



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A stubborn refusal to confess sin.
by Rev Ivan Foster

“And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds,” Revelation 16:10-11.

It is hard to conceive of such defiant hardheartedness amongst men that causes them to refuse to confess their sin under the very judgments of God. The scene presented to us in the passage in Revelation 16, from which we have taken these two verses, is from the very closing days of this age. Antichrist and his kingdom are in their short-lived zenith. The dark clouds of God’s wrath are gathering over the tyrant and his dominion in the form of a series of terrible judgments poured out upon his kingdom, his allies and his followers. The seven vials of God’s wrath are recorded here in great detail. We will have no difficulty identifying them when that time of divine visitation dawns. They will herald the approach of the return of Christ as the following verses show.

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great,” Revelation 16:17-21.

As already observed, it is hard to conceive of such wilful stoutness of heart that drives men to “gnaw their tongues for pain” rather than utter an acknowledgement of their sinfulness and God’s righteous judgment and turn in repentance to obedience and submission to God’s holy law.

And yet, think on this! Is not that spirit seen at work around us today?

I am thinking of various events which indicate that the stubborn defiance in this passage is presently manifested by the reactions within society to some recent developments and disclosures.

In the first instance that comes to mind, the response of the Roman Catholic people worldwide, but particularly here on the island of Ireland, to the repeated revelations of the wickedness of their priests, hierarchy and their Vatican overlords themselves in the satanic conspiracy to torment and torture the young of their flock and to lie and deceive persistently in their efforts to conceal this abominable crime. The crimes are such that it would result in the wholesale disowning of any other organisation which has been so universally



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and comprehensively indicted of such heinous wickedness. Yet still the Roman Catholic people adhere to this vile system! Is this not an example of the stubborn rejection of God's truth that is depicted in the aforementioned verses?

Again, there is the example of the foolish blindness of the British people generally (though the same case may be made out against all the nations of men today) in the face of the decline, indeed the demise of all morality in public life. Atheism, open mockery of God and His truth, the favouring of paganism and idolatry, immorality and the rejection of marriage, the embracing of sodomy and the persecution of those who stand for God's truth, greed, dishonesty, drunkenness, drug-taking, violence and fraud - these are the marks of today's society and of many in public life. The escalating phone-hacking scandal with its involvement of prominent members of the media, the police and political figures close to the Prime Minister himself is the very latest example of this moral decay.

Yet in the midst of the economic melt-down facing the British economy and the nightmarish wider threat of even greater problems facing the European economy, there seems to be no recognising of the frowning providence under which we live.

Soldiers are dying in Afghanistan and few know why. A heady spirit akin to intoxication seems to grip the nation. Bacchanalian revelry precludes any serious thought of just where the nation is going or what the future holds. The threat of national bankruptcy, the loss of national status as our armed forces are stripped of the capability of performing effectively on the stage of world affairs, rebellion on our streets and in our schools, Muslim terrorism breeding in the cities of England - none of these things registers with the general public to any real degree. There is even less awareness of impending doom than there was amongst men in the days of Noah, the folly of whom was described by the Saviour in these words: "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away," Matthew 24:38-39, KJV.

Such scenes faced Ezekiel the prophet and drew out these words of condemnation from the Lord.

"There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I



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poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD," Ezekiel 22:25-31, KJV.

There are few today who take these things to heart or humble themselves before God in the light of the inevitable harvest which must follow our national madness.

Finally, there is the response of the supporters of the Democratic Unionist Party here in Northern Ireland to the sell-outs and scandals of that party, in the last few years. Surely that is another example of this spirit of stubborn and wilful refusal to face the truth.

These three areas of consideration provide us with clear illustrations of the blind stupidity, the obstinate determination of a people to refuse to acknowledge their wrongdoing and to heed the admonitions and chastenings of providence.

Here in Ulster, the Protestant people who desired to promote and support Biblical principles and morality within the political life of the Province, some years ago saw hopes of such aspirations being achieved through the activities of the Democratic Unionist Party in its formative years. However, of late such hopes were dashed as the leadership and the elected representatives of that party abandoned their primitive ideals for the mammon of political success and its rewards.

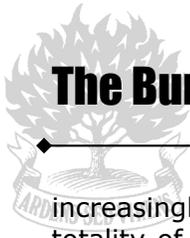
From determined opposition to the ecumenically-inspired compromise of the Ulster Unionist Party in the 70s and 80s which saw that party repeatedly concede ground to resurgent Romanism and its offspring, Irish Republicanism, the DUP has shifted its ground to such an extent that it has espoused policies and notions that even the arch-villain of unionist sell-outs, Terence O'Neill, would not, I believe, have soiled his hands with!

The dramatic shift from conflict with IRA terrorism to coalition with the leaders of that terrorism has taken place with surprisingly little reaction from the supporters of the DUP. There have been those who rightly, and that with brokenness and incredulity, repudiated this abandonment of principles. However, the larger part of the DUP camp remained loyal and went along with the betrayal.

Those who exhausted the English Dictionary to find words harsh enough to denounce, on loyalist platforms and parliamentary benches, the murderers of their kith and kin within the ranks of Sinn Fein and its IRA wing, suddenly began spouting words of compromise and co-operation and conciliation. And the average DUP supporter went along with the deal, content to swallow the lies and deceit.

Even the words of praise from ecumenical leaders and spokesmen, which in the past would have been enough to have the loyalist and unionist credentials of the subject of such praise questioned, have served only to strengthen and comfort the ranks of the neo-loyalists of the neo-DUP that they are on the right path.

Scandalous disclosures, too shameful to repeat and revelations of political betrayals, the



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increasingly close liaison between Robinson and McGuinness, the growing doubts over the totality of IRA decommissioning, the unremitting glorying in the IRA murder campaign by Sinn Fein, Robinson's scheme to make the DUP more appealing to Roman Catholic voters and, most shameful of all, the ongoing funding of sodomite organisations by the Stormont regime - none of these has checked or curbed the enthusiasm of the DUP membership for the new deal.

Such headlines and disclosures would have had the supporters of the DUP of old perceiving them as evidence that they had forsaken the right path and in consequence forfeited the blessing of the One Whose presence and approval was requisite for good success. They would have deemed it time to repent and return to the right paths. But not the DUP of today. There is a stubborn refusal to face up to and acknowledge the sell-out of Protestant and Christian principles. That stubbornness has withstood the recent shock of the announcement by DUP leader, Peter Robinson, that he was prepared to attend, and actually did attend, the Romish Mass. Even DUP men who have sworn solemn allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith have deemed it acceptable to acquiesce silently in such wickedness.

These things provide us with a commentary on Revelation 16:17-21 and afford us some insight into how the nations of the world will become more and more blinded to the truth and press on in defiance of God despite the clear evidence of His disapproval and wrath.

These things also serve to underline the grand old truth uttered by Isaiah many years ago. "Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD. LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see," Isaiah 26:10-11, KJV.

The blindness that robbed of faith those who were privileged to witness the wonder-working power of Christ, affects the people still. There is only one answer. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see" John 3:3, KJV. Such is the state of mankind today. Spiritual perception is one of the immediate fruits of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart," Ephesians 4:17-18, KJV.

There is no hope for our loved ones, our neighbours, our nation unless there is a move of God whereby those who lie under this darkness are brought into the wonderful light of God.

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