

The Chimney Sweeper (Songs of Experience) Themes

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Failure of Religion: This poem shows how religion (like the Church) hurts children instead of helping them. The little chimney sweeper is a poor child. This little child has to do dangerous work. His parents do not care much about him—they have gone to church to pray. This means they care more about religion than their own child.

The child says he used to be happy. But when he smiled and played, his parents made him work. He had to wear dirty clothes and learn to be sad. Religion did not protect his childhood. The poem says that people think they are good just because they go to church and follow rules. But they ignore the pain of children like him. The Church and the rich use poor children for their own comfort. In the end, the poem says this kind of religion is false. It creates more sadness instead of joy.