

## Devotional Service.

By Rev. T. J. PARK, M.A.

Again the readers of these columns are treated to bright thoughts and helpful suggestions from minds active and alert in the far West. To the Manitoba readers who have kindly rendered this valuable service, our thanks are due and cordially extended.

THOS. J. PARK.

### JANUARY 19.—"CALEB: CHOOSING A HARD THING."

Joshua 15, 6-15.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Jan. 13. Esther's choice ..... Esth. 4, 1-16  
Tues., Jan. 14. Nehemiah's choice ..... Neh. 1, 1-11  
Wed., Jan. 15. Jonathan's choice ..... 1 Sam. 14, 1-17  
Thurs., Jan. 16. Christ's choice ..... Luke 22, 39-46  
Fri., Jan. 17. Stephen's choice ..... Acts 6, 1-3  
Sat., Jan. 18. Paul's choice ..... Acts 20, 17-27

Our topic this evening is very appropriate to the season of the year. Caleb is eighty-five years old, but he is still young. Some men are old at forty, while others are young at seventy. It is not always a question of years. Forty-five years ago God had made a distinct promise to Caleb. The time has now come for him to assert his right and claim his inheritance. He chose Hebron. A study of the history of those times reveals to us the difficulties involved in this choice. Hebron was one of the most ancient of the cities of Canaan. It was the capital of the Anakim. It was inhabited by the most war-like people of the land. At this time the Anakim had left their stronghold, but were making ready to return and subdue Hebron and the surrounding country. And yet in the face of this, this man of eighty-five years says, "Send me on of eighty-five years, where there are difficulties to overcome; give me Hebron, with its strong walls of defence, its mighty bulwarks, its men of giant stature, for," says he, "in verse eleven, 'As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent; and as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war.' Noble words from a noble man, not afraid of the hard things.

Plutarch says, "To do an evil action is base; to do a good action without incurring danger is common enough; but it is the part of a good man to do great and noble deeds, though he risks everything." So Caleb, undeterred by the difficulties, chose the hard thing. Now, go back some forty-five years, when he and Joshua brought back a favorable report of the land, and unsuccessfully tried to counteract the influence of the other ten spies. In Numbers 14, 24, we have the key to Caleb's character. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereto I went; and his seed shall possess it." In this passage we have God's estimate of Caleb. He says two things about him:

1. He had "another spirit." A spirit in contrast to the other ten. There are "three things" in his spirit worthy of notice:

(a) He had a conciliatory spirit. In the 13th chapter and 9th verse we read, "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses." He tried to conciliate them. He acted the part of a peacemaker. Too many people have anything but this spirit. They are worse than the personal column in a town newspaper; they are a veritable news-bag; all you have to do is to shake them and the gossip-slip will fall out. Always stirring things up. "I am going to tell you an awful secret, but mind you are not to breathe

it to a single person," and then there is poured into the ear of the willing listener a story about some one who had only been received a few minutes before from some one else with the same injunction, "Don't breathe it to a soul." Christ said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." Try it for a while; it will be a good way to commence the year.

(b) He had a cheerful spirit. He saw the giants, but gave prominence to the first. He looked on the bright side. A woman, who said she always looked on the bright side, was asked what she would do if there was no bright side. "I would polish up the dark side," said she. It is hardly possible to overestimate the profitability of this virtue. Some people make themselves, and all who come in contact with them, miserable by always looking for trouble. In summer it's too hot, in winter it's too cold. If a picnic is arranged for them, they at once commence to wonder if it will rain that day. How often we are troubled with the troubles that never come? Mr. Beecher said, when he first commenced to preach, he had to take long trips on horseback. In the spring of one year the streams were swollen and dangerous, and the bridges were very often unsafe. On one of his circuits he had a number of those bridges to cross. He no sooner started out but he was filled with fear lest the first bridge would break down while crossing, but he crossed the first one without accident. He then began to wonder if the next would be safe, but he found, as he came to them, that he said, "I learned not to cross bridges until I came to them." He was cheerful, optimistic, a splendid quality to possess while fronting a bright new year.

"A script on my back and a staff in my hand,  
I march on in haste through an enemy's land;  
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long;  
And I'll smooth it with hope and I'll cheer it with song."

