

## HOW TO BE A WITNESS... FOR THE RIGHT SIDE!

One great reason why God leaves Christians in the world after their conversion is so they may be witnesses for God - that they may call the attention of the thoughtless multitude to see the difference in the character and destiny of those who believe the Gospel and those who reject it.

The very fact that most people never even think about their sins (or any eternal things) is the great difficulty that stands in the way of true Christianity. Now the Spirit of God is always trying to awaken the attention of men to the subject of their sin and the plan of salvation. Miracles have sometimes been used to capture their attention, and in this way, miracles may become instrumental in conversion (although miracles in themselves never convert anybody). They may be the means of awakening, but are not always effective even as that, and if continued or made common, they would soon lose their power as an instrument of conversion. What is needed in the world is something that can be sort of an ever-present miracle, able not only to get the attention, but to keep it - something that will keep the sinner's mind in continual contact with the truth, until he yields to it. Hence, we can see why God has scattered His children everywhere, in neighborhoods and among the nations - that they may be those continual, ever-present miracles.

### On What Points Are Christians To Testify?

**Generally**, they are to testify to the truth of the Bible. They should be competent witnesses for this. Even the newest convert knows by his experience the truth of the Bible. He may hear arguments by atheists that he never thought of, and that he cannot answer, and all his reasoning may be confounded; but he cannot be driven from his ground. He will say, "I cannot answer you, but I know the Bible is true." It's as if a man should look in a mirror and say, "That is my face." Someone might ask him, "How do you know that's your face?" "Why," he replies, "by its looks." So when a Christian sees the truth pictured in the Bible, he knows what it is, **and he knows it is true!**

**More specifically**, Christians are to testify to:

- The immortality of the soul. (The fact that conscious existence goes on forever - as this is clearly revealed in the Bible.)
- The vanity and unsatisfying nature of all earthly good.
- The fulfilling nature and glorious sufficiency of serving Jesus.
- The guilt of sinners - and the reality of hell as a place of eternal punishment for them.
- The love of Christ for sinners.
- The necessity of a holy life, if we think of ever living for eternity in the presence of God.  
Without holiness, "no one shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)
- The necessity of self-denial and of living above the world.
- The necessity of meekness, humility, and heavenly-mindedness.
- The necessity of complete integrity and an entire renovation of character and life for all who would enter heaven.  
(Of course, it should be made clear that this, as well as the previous three, are only attainable by fully submitting by faith to Christ.)

### In What Way Are They To Testify?

**By word and example** - on every proper occasion by their lips, but mainly by their lives. Christians have no right to be silent, they should "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." (II Tim. 4:2), but their strongest influence as witnesses is by their example. This is universally known, "Actions speak louder than words." But where words and living proof are both displayed, the greatest impact is made.

As to the manner in which they are to testify, **generally** - they should live in their daily walk and conversation as if they believe the Bible. But more specifically:

