

THE IMMORAL REVOLUTIONDr. Zwemer

The face of the whole world has changed within the last decade. The quality of human life has been threatened. The entire natural environment has been polluted. Man has spewed his fumes and smoke over the surface of the earth. Even the ocean is being polluted. Many rivers in America are under ban for fishing because of the mercurials present in the water. The earth is poisoned with pesticides, the cities are littered with rubbish, crowded with vehicles, full of din and noise and plagued by decaying ghettos. The words of the ancient prophet are applicable today, "The earth is also defiled under the inhabitants thereof..." Isaiah 24:5

But this outward pollution is merely a symbol of the moral corruption within the human heart. And the corruption that pervades all society is manifested in the great cities of the western world where modern culture and Christianity mix.

Everywhere there is fragmentation of society. There are power groups, militant groups, protest groups, liberation groups, black groups, white groups. Fear stalks the streets of the great cities of America. Crime is rampant and increasing. Unrest is universal. Drug addiction is a national calamity in the United States. The sex revolution is sweeping across the land. The seventh commandment has been torn to shreds. In many places and cases, homosexuals are lauded and promoted. Pornography has become a religion, and prostitutes the priestesses of it. Sin is tolerated; even more, it is condoned, preached, practised, and even imposed upon men. A man smokes and we breathe it. He drinks and we suffer on the highways because of it. He takes drugs and we are mugged. Rock music appeals to him, and we suffer it. His television spews its stream of filth and violence, and our children are debauched by it. Society has reached the point where sin has become a science, and those who are its devotees would enforce it upon us. Hard drugs are put in sugar and salt and beverages, that unsuspecting people might be hooked. Men are not satisfied with their private perversions, but enforce them on others in the bathrooms, the hostels, the streets, the playgrounds and the prisons.

The conditions that existed in Sodom and Gomorrah of old are being re-enacted today in the great cities of "Christian" society. Billy Graham has said, "If God does not punish America, He should apologise to Sodom and Gomorrah."

The wise man declares, "The curse causeless shall not come." Proverbs 26:2 God is not the author of it. But we must consider who is responsible for this avalanche of moral pollution.

Chairman: We are hear to answer the question, "Should the churches share the responsibility for the immoral revolution?" Mr. Robert Brinsmead will now discuss this question.

Robert Brinsmead

The church is supposed to be the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). Salt is a preservative element. So the church should preserve society from utter corruption. But as Jesus said, if the salt loses its savour, what shall then become of the earth?

The greatest wickedness exists where modern culture and Christianity (so-called) mix. An historian has said that when the heathen Barbarians overran "Christian" Rome, they were made to blush at the indecencies that were carried on in "Christian" society. It might even be said today that godless communistic societies are puritan compared with many of the great "Christian" cities of the West.

I believe that God will charge the professed Christian church with being responsible for much of the corruption of society today. I would like to point out where she has failed in two vital areas: She has failed to give an effective counter to the humanistic educational philosophy of the world, and she has signally failed to uphold the law of God.

1. Failure to Counter the Humanistic Educational Philosophy

The church is an educational institution. She is supposed to teach the Word of God, especially to her own young people. Yet humanism, scientific idealism, and secular psychology has had a far greater impact on the young members of the church than has the Bible.

Humanism and secular psychology propose that man is basically good. It proposes to develop the good that is within man. It advocates that if the right ideals are set before young people, they will themselves choose what is good. Moral virtue is upheld as the sort of conduct best suited to this stage of man's evolutionary process. Sin is frowned upon only so far as it is contrary to society's cultural mores.

On the other hand, the Bible teaches that man is evil by nature. "He that trusts in his own heart is a fool." Prov.28:26. "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;" Gen.8:21. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; Who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9 Even the great Apostle Paul declared, "I know that I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned." Romans 7:18 (Taylor) If anyone would properly read and understand the Bible, he must first learn well this doctrine of "original sin". Because of Adam's fall, all men are born with a decided bent toward corruption. It is as natural for men to sin as it is for them to breathe. As John Wesley once said, "Never did every sin appear in the vilest wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy nature, and thou mayest see every sin in the seed thereof."

