

Megiddo Message

We need the sea.
We need a place to stand
where we can pray and ponder,
and feel the pulse-beat of the Eternal
In the things of Time.



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Does Your Tone Ring True?

*W*hen we think of “tone” we think of music. In the performing arts, tone is an indicator of one’s ability, for regardless of other qualities which an instrumentalist might possess, an inferior tone is a defect which may render his best efforts distasteful. *How* he performs is as important as *what* he performs.

The same is true of our performance as Christians before God. *How* we seek our noble goal will require the most detailed attention and diligence. What is the tone of our performance in the divine life? Is it willing and joyful, or grudging and selfish? In the little affairs of life we show our true selves and what we really are. Even in the smallest mannerisms we display the *spirit* of our obedience, as well as its letter.

Tone in this context may apply to our conversation. It might seem like straining at a gnat to make an issue of such a technicality as the tone or modulation of the voice. But *how* we speak can be more effective in transferring our message than the actual words we use.

The story is told of two young men attending college, who asked their father for money. The first was rough and demanding. “I need money to go to school.” “You shall not have it,” was the gruff reply. The second was tender and endearing in the request he made of his father, and touched his father’s sympathy. The father’s response was immediate: “You shall surely have it.” What made the difference? Not the words but the tone in which the words were spoken.

Our divine Guidebook instructs us to “provoke unto love and to good works,” and to be an example of the believers “in spirit” as well as in word and conversation and every other aspect of our lives. Our conversation is the witness of our spirit and, consequently, our tone. Jesus said, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

There is no greater indicator of our real selves than the tone of our conversation! We may not be aware of it, but others do not judge us only by what we say but also *how we say it*. Said David, “To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God.” Jesus Himself warned, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

We claim to love God. But we do not love Him if we manifest a harsh, rough spirit toward “the least of these my brethren,” said the Master. Even the Golden Rule demands that we think of the effect of our words on others. This surely includes the tone of the voice. Do we love God? The great apostle Paul said, “Love has good manners, is very kind, is never rude, never selfish”—what could better define a true Christian *tone*?

The *way* we say a thing is also important to God, because the tone is the revealer of the heart. Our words may try to cover what we feel, but our mannerisms “tell it like it is.” God wants a *willing* obedience—here again is the tone of our performance. He is sensitive to our spirit and our motives, as well as our deeds. The outward tone and the inward heart are one. □

Megiddo means

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon); "a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance). Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (II Cor. 10:4-5).

We believe

- in God, the Creator and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "live, and move, and have our being."
- in the Bible as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to Heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be king of the whole earth.
- in the Holy Spirit, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- in life as the gift of God, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- in humankind as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- in ourselves as capable of applying in our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- in the promise of God, that a new age is coming—is near—when the earth shall be filled with His glory, His people, and God's will be done here as it is now done in heaven.

Soon-coming events

The Herald and the KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

The Bible pictures all events, all men and all nations moving together toward this one God-ordained climax, when "the kingdoms of this world" will become "the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), a kingdom in which all will enjoy the blessings of peace, equity and prosperity. When the task is complete, our earth shall be numbered among the heavenly, glorified worlds and filled with immortal inhabitants, bringing to reality the promise of our Lord in His prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

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In the Perspective of Eternity

The early Christians had a sublime motto for their type of thinking. They called it: *Vivere sub specie eternitatis*, that is, living in the perspective of eternity.

What does the perspective of eternity do to our view of life and the world?

First, it breaks the iron grip of this world upon us. We are too easily satisfied with small goals, with "what shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewith shall we be clothed." We should feel every moment that we are not permanently at home here. "Our citizenship is in heaven," in the words of the apostle Paul (Phil. 3:20, NIV), in the world to come. We are strangers here, pilgrims, migrant workers on a temporary assignment, ambassadors extraordinary, or simply persons in exile.

It gives us also a sense of belonging to another world, an expectation of splendor and glory that gives color to all our actions. Thinking about that better world creates an eagerness to apply the standards of eternity to our present decision-making. During our life right now we must be sanctified and totally remade, mentally and morally, into God's image in order to be ready for the heritage of eternity. Cleansed and changed and more and more drawn into His light,

we must become what He designed that we should be. Well we know that this old hard heart of ours cannot inherit the Kingdom.

Our present life is but a very small segment of time in the perspective of eternity. Yet it is priceless, for it is the key to everything beyond. Whether or not we have any part in that eternal plan depends on what we do with our life now.

Eternity belongs to God. Days and years and millennia are His. What is *our* life, in this perspective? Only a moment. Yet, God has planned a way whereby we can live through the ages of eternity.

Distant vision changes our evaluation of the things around us. Thus saith the Lord, "Consider your ways." What is important? What do we love most? What do we count of greatest value? What of the character we are building day by day? We will be tomorrow only what we make of ourselves today. We will be no better than we force ourselves to live and no worse than we permit ourselves the freedom to be. We are making our own choice. Daily as life is passing, we are deciding; we are creating ourselves.

Each moment, regardless of our tasks, we have the opportunity to prepare for real life, for eternity. For this reason, it is important that we keep in mind our perspective, that we live and work continually before the backdrop of our hope. In all that we do, we can have but one underlying thought: What will glorify

The visible things are transitory: it is the invisible things that are really permanent—in the perspective of eternity!

God and prepare me for life in eternity?

What is our perspective, yours and mine? What animates our lives and keeps us moving toward our goals? As the days are passing, are we making maximum spiritual progress? Are we living in the perspective of eternity? Are we living with the thought of future life and glory continually before us as the all-pervading theme of our lives?

Life for each of us is filled with the ordinary: ordinary tasks, ordinary relationships, ordinary assignments to perform. How are we using this life of ours? Are we deriving from the ordinary its deeper, hidden, eternal value? Let us remember that time for us is worth only what we invest in it.

Instinctively we see only the present. We dwell on the numberless petty scenes and incidents, happinesses and grudges of our everyday existence, seeking small goals and finding small gratifications. Do we realize what we are missing?

Perspective and Vision

We need the broader perspective of eternity to live beyond this world. What is our perspective? It is largely a matter of vision, viewpoint or comparison, or a combination of all three. Whatever the situation, the perspective of eternity gives a new dimension to life.

Perspective is a matter of vision. How far can you see? This is mainly determined by your altitude, where you are standing. If among tall buildings, you may be able to see no farther than the nearest building. From the shore you can watch a ship to a distance of two or three miles before it disappears over the horizon. Flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet, you may see some 450 miles of the earth's surface, from horizon to horizon. The astronauts who leave the earth in a spaceship can see the entire 24,000-mile circumference of the earth much as we look at the moon. How far it is possible to see depends on your perspective.

The same is true of our spiritual vision. How far we can see depends upon how high, spiritually speaking, we

live. We find ourselves in a low level, near-sighted society where long-range vision is almost non-existent. Near goals of materialism control the aspiring, and still nearer goals of immediate necessity motivate the rest. Few, very few, acknowledge anything beyond the present. Fewer still have the vision to be each day "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:19).

Distant vision comes with altitude. The higher we climb the mountain of holiness, the better our view of the Land of Promise, the surer the promises become to us, and the surer our claim upon them. Altitude makes all the difference. Each new day is our opportunity to live higher than we have ever lived before.

In the perspective of eternity, we see life—our own life—in relation to the long-range goals of our great Creator



An eagle and a stork were talking. "Come with me," said the eagle to the stork, "up where the air is fresh and clear, the sky is blue, and the view beyond description. You don't know what you are missing, down here in this swamp all the time. Soar with me, up to the heights!" The stork was silent for a moment, and then, squinting up at the sky, replied thoughtfully, "Are there any snails up there?"

If we are limited by a snail perspective, if all we can think about is satisfying our small, momentary needs, we lack the perspective of eternity. But why continue this way? Why encumber our minds with what the limited vision of mortal eyes can perceive, failing to use faith's telescope to look beyond. Why not change and see in our mortal experiences the steppingstones to eternity? □

In the Perspective of Eternity

We will be
tomorrow only
what we make
of ourselves
today.

Perspective is also a matter of viewpoint and comparison. It is our inner attitude, our point of view, how we see our existence and our lives in relation to other lives and the whole realm of existence. In the perspective of eternity, we see life—our own life—in relation to the long-range goals of our great Creator and time without end, and every moment takes on new meaning.

We are all familiar with the story of the three bricklayers who were asked the simple question: "What are you doing?" One was doing what he had been told to do—quite obviously, he was laying bricks. The second was earning bread to provide for his family. The third replied, "I am helping to build a great cathedral." The three men, from all appearances, were doing the same task. But how different their perspectives.

This same difference in thinking applies to each and every aspect of life. Much of our happiness or our despair results from our viewpoint. The same prison walls confined the apostle Paul along with many a common criminal of his day. But to Paul it was a prison of hope; to the others a prison of defeat. What made the difference? Not the prison but the man. The same task can be performed as a drudgery or a delight and to the glory of God. What makes the difference? Not the task, but the perspective of the person doing the task.

