

CREATOR

VOLUME 20

NUMBER 4

TRUE ENTERTAINMENT

*God, who richly supplies us with all things
to enjoy (1 Timothy 6:17b).*

SWEETLY ENTERTAINING

Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Old men and old women will again sit in the streets . . . And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing . . .' (Zechariah 8:4-5).

It was a truly wonderful scene—dozens of nine- and ten-year-old children running around a grassy field, innocently playing with one another as adults stood by and watched. My heart was especially enraptured with a sweet enjoyment of the One who had created these children, our precious Lord Jesus. We had just completed an hour-long survey of a local wildlife refuge as a special fourth grade science project, and now it was time for the kids to “get the willies out.” There were many things in the wildlife refuge that glimmered with the glories of Christ our Creator, but Jesus especially entertained me with this most delightful sight!

GOD’S GLORY IGNORED

*They have abandoned the LORD,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they have turned away from Him (Isaiah 1:4b).*

Despite God’s creative glory surrounding us on all sides, this past year we Americans spent almost *a trillion dollars* entertaining ourselves through movies, music, video games, etc. But why? If God is the source of such great joy, why all these other diversions?

A few years back, my wife and I went to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee. We were surprised to see how few people visited the park at any one time compared to the crowds that filled the streets of the nearby tourist towns of Gatlinburg,



Pigeon Forge, and Sevierville, where worldly amusements were in abundance. Could it be that the things of man capture our interest more than the things of God?



The irony of worldly entertainment is that, sooner or later, it seems inevitably to end in *boredom*.¹ Godly entertainment, however, should be anything but boring if our hearts are attuned to the things of Christ.

Now there are many enjoyable things that can be God-honoring depending on the state of our hearts. Take art for instance—all artists knowingly or unknowingly imitate their Creator, the greatest Artist of all. Whether artwork exalts God or man depends largely upon the one creating the piece of art and the one viewing it.

In 1741, George Frederick Handel labored 24 days straight—with little food or sleep—to compose his now famous *Messiah*. Over the past 275 years, there has scarcely been a more famous piece of music performed in December than the concluding portion of Part II, known to us as the “Hallelujah Chorus.” It is a stunning composition of music. Whether we are drawn to worship our Messiah in hearing this piece, or simply admire Handel’s genius, depends entirely on the condition of our hearts. When we meet with such great talent in music, literature, acting, teaching, business, athletics, etc., who do we admire more—the person with rare gifting or the One who bestows that special skill?

“ENTERTENEN”

Abide in Me, and I in you (John 15:4a).

The origin of the word “entertain” is the old English term *entertenen*. Five hundred years ago, *entertenen* was very similar in meaning to our modern English word *abide*, “to remain (hold to) in relationship with another.” Today’s notion of entertainment retains some of this original meaning as it can be seen as our “holding” or “grasping onto” someone or something in order to obtain amusement or satisfaction, which is not always bad.

True *entertenen* has the sense of joyful “communion,” which is what our union with Christ provides. But modern entertainment has developed a rather dark side to it because in many instances it has become quite base, God-dishonoring, and has nothing to do with holiness. So it would seem that, in many cases, the idea of *entertenen* has sadly changed for the worse. The verb root *tenere* can also mean “to hold one’s attention.” So whether entertainment is proper or improper depends largely on who or what is holding our attention.

God remains the greatest source of *entertenen* possible because to hold unto Him through His Son Jesus Christ is to possess eternal life and incredible joy, and to experience true entertainment!² The ultimate reality of *entertenen* is found in the Godhead, as the Three Persons of the Trinity “hold unto One another” and experience infinite joy in each other’s presence. Thus to be truly entertained is to have our eyes and hearts fixed upon our Triune God above.

¹ For further reading, please see Richard Winter’s book, *Still Bored in a Culture of Entertainment* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, 2002)

² That we can be so close to God is in itself amazing given His infinite holiness, which creates an unbridgeable gulf between us and Him.

“TO HAVE AND TO HOLD”

God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him (1 John 4:16b).

Please allow me to suggest that the greatest expression of godly entertainment this side of Heaven is the joyful union between a man and a woman in marriage. The ancient idea of entertainment (*entertenen*) can be found in the following traditional wedding vow: “I take thee to be my wedded husband/wife, *to have and to hold*, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.”



