

NOTE: you can also find the explanation of the Liturgy for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent by Father Goffine, as well as sermons by Father Francis Hunolt at: <http://www.JMJsite.com>

St. Thomas Aquinas, - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent  
Catena Aurea (Golden Chain),  
Parallel Gospel of Matthew 12:22-30, 43-45

*Then was offered to him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, so that he spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said: Is not this the son of David? But the Pharisees hearing it, said: This man casteth not out the devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. Or how can any one enter into the house of the strong, and rifle his goods, unless he first bind the strong? and then he will rifle his house. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. And when an unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house from whence I came out. And coming he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth, and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is made worse than the first. So shall it be also to this wicked generation.*

Gloss., non occ.: The Lord had refuted the Pharisees above, when they brought false charges against the miracles of Christ, as if He had broken the sabbath in doing them. But inasmuch as with a yet greater wickedness they perversely attributed the miracles of Christ done by divine power to an unclean spirit, therefore the Evangelist places first the miracle from which they had taken occasion to blaspheme, saying, “*Then was offered to him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb.*”

Remig.: The word “Then” refers to that above, where having healed the man who had the withered hand, He went out of the synagogue. Or it may be taken of a more extended time; Then, namely, when these things were being done or said.

Chrys.: We may wonder at the wickedness of the daemon; he had obstructed both inlets by which he could believe, namely, hearing and sight. But Christ opened both, whence it follows, “*and he healed him, so that he spoke and saw.*”

Jerome: Three miracles were wrought in one and the same person at the same time; the blind sees, the dumb speaks, the possessed is delivered from the daemon. This was at that time done in the flesh, but is now daily being fulfilled in the conversion of them that believe; the daemon is cast out when they first behold the light of the faith, and then their mouths which had before been stopped are opened to utter the praises of God.

Hilary: Not without reason, after having mentioned that all the multitude was healed together, does he bring in the cure of this man separately who was demoniac, blind, and dumb. For after the man of the withered hand had been brought before Him, and been healed in the Synagogue, it behoved that the salvation of the Gentiles should be represented in the person of some other afflicted man; he who had been the habitation of a daemon, and blind and dumb, should be made meet to receive God, should contain God in Christ, and by confession of God should give praise to the works of Christ.

Aug., Quaest. Ev., i, 4: For he that believes not, is truly demoniac, blind, and dumb; and he that has not understanding of the faith, nor confesses, nor gives praise to God, is subject to the devil.

Aug., De Cons. Ev., ii, 37: This narrative is given by Luke, not in this place, but after many other things intervening, and speaks of him as dumb only, and not blind. But he is not to be thought to be speaking of

another man, because he is silent respecting this one particular; for in what follows he agrees exactly with Matthew.

Hilary: All the multitude were astonished at this which was done, but the jealousy of the Pharisees grew thereupon, "*And all the multitudes were amazed, and said: Is not this the son of David?*"

Gloss., ap. Raban.: Because of His mercy and His goodness to them they proclaim Him the Son of David.

Raban. e Beda in Luc.: The multitude who seemed less learned, always wondered at the works of the Lord; they, on the other hand, either denied these things, or what they could not deny laboured to pervert by an ill interpretation, as though they were wrought not by a Deity, but by an unclean spirit, namely, Beelzebub, who was the God of Acharon: "*But the Pharisees hearing it, said: This man casteth not out the devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*"

Remig.: Beelzebub is the same as Beel or Baal, or Beelphegor. Beel was father of Ninus king of Assyria; Baal was so called because he was worshipped on high; he was called Beelphegor from the mountain Phegor; Zebub was the servant of Abimelech the son of Gedeon, who, having slain his seventy brothers, built a temple to Baal, and set him up as Priest therein, to drive away the flies which were collected there by the abundant blood of the victims; for Zebub means, a fly. Beelzebub therefore is interpreted, The man of flies; wherefore from this most unclean worship they called him the Prince of the daemons. Having therefore nothing more mean to cast upon the Lord, they said that He cast out daemons by Beelzebub. And it should be known that this word is not to be read with d or t at the end, as some corrupt copies have, but with, b.

Jerome: The Pharisees ascribed the works of God to the Prince of the daemons; and the Lord makes answer not to what they said, but to what they thought, that even thus they might be compelled to believe His power, Who saw the secrets of the heart; "*And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them.*"

Chrys., Hom. xli: Above they had accused Christ of having cast out daemons by Beelzebub; but then He did not reprove them, suffering them, if they would, to acknowledge Him from further miracles, and to learn His greatness from His doctrine. But because they continued to maintain the same things, He now rebukes them, although their accusation had been very unreasonable.

But jealousy reeks not what it says, so that only it say somewhat. Yet does not Christ condemn them, but answers with a gracious mildness, teaching us to be gentle to our enemies, and not to be troubled, even though they should speak such things against us, as we neither acknowledge in us, nor have any reasonableness in themselves.

Therein also He proves that the things which they had said against Him were false, for it is not of one having a daemon to shew such mercy, and to know the thoughts. Moreover, because this their accusation was very unreasonable, and they feared the multitude, they did not dare to proclaim it openly, but kept it in their thoughts; wherefore he says, "*Knowing their thoughts.*"

He does not repeat their thoughts in His answer, not to divulge their wickedness; but He brings forward an answer; it was His object to do good to the sinners, not to proclaim their sin. He does not answer them out of the Scriptures, because they would not hearken to Him as they explained them differently, but He refutes them from common opinions. For assaults from without are not so destructive as quarrels within; and this is so in bodies and in all other things. But in the mean while He draws instances from matters more known, saying, "*Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate;*" for there is nothing on earth more powerful than a kingdom, and yet that is destroyed by contention.

What then must we say concerning a city or a family; that whether it be great or small, it is destroyed when it is at discord within itself.

Hilary: For a city or family is analogous to a kingdom; as it follows, "*and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.*"

Jerome: For as small things grow by concord, so the greatest fall to pieces through dissensions.

Hilary: But the word of God is rich, and whether taken simply, or examined inwardly, it is needful for our advancement.

Leaving therefore what belongs to the plain understanding thereof, let us dwell on some of the more secret reasons. The Lord is about to make answer to that which they had said concerning Beelzebub, and He casts upon those to whom He made answer a condition of their answering. Thus; The Law was from God and the promise of the kingdom to Israel was by the Law; but if the kingdom of the Law be divided in itself, it must needs be destroyed; and thus Israel lost the Law, when the nation whose was the Law, rejected the fulfillment of the Law in Christ.

The city here spoken of is Jerusalem, which when it raged with the madness of its people against the Lord, and drove out His Apostles with the multitude of them that believed, after this division shall not stand; and thus (which soon happened in consequence of this division) the destruction of that city is declared.

Again He puts another case, *“And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?”*

Jerome: As much as to say, If Satan fight against himself, and, daemon be an enemy to daemon, then must the end of the world be at hand, that these hostile powers should have no place there, whose mutual war is peace for men.

Gloss. ord.: He holds them therefore in this dilemma. For Christ casts out daemons either by the power of God, or by the Prince of the daemons. If by the power of God, their accusations are malicious; if by the Prince of the daemons, his kingdom is divided, and will not stand, and therefore let them depart out of his kingdom. And this alternative He intimates that they had chosen for themselves, when they refused to believe in Him.

Chrys.: Or thus; If he is divided, he is made weak, and perishes; but if he perishes, how can he cast out another?

Hilary: Otherwise; If the daemon was driven to this division to the end that he should thus afflict the daemons, even thus must we attribute higher power to Him who made the division than to those who are thus divided; thus the kingdom of the Devil, after this division made, is destroyed by Christ.

Jerome: But if ye think, ye Scribes and Pharisees, that the daemons depart out of the possessed in obedience to their Prince, that men may be imposed upon by a concerted fraud, what can ye say to the healing of diseases which the Lord also wrought? It is something more if ye assign to the daemons even bodily infirmities, and the signs of spiritual virtues.

Chrys.: After the first answer, He comes to a second more plain than the first, saying, *“And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.”*

Jerome: He alludes, as is His manner, under the name children of the Jews, either to the exorcists of that race, or to the Apostles who are by race of that nation. If He means the exorcists who by the invocation of God cast out daemons, He thus constrains the Pharisees by a wise enquiry to confess that their work was of the Holy Spirit. If, He would say, the casting out of the daemons by your children is imputed to God, and not to daemons, why should the same work wrought by Me not have the same cause? *“Therefore they shall be your judges,”* not by authority but by comparison; they ascribe the casting out of the daemons to God, you to the Prince of the daemons. But if it is of the Apostles also that this is said, (and so we should rather take it,) then they shall be their judges, for they shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Hilary: And they are worthily appointed judges over them, to whom Christ is found to have given that power over the daemons, which it was denied that He had.

Raban.: Or, because the Apostles well knew within their own conscience that they had learnt no evil art from Him.

Chrys.: Yet He said not, My disciples, or Apostles, but *“your children;”* that if they chose to return again to their own privileges, they might take occasion hence; but if they should be ungrateful, they might

not have even an impudent excuse. And the Apostles cast out daemons by virtue of power which they had from Him, and yet the Pharisees made no such charge against them; for it was not the actions themselves, but the person of Christ to which they were opposed.

Desiring then to shew that the things which were said against Him were only jealous suspicions, He brings forward the Apostles. And also He leads them to a knowledge of Himself, shewing how they stood in the way of their own good, and resisted their own salvation; whereas they ought to be joyful because He had come to bestow great goods upon them; "If I by the Spirit of God cast out daemons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." This also shews that it is a matter of great power to cast out daemons, and not an ordinary grace.

And thus it is He reasons, "Therefore is the kingdom of God come upon you," as much as to say, If this indeed be so, then is the Son of God come upon you. But this He hints darkly, that it may not seem hard to them.

Also to draw their attention, He said not merely, "The kingdom hath come," but, "upon you;" that is to say, These good things are coming for you; why do you oppose your own salvation; for this is the very sign given by the Prophets of the presence of the Son of God, that such works as these should be wrought by Divine power.

Jerome: For the kingdom of God denotes Himself, of whom it is written in another place, "The kingdom of God is among you; [Luke 17:21] and, "There standeth one in the midst of you whom ye know not." [John 1:26]. Or surely that kingdom which both John and the Lord Himself had preached above, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matt 3:2, 4:17]

There is also a third kingdom of the Holy Scripture which shall be taken from the Jews, and be given to a nation that brings forth the fruit thereof.

Hilary: If then the disciples work by Christ, and Christ by the Spirit of God, already is the kingdom of God transferred to the Apostles through the office of the Mediator.

Gloss., ap. Anselm: For the weakening of the kingdom of the Devil is the increase of the kingdom of God.

Aug., Quaest. Ev., i. 5: Whence the sense might be this, "If I by Beelzebub cast out daemons," then, according to your own opinion, "the kingdom of God is come upon you," for the kingdom of the Devil, being thus divided against itself, cannot stand. Thus calling that the kingdom of God, in which the wicked are condemned, and are separated from the faithful, who are now doing penitence for their sins.

Chrys.: Having concluded the second answer, He brings forward yet a third, saying, Or how can any enter into a strong man's house? For that Satan cannot cast out Satan is clear from what has been said; and that no other can cast him out, till he have first overcome him, is plain to all.

Thus the same as before is established yet more abundantly; for He says, So far am I from having the Devil for my ally, that I rather am at war with him, and bind him; and in that I cast out after this sort, I therein spoil his goods. Thus He proves the very contrary of that they strove to establish. They would shew that He did not cast out demons of His own power; He proves that not only daemons, yea but the prince, also of the daemons He hath bound, as is shewn by that which He hath wrought. For if their Prince were not overcome, how were the daemons who are His subjects thus spoiled.

This speech seems also to me to be a prophecy; inasmuch as He not only casts out daemons, but will take away all error out of the world, and dissolve the craft of the Devil; and He says not rob, but spoil, shewing that He will do it with power.

Jerome: His "house" is this world, which is set in evil, not by the majesty of the Creator, but by the greatness of the sinner. The strong man is bound and chained in tartarus, bruised by the Lord's foot. Yet ought we not therefore to be careless; for here the conqueror Himself pronounces our adversary to be strong.

Chrys.: He calls him "strong," shewing therein his old reign, which arose out of our sloth.

Aug.: For he held us, that we should not by our own strength be able to free ourselves from him, but by the grace of God. By his goods, he means all the unbelievers. He has bound the strong man, in that He has taken away from him all power of hindering the faithful from following Christ, and gaining the kingdom of heaven.

Raban.: Therefore He has spoiled his house, in that them, whom He foresaw should be His own, He set free from the snares of the Devil, and has joined to the Church. Or in that He has divided the whole world among His Apostles and their successors to be converted. By this plain parable therefore He shews that He does not join in a deceitful working with the daemons as they falsely accused Him, but by the might of His divinity He frees men from the daemons.

Chrys.: After that third reply, here follows a fourth, "*He that is not with Me is against Me.*"

Hilary: Wherein He shews how far He is from having borrowed any power from the Devil; teaching us how great the danger to think amiss of Him, not to be with Whom, is the same as to be against Him.

Jerome: But let none think that this is said of heretics and schismatics; though we may apply it besides to such; but it is shewn by the context to refer to the Devil; in that the works of the Saviour cannot be compared with the works of Beelzebub. He seeks to hold men's souls in captivity, the Lord to set them free; he preaches idols, the Lord the knowledge of the true God; he draws men to sin, the Lord calls them back to virtues. How then can these have agreement together, whose works are so opposite?

Chrys.: Therefore whoso gathereth not with me, nor is with me, may not be compared together with me, that with me he should cast out daemons, but rather seeks to scatter what is mine. But tell me; If you were to have fought together with some one, and he should not be willing to come to your aid, is he not therefore against you?

The Lord also Himself said in another place, "He that is not against you is for you." [Luke 9:50] To which that which is here said is not contrary. For here He is speaking of the Devil who is our adversary -- there of some man who was on their side, of whom it is, said, "We saw one casting out daemons in thy name."

Here He seems to allude to the Jews, classing them with the Devil; for they were against Him, and scattered what He would gather. But it is fair to allow that He spoke this of Himself; for He was against the Devil, and scattered abroad the things of the Devil.

