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***"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH
ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."***
COL.3.1

WANDERING AND WORLDLINESS.

An Address (revised)

At 65, St. Mary Axe, E.C.

13th Feb. 1917

***by
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An Address by Mr. P.W.Heward
At St. Mary Axe, E. C.
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OUTLINE:

1. Simple thoughts on following the Lord.
 2. What is worldliness?
 3. A tender conscience.
 4. Scripture beacons and Romans 12:1,2.
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It is well, by grace, to have simple thoughts on following the Lord, simple thoughts in the true sense of the word "simple". We do not wish to be of TWO minds. We want to have a definiteness of purpose. We want to have our thoughts occupied with our Lord, and in every sense of the word we often lose much through lack of simplicity. It is easy to be too clever to understand the Scriptures; to be sufficiently clever to explain them away, but not sufficiently wise and disciple-like to obey them.

"Following the Lord" - what does it mean? I would ask you to consider the words which the Holy Spirit has employed. One of the best known is that which is used of Caleb, of whom we read in Num. 14:24 that he FILLED AFTER the Lord. Observe two thoughts - first, the "filling" and secondly the "after" - not only was there the right position but there was also the right condition. "He filled". "Following" is, therefore, a contrast with halfheartedness and a contrast with any idea of slow, dilatory, indifferent semi-enthusiasm. It is the position of subjected submission, but it is not only that. There is also a responsiveness to the will of the Lord, a desire to occupy the path which He has marked out, a filling that which expects a fulness. "Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, that seek Him with the whole heart". Secondly, in 1 Kings 13:8 the word "follow" indicates to walk after. With following there is no mere standing still, there is a progress, a firm stepping forward, and this is of deep spiritual importance. Again, in Psalm 63:8 the word employed denotes to "cleave". In the later Scriptures, the com-

mon verb is associated with the dative, to imply grammatically that those who follow the Lord give themselves to Him. The word of Scripture comes to mind, "My son, give me thine heart". Only SAINTS can give their hearts, and such have a joy that they can so do. Following is, therefore an act of dependence, an act of devotedness, an act of worship. I think we get a measure of interpretation of what following is in John's Gospel. In the first chapter the Lord sees the disciples of John following Him, and He speaks to them, and they go and abide with Him that night. In John 10 we read "The sheep follow Him, for they know His voice, and a stranger will they not follow but will FLEE from him for they know not the voice of strangers". True following is the opposite of fleeing, and it is related to a holy hearing of the Lord's voice. In John 12 the Lord links the word "follow" with the word "serve" - "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be. If any man serve Me, him will My Father honor". In John 21 Peter was WITH the Lord Jesus. He is thus seen following both in chapter 1 and chapter 21; but Peter, having heard the words "Follow Me" in verse 19, TURNS and sees a disciple whom Jesus loved following, and he says, "Lord, and what shall this man do", and the answer is "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? FOLLOW thou Me". There we have the following of the Lord which meant a going under judgment at the hands of men, a path to death, and that death the death of a rejected cross. It is precious, moreover, to notice in this connection, that in 1 Peter 2, we have our beloved Lord leaving an example that we should follow on His steps. The word here employed is a compound and implies that the following is intent and with a resting upon that which is marked out. Another word used in some Scriptures for "followers" - "Be ye followers of God" - is more literally "imitators", - imitating God's attitude of mercy and forbearance. I think you will realize from these different expressions, something of what following means. Examples also will help us. We find

in Num. 32:11,12 a solemn contrast. There were those who did not follow the Lord, and the Lord said, "They have not wholly followed Me, they shall not see the land, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the Lord". The margin, here, I notice, gives "fulfilled after Me". Wholly following the Lord - here is an example. Now, what was involved in Caleb's wholly following-the Lord? There was a quiet, confident, trustful acknowledgment of the TRUTH of what the Lord promised. Caleb looked at everything from God's standpoint. He ~~was~~ saw the Anakim and the high cities as much as the other spies, but he stilled the people before Moses saying, "Let us go ~~up~~ at once to possess it, for we are well able to overcome it", and again he said, "Fear not the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them and the Lord is with us; fear them not". That was the attitude of wholly following the Lord. Following the Lord is therefore, a simply ^{and} acknowledgment of His promises and precepts, so that there is a holy refusal to be biased by circumstances. Unbelief is most unreasonable to a believer, even as faith is most unreasonable to an unbeliever. If I am in Christ, it is my privilege to expect miracles. God is the God of all grace, and faith looks at what God is. Another beautiful example of following is in 2 Kings 18:6. There we have "He clave to the Lord (Hezekiah) and departed not from following Him, but KEPT His commandments which the Lord commanded Moses". To follow the Lord is, therefore, to cleave to HIM, and to keep His commandments. We know what this meant to God's servant Hezekiah. In another Scripture we read that in every work that he BEGAN, in the service of the house of God, in the law and the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with ALL HIS HEART and prospered. Oh, that there may be in us a following the Lord that we may be kept from turning aside after vain things which cannot profit. I am referring to 1 Sam. 12 where God's servant Samuel gives that wonderful instruction. He encouraged Israel that they might continue

