

THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL DESTROYED

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A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested,
that he might destroy the works of the devil.”*
1 John 3:8

IN this chapter John makes a sharp and clear division of mankind into two classes. He gives not even the slightest hint that there is, or ever was, or ever can be a third class. He describes men as being the children of God or else the children of the devil, and tells us how the two classes are made manifest (see verse 10).

Now, this distinction would not have been drawn by John so sharply if it had not existed, for he was a man of a most loving heart and gentle spirit, and if he could somewhere or other have found a space for neutrals, or what I call “betweenites,” or people who come in midway between saints and sinners, I am sure he would have done it. No one could suspect John of lack of charity, and therefore as *he* was convinced that no middle position was possible, we may be quite clear upon that point, and at once dismiss every theory which is meant to flatter the undecided.

At this day the world is still divided into children of God and children of the evil one. This distinction ought never to be forgotten, and yet thousands of sermons are preached in which it is quite ignored—and congregations are commonly addressed as if they were all the people of God. How shall we preach the truth of God if we begin by assuming a lie? Yet to assume that all our hearers are Christians is to begin with an error.

Is it not highly probable that men will be built up in falsehood if the very truth which is addressed to them is put in a false way? No, my hearers, we cannot talk to you as all the people of God, for you are not. Some of you are the children of the wicked one, and though it may not be pleasant to be told so, yet it is no business of ours to please you. Our duty is to preach so as to please God and benefit the souls of men—and that can only be effected by an honest enunciation of matters of fact.

There is a definite and fixed line in the sight of God between the living and the dead, between those who are born again and those who abide in their fallen estate—between the spiritual and the carnal, between the believing and the unbelieving. There is a gulf fixed between the two orders of men, which, blessed be God, can be passed, but which, nevertheless, divides the whole race as though a vast chasm had opened up in the in their midst, and set them apart from each other, separating them into two camps.

This important distinction ought to be observed in public prayer. And this is a point in which we are dissatisfied with most liturgies, because they are necessarily composed with the view of suiting both saints and sinners, and as a necessary result, they are not suitable for either.

The joyous notes of confidence which are becoming in the children of God are left out, because the ungodly could not use such expressions of exultant faith. While, on the other hand the wailing notes which are most suitable to anxious souls are put into the mouths of men who, by the grace of God, have long ago found their Savior. Men walking in full fellowship with the Lord are not correctly described as “miserable sinners”—neither is it theirs to pray as if they had never found pardon and life in Christ Jesus.

It is impossible that public prayer should be suitable for a mixed congregation unless a portion of it is evidently for such as fear the Lord, and another portion for such as do not fear Him. I suppose it

would be difficult, if not impossible, to compose a liturgy for common use upon strictly truthful principles—and yet that order of public prayer which ignores the distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate must inevitably be mischievous to the souls of men. In this matter the servant of the Lord must discern between the precious and the vile, or he cannot be as God’s mouth.

If this distinction is to be thought of in preaching and in public prayer, it should be specially considered in our personal religion. We ought to know whose we are and whom we serve. We ought to know the differences which the Lord has made by grace, and whether or not He has made us to differ from the unregenerate.

Every man in trade wishes to be sure of his position, whether he is prospering or not. And surely we ought each one to know our position in that one great enterprise of life which, if it finds us bankrupt at the last must leave us so forever. It is of the utmost importance for a man to know whether he has been enlightened or abides in darkness, whether he is the slave of sin or the Lord’s free man.

Each man should know that he is either saved or lost, pardoned or condemned—he may not sit down in peace in the deceitful hope that though he may not be a child of God, he is, nevertheless, no heir of wrath, for it cannot be—he is one thing or the other at this moment. Everyone is under the wrath of God unless he has believed in Jesus, and so has become accepted in the Beloved.

Two seeds there are, and only two—the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—and you, my friend, belong to one or other of these. John sums up the vital distinction when he writes, “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

Let this stand as the preface of the sermon, for the spirit of it will run through my whole discourse.

And now I come to the words of the text itself—“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

We shall speak of four things—*the works of the devil. The purpose of God. The manifestation of the Son of God. And the experience within ourselves* of the meaning of this text. Oh, for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may think aright and speak with power.

I. First, then, let us say a little upon THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.

This very strong expression is descriptive of *sin*, for the preceding sentence so interprets it. I will read the whole verse—“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil”—that is, that he might destroy *sin*.

