

## “Times That Try Men’s Souls”

---

by Bill Crews

If the pre-revolutionary inhabitants of our fair land, for reasons well-known to themselves, lived in “times that try men’s souls,” surely the citizens of the great U.S.A. today, for different but equally disturbing reasons, also live in times that try men’s souls. We are faced with destructive drouths in some areas and catastrophic floods in others; raging wild fires that burn both timber and dwellings; wars that seem to have no end in sight and involve racial and ethnic strife and political power and control; economic chaos and uncertainty in many areas of the world; the break-up of so many marriages and poor substitutes for a family; crowded jails and prisons due to the huge number of citizens that choose to break the laws; the continual decline in morals as shown by the language and behavior we are willing to tolerate; the eradication of Bible reading and prayer in our public schools, while discipline and the insistence upon high standards have declined and vulgar language and shocking behavior have grown; the murder of unborn children is alive and well and now many push for medically assisted (another form of murder) suicide; television programs that become more and more vulgar and disgusting; the movies that glorify violence, nudity and sex; the push for so-called “Gay rights” and “Gay marriage”; the horrible traffic in illegal and mind-altering drugs; and other disturbing problems and crises.

In such times the pressures that can cultivate anxiety, worry and fear, and the temptations to surrender integrity, principle and purity are greater, but the faithful Christian will neither go along with the crowd nor give place to anxiety in the form of worry or fear.

A faithful Christian knows that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life are not of the Father, but of the world, and that if he loves these “*things of the world*,” the love of the Father is not in him (1 John 2:15-17). He knows that he is not to be fashioned according to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of his mind (Rom. 12:2). He knows that Satan will resort to any measure possible to beguile him (2 Corinthians 11:3, 13-15), seeking to make right appear foolish and futile and wrong appear proper and rewarding. He who has neither the faith nor the courage to persist in doing the Lord’s will falls into the devil’s hands. The faithful Christian knows that sin is deceptive and its rewards fleeting, so as a pilgrim and sojourner he has his eye of faith on spiritual values and an eternal goal — he will not be distracted or turned aside.

A faithful Christian will not give in to anxiety and fear. He looks beyond the surrounding waves that threaten to take away his possessions, his job, his health, and even his life. He knows that if he will put the Lord first and serve Him with loving trust, “*all things*” will “*work together for good*” (Rom. 8:28). He need never worry about food, clothing and drink because if he will “*seek first his kingdom and his righteousness*,” “*all these things*” will be “*added*” unto him (Matthew 6:25-33). He lives by the principle of Hebrews 13:5: “*Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee.*” He believes the declaration of Romans 8:38-39: “*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

A faithful Christian has something more precious and more lasting than his physical life, his fleshly body, his earthly possessions — all of which shall eventually pass away. And he has learned to “*count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials; knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience*” (James 1:2-3).

284902