following the Lord their God, and added "Turn ye not aside, for then should ye go after vain things which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great Name's sake". It is REASONABLE if we know such a mighty God to bring Him into everything of daily life, it is REASONABLE that children of God should be quite distinct from the world. If they have God as their God, how can they take the standpoint of the ungodly? They have a sanctuary position, and they realize everything is changed; they dare not look at the hindrances and the surroundings as if these had any might at all. God is God, He is living, He is mighty. If we follow the Lord, we shall have a holy deafness to the arguments of man, and a blindness to the things which would ensnare and entrap away from simple obedience. I am persuaded that much wandering comes from taking our eyes off our Lord, comes from an ordinary standpoint instead of joy in the Lord's standpoint. Many will recollect the wondrous words concerning Peter, "He walked on the water to go to Jesus, but when he saw the wind boisterous he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me". If we are occupied with the wind and its boisterousness, if we have fear, we shall soon begin to sink. Fear soon leads to a slough of despond. Fear soon leads to a beginning to sink. It is only mercy we are kept from entirely sinking. The Lord says to Peter, "OH, thou of LITTLE faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" If there is simple following the Lord and looking to Him and confidence in Him, our eyes will be turned away from beholding vanity, and we shall be enabled to look at things from the standpoint which God has Himself marked out. We shall be afraid to be afraid, ashamed to be ashamed, and trustful to be trustful in Him!

We pass now to consider - What is worldliness? A dictionary is useful, but it cannot explain everything. Derivations are valuable, but they are incomplete. Worldliness is worldlikeness. Everything, therefore, which takes the standpoint of the world is worldliness. Herein is a dif-

ficulty. There often comes to my mind the description that was given to Jehoshaphat by one in the last century. His attitude was called "world-bordering", and there is so much world-bordering. Worldliness is not an elastic term, but it is a term of which there are different appreciations. There are some people who will tell us "That is sin to you, but it is not sin to me". I am not quite clear as to this manner of dividing up. I am quite prepared to agree that one child of God is called to an important part of service, and that if another were to take it, that would be sin to the other, but I mean I am not quite clear in adopting the present-day tendency to make different standpoints of sin. Rather should I say I am clear against it. It is not the instruction of the Spirit of God. Sin does not depend on my knowledge of sin. My knowledge of it makes the sin greater, or rather adds ANOTHER sin, but sins of ignorance are sin, and God beholds them as such. Worldliness, therefore, is not to be explained in a way which modifies it to suit individual fancies. Beloved friends, every one of us must feel that there is more worldliness in his life than he can even realize, for worldliness in anything and everything which is like to the world in its moral aspect. There are certain things which we are told to do which the world do as well. We eat and drink, but we eat and drink TO THE GLORY OF GOD, or should do so. It is a Divine arrangement that we should eat and drink - there is nothing wrong in this. There is no worldliness in eating and drinking or with other necessary physical requirements, as, for example, sleep - "God giveth His beloved sleep". We are like to the world in partaking of sleep, yet no one would call this worldliness, but any fellowship with the world in its moral aspect is worldliness. Any taking of the human standpoint is worldliness. Albeit our sense of worldliness does not make a bad action good, our sense of worldliness is deeply important, for the nearer we come to our Lord, the more we shall preceive things to be evil which we did not know to be evil before. I should like to join this point with the third one,

