

296 Firm Rejection, Informed Concern

In last week's Reflection we identified two disturbing trends within British society: the trend of "foisting" on to society numerous anti-biblical beliefs and practices which we are all expected to accept without a murmur; and the trend of switching the meaning of the word "phobia" from "fear" to "hate", thus making it much easier to write off any critics of these trends, such as Christians, as dreadful "hate-filled extremists".

Examples of these foisting-and-phobia trends include the promotion of homosexuality and its several offshoots; the insistence that the growth of Islam in our midst is of little significance; and the wilful excision of the Christian Faith from public life and debate, to be replaced by so-called "British values" of tolerance and diversity.

So how, in practice, are normal, Bible-upholding Christians to react to all this? We ourselves are blessed by the great Gospel truths freely given to us in Jesus Christ, and of course we long for others to be similarly blessed - "we have a Gospel to proclaim". Yet because of Satan and the Fall and sin, we find that even the mention of the Word of God in the "public square" is commonly met with hostility, derision or apathy.

We start with the prime need for love. Whatever we may say or do in standing up for God's Word and decrying those things which blatantly defy God's Word, we are to display Christian love, taking our lead from Jesus' own example. He is never soppy, never desirous of popularity, and never compromising of His Father's truth; yet in His robust love He remains ever open to lead others into a deeper understanding of God's truth (eg., John 6.37).

Just so with us. "If it be possible, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12.18) – a few simple, divinely-given words which recognise our responsibility to get along with people as well as we can, alongside our equal responsibility to uphold God's truth. Displaying as appropriate "the fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5.22-23) in word and deed, we are bidden to uphold in Christian love both peace and truth in our dealings with others, with truth the ultimate victor if ever a choice between peace and truth has to be made (eg., Acts 4.18-20 and 5.29).

We saw last week that within God's love there is indeed a place for a properly-understood "hate", (which is very different from "phobia"). We can define such "hate" as simply a firm rejection of sinfulness and evil, be that in ourselves or in others, and as measured by the Word of God. This rejection has nothing to do with any "holy-Joe" mentality on our part: everyone on the planet is a sinner, including ourselves, and everyone needs Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (eg., Romans 3.21-25 / Hebrews 7.25 / ...).

As we seek to love others biblically and to hate sin biblically, we come now to the true meaning of "phobia", namely "fear". In the wake of various recent Islam-inspired atrocities and the subsequent community placards boldly declaring "We are not afraid", it would be very odd indeed if people did not have some fear at the prospect of being caught up in such wickedness themselves. As we have defined "hate" in this context as "firm rejection", so we can define "fear" in this context as "informed

concern”: “informed”, to ensure we have a mature awareness of what is actually happening, and “concern” in recognition of our God-given responsibility as His “watchmen” to sound the trumpet of warning loudly and clearly, as in Ezekiel 33.

The baleful consequences of promoting homosexuality across society, profoundly affecting marriage, parenthood and family life, are increasingly apparent. Equally, the casual assumption that the planned, visible spread of Islam in the West, including Britain, is a fine opportunity for us to celebrate diversity and show tolerance, is downright irresponsible.

Anyone who bothers to look can see Islam’s careful steps of progress within non-Islamic societies to grow from minority-status to majority-status; and if that majority-status is ever achieved in Britain, as is the goal of a good number in our midst, suffice it to say that that British society will be very different indeed from the Christian-based society we have all inherited. One of the great ironies of the situation is that many Muslim people, while choosing to live in western, free, Christian-shaped societies and benefit from these freedoms, then work from within to build an Islamic society instead.

Are the points just made about homosexuality and Islam in any way “hate-filled”? No. They arise from a well-founded, biblically-based “fear” in the form of “informed concern” over what is going on before our eyes, and as such are entirely appropriate for Christians to express.

Edmund Burke (1729 – 1797) once wrote: “Custom reconciles us to everything”. Yes, and that is just what the various foisters of our day are relying on! May our Christian response to the anti-biblical foistings around us today always involve an informed concern (biblical “fear”), a firm rejection (biblical “hate”), and a responsible Christian love.

© 2018 Faithful Sheep Ministries - www.fsmins.org