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upon a basis of world-periods. The calculation and number of these periods vary, but every scheme exhibits this feature. Every period is closed by disasters of a more or less stereotyped character.

2. *Pre-Messianic woes.*—These disasters or woes (חבלי המשיח), 'pangs of the Messiah' as they came to be called in later Judaism, fall into three main classes: (i.) An intensification of moral and physical evils. These include the ἀπόστασις of 2 Th 2³ (note the article, ἡ ἀπόστασις, i.e. *the well-known* apostasy), the waxing cold of love, Mt. 24^{11, 12}, and similar phenomena described in Dn 11³⁵, 1 Ti 4¹, 2 Ti 3¹⁻⁶. In the physical sphere occur wars, famines, pestilences, and plagues of various kinds (Mk 13⁷⁻⁸). (ii.) The assault of hostile powers against God and Messiah, against the 'navel of the earth,' against Jerusalem, against the holy city, etc. This group assumes various forms in various schemes, all ultimately to be traced back to the supreme conflict between good and evil, light and darkness. It is possible that the particular form which the tradition has assumed in later Jewish thought is due to Persian influence (see Clemen, *Primitive Christianity and its non-Jewish Sources*, p. 129f.). To this group of disasters belongs the Gog-Magog conception. (iii.) The darkening of sun and moon, and the occurrence of earthquakes. This group does not fall to be discussed here.

3. *The Northern enemy.*—The Gog-Magog conception falls more precisely under the general head of the 'Northern Enemy' in Jewish eschatology. The North assumes a special Apocalyptic significance in the prophets as the source of judgment and the latter-day disasters. But in the Apostolic

Age, Gog and Magog are completely detached from any special topographical connexion and become the nations from 'the four corners of the earth.'

4. *Gog and Messiah.*—In later Rabbinical eschatology there is a considerable development of the part played by Messiah in the final act of the Apocalyptic drama. A distinction is drawn between Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David, in order to satisfy exegetical requirements in the interpretation of the blessing of Ephraim (Dt 33¹⁷). The Messiah ben Joseph is slain in the great battle with Gog and Magog, while Messiah ben David slays the leader of the hosts with the breath of his mouth. No trace of this scheme of the finale appears in the Apostolic Christian literature. In Revelation the destruction of the hosts of Gog and Magog takes place through the direct intervention of God from heaven by fire.

Conclusion.—It is easy to see that the older clear-cut outlines of the scheme of the end are becoming blurred. In general the Christian writers of the Apostolic Age concentrate their attention on the mystic figure of Antichrist which is gradually undergoing spiritualization under the form of the advance of moral evil and heresy in the Church. The sense of a great final conflict is not lost, but is passing into a deeper and more spiritual form. To the writer of the Apocalypse the Gog-Magog conflict seems to represent the sense that even the old Messianic hope and kingdom cannot finally purge the earth of evil and end the age-long conflict. God alone can do it, and His intervention brings about the end of the heaven and earth, the theatre of the conflict, and ushers in the final judgment.

In the Study.

Few books are more welcome than those which the Rev. F. W. Boreham is sending us from Hobart in Tasmania. They are the books of a minister of the gospel who never forgets his high calling, and of a master of the English tongue who cannot deny his great gift of imaginative writing. Are their contents sermons? There is a text of Scripture lurking in every chapter. If they are, we should like to know what is the effect of *this*

kind of preaching in the way of church attendance and the spread of the gospel. We could commend it for imitation, but, alas! how few of our preachers have trained their imagination, how few have discovered that there is an imagination to be trained!

We must quote one of the chapters of Mr. Boreham's new book, and we shall quote rather a long one. We must not suggest that all the chapters have this fulness of teaching and this

pathos, but they are all worthy of their place in the book where this is found, and of which the title is *The Golden Milestone* (Kelly; 3s. 6d. net).

The Little Palace Beautiful.

There are only four children in the wide, wide world, and each of us is the parent of at least one of them. I will tell how I made the discovery. I was going along the road that Bunyan's pilgrim travelled, and was nearing the Delectable Mountains. As Christian and Hopeful drew near those glorious hills, with their gardens and their orchards, their fountains and their vineyards, they were in such terror, because of their recent adventure with Giant Despair, that they looked aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. That is how they missed the Little Palace Beautiful. It stands among the trees of the valley just off the main road. It is a palace in miniature. Such a dainty little dwelling! Such lovely flowers in the garden! Such a ceaseless chorus of song from all the forest around! It is like a nest beautifully built among the trees. And about the garden and the home itself I saw the angels moving. They kept guard over it night and day. There are only four charming little rooms, and in those pretty rooms I found the children sleeping. And what I saw I here set down.

