

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(Jn. 1:19-28) (Audio Year B Track 003)

(Poem Vol. 1, pp. 216-7, 244-5; Gospel Vol. 1, pp. 261, 291-2)

(In a prelude to this Gospel passage, Jesus - as a twelve-year-old Child Who is lost in the Temple at Jerusalem - is being examined by a gathering of learned men, before being re-united with Mary and Joseph. Some of these men, including a man named Shammai, are hostile to Him. In a clear voice, Jesus reads from a Scripture roll that has been given to Him:)

“Be consoled, my people. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her that her time of service is ended... A voice cries in the wilderness: ‘Prepare a way for the Lord... then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed...’ ”

Shammai says: “See, Nazarene. It refers here to an ended slavery, but never before have we been slaves as we are now. And there is the mention of a precursor. Where is he? You are talking nonsense.”

Jesus says: “I tell you that the admonition of the Precursor should be addressed to you more than anyone else. To you, and those like you. Otherwise you will not see the glory of the Lord. Neither will you understand the word of God - because meanness, pride and falsehood will prevent you from seeing and hearing.”

Shammai replies: “How dare You speak to a master like that?”

And Jesus says: “I speak thus. And thus I shall speak, even to My death, because above Me there are the interests of the Lord and the love for Truth - of which I am the Son. And I add, rabbi, that the slavery - of which the Prophet speaks, and of which I am speaking - is not the one you think. Neither is the royalty the one you consider. On the contrary, by the merits of the Messiah, man will be made free from the slavery of Evil - which separates him from God - and the sign of Christ will be on the spirits, freed from every yoke, and made subjects of the eternal kingdom...”

(The specific encounter of John with the priests and Levites verses 19-28 of today’s Gospel passage) is not recorded by Maria Valtorta. The following commentary by Jesus, however, follows the episode of His Baptism by John the Baptist, on the banks of the River Jordan. Jesus says:)

“John did not need any sign for himself. His soul, which had been pre-sanctified in his mother's womb, possessed that penetration of supernatural intelligence - which all men would have had, if Adam had not sinned.

If man had persevered - in grace, in innocence and in loyalty to his Creator - he would have seen God through external appearance. In Genesis, it is said that God used to speak to the innocent man in an informal way, and that man did not faint on hearing His voice. Neither was he deceived in discerning it. Such was the destiny of man: to see and understand God - exactly as a son sees and understands his father. Then man sinned, he no longer dared look at God, and he was no longer able to see and understand God. And now he is less and less able to do so.

But John - My cousin John - had been purified from fault, when the One Who was Full of Grace lovingly embraced Elizabeth, who, after being barren, had become pregnant. The little child had leapt for joy in her womb because he felt the scales of sin falling from his soul, as a scab falls off a wound when the latter is healed. The Holy Spirit - Who had made Mary the Mother of the Saviour - started His mission of salvation on that child about to be born, through Mary, the living Tabernacle of Incarnate Salvation. The child was destined to be united to Me - not so much by his blood, but by the mission by which we were like the lips that express a word. John was the lips, I the Word. He was the Precursor - both in the Gospel and in

martyrdom; I - by means of My divine perfection - made perfect both: the Gospel which John had started; and martyrdom, suffered to defend the Law of God. John did not need a sign. But a sign was necessary for the darkness of spirit of other people. On what would John base his statement, but on an undeniable proof, evident to the eyes and ears of backward and dull listeners?

Neither did I need to be baptised. But the wisdom of the Lord had chosen that moment, and that way for our meeting. Leading John out of his cave in the desert, and Me from My home, He united us in that hour to open the Heavens above Me. And He descended Himself, a divine Dove, on Him Who was to baptise men with that Dove. And His announcement was heard, descending from Heaven. It was more powerful than the angel's because it came from My Father: 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased'. So that man should have no excuse or doubt in following or not following Me.

The manifestations of Christ have been numerous. The first - after His Birth - was the Magi's. The second was in the Temple. The third was on the bank of the Jordan. Then there was an endless number of them, which I will let you know about because My miracles are manifestations of My divine nature, down to the last ones: My Resurrection, and My Ascension into Heaven."
