

Revelation 3:18 (L. Douglas Nicolet) 167599

The Christian Shepherd: 2000, Editorial: Paying the Price (3:18)

"I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

These words of counsel, spoken by the Lord Jesus in view of the lukewarm spiritual condition found in the assembly at Laodicea, strikingly show His loving desire and faithful care for His assembly. To those who have an ear to hear, desiring to be overcomers, the Lord's counsel is vital, for it contains a promise of reward. It is also clear, revealing that it will cost something to walk pleasing to Himself in this world. And it is urgent because He, as righteous Judge, is about to solemnly disown the lukewarm Laodicean assembly.

Laodicea spiritually had no cup of cold water (Matt. 10:42; Mark 9:41) to offer as refreshment, nor was the report of their condition "good news from a far country," for it did not refresh His blessed heart as cold waters (Prov. 25:25). There were no mighty men evident in Laodicea—such as had willingly hazarded their lives, bringing Bethlehem's water to refresh their beloved David (2 Sam. 23:15-16).

Rather, the condition of the Laodiceans was so nauseous to the Lord Jesus that the assembly is about to be spued out of His mouth. May His warning and counsel make us willing to buy that which will refresh His blessed heart. It is to those who overcome that the Lord Jesus says, "I grant to sit with Me in My throne" (Rev. 3:21).

The Lord counsels each to buy of Him three things—gold, white raiment and eyesalve. Let us make a spiritual application of these, allowing them to picture morally the three great principles of Christian life that are found in the earliest epistle of Paul (1 Thessalonians). "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:3). These three—faith, love and hope—were not operative in the assembly at Laodicea—the last state of the church—as they had been at the first with the Thessalonians. If they are to be living and active in our lives, we must be willing to pay a price.

"Work of Faith"—Gold

The Thessalonians had "turned to God from idols" (vs. 9)—from that which was visible and tangible to that which was unseen—a proof that their faith was real and working. It had cost them much to take that step of faith. They experienced persecution—perhaps even loss of earthly goods (Acts 17:1-15). But when tried by the fire of persecution, their faith was found more precious than the gold (1 Peter 1:7).

The Laodiceans, who considered themselves rich, felt no need to pay the price for that which the Lord counseled them to buy. They felt increased with what their flesh desired and shunned the trials and persecutions connected with the path of faith.

Are we willing to pay the price of daily walking by faith? It will cost as much to walk thus today as it did the Thessalonian believers. But possessing that divine gold—tried and tested faith, which endures until it gives way to sight—is surely worth the cost!

(Little Flock Hymnbook #168)

"Labor of Love"—White Raiment

We read in Revelation 19:8 that the Lamb's wife was "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Not only will it cost believers to walk by faith (a work of faith), it will also cost Christians to live lives that are characterized by righteousness in this violent and corrupt world—a real labor of love in the energy of faith.

The world said to God, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14), and they cast out and crucified His beloved Son. Now the Lord Jesus says to those who are called by His blessed name, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

The Thessalonian believers bought their white raiment by serving the living and true God. Keeping His Word and not denying His name in a world governed by self-willed disobedience was the price they paid for that white raiment (practical righteousness of walk). It cost them (as it will us) misunderstanding and reproach in a world that thinks "it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:4). May our hearts be so stirred that we willingly and joyfully pay the price for His white raiment.

"Patience of Hope"—Eyesalve

Unlike the Thessalonian believers, the foolish Laodiceans were not willing to patiently wait (endure) for "His Son from heaven." They readily gave up what they were unable to see with natural sight—the believer's proper hope of coming glory with Christ—in order to obtain the fleeting pleasures of this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). Morally, they were earth-dwellers. The Lord Jesus would drink no wine until He drank it new in His Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:29), but Laodicea was already "drunk with wine, wherein is excess" (Eph. 5:18).

There was no patience of hope in their lives, for their eyes were not anointed with divine eyesalve to see the beauty of His Person and the glory of His coming kingdom. They answer to Isaiah 53:2: "And when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." The present filled their vision and hearts, even as Sodom had filled Lot's, so that they were blinded to Christ's loveliness.

God grant us the spirit of the psalmist who said, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things" (Psa. 119:18). May we be willing to pay the price for divine eyesalve (communion), that with eyes so anointed, we can by faith view the coming glory and thus patiently await His return.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).

Ed.

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