- As if they believe the soul to be immortal, and as if they believe that death was not the termination of their existence, but the entrance into an unchanging eternal state. It is easy to see that words without example will do no good. All the arguments in the world will not convince mankind that you believe this, unless you live as if you really do. Your reasoning may be flawless, but if you do not live accordingly, your actions will defeat your arguments. They will say, "It's obvious that your reasoning is not true, and that you know it is all false because your life contradicts your theory." Or they will say that, "If it is true, you do not believe it at any rate!" And so all the influence of your testimony goes to the other side.
- Against the vanity and unsatisfying nature of the things of this world. The failure to testify to this is the great stumbling block in the way of mankind's salvation. Here the testimony of God's children is needed more than anywhere else. Men are so struck with their senses (what they can see, hear, feel, etc.) and so constantly occupied with them, that they are most likely to shut out eternity from all their thoughts. A small object that is held close to the eye can shut out the whole ocean. So the things of this world that are near appear so magnified in their minds that they overlook everything else. One important design in keeping Christians in the world is to prove this point to people, **practically**. Who could not see that it would be quite ridiculous for them to testify with their lips that this world is all vanity and all its joys are unsatisfying and empty, while their possessions, lifestyle, and daily conduct testify to everybody the very reverse? Who would believe what they said?
- To the fulfilling nature of Christianity. Christians are called to show by their conduct that they are actually satisfied with the enjoyments of serving Jesus. They are to live like this world is not their home. Their professed belief is that heaven is a reality, and they expect to dwell there forever. But suppose they live in such a way as to prove that they cannot be happy unless they have a full share of the world, and as far as going to heaven, they would much rather remain here on earth than die and go there!
- Regarding the guilt of sinners and the reality of hell. Christians are under solemn obligation to warn sinners of their awful condition, and exhort them to flee from the wrath to come and take hold of everlasting life. But who does not know that the way you say this is everything? Sinners are often struck under heavy conviction by the very way something is said. Say you go to a sinner and talk to him about his guilt and danger, but in your manner you make an impression that does not correspond with your words. You may in effect bear witness the other way and tell him he is in no danger. A man may tell you that your house is on fire in such a way as to make exactly the opposite impression, and you will take it for granted that it is not your house that is on fire. If you live in such a way as to show that you do not feel compassion for sinners around you, if your manner is not solemn and earnest, how can they believe you are sincere? Woman, suppose you were to tell your unconverted husband in an easy, laughing way, "My dear, I believe you are going to hell" - will he believe you? If your manner of life around him is light and gay, you show that you either do not believe there is a hell, or that you wish to have him go there!
- To the love of Christ. You are to bear witness to the reality of the love of Christ, by the regard you show for His truth, His honor, His Kingdom. You should act as if you believe that He died for the sins of the whole world, and as if you put the blame on sinners for their rejection of His great salvation - and for the awful state they are in. This is the only legitimate way in which you can impress sinners with the love of Christ. Christians, instead of this, often make the impression on sinners that Christ is so compassionate that they have very little to fear from Him. I've been amazed to see how a certain group of Christians want ministers to always preach about the love of Christ. But if a minister urges Christians to be holy and to labor for Christ, they call it "legalism." They say they want to hear "the Gospel."
- The necessity of holiness in order to enter heaven. Just talking about this won't do - they must live holy. The idea has prevailed for so long that "we can't be perfect here" that many Christians do not even seriously aim at living a life without sin. They cannot honestly say that they really have tried to live without sin. They drift along before the tide in a loose, sinful, unhappy, and abominable manner, at which undoubtedly the devil laughs, because it is of all others the surest way to hell.
- To the necessity of self-denial and living above the world. Christians ought to show by their own example what the Christian walk is. That is the most powerful preaching - the kind which shows sinners the great difference between themselves and Christians. Many believe they can best make people accept the truth by bringing religion down to the standards of men. As if the nearer you bring religion to the world, the more likely the world will be to embrace it. Now all this is as wide from the truth as the North Pole is from the South, but it is always the policy of carnal and worldly "Christians." And they think they are displaying such wonderful wisdom by taking so much pain not to scare people at the mighty strictness and holiness of the Gospel. They argue that if you show people that such a great change is required in their life, why you will drive them all away! This seems reasonable at first, but it is not true. Let professing Christians live in this lax and easy way, and sinners will say, "Why I can see that I am about right, or at least so near right that it is impossible for God to send me to hell for the few differences between me and these Christians." No, the true way is to exhibit Christianity and the world in wide contrast, or you can never make sinners feel the necessity of a change. If Christians attempt to accommodate religion to the worldliness of men, they render the salvation of the world impossible.
- They are to testify by meekness, humility, and heavenly-mindedness. The people of God should always show a temper like the Son of God, who "while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats." (I Pet. 2:23) If a professing Christian is irritable, ready to resent an injury, to fly into a rage, or to take the same measures as the world does to get even, how is he to make people believe there is any reality in a change of heart? Why, such a person contradicts the Gospel! But nothing makes such a great impression upon sinners or bears down with such tremendous weight on their consciences, as to see a Christian truly Christ-like, bearing injuries with the meekness of a lamb. It cuts like a two-edged sword!

Finally, they are to testify to the necessity of entire honesty in a Christian. This extends to every department of life. Christians need to show the strictest attention to integrity in every aspect of business and in all their dealings with their fellow man.

But unfortunately, the dishonesty of the Church is cursing the world. Now, I am not going to preach a political sermon, but I want to show you that if you mean to impress men favorably to your Christianity by your lives, you must be honest, strictly honest, in business, politics, and everything you do. What do you think those ungodly politicians, who know themselves to be playing a dishonest game in carrying on an election, think of your religion when they see you uniting with them? They know you are a hypocrite!

