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THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
IN RELATION TO
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE HOME

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Christian Education
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education

by
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May 1951

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

One of America's great moral problems is juvenile delinquency. The continuous rise in crime during these postwar years reveals that there is an abnormally high rate of juvenile misbehavior. Some people believe that juvenile delinquency is but the outgrowth of adult delinquency, and that the son will be no better than his father, and the daughter no better than her mother. David D. Allen has said that, "A God-less, Bible-less, drunken father will produce an equally worthless son. A smoking, beer-drinking, gada-bout mother will produce a loose-living and pleasure-loving daughter."¹

Complete statement of the problem. J. Edgar Hoover, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, says that within the span of their lifetime, one hundred million Americans can look forward to becoming victims of crime, and that during the next generation more Americans will be murdered than lost their lives from enemy gunfire in World War II.²

¹ Allen, David D., "I Accuse My Parents," The Taylor Student-Pastor Visitor, #95.

² Hoover, J. Edgar, "Crime Begins At Home," FBI Bulletin, p. 1, October, 1946.

The total number of crimes recorded in the United States during 1949 was 1,763,290. This was an increase of 4.5 per cent over the figure for 1948. This increase was 4.2 per cent in the urban communities and 8.5 per cent in the rural districts.

The monthly collection and analysis of crime statistics by the Federal Bureau of Investigation constitutes a national crime barometer which shows that the eternal conflict between the forces of good and evil goes on day and night, twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, etc. For example, every eighteen seconds during 1949, there was a crime committed. While this estimate includes some larceny offenses involving property of small value, it is considered conservative because it does not include crimes of arson, carrying concealed weapons, embezzlement, and fraud.

During an average day in 1949 there were 293 persons feloniously killed or assaulted; 162 robberies were committed; over 1,100 places were burglarized, and more than 440 cars were stolen, in addition to 2,800 other thefts.³

During 1949, there were 192,122 persons of all ages arrested for robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft, embezzlement, fraud, forgery, counterfeiting, receiving stolen property, and arson. Of these persons, 52,670 or 27.4 per

³ Hoover, J. Edgar, Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 75-79.

cent were less than twenty-one years of age.⁴

The latest reports available indicate that crime rose 7.4 per cent in the rural areas during the first half of 1950 over the same period of 1949 as compared with a 1.9 per cent increase in the cities.⁵

That youths played a predominant part in the commission of crimes against property is indicated by the following figures: During the first half of 1950 persons of all ages arrested for robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft, forgery, counterfeiting, embezzlement and fraud, receiving stolen property, and arson, numbered 99,130, and 29.9 per cent of these persons were less than twenty-one years of age.⁶ This shows an increase of 1.5 per cent over 1949.

In the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation are the fingerprints of more than six million individuals who have been arrested for an offense more serious than a traffic violation. Fifty-two per cent of these fingerprints represent persons with several records of law violations. More than one-fifth of all the arrest records which are received daily are of persons under twenty-one years of age.⁷

⁴ Ibid., p. 113.

⁵ Hoover, J. Edgar, Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., p. 65.

⁷ Hoover, J. Edgar, "Crime Begins At Home," p. 1.

The records also show that 65 per cent of all the car thefts, 55 per cent of all the burglaries, 39 per cent of all the robberies, 37 per cent of all the sneak thievery, 30 per cent of all the cases involving malicious destruction by fire, and 13 per cent of all the murders are committed by boys and girls twenty years of age or under, not yet old enough to go to the polls and vote.⁸

It is said that two homicides are committed every day by boys and girls under twenty years of age and that one of these killings is committed by a child under eighteen.⁹ More than two-thirds of all delinquent boys brought into court are from twelve to fifteen years of age. The first crime is seldom, if ever, committed after the boy is sixteen.¹⁰

Looking at the problem from a different angle, Supreme Court Justice Fawcett, of Brooklyn, says that of the four thousand boys brought before him in twenty-one years not more than three of them were members of the Sunday School when they committed their crimes. County Prosecutor O'Brien, of Omaha, Nebraska, says that of the eight

⁸ Hoover, J. Edgar, "Crime Challenges the Churches," FBI Bulletin, p. 2, November, 1944.

⁹ Selecman, Charles C., Christian Nurture in the Home (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1948), p. 9.

¹⁰ Benson, Clarence H., An Introduction to Child Study (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945), p. 190.

thousand cases brought before him, less than three per cent had the benefit of any religious education in either home, or school, or church.¹¹

It was estimated in 1950 that the number of young people and children not receiving religious instruction in the United States was thirty-six million, or approximately one-fourth of the population of the United States.¹²

It would seem, from the almost complete lack of religious training in the ranks of juvenile delinquents, that religious education in itself might wholly determine whether the adolescent is to be a Christian citizen or an incorrigible criminal.¹³

Justification of the problem. Increasingly, the crime problem is becoming a youth problem. The pages of the daily papers record the fact that the crimes of juvenile delinquents no longer are to be found only in the case studies of the researcher.

Nineteen burglaries occurred in a peaceful New England community within an eighteen-day period. Finally, four boys were arrested--two of them were seventeen years old and the other two only sixteen years old. They were a real

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 190-91.

¹² Mason, Harold C., "Claiming the Children," Moody Monthly, 50:529, April, 1950.

¹³ Benson, loc. cit.

menace. They were perfectly organized; they had a leader and a second in command--his job to divide and dispose of their loot. They had rules and regulations and they kept minutes of their meetings. One of the boys was in charge of plans and it was his duty to maintain order in their meetings and to have full charge when a crime was being committed. The fourth was in charge of their radio equipment and had the responsibility of keeping their cars in good condition. Their records showed an inventory of loot which they wanted to secure, and it listed knives, ammunition, shot-guns, pistols, spy-glasses, skis, snowshoes, radios, and numerous other items.

They planned and executed each job with a finesse that rivaled that of professional burglars. But behind their organizational genius there was a sordid and typical story. All of these boys came from homes which either were broken or homes from which one of the parents was absent because of circumstances. In each case the boys lacked encouragement. They all had lost interest in school. Each of them possessed above-average intelligence, but all of them were wholly unacquainted with discipline and responsibility. All of them were typical, average American boys. In each case it was parental delinquency which was responsible for their misdeeds.¹⁴

¹⁴ Hoover, "Crime Begins At Home," p. 2.

Two boys, aged fifteen and sixteen, broke into a Midwest National Guard Armory and stole a machine-gun, a rifle, revolvers, and bayonets. Fearing discovery, the boys fled to Mexico. On the way they ran out of funds and decided to visit an uncle of one of the boys. While there, a sixteen year old cousin offered to give them five dollars if they would kill the uncle, whom she disliked. The two boys then flipped a coin to determine who should pull the trigger, and the uncle was killed in cold-blooded murder. One of the boys was the only child of parents in modest circumstances. His home had been broken by divorce on a charge of adultery. The second boy was also the product of a broken home.¹⁵

J. Edgar Hoover, in his twenty-two years as Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, has studied the case histories of thousands of criminals. He first checks on the development of the investigation and then tries to find out the cause of the crime by looking into the criminal's background. He says that it is not possible to single out any one specific motivating cause, because there are many reasons for the lawless attitude. But all of them point to one common source--the home.¹⁶

There are multitudes of theories as to the cause of juvenile delinquency. Each concept of causation also has a

¹⁵ Hoover, loc. cit.

¹⁶ Hoover, "Crime Begins At Home," pp. 2-3.

so-called "preventive" enterprise.

It has been said that crime is due to the following causes: empty churches, broken homes, poverty, parental neglect, cheap commercialized recreation, not enough recreational facilities, comics, mystery stories, radio thrillers, sex-stimulating movies, excessive mobility of population, illiteracy, malnutrition, glandular weaknesses, feeble-mindedness, defective eyesight, and infected teeth.

In pursuance of these beliefs the following preventive programs have been suggested: the prohibition of intoxicating drinks, of coffee, of certain soft drinks, of tobacco, and of juke-box machines; the control of movies and radio, as well as the abolition of comics. Another scheme suggested has been the installation of more electric lights on street corners. It has been proposed that parents be prosecuted and sent to prison. In San Francisco, parents have been "sentenced" to attend parental schools to learn how not to contribute to the delinquency of their children. In New Jersey, parents are invited to attend classrooms with their children. "Boys and Girls Week" has been proposed, and someone has given a large sum of money to finance an annual "Crime-prevention Week." Judges have placed children on probation on condition that they read certain prescribed books and then write brief reports on them telling the judge whether they enjoyed them or not. It has also been proposed

that piano playing is an antidote to antisocial behavior. In the meantime newspaper editors, district attorneys, and police commissioners are convinced that the only genuine crime preventive is the certainty and severity of swift punitive justice. Legislation has been passed to require the sterilization of hopeless idiots and imbeciles, and also to limit immigration on the theory that the foreign born tend to be more criminalistic than the native born.

Paul W. Tappan, a professor of sociology in New York University, says that it appears there is no end to the proposals for preventing juvenile delinquency because there is as yet no clarity of thinking on the genesis of the phenomenon. He further says:

The clarity of thinking we hope for may be impossible to achieve until behavior scientists have elicited greater exactness from the veritable mountain of confused and confusing material accumulated in each passing decade.¹⁷

But, "Criminals are not born," says J. Edgar Hoover. "They are the products of neglect, the victims of indifference, and the results of an age which has tossed morality into the junk yard." Moral chaos and crime work together in attempting to destroy peace, order, and happiness. In order to get down to fundamentals in approaching the problem of juvenile crime, it is necessary to begin to build the

¹⁷ Tappan, Paul W., Juvenile Delinquency (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1949), pp. 490-91.

spiritual structure of the child at the cradle. This responsibility rests primarily with the parents. The first great arena of teaching must be the home, and the child who fails to learn honesty, discipline, and respect for authority from his parents can quickly become exposed to the virus of crime.