This name for sin is first of all *a word of detestation*. Sin is so abominable in the sight of God and of good men that its various forms are said to be “the works of the devil.” Men do not like the idea of having any connection with the devil, and yet they have a most intimate connection with him until they are made anew by the Spirit of God.

When it was supposed in a superstitious age that a man had commerce with the devil, he was abhorred or feared, and most properly so—he that is in league with Beelzebub has forfeited all right to honor. Yet let every man know that if he lives in sin, his actions are called by the Holy Spirit, “the works of the devil.”

Satan is “the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.” Think of that, you ungodly ones. The devil is at work in you—as a smith at his forge. Is it not a shocking thought that if I am living in sin, I am the bond slave of Satan, and I am doing his work for him? If the devil be in the heart, the whole life will be more or less tainted by the presence of that arch-enemy of God and man.

Do not laugh at sin, then. Do not dare to trifle with it, for it is dangerous and deadly, because it is of the devil, from whom no good thing can ever come. Oh, if men could but see the slime of the serpent upon their pleasurable sins, the venom of asps upon their dainty lusts, and the smoke of hell upon their proud and boastful thoughts, surely they would loathe that which they now delight in! If sin connects us with the devil himself, let us flee from it as from a devouring lion. The expression is a word of detestation—may it enter into our hearts and make sin horrible to us.

Next, it is *a word of distinction*—it distinguishes the course of the ungodly man from the life of the man who believes in the Lord Jesus. He that is of God does the works of God—his life is the work of God—it is a life which has much that is God-like about it, and he is upheld by the power of God, the ever blessed Spirit.

But the ungodly man's life is very different—he lives for himself, he seeks his own pleasure—he hates all that oppose him, he is up in arms against the Lord and His truth—and all that is pure and good. His spirit is not the spirit of God, but of the evil one. There is a radical distinction between the gracious and the graceless—and this comes out in their works—the one works the works of God, and the other the works of the devil. I know that this doctrine is not pleasant, but it is true, and therefore it must be plainly stated.

I hear one say, “Look at me. Am I a child of the devil? I may not be much of a saint, but I am no worse than many of your professing Christians.” I answer that may be the case, for professing Christians are sometimes horrible hypocrites. But what has that to do with you? Ah, my friend, their perishing will not help your salvation. If you are not trusting in Christ and living under the power of His love, you may be as good as any hypocrite, or even better, and yet you may be widely different from a real Christian.

If you have not the life of God in you, you cannot do the works of God. The mineral cannot rise into a vegetable by itself—it requires another touch from the creative hand. The vegetable cannot rise into an animal unless the Creator shall work a miracle, and even so, you as a carnal man cannot become a spiritual man by any spontaneous generation—the new life must be imparted to you by the quickening Spirit.

The distinction of your works from those of the real believer in Christ is as great as that between the works of the devil and the works of God—and this may show you how great the distinction of the natures must be by which these different fruits are produced.

The language before us is, next, *a word of descent*. Sin is “of the devil.” It came from him. He is its parent and patron. Sin is not so of the devil that we can lay the blame of our sins upon him, for that is our own. You must not blame the tempter for tempting you to do that which without your will he could not make you do.

He may tempt you, but that would be no sin of yours if your will did not yield thereto. The responsibility lies with your will. The devil has plenty of sin of his own to answer for, and yet he is often made a pack-horse to carry loads of evil which are none of his.

Mother Eve taught us that art when she said, “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” And since then men have become wonderfully proficient in the science of excuse-making, frequently imputing their own guilt to the devil's guile.

Yet sin, in a sadly true sense, does come of the devil. He first introduced it into the world. How or when he himself first sinned and fell from being an angel of light to become the apostle of darkness we will not conjecture. Many have thought that the pride of his lofty station, or envy of the foreseen glories of the Son of Man, may have overthrown Him. But at any rate, he kept not his first estate, but became a rebel against his Lord, and the active promoter of all evil. Being expelled from heaven for his wickedness, he desired to wreak his revenge upon God by alienating the human race from its obedience.

He saw what an interest the Creator had taken in man, and therefore judged that he could grieve Him greatly by seducing man from obedience. He perceived that the Maker, when He formed the earth, did not rest. When He had made the birds and fishes, did not rest. When He had made sun, moon and stars, did not rest. But when He had fashioned man, He was so well-content that then He took a day of rest, and consecrated it forever to be a Sabbath.

