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Our Pulpit.

Following The Lord Fully.

SERMON PREACHED BY

REV. A. J. MOWATT.

In St. Paul's Church, Sabbath evening, Fredericton, Sept. 30th., 1888.

"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land where unto he went; and his seed shall possess it."—NUM. XIV. 24.

My theme tonight is following the Lord fully, and it seems appropriate after the solemn service of eating and drinking at the Lord's table this morning. We were there re-consecrating ourselves to Him and His service, and now it is proper for us to consider how we can best carry out into practical effect our personal consecration. After the feast comes work, perhaps warfare. Now and again the blessed Master takes us apart and refreshes us with a feast, feeds out of His own rich fulness, breaks for us with His own hands the bread of life, and gives us to know the joy of being with Him at His own table. But soon the feast is over, and then rising up and girding his loins, His word to us is, and there is energy in it, almost harshness: "Follow me."

And it is not to be any sort of following. We may follow, and yet not follow. We may follow afar off. We may follow in a go-as-you-please style. We may have our own little schemes to work out in the following we follow. It may be the leaves and fishes we are after. We may follow with the crowd, follow because it is fashionable to follow, or because it pays to follow. We may follow for the sake of the excitement about it, or the fun of the thing. People will say: "It is just splendid to follow; it is a picnic; it is the latest sensation, the last new thing; hallelujah! hallelujah!" Ah! all such following is dishonoring to the Lord, and not the following He wants.

The following He wants, is following Him fully, and we may know the sort of following it is by taking a note of how Caleb followed, for he followed fully.

Caleb was one of those appointed to spy out the land of Canaan when Israel was at Kadesh—Bamea. He was a leading man in the tribe of Judah, and he represented that tribe in that important embassy. From several circumstances it is believed that he was not of Jewish extraction. He seems to have been a Kenezite. His father may have become a convert to the Jewish faith, and may have married into one of the leading families of the tribe of Judah. At all events many critics regard Caleb as not a Jew by birth. But however that may be he was an out and out Jew in heart, and to be a Jew in heart is better than to be a Jew by birth simply. There was not a better Jew than Caleb among all the ten-thousands of Israel. Moses sinned, and his brother Aaron sinned, and his sister Miriam sinned, and all the people sinned. But Caleb did not sin. He followed the Lord fully.

After an absence of forty days the twelve spies returned and reported. They reported the land good, a land following with milk and honey, and they showed the people specimens of the fruits of the land, specially an immense bunch of grapes from the brook Eshcol. But the report upon the whole was unfavorable. The majority of the spies gave a most discouraging account of their visit. The cities of the land were strongly walled, and the people were giants, and they raised a panic of fear in the hearts of Israel.

You have noticed, and I have noticed, when men do not want to undertake an enterprise, what insuperable difficulties they can conjure up to make it clear that they should not undertake the enterprise. Straws are cables then; mole-hills, mountains; tall men, giants, and they themselves grasshoppers down in the grass. Trifles are easily piled up into the mightiest obstructions.

So it was with those cowardly spies. The big Anakims, when they looked down at them, made them shrink and shrivel up until they were no bigger in their own estimation than grasshoppers. But not so with the stalwart Caleb and the youthful Joshua. Caleb took a good look at those big Canaanites, and he saw they looked bigger than they were. They had big bodies, but they had not big souls. He felt that nothing could afford him more satisfaction as a soldier than to get at those sons of Anak with his sword and drive them from their mountain fastnesses. Caleb was a man of strong faith. He had faith in God, faith in the enterprise Israel was undertaking. He had no fears of the result, and he was ashamed and chagrined beyond expression when his brother spies showed so much cowardice and chicken-heartedness. He tried to still the panic and undo the bad effect of their report upon the people. But he could not. The mischief was done, and there was no undoing it. They went so far as to determine upon the choice of a new captain and a return to Egypt.

This led to their wanderings in the wilderness for forty years, and we can understand what dreary trying years they must have been to Caleb. But he followed the Lord fully all those wretched dying years. When the Lord ordered them back to the wilderness from the very threshold of Canaan, he did not rebel. It was none of his sin that drove them back, and he might have refused to share in their punishment. But like a hero, he went back to the wilderness with Israel, and he stayed there the whole forty years, and during all those years we never hear of one murmuring word he ever uttered. The only thing said about Caleb is that he followed the Lord fully, and that is said about him over and over again.

