

# How Saints May Help the Devil

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*The church's inconsistencies and failures have helped to comfort sinners in their sins and render the testimony of God's people invalid.*

**Duration:** 48:40

**Scripture:** James 4:1

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Spiritual Consistency"

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## Description

In this sermon, the minister shares a personal testimony of a man who was deeply impressed by his sermon but later witnessed the minister's inconsistency and levity in his conversation. The man felt convicted and pleaded guilty for his own sins, praying for forgiveness. The minister then emphasizes the importance of consistency in one's faith and the potential harm that can be caused by being lukewarm or inconsistent in one's Christian walk. He urges the congregation to examine their own lives and not use the inconsistencies of others as an excuse to neglect their own relationship with God.

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## Transcript

The Prince of Preachers Charles Haddon Spurgeon has been called England's greatest contribution to the spread of the Gospel in the 19th century. One of his contemporaries said that the chief secret of Spurgeon's attractiveness was the fact that in every sermon, no matter what the text or the occasion, he explained the way of salvation in simple terms. Spurgeon's messages remain one of the great treasure houses of Christian literature, still bringing the light of the Gospel and the comfort of the Scriptures to hungry souls long after the preacher has passed into glory.

This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to listen to a message from the Prince of Preachers. C. H. Spurgeon preached this message on July 24th, 1859, at the Music Hall of the Royal Surrey Gardens. It is entitled, How Saints May Help the Devil.

The text is found in Ezekiel chapter 16 and verse 54. 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. 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 to the rebuke of the Almighty, but still goeth 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 lookout

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 hath 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 even of there he fails, and the man is like Job, perfect and upright, and one that fears God and eschewed evil. Then the sinner will, like the devil of old, begin to impute some wrong motive to the Christian's innocency. Doth Job serve God for naught, 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 files of their calumny, and they can find nothing tangible. And this is the last that 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 a 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 that 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 and 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 thus deal with the subject.

First, I shall point out the fact, the different acts of Christians which have helped to comfort sinners in their sin. 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. Then I shall come with a solemn warning, bringing out the great battering ram to dash against these refuges of lies.

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. 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. 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 effect.

Look, says the worldling, this man professes that his inheritance is above and that his affection is not set 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 the world.

He can drive the screw home as tightly with his debtor as I can. He can scrape and cut with those that 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 gripping, as grasping, as the transactions of the most worldly. How often has it happened that some of you have bent your knee 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 you can't. 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 be 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 us 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 broadcloth? How often does he feel it a condescension to own a smock frock? And how often do you see a sister in Christ in satin, who thinks it something wonderful if she owns a fellow member in an unwashable print? It is of no use denying it. I do not think that the evil is so common amongst 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. 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 prevents 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 stripes 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 fighting come from our lusts. Where do your wars and fighting come from? You tell us that our anger and wrath are the effect of sin that dwelleth in us. What causes your divisions and your stripes? In this way, you see, the testimony of the children of God is rendered invalid, and we help to comfort sinners in their sins.

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 had 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, 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 one 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. Oh, my brethren, let us not talk of these things except with mourning and tears. Wrap thyself in sackcloth, O church of God, put away

thy laughter, and cast ashes on thine head, for the crown of thy glory is departed, thy garments are stained, and the filthiness of thy skirts witnesses against thee.

O church of Christ, thy Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, but now their visage is blacker than a coal, and their hands are defiled with iniquity. Remember thou the time of thy purity, when thy priests were glorious, and thy sons and daughters were clothed in royal apparel. How art thou fallen! How art thou cast down from thy high mountains! Thy princes are clothed in rags, the veils are plucked from the face of thy daughters, and thou thyself art become disconsolate, and a widow by reason of the iniquity of thy sons and thy daughters.

Woe unto us, for thy glory is departed, thy sun is covered with thick darkness, and thy 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 were 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, ye professors of religion. You can undo infinitely more than we can accomplish.

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. O 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, see these Christians.

They talk about faith, but their faith is not 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 dribbling set of crying creatures. They never either have 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 the sunbeam out 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 thee not, O church of God, with inconsistency.

