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Qdmn. Cf. 'the Kadmonite or Easterner,' Gn 15^{19}, perhaps also Job 18^{20}.
Sdy. Cf. Sodi, Nu 13^{10}.
Rgm-yshshb. Cf. Regem-melek, Zech 7^{2}.
Abdḥr (=*Obēd-Ḥur*, 'destruction of Ḥur'). Cf. 'Ammi-Ḥur ('kinsman of Ḥur'), 2 Sam 13^{37}, where the Kethibh is probably right, and Pash-Ḥur (Jer 20^{1}).

The important excavations undertaken of late by Sir Leonard Woolley (See *Abraham, Recent Discoveries*) and other authorites on Mesopotamia have helped to elucidate some difficult problems regarding the Hebrews. For one thing, the fact that Abraham actually existed and that he dwelt originally at Ur in Mesopotamia can no longer be disputed. According to Woolley, the chances that there should have been tablets at Ur or elsewhere bearing his name, and that any one of them should have been preserved, is only about one in a million. Moreover, in the Old Testament record of Abraham there are allusions and whole descriptions which could not possibly have been either remembered or invented by the later Israelites, but are definitely connected with the Mesopotamian civilization of his day (*c.* 2000 B.C.). Woolley also regards the identity between the Hebrews and the *Ḫabiru* of the cuneiform texts to be conclusive, not only philologically but historically. It has been found that there was a fairly large element of these 'sojourners' at Ur. An altar base of unhewn stone discovered there, and dated *c.* 2300 B.C., must have belonged to them (cf. Ex 20^{25}). They included Terah and his family; and their general migration to Haran was due to the social and economic conditions of the city at the time. It follows, as we have endeavoured to show elsewhere, that the entry of the Hebrews into Canaan, about forty years after their exodus from Egypt, corresponds with the invasion of the *Ḫabiru* described in the Amarna Tablets (*c.* 1400–1370 B.C.), and was really part of the greater inroad in which Sa-gaz, Sûtû, and other elements from the north-east, along with the *Ḫabiru* from the south, combined together in a united attack (perhaps with the consent of the Pharaoh, in order to stem the powerful Hittite advance southward). The fact that the Hebrews had dwelt at Ur, where the Sumerian civilization existed, and then at Haran among a Hurrian population, explains several of their customs and regulations. Abraham's offering up of a ram, for example, at the last moment, instead of his son, was not according to Palestinian conceptions, but was thoroughly Sumerian. So far as we know, there was no human sacrifice among the Sumerians (the self-immolation in the death-pits in prehistoric tombs was a different thing). There is no hint of any such practice in the innumerable religious texts, but rather the opposite. 'The lamb is the substitute for humanity,' we read in one text, 'he hath given up a lamb for his life.' Abraham, in substituting animal for human sacrifice, was probably acting contrary to the Canaanite superstitions and vindicating the higher beliefs he had learned at Ur. The story of the Flood, too, in the Old Testament, bears marks of being a Hurrian version, for the name Noaḥ (it is 'Uta-napishtim' in the Babylonian legend), which has always been a mystery to scholars, seems to be an abbreviation of Na-aḥ-molel, the name of the hero in the Hurrian fragment. We know that Abraham lived among the Hurrians at Haran, Rebekah came from there, and Jacob remained there for fourteen years. If the Flood story was current in these regions, as we know it was, it is quite probable that the Hebrew version took on the northern tinge, and this accords with the mention of Ararat, a mountain in the far north, which does not occur in the Babylonian legend.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Sky-writing.

By the Reverend R. Hughes, Uttoxeter.

'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'—Lk 10^{20} (R.V.).

Not long ago in London I was watching an aeroplane. There was something strange about its movements. When I first saw it, it was flying fast from right to left high up in the sky. There was a long trail of black smoke behind it. Then it made a big curve downwards and back again, flying now from left to right. Then one more curve down and back and from right to left. Suddenly there was no more smoke behind it; but there high up in the sky was a big black letter S. The aero-

plane now flew on, and when it had got a little way past the smoke it rose up in the air until it was on a level with the top of the letter S. Then it turned down and started dropping towards the earth, leaving behind it once more a straight long column of smoke—the letter I. On it went once more. This time it rose twice as high as before, turned and dropped down again, now making the letter L. I knew then that it had been doing this sort of thing before I first saw it. But there were some tall buildings which had hid my view. So looking carefully around me to make sure that it was safe, I stepped off the pavement on to the road until I could see round the corner of the high buildings. There I saw three more letters in front of the others. They were already beginning to fade; but I could just make out that they were PER. I had been watching the newest kind of advertising. It was sky-writing.

