

Gold Tried In the Fire

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Study given by W. D. Frazee—July 5,

I invite you to turn to Revelation 3:18. You will note this is a part of the Laodicean message. The laodicean message is the key to the coming events that lie between us and the coming of our Lord. The Laodicean message points out our need personally, and the need of the church. And those who accept the Laodicean message will be caused to seek the Lord with all their hearts for that victory which prepares the way for the glorious outpouring of the latter rain. They will exalt in their lives the standard. They will pour forth the straight truth, or the straight testimony as *Early Writings*, page 270 expresses it.

This will bring a shaking. It will be followed by the outpouring of the refreshing, and the wonderful ingathering of souls that takes place during the loud cry. It will make possible the sealing of the people of God, and with the close of probation will usher in the time of trouble, and on to the coming of Jesus.

As we think of these wonderful things that are just ahead, and as we meditate on the Laodicean message as the key to it, we will see that the heart of the message is the counsel of the true witness. Let us notice what this counsel is:

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich" Revelation 3:18.

For ages gold has stood for value. Here in the message of Jesus to the remnant church He counsels us to buy something of real value.

If you study the whole message, it is evident that we are in danger of attaching things of value to things of no value. He says in the preceding verse, You say, I am increased with goods, and have need of nothing, but you don't know that you are wretched and miserable, and poor.

The man in Bunyan's allegory was raking around in the straw, and every now and then he would find a little gold bead, or some other object that would cause him to grin. Bunyan says that there stood one holding above that man's head a crown of priceless worth, but he could not see it. His eyes and hands were busy with the muck and what he could find there.

God would draw our heart and mind away from the straw of this earth, and from the things that are called riches. He would direct our minds to the true riches, the true value. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire."

We are told exactly what that gold is:

"Faith and love are the true riches, the pure gold which the True Witness counsels the lukewarm to buy"
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4, page 88.

What is the gold? Faith and love.

"The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich" *Ibid*.

Oh friends, it does! The man who has faith and love is rich. When I think of how wonderful it is, I pray God that we all may be millionaires. I pray that our hearts may be full of that love. If we have that love, it causes us to want to do something for others. Love always causes people to want to do something for others.

"Love for souls for whom Christ died means crucifixion of self. He who is a child of God should henceforth look upon himself as a link in the chain let down to save the world, one with Christ in His plan of mercy, going forth with Him to seek and save the lost" *Desire of Ages*, page 417.

There is a chain let down from heaven, and each one who partakes of the love of Jesus becomes a link in that chain. Oh, think of it. Somewhere in this world there is a soul, and you are the connecting link to that soul. Isn't that wonderful? And love will lead us to abandon anything and everything that would interfere with that work. If we have love, we want to win souls. But let me tell you friends, the Devil and the world are bidding high for every one of those links. The Devil wants you not necessarily to be a boot-legger or a gambler. He would be perfectly willing for you to be anything that would hinder you from being a link in the chain let down to save the world.

Soul winning is the great objective of the loving heart. That's what we live for if the love of Jesus is in our hearts. Love makes us want to win souls. Do you want to win souls? Well, if you do it is because you have some love. Do you want very much to win souls? Well then, you have much love.

The thermometer by which you may measure love is how much burden you have to win a soul to Jesus. Love leads us to yearn for souls. Love is the gold the true witness counsels us to buy. Love is not only the motive that leads us to want to win souls. Love is the most effective agency in the winning of souls. Love not only prompts us to labor, it is the most wonderful tool, the most wonderful means.

"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 189.

We can have our choice. Where now there is only one we can have a hundred if we will do what? Humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful. I think we could sum all that up in one

word. Don't you think so? Yes. So love will give us a hundred times what we see now.

This is God's prescription, God's plan, God's recipe for soul winning. God prompts us to win souls. Love itself is the thing that wins. If we would win some, we must be winsome, and love is winsome. Love is what makes us able to reach hearts, so let's pray for that love.

"But, though professing to be converted, we carry around with us a bundle of self that we regard as altogether too precious to be given up" *Ibid*.

