

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning*

Vol. 64 No. 8

AUGUST, 1997

BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE?

According to the newspapers this morning the Primus of the Episcopalian Church Of Scotland, the "Most Reverend" Richard Holloway, has been hitting the headlines again. Readers may recall that, in August 1993, he described the Bible as "a big problem; difficult to figure out; a book which kept women in chains; and which contains as much dross as gold, and as much out-of-date nonsense as enduring wisdom." Also, in 1995, speaking at Strathclyde University, Glasgow, he is reported to have described the Bible as "a male-centred patriarchal creature out of its time" and that because it was outdated we would have "to engage in debates about the best moral systems; to identify where changes could be made, where things could be abandoned and where we should overturn old ways." Such is the Bishop's opinion of God's word. Earlier that year the Bishop had again raised eyebrows in his church, in seeming to condone adultery, by saying that "since God had given us our promiscuous genes it would be wrong for the Church to condemn people who had followed their instincts."

Bishop Holloway, head of a Church 57,000 strong, has again hit the headlines on account of his appeal to the Anglican Church to consider ordaining clergy who are homosexual, and to recognise gay marriages. He accuses his church of behaving "like the head prefect of an authoritarian school rather than the poet of God's love". He draws a parallel between the recognition of homosexuals and the ordination of women priests, and says that, whereas at one time, "women priests were impossible and even anti-biblical, now we have got them." Similarly, and ultimately, the Bishop says that recognition of homosexuality will come in the Church and so "the church should bow to the inevitable". He also maintains that "the Church should seek forgiveness from the homosexual community for its authoritarian attitude", and that just "as persecuted homosexuals are drawn to Jesus there can be little doubt that He would be drawn to them." The Bishop is publishing a book entitled "*Dancing On The Edge*" in September.

A POPULAR PRACTICE

I only refer to these outbursts of the Bishop to inform anyone, who may still be naive enough not to know how things are shaping up *in the religious world*, on the question of homosexuality.

Certainly *in the secular world* homosexuality is making great strides. Just a few weeks ago, a new Labour M.P., Ben Bradshaw, obtained a pass which will give his homosexual partner access to the House Of Commons and many of its privileges. The new Heritage Secretary is committed to removing Clause 28 so that children once again can be indoctrinated with gay propaganda. Our new Home Secretary has promised a

free vote on reducing the age of consent to 16 years: (some now want it reduced to 10 years). Last week our new government signed up to the gay amendment of the European Treaty. Over the past few weeks we have been reading of lesbians seeking artificial insemination from gay men; and gay man seeking surrogate mothers (as if children were a commodity); and recently a High Court Judge overruled the claim of a child's natural mother so that the child could be adopted by a woman living with a lesbian partner. In the secular world this is how things are rapidly moving: and, lamentably, the religious world is being urged (by certain Bishops and others) not to resist the trend but to join it.

BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE?

The Bishop uses the analogy that whereas his Church at one time opposed women priests; they now accept them; and *with the passage of time*, the Church would similarly accept homosexuality. In this he is probably right. It's frightening to think that TIME has this capacity to transform, merely by its passage, things which were wrong and evil, into things which are right and good. Give a man something which is hard to accept (even impossible to accept) and leave it with him for a year or two: eventually he will accept it. This has been the case in recent years, with divorce, abortion, and homosexuality, and will, in the future be the case with euthanasia, incest and many other abhorrent practices. The truth is, of course, that the passage of a million years will never make homosexuality anything other than what it has always been: a heinous abomination. Thus beware the passage of time. Even in the Churches of Christ, time has made some things acceptable which previously would not have been.

The Bishop also feels that his Church should, "bow to the inevitable," and accept a homosexual clergy. This seems a strange attitude from men pledged to fight evil and preach only that which is God's truth. Paul's call to Christians was **"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."** Thus Paul could not agree with the Bishop.

Again, the Bishop says that ". . . it is true that Jesus would be drawn to homosexuals", and this is true. Jesus is drawn to all sinners: and indeed came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus would be happy to accept homosexuals, but only **after** they had repented and given up the practice. Jesus certainly never said what the Bishop says, "Let's accept homosexuality and bow to the inevitable".

