

HOW SAINTS MAY HELP THE DEVIL NO. 264

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JULY 24, 1859
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*“That thou mayest bear thine own shame,
and mayest be confounded in all that thou hast done,
in that thou art a comfort unto them.”
Ezekiel 16:54*

IT is not a comfortable state to be at enmity with God, and the sinner knows this. Although he perseveres in his rebellion against the Most High and turns not at the rebuke of the Almighty, but still goes on in his iniquity, desperately seeking his own destruction, yet is he aware in his own conscience that he is not in a secure position.

Hence it is that all wicked men are constantly on the look out for excuses. They find these either in pretended resolutions to reform at some future period, or else in the declaration that reformation is out of their power, and that, acting according to their own nature, they must continue to go on in their iniquities.

When a man is willing to find an excuse for being God’s enemy he need never be at a loss. He who has to find a fact may find some difficulty, but he who would forge a lie may sit at his own fireside and do it. Now, the excuses of sinners are all of them false, they are refuges of lies, and therefore we need not wonder that they are exceedingly numerous, and very easy to come at.

One way in which sinners frequently excuse themselves is by endeavoring to get some apology for their own iniquities from the inconsistencies of God’s people. This is the reason why there is much slander in the world. A true Christian is a rebuke to the sinner, wherever he goes, he is a living protest against the evil of sin. Hence it is that the worldling makes a dead set upon a pious man. His language in his heart is, “He accuses me to my face, I cannot bear the sight of his holy character, it makes the blackness of my own life appear the more terrible, when I see the whiteness of his innocence contrasting with it.”

And then the worldling opens all his eyes, and labors to find a fault with the virtuous. If however, he fails to do so, he will next try to invent a fault, he will slander the man, and if even there he fails, and the man is like Job, “Perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil,” then the sinner will, like the devil of old, begin to impute some wrong motive to the Christian’s innocence. “Does Job serve God for nought?” said the devil. He could find no fault with Job whatever, his character was untainted and unblemished, “But,” says he, “he keeps to his religion for what he gets by it.”

I reckon it to be a glorious accusation when we are falsely charged with being religious for the sake of gain. It shows that our enemies have no other charge that they can bring against us. They have ransacked all the flies of their calumny, and they can find nothing tangible, and this is the last they can bring—an imputation upon the motive of the man who has no other motive in all the world than to glorify his God and win sinners from destruction. In this, then, let us glory.

If sinners slander us, it is because we make them uneasy. They see that our lives are a protest against them, and what can they do? They must somehow or other answer the bill which we have filed against them in heaven’s Chancery, and they do it by issuing a rejoinder against us, and bringing us in as defendants in the case. We glory in this, that we are defendants who can prove our innocence, and we are not ashamed to stand before the bar of God to have our motives tried.

There is much I say to cheer us in the fact of such a libel. We know the work is done. We are sure our shots have told on their armor, when they are driven to return on us their calumnies and the venom of their wrath. Now we know that they feel the might of our arm, now we know we are not like them, mere drivelings and dwarfs. They have felt our might, and against it they kick, they foam, they vomit forth their wrath. In this, I say, we glory. We have smitten them hard, or else they would not rise against us in this fashion.

Alas! alas! however, sinners have not always to use calumny and lies. It is too true that the church has given a real *bona fide* cause to the wicked for excusing themselves in their sin, the inconsistencies of professors, the want of heart in piety, the absence of devout earnestness, have given sad grounds to the ungodly to justify themselves in their sin.

It is upon this melancholy subject, that I am about to enter this morning, and may God grant unto all His people who shall feel convicted in their consciences, the spirit of mourning and contrition; that they may vex themselves before God, and confess this great iniquity that they have done, namely, that they have comforted sinners in their sin by their own inconsistency, and have justified the wicked in their rebellion by their own rebellings and revoltings.

This morning I shall deal thus with the subject. First, I shall point out the fact—*the different acts of Christians which have helped to comfort sinners in their sin*, and then secondly, I shall observe the consequences of this evil—*how much the world at large has been injured by the deeds of professed followers of Christ*, and then I shall come with a *solemn warning*, bringing out the great battering ram, to dash against these refuges of lies, and moreover crying with a loud voice to those who are the faithful servants of Christ, to withdraw their hands, and no longer to assist in keeping up the Jericho in which the wicked have entrenched themselves.