Then I remembered something that Jesus Christ had said to His disciples. 'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' Here, then, was a sort of sky-writing spoken of in the Bible. It is really much more wonderful than that which I saw in London. The friends of Jesus to whom He spoke these words were Jews. They belonged to the same race as Abraham and Moses, David and Isaiah. And they felt it was a great honour to have the same blood in their veins as those great saints of God. They belonged to the Jewish Church, and their names were written on the roll of that Church. But already the leaders of the Jewish Church were turning against Jesus. They said He was a false teacher. They warned the people not to listen to Him nor to follow Him. But when the friends of Jesus refused to give Him up, then they struck their names off their books. They said to them: 'You do not any longer belong to our Church. We cast you out.' When that happened they remembered what Jesus had said: 'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

Most of the people who first believed in and followed Jesus were poor. But a few of them were rich. They belonged to noble families, who owned great houses and much land. They had also what we call a family tree. On the family tree were written the names of their fathers and grandfathers and great-grandfathers for a long way back. Their own names had been written there when they were born. When the father of the family died, the house and the land and all the wealth would pass to his son or sons. And the name on the family tree was the title to show that they were to be his. But when the father saw that his son had become a Christian he was very angry. He did his best to turn him back again to the worship of the idols. And when the son refused and said he could never deny Jesus Christ, the father took a pen and crossed his name from the family tree, saying, 'You are no longer a son of mine.' That meant that he would be turned out of house and home, and would have to go out into the world a poor man. Then he too would remember the words of Jesus Christ. 'Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' If he had no longer a home on earth, he had a home in heaven. If his earthly father would no longer own him, he had a Heavenly Father who would love him and care for him, and never forsake him.

Some of the friends of Jesus were citizens of the Roman Empire. In those days a man was every bit as proud to belong to the Roman Empire as we are to belong to the British Empire. Paul, who was one of the greatest servants of Jesus Christ, knew that it was a good thing for him that he was a Roman citizen. More than once it saved him from prison and from being flogged. But soon there came a time when the rulers of Rome would no longer protect the Christians. Though they were good people and kept the laws and never gave any real trouble, they were put in prison. They were flogged. They were burnt to death. They were thrown to the wild beasts in the circus. But before doing all that to them the Romans blotted their names out of their books. They said that they were no longer Roman citizens. That meant that they could not have the protection of the law, and men were allowed to ill-treat them as they liked. Paul saw that time coming; and he said to his friends and the friends of Jesus: 'Your citizenship is in heaven. Cæsar may have your names blotted out of the roll of Roman citizens. But do not let that trouble you. Your names are written in heaven.'

As I watched that aeroplane writing its letters in the sky, I noticed that by the time the last letter was written the first was already beginning to fade. In another minute or two the whole word was gone. There was no trace of it left, only the clear blue sky once more. For the writing was in smoke. But when God writes a man's name in heaven it will remain there for ever. It will last and never fade away. And nobody can alter it. Jesus Christ Himself has said: 'I will not blot his name out of the book of life.' And if Jesus does not blot out your name there is no one else who can do so.

Who, then, are they who have their names

written in heaven? They are all those who love Jesus Christ here on earth, and who try to follow Him all through life.

Getting a Lion.

By the Reverend W. R. Clarke, B.A., Glasgow.

'Thy servant slew . . . the lion.'—1 S 17^{36}.

During the illness in 1928 of His late Majesty, King George v., the Prince of Wales, now known as King Edward viii., was away in Africa on a hunting holiday. As soon as he heard of the illness of his father, the King, he immediately rushed home. He went at once to his father's bedside, and when his father saw him, he looked up at his son and said with a smile, 'Well, David, did you get that lion?'

You see, boys and girls, the Prince was known to the members of his family as David, though he always signed his name, Edward P., and is now known throughout the world as King Edward.

Now when we think of the question that the King asked his son, are we not reminded of another young man, called David, who also got a lion one day? This young man was a shepherd. One day, while he was watching his father's sheep just outside Bethlehem, a lion came prowling softly up to catch a nice fat sheep that he might kill it and carry it off. But David saw the lion and killed it before it could kill any of the sheep. Don't you think that was very brave of David?

Well, one day this young shepherd, David, became a great King and ruled for many years over Israel. Under his rule, Israel became a mighty nation, prosperous and happy. Not only that, but he led the people of Israel back to God, and Israel became the great moral leader of the nations of the world.

To-day we have on the throne of the British Empire a young man who is known to his family as David, though known to us as Edward, our King. Shall we not sometimes think of him as the young man who one day 'got a lion'? And now that he is our King, we all hope that he will get and slay more lions. I mean those fierce lions that are attacking the lives of his people and the homes of the Empire. 'What are they?' I hear little voices asking.