Perspective gives us the ability to compare, judge and evaluate. We may seek—and find—some security in the "things" of this world, in houses and lands and family and brethren. God does not deny us these blessings, insofar as we thank Him for what we have of them and use them as unto Him. But we must see them in proper perspective, and—much as we appreciate them—must keep our hearts fixed on the heavenlies. For what is 70 years of the very best pleasures of this world, all of which will vanish in the end, compared with 60 billion ages of life among the angels of God?

We might conceivably, by some stroke of good fortune, secure a portion of the

honor and recognition of this world—or it may be only the compliments and approval of our friends and neighbors that we seek. But what is a whole lifetime of the greatest earthly honor—compared with the recognition of the angels and the high and holy God of heaven?

The same perspective applies to the negatives of this world. Even physical losses and disabilities cannot deprive us of the glory of our opportunity. As long as we have life, there is always struggle, challenge and the opportunity to achieve in the sight of God.

The perspective of eternity also affects our losses. It may be something forcefully taken from us, or a voluntary sacrifice we are asked to make. The sacrifice may seem to require all our powers of body and mind; it may take all the spiritual gumption we can muster, and may leave us without the very thing that seemed to bring meaning to our lives. But what is 50 years of the severest personal sacrifice or suffering compared with even ten thousand years in eternity, where we can enjoy the choicest of friendships and companions and never a thought of parting!

A few years, or months, or days—or even hours—of suffering may seem endless. But in the perspective of eternity, what is even twenty years of intense suffering—compared with ten million ages of life crowned with more than eye has ever seen, or ear has heard, or the heart of man has imagined!

The perspective of eternity re-frames all our prospects and experiences here and now and transforms them into meaningful pictures of opportunity.

In the perspective of eternity, the only real values are those which we can carry with us into the world to come, those which we can keep forever.

In the perspective of eternity, our life, even though it be eighty, ninety or one hundred years, is but a tick on the clock of Eternity. Yet that tick is vital, laden with opportunity and challenge.

Why do we permit ourselves to be hemmed in by the walls and ceilings of our daily fortunes or misfortunes, when

the endless reaches of eternity can be ours? How is it that we do not look at today to ascertain how it is preparing us for better things? What of its accomplishments and its long-range possibilities in the perspective of eternity?

We need to add that perspective of the early Christians to our lives, to live *sub vivere eternitatis*, to find our breadth and depth and height within the love of God. We need to expand our minds so that we can take in a maximum of God's thoughts, plans and purposes for us.

A Heavenly Viewpoint

We need to look at our life as it is seen by the mighty God of the heavens—our Creator, our Sustainer, our Provider, our Father. To us, life consists of sleeping, eating, and waking, interspersed with various tasks, pleasures, successes and failures. But unless all is dominated by an unquenchable desire for real life, we are before God exceedingly insignificant. And shall He, who has an eternity in which to select His family, choose those who are so satisfied with the present that they regard His interests as secondary?

This life is but the prelude, the opening chord of a beautiful symphony which God will someday perform for us if we will now do our part. Someday our planet will ring with the echoes of His praises—and that day lies but a moment distant in the perspective of eternity. In the words of our song, "God is working out His purpose; He has planned this earth should be/ Someday free from every evil, blest with immortality." It *shall* be—someday soon.

The bondage of the earthly need not confine us. Ours is the greatest liberty of any people on earth. Instead of feeling bound by our physical limitations or misfortunes, we can use them—whatever their shape or nature—to raise us higher.

The scenes of our daily life become so familiar that we fail to recognize their value; but in the perspective of eternity, this is our training ground. This is our chance to learn to eat the "butter and honey," to have a genuine break with evil

and a real devotion to good. Each moment enriches our spiritual heritage if we truly redeem it. Each moment is another opportunity to prove ourselves of eternal use to the Creator Himself!

The precious privilege of that higher horizon must cast a soberness and a discernment over the things of earth. Living in the light of eternity will always create a certain distance between the Christian and the affairs of this world. Nothing of here and now will concern him unduly, nor will he be shaken or upset by events around him. He will be found in a constant state of preparedness, his one concern to be ready for the returning Christ. He will even be willing to suffer for Christ. If our reference point is in the world to come, we will not be trapped in reactions of bitterness or cynicism, nor will we be controlled by what events and people may do to us.

Our whole concern now is to act responsibly here while we seek a better world, honoring our eternal calling in everything we do. Things of here and now must always take second place in our hierarchy of values. The Kingdom first; everything else second.

Whatever we must do, let us live today for tomorrow. Let us build out of our daily tasks a character that God will choose to give to the ages. Let us rededicate ourselves wholeheartedly to the eternal verities which God has offered. Remember, "the visible things are transitory; it is the invisible things that are really permanent"—*in the perspective of eternity!* □

In the perspective of eternity, the only real values are those which we can carry with us into the world to come, those which we can keep forever.



Establishing the Kingdom

Part Four

*Every member
of the Bride
of Christ must
be wearing
garments
free from
defilement,
having neither
spot nor wrinkle
nor any such
thing —Eph. 5:27.*

The next step in the Divine plan of establishing a heavenly Kingdom upon earth is the actual setting up of that Kingdom. The Kingdom was God's plan from the time the first blueprints for earth's creation were drawn. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion," said God to the angels at the time when they began the process of spiritual creation on this earth (Gen. 1:26). And as Moses the great lawgiver recorded, God declared: "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14:21).

The transition from what the world is to what it will be when God's Kingdom is established is so drastic and far-reaching that we could not reasonably expect the change-over to be either simple or painless. Just to refresh our minds on the steps involved and their sequence, let us review: First, the appearance of Christ's forerunner, the prophet Elijah, to inform the nations of Christ's imminence, and to warn them to prepare to submit to the new order; the resurrection of the covenant-makers, so that they are ready to meet the Lord when He appears; the appearance of Christ in person to His Church, composed of faithful and unfaithful servants, including living and resurrected; the meeting in the air or "Rapture"; then the Judgment, which will determine the winners in the race

for eternal life; and the marriage of the Lamb to His Bride, His faithful Church. Then will follow Christ's appearance to the nations of the earth, the demand for worldwide surrender to the new order, followed by the great Battle of Armageddon to enforce that demand. These steps, plus the task of reconstructing a battle-scarred earth, will be accomplished in record time, because "a short work will the Lord make upon the earth" (Rom. 9:28).

The old order destroyed and the resistance overcome, God's Kingdom will come into being. Religious groups who accept to a certain degree the Scriptural plan of an ultimate Kingdom on earth often blind themselves and their followers to the holocaust that must precede that age of bliss. In the parable of the nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and return, it is said that "his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." And upon His return the edict went forth: "those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:14, 27). Again, speaking of the time of His second coming, Jesus foretold that it would be as it was in the days of Noah and as in the days of Lot. Both of these occasions were accompanied by devastating judgments. So likewise, God's

Kingdom on earth cannot possibly come without a thorough purge of the elements which resist progress.

Now let us canvass the evidence concerning the nature of the Kingdom. A kingdom is a political entity which necessarily embraces four basic elements: territory, a ruling group headed by a king, populace, and laws. All these elements are covered prophetically in the Bible.

★ *Territory*

The Lord's Prayer reveals the territory which God's Kingdom will occupy: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in *earth*" (Matt. 6:10). Daniel 7:27 informs us that the Kingdom will not only be on earth, but that it will be worldwide, leaving no place for divided authority: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." That Kingdom shall prevail "under" the whole heaven. Revelation 11:15 also reveals the extent to which the new order will replace the old: "...and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great metallic image, interpreted by Daniel as representing the kingdoms of men, the little stone hurled without human hands at the feet of this image, or extremity of human authority, struck such a devastating blow that the kingdoms of men were driven away as the chaff of the threshing floor till they could not be found. Then this

"stone," representing the Kingdom of God (Dan. 2:44), grew until it filled *the whole earth* (v. 35).

In Psalm 2 Christ is promised the "uttermost parts of the earth" for His possession, and according to Psalm 72:8, His dominion is to extend "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

All the Divine promises focus upon the earth as the home of the saved. Jesus in one of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:5) promises the meek this earth for their inheritance: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Revelation 5:9-10 reads, "And they sung a new song saying, Thou...has made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*" And in chapter 21:3, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them." In Psalm, 37, we are told six times that the righteous shall inherit the earth. Verse 29 is precise and to the point: "The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Another Old Testament promise runs: "For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it" (Prov. 2:21). The prophet Isaiah speaks eloquently of his hope for the righteous of the earth: "Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" (60:21).

According to Jesus in Matthew 25, He, the King, shall say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v. 34). And again: "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32), and this Kingdom will be on the earth.

The nationalistic trend of recent

years has led to the demand of Asia for the Asians, Africa for the Africans, and the Middle East for the Arabs, and so on; and according to the Almighty's plan, the earth is for the children of men. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men" (Ps. 115:16).

