



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

The voice of the merchants beginning to dominate

I have been increasingly conscious of the dominating role of the merchant in the nation's affairs.

For the child of God the imperative we seek to live by is "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This is so, because God is the fountain of all good, and pleasing Him ensures us of His blessing which, the wise man said: "maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it," Proverbs 10:22.

But once God ceases to be a feature of man's thinking then another exigency takes over, the laying up of "treasures upon earth," Matthew 6:19.

That is the 'modus operandi' of today's society! Everywhere we see the slaves of money-making toiling away and greedily grasping for ever more of this world's goods. Nothing is permitted to get in the way of enrichment, not even the physical wellbeing of the young, the old, the vulnerable or the weak.

That is evident in the public discussion regarding the bringing in of restrictions on public gatherings which of necessity impacts upon certain businesses. The sellers of booze have been particularly loud in their demands for such restrictions to be avoided so that their trade is not affected. The spread of Covid-19 is considered by them and their mouthpieces as of much lesser importance than their enrichment!

All of this is fully predicted in God's Word.

May these few thoughts prove helpful in the midst of the plethora of lies and deceit filling the air today.

The Word of God is not merely up to date, it is far in advance of the unfolding events of today. This time last year, there were few in the United Kingdom who could have foreseen what the next twelve months would bring.

But the Word of God had it revealed for all who would see.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples that the chief features of the age between His ascension to His Father in Heaven and His return to this earth in power and glory, would be a period of false christs and deceivers, war and rumours (reports) of war, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and increasing persecution of those who believe in the gospel.

Persecution

There has always been persecution of gospel believers but there were, throughout the centuries, havens where Christians could find shelter and support amidst the nations. There were times of national revivals when whole peoples, entire populations were more or less brought to sympathise with the gospel and gave refuge to those who were forced to flee the rage of the enemy.

Recent Times

In recent times, we have seen here in the United Kingdom, which for a very long time would have professed an allegiance to the Word of God and the religion of Christ, a rising tide of opposition to that once revered amongst us.

It was seen at first in the abandoning of the old 'Confessions' within the professing Christian denominations and the embracing of modernistic theology, which was nothing more than a rejection of the Word of God dressed up in the almost indeterminate language of an ungodly philosophy. The devil's sneering question to Eve, 'Yea, hath God said,' Genesis 3:1, has been heard again and again in the modernist preacher's challenging of the truth of the Bible.



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Yes, that is how the departure began here in the United Kingdom, and other nations of course, but that rejection of the Bible led on to an overturning of the laws Parliament had passed in former times, when the truth of the Bible was submitted to as the national guide.

Capital punishment for murder, the legalising of the murder of the unborn child, divorce was made ever more easy to obtain, the legalising of sodomy and promoting of its ways and a sheltering of its adherents, followed on.

The evil tide advances and broadens every day as immorality is countenanced and has become a common feature of life. Even our Prime Minister is one who openly lives in sin! None cares to challenge such behaviour since it is endorsed by 'church and state'!

Such is the spirit of acceptance and tolerance of the wickedness and violence bred by the ignorance of God's truth deepens.

The European Union

One feature of the last days, which we have seen emerging in very recent times, is the increasing importance placed by men upon commercial advance and success. The nation was gripped and disastrously divided during the 'Brexit' debate. The whole issue was one of whether the nation would prosper better 'in' or 'out' of the European Union! That wrangle continues with daily arguments about the effect of the withdrawal from the EU upon our supply of food, of medicine and of many other goods!

The importance of 'Brexit' to Westminster is such that the constitutional position of Northern Ireland has been totally undermined and we are in reality, no longer part of the United Kingdom as far as the import of goods from the EU is concerned. The border between the United Kingdom is not where it is truth, and where it always was since 1921, at the land border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

No, it is now at the Irish Sea with customs posts etc at Larne harbour. To all intents and purposes, Northern Ireland is still IN the EU and now OUTSIDE the UK! Thus the commercial interests of England takes precedent over the constitutional rights of Northern Ireland.

Last Days

The Book of the Revelation brings us to the very last times before the return of Christ and shows that 'king merchant' will be enthroned in that day. Indeed, the 'Antichrist' is, amongst many things, the chief merchant.

In Revelation chapter 13, the 'False Prophet', the Antichrist's right hand man, we are told in verses 16-17, will enforce the commercial policy of the Antichrist.