Well, boys and girls, there is the fierce lion of unemployment. How sad it is to see strong young men idle at the street corners. 'Satan finds some mischief still, for idle hands to do.' The police records are full of accounts of young men and women who fall into mischief because they have too much time on their hands, and who try to get money in the ways of sin. Yes, we want to see the lion of unemployment killed, for it chases people into sin, and blights the homes and the lives of boys and girls who live there.

Then there is the fierce lion of strong drink. This lion drives men and women to prison and to shame. It eats up the food that the children ought to get. It keeps many a home poor, ill-furnished, and diseased. It stands between many boys and girls and good warm clothes. It often drives a father to wreck his home, and a mother to neglect her children. Will it not be a glad day when we see this savage lion lying dead outside the door of the land?

Another fierce lion is gambling. What a hold its teeth has in the life of our land! Hardly a day passes but we read in the newspapers about some one being sent to prison for stealing an employer's money. What is the reason? Horse-racing, dog-racing, or some other form of gambling. First a little was taken, and used for gambling, and lost. A little more was taken to try to win back what was first lost. This was lost as well, and so the stealing went on. Then came exposure and prison. Then there are the thousands upon thousands who do not steal, but who still gamble, and so lose the faith they ought to have in God. We do not want to cage this lion and control it by laws. We must kill it!

These, boys and girls, are three of the lions that we all want slain; and we look to our King to lead the expedition that will bring that about. Will *you* join that expedition.

Our late beloved King, George v., gave you boys and girls a message last Christmas Day. Do you hear those words now: 'When the time comes, be ready and proud to give your country the service of your work, your mind, and your heart.' You can only do that truly when you give first your heart to Jesus. Then you will help David, now our King Edward, to get more lions of sin and so crush them that, just as under David of Israel, our Empire may return to God and lead the world morally and spiritually.

The Christian Year.

Second Sunday after Trinity.

The Soul and Other Souls.

'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.'—1 Jn 3^{15}.

'We are not only gregarious animals liking to be in sight of our fellows,' says William James, 'but

we have a propensity to get ourselves noticed, and noticed favourably by our kind. . . . If no one turned round when we entered, answered when we spoke, or minded what we did, but if every person we met "cut us dead," and acted as if we were non-existing things, a kind of rage and impotent despair would ere long well up in us, from which the cruellest bodily tortures would be a relief.'

It should be a fruitful line of thought, therefore, to contemplate how dependent our soul is for its very being, yea, for its separateness, its individuality, upon its intercourse with other souls. And by the soul we mean just our personality, our self. 'I' am not different from my soul. I *am* a soul. 'Our soul comes to its life by virtue of the brother souls around it.'

Take the mystery of human speech. What is language but the signs and signals by means of which the thoughts that arise in one soul are passed over into another? To quote again, for all this has been often said, and said well, by others: 'One of the first things we learn is to talk, and to listen to talk. And we have been talking and listening on and off ever since. Think of the number of sentences we have spoken, of the words that have rolled off our tongues since then! A queer retrospect when we come to think of it, and so much in it that is hardly golden. The world is carried on under a babel of utterance.'

What does it mean—all this confused murmur of souls flashing signals to other souls? It means that other souls are absolutely necessary to the life of the soul.

There is another side—the solitariness of the soul. The soul has an inner life which no other soul can invade or violate. A man may tell you about his experiences, and you may understand something of their meaning, because you have had similar experiences. But you do not thereby enter and *feel* them. Your sympathetic sorrow or joy is not the weariness or gladness that he feels. We think of the soul as

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

But it is the other half of the truth that we are reminding ourselves of now. We must stand high up on the beach, beholding not one pool, but millions of pools, laced and linked by millions of tiny rills and channels all over the wet gleaming sands. We want to emphasize this single truth: the true life of the soul consists in love; and love is the finding of oneself in other souls. And for the purposes of our present theme we may define sin as hatred. And hatred not only leads to murder, but it is murder—murder which includes in the end the death of the hate-filled soul. We read the newspaper of a morning. It is choke-full even to nausea of murder and sudden death. But the poison, the bullet, and the knife are not the weapons that presently concern us. We are looking deeper than the outward physical life. We are considering what Christ meant when He said that the passion of hate is itself murder. He who uses the language of contempt, or, as Christ says, calls his brother *Raca* (fool); he who uses the language of slander—calls his brother *Morê* (scoundrel)—he is a murderer.

But it is not only other souls we murder thus. The common voices of our souls are these: 'I love,' 'I hate,' 'I fear.' How narrow and contracted is the circle of which the word 'I love' is spoken! And can any of us speak the word 'I love' perfectly and without reserve?

