

**The General President of the Wesleyan Methodist
Church Writes on . . .
THE TELEVISION CONTROVERSY**

Dr. Roy S. Nicholson

The question of the proper attitude toward television has provoked an unpleasant controversy among some Christians. Television's phenomenal growth has been astonishing, and yet its possibilities have not been fathomed fully. Its "entertainment" phase amounts to only 15 percent of the industry, authorities report; however, 99 percent of the controversy centers about that 15 percent. That television can be harmful none will deny. That it also may do good some will admit. It appears beyond question that television is now permanently established as a medium of communication. Therefore the Christian's concern is of more than passing interest.

Some seem to consider television as having only the potential to do harm. They have condemned it without any exceptions or modifications. That position assumes that television is an unmixed evil, a device of Satan. Such a position tends to raise questions in many minds concerning the accuracy and fairness of their judgment on other matters in which these people say they speak with authority. For example, some owners of television sets do not view, or permit others to view, programs which involve scenes of improper conduct, immodest exposure of the person, improper poses of the body, prize fights, the so-called "soap operas", etc. Their use of television is restricted to that which is educational, cultural and mentally and morally constructive. To deny that phase of television's possibilities is to be unrealistic.

What we urgently need is to cultivate a correct attitude which governs the Christian's use of television. The indiscriminate viewing of "everything on television" is as censurable as the indiscriminate reading of every magazine or book, or looking at every cartoon or picture printed. Some radio programs also are unfit for a Christian's ears. Anything unfit to hear is unfit to see. Therefore, we need to create a moral "conscience" which produces genuine convictions as to what one will see, hear, read, or discuss, whether he is at home or visiting in a neighbor's home. To adhere kindly to one's convictions is an effective witness which the Spirit may use in His dealings with another about such matters.

Before any Christian acquires a television set, some principles of Christian stewardship deserve his careful and prayerful attention: (1) Can he afford to make the financial investment? Will such a purchase embarrass him financially, restricting his support of Christ's cause? This IS a vital, but often overlooked, point! (2) If he can afford the investment, are sufficient programs of the character he may view with a clear conscience available in his area to justify his investing in a television set? (3) If the investment is justifiable, does he have the time to spare for viewing proper programs of interest without interfering with the cultivation of his private devotional and spiritual life? This, too, is an item which has been neglected to the detriment of many souls.

There is a further consideration which obligates both parties to this controversy to display Christian charity: Will one's ownership of a television set create a spirit of division and controversy which will cripple his Christian influence? Immediately some will vehemently affirm that it will. Others, who feel that those taking that position desire to boast over compelling submission to their ruling, may dispute the affirmation and, insisting upon personal liberty, react in a manner that is also hurtful. Owners of television sets and opponents of television—especially those professing holiness—must manifest the spirit Paul advocated in I Corinthians 13 and Romans 4, and beware

lest the attitude taken toward the other does not prove destructive to both (Galatians 5: 14).

Above all, the most important thing is for each one to know God's will as to the details of his daily living. The Holy Spirit will make that clear as one seeks earnestly to know God's will. If our brothers and sisters do not please us exactly in some points not essential to salvation, let us not criticize them, but love and pray for them.

Wesleyan Methodist.

BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD

Every day should be commenced with God, and upon the knees. He begins the day unwisely who leaves his room without a secret conference with his Heavenly Father. The true Christian goes to his closet both for his panoply and his rations for the day's march and its inevitable conflicts. As the Oriental traveler sets out for the sultry journey by loading up his camel under the shade of the palm tree, and by filling his flagons from the cool fountain that sparkles at its roots, so does God's wayfarer draw his fresh supplies from the inexhaustible Spring.

Morning is the golden time for devotion. The mercies of the night provoke to thankfulness. The buoyant heart that is in love with God makes its earliest flight, like the lark, toward the gates of heaven. Gratitude, faith, dependent trust, all prompt to early interviews with him who, never himself slumbering, waits on his throne for our morning orisons.

We remember Bunyan's beautiful description of his Pilgrim's lodging overnight in the "Chamber of Peace," which looked toward the sunrising, and at daybreak he awoke and sang. If stony Egyptian "Memmon" made music when the first rays kindled on his flinty brow, a devout heart should not be silent when God causes the outgoings of his mornings to rejoice. No pressure of business or household duties should crowd out our prayer.

—Theodore L. Guylar.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST . . . from Page One

pulsations of a new and blissful life be felt through every fibre and atom of the being. It is not the old life that rises, but a new life is breathed forth by the Holy Ghost. "I am crucified with Christ, it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." (R.V. Am. Committee). "Dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ."

He who enjoys this repose is brought so intimately into sympathy with Jesus Christ that he is all aflame with zeal, and aroused to the utmost activity to save lost men. As a venerable preacher, widely known, quaintly expressed it, "I enjoy the rest of faith that keeps me in perpetual motion."

MISSIONARY VISION

Lord God of Hosts! Open Thy people's eyes
That they may see earth's whitened harvest field
Widespread. May note the precious grain that lies
Unreaped. Open! that they may see the promised yield
Perish because no sickles touch the grain,
Making Thy Son's great sacrifice in vain.
Lord God of Hosts! Call forth our young and strong
Into Thy harvest field where die the lost
In sin's black night of fear and hate and wrong.
Lord! call them forth to toil at any cost
To Self and gain and home and life;
Baptize them for earth's final strife.

—From "Heart and Life"