Thus was God's unresting care for man made manifest. “Surely,” said the evil one, “if I can turn this favored being into an enemy of God, then I shall bring dishonor upon the name of the Most High, and have my revenge.” Therefore he alighted in the garden, and tempted our first parents, thus opening the gate by which sin entered into the world with all its train of woe.

In that sense sin is truthfully described as being the work of the devil. He brought the flame which has caused so great a burning. Since then he has been in some degree the author of sin by often tempting men. I doubt not that he suggests to many a sinner the delights of the flesh, and the pleasures of self—and that he shuts the eyes of conscience to the truth, and hardens the heart against the threatenings of God.

Under these influences men doubtless rush into wild extravagances of evil, willingly yielding themselves to be led captive at his will. Doubtless, Satan not only suggests sin to men, but as one spirit influences another spirit, he influences men strongly towards that which is evil, and blinds them against that which is good.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,” is a prayer which plainly connects the evil one with temptation, as we know that he is connected with it as a matter of fact. This is his constant employment, to be tempting one way or another the sons of men. Hence sin is the work of the devil, but not so that it excuses us—it is our work because we willingly yield—let us be thoroughly ashamed of such work when we find that the devil has a hand in it. May Almighty God deliver us from the mighty spirit of evil!

Consider, next, that we have here *a word of description*. The work of sin is the work of the devil because it is such work as he delights in. What are the works of the devil? They are such actions as are like himself, and exhibit his nature and spirit. Open your eyes, and you will surely see “the works of the devil”—they are everywhere in this poor world. The earth is defiled with his horrible productions.

How delightful it is to take a survey of the works of God! The wise men say, “The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.” I heard of a good man who went down the Rhine, but took care to read a book all the way, for fear he should have his mind taken off from heavenly topics by the beauties of nature.

I confess I do not understand such a spirit—I do not want to do so. If I go into an artist’s house, I do that artist a displeasure if I take no notice of his works under the pretext that I am quite absorbed in himself.

Why not enjoy the objects in which our heavenly Father has set forth His wisdom and power? There is nothing in any of the works of God to defile, debase, or carnalize the soul. Delight yourself in all your heavenly Father’s handiwork, and make it to be a ladder by which you climb to Himself.

But what a very different contemplation is that which lies before us in the works of the devil! Ah, me, what a picture for a painter here—the works of the devil! Yet surely, brush and color would altogether fail. Oh, evil one, how cunning are your works—in malice have you made them all. The earth is full of your abominable things!

Look abroad in the world and you see *atheism*—men made by God deny His existence. They could not stand upright and speak if He did not enable them to do so, and yet they cry, “There is no God!” Into what a condition must an intelligent mind be brought ere it can vent such folly! Surely this must come from that arch-fiend who above all things desires that there should be no God!

See, also, how much there is of *ignorance* abroad, a leaden night of ignorance of God and of His Son. Is not this the work of the prince of darkness? Note also the abounding *unbelief* of truth which would be believed at once if men’s minds were pure—of truth which is salvation to those who accept it, and yet is rejected by many as if it were injurious to them.

Whence comes all this *indifference* to God and His grace, and what is the origin of all this plague of *doubting* which is now upon us? Is it not of the same character as that which abode in the serpent’s heart when he whispered, “Hath God said?” and again, “Ye shall not surely die.” Here is the liar that is from the beginning still producing a host of lies against God Himself.

What is this *idolatry* which we see everywhere abroad, not only among the heathen, but among those who call themselves Christians—the worship of visible symbols instead of the spiritual adoration of the unseen Spirit? It must have come from Satan, who has made himself the god of this world, setting himself up to be God’s rival.

Things offered to idols are offered to devils, for a mere idol is nothing in the world—its evil lies in its representing a principle which is opposed to the one true, invisible God. The superstitions which degrade humanity—which are an insult to our manhood—all these are most pleasing to Satan, and approved by him. And so they are fitly described as “the works of the devil.”

And what, my brethren, is *blasphemy*—that common profanity which pollutes our streets? Who could have taught men wantonly, and for no purpose whatever, to use the foul and filthy language that is so common nowadays? This must be the speech of pandemonium, the dialect of hell.