It is a tragic fact that there are many homes across this country where parents are untrained in their obligations to their children; where unguarded talk is as regular as three meals a day; where disrespect for authority and criticism of officials are common, everyday occurrences; and where God and religion are considered too old-fashioned to be scarcely even mentioned in this age of materialism.¹⁸

It is the purpose of this study to determine how the lack of Christian education in the home is related to the problem of juvenile delinquency.

¹⁸ Hoover, J. Edgar, "Crime and the Sunday School," FBI Bulletin, p. 2, February, 1948.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written on the subject of juvenile delinquency. It is true that much of such crime can be traced directly to the community. The role of the community in preventing juvenile neglect and crime has been frequently written upon. This treatment of the subject includes the setting up of supervised recreational centers, milk bars, curfew laws, social centers, parks, playgrounds, and civic clubs. It also includes the work of Young Men's Christian Associations, Girl Reserves, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.

Many sociologists and psychiatrists have written on the subject. The variety of subjects treated can be seen in the following titles found in a Bibliography of Juvenile Delinquency and Crime Control:¹ Personality Patterns of Adolescent Girls, Unwanted Child, The Boy Sex Offender and His Later Career, New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment, Dynamic Causes of Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas, Rural Crime Control, Crime and Society, The Slum and Crime, Crime and Its Repression, Crime for Profit, and Criminology and Penology. A great many

¹ Hoover, J. Edgar, Bibliography of Juvenile Delinquency and Crime Control (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 1-21.

books have been written on the case histories of delinquents. Included in this bibliography are the following: 500 Criminal Careers, One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents, Girls on City Streets (a study of 1400 cases of rape occurring in New York City), and The Gang (a study of 1,313 gangs in Chicago). This bibliography lists many articles published in monthly journals and periodicals and includes the FBI bulletins written by J. Edgar Hoover.²

There is also available for the student doing research in this field a critical annotated bibliography by Philippe Sidney de Q. Cabot.³

Limitation of previous studies. In this study a careful search revealed only one book on The Delinquent Child and the Home,⁴ and none that dealt with the thesis subject as stated, "The Problem of Juvenile Delinquency in relation to Christian Education in the Home." This study has been made to show that if parents would take their responsibility in the home seriously and teach their children early in life to love and serve God, there would be much less juvenile crime.

² Hoover, loc. cit.

³ Cabot, Philippe Sidney de Q., Juvenile Delinquency-A Critical Annotated Bibliography (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1946). 166 pp.

⁴ Breckinridge, Sophonisba P., and Abbott, Edith, The Delinquent Child and the Home (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917). 343 pp.

Sources of data. The materials used in this thesis have been gathered from library books, church periodicals, monthly magazines, pamphlets, newspaper articles, and FBI bulletins by J. Edgar Hoover. Statistics have been taken from the latest crime reports issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Department of Justice. Case records have been used from the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as specific cases investigated in Jessamine County, Kentucky. A survey was also conducted to determine the percentage of neglected and delinquent school children in Jessamine County.

Organization of remainder of thesis. This study was made by defining the term "delinquency," looking for the causes of delinquency, studying some cases of delinquency, and searching for the cure of delinquency.

CHAPTER III

DELINQUENCY DEFINED AND CLASSIFIED

Delinquency is any act, course of conduct, or situation which might be brought before a court and adjudicated there. Whether in fact it comes to be treated there or by some other resource, or indeed remains untreated, it is still considered as delinquency.¹ Healy and Bronner say that delinquency is a symptom of some personal or social maladjustment, and its rational treatment should be analogous to therapy in medical science.²

Who is a delinquent? The law defines a delinquent as a child who is over seven years of age and under sixteen to twenty-one years of age (depending on the laws of the different states), who violates any law of the state; or who commits any act which if committed by an adult would be an offense punishable otherwise than by death or life imprisonment; or who is incorrigible, ungovernable, habitually disobedient and beyond the control of his parents or other persons in custodial charge; or one who is habitually guilty of truancy.

¹ Tappan, op. cit., p. 30.

² Healy, William, and Bronner, Augusta F., New Light On Delinquency and Its Treatment (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 159.

The law makes a distinction between a neglected and a delinquent child. The neglected child is a child who is under improper supervision, or unlawfully kept out of school, or treated cruelly; or who has been abandoned or deserted by its parents; or whose parent is immoral or depraved, or is impaired mentally, or has been imprisoned for a crime; or whose parent is unable (or neglects or refuses) to provide the necessary medical, surgical, or other care for the child.

Judge Panken says that the law, in thus differentiating between the neglected and the delinquent child, unfortunately ignores the indisputable fact that the second often flows directly from the first and that the child who is neglected tends to become delinquent.³ Neglect develops delinquency patterns and life styles. There is only a hair-line division, if any at all, between the delinquent and the neglected child. He also says that in the Children's Court he rarely, if ever, has a case where the delinquency is not directly traceable to neglect. The few exceptions are due usually to mental deficiency or feeble-mindedness.⁴

A child is to be regarded as technically a delinquent when his antisocial tendencies appear so grave that he

³ Panken, Jacob, The Child Speaks (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), pp. 1-2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 104.

becomes or ought to become, the subject for official action.⁵

Under the statutes of a majority of states today, a child may be adjudicated delinquent if he is over the age of seven and under eighteen. Thirty-two states have either complete or partial jurisdiction over juvenile delinquency up to that age. Seven states extend jurisdiction to the age of twenty-one, and in each of these the criminal court has the power to try serious cases, such as homicide, robbery, burglary, and rape. In eleven states, jurisdiction over the juvenile is terminated wholly or in part by the age of sixteen.⁶

Three broad categories may be used to classify cases handled by various law enforcement agencies. (1) Offenses committed by juveniles that are in violation of the law, which if committed by adults would be considered criminal and would be punishable by fines or imprisonment. These include such crimes as the following: auto theft, larceny, robbery, burglary, murder or negligent manslaughter, rape, and aggravated assault. (2) Behavior problems peculiar to youth, or forms of conduct, or kinds of surroundings that are regarded harmful to them, may be lawfully interpreted

⁵ Reckless, Walter C., and Smith, Mapheus, Juvenile Delinquency (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1932), p. 14.

⁶ Tappan, op. cit., p. 15.

as requiring official action. Some of the more common problems are: habitual truancy from school, running away from home, incorrigibility, habitually visiting saloons, pool-rooms, and other places that are considered harmful to children, begging and receiving alms, addiction to intoxicants and drugs, and leading an idle and dissolute life.

(3) This category includes the dependent, neglected, and abused children, those with health problems, children without parents or guardians, as well as those without proper home care, and the mentally deficient or disorganized.⁷

Types of delinquency. The delinquent acts of which boys are most guilty include the following: stealing, disorderly conduct, incorrigibility, malicious mischief, immorality, vagrancy, dependent charges, truancy, and miscellaneous offenses.

Girls are also guilty of stealing but the forms of stealing change. Girls are frequently charged with shoplifting or stealing from their employer. The most frequent charge against the incorrigible girl is "staying away from home or going out at night in company with vicious people." Sometimes the girl will refuse to stay at home and will keep a room in a disreputable part of the city. Girls will go to rough dances and come home at two or three o'clock in the

⁷ Neumeyer, M. H., Juvenile Delinquency in Modern Society (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1949), pp. 18-19.

morning. They will associate with vicious persons, refuse to work but will bring home money. Girls go away and stay away for days. They use vulgar and vile language, are on the streets day and night, and are strongly suspected of being immoral. But the term "immorality" is never used in the petition or the statement of the girl's case if it can be avoided. Every effort is made to protect the name of the girl brought into court, and she is therefore charged with being "incorrigible" or "disorderly."⁸

Nathaniel Hirsch groups juvenile delinquency into the following six different types:

- Truancy: Running away from home, boarding-home, school.
- Larceny: Pilfering at home or in school or on railroad property, picking pockets, shoplifting, unlawful use of cars or bicycles, breaking-and-entering, hold-ups, robbery armed, selling stolen property, etc.
- Sex Offenses:
 - Boys: Illegitimate paternity, attempting rape, indecent liberties, perversions, etc.
 - Girls: Illegitimate maternity, prostituting, incest, perversions, etc.
- Incorrigibility: Disobedience to parents, late hours, impudence to elders, lying, committing nuisances, using bad language, refusal to work, pulling false fire alarms, temper tantrums, etc.
- Violence against person: Threatening or attacking others, attempting suicide.
- Destruction of property: Throwing stones at windows, passing cars, trains, etc. Vandalism in school, arson, flooding premises, etc.⁹

⁸ Breckinridge, and Abbott, op. cit., pp. 26-37.

⁹ Hirsch, Nathaniel D. M., Dynamic Causes of Juvenile Crime (Cambridge: Sci-Art Publishers, 1937), pp. 36-37.

In most jurisdictions theft, including automobile theft, burglary, and robbery, is the primary type of delinquency. Mischievous behavior follows fairly close. Endangering the morals of oneself or others and running away from home follow with high rates. Other offenses trail behind with a small proportion of each. Among girls the most common offenses are sex violations, incorrigibility, and running away from home.¹⁰

More than 80 per cent of the delinquent girls are brought into court because their virtue is in peril, if it has not already been lost.¹¹

A large proportion of the boy's cases are dismissed or continued indefinitely. This is not true with the cases of the girls. The reason for the difference is that boys are brought into court with less serious offenses and there is a greater unwillingness to bring the girls into court. Statistics show that 59 per cent of the boys are returned to their homes under the care of a probation officer (first offense) and only 21 per cent are sent to institutions. With girls these proportions are almost exactly reversed-- 51 per cent are removed from their homes and committed to institutions, and only 37 per cent are allowed to return to

¹⁰ Tappan, op. cit., p. 29.

