

The Manifestation of the Son of God

Preached at North Street Chapel, Stamford, on Christmas Day Morning, 1858

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8

The origin of evil is a problem that has ever baffled, and will doubtless always continue to baffle the keenest human intellect. But we may see a stream of which we may never view the spring. The Nile rolls down its turbid flood through the land of Egypt, but no European eye has ever yet seen its source. So it is with evil and its origin: none can see its source; all may see its stream. But there are two things connected with evil so palpable that they cannot be denied. First, its *existence*: to *that* every town, every street, every house, I may add every heart, bears infallible witness. And secondly, that *God could not have been the author of it*; that holy Being could not have originated it. It must arise from some source distinct from a pure and holy Jehovah. It evidently existed before this world had a being, before man was created to dwell in it, and before sin became manifest in the Adam fall. The mystery is, how sin could ever enter the courts of heaven. When we view for a few moments the majesty of God, and what heaven is as his own dwelling-place, where he sits in the brightness of his own effulgence, in the rays of his own eternal glory, surrounded by myriads of bright angelic beings whose every thought is obedience and love; then to conceive how sin—that hateful thing so abhorrent to the holiness of his presence—could enter into those courts of purity and bliss, and by its subtle working, could cast down from heaven's battlements into an abyss of eternal misery and horror, a numerous host of once glorious spirits, converting them, with Satan as their head, into

damnable and hellish fiends: this, indeed, is a mystery which surpasses all our understanding, and baffles our keenest research.

Again: why God was pleased to permit sin to enter into this lower scene; why, when such consequences had already taken place, from its original invasion of heaven, as to sully the purity of thousands, if not millions, of angelic spirits, the Lord did not set up an effectual bar against the entrance of evil into this world also, but should suffer Satan so far to triumph as to infect man, created in God's own image, after his own likeness, with hell's infernal poison; when we attempt to penetrate into this mystery, do we not find it baffle all our mental powers? But when we have sought in vain to penetrate into this deep mystery, we feel at length obliged to come to this conclusion in our own minds, beyond which we cannot pass and in which alone we find rest, that God decreed in his own eternal mind to permit the entrance of evil into this lower world; that he did not and could not himself put his hand to such an accursed work, for that would make the pure and holy Jehovah the author of sin; but that it was consistent with his most sacred will that sin should come into the world, in order to manifest and magnify thereby his own glory. We cannot think that sin entered into the world unforeseen by the all-seeing Jehovah; that the Adam fall broke in upon him suddenly and unexpectedly, as the Holmfirth flood surprised the sleepers in their beds: that he who sees the end from the beginning, and to whom past, present, and future are but one eternal Now, was taken at unawares, and that the Serpent glided under the leaves and amidst the flowers of Eden unwatched, undescried, by his all-discerning eye. To think so is Atheism, or making the living Jehovah a Baal, who, when the standing or falling of man was at stake, was talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or peradventure was sleeping, and must be awaked. (1 Kings

18:27.) Nor again can we think that God would have permitted sin to enter into the world, and death by sin, unless it had been for the execution of some all-wise purpose and for the display of his own glory. Thus we are brought to see and believe these three distinct points, from which there is no escape, and beyond which there is no advance—1. that sin exists; 2, that it was the permissive will of God that it should exist; and 3, that all will be over-ruled in the end for the display of the glory of a triune God.

But if the conclusions to which I have brought you do not fully satisfy your mind, I think that you will not quarrel with the following statements: that there is such a dreadful thing in this world as sin—a fact which must be palpable to every man who has a conscience in his bosom; that this dreadful thing called sin must ever be hateful to God; that his justice, holiness, and purity, are so in diametrical opposition to it, that he is called upon to punish it; and that unless some means be found to avert this punishment, it must be executed upon every guilty head.

In all this thick darkness, how blessedly does our text shine as with a ray of light! How clearly does the Holy Ghost here, by the pen of John, tell us how this work of the devil is abrogated and abolished, and all its dreadful consequences removed, by that wondrous gift of the Son of God, which is here spoken of as his manifestation in the flesh. And I think that as we are this morning gathered together in the Lord's name—I leave the point as to celebrating or not celebrating the festival called Christmas; I waive all question as to whether the Lord was really born upon this day or not: it is sufficient for you and me to find ourselves here this morning, and it may be, with God's help and blessing, a means of leading our minds up to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, and the object and purpose for which that

blessed Redeemer came; so that waiving all minor questions upon this point, I shall this morning confine myself to these three things, that seem to me declared in our text:—

I.—*First*, what are "*the works of the devil?*"

II.—*Secondly*, the *manifestation of the Son of God*.

