

GOSPEL PEARLS

Help or hinderance?

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23_08_2021



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Jesus said: "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold

sacred? And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it. And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by him who sits upon it."
(Matthew 23: 13-22)

The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees that is condemned by Jesus is a form of pride because they attributed to themselves the possession of certain personal qualities as due to their own merit. That is why everything they did was aimed at earning the praise of others. We too can fall into pride. Our levels of culture, artistic sensitivity, and religious devotion often do not depend on us, but on how we have been raised. Therefore, instead of being helpful, such pride hinder our own journey of personal conversion as well as of those around us because they negatively affect our behaviour. Hence, honestly ask yourself whether you are a help or a hindrance to the conversion of those you meet on your own faith journey everyday.