Even professed Christian people will often blame the environment as the principle cause of moral pollution. They will crusade against dirty literature, corrupt films, and other evils that surround the young. (And certainly literature, films, and television provide a mighty stimulus to the evil nature within us all.) Yet this alone can never stop the avalanche of pollution. The main problem is not the environment - it is not the schools, the television, the literature, the drug pushers. Jesus said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:" Matthew 15:19 The cause of corruption is man's corrupt nature, and any effective resistance to evil must be based on a true understanding of "original sin".

Yet the Bible doctrine of "original sin" is often regarded as archaic, negative, and unscientific, even by professed Christians. Secular psychology has had a tremendous impact on modern man, and even the church has been swept along with the current. Most of the preachers today actually preach a sort of mixture between Christian ideals and secular psychology. They would do much less harm if they disowned Christ altogether. A classic example of this corrupt mingling of Christian ideal and secular psychology is found in a popular book called

"The Power of Positive Thinking" by Norman Vincent Peale. In the opening paragraph of this book, the author says,

"Believe in yourself. Have faith in your abilities... self confidence leads to self realization and successful achievement...this book will help you believe in yourself and release your inner powers."

Further on, the author continues:

"It is important, first of all, to realize that the power to solve them (problems) correctly is inherent within you." "Even if you may be down to the worst, the best is potentially with you. You have only to find it, release it, and rise up with it."

These sentiments are utterly unchristian and unbiblical. Yet it is impossible to estimate their widespread influence on the minds of men. Even Christian young people attend educational institutions where they are taught that they must develop the good within them and that repression is bad. It would not be so bad if the church resisted this popular philosophy, but more often than not, she is going along with it. And so we see a generation committed to the idea of developing the "good" within them - and look at the harvest. What else could be expected, especially in countries where youth have the time and leisure to develop all this "good" within them? And the church has encouraged it more than she has counteracted it.

2. Failure to Uphold the Law of God

Closely linked to this humanistic ideal of developing the "good" within, is the idea that this "good" or "spark of divinity" within man is able to judge what is right and wrong without having any objective, absolute standard of conduct. In this context, the idealists will tell us that each situation is to be judged according to the ethic of love - as if love was a sort of guiding impulse possessed by natural man. Under the influence of this teaching, desire becomes the highest law, and the basest sin can be excused on the basis of "love".

Unfortunately, even those who might class themselves as "evangelical" sometimes play right into the hands of this godless and lawless philosophy. It is often advocated by professed Christians that love is a higher law which has superseded the ten commandments. They do not see that the ten commandments are simply love codified into a form adapted to man in this present life. Sinful man is not able to judge what is love. He needs it plainly spelled out to him. Therefore, God shows us that love does not commit adultery, does not steal, does not lie, does not covet, does not blaspheme, and does not prefer anything else in preference to God. D. L. Moody said:

"The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation. We do not want a gospel of mere sentiment. The Sermon on the Mount did not abolish the Ten Commandments...Paul said, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' But does this mean that the detailed precepts of the Decalogue are superseded and have become back numbers? Does a father cease to give children rules to obey because they love him? Does a nation burn its statute books because the people have become patriotic? Not at all. And yet people speak as if the commandments do not hold for Christians because they have come to love God." Weighed in the Balances, pages 17,18.

Another error is the idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is all that matters. If the reception of the Spirit was understood as being communicated by the Word of God and always leading to the Word of God, there would be safety for erring human feet; but we must reject anything that would encourage people to follow the impressions and impulses of any religious experience.

Finally, there is the erroneous notion that grace releases the Christian from the obligation of obeying the law of God. The Bible doctrine of salvation by grace has been so strained that obedience has almost become a bad word. Many professed Protestants claim to be the spiritual descendants of the Reformers, but they either do not know, or they have forgotten that every one of the Reformers upheld the binding claims of the Ten Commandments. Luther declared, "Those are absolutely not to be tolerated who hold that the teaching of the Law is to be thrown out of the churches." What Luther Says, Ewald Plass, Vol. 2, page 770. We wish Luther were alive to chase out the antinomians today!