I.

In a sunless room that faces the south, a room whose name is Fancy, I found *the Little Child that Never Was*. And *the Little Child that Never Was* is an exquisitely beautiful child. He is the little child of all lonely men and lonely women, the child of their dreams and their fancies, the child that will never be born. He is the son of the solitary. Let me cite two instances as typical of many. The one shall be the case of a man and the other of a woman. Professor Herkless, in his *Life of Francis d'Assisi*, tells us how Francis was torn between the monastic life on the one hand and the domestic life on the other. He longed to be a monk and to dedicate himself to poverty and pilgrimage. And yet he loved a sweet and noble and gracious woman. He wrestled with his alternatives, and at length, through an agony of tears, he chose the cloak and the cowl. But still the lovely face haunted him by cloister and by shrine. And one radiant moonlight night, when the earth was wrapped in snow, the brethren of the monastery

saw him rise at dead of night. He went out into the grounds and, in the silvery moonlight, fashioned out of the snow with deft artistic fingers the images of a lovely woman and a group of fair little children. He arranged them in a circle, and sat with them, and, giving rein to his fancy, tasted for one delicious hour the ecstasies of hearth and home, the joys of life and love. Then, solemnly rising, he kissed them all a tearful and final farewell, renounced such raptures for ever, and re-entered the monastery. That night the deep impressive eyes of Francis looked full into the face of *the Little Child that Never Was*.

For the womanhood let Ada Cambridge speak. In *The Hand in the Dark and Other Verses*, she has a touching little poem that she calls 'The Virgin Martyr.' It might just as well have been called '*The Little Child that Never Was*.'

Every wild she-bird has nest and mate in the warm April weather,

But a captive woman, made for love, no mate, no nest, has she.

In the spring of young desire, young men and maids are wed together.

And the happy mothers flaunt their bliss for all the world to see.

Nature's sacramental feast for them — an empty board for me.

I, a young maid once, an old maid now, deposed, despised, forgotten—

I, like them, have thrilled with passion and have dreamed of nuptial rest,

Of the trembling life within me of my children-unbegotten,

Of a breathing new-born body to my yearning bosom prest,

Of the rapture of a little soft mouth drinking at my breast.

Time, that heals so many sorrows, keeps mine ever-freshly aching.

Though my face is growing furrowed and my brown hair turning white.

Still I mourn my irremediable loss, asleep or waking;

Still I hear my son's voice calling 'Mother' in the dead of night,

And am haunted by my girl's eyes that will never see the light.

O my children that I might have had! My children lost for ever!

O the goodly years that might have been, now desolate and bare!

O God, what have I lacked, what have I done, that I should never

Take my birthright like the others, take the crown that women wear,

And possess the common heritage to which all flesh is heir?

I said that *the Little Child that Never Was* is a very beautiful child. He is absolutely without faults or flaws or disfigurements of any kind. He is all, *all*, ALL that his father, his mother, would have him to be. And he has a great work to do in the world—that *Little Child that Never Was*. He will either sweeten the life of his poor lonely father or mother or else make it as bitter as worm-wood. He will wonderfully soften or cruelly harden them. *The Little Child that Never Was* calls his solitary father and lonely mother to the service of the world's childhood. It is a great thing for the world that there are men and women with no children of their own. For there are little children without fathers and without mothers, and there are little children with fathers and mothers who would be better off if they had none. And the lonely men and women are called by *the Little Child that Never Was* to devote their lives to the service of the lonely little children. And in ministering to the world's childhood they will lose their loneliness and their longing, for *the Little Child that Never Was* will become incarnate in the little children around them, and they will hear his laughter and wipe away his tears after all.

II.

In the room that faces the west and is flooded with the sunset glory, a room called Memory, I found *the Little Child that Was*. And if Ada Cambridge has described *the Little Child that Never Was*, Josephine Dodge Daskam has done so much for *the Little Child that Was*. It occurs in her poem on 'Motherhood.'

The night throbs on; oh, let me pray, dear Lord!

