

How to Grow a Witness

#0121

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 7, 1956

[Recording started in progress]

...to bring us tonight a message regarding the coming of Jesus. Christ is coming. Let creation bid her groans and travail cease. I think you'll enjoy this strong rousing note of triumph and praise concerning the coming of our blessed Lord.

[Choir sings "Christ is Coming" hymn.]

Christ is coming! Let creation from her groans and travail cease;
Let the glorious proclamation hope restore and faith increase;
Christ is coming! Christ is coming! Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace.

Earth can now but tell the story of Thy bitter cross and pain;
She shall yet behold Thy glory, when Thou comest back to reign;
Christ is coming! Christ is coming! Let each heart repeat the strain.

Though once cradled in a manger, oft no pillow but the sod;
Here an alien and a stranger, mocked of men, disowned of God.
Christ is coming! Christ is coming! Come, Thou blessed Prince of Peace!

Long Thine exiles have been pining, far from rest, and home, and Thee;
But, in heav'nly vestures shining, they their loving Lord shall see;
Christ is coming! Christ is coming! Haste the joyous jubilee.

With that blessed hope before us, let no harp remain unstrung;
Let the mighty advent chorus onward roll from tongue to tongue:
"Christ is coming! Christ is coming! Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come!"

Come Lord Jesus, quickly come. Why doesn't He come? For over a hundred years now, in a special way, the children of God have been expecting Him, and have had a right to expect Him. For over a hundred years, we've been living in the generation that was not to pass until He should appear. For over a hundred years, we have been living in the glare of those meteors that flaming across the sky proclaim that it was time to *know* that He is near, even at the door. Why doesn't He come? Somebody must come first. Matthew 17:11:

"...Elijah truly must first come, and restore all things"
Matthew 17:11.

Jesus can never come until the work of Elijah has been accomplished, and the things that Elijah is to restore have been restored. We've been told in *Ministry of Healing*, page 349:

"The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home. The work of parents underlies every other" *Ministry of Healing*, page 349.

And so, of the all things that Elijah is to restore preparatory to the coming of our Lord, this restoration of the home is fundamental and primary. That is indicated in the very prophecy itself:

"Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" Malachi 4:5–6.

Note that this is the specific prophecy dealing with the coming of Elijah the prophet *before* the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Only those that accept this message and experience it will escape the curse. Oh, what a curse is spreading over this world, dear friends. What a terrible curse. Divided hearts and broken homes are filling up this world. There is only one remedy. It's the message of Elijah. He has come to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers. Those who accept that message will see homes built up after the divine blueprint. Heaven's order, Heaven's discipline, Heaven's love revealed here on earth; they will escape the curse. But all the world outside of that holy experience will be under the curse: the curse of broken homes, a lack of love, no order, chaos, anarchy. This is what the world is coming to. This is what it is even now entering into.

Can we bear the thought, dear friends? Even if it were possible to be that we should be saved without our children, can we bear the thought that we should go to Heaven and leave children and youth behind in this awful world? There are some verses that ring in my ears from time to time that I want to share with you tonight, written by Elizabeth Rosser.

Are all the children in? The night is falling,
And storm clouds gather in the threatening west;
The lowing-cattle seek a friendly shelter;
The bird hies to her nest; The thunder crashes;
wilder grows the tempest, And darkness settles o'er the fearful din;
Come, shut the door, and gather around the hearth-stone:
Are all the children in?

Are all the children in? The night is falling,
When gilded sin doth walk about the streets.
For, 'at the last it biteth like A serpent!' Poisoned are stolen sweets.
Oh Mothers; guard the feet of inexperience,
Too prone to wander in the paths of sin!

Shut the door of love: against temptation!
Are all the children in? Are all the children in? The night is falling,
The night of death is hastening on apace.

The Lord is calling "Enter thou thy chamber,
And tarry there a space." And when He comes;
the King in all His glory, Who died the shameful death
our hearts to win, O, may the gates of Heaven shut about us,
With all the children in!

May it be so, but there is something still more wonderful. Glorious as is the vision of all our children saved, there is something still more glorious that Heaven has in mind, and it is that, that I trust the Spirit of God will direct our minds to it in a special way tonight, it is this: God intends through these children and youth to make His crowning demonstration and His last appeal to this world. Angels are watching. The whole universe is looking on with anticipation, waiting to see that which thing that prophets have foretold.