★ *The King and His Associate Rulers*

The Scriptures are very specific on the rulership of God's Kingdom on earth. Being a kingdom, the supreme authority must of necessity be a king. A number of one-man governments have come into being during the past half century, partly due to their ability to get things done, whereas the democracies tend to become debating societies, with much important business stymied by endless red tape and interparty wrangling. But too often the dictators do the wrong thing. Once they get into power they may become ruthless extremists, interested only in perpetuating their tenure in office with no thought of the interests of the people. God's Kingdom also will be a dictatorship; however, Christ will be an entirely different kind of dictator. God will not permit a man to rule over others until he first has learned to rule himself. The God of Israel, speaking through King David, said: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (II Sam. 23:3).

A brief review of Biblical statements on the kingship leaves no doubt but that Christ will fill the position of chief ruler. When the angel Gabriel revealed the coming birth of Christ to Mary he said: "Behold, thou shalt...bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and



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the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33). The prophet Zechariah had already foretold this happy climax of events: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one" (14:9). The Psalmist agrees with Zechariah: "For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations" (Ps. 22:28). Christ as Lord of all will fulfill these prophecies.

In the 72nd Psalm, King David in colorful language describes the noble munificence of his greater Son, Christ: "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth....Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper...His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed" (vs. 7-8, 11-12, 17).

Then, too, Christ will have associate rulers, 144,000 of them (Rev. 14:1). He is "Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14). Like their King, during their mortal career they learned complete self-control, hence are fit to rule others. They will fulfill the Divine forecast: "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness" (Isa. 60:17).

The book of Revelation makes a number of allusions to this associate kingship. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations....To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. 2:26; 3:21). Referring again to Rev. 5:10, the same facts are stated: "[Thou] hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Daniel 7:27

reveals that the Kingdom and dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the "people of the saints of the most High," Christ the great King and His associate rulers.

The apostle Paul was familiar with the arrangement for the rulership of God's Kingdom on earth. The saints are to be heirs and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17); the saints "shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2). The author of the book of Hebrews employs the term "we" in speaking of the recipients of the Kingdom: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28). Every member of the true Church or bride of Christ will share the rulership with Him.

In Jesus' parable of the talents (Luke 19), He likened Himself to a nobleman going into a far country, "to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." When this was spoken, Imperial Rome was at her zenith, holding sway over a vast empire around the Mediterranean and in western Europe. Judea being a part of this empire, Jesus would be familiar with the formalities required of a seeker after office, such as the government of a province or tetrarchy. He must go to Rome, the seat of government, to have his credentials and qualifications examined and to receive his commission. So Jesus has gone into a "far country," into heaven itself, where He has been judged, accepted, and commissioned, and at the Father's right hand He awaits the day when He shall return with authority to rule as King over the whole earth.

★ *The Populace of the Kingdom*

Now we come to the point of the populace of the Kingdom. The Kingdom will be on earth, hence every factor entering into the Kingdom—the King, the ruling group, the territory, the subjects, as well as the laws to govern them—will be on earth. A statement in Psalm 67:4, is enlightening: "O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and

govern the nations upon earth." Portions of Psalm 72 bear directly on the point of the populace of the Kingdom. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations...They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust....Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (vs. 4-5, 9, 11).

The class of faithful who are accounted worthy of ruling with Christ are relatively few in number (Rev. 14:1), a "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingship (Luke 12:32). These alone could never fill the earth with God's glory, as promised in Numbers 14:21. The people over whom they will rule are described in Rev. 7:9 as "a great multitude, which no man could number," who stand before the throne and serve. They are the survivors of the purifying judgments of God, and their descendants (Zech. 13:9), whose mild probation during the Millennial reign of Christ will be something very different from the rugged experience of the rulers in the preceding six thousand years, when everything was against them.

At the close of the Millennium, those of the general populace who have made themselves worthy shall be rewarded with immortality, and Eternity will begin—the finished work of God. This blessed state is described in Rev. 21:3-4, 23-24), "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will

dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself [Emmanuel, God with us] shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away...And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

★ *Laws for the Kingdom*

There is yet one more factor needed for a kingdom: *laws*. God's heavenly Kingdom also will have laws. No governmental structure could function without laws. Isaiah 2 makes this point crystal clear and identifies the high authority behind these laws: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the

Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (vs. 2-3; see also Micah 4:1-4).

No one anywhere can plead ignorance of law, for such a mighty campaign of education will be waged that all shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:34). There will be no dark or backward areas, "for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14).

The law will be everywhere and always present in the form of immortal overseers, who will be able to check delinquency before it starts. "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isa. 30:21).

A law unenforced or unenforceable is worthless. In the Kingdom of God, there will be, for the first time in history, perfect enforcement of righteous Law stern and impartial for the benefit of all. This law will have teeth. No overt disobedience will be tolerated. Isaiah the magnificent, beholding in vision the glories of that future Kingdom, saw also what will protect its glories from tarnish. It is very simple. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted" (60:12). Obtaining the blessings in that bright new world will depend upon obedience to the laws that will emanate from Jerusalem, the City of the great King.

"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which

*Our desire to have
part in that coming
Kingdom should be
the strongest urge of
our lives.*



came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain" (Zech. 14:16-17).

★ *The Qualifications*

Revelation 21:27 speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem, or kingdom of God, and of whom shall inhabit it, in the following words: "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Here are some facts which should alert us. Our desire to have part in that coming Kingdom should be the strongest urge of our lives.

But to merit those future blessings requires work on our part. We should be willing to give up all of the present to win those coming glories.

Nothing can enter that glorious Kingdom that defiles, nothing that is even slightly impure, nothing that has even a shadow of defilement. And every element of the flesh is defiling. Jesus lists the varying types of human misbehavior issuing from the heart or mind of man as "evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness," and He com-

pletes His statement by saying: "All these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). The man or woman possessing any of these sins is defiled, hence shall be strictly barred from entering the Kingdom of God.

Every member of the 144,000 composing the accepted Bride or Church of Christ must be pure. They must be clothed in garments clean and white, the righteousness of saints. Every member of that august body must be wearing garments that are free from defilement, having neither spot nor wrinkle nor any such thing (Eph. 5:27).

★ *No Abominations...*

Nothing can enter that heavenly Kingdom that works abomination. There are many things to which humankind are heirs that are an abomination to God. Such may not be counted abominable to men, but remember "God seeth not as man seeth." God sees us through eyes too pure to behold iniquity with any degree of allowance (Hab. 1:13). To profess when we do not possess is an abomination to Him. We read in Titus 1:16, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." If we profess to know God and then deny Him by our works, we are "detestable, disobedient, and worthless for good work of any kind," as Moffatt's translation renders it, and shall find ourselves outside the City gate.

Proverbs 6 lists six things that the Lord hates, yea seven which are an abomination to Him, and some of these things would not look too bad to us if we saw them in ourselves: "A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (vs. 16-19). Unless great care is exercised, we shall find ourselves an abomination to God in one way or another, and shall be eternally barred from God's glorious kingdom upon earth.

The Divine Majesty

*The Lord our God is clothed with might,
The winds obey His will;
He speaks, and in His heavenly height
The rolling storm stands still.*

*Rebel, ye waves, and o'er the land
With threatening aspect roar;
The Lord uplifts His awesome hand
And chains you to the shore.*

*Ye winds of night, your force combine;
Without His high behest,
Ye shall not, in the mountain pine,
Disturb the sparrow's nest.*

*His voice sublime is heard afar;
In distant peals it dies;
He yokes the whirlwind to His car
And sweeps the howling skies.*

*Ye sons of earth, in reverence bend;
Ye nations, wait His nod;
And bid the choral song ascend
To celebrate our God.*

—Selected.

★ *No Liars...*

No one who makes a lie shall enter that glorious Kingdom. It is very easy to prevaricate in some way, or tell untruths to one another, but it is still easier to lie to God. We have agreed to serve Him without reserve, to make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its desires. We have promised to serve God with an undivided heart, to do all to His glory. If we fail to keep our word, we are lying to Him, and by example are teaching others to do the same, and shall be counted less than the least in the Kingdom of God. In fact, we shall never enter there at all. Jesus showed the pattern of things to come when He said: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41). An offense is committing iniquity, and none committing any offense shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

If God would allow even a small amount of iniquity to enter His Kingdom: a little lying, a little jealousy, a little indifference, a little rebellion against law, the inhabitants could borrow, and lend, and trade one with another, and soon every evil of the bad past would be flourishing in His Kingdom. Hence, the need for the application of His plan: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." None will be tolerated in that heavenly Kingdom.

Let us make a personal application. If that day finds any one of us defiled with even one small spot of sin, *we* shall find ourselves outside the City gate, "for there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. 21:27).

God is building a temple, a city, a kingdom. These are different ways of expressing the same truth. At the site of this spiritual temple, still under construction, are to be seen many stones and timbers which are unfit for use in the finished structure, which must be "holy and without blemish," "polished after the similitude of a palace" (Eph. 5:27; Ps. 144:12). These defective pieces are useful only as scaffolding, forms and the like. They could have had an eternal place in the building, but when tested by the hammer, some proved too soft, some too hard, some refused to take a polish, others had no beauty or brilliance to reflect the Light Divine. Being "lively stones" with free will, they could have changed their nature, but they would not; they considered themselves pretty good just as they were.

