

GOD AND MORALS (1)

ALL over the world evidences of moral degeneration abound. Sexual immorality has posed a problem to which no human answer has been found.

The more people condemn acts of immorality, the greater the vigour with which majority indulge in them. Men and women who are notorious for their characteristic deviation from the path of virtue are sometimes accorded places of honour.

Some people are sometimes moved to ask whether God, in fact, laid down any code to guide the conduct of men; and if He did, why men are not keeping to that code of conduct and what God's attitude towards these things is.

The Creator, no doubt, had a purpose for bringing man into existence. "This people have I formed for myself," said He "they shall shew forth my praise" - Isaiah. 43: 21; see also Psalm 100: 3-5; 79: 13; Revelation 4:11; 14:6, 7.

Ten Commandments

In order that man may fulfil God's purpose and prove worthy of his honour, he is required to live up to certain standards of behaviour both in the service of his Creator and in his dealings with his fellow men. To this end God enacted laws to guide His people. Among the laws given in the days of Moses the prophet, the Ten Commandments as written in Exodus chapter 20, were of fundamental significance.

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ came and confirmed them but with modification of grace summing up all of them under LOVE- the love of God and that of one's neighbour. (Mark 12: 28-31; Romans 13: 10) It is on this royal law or golden rule the principles of Christianity are based. **To live up to these principles is to build up a strong moral character that goes with true honour and abiding grace; it is to lead a life of holiness that brings glory and life eternal. But to do otherwise is certainly disastrous.**

It is because people set aside the principles of God and go about following the lusts and devices of their own hearts that crimes and calamities ravage the modern race; that sex perversion becomes the order of the day; and there continues to be deterioration in moral and spiritual values.

SIN, in one word, is the bane of humanity. It robs man of his honour and glory, and even deprives him of the right to existence.

Adultery is a sin. And King Solomon said: **"But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away."** - Proverbs. 6: 32, 33.

Yes, ADULTERY is one of the sins of the people for which God is going to destroy this evil world. (Hosea 4: 1-3; Isaiah. 26: 21) So too fornication is an abomination. The apostles of Christ jointly commanded the believers through the Holy Spirit to ABSTAIN FROM FORNICATION and other heathenish practices. (Acts 15: 28, 29) Moreover, it is positively stated in the Bible that NO ADULTERER, ADULTERESS OR FORNICATOR WILL INHERIT GOD'S KINGDOM.-1 Corinthians 6: 9, 10, 18; Galatians 5: 19-21; Ephesians 5: 3-6.

Today, adultery and fornication are among those things in which the world takes greater pleasure. This shows how men have gone far away from God and His word.

Church Leaders

Certain religious leaders have been found guilty of immorality. It was reported in the front page of the Nigerian *Daily Express* of 10th April, 1961, that "a woman told a church court in London that she committed adultery 75 to 80 times with a vicar" If the vicar of a church can be so immoral, what is he expected to say or do when his followers do the same? Practically nothing! (Romans 2:1, 2, 22-27).

Some church leaders connive at the immoral behaviours and practices of the members of their organizations because they fear that if they speak out they would lose adherents. Certain male and female members of a church parish were often found after church services making love in a hotel near their place of worship. And when someone called the attention of the pastor in charge to the unwholesome conduct of the members and protested, he received to his chagrin a sharp rebuke from the priest. "Are you the one sent by God to condemn people? or do you want to scatter my church?" the pastor inveighed. And he added: "The Bible says judge not but let both good and bad grow together till the time of the harvest." This is the way certain preachers quote the Bible like the devil and wrest its passages to suit their own purposes only to deceive the gullible. And with such an irrational attitude and negative approach to matters of this nature which is but a manifestation of lack of spiritual understanding, such priests also contribute to the moral decay prevalent among the folds of many Churches so-called.

Of a truth, many church leaders do not in the least have the spiritual dynamism nor reflect the irresistible, awe-striking force of the word of God dreaded by neither evil-doers nor the reformatory power for which Christianity is renowned.

There is nothing wrong in judging anyone who acts contrary to the law of God. The elders in the church are charged with the responsibility not only to judge or rebuke offenders but also to punish them by way of excommunication **where they do not repent**. This must be done without fear or favour regardless of the social rank or status of the unrepentant sinner.

