

## Discipline for Excellence

Instead of incorporating a program of discipline, some educators have instead altered breakfast for thousands of school children. No longer does their breakfast consist of orange juice, milk, cereal, and toast; today, drugs are a part of their regular morning diet. Not sugarcoated vitamin pills, but drugs like amphetamines, known also as the hazardous “speed.” Such stimulants are to aid children to learn and obey.

### Drugs for Learning and Behavior

It is well recognized that schools have educational and discipline problems. However, a host of pediatricians, neurologists, and educational psychologists have “discovered” new reasons for these massive failures: Children unable to learn are labeled “learning disabled”; those unable to behave are diagnosed as “hyperkinetic.”

“The nation’s schoolchildren are suffering an ‘epidemic’ of learning disabilities,” says Diane Divoky in the *New York Times*, “ranging from ‘minimal brain dysfunction’ to bad manners.” Divoky notes that “in some places, such as in the Delaware Community school district in Muncie, Ind., all students have been screened and deemed learning disabled. There, the pride of the federally funded learning disabilities project is an extensive screening battery that is administered to preschoolers and high school students alike and designed to find that everyone has at least some disability.

“‘If a child got through our screens without something being picked up, we’d call him Jesus Christ,’ observed project director, Fred F. Glancy Jr.”<sup>1</sup>

Charles Mangel, co-author of *Something’s Wrong with My Child: A Parents’ Book About Children with Learning Disabilities*, says, “It is not uncommon in middle- or upper-class areas for some parents of children who are not doing well in school to pressure schools into designating their children as learning-disabled. Some parents of children with other handicaps, emotional disorders, for example, may do the same thing. In both instances, the intent is to lessen parental embarrassment caused by a child’s performance.”<sup>2</sup>

Diane Divoky says the learning-disability movement is an overwhelmingly middle-class one. It gives “ambitious parents a socially

acceptable, guilt-free rationale for their children's not making it at school or at home.

“But at the same time, the fancy diagnosis often leads to easy solutions—what one authority described as ‘a prescription for drugs and a nice little program’—that only mask the very real problems of raising children who are difficult and disappointing.

“For schools, the danger is greater still. To see all children who behave badly or learn raggedly as the victims of their own neurology is to deny their right to control at least a part of their own destiny.” Divoky warns about looking at every variation from the norm as a disability. Then she declares, “To treat what are in fact social problems—nonreaders and nonconformists—as medical problems is to admit the bankruptcy of the schools in finding real solutions.”<sup>3</sup>

Barbara Bateman, an authority on learning-disabled children, notes, “Learning disability has become an incredibly successful excuse for the failure of the public schools to adequately teach those children who truly need good teaching. ‘Of course we didn’t teach that child; she has a disability,’ is the standard line.”<sup>4</sup> Certainly some children have learning disabilities, but the startling increase in “learning-disabled” children appears as a dignified cover-up for the failure of parents, children, and schools.

The learning disabled are children having difficulty learning. Yet authorities at the National Institute of Mental Health estimate that 3 percent, or nearly 800,000 American children, are suffering from “hyperkinetic syndrome.”<sup>5</sup> In *The Myth of the Hyperactive Child and Other Means of Child Control*, Peter Schrag and Diane Divoky claim that there are two million such children on behavior drugs and say that the thrust for these drugs is coming from schools.<sup>6</sup>

These amphetamine drugs “can be highly dangerous,” discloses *U.S. News & World Report*. “The argument is advanced that there have been far too few studies to prove that these stimulants are safe for young children. In fact, some doctors charge that there are such side effects as depression and stunting of growth.

“What’s more, many physicians and educators fear that an entire generation of children is being turned into ‘pill poppers’ who are far too dependent on drug use.” The article tells that the drugging of children has run into legal problems. “What is described as the first civil suit to arise out of this situation has been filed against the school system in

Taft, Calif. It alleges ‘coercion’ by school officials, who are accused of threatening to keep children out of school unless they take daily doses of pills prescribed to them.”<sup>7</sup>

Children receiving these drugs, usually Ritalin and Dexadrine are classified as “hyperkinetic”; the term *minimal brain dysfunction* has also been used. Some people differentiate between a hyperkinetic child unable to control his behavior on account of organic development and a hyperactive child whose misbehavior is due to environmental difficulties. Hyperkinetic children do not suffer from a disease, are not mentally retarded, and are not so disturbed that they must attend special schools. They are basically normal children misbehaving. The issue is whether a child’s behavior is due to a faulty biological or environmental function or to a defiant and stubborn nature.

Edward L. Birch, a director of special education, asks an important question: “What is to prevent the ‘poor’ teacher from attempting to control overactive, or healthy active behavior through referral for medical treatment?”<sup>8</sup> Some schools, instead of providing a disciplined learning environment, follow the new trend of labeling nonlearning and disruptive children: Those unable to read suffer from dyslexia; those with learning difficulties are diagnosed as learning disabled; and unruly children are designated hyperkinetic. Now schools have medical reasons for the educational and disciplinary crisis. Authors Peter Schrag and Diane Divoky have a chapter, “The Invention of a Disease.” In it they state about the hyperactive child:

In less than a decade, the ailment spread from virtual obscurity to something well beyond epidemic proportions. . . . Before 1965, almost no one had heard of it, but by the beginning of the ’70s, it was commanding the attention of an armada of pediatricians, neurologists and educational psychologists, and by mid-decade, pedagogical theory, medical speculation, psychological need, drug-company promotion and political expediency had been fused with an evangelical fervor to produce what is undoubtedly the most powerful movement in—and beyond—contemporary education.