¹¹ Breckenridge, and Abbott, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

their parents or guardians. When a girl is finally brought into court, her situation is serious and demands immediate action. Her only hope of rescue seems to lie in prompt removal from her old surroundings and associates.¹²

¹² Ibid., p. 41.

CHAPTER IV

CAUSES OF DELINQUENCY

The years between twelve and twenty represent the period in a young person's life when he attempts to find himself as a person. There is bound to be a constant struggle within the growing person as he attempts to determine his rights and responsibilities in relation to other people. Some young people seem to be able to make the transition from youth to adulthood very adequately without great suffering to others or to themselves. In fact, the normal adolescent suffers no great conflicts as he makes satisfactory adjustments in the home, in the school, and in his social and vocational life. However, there are many who seem to find it impossible or difficult to make desirable adjustments.¹

In general, the delinquent child is the unhappy child--the emotionally mal-adjusted child. His misconduct is his way of reacting to his inner urges and the environmental pressures. He is seeking to satisfy the basic needs of his life.

Everyone--the delinquent and the law-abiding--has certain fundamental emotional needs that he seeks to

¹ Crow, Lester D., and Crow, Alice, American Youth on Parade (York: The Maple Press Co., 1945), pp. 5-11.

satisfy. Simply expressed they are the need for love and affection and for security with other human beings. There is also the need for growth, achievement, and recognition by other persons.²

Maud Merrill says that, whatever psychological position one may hold concerning the number and classes of fundamental needs which are vital to the individual, from a clinical standpoint at least two basic needs can be differentiated--the need for affectional response (parental affection and concern) and the need to achieve.³

First and above all, the child must be secure in his relationship with his parents. He must feel that he is loved and that he "belongs." Such security gives him a sense of worth and of confidence in himself which helps him toward becoming an integrated personality.

For his healthy development into maturity, a child must also have the kind of relationship with his parents that will fulfill his second need--the need for growth, for achievement and for status as an individual apart from his family. But the child who is unhappy in his family relationships is likely to seek satisfactions away from home. If he lives in a community in which antisocial attitudes

² Understanding Juvenile Delinquency (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), p. 10.

³ Merrill, Maud A., Problems of Child Delinquency (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1947), p. 281.

prevail and in which a pattern of delinquent behavior is traditional, he will be more susceptible to the attractions of delinquency than another child in the same community who has found more strength and satisfaction in his home.

Children are not born with a sense of right or wrong. They must develop it. They must learn to repress impulses that are socially disapproved and must be taught to behave according to prescribed convention. This important task belongs to the parents. Children are great imitators. They try to be like the persons they admire and love. Children not only imitate their parents' external behavior, but they absorb their traits and standards of behavior as well. The kind of conscience a child develops depends upon the kind of adults he has patterned himself after, and also upon the emotional feeling between himself and the adults closest to him--namely, his parents.⁴

J. Edgar Hoover says that it is impossible to point out any one specific motivating cause, but that the failure of the home is the chief cause of juvenile delinquency.⁵

The causes discussed in this chapter will be those considered most important and most directly relevant to the thesis topic.

⁴ Understanding Juvenile Delinquency, pp. 8-12.

⁵ Hoover, "Crime Begins At Home," p. 3.

Unwanted children. It is a well known fact that hundreds of unwanted children are born each year. Eighty-four per cent of one hundred and three delinquents investigated did not have planned births. These children were not wanted, and on arrival usually complicated an already complicated home situation. This has often resulted in early rejection, dislike, and subconscious resentment and hate. Statistics generally seem to indicate that intermediate children of large families have been the most likely of all children to get into some sort of trouble.⁶

Family problems. Dr. David Abrahamsen, psychiatrist of Columbia University, told a New York forum on the Study and Prevention of Crime that crime has its roots in bickering, nagging and other forms of tension in the home. He based his conclusion on a psychological study of eighty families of juvenile delinquents and criminals under a grant by the Josiah Macy Foundation. The doctor felt that families should be given psychiatric treatment. He also sought to get a law passed that where a family could not provide a home reasonably free from hostility, a child could be taken away and given to foster parents who would make the child welcome and give him a peaceful atmosphere in which to live.⁷

There is a widespread belief that delinquency and

⁶ Kavaraceus, W. C., Juvenile Delinquency and the School (New York: World Book Co., 1945), pp. 60-62.

⁷ Brooks, Keith L., "Home Tension," Prophecy Monthly, 21:33, July, 1949.

crime are wholly due to economic disadvantages. But this is not true. The vast majority of people are not endowed with riches and neither are they delinquent or potential criminals. Despite poverty and certainly in spite of privations most people are upright, forthright, and honest. Criminals and delinquents do not come from the poorer classes only. There are proportionately as many delinquents and criminals among the rich and in the so-called upper classes as there are among the poor--perhaps more. Riches are not a cure for crime, nor are they a preventative of crime. However, economic insecurity is a contributing factor to the breakdown of self-respect, self-assurance and self-reliance. Economic security, on the other hand, does not cure an inferiority complex resulting from emotional instability.⁸

Many times the poor home means the lack of common decency. Frequently it means absence of parents from the home, no proper discipline, lack of proper food and medical treatment, with consequent truancy, and early employment of the children. Often the mothers are obliged to work away from home and therefore the homes and the children are neglected. The children do not have proper supervision and consequently resort to the streets for companionship and

⁸ Panken, op. cit., pp. 51-53.

recreation. These poverty-stricken homes are frequently found in slum areas where the children band together to secure the things which the poverty of their families has denied them.⁹

Statistics show that in past years poverty was considered one of the most important causes of delinquency. Breckinridge and Abbott, in an early study in Chicago, found that nine-tenths of the delinquent girls and three-fourths of the delinquent boys were from the homes of the poor.¹⁰

The writer made inquiries concerning the economic conditions of the families of delinquents in Fayette and Jessamine Counties in Kentucky and discovered that the current problem was not so much one of insufficient salary as one of mismanagement. Many fathers in Fayette County were making forty-five or fifty dollars a week, and some of them over one hundred dollars a week. Many of these men probably did not have a very high intelligent quotient but they were good mechanics or carpenters and therefore made good wages. It was the testimony of case workers as well as juvenile court workers in Fayette County that the problem in 1951 was one of mismanagement more than of poverty. The writer has also seen the children of poor families (some with whom

⁹ Gillin, John Lewis, Criminology and Penology (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1935), p. 147.

¹⁰ Breckinridge, and Abbott, op. cit., p. 74.

she was personally acquainted) buying groceries for the family. She noticed that money was spent unwisely by the buying of fruits that were out of season and very expensive, when fruit juices would have been much cheaper and would have served the purpose. It has also been observed that these poor children bring the most expensive (though rarely the most nutritional) foods in their school and picnic lunches.

Cyril Lodowic Burt, a psychology professor in the University of London, has made a careful study of the relation between hereditary conditions and juvenile delinquency. He found that hereditary intellectual defects are found three times as often among delinquents as among non-delinquents. Temperamental defects are present twice as frequently. His coefficient for moral defects found in the ancestry was almost as high in frequency as for intellectual defects. He says that these physical, intellectual, and temperamental defects in the lives of delinquents do not operate in a social vacuum but are usually combined with bad home conditions. He found that vice was present in the home in 26 per cent of the delinquency cases which he tested, as contrasted with 6.2 per cent of the non-delinquent group, or over four times as frequently.¹¹

Defective intelligence, coupled with other personality difficulties, is probably the most fertile single source

¹¹ Gillin, op. cit., p. 154.

of juvenile delinquency. But the average young delinquent has great assets in another direction--in mechanical ability. Studies of the male juvenile delinquent picture him as having, on the average, high borderline or low dull general intelligence. It was discovered that he reacted better to non-symbolic and to perceptual situations than to verbal, conceptual ones. He was average or better in motor responses and average to superior in mechanical aptitudes and mechanical ingenuity.¹²

Twenty per cent of 695 delinquents studied were feeble-minded according to the Terman classification. They had an intelligent quotient of less than 65. This proportion is at least ten times as great as is found in the population at large, and may be even fifteen times as much.¹³ There is general agreement among biologists that feeble-mindedness is inheritable.¹⁴ However, without the presence of negative personality characteristics and unfavorable environmental conditions, defective intelligence does not often produce juvenile delinquency. It is a primary cause and yet at the same time, in a definite sense, a negative one.¹⁵

¹² Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 92-93.

¹³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴ Gillin, op. cit., p. 120.

¹⁵ Hirsch, op. cit., p. 99.

There are also many problems found in the degraded home--the home in which there is a combination of poverty and abnormal heredity. In this home there is brutality, drunkenness, immorality, crime, and vice, often in connection with paralysis or insanity, imbecility, and other psychopathic conditions, and the misery of filthy and overcrowded rooms. In such a case the home conditions are unfavorable to the proper development of the children. Accustomed from their earliest days to low ideals, to indecency, immorality, obscene language, and degradation of every sort, it is no wonder that large numbers of children from such homes become delinquent.^{16 13}

An analysis of problems in sample families of the state of Connecticut's 1945 delinquent and neglect cases showed that in only fifteen per cent were there no important factors of disturbances. In all others, in varying percentages, were evidences of "clusters" of other symptoms, including crime, mental disease and deficiency, divorce, illegitimacy, truancy, alcoholism, extra-marital relations, quarreling, abuse, and the like. As a result of this disruption in their family life thirty-two per cent of the children were found to have been deprived of normal parental and family affection, twenty-eight per cent of reasonable family security, eighteen per cent of the physical necessities

¹³ 16 Gillin, op. cit., p. 156.

of food, clothing, shelter, medical care, while twelve per cent had been overindulged and overprotected by their parents.¹⁷

Broken homes. Another fundamental cause of delinquency is broken homes. There are at least two types of broken homes: the normal broken home, effected either by the death or by the prolonged hospitalization of one or both parents, and the abnormal broken home, effected by divorce, separation, desertion, psychosis, imprisonment, or illegitimacy. The case histories, psychological personality studies, and psychiatric interviews of 2,000 juvenile delinquents and their parents have been analyzed and collated. The 2,000 children came from:

Unbroken homes-----	810 cases---	40.5%.
Normal broken homes-----	677 cases---	33.85%.
Abnormal broken homes-----	513 cases---	25.65%.

