



Weathering the Storm

*13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? 14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: 16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. 17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him. (1 Peter 3:13-22)*

There is only one sure and certain sanctuary and home for the Soul - that is the heart! No intruder can enter therein without express invitation of the owner. But the human heart is weak and susceptible to every deceitful salesman who comes knocking, and the devil sends them often to the hearts of prospective recipients. However, if the Lord Jesus Christ has entered into your heart, though the devil's minions may continue to call often, your heart is safely defended from their uninvited intrusions. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* (1 John 4:4) As St. Peter avers: *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* There was a time in America in which moral goodness was valued at a high premium by Justice. Those days, however, have gone glimmering along with the love of that Moral Law which underlies our beloved Constitution. What has forever been good under God's Law may now be considered BAD under man's fickle laws; and that which is condemned by God's Law is now labeled good under the decadent law of man.

We are arrived at the condition of that woeful warning given by the prophet Isaiah: *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light*

*for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* (Isaiah 5:20-21) Though there is no such thing in either history or Scripture, we have come to accept the ungodly union of two men or two women in a so-called marriage relationship. This is a filthy and reprehensible practice that has never been acceptable in history until now.

But God is on the Throne, *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.* (Romans 1:24-28) Not only does their sins damn them in this life, but also in the eternity to come. All sorts of dreaded and deadly diseases arise from sexual impurity. Future generations will continue to suffer a growing epidemic of such plagues.

So how should the righteous live under such evil circumstances? By not becoming a party to the evil! We must resist unto the shedding of blood, or even death. Lord Acton was right, The only thing worse than war is the belief that nothing is worth fighting for. We are at war, and there is something worth fighting for in Christ! *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.* Though we are pressed by the enemy to the geographic boundary of Jordan Banks, we know something the enemy does not know: Legions of Angels wait in reserve beyond that river to deal a hard blow to Satan's desultory forces at a moment he least expects.

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. Tell me, pray tell, how we can give a reason for the hope that is in us if we do not know the source of that hope in God's Holy Word. Should we not study that hope: Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.* (2 Tim 2:15-16) Lazy scholars get poor marks in school, and in Heaven.

Our strong breastplate of defense is a good conscience. The prosecuting attorneys have an uphill battle if they cannot bring up an evil past to the bar against their charge. *Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.* Why would the wicked be ashamed? It is because all of their slander and accusations against you shall wither in the Light of God's Sun. In the old days, I might have had to go to jail for conducting a marriage between two men or two women. I would deserve the jail time. But today, a godly minister may be forced to serve jail time for refusing to conduct such an ungodly marriage.

Which man do you think enjoys a happier conscience as well as the favor of God? Valid law requires a precedent, and we have the greatest of all: *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:* If we are His, man can do little to harm us since we have already suffered death to self and a resurrection in Him. Note that Christ suffered once and for all for our sins - there is no further sacrifice that will appease. We do not sacrifice Christ anew with our sins, or with our ill-natured Masses or Eucharists. The Lamb was historically slain in the time of Christ; but long before the coming of Christ

there was the Divine atoning love, there was the vicarious suffering of the Savior. And now, although no longer humbled in the flesh, Christ has not lost that peculiar element and attribute of the Divine nature — namely, substitution, imputation, vicariousness. Still He suffers in all our sufferings. He is afflicted in all our afflictions. Christ is out SUBSTITUTE, and that one word better summarizes the Gospel than any other:

There is a touching story told regarding a body of men who had taken part in a rebellion, and were sentenced to have every tenth man of their number shot to deter others from doing what they had done. Among these were two, a father and son. We can fancy we see the men drawn up in a long line. Fixing, perhaps, on the first man by lot, he is marked out for death, and every tenth man thereafter, counting from him. The father and son stand together, and as the son runs his eye along the line he discovers that his father is a doomed man. He realizes what it will be to have their family left without a head, his mother a widow, the old home stripped of its light and joy, and, quick as thought, he steps in where his father stood, and falls in his stead. He becomes his father's substitute, and, if you ask the father in after years how he was saved, with the tear in his eye and a quivering voice, he will tell you he was saved by a substitute — that substitute his most loved and loving son.

Dr. Carey, the great Indian scholar and missionary, tells of his visit to one of the wards in an Indian hospital. On a bed, in a corner of the room, lay a dying soldier. Stepping gently up to him, he knelt at his bedside, and whispered into his ear, My dear brother, are you afraid to die? Looking up with a smile, the dying man answered, Oh, no, sir; I have died already! He meant that Jesus, his substitute, had died for him, and he had not to die, but only to fall asleep in Jesus. (taken from the Biblical Illustrator.)

*By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.* While confined to His Sabbath rest in the Garden Tomb, our Lord preached to those spirits in Hell through the agency of the His own divine Spirit. Our Creed tells us that He was Crucified, but it does not say that His life was taken at the hand of any man. He was crucified, dead and buried. It also states that On the third Day, He arose from the dead. It does not say that He was 'raised from the dead. There are fine distinctions in the wording. His human form died by His own consent to free us of our sins. His lifeless human form was raised by His own Spiritual power on the third day. It is impossible for God to die. His Spirit could not die though His human form did. It was this Spirit of Christ, I believe, that preached to those languishing dead in Hell of the pre-Deluge days. This seems to me to be the justice of God since those of the pre-Flood world had not received the promise made to Abraham.

It is interesting to observe that the very elements that destroyed the wicked of those days of Noah were also the very same elements that saved Noah and His family: *eight souls were saved by water.* The greater the waters of the destroying flood, the higher were the occupants of the Ark raised above the destruction below.

Here again we have the confirmation of the efficacy of the Sacrament of Baptism as being an outward and visible form of an inward and spiritual grace. *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.* It is by no means the water itself that saves, but the washen soul illustrated thereby in the heart that belongs to God. Obviously, since Christ arose in bodily form, and sits at the right hand of the Father, He is not subject to being arraigned at every Roman Mass to be physically present in the elements of Bread and Wine; though He is forever spiritually therein among true worshippers at Communion.