Learning disabilities, according to some “authorities” in the field, account for nearly all school failure, most juvenile delinquency, a large proportion of broken marriages and some

part of virtually every other social affliction of modern life.<sup>9</sup>

What can laymen say when children are diagnosed by a specialist as hyperkinetic? Now with the approval of the white cloth, schools can hide even more of their failures. Ironically, hyper-kinesis is difficult even for doctors to diagnose. As one psychologist points out, the symptoms for hyper kinesis include “almost everything that adults don’t like about children.”<sup>10</sup> Now educators, instead of facing their problems head-on and correcting them, find all sorts of alibis to cover up their faulty methods.

### **Behavior Modification**

Another recent educational method to discipline children is behavior modification, first introduced by psychologist B. F. Skinner and others in the 50’s to describe methods used in dealing with psychotics. The term was unheard of in schools till the early 60’s, and then primarily for the handicapped. Within the last decade the behavioristic approach has been used with normal school children. Dr. Bertram S. Brown, director for mental health, commenting on the widespread use of behavior modification, said, “Almost every public school near a large city or university has at least one behavior modification program.”<sup>11</sup>

Certain concepts of behavior modification have been around for thousands of years. It is basically a procedure for reshaping undesirable behavior. Parents have used rewards (positive reinforcement) and punishments (negative reinforcement) for years to alter their children’s behavior. The methods are couched in technical terms: conditioning, discriminative stimuli, aversive control, shaping, SDs, stimulus change, chaining, fading, extinction, and timeout.

In one method children are given tokens as rewards when they show desirable behavior. When enough tokens are amassed, they can be cashed in for candy, toys, or basketball-playing time. Once the correct behavior is achieved, rewards are decreased and verbal rewards are given. Finally, under ideal conditions, children’s behavior has been so modified that they no longer require rewards or praise to maintain desired behavior. Frances Templet was involved with a behavior modification project with her class of 10- to 11-year-old pupils, that class being chosen as the control group because she had excellent classroom discipline. Whenever children were doing their arithmetic correctly, they received checks or credit marks, which could then be exchanged for rewards.

“After a few days I noticed a change in my students’ attitude toward

the program,” explained Templet. “The children became bored, even resentful of it. I especially noticed the more intelligent and creative kids in my class feeling this way. Finally several of the group asked for a meeting with me. In their own way they told me that the tokens and rewards were meaningless. ‘These check marks don’t smile or look puzzled,’ said one! As each child spoke, what they were trying to say was that they didn’t want to be patted on the head like a puppy when they did a task well and ignored when it was done wrong. They wanted to know why it was wrong or right. They did not want me to tell them the answers; they wanted the warm body of that adult in whom they had confidence.”

Two other of her experimental classrooms likewise experienced no noticeable positive behavioral changes. Templet felt that the sponsors of the behavior modification program did not view the child as a person but as a robot. They used “a donkey-with-a-carrot-on-the stick model to achieve ‘socially acceptable behavior patterns.’” Then Templet asks, “How do we expect the child to grow up human if we treat him as subhuman?”<sup>12</sup>

While I was taking “Psychology of Learning,” a behavior modification course required for my teaching license, the instructor emphasized that negative reinforcers should never be used. A shop teacher related a class problem he had with a boy who talked continuously. He remedied the situation by informing the boy that if he did not stop chattering the whole class would not work. (Personally, I do not favor this approach. The child who causes the problem should be dealt with individually.)

The doctor of psychology reproved him for using negative reinforcement and offered this solution: If the student talked every minute, but at one time stopped talking for two minutes, he should be rewarded. When he stopped for two minutes, the teacher should aim for three or four minutes of quiet. This procedure should be continued until the behavior was altered. For rewards it was suggested that the student receive candy when he was progressing. To this suggestion the down-to-earth shop teacher replied, “Then I would have the whole class talking.” The class roared with laughter.

## **Chemotherapy**

Certainly school children need to have their behavior modified so that educators can teach properly. The problem is: how far will educators go to modify humans? The use of stimulant drugs for hyperkinetic children is just the tip of the iceberg; drugs to increase memory capacity and

change motivation are also under consideration. Observers warn that chemotherapy is just entering the schools and such drugs will play an ever increasing role. Mind control or brainwashing is also accomplished by use of psychosurgery and electroconvulsive therapy. As one physician commented, "Pneumonia can sell only so much penicillin, but once human behavior is seen as a disease, there are no limits to the problems that can be treated with drugs."<sup>13</sup>

Not all doctors agree on using drugs for treating unruly children. Dr. Sidney Walker, a neuropsychiatrist, remarked, "It may well be that stimulant drugs produce greater harm in the long run than the hyperactive symptoms they are meant to control."<sup>14</sup>

Amphetamine problems were discussed in *A Federal Source Book: Answers to the Most Frequently Asked Questions About Drug Abuse*, which asks, "Are there any special difficulties in the treatment of stimulant abusers?" It states: "The 'speed freak' is a difficult patient to rehabilitate. Although he may want to stop using the drug, his 'high' is so intense that he is attracted to the enormous euphoria that he obtains from the chemical. Persons who seem to have broken the speed habit often relapse." *The Federal Source Book* also reveals, "Sweden has a major problem with the amphetamine-like substance, phenmetrazine. It was introduced as a 'safe', weight reducing pill, but for the past 10 years its illicit use has been increasing." Now Sweden has virtually abolished medical use of this drug; nevertheless, illegal laboratories and sources from other countries provide amphetamines for the addicted.<sup>15</sup>

There was a time when the school was supposed to fit the child and all sorts of new programs were incorporated to accommodate children. Today, a new trend emerges: Make the children fit the school—drug them into submission.