The wrongs and cruelties which, wittingly or unwittingly, our lusts and passions have caused us to wreak on the souls of others—these are the things which creep into the spiritual ear of the soul, making a great silence around us, as of death. We shudder at the ugliness of Scrooge's soul, in Dickens's story. But are there not times when each of us, in this inner spiritual sense, is a Scrooge? There we sit, in the narrow room of self, behind its darkened walls, peering out through chinks in the shutters, crying 'I hate,' 'I fear!' Such is the isolating veil of reserve which shame forces us to cast around our souls! Such are the shadows, and mists, and glooms of suspicion and estrangement through which we walk alone amid a crowd! That solitude is the shadow of death falling on our own souls.

That is the way of spiritual murder. Because of the touch of impurity, the taint of evil in the heart, we break or mar whatever we touch in this fair world of ours. We murder the world's beauty for ourselves, we murder the love of friends for us, we murder our own peace, we murder hope, we murder joy. Anger, hate, fear in the heart are the shadows of murder there.

'Hates the man anything he would not kill'? asks Shylock, in the trial scene in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and there is hardly another page in literature where we have so powerful a picture of self-made solitude of soul. It was his own soul that Shylock's hate was killing. The Jewish philosopher Philo says that it was not

merely his brother that Cain slew: it was himself.

Love is the life of the soul. We believe it possible to explain every passion of the human soul as a form of love, or the perversion of love. The hatred of Cain for Abel began in envy. Envy is stillborn love—love strangled in the heart, ere it had blossomed into life. It is love's look of regard towards its brother, stopped short after it had travelled but a little way. Envy has a thousand eyes—and is very short-sighted. Jealousy is the ghost of dead or forgotten love. It is the look of a man towards a brother in whose heart he once had a place. Jealousy, too, 'can never be satisfied with anything short of omniscience.' We would fain 'detect the subtlest fold of the heart' that once sheltered us; and we become obsessed by delusions. Suspicion is poisoned love; cynicism, which interprets all goodness in another's life as hypocrisy, attributes all noble deeds to interested motives. Fear is the absence of all love, the demon which displaces charity. Or take a concrete case—the case of Judas. Can we not trace there, painted on the blackest canvas of all the world's immortal pictures, the growing loneliness of soul that ends in death?

But that is not where our imagination wishes to rest. That is only the obverse side of the picture—the result of the soul's disloyalty to other souls. Is there any way up out of this abyss of spiritual death into the life of love? Yes, even for an abandoned soul there is a way up. The first and greatest step from spiritual death to life is taken when remorse is changed into penitence. Remorse is the soul alone with its black thoughts, and banished even from God. But the eternal wonder of the gospel is that God's love breaks through that dark loneliness in one immortal blaze of sacrifice. What is penitence but love-awakened love. The soul has begun to live again, because it has begun to love. All the world of other souls becomes bathed for it in a new and holy light of compassion. Love is the giving impulse: it is the identification of self with the life of others.

> Time was when few seemed fair.
> But now, as through the streets I go,
> There seems no face so shapeless, so
> Forlorn but that there's something there
> That like the heavens, doth declare
> The glory of the great All-fair;
> And so mine own each one I call
> And so I dare to love you all.

If ours could be a vision of other souls like that—if we could go forth into the world seeking to be kind and helpful, forgiving and charitable, open, sincere, transparent, seeking the best, believing the best, hoping the best of all men, how the face of the world would be changed!

When Father Dolling was asked what was the secret of his wonderful power to redeem the 'hopeless cases,' as they were called, who were sent to him from all over England, he answered, 'I live inside them by love. When they have ceased to believe in themselves, I trust them, though I know that they are untrustworthy. It is the only way to make them worthy of trust. When they are in despair and never expect to be better, I hope for them with full confidence and do for them what they cannot do for themselves. When they have lost all self-respect and have destroyed their ability to love, I love them, and am soon rewarded with a responsive love.'

Some of the great thinkers whose minds have been absorbed by the thought of a universe transformed at last into one vast, perfect society of souls, have found no room for a personal God there. Over against that blindness of unbelief, we would place the sublime mysticism of St. John. The very reason for the world's unbelief and doubt of God—the very reason of its questioning cry in face of the great silence of God—is just the loneliness of soul that sin has wrought. But a world of souls transformed into a perfect fellowship of love would be a world so flooded with God's presence that doubt and unbelief would vanish for ever. 'He that loveth his brother abideth in the light.' [1]

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Law and the Gospel.

'God . . . deviseth means, that he that is banished be not an outcast from him.'—2 S 14^{14} (R.V.).