Note in the book of Isaiah. The setting of this is the advent—the church watching for the advent. The setting is that of a people who are having the seal restored to the law in their hearts. So I read:

"Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
And I will wait upon the Lord that hides His face from the
house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the
children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for
wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in
Mount Zion" Isaiah 8:16–18.

God's purpose for the children growing up beside our hearths today is greater than our restricted vision comprehends. They are not merely to be saved as brands plucked from the burning in this awful world, my friends. Oh, no. They are to be heroes of faith, witnesses as was Joseph amid the corruption of Egypt, as was Daniel amid the paganism of Babylon, and as was John the Baptist crying in the wilderness of his time, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." Friends, that is the destiny to which our children and youth have been called. It is for that purpose that they have been born. We set our sights too low when we plan merely for them that they shall be saved with us in the kingdom of God. Glorious as is that goal, it is not high enough. And may I tell you, it is not high enough even to ensure for its own success. There is something more for our children, I repeat, than to be snatched from the wickedness of this world. They are not to be criminals barely pardoned. They're to be more than conquerors. They are to be *witnesses*—the greatest witnesses that God has ever had in this world.

Notice this in *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 202:

"As Jesus in the temple solved the mysteries which priests and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this earth children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an astonishment to men

who now talk of 'higher education.'" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 202.

How old was Jesus when He had that experience? Just 12 years old. May I say right here, dear friends, that Jesus in His life as a child was an example of what our children can be. In His life as a youth, He was an example of what our youth can be. And as He at that early age solved the mysteries that the priest and rulers could not discern, so (what does that word 'so' mean? In the same way) in the closing work of this earth (what is the closing work, what do we call it? The Loud Cry) children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an astonishment to men who now talk of higher education. Oh friends, I can think of no greater destiny for any son or daughter of Israel. Can you?

I read on:

"As the children sang in the temple courts, 'Hosanna; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,' so in these last days children's voices will be raised to give the last message of warning to a perishing world. When heavenly intelligences see that men are no longer permitted to present the truth, the Spirit of God will come upon the children, and they will do a work in the proclamation of the truth which the older workers cannot do, because their way will be hedged up" *Ibid.*, page 203.

Do you see? When folks like brother Craw and me and some of the rest of you are behind prison bars, God is going to have some children and youth who, under the influence of His Spirit, will step into the breach and give the closing witness—the last call.

Do not think for a moment that they're going to be children with an ordinary experience. Each one will resemble the children of the King. Each one will be to this generation what Joseph was to his day, what Daniel was in Babylon, and what John the Baptist was in Judea. It will take that. And it is for the production of such witnesses that Heaven is waiting. And it is *in* the production of such witnesses that Heaven is employing its forces, its powers at this hour. Oh, I pray that our souls may thrill to the glorious opportunity of this hour. Did you notice an expression there echoing the thought from Isaiah 8:18?

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel..." Isaiah 8:18.

That's it. As Jesus in the temple solved the mysteries which priest and rulers had not discerned, so in the closing work of this world, children who have been rightly educated will in their simplicity speak words which will be an *astonishment* to men who now talk of higher education. God is going to have some signs and wonders in the boys and girls, the young men and young women, that have been (mark it) *rightly* educated, and it all hangs on those two words right there: "rightly educated."

That's my subject tonight: rightly educated, or how to grow a witness. Notice I said, "grow," not manufacture or build. You don't manufacture witnesses. You can manufacture tractors and automobiles and refrigerators. You can manufacture jet planes and atom bombs. But you can't manufacture witnesses. They are grown. They are developed as Jesus was developed.

Turn to Isaiah 53 please and note the second verse. This is speaking of Jesus; over 700 years before He was born, the prophet wrote it down.

“...He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant...” Isaiah 53:2.

How was Jesus to be made to develop? He shall grow up. How? As a tender plant. I'd like to read you an inspired comment on this text. It's found in the book *Counsels to Teachers and Parents*, page 140. It applies this text to Jesus and to our own children.

“In both His physical and His spiritual nature Jesus followed the divine order of growth, illustrated by the plant, as He wishes all youth to do” *Counsels to Teachers*, page 140.

Jesus grew up as a tender plant; He wants *our* children to grow up as tender plants. The Psalmist echoes:

“That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth” Psalm 144:12.

Oh, that every boy and girl here may be one of those tender plants growing up in the garden of God, to bear much fruit for His glory.