I. First then, it shall be my sad and melancholy business this morning to show certain facts which it were dishonest to deny, namely, that THE ACTS OF MANY OF CHRIST'S FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN THE CAUSE OF JUSTIFYING AND COMFORTING SINNERS IN THEIR EVIL WAYS.

1. And first I would observe that the daily inconsistencies of the people of God have much to do in this matter. By inconsistencies I do not exactly mean those grosser crimes into which, at sad and mournful periods, many professors fall, but I mean those frequent inconsistencies which become so common indeed, that they are scarcely condemned by society.

The *covetousness* of too many Christians has had this offset. "Look," says the worldling, "this man professes that his inheritance is above, and that his affection is set not on things on earth, but on the things of heaven, but look at him, he is just as earnest as I am about the things of this world, he can drive the screw home as tightly with his debtor as I can, he can scrape and cut with those who deal with him quite as keenly as ever I have done." Nay, beloved, this is not a mere tale, alas! I have seen persons held up to commendation as successful merchants, whose lives will not bear the test of Scripture, whose business transactions were as hard, as griping, as grasping, as the transactions of the most worldly.

How often has it happened that some of you have bent your knees in the sanctuary and have said, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and one hour afterwards, your finger has been almost meeting your thumb through the jugular vein of some debtor whom you had seized by the throat! The church of Christ appears to be as worldly as the world itself, and professors of religion have become as sharp in trade and as ungenerous in their dealing, as those that have never been baptized into the Lord Jesus, and have never professed to serve Him.

And now what does the world say? It throws this in our teeth. If it be accused of loving the things of time and sense, it answers, "And so do you." If we tell the world that it has set its hopes upon a shadow, it replies, "But we have set our hope upon the selfsame thing in which you are trusting, you are as worldly, as grasping, as covetous as we are, your protest has lost its force, you are no longer witnesses against us—we are accusers of you."

Another point, in which the sinner often excuses himself is the manifest *worldliness* of many Christians. You will see Christian men and women as fond of dress, and as pleased with the frivolities of

the age, as any other persons possibly could be, just as anxious to adorn their outward persons, so as to be seen of men, just as ambitious to win the praise which fools accord to fine dressing, as the most silly fop or the most gaudy among worldly women.

What saith the world when we turn round to it, and accuse it of being a mere butterfly and finding all its pleasures in gaudy toys? “Oh! yes,” it says, “we know your cant, but it is just the same with you. Do you not stand up and sing,

*‘Jewels to me are gaudy toys,
And gold but sordid dust?’*

And yet, you are just as fond of glittering as we are, your doctors of divinity pride themselves just as much in their D.D. as any of us in other titles. You are just as punctilious about terms of honor as any of us can be. You talk about carrying the cross, but we do not see it anywhere, except it is a golden cross sometimes hanging on your bosom. You say you are crucified to the world, and the world to you, it is a very merry sort of crucifixion. You say that you mortify your members and deny yourselves, your mortification must be suffered in secret, for it is but very little that we can see of it!”

Thus, the worldling casts back to our challenge, declaring that we are not sincere, and thus he comforts himself in his sin, and justifies himself in his iniquity.

Look too, at the manifest *pride* of many professors of religion. You see members of Christian churches as proud as they possibly can be. Their backs are as stiff as if an iron rod were in the center, they come up to the house of God, and it is a Christian doctrine that God has made of one flesh all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth, but the Christian is as aristocratic as anybody else, just as proud and just as stiff. Is the Christian clothed in broad cloth? How often does he feel it condescension to own a smock frock! and how often do you see a sister of Christ in satin, who thinks it something full of wonder if she owns a fellow member in an un-washable print.

It is of no use denying it. I do not think that the evil is so common among us as it is in some churches, but this I know, that there are *respectable* churches and chapels in which a poor man scarcely dares to show his face. The pride of the church surely has become almost as great as the pride of Sodom of old. Her fullness of bread and her stiffness of neck have brought her to exalt herself, and whereas it is the real glory of the church that “the poor have the gospel preached unto them,” and that the poor have received the Word with gladness, it becomes now the honor of the church to talk of her respectability, of the dignity and station of her members, and of the greatness of her wealth.