Could that be? It indicates that is the thing that hinders us from soul winning. *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 124 puts it this way:

"It is the respect we render to I that so often hinders the growth of love" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 5, page 124.

We cannot live for self and for others at the same time. We cannot be successful in soul winning and at the same time make a name or an easy place for ourselves in this world. Successful soul winning means true love, and true love means turning from self-interest to seek to please and serve others. It means to seek to live for others. Love is an active principle; it keeps the good of others continually before us, thus restraining us from inconsiderate actions lest we fail of our object in winning souls to Christ.

Why will we be courteous to people? Because we want to win them for Jesus. Why will we do some service for them as nurses, as physicians, as teachers, as neighborhood visitors? Why will we be looking for a chance to do something? What we do may be as simple as picking up a handkerchief, or getting a drink of water for someone. It may be something that involves great sacrifice. But why will love seek for those opportunities to be kind and courteous to others? So that we may win them to Jesus. Not so we may win friends and influence people to do what we want them to do. That's plain selfishness. God save us from that kind of politeness. True heaven born courtesy springs from love.

The reason we love people is because they are Jesus' property. He has given us the commission to be the link in that chain let down from the world above to reach that person and the next one. No matter how long the chain is, unless it reaches the soul it has failed in its object. In order for that link to be effective there must be some way that it can be linked onto. Unless we make contact with that soul, and unless that soul responds and links up with us and thus with heaven, we have failed, and the plan has failed. Oh, how earnestly we should seek for that love that will lead us to study how to help people. As the apostle Paul says:

"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved"
1 Corinthians 10:33.

I know we desire that, don't we? Let's study a few very practical things that we can do in seeking that love and in revealing that love.

"Begin to pray for souls" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 1, page 114.

Do you have a prayer list? Prayers will bring souls to the cross. Jesus prayed for His disciples. He taught them to pray for others. He said:

"If two of you will agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" Matthew 18:19.

It is your privilege and mine to claim that promise. Praying for souls by ourselves, and then praying with others.

Some of you are well acquainted with that wonderful challenge where it is asked why two or three do not meet together and pled with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another. If you love souls, you will pray for them, and if you continue to pray for souls, you will love them more. So I would like to challenge each of you. Do you have a prayer list? Is there a name, or certain names that day by day you are pleading with God for? Oh, that each one of us may know that joy.

I find it is a great help to many to actually write those names out on a slip of paper or on a card. Keep it in the back of your Bible, or in some place where you can take it and spread it out before the Lord. And as you pray, God will impress your heart. More than once He will bring to your mind something that you may do. The impressions of the Spirit that come when we pray over souls are of special value. God is giving His directions to those who seek Him for wisdom as to how to work for souls. Begin to pray for souls.

We are not only to pled with God for men, we are to pled with men for God. Speaking of our young people:

"Souls are perishing all around us, and yet what burden do the youth bear to win souls to Christ? Those who attend school could have an influence for the Saviour; but who name the name of Christ and who are seen pleading with tender earnestness with their companions to forsake the ways of sin and choose the path of holiness?"
Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 1, pages 511, 512.

In his new book just off the press, titled *Lamb Among Wolves*, Elder MacGuire tells the story of an experience he had in a week of prayer meeting he was conducting. He was telling the young people who were listening that God would impress them of people to speak to. And if God impressed them to speak to somebody, quite often another voice would suggest, Oh no, I wouldn't talk to that person. He doesn't want to hear anything from you. Don't pay any attention.

In that meeting there was a young man that was impressed that he should speak to another young man. But as soon as he had been impressed that he ought to speak to this other young man, right away came the contrary impression, No. Don't talk to him. He has been expelled from school. He is not interested in anything like this. But the impression kept strong to his heart, and he said, All right Lord, I will do it.

After the meeting he went to this young man and said, "Would you mind coming to my room so we can have a little talk?"

They went up to his room and he said, "I know you have had some difficulties. A couple of years ago I was having difficulties like you are having, and I gave my heart to Jesus. He has changed my heart and has given me victory. I know He can do it for you."

