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Our Pulpit.

## David Fighting Goliath: A LESSON ON FAITH.

SERMON PREACHED BY

REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church on Sabbath Evening Sept. 15th, 1889.

"Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."—1 SAM. XVII. 32.

I go back tonight to the romantic past, the heroic age of the church, for a lesson on faith. You see two armies drawn up in battle array on opposite hillslopes, with a valley between them, and a brook running through it, the valley of Elah, so called from the terebinth trees growing there. The army of Israel is under the leadership of Saul their king. The Philistines on the opposite ridge depend for success on a huge giant they have among them called Goliath. The two armies are slow to make the attack. The giant glorying in his huge strength, and feeling sure that he is more than a match for any one man, proposes to decide the battle by single combat, and issues a challenge to that effect. It was not uncommon in those old fighting days to decide battles in that way. The biggest man on Israel's side was the king himself who was head and shoulders taller than any soldier in his army, and no doubt the challenge was specially intended for him. And there was a day in his history when the big king would not have shrunk from Goliath's loud-mouthed challenge. But that day has passed, and now the king is weak in faith, and unworthy indeed to be any longer king. So day by day, morning and evening, for some forty days, the big Philistine strides down into the valley midway between the contending hosts, and with insolent remarks, flings his challenge in the face of the Lord's people, and then strides back again bigger than ever, because there is no one who dares cross weapons with him.

But one morning, when things are growing serious, a shepherd lad from the hills of Bethlehem happens along on an errand from his father to his older brothers in the army. The giant is just sallying out to issue his usual challenge and bellow forth his insolence at Israel and Israel's God. And indeed he is a monster more than nine feet high and strong in proportion, his body covered with a coat of mail, on his head a brass helmet, his feet and legs encased in a huge pair of copper boots, and in his hand a spear like a weaver's beam, he looks to be a most formidable antagonist. The shepherd-boy eyes him. He hears his growl, his profane insolence, and he wants to be at him. So he says quietly to those about him: "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Now, I want you to observe first here, how soon faith finds something to do for the Lord. The shepherd-boy was not a soldier as his brothers were. He only happened along on other business. The challenge was not aimed at him, and why should he take it up? It was for the fighting-men of the army; it was for the king and the tribal chieftains, David might very well have excused himself, and hurried away to his own proper work. But he did not. He felt that the battle was the Lord's, and therefore his. His people were insulted. The church he was a young member of was insulted. The God he feared and worshipped, his God, was insulted. The religion he professed was insulted. For one, then, he could not stand quietly by and hear such daring insolence without resenting it. So, since there was no one else to come forward and fight the giant, he laid himself at the feet of his king and country for this service.

Now, there is work to be done today for the Lord, plenty work, wide fields of labor lying all around, and no one to do the work. And there is fighting to be done, as well as sowing and reaping. Enemies are up in arms against the Lord and His anointed, giant forces of evil, and they are loud and insolent.

Giant intemperance stalks over the land, armed to the teeth, and he flings defiance in the face of God's people. Helmeted in brass, harnessed in brass, booted in brass, brass from head to foot, he dares the church to come on and have it out. And what a monster he is, cruel, relentless, blood-thirsty, deadly! Oh the thousands and tens of thousands slain by this monster, the innocents murdered, the homes wrecked, the property squandered, the wretchedness created, the evil done!

And then there is that other giant, immorality, and his brother giants, irreligion, infidelity, indifference, and up and down our streets they swagger, polluting everything they touch, trampling over sacred rights, daring and defying the people of God to put them down. They come to the church's door. They sit in her pews. They thrust themselves into christian homes. They introduce themselves into society, and want to

have things there and everywhere their way. They are bold and brazen-faced, defiant and daring. They stand at nothing, revel in lust and crime, laugh in the face of Heaven, care neither for God nor man.

Such are some of the mighty Philistines, who today, and among us, are defying the armies of the living God, and working dire ruin in the land. And you and I may say: "It is not mine to fight those giants of today. Let those fight them who suffer by them. Let those fight them whose business it is to fight. Let those in power, our rulers, the city authorities, the custodians of public morals, the people who bear the sword, the big Sauls who are placed and paid to do it;—let them fight."

But now as in David's time the big Sauls in power are afraid to face Goliath. His threats, his big boots, the spear he brandishes, the army at his back, his bullying and bellowing, frighten them, and they deem it better valor on their part to let the monster alone, and that is the policy they are following out. And so they stay up on the mountain-side well out of the way, and they take much counsel together as to what is to be done, they have much talk as to the state of matters, they legislate, they pass resolutions, they exact laws, they offer rewards; in a word, they make a great show of doing—doing nothing. And indeed, not only that, but of hindering as far as they can what is being done.