“To have and to hold” is at the very heart of the Middle English word *entertenen* . . . a “holding onto one another.” What a beautiful word picture of true marriage, and our union with Christ!

As we noted, the English word “abide” (to dwell or live with) is very similar in meaning to *entertenen*. It is used many times in the Bible, especially when describing our relationship to Christ and one another (please read 1 John). As Christians, we “hold to one another” spiritually as we live in Christ and He lives in us. For this reason, the Scriptures describe our union with Christ as a marriage relationship (Revelation 19:7). The marriage between a man and a woman is a beautiful

symbol of Christ and His Bride (the Church), who forever “hold onto one another” for His Father’s glory. Through the Gospel, Jesus is saying to us, “all I am is thine, Myself, My goods, My glory, whatsoever is in Me, all that I have . . .” is thine.³ O what a promise this is!

ENTERTAINING ANGELS

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:2).

True hospitality (a form of godly entertainment) usually means that we meet someone’s needs, as in providing them a warm meal and a roof over their heads (see James 2:15-16). But how does this apply to angels? How can we possibly entertain them? Did not angels provide for the physical needs of our Lord Jesus after His temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11)? And was it not an angel who encouraged Him before He went to the Cross (Luke 22:43)? So in what way can we show hospitality to angels? Let me suggest this one thing: By entertaining them with our love for Jesus and His glory radiating from our lives!

The one thing we can share with angels is the glory of God as found in the true Gospel (1 Peter 1:12). Unfallen angels cannot experience the Gospel personally because they have no need of salvation as we do. Yet, it would seem that they can share our joy, as we rejoice in the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross for our sins. Thus true entertainment is rooted in these glories of our gracious God.

As with people, angels can also enjoy the creative glory of God, after all they are *His creatures*. God was not compelled to share His majesty or character with either men or angels. He did this of His own free will, and by His love and grace. If we desire to be at the ready

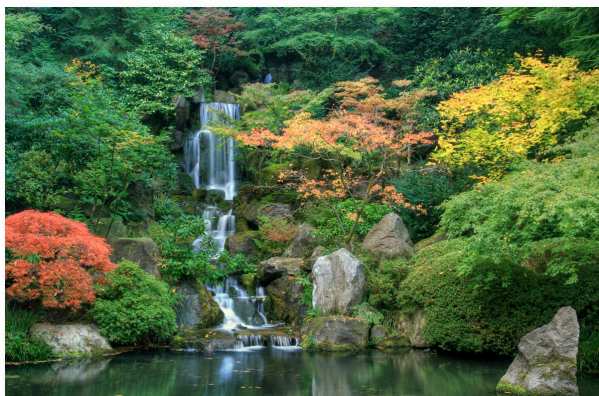
³ Quotation from *Looking Unto Jesus* by Isaac Ambrose, (J.B. Lippincott: Philadelphia, 1856), p 102.

to entertain angels and people alike, then let us fill our hearts and our homes with reminders of Christ's excellencies!

THE SECRET GARDEN

*"A garden locked is . . . My bride,
A rock garden locked, a spring sealed up"
(Song of Solomon 4:12).*

As we've seen, somewhere along the line the idea of entertainment has lost its original meaning. In many folk's eyes, today's entertainment is nothing more than the act of "amusing ourselves," no matter what the cost. But if we truly desire delight in the depth of our soul, then we must look elsewhere for satisfaction (Psalm 37:4). We're not going to find it in the world, but in a very secret place.



If you love Jesus, your heart is then a secret place where you and Jesus can meet frequently, a garden of delights, a place to entertain one another in true fellowship. Unlike the rest of the physical creation, we have the potential, as bearers of God's image, to engage in sweet communication with our Creator. Like Mary at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39, 42), come into the garden of your heart where Jesus is, sit at His feet, speak to Him by prayer, and listen intently to Him through His Word.

*"O You who sit in the gardens, my companions
are listening for Your voice—Let me hear it!"
(Song of Solomon 8:13).*

Covenant with the Lord to meet with Him every morning as you first awaken from sleep. Grab your Bible and hurry to a place of seclusion—it may be your bedroom or the backyard or some other quiet place away from all others. Let it be your Quiet Time or your private "closet," as the Puritans used to say. Enter the secret garden with your Creator, your Savior, your dearest friend Jesus. Your garden may not appear beautiful at first, but in time—as you meet faithfully with God everyday—your heart will become a luxurious place (Isaiah 58:11) where you will long to go to be with Him! It is here that the seeds of the knowledge of God's glory are planted, which then grow into beautiful garden plants. And here He will share with you deeper things from His Word and His character—"beautiful flowers" that will thrill your soul and produce more seed to be sown into your heart.