Crush off his name a moment from my mouth. To Thee my eyes would turn, but they go back,

Back to my arm beside me where he lay—
So little, Lord, so little and so warm!

I cannot think that Thou hadst need of him!

He was so little, Lord, he cannot sing,

He cannot praise Thee; all his life had learned
Was to hold fast my kisses in the night.

Forgive me, Lord, but I am sick with grief,
And tired of tears and cold to comforting.

Thou art wise, I know, and tender, aye, and good,

Thou hast my child, and he is safe in Thee,
And I believe—

Ah, God, my child shall go

Orphaned among the angels! All alone,

So little and alone! He knows not Thee,

He only knows his mother—give him back!

And *the Little Child that Was* is also an exquisitely beautiful child, a child that is always a child, a child that never grows up. I remember hearing a Sunday-school superintendent in England tell a story of a shepherd who could not get his flock to cross a narrow bridge that spanned a silver stream. At last he took a lamb in his arms and crossed. The mother instantly dashed across after him, and the whole flock scampered at her heels. I often think of the gentle story when I ponder on *the Little Child that Was*. And *the Little Child that Was* also has a great work to do in the world. The classical example is the story of Mrs. Josephine Butler. We all remember with a shudder the story of that holiday—the father and mother in Europe, the little girlie left at home. And at last the night came when father and mother were expected. And in the night there was the sound of wheels and the commotion in the great hall below. The excited little daughter sprang from her bed, rushed out into the corridor, jumped up on to the banister rail to peer over and see 'dadda' and 'mamma' again. And then—the lost balance! the awful fall! 'Never,' says Mrs. Butler, 'never can I lose that memory, the fall, the sudden cry, and then the silence. It was pitiful to see her, helpless in her father's arms, her little drooping head resting on his shoulder, and her beautiful golden hair all stained with blood, falling over his arm. Would to God that I had died that death for her! If only we had been permitted one look, one moment of recognition!' Here, then, is a picture from life of *the Little Child that Was!* And we all know what resulted. Mrs. Josephine

Butler could find no comfort until she rose from her grief and devoted herself to all the wayward and motherless daughters of the great world outside, and everybody who knows the story of that greatly heroic life for the world's womanhood thanks God for that *Little Child that Was*. *The Little Child that Was* calls, not for sorrow, but for service.

III.

In a room called Experience, a room that faces the north and gets all the sun, I found *the Little Child that Is*. What a wonder he is, to be sure! I am not surprised that people have asked, 'What are little boys made of?' Nor am I surprised at the divergence which has characterized the replies. But boys and girls are made neither of sugar and spice nor of snips and snails. *The Little Child that Is* is made of Curiosity, Ambition, and Imagination. And these are all fine things. Curiosity, rightly developed, has led all our explorers across uncharted seas and untrodden continents, and has lured our scientists and inventors to their triumphs and their fame. But it needs educating. It is no good telling a child that he must not go to the cupboard. You only inflame his desire to go. You must satisfy him in some way, either that there is nothing in the cupboard that he needs, or that there is good reason why he should be forbidden from approaching it. The universe is full of wonderful and tantalizing cupboards. And half the damage done to fair young lives is caused through our insane way of telling them on no account to look into a certain cupboard. 'Don't look at the cupboard!' 'Don't think of the cupboard!' 'Don't read of the cupboard!' we cry, until we have so roused their innate curiosity that the forbidden cupboard becomes the one topic of their thought and speculation. The high art of training young people, all of whom are in the continental and most romantic stage of discovery, lies in the adoption of some sane and reasonable and satisfying attitude towards the world's wonderful cupboards.

The same is true of Ambition and Imagination. *The Little Child that Is* dearly loves to excel. He wants to win. And the wise parent will not seek to crush his pride of achievement, but to educate it. We must point him out the heights that are best worth climbing, the goals that are best worth reaching, the prizes that are best worth winning. And the culture of the Imagination, too, is surely

well worth while. *The Little Child that Is* has an amazing creative faculty. He peoples every crack and crevice in the solar system with fairies and elves, hobgoblins and ghouls. It is the sense of the Infinite stirring within him. If only we could preserve it to him! What a world this would be if we had a touch of imagination left in it! Our churches are languishing for it. One flash of real imagination would save us from that detachment from reality which is the secret of half our failure. The imaginative faculties of *the Little Child that Is* would enable us preachers to project ourselves into the real lives of our people and to say the things that would really help them. And the world needs it, too. 'I understand now,' says Mr. H. G. Wells, 'why modern electioneering is more than half of it denunciation. There is nothing constructive. That calls for the creative imagination, and few are able to respond to that call.'