Thus it can be seen that nearly 60 per cent of these 2,000 cases came from broken homes. Statistics concerning the abnormal broken home revealed that 58.48 per cent of the parents were excessive alcoholics, 73.88 per cent were unstable, and 24.17 per cent had criminal records. In only 1.56 per cent of the abnormal broken homes were both parents normal.¹⁸¹⁴

¹⁷ Buell, Bradley, "Our Unsocial Behavior," Survey Midmonthly, 25:142, May, 1947.

¹⁸ Hirsch, op. cit., pp. 61-64.

Recently two newspaper reporters of The Lexington Leader investigated the Kentucky Houses of Reform at Greendale and wrote a series of articles concerning their findings. They reported that recent surveys and tests conducted there disclosed the fact that broken homes and dull mentalities were the two main factors contributing to the delinquency of the youth in that institution.¹⁹

One can easily understand why delinquency often results from the broken home. If the mother has to work, the children are not given the proper care and often take up with bad associates. Many times the lives of the children are devoid of wholesome amusement. Often, while still young, their lives are tied down to monotonous work and drudgery, and the allurements from outside the home are a great temptation to them. Frequently their school lives are interrupted. When the father dies, the situation is even worse than when the mother dies or deserts the family. With the father's death, the entire income of the family is often cut off. On the other hand, if the mother is absent from the home, the father may secure a housekeeper, or one of the older girls may be able to take her place, or the father may remarry. If the surviving parent does remarry, there is always the problem of the adjustment of the step-parent to the children.

¹⁹ News item in The Lexington Leader, March 22, 1951.

Another complication of home conditions which affects the conduct of children is desertion. In a Chicago Court it was found that about 8.6 per cent of the delinquents came from homes in which either the father or mother or both parents had deserted the children.²⁰¹⁵

Another factor in delinquency which is related to the broken home is illegitimacy. Most illegitimate children are born of parents who have had records of immorality or of delinquency, and many of them start life with a heritage of mental subnormality. A study made by the United States Children's Bureau shows a large amount of alcoholism, sexual irregularity, and other forms of delinquent behavior in the heritage and environment of these children. They are often cared for by foster parents who do not have suitable homes for them and who do not deal as patiently with them as they would if they were their own children. This study also showed that children born out of wedlock have a much higher expectancy of delinquency than other children.²¹¹⁶

Adults often imagine in domestic strife, when the child is deprived of a mother's physical care, or the bread winning capacity of the father, that the only damage done the child is neglect. But the damage is much more extensive and may permanently destroy the child's mental health. No

¹⁵ ²⁰ Gillin, op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁶ ²¹ Ibid., pp. 153-54.

amount of "patching it up" or "returning to live together for the sake of the child" can restore the child if there is an undercurrent of hostility, distrust, suspicion, and dislike between the parents. Little children are not influenced so much by words and actions of adults as they are by their attitudes.^{22 17}

Parental neglect. The homes in which there is a lack of proper discipline, control, and guidance furnish a surprisingly large number of juvenile delinquents. Healy and Bronner, on the basis of 4,000 cases of delinquents in Chicago and Boston, found that 40 per cent of these children came from families in which there was a great lack of discipline. Burt, in his London study, found that the group of causes most closely connected with crime could be summed up under the head of defective discipline. Such discipline he found five times as often with the delinquent as with non-delinquent children. In the analysis of his study he discovered that overstrictness was reported in 10 per cent of the cases, while in one case out of every four the discipline was too weak and easy-going.^{23 18}

J. Edgar Hoover has said that the delinquency rate is increased by parents who are either too careless or too busy

^{17 22} Van Waters, Miriam, Youth in Conflict (New York: Republic Publishing Company, 1925), pp. 72-73.

^{18 23} Gillin, op. cit., p. 158.

with their own pleasure to give sufficient time, companionship, and interest to their children.^{24 19}

Judge Jacob Panken wrote:

Most delinquent conduct and crime stems from neglect of children. Neglect is not merely failure to provide the physical need, the clothing, shelter, and medical care needed. Failure to provide supervision, leadership, and guidance within the home is a more serious form of neglect; its consequences are often the most telling factor in the development of delinquent patterns in the child. The community may step in to cure sickness and supply physical needs; that is fairly easy. But anti-social characteristics learned in early childhood in the home are not easy to eliminate or even to modify. They are too deeply rooted.

For it is in his very early years that the child acquires the characteristics which fashion his personality and pattern his life. It might be said that he begins to learn how to live and how to act and react, and his personality begins to form at his mother's breast. The child's earliest teachers are his parents and his siblings. His gods are his father and mother. If his gods are bad, he is going to be bad. If parents are inadequate to their responsibilities, their children will be the victims.^{25 20}

Judge Panken also believes that the neglect to which children generally are exposed is not wilful, but that it is attributable to parental ignorance due to lack of training, emotional instability, neuroses, and worse.^{26 21}

Failure of parents to know and understand their children does not usually connote a lack of parental love--it indicates rather a lack of responsibility and oftentimes

^{19 24} Tappan, op. cit., p. 31.

²⁰⁻²⁵ Panken, Jacob, "The Real Delinquent--The Parent," The New York Times Magazine, 35:26, December, 1946.

^{21 26} Panken, Jacob, The Child Speaks, p. 127.

selfishness. This lack of responsibility is shown in the ease with which delinquent parents try to put the blame for their child's waywardness on someone else or on something else. When trouble comes, they stand in amazement and wonder why it happened to them.^{27 22}

The percentage of children who come into court on petitions of their parents is disturbing. Many parents have been heard to say, "I brought him here to frighten him." These poor mothers and fathers do not seem to realize that this method adds to the child's resentment against them instead of bringing him closer. Few, if any, of this type of parent take the trouble to find out the real cause of their child's disobedience.²⁸ The father of one fifteen-year-old boy when informed of his son's first offense, advised arresting officers, "If he doesn't straighten himself out, he should be put in a reform school." It is amazing that any parent should expect a child to "straighten himself out", when it is the parent's responsibility to teach the child how to be a good citizen.²⁹

The home is placed at the very center of the moral and spiritual discipline of children. It is not too much to

^{22 27} Hoover, "Crime Begins At Home," p. 3.

²⁸ Panken, op. cit., p. 130.

²⁹ Hoover, J. Edgar, "The Golden Rule - Against Juvenile Crims," FBI Bulletin, p. 2, August, 1945.

say that the modern neglect of the function of parental responsibility (Deuteronomy 6:4-10) has produced a generation of youth many of whom are lacking in definite moral convictions. The Bible says "Thou shalt teach them." That is more than just advice--it is a command. Teach them to "thy children." Mothers and fathers are to be both parents and teachers to their children. To sidestep this duty is to invite the bitter experience of suffering because of the moral failure of their sons and daughters. They are not only to "teach their children" but to teach them "diligently." The same idea is found in the training of a child. Real training requires much time, patience and repetition. It should begin in the early years of a child's life and increase with the growth of his body and mind.³⁰

Making the home a place of learning as well as a place of living is more difficult today than it was a generation ago. The conflicting forces of our mechanized age and the lower standards of discipline and morality are responsible. The home must be restored to its rightful importance to eliminate the tragedies which constantly recur because of its deficiencies.

It is ironical but true that any number of youthful crimes can be traced to the improved economic condition of America. In the past few years many teen-agers have had an

³⁰ Selecman, op. cit., p. 9.

income that exceeded their fathers' in the prewar years. Failure of the home to teach fundamental lessons of thrift has made these youngsters easy prey for the host of cheap taverns, cheap dance joints and other sordid places of amusement. The children who buy their entertainment, soon run the gamut of normal experience, and in the thrill of seeking the unknown often head into serious trouble.³¹

Today's movies, many of them dealing with crime, exert a tremendous influence upon pliable young minds. The files of law-enforcement agencies are replete with the stories of juvenile offenders who confess to having derived the ideas for their crimes from the movies.

After having seen a particularly atrocious crime picture which had been skillfully exploited as the enactment of a public enemy's life, four teen-age boys emulated the example. Their car ran out of gas; they needed money and so one of the group snatched a purse. In another case, the arrest of four boys, ages 15 and 16, solved a wave of burglaries. In each case, entry was effected by the use of skeleton keys or keys left under door mats. Each boy had a good school record and came from a home of good repute. Each said he got his ideas from the movies.³²

J. Edgar Hoover says that crime usually plants its

³¹ Hoover, "Crime Begins At Home," pp. 3-4.

³² Hoover, J. Edgar, "How Good A Parent Are You?" FBI Bulletin, p. 4. April, 1947.

seeds in the mind of the child during the early, formative years. It comes when there is a lack of something--lack of proper parental guidance, lack of wholesome companions, lack of discipline, lack of respect for the rights of others, disregard for parents and constituted authorities, and the lack of emotional stability.³³

The motion picture is a medium of unpredictable influence. Parents are often utterly insensible to the harm that it does to their child. They take him to the movies at a very early age, in some cases while the youngster is still a babe in arms. The clanging, the noise, the glare, and the crowd, all make an impact upon the child's emotions which is hard to overcome.

When parents take an older child to the pictures, or allow him to attend them with other boys and girls, they seldom ever stop to inquire whether the picture exhibited is fit for the child's mind, or whether it will harm the normal and orderly development of his emotional life. If the picture is realistic, it may be sordid. It may be frank, and, by virtue of that, beyond the child's capacity to understand, or at any rate beyond his capacity to analyze or distinguish.