The gospel cannot be presented without the law. Where there is no law, there is no sense of sin, no repentance, no appreciation of grace. The office of the law is to magnify sin, to make it appear exceeding sinful. But we live in an age where this is not so. Today there is little sense of sin. The church should be the conscience of society, and armed with the law of God, it should be a terror to evil doers. Yet too often she is found encouraging lawlessness by her failure to forthrightly uphold the law of God, if not by claiming that the gospel has abolished it.

Man needs a plain definition of sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4. "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Exodus 20:14 "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23 God will punish the law breaker without respect of persons. Men may try to hide under their doctrine of election, eternal security, and once-saved-always-saved; but if they are found to be transgressors at last, they will die the death of the wicked under the judgment of Him who without respect of persons will render to every man according to his deeds.

So the time has come for Christians to unashamedly uphold God's holy law - not to save, but in order that men may see their need of the Saviour; not for cleansing, but as a mirror in which sinners may see their need of cleansing, not to comfort, but to convict of sin's terrible power. And unless the church upholds the law of God she herself will become "a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Rev. 18:2. Then, instead of being the salt of the earth, she will become "the great whore, which did corrupt the earth." Rev. 19:2.

Chairman: Mr. John Brinsmead, in what other way can the church fail to stem the tide of moral corruption?

John Brinsmead

We have just heard that a failure to teach people about "original sin" and the law of God is responsible for much of the corruption in society. That is true. But a failure to preach the gospel of the New Testament is also responsible for a great deal of lawlessness.

Without the gospel of Christ, the law cannot check sin - in fact it stimulates people to sin. Paul writes about this in Romans 7. He says that the mere command, "Thou shalt not..." stirs up "all kinds of wrong desires." (verses 7 and 8 NEE) If you tell little Johnny, "Don't go near that paint," the

mere command arouses stronger desires to get to the point. The human heart is inclined to sin. When it is confronted with the law, "Thou shalt not," it arouses an even more intense desire to sin. This is part of the law's function - to make man intensely aware of the sinfulness of his heart.

In this light, we must say that those who merely campaign against immorality are not doing anything to stop the tide of corruption. If they only present the law, they are inciting people to further immorality. So, too, the best sex education that can be given in a secular school will only foment immorality.

The gospel must not be presented without the law, and the law must never be presented without the gospel. By gospel I do not mean the "social gospel" of liberal Protestantism. Nor is the gospel the power of your positive thinking in Norman Vincent Peale style. We mean the gospel of Christ, the gospel of the New Testament.

Firstly, it is important to see that the gospel takes the law very seriously. No man can be justified and accepted of God apart from perfect obedience to the law. (Romans 2:13; Gal. 3:10-14). Of course, the sinner's predicament is that he is not able to render that sort of obedience. And furthermore, he is under the death penalty because of his failure to do it. Now God's way of salvation is not to remove the law, but to send His own Son into this world to keep it on man's behalf. In this way the law is honoured and magnified. (Isaiah 42:21) And the fact that Christ had to die under the penalty of a broken law is the convincing testimony that the law's honour must be upheld at all costs. If the law could have been set aside, there would have been no need for Christ to die. So divine Love came to this earth in the person of Christ and kept the law for us. Divine Love made an infinite sacrifice to satisfy the claims of the broken law.

The uplifting of the cross of Christ brings "repentance toward God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:20 Repentance means a true sorrow for sin, a change of attitude to the law of God. When the sinner yields to the drawing of divine love, he acknowledges his sin of rebellion against a law so holy, just, and good. At the same time the Spirit of God gives him faith in the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. Through faith, the sinner is justified, for God takes the obedience of Christ and places it to the sinner's account. (See Romans 4:5)

Does this faith, which lays hold of the righteousness (obedience) of Christ do away with the law? "God forbid", says Paul, "it establishes the law." Romans 3:31 By repentance the sinner acknowledges the claims of the law. By faith in Jesus he meets all its demands (Romans 10:4). And by love he runs in the way of God's commandments (Ps. 119:32). For faith, as Martin Luther says in his Introduction to Romans, fetches the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit writes the law of God in the hearts of all those who are justified by faith (Romans 5:1-5; Hebrews 8:10). Through the regenerating power of the Spirit, the believer is given new motives and new tendencies: and by the Spirit's power He fights the flesh in order that he may do the will of God.