Here, then, is your *Little Child that Is*! He is made up of these three priceless ingredients—Curiosity, Ambition, and Imagination. Crush his curiosity, and you will find him sinister, self-satisfied, knowing all he cares to know. Crush his ambition, and you will find him, hands in pockets, at the street corner. Crush his imagination, and you rob him of his power to lead this old world into new joys and new experiences. The father and mother to whom *the Little Child that Is* has come have already tasted of the bliss of heaven; but a fearful responsibility attends their rapture.

IV.

And in a room whose window faces the east, the sunrise, a room called Hope, I found *the Little Child that Is to Be*. A wonderful, wonderful child is he—*the Little Child that Is to Be*. I often feel that I should like to take every young fellow in my congregation into this room that faces the sunrise and show him this sweet and slumbering angel-face. And as he looks down upon the head on the pillow I would say, 'Take care, when you are making love to the girl of your fancy, that you are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a mother capable of maintaining the great and holy traditions of motherhood. Take care that you are winning to yourself a woman whom you can set with pride and confidence before the eye of *the Little Child that Is to Be*, as the embodiment of all that is pure and noble and unselfish and true! And I often feel

that I should like to take every girl in my congregation into this little room with the eastern window. And, as she gazed tenderly down into the sleeping face of *the Little Child that Is to Be*, I would say to her, 'Take care, when you ally yourself with the lover of your fancy, that you are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a father to whom you may always point with proud motherly affection! Take care that you are setting before the eyes of *the Little Child that Is to Be*, when he wakes up, a father whose character he may copy and in whose safe footprints he may plant his own! Take care! Take care!' And I would have both young men and maidens, as they stand beside this sleeping angel, to remember that whenever they yield to temptation they are striking a more terrible blow at *the Little Child that Is to Be* than they will ever be able to strike him with clenched fist. And whenever they resist and overcome temptation they are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a finer heritage than any they will ever leave him in their wills. 'Take care, take care,' I would say to to every man and maiden, 'take the greatest, tenderest care of *the Little Child that Is to Be*!'

V.

I said when I began that there are only four children in the wide, wide world, and that every one of us is the parent of at least one of them. That is so. Every man and woman on the face of the globe has a child of his own—one or other of these four. And a little child is always a leader. 'A little child shall lead them.' And be sure *the Little Child that Never Was, the Little Child that Was, the Little Child that Is, and the Little Child that Is to Be* have come stealing into all our hearts and all our homes that they may lead us, their dusty, world-stained fathers and mothers, out of our sins and out of ourselves to the dear feet of that Holy Saviour in whose radiant and gracious presence the little children always felt at home.

Virginitibus Puerisque.

I.

Easter—1915.

'He is not here, but is risen.'—Lk 24⁶.

My boys and girls, this is Easter morning—Easter morning, 1915.

You know that with people who love the name

of the Lord Jesus Christ, Easter is counted a time for rejoicing. I believe that amongst your grown-up friends here, there are many who came into church with very thankful hearts indeed. Coming along, they felt so glad that they wanted to say to some of the other church-going people, 'Don't you love Easter Sunday? I think it is the next best day to Christmas.' Ministers have often said things like that to you. But I believe that even while they were saying them, they felt that it was impossible for boys and girls really to understand the joy of the Resurrection. To your fathers and mothers, it means a story of joy coming after great sorrow—of life coming after death. Not one of us likes to speak to boys and girls about death, and that simply because we want you to think about life. But on this Easter morning of 1915, we cannot help asking ourselves, 'Why should it be so?'

To-day, we are feeling happy, because Christians have rejoiced in Christ's resurrection for hundreds of years. We all know that He died upon the cross, but—did you ever think what His death must have meant to His disciples? They had been so happy during the three years they had been in their Master's company. They wished for no happier heaven than to be beside Him. There was something of pride in their happiness too, for, had not Jesus the power to work wonderful miracles—even to raise the dead to life? How dark, then, must that day have seemed to them when He was crucified, and they heard the mocking tone of those who said, 'Ah! He saved others, but he could not save himself.' And—we have read the story so often—I do not think it is possible for you boys and girls, or any of us, to think ourselves back to that burst of sudden happiness that came to the two Marys—they were weeping—when they saw the angels at the tomb, and heard what they said.