With that he happened to look up. He hadn't been looking right at the other young man, but as he looked he saw tears trickling down his cheeks. He appealed to him to give his heart to Jesus, and they knelt right there.

Elder MacGuire said when that young man saw him soon afterward, he said, "Elder MacGuire, I have just had the most thrilling experience of my life."

Well of course. Wouldn't it be, friends? How did he get it? He got it by following the impressions of the Spirit and pleading with another young man to give his heart to Jesus. Oh, we are altogether too delicate in our work. We are altogether too backward. We are altogether too afraid that someone wouldn't like it. Well, someone won't like it. The Devil never will like it. And the Devil's agents will never like it. And the un-surrendered soul may not like it. But that isn't the point. The point is that someone will listen.

So it is very simply summed up. Pled with God for souls, and then plead with souls for God. Beg God to give you a soul, then beg that soul to give himself to God. Not in an argumentative way. Not in an annoying way. Not in a mere human persistence. But with tender love pleading earnestly, kindly, lovingly, and yearningly. It seems to me that is indeed the goal. What do you think?

Jesus says, "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire." God may try you in the fire so that the gold of love in your heart will be worth something. He may take you through sorrow, pain, affliction, and loss. He may do it to develop that pure gold which is more precious than all the treasures of this world. Let us be willing, as Jesus was, to be wounded, that there may be a place for others in our broken hearts to get some help. What do you say? Let's do it. "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold, tried in the fire."

I want to study a little more about this matter of love. We are not only to love lost men, we are to love the brethren. And strange to say, it is easier for some people to love the down and out in the slums than it is to love their own brothers and sisters. It is easier for some people to go out and do medical missionary work for the depraved and the degenerate who need help in every way than it is to live with people who chafe them.

Do you love the brethren? Well that depends on how much love you have. In Ephesians 5:25 I read that Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Do you love the church? Well, if you have true gold, pure gold, you love the church. Jesus loves the church. That doesn't mean He loves it when it is perfected. He loves it right now. Notice these opening words:

"Dear Brethren of the General Conference: I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 15.

Jesus loves this church. It is His property. It is the object of his supreme regard. In other words, if you could be up there in heaven and look at Jesus and follow His eye, you would see how with the most earnest solicitude and the deepest love His attention is focused upon the church here in this world.

If we are connected with the Jesus our hearts of love will beat with His heart in love and sympathy for the church, and we will love the church as He loves it. If we love the church there are two things we won't do. We won't be saying critical things about the church, and we won't listen with greedy interest to criticisms of the church by others. Is that correct? Yes.

What would you think of a man going around the country collecting all the slander that he could find about his wife? You would conclude that he didn't love her. You might think that he was planning a divorce. If a man really loves his wife, there are two things he is not doing. He is not going around the country circulating critical stories and fault-finding remarks about his wife, and he isn't gathering them up with interest.

If you and I love the church as Jesus loves it, our attitude will be that we will not be interested in either speaking criticism or to hear it. The church is God's property. Jesus is jealous about it. He doesn't like criticism.

I was interested in the following statement. I think you will be. It was in a sermon that Sr. White gave in Oakland, California on October 20, 1906.

"Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another, for by indulging in these words of criticism you blaspheme God's Holy name as verily as you would were you to swear" *Manuscript 95*, 1906.

That is pretty strong, isn't it? Do you know why that is? I'll tell you why. When a person is baptized into God's church he is baptized into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. From then on that soul bears the name of God. And when you and I circulate reports and criticize, and find fault with one who bears the name of God, we are casting reflection upon that name which he bears.

Somebody says, But they are not worthy.

Well, there wouldn't be very many baptisms if God waited to find perfect people before He allowed them to be baptized.

As you look back on your own experience, would you have been allowed to be baptized if God had waited for perfect people before He would have let you be baptized? Aren't you glad God let you into the fold weak and unworthy as you doubtless recognize yourself to be? You bear that royal name. Your brother bears it. Your sister bears it. Oh, let us be united in upholding the family name, the family honor. What do you say? Love will lead us to do that for Jesus' sake.

Do you know what attitude love takes toward the sins of others?

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" 1 Peter 4:8.