When there were reported cases of fornication among the Christians at Corinth, so much that one had union with his father's wife, St Paul gave stern orders through his epistle that such a person should be judged and expelled from the Church-more so, when there was no evidence of contrition in that person. (I Corinthians 5: 1-5. 9-13) Such disciplinary measures serve as a deterrent to others who may be carried away into similar abuses. What is more, St. Paul also enjoined Timothy, his fellow labourer in the gospel, saying, "**Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.**"- I Timothy 5: 20

"Civilization"

What the world has been pleased to call "civilization" is fraught with a number of evil things that sap the moral and spiritual strength of any nation. Here in Nigeria we are witnesses of how it has contributed to lower the moral standard of the present generation.

We now find ourselves in a world where uprightness of character counts but little, where men and women of proved integrity and rectitude are not as popular as those of corrupt and dissolute disposition. The newspapers and magazines are always there to give prominence to loose women who for material gain and vainglory sell away their feminine honours. The TV programmes are considered to

be exciting when they have to do with naked women, love affairs, and other sensual acts.

For these newspapers and magazines pornographic publications are the springboard to their social popularity, and indecent advertisements of naked women are their source of more income and economic stability. **But it must be made clear that any medium of information that encourages sexual immorality in any way is not only acting contrary to the law of God but is also doing great disservice to humanity.**

The way the devil is using men and women and even children these days is so bad that many sober people are becoming more concerned about where the present generation is heading for.

There are clubs and theatres where people go simply to engage in sinful, immoral pleasures. Worldly women make obscene appearance on the stage and are greeted with cheers, and those of them who go besides themselves to strip clothes off their bodies and wriggle themselves dancing in a most indecent manner are given the loudest applause. And you find some who call themselves Christians among them too!

The other day the *Sunday Times* (February 11, 1968, page 3) published its investigation on the question of "sex and the single girl". The view was expressed that "hardly will you find one out of thirty who is still a virgin". It was further stated: "Even our men would look down on such girls... They regard these virgins as immature and unsophisticated." It was also the opinion of some that "chastity is out of date" and "is not fashionable". These views and others were gathered from Nigerian girls among whom were graduates, clerks, and so on.

It must be pointed out that men who look down on a girl for being a virgin are themselves depraved characters. And any girl who seeks to please such men by leading a loose life so as to appear sophisticated, modern and fashionable, is stupid and spiritually not better than a beast. SHE SHALL PAY DEARLY FOR HER PERVERSION. - Look up Psalm 49: 12; Proverbs 11: 3; 21: 15,16; 2 Corinthians 5: 10.

The *Sunday Times* investigation is but a confirmation of the well known fact that immorality has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society-even to the extent that the true sense of value of the majority of youths has been contaminated.

Young girls take extraordinary pride in their age, they abuse their youth forgetting that youth is but a temporal state. In their exuberance they shift from fashion to fashion and adopt all sorts of mannerism-winking of eyes and body movements-all to attract attention of those of the opposite sex. Today mini-skirt is the vogue. They have learned, in Peter Howard's description to wear wigs for the delight of men, to paint lips, cheeks, finger-nails, toes, eyes till they are like the colours of a mandrill's backside. In all these that make for immodesty certain women, some above middle age, would want to compete (godlessly) with the younger generation!

These things are not good. Mini-skirts should be banned, by the Government. Church leaders who are worth their salt must speak out not only in condemnation of vices but also in scattering evils as of a duty but within the limit of their prerogatives as prescribed in the Holy Bible. Governments as well must discourage immoral tendencies in their institutions and departments and take steps to check immorality

in the general public. This is of vital importance to the spiritual and moral strength of any nation.

Some blame the cause of the low morals of youths on parents. It cannot be argued that some parents are not reprehensible. There is an element of truth in the saying that parental delinquency begets youthful delinquency. But there are also instances of children who have perverted to loose life though they were brought up in strict discipline under parents of known integrity, strong character and high morals. Such parents are not to blame but the children who will definitely give account of themselves to God.

It was King Solomon who said, "Rejoice, O young man (or young woman), in thy youth.; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: **but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.** Therefore...put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity." - Ecclesiastes 11: 9. 10.