But the Lord's work is not going to wait, and His cause is not going to suffer, through the incapacity of our rulers and leaders. As yonder at Elah in the long ago, so here today, out of Bethlehem comes a weak one, weak in world power, but strong in faith, strong in the strength of a righteous cause, and this new David says in his own quiet practical way: "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Thus, wherever there is real faith, it does not parley much; it does not say: "It is not my work to fight the giant, to meddle with this affair, to right this wrong, to root out this evil." No; on the contrary, it waits on no one; it does not even stop to calculate the cost of the struggle. It says, "Here is work needing to be done; I will go and do it. Here is a giant evil in the land, that, with his gluttonous mouth, is swallowing down the peace and prosperity of happy homes, devouring the strength and usefulness of promising lives, ravaging the church of God, sapping the foundations of the nation; I will go and cut off his head. He is a big fellow indeed, but I am not afraid. Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

Again: Faith is not easily discouraged. It does not turn back because it finds difficulties in the way. It is not appalled because the opposition is great, the enemy huge in appearance, the dangers formidable. It glories rather in grappling with them and overcoming them. It is glad there are difficulties, an enemy to fight, a lion in the way, a towering giant to close with in deadly combat. And yet, christian faith is not reckless, fool-hardy, presumptuous, heedlessly rushing into danger where it is not called to go.

Goliath was four times the size of the stripling of Bethlehem. He was armed from head to foot, and was trained to the use of weapons. He was at home on the battle-field. He was a man of ripe fighting experience; he had been through and through the fire, and knew what it was to take as well as give blows. He was, in a word, such a formidable foe, that the mere sight of him was enough to conquer most men. In his shining brass panoply, glittering in the morning sun, he must have looked terrible.

And then the roar of him was like a lion's, making the earth tremble. Men said, "If his bark is so dreadful, what must his bite be!" and they took very good care to keep out of the way of his bite, and they would have kept out of the way of his bark too, if they only could, for twice a day it made their knees tremble, and their faces turn pale. Thus, there was much to deter and discourage the shepherd-boy in the seeming terror of the monster Philistine.

And then others had no faith in the success of his undertaking. He did not look to be at all equal to it. To them it seemed utter madness, a reckless venture on his part. The king discouraged the youthful hero, and tried to dissuade him from making the attempt. His own brothers hooted at the idea; they told him to go home and mind his sheep as about all he was good for. Nobody but himself believed in his being able to do anything.

But David's faith was not to be discouraged. He felt it was because they did not know him that they had such a poor opinion of him. He was not with out experience. He had looked danger and difficulty in the face. He had been at close quarters with an enemy quite as formidable as the huge Philistine. He had bearded lions and bears in their own desert fastnesses, and had come off more than a conqueror. And he felt sure, that the strong Lord who had been his help then, would be his help now, for it was not in his own strength he was going

to do this, and the battle was not his, but the Lord's. David was thus discouraged when he would do work for the Lord, and difficulties were piled high in his way, but his faith surrounded them all, and at last his way was clear.

And thus it is always with those who have faith and want to do for the Lord. If, my young hearers, you have the Bethlehem Shepherd-boy's faith, you will not be easily turned from your purpose. There are all sorts of lions still in the way it is yours to take, mighty giants clad in mail opposing your progress and threatening to make short work with you. And would-be friends in their mistaken kindness will tell you how foolish it is for you to be this or that, to try to do anything. They will say, you are too young to be a Christian, too inexperienced to serve the Lord, too boyish to fight with giants. They will ask sometimes what you have to do with religion and religion to do with you. They want you to wait till your beards be grown, till old age begins to wrinkle up your faces. They will say, "go, boys, and play base-ball, and let these great matters of the Kingdom alone. Sling away as much as you like at the birds and the squirrels; but you are too young yet to sling at giants."

But wherever there is a real David, a real child of faith, he will not be put off that way. Discouragements will not deter him. Difficulties will not frighten him. Dangers will not frighten him. Lions in the way will not turn him from his life-purpose. Hearing the voice of the Lord in his soul calling him to a life of faith, his duty, his mission in the world, his work among men, he will press on; and the more you do to stop him, the more persistent he will be to do what it is his to do, and to do what it is his to do. Stop a David! Stand in the way of faith! You cannot stop a David; you cannot stand in the way of faith. You will have to get out of the way, else it will be right over you.

Mistakes, I grant, are sometimes made here. How absurdly silly for every beardless boy to think he must try and do something wonderful for the world because David did it, and he goes hunting over creation for a giant to kill. Boys have large ideas sometimes, and most mistaken ideas, as to their capabilities and mission. They talk about their faith and their untried courage, and all that. But their courage may leak away very fast when it comes to face a real live danger, a real flesh-and-blood giant. Courage too is often fool-hardiness, faith presumption, and a mission a silly boy-dream.

True faith is not wanting of common sense. David was no silly braggart. He knew what he was doing when he said he would go and fight Goliath. He looked to those veterans like raw inexperience; but he was not so inexperienced as they took him to be. He was young in years, but old in experience. His faith was full-grown. Out in the danger-haunted wilderness he had learned to trust in God, and now he comes to the battle-field to fight the giant with a strength beyond his years and looks. There is nothing here to encourage rawness, mere boyishness. It is not precocity we want, not impudence, it is faith in God.