LOVESICK TOWARD CHRIST

"I am lovesick" (Song of Solomon 2:5, 5:8).

For the Christian, being lovesick toward Christ is more than mere sentiment. There are at least three things God's Spirit plants within the garden of our hearts that allow us to truly enjoy His Son:

- 1) holy obedience (1 Peter 1:14-15),
- 2) a desire to imitate Christ's humility (Philippians 2:1-12), and
- 3) countless displays of His attributes—"blooms" of Christ's glory (Isaiah 6:3).

Please allow me to suggest that in order for us to enjoy our Lord's glory hidden away in our hearts we must first be wholly committed to 1) and 2). Something as simple as seeing

the beauty of our Creator in a sunset flows solely from a heart of daily humble and holy obedience to Christ our King. These things are the keys that unlock our hearts to an unashamed affection for Christ.

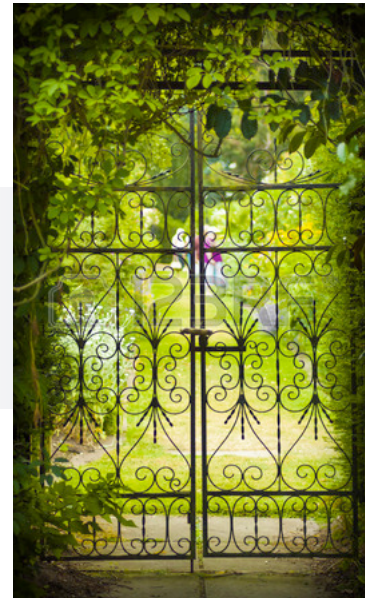
Those of us who long to love Jesus even more have come to appreciate that an unbridled affection for our Creator and Savior only grows as we daily obey Him as our Sovereign Lord. Disobedience and pride create a dense fog within our hearts, effectively preventing us from enjoying God's glory—as it is clearly revealed in His creation, His Word, and His sweet providence. We must not expect to be “entertained” by God if we refuse to humbly submit to Him *in all things*. Humble and holy obedience is the gateway to our heart's garden where we can enjoy the fullness of Christ's character forever.

GUARD YOUR GARDEN!

At the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24).

Jesus is the Tree of Life in the center of our hearts, if he *entertenens* or abides there (John 15:4; Revelation 22:2). We must, as such, protect our hearts as the Scriptures teach us: “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life” (Proverbs 4:23). We must jealously guard it against anyone or anything that tries to steal our love for Christ, or comes between Him and us. Pride often snakes its way into our garden and disturbs God's planted glory there, sowing seeds of its own vanity. We must, therefore, daily weed our hearts of pride. So too, many of the world's entertainments act as thieves that ravish this secret place.

Outside the garden walls rages a storm of wickedness—both in our flesh (Romans 7:14-24) and the world (1 John 2:15-17). But it is within the garden that we find Jesus and true peace. So how do we guard our hearts and make them fit for a king? First, put a “gate” at the entrance



to your heart—a resolve to live holy before the Lord. Then write these words over the gate: BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD. Memorize Matthew 5:8 and take it with you wherever you go. Next, set aside some time to study and meditate on Christ's teaching found in Matthew 5:3-12. Learn what it means to be sold out for Him! There are three who daily try to assail us: Satan, the world, and the flesh. The Apostle John thus warns us in his first epistle: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world” (1 John 2:16). Though Satan and our flesh use sundry weapons against our souls, it is the world in particular that wants to “entertain us to death” and is our greatest enemy in this way.

Looking unto Jesus is the only true joy we can experience on Earth. As Mary sat at the feet of the Lord, captivated by each of Christ's words (Luke 10:39), she experienced what it meant to be truly entertained. True entertainment *always* turns our eyes *away from the world* and back to Christ. Worldly entertainment does exactly the opposite because the world is in competition with God for the attention of mankind.

Once a Christian has tasted the glory of God, he or she cannot find full satisfaction in any other entertainment. Other things may amuse for a while, but will not bring lasting contentment.