Children who have come into court have been asked what pictures they liked best. Most generally they say, "Shooting pictures, gangster pictures, G-men pictures, and detective-

³³ Hoover, "Crime Challenges the Churches," p. 1.

story pictures." Once in a while a child will prefer a love picture.³⁴

It is a well-known fact that children through the movies become conditioned to the unsavory, to the roughhouse, to killing, to gangster life and similar modes of conduct. Moreover, many court cases disclose that instead of going to school, the children were in the moving-picture theaters. Sometimes boys and girls of adolescent age go to the dark theater instead of to the lighted school, there to indulge in petting, or even worse. The modern outdoor theaters offer an added opportunity for delinquency.

Probably the most disturbing manifestation of present-day child life is the fact that at a very early age our youngsters cease to be children. They talk like grown-ups--they learn this in the theaters--and before long they begin to act like grown-ups, which is even worse.³⁵

Over a decade and a half ago, sociologists and educators made an exhaustive study of the influence of movies on the nation's children. Their findings were collected in a volume by H. J. Forman, entitled Our Movie Made Children. This book, packed with objective, scientific facts, soberly concludes that the influence of the cinema on American children is "a critical and complicated situation." Professor

³⁴ Panken, The Child Speaks, pp. 90-91.

²⁵ ³⁵ Ibid., p. 91.

Forman was obliged by the facts themselves to conclude that the wholesome contribution of the cinema was far outbalanced by its negative perversion. And no perversion ranked higher in his correlations than that of sex.³⁶

Early television trends suggest that this new medium intends to make large use of this same type of perversion. Unscrupulously television advertisers are already, Delilah-like, using sex as a drawing force.³⁷

Radio programs also exert a powerful influence for good or evil. Mothers testify to the fact that the lurid horror-crime stories on the air in the early evening hours upset their children emotionally.

Crime books, comics and newspaper stories crammed with anti-social and criminal acts, the glorification of un-American vigilante action and the deification of the criminal are extremely dangerous literature in the hands of the unstable child.³⁸

Many children's comic books open on the first pages with compromise situations. The plots are then launched in lust of the most base sort.³⁹

³⁶ Carnell, Edward J., Television--Servant or Master? (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), pp. 142-43.

³⁷ Carnell, op. cit., p. 143.

³⁸ Hoover, "How Good A Parent Are You?" p. 5.

³⁹ Carnell, loc. cit.

There does not seem to be much doubt that comic books have become a new medium of communication with all the potentialities for good or evil that such a status implies. Their importance may be judged from the following facts: there are 25 million copies of comic books sold every month; consumers spend more than 30 million dollars on comic books each year; there are no less than 70 million readers; these readers range from small children to university professors; and there are now over six thousand schools using comic books as supplementary texts.⁴⁰

A study was made by Thomas F. Hoult, a graduate student of the University of Southern California, to discover whether there was any correlation between comic book reading and juvenile delinquency. Data was obtained by giving the same questionnaire to two comparable groups, one delinquent and one non-delinquent.

The juveniles used were 235 boys and girls arrested for delinquency and held at Los Angeles County's Juvenile Hall, and 235 non-delinquent boys and girls from the residential municipality of Downey, California. These groups were matched for sex, age, school grades, and generally speaking for social-economic status.

The results of the survey were tabulated on a chart

⁴⁰ Hoult, Thomas F., "Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency," Sociology and Social Research, 33:279, March-April, 1949.

with the various comic books arbitrarily lumped into the following general categories: (1) "Crime and Gangsterism," (2) "General Blood and Thunder," (3) "Supernatural Action," (4) "Jungle Adventure," (5) "Cowboy and Indian," (6) "Young Romance," and (7) "Animated Animal Cartoon." For purposes of analysis the first three categories were termed "harmful," the second two "questionable," and the last two "harmless."

The findings taken as a whole showed differences which must be considered unquestionably significant. Hoult says that there is hardly one chance in a million that the differences found were entirely due to chance.

The delinquents reported that they read 2,853 "harmful" and "questionable" comic books each week, while the non-delinquents reported that they read only 1,786 of these types. The favorite "comic" of both groups was "Crime Does Not Pay," but the delinquents read many more of the "crime," the "blood and thunder," and the "supernatural action" books.

In summary, it was found that the delinquent and non-delinquent groups used in this survey read about the same number of "harmless" comic books, but the delinquents read many more "questionable" and "harmful" comics than did the non-delinquents.⁴¹

"Don't the comic books always tell you at the end that

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 279-85.

you can't win?" a police officer queried a 15-year-old gang leader. "Sure," was the answer, "but we never read the end." The youth confessed that his gang had slugged a taxi driver in an attempted robbery. (And, as usual, the boy's mother could not conceive of his doing any wrong.)⁴²

In the older adventure tales adherence to the moral principles of the ages was observed. These provided stimulus and encouragement to the younger generation. James D. Landsdowne says that the present crop of thrillers passes the bounds of the physical, leaves the intellectual, and plays heavily in the emotional field. They make the reader to be a spectator to the scenes. This difference in philosophy is the viciousness.⁴³

It is believed quite possible, by some psychologists, that juvenile delinquents seek out literature and movies involving crime and violence only after they become delinquents.⁴⁴ Paul Tappan believes that a child does not develop a disposition to delinquency in the motion-picture theater, but in the home and neighborhood. If the foundations of dereliction have been established in the home, the child, to be sure, may adopt the particular pattern of his offense

⁴² Hoover, "How Good A Parent Are You?" p. 5.

⁴³ Landsdowne, James D., "The Viciousness of the 'Comic Book,'" The Journal of Education, 127:15, January, 1944.

⁴⁴ Hault, op. cit., p. 283.

through imitation of motion pictures, comic books, magazine stories, radio or television programs, or the daily paper.⁴⁵

Lack of Christian Education in the home. Judge Lasserre Bradley of the Fayette County Juvenile Court, in Kentucky, said concerning delinquents brought before him, "The greatest one thing that is apparent in all cases is a lack of religious training." Judge Bradley said that religious training is one of the responsibilities of parents, and that boys and girls who have had religious training "just don't get into my court."⁴⁶

Instinct teaches the parent to care for the physical needs of the child. Even the hardest of men lovingly respond to the pitiful cries of a child in distress. Instinct also teaches parents to make provisions for the intellectual and social securities of their children. Sadly enough, however, this does not end the story of parental responsibility. When it comes to the most important task in the home, that of spiritually instructing the children, the average parents are woefully indolent. The powers of sin have blunted an instinctive response to these holy obligations. The average parent believes that when the physical and social needs of his child have been met, his duty to the child is over. This attitude is really the worst sort of parental sin. No

⁴⁵ Tappan, op. cit., p. 154.

⁴⁶ News item in The Lexington Leader, April 20, 1950.

matter how pious or sincere a parent may be, if he teaches his child everything but the way of life in God, he acts as if his child is only an animal. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). When a parent inverts this order and seeks first the bread of this world, he becomes an accomplice in the delinquency of his children. While serving the little ones' physical and social needs par excellence, he neglects the most important thing--the spiritual walk with God.⁴⁷

The late Father Flanagan,⁴⁸ founder of Boy's Town, in answer to the question, "Who's to blame for juvenile delinquency?" asks people to consider the kind of homes from which unfortunate boys and girls come. They come from broken homes, from underprivileged homes, from homes where parents fight and quarrel, from homes where God is unwelcome or unknown--from almost every kind of home, in fact, except the kind to which every child of God is entitled. The home has been instituted by God as a unit of society. Parents thus have been made responsible to train their children for citizenship and service for God. Father Flanagan also said that in the background of unfortunate boys and girls he had found a story of shocking neglect. Parents have not done their

⁴⁷ Carnell, op. cit., p. 173.

⁴⁸ Flanagan, Father, "Who's to Blame?" The Rotarian, 20:22, April, 1946.

jobs. They have been so busy making a living or striving for social preference that they have had no time for their children. But parents cannot escape their responsibility for the kind of homes which are a poor second to the cheap tavern and the pool hall. Nobody expects a machine to turn out a first-class product when parts are broken or worn by friction. Neither can first-class citizens be expected to come from homes that are broken or homes in which parents have failed to do their job.⁴⁹

God's purpose for the home is quite evident. The home is a sacred place where husband and wife live together in love, bring children into the world, and nurture them in the way God would have them go. Every child is entitled to a Christian home. The home is the first and the greatest teacher, not only for the children but also for the parents. Grave responsibility is placed upon the father in this teaching ministry. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deuteronomy 4:9). "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁰ King, Herman L., "Christian Homes Our Major," The Teacher, 64:15, May, 1950.

Because children are born in sin, they will no more seek after the righteousness of God without nurture and admonition from a God-fearing parent, than they will increase in physical well-being without food and water. Spiritual virtues, without which man is worse than a beast, must be cultivated with care: love, holiness, justice, charity, forgiveness, kindness, honesty, fidelity, piety, and humility.⁵¹

If all parents were truly Christian, there would be Christian training in the home, and this chapter on the causes of juvenile delinquency would have to be rewritten. Christian parents want and love their children; and family problems, such as divorce, desertion, illegitimacy, etc., are kept at a minimum in Christian homes.

Some parents professing to be Christians have become careless and negligent concerning their own spiritual welfare. Then, too, they have neglected family worship. They have neglected to teach their children about God, and Jesus, His Son, who came to save people from their sins. It is no doubt true that many delinquents have never been taught the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and therefore these boys and girls do not realize that delinquency is sin.

⁵¹ Carnell, loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

CASES OF DELINQUENCY

The juvenile delinquent is the product of spiritual starvation. Someone failed miserably to bring him to know God, love Him, and serve Him. As a result, his mental attitudes and actions are guided by a selfish individualism. He has no respect for the law--he hates it. Moral traditions are also subject to his scorn as he declares war on society.

