

Television and the Christian Home

By J.K. Duff

There are many perils which threaten the spiritual well-being of the believer in these last closing days. Some of these dangers are apparent and can be easily discerned, while others are like sunken rocks which cannot be readily seen, but are, for that very cause all the more dangerous.

Such a menace to the Christian is to be found in Television which Satan exploits for the accomplishment of his own sinister ends. No one will deny that it is a most wonderful invention and some items in the programmes are educational and instructive; but for the child of God the baneful effects on the soul, will far outweigh the seeming advantages.

There is no desire to encroach upon the personal liberty of any brother or sister, but rather to lovingly warn any who may be tempted to follow the trend of the world, and be caught in the snare. The writer believes that viewing TV programmes is inimical to spiritual prosperity, and that Television will prove a curse if brought into the home.

The Lord said unto Ezekiel—"I have set thee as a watchman...therefore thou shalt hear the word at My mouth and warn them from Me" (Eze 33:7).

There are five simple yet cogent reasons why we who are believers in Christ should avoid acquiring a TV set.

For Our Own Sakes

Beloved brethren and sisters, we have been born again by the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23). It is God's desire that we should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This spiritual growth results from feeding on God's word (1 Peter 2:2), and communing with the Lord in prayer. Now, if we fritter away our time in watching TV, there is nothing more certain than that we shall lose our appetite for the Scriptures and our desire to pray. Then we will imperceptibly become weak and impoverished in soul, moreover, the conscience will become defiled and we shall lose the joy of God's salvation.

Remember one has said: "Mine eye affecteth my heart," therefore let us be very careful what we see as well as what we hear.

Much better to go in for the blessed experience of 2 Corinthians 3:18—"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

For Our Children's Sake

God is very solicitous for the welfare of His people's children as can be seen in both Old and New Testaments (see Exo 10:9, Deut 6:7, Eph 6:4, Col 3:21).

If God has blessed us with a family, He commands us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He would have us to put their salvation before education, recreation, or worldly advancement. Christian parents who live with eternity's value in view will seek to do this by living Christ before them, by reading God's word with them, by praying continuously for them, also, by bringing them under the sound of the Gospel as frequently as possible, since it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor 1:21). The influence of loving parents, who honour God, is powerful and cannot be overestimated.

Now, when TV is introduced into the home, the godly atmosphere is changed, and the children who are naturally keen to watch programmes are mentally transported to the Picture House. We probably would be shocked to see our children in a Cinema queue, yet when we bring in TV, do we not virtually bring the Theatre in to them?

Again, experience shows that when children become obsessed with TV, it is almost impossible to get them to attend gospel meetings.

Some may say: 'But I would not allow my child to see everything that appears on TV.' That may be true, you may be selective and switch off when undesirable items are coming over. But will your family be so discriminating? Will they not rather be curious to see everything that is to

be seen when you are not there, or when they feel old enough to assert their own wills in the house. Surely all parents who realize the dreadful possibility of rearing children who may lose their souls, will agree that we should refrain from bringing into our homes anything that may cause them to miss salvation.

For Our Brethren's Sake

"Am I my brother's keeper?" were the words of Cain after he had slain his brother Abel. God's question infers that it was His intention that he should have been. In 1 Corinthians 12 the local assembly is viewed as a body with the several members all functioning for the good of the whole. God would teach us that we are all closely linked together, each necessary to the other and each affected by the other, for if "one member suffer all the members suffer with it." If this aspect of truth is appreciated, it will be readily seen that TV installed in the home of the believer may have serious repercussions in the assembly. Some perhaps, will not care, but many beloved brethren and sisters who have a conscience about this thing, will be sorely grieved while other weak Christians may be emboldened by the example and stumble. Furthermore, if an elder in the assembly has TV in the home, will the saints not regard him as a worldly Christian, and lose confidence in his leadership? Certainly, if he is one who is "apt to teach," his ministry will have less weight in the meeting.

For Our Neighbor's Sake

One of the greatest arguments in favor of the Gospel is the fact that the believer has a peace and a joy independent of circumstances. He derives his joy not from the world's cisterns but from the wells of salvation. The Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria—"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." We can sing:

*"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me,
There's love and life, and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus found in Thee."*

The impact of Christians who are full of this joy of the Lord upon the unsaved is tremendous. They see that we have happiness and peace without going in for the pleasures and sports of the world. But will our testimony in this respect not be altogether nullified if our unsaved neighbors observe that we have to resort to the ways and means through which they derive their enjoyment? If we fail to keep our souls in spiritual health through fellowship with God, we shall become backsliders in heart, if not in life, and like Lot, we shall seem as one that mocked, unto those whom we would warn and seek to win for Christ.

For the Lord's Sake

The Lord has redeemed us with His precious blood, therefore we are not our own, we have been bought with a price. We have been redeemed to be His own peculiar possession. He will have us in glory with Him by and by, but He desires to have fellowship with us now. He is jealous of our affections and cannot bear the world to steal away our hearts.

When we consider the case of the cleansed leper in Leviticus 14, we observe that the blood of the sacrifice was put on the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot. Then upon the blood marked ear, thumb and toe was put the oil. This finds its antitype in the blood of Christ by which we have been cleansed from sin, and the Holy Spirit by whom we have been sealed. It teaches us that God claims all our faculties, our actions and our will. What we think, say, hear and see, what we do, and where we go, should manifest our subjection to the Lordship of Christ.

Brethren, the coming of our Lord draweth nigh, now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, let us keep our hearts true to Christ, and our homes free from the world. Then we shall be able to sing truthfully to the glory of God—

*"I have seen the Cross of Jesus,
Gazed upon the Crucified,*

*And my heart is won forever,
I am saved and satisfied.*

*Earth's joys no longer charm me,
And the world has lost its hold,
But my heart will sing with gladness,
When the pearly gates unfold."*