III.—*Thirdly*, the purpose why, "the Son of God was manifested"—"that *he might destroy the works of the devil.*"

I.—It is evident that the works of the devil must be of great strength and magnitude, that there should be a necessity for the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy them. We do not send out an army of a hundred thousand men, with all the proportionate munitions of war, to fight with a few naked savages, who have nothing wherewith to defend themselves but bows and arrows. There is a necessary proportion betwixt the object to be overcome, and the means taken to overcome it. If, then, it were necessary for the Son of God to be manifested in the flesh "to destroy the works of the devil," it is evident that the devil must have thrown up and fortified some most tremendous works, when nothing short of this could shatter them to shivers, and scatter their very dust to the wind. Fix, then, this point firmly in your mind, as a most important truth, that the works of the devil must be of awful magnitude, since nothing short of the coming of the Son of God in the flesh could destroy them. Men usually think very lightly of sin. The drunkard takes his cup; the swearer fills his mouth with oaths; the nightly depredator robs and plunders; the murderer attacks his victim; and, apart from these atrocious crimes, men of higher cast and character go on day after day indulging themselves in every excess of wickedness and iniquity, drinking down sin like water. What little idea they have of the magnitude of the crimes that they are

committing! What little conception they possess of the holiness, purity, and majesty of that great and glorious Being against whom they are sinning with so high a hand! For, in looking at sin, we must view the Person against whom sin is committed. If a man were to offer an insult to our Sovereign, it would be viewed in a very different light from an insult offered to a person of his own rank. There was a wretch of a man calling himself a gentleman who, some years ago, struck our Queen with a switch. How the outrage aroused the indignation of the whole country! Had he struck one of his own rank in a similar way, would that have caused such a general ebullition of feeling throughout the land? It was the dignity of the Sovereign that made the insult so atrocious. So it is the majesty of God, his purity, holiness, and infinite greatness, that make sin to be so enormous an evil; it is the dignity of the Person against whom the offence is committed, that stamps it and invests it with so awful a magnitude. We may perhaps think, in the folly and unbelief of our hearts, that there was no great crime in Adam eating an apple; we may fancy that the transgression was not so very enormous in his listening to the suggestion of his wife, or in her complying with the temptation of Satan. In fact, infidels and sceptics have ridiculed the whole transaction as what they call "an Eastern myth," that is, a fable of the same character as the gods of Homer, or the traditions of our Saxon ancestors; and even men who profess to believe the Bible is an inspired book, have indulged in many unbelieving and erroneous views about the fall of man. They do not see that Adam in a state of innocency stood as our federal head; that he was not, as we are, prone to sin by nature, but though able to fall, was free to stand; that as he was able, so he was bound by every consideration to keep the positive and express command that God had given him not to touch the forbidden fruit; and that by wilfully and deliberately breaking it, he as it were struck a blow against the very majesty of

heaven, insulted his Maker to his face, and did a deed that God most justly abhorred as being committed with such signal aggravation. At this gate entered sin and death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) This, then, was the great work of the devil, the masterpiece of Satan, to deface the image of God in which man was created; to separate the creature from the Creator; to introduce into the very heart of man that infernal poison which filled his own veins; to enlarge the domain of evil; to triumph over God by turning this beautiful earth into a second hell; and to glut his fiendish hate by involving man in the same hopeless misery into which he himself had been cast. It was therefore not only an act of the most damnable treachery on the part of Satan the tempter, but it was an act also of the greatest sin on the part of the tempted. Adam deliberately refused to listen to God, and gave ear to Satan. He wilfully trampled upon the solemn command of God, and preferred the counsel of Satan to the authority of his Creator and Benefactor.