Imagine the diagnosis Helen Keller would have received from some of today's psychiatrists and pediatricians! That poor girl would have been labeled a severe hyperkinetic and given the maximum drug prescription. Anne Sullivan broke nearly every rule that modern educational theorists advocate. She saw that Helen was being ruined by her parents' permissive policies and initiated a program to conquer her stubbornness. When Helen refused to listen, she insisted on obedience. When Helen pinched her, she used corporal punishment. Yet deep within Anne Sullivan was that sincere love for Helen—a love that ultimately conquered. Anne Sullivan incorporated the proven system of love and discipline, or rewards and punishment, then continued a program of discipline for excellence.

## **Corporal Punishment**

Just mention something favorable about corporal punishment to some modern educators and see what happens. This is the reaction I received in my required behavior modification course: “You’re not going to force me to change my psychology. If you want to beat your children you could, but I’m not going to have you act like this.”

I wanted to answer my infuriated psychology teacher, but she indignantly silenced me, “Now listen to me!”

She continued to give me a severe tongue-lashing, and knowing the folly of reasoning with one in anger, I quietly listened. Then curtly dismissing me, she snapped, “Next!” to another waiting student.

In amazement I walked away at the reaction of this doctor of psychology.

The incident was initiated on a previous occasion when I expressed belief in the use of corporal punishment in training children. She expressed her strong disapproval. Ironically, in class she proved the effectiveness of punishment when she told us about an experiment. A group of rats were placed in a T maze, which resembled a race track, and trained to obtain their food in the easiest manner. The rats were divided into three groups. They were to be trained by different methods to take a longer path to obtain their food. Every time the first group took the short way, they were withdrawn when they came close to the food. The second group found a barrier placed in their way. The final group received an electric shock every time they went the short way.

The teacher asked which method was the most effective: no reward, barrier, or punishment. After hearing and reading all the negative remarks about punishment, I eliminated punishment as the most effective. When the teacher asked for answers, I responded, I guessed wrong; punishment was the answer. The teacher listed the results on the blackboard: withdrawn rats—took 230 times to be trained; barrier—82 times; punishment—6 attempts.

When the teacher presented her views about the ineffectiveness of negative reinforcement, I expressed the opinion that punishment was effective when administered in love. Since I was the father of five children, I had on numerous occasions practiced love and discipline and observed positive results. She challenged my statement about corporal punishment and categorically stated that no modern psychologist believed in it. On learning that I had recently acquired a book on child rearing advocating spanking, she asked to see it.

The following class I gave her *How to Parent*, by Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson. First she checked author credentials. As the book stated, he “earned his A.B. *cum laude* from Johns Hopkins University, his B.D. *magna cum laude* from Yale University, and his Ph.D. from University of Southern California. He is founder of the nationally famous La Primera in Torrance, California.” Next she wanted to know if he was a psychologist. Indeed he was—a child psychologist, and psychological consultant of his own nursery school. I then showed her Dr. Dodson’s statement:

Many parents also have the impression that modern psychology teaches that you should not spank children. Some psychologists and psychiatrists have actually stated this idea in print. However, as a psychologist, I believe it is impossible to raise children effectively—particularly aggressive, forceful boys—without spanking them.<sup>16</sup>

My teacher declared that this was just an opinion of a psychologist and had no scientific backing. I countered by recalling the rat experiment, which proved that punished rats learned much faster.

“That’s rats, not people!” she bristled.

Previously she had given illustrations about rats, pigeons, cats, and other animals to support her theories. Now when an experiment contradicted her concepts, she stated that rats were not people. Certainly, caution needs to be exercised in applying animal experiments to humans; nevertheless, I saw no value, I told her, in studying rats if we could not apply the lessons to humans. This doctor of psychology became so infuriated that she resorted to that tongue-lashing and twisted my whole concept of love and discipline.

Following this event I began an extensive research on discipline. After going through hundreds of volumes, I readily understand why so many psychologists and educational leaders have taken such a strong anti-corporal punishment stance. In *Changing Children’s Behavior*, John D. Krumboltz and Helen B. Krumboltz said, “Punishment may produce intense fears and anxieties which may last a lifetime.”<sup>17</sup> John E. Valusek noted, in *People Are Not For Hitting*, “It is my contention that childhood spanking is the major seed-bed of much of the world’s violence.”<sup>18</sup> An article in the *Education Digest* stated, “Leading the revolt is a National Education task force which recommends that corporal punishment be phased out by the beginning of the 1973-74 school year. Following

months of study, the task force—representing teachers, students, and administrators found that physical punishment as a disciplinary measure causes more harm than anyone ever imagined.”<sup>19</sup>

The NEA *Report of the Task Force on Corporal Punishment* presented these statements: “The effect of repeatedly and righteously inflicting physical pain is likely to be more detrimental to a teacher’s mental health than learning other ways of dealing with frustrating circumstances would be.”<sup>20</sup> B. F. Skinner is quoted as saying, In the long run, punishment, unlike reinforcement, works to the disadvantage of both the punished organism and the punishing agent.”<sup>21</sup> According to the report, the obvious evidence was so weighty “that corporal punishment is used, not because it has proven to be effective, but because its ineffectiveness has not been thoroughly understood and accepted.”<sup>22</sup>