Chrys.: The Lord had said to the Jews, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it;" that they should not therefore be careless, He tells them that not only in the world to come but here also they should suffer grievous things; setting forth in a sort of riddle the punishment that should fall upon them whence He says, "When, the unclean spirit has gone out of a man."

Jerome: Some suppose that this place is spoken of heretics, because the unclean spirit who dwelt in them before when they were Gentiles, is cast out before the confession of the true faith; when after they went over to heresy, and garnished their house with feigned virtues, then it is that the Devil, having taken to him other seven evil spirits, returns and dwells in them; and their last state becomes worse than their first. And indeed heretics are in a much worse condition than the Gentiles; for in the heretics was a hope of faith, in the Gentiles a war of discord.

Yet though this exposition has a plausibility and a shew of learning, I am doubtful of its truth. For by the concluding words of this, whether it be parable or example, "Thus shall it be to this evil generation," we are compelled to refer it, not to heretics, or to men in general, but to the Jewish people. So the context of the passage may not shift about loosely and vaguely, and be like unmeaning speeches, but may be consistent with itself from first to last. The unclean spirit then went out from the Jews when they received the Law; and being cast out of the Jews, he walked through the wilderness of the Gentiles; as it follows, "He walketh through dry places seeking rest."

Remig.: He calls the hearts of the Gentiles, “dry places,” as lacking all the moisture of wholesome waters, that is of the holy Scriptures, and of spiritual gifts, and strangers to the pouring in of the Holy Spirit.

Raban.: Or, the “dry places” are the hearts of the faithful, which after they have been purged from the weakness of loose thoughts, the crafty lier-in-wait tries if by any means he may fix his footsteps there; but lying from the chaste spirit, the Devil finds no resting place to his mind but in the heart of the wicked; as it follows, “and findeth none.”

Remig.: The Devil supposed he should have rest for ever among the Gentiles, but it is added, “and findeth none,” because when the Son of God appeared in the mystery of His Incarnation, the Gentiles believed.

Jerome: And when they believed on the Lord, the Devil, finding no place among the nations, said, “I will return into my house whence I came out;” I have the Jews from whom I formerly departed. “And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.” [John 14:31] For the temple of the Jews was empty, and had not Christ to dwell therein, He having said, “Arise, let us go hence.”

Seeing then they had not the protection of Angels, and were burdened with the useless observances of the Law, and the traditions of the Pharisees, the Devil returns to his former dwelling, and, taking to him seven other daemons, inhabits it as before. And the last state of that nation is worse than the first, for they are now possessed by a larger number of daemons in blaspheming Jesus Christ in their synagogues, than they were possessed with in Egypt before they had knowledge of the Law; for it is one thing to have no belief that He should come, another not to receive Him when He is come.

A number seven-fold is joined with the Devil, either because of the sabbath, or from the number of the Holy Spirit; that as in Isaiah [margin note: Isa 11:2] upon the bud which comes from the root of Jesse, seven spirits of virtues are related to have descended; so on the other hand an equal number of vices should he poured forth upon the Devil.

Beautifully then are seven spirits said to be taken to him, either because of the breaking of the sabbath, or because of the heinous sins which are contrary to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Chrys.: Or, herein He may be shewing forth their punishment. As when daemoniacs have been loosed from their infirmity, if they after become remiss, they draw upon themselves more grievous illusions, so shall it be among you -- before ye were possessed by a daemon, when you worshipped idols, and slew your sons to daemons; yet I forsook you not, but cast out that daemon by the Prophets, and afterwards came Myself seeking to purify you altogether. Since then ye would not hearken to me, but have fallen into more heinous crime, (as it is greater wickedness to slay Christ than to slay the Prophets,) therefore ye shall suffer more heavy calamities. For what befell them under Vespasian and Titus, were much more grievous than they had suffered in Egypt, in Babylon, and under Antiochus.

And this indeed is not all He shews concerning them, but also that since they were destitute of every virtue, they were more fit for the habitation of daemons than before. It is reasonable to suppose that these things were said not to them only, but also to us. If after being enlightened and delivered from our former evils, we are again possessed by the same wickedness, the punishment of these latter sins will be greater than of the first; as Christ spake to the paralytic, “Behold, thou art made whole, sin not, lest a worse thing come upon thee.” [John 5:14]

Raban.: For when any one is converted to the faith, the Devil is cast out of him in Baptism, who driven thence wanders up and down through the dry places, that is, the hearts of the faithful.

Greg., Mor., xxxiii, 3: The dry places where no water is are the hearts of the righteous, which by the power of discipline are dried from all humours of carnal lust. The wet places are the minds of worldly men, which the humour of carnal lust fills, and makes watery; in such the Devil imprints his footsteps the more deeply, inasmuch as in his wanderings he comes down upon such hearts as upon low and marshy ground.

Raban.: And returning to his house whence he had gone out, “he findeth it empty,” of good works through slothfulness, “swept,” that is, of its old vices by Baptism, and “garnished” with feigned virtues through hypocrisy.

Aug., *Quaest. Ev.*, i, 8: So that in these words the Lord signifies that some shall so believe as not to have strength for the work of continence, and shall return to the world. “He taketh unto him other seven,” is to be understood that when any has fallen from righteousness, he shall also have hypocrisy. For the lust of the flesh being cast out of its wonted works by penitence, when it finds not any delights in which it may rest, returns the more greedily, and again takes possession of the goal, if carelessness has ensued, and there has not been introduced as the dweller in the cleansed abode the word of God in sound doctrine.

And as he will not only have the seven vices which are the contraries of the spiritual virtues, but will hypocritically feign that he has the virtues, therefore his old lust, taking to itself seven other worse, that is, this seven-fold hypocrisy, returns to him so as to make the last state of that man worse than the former.

Greg., *Mor.*, vii, 17: For it often happens that the soul in the commencement of its progress is lifted up, and prides itself on its virtues, that it opens an entrance to the adversary who is raging against it, and who shews himself the more violent in breaking into it, by how much he was grieved at being cast out, though but for a short space.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

#### Tertullian on the Gospels for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

(latter portion of Chapter XXVI of Book IV of *Tertullian against Marcion* in Vol. III, ANF)

Latter portion of Chapter XXVI.-*From St. Luke's Eleventh Chapter Other Evidence that Christ Comes from the Creator. The Lord's Prayer and Other Words of Christ. The Dumb Spirit and Christ's Discourse on Occasion of the Expulsion. The Exclamation of the Woman in the Crowd.*

In like manner, it is He who will give the Holy Spirit, at whose command<sup>1074</sup> is also the unholy spirit. When He cast out the “demon which was dumb”<sup>1075</sup> (and by a cure of this sort verified Isaiah),<sup>1076</sup> and having been charged with casting out demons by Beelzebub, He said, “If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?”<sup>1077</sup> By such a question what does He otherwise mean, than that He ejects the spirits by the same power by which their sons also did—that is, by the power of the Creator? For if you suppose the meaning to be, “If I by Beelzebub, etc., by whom your sons?”—as if He would reproach them with having the power of Beelzebub,—you are met at once by the preceding sentence, that “Satan cannot be divided against himself.”<sup>1078</sup> So that it was not by Beelzebub that even they were casting out demons, but (as we have said) by the power of the Creator; and that He might make this understood, He adds: “But if I with the finger of God cast out demons, is not the kingdom of God come near unto you?”<sup>1079</sup> For the magicians who stood before Pharaoh and resisted Moses called the power of the Creator “the finger of God.”<sup>1080</sup> It was the finger of God, because it was a sign<sup>1081</sup> that even a thing of weakness was yet abundant in strength. This Christ also showed, when, recalling to notice (and not obliterating) those ancient wonders which were really His own,<sup>1082</sup> He said that the power of God must be understood to be the finger of none other God than Him, under<sup>1083</sup> whom it had received this appellation. His kingdom, therefore, was come near to them, whose power was called His “finger.” Well, therefore, did He connect<sup>1084</sup> with the parable of “the strong man armed,” whom “a stronger man still overcame,”<sup>1085</sup> the prince of the demons, whom He had already called Beelzebub and Satan; signifying that it was he who was overcome by the finger of God, and not that the Creator had been subdued by another god. Besides,<sup>1086</sup> how could His kingdom be still standing, with its boundaries, and laws, and functions, whom, even if the whole world were left entire to Him, Marcion's god could possibly seem to have overcome as “the stronger than He,” if it were not in consequence of His law that even Marcionites were constantly dying, by returning in their dissolution<sup>1087</sup> to the ground, and were so often admonished by even a

scorpion, that the Creator had by no means been overcome?<sup>1088</sup> “A (certain) mother of the company exclaims, ‘Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which gave Thee suck;’ but the Lord said, ‘Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.’”<sup>1089</sup> Now He had in precisely similar terms rejected His mother or His brethren, whilst preferring those who heard and obeyed God.<sup>1090</sup> His mother, however, was not here present with Him. On that former occasion, therefore, He had not denied that He was her son by birth.<sup>1091</sup> On hearing this (salutation) the second time, He the second time transferred, as He had done before,<sup>1092</sup> the “blessedness” to His disciples from the womb and the paps of His mother, from whom, however, unless He had in her (a real mother) He could not have transferred it.

---

1074 Apud quem.

1075 Luke xi. 14.

1076 Isa. xxix. 18.

1077 Luke xi. 19.

1078 Luke xi. 18.

1079 Luke xi. 20.

1080 Ex. viii. 19.

1081 Significaret.

1082 Vetustatum scilicet suarum.

1083 Apud.

1084 Applicuit.

1085 Luke xi. 21,22.

1086 Ceterum.

1087 Defluendo.

1088 The scorpion here represents any class of the lowest animals, especially such as stung. The Marcionites impiously made it a reproach to the Creator, that He had formed such worthless and offensive creatures. Compare book i. chap. 17, note 5. p. 283.

1089 Luke xi. 27,28.

1090 See above, on Luke viii. 21.

1091 Natura.

1092 Proinde.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

#### Exposition of the Gospel for the third Sunday of Lent

St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bishop and Doctor

Translated by M.F. Toale, D.D.

*And he was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb.* The man here spoken of as being without certain senses we would describe as speechless; for his nature was not afflicted. He suffered rather from a trick of the devil, by whom his tongue was as it were tied. So he needed to be brought forward by others: since without a voice he could not plead for himself. For this reason the Lord does not inquire into his faith, but straightaway cures his affliction; *and the multitude were in admiration at it.*

And when the man had been delivered, and the miracle wrought, the people began to praise Christ, with praise such as befitted God. But some of them, the Evangelist says: (and these were from the Scribes and Pharisees, whose hearts were filled with desperation and jealousy) made as though to regard what had happened as simply a stage in the course of the disease. For seeking to detract from the wonders He wrought by divine power, they began to attribute them to the power of the devil; for through him it was, they said, that the Lord cast out devils.

And thus Christ, though He had as it were cast into the abyss the spirits of evil whom He had forced unwilling from the bodies they possessed, and where they had dared to rule; and though for this He was worthy indeed of praise, yet He did not escape the tongues of those who love to belittle, and those of evil speaking men. For twisting the miracle into a crime they say: *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub.*

*And others tempting him, asked of him a sign from heaven.* Others urged by the goad of jealousy asked of Him a sign from heaven, almost saying: 'You have driven out an evil spirit from a man, but that is no great wonder. And neither does this show you have divine power. We have seen nothing yet like the miracles of old. Show us something that no one can doubt is from above. Moses led the people through the midst of the sea; making the deep passable for them. With a wand he struck the rock, and made it the mother of streams: springs rushing from the hard stone. And his successor halted the sun before Gabaon; and the moon above the valley of Ajalon (Jos. xii. 12). He held back the Jordan, and put a barrier before its rushing Waters.' For these men to ask a sign can only mean, that they were turning thoughts of this kind over in their minds as they watched Him. How did Christ answer them?

*But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided.* . . First He shows that He is God by this, that He knows what they had been murmuring among themselves: for He had known their thoughts. For since suspicions of this kind were shameful, and also because they feared the people, they did not give tongue to their grievance against Him, but limited themselves to turning it over in their mind. Then that He might divert their minds from this grievous impiety He answers them, not from the Scriptures: for they paid no heed to them, rather they tried to twist their meaning: but from what is commonly agreed to happen among men.

For, He says, a city, and even a house, if it be divided against itself will soon come to nothing; the same is true of a kingdom: than which men think there is nothing stronger. If I therefore, having in me the power of a demon, by this demon cast out other demons, the kingdom of the demons is divided; whose power if they oppose each other will soon pass away. For it is the union of its people makes a kingdom strong. A house too is strong when its members are no way in conflict with each other. The kingdom of Beelzebub then also remains strong, unless it seeks to do that which works against itself. How then does Satan drive out Satan? It is unlikely that it is of their own will evil spirits are driven from men. For Satan does not fight against Satan, nor direct attacks against his own followers; rather he gives aid to his own kingdom. You must then believe that it is by divine power I crush Satan.

They dared, this perverse assembly of wicked Pharisees, to accuse Emmanuel of crime. They dared to slander his honour; and blasphemously they repeat that upheld by the power of Beelzebub He cast the evil spirits out of the afflicted. For this, in times past, Emmanuel had rebuked the unrestrained mouths of the Jews, by the mouth of Osee His Prophet. *Woe to them, He said, for they have departed from me: they shall be wasted because they have transgressed against me. And I have redeemed them! But against me they have spoken lies* (Os. vii. 13).

*If I cast out devils by Beelzebub; by whom do your children cast them out?* The blessed Disciples were Jews, and born of Jews. They had received power from God against unclean spirits; and those who were tormented by them they had delivered by the invocation of the Name of Jesus Christ. If then, He says, your sons crush Satan in My Name, striking down his followers, and driving them headlong from the bodies they afflict, how can it be anything but plain blasphemy on your part, coupled with great ignorance, if any among you say that I receive My power from Beelzebub? Your own sons' testimony condemns you: for they, after they had received My authority and My power, put Satan to flight, driving him out against his will from those he had possessed; while you say that it is by his power I work My miracles!

