

as this revision of its text and versions have, the great vital truths only the clearer thereby; yet here we have it at our hand, in our homes. "Happy is the people that is in such a case," if—ah, those ifs—yet there must it stand—if they take heed to their way according to this word: but "if thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name THE LORD THY GOD, then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful and shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes and pining of souls. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

SERMON

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"And ye shall be witnesses unto Me."—Acts i. 8.

The significant word in the text is the word "Witness." For ordinary purposes the following may serve as a definition: A witness is one who knows and is summoned to tell what he knows. It is to a very large extent a legal term and to legal procedure we must look for illustration. The witnesses in a case are those who are supposed to be acquainted with the facts, and upon their testimony depends the decision. In some instances men are witnesses accidentally. They happen to be where the event in question has occurred. In other instances they are carefully selected and the graver the matter at issue, the greater the care in selecting. When we enter into any solemn compact, when we are doing that which affects the interests of many others beside ourselves, we exercise our best judgment in choosing competent and faithful witnesses.

It was in accordance with this principle and this custom that when our Lord came to live his wonderful life, and do His great work He deliberately chose men who should be His witnesses to all the future of time. When Peter affirmed that Christ was manifested, "not to all the people but unto witnesses chosen before of God" he was saying that which was true not only in the case of the Resurrection, but of all the greater events and profounder revelations of the life of Christ. This band gathered about Christ, not only for their own personal advantage, for their own salvation and spiritual enrichment, but that having fixed their attention upon Christ, having studied His character, and learned His truth they might make their knowledge the heritage of all mankind.

It was this aspect of their life that Christ emphasized in that last wonderful interview on Olivet. Assembled there with their Master, they had ventured to ask a question: "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" But the time was too solemn a one for satisfying curiosity. Christ did what

God so often does with us. He turned their minds from the speculative to the practical. He gave them two things which were infinitely better than the answer they sought. He gave them a sublime promise: "Ye shall receive power." He laid upon them a sublime duty: "And ye shall be witnesses unto Me."

What a charge this was. Let us try to grasp the situation. Christ was about to depart, to speak no more, to be seen no more among men. Century should follow century, and no eye should behold Him. What memorial had He left, what record! The kings of Egypt built mighty pyramids to immortalize their fame. The kings of Assyria have left upon chiselled columns and even upon the bold sides of their native cliffs the hieroglyphics that should commemorate their wonderful deeds. The Emperors of Rome have bequeathed to us triumphal arches which even now bring before us the splendour of their victories. But Christ left no such memorial. He did not commit a single line to writing. His only recorded inscription is the one he traced with his finger upon the sand. He left no parchment, no pillar or pyramid, no arch or temple. On that farewell day He was without the slightest trace of a memorial, save the record that was upon the minds and hearts of His disciples. Whatever impression, therefore, He was to make upon the world depended upon the truthfulness, the courage, the fidelity of these men. If they had uttered an uncertain sound, if they had given a wrong version, or if they had flinched and kept silent then Christ's work would have failed. All His teaching, His tenderness, His suffering would have been in vain. The light of the world would have been only a meteor flashing swiftly from gloom to gloom. Oblivion would have settled like a pall upon Gethsemane, Calvary, and Olivet. Whether then we look upon Christ's work in its own intrinsic value, or in the relations it has borne to the history of mankind, we find in this little company on the mountain top waiting reverently for their Master's farewell, the most pathetic, the most momentous, the most sublime spectacle of history. They were the mediators between Christ and humanity. They were the one living link between the Son of God and the great, sad, sinful world He came to save. They were the witnesses whose testimony should be the fulcrum by means of which God should move the world.

We believe that they were faithful to their solemn trust. Amid tears and blood they were steadfast. Regardless of the fashions of their age, despising alike the sneer of the cultured and the howl of the mob, they preached Christ and Him crucified. We believe that what they preached was the truth because it did the work of the truth. Two facts I notice in regard to their testimony. The first is that in their own time it wrought wonders. It is a fact of history that when Judaism had become petrified, when Rome had become utterly and horribly corrupt there sprang into being as by the breath of God, that thing of beauty, that fair, radiant creature fresh as the dew—the Church of God; and that this came about as the result of their witness-bearing. The second fact is this, that whenever there has been a great welling forth of spiritual life in the world it has been through the New Testament, which is nothing else than the embodiment of their witness. Turn to the Reformation. D'Aubigne says of that great movement: "If Luther and Calvin