Others say that corporal punishment does not eliminate undesirable behavior but only temporarily suppresses it. Freudian psychologists have presented the view that corporal punishment, particularly on the buttocks, may produce sexual deviations, causing the child to become a flagellomaniac. It is claimed that the buttocks are an erogenous zone, and when a child is punished, sexual stimulation is effected. One physician went so far as to claim that beating the buttocks can lead to brain damage: Spanking can dislodge tiny fat particles, which may in the future cause blood clots in the brain. She also said that headaches, dizziness, forgetfulness, and difficulty in concentrating can occur.<sup>23</sup>

### **Effective Punishment**

These are a few of the many statements made by the antipunishment advocates. However, there have been studies showing the effectiveness of punishment. Richard L. Solomon, in *American Psychologist*, exposed the error of Skinner’s comment in 1948 in *Walden Two*: “We are now discovering at an untold cost in human suffering—that in the long run punishment doesn’t reduce the probability that an act will occur.” And the error of the Bugelskis, who in 1956 stated, “The purport of the experiments. . . appears to be to demonstrate that punishment is ineffective in eliminating behavior.” Solomon admired “the humanitarian and kindly dispositions contained in such writings. But the scientific basis for the conclusions therein was shabby, because, even in 1938, there were conflicting data which demonstrated the great effectiveness of punishment in controlling instrumental behavior. For example, the widely cited experiments of Warden and Aylesworth (1927) showed that

discrimination learning in the rat was more rapid and more stable when incorrect responses were punished with shock than when reward alone for the correct response was used.”

Solomon tells how in “spite of this empirical development, many writers of books in the field of learning now devote but a few lines to the problem of punishment, perhaps a reflection of the undesirability of trying to bring satisfying order out of seeming chaos. . . . Perhaps one reason for the usual textbook relegation of the topic of punishment to the fringe of experimental psychology is the widespread belief that punishment is unimportant because it *does not really weaken habits*; that it pragmatically is a *poor controller* of behavior; that it is extremely *cruel* and unnecessary; and that it is a technique leading to neurosis and worse. This legend, and it is a legend without sufficient empirical basis,” caused a “lack of concerted research on punishment from 1930-1955.”

Solomon cites a strange situation, in that “punishments are asserted to be ineffective controllers of instrumental behavior;” yet they are “often asserted to be devastating controllers of emotional reactions, leading to neurotic and psychotic symptoms, and to general pessimism, depressiveness, constriction of thinking, horrible psychosomatic diseases, and even death!”<sup>24</sup> Is it any wonder that psychologists and educators reading these early unscientific conclusions had such strong reactions against punishment?

Dr. Justin Aronfreed of the University of Pennsylvania psychology department was the recipient of many honors. One such one was the National Science Foundation Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. “I’ve always been interested in how human beings develop a conscience,” he said. “Obviously, you can’t find out much about that from animals. So I decided to study children—to try finding out just how punishment teaches them to control their behavior. And I began my studies because research on the effects of punishment has been so neglected.”

In summarizing these studies Aronfreed stated, “*Any* kind of explanation that makes a child consciously connect an undesirable act with an unpleasant punishment will help suppress the act. But you get the most suppression if you connect the punishment with the child’s *intensions*. If you catch him with a piece of forbidden cake in his hand, for instance—you don’t tell him you’re punishing him for taking the cake but, let’s say, for wanting to eat somebody else’s share.” Many years ago, Aronfreed related, research on animals showed the punishment was

undesirable. Certain educators, psychiatrists, and social philosophers claimed that punishment brutalized a child, and that permissiveness was the answer. Psychoanalytic theory put the blame for neuroses on punitive, traumatic childhood experiences. Many parents, often the better educated, were influenced by these theories to reject punishment.

“Now speaking as a parent myself,” said Dr. Aronfreed, “it’s quite clear that punishment can be tremendously effective in changing conduct and values. That’s how we become socialized. So why did the early animal studies produce such discouraging results? For one thing, the investigators used punishment to try suppressing behavior that was in the service of a strong biological drive. Starve a rat for 24 hours, put him in a box where he can get food only by pressing a lever, then shock him when he presses it, and of course the shock won’t be very effective in suppressing the lever-pressing. And many of the early studies forced animals to make very difficult discriminations. There’s reason to think that if you punish human beings for behavior that is prompted by the need for survival, you’ll get effects like those in the early animal studies. But human beings are very rarely placed under this kind of stress. When they *are*—in concentration camps, for instance—behavior taught and sanctioned by society tends to break down.”

Beginning in the 50’s much work was done on animals proving the effectiveness of punishment. Aronfreed’s experiments confirmed that punishment is likewise effective in children. As he cheerfully observed, most people have more sense about raising children than the psychiatrists and psychologists advising them.

The general conclusion Aronfreed draws from his studies on punishment is this:

The effects of punishment are not capricious, but predictable from theoretical models. Under certain conditions, punishment can be a very effective way of controlling a child’s behavior. We should try to learn why punishment is useful on some occasions and not others. And we shouldn’t reject its use on the basis of emotional prejudice and incorrect assumptions.<sup>25</sup>

In *Psychology Today*, Donald M. Baer, professor of human development and psychology at the University of Kansas and research associate of the Bureau of Child Research, cited examples of the effectiveness of punishment: “In general, behaviorists have found punishment to be one

of the fastest, most effective techniques available for helping people rid themselves of troublesome behaviors”

The reasons for much of the revulsion, he says, were due to the truly inhumane punishment of “headmasters with canes, slave masters, prison turnkeys with whips, bullies, orphanage overseers, snake-pit mental hospitals.” Baer notes how “in recent years, researchers have reported successful results using punishment to cure such diverse problems as smoking, tics, suicidal ruminations, jealousy, thumb-sucking, nail-biting, homosexuality, exhibitionism, alcoholism, dangerous wall-climbing and habitual coughing.”