*But if I by the Finger of God cast out devils; doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you.* Since what you say is not true, rather a worthless fabrication, darkened further by slander, it is manifest therefore that it is by the Finger of God that I cast out demons. He calls the Holy Ghost the *Finger of God*. Christ Himself is called the *Hand* and the *Arm of God* (Ps. xliii. 4; Is. liii. 1): because through Him

the Father does all things. And the Son in turn works through the Spirit. As the finger is joined to the hand, not separate from it, but joined naturally to it, so the Holy Spirit, sharing the same nature as the Son, is joined naturally to Him; though He proceeds from God the Father. For, as I have said, the Son works all things through His Consubstantial Spirit. Now however as man, He says, by reason of My divine purpose, I cast forth devils by the *Finger of God*. For the Jews, weak and corrupt of mind as they were, could not have endured it had He said He cast out devils by His own Spirit. And note here, I beseech you, that as the Father works His wonders through the Son, it is the Spirit that accomplishes them; but as One and the Same is their Nature, so one likewise is their operation.

Since then the adversaries of the Holy Spirit are driven on every side towards the truth, let them reject the vomit of the deceivers, and turning again to God let them seek from Him the Light of truth, which He being kind and merciful will grant them. If therefore, He says, becoming a man like you, I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, it follows that the nature of man, beginning with Me, has grown rich from the heavenly kingdom. For it has acquired glory in crushing Satan, and in rebuking the unclean spirits. This is the meaning of, *the Kingdom of God is come upon you*.

*And when a strong man armed keepeth his court, these things are in peace that he possesseth.* Since it was necessary for many reasons that He should answer remarks of this kind He here uses a clear and striking illustration by which they may see, they who desire to see, that He has truly overcome the prince of this world, and as it were unnerved him, and taken from him the strength he once had, and given his possessions to His own friends. For, He says, as long as he had power, and kept guard over what he had, he feared no violence. But if someone stronger suddenly attack him, and overwhelm him, he is then defenseless.

This is a parable based on what happens among men; but the same has befallen the devil, the hater of good, who, before the Coming of the Saviour, did indeed enjoy great power, seizing on the flocks that were manifestly not his, but belonged to the God of all things; shutting them in, and as it were keeping them in his own fold. Then later the Word of God, the Giver of all strength, the Lord of Hosts, being made man, assaulted him and deprived him of his armour, and gave to others all that he had possessed. For those he had held fast in atheism and error are now through the holy Apostles called to the knowledge of Truth, and because of their belief in His Son they have been restored once more to the Father.

*He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.* For I have come, He says, that I may snatch everyone from the hands of the devil, that I may deliver those who were captives, give light to those in darkness, raise up the fallen, heal the bruised, and gather together in one the children of God he has scattered. But it is otherwise with Satan, who is not with Me, but strives to scatter what has been delivered and gathered together. How then should he who is at war with all I do give help to Me against himself? Is it not great folly to believe that this could happen? And how it came to happen to the Jews to fall into such thoughts He then goes on to explain.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water. That this similitude is directed against the Jews Matthew has already told us where He says: So shall it be also to this wicked generation. For while they were in servitude in Egypt, living after the manners and customs of the Egyptians, and abounding in every impurity, the unclean spirit began to dwell in them. Afterwards, by the mercy of God they were delivered through Moses, and had the Law as their guide and teacher, and through this they were led to the knowledge of the True God, and the impure and evil spirit was cast out from them. Then sacrificing a lamb, the figure of Christ, and being sprinkled with its blood, they escaped the Destroying Angel. But because they refused to believe in Christ, and turned from their Redeemer, the spirit of evil has again possessed them, and has enslaved them more cruelly than before. For he found their heart empty, and void of all concern for the things of God, and wholly taken up with the flesh, and so he took up his abode in them. For just as the Holy Spirit, when He finds the heart of man free of all uncleanness, enters in and abides there, and there takes His rest, so the unclean spirit takes up his abode in the souls of the wicked. For they are, as I say, empty of all virtue. And in this way it comes to pass that

the last state of Israel is worse than the first. For, as the Saviour's Disciple says: It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from the holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog is returned to his vomit: and the sow that has washed to her wallowing in the mire (II Pet. ii. 21, 22).

And from what they afterwards dared to do, it is plain to see that they have swallowed their vomit, and turned again to wallow in their ancient mire, and relapsed into the errors of Egypt. For the evil spirit has again entered them, and their last state has become worse than their first; in accordance with the words of our Saviour, Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

### The Kingdom of Evil - the third Sunday of Lent

St. Bruno, Abbot

Translated by M.F. Toale, D.D.

(PL 165, cols. 794 and 183.)

Luke xi. 14. The Blessed Evangelist Matthew tells us, that this man was not alone dumb but blind also. And blind is every man who follows not after that Light Which says: *I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the Light of life* (Jn. viii. 12). And he is indeed dumb who confesses not his sins, and who knows not how to open his mouth to the praise of God.

And he hath a demon within him who persists in any grave sin. And because of this the Apostle admonishes us, where he says: *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body* (Rom. vi. 12). For as long as sin remains in a man, for so long is he bound and captive and possessed by the devil. Such a man, blind and dumb, if he be offered to the Lord, if he be converted to penance, the Lord shall straightaway heal him; so that the evil spirit being driven out of him he may speak and see.

But let him not, as before, speak idle and vain things, but what is holy and of the Spirit, as becometh a Christian. Nor let him look upon vain things with the eyes of his body; but with the eyes of his soul let him contemplate the Light of life and truth.

But some of them said: *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils*. Of these the Evangelist Matthew says: *But the Pharisees hearing it, said: this man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of devils*. For the more the Pharisees appear to be better and wiser than the rest, so much the more often are they goaded by an ever greater jealousy against the Lord. But who, O Pharisees, has taught you this? For only because you are the disciples of Beelzebub could you say such things in his praise. You see Jesus raising the dead, giving light to the blind, cleansing the lepers, and curing every kind of infirmity and disease, and you say that He casts out devils by the power of Beelzebub? When did Beelzebub, the Lord of the Flies, ever do such things?

*And others tempting, asked of him a sign from heaven*. Another Evangelist relates what answer the Lord gave to these men; saying to them: *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights: so shall the Son of man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights* (Mt. xii. 39). Let this sign suffice for you; nor will any other sign be given to you, either from heaven or from the earth. Great and wondrous is this sign: that He Who holds all things in His Hands allowed himself to be in the power of men for three days and three nights. For what does it mean to be in the heart of the earth if not to be subject to the passions, to the power, to the evil will, of sinners? Because of this the Lord also answered Pilate: *Thou shouldst not have any power against me, unless it were given thee from above* (Jn. x. 11). And as heaven means the Just, so likewise earth signifies sinners.

*But he seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils*. With a very clear illustration

He confutes those who said that He was casting out devils by Beelzebub. For if it is as they say, then Beelzebub has wholly lost his power, his leadership, and his kingdom. For if the spirits of evil were waging war against each other, they would have had little or no power against man.

Rather what is worse than this holds; for there are scarcely to be found any number of men imbued with such unity of purpose in doing good, as the devils possess in doing evil. For though they are endless, innumerable, yet in this they are one, that they seek to do nothing but what is evil. If then they had not this concord in wickedness, and desired to be converted to penance, and could do so, then indeed would the kingdom of Beelzebub be brought to desolation; for this is what we see take places in other kingdoms. It is not therefore as these *others* say; and Satan does not cast out Satan; rather do all in his kingdom give aid to each other in all that they do.

For this same reason was it said by the Lord, through the mouth of Job, concerning the devil: *His body is like molten shields, shut close up with scales pressing upon one another. One is joined to another and they hold one another fast, and shall not be separated* (Job. xli. 6, 8). By these words He makes clear that the spirits of evil have, between them, such harmony of purpose that in no way can they be separated one from another. For by the *body* of the devil is understood the whole array of the malignant spirits. And because of their strength these same malign spirits are spoken of as *molten shields*, and they are described as *scales pressing upon one another*, and as, *holding one another fast*, and as being joined to one another, because of this surpassing unity and concord which they possess in every kind of malice and desire of evil-doing. Would indeed if it could be that this so great unity and harmony might be broken, and the kingdom of evil be destroyed!

*Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub; by whom do your children cast them out?* If, He says, you have such thoughts against Me, what then do you say of My Disciples? I know that you who say such abominable things of the Master will not think well of His Disciples. For earlier He had declared: *If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?* (Mt. x. 25). The Apostles are spoken of as sons of the Pharisees, since they also, and all who were accustomed to believe in the resurrection, which the Pharisees preached, were wont to look upon the Pharisees as fathers and teachers. For which reason they also may be considered as belonging to that sect: for this sect was better than the others; though it too was in many respects not worthy. And likewise in the Acts of the Apostles Paul is recorded as crying out: *I am a Pharisee: the son of Pharisees; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question* (Acts xxiv. 6). This therefore is why the Disciples of Christ are spoken of as sons of the Pharisees. And so Our Lord says: *Therefore they shall be your judges.* For they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

*But if I by the Finger of God cast out devils; doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you.* What this means another Evangelist tells us, saying: *If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils* (Mt. xii. 28): which is indeed true, and may not be doubted: therefore *is the kingdom of God come upon you*. For where the Spirit of God is, there also is the Kingdom of God. The Holy Ghost is called the *Finger of God*, because of the multiple division of graces. For in no part of the body do we find such division as in the fingers. And this is as if He had said: I indeed cast out devils in the Spirit and Power of God; since they are subject to me, since they are powerless to withstand me, since I hold them tied, and keep them bound.

*But when a strong man armed keepeth his court, these things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him, and overcome him* etc. For the devil was strong; but I am stronger. I have entered his court; I have come into this world which he has held as though it were his own house; and the time draws near for the prince of this world to be cast forth. I have bound him; I have broken his armour; and the unhappy people he held captive I have delivered from his bondage. He is not therefore *with Me*; nor does he gather with Me; neither does he cast out devils together with Me; nor does he heal men, as I do; nor does he gather in the flocks, nor lead them to the living pastures, which I am doing. What then does he do? Do you wish to hear? He scatters, he harries, he kills, he drags down to death and

eternal damnation whomsoever he can. For this is the meaning of those words: *He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth.*

*When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man* etc. The Lord spoke to us this similitude that He might show us that the evil and adulterous generation of the Jews, because of their hard and unrepentant hearts, would be condemned, not alone by the Ninivites, but also and rightly by the other Gentiles. Since this impious generation knew not that it should repent, but daily became more wicked, its last state was worse than its first. And this they themselves likewise implied when they said of Our Saviour: *His blood be upon us and upon our children* (Mt. xxvii. 35). So shall it be unto this most wicked generation as it was to this man who was possessed by an unclean spirit:

*For when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest; and not finding . . .* For the unclean spirit enters easily into a man, and easily goes out from him. For as often as a man, either in thought or in action, does something that is wicked, the devil is present with him. But should he begin to repent from his heart, the devil will leave him. And going out he walks through dry and waterless places, tempting those that are free of the sap of malice and of lust, and in whom *he finds no rest*; since he seeks what is corrupt and moist. And for this was it written of him: *He sleepeth under the shadow, in the covert of the reed, and in moist places* (Job xl. 16); in which reference the genitals are signified. Then he saith: *I will return into my house whence I came out.* Because he could find no foothold in the good he turns back to the wicked. For the devil may tempt the good, but he cannot find rest in them; for he is shaken violently, and upset, and driven out, now by their prayers, now by their tears of repentance, and now by their almsgiving and similar good works.

*And when he is come, he findeth it empty* (Matt. xii. 43). *Empty*, since he finds there no charity, nor true faith, nor humility, nor patience, nor justice, nor mercy, nor any of the other things with which the souls of the saints are furnished. How does he find it? *Swept and garnished*: he finds it as he desires to find it. He finds it *swept clean* by evil brushes, and *garnished* with evil furnishings; evil brushes that sweep out the virtues, and leave the vices; evil brushes that scatter dust upon the floor, and do not sweep it out. It is lust, fornication, pleasure, pride, avarice, discord, and all uncleanness, which are the furnishings of the devil. With these adornments he finds it garnished.

*Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there.* It is not enough for him that he possesses the house alone; he seeks companions: the place is spacious: it needs many dwellers there. But who are these seven spirits? Why also are they seven? Why are they more wicked than himself? Because seven are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, by means of which every soul is converted to faith in Christ, and defended against the contrary evils. Therefore the unclean spirit takes unto him those seven wicked, contrary, spirits, with which he defends the house against the virtues.

Namely, opposing the spirit of stupidity to the spirit of wisdom; the spirit of revolt and unreason to the spirit of understanding; the spirit of rashness to the spirit of counsel; the spirit of inconstancy and fear to the spirit of fortitude; the spirit of ignorance to the spirit of knowledge; the spirit of impiety to the spirit of piety; the spirit of contempt and hate to the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Unhappy the soul where these seven evil spirits dwell, and wherein they rule. For these are, in a certain way, worse than the one who brought them there; since it is they who in this life corrupt souls; while he, after this life, torments them. He opens the door; they, once entered, lay waste and destroy everything within. He tempts; they kill. He can tempt and vex a man; but without these others he cannot kill the soul. And so they are worse than he is; for they injure more grievously than he can. He, tempting and persuading, is truly wicked; they by doing and destroying are yet more wicked. To the one the Apostle delivered a man, *for the destruction of the flesh*; but of these others he says: *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body* (I Cor. v. 5; Rom. vi. 12). It is no wonder then that the last state of this man is worse than the first; since he is first oppressed by the one, and then following this by the seven other demons.

*And as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd, lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.* This is as if He said: Blessed indeed is My Mother, and blessed the womb that bore Me. But not for this is She blessed: because She is My Mother. Neither is the womb blessed because it bore Me. But both are blessed because She heard the word of God, and hearing it, believed; and believing, She safeguarded it. For had She not done this, She would neither be blessed, nor My Mother.

Turning then to the Lord Our God, the Father Almighty, let us as best we can give thanks with all our hearts; beseeching Him that in His Goodness He will graciously hear our prayers, and by His Power drive evil from our thoughts and actions, increase our faith, guide our minds, grant us His holy inspirations, and bring us to everlasting joy, through His Son Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

*On the Gospel for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor

Translated by M.F. Toale, D.D.

(PL 15, Expos. in Lucam Lib. VII, 91-5.)

Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to desolation, and house upon house shall fall.

The cause of this saying was because our Lord was accused of casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils; so that He might show that His own kingdom is one and everlasting. And rightly did He also answer Pilate: My kingdom is not of this world (Jn. xviii. 36). And so He tells them that those who do not place their trust in Christ, and who believe that He casts out devils through the power of the prince of the devils, do not belong to His eternal kingdom. And this refers to the Jewish people who, in afflictions of this kind, seek the help of the devil to cast out the devil.