In short, the gospel reconciles the sinner to the law of God as much as it reconciles him to the Lawgiver. Anything short of this is not the power of God unto salvation, but is the "gospel" of sentiment and permissiveness. When the churches preach this kind of gospel, they really encourage people to sin with an easy conscience.

Chairman: The Word of God reveals that we can look for no improvement in the Immoral Revolution. Yet, it shall have an end. Dr. Jack Zwemer could you elucidate this point?

Dr. Zwemer

We have spoken earlier of the floodtide of open, shameless, unbridled, universal human corruption - preached and practised by society, aided and abetted by the churches. The churches presume to reject sin. They repudiate the very law of God. They spurn the good news of the gospel. And having done all that they titillate themselves in their legislative councils and assemblies with such questions as whether or not a man of the cloth should pronounce a couple of the same sex, man and wife in holy matrimony. They honour that which brought fire and brimstone on the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Is it any wonder that the churches are spiritually impotent on the great moral issues of contemporary society? Is it any wonder that Christianity - called to be the salt of the earth - has lost its savour. Is it any wonder that the word of the prophet is today fulfilled, "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance and broken the everlasting covenant." Isaiah 24:5 This is the condition. What does it mean? The corruption that pervades mankind foretells the imminent and personal and glorious return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Four thousand years ago God saw the earth was corrupt and filled with violence, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon earth. He destroyed that earth with a flood. "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Matthew 24:37 We think again of Lot, that righteous man whose soul was vexed at the unbridled wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. You recall that God decided that because of its incurable rebellion, He would have to destroy those wicked cities. He sent His angels down. They approached the city and entered its gates, were met by Lot, invited to his home, housed and fed by him, and before they lay down the record says, "The men of the city, even the men of Sodom called unto Lot and said unto him, 'Where are the men which came into thee this night, bring them out to us that we may know them,' and they pressed sore upon them, even Lot, and came near to break the door." Genesis 19:4-9 "As it was in the days of Lot even thus shall it be when the Son of Man is revealed." Luke 17:28.

The Apostle Paul has given a graphic description of the moral condition at the time of the first advent of the Saviour, quoting from Romans 1, "For this cause," referring to those who worship the creature more than the Creator, "God gave them up unto vile affections, for even the women did change the natural use into that which is against nature, and likewise the men burned in their lust, one toward another." That was the condition at the first advent; that today is the condition as we stand on the threshold of the second advent of the same Saviour. And so Paul before he closes his ministry, writes again to his friend and co-worker Timothy,

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

And so the solemn words of Scripture are before us. We have indeed come to perilous times in these last days.

This tide of human pollution foretells the Advent. What does it demand? It demands the return of Jesus, for Paul goes on to declare to Timothy, that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. There is to be no improvement. There is

no hope within man himself. And those who serve as the conscience of Society, to point men to the standard of the Law of God and the divine remedy for sin, are declared to be that great Whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, whom God in His true and righteous judgment is to judge. And so the tide of moral pollution demands the intervention of God at the Advent. The wicked are entering into incurable rebellion against the government and the law of God - throwing off all the restraints of the Spirit of God. The word of the wise man is being fulfilled, "Them that hate me love death." Proverbs 8:36

Finally, what is the solution to the pollution? What is the remedy for this great evil harvest? Again God must intervene at His Advent to rescue the righteous, to gather His people into the garner. Then in those solemn words of the Revelation Chapter 11, verse 18, "The nations were angry and thy wrath is come and the time of the dead that they should be judged.... and shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth." Soon God will clothe himself in garments of vengeance, return to earth in immeasurable glory and power to destroy them that destroy the earth.

So, dear friends, all of us may look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Rev.22:20

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