

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Luke 16: 1-9)

(*Poem* Vol. 3. pp. 639-42; *Gospel* Vol. 6, pp. 162-6; *Notebooks 1945-50*, pp. 178-81)

(Jesus arrives among some crowds of people on the slopes of a mountain near the Dead Sea. He begins speaking to them, and asks:)

'How can one be saved? How can man make everything useful to his salvation?...

However poor, man may be, he can always sin by immoderate desires for gold, high office, and women. At times he becomes the thief of such things, so as to have what rich people have. So will man - rich or poor as he may be - never be able to save himself? Of course he will. How? By using wealth and misery for Good purposes. The poor man who is not envious, who does not curse, who does not attempt to take what belongs to other people - but is happy with what he has - exploits his humble condition in order to achieve future holiness. In actual fact, most poor people know how to do that. But the rich are not so capable, as wealth is a continuous trap, set by Satan...

Listen to a parable, and you will see that the rich can save themselves as well, although they are rich. And they can make amends for their past wrongs, by making good use of their riches, even if they were unjustly obtained. Because God, the Most Good God, always grants many opportunities to His children, so that they may save themselves.

There was a rich man who had a steward. Some enemies of the steward were envious of the good position he had. They were very friendly with the rich man, and therefore aware of his wealth. They accused the steward, saying to his master: "He squanders your wealth. He embezzles your goods. Or he does not make them produce any fruit. Be careful. Defend yourself!".

The rich man, after hearing such repeated accusations, summoned the steward and said to him: "I have been told so and so. Why have you done that? Give me an account of your stewardship, because I will not allow you to stay any longer. I cannot trust you. Go, and come back tomorrow with your documents, so that I can examine them and assess the situation of my property, before handing it to another steward".

He dismissed the steward, who went away and began to worry, saying to himself: "What shall I do, now that the master is taking the stewardship from me? I have no savings, because I was sure that I would get away with what I did. I spent everything I usurped in enjoyment. I don't feel like working as a peasant, under other people, because I am no longer used to digging. I have grown fat because of overeating. And I dislike begging even more. It is too humiliating! But what shall I do?"

He thought it over and over again, and he found a way out from his painful situation. He said: "I have found it! As I arranged a pleasant life for myself so far, in the same way I will make sure that my friends will offer me hospitality, out of gratitude, when I am dismissed. He who does good, always has friends. I'll go, therefore, and help people, in order to be helped. I'll go at once, before the news spreads and it is too late".

He went to the various debtors of his master, and he said to the first one: "How much do you owe my master for the money he lent you three years ago?"

The debtor replied: "One hundred measures of oil, for money and interest".

"Oh! Poor fellow! What, with such a large family, and with your children afflicted by disease, you have to give so much?! But did he not give you enough money for thirty measures?!"

"Yes, but I needed it urgently, and he said to me: 'I will give it to you, but on condition that you will pay me back whatever the sum will yield to you, in three years'. It yielded the equivalent of one hundred measures. And I must give this amount to him".

"But that is greed! Don't! He is rich, while you are not far from starving. He has a small family, you have a large one. Write here that it yielded to the value of fifty measures and forget about it. I will swear that it is the truth. And you will benefit by it".

"But will you not betray me? What if he finds out?"

"Do you think that is possible? I am the steward, and what I swear is sacred. Do as I tell you, and don't worry".

The man signed the document, handed it to him and said: "May you be blessed! You are my friend and saviour. How can I compensate you?"

"In no way! But if I should get into trouble and be dismissed because of this, will you welcome me out of gratitude?"

"Of course! Certainly! You may rely on that!"...

The steward called on other debtors in the same way, stating that he was willing to get into trouble, to put matters right according to justice. And offers of help and blessings rained upon him.

When he was reassured about his future, he went to his master, who in turn had followed his steps and discovered his trickery. The master, however, praised him, saying: "What you did is not right, and I do not praise you for that. But I must praise you for your cunning. The children of this world are really more cunning than the children of Light".

