

A SUPREME COURT JUDGE LOOKS AT  
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

By the Hon. Lewis L. Fawcett

It takes whole pages in the daily press to recount the crimes of racketeers, gunmen, gangsters, and other enemies of society of the evening before.

Statistics show that fourscore and five years ago the United States was the most law-abiding of the nations. Now it is the most lawless country on earth.

The crime reports which the Department of Justice at Washington issues quarterly show the nation's crime bill to be \$13,000,000,000 a year; 140,000 Americans are in prison, and 400,00 persons are regularly engaged in criminal activities. Last year 4,000 homes and other places were burglarized and more than \$100,000,000 was lost through incendiary fires; 100,000 persons were assaulted, and 550,000 robbed. There were 554 hold-ups and a loss of \$3,384,000. An inhabitant of the United States is murdered every forty-five minutes. Last year the homicide rate was 10.7 per 100,000, or about 12,000 persons murdered—the highest rate in the civilized world. The annual murder rate has increased 350 per cent since 1890. Startling as these figures are, and paradoxical as it may seem, there is no crime wave in this country. The statistics do not make it a crime wave, because there is nothing new about them.

## WHEN THEIR DOWNFALL BEGAN

During my experience of more than twenty-eight years on the bench, I have passed sentence on over 8,000 persons convicted of crime. Very few were members of or attendants at any church or Sunday-school. However, the evil-doer realizes the important relation of the church to society and turns to it for help when in danger of being deprived of his liberty.

In 1910 Stanislaw Pettanza and Maria Rappa were indicted charged with kidnapping Joseph Longo and Michael Rizzo, who were held for \$30,000 ransom. During the trial of Pettanza, the pastor of a church testified that the gang insisted he make an effort to help him in the case. Maria Rappa, after conviction, when asked her religion, responded: "I do not know what the inside of a church looks like."

Abe Lewis, noted gang leader, was convicted of robbery. A rabbi called and told me that members of the Lewis gang threatened to kill him if he did not make an appeal for clemency for Lewis.

An attorney, convicted of forgery, said before going to prison, "My downfall commenced when I left the church."

A youth of eighteen years, convicted of murder, said, "My downward career started when I stopped going to Sunday-school."

Scores of young men convicted of crime have declared the first fatal step toward ruin was leaving Sunday-school. No child can have a fair American chance without religion. Children can not have too much education based on the plain teachings of Jesus.

The total crime bill in this country annually is over \$13,000,000,000 in money and a value in ruined lives far beyond all possible computation. It would cost many times that if the churches were closed. There would be a carnival of crime loose in the land. Black-handers, white-slavers, highwaymen, burglars, bigamists, and the habitues of the underworld are unchurched.

The records of the civil courts also furnish

abundant proof of the value of the church to society. This is especially true of the Matrimonial Court. In the several thousand cases disposed of by me, not in a single case were both parties to the suit active church-members, and in the majority of cases, neither attended any church. Invariably the guilty party did not go to any church. The divorce evil in the United States is growing at an alarming rate. The absence of religion in the home means the loss of one of the strongest ties that bind men and women together in marital bliss. A religious home is a happy home. Divorce, crime, and juvenile delinquency all bear striking testimony that society is carrying its broken homes and the burden of criminality because of the lack of religious training in the home, the school and the church.

## 19-YEAR OLD VETERANS OF CRIME

The growing increase of juvenile criminality is proof of a deterioration of character and an indictment against the home, the parents, and the schools. It is a breakdown in the moral and religious education of the young. The ideals of youth have been lowered. We must bear in mind that public schools used to start the day with some words of Christian guidance. That beneficial uplift has been discontinued. If religion is good one day in the week, it is good every day. The majority of crimes in the past ten years have been committed by those under twenty-one years of age. For the past two years more nineteen-year-olds were arrested than any other age group. The 4,548 arrests in this group the first six months of last year included more than a hundred charged with homicide.

The gang on the corner is often the starting place of a criminal career. But the right kind of gang is helpful to keep boys straight. We are gregarious. It is natural for us to flock together. We join groups for play, for social intercourse, and for work. School and college societies, clubs and organizations of various kinds, are a phase of gangdom of the beneficial sort. The all-important thing is to keep the young from joining the wrong gang and away from vicious contacts. Church clubs and properly supervised groups and organized play keeps boys from wrongdoing and away from evil companions.

More than 4,000 of the 8,000 prisoners sentenced by me were under the age of twenty-one years, and only three were members of the Sunday-school, at the time of committing their crimes. That satisfies me of the value of the Sunday-school to the community in helping safeguard it from the growth of criminals. It also satisfies me of the value to the individual.

In 1,092 cases of suspended sentence, in each of which a minister, rabbi, or priest became interested, at my request, with the hope of saving the boy to a future life of usefulness and good citizenship, only sixty-two of the boys were brought back for violation of the conditions of the parole. I believe the reform in the remaining cases, over 1,000 was prompt and permanent.—Free Methodist.

Oh, the wasted hours of life

That have drifted by;

Oh, the good we might have done,

Lost without a sigh;

Love that we might once have saved

By a single word;

Thoughts conceived, but never penned,

Perishing unheard.

—Anonymous.

## BEING UNLIKE CHRIST IS SIN

By P. B. H.

Most Christians have too easy a definition of sin. Of course we do not commit the gross immoralities which even good taste condemns! Most cultured people could say the same.

Sin, as usually interpreted, is not what is destroying us—it is our unlikeness to Christ! The world continues in unbelief not because of our crimes, but because we are unlike the Master!

It is not anger, but our inward feeling of impatience which leaves the unsaved without conviction!

It is not murder, but lack of true respect for others' personality which separates us so impassably from them!

It is not hatred, but our lack of compassion which leaves the deadening chill upon our spirits!

It is not impurity, but our regard of other people for what they can do for us that causes a world to doubt our sincerity!

It is not drunkenness, but our selfish love of physical comfort that drags us toward the animal level!

It is not covetousness, but the secret pride that we are owners of what we merely possess that makes us at heart pagans rather than Christians!

It is not failure to do and teach many good things, but that we do not begin where Christ began—after the Holy Spirit had anointed Him—that cripples and weakens the Christian cause today!

It is not heresy, but our lack of continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit that makes Christians unchristian!

Friend, are you really like Christ in the inward harmony, joy and peace which was His and which He gave to us? (John 14:27).

Do you make all of life part of the Father's plan for you?

Do you accept all things with thanksgiving?

Do you meet all men on the level of love?

Do you use as your one arm of defense and offense that of love?

"Impossible," you cry. "No one can really be like Christ!"

But John, the apostle of love, answers, "Walk as he walked." "As he is, so are we in this world, . . . righteous even as he is righteous; . . . every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 2:6, 4:17, 3:7,3:3).

O Christ, make us who profess Thy holy Name like Thyself! Search us from behind the convenient definitions of sin where we have complacently been hiding our real needs from Thee and from ourselves! Let the cleansing fire of the Holy Spirit's presence and His indwelling transform us now and daily into Thine own image! Make us like Thyself in thought, in word, in deed, that a world may believe that Thou hast made Thine abode within us! Amen!

Being unlike Christ is sin!

This will make a good book-mark for you!  
—Free Methodist.

Little joys refresh us constantly, like house-bread, and never bring disgust; and great ones, like sugar-bread, briefly, and then satiety.—Richter.

A man must have either great men or great objects before him, otherwise his powers degenerate, as the magnet's do when he has lain for a long time without being turned towards the right corners of the world.