(c) He had a courageous spirit. The other ten said, speaking of the giants, "They are stronger than we." And we are in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we are in their sight." Very true. The person who is a grasshopper in his own sight is very likely to be one in the opinion of others. No such craven spirit lived in Caleb. He said, "Let us go up at once and possess, for we are well able to overcome it." He recognized the difficulties in the way, but he had faith in God and faith in himself. The late Phillips Brooks said, "Be courageous. Be independent. Only remember where the true courage and independence come from."

2. "He followed the Lord fully." It was this that distinguished Caleb from the others. In Numbers 32, 10 and 11, we read, "And the Lord's anger was kindled the same time, and he swore, saying, surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, shall see the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob; because they have not followed me fully," said Caleb," etc. There was a thoroughness about his service. He did not come live and not lose his religion. His affections were not divided. Like Paul he might have said, "This one thing I do." Thoroughness is essential to success in any department of life. The student must be thorough in order to take a high standing in his class. The lack of thoroughness has driven many a business man to the wall. It has robbed the doctor of his patients, the lawyer of his briefs, and the preacher of his congregation.

"He wholly followed the Lord." This entire consecration. The Lord always knew where to put his hand on

Caleb. He was one of those men you could bank on. He is the same at eighty-five as at forty—not a sail taken in, not a flag lowered, not an affection old. Now he claims the promise; now he asserts his right. Forty-five years ago God had promised an inheritance. God never forgets his promises. And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance. This is the reward of faithfulness. Caleb's reward illustrates the immense difference between a full and a partial following of God. It is the difference between the river and the sea. Both are water. The river is good enough in its place, and is useful to man and beast in small services. The sea is something more than water, for it is all but infinite, and as we gaze upon it a sense of its immeasurableness comes over us, as is never the case when we behold the largest rivers. You cannot measure the Christian that wholly follows God, but you can easily take the dimensions of the half-hearted Christian. You get to form an idea of about how much money he will give to a needy enterprise, about how much time to a pressing work, and what pleasures and engagements he will surrender to be present at the League or prayer-meeting. We get tired of these easy measurements. But take a Caleb, and you cannot tell what divine energies are locked up within him, to come forth when needed. There is more in him than ever appears at any one time. Millions perish in the wilderness; only two enter Canaan.

Let us emulate the spirit of Caleb. Do not choose a thing because it is easy. The hard things are usually valuable things. That which costs us little effort is, as a rule, worthless. We are standing at the beginning of a year. Its untold and unknown experiences are before us. Let us meet them with a bright, cheerful, courageous, and optimistic spirit.

"Strong in the strength which God supplies,  
Through his eternal Son."

#### HELPFUL THOUGHTS.

"The conscience of a free man recognizes courage as the foundation of manliness, and manliness as the perfection of human character."—Thos. Hughes.

"In proportion as a man gets back the spirit of manliness, which is self-sacrifice, affection, loyalty to an idea beyond himself, a God above himself, so far will he rise above circumstances, and wield them at his will."—Chas. Kingsley.

"A Christian is the gentlest of men, but then he is a man."—C. H. Spurgeon.

"It is the way to cultivate courage, first, by standing firm on some conscientious principle, some love of duty, by being faithful to truth and right on small occasions and common events. Third, by trusting in God for help and power."—Jas. F. Clarke.

REV. J. C. WALKER, Winnipeg.

### JANUARY 26.—"MISSIONS: THE MISSIONARY AWAKENING. IN MY HEART, IN MY CHURCH, CHRIST'S CHURCH EVERYWHERE."

Romans 13, 10-14.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Jan. 20. The day in song ..... Ps. 72, 7-17  
Tues., Jan. 21. The day in prophecy ..... Isa. 2, 1-5  
Wed., Jan. 22. The day dawn. Matt. 28, 18-20; Acts 1, 4-9  
Thurs., Jan. 23. The day in now. Matt. 28, 18-20; Acts 1, 4-9  
Fri., Jan. 24. The day in earthly triumph ..... Rev. 1, 2-3  
Sat., Jan. 25. The day at high noon ..... Rev. 4, 12; 5, 8

Awake! Awake! A most pertinent and forceful trumpet-call to a larger missionary enthusiasm and effort on the part of God's young sacramental host throughout Canadian Methodism. It is a call to