A good many years ago, I read in the newspapers of a terrible mining disaster. It happened in Fifeshire. Day after day, there appeared news of numbers of men having been rescued. But after nearly a week had passed, sorrowful women and children sat from early morning to late at night at the pithead, hoping and hoping for a sight of those who had gone down one day, and had never come back. At last, when nearly all hope had fled, and despair had settled on the waiting company, the rescuers appeared. They

had two miners with them; but so faint that they could not walk, they had to be supported. I do not remember what was said about their wives and children, or if they had any. But a very strange feeling came over me when I read how those sad and weary women wept for joy, as they went forward and kissed the dear grimy faces.

In a way, nothing could be farther apart from Christ's resurrection. *It* was all beautiful. His sepulchre was hewn out of the rock, and no one had ever been laid in it. Loving hands had dressed Him in beautifully white linen, and the two Marys were met by men in shining garments. But I think their joy was akin to the joy of the humble women in the mining village—it was a wonderful joy full of thankfulness which they could not express.

As I said, it is often felt that the joy of Easter has in it something beyond the understanding of boys and girls. This year, however, our hearts are in a manner relieved. We can talk to you about Easter, as we have never talked before. Do you wonder how this is so? For months and months many grown-up people have been preaching Easter sermons to themselves—Easter sermons, too, that are full of a great and deep joy, and that you could understand. In your homes you have heard your fathers and mothers talking very sorrowfully. You could not help thinking about death as they talked, for you knew that your big brothers and many of your friends were facing it. To many boys and girls—to some, I believe, in this church—the experiences of these past months have been like following their fathers and mothers through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. One mother I know is very timid—she keeps fearing that the worst will happen, and that makes her little girls frightened too.

But— isn't it sometimes a blessing to be able to use that little word?—the resurrection of Jesus. Christ has made this life just a story of dying and living again.

A very brave mother said to me the other day, 'My boy has gone, and now I can ask God's blessing upon him, for I was unhappy till he went.' Her mind was on the Resurrection. In days like these, some people can be glad even in the presence of Death; out of all this sorrow and darkness they look for a new and better nation. My boys and girls, there is no reason why that

new nation should not be pure as the men in white garments. It was needful that even you should know sorrow, for we were all forgetting about God.

A new and risen kingdom of Great Britain! You are to be the men and women of it. To you will fall the duty of upholding its honour. We know that you are not afraid of death in battle for the right; your brothers have shown us that. And they are leaving with you something to remember—and keep. We call it a heritage. Will each of you resolve that in your thoughts and your words you will never prove unworthy of it? If you—if all the children in Scotland, and England, and Ireland do this, the new and risen Great Britain will shine with a light that will throw its beams into every corner of the world. From Christ who died and rose again we get the light that is helping us through our present sorrow.

Will you pray to God to help you to play your part?

II.

The Rev. C. E. Stone, the author of *The Angel in the Corner*, has issued another volume of 'Talks to Children,' to which he has given the name of *Flowers of Gold* (Robert Scott; 2s. net). Here is a fair example of the Talks, both for length and for quality:

Prickles.

Micah 7⁴.

'The best of them is as a briar,' says Micah. What does he mean? You go and buy perhaps a pound or two of nuts. When you examine them you find some have only dust inside and some are withered and dried. They are a poor lot, and so you say, 'The best of them are only like peas.' And Micah thought the people were a poor lot. Why, he said, the very best of them are only like briars with a little blossom and plenty of thorns. I am afraid it is true of us all. The best men and women I know are 'briars' sometimes, and so are the best boys and girls.

When are best people briars? When they are tired. A man who has been at work all day and comes home overtired is apt to be prickly. So are you. There was the long morning at school, then games, then school again, then lessons at home, and as a result you were so tired that you were

cross, and nobody could speak to you without getting a sharp answer. When you feel like that, tell people so, and ask them not to bother you. Better still, go to bed and sleep it off. Jesus was often tired, but He was never cross. Why should you be?

