

THE BURNING BUSH

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"An angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Ex. 3:2).

Israel wore a galling yoke when she was in slavery in Egypt, and the heart of the people cried for relief. But what could the poor people do about their plight? The Jews were greatly outnumbered, and they were unarmed. Revolt was suicidal. In their distress, the Jews turned to God in prayer, and He heard the cry of His people and brought deliverance.

In Midian, a highly educated young Jew named Moses was herding the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. God spoke to the young man in a flame of fire and called him to return to Egypt and deliver Israel out of bondage. Moses was a man of wisdom, faith and daring. He went to Pharaoh and requested the freedom of his people, but Pharaoh stubbornly refused to grant the request, even when the plagues tormented the Egyptians. But the mighty power of the Egyptian ruler could not stay the hand of God.

There was power in the burning bush, because back of that bush were the prayers of an earnest and worthy people. Israel was not only freed from bondage, but she was led to the land of milk and honey.

The bush burned at Jerusalem when the disciples held the greatest prayer meeting of all time. The result was the conversion of thousands in the city where the most tragic events of history had recently occurred. And the mob that had so recently cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Now cried, "Sirs, what shall we do to be saved?"

The bush burned at Wittenberg when Luther prayed, and the great crisis in the church occurred. Calvin and Knox united their prayers with those of Luther, and Christianity took a new turn.

The bush burned at Oxford when the Wesleys and other young men prayed. John Wesley's heart was "strangely warmed"; a holy zeal came upon him and his co-workers. That holy fire was too hot for the frozen churches. Wesley and Whitefield were refused permission to preach in the churches. Thereupon they went into the highways and byways to preach, great multitudes heard the Gospel of repentance preached with great zeal and power; and the GREAT REVIVAL was on!—Christian Witness.

THE MENACE OF THE MOVIES

A boy of 15 was condemned to be hung the other day in Montreal for killing a detective who attempted to arrest him for robbery. Another boy will also be tried in connection with the same crime, and defence counsel in addressing the jury stressed the habit of the two youths of attending gangster movies "six or seven times a week."

"This trial," he added, "is in a sense the trial of our social system, and society has indeed reached a sorry stage if it must cover its defects with the blood of children." He said the plight of the two boys could be traced to society's failure to apply a Provincial law barring children under 16 from movies.

Personally we believe this lawyer was right in his indictment of the movies. The harm they have wrought to our young people is incalculable and entirely out of proportion to any good they do. There is nothing that we know of more calculated to destroy the moral character of young people than a steady diet of the movies if

one may judge the character of the pictures from the lurid posters displayed outside the theatres. Unless something is done, and done speedily, to restrain young people from attending these degrading shows it will be a bitter harvest this country will reap of which the case of this young lad is only the first fruits. Will the censors of the various provinces who are supposed to pass all moving pictures please take note.—The Evangelical Christian.

CRIME—FREEDOM UNLIMITED

(The following article was written by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, at the request of the International Council of Religious Education).

One of man's most treasured possessions is his power of self determination, his freedom to choose a course of action, to do or not to do as he pleases. That faculty, together with his intellect, distinguishes him from the animal, gives him a dignity that reflects the Divine nature. Man is jealous of that prerogative to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and should it be challenged or abridged, he will fight to protect it, as he is fighting now in every corner of the Earth against a totalitarian philosophy that would enslave him.

It is strange, then, that by his own abuse of freedom man sometimes seeks to destroy it. True freedom can exist only when it is limited—limited by the rights of other men and by the laws that define and protect those rights. When a man refuses to respect those limitations, when he refuses to observe the laws laid down by God and by man, he becomes a criminal—an enemy to all his neighbors.

