

Recognizing the Devil's Word Among Men

by F.C. Jennings

The sermon challenges the perception of morality by highlighting that the Devil's work is often more prevalent in the self-righteous than in the openly sinful.

Scripture: Proverbs 16:5, Matthew 23:23, Matthew 23:33, John 7:7, James 4:6

Topics: "Spiritual Pride", "Hypocrisy"

Description

F.C. Jennings challenges the congregation to discern the true work of the Devil by presenting two contrasting characters: a disreputable, profane man and a respectable, self-complacent church leader. Drawing from the teachings of Jesus, he emphasizes that it is the proud, religious, and self-righteous individuals who are often more aligned with the Devil's work than those openly living in sin. This thought-provoking sermon urges listeners to reflect on the true nature of their hearts and actions, highlighting the dangers of spiritual pride and hypocrisy.

Transcript

I would like to put before you a picture of two men, and ask you to tell me which, in your judgment, is the best exhibition of the work of the Devil.

The first is by no means a choice character. You will find him in the saloon; very probably he will be the proprietor of the saloon. His name is not on any church roll. He is loose in life, profane in lip, careless of decencies. He is indeed "hail-fellow-well met" with every one, but yet truly esteemed by none. He is what is usually called "disreputable" by the refined, educated or religious classes, an "honest fellow" by his associates, who find it difficult to conceive of honesty in such a world as this apart from defiant ungodliness.

We will put him on one side, and now let me bring before you a man of the highest respectability and self-complacency. He is a "church member," and prides himself, not a little, on the fact.

Indeed we may safely go still further in these days, and see in him a very pillar of the church; an elder, whose wealth alone, with its consequent standing in the business, and influence in the social world, have given him this office; perhaps we may go still higher; he may even be called "The Rev." or "The Very Rev.," or what-not; it is not the position but the character, we seek to look at. Wherever he is, every breath of flattery that blows his way he appropriates to himself as his undoubted due. He is, if a man of affairs, exceedingly fond of that utterly misquoted and misused text, that perhaps more than any other has been

bedraggled in the mire of man's covetousness, "be diligent in business." Nor does he shrink from any little sacrifice that shall secure the greater esteem of his fellow-men; like all else his benefactions are "respectable;" and, if he be very wealthy, they may appear princely.

Now which of these two is the truest example of the Devil's work?

It will probably be admitted that the first may be accepted as an exact representation of what the Devil can do with a man, but it is difficult to see in the second any exhibition of the Devil's work at all. Quite the contrary; he is a respectable religious member of society; perhaps with some of the lesser defects inherent amongst men; but not to be associated with the Devil at all. Let us see.

It is a most striking fact that when our Lord Jesus was on earth, He never, in one single instance, witnessed to the publican and harlot that their deeds were evil. We may wonder why He did not, but it is quite sure He did not. And why? Surely because it was unnecessary. That kind of people knew it well then, and know it well now of themselves, without any one else telling them. But to whom does He witness that their deeds are evil and they hate Him on account of that witness (John 7:7)? In the 23rd chapter of Matthew we read the sternest words that ever fell from those blessed lips. He calls those to whom He speaks - the men of the most rigid religious correctness, men of the highest social respectability, of the greatest formal piety and religious pretension; not merely "church-members" as we should now call them but church leaders - "fools and blind, blind guides, hypocrites," until in the climax of His holy indignation, He says, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23:33)

It is, then, the testimony of God's Word, whether we are prepared to accept it or not, that it is the proud, religious, self-complacent character that is a truer expression of the Devil's work amongst men than the openly profane and morally debased.

This is so utterly contrary, not merely to what is recognized in business circles, but to what is taught from the bulk of Christian pulpits, that it is difficult to sufficiently press the importance of giving it careful and candid consideration.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/fc-jennings/recognizing-the-devils-word-among-men/>

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