I lay no crime at thy door now. It is with another fault I charge thee, one as grievous as these. I pray thee, plead guilty to it, for thou wilt but speak the truth.

Then I pray God that this thy guilt may be cleansed and that thou mayest offend him no longer with this thine 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 become accustomed to sit in a kind of solemn silence to hear the gospel. O, not so in Wales! There is to be heard the voice of acclamation. Every person express 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 gogonjant! 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 hath 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 Whitefield. 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 a 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's 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. 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 true, 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, make 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 to 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 soporific draft by our coldness of heart? Hush, Master Conscience, says the sinner, that he will not be still, but cries aloud, repent, repent, and then you, a professing Christian, pass by and you administer the laudatum draft 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 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 aroused? 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-and-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 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.

Therefore I tell it with the hope that it may also awaken 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 forward 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. 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, said he, 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 into which to catch the souls without your being made Satan's fowlers to do mischief? Hath 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 besides yours? O followers of Christ! O believers in Jesus! Will ye serve under the black prince? Will ye fight against your master? Will ye 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 by our conversation injure and destroy men's souls? Thus I think I have expounded the solemn consequences of this fearful evil. Now I come in conclusion, and I pray God to help me while I deal earnestly and solemnly with you and bring out the 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 inconsistencies of professors that I do not intend to think about religion myself. My hearer, I conjure thee by the living God.

Give me thine ear a moment while I pull this vain excuse of thine to pieces. What hast thou to do with the inconsistencies of another? To his own master he shall stand or fall? What will it better thee if one half of all the professors of religion be sent to hell? What comfort will that be to thee when thou shalt come there thyself? Man, will God require the sins of other people at thine hands? Where is it said that God will punish thee for what another does? Or dost thou imagine that God will reward thee because another is guilty? Thou art surely not foolish enough for that. I ask thee, what canst thou 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 thine? If thou shouldst see twenty men drinking poison, would that be a reason why thou shouldst drink it? If, passing over London Bridge, thou shouldst see a dozen miserable creatures leaping off the parapet, there would be a good argument why thou thyself shouldst seek to stop them, but no argument why thou shouldst leap to. What if there be hundreds of suicides? Will that excuse thee if thou shalt shed thine 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 as thieves as I. Thou wilt be punished for thine own offenses, remember, not for the offenses of another.

Man, I conjure thee, look this in the face. How can this help to assuage thy misery? How can this help to make thee happier in hell, because thou sayest there are so many hypocrites in this world? Besides, thou knowest well enough that the church is not so bad as thou sayest it is. Thou seest some that are inconsistent, but are there not many that are holy? Dost thou dare to say there are none? I tell thee, man, thou art 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 a 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 thou comest before the bar of God, dost thou think that this will serve thee 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, thou art adding insult to wickedness, thou art guilty thyself, and now thou dost malign mine own children, the princes of the blood? The Lord will not have thee say that at last.

He has pardoned His children. He is ready to pardon thee. He sends mercy to thee this day.

But if thou reject it, imagine not that thou shalt escape by recounting the sins of the pardoned ones, that rather this shall be an addition to thy sin, and thou shalt perish the more fearfully. But come, man, once again, I would entreat of thee with all my might. What, canst thou be so foolish as to imagine that because another man is destroying his own soul by hypocrisy, that this is a reason why thou shouldst destroy thine 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, thou wilt soon be on thy dying bed. And will it comfort thee 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 are many hypocrites. Then shall the judge say, What hast thou to do with that? Thou hast not to interfere with my kingdom and with my judgship.

For thine own offenses thou art lost. 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 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 hurt.

That is an impossibility. You must be either doing good or evil. There is no borderland 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 toxin rings from every church steeple, the drum is sounding at 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 yet. 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 thy 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. This message, How Saints May Help the Devil, was preached by Charles Haddon Spurgeon on July 24th, 1859. This is Charles Kelsch inviting you to join me again for another message from the Prince of Preachers.

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