Again: one might think, as many have not only thought but said, that the entrance of sin into the world by the fall of Adam could not have affected the whole human race, or entailed the same penalty on all his future offspring. It may be asked, how could one sin thoroughly destroy the image of God in which Adam was created, and carry death both into body and soul? But do we not see an almost similar effect naturally in the case of certain poisons of great potency and malignity? There is a poison unhappily too well known by the name of strychnine, so powerful that one grain will destroy human life with the most agonising convulsions. A drop of poison from a venomous snake, such as you can hardly see upon the point of a needle, will course through every artery and vein in a man's body, and speedily turn it into a mass of

putrefaction. If, then, poison, whether vegetable or animal, of so small a magnitude, possess such destructive power over the juices of the body, can we not see how the poison of sin may act in an analogous way upon the soul, and turn, so to speak, all its once wholesome juices into a mass of loathsome corruption? But whether the figure apply or not, it is most certain, from the unerring word of truth, that the one sin of Adam ruined his own nature throughout. He was duly forewarned by the mouth of God—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." That sentence took place. Though Adam's natural life was prolonged for more than nine hundred years after this, yet mortality and disease, at the very instant of the fall invaded his frame, and from that moment he began to die; and not only so, but death without a moment's delay took place in his soul: he became dead in trespasses and sins on the very spot where he fell, and in falling lost the image of God in which he had been created.

Now we, as Adam's descendants, are daily and hourly feeling the consequences of his fall. He sinned not alone; he fell not as a single solitary individual, for the whole human race was in his loins and fell with him. The word of truth declares, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that [margin, "in whom"] all have sinned. By the offence of one, [or "by one offence," margin], judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. 5:12, 18.) Adam, we read, "begat a son in his own image, after his own likeness." (Gen. 5:3.) Indeed, how could he beget any other? All beget after their kind; and a sinner begets a sinner as naturally and necessarily as a beast of prey begets a beast of prey, or a vulture begets a vulture. It may seem hard that we should suffer for Adam's sin; but do we not daily see similar instances of the transmission of a sad inheritance? How many a child is at this very moment

feeling the consequences of its parent's transgression! How many little things are born into this world just to struggle through a few years of misery, entirely in consequence of their parents' profligacy or debauchery! How scrofula, consumption, insanity all run in the blood and taint generation after generation! We may say how hard it is for little children to suffer for their father's sins or inherit their mother's maladies. It is hard, and it has wrung thousands of parents' hearts, to see many a fair daughter pine away like a lily, many a gallant son droop and die under consumption's deadly stroke, because the mother or the father carried its taint in their bosom. It is grievous to see children swept into poverty through a gambling father; or a mother's sin taint the child with a life-long disgrace. Before then you complain of, or quarrel with the consequences of the fall, see whether you can adjust these minor matters; and if you admit the present transmission of disease and suffering from parent to child, look higher, and see whether sin may not be transmitted as well as sorrow. You cannot but see that sin exists;—that it has filled the world with misery—has polluted this beautiful earth—and rules and reigns from shore to shore. Whence came this deadly plague, under which thousands and tens of thousands perish under the wrath of God? From the fall, that work of the devil; that is the fountain head. But look at the stream as well as at the fountain. Wherever you see sin, you see a work of the devil. For Satan does not cease to work. He was not satisfied with introducing sin in the first instance into the world, and thus ruining Adam and all his future race. One would have thought he might have stopped there, and not pressed on his conquest. One would have supposed, did we not know how that proud and fallen spirit is filled with the direst malice and enmity against God and man, that he would then have stayed his slaughtering hand. But nothing stops him. Though he knows that it will but eventually aggravate his own

misery, he will still go on seducing and deceiving man, until he is shut up for ever in the bowels of that hell which God has prepared for him, and into which he and all his reprobate angels will be cast, with all the nations that know not God. Why does a dog worry a whole fold? Is not one lamb enough to appease hunger? Why night after night wound and tear what he cannot eat? The mad thirst for blood that boils in his veins hurries him blindly on, till the stake or the gun finish his career. So with Satan. He was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44), and he will be a murderer to the end. Wherever mischief is to be done, there he is. As in Eastern climes, directly a carcass falls the vultures are seen hovering in the sky and congregating from all quarters to prey upon it; so wherever there is the scent of crime upon the gale, there Satan and his infernal agents are. Has this vulture never seen from afar the risings of sin in the heart? Who knotted the halter for Ahitophel, put the sword into the hand of Saul, and tied the noose round the neck of Judas? Who filled David's heart with lust, and planned the death of Uriah? Who enticed Absalom into rebellion and incest, and then hung him up in the oak as a mark for the darts of Joab? Who tempted David to number Israel, and turned Solomon, the wisest of men, into a poor old, foolish, idolatrous dotard? One answer suffices. The same foul spirit who is continually stirring every sin of the human heart, kindling every evil passion, working upon every lust, and stimulating every vicious, ungodly desire. It is hard, I fully admit, for us to distinguish, especially when blinded by temptation, between the workings of our fallen nature in itself and the agency of Satan upon it. The sea sometimes heaves and rolls with what is called a ground swell when there is not a breath of air in the sky; at other times the winds distinctly agitate its bosom and raise up the stormy waves. So sometimes the heart heaves and swells without any direct Satanic influence; at others he evidently makes it cast up mire and dirt. But he is worst