There is far too much copybook morality in the world. Jesus says in the gospel that, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven will not open to receive you. The little known but very striking incident in the history of king David, from which the text is taken, affords a remarkable illustration of the Saviour's meaning. The most strict moral principles are a man's righteousness at the best, and at the worst nothing better than hypocrisy. If we are to get anywhere near God we must pitch our righteousness much higher. We must always be building bridges for our brothers and sisters, paving the highway of

[1] J. A. Robertson, *Concerning the Soul*, 83.

human progress with forgiveness, devising means whereby the banished may return. The Pharisee is always blind to the glory that excelleth, always pleading the highest principles instead of God's purpose of redemption. Now that was exactly David's case in the story before us. He was prepared to do violence to his own fatherhood, to strangle the love of his heart, to hazard the divine destinies of his house and people in vindication of his own stern sense of truth and honour. The young man Absalom had been guilty of a crime which was condemned even by the wild justice of those early times. Three years had elapsed since the lawless prince had fled the kingdom, and day by day the old king was eating his heart out in the deserted palace at Jerusalem. No doubt he played the moral parent till the life at Court became a burden to all his ministers.

Joab is by no means a character worthy of our imitation, but this does not prevent us from recognizing that on this question at least he had a juster estimate of the true issues than his more religious master. He avails himself of the simple custom of the times to bring into the royal presence a woman of Tekoah, one of those old wives whose mother-wit has often helped to the solution of seemingly insoluble problems. She leads the king back to those great fundamental principles of the universe, in the light of which all the greater issues of life must be faced.

That pedagogic morality which, in a later age, Jesus described as the righteousness of the Pharisees, and which keeps the Ten Commandments at its finger-ends as the measure of human conduct, solves no problem either in heaven or in earth. The citizens of London may gaze with complacent pride at my lord judge and my Lord Mayor taking their places on the Bench 'to keep the simple folk by their right, and to punish the wrongdoer,' but at best the Court of Justice is but a half-way house in the establishment of righteousness. The real problem, the moral problem of life, is not to impose the ban, but to remove it.

Said Dr. Samuel J. Barrows, one of the foremost criminologists, 'We speak of Howard, Livingstone, Beccaria, and others as great penologists, who have profoundly influenced modern life; but the principles enunciated and the methods introduced by Jesus seem to me to stamp Him as the greatest penologist of any age. He has needed to wait, however, nearly twenty centuries to find His principles and methods recognized in modern law and penology.'

We cannot long escape from becoming canting hypocrites if the one theme on which we can address our brethren is that sentence in Galatians where St. Paul declares that as a man sows so shall he reap. We may as well go back to the cynical statement of the old preacher, 'as the tree falls, so will it lie.' Why, the world is a failure indeed if this petty vindication of righteousness is all that God has to show for the groaning and travailing of the centuries. It mocks that higher righteousness whose demand is nothing less than a new creation.

People imagine that there is no alternative to the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees but the iniquity of the publicans and harlots. Christ declares that there is also the righteousness that exceeds, and that it is this, and this only, that penetrates to the Kingdom of Heaven. If we begin by condemning we thereby declare our inability to save. The ferryman of the Styx does not care whether men are slain in a street brawl or despatched by the hands of the public hangman so long as there are passengers for his boat. There is laughter in hell when virtue declares its sentence of banishment against the transgressor and justifies itself by refusing a place of repentance to the guilty. That is why the Lord puts so high a value upon the quality of forgiveness.

God saves us from the faint-hearted impatience which washes its hands of all complicity with the unthankful and evil, and which trembles to be kind lest it should seem to condone. God give us rather the venturesome spirit of that divine charity which beareth all things and which never ceases to hope. Is there not a grave danger lest those who call themselves the disciples of Jesus should, like David in the matter of Absalom, be tempted to wrap themselves in the mantle of their own righteousness, as they contemplate the problem urgently presented by social disturbance and disquiet to all who desire the progress and uplifting of the world? 'The foundations shall be cast down, and what hath the righteous done?'

There is something highly fascinating to many minds in looking upon the forces of the future as raging revolutionary fires. Men are prepared to nail the old flag to the mast and to go down shouting for the Ten Commandments and for the Established Church. There is something magnificent about it, but it is a blank refusal to face the very problem which the circumstances of the time present.

Did David, as he sat gloomily in his palace refusing to devise means for the outcast to return, remember the old Adullam days 'when every one

that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became their captain'? How this may have been we do not know, but this we know, that the wise woman of Tekoah was able to show before him with convincing power the sovereign truth that God is above all else the Captain of our salvation. His is no narrow Pharisaic righteousness entrenching itself in the fortress of its own ordinances amidst the jeering laughter of the lords of hell. For God there is no dilemma; there is always the third alternative.

