

The Wind Is Shifting

by Allan Halton

As the Spirit of Christ takes up His habitation in us in a more manifest way, we can expect to face severe persecution, but we must be prepared and armed with the same mind as Christ.

Scripture: John 15:18, John 15:20, 1 Peter 4:1, 1 John 3:13

Topics: "Persecution", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Allan Halton preaches about the need for Christians to be valiant and faithful for God's truth in the midst of trials and persecution, drawing inspiration from the early Quakers who suffered for their faith. He highlights the shifting winds of persecution in Western lands and the deeper manifestation of Christ in His people that will provoke coming persecution. Halton emphasizes the importance of being prepared for the suffering and persecution that may come with a deeper reality of God's Spirit in our lives, urging believers to arm themselves with the same mind as Christ and be ready for the consequences.

Transcript

Be valiant and faithful for God's truth upon the earth in this day of trial and persecution.

This is from the letters of George Fox the Quaker apostle, which I have been reading. Fox often encouraged his friends with words such as these. The early Quakers suffered grievously at the hands of the apostate church of their day, and the government. Many of them had their goods and houses confiscated because they refused to pay the mandatory tithe the established churches required. They were thrown in jail for the same reason, or because they would not swear an oath or doff their hats to dignitaries. They also reprovved those in authority for their wicked ways, and paid the price for this as well. So Fox--who himself spent much time behind bars--would encourage his fellow sufferers to take heart by recognizing that this kind of thing is the lot of those who follow Jesus Christ in "this day"--this present evil age.

How we in western lands need to recognize that we are still in this same day! We are thankful for the liberty we have enjoyed; we in western lands can be Christians and still enjoy great security and safety and prosperity. But wet your finger and hold it up to the wind. You will discover the wind is shifting these days. The warm west wind of prosperity is shifting--and is beginning to come out of the north. The "world" is not going to be so amicable to us as it has been in the past. Western nations don't want to be recognized as "Christian" nations any more. There is arising a "new king over Egypt," who does not know "Joseph" (Ex. 1.8).

There is another factor that is going to provoke this coming persecution--a deeper manifestation of Christ in His people. It's heartbreaking to read of the things our brothers and sisters go through in other lands simply for being named a Christian. Over here being identified as a Christian doesn't seem to provoke the same reaction it does in many other places. But the persecution is going to be just as severe here, if not more so, when the Spirit of Christ takes up His habitation in us in a more manifest way--something many are now seeking.

I recall many years ago reading one of the "Visions of Annie," in which she said it seemed to her almost a deceitful thing when God gave His own that Spirit of His Presence they had so long been seeking. For it provoked a severe reaction from those who hated Him--much suffering, pain, and persecution.

Some of us have been waiting a long time for this--not the trouble, but the Presence. It is at the door, I believe. Others bear the same witness. And we long for this. Nothing less than this will meet the need of this day. But at the same time, this Presence is going to bring upon us here in western lands the measure of suffering many of our brothers and sisters in other lands are already enduring for merely being Christian in name.

Jesus told His disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (Jn. 15.18). It's important to note the context in which Jesus said this. He was speaking of the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. In other words, a world that has already demonstrated it hates Jesus Christ is going to hate those in whom the Spirit of Jesus Christ has come to abide.

And so if we are seeking God and greatly longing for a deeper reality of His Spirit in our lives, let's be sure we understand what the implications are.

And let us start preparing for this.

How? Peter's words come to mind.

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind... (1 Pt. 4.1).

This is the key, I believe. The servant is not greater than his lord, Jesus warned. "If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you..." (Jn. 15.20). If Christ suffered in the flesh, so shall we. Let us arm ourselves with the same mind, then. If we are armed beforehand with the realization that suffering and persecution is our portion in this day, and not some strange thing that has come upon us, we will not be undone when it comes upon us.

John exhorted, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 Jn. 3.13). We are inclined to "marvel" when the world hates us, and to think it a strange thing when the trial of fire comes our way. And we go under because we were not prepared for this. No, we must go into the day before us with our eyes open, our minds armed, our hearts prepared. We are greatly longing for a manifestation of the Spirit of Christ that will enable us to have a Testimony that is greater than mere words--something that is able to deal effectively with the forces of darkness in our world, something that brings genuine conviction. God is going to answer our cry.

Let us be ready for the consequences.

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