Now let us turn to Luke 2, and notice what it said concerning the growing up of Jesus. The record of the childhood and youth of Jesus is very significant, significant for its brevity. Thirty years are covered in a few verses. Concerning His growth and development, the main two verses are Luke 2:40 and Luke 2:52. The first verse deals with His childhood, the other one with His youth.

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him” Luke 2:40.

The child did what? Grew. He grew how according to Isaiah? As a tender plant.

“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” Luke 2:52.

Now, notice the comment on these verses in *Counsels to Teachers*, page 141. The work of parents and teachers is here suggested:

“They should aim so to cultivate the tendencies of the youth that at each stage of their life they may represent the natural

beauty appropriate to the period, unfolding naturally, as do the plants in the garden" *Counsels to Teachers*, page 141.

How are they to develop? Unfold naturally as what? The plants in the garden. I fear so many people are like the little girl that I read of some time ago who ran into the kitchen where her mother was preparing dinner saying, "Oh mother, I've been out in the garden helping God."

The mother said, "Why darling, what do you mean 'out in the garden helping God?'"

"Well," she said, "some of the buds weren't open yet, and I flowered them."

She got them opened, all right, but you know what they looked like. You know what they *didn't* look like.

God is not looking for precocious children—hothouse grown, forced youth. He's not looking for prodigies that will flame across the sky like a meteor, attracting the attention of the multitudes, and then go out in darkness. He's looking for little plants that'll grow up naturally, quietly; unfolding petal by petal, at each stage representing the natural beauty appropriate to the period. When Jesus was a child, He spoke as a child. He didn't dazzle men by talking as an adult. He was a child—a good child, an obedient child—but a child.

"Those children are most attractive who are natural and unaffected. It is not wise to give children special notice, and repeat their clever saying before them. Vanity should not be encouraged by praising their looks, their words, or their actions... This encourages pride in them, and awakens envy in the hearts of their companions..."

"The little ones should be educated in childlike simplicity. They should be trained to be content with the small, helpful duties and the pleasures and experiences natural to their years. Childhood answers to the blade in the parable, and the blade has a beauty peculiarly its own. The children should not be forced into a precocious maturity, but should retain as long as possible the freshness and grace of their early years" *Ibid.*, page 141–142.

I want to ask you something, friends. Is that the way the world is going? Is it? You know it isn't. You know, for example, that before any of us here in this room were born, God sent this people messages through the Spirit of Prophecy, that until children were 8 to 10 years of age, the only teachers were to be who? Parents. And the only schoolroom where? The home and nature, and the only textbook what? The book of nature.

But do you know it's hard to find anybody that is content to do what that says? Do you know why? "Why, my child will get behind." Get behind what? Why, my dear parents, if the children are going to take that road, how in the world will they

ever be like Joseph or Daniel or John the Baptist or Jesus? Jesus got behind by staying out of school until He was eight or ten years of age, didn't He? Or did He get behind still more? We have yet to plumb the depths. We have yet to scan the heights of true education as it applies to the development of the remnant. We have yet, my friends, to cut loose from this whole idea of keeping up with the world.

"The children should not be forced into a precocious maturity, but should retain as long as possible the freshness and grace of their early years." Oh, what a pretty picture, but how rarely is it seen in three dimensions; rather the opposite, which I find illustrated by the insane desire of the commercial world to get things on the market. They'll pick fruit green and then run it through certain processes to make it look like it's ripe. You buy it and taste it, and if you've ever tasted fruit ripened on the tree, you'd say, "What miserable stuff."

That's the type of children and young people that are coming onto the stage at the present time. They have to be sprayed and painted and trained and drilled to act and perform and show off, for they lack the real sweetness that comes only from being left on the tree to ripen in the garden of God.

In *The Desire of Ages*, in that wonderful chapter on "Blessing the Children," we're given some precious instructions to parents and teachers concerning dealing with the little ones children. Again, it compares them to plants in the garden.

"Parents, in the training of your children, study the lessons that God has given in nature. If you would train a pink, a rose, or lily, how would you do it? Ask the gardener by what process he makes every branch to leaf to flourish so beautifully, and to develop in symmetry and loveliness. He will tell you that it was by no rude touch, no violent effort; for this would only break the delicate stems. It was by little attentions, often repeated" *The Desire of Ages*, pages 515–516.

Ah, there's the key, friends: little attentions often repeated.

"In dealing with your children, follow the method of the gardener. By gentle touches, by loving ministrations, seek to fashion their characters after the pattern of the character of Christ. Encourage the expression of love toward God and toward one another. The reason why there are so many hard-hearted men and women in the world is that true affection has been regarded as weakness" *Ibid*.

