

# Hollywood *and the* Christian

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## ***Introduction***

Entertainment! The vast and lucrative movie industry thrives on the almost-insatiable appetite of billions of people for entertainment, filling their eyes and ears with images and sounds designed to thrill them, excite them, make them laugh, make them cry, and make them lust.

Mankind's appetite for entertainment is nothing new. In earlier ages the arena and the stage catered to this appetite. In the ancient arenas men fought with beasts, and men fought with men, in bloody clashes which only ended with the death of one of the contestants; and the crowds bayed for more and more blood. And on the stage there were plays which entertained people with violence, fornication, adultery, idolatry, heathen mythology, etc. The invention of the motion picture was the next step; and today an endless variety of movies is available in one's own house, at any time one desires.

This article is entitled *Hollywood and the Christian*, because the name "Hollywood" has become synonymous with the movie industry, the largest source of movies in the world; but of course many other parts of the world have their own movie industries as well.

Those who profess to be followers of Christ, children of the living God, must evaluate the "entertainment industry" in the light of Holy Scripture. Large numbers of those who profess to be "Christians," who are able to wax eloquent about the precious doctrines of the faith, who speak piously and appear so godly, are *slaves* to their TVs, computers and phones, bowing down before what they have turned into their household gods, prostrating themselves before this idol of entertainment. Should they be deprived of them for any reason, they behave with all the anxiety displayed by Laban when his daughter stole his household images (Gen.31:19-35). One hears professing "Christians" speaking enthusiastically about the latest movie, the latest "soap" saga, etc. In one breath they speak of attending the services of their church, and then of the movies they have been watching.

How many parents – claiming to be Christians – rightly condemn the music young people listen to, and even rightly forbid it in their homes, yet are glued to their screens, soaking up the vile filth that spues into their homes and their lives from these toys? Hypocrites! Condemning what suits them, but not what doesn't! Where are the ministers who speak out against the sinful entertainment of movies? One of the main reasons for their silence is that the men claiming to be shepherds are slaves to these things as much as their flocks are. Where is the separation from the world that the Bible commands?

## ***What Does the Bible Say?***

Do the Scriptures have anything to say on this subject? They most certainly do! For the Scriptures list, as sins in the eyes of a holy God, such things as fornication, adultery,

uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sodomy, stealing, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, extortion, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, revellings, and such like (1 Cor.6:9,10; Gal.5:19-21; etc.). And *every single one of these sins is portrayed, glamourised and glorified by the movie industry!* In Romans 1 we find another list of terrible sins in the sight of God (vss.21-31). And then we read these solemn words: “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but *have pleasure in them that do them*” (vs.31). Some may argue that they simply watch these things, but do not live that way themselves; yet here we see that those who take pleasure in *others* committing such sins are guilty as well! No Christian is to take pleasure even in *watching* such things, let alone doing them. This is “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes,” which “is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:16); and we are commanded, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 Jn.2:15). If any man love the world, the love of the Father *is not in him*. It is as simple as that. He is not a Christian, regardless of what he professes.

Those who commit such sins as are portrayed in movies will not inherit the kingdom of God, according to 1 Cor.6:9,10 and Gal.5:21. They are the works of the flesh, according to Gal.5:19. Yet we see huge numbers of professing “Christians” actually *taking pleasure* in those who commit such things! And they do so knowing the judgment of God, that such sinners are worthy of death. Where is the evidence of regeneration in such people? They show that their profession of faith in Christ is an empty profession. They walk in darkness, not in the light. Away with their pious talk, their praises, their prayers! “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him” (Tit.1:16). They are a blight upon the Church, a disgrace to the Holy One they claim to love and serve.

Let us briefly divide movies into certain categories, and examine these.

