. He who invokes Satan destroys what he had to conquer the Kingdom.

Therefore, he who is not with Me is against Me. And he who does not cultivate what I have sown, will reap what the Enemy has sown. He who does not harvest with Me, dissipates and

will be poor and nude when he comes to the Supreme Judge, Who will send him to the master to whom he sold himself by preferring Beelzebub to Christ.

Citizens of Gerasa: build the Kingdom of God within yourselves and in your town. »

The trilling voice of a woman is clearly heard like the song of a skylark above the whispering of the admiring crowd, and it sings a new beatitude, that is the glory of Mary: « Blessed be the womb that bore You and the breast that suckled You. »

Jesus turns towards the woman who extolled His Mother admiring Her Son. He smiles, because He is pleased with the praise for His Mother. But He then says: « More blessed are those who listen to the word of God and practise it. Do that, woman. »
