

## Devotional Service

BY REV. T. J. PARR, M.A.

### SEPT. 20.—"WHY AND HOW WE SHALL BEAR WITNESS FOR CHRIST."

Acts 5, 27-32.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Sept. 14. Through the Spirit. . . . . Heb. 2, 1-4  
 Tues., Sept. 15. Of Christ's lordship. . . . . Acts 2, 32-36  
 Wed., Sept. 16. Of His power to save. . . . . Acts 3, 8-10  
 Thurs., Sept. 17. Of His kindness. . . . . Tit. 2, 11-14  
 Fri., Sept. 18. Of a hope of heaven. . . . . Tit. 2, 11-14  
 Sat., Sept. 19. Rewards of confession. . . . . Luke 12, 8, 9

Unless there are witnesses for Christianity it dies. Lacking testimony to the truth, which Christ declared, the great cause cannot advance. The audible witness of the tongue and the silent testimony of Christ-like lives are both necessary.

#### WITNESS—ITS MEANING

The word "witness" is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "witian," which means "to know." The root meaning, therefore, of witness is "one who knows"—one who has personal knowledge of anything. So, to witness for Christ, one must know Him by spiritual experience, must have a personal knowledge of Him by the Spirit through His Word. Only thus can one render effective to the Saviour of the world. In a court of law, the statement of a witness is immediately challenged if he testifies to anything of which he has not personal knowledge. If the witness says: "Mr. A. told me that Mr. B. was on the railroad bridge at the time of the accident," the judge would likely say, "Don't tell the court what Mr. B. told you, tell us what you know by actual observation." And the faithful and effective witness for Christ is not the one who says: "I have been told that Christianity is a good thing, that it satisfies the soul and guides the life aright." No! testimony that has real power in it is that which is the outcome of "I know." The strength of the Christian is not in arguing, but in testifying. He bears witness to facts which he knows. Hence just in proportion as he has experienced what Christ can do, and as his nature and life have been, transformed by the truth, can he do his best work as a Christian.

#### WITNESSING—HOW?

All Christians are to be witnesses for Christ, testifying to the reality of religion, to the living presence of Jesus, to His power to save from sin, to guide into righteousness, to support in trouble, to the fulfillment of the promises, to the superiority of Christianity as compared with all other religions.

A Christian bears witness—

1. By His Words.—There is much which can be made known only by his expressing what Christ has done for him and in him. What Christ has done for him is expressed by the atonement. What Christ has done in him is denoted by his regeneration.

2. By His Character and Conduct.—A believer is to be a well-known example of what Christ does for a man. His personal life, his family life, his example in business, in public affairs, in social life, are all witnesses as to what Christ has done for him and can, therefore, do for others.

3. By His Spirit and Influence.—The Christian exemplifies the fact that "Christ worketh in him." He prays and endeavors to answer his own prayer, "Let this mind be in me what was also in Christ Jesus." The Christian man

exhibits the spirit of kindness, justice, mercy—the spirit described in the twelfth of Romans. His influence, conscious and unconscious, is always on the right side. He can always be depended upon in a struggle for moral reform and the ushering in of a better day. Thus he is a constant, an everyday witness to the Master, "who went about doing good."

#### ILLUSTRATION.

Do you wish to know how the Spirit convicts men of sin? Imagine yourself to be in a house where people have lived till now entirely at peace in following sin. When you come, there comes a friend who knows the better life, the fear of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, the love of Christ, which is the fulfilling of the law. You walk in the Spirit and do not bring forth the evil fruits of the flesh. You stand among your ungodly companions as a witness for Christ and his truth. Then the Spirit will convict the others. You may not need even to speak one word. The evil-doers are convicted of their evil-doing by your character and conduct. They learn from you either to serve the Lord with you, or to reject your testimony and fall into greater condemnation. This is one way in which the Spirit convicts of sin and makes faithful witnesses for Christ effective unto salvation.