What then, do worldlings say? “You accuse us of pride, you are as proud as we are. *You* the humble followers of Jesus, who washed His saints’ feet? Not you, no, you would have no objection, we doubt not to be washed by others, but we do not think it likely that you would ever wash ours. *You* the disciples of the fishermen of Galilee? Not you, you are too fine and great for that. Accuse us not of pride, why, you are as stiff-necked a generation as we ourselves are.”

Now, these are only mentioned amongst us as inconsistencies—not as sins. But sins they verily are, and they are such sins that they restrain the Spirit of God from blessing the church. Sins too, they are that render the wicked callous in their sins, blunt the edge of our rebukes, and prevent the Word of God from working in the hearts of men.

I might mention another sad fact with regard to the church which often stings us sorely—the various *enmities*, and *strifes*, and *divisions*, that arise. You tell the worldly man that Christians love each other. “Ah!” says he, “you should go over to Ebenezer or to Rehoboth, and see how they love each other. Don’t talk of leading a cat and dog life! Look at many of your churches, see how the minister is treated, and how the deacons are in arms, and how the members hate one another. They can scarcely hold a church meeting without abusing each other!” How often is this proved to be true in many churches!

And then the worldling says, “You tell us that we bite and devour each other, and that our wars and fightings come from our lusts. Where do your wars and fightings come from? You tell us that our anger

and wrath are the effect of sin that dwells in us, what causes your divisions and your strifes?" In this way, you see, the testimony of the children of God is rendered invalid, and we help to comfort sinners in their sins.

2. Now, it is my mournful duty to go a step further. It is not merely these inconsistencies, but the glaring crimes of some professed disciples, that have greatly assisted sinners in sheltering themselves from the attacks of the Word of God. Every now and then the cedar falls in the midst of the forest. Someone who stood prominent in the church of God, as a professed follower of Jesus, turns aside. "They go out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, doubtless, they would have continued with us; but they went out from us, that it might be manifest that they were not of us."

We have wept over high professors becoming drunkards, we have seen mighty men at religious public meetings becoming scoundrel bankrupts. We have had it dashed in our faces dozens of times, that religion has often become a cloak for fraud, and that when the world has trusted a religious man with its wealth, that religious man has carried it off with him, and has not been found at the proper time. Oh, this is the great curse of the church.

I was thinking only yesterday, with much sorrow in my heart, of the present age, and I could not but come to the conclusion that all the burnings of Pagan tyrants, that all the tortures of Popish executioners, that all the bloody deaths to which God's people were ever put, in any age of the world, have never done so much hurt to the cause of Christ as the inconsistencies of professors of the present time. It was about three years ago, I think, that failures among religious men seemed to be the order of the day, and our papers literally teemed with accusations against the church of God.

O my brethren, let us not talk of these things except with mourning and tears. Wrap yourself in sackcloth, O church of God, put away your laughter, and cast ashes on your head, for the crown of your glory is departed, your garments are stained, and the filthiness of your skirts witnesses against you.

O church of Christ, your Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, but now their visage is blacker than coal and their hands are defiled with iniquity. Remember you the time of your purity, when your priests were glorious, and your sons and daughters were clothed in royal apparel. How art thou fallen! How art thou cast down from the high mountains! Your princes are clothed in rags; the veils are plucked from the faces of your daughters, and you yourself have become disconsolate and a widow, by reason of the iniquity of your sons and of your daughters. Woe unto us, for your glory is departed, your sun is covered with thick darkness, and your stars withhold their light. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned.

My hearers, my soul has carried me away, breathless and panting I return to my humbler but not less earnest style. Remember how vast your powers for mischief! Your ministers may preach as long as they will, but you undo their preaching if you are unholy. If you are inconsistent in your lives, Paul, Apollos, and Cephas might preach with power, but they have not half the power to build up that you have to pull down. You are the mightiest workmen, you professors of religion, you can undo infinitely more than we can accomplish.

And now I pause, and relieve the shadow of this subject with something which, I fear, is in the sight of God equally vile. How often do the people of God comfort sinners in their sins by their murmurings and their complaints? Oh beloved, we are too much in the habit of covering our faces with sadness on account of our temporal trials, and too little in the habit of weeping on account of the failings of the church of God!