For how can a kingdom remain undivided when its faith is destroyed? For, since the Jewish people is subject to the Law, and Christ also as man was born under the Law, how can the kingdom of the Jews, which derives from the Law, endure when this same people divided the law into parts; when Christ Who was promised under the Law was rejected by the people of the law? So in part the faith of the Jewish people turns against itself, and so turning becomes divided, and by being divided it is brought to nothing. And therefore the kingdom of the Church shall endure for ever; for being one faith, it is one body: For there is One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all (Eph. iv. 5, 6).

How great the foolishness of the impious belief, that though the Son of God had taken flesh to crush the unclean spirits, and take away the armour of the prince of this world, and had also given power to men to destroy the spirits of evil, distributing his spoils in sign of triumph, some should seek the help and protection of the power of the devil; since it is by the Finger of God, or as Matthew says, by the Spirit of God that devils are cast out? (Mt. xii. 28). From this we are to understand that His kingdom is as it were the inseparable Body of the Divinity; since Christ is the right hand of God, and the Spirit, under the figure of a finger, seems to express to us the notion of the Oneness Being of the Divinity.

Since His Body is One, shall His kingdom not seem to be one? For, as you have read, in him dwelleth all the fulness of the divinity corporally (Col. ii. 9). And what you may not deny of the Father you ought not deny of the Spirit. Nor should a certain part appear as the instrument of power, because of this comparison with our members; for there is no division of an indivisible thing, and because of this the use of the term finger is to be referred to the reality of their unity, not to a division of power. For the Right Hand of God also says: I and the Father are one (Jn. x. 30). Yet though divinity is undivided, the person is distinct and separate.

When however the Spirit is called Finger operative power is signified; for the Holy Spirit, equally with the Father and the Son, is the holy Operator of the divine works. For David says: I will behold thy heavens, the work of thy fingers (Ps. viii. 4). And in the thirty-second psalm: And all the power of them

by the spirit of his mouth. And Paul says: But all these things one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to everyone according as he will (I Cor. xii. 11). And when He says:

But if I by the finger cast out devils; doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you, saying this He shows that there is a certain royal dominion of the Holy Spirit, which is the Kingdom of God. We in whom the Spirit abides have also within us a royal dwelling. So on a later occasion He says: The kingdom of God is within you (Lk. xvii. 21). We must therefore consider the Holy Spirit as being an equal sharer of the Divinity, and of the Divine Power, and of the Divine Majesty; because the Lord is a Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty (II Cor. iii. 17.)

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest, and not finding. It cannot be doubted that this was said of the Jewish People, whom in the preceding words the Lord severed from His Kingdom. And from this we are to understand that heretics and schismatics are also severed from the Kingdom of God, and from the Church. And so He makes it clearly evident that every assembly of heretics and schismatics belongs, not to God, but to the unclean spirit. Accordingly, the whole Jewish People is compared to a man from whom, through the Law, an unclean spirit has gone forth.

But because he could find no resting place among the nations and Gentiles, because of their faith in Christ (for Christ is the undoing of the unclean spirits; for He has cooled the fiery darts of the enemy against the hearts of the Gentiles, which before were dry and hard, but which now have begun to be soft from the dew of the Holy Spirit in baptism) he returns to the Jewish People, which had been swept and garnished to a legalistic but superficial cleanness, yet remained ever more stained in its inward soul. For it had not begun either to restrain or to cleanse its fierceness in the sacred stream of baptism. And so not without reason did the unclean spirit return to it; bringing with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; for in this impious purpose he warred against the week of the Law, and the mystery of the eighth day.

And as the grace of the sevenfold Spirit is multiplied on us, so on them is heaped every violence of the spirits of evil; for totality is often signified by this number; for it was on the seventh day that, having finished the work of creation, God rested (Gen. ii. 2). Because of this we also have: Therefore the barren hath borne many (hepta), and she that had many children is weakened (I King ii. 5).

Chap. 12: 10-12. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but to him that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him. We understand that Christ is truly the Son of man, Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin; that the Virgin is His sole earthly Parent. Is the Holy Ghost then preferred before Christ, so that though sinning against Him we yet receive pardon, but if we sin against the Holy Spirit we shall not obtain pardon? There is no question of comparison, no discussion of degree, where there is but oneness of power; for the Lord is great, and of his greatness there is no end (Ps. cxliv. 3). If therefore we believe that Oneness belongs to the Trinity, then so does indivisible might, and undivided action; which is seen from what follows. For since it was elsewhere said: The Father will give to you what you shall say, here we have added: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you must say. So if action relates to this Unity, so does offence. But let us return to what we proposed.

Here it seems to some that we are to understand that the same Christ is both Son of man and Holy Spirit: saving the distinction of Persons and their Oneness of Nature; for One and the Same Spirit is both God and the Man Christ, as we find written: The breath of our mouth Christ the Lord (Lam. iv. 20). The Same is Holy; for as the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Father is Lord, and Lord also is the Son, so also Holy is the Father, Holy the Son, Holy the Spirit. Accordingly, the Cherubim and Seraphim with unwearying voices exclaim: Holy, Holy, Holy, that by this threefold name the Trinity may be signified.

If then Christ is both, what is the reason for the distinction, unless that we may know that it is not lawful for us to deny the Divinity of Christ? And what was it that was demanded of us in the persecutions

but that we should deny that Christ was God? And so whosoever does not confess that God is in Christ, and that Christ is in God and from God, will not be deserving of pardon. And whosoever does not also confess that Christ came in the flesh is not of God; for he who has denied the Man has denied the God: because God is in the Man, and Christ as Man is in God. Amen.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

St. John Chrysostom on the Parallel Gospel for the third Sunday of Lent

### **Portion of Homily XL**

*“Then was offered to him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, so that he spoke and saw.”*

O wickedness of the evil spirit! he had barred up both entrances, whereby that person should have believed, as well sight as hearing; nevertheless, both did Christ open.

*“And all the multitudes were amazed, and said: Is not this the son of David? But the Pharisees hearing it, said: This man casteth not out the devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”*

And yet what great thing had been said? Nevertheless, not even this did they endure: to such a degree, as I have already remarked, are they ever stung by the good works done to their neighbors, and nothing grieves them so much as the salvation of men. And yet He had actually retired, and had given room for their passion to subside; but the evil was again rekindled, because a benefit was again conferred; and the evil spirit was not so indignant as they. For he indeed departed from the body, and gave place and fled away, uttering no sound; but these were endeavoring now to slay, now to defame Him. That is, their first aim not succeeding, they would fain hurt His good name.

Such a thing is envy, than which no worse evil can exist. For the adulterer indeed enjoys some pleasure, such as it is, and in a short time accomplishes his proper sin; but the envious man punishes himself, and takes vengeance upon himself more than on the person whom he envies, and never ceases from his sin, but is continually engaged in the commission thereof. For as a sow in mire, and evil spirits in our hurt, so also doth he delight in his neighbor's ills; and if anything painful take place, then is he refreshed, and takes breath; accounting the calamities of others his own joys, and the blessings of others his own ills; and he considers not what pleasure may accrue to himself, but what pain to his neighbor. These men therefore were it not meet to stone and beat to death, like mad dogs, like destroying demons, like the very furies?

For as beetles feed on dung, so do these men on the calamities of others, being a sort of common foes and enemies of our nature. And whereas the rest of mankind pity even a brute when it is killed, dost thou, on seeing a man receive benefits, become like a wild beast, tremble, and turn pale? Why, what can be worse than this madness? Therefore, you see, whoremongers and publicans were able to enter into the kingdom, but the envious, being within it, went out: For “the children of the kingdom,” it is said, “shall be cast out.” And the former, once freed from their present wickedness, attained to things which they never looked for, while these latter lost even the good things which they had; and very reasonably. For this turns a man into a devil, this renders one a savage demon. Thus did the first murder arise; thus was nature forgotten; thus the earth defiled; thus afterwards did it open its mouth, to receive yet living, and utterly destroy, Dathan, and Korah, and Abiram, and all that multitude.

But to declaim against envy, one may say, is easy; but we ought to consider also how men are to be freed from the disease. How then are we to be rid of this wickedness? If we bear in mind, that as he who hath committed fornication cannot lawfully enter the church, so neither he that envies; nay, and much less the latter than the former. For as things are, it is accounted even an indifferent thing; wherefore also it is little thought of; but if its real badness be made evident, we should easily refrain from it.

Weep then, and groan; lament, and entreat God. Learn to feel and to repent for it, as for a grievous sin. And if thou be of this mind, thou wilt quickly be rid of the disease.

And who knows not, one may say, that envy is an evil thing? No one indeed is ignorant of it: yet they have not the same estimation of this passion as of adultery and fornication. When, at least, did any one condemn himself bitterly for having envied? When did he entreat God concerning this pest, that He would be merciful to him? No man at any time: but if he shall fast and give a little money to a poor man, though he be envious to the thousandth degree, he counts himself to have done nothing horrid, held as he is in subjection by the most accursed passion of all. Whence, for example, did Cain become such as he was? Whence Esau? Whence the children of Laban? Whence the sons of Jacob? Whence Korah Dathan, and Abiram, with their company? Whence Miriam? Whence Aaron? Whence the devil himself?

Herewith consider this also; that thou injurest not him whom thou enviest, but into thyself thou art thrusting the sword. For wherein did Cain injure Abel? Did he not even against his own will send him the more quickly into the kingdom? But himself he pierced through with innumerable evils. Wherein did Esau harm Jacob? Did not Jacob grow wealthy, and enjoy unnumbered blessings; while he himself both became an outcast from his father's house, and wandered in a strange land, after that plot of his? And wherein did Jacob's sons again make Joseph the worse, and this, though they proceeded even unto blood? Had not they to endure famine, and encounter peril to the utmost, whereas he became king of all Egypt? For the more thou enviest, the more dost thou become a procurer of greater blessing to the object of thine envy. For there is a God who beholds these things; and when He sees him injured, that doeth no injury, him He exalts the more, and so makes him glorious, but thee He punishes.

For if them that exult over their enemies, He suffer not to go unpunished ("For rejoice not," it is said, "when thine enemies fall, lest at any time the Lord see it, and it displease Him"); much more such as envy those who have done no wrong.

Let us then extirpate the many-headed wild beast. For in truth many are the kinds of envy. Thus, if he that loves one that is a friend to him hath no more than the publican, where shall he stand who hates him that doeth him no wrong? And how shall he escape hell, becoming worse than the heathens? Wherefore also I do exceedingly grieve, that we who are commanded to copy the angels, or rather the Lord of the angels, emulate the devil. For indeed there is much envy, even in the church; and more among us, than among those under authority. Wherefore we must even discourse unto ourselves.

Tell me then, why dost thou envy thy neighbor? Because thou seest him reaping honor, and words of good report? Then dost thou not bear in mind how much evil honors bring on the unguarded? Lifting them up to pride, to vainglory, to arrogance, to contemptuousness; making them more careless? And besides these evils, they wither also lightly away. For the most grievous thing is this, that the evils arising therefrom abide immortal, but the pleasure at the moment of its appearing, is flown away. For these things then dost thou envy? Tell me.

"But he hath great influence with the Ruler, and leads and drives all things which way he will, and inflicts pain on them that offend him, and benefits his flatterers, and hath much power." These are the sayings of secular persons, and of men that are riveted to the earth. For the spiritual man nothing shall be able to hurt.

For what serious harm shall he do to him? Vote him out of his office? And what of that? For if it be justly done, he is even profited; for nothing so provokes God, as for one to hold the priest's office unworthily. But if unjustly, the blame again falls on the other, not on him; for he who hath suffered anything unjustly, and borne it nobly, obtains in this way the greater confidence towards God.

Let us not then aim at this, how we may be in places of power, and honor, and authority, but that we may live in virtue and self denial. For indeed places of authority persuade men to do many things which are not approved of God; and great vigor of soul is needed, in order to use authority aright. For as he that is deprived thereof, practices self restraint, whether with or against his will, so he that enjoys it is in some such condition, as if any one living with a graceful and beautiful damsel were to receive rules never to

look upon her unchastely. For authority is that kind of thing. Wherefore many, even against their will, hath it induced to show insolence; it awakens wrath, and removes the bridle from the tongue, and tears off the door of the lips; fanning the soul as with a wind, and sinking the bark in the lowest depth of evils. Him then who is in so great danger dost thou admire, and sayest thou he is to be envied? Nay, how great madness is here! Consider, at any rate (besides what we have mentioned), how many enemies and accusers, and how many flatterers this person hath besieging him. Are these then, I pray thee, reasons for calling a man happy? Nay, who can say so?

“But the people,” you say, “hold high account of him.” And what is this? For the people surely is not God, to whom he is to render account: so that in naming the people, thou art speaking of nothing else than of other breakers, and rocks, and shoals, and sunken ridges. For to be in favor with the people, the more it makes a man illustrious, the greater the dangers, the cares, the despondencies it brings with it. For such an one has no power at all to take breath or stand still, having so severe a master. And why say I, “stand still and take breath”? Though such an one have never so many good works, hardly doth he enter into the kingdom. For nothing is so wont to overthrow men, as the honor which comes of the multitude, making them cowardly, ignoble, flatterers, hypocrites.

Why, for instance, did the Pharisees say that Christ was possessed? Was it not because they were greedy of the honor of the multitude?

And whence did the multitude pass the right judgment on Him? Was it not because this disease had no hold on them? For nothing, nothing so much tends to make men lawless and foolish, as gaping after the honor of the multitude. Nothing makes them glorious and immoveable, like despising the same.

Wherefore also great vigor of soul is needed for him who is to hold out against such an impulse, and so violent a blast. For as when things are prosperous, he prefers himself to all, so when he undergoes the contrary, he would fain bury himself alive: and this is to him both hell, and the kingdom, when he hath come to be overwhelmed by this passion.

Is all this then, I pray thee, matter of envyings, and not rather of lamentations and tears? Every one surely can see. But thou doest the same, in envying one in that kind of credit, as if a person, seeing another bound and scourged and torn by innumerable wild beasts, were to envy him his wounds and stripes. For in fact, as many men as the multitude comprises, so many bonds also, so many tyrants hath he: and, what is yet more grievous, each of these hath a different mind: and they all judge whatever comes into their heads concerning him that is a slave to them, without examining into anything; but whatever is the decision of this or that person, this they also confirm.