Now, to follow the Lord fully, there must be first of all a beginning. There can be no following of any kind, no anything indeed for that matter, without a beginning, a setting out. I do not know when Caleb began, or how he began, but one thing I am sure of he did begin. And another thing I am sure of he must have begun when he was a young man. There can be no full following that does not begin early. It is no use talking about following the Lord fully, when we do not begin to follow Him till we are on the far side of forty or fifty. Better late than never, but better never late.

Young man, when are you going to begin to follow the Lord? If you want to be a Caleb, if indeed you want to be anything, begin as he did when you are young. Do not hesitate, trifle, dilly-dally. The man who does so in a matter of so much moment never comes to anything. I do not wonder that men are in doubt in matters of little importance, but when life and eternity and all that is grand and glorious is at stake, I have no hesitation in saying that doubt and hesitancy there are as wicked as they can be. Let us be prompt in following the Lord.

Again, to follow the Lord fully, there must be a holding out as well as a beginning. Not a few people begin to follow well enough, but they do not hold out. They soon get tired following. They follow in a kind of way for three months, or six months, or a year, or ten years, and then they give it up.

At the breaking out of the last American war they used to enlist the soldiers for three months, or six months, for short periods. The reason for it was, they expected the rebellion to be put down very soon. But it was bad policy. When their term of enlistment was up, even though it was just on the eve of a great battle, many of those three-month and six-month soldiers would start for home. So the war department learned after a while to enlist only those who were willing to serve till the war was ended.

And in the Lord's army we have some three-month and six-month soldiers. When the real struggle begins, they slink away to the rear, or they desert. Some go clear back to Egypt again; yes, right from the very borders of the promised land back to the land of bondage and darkness and sin.

Now, there is to be no three-month or six-month enlistment in the war of the cross. If you want to enlist in Christ's army, you must do as the true patriots of the American army did, you must enlist until the war is done. He had the true soldier-spirit in him who said, when asked how long a period he had enlisted for: "Till the rebellion is dead or I am dead."

The Lord wants recruits for His army. He wants volunteers. We have had a few more added here, but so few compared with what there should be. I hope that when the next occasion comes round we will have more than we have ever had. Who will come, and come to follow and fight it out to the end? Some have failed in the day of battle. Their fears or foes have overcome them, and faint-hearted they have turned back. O ye faint hearts, come to the front. Do not stay back in your sins, but rally around the cross, and strike hard for truth and liberty. The union army had their Bull's Run, but after that they had their Gettysburg. And we shall conquer in the struggle, if we keep at it. Nothing will be able to stand before the Lord of Hosts and His people. But, like Caleb, we must follow on to the end.

Again, to follow fully, we must follow wherever the Lord leads, whether we like the way or not. Caleb followed when the way was forward to Canaan. By and by the Lord turned round and led the people back to the wilderness again. He sounded a retreat, and Caleb did not like that. Still he followed—followed back to the wilderness.

And there are wildernesses to-day where the Lord leads His people, wildernesses of trial, wildernesses of sorrow and suffering. Ah! we do not like to be led into the wilderness. Christ Himself did not like it. But for all that He went there, and we must follow. And we need not be afraid to follow where He leads, even though it is into the wilderness.

It seemed to be in every sense a backward step to order the people to the wilderness. It was an utter waste

of life to wander there. But God said so, and it had to be done. Still, it was not in vain Caleb was in the wilderness, for he was learning lessons to fit him for his after life, lessons he could not so well learn anywhere else. And it is not a loss to a christian man to be in the wilderness, to suffer and sorrow, to be tempted and tried. It seems a waste of life to be sick, but it is not. We need every pain we have. We need our sicknesses, our headaches, our racking-coughs. We do not know how much our souls need them. And let us not murmur. Let us still follow. Even though the shadows of death are gathering thick around us, let us not hesitate. It will soon be light forever.