when least seen. Judas, when the thought first entered his mind to betray his Master, did not see that Satan prompted the desire. Covetousness, enmity against the Lord, jealousy of Peter and John, the secret infidelity of his heart, weariness of the restraints of religion, fear of persecution, and other mixed motives—for men are not usually led into crime by one temptation—might have been the strings that drew him toward his horrid deed, but Satan pulled the last cord that plunged him in. The devil, we read, put it into his heart (John 13:2), but was there no seed-bed ready for the hellish suggestion to root in? Thus, though Satan "put it into his heart," Judas saw not his hand; though the very inspiration of hell, it so mingled itself with his own breath after money and revenge, that he could not distinguish one from the other. Though not like him abandoned to Satan, it may still be hard for us to distinguish at all times between the workings of our corrupt nature and the influence of the Prince of darkness, I doubt not we can sometimes do so. But we may depend upon it, that where sin is present, Satan is not far absent. Wherever there is anything to be done to disbelieve or disobey, to bring reproach upon the cause of God and truth, to distress the mind of others, to grieve one's own conscience, cripple one's own usefulness, injure one's own character, and, but for grace, eternally ruin our soul, we may be sure that Satan or some of his agents are not a great way off. Were our eyes miraculously opened to perceive the true state of the case, it might be that we should see ourselves, when under the influence of temptation, surrounded with these infernal fiends, in the very contrary sense, and with a very different prospect from that which was displayed to view when the Lord opened the eyes of Elisha's servant, and he saw the mountain surrounded with horses and chariots of fire to protect his master.

But Satan's main seat is the unregenerate heart. Here he has

erected his strong citadel, and from this, as from the centre, he is continually prompting every wicked desire, suggesting or fostering every ungodly thought, and stimulating the first incipient movement of sin, until it breaks forth into open action.

We see it more particularly in the world without, as it comes sometimes under our observation. When men are alone, sin is plotting in their heart; when they get together, they put it into execution. Can any crowd of men be assembled without sin being inflamed by the concourse? The more that men are gathered together, the more sin acts by mutual contact. As in a conflagration, the larger the risk the greater the flame: as in a gunpowder magazine, the more materials the greater the explosion. A mob will do what an individual durst not; and many a youth has been plunged into grievous crime, as one of a company, who would have shuddered to commit it alone.

We see "the works of the devil" also in the Church of God. What divisions—what animosities—what unkind thoughts—and what harsh, cutting expressions are continually manifesting themselves even among those who profess to be the disciples of Jesus! How rarely we find two or three of God's people who can walk together even comfortably, without jarring and without strife! How few churches are there in which there is not some root of bitterness—in which the members are knit together in the close bands of brotherly affection and love!

How few families are there (to take another view of the case) in which there is even common harmony—in which there is decent affection—in which husbands and wives, or brothers and sisters, are walking together in a spirit of mutual concord and peace. O could the veil spread over many houses be

rudely torn off, how many bickering husbands, fretful wives, jealous sisters, quarrelsome brothers, and families making each other mutually wretched should we see! Smiles abroad, frowns at home; kindness for company, sullenness for the fireside. Is not this the work of the devil, especially when a profession of religion is thrown as a cloak over the whole?