When are the best people briars? When they are disappointed. Father expected a cheque or a big order, and as it did not come, he went home cross. Mother thought she was going to have that new dress, but was not able to get it, and it upset her. You did not get many presents on your birthday, could not go for that outing, had to stop in because of the rain, and as a result you were 'prickly.' How silly it is! Jesus, tired and hungry, came to a village where He expected to spend the night, but they would not let Him. The disciples were cross, but He was not. He expected people to love Him and believe in Him, but they sneered at and hated Him. Yet He was not cross. He was often disappointed, but never irritable and prickly. Next time you feel that way, go to Him and say, Help me to bear disappointment as You did.

When are the best people briary? When they cannot get their own way. If the minister cannot have his way, he is inclined to be nasty; so is the deacon. If the husband or the wife cannot have all their own way they sometimes quarrel. And if you cannot go to the pictures, cannot have those friends in to tea, cannot have that pocket-money, what trouble there is with you. You are as prickly as a porcupine with all his quills standing up.

Now suppose you could have all your own way, and people never opposed you and let you do as you liked and have what you wanted. That would be jolly. Would it? You would become a spoilt child, a nuisance to everybody, and of no use in the world. And that is why God won't let me, nor father, nor mother, have all our own way; and that is why He will not let you have all yours; because He is determined you shall not be spoilt. Next time you are inclined to be prickly, remember that, and it will help you to be content. Jesus did not have all His own way; but it did not make Him cross. He said: 'Thy will, not mine, be done.' And all must try and learn that lesson. If we do, we shall become roses, instead of briars.

III.

How to be a hero.

'We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.'—Nu 13³⁸.

'The Lord is with us: fear them not.'—Nu 14⁹.

When the Children of Israel were on the borders of the Promised Land, Moses sent forward twelve spies—one from each tribe—to find out all about the land. These men received orders to explore the country, and discover whether the soil was fertile or not, what sort of crops grew there, and whether it was well wooded or not. They were also to find out about the inhabitants—whether they were strong or weak, good or bad, and whether they lived in camps or in strongholds. Lastly, they were to bring back samples of the fruit of the land.

When the men returned after forty days, they were divided into two distinct groups. All of them were agreed that for the most part the land was very fruitful, and to prove it they brought back a bunch of grapes, so large and heavy that it had to be carried on a staff between two men. But only so far did their opinions agree. When they came to tell of the inhabitants of the land and of their cities, the spies were divided.

The first group was much the larger, and consisted of ten men. These men had allowed their fears to get the better of them. 'The country,' said they, 'is overrun with wild and warlike tribes, the cities are surrounded with walls—very high and very strong,—and we saw enormous giants there—so big that we felt like grasshoppers in their sight.'

The second group contained only two men, Caleb and Joshua. These two looked at things in a different light, because they remembered what the other men forgot—or chose to forget—that God was with them, and would not forsake them, for He had promised them the land, and willed that they should now go up and possess it. 'Let us go up at once,' said Caleb, 'for we are well able to overcome it.' Then they both reminded the Israelites of God's protecting presence. 'The Lord is with us,' they said: 'fear them not.'

How different are the reports of these two sets of men. The frenzied exaggerations of the ten spies, and the calm, clear, courageous words of Caleb and Joshua. Yet the Israelites listened to the ten cowards instead of to the two brave men.

They wept, and wailed, and murmured against God. They even suggested returning to Egypt, and all the thanks Caleb and Joshua received for their brave stand was a volley of stones.

So God decreed that none of these foolish Israelites should ever enter the Promised Land. They had made their choice. They might have gone on into that rich and fertile country and enjoyed its plenty, but, rather than face a few dangers,—dangers through which God had promised to bring them,—they preferred to stay in the barren wilderness, or return to the persecutions of Egypt. God punished them by ordaining that they should wander in the Wilderness for forty years, that they should die there, and that only their children should enter the Land of Promise. Caleb and Joshua alone were allowed to reach it.

We have all to meet dangers and difficulties in this life, and the way we meet them determines what sort of men and women we are. There are just two kinds of people in the world—those who face up to their difficulties, and those who turn their backs on them and run away. The first are in the ranks of the brave men, the last in the ranks of the cowards. The first often suffer hardship and peril, but from amongst them come the heroes of the world; the last have an easier time, but they never do anything worth doing in the world. To which side would you prefer to belong?

