



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“God’s glorious alternative to power-sharing with murderers”



“I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee,” Psalm 81:10-16.

Substance of a sermon preached by Rev. Ivan Foster on Lord's Day evening, April 29th.

These last few months have seen events take place that have been distressing and inexplicable to many believers.

Political positions and moral declarations have been abandoned by those whose word we have come to rely on and whose faithfulness we never doubted. In one very short weekend in October of last year, the moral and spiritual world of many in the Free Presbyterian Church, and many more outside it, was shaken by an earthquake, the tremors of which continue still. It was an earthquake that will leave many sad scars, crumbled confidences and hopes.

I am speaking of course of the decision taken by the DUP to enter an alliance with the murderers of Sinn Fein/IRA and form a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland. That government will, if God permits it, take up its functions of government on May 8th. There are none within the DUP but have shown some indication that they are conscious of the political about-turn that they have engaged in. Their somersault is all the more conspicuous in that they have been so unrelentingly critical of any who did in the past what they are now doing, and that just as soon as they gained a majority of support from the Unionist population in Ulster. Names like "traitor" and "liar" and "lundy" were heaped upon any who showed the least inclination to set foot on the road which the DUP have entered upon at a gallop!

Their past criticisms of others are seen by many to be now falling on their own head. It reminds me of a story of a fighter plane overtaking its own shells as they ricocheted off a concrete runway and shooting itself down! The DUP are being hit by the very criticisms that they aimed at others in the past.

One response to those who have criticised their actions has been repeated by the DUP leadership and echoed by its supporters. It is that the DUP had no alternative but to enter an agreement with Sinn Fein/IRA because the British government was threatening to initiate a political settlement that would be far worse for unionists. In other words they were blackmailed into this course of action which made many of them "sick to their stomachs"! Before coming to our text, I believe I need to make some comments in response to this assertion.



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1. If there was such blackmail going on, why were not the unionist people told of it by the DUP in its election literature, since it was their future that was being bartered to "pay off" the blackmailer?
2. If there was such blackmail taking place, why was it never even discussed by the DUP leadership, as former DUP MEP, Jim Allister has stated in response to this claim?
The following letter to the press makes an important point.

All details of Plan B must be made public Letter to the Editor of The Belfast Newsletter

Parliament legislated on March 27 to give effect to a DUP/Sinn Fein deal to form a power sharing Executive on May 8, 2007.

The DUP/Sinn Fein deal will elevate (with the IRA command structure still intact) a self-confessed leader of the IRA and convicted IRA terrorists into the government and policing of the unionist citizens that the IRA systematically murdered and terrorised for three decades.

The DUP/Sinn Fein deal is therefore an affront to democracy. That was certainly not the view of the leader of the DUP in his contribution to the debate in parliament on March 27 in which Dr Paisley asserted that the DUP/Sinn Fein deal constituted a 'star of hope' for the "whole of the people of Ireland".

These considerations raise a crucial question: why did the DUP agree to form a power-sharing Executive with Sinn Fein?

The DUP leader provided an answer to precisely that question on the BBC Nolan Show on April 4, when he claimed that the DUP had been presented with two options by the 'two governments' – either form an Executive with Sinn Fein or a 'Plan B' would be imposed directed to the destruction of the Union.

Under a claimed threat of "Dublin rule" and "curtains for our country", the DUP leader stated he had no option but to take 'Plan A' – that is, form a power-sharing Executive with Sinn Fein.

But there is a major problem with this explanation of the DUP capitulation. The problem is that in parliament on March 27, Peter Robinson categorically denied that the DUP/Sinn Fein deal was the result of any such threat: "The DUP reached a decision on its own. It was not bullied into that position by anyone."

The clear import of Mr Robinson's statement is that DUP policy to form a power-sharing Executive with Sinn Fein was not the result of the threat claimed by the DUP leader in the Nolan interview.

The conflicting positions of the DUP leader and deputy leader bring into question the political integrity of the party. That is an issue that the unionist electorate have a right to demand to be publicly resolved.

There is a simple way to resolve this issue. The DUP leader must put into the public do-



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main the precise details of 'Plan B' that he claims were put to him by the "two governments". If Dr Paisley cannot or will not do that then unionists would be entirely justified in concluding that no 'Plan B' threat to the Union existed.

Cedric Wilson,
Castlereagh,
Belfast

3. If this power-sharing agreement between the DUP and Sinn Fein/IRA is the result of blackmail, why is that the DUP seem, to judge by their smiles, to be delighted with the arrangement and have been busy prophesying prosperity and peace as being the outcome of this arrangement?

A nation's leaders, who have been forced to accept a political course that was hitherto anathema to them, usually display on their countenances some indication of their distaste at the arrangements they have been forced to accept. It certainly is not the case with the DUP. This seems to be a most pleasing "distasteful" political action for them!

4. If this arrangement has resulted in the strengthening of the unionist position and the humbling and weakening of Sinn Fein/IRA, why had the DUP to be blackmailed into accepting it?

It was either a case of distasteful blackmail or it is a clever political coup for the DUP over Sinn Fein/IRA — it cannot be both!

There is, sadly, evidence of the discomfort of those who are engaged in this unholy alliance with Sinn Fein/IRA though it has not resulted in repentance. A church advert containing the above sermon title did not appear in the *Belfast Newsletter's* "Church Adverts" in its Saturday's edition though it was received well before the deadline.

