

# COMING OUT

This week the question of homosexuality has raised its ugly head again, and although the subject never seems to be far from the surface as a news item, it has hit the headlines once more. According to "The Times" and many other newspapers, Peter Tatchell, leader of the homosexual group called "Outrage" has written to the Bishop of London, inviting him to do the decent thing and "Come Out": declaring himself to be an active homosexual. Mr. Tatchell, (a former Sunday-School teacher in his native Melbourne and who stood recently here as an M.P.) spends a lot of his time in writing to "high profile" personalities, known to be homosexual, urging them to "Come out" and be counted as "gay". He claims to have written to 20 M.P.'s this week and 15 Bishops recently. The Bishop of London is the third most senior figure of the C. of E. and Mr. Tatchell feels that his "Coming out" would be a great spur and fillip to the British "gay" world.

In his letter to the Bishop (the Rt. Rev. D. Hope) Mr. Tatchell said, (Quote) "Your 'Coming out' and speaking out can give the campaign for lesbian and gay rights new credibility and influence, which will eventually contribute to legislative changes . . . By coming out and speaking out you can also ensure that the C. of E. begins to make a fundamental change with its past and present homophobia. It is within your personal power to be an agent for the liberation of lesbian and gay people - or you can continue to remain silent and passively collude with our victimisation. You are, however, not alone. There are ten other Bishops we named at Synod, plus five others we did not name (for various reasons). After our naming of the Bishops, two of them (John Satterthwaite and John Nicolls) issued ambiguous statements which some people have interpreted as a *de facto* 'coming out'. The Bishop of Wakefield has recently emphasised that having a homosexual orientation is not sinful, and is no bar to high office in the C. of E. It would, therefore, seem unproblematic for you and others to be open about being gay . . ." (Unquote). This is just part of the letter but is enough, perhaps, to show what the Bishop was asked to do. Apart from anything else, all this was good publicity for the lesbian and gay fraternity, and, in a T.V. interview, all the Bishop was prepared to say was that he felt slightly threatened by the letter and was not in any case, prepared to "Come out". He did say, however, that his sexuality was a "grey area". Mr. Tatchell maintains, nevertheless, that he has "a lot of detailed information" about the Bishop's private life and could have classed him with the other ten Bishops at the last General Synod.

## WHAT "SOCIETY" ACCEPTS

As can be imagined, the letter, and its response, has attracted close media attention and has been followed by numerous radio and T.V. programmes featuring talks and

discussions on homosexuality. Added impetus was given to this new wave of interest by the declaration of Cardinal Hume, speaking on behalf of the R.C. Church, that "the love" which exists between gay people should be respected but that no sexual acts should occur between "gay" people. One of the more interesting T.V. programmes was the morning Kilroy-Silk discussion where a whole collection of gay clergy had their say, including a Rabbi from the Jewish Gay Association. Such programmes are of interest, if only to hear how the issue is being interpreted by young people who, by this time, have been reared on the general supposition that homosexuality is quite 'normal' and a legitimate alternative to marriage. It is also interesting to hear the lengths to which the clergy will go, in trying to justify the unjustifiable. One Bishop (who said he was proud to have been an active homosexual all his life) tried to water-down the strength of the word "abomination". He had to admit that in the O.T. sodomy was regarded by God as an "abomination" but pointed out that men wearing women's clothes (and vice versa) was also listed in the O.T. as an "abomination". He pointed to a lady in the audience wearing slacks and said, "There's an example of it, and it's not so terrible is it"? This was the kind of logic coming from the gay Bishops, willingly disregarding the difference between a lady wearing 'slacks' (or, for that matter a man wearing a kilt) and a transvestite. When, during the programme, Lev. 18:22 was quoted, one clergyman said, "Let's forget about texts, and talk of the love of God. God loves and we should love: Men even loving men". This was the level of the discussion. Another Bishop tried the "modern society" argument, insisting that as we live in a modern society we can "accept" lots of things previously thought unacceptable. "Times have changed", he said "and homosexuality has now been accepted by society". Nobody in that group seemed to regard that statement as incredible, coming as it did from a man with a dog-collar. What "society accepts" is surely not the issue. GOD does not accept, and never has accepted, lesbians or sodomists. In due time, "society" will probably "accept" incest (and it's certainly moving that way in some quarters); and "society" winks the eye (in some countries) at bestiality, but all these things will remain, and will ever remain, abominations in the eyes of God.