Before we go further I want you to understand clearly what is really meant by the word 'coward,' because it is a word that is very often misused. Remember it doesn't mean you are a coward if you are afraid of things. It is not the people who see no danger that are the bravest, but the people who fully realize the danger, and yet face it all the time. Some people are born brave; they have little imagination, and it is no effort to them to keep cool. Others are possessed of very vivid imaginations, and see the dangers as they are, and often very much worse than they are. Somehow, I have an idea that Joshua belonged to this class; and the reason why I think so is, that when, later on, Joshua was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Holy Land, he was told repeatedly, first by Moses and then by God, to 'be strong and of a good courage.' It seemed as if he needed a lot of cheering and encouraging. Yet Joshua never turned aside from the right path. His was a very difficult task, but whatever his fears

may have been he marched straight on, and led the Children of Israel safely into the Land of Promise.

I want to speak first of our *Imaginary Difficulties*.

The reason why I am putting them first is because I know they are very real to children, and often much worse to face than the real difficulties. I wonder how many of you are afraid to go into a dark room, or to sleep in one. Some boys and girls are very much afraid of this. Fear makes them picture all sorts of terrors. Yet there is nothing in the room at night that was not there in the daytime, and God is just as truly with you as He was when the sun shone. The wrong way to overcome this difficulty is to give way to your fears, and not venture into the room. The right way is to go in bravely in spite of your fears. By degrees you will become less and less frightened, and all the time you will be growing into a hero.

Have you ever seen a horse shying at a bit of white paper on the roadside? The wise and kind rider leads his horse up to the paper so that he may have a good look at it and see that there is no harm in it. That is how we must treat our imaginary difficulties.

Now for the *Real Difficulties*. First among them I shall put our *Tasks*.

That word includes a great deal—it includes our lessons, our duties, and, later on, our daily work, or our business. Sometimes our lessons are a terrible worry. They are difficult to understand, and we would much rather be out playing with other boys and girls. Or perhaps it is a difficult piece of music that taxes our patience, and we feel inclined to throw it aside and take something easier. Well, you can do so if you like—and be a coward. Remember it is only by strenuous effort and hard work you can become brave or great men and women.

Have you ever passed through the station at Newcastle? Next time you do, be sure to look out of the window and you will see a curious thing on the platform—a thing that you think must have got into that place by mistake. What is it? Just a funny, old, ramshackle-looking engine. Yet that engine is a monument to a man of whom Newcastle is justly proud—George Stephenson, who invented the first railway engine. That boy won

his way by sheer pluck and perseverance. He never allowed any difficulty to get the better of him. He began life as a little herd-boy at twopence a day, and step by step he won his way up. He was nineteen before he learned his ABC, because education was not free in those days, and it was not till then he was able to pay the school fee of threepence a week out of his wages. When he brought out his invention, he was met by a storm of opposition. Who ever had heard of such an absurd thing? Every one would be killed who risked their lives in a railway train! Yet George Stephenson held on in spite of much opposition, and in the end he got his way. Where should we have been to-day if George Stephenson had given in?

It doesn't seem a very noble thing, just to stick in, and learn a difficult lesson, but it is all the more noble because there is no glory about it—no blare of trumpets or beating of drums. Perhaps nobody will know how hard you have striven; nevertheless you are laying the foundations of a hero, and, who knows, perhaps some day you will take your place among the great ones of the earth.

When Nelson was a boy he once lost heart and very nearly gave in. He had been at sea some time, had gone through many hardships and dangers and had not yet won the rank of a midshipman. Then his health broke down and he was just on the verge of throwing the whole thing up, thinking he would never reach the top of the tree, when suddenly a great thought came to him. His life was not his own. He had a King and a country to serve. For England's sake he would brave every danger, suffer every hardship, overcome every difficulty. From that day he never turned back, and no boy needs to be told what England owes to Nelson.

We all owe a duty to our country. We owe it to do our best in the task appointed to us. Are we going to turn back from it just because it seems humdrum, and tiresome, and not to our taste? The Israelites turned back. They were afraid of the difficulties and the dangers; they forgot that they owed it as a duty to their God, and to their nation, to go forward at that time. And what was the result? Forty barren years of wandering in the desert; the glory which might have been theirs passed on to other men!

But there is another difficulty we have to meet—the difficulty of *Standing up for the Right*.

To stand up for the right? That is what the brave Belgians did. The Germans asked that they might be allowed to walk through Belgium, and in that event none of the inhabitants should be harmed. That would have been the easy way for the Belgians, but did they agree? Rather than sell their honour, rather than go back on their plighted word, they risked their lives, their homes, their dear ones, their beautiful cities!