And what is *pride*, my brethren, pride in a creature that will die? Pride in a sinful worm?—the pride of dress, the pride of life, the pride of talent? What are those haughty looks? What are those presumptuous words? What are those contemptuous glances—what are all these things but works of the devil? He whom Milton describes as thinking it “better to reign in hell than serve in heaven”—he surely is the great fomentor of all pride among mankind.

As for *deceit*, so current everywhere, and worst of all, religious deceit, formalism and *hypocrisy*—whence come these but from the bottomless pit—from him who transforms himself into an angel of light? Are not all liars his dear children?

My list is long enough—but I see a numerous brood hatched beneath the wings of *hate*—envy, strife, wrath, bitterness, malice, revenge. These are as fiery flying serpents in this wilderness, inflaming men’s blood. I see these accursed evils rousing nations into war, dividing communities with discords, embittering families that otherwise might be full of love.

Yea, making men to be the worst enemies of men. These all come from him who is a murderer from the beginning, and is the aider and abettor of all hatred and strife. What a busy being he has been! How he has toiled incessantly day and night to set up a kingdom of hate in opposition to the empire of eternal love!

With what diligence has he smothered the world with a pall of darkness, so that men sit down to weep and rise up to torment one another. Ah me, what mischief this unclean spirit has wrought! His works are evil, only evil, and that continually. He has led the human race to become accomplices in his treason against the majesty of heaven, allies in his rebellion against the sovereignty of God Most High.

The works of the devil make up a black picture—it is a thick darkness over all the land—even a darkness that may be felt.

II. But now, secondly, and much more joyously, let us consider THE PURPOSE OF GOD—“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

Ring out sweetly all the silver bells of earth, and all the golden harps of heaven—God has purposed that the terrible work of the devil upon the earth shall be every atom of it destroyed. Yes, mark that word “*destroyed*.” Not limited, nor alleviated, nor neutralized, but destroyed.

Oh, men and brethren, what could you and I do against such a power as Satan—so malicious and so strong—and withal so cunning and subtle, and apt to deceive? Who among us can loosen his works, and cast his cords from us? But if God has purposed it, verily the purpose of JEHOVAH shall stand! If this be the divine decree, tremble, O Tophet, and you, Beelzebub, for there shall come an end to all your works, if God has purposed to destroy them!

The work which lies in this purpose is assuredly *a divine work*. The Lord who can create can certainly destroy. Destruction lies in the hand of Omnipotence, and is a prerogative of the Eternal One. Destruction of forces so terrible must come from the Lord alone. What could you and I do in this business?

Ourselves originally under Satan’s power, ourselves destroyed—could we destroy the destroyer? The image of God in us has been marred by the work of Satan. Could we restore that image? Enmity to God has been created in our hearts by Satan—could we while yet enemies tear out that enmity? No, another hand must make us friends—a hand outside of us.

That which has been done by the powers of darkness must be undone by the eternal light, or else it will remain forever. It is a divine work—this destruction of the works of the devil—and herein lies our hope of its being accomplished.

And there is, to my mind, about it the idea of *a conquering work*. When are the palaces and the fortifications of great kings destroyed? Not till the kings themselves have been overthrown in a fair fight. But when their power is broken, then it is that the conquerors raze the castle and burn the stronghold.

Glory be unto JEHOVAH, it is His purpose to win such a victory over the prince of darkness that every work of his shall be destroyed. “Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he has made in the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”

Your right hand O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces. Our Almighty Champion has come forth with a shout of victory to divide the spoil with the strong. The arch-enemy is vanquished, and therefore his works are to be destroyed!

This means also *a complete work*. The product of evil is not to be cut down for a time and left to grow again. The tree of the forest is felled by the axe, but the root remains—and at the scent of water it will bud and send forth branches. But the purpose of God is utterly to *destroy* the works of the devil, and destroyed they shall be.

In the heart of man, when God begins His work, He does not cease till He has utterly destroyed all sin, yea, the very tendency and possibility of sin. And then He conducts the purified spirit up to His right hand, having neither spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing. In the world, also, do not doubt it, oh you soldiers of Christ, who are ready to turn your backs in the day of battle—He will yet drive sin out of its entrenchments—the habitations of cruelty shall become the temples of adoration.