### Some Important Remarks

It is unreasonable for Christians to be amazed that sinners are not concerned about their souls, nor think about eternal things. Everything considered, the thoughtlessness of sinners is not surprising. For sinners are so taken up with business, pleasure, and the things of the world, that they will not examine the Bible to find out what the truth is. Their feelings are only moved by worldly subjects, because these are the only ones brought into warm contact with their minds. But there is so little to make an impression on them in respect to eternity, or to bring the truth about God home to them, that they almost never have deep feelings about these things. If they were forced to examine the subject, they would be moved greatly - but they do not think about it, nor care anything about it - and they never will unless God's witnesses rise up and testify!

But considering the way the great body of Christians live, it seems they're testifying for the other side! God has left His cause here before the human race, and left His Church, **His** witnesses, to testify on His behalf. And behold! They turn around and testify the other way! Is it any wonder that sinners couldn't care less?

We see why it is that so much of our preaching does so little good, and why so many sinners seem to get "gospel-hardened." But if the Church were to live one week as if they believed the Bible, sinners would melt down right before them.

Suppose I were a lawyer and went into court and spread out my client's case. As the trial begins, I make my opening statements, tell what I expect to prove, and then call my witnesses. The first witness takes the stand, and then proceeds to contradict me to my face. What good will all further pleading do? I might address the jury for a month, and be as eloquent as Shakespeare, but as long as my witnesses contradict me, all my pleading is in vain! Just so it is with a minister who is preaching in the midst of a cold, stupid, and God-dishonoring church. In futility he holds up the great truths of the Bible, while every member of his church is ready to witness that he lies.

Yet there are ministers who will go on in this way for years, preaching to a people who by their lives contradict every word that he says. And these ministers think it is their duty to do so. Duty! For a minister to preach to a church that is undoing all his work, contradicting all his testimony, and refusing to change? No! Let him shake the dust off his feet as a protest, and go to the heathen or to a new place. The man is wasting his energies and wearing out his life, and just rocking the cradle for a sleepy church which is testifying to sinners that there is no real danger.

It is evident that the standard of Christian living must be raised or the world will never be converted. Many churches are depending on their minister to do everything.

When he preaches they will say, "What a great sermon that was! He is an excellent minister. Such preaching has to do good. We shall have a revival soon no doubt!" I tell you, if they are depending on preaching alone to carry on the work, they must fail. Even if an apostle should rise from the dead, or an angel come down from heaven and preach, without the Church to witness for God, it would have no effect.

Every Christian makes an impression by his conduct and witness either for one side or the other. His looks, dress, and whole demeanor make a constant impression, one way or the other. He cannot help testifying for or against God. He's either gathering for Christ or scattering abroad. At every step, you tread on cords that will vibrate to all eternity. Every time you move, you touch keys whose sound will re-echo over all the hills of heaven and through all the dark caverns of hell. Every moment of your lives, you are exerting a tremendous influence that will affect the eternal destiny of souls all around you. You are "*letters, known and read by all men.*" (II Cor. 3:2)

It is easy to see why revivals do not come and stay. How can they? Just look at God's witnesses and see what they are testifying to! Do you suppose I have such a vain imagination of my own ability as to think that I can bring a revival merely by my preaching, while you live on as you do? Do you not know that as far as your influence goes, many of you are standing right in the way of a revival? That your whole spirit and life produce an influence on the world which contradicts the truth? You contradict yourselves, you contradict one another, you contradict your minister. And the sum total of your whole testimony is: *there is no need of being holy!* Do you believe the things I've been preaching are true, or are they just the ravings of a disturbed mind? If they are true, do you recognize the fact that they have reference to YOU? You say perhaps, "I wish some of the rich Christians could hear this!" But I am not preaching to them, I am preaching to you!

Finally, I remark that God and all moral beings have great reason to complain of this false testimony. God's chosen witnesses are turning and testifying pointblank against Him. They declare by their conduct that there is no truth to the Gospel. Heaven might weep and hell rejoice to see this. O how guilty! There you are, going to the judgment, red all over with blood. Sinners are to meet you there - those who have seen how you live, many of them already dead and many others whom you will never see again upon earth. What an influence you have exerted. Perhaps hundreds of souls will meet you on the Judgment Day and curse you (if they are allowed to speak) for leading them to hell by practically denying the truth of the Gospel. What will become of your city, and of the whole world, when the Church is united in practically calling God a liar? They testify by their lives that if they say a little prayer and live a good life, then that is religion enough. O what a doctrine of devils that is! **It is enough to ruin the whole human race!**