What manner of waves then, what tempest so grievous as this? Yea, such a one is both puffed up in a moment by the pleasure, and is under water again easily, being ever in fluctuation, in tranquillity never. Thus, before the time of the assembly, and of the contests in speaking, he is possessed with anxiety and fear; but after the assembly he is either dead with despondency, or rejoices on the contrary without measure; a worse thing than sorrow. For that pleasure is not a less evil than sorrow is plain from the effect it has on the soul; how light it makes it, and unsteady, and fluttering.

And this one may see even from those of former times. When, for instance, was David to be admired; when he rejoiced, or when he was in anguish? When, the people of the Jews? Groaning and calling upon God, or exulting in the wilderness, and worshipping the calf? Wherefore Solomon too, who best of all men knew what pleasure is, saith, “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of laughter.” Wherefore Christ also blesses the one, saying, “Blessed are they that mourn,” but the other sort He bewails, saying, “Woe unto you that laugh, for ye shall weep.” And very fitly. For in delight the soul is more relaxed and effeminate, but in mourning it is braced up, and grows sober, and is delivered from the whole swarm of passions, and becomes higher and stronger.

Knowing then all these things, let us shun the glory that comes from the multitude, and the pleasure that springs therefrom, that we may win the real and everlasting glory; unto which may we all attain, by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and might, forever and ever.

Amen.

### **Homily XLI.**

*“And Jesus knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?”*

Even before now they had accused Him of this, that “by Beelzebub He casteth out the devils.” But whereas then He did not rebuke them, allowing them both to know His power by His more numerous miracles, and by His teaching to learn His majesty: now, since they continued saying the same, He proceeds also to rebuke them, showing His Godhead by this first, that He made their secrets public; and secondly, by the very act of casting out the devils with ease.

And indeed the accusation too was very shameless. Because, as I have said, envy seeks not what to say, but only that it may say somewhat. Yet for all that, not even so did Christ despise them, but defends Himself with the forbearance proper to Him, teaching us to be meek to our enemies; and though they say such things, as we are neither conscious of, nor have they any the least probability, not to be disturbed, nor troubled, but with all long suffering to render them an account. This then He did most especially on that very occasion, affording the strongest proof, that the things were false that were said by them. For neither was it a demoniac’s part to exhibit so much meekness; it was not a demoniac’s part to know men’s secrets.

For, in truth, both because of the exceeding impudence of such a suspicion, and because of the fear of the multitude, they durst not publicly make these charges, but were turning them in their mind. But He, to show them that He knew all that likewise, doth not set down the accusation, nor doth He expose their wickedness; but the refutation He adds, leaving it to the conscience of them that bad said it to convict them. For on one thing only was He bent, to do good to them that were sinning, not to expose them.

Yet surely, if He had been minded to extend his speech in length, and to make them ridiculous, and withal to have exacted of them also the most extreme penalty, there was nothing to hinder Him. Nevertheless He put aside all these things, and looked to one object only, not to render them more contentious, but more candid, and so to dispose them better toward amendment.

How then doth He plead with them? Not by allegation out of the Scriptures (for they would not so much as attend, but were sure rather to distort their meaning), but by the events of ordinary life. For “every kingdom,” saith He, “divided against itself shall not stand; and a city and a house, if it be divided, is soon dissolved.”

For the wars from without are not so ruinous as the civil ones. Yea, and this is the case in bodies too; it is the case even in all things; but for this time He takes His illustration from those that are more publicly known.

And yet, what is there more powerful on earth than a kingdom? Nothing, but nevertheless it perishes if in dissension. And if in that case one throw the blame on the great burden of the affairs thereof, as breaking down by its own weight; what wouldest thou say of a city? And what of a house? Thus, Whether it be a small thing, or a great, if at dissension with itself, it perishes. If then I, having a devil, do by him cast out the devils, there is dissension and fighting among devils, and they take their stand one against another. But if they stand one against another, their strength is wasted and destroyed. “For if Satan cast out Satan” (and He said not “the devils,” implying their great unanimity one with another), “he is then divided against himself;” so He speaks. But if he be divided, he is become weaker, and is ruined; and if he be ruined, how can he cast out another?

Seest thou how great the absurdity of the accusation, how great the folly, the inconsistency? Since it is not for the same persons to say first, that He stands, and casts out devils, and then to say, that He stands by that, which it was likely would be the cause of His undoing.

This then being the first refutation, the next after it is that which relates to the disciples. For not always in one way only, but also in a second and third, He solves their objections, being minded most abundantly to silence their shamelessness. Which sort of thing He did also with respect to the Sabbath, bringing forward David, the priests, the testimony that saith, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," the cause of the Sabbath, for which it was ordained; "for the Sabbath," saith He, "was for man." This then He doth in the present case also: where after the first He proceeds to a second refutation, plainer than the former.

*"For if I," saith He, "by Bezelezebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?"*

See here too His gentleness. For He said not, "my disciples," nor, "the apostles," but "your sons;" to the end that if indeed they were minded to return to the same nobleness with them, they might derive hence a powerful spring that way; but if they were uncandid, and continued in the same course, they might not thenceforth be able to allege any plea, though ever so shameless.

But what He saith is like this, "By whom do the apostles cast them out?" For in fact they were doing so already, because they had received authority from Him, and these men brought no charge against them; their quarrel not being with the acts, but with the person only. As then it was His will to show that their sayings arose only from their envy against Him, He brings forward the apostles; thus: If I so cast them out, much more those, who have received their authority from me. Nevertheless, no such thing have ye said to them. How then bring ye these charges against me, the author of their doings, while acquitting them of the accusations? This, however, will not free you from your punishment, rather it will condemn you the more. Therefore also He added, "They shall be your judges." For when persons from among you, and having been practiced in these things, both believe me and obey, it is most clear that they will also condemn those who are against me both in deed and word.

*"But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you."*

What means "the Kingdom"? "My coming." See how again He conciliates and soothes them, and draws them to the knowledge of Himself, and signifies that they are warring with their own good, and contentious against their own salvation. "For whereas ye ought to rejoice," saith He, "and leap for joy, that One is come bestowing those great and unutterable blessings, hymned of old by the prophets, and that the time of your prosperity is at hand; ye do the contrary; so far from receiving the blessings, you do even speak ill of them, and frame accusations that have no real being."

Now Matthew indeed saith, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out"; but Luke, "If I by the finger of God cast out the devils:" implying that to cast out devils is a work of the greatest power, and not of any ordinary grace. And He means indeed that from these things they should infer and say, If this be so, then the Son of God is come. This, however, He saith not, but in a reserved way, and so as not to be galling to them, He darkly intimates it by saying, "Then the kingdom of God is Come unto you."

Seest thou exceeding wisdom? By the very things which they were blaming, He showed His presence shining forth.

Then, to conciliate them, He said not simply, "The Kingdom is come," but, "unto you," as though He had said, To you the good things are come; wherefore then feel displeased at your proper blessings? Why war against your own salvation? This is that time, which the prophets long ago foretold: this, the sign of that advent which was celebrated by them, even these things being wrought by divine power. For the fact indeed, that they are wrought, yourselves know; but that they are wrought by divine power, the deeds themselves cry out. Yea, and it is impossible that Satan should be stronger now; rather he must of absolute necessity be weak. But it cannot be, that he who is weak should, as though he were strong, cast out the strong devil.

Now thus speaking He signified the power of charity, and the weakness of separation and contentiousness. Wherefore He was Himself also continually charging His disciples, on every occasion, concerning charity, and teaching them that the devil, to subvert it, leaves nothing undone.

Having then uttered His second refutation, He adds also a third, thus saying: "How can one enter into the strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then spoil his goods?"

For that Satan cannot possibly cast out Satan is evident from what hath been said; but that neither in any other way is it possible to cast him out, except one first get the better of him, this too is acknowledged by all.

What then is established hereby? The former statement, with more abundant evidence. "Why, I am so far," saith He, "from using the devil as an ally, that I make war upon him, and bind him; and an infallible proof thereof is the plundering of his goods." See how the contrary is proved, of what they were attempting to establish. For whereas they wished to show, that not by His own power doth He cast out devils, He shows that not only the devils, but even their very chief leader is held by Him bound with all authority; and that over him, before them, did He prevail by His own power. And this is evident from the things that are done. For if he be the prince, and they subjects, how, except he were worsted, and made to bow down, could they have been spoiled?

And here His saying seems to me to be a prophecy likewise. For not only, I suppose, are the evil spirits the goods of the devil, but also the men that are doing his works. Therefore to declare that He doth not only cast out devils, but also will drive away all error from the world, and will put down his sorceries, and make all his arts useless, He said these things.

And He said not, He will take away, but "He will spoil," to express what is done with authority. But He calls him "strong," not because he is so by nature, God forbid, but declaring his former tyranny, which arose from our remissness.

*"He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."*

Behold also a fourth refutation. For what is my desire? saith He. To bring men to God, to teach virtue, to proclaim the kingdom. What, that of the devil, and the evil spirits? The contrary to these. How then should he that gathers not with me, nor is at all with me, be likely to co-operate with me? And why do I say co-operate? Nay, on the contrary, his desire is rather to scatter abroad my goods. He then who is so far from cooperating that he even scatters abroad, how should he have excited such unanimity with me, as with me to cast out the devils?

Now it is a natural surmise that He said this not of the devil only, but Himself also of Himself, as being for His part against the devil, and scattering abroad his goods. And how, one may say, is he that is not with me against me? By this very fact, of his not gathering. But if this be true, much more he that is against him. For if he that doth not co-operate is an enemy, much more he that wages war.

But all these things He saith, to indicate His enmity against the devil, how great and unspeakable it is. For tell me, if thou must go to war with any one, he that is not willing to fight on thy side, by this very fact is he not against thee? And if elsewhere He saith, "He that is not against you is for you," it is not contrary to this. For here He signified one actually against them, but there He points to one who in part is on their side: "For they cast out devils," it is said "in Thy name."

When therefore He had condemned them, having proved most amply that they were sinning inexcusably, and that their disobedience arose from their own perverseness not from their Teacher's inability, and when He had demonstrated this as well by many other arguments, as also by the Ninevites, and by the queen: then He speaks also of the punishment that should overtake them, darkly indeed, yet He doth speak of it, interweaving an intense fear in His narration.

"For when," saith He, "the unclean spirit is gone out of the man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return to my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, and swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits

more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this generation.”

By this He signifies, that not only in the world to come, but here too they should suffer most grievously. For since He had said, “The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment, and shall condemn this generation;” lest, on account of the postponement of the time, they should despise and grow more careless, by this He brings His terror close upon them. Wherewith the prophet Hosea likewise threatening them said, that they should be “even as the prophet that is beside himself, the man that is carried away by a spirit;”, that is to say, as the madmen, and distracted by evil spirits, even the false prophets. For here, by “a prophet that is beside himself,” he means the false prophet, such as are the augurs. Much to the same effect Christ also tells them, that they shall suffer the utmost evils.

Seest thou how from everything He urges them to attend to His sayings; from things present, from things to come; by those who had approved themselves (the Ninevites, I mean, and that queen), and by the offending Tyrians and Sodomites? This did the prophets likewise, bringing forward the sons of the Rechabites, and the bride that forgetteth not her proper ornament and her girdle, and “the ox that knoweth his owner, and the ass that remembereth his crib.” Even so here too, when He had by a comparison set forth their perverseness, He speaks afterwards of their punishment also.

What then can the saying mean? As the possessed, saith He, when delivered from that infirmity, should they be at all remiss, draw upon themselves their delusion more grievous than ever: even so is it with you. For before also ye were possessed by a devil, when ye were worshipping idols, and were slaying your sons to the devils, exhibiting great madness; nevertheless I forsook you not, but cast out that devil by the prophets; and again in my own person I am come, willing to cleanse you more entirely. Since then you will not attend, but have wrecked yourselves in greater wickedness (for to kill prophets was a crime not nearly so great and grievous as to slay Him); therefore your sufferings will be more grievous than the former, those at Babylon, I mean, and in Egypt, and under the first Antiochus. Because what things befell them in the time of Vespasian and Titus, were very far more grievous than those. Wherefore also He said, “There shall be great tribulation, such as never was, neither shall be.” But not this only doth the illustration declare, but that they should be also utterly destitute of all virtue, and more assailable by the power of the devils, than at that time. For then even although they sinned, yet were there also among them such as acted uprightly, and God’s providence was present with them, and the grace of the Spirit, tending, correcting, fulfilling all its part; but now of this guardianship too they shall be utterly deprived; so He tells them; so that there is now both a greater scarcity of virtue, and a more intense affliction, and a more tyrannical operation of the devils.

Ye know accordingly even in our generation, when he who surpassed all in impiety, I mean Julian, was transported with his fury, how they ranged themselves with the heathens, how they courted their party. So that, even if they seem to be in some small degree chastened now, the fear of the emperors makes them quiet; since, if it were not for that, far worse than the former had been their daring. For in all their other evil works they surpass their predecessors; sorceries, magic arts, impurities, they exhibit in great excess. And amongst the rest, moreover, strong as is the curb which holds them down, they have often made seditions, and risen up against kings, which has resulted in their being pierced through with the worst of evils.

Where now are they that seek after signs? Let them hear that a considerate mind is needed, and if this be wanting, signs are of no profit. See, for instance, how the Ninevites without signs believed, while these, after so many miracles, grew worse, and made themselves an habitation of innumerable devils, and brought on themselves ten thousand calamities; and very naturally. For when a man, being once delivered from his ills, fails to be corrected, he will suffer far worse than before. Yea, therefore He said, “he finds no rest,” to indicate, that positively and of necessity such an one will be overtaken by the ambush of the devils. Since surely by these two things he ought to have been sobered, by his former sufferings, and by

his deliverance; or rather a third thing also is added, the threat of having still worse to endure. But yet by none of these were they made better.

All this might be seasonably said, not of them only, but of us also, when after having been enlightened, and delivered from our former ills, we again cleave unto the same wickedness, for more grievous also thenceforth will be the punishment of our subsequent sins. Therefore to the sick of the palsy also Christ said, "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" and this to a man who was thirty-eight years in his infirmity. And what, one might ask, was he to suffer worse than this? Something far worse, and more intolerable. For far be it from us, that we should endure as much as we are capable of enduring. For God is at no loss for inflictions. For according to the greatness of His mercy, so also is His wrath.