And when we come closer still—to our own bosom, how continually we find Satan at work there! What infidelity, at times, can he stir up in our carnal mind! What wicked desires, or if not so far as that, what wicked thoughts can he infuse into our breast in our most sacred and solemn moments! Upon our bended knees before the throne of grace; in a place of worship when hearing the word of truth; in conversation with the saints of God; even at the very ordinances of God's House, who can shut out thoughts of the most intrusive character, to use no stronger language to describe them? A man who watches his own heart will see how Satan is ever at work, continually suggesting or fostering matter of evil, applying the torch to the train that seems already laid to his hands, and as such ever ready to explode! Surely, a man can see little of the evil of sin, can know little of the workings of it in his own mind, who cannot, from personal and painful experience, set to his seal that this is true. We have so clear a view sometimes of Satan's infusing or fostering vile thoughts, that we start back with horror, and almost if not actually cry aloud against him, as we should do if we caught a thief in our house.

O, the works of the devil! How they stand before us as so many heaps of ruin. How he has marred this beautiful earth, and filled it with lamentations and woe! O the thousands and millions, by his plots and his instrumentality, consigned to eternal misery! O the grievous sorrows of mind, the intolerable anguish of body, whereby thousands are at this

moment racked and tortured! O the distress of conscience, the guilt, bondage, and fear with which many of God's saints are now exercised! O the wide-spread havoc which has made the world a very Aceldama—a field of blood, not of gory bodies, but of bleeding hearts! What destruction thou hast wrought, thou enemy of God and man!

But what a rich and unspeakable mercy it is that there is some means of escape from them—that these works of the devil have not eluded the wisdom of God, nor are beyond the reach of his omnipotent arm. Infinite wisdom that foresaw the ruin, combined with infinite love and mercy to devise and execute a way to break them down. However formidable, however extensive; however to human skill and power impregnable, a means has been found in the counsels of heaven "to destroy the works of the devil." And this leads us to our second point:—

II.—*The manifestation of the Son of God.* "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested." Could nothing else but this suffice? Could no other way be found? Was it absolutely needful that the Son of God should be manifested to destroy these works? What a view this gives us, if we can see it by the eye of faith, what these works are, when nothing short of the manifestation of the Son of God could destroy them! Have you a son? Do you know what the feelings of a father towards a child are? We must bear in mind that the Son of God is to the Father what a son of ours is to us, though in a way of which we can form no conception, as being so infinitely beyond all the thoughts of the human heart. Still, as we find in the Scripture mention made of the fatherly love that the Father bears to the Son, and of the filial love that the Son bears to the Father, we believe what we cannot understand, and feel what we cannot reach. Ever bear in mind that Jesus Christ is God's co-equal, co-eternal Son, not

by office, but by nature; that his very essence, his very mode of subsistence from all eternity, is to be the only begotten Son, and that any other view but this strikes a fatal blow at the Trinity itself; for if he be not the eternal Son of God, and as such of the very essence of the Father, there is neither a Trinity of persons nor a unity of essence. Hold then by the eternal Sonship of Christ as your very life, lest you deny the Son, and so have not the Father. (1 John 2:23.) Amidst every storm may this be our sure anchorage—"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:68, 69.)

Now, it was the eternal purpose of God to manifest his dear Son. But how could he be manifested? Can God be seen? Is he not invisible, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto?" We can no more see the Son of God in his eternal Deity than we can see God the Father himself; for "no man can see God and live." Therefore, that he might be manifested, he took a nature in which he could be seen; and that nature was a nature like our own; for "as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Thus was accomplished the manifestation of the Son of God. But he was still the Son of God. He never laid aside his Deity or Sonship: he could not do so without ceasing to exist. He ever was what he ever had been; he ever is what he ever must be—the eternal Son of God. But to be manifested, brought to light, made known, revealed; to be seen, touched, handled, embraced, and realized, it was needful for him to assume a nature that could be touched, handled, realized, and looked upon. As John speaks in the beginning of this epistle—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested,

and we have seen it, and bear witness." In order, then, that the Son of God might be manifested, he took our nature into union with his own eternal Deity, and thus God and man were united in one glorious person as God-Man, Immanuel, God with us.