Experience has demonstrated that fear of punishment alone is not an effective deterrent against crime. There are always those who believe themselves above the law, or who fatuously pride themselves upon an ability to escape the consequences imposed by society upon the transgressor. Frequently, by the time their lawless activity becomes sufficiently serious to merit punishment, they have lost all sense of moral responsibility, all realization of their obligations to their God, their country and their fellow men. The prevention of crime can never be achieved by the mere enforcement of law; by treating the symptom rather than the cause. Amputation of a gangrenous limb is necessary, but not nearly so salutary as the prevention of infection.

The experiences of these wartime years in America have shocked us all into a realization that there is a growing infection in our society. Almost daily the ranks of those who have lost their respect for true freedom grow, and frequently the new recruits are drawn from our most vital possession—youth. During 1943, age 18 predominated among all persons arrested, according to fingerprint records received in the FBI from all parts of the nation. Arrests of 17-year-old boys increased 27.7 per cent, and of 16-year-old boys 61 per cent during the period. For the past two calendar years arrests of girls under 21 years of age have increased 130.4 per cent.

These cold facts have stirred the nation to its very core. On every side intelligent citizens are planning and acting to remove the causes of this shocking increase in lawlessness among our young people. It is obvious that the immediate causes are many, and thus the remedies applied must be varied and must reach all the maladjustments that have helped to produce an era of juvenile crime. Improved facilities for recreation, intelligent administration of juvenile courts, increased guidance for children whose families have been weakened by the war—all of these

things are necessary and good. But they are not enough.

All the activities of civic organizations and all the efforts of law enforcement to curtail crime and to create conditions in which crime will not find nourishment will avail nothing, so long as the boy or girl, man or woman has no impelling motive for living in accordance with the law of God and the law of man. Since they have the power to do as they please, they are likely to forget their responsibilities, unless they have a reason for observing them.

Too often we are prone to forget that man is more than a machine, a bundle of nerves and muscle that will react automatically to physical stimuli. We may analyze the conditions that breed crime and strive to eliminate or alter them. To do so is an obligation of civilized society. But it is not the only obligation, because conditions alone cannot produce strong citizens and great men. Our problem is not merely that of the gardener, who needs to look only to the condition of the soil and the absence of deleterious insects and plants. We are dealing with men, men who think and choose freely their own course of life, and who have the power to rise above conditions or to rot in spite of them.

But our cause is not without hope; we can prevent crime and produce a noble citizenry. The answer lies in religious education. Religion reaches a part of man where sociology is ineffectual; it reaches his motives, his reasons for pursuing a way of life. In the last analysis, religion is the recognition of man's dependence upon a superior Being and his obligation to observe a higher law. Hitler is wrong precisely because he refuses to recognize that Being and observe the Law. Like Julius Caesar, he has taken unto himself the attributes of divinity. The young criminals who are falling into lawlessness and immorality are closer to the philosophy of Hitler and Caesar than to the will of God.

We must, then engender in our youth a sense of moral responsibility founded in religion, a religion that is not merely a method of worship, but a religion that embodies a creed and a code as well. The young boy and girl must believe in those truths upon which our freedom rests, and they must have respect for the laws which must exist to preserve it.

The obligation to supply religious education to our youth rests largely with the parents and the churches of the land. It is an obligation to provide a way of life, a motive power that will impel the young men and women of America to choose the good instead of the bad in every department of their lives. To accomplish that, it is obviously necessary that they know what is good and bad, not for just a moment, not in the light of a temporary pleasure, but in the eternal order.

The duty that lies on the shoulder of every parent and every clergyman in America is a sacred and a serious one. It is not merely an opportunity for philanthropy or humanitarian good works. It is rather a solemn obligation to preserve freedom and justice for the world, by moulding the youth of America in accordance with the Divine plan. That duty is not an admonition or a counsel, it is God's will, and if it is faithfully discharged America will survive and prosper. If it is ignored, we can never hope for the true freedom for which our sons and brothers and husbands are giving the final measure of love on the battlegrounds of the Earth.

He who holds nearest communion with Heaven can best discharge the duties of everyday life.—Heart and Life.