Before the dedication of this glorious temple, there will necessarily be a cleaning up of the premises, and all the debris of construction, all the worthless material will be carried away to oblivion. And who will abide? Psalm 15 provides the answer.

"He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and

speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." He shall enter through the gate into the City. He shall be inside looking out, while the unfaithful will be outside looking in.

Let us be wise; let us act like sensible men, not like thoughtless. Let us work while the day lasts, knowing that soon night cometh when no man can work.

No other interest in life is so important as to get ready for the Kingdom. Let us not only pray for the Kingdom to come, but let us bend every energy of mind and body to get ready for it. Only so can we be assured that we will take our place inside the City along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the faithful who have sought first the Kingdom of God and made everything else secondary. □



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What man or woman hearing Jesus' words some two millennia ago, that "as it was in the days of Lot...Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed" (Luke 17:28-30), could have pictured the close parallel we are seeing today? Who even 10 or 20 years ago could have predicted that the sin of ancient Sodom—homosexuality—would actually emerge from a shell of reproach to becoming widely accepted as an alternative lifestyle, with homosexuals allowed to fill key roles, such as school teachers—or ordained ministers?

Not many years ago even the words "homosexual" and "lesbian" seemed too shameful to be mentioned in a respectable publication. Now gays militantly assert their right to equality under law, and many communities have passed "gay rights" ordinances barring discrimination on the basis of "sexual preference." Universities and colleges are forbidden to question the lifestyle of an applicant, on the

basis that equal rights means equal for all cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles.

While actually practiced by less than one percent of the population, the consequences cannot be hidden. The facts are there. From the first identifying of AIDS in 1980, the disease has reached epidemic proportions with approximately 275,000 known cases in the United States, and three million worldwide by 1991. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that by the year 2000 there will be more than 20 million people infected. While infection can result

from infected blood transfusions and IV drug use, homosexual transmission predominates. More people have died from AIDS since it was discovered than in World War I and the Vietnam War combined. (Ref: *The Encyclopedia of Health: AIDS*. Edited by D. C. Garell, M. D.)

Strangest of all, many religious groups are mildly sympathetic to the rights of the homosexual, even protective of the evil-doer. Very few will speak out clearly a "Thus saith the Lord." They feel that all are children of God's love regardless of their conduct and should be treated "with love." Others, outside religious circles, argue that some people are born with a homosexual bent. Why should they be penalized for something beyond their control?

Other groups are outspoken against homosexuality. The Southern Baptist Convention, for example, has been particularly critical of Southern Baptist (President) Bill Clinton in his recent policies on homosexuality. The Convention this year reaffirmed the 1992 amendment to its constitution which bars any Southern Baptist Convention Church that acts "to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior." The Presbyterian Church also has retained its ban on ordaining gay clergy, as has the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

As avowed followers of Christ, what must our position be? What says the Lord?

The laws of God are clearly discriminatory and anti-human-rights, leaving no question as to what is right or wrong. There is no protection for homosexual lifestyles and no ground for debate. Homosexuality is sin.

God's attitude was first shown in His dealing with the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. The "very grievous" sin (Gen. 18:20) which prompted God to destroy

The laws of God are clearly discriminatory and anti-human-rights. Homosexuality is sin.

those communities was sodomy, and God declared it intolerable. The book of Jude adds that these cities "committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts; and they paid the penalty in eternal fire, as an example for all to see" (Jude 7, NEB). Or, as translated in Phillips Modern English, these cities "gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion,... defiling their bodies by their filthy fantasies."

When Israel became a nation, homosexuality was prohibited (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). It was a moral issue. And as a moral issue, it entailed personal responsibility. There was no tolerance for the disobedient. Offenders were to be put to death. Even the offering brought by a homosexual was detestable to the Lord (Deut. 23:17-18).

It is written that in the time of the Kings (I Kings 14:24) there was "homosexuality throughout the land, and the people of Judah became as depraved as the heathen nations which the Lord drove out to make room for his people" (TLB). A rise in homosexuality accompanied a decline in the nation's morality.

Were these injunctions only Jewish, or were they also accepted as law by the New Testament Christian communities? Paul's words leave no question. "The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient,...for them that defile themselves with mankind" (I Tim. 1:9-10); or as translated in some of the newer versions, "The law is...laid down for sodomites" (RSV); or, "These laws are made to identify as sinners all who are immoral and impure: homosexuals, kidnapers, liars, and all others who do things that contradict the glorious good news of our blessed God" (TLB); "For fornicators, sodomites" (Conberry); for "Men who sin sexually with women or with other men" (Beck). There is no question about the intent of Paul's words. In another passage (Romans 1, NIV, NEB) Paul classifies homosexuality as a moral depravity of the lowest kind, and adds that all who practice it will ultimately be visited by the judgments of God (vs. 18, 32).

What about separating the sin from the sinner, condemning the sin but loving the sinner? No such distinction can be found in the Word of God. The homosexual is the one practicing the wrong, and he is liable for his misconduct. Nowhere is the wrong deed distinct from the doer. There is no sin

apart from the sinner, so how can there be condemnation of the sin apart from the condemnation of the sinner?

Are transgressors beyond hope or help? Paul in addressing the Corinthians said that they are not. After listing "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, and homosexuals," he writes, "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 6:9-11). The newer translations are very explicit, and call the offenders "homosexuals" (NEB), or sexual perverts (Williams, Beck). And Paul is very explicit about their state: "They shall not inherit the kingdom of God." The individuals themselves were clearly responsible for the sin, but they could repent and turn if they wished to. Some had already turned and been forgiven. It was not a perversion beyond control, or a sin beyond forgiveness. But the sinner had to take the first step: to be "washed,... sanctified,... justified." And there is no justification without becoming just. Only "the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. 2:13). The only solution is the one given in Scripture: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well" (Isa. 1:16-17). "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4:8).

If the homosexual were incapable of changing his conduct, God would be unjust in condemning him. But if homosexuality is a sin—and the Bible clearly states that it is—then he must change before he can be accepted by God.

We condemn homosexuality because God condemns it in the Bible, because it is sin, the sin of Sodom, and the sin of modern-day Sodom as well. But at the same time, we look upon this gross immorality as providing another bright star of hope, confirming the Word of the Lord, stating in blazing letters, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

When Christ comes to make a speedy riddance of all evil, we do not want any of our sympathies bound up in Sodom. We must view sin as God views it, and realize that every sin is abominable to Him. God loves purity, holiness, righteousness. And all that does not meet His standard will be destroyed. □

*The only solution:
"Cease to do evil, learn
to do well."*

What About



Aware of the non-Christian and non-constructive nature of many (or most) television programs, we feel a need to comment on the threat which television viewing poses to our society today. Not being regular TV viewers, we are grateful for the studied assessment which Sue Lockwood-Somers has given the subject, and for her desire to defend Christian values. —EDITOR.

An Evening Is A Terrible Thing To Waste

*by Sue Lockwood-Somers**

Most members of the Megiddo Church choose not to have television or video in their homes, feeling the negatives outweigh the advantages. But if one has need or use for it, as a church we emphasize extreme carefulness in selecting what one views, based on Christian principles, in regard to all electronic media (television, video, compact discs, etc.).

To the time-honored motto, "Do nothing you would not want to be found doing when Jesus comes," we add, "View nothing you would not want to be found viewing when Jesus comes." If this is our standard, we will be safe, even in an age of corruption and immorality. —EDITOR.

Ninety-eight percent of U.S. homes have television sets. Sixty-one percent of American families subscribe to cable.

The average American sees 1,000 TV commercials every week.

Television absorbs seven and a half hours of the average American's day.

As a Christian parent, I struggle with the ever present television set in my home. I am well aware of the messages that bombard my children. But, like most Americans, TV is a part of the home—almost a member of the family. It would almost be considered heresy to remove it.

Most of us would acknowledge that a large percentage of television's content gives us reason for concern. Since TV is here to stay, how can we offset its negative influence in our lives and the lives of our children?

The Word has much to say about our struggle with the world's influence. Prov. 22:6 commands parents to raise a child properly. James 4:4 is adamant: "Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." Rom. 12:2 exhorts us: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world," while Gal. 5:16-17 admonishes us to "Live by the spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." Psalm 101:2-3 states, "I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart. I will set

*"An Evening Is A Terrible Thing To Waste" by Sue Lockwood-Somers. Published by *Discipleship Journal*, Issue seventy-two, 1992, page 50. Used by permission of the author.

before my eyes no vile thing." How does television relate to these passages? Would God see the content of most broadcast and cable television programming as "the world"? Is the television set a temptation to our sinful nature? Consider some of the ways television programming influences us:

1 We become desensitized when we allow our light leisure time to be filled with the seedier side of life. It's increasingly difficult to react with compassion to nightly news stories of murder, assault, or robbery when we have just watched movies that treat these issues as entertainment.

2 We show inconsistency in our values when we view programs in our home that we would deem socially unacceptable. Sensationalized programming tantalizes us with lurid details and graphic violence.