God brings forth the gospel, and His triumph is complete. The Cross is the third alternative. That is why it checkmates the hosts of wickedness. God vindicates righteousness in the very act by which He saves. Nowhere in the whole Bible is the power of the Gospel more trenchantly stated than in the words of the Epistle to the Romans, used to express the purpose of the death of Christ, 'that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.' Here is an exhibition of Divine Righteousness beside which the storm and tempest of celestial wrath shrinks to a puny exercise of power. It is the eternal justice on fire with forgiving mercy.

No ideal character, says Fosdick, can be imagined now without this Christlike quality of forgiveness. When Browning portrays the beautiful character of Pompilia in 'The Ring and the Book,' the picture is not complete until Guido has wronged her cruelly and she, with all her consciousness of bitter injustice done her, is still steadfast in her unconquerable goodwill and readiness to pardon. When Tennyson imagines King Arthur, the perfect knight, the portrayal cannot be consummated until, deeply wronged by Guinevere, his Queen, he stands beside her, as she lies penitent upon the floor of the nunnery.

Think not that I come to urge thy crimes,
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death,
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
. . . . . .
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives.

Let us imitate our Heavenly Father. 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' We think we should like to see a clockwork deity dealing out rewards and punishments from day to day, crowning what seems to us good, damning what seems to us evil. But what sort of a being would God appear if He were to make this earth of ours nothing but a scrap-heap of ruined purposes, of derelict lives? God cannot be righteous unless He redeems. God cannot do justly unless He forgives. In His patience He is kind to the unthankful and evil, not because He thinks lightly of human transgression, but because in His own Passion He Himself comes forth to bear our iniquities. In bearing one another's burdens we fulfil the law of Christ. We make the most of men because we dare to think the best of them, for we have found a liberality in the heart of God which establishes truth in forgiving, a kindness in His justice which brings the outcast home.[1]

Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

Pain.

'The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.'—Ro 8^{22}.

'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.'—Ro 8^{18} (R.V.).

1. *The Problem of Pain.*—There can be no question but that we are more sensitive to the presence of pain than our fathers seem to have been. At any rate we pay more attention to its existence, and our sympathies are more readily aroused. Undoubtedly the question suggested itself to most of the finer spirits of antiquity. The principal of the Greek tragedies recognized the deep pathos of human life, and the nobler philosophies both of the Eastern and Western worlds are only to be understood according to the standpoint from which they view the problem of pain. But, as Dr. Martineau said, there is one striking difference between the ancient and the modern world, and that difference consists in the absence from the former of all institutions for the care of the sick, the disabled, and the unfortunate. Hospitals, orphanages, and almshouses are the product of a later civilization. The Book of Job does not state the problem of pain as it presents itself to us. The question for the author of that marvellous work is simply, 'Why do the righteous suffer?' It is not, 'Why should there be suffering at all.'

[1] J. G. Simpson, *Great Ideas of Religion*, 229.

It would be foolish to claim that modern susceptibility to pain is clearly and indisputably due to the influence of Christianity, but we may say without fear of being untrue to the facts that wherever the spirit of Christianity has prevailed such susceptibility has ensued. The spirit of Jesus was one of pity without pessimism, and that same spirit has invariably been exhibited in the noblest of His followers. St. Francis of Assisi, for example, preaching to the little birds and overflowing with sympathy for the brute creation, shows himself capable of understanding that the whole creation 'groaneth and travaileth in pain together.' The history of ecclesiastical Christianity is not to be confounded with that of Christian spiritual experience. The Inquisition, with its horrifying atrocities and its insensibility to pity, exhibited not the spirit of Christ but of Antichrist.

It is the noblest spirits who feel most the pressure of the problem. The present is an age in which philanthropic labours and willing self-sacrifice are well to the fore, and it is just those in whom the sentiment of pity, the desire for self-oblation, and the willing performance of rescue work are most developed who see most clearly the perplexing fact of pain. The sufferings of the sympathetic are part of the total of human woe. As a sorrowing father said after he had been watching by the dying bed of his daughter, 'Had it been in my power to bear her pain for her how gladly would I have done it! I could not bear to see her suffer; how is it that God could?'

2. *The Light from the Cross.*—It is remarkable that we have in the New Testament no indications that Jesus was ever puzzled or confounded by the existence of pain. Yet Jesus is in many ways the cause of modern sensitiveness to the problem. He went about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead.

> Alas for grief! but for those tears,
> Which fell at Bethany.

His own susceptibility to sorrow is very marked. Yet it never altered or deflected His message concerning the goodness of the God who is the Author of all.