It goes on and says the only hope for people that have grown up to adult life with that stiff, cold, unlovely and unlovable disposition is to be melted by the love of Christ and develop a different attitude. Well friends, that's the picture as given here in this wonderful book of how to train our children in this science and art of love, to be like Jesus.

You know, the Loud Cry is to be a revelation of God's love, such as the world has never seen. And it's our children that are to have a part as we have seen in that.

But now, let me come now to a very important point. I trust every parent and every child and youth will listen carefully for the next few minutes as I deal with something which is most important: In response to a leadership of love on the part of parents, there must be the submission of love on the part of the child. This must be not only in what we think of as infancy and childhood, but it must also continue on through youth.

Now, I'm coming into something which is *just* as different from the popular conception as our diet principles are different from what the world is doing. In our educational principles, and I mention it so you will understand that I am deliberately presenting something entirely different from the worldly concept; for its objectives are entirely different.

God wants our young people to follow the example of Jesus. And what is that? Turn back to Luke 2. You remember at the age of 12, He had so far advanced in His understanding of God and His relation to God that He recognized Him as Father. He knew His mission by the time He was 12 years old. What did He do? Did He start out on a wonder tour as the boy preacher? Nothing of the kind, my friends. Nothing of the kind.

“And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them...” Luke 2:51.

He was what? Subject unto them. That was when He was 12 years old. When He got to be 15 or 17 or 18, He began to be pretty independent; they couldn't do much with Him anymore. Is that right? When He got to be 21 then He really got out and did great and wonderful things. The carpenter shop was no place for a young man of His talents. He had a career to carve out for Himself. He had something wonderful to do, and He couldn't stick around that little, old town of Nazareth, and be out there with His father and mother in the humdrum things that they were doing; He had something *important* to do.

Am I right? No. I'm wrong, just like millions of other people are wrong. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was what? Subject unto them. And that verse covers the years between 12 years old and 30 years old.

Is that really so? Is that really true? What in the world was the matter? Maybe if He could have had the advantages of some of these schools, He wouldn't have had to stay so long. That's why He did not go to those schools. That's why God didn't send Him there. God wanted a type of fruit that is developed by staying *on* the tree. He wanted a peculiar sweetness of character that comes in contact with the tree. Jesus stayed there and got it, thank the Lord. God's going to have some people today who are going to get it—some children and youth. And I hope some of them are sitting here tonight, and I hope the parents of some of them are sitting here tonight.

Desire of Ages, page 74, I want to read you something:

“Jesus is our example. There are many who dwell with interest upon the period of His public ministry, while they pass unnoticed the teaching of His early years. But it is in His home life that He is the pattern for all children and youth”
The Desire of Ages, page 74.

Oh, that God may help us to see the glorious vision. But do you know that those very years from 12 to 30 cover the period when young people in general are full of restless longings and striving and chafing at the bit, and the desire to break away and do this, and do that, and do the other thing? It has become so common that the word normal is even applied to it. It's no more normal than to have a blood pressure of 180. It's certainly common. It's certainly typical, but not normal. Thank God it is possible for children and youth to grow up as a tender plant, not as a kicking mule. It's possible, and God is going to have some young people that will do it. I believe, friends, some of them are sitting here tonight.

I want to read you something from *Volume 2*. This is written to a young man by the servant of the Lord. I'd give a good deal to know what the young man who got the letter did with it. This particular young man didn't have parents; he didn't have to. God in His love and mercy provided a home for this young man so he could be with some other people. And that may be what He's provided for some of you. If you don't have parents, or if your parents are not where you are, if God in His love and mercy has provided somebody else to act the part of parents, then listen carefully to what this says. If you're with your own parents, listen carefully to what this says:

“You feel that you may assert your liberty and act like a man. You feel that it is time for you to think and act for yourself. ‘I am a young man and no longer a child. I am capable of discriminating between right and wrong. I have rights, and I will stand for them. I am capable of forming my own plans of action. Who has authority to interfere with me?’”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2, pages 307–308.

You know it must have been interesting when he got this message from the prophet to have his thoughts so clearly put on paper. Don't you think so? Now I know exactly how this fellow felt, because I felt that way more than once. But I thank God that the Spirit of Prophecy tells young people how to relate themselves to those feelings. That's the important thing. You may have the feelings. Most people do. It's what you *do* with the feelings that makes the difference between a Joseph and a Judas.