3 Television programming has the power to alter society's standards. Some programs intentionally challenge previously recognized guidelines. [Other programs] are filled with relationships lacking dignity and respect. Extra-marital sex, homosexuality, and teen sexual activity are portrayed as the norm in movies, commercials, situation comedies, soap operas, and talk shows. [Still other shows] thrive on their reputations for offending and mocking authority figures, religious viewpoints, and societal ideals.

4 Commercials use myriad techniques to condition our attitudes and longings and to shape our goals and beliefs. Ads define happiness and success in terms of materialistic goals. Value statements fill advertising: "Just do it!" moved Nike into the number-one slot in athletic shoe sales. Ads instill us with a sense of discontent and reassure us that self-centeredness and a lack of concern for others are requirements for all up- and-coming individuals. Sexual images and prevailing stereotypes fill the ten to sixteen minutes of every hour devoted to commercial messages.

5 Television pedals a world view that is often in direct contrast with the lifestyle Christians are called to follow. This world view tells us that life is cheap or disposable, sex is a recreational activity, there is no real hope for mankind, and we must watch out for "number one."

No Time For Real Life

Television's temptation is not limited to its content. There is the issue of what television viewing keeps us from doing. It limits involvement with others, including family members, neighbors, community, church, and the needy. It robs us of time to think, create, read, pursue hobbies, or pray. As parents we spend less time with our children when there is a TV set available. We spend less time communicating with others by letter, telephone, or in person when we devote our leisure time to television viewing. In essence, we plan—or modify—life around TV.

Using television as a babysitter, companion, or time-filler is an all-too-frequent habit in many homes. The television is more than a vehicle for entertainment or information if the first thing we do when we get up or when we get home is to turn it on (especially if it stays on even when no one is watching it). We cannot dismiss the power television has to negate our convictions, restructure our priorities, and steal our leisure time.

Why is TV so tempting? The most common answer is that TV allows "relaxation time." It provides an opportunity for passive, nonthinking time to unwind from stress filled days. Often the television is welcomed as an escape—an opportunity to forget pressing problems and ignore hurts or disappointments.

Some viewers become "information junkies" who need to watch all the news and magazine-format programs in order to feel informed. Many watch sensationalized programs to vicariously experience adventure, drama, or "life and death" situations, thereby filling the void of their ordinary lives.

(Continued on page 26)

What can we do to lessen the media's impact on our values and those of our children?

Light of the World

The Bible in English

As the years passed, the Roman Church, that power which had worn out the saints and cast true religion to the ground, became also a tyrant, stifling competition and discouraging independent thought.

And, like all oppressors, it came to distrust and fear its subjects. Those who could not be kept in line by the hope of heaven and threats of eternal torment were subjected to the unspeakable horrors of the Inquisition from the 11th to the 16th century. Heretics and dissenters—anyone who dared to disagree with the decree of the Church, anyone who dared to think for himself—was tortured in every inhuman and brutal way imaginable.

The church saw also its need to keep the Bible locked up in the Latin tongue, fearing what might happen if the people could read it.

But even the threats of the cruelest tortures were not enough to keep men from thinking for themselves or from wanting to read the Bible for themselves. As early as the Eighth Century the venerable Bede, a British scholar, undertook to translate the gospels into Anglo-Saxon, but none of his translations survived. During the next century England's noble King Alfred translated the Ten Commandments into a famous code of laws for his subjects, but that is all the translating he did.

Efforts at translating the Scriptures met with sharp opposition from the Catholic Church. Writing in 1199, Pope Innocent the Third expressed this opposition: "The secret mysteries of the faith ought not to be explained to all men in all places, since

they cannot be everywhere understood by all men; but only to those who can conceive them with a faithful mind, for what says the apostle to simple people? *Not to think more highly than one ought to think but to think soberly.*"

During the next two centuries a few bits and pieces of the Scriptures were translated into the common tongue, but none with great success. Part of the problem was that the Latin languages (*English, French, and German, etc.*) were still developing, and the constant change of language made translation impractical.

With the arrival of the Fourteenth Century we come to the first great effort to place the entire Bible in the hands of the common people in their own language. And that effort is not by the Church but by an individual opposed to the Church.

John Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire England in 1330, and was educated at Oxford University. After serving several parishes as a priest, he rose to the rank of royal chaplain. In 1378 he began to denounce certain abuses and to question some of the cardinal doctrines of the Church. He sent out his disciples as "poor preachers," an imitation of the Apostles. About the year 1400, he completed his first translation of the Bible into English. The Wycliffe Bible was the first complete Bible to appear in England, and stirred up a desire on the part of many people to have the Holy Scriptures in their common language.

The Wycliffe translation was not well received by the Church authorities, who promptly condemned him as a heretic on ten counts and in error on fourteen more,

excommunicated some of his followers, and ordered his books destroyed.

Our next scene occurs in the home of John Thomas Morgan, a sturdy Englishman who reads laboriously to his child from his treasured new Wycliffe Bible—until a knock at the door changes their plans. The visitor is Father Boggins, the local parish priest who has come to warn his estranged sheep that possessing or reading a Bible in English is forbidden.

SCENE FIVE
The Bible in English

Time: A.D. 1408

Setting: Interior of the Morgan home. Candle on table. Thomas Morgan and son are seated, Mr. Morgan reading aloud from his antique board-bound Bible.

Characters:

John Thomas Morgan

Alfie (*his son*)

Father Boggins

Angel

ALFIE: How strange it seems, Father, to hear the Scriptures in our common language.

THOMAS: Yes, Alfie, and a wonderful thing it is. The Latin is a noble language, but only the rich men's sons can learn it, while the poor need the Scripture too. It looks like a new day is dawning in England; praise the Lord, the poor have the gospel preached to them. God bless Master Wycliffe.

ALFIE: James Mogridge told me that the Council has forbidden the people to own or read the Bible in English. I wonder if it's so.

THOMAS: I don't know why, if the Church really cares for our souls. There must be some mistake, Alfie. (*a knock at the door*)

ALFIE: I wonder who that is?

THOMAS: I don't know, but just in case James is right, you take this Book out and hide it. Quick!

ALFIE: Where?

THOMAS: Anywhere. I don't care, but hide it securely. Don't tell me where—I don't want to know. Then stay out of sight. Hurry!

(*Exit Alfie; enter Father Boggins. Greetings*)

BOGGINS: Thomas, you are my good friend, and have been for many years. I wouldn't want to see any harm come to you. That's why I am here tonight.

THOMAS: What do you mean, Father?

BOGGINS: It's this, Thomas: you recently bought one of the new English Bibles, by the heretic John Wycliffe.

THOMAS: (*hesitating*) Yes...

BOGGINS: (*wisely, superior*) It would have been better for you to ask advice. Have you heard the decree of the Council of Oxford?

THOMAS: No, Father. Don't they approve of it?

BOGGINS: Very definitely they do not! I brought with me a copy of the letter, in case you did not know. Let me read it to you. (*read severely*) "We hereby enact and ordain that no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or any other language, by way of a book, pamphlet, or tract, and that no book, pamphlet, or tract of this kind be read, either already composed in the time of the said John Wycliffe, or since then, or that may in the future be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privily, under pain of the greater excommunication, until the translation itself shall have been approved by the diocesan of the place, or if need be by a provincial council. Whosoever shall do the contrary to be punished as a supporter of heresy and error." Signed by Archbishop Arundel at Oxford this 12th day of April, 1408.

There it is. I had nothing to do with it.

THOMAS: (*puzzled*) But I don't understand. What is wrong with owning a Bible? I paid a good sum for it.

BOGGINS: Simply this: the Council says No.

THOMAS: Master Wycliffe was a good man, wasn't he?

BOGGINS: Master Wycliffe was a crafty and dangerous heretic, and a heretic is never a good man.

THOMAS: What is his heresy?

BOGGINS: He says the Scriptures are a sufficient guide for man. (*pause, exasperated*) He puts the Scriptures above the Church!

THOMAS: Seems like that's the way it should be.

BOGGINS: John Thomas Morgan! Such thinking would completely undermine the position of the Church. Can't you see? If men can read and understand the Scriptures without the Church to guide and interpret,...

THOMAS: That's the way it ought to be.

(*Boggins eyes Thomas severely*)

THOMAS: (*suddenly remembers and puts his hand over his mouth*) I found the book enlightening. Have you looked into it to see if Master Wycliffe's heresies are there?

BOGGINS: I don't need to. He couldn't keep them out. A heretic could not make a proper translation. Be patient, Thomas. Maybe someday we will have a Bible licensed by the bishops.

THOMAS: (*skeptical*) When will that be?

BOGGINS: Again, that's the Church's business, and it can

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be very unhealthy to ask too many questions.

THOMAS: If Archbishop Arundel has his way, this generation and the next will die waiting.

BOGGINS: What's so terrible about that? Other generations have died without it and never missed it. Anyway, you don't need the Bible to save your soul. We tell you all you need to know.

THOMAS: I hope so, but a man likes to learn for himself.

