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The increasing animosity to the gospel in the United Kingdom

A recent news report gave the details of how a Christian magistrate was sacked and then suspended from his position as non-executive director by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust.

His crime? Mr. Richard Page was struck off after he told the BBC it would be better for a man and a woman to adopt a child!

That is stating a simple truth, long held sacred in this land, in a very mild manner but for this he was removed as a magistrate.

Speaking about his views he said, "My responsibility as a magistrate, as I saw it, was to do what I considered best for the child. My feeling was therefore that it would be better if it was a man and woman who were the adoptive parents."

It is reported on the BBC news site that Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust chairman, Andrew Ling, wrote to the NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA) requesting the suspension. He said Mr Page's comments and continuance as a trust member would have a major impact on staff and patients, particularly lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) staff. He said: 'Links between the stigma often associated with being LGBT and poor mental health are well-established.'

The reason for the 'poor mental health' of such people is, I suggest, their living in defiance of the laws of God and nature!

Of course, no one today may say that without threat of retaliation by the 'politically correct' establishment!

Where it can, the establishment will take revenge on any who seek to uphold the teachings of the Bible.

Of course, there is nothing new in such a situation. Such anti-God bigotry is the norm for this fallen world. Those times when such attitudes were unpopular and suppressed were times of mercy sent by the Lord to aid the ingathering of God's elect from amongst the nations. They were times in which the sun shone and gospel 'hay-making' was possible.

But as we all know, such pleasant weather is short-lived and soon the storms return!

Peter said: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf," 1 Peter 4:12-16.

Fiery trial is the norm and it is what the very best of God's people were called upon to endure at times.

I believe that the signs of such a time breaking forth again are gathering.

Please consider some simple truths for your encouragement in such times as these.

I. THERE ALWAYS HAS BEEN ENMITY TOWARD THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL AND ITS ADHERENTS.

So said our Saviour.

1. The warnings of the Lord Jesus and His apostles.

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you," John 15:18.



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"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," 1 John 3:13.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake," Luke 6:22. God's people were told to expect persecution. The Saviour's words to Ananias in Damascus regarding Paul the apostle indicate that. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake," Acts 9:15-16. Suffering would be part of his apostleship and of the discipleship of believers generally.

2. The early church's experience.

"And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles," Acts 8:1.

The Saviour's words to the Church in Smyrna make the matter clear. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Revelation 2:10.

The devil lay behind the persecution. It involved imprisonment, tribulation and death for some. However, the Saviour sets a limit to that time of persecution - 'ten days.'

Praise God, the devil is under the same restraint today as he was in Job's day.

3. Repeated experience of the Christian.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him," James 1:12.

Times of blessing always brought in periods in which men were made aware of the presence and power of God and men were brought under the restraint that a fear of God gives rise to. We in the United Kingdom have enjoyed much Gospel freedom as a result of the times of refreshing in the days of the Reformers, the Puritans, the Great Evangelical awakening of the 18th century and the 1859 revival. Here in Ulster, we have been further favoured by the days of blessing under WP Nicholson and later in the 1960s and 70s.

But the sun is beginning to set again and a night of darkness is descending upon us.

II. IT IS THAT ENMITY WHICH BROUGHT ABOUT THE PERIODS OF TERRIBLE PERSECUTION SUFFERED BY OUR FOREFATHERS.

Whenever the devil, the prince of darkness, gets a stronghold on a nation, then he will seek to strangle the gospel as Pharaoh sought to drown the Hebrew children and he will resist to the death any attempts to turn the nation to faith in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what happened in the times of 'Bloody Mary' in England, and the 'Killing Times' in Scotland.

It is what is happening today in the United Kingdom!

Sadly, the lessons learned in those dark days of old and the fear of Popery that was engrained in the soul of this nation have begun to be expunged and forgotten under the seductive lies of ecumenical false prophets. 'Rome is changed,' we are told but Rome, the offspring of the devil, cannot change. She can don a veil to hide her true face but she cannot change her nature. Her filthiness is painted large for all to see in the innumerable cases of child molestation she has sought to conceal.

The fools who believe the ecumenical lie will find this out to their cost!



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III. WE ARE SEEING A RETURN TO THE DAYS WHEN HATRED OF THE GOSPEL DOMINATES SOCIETY.

Our society no longer favours the religion of the Bible and as sure as night follows day, where there is a rejection of the Word of God, darkness and its works will once more invade the land.

The wise man Solomon said: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," Proverbs 14:34.

The pattern of events which Israel experienced will likewise be the same for any nation that acts as she acted. "And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies," Judges 2:13-14.

So it has been and so it will ever be!

1. Today's descent into darkness started with the apostasy in the Protestant churches.

The place where the gospel was once preached became the place where the devil's lie was advanced. Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational and Episcopalian pulpits became the fountainhead of liberalism, modernism and Christ-denying, Bible-contradicting blasphemies! This dark and toxic stream polluted and poisoned the very heart of the nation until there was nothing sacred or holy any more but all that was godly and good was the subject of the blasphemer's depraved 'wit', and that with complete sanction by the powers that be!

Truly, the nation has "sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7).

2. Naturally, government took up the cry.

Where pulpits lead, parliaments follow. Laws which were based upon the Word of God were overthrown or ignored. The penalty instituted by God for murder was abolished. The abominations of sodomy were legalised and protected. Immorality of every form was endorsed and embraced throughout society.

The result? Increasing child abuse and murder. The disintegration of stable family relationships, the very bedrock of a stable society. Tolerance for every form of wickedness, once rejected by our forefathers in better times, is now extolled and its proponents honoured!

Such is the harvest of apostasy.

3. Now general ignorance and darkness dominate the land.

Of course the full harvest has not ripened. Wicked men, for a season, will indulge themselves in that from which they were once held back. Then when they have, to some degree, sated their appetites, they will turn their wrath on those who dare to witness against their sin. There is no society less tolerant than that society which tolerates sin to the full!

There will be no freedom to contradict and to confront the defiance of God. Rather, as was the experience of Stephen, such a witness will be rejected and silenced. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:54-60. The spirit of the Christ-rejector is clearly evidenced here and stands in complete contrast to



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the spirit of gospel grace displayed by Stephen. "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Stephen showed forth his Master's spirit for his words are but an echo of the Saviour's on the cross. "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.," Luke 23:34.

On the other hand, the murderous mob showed their lineage by their actions. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," John 8:44.

It is to that spirit that the United Kingdom is fast returning.

Ivan Foster.

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