Dr. Baer criticizes society’s reaction to this scientific discovery of the value of punishment: “By the usual standards of science these findings ought to evoke admiration: scientists successfully applied research findings to problems that had not responded to therapy and they relieved patients of misery. Had the findings been a vaccine against some disease, there would have been headlines and congratulations. But the treatment is not called ‘vaccination,’ it is called ‘punishment.’ The word brings with it images of anger, whips, screams. So instead of celebrating a new scientific advance, we feel apprehensive; we look for a hint of sadism.”<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, many educators and psychologists have been trained to consider punishment in the light of the false conclusions of Skinner and Freud. Then one psychologist quotes another until the legend of the ineffectiveness of punishment is claimed to be a scientific fact beyond disputation. The *NEA Report of the Task Force on Corporal Punishment* quoted this authoritative statement by Henry A. Waxman: “Psychologists are unanimously agreed that corporal punishment is a totally ineffective disciplinary device.”<sup>27</sup> However, psychologist Donald M. Baer concludes:

Punishment is not a barbaric atavism that civilized men must always avoid. It is a legitimate therapeutic technique that is justified and commendable when it relieves persons of the even greater punishments that result from their own habitual behaviors.”<sup>28</sup>

*Today’s Child* reports: “Let’s not sneer at spanking as an aid to discipline, says the director of Univ. of Chicago Child Psychiatry Clinic, but let’s not overdo it either.

“‘An occasional good whack on the seat’ can do a lot to convince a

young skeptic that his parents mean what they say, observes Dr. John F. Kenward. Used sparingly, a spank serves as a kind of shock treatment which shows a child that he's gone too far."<sup>29</sup>

## **Love and Punishment**

Researchers have shown that humane punishment is effective. Other researchers, to prove corporal punishment ineffective and detrimental, produce studies showing that though many criminals were severely beaten by parents they still committed crimes. Antipunishment advocates, however, fail to differentiate between highly punitive parents and their authoritarian discipline and parents who mete out punishment with love.

How can one punish in love? If a two-year-old has been warned to stay away from a hot stove, a loving parent will slap the hand if the child reaches out to touch it. It is an expression of parental love to give the child a temporary sting and a lesson in obedience rather than see the child burned. A child who runs into the street after being warned may receive a sound spanking from a loving parent. Parents would rather inflict corporal punishment than see their child crippled for life. But why punishment? Because corporal punishment is of short duration and extremely effective.

Take a class of 30 third-graders in which an unruly failing child repeatedly refuses to sit down and delights in disturbing and hitting other children. If the teacher believes corporal punishment is dehumanizing, he may take this approach:

"I know how you feel. You hate the class. You wish the teacher were dead."

Then to relieve the child's inner frustration he redirects the child's energy by using a nonpunitive approach. "Instead of hitting others, kick the play box, or the chair, or anything else. Say, 'I hate you,' or whatever you want, but don't kick anyone."

What will the other children learn with this teacher when an unruly child is not effectively chastised? They will learn that misbehavior is not punished; some will instead be tempted to imitate the disturbing conduct.

Suppose the same boy has a teacher who practices loving discipline. The teacher tells him, "I know how you feel, but you cannot leave your seat and hit others because you are mad." Firmly and lovingly he insists that the child return to his seat and sit down.

Later, as the class is doing art work, the teacher takes the child aside

and tries to help him learn the material he is failing. In spite of the teacher's efforts, the boy again leaves his seat and hits another student. The teacher gives him a warning: "The next time you hit someone; I'll take this paddle and give you a spanking."

The child disregards the warning. The teacher then has the child bend over and applies a few strokes with the paddle. The child cries and returns to his seat. Both the boy and the class know the teacher is in authority. Now with an orderly class a learning atmosphere prevails.

Objections arise because in resorting to corporal punishment the teacher is modeling undesirable behavior by the use of force. However, the teacher realizes that *all* 30 children have rights, and it is undemocratic to let one child violate the rights of the other 29. All societies have laws preventing individuals from engaging in antisocial actions, they have police, judges, courts, and jails to apprehend and punish offenders of basic human rights. When a child insists on fighting and disrupting the class, it is a matter of justice to punish him. Far from modeling undesirable behavior, the teacher is modeling justice against misbehavior.

Concerned teachers do not use corporal punishment as the only way to punish a child. There is also reprimand, detention, withdrawal of privileges, isolation, assignment of special tasks, or expulsion. Simply taking a child aside often does wonders. Sometimes there are hidden reasons why children cause problems. Often students are transformed just by having their parents notified of their misbehavior.

When corporal punishment is used, it should be done with intelligent love. It is not a device for teachers who have tried everything and whose nerves have reached the flash point—then they "haul off and give the kid a good whack to put him in his place." In this case the teacher feels guilty, and the child cries, despises his punishment, and looks for revenge. Punishment administered unjustly is scorned.

A few teachers will abuse corporal punishment. The solution, however, is not to eliminate corporal punishment; but to make sure abusers are dealt with effectively. Policemen are known to abuse their weapons; should elimination of nightsticks and guns be the goal? Cars cause many highway deaths; shall we go back to walking as the only mode of travel? In one year, 55,000 individuals required hospital emergency room treatment resulting from playground injuries; should we close all playgrounds? The solution is not elimination but the incorporation of proper safeguards.

