



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

The Lord's question for those Christians in Stormont who assisted in the approving of posthumous pardons for those guilty of sodomy in the past.

Yesterday, as I sat amongst the congregation listening to the preaching of God's Word, the minister turned us to Job chapter 40. My eye fell upon verses 6-8.

"Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?"

TRIAL

The book of Job deals with the trial of Job by Satan which was permitted by the Lord for His glory, and the reactions of Job to those trials and his responses to the harsh criticisms of his friends who totally misunderstood what was happening. They believed Job to be guilty of some sin for which he was now being punished.

Job, though he bore the initial trials most patiently (Job 1 & 2) gave way to impatience and some anger with his accusers and even challenged God's justice.

At the end of the book, the Lord answers Job's challenges, as He will answer all who dare to question His providential dealings with men.

We must have great sympathy with Job and understand why it was he acted as he did. His trials were very great indeed and he had no indication of why it was happening and further he was provoked by his friends' false accusations. We must surely see why he spoke inadvisedly on a number of occasions.

Though we may sympathise and understand to some degree, we must not seek to defend Job for it is clear from the chapter 40 that he did wrong in questioning God.

The verses I have quoted indicate the very serious implications of what he had done.

"Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?"

STORMONT

When I looked at the verses, I immediately thought of the decision on Monday 28th November 2016 by the members of the Stormont Assembly, with the commendable exception of Jim Allister, who supported the granting of a posthumous pardon to sodomites convicted of acts contrary to the law in former years when sodomy was a criminal activity.

There were those amongst the MLAs, and here I am thinking of the Free Presbyterian MLAs, who were well aware of what it was the Bible taught about sodomy and how that God called it an 'abomination'!

To grant a posthumous pardon to those guilty of sodomy under the terms of the Bill proposed by the Justice Minister, Miss Claire Sugden, was an arrogant and wicked act. This is especially so when we consider the statement of the Justice Minister when her proposal was first announced. She is on record as saying: "This is an opportunity for the criminal justice system to try and right the wrongs of the past and one which will allow for much earlier resolve than that presented by way of an Assembly Bill."

So the DUP and Sinn Fein and the Justice Minister, together with all in Stormont who would not oppose the Bill, were going to right the wrongs that were done in the past when, in obedience to the teaching of God's Word, sodomy was punished as a criminal act.

Most distressingly, Christians put their hand to aid that impious action!



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The proposal was a challenging of God, His justice, His holiness and His uprightness.

What these Christian MLAs did is much more culpable than were the actions of Job for which the Lord is now rebuking him most severely in our text.

We have to say that Job did not really understand what was happening to him and in that darkness surely we must see that his actions were far less blameworthy than were those of the MLAs who dared to declare as wrong and unjust the holy will of God and to correct the condemning and punishing of those who defied His law?

Those MLAs belong to a Church which repeatedly has declared the truth of God on sodomy. Three of them are elders who took a solemn oath to uphold and defend the teaching of the Word of God.

They were not acting in the dark as was poor Job!

Furthermore, these MLAs belong to a political party which led a campaign to "Save Ulster from Sodomy". They were therefore denying the very stand and truth they had once publicly campaigned for.

This being so, in the light of the stern words of the Lord to Job for his much less blameworthy words, just where does that leave these Christians, who acting with the Word of God clearly before them, yet dared to "disannul" His judgment and "condemn" Him that they may appear to be "righteous" in the eyes of today's evil society which freely endorses sodomy?

Job's reaction to the Lord's Word illustrates for us how these MLAs should act. They should follow in his path.

"Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job 42:1-6.

That is the pattern these men should follow rather than brazening the matter out as if they had done no wrong.

They aided, by their inaction, in the passing of a Bill which declared God's Law to be unjust and which was blasphemously designed to rectify what His Law taught.

If the Lord was angry with Job, how much more must He be with those guilty, in conjunction with the likes of Martin McGuinness and his fellow Sinn Feiners, of challenging of His truth and authority.

I can but sincerely and unfeignedly urge upon my brethren a proper consideration of these things and a repenting of what they have done, in keeping with Job's example.

Rev. Ivan Foster

December 12th, 2016.