BOGGINS: (*solemn*) A dangerous thing, very, very dangerous. And that is why I am here tonight, Thomas. As I said, I don't want you to get hurt. The Church has its rules, and that is that. So if you will just give me this Bible I will turn it in to the Bishop, and you will have only a light penance. Otherwise... (*raises eyebrows, pauses.*) I'm doing this for your own good, Mr. Morgan. Come, give me this heretic Bible. As your spiritual father, I command it.

THOMAS: Well, Father Boggins, I'm afraid I can't do it.

BOGGINS: You can't do it?! Why not? You *bought* the Bible, didn't you?

THOMAS: Yes, I did, but something happened to it recently. It's gone, and I have no idea where it is.

BOGGINS: You mean it's lost? A big book like that? Hah! hah!

THOMAS: It's disappeared. I think some one must have taken it.

BOGGINS: I know England is full of thieves, — but Mr. Morgan, I wonder (*looking him close and straight in the eye*) I wonder if you are telling me the truth...?

THOMAS: The gospel truth, Father. If you can find it, you're doing better than I can.

BOGGINS: I shall not look. Come to your senses, Thomas! If the sheriff can't find it when he comes, and if he is not satisfied with your story—(*pause, very slowly*) you know there are ways of making men talk. It isn't worth it, Thomas, just for a book!

THOMAS: Now Father, do you think I would dare defy the authority of the Church?

BOGGINS: Knowing you as I do, I think it quite possible. And I warn you *DON'T DO IT!* You have been my friend, but if you get into trouble I can't say one word to help you. (*pleading*) Thomas, don't be a fool. Better you should burn your books than that your books should burn you. Have you ever seen a heretic burned?

THOMAS: No, and I hope I never do. But it's as I say, I don't know where the Book is, and that's the truth. Maybe the sheriff can help me find it. (*Exit Boggins. Enter Alfie.*)

ALFIE: What's going to happen to us, Father?

THOMAS: Now don't worry, Alfie. You are going to go to Yorkshire tomorrow for a long visit with your grandfather. But before you go, I want you to hide that Bible again. Hide it so securely that no one can ever find it. Understand?

ALFIE: Yes, Father, I'll do it right away. I know a place. It's over in

THOMAS: (*interrupting*) Don't tell me — I don't want to know.

ALFIE: But what are *you* going to do? Shouldn't you go away, too?

THOMAS: Someone has to face this issue, and why shouldn't it be I. If they arrest me and put me to the torture, I won't be the first man who has suffered for the Word of God. I'll show these fellows that Englishmen can't be pushed around, and they are not going to tell a Morgan what he shall and shall not read. Now go—hide that Bible. If not for us, for the generations to come. I'm trusting God. Someday things will be better, Alfie. Someday. (*Exit Alfie*)

Narrator:

The work of the translators was arrested for a time, but it did not die. One hundred forty years after Wycliffe another brave Englishman arose, whose one ambition was to produce a new edition of the Bible in English, translated out of the original Greek and Hebrew. This man's name was Tyndale. Tyndale was able to handle seven languages with ease. Failing to secure any encouragement from the Bishop of London, Tyndale crossed the Channel to Hamburg, then to Wittenberg, where he met Luther. In Cologne was printed the first New Testament in English, in 1525.

Both the Church and the King were bitterly opposed. The following is a condensed rendering of the proclamation of the king, condemning Tyndale's book: "Forasmuch as it has come to the hearing of our said sovereign lord the king, that report is made by divers and many of his subjects, that it is not only expedient but also necessary to have in the English tongue both the New Testament and the Old Testament: Be it known that his highness the king, his noble men and prelates hath...consulted with the virtuous, discreet, and well learned personages in divinity, and by them all it is thought, that it is *not necessary that the said Scripture be in the English tongue and in the hands of the common people*; that considering the malignity of this present time and the inclination of the people to erroneous opinions, the translation of the New Testa-

ment and the Old into the vulgar tongue of English, should rather occasion the continuance or increase of errors among the said people, and offer no benefit toward the well-being of their souls; that it shall now be more convenient that the said people have the Holy Scripture expounded to them, by preachers in their sermons, according as it hath been of old time before this."

Tyndale, betrayed by a friend, was deceivingly persuaded to return to England, where he was immediately imprisoned and martyred on October 6, 1536, with the famous words upon his lips, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

The Catholic Church and the kings of the day continued to harshly denounce the translating of the Bible into the common languages. But the people persisted. Just before Tyndale died, there appeared the first complete Bible to be printed in the English tongue, the work of Miles Coverdale.

In 1546 King Henry the Eighth of England issued an order that "No man or woman of what estate, condition, or degree was to receive, have, take, or keep Tyndale's or Coverdale's New Testament."

But there was little that anyone could do to suppress the proliferation of Bibles. During the next 80 years, 140 editions of the Bible appeared.

In the meantime there were other issues. One was the retaining of the purity of the text, and the old question of what should or should not be included in the canon.

SCENE SIX

To Be or Not to Be

Setting: The Castle of Frederick the Wise, Wartburg, Germany, 1520.

Characters:

Martin Luther
Albrecht Pirkheimer
Frederick

As the scene opens, Luther, in robe and cowl, sits studiously at work, just completing his translation. In a few moments he stops writing, looks it over carefully, lays it aside, and opens his Vulgate to the book of James. Suddenly he stiffens and closes the book, lost in deep thought. Slowly he raises his fist and slams it down on the table, then rises and paces to and fro in agitation.

An old man, Albrecht, appears in the doorway. By his dress he is also a scholar. In one hand he has a quill pen, parchment in the other.

ALBRECHT: What happened, Martin? I thought you had fallen.

LUTHER: (*very intense*) The New Testament is complete, Albrecht. Our great German people shall have the

Bible, pope or no pope. Furthermore, they shall have it as it should be — without that abominable book of James. I don't know why the church ever sanctioned such a script. More of Rome's bungling.

ALBRECHT: (*cautiously*) I am not so sure, Martin, that this is the best thing to do. You may alienate your associates, just at a time when you need their support. I doubt very much if the clergy, even in Wittenberg, would go with you on that. The German people are too thorough and technical not to want a complete and accurate translation. How can you leave it out?

LUTHER: (*with energy*) How can I leave it out? How can I leave it *in*? Listen to this. (*reads*) "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" What is he talking about? And listen "Ye see then how that by works"—works, he says—"how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (*laughs cynically*) Justified by works! That sounds just like Rome. Why, the whole tone of the book is off. He overthrows the whole purpose of Christ's sacrifice and suffering. Here again he says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." I tell you, Albrecht Pirkheimer, the book of James is a veritable epistle of straw!

(*Enter Frederick*)

FREDERICK: Good afternoon. And how is our guest doing with his translation?

LUTHER: (*respectfully*) We were just discussing it, sir. The translation is complete, so far as I am concerned.

FREDERICK: Meaning what?

LUTHER: As I was telling Albrecht, I am omitting the book of James.

FREDERICK: (*slowly, after a pause*) And just what is your reason?

LUTHER: The book of James does not belong in the Bible. He harps on good works as necessary to salvation. This is completely foreign to the whole plan of salvation, as I understand it. It nullifies the Atonement. It overthrows the purpose of Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross, and justification by faith in His blood.

ALBRECHT: That may all be, but it would surely cause another uproar in Germany if you omit it. I'm warning you.

LUTHER: And who, pray tell, is afraid of that? Not I. I was born to fight with devils and factions. It is my business to remove obstructions and cut down thorns, to open and make straight the paths.

ALBRECHT: (*sits down and opens book*) This book is not

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all bad, Brother Martin. *(reads)* "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." *(glances at Luther; who conceals a wince)* Hm-m-m. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" — not bad at all. "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things ... But the tongue can no man tame." *(Luther by this time is bristling visibly)* "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

LUTHER: *(triumphantly)* There you have read it again with your own lips - "to him that knoweth to do good." Do — do — do! That's all James seems to talk about. I tell you, when any man proclaims that good works are necessary to salvation, I say flat and plain that that man is a liar. Furthermore, James does not seem to believe in the devil. Listen to this: "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." He must have been pretty dull. I have certainly encountered the devil enough—talked to him face to face, even threw an ink bottle at him *(points at ink spot on wall)*.

(ALBRECHT looks into space for some time, then slowly and deliberately rises and faces Luther; as the Angel appears in background)

ALBRECHT: Martin Luther, we all know those things, but I appeal to you as the scholar you are. The book of James has been in the canon for centuries. It is no more Roman than the rest of the New Testament. You must not leave it out, for it is in the original Greek. Our people know this. They would certainly demand that it be included. And don't forget it—our enemies know it. If you omit it, they would surely use this fact to turn the people against you as one who tampers with the Word of God.

(Luther stands with chin in hand, staring at the floor in silence. He is in a corner. Frederick, who has been sitting in center background, rises impressively)

FREDERICK: I am inclined to think Albrecht is correct. It would not be wise to omit the book. Since it is in the original, it is my pleasure and advice that it be included. I believe it is not a very large book, anyway. It can do no harm. You will do well to include it and make your translation accurate and complete.

(The men stand in silence as background organ fades in with a few bars of "Ein Feste Burg," then organ fades out and Luther straightens.)

LUTHER: We shall see.

ALBRECHT: Good. Come, let us go to the chapel. They

are playing your new hymn.

