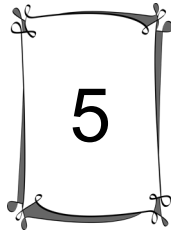


The background of the cover is a photograph of a scenic landscape. A gravel road curves through a valley, bordered by a fence. To the left, a railway track with overhead power lines runs parallel to the road. The trees are in autumn, with yellow and orange leaves. In the distance, a large mountain peak is visible under a cloudy sky. The entire image is framed by a green border with rounded corners.

# Sermons of Robert Murray M'Cheyne

**5. Follow the Lord  
Fully**

**Sermons**  
**of**  
**Robert Murray**  
**M'Cheyne**



**Follow the Lord**  
**Fully**

***“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it”***  
**Numbers 14:24.**

The children of Israel lay encamped below Mount Sinai for about a year, during which time God gave them the law and the tabernacle. Moving across the desert with the pillar-cloud before them, they soon came to Kadesh-barnea, in the edge of the desert, and on the border of the promised land. Here, by God’s direction, they sent twelve spies to search the land, and to bring back word “whether the people were strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds” (Numb. 13:18, 19). Accordingly the spies searched the land from one end to another, going up by the rocky dells of Hebron, and returning by the pleasant vale of Eshcol. After forty days they returned, bearing a cluster of grapes between two upon a staff; also some pomegranates, and some figs. And as they stood in the midst of assembled Israel, all eyes rested on them — all ears were open to hear their report. The land was good, they said, flowing with milk and honey; but the people were strong, and their cities walled, and very great. Two men alone of the twelve stood boldly forward — Caleb and Joshua; and Caleb said: “Let us go up at once, for we are well able to overcome it.” But the people wept that night, and “bade stone Caleb with stones” (Numb. 14:10). And God was angry, and said that the congregation should die in the wilderness. “But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.” (Verse 24.)

***Doctrine.*** It is a blessed thing to follow the Lord fully.

## I. What it is to follow the Lord fully.

### 1. *To follow Christ all our days.*

This was the way with Caleb; he followed the Lord all his days — he followed him fully. We find it recorded of him, forty years after, when he was an old man of eighty-five, that “he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.” He did not follow God for a time, or by fits and starts, but all his days — he followed him fully. *There are many like Lot’s wife*, who flee out of Sodom for a while. She was greatly alarmed — the angels laid hands upon her — she heard the words of warning, and fled for a time; but she soon gave up — she looked back, and became a pillar of salt. So, many are awakened, and flee for their life — they weep — pray — seek salvation; but they do not hold out — they are allured by an old companion or a favourite lust, and so they draw back. *Many are like those spoken of in John 6*: They follow Jesus for a time, and are called his disciples; they hear the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth; but by-and-by some discovery of doctrine or duty is made which offends them: “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus.” It is those who never go back that follow him fully. *Many are like the Galatians*. When Paul first preached to them, they received him “as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” They spoke of the blessedness of being in Christ, and the great salvation. They loved Paul, so that if it had been possible they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him (Gal. 4:15); and yet they did not follow the Lord fully. They were soon removed from the Gospel of Christ to another gospel. “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?” And now they hated Paul for speaking the truth to them. So with many of you. This is not following fully. *Many in affliction begin to follow Christ* (Psa. 78:34). When laid on a sick-bed, or when some bereavement occurs, they take to their Bible — begin to weep

and pray. But the world comes back upon them — temptation — old companions — and they go back. They do not follow the Lord fully.

Ah! how many in this congregation are witnesses that ye have not followed the Lord fully. Ye did run well, who did hinder you? How many of you were impressed! Divine things appeared great and precious in your eyes — you came to the Lord's table — you sat down with solemnity — and where are you now? Have you not gone quickly out of the way? *Those of you who would follow Christ fully all your days, must be like Lot:* Not only flee from Sodom, but flee to Zoar — you must not rest in convictions, however deep. It is a good thing to be awakened, but, ah! you are not saved. If you would follow Christ fully, you must get fully into Christ. *You must continue in his word:* “Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed” (John 8:31). Remember, “ye are saved by the Gospel, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” *You must be like Mary,* who sat at his feet and heard his word. *You must be like aged Simeon:* “Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, the same was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.” Perhaps he was converted when a young man; but it was no slight work — soon over; he followed the Lord fully all his days; and now, when he was an old man, he was still waiting for the Consolation of Israel. He followed the Lord fully, and now he follows the Lamb in paradise. *You must be like the palm tree:* “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing” (Psa. 92:12-14). The palm tree and cedar have both this wonderful property, that they are fruitful

to the last: and so it is with the living believer — he is a Christian to the last full of the Spirit — full of love, full of holiness to the last. Like fine wine, the older the better. “The path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” *You must be like Paul.* From the day of his conversion, Paul was a new creature. The love of Christ constrained him, and he lived no more unto himself, but unto him that died for him and rose again. We never hear of his slackening his pace, or giving over fighting: “Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press toward the mark.” Even when an old man, he did not lose the fire of his love, or zeal, or compassion: “I am ready to be offered, and the hour of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” He followed the Lord fully: he never looked back — he never halted — he never slumbered — he was a second Caleb. So must you be, if you would be saved. “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” Not he that has a good beginning, but he that follows fully.