Unfortunately, there are many youth in the United States today who flout the laws of both God and man. This is borne out by the case records in the possession of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, of the United States Department of Justice.¹

This chapter contains outstanding case histories from federal files and from Jessamine County, Kentucky. It will be observed by the reader that causation seems to be complex, and that several factors seem to combine to make the individuals delinquent. It should be noted, however, that there is one major cause in every case--lack of Christian Education in the home. If this negative cause would have been made a positive addition to the life of the delinquent, at the proper time, probably none of these records would ever have been written.

¹ Hoover, "Crime and the Sunday School," p. 1.

Case of an unwanted boy. This is the history of a fourteen year old boy who was no doubt saved from a life of crime because Professor C. R. Hager, the Jessamine County Superintendent of Schools, befriended him.

Ned (the names used in this chapter are fictitious) was a truant from school and was brought to the office of the Superintendent by the Chief of Police. The boy sobbed continuously as he related his story. He told them that his mother and father separated when he was very small. He lived with his father for some time and then the father left him with his grandmother. He had lived with different folks in Richmond, Lexington, and Nicholasville, Kentucky, and did not go to school very regularly. He was now fourteen years old and in the fourth grade. Ned said that he never heard from his mother and father and no one seemed to care for him at all. His grandmother was going to move and felt that she could not afford to keep him any longer. He did not have money for clothes or food and did not know what to do to support himself. He appeared of normal intelligence and was very polite in his conversation. In order that he could attend school, the county judge clothed him with an entire outfit, and he entered school the next day. He now seemed to get a new interest in it. He attended regularly until his grandmother moved and left him without a home. All efforts made by the county judge and Professor Hager to locate

a boarding home for him, where he could pay a portion of his room and board by doing chores, proved futile. Ned felt that, because his father had a penitentiary record, nobody wanted to help him. The Kentucky Boy's Estate, in Louisville, was contacted and accepted him. Reports received from the home stated that he was a good student and that he appeared to have possibilities for the making of a good citizen.

Case influenced by family problems. Jack, a ten-year-old, invited his little girl friend, Barbara, age seven, to go with him to town. It was just a short distance from their homes, and she agreed when he promised to buy her some candy. When they arrived in town, Jack admitted to Barbara that he had no money with which to buy candy. The result was that the little girl became infuriated and the youngsters quarreled as they proceeded back to their homes. Just before they reached the bridge on the outskirts of town, Jack slapped Barbara. When Barbara threatened to tell her parents of Jack's behavior, the boy, in a fit of rage, pushed the girl through the guardrail of the bridge and continued on his way. Later in the day, Barbara's bruised and lifeless body was found on the rocks far below the bridge.

Jack, when taken into custody, told several conflicting stories to the police. He first said that Barbara had refused to stay out of the highway in spite of his repeated warnings; however, he changed his story later and told the

authorities concerning their quarrel.

Deplorable home conditions, obscene language, loose morals, a father with criminal tendencies--these were but a few of the aggravating circumstances to which Jack was daily exposed. The house was furnished with only the bare essentials. His mother took no interest in housekeeping, the yard was cluttered up with rubbish, and the other members of the family were dirty and unkempt. Although the family income was actually sufficient, it was managed so badly that the family seemingly was poverty-stricken.

Conditions in the neighborhood also were extremely unfavorable. Community morals were low and the neighbors in the immediate vicinity of Jack's home were all poverty-stricken.

Jack was the illegitimate child of a woman who turned the boy over to his foster parents because of financial circumstances. Jack's foster father served one year in the state penitentiary and the mother, who was completely lacking in morals, had two illegitimate children. Both parents had been brought before the mayor for disorderly conduct.

Jack's school record was average and his mental ability was exceptionally good, reflecting an I.Q. which ranked third highest in the third grade. However, even in school, Jack had a reputation for pushing and shoving other children around, and also for a violent temper.

Jack was sentenced to serve seven and one-half years in the state penitentiary. The sentence was suspended, however, and he was placed in the custody of the State Department of Public Welfare and committed to a receiving home.

It is quite evident that there was nothing abnormal about Jack. The chief responsibility for the disaster of which he was found guilty lay in his home, where, instead of receiving love and guidance, he met with neglect and abuse.²

Cases influenced by broken homes. A gang of four youths, Bill, Dean, Howard, and Ed, ranging from fifteen to eighteen years of age, were arrested for the theft of six automobiles valued at \$4600. Their ringleader, Bill, was already the possessor of a criminal record for petty larceny and window peeping, as a result of which he was committed to the state industrial school at the age of fourteen. Bill, who stated that he stole cars "just for excitement," together with his three teen-age companions, hid in a wooden shack between escapades.

All of the six automobiles were stolen within a period of twenty-four hours. While joy-riding in the first car, which was stolen from in front of the owner's residence, the boys noticed an approaching police car. Driving into a

² Hoover, J. Edgar, "Cases Involving Delinquency and Neglect," FBI Bulletin, pp. 1-2, April, 1948.

parking lot, they crawled under the car and waited until the police were out of sight. After abandoning the first car, they found a second automobile easily accessible to them and drove it away from the owner's residence.

The young offenders decided to terminate their activities for the time being and relinquished the car before they separated. While Dean waited at a bus stop en route to his home, Bill drove up in a Ford coupe he had stolen during the brief time since they had parted. These two resumed their joy-riding until they discovered a car containing a hunting rifle and shells. They broke into the car and stole these items. They next abandoned their coupe for a Ford truck, which the next day they exchanged for a Pontiac. When their gasoline supply became exhausted, they abandoned this car after first removing fishing tackle valued at about \$150. Bill, continuing alone, found a Buick sedan which he "borrowed" and abandoned, only to return later for another ride in the same automobile.

When Bill was picked up by the police for vagrancy, the amazing story of the auto theft was unfolded. At the time of the arrest he revealed that he had been away from home for four days and that he had been sleeping in the local railroad station.

At the time of Bill's offense, his father, age thirty-seven, was confined to the county jail, charged with raping

his fifteen-year-old daughter. Bill came from a family of ten children who lived in a two-story frame house located in a rear alley in one of the poorest sections of the city.

Dean's father and mother were separated. His father was an erratic veteran of World War I and his mother had the responsibility of supporting the family. Dean could neither read nor write.

Howard also was the victim of a home broken by the separation of his parents. His father lived with the mother of his three illegitimate children.

In the case of Ed, the pattern was again repeated. His parents, also, were separated. The fifteen-year-old lived with his mother, who was unable to properly supervise him because of her employment.

Ed was placed on probation for one year. The other three boys were adjudged youthful offenders, which judgment automatically carries with it an imposition of probation to the age of twenty-five. In the case of a subsequent arrest, these boys will be considered as second offenders and therefore liable to more severe punishment.³

J. Edgar Hoover says that John's story is no different from hundreds of others. He was a teen-age boy who was arrested for stealing a truck and driving it across a state line. John's parents separated before he could crawl. He

³ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

was left with anyone available while his father was at work. From the beginning he was compelled to shift for himself. Without competent guidance and supervision, he soon began to cheat, lie, and steal. Belatedly alarmed, the father used harsh words and whippings instead of understanding and firm patience. Concerned with his own pleasures, he let the boy shift for himself between whippings. As a result, John burned down a school, set fire to a house, ran away from his so-called home, and, after an arrest for burglary, was placed in a reformatory. On release he entered the Navy but soon deserted. Such is his history to date. Unless his liberty is restricted or he is rehabilitated, he is in danger of becoming another Dillinger.⁴

Cases influenced by parental neglect. Thirteen-year-old George led a group of boys in the burglarizing and burning of a bowling alley. Back of his crime was the greater one of his parents. Both his father and mother were employed. George worked at the bowling alley until after midnight. He came home whenever he pleased. His parents went to parties on Saturday evenings and often would not pick up George until two o'clock on Sunday mornings. George always slept late. He was expected to cook his own breakfast, and, though he was provided money for his lunches, he usually spent it at a soda fountain or in playing slot machines. He

⁴ Hoover, "How Good A Parent Are You?" p. 2.

attended school only when he chose. His anti-social attitude was directly attributable to his run-down physical condition occasioned by total neglect on the part of his parents.⁵

Four juveniles led by thirteen-year-old Charles committed forty-one burglaries in the course of a few weeks. The young leader, boasting of his ability to open safes, told the juvenile judge that he had learned how to unlock them from listening to a radio serial. He proved this by opening the safe of the Chief of Police in a few minutes.⁶

After a particularly brutal rape-murder a killer told police, "It was the magazines--the ones with the pictures of women. When I read them I couldn't control myself."⁷ High in the ranks of contributors to juvenile delinquency are the vicious and unscrupulous peddlers, producers, and printers of obscene literature. They are as responsible as the sex fiends they incite by their wares.

Probably no sadder illustration of the stimulating powers of television can be cited than the "mercy" killing in West Los Angeles on the evening of October 16, 1949. While the parents were dining out, Richard Elliott, age fifteen, and his brother Robert, age ten, were given over to the tender care of the family television set. The harmless movie

⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷ Loc. cit.

would surely keep the boys from getting into mischief. It was Sunday night and the boys were watching a Hopalong Cassidy movie. As the blazing of the guns sent the blood surging in their veins, Richard went to his bedroom, took a gun from beneath the mattress, and brought it into the living room--so he told the police officers. Then he decided to demonstrate for his little brother the "kind of gun they use in the West." In playing with the sawed-off 32 caliber gun the firing chamber was tripped and Robert was shot in the head. He writhed and moaned on the floor. Richard testified that he was unable to see his brother suffer so; and consequently he backed up and, with a mixed feeling of mercy and cowboy courage, fired a second shot into the head of his brother. Robert died from the wound.⁸

Cases influenced by lack of Christian Education in the home. Fourteen-year-old Jimmy drank a little beer, smoked, and ran around with girls. One day he beat a neighbor to death with a shotgun barrel and then took the man's car. He drove it around until evening when, filled with remorse, he confessed the deed to his father.