With this He charges Jerusalem also by Ezekiel. "I saw thee," saith He, "polluted in blood; and I washed thee, and anointed thee; and thou hadst renown for thy beauty; and thou pourest out thy fornications," saith He, "on those who dwell near thee," wherefore also the more grievous are His threatenings to thee when thou sinnest.

But from hence infer not thy punishment only, but also the boundless longsuffering of God. How often at least have we put our hands to the same evil deeds, and yet He suffers long! But let us not be sanguine, but fear; since Pharaoh too, had he been taught by the first plague, would not have experienced the later ones; he would not afterwards have been drowned, his host and all together.

And this I say, because I know many, who like Pharaoh are even now saying, "I know not God," and making those that are in their power cleave to the clay and to the bricks. How many, though God bids them assuage their "threatening," cannot bear so much as to relax the toil!

"But we have no Red Sea now, to pass through afterwards." But we have a sea of fire, a sea not like that, either in kind or in size, but far greater and fiercer, having its waves of fire, of some strange and horrible fire. A great abyss is there, of most intolerable flame. Since everywhere fire may be seen roving quickly round, like some savage wild beast. And if here this sensible and material fire leaped like a wild beast out of the furnace, and sprang upon those who were sitting without, what will not that other fire do to such as have fallen into it?

Concerning that day, hear the prophets, saying, "The day of the Lord is incurable, full of anger and wrath." For there will be none to stand by, none to rescue, nowhere the face of Christ, so mild and calm. But as those who work in the mines are delivered over to certain cruel men, and see none of their friends, but those only that are set over them; so will it be then also: or rather not so, but even far more grievous. For here it is possible to go unto the king, and entreat, and free the condemned person: but there, no longer; for He permits it not, but they continue in the scorching torment, and in so great anguish, as it is not possible for words to tell. For if, when any are in flames here, no speech can describe their sharp pangs, much less theirs, who suffer it in that place: since here indeed all is over in a brief point of time, but in that place there is burning indeed, but what is burnt is not consumed.

What then shall we do there? For to my self also do I say these things.

"But if thou," saith one, "who art our teacher, speakest so of thyself, I care no more; for what wonder, should I be punished?" Nay, I entreat, let no man seek this consolation; for this is no refreshment at all. For tell me; was not the devil an incorporeal power? Was he not superior to men? Yet he fell away. Is there any one who will derive consolation from being punished along with him? By no means. What of all who were in Egypt? Did they not see those also punished who were in high places, and every house in mourning? Were they then hereby refreshed, and comforted? No surely; and it is manifest by what they did afterwards, as men tortured by some kind of fire, rising up together against the king, and compelling him to cast out the people of the Hebrews.

Yea, and very unmeaning is this saying, to suppose that it gives comfort to be punished with all men, to say, "As all, so I too." For why should I speak of hell? Think, I pray you, of those that are seized with gout, how, when they are racked by sharp pain, though you show them ten thousand suffering worse, they

do not so much as take it into their mind. For the intensity of their anguish allows not their reason any leisure for thinking of others, and so finding consolation. Let us not then feed ourselves with these cold hopes. For to receive consolation from the ills of our neighbors, takes place in ordinary sufferings; but when the torment is excessive, and all our inward parts full of tempest, and the soul is now come to be unable so much as to know itself, whence shall it derive consolation? So that all these sayings are an absurdity, and fables of foolish children. For this, of which thou speakest, takes place in dejection, and in moderate dejection, when we are told, “the same thing hath befallen such an one;” but sometimes not even in dejection: now if in that case it hath no strength, much less in the anguish and burden unspeakable, which “the gnashing of teeth” indicates.

And I know that I am galling you, and giving you pain by these words; but what can I do? For I would fain not speak thus, but be conscious of virtue both in myself, and in all of you; but since we are in sins, the more part of us, who will grant me ability to pain you indeed, and to penetrate the understanding of them that hear me? Then might I so be at rest. But now I fear lest any despise my sayings, and their punishments become the greater for their indifferent way of hearing. Since, when a master utters a threat, should one of the fellow-servants hear and make light of his menace, not without punishment would he hasten by him, provoked as he is, but rather it would be a ground for increasing his chastisement. Wherefore I entreat you, let us pierce our own hearts, when we hear His sayings regarding hell. For nothing is more delightful than this discourse, by how much nothing is more bitter than the reality. But how delightful to be told of hell? one may ask. Because it were so far from delight to fall into hell, which result, our words that appear so galling, keep off. And before this they furnish another pleasure: in that they brace up our souls, and make us more reverent, and elevate the mind, and give wings to the thoughts, and cast out the desires that so mischievously beset us; and the thing becomes a cure.

Wherefore, to proceed, together with the punishment let me speak also of the shame. For as the Jews shall then be condemned by the Ninevites, so we too by many that seem beneath us now.

Let us imagine then how great the mockery, how great the condemnation; let us imagine, and cast some foundation at length, some door of repentance.

To myself I say these things, to myself first I give this advice, and let no one be angry, as though he were condemned. Let us enter upon the narrow way. How long shall it be luxury? How long sloth? Have we not had enough of indolence, mirth, procrastination? Will it not be the same over again, feasting, and surfeiting, and expense, and wealth, and acquisitions, and buildings? And what is the end? Death. What is the end? Ashes, and dust, and coffins, and worms.

Let us show forth then a new kind of life. Let us make earth, heaven; let us hereby show the Greeks, of how great blessings they are deprived. For when they behold in us good conversation, they will look upon the very face of the kingdom of Heaven. Yea, when they see us gentle, pure from wrath, from evil desire, from envy, from covetousness, rightly fulfilling all our other duties, they will say, “If the Christians are become angels here, what will they be after their departure hence? If where they are strangers they shine so bright, how great will they become when they shall have won their native land!” Thus they too will be reformed, and the word of godliness “will have free course, not less than in the apostles’ times. For if they, being twelve, converted entire cities and countries; were we all to become teachers by our careful conduct, imagine how high our cause will be exalted. For not even a dead man raised so powerfully attracts the Greek, as a person practicing self-denial. At that indeed he will be amazed, but by this he will be profited. That is done, and is past away; but this abides, and is constant culture to his soul.

Let us take heed therefore to ourselves, that we may gain them also. I say nothing burdensome. I say not, do not marry. I say not, forsake cities, and withdraw thyself from public affairs; but being engaged in them, show virtue. Yea, and such as are busy in the midst of cities, I would fain have more approved than such as have occupied the mountains. Wherefore? Because great is the profit thence arising. “For no

man lighteth a candle, and setteth it under the bushel.” Therefore I would that all the candles were set upon the candlestick, that the light might wax great.

Let us kindle then His fire; let us cause them that are sitting in darkness to be delivered from their error. And tell me not, “I have a wife, and children belonging to me, and am master of a household, and cannot duly practice all this.” For though thou hadst none of these, yet if thou be careless, all is lost; though thou art encompassed with all these, yet if thou be earnest, thou shall attain unto virtue. For there is but one thing that is wanted, the preparation of a generous mind; and neither age, nor poverty, nor wealth, nor reverse of fortune, nor anything else, will be able to impede thee. Since in fact both old and young, and men having wives, and bringing up children, and working at crafts, and serving as soldiers, have duly performed all that is enjoined. For so Daniel was young, and Joseph a slave, and Aquila wrought at a craft, and the woman who sold purple was over a workshop, and another was the keeper of a prison, and another a centurion, as Cornelius; and another in ill health, as Timothy; and another a runaway, as Onesimus; but nothing proved an hindrance to any of these, but all were approved, both men and women, both young and old, both slaves and free, both soldiers and people.

Let us not then make vain pretexts, but let us provide a thoroughly good mind, and whatsoever we may be, we shall surely attain to virtue, and arrive at the good things to come; by the grace and love towards man of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be unto the Father, together with the Holy Ghost glory, might, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

St Augustine on the Harmony of the Gospels for the third Sunday of Lent.

## **Book II The Harmony of the Gospels**

**Chapter XXXVII.**-*Of the Consistency of the Accounts Given by Matthew and Luke Regarding the Dumb and Blind Man Who Was Possessed with a Devil.*

84. Matthew then goes on with his recital in the following fashion: “Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and He healed him, insomuch that he both spake and saw.”<sup>352</sup> Luke introduces this narrative, not in the same order, but after a number of other matters. He also speaks of the man only as dumb, and not as blind in addition.<sup>353</sup> But it is not to be inferred, from the mere circumstance of his silence as to some portion or other of the account, that he speaks of an entirely different person. For he has likewise recorded what followed [immediately after that cure], as it stands also in Matthew.

**Chapter XXXVIII.**-*Of the Occasion on Which It Was Said to Him that He Cast Out Devils in the Power of Beelzebub, and of the Declarations Drawn Forth from Him by that Circumstance in Regard to the Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit, and with Respect to the Two Trees; And of the Question Whether There is Not Some Discrepancy in These Sections Between Matthew and the Other Two Evangelists, and Particularly Between Matthew and Luke.*

85. Matthew proceeds with his narrative in the following term: “And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but in Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation;” and so on, down to the words, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”<sup>354</sup> Mark does not bring in this allegation against Jesus, that He cast out devils in [the power of] Beelzebub, in immediate sequence

on the story of the dumb man; but after certain other matters, recorded by himself alone, he introduces this incident also, either because he recalled it to mind in a different connection, and so appended it there, or because he had at first made certain omissions in his history, and after noticing these, took up this order of narration again.<sup>355</sup> On the other hand, Luke gives an account of these things almost in the same language as Matthew has employed.<sup>356</sup> And the circumstance that Luke here designates the Spirit of God as the finger of God, does not betray any departure from a genuine identity in sense; but it rather teaches us an additional lesson, giving us to know in what manner we are to interpret the phrase “the finger of God” wherever it occurs in the Scriptures. Moreover, with regard to other matters which are left unmentioned in this section both by Mark and by Luke, no difficulty can be raised by these. Neither can that be the case with some other circumstances which are related by them in somewhat different terms, for the sense still remains the same.

**Chapter XXXIX.**-*Of the Question as to the Manner of Matthew's Agreement with Luke in the Accounts Which are Given of the Lord's Reply to Certain Persons Who Sought a Sign, When He Spoke of Jonas the Prophet, and of the Ninevites, and of the Queen of the South, and of the Unclean Spirit Which, When It Has Gone Out of the Man, Returns and Finds the House Garnished.*

86. Matthew goes on and relates what followed thus: “Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign of thee;” and so on, down to where we read, “Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”<sup>357</sup> These words are recorded also by Luke in this connection, although in a somewhat different order.<sup>358</sup> For he has mentioned the fact that they sought of the Lord a sign from heaven at an earlier point in his narrative, which makes it follow immediately on his version of the miracle wrought on the dumb man. He has not, however, recorded there the reply which was given to them by the Lord. But further on, after [telling us how] the people were gathered together, he states that this answer was returned to the persons who, as he gives us to understand, were mentioned by him in those earlier verses as seeking of Him a sign from heaven. And that reply he also subjoins, only after introducing the passage regarding the woman who said to the Lord, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee.”<sup>359</sup> This notice of the woman, moreover, he inserts after relating the Lord's discourse concerning the unclean spirit that goes out of the man, and then returns and finds the house garnished. In this way, then, after the notice of the woman, and after his statement of the reply which was made to the multitudes on the subject of the sign which they sought from heaven, he brings in the similitude of the prophet Jonas; and then, directly continuing the Lord's discourse, he next instances what was said concerning the Queen of the South and the Ninevites. Thus he has rather related something which Matthew has passed over in silence, than omitted any of the facts which that evangelist has narrated in this place. And furthermore, who can fail to perceive that the question as to the precise order in which these words were uttered by the Lord is a superfluous one? For this lesson also we ought to learn, on the unimpeachable authority of the evangelists,-namely, that no offence against truth need be supposed on the part of a writer, although he may not reproduce the discourse of some speaker in the precise order in which the person from whose lips it proceeded might have given it; the fact being, that the mere item of the order, whether it be this or that, does not affect the subject-matter itself. And by his present version Luke indicates that this discourse of the Lord was of greater length than we might otherwise have supposed; and he records certain topics handled in it, which resemble those which are mentioned by Matthew in his recital of the sermon which was delivered on the mount.<sup>360</sup> So that we take these words to have been spoken twice over, to wit, on that previous occasion, and again on this one. But on the conclusion of this discourse Luke proceeds to another subject, as to which it is uncertain whether, in the account which he gives of it, he has kept by the order of actual occurrence. For he connects it in this way: “And as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him.”<sup>361</sup> He does not say, however, “as He spake these words,” but only “as He spake.” For if he had said, “as He spake these words,” the expression would of course have compelled us to

suppose that the incidents referred to, besides being recorded by him in this order, also took place on the Lord's part in that same order.

---

352 Matt. xii. 22.

353 Luke xi. 14.

354 Matt. xii. 23-37.

355 Mark iii. 22-30.

356 Luke xi. 14-26.

357 Matt. xii. 38.

358 Luke xi. 16-37.

359 Luke xi. 27.

360 Matt. v.-vii.

361 Luke xi. 37.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.

#### A Sermon of St. John Chrysostom on the Epistle for the third Sunday of Lent

*Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints: Or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose; but rather giving of thanks. For know you this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord. Walk then as children of the light. For the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth; (Ephesians chapter 5 verses 1-9)*

That thou mayest not then think it an act of necessity, hear how He saith, that "He gave Himself up." As thy Master loved thee, love thou thy friend. Nay, but neither wilt thou be able so to love; yet still do so as far as thou art able. Oh, what can be more blessed than a sound like this! Tell me of royalty or whatever else thou wilt, there is no comparison. Forgive another, and thou art "imitating God," thou art made like unto God. It is more our duty to forgive trespasses than debts of money; for if thou forgive debts, thou hast not "imitated God"; whereas if thou shalt forgive trespasses, thou art "imitating God." And yet how shalt thou be able to say, "I am poor, and am not able to forgive it," that is, a debt, when thou forgivest not that which thou art able to forgive, that is, a trespass? And surely thou dost not deem that in this case there is any loss. Yea, is it not rather wealth, is it not abundance, is it not a plentiful store?