respecting a tender conscience, because there are certain actions which we ALL know to be wrong, there are certain actions which we ALL acknowledge to be right. The difficulty is as to other actions. There is, I presume not a single believer present who would excuse attendance at a picture palace or a theatre. Every believer here realizes that such a wish, even without a putting into action, must be viewed as iniquity, as utter worldliness, and a lack of appreciation of the preciousness of Christ and the evil age from which he is ~~now~~ saved. In like manner, we all know that certain actions are right - it is right to read the Scriptures, it is right to continue in prayer. We have no doubt upon these points. The question is, How shall we deal with other actions about which we may have a measure of uncertainty, and want to be guided? A tender conscience is very precious. Ah, we should never wound this. But there are limitations in our conscience. The most tender conscience is not tender enough. None of us realize fully the small, but powerful, beginnings of sin. Concerning Josiah the Lord said, "Because thine heart was tender". Concerning Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, we are distinctly told he HARDENED his heart. Oh, beloved friends, how important that we should have tender hearts and not hardened hearts, that we should have tender consciences and not darkened consciences - that we should be those who have a tender conscience that we may ~~see~~ perceive sin at its beginning, even as Paul in Romans 7, and hate the smaller manifestations of worldliness, for iniquity will grow upon us and we shall be led further and further astray. I take it, therefore, that our desire is to find out ~~me~~ with a tender conscience what worldliness is, that we may avoid it, that we may hate it, that we may turn from it and pass away. First of all, to understand worldliness and to have a tender conscience, we should know something of Scripture principles. Anything which is against Scripture principles is worldliness. It may not be an outward action of defiance of the Lord, but if it is against Scripture principles it is worldliness.

Let me illustrate what I mean. "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after ~~all~~ all these things do the Gentiles seek): for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things". There is a deeply important message, a deeply important encouragement. Suppose that you or I are occupied with the things of earth and are worried as to how we shall obtain this or how we shall obtain that, though the action may not lead to any indulgence, though there may be no manifest sin before the world, we are guilty of worldliness, our mind is occupied with the food and clothing of earth, instead of being occupied with the Lord. I think you will all perceive that in the light of such a thought, worldliness is not merely a term to be employed in a general, vague, self-satisfied way, but it applies in measure to each child of God, and only as we grow in grace can we see how worldliness degrades in our own lives. There are some things which we at once pronounce worldly. A believer indulges in some fashionable color or cut of clothing. It may be with a brother in Christ, merely a necktie or a gold chain or whatever it is, but we have no hesitation in pronouncing that the action is worldly. Another believer is very satisfied that he abstains from these things. His self-satisfaction is equally worldly. We do well to realize how wide a term "worldliness" is. One child of God forms a measure of friendship with a workfellow, it may be, who, however honorable in earthly dealings and intellectual in conversation, has never passed out of death into life. We have no hesitation, when before the Lord, in describing this as the unequal yoke, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"; but there may be another who has no such friendship but at the same time allows a delight in secular knowledge for the sake of secular knowledge, and for the sake of earthly advantages. This personal worldliness is equally to be branded by the name. Though there may be a marked separation from all outward fellowship with the ungodly I would speak to myself and

speak to you) in this matter, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do we are to do all to the glory of God. Hence there is the sin of worldliness coming in and with worldliness there is wandering. Alas, the above suggestion must make us feel how we have failed - failed in our own experience, and failed in dealing with others, wandering is not merely to be applied to overt acts of sin, wandering begins in the heart. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil HEART of unbelief in departing from the living God". Of Job we are told, "In all this Job sinned not". Then come the ominous words "He sinned not WITH HIS LIPS". We are not surprised that SOON after he opened his mouth and cursed his day. The limitation "sinned not WITH HIS LIPS" seems to imply there was the beginning of sin in the THOUGHTS of the heart. A wandering is any and every departure from the plan of the Lord. I am quite aware that we should describe as wandering, and rightly so, any standing aloof from the gatherings of saints, any admixture with the systems of Christendom, but those are not the only forms of wandering. We talk of wandering thoughts at a meeting - and wandering thoughts imply a measure of wandering on the part of the thinker. If our object is not Christ and Christ only, we have something of wandering, and no believer can boast that he has gone beyond wandering. We should all be humbled to the dust. We all should be laid low, that we may see what wandering is, that we may enter into the meaning of the message in Matthew 6 - "Seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness", and into the attitude of Phil. 3 - "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". We are told in Matt. 6 that after earthly things the Gentiles seek, and this is true, and if we at all become like the Gentiles and are not occupied with the thought of our Lord, I would repeat it, we are wandering from Him, there is a worldliness in some measure. We need to probe ourselves and search our motives - for what do