Social Evils

Today a lot of things known to be bad and contrary to morality are done by people without feeling remorse. The sin of fornication and even adultery are taken lightly. There are places where prostitution is legalised and permitted. Married women have the gut to keep boyfriends and are not ashamed to confess having lawless sex relations with other men. Some men on the other hand also boast of the number of girls they have defiled or of women they have succeeded to seduce from their husbands. We pity them. And may God give them repentance-for UNLESS they repent to His satisfaction, they shall get full reward for their heinous sins. -1 Timothy 1: 9, 10; Hebrews 13: 4; Revelation 21: 7, 8.

Social gatherings and youth clubs have become fertile grounds for immorality. Some schools also contribute to the moral laxity among the youths Take for example, the case of male students of a college inviting the students of a Girls' Grammar School to a week-end or end- of-term dance at the college hall with !the approval of the respective principals. The pity of it is that some of such schools are run by certain so-called church denominations!

With such low moral and spiritual standards in institutions of learning, apart from the secular and materialistic ideas pumped into the students by godless tutors, we agree with the view that a boy or girl finds the school environment a battle-ground rather than a training ground.

Unrestricted social intercourse between boys and girls not only makes them sex lawlessly and contact diseases but also results in some school girls becoming pregnant and therefore unable to complete their training courses: and others because of shame resort to procuring abortion but die in the process.

These are some of the evils in human societies that must be condemned without reservation. The Christian boy or girl must resist these temptations and keep himself or herself pure in the fear of God knowing very well that God's judgment awaits everyone. Evildoers must be brought to face the grim realities of the consequences of their actions.

Last Days

It had long been foretold in the Scriptures that evil practices would be rampant among men in this final age of the world. St. Paul described the last days as a time of troubles, and stated that men would be selfish, covetous, blasphemous, unholy, with no respect for parents, wanting in self-control, swollen with self-importance, high-minded and "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God".-2 Timothy 3: 1-5.

The apostle further stated that those who would endeavour to live a godly life as Christians would be subjected to persecution, whereas "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived".-2 Timothy 3: 12, 13.

But one thing is clear: it is that God will not continue to tolerate the sins of men indefinitely, iniquity shall have an end.

God's Vengeance

It was the wickedness of men on earth when every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was evil continually, that provoked the wrath of God and caused the Deluge which destroyed the ungodly in the days of Noah. He (Noah) was found righteous and was saved with his family.-Genesis 6: 5-8; 7: 1-10, 21-24; 2 Peter 2.4,5.

There is also the instance of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah because of the sins of the inhabitants. Immorality reached such a height that men, burning with lust for one another, committed sodomy-the sin of carnal relation between male persons. **When those cities were destroyed Lot, who neither took part nor had pleasure in the sins of the people, was rescued by God through His angels. -2 Peter 2: 6-10.**

Very soon God will rid the world of all unrighteousness. It is sheer wishful thinking for any "body to hope that he could escape God's wrath and punishment when he or she does not repent thoroughly of his or her sins. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." -2 Corinthians 5: 10.

The severity with which God dealt with those who were guilty of immorality in the days of old is an object lesson to Christians of today, warning them to refrain from sinful lusts. (1 Corinthians 10: 5-11; Romans 11: 20-22) It is because of this understanding that the GKS is firm in the enforcement of discipline expelling from the fold (after ecclesiastical judgment) unrepentant members and even ministers who are guilty of ungodly acts.-Proverbs. 11: 31; 1 Corinthians 5: 11-13; 1 Peter 4: 17, 18.

In a comprehensive admonition to the Church of the Thessalonians, St. Paul stated what every Christian should do for the maintenance of self-respect and dignity in the Lord. As it is written: **"This is the will of God, that you should be holy: you must abstain from fornication: each one of you must learn to gain mastery over his body, to hallow and honour it, not giving way to lust like the pagans who are ignorant of God."**- 1 Thessalonians 4: 3-5, *New English Bible.*

From the foregoing it is abundantly clear that God is against immorality.

NOTE: The text of this sermon is made up of excerpts from a booklet soon to be published by the God's Kingdom Society. - Pub. Sec.