Corporal punishment should be neither always the first nor the last

resort. Each situation should be evaluated on its own merit. Teachers need to know how to maintain a disciplined learning atmosphere. Once they are properly trained and have the authority to maintain order, there will be little need for corporal punishment. It can be readily observed in disciplined classrooms how seldom punishment is required. But if a child does misbehave, immediate intelligent action is taken. For a serious infraction children know they are likely to experience the paddle.

Opponents of corporal punishment speak of a child in a Boston school who was beaten on a hand that had an infected finger and consequently spent three days in a hospital. No one in his right mind would condone hitting a child's hand when he had an infected finger. But strangely these anti-punishment advocates show grave concern over an infected finger or bruised buttocks yet maintain silence over the multitudes of children who are harassed, mugged, beaten, knifed, and even raped and killed in undisciplined schools.

Many individuals have been spanked in their childhood. Looking back on these experiences they do not despise their parents or the punishment. In fact, sometimes they say, with a twinkle in their eye, "I deserved a lot more." I visited a large Christian camp in the Adirondacks to interview 25 youth ranging from 13 to 21 years of age about the effects of parents' using the biblical principle of "applying the rod." All expressed extremely favorable attitudes toward the spankings they had received. The general feeling was summed up by a 17-year-old girl who was planning to enter college—the discipline was natural. Resentment over corporal punishment could not be detected, even among the youth still under parental control.

### **Corporal Punishment: Teachers' Reactions**

As has been shown, the proper use of corporal punishment is an effective device to correct misbehavior. Nevertheless, permissive educational leaders have tried for years to bar its use from schools. Though there are some 60 anti-corporal punishment groups, a survey conducted by NEA showed that 72 percent of teachers favored corporal punishment.<sup>30</sup> It is amazing that teachers constantly bombarded with anti-corporal punishment materials can still, in the majority, favor its use. One teacher cleverly analyzed the situation: "The farther away you are from the classroom, the less you think corporal punishment is needed."

The *American Teacher* reports that in Pittsburgh, in spite of a

downpour, more than 1,000 teachers and paraprofessionals demonstrated for strengthened discipline and security measures in city schools. Teachers were angry after a pupil who assaulted a teacher was allowed to return to class a few days later. They wanted “firm action to deal with assaults on teachers, on other staff, and on students,” reported President Al Fondy of AFT Local 400. “If there is an assault on a teacher, the student should be transferred or suspended for the balance of the school year.”

One of the demands the union presented was that corporal punishment be restored. “Absence of paddling,” Fondy said, “particularly at our elementary schools and middle and junior-high schools, has been a major factor in the deterioration of discipline conditions in our schools. Restoration of this alternative for dealing with certain disciplinary infractions could go further than any other single step toward improving school-discipline conditions and toward reducing suspensions.”<sup>31</sup>

School crime became so rampant in Los Angeles that California Attorney General George Duekmejian in an unprecedented lawsuit charged school officials with inflicting cruel and unusual punishment on children by forcing them to attend city schools. In bringing this civil suit against county agencies, mayor, city council, and police in the nation’s second largest school district, the state is trying to compel schools to protect their children. Duekmejian says, “My primary goal is the restoration of our public schools as islands of safety in which students can pursue their learning without fear.”

To combat the rising crime, Los Angeles has reinstated corporal punishment after prohibiting it four years ago. In a statewide survey of more than 800 parent-teacher associations, 85 percent of the parents and teachers supported corporal punishment. When Los Angeles school principals were surveyed, 89 percent favored reinstatement of corporal punishment.

Board member Bobbi Fiedler, when asked about the effectiveness of corporal punishment, replied, “On an issue like this, experience is perhaps the best teacher. In Los Angeles schools, corporal punishment was ended in 1975. Since then there has been more fighting, more obscenity and a general disregard for good behavior. There has been not only increased lack of respect for adults, but children have exhibited greater hostility toward each other as well. We are facing a tremendous increase in the violence on our school campuses.”<sup>32</sup>

## **Supreme Court and Corporal Punishment**

In October 1975, corporal punishment was brought before the United States Supreme Court; it ruled that teachers may spank misbehaving pupils—even over parental objections. In January 1976, the House of Commons likewise rejected a bill to abolish corporal punishment in British schools.

Then in April 1977, the United States Supreme Court decided that spanking of school children by teachers did not violate the Constitution's Eighth Amendment on cruel and unusual punishment. Writing for the majority, Justice Lewis Powell said the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment was applicable only to prisoners and "the schoolchild has little need for the protection of the Eighth Amendment." Justice Powell then added, "The openness of the public school and its supervision by the community affords significant safeguards."

The Court stated that the "prevalent" rule is derived from common law, whereby teachers may use "reasonable but not excessive" force to discipline children. School officials using unreasonable or excessive force, the Court said are almost everywhere subject to possible criminal or civil liability. The Court further ruled that when teachers use corporal punishment, students do not need to have a hearing before receiving their punishment.<sup>33</sup> In Dade County, Florida, it is prescribed that wooden paddles should not exceed two feet in length by four inches in width by one-half inch in thickness. The number of strokes for elementary and for high school students is also stipulated.<sup>34</sup>

### **Corporal Punishment Banned**

Most states have never acted on the use of corporal punishment, but New Jersey, Maryland, and Massachusetts have statutes forbidding it. New York State permits corporal punishment; however, when Irving Anker, chancellor of the New York public school system, heard of the Supreme Court ruling, he said it would not affect the city Board of Education's prohibition against corporal punishment. "It is our view that corporal punishment is both dehumanizing and counterproductive,"<sup>35</sup> commented the chancellor.

