

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

(Luke 10: 23-37)

(*Poem* Vol. 3, pp. 38-40, Vol. 4, p. 436;
Gospel Vol. 4, pp. 405-7, Vol. 7, pp. 413-4; *Notebooks 1944*, pp. 366-7)

(Jesus, with His apostles and many of His disciples, is at the Temple in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. He speaks to a crowd of people, including some Scribes and Pharisees, and many members of the Sanhedrin, and His parable of servants and the talents causes some objections...)

Jesus becomes silent as if He wished to put an end to the debate and He turns towards the enclosure of the Temple. But a doctor of the Law, who had sat down listening gravely under the porch, gets up and standing in His way, asks Him: 'Master, what must I do to gain eternal life? You have replied to others, please reply to me as well.'

'Why do you want to tempt Me? Why do you want to lie? Are you hoping that I may say something different from the Law because I add brighter and more perfect ideas to it? What is written in the Law? Tell Me! What is the first commandment of the Law?'

"'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your intelligence. You shall love your neighbour as yourself ".'

'Your reply is correct. Do that and you will have eternal life.'

'And who is my neighbour? The world is full of good and of wicked people, known and unknown, friendly and hostile to Israel. Which is my neighbour?'

'A man going from Jerusalem down to Jericho through the mountain gorges, ran into highwaymen, who after wounding him severely, despoiled him of all his belongings and his very clothes and left him more dead than alive on the edge of the road.

A priest, who had finished his turn at the Temple, travelled down the same road. Oh! He was still smelling of the incense of the Holy! And his soul should have been scented with supernatural kindness and love, after being in the House of God, almost in touch with the Most High. The priest was in a hurry to get back home. So he looked at the wounded man but did not stop. He passed by hurriedly leaving the poor man on the edge of the road.

A Levite passed by. Should he become contaminated who must serve in the Temple? Never! He gathered his tunic so that it might not get stained with blood, he cast a glance over the man moaning in his blood and hurried faster towards Jerusalem, towards the Temple.

Third came a Samaritan, who was travelling from Samaria towards the ford. He noticed the blood, he stopped, saw the wounded man in the deepening twilight, he dismounted and approached the wounded man, whom he gave a sip of strong and generous wine, he then tore his mantle to make bandages, and gently dressed the man's wounds after bathing them with vinegar and applying oil to them. He mounted the man on his horse and carefully led the animal, supporting the man at the same time, comforting him with kind words, without worrying about all the trouble or being annoyed because the man was of Jewish nationality. When he arrived in town, he took him to an inn, watched over him during the night and at dawn, seeing that he was better, he entrusted him to the innkeeper, paying him in advance with some denarii and saying: "Look after him as you would look after me. On my way back I will make good any extra expense you have, with a good measure, if you do everything well". And he went away. Tell Me now, doctor of the Law. Which of these three was a neighbour" for the man who had run into highwaymen? The priest perhaps? Or the Levite perhaps? Or was it not the Samaritan who did not ask who the wounded man was, why he was wounded, whether he was doing the wrong thing by assisting him, wasting time and money and running the risk of being taken for his wounder?'

The doctor of the Law replies: 'The last one, who took pity on him, was his "neighbour".'

'Do the same yourself and you will love your neighbour and God in your neighbour and you will deserve eternal life.'

Nobody dare speak and Jesus takes advantage of the situation to join the women waiting for Him near the enclosure and return to town with them.

(Jesus comments on some of the qualities of Samaritans...)

'...Without being sinners - as the Judaeans and Galileans considered them - they are open and frank, without bigotry, and without the silly complications of other people. And they are hospitable. This remark makes me think of the parable of the good Samaritan... There is good and evil everywhere, and among all races - also among heretics, there may be righteous people - and there is also a real description of Samaritan behaviour towards those who are in need. The Samaritans may have stopped at the first five books of the Old Testament - and I hear them speak of those, and of nothing else - but they practise them (at least towards their neighbours), with more integrity than the others, who have their six hundred and thirteen precepts, and so on...'

(Jesus asks us to care for those who suffer - just as the Samaritan did...)

'...My parable speaks of a Good Samaritan who treats the wounds not treated by the children of the Law who pass by - absorbed in their hurry of serving God. They do not know that God is served more by loving, than by performing practices.

I am the Wounded One, languishing on your roads. Marauders assaulted and plundered Me. Marauders: are those who unworthily make use of my sacrifice of God becoming flesh. They plunder Me: by denying my attributes with their multiple heresies. They plunder the Truth because their robe tempts them, for it is radiant. But they do not know that it shines [only] because it has been put on [by Myself]. But in the hands of these who cover it with the saliva of their proud minds, it becomes just another rag.

Truth is truth, and when it is seen in union with God, it illuminates all things with His light. When divided, it becomes chaotic language. For the Truth is Knowledge and Wisdom, but, when torn away from God, it becomes chaos.

Medicate Me, even if you are Samaritans. Give Me your oil and wine - the oil is love, and the wine is your own contrition. Medicate Me. I do not disdain you...'