How frequently do you meet with a true Christian full of unbelieving cares! Ah! he says, "All these things are against me." He has food and raiment, but he is not content with it, he has more than that, but his store is a little diminished, and he is very cast down, and he has no faith, and cannot trust the Lord.

"Oh!" says the worldling, "look at these Christians, they talk about faith, but their faith is not of half so much service to them as my desperation is to me. That hardens my heart and makes me stand up against affliction a great deal better than their faith in God's providence can do. Why, just look at these saints—a driveling set of crying creatures, they never have either peace or joy, they are everlastingly

pulling long faces, and talking through their noses about their sad trials and troubles, they never have an hour of happiness.

Who would be a Christian? *I don't want to be converted,*" says the worldling, "why should I pluck out the sunbeam from my eye, and take the smile from my brow? Why should I profess to follow a God whose servants only worship Him by weeping, and never offer any sacrifice but that of groans, and sighs, and murmurs?"

Might not a wicked man come in often, when Christians are grumbling together about the badness of the times, about the high price of commodities, and the low rate of wages, and so forth, and might he not say, "Yes, I can see your God treats you very badly, if I were you I'd strike, and have nothing to do with Him"? And he would go away laughing and saying, "Ah! Baal treats me better, I get more pleasure in this world than these Christian people do. Let them have their brave heaven to themselves if they like, I'm not going sniveling through this world with them, let me have joy and rejoicing while I may."

Don't you think that in this way you and I have done a world of damage to the cause of Christ, and may have helped to comfort sinners in their iniquities?

One other point and I will have done with this. Perhaps the greatest evil has been done by the cold-heartedness and indifference of religious professors. I charge you not, O church of God, with inconsistency, I lay no crime at your door now, it is with another fault I charge you—one as grievous as these. I pray you, plead guilty to it, for you will but speak the truth, and then I pray God that this your guilt may be cleansed. and that you may offend Him no longer with this your evil.

The church of God at the present age is cold, and lukewarm, and lifeless, compared with what it used to be. When I was preaching in Wales this week, I could not but observe the power which attended the ministry, when there was a living congregation and an earnest company gathered together to hear the Word of God!

We have here become accustomed to sit in a kind of solemn silence to hear the Gospel. Not so in Wales. There is to be heard the voice of acclamation, every person expresses the feelings of his soul in audible prayers and cries to God, and at last, when the Spirit has descended, you hear the loud cries of "Gogoniant"—"Glory to God."

As each precious sentence drops from the lips of the preacher, it seems to be taken up and fed upon by the people, while they shout aloud for joy. I believe it is a great improvement on our English congregations, and some of our English preachers could not go on in their dull style, if sometimes the people had a chance of either hissing them or cheering them on. That however, is but an index of the cold state of the churches.

We are a phlegmatic, cold nation, even Scotch divines are more alive than we are, they speak the Word of God with more earnestness than many of our ministers do in England. Cold as we think the north is, yet has even it become warmer than we are. And now, what says the world to all our coldness? Why, it says—"Ah, this is the kind of religion we like," says the worldling, "we don't like those raving Methodists, we can't stand them, we don't like those earnest indefatigable Christians of the days of Whitfield, oh! no, they were a raving set of folks, we don't like them, but we like these quiet folks."

"Yes," says the worldling, "I think it is quite right that every man should go to his church and his chapel on Sunday, but I never could go and hear such raving as Mr. So-and-so gives." Of course you could not, you are an enemy to God, and that is why you like a Laodicean church. That very church which the world likes best is sure to be that which God abhors.

The world says, "We like everything to go on smoothly, we like a man to go to his own parish church, and hear a good, solid, substantial sermon *read*, we like to go up to the meeting house and hear a sober, eloquent divine, we don't like any of this furious preaching, any of these earnest exhortations." No, of course you like that of which God has said, "Thou art neither cold nor hot." God hates such, and that is why sinners love it.

But what effect does all this have upon the worldling? Why, just this. He says, "I like you, because you don't rebuke me, I like that kind of religion, because it is no accusation against me. When I see a

Christian hot and in earnest about being saved,” he says, “it rebukes my own indifference, but when I see a professed Christian just as indifferent about the salvation of men as I am, why, then I say it is all a farce, nonsense! they don’t mean it, the minister does not care a bit about whether souls are saved or not, and as for the church, they make a great deal of noise every now and then at Exeter Hall, about saving some poor blacks far away, but they don’t care about saving us.”