AN EVEN MORE PROGRESSIVE BISHOP

The Bishop has his dissenters but also his supporters and Bishop Michael Hare-Duke, (of the same Church), has been causing a sensation by admitting that he has gone a bit further than Bishop Holloway, and has *already* been ordaining homosexuals into the ministry. He said, "We have been ordaining them for years. A person's sexuality is not the issue, it is their personality that counts. I have ordained homosexuals as did the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, and other Bishops." Bishop Hare-Duke describes his critics as "fascists" who "fear change and resist it by trying to find particular texts from the Bible." He also thinks that "the need to consider other people's sexuality implies insecurity about one's own sexuality" and that "we now have an anxiety about a new label - the gay label".

What can we make of such views.? Surely the Bishop knows that the "gay label" is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a *new* label. It is an extremely *old* label and goes back to the dawn of time, and to the Genesis. Neither is it a "gay label"; it is a "sodomy" label, although those clergymen studiously avoid using the term. The Bishop, apart from referring to his critics as "fascists" seems surprised that such critics "would

try to find particular texts from the Bible". Where else but in the Bible would we expect to find guidance on *any question*, let alone the matter of homosexuality? And if the Bishop thinks that a controversy over homosexuality exists should not he, too, be looking for particular texts in the Bible? Is he not highly paid for presiding over *Biblical matters*? Indeed, if the Bishop was to consult his Bible on the subject he would surely discover that such texts are not difficult to find: indeed a few of them will be quoted in the next sub-heading.

On the point expressed by the Bishop that "it's not a person's sexuality that counts but their personality" it's difficult to see how the latter is not affected by the former, and it's not a view that a rapist's victim would share. Nor was it a view that God seemed to share when He poured fire and brimstone down upon all those sodomite cities. Jesus too, seemed to think that a person's sexuality mattered when He told the woman to "Go and sin no more" and when He said that even to look, with lust, upon a woman was equal to the deed.

"PARTICULAR TEXTS" IN THE O.T.

Bishop Hare-Duke seems rather peeved that his critics would "try to find particular texts in the Bible", but surely this is the most obvious thing to do. **"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."** (Is. 8:20) And what does God's testimony say on the subject?

The KJV, having been printed in 1611, does not employ the word homosexuality but modern versions do. The KJV does, however, talk of men **"who are abusers of themselves with mankind"** (1 Cor. 6:9) and **"them that defile themselves with mankind"** (1 Tim. 1:10) and so, far from regarding homosexuality as natural and healthy, regards it as abuse and defilement. The RSV uses the term **"sexual pervert"** (1 Cor. 6:9) and **"sodomites"** (1 Tim. 1:10).

Away back in the Book of Leviticus God charged that a man **"shall not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is an abomination. Neither shall thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith."** (18:22,23). This verse as I say, puts homosexuality on a par with bestiality. Again (in 20:18) God repeats the charge and adds the penalty, **"If a man also lie with mankind as he lieth with womankind, both of them hath committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them."** Thus, with God, homosexuality is not natural and healthy, gay or trendy, but vile, obscene, abominable and worthy of death. There were no mitigating circumstances and those found together were put to death.

Notwithstanding God's unequivocal prohibition of the practice, the children of Israel had a long and varied association with sodomy. In 1 Kings 14:24 mention is made of the fact that in Rehoboam's reign, in Judah, **"The people provoked God above all that their fathers had done. For they built them high places and images and groves on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were Sodomites in the land, and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."** These "Sodomites in the land" were tolerated until the 20th year of Jeroboam's reign, when Asa became king. **"And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and did as his father, David. And he took away the Sodomites out of the land, and he removed all the idols that his father had made."** (1 Kings 15:9-12). And so King Asa got rid of all the homosexuals but they soon crept back and it was left to Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, to get rid of **"the remnant of the Sodomites which remained in the days of his father Asa: and he took them out of the land"**. (1 King 22:46). Notwithstanding these thorough purges it is remarkable to read that when King Josiah came to the throne of Judah the