we want any money at all? For what purpose do we desire any influence over others? In our object the glory of Christ? Why do we desire time? Is it to use that time for our Lord? What is our thought with respect to clothes? Do we seek to obtain clothes which gratify the eye, or is the thought that we must, humbled in memory of Gen. 3, have certain attire, and therefore we would obtain that which avoids unnecessary expense and unnecessary extravagance? What is our thought as to everything? Unworldliness is a ~~an~~ separation from the attitude of the world. It is to look at ^yeverything from the heavenly standpoint, and to realize that we have a citizenship in heaven; and thus our mind is to be in heaven, and we are to be occupied with the desires of our Lord. Unworldliness is to count everything but loss compared with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Unworldliness means using the world simply as an opportunity to please Him, not abusing it, i.e. not using it to the full, not seeking in a worldly sense to do what men call making the best of both worlds, but willing to be rejected here, to suffer here, to lose here. I feel sure we must realize our departure from God in this respect, our worldliness before we are aware of it. Only One was absolutely unworldly - our beloved Lord did ever those things which pleased the Father, but there are some conspicuous examples of worldliness and as beacons they shine out before us. We think of Lot who chose the plain of Jordan because it was well watered. He did not ask from the Lord. The way was open, He had his request - with leanness of soul. He pitched his tent toward Sodom, and the silence of Scripture suggests it was easy to be partly unmindful that the men were sinners. Soon he dwelled in the cities of the plain, and then he was in the gate of Sodom. Warned by the capture from which Abraham delivered him, he did not leave the doomed city. He lost some who ~~w~~ were near to him in the city; his wife, who was yet nearer, was lost, outside the city; his daughters were iniquitous indeed; and we see the perils and the penalty of worldliness. We think of Jehoshaphat

of whom the Scripture speaks so plainly. He ventured to join himself with Ahab the sinful king of Israel, he joined himself with Ahaziah the king of Israel "who did very wickedly, and he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish", and we find on another occasion he was met with these words "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord". True, he repented and would not after allow his ships to go, as 2 Kings tells us. But he had marred his home, and we are not ~~any~~ surprised to find afterwards that the son of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, "walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord". Here was worldliness, Ahab was iniquitous; but Jehoshaphat with kingly courtesy, and with home alliance, and in ~~always~~ suggestive of business confederacy, linked himself with Ahab, and the results were terrible.

God gave a distinct warning to Israel when first He delivered from Egypt; He told them their only safety was in entire separation. There are some who tell us that we can improve others only by mixing with them. Listen to the contrasted words of God, "Thou shalt not make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son, for they will turnaway thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods". The evil will be stronger; it is dangerous to go into false companion-ships with the hope of improving them. Evil has a mighty grasp, and we only have a power over it as we take a stand of obedience to the Lord. In ourselves if we go into evil without the might of the Lord, we shall falter, and we shall not have the might of the Lord in wrong places. We must stand aloof - here is a beacon

to us. We call to mind a Demas who loved this present age; we think of the people of Laodicea, and we are specially told of the angel of the church as to the increase of goods. There is a worldliness with desires to be rich. They had fallen into temptation and a ~~spare~~^{snare}, and into many hurtful (lusts) which drowned men in destruction and perdition. There is a strong natural tendency to wish for earthly learning, and earthly greatness, and earthly comforts - all these are worldliness. The Lord Jesus said to one who wished to follow Him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head". We must be willing to give up everything, and to count all things but loss. The things that are seen are temporal. We must be willing to be counted the offscouring of all things, else there is a measure of worldliness. It is rather remarkable that in all four gospels we have brought before us Peter following to the place where the Lord Jesus was tried. The word "follow" is used in each gospel, and in three of the four it is linked with the words "afar off". When he arrived there, what happened? He sat WITH the servants and warmed himself. If we warm ourselves at earth's fire in a spiritual sense, or rather, an unspiritual sense, we may be sure there will be trouble. We want a warmth of heart for the Lord, the flames of Jah within. If we look after our comfortable condition, if we are unwilling to spend and be spent for our Lord, there is worldliness - we need to be NOT conformed to this age, we need to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. We long, not only to come out from Christendom's forms and ceremonies, but from the attitude of settling down in the world. There are some who will tell us we must not be too peculiar - the danger is all the other way, that we are not ~~quite~~ peculiar enough. There are those who will encourage us that we have already given up enough. How little

have we given up for Him Who gave Himself for us. There are not a few who would spur us on to worldliness by their suggestion that God has given us various advantages, and we can somehow use them for Him. Oh, beloved friends, we need to be detached from all of earth, we need to examine our motives before the Lord, that we may be those who follow wholly after Him, and are simply concerned to please Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us not be too ready to say an action is unworldly, let us not be too ready to excuse it. Let us be exercised in heart before Him Whom we call Lord, and if we feel any difficulty or problem, let us remember that whatsoever is not of faith is sin - so shall we be kept from worldliness, and be kept from our own way, and be drawn to love our Lord the more. So shall we desire, not our own glory, but His present fellowship now and His encouraging "well done" IN THAT DAY.