## *2. To follow Christ with all the heart.*

This was the way in which Caleb followed the Lord — with all his heart — fully. He had no inconsistencies — he followed the Lord in all he did.

(1). *The most of Christians do not follow the Lord fully — the most have some inconsistency.* Most do not reflect Christ’s image in every part. The most do not think it attainable — they are discouraged from seeking it. Many do not think it desirable; at least they think it better for the time to have this and that weakness.

*Some do not follow Christ in his lowliness.* Christ compared himself to the lily of the valleys: “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.” This was to express his lowliness — his genuine humility. Although he had no sin of his own to make

him humble, yet he was humble in his own nature. He did not vaunt himself — did not seek the flattery of men. Some do not follow Christ in this. Some who seem really saved persons, yet have this unlikeness to Christ. They are proud — proud of being saved — proud of grace — proud of being different from others. *Some do not follow Christ in his self-denial.* He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. While we were sinners, Christ died for us. He had not where to lay his head. Yet many who seem to be Christians seek their own comfort and ease before everything else. They do not drink into Christ's Spirit in this. *Some do not follow Christ in his love.* Christ was love. He descended out of love — lay in the manger out of love — lived a life of sinless obedience out of love — died out of love. Yet some who are Christians do not follow him in this — do not love as he loved. Some have little compassion upon sinners — an sit at ease in their own houses, and see a world perish for lack of knowledge. How few will do anything out of love!

(2). *Many Christians have a time of decay.*

*So it was with Ephesus.* At one time they were “blessed with all spiritual blessings” — “chosen to be holy and without blame before him in love.” They were followers of God, as dear children, and walked in love, as Christ loved them. But a time of decay followed, and Christ says: “I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love.” They were not like Caleb — they did not follow the Lord fully. *So it was with David.* When he fell into gross and open sin, his whole soul seemed to decay for a time, all his bones seemed to be broken, and he feared that God would take away the Spirit from him for ever. He did not follow the Lord fully. *So it was with Solomon.* When Solomon began to reign, it seemed as if he would follow the Lord fully. The Lord appeared to him in Gibeon, saying: “Ask what I shall give thee.” “God gave

Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much; and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.” And God enabled him to build the temple, and blessed him in all things. Yet did Solomon suffer a sad decay: “He loved many strange women. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” He did not follow the Lord fully. *So it was with Asa*: “Asa did that which was good and right in the sight of the Lord his God” (2 Chron. 14). By his faith he overcame the Ethiopian army of a thousand thousand. He also made a covenant, and all Judah rejoiced at the oath. Yet he suffered a sad decay. For, when the king of Israel came against him, his faith failed him. And when he was old, he was diseased in his feet; nevertheless he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. He did not follow the Lord fully. So it was with the five virgins. They were wise, and took oil with them in their vessels with their lamps; yet while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. They suffered a sad decay. They did not follow the Lord fully.

Ah! this must not be the way with you, if you would be like Caleb, and follow the Lord fully. You must follow him without any inconsistency, and without any decay.

(a). *You must be like those that say: “I am the Lord’s.”*

“One shall say, I am the Lord’s.” God says: “My son, give me thine heart.” Ye are bought with a price — ye are not your own. If you would be a Caleb, you must give yourself away to him — you must give away your understanding, will, and affections — your body, and all its members — your eyes and tongue — your hands and feet: so that you are in no respect your own, but his alone. Oh, it is sweet to give up yourself to God — to be filled with his Spirit — to be ruled by his Word; a little vessel full of him — a vessel to bear his name — a



vessel afore prepared unto glory! This is to follow the Lord fully.

(b). *You must be changed into the same image.* “We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18). Our foolish hearts think it better to retain some part of Satan’s image, but, ah! this is our happiness, to reflect every feature of Jesus, and that for ever — to have no inconsistency — to be like him in every part; to love like him — to weep like him — to pray like him — to be changed into his likeness: “I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.”

(c). *You must have his whole law written in your hearts:* “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” This is your chief happiness, to let every commandment have its proper place in your heart — to have it graven deep there, so that it cannot be effaced. This is to follow the Lord fully.

### 3. *To follow Christ at all hazards.*

So it was with Caleb. The congregation “bade stone him with stones;” still he did not care, he would do his duty, whatever evil should befall him. He followed the Lord fully. Ah! there are many that follow Christ in the sunshine, that will not follow him in the storm. When the winter comes, the swallows fly away. There are many like the swallows. Many do not follow fully.

