

Parents Beware

A WARNING FROM CHURCH AND STATE.

Statements of the church and nation emphasize again that the "perils ahead" are moral, and speaking at different times and places, urge that reform begin with the parents if the younger generation is to be kept safely on its feet in the swirling currents of changing conditions. The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, the President of the United States, a Cabinet officer and the Chief Magistrate of New York City all draw the same conclusions and hammer the same lesson home—that parents may not wash their hands of the responsibilities of parenthood. "It is well," observes the Philadelphia Inquirer, when the President of the United States and the prelates of a great religious body agree upon the nature of the disease and the remedy. While the President deprecates a tendency to shift moral obligations on government and institutionalism, it is insisted elsewhere that government, too, has its part in effecting reform by improving unhealthy economic and industrial conditions.

A feeling of disquiet pervades the separate messages when they take account of conditions in the home. In their message of "love and counsel," the Bishops of the Episcopal Church, in convention at New Orleans, say they "see a weakening of the ties and a loosening of the standards of home life, due to lack of proper parental control and to the absence from homes of definite religious influence." They say further:

"We see in our land tens of millions of men and women who acknowledge no connection with religion, and, as a result, a large proportion of our children growing up without religious influence or religious teaching of any sort. Can we fail to see the connection between this situation and the spirit of lawlessness, the startling increase in crime, and especially the increase in the number of youthful criminals now challenging our attention?"

And to President Coolidge, too, it is apparent that "there are too many indications that the functions of parenthood are breaking down." In his address to the International convention of the Y.M.C.A. of the United States and Canada, in Washington, quoted in full in the metropolitan papers, President Coolidge warns us further that "too many people are neglecting the real well-being of their children, shifting the responsibility for their actions, and turning over supervision of their discipline and conduct to the juvenile courts." He continues:

"It is stated on high authority that a very large proportion of the outcasts and criminals come from the ranks of those who lost the advantages of normal parental control in their youth. They are the refugees from broken homes who were denied the necessary benefits of parental love and direction. The home is the cornerstone of the nation, and any effective better-homes movement must begin with the training of the youth for those responsibilities, or we shall see the disposition to attempt in some way to turn over to the Government the responsibilities for the rearing of children constantly increased. What the youth of the country need is not more control throughout government action but more home control through parental action."

A similar warning comes from Secretary of Commerce Hoover, who, also speaking before the international Y.M.C.A. convention, says that "the flooding in of modern knowledge has cost religion heavily where it has not kept pace in intellectual respect and confidence," and that "out of our materialism has grown a series of philosophies which insist that materialism alone is the sole basis of human action and inspiration." Mr. Hoover explains that evidences of the trend of the times "lie in the weakening moral fiber, in loosening family and home ties, in youthful criminality, in the easy breaking of law by adults, in growing intolerance, in a leaning upon the State without corresponding willingness to bear its burden or suppress discontent instead of discovering the causes and removing them, in the intriguing of open purposes of groups to profit themselves regardless of the consequences to others and to the whole of society, in the complacency of millions over the wrongs and sufferings within and beyond our borders, in waste and extravagance." The indispensable requirement, believes the Secretary of Commerce, "is a measure of spiritual reinforcement that, in adequacy is supplied only from the fountainhead of character—new religion widely embraced with its ethical values supported." And he asserts that "if we let the churches, their auxiliaries, and the schools, fall, in this generation in vision, guidance and motive, the heritage left will afford little enough of what has made America a land of promise to humanity."

"We have got to get hold of the children between the ages of five and fourteen, especially, and try to reach them spiritually and morally," says William McAdoo, Chief Magistrate of New York City, in an article in the New York World on the cause of crime. Judge McAdoo speaks from long experience, and he writes:

Great masses of young fellows in



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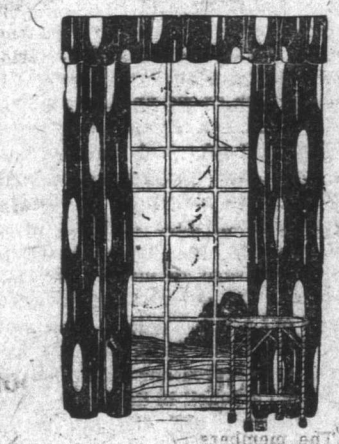
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the twenties are practically all of them in the outly class. have no emotions of pity, love, sympathy or sense of responsibility. They despise their parents, the law and are in open war with officers. Young men and women this country, going to work, are early economically independent parents and therefore insubordinate. Doubtless there is great force in this, comments the New York World. It does not believe that it is far to say with Mr. Coolidge "what the youth of the country is not more control through government action but more home control. For, observes The World. "If he means that the Government has no responsibility, he is quite taken. Why does home lose its influence? Partly through industrial and other causes which oppress the young. Partly through bad living which makes home repulsive. Partly through divorce, which families asunder. Partly through economic conditions which force parents to seek employment. Because immigrants do not easily obtain authority over their children. Government does something for home every time it strengthens housing-law, passes a widow pension act or attacks child labor; and might do more."

However, touching upon family life as well as that of the state, has been closed and strive to better us, thinks the Boston Globe. The old type of family which had common purse, ate three times a day at the same table, spent its evenings at its own fireside or went out as a unit to the same place of amusement has disappeared, says this and it would serve us best to look ward instead of backward. As the are now:

"Where family ties are strong, really modern life they have made so by personality. Old folk keep their capacity for wide interest better than under the old plan long hours of work. They can, being keen, maintain some sort of footing with their children. On relationships they can build a life not founded on the compulsion circumstances but based on a firmer thing—true friendship between old and young. Where this is there will always be a family steady and a helpful force in the world of change."

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