Again, faith uses means, and is particular, choice, skilful, as to the means it uses.

They put a coat of mail on David, great war-boots on his feet, a helmet on his head, and they girded a sword on his thigh, and then they said to him: "Now you are armed; go and fight Goliath." And David took a step or two. But he could not go that way. So he took them off, and asked the king to let him go his own way. This was granted.

Then he took his staff, and his sling, and his lunch-bag. When he came to the brook he gathered a few round smooth pebbles. He selected five which he put into his bag. He could sling with the precision of a skilled marksman. Often had he brought down a partridge from the top of a tree. Now and again he might miss, but three times out of five he was sure of. So he took five of the best sling-stones he could pick up; hard, smooth, round stones. You see he meant to try again if he failed in his first attempt. That is what faith does.

Thus armed he starts out to meet the giant. I hear David saying to himself, "Not very often do I have so large a target to shoot at as the big fellow is." But then the difficulty is to find a place about him not covered over with plates of brass. The giant, however, is thrown off his guard by the insignificance of his antagonist, and his boyishness. So I suppose he throws up his visor in order to have a good square look at David. And now David has him. With a prayer swift as an arrow shot heavenwards he asks for strength and skill, and then running to help the effort he is to put forth, he slings with all his might straight for the giant's broad forehead. There is a moment's pause, while perhaps his hand seeks the bag for another stone. But it is unnecessary. The fatal work is done. With a groan the mighty God-defying giant falls forward to the earth a dead man, the stone having sunk into his forehead. David runs to where he lies to complete the work. He may be only stunned. So coming to him, he draws

(Continued on third page)

## INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

### '89 Summer Arrangement '89

On and after MONDAY, 10th June, 1889 the Trains of this Railway will run daily, (Sunday excepted), as follows

TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN

Day Express for Halifax & Campbellton, 7.00  
Accommodation for Point du Chene, 11.10  
Fast Express for Halifax, 14.30  
Express for Sussex, 16.35  
Express for Quebec and Montreal, 16.35

A Parlor Car runs each way daily on express trains, leaving Halifax at 8.30 o'clock and St. John at 7.00 o'clock. Passengers from St. John for Quebec and Montreal, leave St. John at 16.35 and take sleeping car at Moncton.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN.

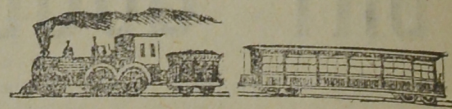
Express from Sussex, 8.30  
Fast Express from Montreal and Quebec, 10.50  
Fast Express from Halifax, 14.30  
Day Express from Halifax & Campbellton, 20.10  
Express from Halifax, Picton & Mulgrave, 23.30

The trains of the Intercolonial Railway to and from Montreal are lighted by electricity and heated by steam from the locomotive.

All trains run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. POTTINGER,  
Chief Superintendent

Railway Office  
Moncton, N. B. 8th June, 1889.



## Northern and Western Railway.

### SUMMER ARRANGEMENT.

In Effect May 20th, 1889.

Trains run on Eastern Standard Time.

A Passenger, Mail and Express Train will leave Fredericton daily (Sunday excepted) for Chatham.

#### Leave Fredericton

3:00 p. m.; Gibson 3:05; Marysville 3:15; Manzer'siding 3:35; Durham, 3:45; Cross Creek, 4:20; Boiestown, 5:20; Doaktown, 6:05; Upper Blackville 6:45; Blackville, 7:10; Upper Nelson Boom 7:40; Chatham Junction, 8:05; arrive at Chatham, 8:30.

#### Returning Leave Chatham

5:00 a. m. Chatham Junction, 5:25; Upper Nelson Boom, 5:40; Blackville, 6:20; Upper Blackville, 6:45; Doaktown, 7:25; Boiestown 8:15; Cross Creek, 9:10; Durham, 9:50; Marysville, 10:25; Gibson, 10:30, arriving at Fredericton, 10:35.

Connections are made at Chatham Junction with I. C. Railway for all points East and West and at Gibson with the N. B. Railway for St. John and all points West and at Gibson for Woodstock, Houlton, Grand Falls, Edmundston and Presque Isle, and with the Union S. S. Co. for St. John, and at Cross Creek with Stage for Stanley.

Tickets can be procured at F. B. Edgcombe's dry goods store.

THOMAS HOBEN  
Superintendent

Gibson, N. B., May 18th, 1889.

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Is hereby given that all communications in respect to matters affecting the Department of Indian Affairs, should be addressed to the Honorable E. Dewdney as Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and not as Minister of the Interior, or to the undersigned. All Officers of the Department should address their official letters to the undersigned.

L. VANKOUGHNET,  
Deputy Superintendent General  
of Indian Affairs.

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