

the word "minister" of a dignitary, but it never means a dignitary in the Acts of the Apostles or in the Gospel narratives. It is the equivalent of "servant," the chief minister being therefore the chief servant. Paul conceives of the minister as an under-rower, humbly sitting at his place in his little sphere of service, presided over by the Pilot, the eyes of the servant being always unto the hands of the Master. "And a witness;" "a witness, both of these things which thou *hast seen*, and of those things in the which I *will appear* unto thee."

What is a witness? The word is from the Saxon, "witan," which means "to know." A witness is one who knows, and tells what he knows. And so an experience of grace in our personal history is the indispensable requisite to witnessing for God. A herald is not enough, for he may declare a message, the truth of which he does not know, and sympathy with which he does not possess. God will not have mere heralds. He will not have unconverted people proclaiming His message. He wants a Gospel with a believer behind it.

" Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love,"

and so He keeps even the angels back and thrusts the believer forward; and the humblest child of God who can say, "I am a sinner saved by grace," has a right to tell the story of grace to those who do not know it. And, as experience alone qualifies for witness and gives the right of testimony, so all proclamation of the Gospel, all preaching or teaching, so far as it lacks the experience of grace, lacks power and effectiveness. It is a mere parrot-like repetition, the use of the dialect of the Spirit without that soul of speech which is found in deep conviction, and it is little better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

Moreover, all testimony that lacks deep experience lacks authority. There is a unique right to bear witness which is found in having something to bear witness to; and the indescribable charm of one who speaks from profound conviction and deep spiritual knowledge and experience is something that can no more be described than the aroma of a flower.

Again, notice that Christ says to Paul, "And of those things in the which I will appear unto thee." Witness enlarges in range and scope as experience deepens and broadens. We are told in the 103d Psalm that God "made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel." The people at large saw God's mighty acts, and could not but see them; but Moses knew the ways of God—His plans and secret counsels. Many disciples see God's outward *acts*, and cannot but acknowledge them; but it is the few that linger in the secret place with God, and follow Him most closely in paths of active obedience, who know something about His *ways*. Such witnesses become interpreters of His truth and grace to others; they hold the key of knowledge that unlocks wondrous chambers of experimental truth to ordinary disciples.