#### PETER AND THE APOSTLES.

Peter and the other apostles are striking illustration of courage in witnessing for Christ. And what made them courageous witnesses? The Spirit witnessed in their hearts. The Spirit made clear the word of Christ in their souls. He came with power, witnessing to their spirits that they were God's children. They realized that their treasure was in heaven. They were united in one and the Spirit was the messenger passing between them. Thus spiritually equipped, it is no wonder they declared: "we ought to obey God rather than men," and "we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him."

#### ILLUSTRATION.

When the sunbeams have borne witness to the planets and the moon as to the source of their light, they in turn shine in the night and bear witness of the source of their light. When the sunshine bears witness in the flowers of the source of their life, then they bear witness to the source of their life in their varied beauty and sweet odors. So should it be with Christians and Christ.

#### FROM ANOTHER ANVIL

The original Greek word for "witness" is the same as our word "martyr." There can be no true witness-bearing without some suffering.

Christ, we must ever remember, is not speaking for Himself now, but trusts us to speak for Him. What a privilege! What a responsibility!

Effective witness-bearing is an art to be learned by practice. Do not be discouraged if you do not succeed perfectly at first.

Bear witness to what you know about Christ and you will soon know more of which to bear witness.

The apostles had "filled Jerusalem" (v. 28) with their teaching. We are to bear witness for Christ so abundantly that, though much of the good seed may fall, some of it must bring forth fruit.

When men oppose us with sneers and hindrances (v. 29), we are to set off against man, and judge which it is best to mind.

Every Christian is a witness (v. 32) for Christ. How much a man that is on trial relies on his witnesses! And Christ is always on trial before the world that He saved.

We need never worry about our witnessing, since it is only part ours and the rest is the Holy Spirit's (v. 32), who will take care of all of it for us.

#### POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

You will find in the foregoing three ways of witnessing for Christ pointed out. Appoint three members of the League in advance to develop the three suggestions in a brief paper or address. Use the daily readings and have them read at appropriate times in the meeting, or continuously, as you think best. Of course, spend considerable time in testimony, so that the service will illustrate the topic. Are there not some who will witness for Christ for the first time?

### SEPT. 27.—"MISSIONARY: THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD AS A WATCHWORD."

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon., Sept. 21. Getting back his own. . . . . Mal. 3, 16-18  
 Tues., Sept. 22. Gathering scattered flocks. . . . . Jer. 23, 1-4  
 Wed., Sept. 23. The day-star rising. . . . . 2 Pet. 1, 16-19  
 Thurs., Sept. 24. The witness. . . . . Isa. 43, 22-24  
 Fri., Sept. 25. No sunset. . . . . Isa. 60, 19-22  
 Sat., Sept. 26. A whitened field. . . . . John 4, 31-38

The idea of evangelizing the world in a generation, did not originate, as some have thought, with Student Volunteers for Foreign Missions. In substance, and often in practically the same phraseology it has been urged in different generations by leaders of the church, both in Christian countries and on the mission fields. The Student Volunteer Movement, however, was the first body of Christians to adopt it as a Watchword and to promote in an organized way its acceptance by all disciples of Christ.

#### ADoption OF THE PHRASE.

When the Students' Volunteer Movement was fully organized in 1888, one of the first acts of its Executive Committee was the adoption of the phrase, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation," as the Watchword of the movement. From that time to the present, the leaders of the movement in North America have earnestly advocated the idea. The leaders of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union of Great Britain in 1896 adopted the same Watchword. This Watchword was adopted for the movement in the sense of making it a great aim of the movement, toward the realization of which they as leaders would seek to guide its forces. As a result not only many Student Volunteers, but a great number of other Christians, have accepted the evangelization of the world in this generation as a controlling principle in their lives. In a word, it was made the Watchword of a movement in order that it might more widely and more effectively be made the watchword of individual lives.

#### REMARKABLY EFFECTIVE.

In actual use the Watchword has proved to be remarkably effective. This is due to the fact that it is at once concise, comprehensive, definite, instructive, Scriptural, striking and inspiring. It has helped to concentrate the convictions, desires and proposals of a great number of Christians on the work of the world's evangelization. It has exerted a unifying influence among the volunteers. This means much in a movement which has become well-known world-wide. As