## ***Thrillers***

There is, firstly, that type of movie known as the *thriller*. Under this category would be adventure movies, spy movies, detective movies, war movies, and much more. The vast majority of them involve hatred, violence, murder and revenge. These sins are considered essential ingredients. But the Christian is to love his enemies (Matt.5:44,45), to be gentle (Gal.5:22), to commit no murder, not even in the heart (Matt.5:21,22), and to seek no revenge, but to forgive (Rom.12:19-21; Matt.6:14,15) – the very opposite of the essential ingredients of most of these movies! The Christian is not to walk according to this world. He is a citizen of a heavenly country. He is to “think on” such things as are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil.4:8). He is to set his affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col.3:2). He cannot do this if he is filling his mind with images of unnecessary violence, murder, revenge, etc.

Then, too, thrillers are usually full of fornication, adultery, and other sexual sins. Not only are such sins graphically acted out – that would be evil enough – but they are actually glorified! The Lord Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt.5:27,28). Adulterous scenes are constantly portrayed in movies, inciting lust in the viewers – millions of whom *profess* to be Christians! Merely to look at a woman (or man) with lust is to commit adultery, yet in their

devotion to movies these “Christians” do precisely that! The holy God that they claim to love and worship sees all, and His judgment will not tarry forever.

In addition, this type of movie often contains scenes glorifying drinking and drunkenness (see Prov.20:1; 23:29-35; 1 Cor.6:10), as well as making liberal use of blasphemy and profanity. The child of God has no excuse, no justification, for watching such things.

Besides all that has been said above, there is another point to be made: what constitutes heroism in our eyes? Is the “hero” of the movie a true hero? Is it heroic to do what he does? To kill, to hate, to lust? In the life of our Lord upon the earth, we see true heroism. Yet He was the very opposite of the so-called “heroes” of Hollywood.

### ***“Love Stories”***

Secondly, there is the category of movie known as the *love story*. But it is almost never about love. In truth, the world cannot teach the Christian about true love. “Love,” to the worldly, usually means *lust*. And so-called “love stories” are usually filled with adultery, fornication, divorce, hatred, bitterness, etc.

Women in particular are devotees of this type of “entertainment.” It is fantasy, escapism, a time in which they close out their own real world, with all its problems and struggles, and fill their minds with the standards and values of the ungodly. Tragically, so widespread are such sins as divorce, adultery, etc., today, that many women are living miserable lives, and they seek escape for a few hours in soaking up such movies. But only at the feet of the Lord Jesus may peace and joy be found. The Christian woman must spend much time in studying the Word of God, not in idly sprawling in her chair or in her bed, absorbing the devil’s trash.

### ***Science Fiction***

Thirdly, there is what is called science fiction. In addition to being filled, for the most part, with the usual violence, adultery, blasphemy, profanity, and other sins found in almost all movies, the ones in this category promote the absolutely unscriptural concept of life on other planets, or in other universes, other dimensions, etc. The Bible tells us that God created life on earth; but we are not told that there is life anywhere else in the physical universe. In fact, the Bible positively precludes any such notion. When God created the heaven and the earth, He immediately focused on earth alone (Gen.1:1,2). The sun, moon, and stars were created, firstly, for God’s pleasure (Rev.4:11); secondly, for the benefit of man and other creatures upon the earth: for signs, and seasons, and days, and years; to give light upon the earth (Gen.1:14-19); and thirdly, to declare the glory of God, and show His handiwork (Psa.19:1), leaving men without excuse (Rom.1:20), so that it is indeed the fool who says in his heart, There is no God (Psa.14:1). But there is no life anywhere else. The Lord Jesus Christ left heaven’s glories and came to earth alone, to die for men and women ordained to eternal life; and when His work was done He returned to heaven. He went to no other planet. He redeemed no other creatures.

The notion of life in outer space promotes the diabolical theory of evolution, for of course, if life could spontaneously evolve here on earth, then conceivably it could do so elsewhere in the universe. But for those who believe the Holy Scriptures it is quite evident that there is no life anywhere else; and they should derive no pleasure from such ungodly fantasies as are portrayed in science fiction films.