"And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."

It is clear from these words that commerce is not merely 'king' but also 'god'! Commercial enterprise will be pursued at the expense of the denial and rejection of the true God and the consequent damnation of the souls of those engaged in such a pursuit.

"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name," Revelation 14:9-11.



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A wicked greed has taken the place of the gospel creed!

Shades Of That Today

Are there not shades of that today? Every branch of the media here in Ulster sides with the members of the DUP who argue for the opening of premises for the sale of booze. Even Mrs Arlene Foster, an Episcopalian who shows little evidence of any great faith in the Word of God and in the past has shown a readiness to desecrate the Sabbath Day in order to placate Republicans by attending a Gaelic football match, has complained of the treacherous actions of members of her own party in undermining efforts to maintain regulations designed to curtail the spread of the Covid 19 virus. One media outlet reports: "Mrs Foster has said that when she left home on Monday morning, she still expected the Executive to approve the plan. But that morning she faced open revolt from her own party, with Ian Paisley Jr denouncing the plan on the Nolan show. The son of Northern Ireland's most famous teetotaler said that asking restaurants to reopen without booze was like allowing hairdressers to reopen without their combs." (Belfast Newsletter, Saturday 14th November)

Contrast

I need hardly emphasise that the thoughts of Ian Paisley Jr are very far removed from those of his father in his prime! Junior is singing the rapacious song of the merchant!

Dr Ian Paisley led the Free Presbyterian Church from its inception until he stepped down from the moderatorship at the end of 2007, a decision sadly brought on by his joining forces with Sinn Fein/IRA in a power-sharing Executive.

In the early years of the Free Presbyterian Church, the views of Dr Paisley on alcohol may be seen in the formulation of the ordination oath of both ministers and elders. Every minister and elder must still subscribe publicly the subordinate standards of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. Part of these Standards require the public denouncing of 'the great public vices of drinking, dancing, gambling and the pleasure crazes of this present evil world.'

That was certainly not the spirit of the words of Ian Paisley Jr as quoted by the Belfast Newsletter!

Who was he speaking for? None other than the 'merchants' whose desire to get back to money-making over-rides, it would appear, any consideration of the consequences upon life and limb that the lifting of the restrictions on certain public activities which involve the gathering of crowds will bring.

Rationing

I was born during World War Two, and I have some memories of the difficulties that the war restrictions inflicted upon the population, both commercially and socially, right up to the early 1950s. Yet there was a bearing of those far more inhibiting, disruptive and intrusive restrictions with a large degree of patience, interspersed no doubt with many grumblings, but that was all! The voice of the merchant was not heard as now, complaining about his losses.

Foreshadowing

The debates and contrived newspaper coverage of the case for giving priority to business interests is but a foreshadowing of the soon coming days when commercial interests will reign supreme.

The merchants have led in the campaign to desecrate the Sabbath with the opening of their business premises. The merchants have been to the fore in the promoting of the acceptance of moral perversion, pushing for an embracing of the 'equality' of those who live a perverted lifestyle with those who reject such moral deviance. Woe to the businessman or businesswoman who dares oppose the tide! He or she will soon be the target of hatred and boycott which usually results in shut doors and shuttered windows and 'for sale' notices erected!



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Where once 'What saith the Scriptures' was the shibboleth of the majority within society it has been rejected and 'What saith the businessman' has taken its place.

So it shall be increasingly until the fast approaching end of this age.

Just where the Lord stands on this issue may be seen in the outcome of His interventions at the return of Christ.

Please read the whole of the 18th chapter of Revelation. Here is part of what is recorded there.

"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her," verses 5-10.

The kingdom of the 'profit-maker', the one who puts the making of money before the rightful worship and honouring of his Maker, is doomed!

How we need to recall these simple words in 1 Timothy chapter 6. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses," verses 10-12.

Please notice that one is set over against the other! It is the 'love of money' or 'lay hold on eternal life'!

The Lord Jesus emphasised this in Matthew 6:24-34.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Christian, do not be caught up in the web of deception and greed that is being woven today. There is a very real danger of you being entangled. We see some prominent professing Christians in public life following the "multitude to do evil", and speaking "in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment," Exodus 23:2.

Do not follow their example.



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These are days in which we should strive to follow 'hard' after the Lord, Psalm 63:7-8, and not turn aside into 'bypath meadow'!

Rev Ivan Foster (Rtd)

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