Jimmy's home was comfortable and his father provided a good living for the family. The mother was very devout, but neither the father nor the children ever went to church. Discipline was greatly lacking in the home. Jimmy was

⁸ Carnell, op. cit., pp. 168-69.

permitted to quit school because he did not like the teacher. He had access to his father's car and very often drove various men in the community to gambling houses, saloons, and even to houses of ill fame. He began being intimate with girls at the age of twelve. As the youngest of ten children he was treated as a baby, and his parents always excused his boyish pranks. A firmer hand would no doubt have saved the boy as well as the life of the neighbor.⁹

In a southern state, Jack shot and killed the Chief of Police in his home town. The Chief died from head wounds. Jack was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to pay the death penalty, but, because he was only fifteen years old, the Governor commuted his sentence to life imprisonment.

That is the story of Jack, the boy-murderer, in brief. Behind this picture is another story of Jack, the under-privileged and neglected child. He was one of nine children whose father was a ne'er-do-well, part-time worker who spent most of his life in jails paying for offenses against society rather than contributing to the support of his family. Jack's slovenly, shiftless mother failed to provide the proper maternal guidance and care to which her children were entitled. There was no incentive for the children to attend church services or Sunday School. The parents did not care whether their children received an education; consequently,

⁹ Hoover, "How Good A Parent Are You?" p. 3.

each youngster dropped out of school at an early age.

Young Jack was a good boy at first, but under the direction of his father he commenced stealing small items. Later, when he was old enough to perform odd jobs, his mother caused trouble by trying to get his wages paid over to her. He became a police problem early in life and was committed to a boys' training school. This boy, who, after stealing small sums of money and a revolver, killed a police chief while being arrested, was a mere adolescent who needed a strong helping hand but never got it.¹⁰

Jessamine County survey. The following information was obtained by a survey of Jessamine County through the courtesy and assistance of Professor C. Hager, Superintendent of Schools, and his corps of public school teachers.

Number of school children in Jessamine County -	1948
Number of Protestant school children - - - - -	1843
Number of Catholic school children - - - - -	40
Number of school children - no preference - - -	65
Number of children attending Sunday School - -	874
Number of delinquent children - - - - -	18
Number of neglected children - - - - -	22
Number of truants - - - - -	20

These statistics show that more than forty-seven per cent of the children in the county attend Sunday School. Statistics

¹⁰ Hoover, "The Golden Rule - Against Juvenile Crime," p. 4.

are not obtainable as to how many of these children have had any Christian Education in their homes.

There are two Christian institutions of higher learning--Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary--located in the county. There are also two high schools in the county. The principal of the Nicholasville High School is a Christian and an active church member. Quite a number of the teachers in the county are earnest Christians and some have a short Bible reading and prayer every morning in their class rooms. The fact that the College has for many years conducted a mission "across the tracks" in Wilmore and in the "mud flats" of Nicholasville must also be taken into account. Parents, as well as children, have been reached with the Gospel through these efforts, and this no doubt helps to account for the low rate of delinquency. Less than one per cent of the total number of school children in the county are delinquent, and only a little over three per cent of the total are potential delinquents. Due credit for this small number of delinquents should be given Professor Hager (a graduate of Asbury Seminary) who in past years has taken a great personal interest in these delinquents or prospective delinquents.

The Jessamine County Court has a record of only fifteen cases of juvenile crime for 1950. (There are no records kept of truants who appear before the judge.) Only one delinquent was sent to Greendale during the year.

Recent Jessamine County case. Fourteen interviews have been made concerning the case of "Billy"--the most outstanding juvenile delinquency case on record in the county during the last four years. These interviews included public school teachers, Sunday School teachers, neighbors, housewives, the County Superintendent of Schools (who had made a study of the case), Billy's half-sister, and his mother.

Billy's life was ended quite suddenly, in November of 1950, during a gun battle with police in Florida. Billy and his half-brother were fleeing south in a stolen car when they were overtaken by the police. Reports received here said that he had almost killed their best policemen.

Billy was the product of a broken home. His mother married when she was only sixteen, and Billy was born when she was seventeen. After the parents were separated the mother married again. Billy never did like his step-father. He was an older man and had several children by a former marriage. Billy also became very jealous of his half-sister. She seemed to be the favorite in the family and received all the attention. This was definitely a psychopathic case. Billy was hungry for love and understanding. In an effort to compensate for the lack of these things he started on the downward path early in life. About five years ago the family moved to Nicholasville. Billy started in on his life of crime by going along with his boyfriend, who had a paper route, to deliver papers. Then in a few days, he would go

back to these same homes to collect the money for the paper. When his boy friend called to collect, they would say they had paid already. Billy was also guilty of arson. He was known to have started eleven fires, three on one night. The court records also stated that he played with live bullets. He was supposed to have been a member of the Baptist Sunday School, but investigation shows that he attended very irregularly. The boy was on probation time after time until finally in 1948, at the age of fourteen, he was committed to the Kentucky Boy's Estate in Louisville. Letters sent by the principal of the school to the county judge seem to indicate that at first he behaved quite well. But he was not interested in school, made poor grades, and soon had a bad influence on the other boys. It was discovered that he stole money from two churches which he attended in St. Matthews, Kentucky. His parents moved on a farm and tried their best to get him paroled. They felt that he would make good on a farm, but investigation of the home and its circumstances by a committee from the Kentucky Boy's Estate convinced them differently. They felt that the parents were "too weak to lead the boy in right paths and that it would be just a question of time until he would be in trouble again." When Billy believed that there was hope of a parole for him, he was on good behavior. Later he went from bad to worse. A big knife was found in his possession and he along with another boy

stole the typewriter from the principal's office. He was dismissed from the school and sent back to the court. The court sentenced him to the Kentucky Houses of Reform at Greendale. He was at Greendale only a few weeks until he escaped. At Georgetown, Kentucky, he stole a car and then with his half-brother he started south. His career ended in a few days for police were on the look-out for him.

Billy's mother and step-father have been very interested in church and Sunday School since his tragic death. In fact, they have been in services almost every Sunday and joined a church in Nicholasville just two Sundays ago. The mother boasts in the fact that the little half-sister, who is twelve years old, has been sent to Sunday School ever since she was old enough to go to kindergarten.

In Billy's case, as in all the other cases in this chapter, the delinquent child did not have Christian parents, and there was no Christian Education in the home.

CHAPTER VI

THE CURE FOR DELINQUENCY

Christian parents. A report from the National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency sent to the Department of Justice stated that in large measure juvenile delinquents are among those who have not enjoyed proper religious care and upbringing. The message of religion cannot be brought to them in the ordinary way. They require all that is best in the ministry of religion. To deal successfully with juvenile delinquents, people must give expressions in their own lives to the finest that religion has to offer, both in convictions and in practices.¹

Punishing boys and girls has not eliminated the cause of their mistakes. These unfortunate children are spiritually sick. The late Father Flanagan felt that juveniles should no longer be blamed for their delinquency, but that the responsibility should be put where it belongs--on the parents.²

Parents have been proven to be responsible for a large number of children becoming delinquent, but the opposite is also true. Christian parents have kept their children from

¹ Odenwelder, Helen E., "Our Evil Day," Of Such, 2:6-7, February, 1947.

² Flanagan, op. cit., p. 22.

becoming delinquents.

A child's family, particularly during his first few years, is the greatest influence in his life. Psychologists have said that the first six years of an individual's life are the most important, and that this is the period during which fundamental attitudes and habits are developed.

It is also a well-known fact that a child's religion starts with his parents. His basic outlook on life, his sense of values, and his moral and ethical standards are all absorbed from the examples of living set before him by his parents.⁴

It is therefore important that the home have substantial foundations and that these be founded upon the deep, broad principles of morality and religion. A family like a house is built upon either rock or sand. Homes, in order to be preventative against delinquency, need to be founded on the rock of truth--on the Word of God and the Rock of Ages.⁵

Every child deserves and needs a Christian home. Every child needs a home that will help him to find God; a home that acknowledges God by prayer, praise, and the daily life of Christian parents.⁶

37 3 Crow, and Crow, op. cit., p. 17.

38 4 Understanding Juvenile Delinquency, p. 25.

39 5 Selecman, op. cit., p. 24.

40 6 Chalmers, Mary M., Your Child Needs--- (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1940), p. 11.

Christian Education in the home. Fathers and mothers can communicate their faith to their sons and daughters. In fact, they are expected too. This was done in homes described in the Bible. The home was the principal educational institution among the Ancient Hebrews. There were no formal schools until the days of Samuel the prophet. The home was the center of learning and the father and mother were the principal teachers. They were held responsible for both the education and the conduct of their offspring. The father was the leading instructor and disciplinarian, but the mother earnestly co-operated with him in these vital matters.⁷

The religious education of the child really began with the rites of infancy by which he was marked as belonging to a race (nation) set apart unto Jehovah. When a baby was born into the community, all the mothers with their children gathered in the home where the new baby was, and Scriptures were read, especially the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4-10. Even before the child could speak, he began unconsciously to receive lessons of reverence and love of the law. Long before he could understand language his attention was attracted by members of the family pausing before the doorway, touching reverently the Mezuzah, a small shining cylinder of wood or metal, kissing the hand that touched it, and then passing on. Later on he would learn that the Mezuzah was placed upon the doorway

⁷ Cady, Marion E., The Education That Educates (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1937), p. 86.

in obedience to the divine command: "Thou shalt write them (the laws) upon the door posts of thy house and upon thy gates," Deuteronomy 5:4. Within the cylinder, written on a small piece of parchment, were two passages: Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-20. About this time also the child must have begun to notice the phylacteries and bright twisted threads hanging from the four corners of his father's Simlah.⁸