Fritz Redl and William W. Wattenberg wrote, in *Mental Hygiene in Teaching*, "A number of states and cities very wisely have made physical punishment illegal. In such school systems both teachers and children survive very nicely. The fact is that whippings, slappings, beltings, and paddlings can accomplish nothing that cannot be achieved better by some other method. The very conditions which physical punishment involves

violate the known requisites for producing a psychologically justifiable result.”<sup>36</sup>

New York City educational leaders can boast that corporal punishment has been banned for decades, but they cannot deny the horrible conditions existing in many of their schools. Since teachers have been stripped of their powers to restrain students physically and to punish pupils, many find it extremely difficult to maintain disciplined classrooms. According to *Time*, a number of other cities have “banned spanking in public schools,” and they are: “Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.”<sup>37</sup> (Los Angeles has recently restored it). In retrospect, one can recall that it is in many of these same cities they experience the greatest amount of violence.

To imagine what it is like to teach in New York City schools, envision teachers’ hands tied behind their backs as they stand helplessly before unruly children. Often students mock teachers’ impotence. Were teachers given in loco parentis (teachers acting in lieu of parents) to administer reasonable control and punishment to disruptive children, it would transform the schools and have a much greater impact than many costly programs to help delinquent youth. But to some educational leaders it would be utterly intolerable to allow teachers to use their discretion to apply corporal punishment. One wonders why these same leaders take so little positive action against the tragic undisciplined conditions existing in some of their schools.

The action they occasionally use is to suspend children who cause serious discipline problems. Then they play musical chairs, sending children from one school to another. The most seriously unmanageable are eventually sent to a school for emotionally handicapped children. In one such school, I substituted as a buddy teacher. For just 130 first- to third-grade pupils there were 12 classes, 12 teachers, 12 paraprofessionals, and 4 buddy teachers who visited the various classes. Clearly, a few had problems, but the majority were simply undisciplined. In a second-grade class a regular paraprofessional and I had 10 pupils. When the children began running and hitting each other, the paraprofessional tried desperately to control the situation, but the children were totally disrespectful. Although I wanted to take the first one who misbehaved and paddle him to obtain order, under no conditions was I allowed to do so. We were finally saved by the dismissal bell.

## **Punishment: Parents and Nature**

The American public has been so deceived regarding corporal punishment that one is made to feel ashamed to admit one believes in it; or worse, practices it. Nevertheless, Ross D. Parke, of the University of Wisconsin, says, “According to a large scale study of child-rearing, 98 percent of the parents interviewed occasionally used physical punishment to control their children.”<sup>38</sup>

Even animals use punishment in the training of their young. Hens and mother birds peck at their chicks and nestlings to correct them; mother bears cuff their cubs vigorously when they misbehave; when calves become too boisterous in getting milk, the mothers butt them. Nature also operates on the principle of obedience—happiness; disobedience—punishment. Nature takes no backtalk. Expose body gently to the sun: suntan; overexpose body: sunstroke. Nature strikes quickly and effectively, and mankind learns quickly to abide by its rules.

## **Permissive Solutions**

There is an instinctive revulsion to pain. This is the reason punishment is so effective in training children. Physical or psychological pain causes unpleasant feelings to change behavior. Strangely, permissive leaders protest the serious consequences of physical pain yet in the same breath advocate psychological pain. The NEA Task Force recommends “Quiet places (corners, small rooms, retreats)” could be used as a short-range solution to avoid corporal punishment; also “privileges to bestow or withdraw.” It advocates “social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists to work on a one-to-one basis with disruptive students or distraught teachers”; also parent education programs, student human relations councils, student involvement in decision-making processes in the schools, increased human relations training—and “full implementation of the *Code of Student Rights*.”<sup>39</sup>

Imagine the psychological results from some of these programs as opposed to the results from a teacher who, acting *in loco parentis*, tells a child, “If you hit another child once more you’ll get a spanking.” The child misbehaves, receives a temporary sting, and all is forgotten, whereas the child disciplined with progressive concepts must parade from teacher to principal to parent to psychologist to psychiatrist to social worker, etc. While the child is parading about to these specialists trying to diagnose and alter his conduct, he continues to misbehave, influences others to

do the same, causes bedlam in the classroom, frustrates the teacher, and hinders effective learning. Which method is truly humane and creates the least psychological damage?

In *Today's Education* a teacher describes a situation in which David Evans, a sixth-grade student, was consistent about three things—he came to school, fought, and swore. His father was an alcoholic, his mother was busy with her lovers, and he was virtually reared by older street gangs. Being a victim of an inner-city deprived life, at age 13 he was already on probation for stealing.

A sincere but vain effort was made by the teacher to help David adjust to school. The teacher became exhausted and bruised from breaking up fights. The school counselor, Mr. Wright, also tried to help David, but the boy would sulk in his office and reenter the class unchanged. The situation became so difficult that school authorities finally contacted the courts to have him sent to a correctional home.

Then a dramatic change occurred. David was involved in a fight, and the teacher finally became fed up with the situation. He threatened David with his size, his fighting ability, and his own inner-city experience. David was terrified. His swearing stopped. He even said, “Yes, sir; no, sir,” to the astonishment of the teacher, who never dreamed that he knew these expressions. The following week his class, as the teacher described it, was “total bliss.”

In the midst of this change, the plans for David to enter the correctional institution were approved. David strongly protested, and his teacher too now wanted him to stay. In discussing the situation with Mr. Wright, the teacher wanted to appeal to the courts to give David another chance because of the dramatic change in David's behavior. Nevertheless, Mr. Wright decided that David would benefit more from being placed in an institution with trained personnel; “quieting a child by using threats,” he believed, was wrong.