And so a worldling wraps himself up, and goes on his way in his sin and his iniquity, and perseveres, even to the last, declaring all the while that religion is but a sham, because he sees us careless in solemn matters, and cold concerning everlasting realities.

Thus, I have mournfully in my own soul, set forth the plan whereby Satan comforts sinners in their sins, even by means of those who ought most sternly to rebuke them.

II. And now for the second point—THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVIL.

And here I wish to speak very pointedly and personally to all of you who are professors of religion, and I do hope that you will take every point to yourself, in which you must feel that you have been and are guilty.

Friends, how often have you and I, in the first place, helped to keep sinners easy in their sin, by our inconsistency! Had we been true Christians, the wicked man would often have been pricked to the heart, and his conscience would have convicted him, but having been unfaithful and untrue, he has been able to sleep on quietly, without any disturbance from us. Do you not think, my dear brothers and sisters, that you have each been guilty here—that you have often helped to pacify the wicked in their rebellion against God?

I must confess myself that I am guilty. I have labored to escape from the sin, but I am not clean delivered from it. I pray each one of you makes a full confession before God, if by your silence, when sin has been committed before your eyes, or by a smile, when a lascivious joke has been told in your hearing, or if by a constant indifference to the cause of Christ, you have led sinners to sleep more securely in the bed of their iniquities.

But let’s go further still. Do you not think that very often, when a sinner’s conscience has been roused, you and I have helped to give it a tranquilizing draught by our coldness of heart, “Hush! Master Conscience,” says the sinner, but he will not be still, but cries aloud, “Repent, repent.” And then you, a professing Christian, pass by and you administer the opium draught of your indifference, and the sinner’s conscience falls back again into its slumber, and the reproof that might have been useful is entirely lost upon him.

I am sure that this is one of the great crying sins of the church of Christ, that we are not now the witnesses of God, as we should be, but often quiet the witness of conscience in the souls of men. Look now to your lives—I am speaking personally to each one—look at yesterday, and the days that went before, and I ask you, and I solemnly charge you to answer that question, have you not often assisted, in the first place, to keep men’s consciences quiet, and afterwards to send them to sleep when they have been convicted?

Further, is it not possible that often sinners have been strengthened in their sin by you? They were but beginning in iniquity, and had you rebuked with honesty and sincerity, by your own holy life, they might have been led to see their folly, and might have ceased from sin, but you have strengthened their hands. They have gone forward confidently, because they have said, “See, a church member leads the way. So-and-so is not more scrupulous than I,” says such a one, “I may do what he does” And so you have helped to strengthen sinners in their sins.

Nay, is it not possible that some of you Christians have helped to confirm men in their sins and to destroy their souls? It is a masterpiece of the devil, when he can use Christ’s own soldiers against Christ. But this he has often done. I have known many a case. Let me tell a story of a minister—one which I believe to be true and which convicts myself, and therefore, I tell it with the hope, that it may also waken your consciences and convict you too.

There was a young minister once preaching very earnestly in a certain chapel, and he had to walk some four or five miles to his home along a country road after the service. A young man who had been deeply impressed under the sermon, requested the privilege of walking with the minister, with an earnest hope that he might get an opportunity of telling out his feelings to him, and obtaining some word of guidance or comfort.

Instead of that, the young minister all the way along told the most singular tales to those who were with him, causing loud roars of laughter, and even relating tales which bordered upon the indecorous. He stopped at a certain house, and this young man with him, and the whole evening was spent in frivolity and foolish talking.

Some years after, when the minister had grown old, he was sent for to come to the bedside of a dying man. He hastened thither with a heart desirous to do good. He was requested to sit down at the bedside, and the dying man, looking at him and regarding him most closely, said to him, “Do you remember preaching in such and such a village on such an occasion?” “I do,” said the minister. “I was one of your hearers,” said the man, “and I was deeply impressed by the sermon.” “Thank God for that,” said the minister. “Stop!” said the man, “don’t thank God till you have heard the whole story, you will have reason to alter your tone before I have done.”