Some people don't understand this text at all. They think that if you have enough love it will make up for some of your sins. Not at all. If you have love, you will cover the sins of the people you love. And you do. Peter doesn't say love ought to cover sins. He says love does cover sins. And if you can't do it, it is because you lack love.

Love will cover the multitude of sins. You can prove that for yourself. Think of the person you love best in this world and tell me if you would like to publish their sins and faults. Wouldn't you like as far as possible to hid those weakness from the view of others? Why, of course. And the greater our love the more that is our desire. So it is with the church as a whole, and with individual members. If we have love, we will be in the business of covering those sins.

I might add that we need to remember the only way to get them covered successfully for eternity is to get them under the blood of Jesus. If we see our brother sin a sin which is endangering him, then in love we will want to go to him and warn him and pled with him, and seek to get that sin covered under the blood of Jesus. But meanwhile, we will not want to expose it. We will want to keep it as far as possible from the gaze or notice of others.

As I came to the meeting tonight, if somebody out on the steps had noticed that I had a black mark on my face, what do you think they would have done? Do you think they would have come running in here ahead of me and said, Brother Frazee has a black mark on his face? Doubtless it would have attracted notice. All of you would have set up and been watching when I came in, wouldn't you?

But none of you would have done that. You would have said, Wait a minute Brother Frazee. If you don't mind, I just noticed you have a black mark on your face, and I am sure you would want to know about it before you went in. Isn't that what you would do? Why, of course. And I would say, Thank you. Wouldn't I? I would

run downstairs and get rid of that black mark, and come in here, and none of the rest would know anything about it.

That is the way God wants us to deal with the faults and mistakes of one another. Love will do that. Love will cover the multitude of sins. Oh, I want that love. I want that pure gold. Don't you?

There is one danger in this matter that the servant of God has called our attention to. Suppose we thoroughly learn this lesson, and we become rather sensitive to any thought of criticism. We ought to be. But suppose the turn our sensitiveness takes is that we begin to criticize the people who criticize. I read:

"In this world we shall become hopelessly perplexed, as the devil wants us to be, if we keep looking upon those things that are perplexing; for by dwelling upon them and talking of them we become discouraged. In criticizing others because they fail to manifest love, we shall kill the precious plant of love in our own hearts. Have we individually appreciated and felt the warmth of love which Christ represented in His life? Then it is our duty to manifest this love to the world. Let us fear to dwell upon, to behold and talk of, the great mistakes others are making by not manifesting love to their brethren and sisters" *Ibid*.

So I am not only to avoid criticism, I am to avoid criticizing people who criticize. Why? Because it makes you a criticizer. I think this is very practical and very sound counsel. I am thankful for it, and I know you are.

As we study the life of Jesus, it is interesting to see how criticism was used to seek to discourage Him and His disciples. On some occasions the critics came to Him and criticized the disciples.

One Sabbath they were coming home from church (Matthew 12). As they came through the fields of grain, the disciples began to pluck some of the heads of grain to eat. The Pharisees began to criticize the disciples to Jesus. They didn't come to the disciples and say, Why are you doing this? They came to Jesus and said, Now what about those disciples of yours? They were criticizing the disciples to Jesus.

But again and again we see them turning the thing the other way, criticizing Jesus to the disciples.

"When the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"
Matthew 9:11.

Do you see the technique? Now, that is the Devil's way, and you and I ought to be initiated. We ought to be orientated. We ought to be understanding so that we will not be thrown off the track.

If you are carrying on a work for God, believe me, somebody is going to come to you and criticize the leaders in the work you are doing. They are going to criticize the way they do things. And some of those same people are going to come around to the leaders and criticize you and the way you do things. That's the way the Pharisees did with Jesus and the disciples. Don't feel complimented by it when it happens. And don't feel that you are getting wisdom. It is the wisdom of the serpent.

Sr. White says that a world of criticism would be stopped if people would remember that anyone who will expose the faults of others to them will expose their faults to someone else.

I heard an old proverb that puts it very well. Any dog that will bring a bone will carry one. So the next time somebody comes along to you with a critical statement, or a critical question, remember that same person thirty minutes later may be telling somebody about your faults, your weakness, your failures. Don't forget about the Pharisees and Jesus and His disciples.