As soon as children began to speak their parents began to teach them Bible verses. There was scarcely a question childish lips could frame for which the answer was not waiting in the sacred writings. The story of Adam and Eve answered the child's question, "Who made me and what am I made of?" "Why don't all people speak the same language?" was answered by the story of Babel. No matter what the question, in the last analysis, and in its final effect upon the child, the answer was always, "God." In this atmosphere, pervaded by a continuous sense of the reality, holiness, purity, and dominion of Jehovah, the religious consciousness of the child was awakened, stimulated, and nurtured. In the home, as in the temple and in the synagogue, prayer was a conspicuous and important channel of religious expression. The life of every member was a life of prayer. Before and after meals a prayer of thanksgiving was offered. Besides this, prayers were offered three times each day: morning,

⁸ Ibid., p. 87.

afternoon, and evening. One of the first things taught to children was to pray. The religious festivals were also occasions for giving religious instruction. Within the home the parents in obedience to the divine command explained to the children the origin of the festivals and the meaning of each symbolic act. (Exodus 14:2-14; Psalms 78:1-8).⁹

Ancient Jewish authorities positively assert that parents devoted the first ten years of the child's education exclusively to the study of the Old Testament. Concerning this early period of education, Mr. M. T. Lamb says:

From five to fifteen years of age, those years when the memory is most retentive, when the character is forming, when what is learned thoroughly enters into the whole after-life as a controlling force--those years of supreme value in the history of that soul--were given to a study of God as He has revealed Himself to us in His word; God had the right of way, the first chance in the capture and control of that child.¹⁰

In the home of the Orthodox Jew today the parents continue to follow the Scriptures--the Shema--concerning the religious training of their children. It has been observed that these children are well-mannered, obedient to parents, and grow up living clean, honest, and upright lives, usually making a name for themselves in the business world. Panken gives statistics proving that there is less juvenile delinquency among the Jews than among Protestants or Catholics.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., pp. 87-88.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

¹¹ Panken, op. cit., pp. 71-73.

Catholics reiterate the immortal words of Xavier, "Give me the children until they are seven and any one may have them afterwards."¹² The Catholic infant is christened, and from then on, until it is of school age, the parents are responsible for its training. The strict Catholic parents send their children to parochial schools so that they will receive further religious training.

During the colonial period of our country, before the Revolutionary War, religious instruction was paramount in the home. It is safe to say that the Bible was used every day in the average colonial home. The husband and father was high priest of his house, and he would read from the Bible daily to his family. As soon as his children could read, they, too, read the Bible daily. It was a sacred volume to our American forefathers. To them it was the most precious book for which they had suffered and some had even died. This appreciation of the Bible was stamped in the fibre of every child's heart in that day.¹³

Concerning the place of the Bible in the modern home, a leading educator has said, "That the Bible no longer holds the place it once did in the homes of English-speaking men and women, is a proposition that hardly needs proof."¹⁴

¹² Benson, op. cit., p. 34.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 76-77.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

The chief textbook of the modern home is the sensational newspaper and its comics. The child's chief educator is the vice, vulgarity, and violence of the movie.¹⁵

Modern parents, instead of giving their children Christian Education, have substituted the movies, comics, radio, and television. There are thousands of parents in America today who have given their children everything but God. They have provided them with nourishing food, warm clothing, and good educations, but no Bible, no Gospel, and no Saviour. Many parents have read Dick Tracy and Superman to their children but not the Bible, the Word of God. They have taught them nursery rhymes and have not taken time to think that if a child can learn, "Baa, Baa, black sheep," he can learn, "The Lord is my shepherd."

Television, like the radio, automobile, magazine, or newspaper is a decided mixture. It can be used to glorify either God or the flesh. The usage is controlled by the inner intentions of the user. The good needs to be extracted and dedicated to God while the evil is spurned and shunned. Children need to be supervised and guided by their parents in the use of all these things.¹⁶

The Rt. Rev. Fulton J. Sheen says that there are those who would suggest that there be no religious training until

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁶ Carnell, op. cit., pp. 181-82.

the child is old enough to "decide for himself." They should also consistently suggest that a child in the slums should not be removed to a better environment until he is old enough to decide for himself. Unfortunately, when that time comes, he may already have contracted tuberculosis. Why not also argue that no infant should be born into the world until he is old enough to decide who his parents should be, to what economic class he would like to belong, and to what code he would like to subscribe, or even to decide whether he would want to come into the world at all.¹⁷

During the last twenty years, parents have become increasingly interested in the education of pre-school children as is witnessed by the rise of the nursery school, child clinics, Christian kindergartens, and similar institutions. Ella Frances Lynch says, "If you train your children carefully until they are seven years old, they are already three-quarters educated."¹⁸ It is upon this foundation that the subsequent physical, intellectual, and spiritual structure will be built. Failure in the superstructure is bound to result if the foundation is not properly laid in the early and the most impressionable years.

Children get their sense of values and their philosophy of life from their parents. They also get their

¹⁷ Sheen, Rt. Rev. Fulton J., Preface to Religion (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1946), pp. 179-80.

¹⁸ Benson, op. cit., p. 91.

religious foundations from their parents. A child can understand the love and goodness of God because he has seen love and goodness close at hand, in the lives of his parents from his earliest moments of consciousness.¹⁹

Modern child study teaches that the early formation of right habits is of the greatest importance in development. Habits, physical, intellectual, and moral, are generally acquired in childhood. Habits such as prayer, Bible reading, and Christian observances, are also the result of religious discipline. It is true that these habits may be formed in every period of life, but when they are developed after maturity they must contend perpetually against a mob of contrary habits which keep persisting until the end of life. Formation of habit is vastly easier than reformation.²⁰

The little child who is taught to bow his head when grace is said may not understand at the time what it all means, but nevertheless impressions are being made, habits are being formed, and attitudes are taking shape. Through the open gateway of a love for reading, parents can lead the child into the green pastures of a vital religious experience. It can be a natural and happy close to the day to read selections from the Bible with the child. Thus the Bible will become associated with his everyday activities

¹⁹ Wood, Leland Foster, "Can Parents Teach Religion, Yes?" The Christian Home, 9:13-14, May, 1950.

²⁰ Benson, op. cit., p. 31.

and related to his other reading. Bible heroes become associated with other heroic characters. In this way the great religious characters of all time, Biblical and otherwise, come into a natural and happy setting. Printed prayers and hymns, as well as gospel songs, and choruses, may be used in the same way. Pictures and stories that interpret the hymns are also helpful. These times of Christian fellowship in the family will help the child to understand and to interpret life in terms of its lasting values and so lay the basis for a deep and growing religious life.²¹

Environment, like heredity, is something of which the child is the recipient. Parents need to be more concerned about the environment in which their children must live. The child's growth is bound to be greatly influenced by the moods he must sense, the words he must hear, and the things which he sees in and out of his home. The music, pictures, persons, attitudes, and objects which constitute his home environment all make a lasting impression upon his life.²²

J. Edgar Hoover says that undoubtedly juvenile delinquency will continue to thrive until the home and the "family unit" are restored to their former position of importance as the fundamental social unit in our national life. He says

²¹ Hayward, Percy R., and Myrtle Harmon, The Home and Christian Living (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1931), p. 85.

²² Mason, op. cit., p. 589.

that the kind of homes needed in America are those where the children feel inalienably attached to the family circle, where questions are answered, where sympathy and affection is received, and where frequent family activities are promoted that allow expression and participation by all the members. If America is to survive as a great nation, he believes it is imperative that we have homes where children learn respect for their parents, and respect for the laws of man and of God.²³

When a child shares the life of such a home--a truly Christian home--something important happens. He may not become a saint, but he will experience the fact of God and generally accept Christ as his Saviour while he is very young. He then is able to deal with the situations and temptations of life in an entirely different manner than a child does who is not a Christian. Hence, Christian Education in the home acts as a deterrent against juvenile delinquency.

²³ Hoover, "Crime Challenges the Churches," p. 1.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The people in America, as well as in other lands, are witnessing as an aftermath of war an alarming increase in crime and juvenile delinquency. It is a sobering thought that the average age of the criminal is becoming lower. To add to the gloom of the picture, the world has come suddenly into the possession of destructive knowledge which it is morally incapable of handling.

From the causes of delinquency which have been studied and the cases which have been investigated, the author has shown that the only real cure for the problem of delinquency is Christian Education in the home.

It is true that some parents have assumed their proper responsibility in instructing their children in the things of God, but more often than not they neglect their parental duty. Some parents think it is a mark of intellectual superiority to say, "We shall not give our children any religious training but shall wait until they grow up and then let them decide for themselves." In contrast with this careless and lackadaisical attitude a Christian worker has quoted from an interview with a Christian gentleman, a German, who was for three and one-half years in the infamous Buchenwald Concentration Camp and for ten months in solitary confinement,

because he refused to become a Nazi. He said:

I deem it nothing less than criminal to bring up a child in this world and turn him loose to face life without having given him a foundation training in Christian teachings. Not to teach a child to pray with his earliest words--nothing less than criminal! Not to make certain that a son or daughter receives the instruction of Sunday or weekday school--nothing less than criminal! Not to bring a child to share from the first in the reverence and inspiration of divine worship--nothing less than criminal! Not to teach a child that the secret of satisfaction and pleasure in daily tasks lies in serving Jesus Christ--nothing less than criminal! 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Proverbs 22:6). It is criminal not to do so, is the word of one who has suffered much and long at the hands of godlessness.¹

Parents should see in the religious training of their children the paramount task of their lives--the duty that should take precedence over every other. In their children they have under their guardianship not only their greatest treasures, but the treasures of Christ. To lead them to Him and prepare them for His kingdom is a task of such transcendent meaning that it should make their souls tremble with fear and joy whenever they think of it; with fear, because so much depends on its faithful performance; and with joy, because it promises such glorious results.² Parents must first be themselves in Christ in order to do this, so that their efforts may be backed by their example and prayers. Children of such parents will some day rise up and call them "Blessed."

¹ Odenwelder, Helen E., "Criminal," Of Such, 2:6, December, 1946.

² Hiller, Gustavus Emanuel, The Christian Family (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1907), p. 168.

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