RECLAIMING ENTERTAINMENT

*Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the LORD (Lam. 3:40).*

Please don't think that I am immune to worldly entertainment because I have enjoyed Christ as my Lord and Savior now 40 years. And I am not suggesting that all the entertainments of society are bad. I have often eaten at a restaurant with my wife, Colleen, and found myself worshipping my Creator Jesus as I enjoyed the food set before me.

I have, however, discovered this simple means of determining if an entertainment is

worldly or not: "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). If you can, *in good conscience*, participate in an activity, praising our Sovereign Lord as you go, then no one should judge it as God-dishonoring.

But here I must emphasize "in good conscience." Too many today have weak consciences, which need to be strengthened by God's Spirit and His Word. Many Christians fall into one of two camps: 1) the "don't eat this, don't touch that" camp, or 2) the "anything goes" camp (in other words, the "it doesn't matter what I do, Christ will forgive me" camp). Neither are biblical, and both are signs of a weak or unhealthy conscience. I don't have space to address the topic of conscience, but please allow me to suggest the following resources: "How Can I Develop a Christian Conscience?" by R.C. Sproul; "The Vanishing Conscience" by John MacArthur; and for those of you who enjoy Puritan works, seek out the "three Williams": William Perkins, William Fenner, and William Ames.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

"Behold, the Lamb of God . . . (John 1:29)!"

In our previous issue of **CREATOR**, we stressed the importance of "Looking unto Jesus." God has given us five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching) with which we can explore and interact in our environment, and spiritual eyes to enjoy His glory, if we are one of His own. And our Lord has supplied us with a conscience to help us discern good from evil.

These things—the physical and spiritual senses—are designed to help us focus on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). If our eyes are fixed on Christ, we can immediately know whether or not a

particular activity will promote His glory in our hearts and minds. We will recognize if something is base, immoral, or rude because we can compare it to the glory of Christ and see if it is compatible with His holiness or not.

Now there are some types of entertainment that may appear innocent to us at first glance, but have hidden within them things that will corrupt our soul. This has certainly been the case, for instance, with many (but not all) Hollywood films. And this is why God has placed others—parents, friends, pastors—in our lives to help guide us in these matters.

Here's another simple rule of thumb: If you engage in any activity that decreases your interest in Christ or leaves you bereft of any thoughts of Jesus or love for Him, avoid this activity and warn others as well.

THE SPECTACULAR VS THE SACRED

*“Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him”
(Matthew 27:49).*

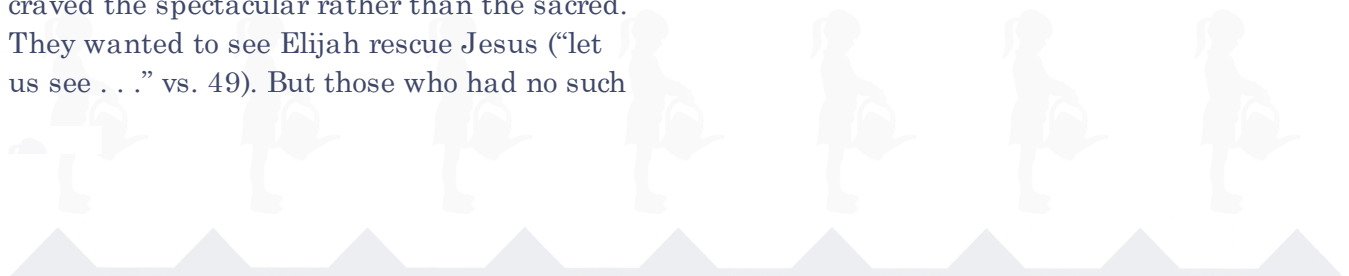
This was the attitude of many who watched Jesus dying on a cross. Their heart's desire was for the spectacular, mere worldly entertainment. Yet read what other people experienced (Matthew 27:49-54). The soldiers were not watching Jesus to see anything spectacular; they were there because it was their job. Yet note what they saw.

