



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Booze – the legalised killer

I return to a theme I have touched upon before though now with a slightly different emphasis.

I am aghast at the many Christians in the political world who are caught up in the cry to protect the booze industry from the effects of the necessary steps taken to curb the spread of the Coronavirus and the many others who remain silent as those with whom they are linked ignore their defence of the indefensible!

There is a terrible slackening of the lines of separation from the world on the part of those who belong to a denomination which remonstrates against alcohol yet tolerates those within its ranks who are associated with those who lobby in favour of the sellers of booze.

Sadly, this is the case with the Free Presbyterians associated with the DUP. They cannot escape the 'touching' of that which is 'unclean' when fellow-members of the DUP are so vociferous in the defence of the 'hospitality' sector, more correctly called the 'booze sellers'!

How often Christians lose sight of the truth of God in the midst of the welter of words and the confusion sown by those seeking to promote the cause of sin!

Let us remember the words of the Saviour: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," Matthew 10:16.

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise," Proverbs 20:1.



The first time the word translated 'raging' in our text appears in Scripture is in 1 Kings 1:41 and there it is translated 'uproar'. That helps us understand the underlying tenor of the word. It is linked to riot and disorder. It denotes scorning and arrogant defiance.

Such indeed is the mood engendered by alcohol! It is the underlying agent in so much of society's law-breaking and crime. An average of 666 people were killed as a result of drunk driving in the years between 1979 and 2014 with an annual average of 3551 people seriously injured. As well as that some

85,000 were convicted of drink-driving related offences. Just how one could calculate the cost in grief and tears, the NHS expenditure due to these incidents and police time is really unknown.

One national daily newspaper recently had this headline on its front page.

"Drink driving deaths highest in nearly a decade, as campaigners call for more police in cars to catch offenders."

And yet the sale of alcohol is legalised and protected and here, during the struggle to contain the Coronavirus in recent months, there are those within the Stormont Assembly who put the preserving of the business of this evil trade above the health of the populace!

The cry from many in the business world and their cronies in the political world is 'Guard the hospitality sector'! That is really a euphemism for 'Guard the pubs and sellers of drink!'

The BBC reported this morning that: "There has been angry reaction from business leaders to the agreement reached by the Stormont Executive to extend Covid-19 restrictions from next Friday."



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Just who were they referring to as 'angry' business leaders? Well, the picture above these words tells us who they are! They are the sellers of booze.

The sale of cannabis or any other so-called 'recreational drug', that resulted in the death of the one who purchased the drug or resulted in the death of another as a result of the intoxication caused to the purchaser of the drug, would result in the one who sold it being prosecuted.

However, a publican may sell his booze and that sale result in death and injury, yet there are no consequences for the publican in normal circumstances. It is deemed that all fault lies with the consumer of the alcohol and the death and injury that he/she caused as a result.

Yet, it is not the same with the seller of what is in truth, the much less common drugs, such as cannabis and heroin. The seller is also deemed guilty of a crime!

How is it that publicans are deemed legitimate and esteemed businessmen while the purveyors of cannabis and the many other concoctions available on 'the street' are deemed criminals?

It comes down to public endorsement of this activity. Today we see that, which but a few short years ago was judged to be utterly reprehensible, embraced and sanctioned by the general public. Laws condemning certain activities have been removed from the Statute Book for that which was once forbidden is now considered perfectly proper and decent! Sodomy, abortion, moral perversity of virtually every form are embraced and endorsed. Indeed, it is considered an offence against humanity to condemn such behaviour and one is liable to prosecution, were one to condemn many of the practices of today!

The Christian must ever resist such trends and never embrace the idea that since 'times have changed' and with that change, evil has become good, and consequently tolerate the new morality.

The standards by which the Christian is to live NEVER change! Some three and half millennia ago the Lord stated this to His people. "Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am the LORD which sanctify you," Leviticus 20:7-8.

That same truth was repeated about two thousand years ago to the Church of Christ universal. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy," 1 Peter 1:15-16.

The Lord Himself is the standard and yardstick by which the Christian must live. He does not change in His person or character. "For I am the LORD, I change not," Malachi 3:6. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," Hebrews 13:8. That being so, the One we follow will ever lead us in the old paths of holiness and truth. That is God's will for us today amidst the shifting sands of modern morality. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein," Jeremiah 6:16.

The response of the people in Jeremiah's day, a day of national apostasy and rebellion is to be noted. "But they said, We will not walk therein." That is the response of the majority today and sadly, some professing believers are to be found within the ranks of these rebels!

It ought not to be so. Christians MUST stay on the old paths and not desert them for some new and apparently better way.

Please remember the words spoken before unto those believers tempted to embrace notions and practices contrary to God's Word. The Saviour Himself warned us all of the workers of deception who would come.

"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be," Matthew 24:21-27.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," Galatians 1:8-9.

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself," 1 Timothy 6:3-5.

This then is a familiar theme in God's Word and never was there a day in which these exhortations need to be obeyed more than today.

Oh! Christian take heed to these warnings.

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God," 3 John 1:11.

Rev Ivan Foster (Rtd)

20th November 2020.