“Wise is that young man and highly blest who feels it to be his duty, if he has parents, to look up to them, and if he has not, who regards his guardian, or those with whom he lives, as counselors, as comforters, and in some respects as his rulers, and who allows the restraints of his home to abide upon him” *Ibid*.

Oh friends, I would like to invite everybody here in your teens and twenties to memorize that sentence that I've just read. It tells you how to be wise. It tells you how to be highly blessed if you're with your parents or with those that God has supplied in place of them. It says the way you will be wise and highly blessed is to regard those that God has placed as your counselors, as comforters, and in some respects as rulers, and to allow the restraints of home to abide upon you. Notice the wording of that, "To allow the restraint of home to abide upon you."

You know, there comes a time in a young man's life and in a young woman's life when you have the physical strength and the mental strength to break the ties if you choose—you have it. There comes a time when mere physical strength cannot hold you anymore. Oh, how Godly parents watch and pray as the feelings of maturity begin to stir; the desire to be grown up and to act grown up begins to assert itself. May I tell you on the authority of what I've read tonight, the greatest proof of *true* maturity that you can show is to allow the restraints to abide upon you. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

Choose it, young people. Do not wait until somebody comes out there in the pasture with a good rope and lassos you and ties you up hand and foot and puts a bit in your mouth. Oh, no, don't be as the horse or the mule. Never. Be like Jesus, Who went down to Nazareth and was subject unto them of His own free, voluntary will. And He continued in that attitude until He had reached a settled maturity and the ability to do a work for God. Oh friends, *you* can be like that if you will, but very few will.

I want to ask you something tonight: Parents, will you take up a work of this kind? Will you blend authority and affection? Will you train your children to look to you for leadership, for guidance? Will you pray earnestly that you may bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God? Let me tell you that young people in their teens are not ready, even in Christian homes, to take the wheel of their lives and drive. They need the guidance of fathers and mothers in Israel. The more they know, the more they know they want it. The less they know, the more ignorant they are, and the more they spurn it, and want to assert their independence and show what they can do. It is not in that attitude that God will find the Joseph or the Daniel, the Esther, or the John who will bear His message and make His demonstration today. Never think it, friends.

God is looking for young people who will love to put their hands with the hand of father and mother and their older counselors and say, "Dear father, dear mother, dear father and mother in Israel, I want to go with you in this work. I want to be with you in growing a character for God. I don't want to jump the fence and show what I can do like a blazing meteor. I want to be like a tender plant in the garden of God, waiting God's time for the unfolding of each petal, happy in the assurance that God knows where I am and what He has made me for, and leaving with Him the hour of unveiling to the world."

The last verse in the first chapter of Luke says about John the Baptist:

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and

was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel”
Luke 1:80.

How old was he? Thirty years old. I’m not trying to work on the arithmetic figure of 30 tonight. That isn’t my thought at all. I’m talking about something far more fundamental. I’m talking about a program of education—a relationship between youth and those older that is heaven-born, and that is entirely foreign to the spirit of this day. I invite parents to take up their God-appointed work. Instead of thinking that their job is to train teenagers so they’ll be wise enough to know and do everything, and then leave it with them, rather encourage them in that confiding love which seeks counsel and is glad to cooperate.

I’m appealing tonight to every child and young person here to know your precious opportunity. Oh, what a glorious privilege you have to be born in a home with somebody to love you and lead you to God. What a privilege you have of being here in a program of education where parents and teachers and counselors are all working together to get you ready to bear God’s last message to the world.

May we bow our heads for prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we pray that Thou will cause us to see light in Thy light tonight. May we see the glorious destiny to which we’ve been born. As parents and teachers, may we accept it. As children and youth, may we accept it and glory in it. May we never be tempted by the crowd outside that dares us to leave the privileges of royalty and be covered with the mud of the gutter. Oh, rather may we thank God that we’ve been born sons and daughters of the King, and may it be our happy choice to be reared in a manner that will make us ready to accept the responsibilities that are soon to be placed upon us. Like Jesus, may our mission ever be before us. May we let the modern crowd rush on its crazy way and not be tempted to take one step with them. Rather, may we thank God for the retirement of country life, for the quietness of these hills, for the message of beauty in nature, for the inspiration of Thy Word, and for the discipline of fathers and mothers in Israel who will help us to develop those characters through which Thy last and crowning demonstration of love shall be given.

[The Appeal]

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