All people shall bow before the Lord, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. Up from this poor planet there shall ascend, like smoke from a great golden altar of incense, the perpetual hallelujahs of a ransomed race, redeemed by blood and power from all the rule of the enemy. Glory be to God, He has purposed it, and He will accomplish it.

It is a complete work and *a conclusive work*, for the Lord Jesus will so break the head of the old dragon that he shall never wear the crown again. Christ has come, not to fight a battle with Satan which shall continue throughout all ages, but to win a victory which shall so crush the power of evil that it shall not molest the world again.

The powers of darkness upon this earth hang out their flags, and ring out the clarions of victory, but they are too fast. Wait a little while, and He that will come shall come, and will not tarry. And when He comes, He shall lead captivity captive, and the reign of captive goodness and truth, and love shall be established forever and ever. Rebellion shall not rise up a second time.

Oh, how glorious is the text—“For this purpose the Son of God was manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” Sin, in every shape and form the Lord shall destroy from off the face of the earth forever.

III. Thirdly, our text plainly tells us how this is to be done—By THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SON OF GOD.

“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested.” The work of the devil was so clever, the foundations of it were so deeply laid, and the whole thing had such a semblance of omnipotence about it, and was, indeed, in itself so strong, that no champion was found in heaven or on earth that could hope to destroy it.

It never entered Satan’s thoughts that God Himself could deign to suffer and to die. He said within himself—“If I can make man so to offend God that he must justly be incensed against him, then I shall have done the work effectually. If I can make man a rebel, God’s infinite holiness cannot overlook his rebellion, and He must punish him. And so I shall have made for God a perpetual race of enemies, and He will have lost the love of myriads of His creatures.”

He did not know the boundless love and wisdom of JEHOVAH. Even his angelic intellect could never have conceived the matchless plan of atonement by a sacrifice, propitiation by substitution. The blessed fact of the Son of God becoming manifest in human flesh, and dying in human form—to destroy the works of the devil—entered not into a creature's mind.

Yet this was always in God's purpose, for the better display of His divine attributes. Behind, and under, and over the works of the devil, the Lord had ever the design that this evil should be permitted that he might baffle it with love, and that the glory of His grace might be revealed.

My text has in it to my mind a majestic idea, first, of the difficulties of the case—that the Son of God must needs be manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And then, secondly, of the ease of His victory.

Have you been abroad at midnight when darkness has been all about you, dense and palpable? Not a star was visible, the moon had forgotten to shine. You could scarcely see your hand when you held it before your eyes. The blackness seemed to be not only above, beneath, and around, but also within you. You were embedded in a thick, heavy, sensible ebony mass. How could all this be scattered? What power could uplift the pall and scatter the mass?

Lo, in the east old Sol has lifted up his head, and the black walls have vanished. Not a wreck remains, the works of darkness are destroyed by the manifestation of the light. That is the thought of the text—"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested." Uprising from His divine retreat in the silences of eternity, Christ appeared in human form, and scattered and utterly destroyed the works of darkness.

Let us see how this was done.

First, Christ's manifestation, even *in His incarnation*, was a fatal blow to the works of Satan. Did God come down to men? Was He incarnate in the infant form that slept in Bethlehem's manger? Then the Almighty has not given up our nature to be the prey of sin. Despair may not be! If one is born on earth who is divine as well as human, then joy be unto you, O race of Adam! Hear you not the song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men"? It cannot be that the race is given up to perpetual night if the Son of God is manifested in such fashion as this.

Next, look to *the life of Christ on earth*, and see how He there destroyed the works of the devil. It was a glorious duel in the wilderness when they stood foot to foot—the champions of good and evil! How dexterously the evil one played his weapons! How cunningly he tempted the Christ of God! But the Lord Jesus used the sword of the Spirit, and "It is written." "It is written." "It is written," struck home till the evil one spread his dragon wings and fled away, for he had found his victor.

Evil spirits had taken possession of human forms. Legions of devils were established in men. But the Lord Jesus Christ had only to speak the word, and away they fled, glad to leap into swine, and rush into the sea, to escape from His presence. They knew that He had come who was ordained "to destroy the works of the devil."

All our Lord's preaching, all His teaching, all His labor here below was in order to the pulling away the cornerstone from the great house of darkness which Satan had built up.

But oh, dear friends, it was in *His death* that Jesus chiefly overthrew Satan and destroyed his works. Satan built upon this—that man had become offensive to God, and God must punish him—that punishment was his hope for the continuance of alienation.