The minister changed countenance, but he little guessed what would be the full extent of that man’s testimony. Said he, “Sir, do you remember, after you had finished that earnest sermon, I with some others walked home with you? I was sincerely desirous of being led in the right path that night, but I heard you speak in such a strain of levity, and with so much coarseness too, that I went outside the house while you were sitting down to your evening meal, I stamped my foot upon the ground, I said that you were a liar, that Christianity was a falsehood, that if you could pretend to be so in earnest about it in the pulpit, and then come down and talk like that, the whole thing must be a sham, and I have been an infidel,” he said, “a confirmed infidel, from that day to this. But I am not an infidel at this moment, I know better, I am dying, and I am about to be damned, and at the bar of God I will lay my damnation to your charge, my blood is on your head”—and with a dreadful shriek, and one demoniacal glance at the trembling minister, he shut his eyes and died.

Is it not possible that we may have been guilty thus? The bare idea would make the flesh creep on our bones, and yet, I think there are few among us who must not say, “That has been my fault, after all.” But are there not enough traps, in which to catch souls, without *your* being made Satan’s fowlers to do mischief? Has not Satan legions enough of devils to murder men, without employing you? Are there no hands that may be red with the blood of souls beside yours?

O followers of Christ! O believers in Jesus! Will you serve under the black prince? Will you fight against your Master? Will you drag sinners down to hell? Shall *we*—(I take myself in here, more truly than any of you)—shall *we*, who profess to preach the Gospel of Christ, by our conversation injure and destroy men’s souls?

III. Thus, I think I have expounded the solemn consequences of this fearful evil. And now I come, in conclusion, and I pray God to help me, while I deal earnestly and solemnly with you, **AND BRING OUT THIS GREAT BATTERING RAM, TO BEAR AGAINST THIS VAIN EXCUSE OF THE WICKED.**

Among this great congregation, I have doubtless a very large number of persons who are not converted to God, and who have continually made this their excuse, “I see so much of the inconsistency of professors that I do not intend to think about religion myself.”

My hearer, I conjure you by the living God, give me your ear a moment, while I pull this vain excuse of yours to pieces. What have you to do with the inconsistencies of another? “To his own master he shall stand or fall.” What will it better you, if one half of all the professors of religions are sent to hell? What comfort will that be to you, when you shall come there yourself? Man, will God require the sins of other people at your hands? Where is it said that God will punish you for what another does? Or do you imagine that God will reward you because another is guilty? You are surely not foolish enough for that.

I ask you, what can you have to do with another's servant? That man is a servant of God, or at least professes to be, if he be not so, what business can it possibly be of yours? If you should see twenty men drinking poison, would that be a reason why you should drink it? If, passing over London Bridge, you should see a dozen miserable creatures leaping off the parapet, there would be a good argument why you yourself should seek to stop them, but no argument why you should leap too.

What if there be hundreds of suicides? will that excuse you, if you shall shed your own blood? Do men plead thus in courts of law? Does a man say, "O Judge, excuse me for having been a thief, there are so many hundreds of men that profess to be honest, that are as big thieves as I"? You will be punished for your own offenses, remember, not for the offenses of another. Man! I conjure you, look this in the face. How can this help to assuage your misery? How can this help to make you happier in hell, because you say there are so many hypocrites in this world?

But besides, you know well enough that the church is not so bad as you say it is. You see some that are inconsistent, but are there not many that are holy? Do you dare to say there are none? I tell you, man, you are a fool. There are many bad coins in the world, many counterfeits, do you therefore say there are no good ones? If you say so, you are mad, for the very fact that there are counterfeits is proof that there must be realities.

Would any man think it worth his while to make bad sovereigns if there were no good ones? It is just the quantity of good ones that passes off the few false coins. And so no man would pretend to be a Christian unless there were some good Christians. There would be no hypocrites if there were not some true men. It is the quantity of true men that helps to pass off the hypocrite in the crowd.

And then again, I say, when you come before the bar of God, do you think that this will serve you as an excuse, to begin to find fault with God's own children? Suppose you were brought before a king, an absolute monarch, and you should begin to say, by way of appeal, "O king, I have been guilty, it is true, but your own sons and daughters I do not like, there are a great many faults in the princes of the blood." Would he not say, "Wretch! you are adding insult to wickedness, you are guilty yourself, and now you do malign my own children, the princes of the blood?"