There is a sense in which we crave worldly entertainment because we are not fully satisfied by Christ's character and we neglect to abide in Him. Those who attended the crucifixion of Jesus out of morbid curiosity craved the spectacular rather than the sacred. They wanted to see Elijah rescue Jesus (“let us see . . .” vs. 49). But those who had no such

thoughts, experienced something far greater . . . “they saw” (vs. 54) many spectacular things. God in His infinite mercy granted them a sight of the sacred, which converted their hearts. These people saw the glory of Christ's character in the events all around them. In like manner, the Cross will hold our attention forever because:



- 1) On the Cross, Jesus displayed every one of the revealed attributes of God's character—His love, mercy, gentleness, forgiveness, power, justice, holiness, and wrath against sin, to name a few (Romans 3:24-25).
- 2) Jesus accomplished perfect obedience to His Father's will by dying on the Cross, thus honoring His Father (Philippians 2:8).
- 3) On the Cross, Christ defeated Satan and all the enemies of God (see Genesis 3:15; Colossians 2:15), to the glory of God.
- 4) By the Cross, Jesus shows us His infinite love, a love that will never let us go (John 10:28), holding onto us in true “entertenen!”



THE WAY OF THE CROSS

You will make known to me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever
(Psalm 16:11).

The Cross of Christ is *the only way* to experience *entertenen* or sweet fellowship with God. It is here that we can become right with God and are united to Him, heart and soul. God possesses us as our gaze is fixed on Jesus. It is Christ's perfect obedience to His Father that saves us from the wrath to come, and is the power to strengthen us to obey. We do not obey to be saved, we obey out of love (1 John 5:2-3).

THE THEATER OF GOD'S GLORY

My meditation of Him shall be sweet:
I will be glad in the LORD (Psalm 104:34 KJV).

The Psalmist comes to this sweet conclusion after pondering all that God has accomplished through His creation. The best entertainment—the only true *entertenen*—is free; we see this in God's handiwork all around us. It might cost a great deal to fly to some tropical paradise like Fiji, but it costs nothing to go outside one's home and enjoy the day the Lord has made. This freedom to enjoy our Lord and His glory was also purchased at the Cross by the blood of Jesus.

RETURN, O CHILDLIKE HEART!

Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant . . . (Ecclesiastes 11:9a).

Some see art, music, architecture, literature, business, theater, and athletics as worldly and say that we should avoid them altogether. But we must have buildings and

homes in which to work and live; we were designed by our Creator to appreciate good music and other forms of creativity; there has been much written through the centuries that has enriched lives; and commerce is a necessary part of our existence. Even athletics can lead us to worship God if our hearts are right (please see Psalm 139:13-14).⁴

So the real issue is how these things affect us. Do they encourage us to enjoy the glory of God, or do they detract? If you are a child of God, He will give you the wisdom to discern.

If you lack a childlike heart, God is able to give it to you. The humility Christ purchased by His death—a humility necessary to our salvation—can be yours if you receive Him as your Lord and Savior. We must see ourselves as we truly are, rebellious people willfully sinning against our Creator. Mankind is no better than a classroom full of wicked imps kicking and spitting on one another, and yelling obscenities at any adult who enters.

But Christ, the great Schoolmaster, can tame our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). He is infinitely able to convince us of our wicked ways and lead us into humble repentance. He can bring order to the classroom of our lives and beauty to the garden of our hearts, as He becomes the *Beloved of God* within us!



R.J. DESTREE
Editor

PASTOR CHRIS KAWA
Theology Editor

TREY TIPPIE
Science Editor

DR. SEAN ALLISON
KOBUS ERASMUS
MAGGIE RICHARDSEN
JOSEPHINE WALKER
Editorial Panel

KELLEY CARLSON
COLLEEN DESTREE
Art Directors

REED EVANS
Printing

VISIT US AT OUR WEB SITE:
www.hiscreation.com

CREATOR is published quarterly by **HIS CREATION**, PO Box 785, Arvada CO 80001-0785. Copyright © 2015 by **HIS CREATION**. All rights reserved. **CREATOR** is offered without charge; however, donations are greatly appreciated!

Scripture references are from the *New American Standard Bible*, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.

PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

- 1 © Sue Nash
- 2 © daveallenphoto / 123RF
- 3 © Grigoriev Ruslan / Shutterstock
- 4 © Paula Cobleigh / Shutterstock
- 5 © allou / 123RF
- 6 © Nejron Photo / Shutterstock
- 7 © Sarah2 / Shutterstock
- Border © majivecka / Shutterstock

⁴ There is a beauty in sports with the turning of a double play or the fluid motion of a long-distance runner—neither can occur without God!