A number of adverts containing sermon titles by Rev. Ivan Foster have been refused by some of the provincial newspapers because of the threat of legal action from political circles.

This has not happened to a Free Presbyterian minister's adverts since the days of Terence O'Neill — signs of the times in which we live!!!

Turn to our text. I wish you to notice:

I. THE READINESS OF GOD TO SUPPLY THE NECESSARY HELP TO HIS PEOPLE IN A TIME OF TRIAL.

God stands most ready to come to the aid of His people. The liberties of the gospel are at stake when such wicked people as those who make up Sinn Fein come to power. We may not be threatened by the Canaanite or the Philistine as was Israel of old. However, we are faced by those who are of the exact same spirit as the ancient enemies of Israel. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the



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rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," Ephesians 6:12.

1. The emphasis upon God's covenant reminds us of His readiness to help. "O my people", "I am the Lord thy God", "my people", "my people", verses 8, 10, 11, 13. His readiness to help must be seen in the light that they were His people. He is their Shepherd undertaking their safety. When threatened by our enemies it is to Him we should look. Submitting to blackmail while the Lord stands ready to deliver His people and safeguard their cause is folly indeed!

Such threats were issued in the past by the likes of Harold Wilson and Edward Heath. Their threats were resisted. Why did we not do that this time? I believe that the threats gave an opportunity for some in the DUP to justify their desire to seize upon high office. No good will come of such a thing.

2. The history of God's deliverances. "I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." The nation of Israel was born out of a deliverance. So it is with every child of God. "Who hath **delivered** us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son," Col 1:13. "Jesus, which **delivered** us from the wrath to come," 1 Thess 1:10. The cross of Calvary is the clearest evidence of God's readiness to intervene to the saving of His people. There He intervened at the cost of His dear Son in order to save us from hell. Does this not show God's readiness to help? In the light of Calvary, there is no situation too hopeless for God to intervene successfully to our deliverance.

3. The simplicity of the means of obtaining God's deliverance. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it," verse 10. There is nothing very complex or difficult in that! No scheming is needed. No clever "behind the scenes" manoeuvring! No denials of past principles. Just simple faith in God's provision.

II. THE INCLINATION OF MEN TO DEFY GOD AND REJECT HIS HELP.

1. Man's will is naturally set against God. "But my people would not" Their will was set against listening to God. That is the case with the sinner and the state into which the backslider returns to. God's people may turn their back upon the Lord, "Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved," Psalm 80:3. There will be a heavy price to pay for this disobedience.

*"The mills of God grind slowly,
but they grind exceeding small!"*

2. Man refuses to obey. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me," verse 11. They would not attend to His Word, accept His offer of help nor acquiesce in His will. If there was the blackmailing of the unionist people that is claimed by the DUP, why was there no call for a day of prayer. Why did we not do what the early church did when threatened by the civic authorities? "And now, Lord, behold their threat-



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enings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness," Acts 4:29-31.

Calling upon the Lord in days of crisis was Ulster's response to trouble in the past. Why was it not so this time? Was public office more to men's liking than was God's intervention?

3. The Lord's help is not desired. If it were, nothing would stand in the way. If men wished to stand for God and resist the pressures of evil men then they would follow the example of Daniel and his friends. The positions occupied by men such as these are used to justify power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA. In truth, these men are the very opposite in their principles and actions to the DUP power-sharers.

Neither Daniel nor his friends campaigned and deceived in order to obtain the positions they were given in Babylon. Furthermore, when the occasion arose that required them to denounce and resist the leadership of the Babylonian and Persian empires, they readily did so.

For them, the answer, the alternative to the pressure mounted upon them to do wrong was to simply do right. This may be seen in Daniel 3:17-18; 6:13-17. Neither the fire nor the lion's den were used as excuses to comply with a sinful policy.

Would that the leadership of the DUP showed the same resolve. Had they done so they would not have had the sleepless nights, the troubled consciences and the sick stomachs which we all have heard much afflicted the DUP camp following this decision.

These men obeyed God, irrespective of the cost and did right as an alternative to doing wrong.

If truth be told, the DUP entered power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA because it desired the trappings of high office, even when it came at such a high and dishonourable cost.

III. THE LAMENT OF GOD OVER HIS PEOPLE'S FOLLY.

"I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee," verses 14-16.

Here is the lament of the Lord.

Here is what could have been. We can only conclude that the opposite of this will be the result of disobedience and defiance of God.

These words are a foreshadowing of Matthew 23:37-38. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

What a terrible price will be paid for the folly of rejecting God's deliverance. Rejecting God's means of deliverance will bring desolation or, as the word means, *a wilderness!* What could have been!

1. The subjugation of the enemy. "I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. The haters of the LORD should have submitted



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themselves unto him," verses 14-15. God's deliverance does not entail putting murderers into high office but rather the turning of His hand against them. That is what we should be praying for.

2. The continuity of God's people. Verse 15. ". . . their (God's people) time should have endured for ever," verse 15. The cause of God's people would be sustained and strengthened.

Is this not a better alternative to wicked men in high office?

3. The abundance of God's deliverance. "He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee," verse 16.

Sadly, in her folly Israel threw all this mercy away.

Did not Ulster do the same in the recent election?

May God have mercy upon us that we humbly seek Him and be enabled to gather up again the mercies we threw away.

A recording of this sermon maybe downloaded from www.sermonaudio.com — see the links on top right of *The Burning Bush* main page.

Ivan Foster, May 1st 2007.