people had reverted to full-scale idolatry. Josiah spent his entire reign in restoring the written law, demolishing the groves, idols, and high places, altars and other paraphernalia of idolatry, **"And broke down the houses of the Sodomites, that were by the House of the Lord, where the women wove the hangings for the groves."** (2 Kings 23:7). And so these male prostitutes (used in idolatry) were not only back in the land, but occupied housing given specially to them to be conveniently next door to the very temple. The clergy of today may smile benignly upon homosexuality but God condemned it and the good kings of Israel and Judah rooted it out.

In addition to anything else, we note, above, that Asa, Jehoshaphat and Josiah **"did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord"** by ridding the land of sodomites. Logically it would surely follow that what the Bishop proposes is diametrically opposed to **"what is right in the eyes of the Lord"**.

"PARTICULAR TEXTS" IN THE N.T.

Homosexuals tell us that Jesus never condemned homosexuality (just because He never actually mentioned it as such). Of course by the same token, Jesus never mentioned incest, or bestiality, or rape, or a dozen other things, but He did, however, condemn sin, and homosexuality is a sin. Jesus did mention, more than once, Sodom and Gomorrah and how God **"rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all"** (Luke 17:29) and it seems fairly certain that Jesus knew why the sodomites had been destroyed in this way.

Paul says. **"But we know the law is good if a man use it lawfully, knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, of manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing contrary to sound doctrine."** (1 Tim. 1:8-10). Those that **"defile themselves with mankind"** are clearly included in that long catalogue of sins.

Another "particular text" could be 1 Cor. 6:9-11 which says, **"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven? BE NOT DECEIVED; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God. AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU: but ye are WASHED, but ye are SANCTIFIED, but ye are JUSTIFIED in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."** Again, **"abusers of themselves with mankind"** are on this list and their only hope is to repent of it, to be *washed* (by immersion in baptism) and thereafter to *sanctify* themselves (give themselves into God's service) so that God might *justify* them. Bishops should be calling upon homosexuals to repent of their evil practice: not advocating that God should accept it.

Jude (6,7), talking about the wrath of God upon evil deeds, includes a reference to Sodom and says, **"even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an EXAMPLE, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."** And so Jude tells us that the ashes of Sodom are meant to be *a reminder* to us of God's *wrath* at sodomy, not of God's tolerance. The apostle Peter says much the same he reminds us of how God **"turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that should after live ungodly. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conduct of the wicked"**. (2 Peter 2:6). Lot was vexed with the filthy conduct of the sodomites whereas the Bishops

seem to want to accept them as Christian clergymen: and recognise the "marriage" of two persons of the same gender.

Small wonder that Bishop Hare-Duke has little interest in those who are "trying to find particular texts in the Bible." The above texts certainly are not on the side of the Bishop.

CONCLUSION

Space has gone but what more is there to say.? Homosexuality is being pushed and promoted at alarming speed in newspapers and particularly on T.V. but cries for its acceptance by "men of the cloth", and particularly by a man from whom the country might expect a lead, bodes ill for the future.

The practice of sodomy is unnatural, defiling, depraved, disgusting, obscene, repugnant, vile, degrading, dissolute, debase, indecent and hideously evil. Sodomy is utterly condemned not only throughout the O.T. but also the N.T. and Sodom is mentioned by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah; by Christ, Paul, Peter, Jude and John (in the Revelation) and so it is not a thing of the past. Paul says that "**It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret**". Obviously this article is far from uplifting, but amidst all the sympathetic noises we hear in support of a "better understanding" of homosexuality I thought it necessary to remind readers how despicable and heinous the practice is, in the eyes of God. Sodomy ever remains an abomination in the eyes of God, and worthy of death. Nothing has changed: homosexuality is completely, and utterly, an outrage to God, and so are all those who engage in it.

(I will send a copy of this article to Bishop Holloway and let readers know of any response.)