(Luther smiles slightly, as they exit slowly and organ fades in again.)

Narrator:

In 1603, when King James was on his way to London to receive the English crown, he was presented with a petition of grievances by the Puritan clergy, which led the King to call a conference "for hearing and determining of things pretended to be amiss in the church." At this three-day conference in 1604, the leader of the Puritan Party made a motion that a new translation of the Bible be undertaken. Though the majority present were against the motion, it appealed to the King, and he ordered that such a translation be undertaken. Fifty-four of the greatest Bible scholars in Great Britain were brought together for this great task. In 1610, the King James Version appeared.

How much of the King James Version was done by his magistrates' excellence? Almost nine tenths of the New Testament portion of the King James Version can be found word for word in the Tyndale Version of 1525, including over 4000 marginal notes giving the literal meaning of Hebrew words.

Was it not the hand of God at work?

SCENE SEVEN King James Contributes

Setting: Hampton Court, England, 1604. The Hampton Court Conference, under James I, has met to consider the petition of the Puritan and Presbyterian clergy for church reform. King James confers with Dr. Reynolds, the Presbyterian spokesman, and Bishop Bancroft, of the High Church. The Angel stands by.

Characters:

King James
Dr. Reynolds
Bishop Bancroft
Angel

JAMES: *(Angrily)* I tell you, Doctor Reynolds, once more and for the last time, no! no! emphatically no! While I have breath in my body I will make no peace with Puritans or Presbyterians, or any other who put power in the hands of the people. A Presbytery, or any congregational government, agrees with monarch no more than God with the Devil. Give the people a voice, and then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick can meet and at their pleasure censure me and my council and all our proceedings. Never! It is contrary to nature and to the plan of God! It is as much blasphemy to dictate to the king as to God. The people have no right to a voice in the Church any more than in the kingdom. The bishop is divinely ordained no less than the king, and I lay it down as a principle—no bishop, no king. *(silence)*

Well, Doctor, have you anything more to say?

REYNOLDS: No more, if it please your Majesty.

JAMES: Then if this be all your party has to say, you may take back your petition and be warned, for I will make them conform themselves or else I will harry them out of the land.

BANCROFT: (*dropping to his knees and raising his hands in joyful prayer*) Praise the Lord — praise the Lord for His mercy in giving us such a king. Since Christ, his like has not been seen.

(*King pats him on shoulder and raises him up*)

REYNOLDS: If it please your Majesty, what of the other suggestion we made?

JAMES: You mean —?

REYNOLDS: Concerning a new translation of the Bible. The time is ripe, I believe, for such a work, and who is better fitted to carry it forward than such a scholar as your Majesty?

JAMES: (*swelling*) The idea has merit, Doctor. There is definitely a need for a better translation. The Geneva Bible, which the Scottish Presbyterians set so much store by, is the worst of all translations, just as they are the worst of all my enemies. I am confident that my English scholars could do much better. It would be a fitting monument to my reign, I should say.

BANCROFT: (*sourly*) Have we not Bibles enough already, your Majesty? To my mind, the less the people read it the quieter they are, and if every man's notion be followed, we shall have no end of translations.

JAMES: Bishop Bancroft, there are things you do not understand. When your counsel is required, I shall ask for it. (*Bancroft wilts*) Now, Dr. Reynolds, let us plan at once, for the work is large, and there is no need to delay. Here is my idea: Out of both Oxford and Cambridge Universities we shall select the best scholars and set them to work immediately. If to the number of fifty or sixty, so much the better.

BANCROFT: Cambridge is full of men of Puritan and Presbyterian sympathies, your Majesty.

JAMES: (*hesitates a moment, and the Angel urges him on*) Never mind. In so great a work we can be liberal. We shall have need of the best brains in the realm. A man's sympathies are not to enter into the matter, or be questioned, if only he be a Protestant.

The work is to be reviewed by the bishops and most learned men of the Church, and finally ratified by our royal authority, and made the official and sole Bible to be used in the Church of England. Bishop Bancroft, your gifts will be most useful here. I appoint you to organize the work and set it in motion at once.

BANCROFT: Me? Me? Very well, your Majesty. But this will cost money.

JAMES: (*with a groan*) Money! Why must you always think of such things, Bishop? The exchequer is empty, as usual, and we are running on borrowed money. What will we do? (*the Angel commands, silently*) No, gentlemen, we cannot let so noble a work fail for lack of money. We shall find it somehow — we must. I shall offer the scholars first place in the promotions within the Church, and we can solicit the bishops for contributions. It shall be done. A new and better Bible we have decreed, and a new and better Bible we shall have — the best the world has ever known.

And now, gentlemen, to work!

Narrator:

The Bible has been protected through the vicissitudes of history by the angel of God. And it has been delivered to us today free of any debt to us, yet the price paid for its preservation and translation into our own tongue has been supreme to many.

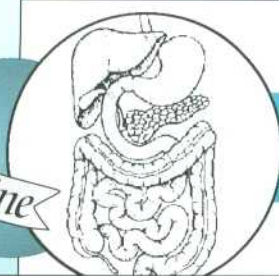
Should not we as the beneficiaries of this priceless heritage pause to thank God? We have not suffered any physical ills because of it. We can own as many Bibles as we wish, and we have no fear of torturous dungeons, of fagots and fire, of the boot and the thumbscrew, the rack and the wheel. For us there has been none of this. Should we not in deep humility thank God?

There were many other events in fulfilling the plan of God besides the translation of the Bible into the common languages. A new continent had to be discovered, and a new government be set up, "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." The First Amendment to the Constitution, separating church and state was an act of God, no less than the Ten Commandments. The steps toward political and religious liberty, the preparation of a new soil and a new land, even the decline of religious influence with the accompanying rise of tolerance—all were Divinely ordained in anticipation of the time when the light of true religion should once again shine in the world.

In all ages the plan of God has operated through human instruments, and when the time was right, another instrument appeared, one who would be able to take the Bible and in the precious air of freedom of religion, rediscover its long-hidden teachings.

How can we thank God for the priceless heritage that is ours, we who stand today in the full light of truth, free from superstition and error, free from the bondage of ignorance, free to dedicate all our effort, all our strength, all our mind, all our energy to prepare for the great Day which is just ahead when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise."

The End.



The Miracle of Nutrition

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that we are really dependent on the common plants around us? Plants take in sunshine and combine it with air and water to produce the carbohydrates we eat. As a by-product they make oxygen, which we need to breathe.
- ✓ ... that even when we are sound asleep our bodies' manufacturing plants are busy working, providing for the needs of our automatic systems – breathing, digestion and heartbeat.
- ✓ ... that if our body cells run short of fuel, unlike other furnaces they can instantly change their source of supply. And they supply energy to the essential life processes first.
- ✓ ... that the stomach is dotted with millions of gastric pits, each containing several glands that release gastric juices which aid in the digestive process.
- ✓ ... that the small intestine is only about an inch and a half in diameter and 15 feet long; yet the area of its many folds and minute finger-like projections spread out would make a blanket large enough to wrap around our body three times.
- ✓ ... that the liver is made up of some 50,000 lobules (tiny lobes), and processes about a quart of blood every minute.
- ✓ ... that the liver performs about 500 different processes simultaneously all the time.
- ✓ ... that each individual cell of our body (and we have about 100 trillion cells) is a complete manufacturing plant, taking in raw materials, producing goods and burning fuel every hour of the day and night as long as we live.

For the statistical and scientific data in this article we are indebted to *Our Incredible Machine*, published by the National Geographic Society, 1986.

Would you believe me if I told you that I am able to change mashed potato, milk, cabbage and corn into skin, hair, toenails, eye tissue, blood cells, and plain simple fuel?

The process sounds fantastic, but I do it every day, and so do you. We eat a meal, and less than twelve hours later the useable substances in that food are ready for our body cells.

Every time we eat a meal, our bodies convert the food substance into the various tissues of our bodies, or into the energy we use to move our hand, or talk, or breathe. Our food actually becomes a part of us. We eat an apple, and the apple becomes us. The sandwich we eat for lunch actually becomes part of the membranes of our cells. Our bodies are so constructed that they are able to take the foods we eat and transform them into substances to produce the energy we need to move, or to keep our heart beating or our lungs pumping.

How does it all happen? Our digestive system does the work. Through numerous steps it converts physically and chemically the peas, potatoes, and carrots we eat into substances our bodies can use. And the whole process goes on without any direct instructions from us. Aren't we thankful? Imagine how difficult life would be if we had to tell our stomach how many contractions to make, and just how much gastric juice to pour into our food, and just when to empty the mixture into the small intestine; or if we had to tell our liver how much sugar to store, and how much to send into our bloodstream, to keep our supply level; or if we had to tell our cells just how to make the hemoglobin molecules which carry oxygen through our bloodstream (a hemoglobin molecule, we are told, consists of 574 amino acids, and is completely manufactured in about a minute and a half!).

God has wisely arranged that our bodies can function largely without our supervision, so that we may have our minds free to pursue deeper enrichments and more satisfying activities.