That is what hundreds of martyrs did when they gave their lives rather than deny their faith.

And that is what boys and girls are called upon to do to-day. Nobody wants you to be prigs, but there are occasions when you have to stand up for the right whatever the consequences may be. It isn't an easy thing. It often means risking one's popularity, but it is the only honourable course. Perhaps it is a case of taking the part of a weaker comrade who is being bullied and laughed at. The Israelites were splendid bullies; they were also splendid cowards. They found it much easier to stone two helpless men than to go and fight the sons of Anak. Perhaps it is just speaking out bravely when something is being done which doesn't meet with your approval, and when your silence means that you approve of and share in it.

Have you heard of Bishop Patteson, the brave missionary to the South Sea Islands, who was killed by the natives? He was a brave, strong man, not afraid to lay down his life, and he grew out of a brave, strong boy.

When he was at school he was captain of his cricket team, and one of the best players in it. One day, after a match, the boys began to make silly jokes, and use bad words. Patteson stood it till he could stand it no longer. Then he rose and said, 'Look here, I'll not share in this kind of talk, and I'll not listen to it. If it goes on, I must leave the room, and resign from the team.' And he did leave the room, and he did resign from the team. It must have cost him a lot, but it cost the other boys a lot too. Patteson was their best player, and you may imagine what it was like to lose him from the team. They gathered round him, and begged him to come back, and promised never again to annoy him with their bad stories. They kept their promise, and Patteson went back, and led the team to victory.

Stick up for the right then, even if you are in the minority. Don't go with the majority if they are wrong.

In the last place, I want you to think what was the difference between the ten spies and the two. What made them act so differently? Was it their upbringing? No; they had all lived the same life of hardship in Egypt. Was it their position? No; they were all 'heads of the Children of Israel,' each man a 'head' in his own tribe. What was it then? Just this: The ten were measuring *themselves* against the giants, but Caleb and Joshua were measuring *God* against the giants.

That is the secret of true victory—the secret of how to be brave. David knew it when he went against Goliath, Gideon knew it when he went forth against the hosts of Midian with his three hundred. The disciples knew it when they set out to conquer the world for Christ.

And we can know it too. Have you heard the story of Stonewall Jackson at the battle of Bull

Run? The fight was waging very fierce, shells were exploding and bullets flying in all directions. Jackson had been hit in the head; yet still he remained perfectly cool, and apparently indifferent to danger. Another General asked him the reason, and received the reply: 'General, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me.' After a pause he added: 'General, that is the way all men should live, and then all men would be equally brave.'

Whatever be our difficulties, whatever be our dangers, we need never fear them if we can say with Caleb and Joshua—'The Lord is with us.' 'Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.'

In Praise of Faith.

A STUDY OF HEBREWS XI. 1, 6, XII. 1, 2.

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III.

FAITH is a venture; but it is not a *forlorn hope*. It has value, for by it man gains his highest good. Faith has had, and ever has, its verification in religious history and experience. The Christian faith, to which the writer turns in the twelfth chapter, has the verification that the record of the faith of the heroes of faith under the old covenant offers, for 'we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.' It can find its final and absolute verification in Christ, 'looking unto Jesus the author and the perfecter of faith.' Each man can get a verification of it himself in his Christian character and experience, if by it he is enabled to 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *him*, and run with patience the race that is set before *him*' (He 12¹⁻²). Each of these modes of verification demands our closer scrutiny.

(1) About the cloud of witnesses a twofold assertion is made. In the last verses of the preceding chapter it is asserted that not having found full satisfaction for themselves they await

with hope the fulfilment of God's promise in the Christian community. Their good can be completed only by the consummation being wrought out in Christian character and experience. As they apart from us cannot be made perfect, we, in our Christian faith, and what it secures and accomplishes, can minister to their comfort, peace, and joy. In the first verse of this chapter they are represented as by their presence with us, and interest in us, encouraging us in the effort which the Christian life involves, and assuring us that it is not made in vain. How significant and valuable for us who have loved ones in the Unseen both thoughts are!

(i.) They who have lived and loved, suffered and laboured, here on earth for the kingdom of God do not at death snap the thread of continuity between this life and the next. Delivered from sin, sorrow, death, and judgment, they have not yet entered into full possession of their heavenly inheritance, for heaven's completion waits for the fulfilment of God's purpose on earth. It is a