He was manifested, in the first instance, as a babe, born at Bethlehem and laid in a manger, for there was no room for him at the inn. He was born of a pure virgin, for he was not conceived by natural generation as we are. Had it been so, his human nature must have been involved in all the consequences of the first transgression: it must have been stained and tainted with original sin as ours is; for wherever there is natural conception, there must be sin attending it. "In sin hath my mother conceived me." But being conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, under the supernatural operation of the Holy Ghost, the blessed Lord assumed of the flesh of the Virgin a nature in all points identical with ours; yet preserved in the very moment of its conception from all speck or spot of sin. When that babe was born at Bethlehem; when he was presented to the eyes of the wise men from the East; when the shepherds looked upon him as he lay in his mother's lap, there was the Son of God manifested. O, the mystery, that the Son of God, he who fills all heaven with his glory—by whom the world was created and by whom it stands—the great, glorious, and eternal Jehovah, for such he is—then dwelt in that holy babe lying in infantile weakness upon the lap of the Virgin Mary! That babe grew up as ours grow; for he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He grew to be a man, and there is reason to believe that he worked with his reputed father at his mechanical employment; for we find it said of him, "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3.) When he was about thirty years of age his ministry more immediately commenced. But all the time during which he was

manifested, he was bearing sin: for he was the sin-bearing Lamb of God from the moment of his conception up to his expiring breath upon the cross. He was born to be "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," not only in the garden and upon the tree, but as being from the very first designed as a lamb for the slaughter. It is not only when laid upon the altar that the sacrifice begins. When the victim is taken; when it is led to the altar; when its limbs are bound; when the stroke is being waited for; when the knife is sharpening; when fear and trembling make every muscle quiver; when the sharp blade pierces the throat and the hot blood gushes forth—all are but parts of one and the same sacrifice. So with regard to the sufferings and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. We must not limit them to the garden and the cross. Was his not continually a life of suffering? The inward experience of the Lord as the sin-bearer is but dimly shadowed forth in the gospels. It is in the Psalms, more especially Psalms 22, 40, 69, 102, that you will find the suffering experience of Jesus. The cross has but the consummation, the last act and suffering, the final sacrifice and bloodshedding of the holy Victim. But long before that, grief and sorrow were the cup of Jesus. Your conscience sometimes may be grieved by seeing the sin practised in the world. When the Lord has blessed you, or favoured you with some sweet and solemn moments of communion with himself, how grievous to you is the conversation of the wicked! Your righteous soul is grieved, as was Lot's in Sodom, with sins in which you take no part, such as profane language or loose conduct in a railway carriage, or scoffing speeches from members of your own family. Now look at the Lord Jesus Christ, and see how his pure and holy heart was pained and grieved by seeing the sin that ran down the streets like water. The world is often a wilderness to us. What must it have been to him who for ever lay in his Father's bosom as his only-begotten Son! To be out of heaven was misery; to bear sin was hell. The very hardness

of heart of his own disciples; the weakness of their faith; their striving for the mastery among themselves—has not that all too a cause of suffering to the Son of God? To have Judas the traitor ever before his eyes to show that he was fostering, so to speak, a hypocrite in his bosom; to see him putting his hand into the same dish; walking with him as a disciple; listening, with seemingly devout attention, to his words; preaching and performing miracles in his name, and wearing the mask of the most devoted discipleship, when his black heart was full of infernal wickedness—was not that a source of grief to the Lord Jesus? We look at his sorrowing agony, his groans and tears, in the garden we see, by the eye of faith, his sufferings on the cross; we view his holy feet and hands pierced with nails, a crown of thorns upon his head, and intense bodily anguish stamped upon his languid eyes and marred visage. But when we have seen this, have we seen all the baptism of blood and all the cup given him by the Father? Was not his holy soul tortured far beyond the tortured body, when he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But O what an object of faith, as such, for those poor, guilty, self-condemned sinners who have had a long and painful experience of the works of the devil! For their sakes he was manifested on the cross—held up before their eyes as a bleeding sacrifice that they might look and live. But there is another manifestation which they need, and at times enjoy: when he manifests himself to their souls, and by his blood and love destroys inwardly and experimentally those works of the devil which they so deeply feel within. For *there* it is that the battle is fought and the victory won; it is *there* that the strong man is disarmed by a stronger than he; it is *there* that the triumphs of the cross are made known, and the mighty conqueror becomes seated on the throne of the affections.

And this leads us to our third point.