Behold, the august Son of God takes the offender's place! Marvel of marvels, the Judge stands where the criminal should have stood, and is "numbered with the transgressors!" Behold, the wrath of God falls upon His Well-beloved, and Jesus suffers, that he may reconcile man to his God, and heal the breach which sin had caused.

The deed was done. Man is no more offensive to heaven, for one glorious man's boundless merit has put away the demerit of the race. Jesus has, by His unutterable beauties, removed the deformities of all who are in Him. By His obedience unto death, the law is vindicated, justice is honored, grace is glorified. Man, accepting this great sacrifice, loves and adores the Father who ordained it—and so the works of the devil in his heart are destroyed.

Our Lord's *rising again*, His ascension into glory, His sitting at the right hand of the Father, His coming again in the latter days—all these are parts of the manifestation of the Son of God, by which the works of the devil shall be destroyed. So also is *the preaching of the Gospel*.

If we want to destroy the works of the devil, our best method is to manifest more and more the Son of God. Preach up Christ and you preach down the devil. All kinds of reforms are good, and we are on the side of everything that is pure, and honest, and temperate, and righteous. Still, the best Reformer is the Christ of God.

The one medicine for man's moral sickness is the cross, and nothing but the cross. Preach the crucified Savior. Preach the incarnate God. Preach Christ full of forgiveness and love, reconciling the world unto Himself, and you have applied the best remedy to the sore. Only be it never be forgotten that Jesus destroys the works of darkness *by His Spirit*. It is the Spirit of God who puts divine energy into the sacred Word.

When the Spirit manifests Christ in a man—the works of darkness are destroyed in that man. When Christ is manifested in a nation—the works of Satan begin to fall in that nation. And in proportion as the Holy Ghost shall more and more reveal Christ to hearts and consciences, bringing them into obedience to the faith—in that degree shall the works of Satan be destroyed.

Lastly, on this point, our blessed Lord is manifested in His eternal power and kingdom as *enthroned*, in order to destroy the works of the devil, for "The government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, The Mighty God, The Father of the ages." He is such a Father, and the age is made to feel His forming hand.

Kings, presidents, parliaments, poets, leaders, and such like—these are powers visible—but there is, over them all, a power invisible. A late philosopher asserted that over all the confusion of affairs he could see a power over all which works towards righteousness. There is such a power. There is a King of kings and a Lord of lords. And who is He? It is He of whom we read, "The Father hath committed all things into his hands."

He is ruling, He is reigning even now, and despite our unbelief, things are moving on. God is being glorified. His kingdom is coming. The ultimate destruction of evil on the earth is sure, and the eternal reign of the right and of good is certain. "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof."

Enthroned at the right hand of the Eternal, Jesus sits, the man of love, the crucified. He has reassumed His eternal glory and sovereignty, and without His bidding shall not a dog move his tongue. The dominion is with the Son of God, and He shall end the reign of evil. Glory be to His name forever and ever!

IV. Lastly, I would come close home to each dear friend as we utter a few words of inquiry as to THE EXPERIENCE OF ALL THIS IN OURSELVES.

Has the Son of God been manifested to you to destroy the works of the devil in you? Come to the point, and look at home!

At first there was in your heart *an enmity to God*, for, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." Is that enmity destroyed? Has the love of God in Christ Jesus appeared to you in such a way that you can truly say you no longer hate God, but love Him? Though you do not love Him as you wish to do, yet your heart is toward Him, and you desire to be like Him, and to be with Him forever. This is a good beginning—the Son of God has destroyed your enmity—you have seen the love of God in Christ, and your rebellion against God has ceased.

The next work of the devil which usually appears in the human mind is *self-righteous pride*. The man says, "I am no enemy to God. I am righteous. If I am not perfect, yet I am tolerably good. God! I thank You that I am not as other men are. I do this and I do that, and I do not do the other." This is our natural boasting, but the Son of God destroys it.

Has the Son of God destroyed all your self-righteousness? It is a precious lot of rags. But we so constantly practice the art of patching and mending that we dream that we are clothed in royal apparel.

Have all those rags gone from you? Has a strong wind blown them right away? Have you seen your own natural nakedness? Why, if I were to talk about my own righteousness, I would be a fool and a liar in one. I have no righteousness of my own. I dare not dream of such a thing.