Two more things might be noted in this connexion. First, that Jesus' susceptibility to the presence of pain, conjoined to the sweetness of His revelation of God, has been the source of a spiritual experience in thousands of our fellowmen, an experience which is of itself a tentative solution of the great world-problem. Every Christian saint has reproduced the dominant notes of his Master's character—perfect trust in the love of God, willing acceptance of pain, and sympathy with the suffering of others. A Roman Catholic writer has said: 'If we compare either the characters of holy men, or the broader facts of history, before and since the Crucifixion, there are few contrasts so remarkable as the presence or absence of that special quality which may be called the grace and bloom of sacrifice, which is the chivalry of self-devotion, and gives to heroic patience its winning and attractive power. It seems as though, till Christ had lived and died, that fulness of human sympathy was impossible.'

The second thing to be noted here is that our twentieth-century pathological sensitiveness is more directly due to the humanitarian impulse communicated by Jesus Christ than to any other cause whatsoever. Believers and unbelievers alike have been affected by the influence of the inner spirit of Christendom, and learned to pity and to save.

We are confronted with the paradox that some of those who have learned of Christ to realize the depth of human woe have also come to challenge Jesus' God—the God with whom Jesus in purpose, mind, and will identified Himself. Those who appropriate Jesus' pity might learn to appropriate Jesus' principle that pain is good because God is good. Like Him we may pray for the cup to pass, but, like Him also, we should be prepared to say 'Thy will be done!' not because we cannot avoid it, but because it is the absolutely right and the absolutely best. Gethsemane and Calvary have shown us that pain is the source of all that is deepest and truest within ourselves.

Yet another light is shed upon this subject by Jesus' witness, not only that pain is a part of the moral order of the world, but an experience in which God shares with man. 'I am not alone—the Father is with me.' Can this be true? If so, we are getting very near to the heart of things. Is God a sharer in the agony of the world? If we are to believe the testimony of Him who spake as never man spake, such is indeed the case.

That pain is a process leading to joy is a proposition that to the spiritual man needs no defence. We have a feeling that goodness and gladness ought to be united, and so they shall be, if the highest human witness is to be believed. They can only be united, however, through the operation of the seeming paradox that gladness shall be sacrificed to the attainment of goodness, and shall keep no consciousness of itself as its object. The highest happiness is to be found in the willingness

to surrender happiness. The principle of the Cross is the secret of joy—joy that is beaten out on the anvil of pain. Thus apprehended pain is embraced as a good.

Let no one think that more than this is possible on this side of the grave. We have here the earnest of heavenly joy, but it is joy 'touched with pain.' God's way is the way of joy, but it leads beyond the tomb. May it be ours to say with Christina Rossetti:

Content with all day brings and night will bring,
Life wanes; and when love folds his wings above
Tired hope, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
Let us go fall asleep, dear friend, in peace:
A little while, and age and sorrow cease;
A little while, and life reborn annuls
Loss and decay and death, and all is love.[1]

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

The Shallows or the Deep.

'He [Jesus] said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.'—Lk $5^{4f.}$.

Nowhere in the Gospels, take them altogether, do we get a complete picture of the earthly life of our Saviour. But what is there recorded is of the most important significance, indicating to us what we might most humbly call the strategy of Jesus in carefully working out a plan for training a small group of humans to begin the great enterprise for which He came to die and rise again.

There are eight stages in the training of the Twelve for their world mission, and every one of them significant. We might think of them as eight steps upward in the development of a vision of the magnitude and value of Christ, and of the need of the world for Christ, that enabled those men fearlessly and intelligently to go out into the world, when Christ had disappeared from the sight of men, to preach His gospel.

The first stage is associated with the meeting with Andrew, and James, and John, and Peter, alluded to in the first chapter of John. The second is this incident. The third is the setting them apart for their apostolic service at the close of the Sermon on the Mount. The fourth is the Great Confession in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, followed a little later by the Transfiguration, which is the fifth stage. And the sixth is one of the most illuminating; it is their acceptance of martyrdom. 'Come, let us go and die with him!' The seventh stage is associated with the Last Supper, and the eighth with the Great Commission.

We have alluded to these eight stages to show there is something behind this simple story of Jesus meeting with these young men at the lakeside. Jesus wants to bind them to Him in a little more intimate way, to go a stage farther with their training, so He joins them and finds them disappointed and depressed. He suggested to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.' Let us look for a moment at that proposal of Jesus.

1. In the first place, it is the sort of proposal that ought to touch a man's imagination, for there is here a contrast that we find in our own lives. Browning says in one unforgettable verse:

Thank God, a man has two soul sides;
One to face the world with, and the other
To show a woman when he loves her.

There is the nature shown to the world, to our business or our pleasures, and there is another side of our life that is not shown to the world. So there is this contrast in every life between the shallows and the deep, between a frontier of experience limited and measured by a familiar shore-line, and a frontier of anticipation and imagination that is measured only by the horizon of the open sea.