## ***Comedies***

Fourthly, the comedy: this type of entertainment is often considered innocent by those professing to be “Christians;” but it is far from being so in truth. Such movies almost always contain blasphemy, filthy language, jokes and behaviour. For a comedy to be successful in this sinful world, it invariably makes fun of the holy standard of God’s Word regarding sexual matters. Such wickedness should never be entertaining to Christians. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb.13:4); yet marriage is mocked, and adultery and fornication are treated lightheartedly, in comedies. “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks” (Eph.5:3,4). Many innocent things are amusing, and there is a time to laugh (Eccl.3:4); but to laugh at sin is itself sinful.

Christian standards and practices, God Himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ, are mocked in many comedies. The blessed name of the Lord is used as a curse-word on the lips of wicked men and women. What true Christian is able to sit through such vileness, and be entertained? Is the true Christian able to bear to hear his Lord’s name used thus? He is a hypocritical liar who says that he loves the Lord, but tolerates, and even *laughs* at, such things! To hear the worldling make fun of the One before whom he will stand on the judgment day is a cause for weeping, not laughing. It is a tragedy, not a comedy.

## ***“Christian” Movies***

Finally, let us look at the so-called “Christian” movies. Certain historical movies, portraying the lives of various Christians of the past, can be profitable if they are accurately made. But a great many of them are made by Hollywood producers who have only profit in mind, and therefore they distort the truth and focus on things which will attract audiences.

As for movies supposedly portraying the life of Christ, with some actor portraying the holy Son of God, the Word of God makes it clear that any representations of any of the three divine Persons of the Trinity are sinful (Exod.20:4-6; Acts 17:29). Although the eternal Son became flesh, we have no idea what He looked like, which means that any representation of Him is completely imaginary and inaccurate; and even if we did know exactly what He looked like we still could not depict Him, for His divine glory, which the apostles beheld (Jn.1:14), cannot be depicted; and yet, if only His humanity was depicted, then His nature would be divided – which is heretical.

Furthermore, as Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col.1:15; Heb.1:3), so that He could say to those who saw Him that they had seen the Father (Jn.14:8,9), it follows that if we attempt to depict Christ, we attempt to depict the invisible God; but as we would only depict Christ inaccurately, we would thereby depict the invisible God inaccurately. And in doing so we would make a similitude of God as a man, which is sinful (Deut.4:15,16). The apostles, who knew Him in the days of His earthly ministry, never attempted to depict Him in art. No Christian should think that he may do what they did not. Movies in which some sinful man attempts to portray the Lord Jesus Christ, the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His Person, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, should be shunned by all true Christians as utterly contrary to the will of God.

## **Books**

All that has been written above about movies applies equally to the *literature* people read. No true Christian should fill his mind with the kind of fictional garbage which ungodly authors spue out, filled with the same sinful things as the movies described above: spy novels, romantic novels, science fiction, horror stories, filthy books of “humour”, etc. Pastors must insist on separation from all such filth on the part of their church members, with those refusing to turn from such things facing the same church disciplinary measures they would face for other sins. For that is precisely what the reading of such literature, like the watching of the type of movies described above, constitutes: sin! Where are the pastors who take such a stand? They are very few and far between. And those who take such a stand are unpopular, and their churches are often small. But their stand is honouring to the Lord.

The Christian loves to read the Holy Scriptures. “O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day” (Psa.119:97). There are also sound Christian books to read, the writings of men of God. The child of God will shun all fiction that is ungodly.

## **Conclusion**

TVs, computers, cellphones, etc., are not sinful in themselves. It is what they are used for that is either sinful or not. They are tools to be used to educate, inform, etc. But no Christian should ever spend a moment of time watching movies which are ungodly and Christ-dishonouring. To do so is to sin grievously against the Lord.

Huge numbers of movie devotees *claim* to be Christians. They *claim* to worship the true God, and that they seek to depart from iniquity. The Bible commands all who profess to be Christ’s to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith (2 Cor.13:5); and I urge all those who prostrate themselves towards Hollywood with the same blind zeal as the Muslims who prostrate themselves towards Mecca to earnestly examine their profession of faith in the light of God’s Word. A lover of Zion cannot be a lover of Hollywood. He who is on a life-long pilgrimage to the heavenly city cannot simultaneously be on a pilgrimage to the shrines of the “stars” in Hollywood. No man can serve two masters.

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