The Hebrew word for "abomination" simply means something that God hates and can't abide: things which God vehemently despises and detests: and these include idolatry; false balance; human sacrifice; transvestitism; witchcraft; spiritism; pride; oppression of the poor; incest and many others. Homosexuality is also included for God, through Moses, said "**Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, it is an ABOMINATION. Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith**". (Lev. 18:22). Nothing can change that: not even the passage of a few thousand years. All these things WERE an abomination to God: ARE an abomination to God; and ALWAYS WILL BE an abomination to God: i.e. things that God hates, detests and can't abide. "Society" will never change that situation; and neither will a million Bishops.

### THE CRIME AND THE PENALTY

There was a time when physiological excuses were made for the practice of homosexuality, and it was alleged that these poor unfortunates were the unwitting victims of physical deformity at birth. Certainly a man born with some physical deformity, whereby he is scarcely one gender or the other, would receive a certain sympathy from most of us, and any judgement on the behaviour of such a person would be left in God's hands. Obviously these cases do occur. But it is very hard to believe that the many thousands, nowadays who seek one another out at "gay" bars and discos have any serious physical deformity. Indeed, it seems that most of them go out of their way to show, by their dress and posturing, how robust and masculine they are. Psychiatrists are also engaged to convince us that homosexuality, and deviant sexual practice, is caused by the upbringing and previous home environment of these

individuals, and various reasons are ascribed, including aggressive fathers, indulgent mothers etc., etc. Again it is difficult to believe that all the many thousands of homosexuals world-wide have been mentally crippled by their parents in this way. Many of us may have had aggressive fathers, or indulgent mothers, without us seeking out a 'rent boy'.

Homosexuality is not new but is as old as "the oldest profession in the world" and is as repugnant to God as incest or bestiality. Away back in the Book of Leviticus, when God charged that man "**shall not lie with mankind as with womankind; it is an abomination. Neither shall he lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith**" (18:22,23). He put 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 have 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 in 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 hath 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 Kings 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 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.

#### AN OLDER, HIGHER AND BETTER CALL

Solomon said that there's nothing new under the sun and Mr. Tatchell is certainly not the first man to call upon people to "Come out". Almost 2000 years ago, the apostle Paul issued the same call: albeit under very different circumstances and for very different purposes. Paul (quoting the words of Isaiah fairly loosely, in which the prophet called upon Israel to forsake pagan pollutions) refers to Isaiah's call in his appeal to the Corinthian Christians to "Come out" from any entanglement with worldliness, and to separate themselves from the many forms of evil by which they were completely surrounded. Paul says, "**Wherefore COME OUT from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you. And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and My daughters saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God**". (2 Cor. 6:17 & 7:1). Clearly Paul's call to "Come out" differs greatly from Mr.

Tatchell's. The latter wants Bishops to "Come out" and declare themselves active sodomists whereas Paul wanted the Corinthians to come away from sodomy, and indeed every other form of evil practice. In short, the Bishops should not be coming out to admit homosexuality, but should be coming out FROM homosexuality: not affirming it, but RENOUNCING IT.

Quite apart from being "men of the cloth", Bishops and the clergy are supposed to be men of considerable learning and education, and how they can possibly believe that procuring the services of a 'rent boy' (and thereafter sexually abusing him in a most disgusting manner) is not hideously obscene and evil, must surely rank as the mystery of the age. Such behaviour is not to be found even amongst the animals. This call to the Corinthians was, of course, matched by a similar call to the Romans in which Paul quite specifically condemns homosexuality: and refers to the time when God gave mankind up "to vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust toward another: men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet". In the verse following Paul continues with a long catalogue of many other vices and ends by saying, "Who, knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them". (Rom. 1:26-32). Paul and the C. of E. Bishops are, therefore, poles apart. Paul clearly describes lesbians and sodomists and calls them "vile" and "worthy of death": including not only "those who do such things" but also those who take "pleasure in them that do them".

#### AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU

We notice from Paul's "Come out" call to the Corinthians that he reinforced it with a brief description of what he had in mind: i.e. things similar to what Isaiah had in mind when he called upon Israel to "Come out" from amongst the heathen and to renounce idolatry. "Separate yourselves" says Paul. "From what" we ask? From all forms of depravity: and homosexuality is depravity. "Touch not the unclean" says Paul, and what could be more revoltingly unclean than sodomy? "Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh" says Paul, and what could be more despicable than a man lying with a man as with a woman? One of the Bishops on the previously mentioned T.V. programme claimed that Jesus Himself never condemned homosexuality. But, by the same token, I suppose we could say that Jesus never specifically condemned such things as incest, bestiality, divination, (or, for that matter, human sacrifice) but Jesus condemned ALL unrighteousness and said to the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more". If Jesus condemned a man for looking on a woman to lust after her, and equated it with adultery; what would Jesus think of a man looking at another man and lusting after him, one wonders? And what would Jesus say to the gay Bishop, one wonders?

To these same Corinthian Christians Paul could say, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, 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". (1 Cor. 6:9). Our friend the Bishop should note that, again, this is obviously not a comprehensive list and some evil things are never mentioned (e.g. murder is not mentioned; neither is incest, bestiality, divinations and much else) but transvestites *are mentioned* (effeminate) and so are *homosexuals* (abusers of themselves with mankind). Indeed, Paul says that all forms of unrighteousness will keep us out of heaven. "And such were some of you" says Paul, and we note his use of *the past tense*. Truly some of them had been thieves, drunkards, idolators, etc., and HAD BEEN effeminate and homosexuals, but they

were no longer. They had "Come out" from all involvement in such things. **"But ye are washed"** says Paul, **"but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God"**. Yes, the Corinthian Christians *had previously* been engaged in all of these malpractices but had come out from the works of darkness and **"had been washed"** and cleansed in the blood of Christ and in the waters of baptism. They were now part of the "Called out" community of Christ; the Church. The Body of Christ, consists of those "called out" from the world, and who have embraced **"the calling of God"** (Phil. 3:14). Having been washed, Paul says that they were now **"sanctified"** (set apart for God's holy use) and were also **"justified"** (pardoned or considered "just" in God's eyes).

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion is not difficult to see. Paul never suggested, as some of the Bishops do, that we must "come to a better understanding" of homosexuality, for Paul *understood it only too well* and classed it, as we have seen, with every other vile thing. We must never be influenced by the pathetic platitudes which fall from the lips of some clergy, like one the other morning on radio, who said it was time for the Church to re-examine its attitude to this subject because ". . . there is a freshness and richness about all the variants". Surely when God angrily rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomórrah it was not because there was any element of "freshness and richness" about sodomy, but because it was unnatural, depraved, disgusting, obscene, repugnant, degrading, dissolute and indecent. Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned also by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Zephaniah in the O.T. and by Christ, Paul, Peter, Jude, John (in the Rev) in the N.T. and it is so well documented that most members of the public, let alone clergy, know all about it. Paul says that **"It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"**.

And so, while Mr. Tatchell continues to call upon Bishops to "Come out" in support of lesbians and homosexuals, we surely cannot do better than to repeat the call of the apostle Paul, a call, after all, not only directed to the gay clergy but to all men and women everywhere, and those who would have no hope, some day, of entering into heaven and life everlasting. **"Wherefore COME OUT from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"**. ( 2 Cor. 6:18).

EDITOR.

(Since writing this article, the Bishop of London has been promoted from third most powerful figure in the C. of E. to the second most powerful, and is now an Archbishop: the Archbishop of York. This illustrates the truth of the Bishop of Wakefield's statement that no homosexual orientation is any bar to high office in the C. of E.)

## GLEANINGS

*"Let her glean even among the sheaves."* (Ruth 2:15)

**"FAITH IN ACTION – NOT BY WORDS ONLY**

James 2:17-20: **"Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone**

**Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works. Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.**

**Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.**

**But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?**

**Was not Abraham our Father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?**