And Jesus says: 'I repeat to you what the rich man said: "Fraud is not right, and I will never praise anyone for that. But I exhort you to be shrewd, at least like the children of this world, with the means of this world, to make them serve as money to enter the Kingdom of Light". Make good use of earthly riches: which are the means distributed unjustly, and used to purchase a fleeting welfare. These are of no value in the eternal Kingdom, so they will not open its door to you. Assist the poor with the means you have, give back what you or any other member of your family took unjustly, and break away from the evil and guilty love for riches. And all these actions will be like friends, who in the hour of your death, will open the eternal gates to you, and will receive you in the blissful abode...'

How can God entrust you for just one day in Heaven, with the mission of supporting the spirits of your brothers on the Earth, when you have shown that extortions, frauds and greed are your prerogatives? He will, therefore, deny you your treasure - which He had kept for you - and He will give it to those who were shrewd on the Earth, by using what is unjust and unwholesome in deeds, which make them just and wholesome.

No servant can serve two masters. He will belong to one or to the other, and he will hate one or the other. The two masters whom man can choose are God or Mammon. If he wishes to belong to the former, he cannot wear the colours, follow the voice, or use the methods - of the latter.'

(Jesus speaks of good and evil, to Maria Valtorta:)

'You must not measure the supernatural entirely in one way. The supernatural is everything which lies beyond the natural world. Isn't that so? But in the supernatural - the extranatural - there are two currents, two rivers: the one coming from God, and the one coming from the Enemy of God.

Phenomena [of the supernatural], when taken externally and superficially, are almost identical, for Satan is able to simulate God, with the perfection of evil. But one sign of those who are mine is the deep peace - and the order - found in the phenomena, and communicating themselves to those who are present. Another sign is the increase of the natural faculties of intelligence and memory. For the heavenly supernatural is always Grace, and Grace augments man's natural faculties, too, so as to be remembered exactly in its manifestations. In the phenomena which are not mine, on the other hand, there is always an effusion of something which disturbs or diminishes... After the cracking of blinding rockets, there is smoke and mist, which take away the purity of the previously existing light, You have seen and heard this. But afterwards you cannot remember anything with complete precision, and you fall into contradictions, even unwillingly. Satan, with his long-nailed hand, stirs and stirs - to deride and exhaust.

Finally, a very exact sign appears in subjects themselves... The soul, seized by 'good will', rises and changes from what it was - into what I want it to be... It grinds and destroys all that was past - all that was the previous self - and recomposes in the new form according to my model. They are the tireless craftsmen of their immortal selves. They see they are changing for the better. But they are never content with the degree of goodness attained, and they work to arrive at greater perfection. Not because of their pride, but out of love for Me.

In the souls that - in a contrary sense - are false contemplatives and false instruments, this untiring metamorphosis is lacking. In that case, as followers of Satan, they feed on and delight in what they have. Sometimes, at the beginning, they really received a gift from Me. They cradle themselves in the pride of being 'something'... They put on a halo of false lights. They exploit more or less relative celebrity to crown themselves. And they contemplate themselves. They say, 'I am taken care of. I have now gotten there!' They go blind that way, to the point where they can not see what they are. And they go deaf that way, to the point where they cannot distinguish the different voices speaking in them...'

(Jesus then has specific words for Maria's Spiritual Director - Father Romualdo Migliorini - who is becoming caught up with another "would-be" visionary...)

'Romualdo, be careful with the multi-coloured glistening which dissolves into mist! I always leave light and concrete, orderly, clear elements. Watch out for the false saints, who are more injurious to my triumph than all the open sinners. The holy supernatural exists. I inspire it. It should be accepted and believed. But let every jar upon which there is written 'Oil of Supernatural Wisdom'- or every closed book upon which there is written 'God is here'- not be accepted at first sight...

If you see that its evolution towards Goodness is slow, or entirely lacking, open your eyes. Open them twice if you can see, in this soul, pleasure at being noticed. Open them three, ten, or seventy times, if you find it to be proud or deceitful... Observe whether it is humble on being approached, and active to an extreme degree in terms of holiness.'