Is that your case? Then the Lord Jesus Christ has been manifested to destroy in you the works of the devil. That is a pretty name for your righteousness, is it not? It deserves that name, for the best righteousness of man, when it is set up in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, deserves small compliments—it is one of the works of the devil.

When the Lord has destroyed self-righteousness in us, the devil generally sets us forth another form of his power—and that is *despair*. “Ah,” he says, “you see what a sinner you are—God will never be reconciled to you! There is no forgiveness for you!” Oh that ever he should have the impudence to make a man believe so gross a slander of such a God as ours, whose very name is love, and who gave His Son to die for sinners!

But if the Lord Jesus Christ has been manifested to you, despair has gone—that work of the devil has been all destroyed—and now you have a humble hope in God, and a joy in His mercy. Though you speak sometimes with bated breath, yet your doubt is about yourself, not about your Lord. You know whom you have believed, and you know that He is a God that passes by transgression, iniquity, and sin. Thus three sets of works of the devil are gone already—enmity is gone, self-righteousness is gone, and despair is gone.

What next? Have you any *unbelief* in your heart as to the promises of God? That is a favorite work of the devil—unbelief is one of his darling children. Now, I beseech you, do not say, “I must always feel this unbelief.” No. Down with it! Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Grind your cutlasses, and cut down these doubts. All mistrusts must die. Not one of them must be spared. Hang them up before the face of the sun!

Jesus has not come that he may lock up our sins, and keep them quiet, hidden away in a dark corner. He has come to *destroy* them. Israel was not to make a league with the Canaanites, as they unwisely did with the Gibeonites. But they were to sweep out the entire race, root and branch. Thus must sin be exterminated and extirpated.

Cry to the Lord Jesus Christ that you may never tolerate the sin of unbelief, and look upon it as a pitiable infirmity. No, it is a grievous sin—war to the knife with it—the Son of God is manifested that it may be utterly destroyed. Happy is that man who no longer doubts his God, but exercises the Abrahamic faith which staggers not at the promise through unbelief!

Do fleshly lusts arise in your heart, my brother? In whose heart do they not arise? The brightest saint is sometimes tempted to the foulest vice. Yes, but he yields not thereto. By the grace of God he says, “Christ is manifested to destroy the works of the devil.” He will not play with these things and dally with them, and let them be his Delilah, for he knows that they will cost him his eyes, even if they do not ruin his soul.

He cries, “Away with them!” It is not meet, even, to mention these vile things—they are works of the devil and to be destroyed.

My brother, do you quickly become angry? I pray God you may be angry and sin not. But if you are of a hasty temper, I entreat you to overcome it. Do not say, “I cannot help it.” You must help it, or rather Christ must destroy it. It must not be tolerated. Does your anger ever intensify into hate? Do you ever feel envious of those who are better off than yourself, or better than yourself? Does that envy ever lead you to think harshly of them, to indulge yourself in suspicions that are groundless concerning them?

Oh, for the sword of the Lord and of Gideon! Slay all these Midianites, for Christ is revealed on purpose to clear the heart of the whole brood of them. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God—and hate and ill-will must not live! Every form of evil must fall. Destruction is meted out to them all. Every idol must be broken.

Oh, brethren, there is to be in every true believer the ultimate abolition of sin. What a prospect this is! The cutting up of the very roots of evil! The sooner the better. The day shall come when every child of God shall be transformed and transfigured into the likeness of Christ—and shall be without fault before the throne of God.

This is already foreshadowed upon us, for the outlines are drawn in the fact that we hate all sin, and long after perfect holiness. The great Father has put His mark upon the lump of clay, and we can see from the rough draft that He will fashion it and form it into the perfect image of His dear Son.

After that image we are struggling. It is begun in us by the power of the Spirit of God, and He will not fail nor be discouraged till the purpose of God shall be accomplished, and all the works of Satan in us shall be destroyed. This robs death of all dread—the prospect of being totally free from sin makes us welcome even the grave, if by that road we are to come to the home of the perfect.

Meanwhile, let us seek after sanctification. Let us labor after holiness, and let us abound in it to the glory of God. Despite our failures and mistakes let us pursue holiness! Taking it by the heel, let us keep close to it. So may the Lord enable us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—I JOHN 3

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—373, 680, 428

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.