This is a question that every man has to decide eventually, whether he is going to vote most heavily for the shallow side of things, or put all his emphasis on to the deep and mysterious side of things. And that was the 'something' that Jesus was gradually forcing into the lives of these young men.

2. He said, 'Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.' Now, Peter's answer to that was the answer of a man who knew a great deal more about fishing than Jesus did. He said, with his accustomed bluntness: 'Master, this is not the time to fish. We have toiled all night, and we have taken nothing.' Peter's experience had taught him that the morning hour was no time to go fishing, because the glare of the sunlight was so great on the sea it would scare away the fish from the nets.

Many of us feel the same thing when the preacher says things to us concerning spiritual adventures or experiences. The man in the pew will say, 'Well, what does the preacher know about the sharp stresses and strains of business life? We

[1] R. J. Campbell, *A Faith for To-day*, 138.

know it through experience. He knows life only theoretically.' The only infallible thing, or what we *call* infallible, to any individual is experience. And yet it may lead us wrong. What we wish to emphasize here is that our experience is erroneously something that attaches us to a measurably familiar shore. Jesus was trying to get these men to turn deliberately round and look out towards something inexperienced, beyond their experience and imagination and their dreams. He is always trying to do that.

3. Here we come upon a third thing. Peter said: 'Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.' That is the difference between an irreligious and a religious attitude towards life. In the one case, the man will not move an *inch* beyond experience, and he says the final reaches of experience are common sense.

Chesterton says, 'That the Christian virtues do not begin to be virtues until they appear to be unreasonable.' And was there ever anything more unreasonable than this pale-faced, dreaming young Jew, saying to those older experienced fishermen: 'Launch out into the deep,' when all along the shore were fishermen mending their nets, ready to laugh at them if they did it.

Yet Peter said, 'Lord, if you say so, we will do it.' That is the religious attitude towards life. When a great change in life is to begin it draws us, oftentimes, against the testimony of experience. Call it common sense, worldly wisdom, philosophy, science—whatever any of them have to say on this subject, we have got to act contrary to them.

The deeps of life. That was what Jesus was impressing on these young men. And Peter and his colleagues went out and let down the net, and they got a great cargo of fish. But they got something infinitely more than fish.

'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' What was that? It was the birth of reverence in that man's soul for a flame of life and authority that he had never imagined was in Jesus before. The idea conveyed the sort of thing that needs to come to this generation more than anything, just to get the right sense of the magnitude and value and significance of Jesus Christ in our own lives. Our modern church life, as a rule, has been gradually and appallingly deprived of the sense of awfulness in life by the smallness of this too human Jesus that we have been hearing about for a whole generation in our churches. Now, before this occasion our Lord was called Messiah, but that term was a phrase which had not gripped the soul or the imagination of these men. But from that time on it was something more, something mysterious, something beyond human definition. And Peter's soul responded to it with a new sense of reverence and awe that put him on his knees.

And this new discovery by Peter led him to the discovery of amazing capacities and possibilities in these young men. We all know how a man's business or profession may narrow him. There is an old saying: 'Born a man, died a grocer.' But what Peter learned was that there was something in himself too big to be shut up in fishing problems; not that he was going to give up business, or turn his back on the tradition of his fathers, but that there was something else which came first. Until a man discovers that there is something bigger in the world than the business he is doing, he has not found the thing Jesus wants him to find. That is the trouble with so many of our Church people. Their religion is not so important as their business.

When Jesus invited Peter to give up and adventure himself beyond the ranges of his so-called experience, He asked this man to put business behind loyalty to Him and not in front: and so He said: 'Follow me, and I will enable you to catch men alive.' That is the Bible phrase; not 'to be fishers of men.'

Catch men! What a thought that is! Will they do it? Those young fellows won't do it with influence and office and worldly position. But we have seen people give themselves whole-heartedly to God, as if nothing could make the cause of Christ prevail without it. And if we have that kind of faith, why, it simply lifts us above all our discouragements, out of the dominion of our commonplace limits of experience, and sets our faces towards the billows of the living sea.[1]

At the conclusion of the Civil War General Armstrong devoted himself to what seemed to many to be the almost hopeless task of raising the standard of negro life in the United States. Yet his task became his triumph. For this man, having built upon a rock, believed that there is nothing too difficult for God. At Lake Mohawk, at a public meeting, a member of the audience objected to a course proposed by him as being impossible. The General was on his feet in an instant. 'And what,' he blazed, 'are Christians put into the world for but to do the impossible in the strength of God?'

[1] H. E. Kirk, *The Glory of Common Things*, 23.