The Lord will not have you say that at last. He has pardoned His children, He is ready to pardon you. He sends mercy to you this day, but if you reject it, imagine not that you shall escape by recounting the sins of the pardoned ones. The rather this shall be an addition to your sin, and you shall perish the more fearfully.

But come, man, once again, I would entreat of you with all my might. What! can you be so foolish as to imagine that because another man is destroying his own soul by hypocrisy, that this is a reason why you should destroy yours by indifference? If there be thousands of untrue Christians, so much the more reason why I should be a true one, if there are hundreds of hypocrites, this should make me more earnest to search myself, and should not make me indifferent about the matter.

O sinner! You will soon be on your dying bed and will it comfort you there to think, "I have rejected Christ, I have despised salvation, I am perishing in my sins," and to add, "but there are many Christians who are hypocrites!" No, death will tear away that excuse. That will not serve you.

And when the heavens are in a blaze, when the pillars of the earth shall reel, when God shall come on flying clouds to judge the children of men, when the eternal eyes are fixed upon you, and like burning lamps are enlightening the secret parts of your belly, will you then be able to make this an excuse—"Good God! it is true, I have damned myself, it is true, I have willfully transgressed, but there were many hypocrites"? Then shall the Judge say, "What hast thou to do with that? Thou hadst nought to do, to interfere with My kingdom and with My judgeship, for thine own rejection of Christ thou shalt perish everlastingly."

And now I conclude, by addressing the people of God with equal solemnity and earnestness.

My dear hearers, if I could weep tears of blood this morning, I could not show too much emotion concerning this most solemn point. I do not know that this text ever struck me before yesterday, but I no sooner noticed it than it came home to me as an accusation. I plead guilty to it, and I pray for

forgiveness. I only wish that a like power may attend it to you, that you may feel that you have been guilty too.

O friends, can you bear the thought that you may have helped to drag others down to hell? Christ has loved you and pardoned your sins, and will you push others downward? And yet if you are inconsistent, and especially if you are cold and lukewarm in your religion, you are doing it.

“Well,” says one, “I don’t do much good, but I do no harm.” That is impossibility. You must be either doing good or evil. There is no border land between truth and sin, a man must be either on land or in the water, and you are either serving God or serving Satan, each day you are increasing your Master’s kingdom, or else diminishing it.

I cannot bear the thought that any of you should be employed in Satan’s camp. Suppose there ever should be an invasion of this country by France. The tocsin rings from every church steeple, the drum is sounding in every street, and men are gathering at every market-cross. Peaceful men spring up to soldiers in an instant, and multitudes are marching away to the coast. When we come near it, we behold a troop of soldiers who have climbed our white cliffs, and with bayonets fixed they are marching against us. We, with a tremendous cheer, rush on against them, to drive them back into the sea which girds our beloved country.

Suddenly, as we rush forward, we detect scores of Englishmen marching in the same ranks with our foes, and seeking to ravage their own country. What should we say? “Seize those traitors, let not one of *them* escape, put *them* all to death. Can Englishmen take the side of England’s enemies? Can they march against our hearths and homes, betray their fatherland, and take the side of the tyrant Emperor? Can this be? Then let them die the death!”

And yet this day I behold a more mournful spectacle. There is King Jesus marching at the head of His troops, and can it be that some of you, who profess to be His followers, are on the other side, that professing to be Christ’s you are fighting in the ranks of the enemy—carrying the baggage of Satan and wearing the uniform of hell, when you profess to be soldiers of Christ?

I know there are such here, God forgive them! God spare them, and may the deserters yet come back, even though they come back in the chains of conviction! May they come back and be saved!

O brethren and sisters, there are enough to destroy souls without us—enough to extend the kingdom of Satan without our helping him. “Come out from among them; touch not the unclean thing; be ye separate.” Church of God! awake, awake, awake to the salvation of men! Sleep no longer, begin to pray, to wrestle, to travail in birth, be more holy, more consistent, more strict, more solemn in your deportment!

Begin, O soldiers of Christ, to be more true to your colors, and as surely as the time shall come when the church shall thus be reformed and revived, so surely shall the King come into our midst, and we shall march on to certain victory, trampling down our enemies, and getting to our King many crowns, through many victories achieved.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.