(1). Reproach makes many stagger. As long as it is fashionable to be religious, and a man’s character is advanced by it, rather than otherwise, then many follow Christ; but when it becomes a proverb and a byword, many are offended. Butterflies come out when the sun is warm; but a shower of rain makes them hide.

(2). When men lose their worldly ease. When Paul and

Barnabas were going to Asia, they took John Mark along with them; but when the work appeared dangerous, he went back (Acts 15:37).

If we would follow the Lord fully, we must go through good and bad report.

(a). *We must bear his reproach*: “Let us go out to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” We must bear the reproach even of our nearest friends: “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.” We would fain go to heaven without reproach, but it cannot be, if we go the narrow way, and follow Christ fully.

(b). *We must not think of ease if we follow Christ fully*. Christ trod a thorny path: he was crowned with thorns — we must not think to be crowned with roses. Paul says: “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

(c). *We must be willing to lose our life*: “Neither count I my life dear unto myself” — “The time cometh, when whoso killeth you shall think that he doeth God service” — “Whoso findeth his life shall lose it” — “Be faithful unto death” — “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Oh! it is sweet to follow Christ fully, for then we shall reign with him: “If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.”

## **II. How we may be enabled to follow the Lord fully.**

1. *By keeping the eye upon him*. This was what enabled Caleb to follow the Lord fully. He endured as seeing Him who was invisible; he set the Lord always before him. If Caleb had been seeking a name, or his own wealth, fame, or honour, he would not have followed fully — he could not have followed all his days, nor with all his heart, nor at all hazards.

If you would follow Christ fully, you must know him fully. *A sight of his beauty* draws us to follow him. “He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.” “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” There is an indescribable loveliness in Christ that draws the soul to follow him. All divine perfections dwell in him; and yet he offers to save us. *His suitableness draws us to follow him.* He just answers the need of our soul. We are all guilty — he is all righteousness. We all weakness — he all strength. Nothing can more completely answer our soul than Christ doth. The chickens run under the feathers of their mother when they see them stretched out — the dove flutters into the clefts — Noah into the ark; and our soul thus follows Jesus. *His freeness draws us to follow him.* “He will in no wise cast out.” He forgives seventy times seven. It is the keeping the eye on Christ that makes you follow him. It is seeing the King in his beauty that makes the soul cleave to him, and run after him. “My soul followeth hard after thee” — “Run the race set before you, looking unto Jesus.”

2. *By having the Holy Spirit.* Caleb “had another spirit.” The other spies were carnal men; but Caleb had another spirit — he had the Holy Spirit dwelling in him — leading him — upholding and renewing. So with all who follow the Lord fully. The Spirit of God in the soul is a constant stream — a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Lot’s wife looked back; but she had not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is a filling Spirit — he loves to fill the heart — to fill every chamber. “Be filled with the Spirit” — “Now the God of hope fill you.” He loves to write the whole law on the heart — to lift the whole soul to God.

### **III. The motives to follow the Lord fully.**

“Him will I bring into the land.” The other spies died of the

plague — the people fell in the wilderness; but Caleb and Joshua, because they followed the Lord fully, were received into the land.

1. *It is the only happy life.* There is no happier life under the sun than to follow Christ all our days. There is not a more miserable creature on earth than a backslider. Every time we turn aside from following Christ, we are providing misery for ourselves — hidings, desertions, and broken bones. The only happy life is to follow with all our heart. We generally think it is happy to have this or that idol, but we are quite mistaken. Your true happiness is in self-surrender — in giving up your heart and all to him. Any one inconsistency mars your joy — mars communion. Are you not far happier in your times of closest walking with God? O that it were so with me always! Decays bring darkness and misery. The only happiness is to suffer the loss of all things. Many Christians are not willing to deny themselves — to suffer for Christ's sake — not willing to bear reproach or persecution. Christ will give a hundredfold more — peace of conscience.

2. *This is the way to be useful.* It is the thriving Christian that is the useful Christian — the one that follows Christ fully. The blessing to Abraham was: "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing." This was eminently true of Paul. He followed Christ fully; and what a blessing he was! So would you be, if you followed Christ fully. If you bore all the features of Christ about with you, what a blessing would you be to this place, and to the world! — not a cumberer of the ground. How useful to your children and neighbours!

3. *This is the way to die happily.* If you would die the death of Christ's people, you must live their life. Inconsistent Christians generally have a painful death-bed; but those that follow Christ fully can die like aged Paul — "I am ready to be offered;" like Job — "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

4. *This will insure a great reward.* Every man shall be rewarded according as his work has been. Some will be made rulers over five, some over ten cities. I have no doubt that every sin, inconsistency, backsliding, and decay of God's children, takes away something from their eternal glory. It is a loss for all eternity; and the more fully and unreservedly we follow the Lord Jesus now, the more abundant will our entrance be into his everlasting kingdom. The closer we walk with Christ now, the closer will we walk with him to all eternity. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