Let me tell you, there is no way to please the criticizer. When the criticizer comes in the room, it wouldn't make any difference what the temperature is. He can think of some reason why it ought to be different. It ought to be a little cooler or a little warmer. You can put him down at the nicest table, and he can look around over it and find something that would be nicer if it were a little different. Some people think that is a mark of wisdom. It is not. We are told that those people would criticize the food at the table of the Lord in heaven. And if they would do it in heaven, don't be surprised if they do it here on earth.

Never think that this place or program can be brought to the point where everyone who comes here will have no criticism to make. It would be nice if it could be, but it won't happen. What shall we do then? Do what Jesus did. He went right ahead with His work. That's what we ought to do. We are to seek to please all men in all things. But we are to remember that the apostle tells us that if it is possible, live peaceably with all men. He recognized it wasn't always possible. We will have to recognize it, and not get down in the mouth and become depressed and worried and fearful if everybody who comes along doesn't appreciate everything.

I am going to read you something I very seldom read. This takes me back twenty-six years ago. For some reason the Lord impressed dear Elder W. C. White, the son of Sr. White to take an interest in me, and I cherish the letters from him that I have received, and the many manuscripts and testimonies from Sr. White's writings that he sent me from time to time. I was just a young man holding a series of meetings in a California city, but my work was under criticism because we were standing for certain principles. The following is from a letter he wrote to me in 1931:

"I rejoice to know that you are planning to open a public effort soon in San Hosea. I advise you to follow the example of your Master in spending some days in fasting and prayer, and in study of the snares and temptations

and opposing forces that you will necessarily meet before you undertake the public effort.

"I beg of you, Brother Frazee, to not take too seriously criticism and condemnation which may be pronounced against your work. Many things are said that are not fully believed by the one who says them, and you should be as one having ears and hearing not, and eyes and seeing not. In your estimation of your brethren, judge not according to the sight of the eyes or the hearing of the ears, but maintain righteous judgment.

"Your Master carried on a work which was approved by heaven amid varying circumstances. Sometimes He was loved and praised by the multitude. Sometimes He was opposed and condemned, but He did not allow either praise or condemnation to unfit Him for the heaven appointed work that He was doing."

My dear friends, as long as we are in this world we are going to be criticized. Let's do our best to learn from the criticisms that come to us. If it is something we can correct in a way to make the work better, let's do it. But let us never think that if we will do enough the criticism will stop. No. There is such a thing as the impossible, and that is impossible. Jesus found it so, and we too will find it so.

In *Mount of Blessing* I find a recipe that teaches us how we can have this love that will keep us from all criticism and judging, and that will lay hold of souls and win them to Christ:

"He who looks often upon the cross of Calvary, remembering that his sins placed the Saviour there, will never try to estimate the degree of his guilt in comparison with that of others. He will not climb upon the judgment seat to bring accusation against another. There can be no spirit of criticism or self-exaltation on the part of those who walk in the shadow of Calvary's cross. What will coming to the cross take from us? Every spirit of criticism and self-exaltation.

"Not until you feel that you could sacrifice your own self-dignity, and even lay down your life in order to save an erring brother, have you cast the beam out of your own eye so that you are prepared to help your brother. Then you can approach him and touch his heart. No one has ever been re-claimed from a wrong position by reproach, but many have thus been driven from Christ and led to seal their hearts against conviction. A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins" *Mount of Blessing*, pages 184,185.

Let us heed the counsel of the true witness, to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, for no one else can furnish it. And remember, gold is faith and love. Love which leads us to feel toward others as Jesus feels toward them. Love that seeks to win them in the most tender, loving ways, praying to God for them, and pleading with them in behalf of God.

Our Father, we thank Thee for this view of the pure gold. We choose to accept the counsel tonight to buy this gold. Give us this love. For that gold, Lord, we choose to give up selfishness, criticisms, self-pleasing, and seeking to have things our way. We choose to let Thee use us to please others. And we thank Thee in Jesus' name. Amen.

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