Off to the institution David went, never again to be seen by his teacher. But David, he heard, had reverted to his old behavior. *Today's Education* presented the reactions from educators to this incident. One response was from a speech and language specialist and the president-elect of a Texas Classroom Teachers Association: “The teacher's threat of physical punishment may stop David's deviant behavior temporarily,” he said, “but it will not necessarily help him develop the values and attitudes he needs to remain in and benefit from a public school classroom.” Then he concluded, “Perhaps what David needed was an alternative

school environment sponsored by the school district whose purpose was achievement through valuing and self-control rather than correction through incarceration.”<sup>40</sup>

That the teacher altered David’s behavior was not important. The crime is that the teacher used the threat of punishment; therefore he was wrong regardless of the outcome. The facts are no longer the issue; what matters is whether teachers’ actions harmonize with educational leaders’ permissive philosophy.

### **Ancient Wisdom**

A statement made by a king 3,000 years ago contains more wisdom than can be found in scores of books and articles published by many modern educators and psychologists. The story is told that in the beginning of the king’s reign God appeared to him and said, “Ask what you wish me to give you.” The king requested not riches, or long life, but wisdom to judge his people. God, highly pleased with his unselfish request, promised him there would be no one before or after him who would attain to his greatness. The man was King Solomon, and under his rulership Israel achieved its golden era. In Proverbs 29:15 NKJV King Solomon wrote,

The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.

What contrast of this ancient wisdom to today’s wisdom? Solomon advocated the use of corporal punishment, and for thousands of years millions have proven its effectiveness. In some schools it has been totally eliminated; in others its abolition is being sought. Permissive educators want to dismiss corporal punishment as one of the archaic brutalities of the past. But look at today’s schools and observe the fruits of modern wisdom.

In addition to using the rod, King Solomon advised reproofing children. When children misbehave they are not to be just punished but reproofed. Reasons are given why their actions were wrong. Schools should follow this ancient wisdom. They should have reasonable standards of behavior; children should be instructed in these standards; then corporal punishment should be permitted for noncompliance. It is “the rod and reproof” that gives wisdom.

Finally, Solomon strikes at the very core of progressiveness: “A child

left to himself brings shame to his mother.” Children need to be trained in the way they should go and not left to flounder according to the whims of their immature feelings.

### **Progressive Leaders**

The American public has pinpointed the main problem in the schools as discipline. However, I fear that progressive leaders have bulldozed the majority of people into thinking traditional methods of love and discipline are embarrassingly old-fashioned. The silent majority needs to be awakened to the fact that their beliefs about discipline are up-to-date and highly effective. It is because educational leaders have rejected these proven methods and substituted methods of permissiveness and license that the schools are in ruins.

James Harris, president of the largest teachers’ union, the National Education Association (NEA), said schools themselves are to be blamed for the present problems of vandalism and violence. He told a Senate subcommittee that the reasons include depersonalization, alienation, outmoded discipline practices, racial hostility, and society’s use of violence as a means of reaching solutions. Harris then gave the typical progressive reasons for failures, which are really the solutions: “the increasing dependency on short-range measures, such as corporal punishment, suspension or expulsion, police in the schools, and detention/isolation, is particularly depressing,” he said. “Schools which rely on traditional methods of school discipline in isolation are traveling on a different path than young people today, and the gap between the institution and the students is widening because communication in such situations has become virtually impossible.”<sup>41</sup>

The problem is not that traditional schools and young people today are on different paths, the problem is progressive schools have destroyed the effective well-worn path.

### **Traditional vs. Progressive Schools**

Often it is the traditionalist demanding discipline that is labeled a vicious, brutal, undemocratic beast, robbing children of their liberty and freedom by insisting on obedience. Yet in traditional schools are found harmony, peace, and freedom for *all*. In such schools children can be seen laughing, playing, and enjoying living. On paper it may look harsh not to handle hard-core delinquents with kid gloves. But visit schools where love and firmness are combined, and you will find a delightful

atmosphere. Then visit progressive schools with their overemphasis on students' rights, and you will witness in many an atmosphere of hate and fear. Why? Because in classes with insufficient authority to punish misbehavers each child must defend himself. As a result a natural pecking order occurs, each child fighting for his class position and the strongest finally achieving overall authority. Even though the pecking order becomes established, violence continues, with fighting among those who want to advance their standing.

Independence and freedom are excellent virtues when exercised within bounds of mutual respect. In disciplined classes there is legitimate authority to enforce this right; disruption results in immediate correction. Traditionally, teachers had authority to act under a legal and moral sanction of *in loco parentis*. Today's preoccupation with children's rights, particularly those of disruptive children at the expense of teachers, parents, and legitimate authority, is destroying schools.

### **Conclusion on Discipline**

In conclusion, the traditional methods of being fair, firm, and loving are as effective today as they have been for thousands of years. Children will never be harmed with that proven treatment. What is needed is a school reform movement that will reject the progressive model that has caused the great havoc not only in our schools but in all of society.

With permissive discipline children fear their classmates. With authoritarian discipline children fear their teachers. Both are to be rejected. The solution? Love and discipline.

Simple? Yes! Very, very simple. This is not a costly program; it is a simple no-nonsense approach that expects orderly schools. We need to demand that administrators and principals provide a disciplined learning atmosphere, encourage preventive discipline techniques, give teachers *in loco parentis* authority, permit corporal punishment, and remove the few hard-core troublemakers. Once a proper system of discipline is established, every teacher should be expected to maintain a disciplined class. In this disciplined atmosphere schools can once again provide quality education for all.