Again, we have here how it was Caleb followed the Lord fully. We find that he was almost alone in his following. Joshua was with him, but ten men of influence were against him. It is not very pleasant to be in a hopeless minority, but sometimes it is a man's duty. And Caleb felt that it was his duty to stand up almost alone, since he was taking his stand on the Lord's side. But how was it that he was able to do it? The text tells us how it was, "He had another spirit with him."

If a man does right and perseveres in it, as Caleb did, he does so because he enjoys the indwelling of the Lord's spirit. Flesh and blood are weak, and cannot do right. Some are naturally stronger to do right than others, but the strongest principled would not long do right, and it would not be much of a right at best, if they had nothing to depend on but their own weak resolutions. If Caleb had not had the spirit of the Lord in him, he would have given up following long before the forty years in the wilderness were up. It may not be such a hard matter to follow the Lord or seem to follow Him, when the land of promise, with its milk and honey is a-head; but when the Lord turns right round on the very threshold of Canaan and heads off to the wilderness, and says: "Follow me!" I tell you, it requires a very different spirit from the spirit we have naturally to follow the Lord then. And yet Caleb followed the Lord as fully to the wilderness, and in it, as he did toward Canaan, shewing that he had another spirit in him than his own.

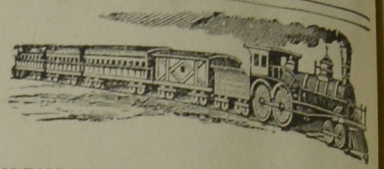
Now, my hearers, if, like Caleb, you want to follow the Lord fully, you must have the spirit Caleb had. You may resolve and resolve to do right, you may make resolution after resolution to be good and true, you may heap them up every communion-season, you may commit them to paper and seal them with an oath, but no resolving on your part will keep you right. Just so soon as difficulties and discouragements meet you, just so soon as you get into the wilderness, and you will soon be there, you will stop following. The truth is, a man cannot follow the Lord at all, much less fully, in the wilderness or out of it, if he has not the Lord's spirit. He may think he is following, and doing very well, but he is not.

Jesus said to Nicodemus that, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Without the new birth you have never seen the loveliness of the face of Jesus, and you are strangers to the mighty influence of His kingdom. I do not wonder that men who have not the spirit of Jesus get tired of following Him. If you do not love what He loves, and hate what He hates, how can you find any pleasure in following Him? How can the man who loves money, and loves to make money, find any pleasure and satisfaction in following the poor Jesus? How can those who like to have a gay glad time in the world find any delight in following Him whose way through the world is tracked with tears and blood? How can the proud like to follow the humble Jesus? They do not like it; they cannot like it. To follow Him you must have His spirit. You must love what He loves and hate what He hates. You must have like sympathies with Him, like aims, like joys, like hopes. You must be able to enter heartily into the great spiritual enterprise He has undertaken. And to do so, you must be born again, you must have another spirit. Trying to follow Jesus without the spirit of Jesus is the greatest drudgery that ever any one attempted.

But you can have the Caleb spirit. It is to be had. Jesus has it to give, and He will give it to you. Jesus told Nicodemus where to come to the possession of the spirit. He led him to the cross. And if you come to the cross, you will get that spirit too, and then you will be able to follow Jesus fully. It will be joy to follow then, joy even in the wilderness.

And then again, we have here the reward of following the Lord fully. "Him will I bring into the land whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it."

The rebels were driven back to the wilderness to die. There was no Canaan for them. But Caleb followed the Lord fully, and the Lord kept him. No wilderness calamities could hurt him. The sun could not scorch his brain or boil his blood. The desert simoons could not poison him. The fiery flying serpents could not bite him. He was safe, be



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11.30 A. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points east.

3.50 P. M.—For Fredericton Junction, St. John and points East.

ARRIVE AT FREDERICTON

9.25 A. M.—From Fredericton Junction, St. John and all points East.

2.15 P. M.—From Fredericton Junction, Vanocomb, Bangor, Portland, Boston, and points West, St. John, Andrew's, St. Stephen, Hotel, Woodstock, and points north.

7.15 P. M.—Express from St. John, and intermediate points, St. Stephen, Hotel, and Woodstock.

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6.20 A. M. Mixed for Woodstock, and points north.

ARRIVE AT GIBSON.

4.25 P. M.—Mixed from Woodstock, and points north.

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