And behold yet another and a nobler incitement: - "as most dear children," saith he. Ye have yet another cogent reason to imitate Him, not only in that ye have received such good at His hands, but also in that ye are called His children. And since not all children imitate their fathers, but those which are beloved, therefore he saith, "as most dear children."

Ver. 2. "Walk in love."

Behold, here, the groundwork of all! So then where this is, there is no "wrath, no anger, no clamor, no railing," but all are done away. Accordingly he puts the chief point last. Whence wast thou made a child? Because thou wast forgiven. On the same ground on which thou hast had so vast a privilege vouch-safed thee, on that selfsame ground forgive thy neighbor. Tell me, I say, if thou wert in prison, and hadst ten

thousand misdeeds to answer for, and some one were to bring thee into the palace; or rather to pass over this argument, suppose thou wert in a fever and in the agonies of death, and some one were to benefit thee by some medicine, wouldest thou not value him more than all, yea and the very name of the medicine? For if we thus regard occasions and places by which we are benefited, even as our own souls, much more shall we the things themselves. Be a lover then of love; for by this art thou saved, by this hast thou been made a son. And if thou shalt have it in thy power to save another, wilt thou not use the same remedy, and give the advice to all, "Forgive, that ye may be forgiven"? Thus to incite one another, were the part of grateful, of generous, and noble spirits.

"Even as Christ also," he adds, "loved you."

Thou art only sparing friends, He enemies. So then far greater is that boon which cometh from our Master. For how in our case is the "even as" preserved. Surely it is clear that it will be, by our doing good to our enemies.

*"And hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness."* Seest thou that to suffer for one's enemies is "a sweet-smelling savor," and an "acceptable sacrifice"? And if thou shalt die, then wilt thou be indeed a sacrifice. This it is to "imitate God."

Ver. 3. *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints."*

He has spoken of the bitter passion, of wrath; he now comes to the lesser evil: for that lust is the lesser evil, hear how Moses also in the law says, first, "Thou shalt do no murder" (Ex. xx. 13), which is the work of wrath, and then, "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. xx. 14), which is of lust. For as "bitterness," and "clamor," and "all malice," and "railing," and the like, are the works of the passionate man, so likewise are "fornication, uncleanness, covetousness," those of the lustful; since avarice and sensuality spring from the same passion. But just as in the former case he took away "clamor" as being the vehicle of "anger," so now does he "filthy talking" and "jesting" as being the vehicle of lust; for he proceeds,

Ver. 4. *"Or obscenity, or foolish talking, or scurrility, which is to no purpose; but rather giving of thanks."*

Have no witticisms, no obscenities, either in word or in deed, and thou wilt quench the flame- "let them not even be named," saith he, "among you," that is, let them not anywhere even make their appearance. This he says also in writing to the Corinthians. "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you" (1 Cor. v. 1); as much as to say, Be ye all pure. For words are the way to acts. Then, that he may not appear a forbidding kind of person and austere, and a destroyer of playfulness, he goes on to add the reason, by saying, "which are not befitting," which have nothing to do with us- "but rather giving of thanks." What good is there in uttering a witticism? Thou only raisest a laugh. Tell me, will the shoemaker ever busy himself about anything which does not belong to or befit his trade? Or will he purchase any tool of that kind? No, never. Because the things we do not need, are nothing to us.

Moral. Let there not be one idle word; for from idle words we fall also into foul words. The present is no season of loose merriment, but of mourning, of tribulation, and lamentation: and dost thou play the jester? What wrestler on entering the ring neglects the struggle with his adversary, and utters witticisms? The devil stands hard at hand, "he is going about roaring" (1 Pet. v. 8) to catch thee, he is moving everything, and turning everything against thy life, and is scheming to force thee from thy retreat, he is grinding his teeth and bellowing, he is breathing fire against thy salvation; and dost thou sit uttering witticisms, and "talking folly," and uttering things "which are not befitting." Full nobly then wilt thou be able to overcome him! We are in sport, beloved. Wouldest thou know the life of the saints? Listen to what Paul saith. "By the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears." (Acts xx. 31.) And if so great was the zeal he exerted in behalf of them of Miletus and Ephesus, not making pleasant speeches, but introducing his admonition with tears, what should one say of the rest? But hearken again to what he says to the Corinthians. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I

wrote unto you with many tears.” (2 Cor. ii. 4.) And again, “Who is weak, and I am not weak?” “Who is made to stumble, and I burn not?” (2 Cor. xi. 29.) And hearken again to what he says elsewhere, desiring every day, as one might say, to depart out of the world. “For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan” (2 Cor. v. 4); and dost thou laugh and play? It is war-time, and art thou handling the dancers’ instruments? Look at the countenances of men in battle, their dark and contracted mien, their brow terrible and full of awe. Mark the stern eye, the heart eager and beating and throbbing, their spirit collected, and trembling and intensely anxious. All is good order, all is good discipline, all is silence in the camps of those who are arrayed against each other. They speak not, I do not say, an impertinent word, but they utter not a single sound. Now if they who have visible enemies, and who are in nowise injured by words, yet observe so great silence, dost thou who hast thy warfare, and the chief of thy warfare in words, dost thou leave this part naked and exposed? Or art thou ignorant that it is here that we are most beset with snares? Art thou amusing and enjoying thyself, and uttering witticisms and raising a laugh, and regarding the matter as a mere nothing? How many perjuries, how many injuries, how many filthy speeches have arisen from witticisms! “But no,” ye will say, “pleasantries are not like this.” Yet hear how he excludes all kinds of jesting. It is a time now of war and fighting, of watch and guard, of arming and arraying ourselves. The time of laughter can have no place here; for that is of the world. Hear what Christ saith: “The world shall rejoice, but ye shall be sorrowful.” (John xvi. 20.) Christ was crucified for thy ills, and dost thou laugh? He was buffeted, and endured so great sufferings because of thy calamity, and the tempest that had overtaken thee; and dost thou play the reveler? And how wilt thou not then rather provoke Him?

But since the matter appears to some to be one of indifference, which moreover is difficult to be guarded against, let us discuss this point a little, to show you how vast an evil it is. For indeed this is a work of the devil, to make us disregard things indifferent. First of all then, even if it were indifferent, not even in that case were it right to disregard it, when one knows that the greatest evils are both produced and increased by it, and that it oftentimes terminates in fornication. However, that it is not even indifferent is evident from hence. Let us see then whence it is produced. Or rather, let us see what sort of a person a saint ought to be:—gentle, meek, sorrowful, mournful, contrite. The man then who deals in jests is no saint. Nay, were he even a Greek, such an one would be scorned. These are things allowed to those only who are on the stage. Where filthiness is, there also is jesting; where unseasonable laughter is, there also is jesting. Harken to what the Prophet saith, “Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice with trembling.” (Ps. ii. II) Jestings renders the soul soft and indolent. It excites the soul unduly, and often it teems with acts of violence, and creates wars. But what more? In fine, hast thou not come to be among men? Then “put away childish things.” (I Cor. xiii. II) Why, thou wilt not allow thine own servant in the market place to speak an impertinent word: and dost thou then, who sayest thou art a servant of God, go uttering thy witticisms in the public square? It is well if the soul that is “sober” be not stolen away; but one that is relaxed and dissolute, who cannot carry off? It will be its own murderer, and will stand in no need of the crafts or assaults of the devil.

But, moreover, in order to understand this, look too at the very name. It means the versatile man, the man of all complexions, the unstable, the pliable, the man that can be anything and everything. But far is this from those who are servants to the Rock. Such a character quickly turns and changes; for he must needs mimic both gesture and speech, and laugh and gait, and everything, aye, and such an one is obliged to invent jokes: for he needs this also. But far be this from a Christian, to play the buffoon. Farther, the man who plays the jester must of necessity incur the signal hatred of the objects of his random ridicule, whether they be present, or being absent hear of it.

If the thing is creditable, why is it left to mountebanks? What, dost thou make thyself a mountebank, and yet art not ashamed? Why is it ye permit not your gentlewomen to do so? Is it not that ye set it down as a mark of an immodest, and not of a discreet character? Great are the evils that dwell in a soul given to jesting; great is the ruin and desolation. Its consistency is broken, the building is decayed, fear is

banished, reverence is gone. A tongue thou hast, not that thou mayest ridicule another man, but that thou mayest give thanks unto God. Look at your merriment-makers, as they are called, those buffoons. These are your jesters. Banish from your souls, I entreat you, this graceless accomplishment. It is the business of parasites, of mountebanks, of dancers, of harlots; far be it from a generous, far be it from a highborn soul, aye, far too even from slaves. If there be any one who has lost respect, if there be any vile person, that man is also a jester. To many indeed the thing appears to be even a virtue, and this truly calls for our sorrow. Just as lust by little and little drives headlong into fornication, so also does a turn for jesting. It seems to have a grace about it, yet there is nothing more graceless than this. For hear the Scripture which says, "Before the thunder goeth lightning, and before a shamefaced man shall go favor." Now there is nothing more shameless than the jester; so that his mouth is not full of favor, but of pain. Let us banish this custom from our tables. Yet are there some who teach it even to the poor! O monstrous! They make men in affliction play the jester. Why, where shall not this pest be found next? Already has it been brought into the Church itself. Already has it laid hold of the very Scriptures. Need I say anything to prove the enormity of the evil? I am ashamed indeed, but still nevertheless I will speak; for I am desirous to show to what a length the mischief has advanced, that I may not appear to be trifling, or to be discoursing to you on some trifling subject; that even thus I may be enabled to withdraw you from this delusion. And let no one think that I am fabricating, but I will tell you what I have really heard. A certain person happened to be in company with one of those who pride themselves highly on their knowledge (now I know I shall excite a smile, but still I will say it notwithstanding); and when the platter was set before him, he said, "Take and eat, children, lest your belly be angry!" And again, others say, "Woe unto thee, Mammon, and to him that hath thee not" and many like enormities has jesting introduced; as when they say, "Now is there no nativity." And this I say to show the enormity of this base temper; for these are the expressions of a soul destitute of all reverence. And are not these things enough to call down thunderbolts? And one might find many other such things which have been said by these men.

Wherefore, I entreat you, let us banish the custom universally, and speak those things which become us. Let not holy mouths utter the words of dishonorable and base men. "For what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity, or what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. vi. 14.) Happy will it be for us, if, having kept ourselves aloof from all such foul things, we be thus able to attain to the promised blessings; far indeed from dragging such a train after us, and sullyng the purity of our minds by so many. For the man who will play the jester will soon go on to be a railer, and the railer will go on to heap ten thousand other mischiefs on himself. When then we shall have disciplined these two faculties of the soul, anger and desire (vid. Plat. Phaedr. cc. 25, 34), and have put them like well-broken horses under the yoke of reason, then let us set over them the mind as charioteer, that we may "gain the prize of our high calling" (Phil. iii. 14); which God grant that we may all attain, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with Whom, together with the Holy Ghost, be unto the Father, glory, might, and honor, now, and ever, and throughout all ages. Amen.

### **Homily XVIII.**

Ephesians v. 5, 6.- *"For know you this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean, or covetous person (which is a serving of idols), hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the anger of God upon the children of unbelief."*

There were, it is likely, in the time of our forefathers also, some who "weakened the hands of the people" (Jer. xxxviii. 4), and brought into practice that which is mentioned by Ezekiel, -or rather who did the works of the false prophets, who "profaned God among His people for handfuls of barley" (Ezek. xiii. 19); a thing, by the way, done methinks by some even at this day. When, for example, we say that he who calleth his brother a fool shall depart into hell-fire, others say, "What? Is he that calls his brother a fool to depart into hell-fire? Impossible," say they. And again, when we say that "the covetous man is an

idolater,” in this too again they make abatements, and say the expression is hyperbolic. And in this manner they underrate and explain away all the commandments. It was in allusion then to these that the blessed Paul, at this time when he wrote to the Ephesians, spoke thus, “For this ye know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God”; adding, “let no man deceive you with empty words.” Now “empty words” are those which for a while are gratifying, but are in nowise borne out in facts; because the whole case is a deception.

*“Because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of unbelief.”*

Because of “fornication,” he means, because of “covetousness,” because of “uncleanness,” or both because of these things, and because of the “deceit,” inasmuch as there are deceivers. “Sons of disobedience”; he thus calls those who are utterly disobedient, those who disobey Him.

Ver. 7, 8. *“Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.”*

Observe how wisely he urges them forward; first, from the thought of Christ, that ye love one another, and do injury to no man; then, on the other hand, from the thought of punishment and hell-fire. “For ye were once darkness,” says he, “but are now light in the Lord.” Which is what he says also in the Epistle to the Romans; “What fruit then had ye at that time in the things whereof ye are now ashamed?” (Rom. vi. 21), and reminds them of their former wickedness. That is to say, thinking what ye once were, and what ye are now become, do not run back into your former wickedness, nor do “despite to the grace” (Heb. x. 29) of God.

*“Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord!”*

Not, he says, by your own virtue, but through the grace of God has this accrued to you. That is to say, ye also were sometime worthy of the same punishments, but now are so no more. “Walk” therefore “as children of light.” What is meant however by “children of light,” he adds afterwards.

Ver. 9 & 10 *“For the fruit of the light is in all goodness, and justice, and truth; Proving what is well pleasing to God.”*

“In all goodness,” he says: this is opposed to the angry, and the bitter: “and righteousness”; this to the covetous: “and truth”; this to false pleasure: not those former things, he says, which I was mentioning, but their opposites. “In all”; that is, the fruit of the Spirit ought to be evinced in everything. “Proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord”; so that those things are tokens of a childish and imperfect mind.