The complexity of the digestive system is beyond the scope of this article, but let us look

briefly at a few of its processes to appreciate the ability of its Designer. And, remember, this is a process vital to life—we must eat to live.

Digestion converts the food we eat into simple forms that our body cells can use.

The conversion process begins in the mouth, where the food we chew is mixed with saliva. The food then passes down the 10 inch tunnel called the esophagus, to the stomach. In the stomach, the demolition job is continued, both by physical and chemical means. The physical activity of the stomach churns the food, mixing it with powerful chemicals supplied by the glands in the lining of the stomach. The stomach also saturates the food with hydrochloric acid, which kills most bacteria and other living cells that may enter with the food.

After about 4 hours, the food, now thoroughly emulsified, has moved into the small intestine. Here the process of chemical breakdown continues, as the pancreas and liver pour in more chemicals that will reduce large complex molecules of sugar to simple sugars, and convert fats into fatty acids. As soon as the finished state is reached, the processed food substance passes directly through the walls of the small intestine into the bloodstream.

As soon as the nutrients reach the bloodstream, they flow directly into the liver. The liver is one of the body's most vital organs, processing every nutrient that comes into the bloodstream.

Up to this point, the major work of the digestive process has been to break down the food into its simple components. The liver now begins the specific processes of selecting food substances to meet specific body needs. Again, let us remember that it needs no conscious direction. It is capable of being its own supervisor, and formulating its own storage plans. After supplying all immediate needs, it even packages the leftover substances against future needs.

The largest of the body's internal organs, the liver is made up of some 50,000 lobules, and processes about a quart of blood every minute. Its multitude of functions (about 500 different functions are known to take place simultaneously) include producing blood sugar, storing excess nutrients, building proteins, removing poisons, and secreting bile to aid in digestion. For example, if more sugar has been supplied by the nutrients than the body needs at that moment, the liver releases only the needed amount and stores the excess, in this way keeping the level of body sugar approximately constant. The liver also stores iron and some vitamins, releasing them to the body as the body has need.

As the nutrients leave the liver, they are carried by the bloodstream to the body cells. In the cells is another whole world of activity. Each individual cell of the body (and we have 100 trillion of them!) is a complete manufacturing plant, producing goods and burning fuel in its own tiny industry. Again the process is unbelievably complex, yet needs no human mind to direct it.

Some nutrients enter directly into the body cells (the cell wall is selective, and will admit only what it can use). Once the nutrients are inside the cell, they are either broken down to release energy, or the cell uses the nutrients to build new products for its own maintenance and repair.

The glucose molecule, for example, upon entering a cell goes immediately into a tiny compartment inside the cell. (A cell is microscopic, and this compartment is only about a thousandth the size of the cell). In this tiny compartment the glucose molecule is split into two parts, and an enzyme from within the cell breaks each part into its atoms, releasing energy. Any energy not needed at the moment is converted into the cell's "currency," a chemical compound known as ATP, which is stored in the muscles to be released as needed.

What happens when you want to smile? Your brain sends a message to the muscles of the face telling them to contract. At that point the energy molecules (ATP) stored in those muscles are broken, the energy locked in the bonds is released, the muscles contract, and you smile.

Another marvel of our bodies is its super-system for prioritizing needs. Any process that is vital for life gets first consideration—and again, without any conscious direction from the mind. When nutrients are dispersed to the cells, a certain portion (about a 24-hour reserve) is set aside for vital maintenance activities—like keeping the heart beating and the lungs breathing. Because these maintenance activities are vital to life, the body sees to it that they are provided for *before* other needs. If the supply of glucose runs out, the body will adapt itself to burn energy from other stored elements, so that these vital processes may be sustained as long as possible.

The descriptions here are grossly oversimplified, but our purpose is to see behind all the great Creator holding in His Divine hand the mystery and miracle of life, who is able to sustain and prosper where we are scarcely able to comprehend! Truly, in the words of the Psalmist, we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

Truly the Hand that made us is Divine!



"Till the Son of Man Be Come"

"What did Jesus mean when He said, 'Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come' (Matthew 10:23)?"

The passage you cite is from Jesus' commission to His twelve disciples, when He sent them out to preach. In this commission He told them where to go, and what they could expect. Among the expectations was a warning of the persecution they would encounter, and in verse 23 a projection of their degree of success.

The meaning of the passage is clearer in the Lamsa Translation, which reads as follows: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another; for truly I say

to you that you shall not finish converting all the cities of the house of Israel, until the Son of man returns." In other words, the world as a whole will not be converted until Jesus returns and sets up His Kingdom. The disciples could expect at best to do only a measure of good. They would not be able to convert whole communities.

Not "till the Son of man be come" the second time, not until Jesus returns will the task of teaching the gospel be completed. Only when the ultimatum "Fear God" is proclaimed worldwide (Rev. 14:7), when God's judgments are in the world (Isa. 26:9) and the inhabitants of all lands are compelled to learn righteousness and all "know the Lord...from the least of them unto the greatest" (Jer. 31:34)—only then will "all the cities of the house of Israel" be turned to God. □

What About TV?

(Continued from page 17)

For some it becomes a habit to watch TV during other activities such as eating, drinking the morning cup of coffee, or preparing dinner. Home shopping channels, sports, movies, religious programs, debate shows, the fine arts, and even "infomercials" (30- or 60-minute commercials that resemble regular programming) allow us to justify our passive lifestyles.

Breaking The TV Habit

Before we can break unhealthy television viewing habits, we must come to grips with our personal temptations regarding TV. Here are some suggestions to put TV in its proper place:

Plan a "no-TV night." This means *no television*.

Read aloud as a family. After dinner, read a chapter of a favorite story. This will encourage your children to love the written word.

As a family, select appropriate alternative activities. Take a walk, start a garden, read a book, read the Bible, visit a nursing home or hospital patient, learn a foreign language, or have a family devotion time together.

If you have small children, put together an "Imagination Station." This might be a box filled with creativity-inspiring items, such as clay, con-

struction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, blank paper, coloring books, etc. This could be used to occupy children's attention during those busy times for parents such as meal preparation or getting ready for company. This keeps the TV from being the babysitter.

Plan a Sunday school unit or a family devotion time on the temptation of television. Discuss how TV holds our attention, causes "loss time," equates happiness with worldliness, and pulls us from our daily walk with the Lord.

Wising Up To The Message

Our entertainment can be selective and consistent with our Christian beliefs. When choosing to view TV, use critical thinking skills to analyze the messages. Think about television, analyze and evaluate both the content and impact of the messages.

To overcome the temptation of TV in our lives, we need to redefine the TV as an instrument of great possibilities—one that can bring us interesting foreign lands, valuable cultural activities, or on-the-spot news happenings. We also need to set viewing standards for all family members. When we determine what our TV temptations are, we can develop a plan to deal with them and rescue the precious God-given moments of each day. □

*Not so in haste, my heart;
Have faith in God, and wait.
Although He linger long,
He never comes too late.*

Failure is the path of least persistence.

*The greatest work is with self, for self is the
main intruder. He is so ingrained in us that
more often than not we must tear him out,
pluck him up by the roots.*

*To cease from our own wisdom and
righteousness means hard, unrelenting
work; and God demands that we thus
prepare ourselves for the greatest day in our
lives. The Lord is coming! Let us prepare
with all haste! Soon our day will be over!*

We are the Lord's last Message,
Written in deed and word,
What if the type is crooked,
What if the print is blurred?

*A house is not a home unless it has food
for the soul as well as for the body.*

Of all commentaries upon the Scriptures,
good examples are the best and the liveliest.

The lowest form of vanity is love of fame.



The highest culture is to speak no ill.
*The best reformer is the man whose eyes
Are quick to see all beauty and all worth,
And by his own discreet, well-ordered life
Alone reprove the erring. When the gaze
Turns in on thine own soul, be most severe;
But when it falls upon a fellow man.
Let kindness control it; and refrain
From the belittling censure that springs forth
From common lips, like weeds from marshy soil.*

It Is Not—

- Our money *but our spirit that makes life interesting.*
- Our amusements *but our work that makes life worthwhile.*
- Our successes *but our difficulties that spur us on to the greater achievements.*
- Our popularity *but our purpose that makes us great.*
- Our fame *but our faith that supports us when the going is rough.*
- Our promises *but our performances that make our reputation.*
- Our words *but our works that build our future.*

Christian

A B C 'S



Act instead of Argue.



Build instead of Brag.



Climb instead of Criticize.



Develop instead of Depreciate.



Encourage instead of Envy.



Fight instead of Faint.



Give instead of Grumble.



Help instead of Harm.



Invite instead of Ignore.



Join instead of Jeer.



Kneel instead of Kick.



Love instead of Lampoon.



Move instead of Molder.



Nurture instead of Neglect.



Obey instead of Object.



Pray instead of Pout.



Quicken instead of Quit.



Rescue instead of Ridicule.



Stand instead of Shrink.



Try instead of Tremble.



Undergird instead of Undermine.



Indicate instead of Vilify.



Will instead of Wish.



Terminate instead of Xcuse.



Yield instead of Yank.



Zip ahead instead of Zigzag.