[Note that the epistle for the third Sunday in Lent ends with verse nine, but St. John Chrysostom goes on to explain through verse 14, so I thought I would share it with you.](#)

Ver. 11, 12, 13. *“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For the things that are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of. But all things that are reprovèd, are made manifest by the light; for all that is made manifest is light.”*

He had said, “ye are light.” Now the light reproveth by exposing the things which take place in the darkness. So that if ye, says he, are virtuous, and conspicuous, the wicked will be unable to lie hidden. For just as when a candle is set, all are brought to light, and the thief cannot enter; so if your light shine, the wicked being discovered shall be caught. So then it is our duty to expose them. How then does our Lord say, “Judge not, that ye be not judged”? (Matt. vii. 1, 3.) Paul did not say “judge,” he said “reprove,” that is, correct. And the words, “Judge not, that ye be not judged,” He spoke with reference to very small errors. Indeed, He added, “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” But what Paul is saying is of this sort. As a wound, so long as it is imbedded and concealed outwardly, and runs beneath the surface, receives no attention, so also sin, as long as it is concealed, being as it were in darkness, is daringly committed in full security; but as soon as “it is made manifest,” becomes “light”; not indeed the sin itself, (for how could that be?) but

the sinner. For when he has been brought out to light, when he has been admonished, when he has repented, when he has obtained pardon, hast thou not cleared away all his darkness? Hast thou not then healed his wound? Hast thou not called his unfruitfulness into fruit? Either this is his meaning, or else what I said above, that your life “being manifest, is light.” For no one hides an irreproachable life; whereas things which are hidden, are hidden by darkness covering them.

Ver. 14. *“Wherefore he saith: Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee.”*

By the “sleeper” and the “dead,” he means the man that is in sin; for he both exhales noisome odors like the dead, and is inactive like one that is asleep, and like him he sees nothing, but is dreaming, and forming fancies and illusions. Some indeed read, “And thou shalt touch Christ”; but others, “And Christ shall shine Upon thee”; and it is rather this latter. Depart from sin, and thou shalt be able to behold Christ. “For every one that doeth ill, hateth the light, and cometh not to the light.” (John iii. 20.) He therefore that doeth it not, cometh to the light.

Now he is not saying this with reference to the unbelievers only, for many of the faithful, no less than unbelievers, hold fast by wickedness; nay, some far more. Therefore to these also it is necessary to exclaim, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” To these it is fitting to say this also, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matt. xxii. 32.) If then he is not the God of the dead, let us live.

Now there are some who say that the words, “the covetous man is an idolater,” are hyperbolical. However, the statement is not hyperbolical, it is true. How, and in what way? Because the covetous man apostatizes from God, just as the idolater does. And lest you should imagine this is a bare assertion, there is a declaration of Christ which saith, “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” (Matt. vi. 24.) If then it is not possible to serve God and Mammon, they who serve Mammon have thrown themselves out of the service of God; and they who have denied His sovereignty, and serve lifeless gold, it is plain enough that they are idolaters. “But I never made an idol,” a man will say, “nor set up an altar, nor sacrificed sheep, nor poured libations of wine; no, I came into the church, and lifted up my hands to the Only-begotten Son of God; I partake of the mysteries, I communicate in prayer, and in everything else which is a Christian’s duty. How then,” he will say, “am I a worshiper of idols?” Yes, and this is the very thing which is the most astonishing of all, that when thou hast had experience, and hast “tasted” the lovingkindness of God, and “hast seen that the Lord is gracious” (Ps. xxxiv.: 8), thou shouldest abandon Him who is gracious, and take to thyself a cruel tyrant, and shouldest pretend to be serving Him, whilst in reality thou hast submitted thyself to the hard and galling yoke of covetousness. Thou hast not yet told me of thy own duty done, but only of thy Master’s gifts. For tell me, I beseech thee, whence do we judge of a soldier? Is it when he is on duty guarding the king, and is fed by him, and called the king’s own, or is it when he is minding his own affairs and interests? To pretend to be with him, and to be attentive to his interests, whilst he is advancing the cause of the enemy, we declare to be worse than if he breaks away from the king’s service, and joins the enemy. Now then thou art doing despite to God, just as an idolater does, not with thine own mouth singly, but with the ten thousands of those whom thou hast wronged. Yet you will say, “an idolater he is not.” But surely, whenever they say, “Oh! that Christian, that covetous fellow,” then not only is he himself committing outrage by his own act, but he frequently forces those also whom he has wronged to use these words; and if they use them not, this is to be set to the account of their reverence.

Do we not see that such is the fact? What else is an idolater? Or does not he too worship passions, oftentimes not mastering his passions? I mean, for example, when we say that the pagan idolater worships idols, he will say, “No, but it is Venus, or it is Mars.” And if we say, Who is this Venus? The more modest amongst them will say, It is pleasure. Or what is this Mars? It is wrath. And in the same way dost thou worship Mammon. If we say, Who is this Mammon? It is covetousness, and this thou art worshipping. “I worship it not,” thou wilt say. Why not? Because thou dost not bow thyself down? Nay,

but as it is, thou art far more a worshiper in thy deeds and practices; for this is the higher kind of worship. And that you may understand this, look in the case of God; who more truly worship Him, they who merely stand up at the prayers, or they who do His will? Clearly enough, these latter. The same also is it with the worshipers of Mammon; they who do his will, they truly are his worshipers. However, they who worship the passions are oftentimes free from the passions. One may see a worshiper of Mars oftentimes governing his wrath. But this is not true of thee; thou makest thyself a slave to thy passion.

Yes, but thou slayest no sheep? No, thou slayest men, reasonable souls, some by famine, others by blasphemies. Nothing can be more frenzied than a sacrifice like this. Who ever beheld souls sacrificed? How accursed is the altar of covetousness! When thou passest by this idol's altar here, thou shalt see it reeking with the blood of bullocks and goats; but when thou shalt pass by the altar of covetousness, thou shalt see it breathing the shocking odor of human blood. Stand here before it in this world, and thou shalt see, not the wings of birds burning, no vapor, no smoke exhaled, but the bodies of men perishing. For some throw themselves among precipices, others tie the halter, others thrust the dagger through their throat. Hast thou seen the cruel and inhuman sacrifices? Wouldest thou see yet more shocking ones than these? Then I will show thee no longer the bodies of men, but the souls of men slaughtered in the other world. Yes, for it is possible for a soul to be slain with the slaughter peculiar to the soul; for as there is a death of the body, so is there also of the soul. "The soul that sinneth," saith the Prophet, "it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) The death of the soul, however, is not like the death of the body; it is far more shocking. For this bodily death, separating the soul and the body the one from the other, releases the one from many anxieties and toils, and transmits the other into a manifest abode: then when the body has been in time dissolved and crumbled away, it is again gathered together in incorruption, and receives back its own proper soul. Such we see is this bodily death. But that of the soul is awful and terrific. For this death, when dissolution takes place, does not let it pass, as the body does, but binds it down again to an imperishable body, and consigns it to the unquenchable fire. This then is the death of the soul. And as therefore there is a death of the soul, so is there also a slaughter of the soul. What is the slaughter of the body? It is the being turned into a corpse, the being stripped of the energy derived from the soul. What is the slaughter of the soul? It is its being made a corpse also. And how is the soul made a corpse? Because as the body then becomes a corpse when the soul leaves it destitute of its own vital energy, so also does the soul then become a corpse, when the Holy Spirit leaves it destitute of His spiritual energy.

Such for the most part are the slaughters made at the altar of covetousness. They are not satisfied, they do not stop at men's blood; no, the altar of covetousness is not glutted, unless it sacrifice the very soul itself also, unless it receive the souls of both, the sacrificer and the sacrificed. For he who sacrifices must first be sacrificed, and then he sacrifices; and the dead sacrifices him who is yet living. For when he utters blasphemies, when he reviles, when he is irritated, are not these so many incurable wounds of the soul?

Thou hast seen that the expression is no hyperbole. Wouldest thou hear again another argument, to teach you how covetousness is idolatry, and more shocking than idolatry? Idolaters worship the creatures of God ("for they worshiped," it is said, "and served the creature rather than the Creator") (Rom. i. 25); but thou art worshipping a creature of thine own. For God made not covetousness but thine own insatiable appetite invented it. And look at the madness and folly. They that worship idols, honor also the idols they worship; and if any one speak of them with disrespect or ridicule, they stand up in their defense; whereas thou, as if in a sort of intoxication, art worshipping an object, which is so far from being free from accusation, that it is even full of impiety. So that thou, even more than they, excellest in wickedness. Thou canst never have it to say as an excuse, that it is no evil. If even they are in the highest degree without excuse, yet art thou in a far higher, who art forever censuring covetousness, and reviling those who devote themselves to it, and who yet doth serve and obey it.

We will examine, if you please, whence idolatry took its rise. A certain wise man (Wisdom. xiv. 16) tells us, that a certain rich man afflicted with untimely mourning for his son, and having no consolation for his

sorrow, consoled his passion in this way: having made a lifeless image of the dead, and constantly gazing at it, he seemed through the image to have his departed one still; whilst certain flatterers, “whose God was their belly” (Phil. iii. 19), treating the image with reverence in order to do him honor, carried on the custom into idolatry. So then it took its rise from weakness of soul, from a senseless custom, from extravagance. But not so covetousness: from weakness of soul indeed it is, only that it is from a worse weakness. It is not that any one has lost a son, nor that he is seeking for consolation in sorrow, nor that he is drawn on by flatterers. But how is it? I will tell you. Cain in covetousness overreached God; what ought to have been given to Him, he kept to himself; what he should have kept himself, this he offered to Him; and thus the evil began even from God. For if we are God’s, much more are the first-fruits of our possessions. Again, men’s violent passion for women arose from covetousness. “They saw the daughters of men” (Gen. vi. 2), and they rushed headlong into lust. And from hence again it went on to money; for the wish to have more than one’s neighbor of this world’s goods, arises from no other source, than from “love waxing cold.” The wish to have more than one’s share arises from no other source than recklessness, misanthropy, and arrogance toward others. Look at the earth, how wide is its extent? How far greater than we can use the expanse of the sky and the heaven? It is that He might put an end to thy covetousness, that God hath thus widely extended the bounds of the creation. And art thou then still grasping and even thus? And dost thou hear that covetousness is idolatry, and not shudder even at this? Dost thou wish to inherit the earth? Then hast thou no inheritance in heaven. Art thou eager to leave an inheritance to others, that thou mayest rob thyself of it? Tell me, if any one were to offer thee power to possess all things, wouldest thou be unwilling? It is in thy power now, if thou wilt. Some, however, say, that they are grieved when they transmit the inheritance to others, and would fain have consumed it themselves, rather than see others become its masters. Nor do I acquit thee of this weakness; for this too is characteristic of a weak soul. However, at least let as much as this be done. In thy will leave Christ thine heir. It were thy duty indeed to do so in thy lifetime, for this would show a right disposition. Still, at all events, be a little generous, though it be but by necessity. For Christ indeed charged us to give to the poor with this object, to make us wise in our lifetime, to induce us to despise money, to teach us to look down upon earthly things. It is no contempt of money, as you think, to bestow it upon this man and upon that man when one dies, and is no longer master of it. Thou art then no longer giving of thine own, but of absolute necessity: thanks to death, not to thee. This is no act of affection, it is thy loss. However, let it be done even thus; at least then give up thy passion.

Moral. Consider how many acts of plunder, how many acts of covetousness, thou hast committed. Restore all fourfold. Thus plead thy cause to God. Some, however, there are who are arrived at such a pitch of madness and blindness, as not even then to comprehend their duty; but who go on acting in all cases, just as if they were taking pains to make the judgment of God yet heavier to themselves. This is the reason why our blessed Apostle writes and says, “Walk as children of light.” Now the covetous man of all others lives in darkness, and spreads great darkness over all things around.

“And have no fellowship,” he adds, “with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret, it is a shame even to speak of; but all things when they are reproved are made manifest by the light.” Harken, I entreat you, all, as many of you as like not to be hated for nothing, but to be loved. “What need is there to be hated?” one says. A man commits a robbery, and dost thou not reprove him, but art afraid of his hatred? Though this, however, is not being hated for nothing. But dost thou justly convict him, and yet fear the hatred? Convict thy brother, incur enmity for the love’s sake which thou owest to Christ, for the love’s sake which thou owest to thy brother. Arrest him as he is on his road to the pit of destruction. For to admit him to our table, to treat him with civil speeches, with salutations, and with entertainments, these are no signal proofs of friendship. No, those I have mentioned are the boons which we must bestow upon our friends, that we may rescue their souls from the wrath of God. When we see them lying prostrate in the furnace of wickedness, let us raise them up. “But,” they say, “it is of no use, he is incorrigible.” However, do thou thy duty, and then thou

hast excused thyself to God. Hide not thy talent. It is for this that thou hast speech, it is for this thou hast a mouth and a tongue, that thou mayest correct thy neighbor. It is dumb and reasonless creatures only that have no care for their neighbor, and take no account of others. But dost thou while calling God, "Father," and thy neighbor, "brother," when thou seest him committing unnumbered wickednesses, dost thou prefer his good-will to his welfare? No, do not so, I entreat you. There is no evidence of friendship so true as never to overlook the sins of our brethren. Didst thou see them at enmity? Reconcile them. Didst thou see them guilty of covetousness? Check them. Didst thou see them wronged? Stand up in their defense. It is not on them, it is on thyself thou art conferring the chief benefit. It is for this we are friends, that we may be of use one to another. A man will listen in a different spirit to a friend, and to any other chance person. A chance person he will regard perhaps with suspicion, and so in like manner will he a teacher, but not so a friend.

"For," he says, "the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of: but all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light." What is it he means to say here? He means this. That some sins in this world are done in secret, and some also openly; but in the other it shall not be so. Now there is no one who is not conscious to himself of some sin. This is why he says, "But all the things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light." What then? Is this again, it will be said, meant concerning idolatry? It is not; the argument is about our life and our sins. "For everything that is made manifest," says he, "is light."

Wherefore, I entreat you, be ye never backward to reprove, nor displeas'd at being reprov'd. For as long indeed as anything is carried on in the dark, it is carried on with greater security; but when it has many to witness what is done, it is brought to light. By all means then let us do all we can to chase away the deadness which is in our brethren, to scatter the darkness, and to attract to us the "Sun of righteousness." For if there be many shining lights, the path of virtue will be easy to themselves, and they which are in darkness will be more easily detected, while the light is held forth and puts the darkness to flight. Whereas if it be the reverse, there is fear lest as the thick mist of darkness and of sin overpowers the light, and dispels its transparency, those shining lights themselves should be extinguished. Let us be then dispos'd to benefit one another, that one and all, we may offer up praise and glory to the God of lovingkindness, by the grace and lovingkindness of the only begotten Son with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, strength, honor now and forever and forever. Amen.

Thank you for visiting: <http://www.JMJsite.com>. Please share this information and tell others about this website.