III.—*Why* the Son of God was manifested—*"that he might destroy the works of the devil."* We have been considering those works; we have said how mighty they are; but language would fail to describe their magnitude, extent, and effect. One thing only can convince us of their nature and magnitude—that the Son of God alone could destroy them. What then must sin be if nothing but the manifestation of the Son of God could destroy it? You have thought perhaps that a few tears, confessions, expressions of sorrow, desires of amendment, various attempts to alter the course of your life, were sufficient to do away with the sins into which you have fallen. If such have been your thoughts, you have been bold enough to think that the works of the devil might be destroyed by a few falling tears, a few mumbled prayers, a few acts of almsgiving, and a little extra attention to the duties of religion. But of course if this be all that is needful for you, it is all that is needful for others. Now, just see what this comes to—that a few religious duties are all that is necessary to destroy the works of the devil. The works of the devil to be destroyed by duties! You might as well send a number of school children with straws in their hands to beat down the walls of Delhi, or attack Sebastopol with pop guns, as to attempt to overthrow the works of the devil with a few tears, or a few promises of amendment, or a few half-crowns or shillings dropped with a grudging hand into a charity plate. Why need God have sent his own Son to destroy the works of the devil if tears could have blotted them out? Shed tears over the walls of Delhi. Would all the tears of Cawnpore, or all the sighs and groans of that night of anguish, when our fair countrywomen fell one by one under the butcher's knife, dissolve those walls and melt them as the snow before the sun? Make a few resolutions to take the city; give a few

shillings or half-crowns as a charity dole to the widows and orphans of the soldiers; repeat a few prayers; bind vows and promises about your neck. Will that drive out the rebels? So Satan is not to be foiled by a few hypocritical resolutions or a few crocodile tears. He has not set up his fortifications in the heart of man—he has not manned the works with all the artillery of hell to be vanquished by an arm of flesh. Sticks and straws will never batter down even the outworks, the practice of sin; much less the citadel, its love and dominion. Only one thing can do both: the manifestation of the Son of God.

I have already opened up this as accomplished in the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. But this is not enough. It must be manifested to our souls. It is not sufficient for personal, individual salvation, that he was manifested in the flesh. It has been so manifested. Are all men saved thereby? Who is really benefited by his sufferings and sorrows in the garden and upon the cross? Are all men benefited thereby? Is a general gaol delivery proclaimed? and do all men in consequence of it enter the courts of Heaven? Surely not. "The wicked are still turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Only those, then, who believe in the Son of God—only those to whom he is manifested as the power and wisdom of God—only those who receive him by faith and love into their heart—are benefited by his death and resurrection; for only as he is spiritually and personally manifested to the soul does he destroy the works of the devil. Where are the works of the devil? In your heart. What must come to destroy them? Power into your heart. Unless you get something into your heart which is stronger than the works of the devil there, how are those works to be destroyed? Look how sin has ruined your soul—how it has brought you under the wrath of God. See how you have been entangled in sin. Look at the long catalogue of crimes which you have

committed—if not in deed, in word or thought—since you lay in your mother's lap. Think only of the sins of a single day: what carnality, what unbelief, what pride, what covetousness, what selfishness! But I need not go through the catalogue. I could not stand up to read, nor could you sit to hear, article by article, the contents of that long dark scroll. The human heart is too deep an abyss of sin to be laid bare to open view. It is like the common sewer: it is best covered up by a culvert. There is stench enough at the mouth, without penetrating through the whole length of its hideous contents. What does conscience say? Does that not testify that there is sin in your heart, and that sin is the work of the devil? Let your life be circumspect and your character without a blot, still is not sin there? If then this work of the devil is to be destroyed, you must have that come into your heart which has sufficient power to destroy it; and I am very sure that nothing short of the manifestation of the Son of God in the very place and spot—the citadel itself and stronghold of sin—can effect this. His blood applied to the conscience can alone take away its guilt. His grace received into the soul can alone deliver from its power. His love shed abroad in the heart can alone overcome its love; and his truth vitally known can alone liberate from its practice. He must be manifested to be known, revealed to be seen, and felt to be enjoyed.

And this not only in the first manifestation of the Son of God—in the first reception of mercy—in the first proclaiming of salvation through his blood, when the great works are broken up, and ignorance, unbelief, enmity, and self-righteousness are laid low by the mighty conqueror. Satan, that crafty engineer, is ever seeking to cast up fresh intrenchments. As soon as one is demolished, he builds up another, and often in a corner little suspected, till they seem to have become almost as strong as before. Then there must

come a fresh manifestation to destroy them. Fresh backslidings want fresh healing; new sins require new forgiveness; and the breaking out of old inveterate lusts, like the rising up of so many gaunt spectres from the dead, needs a fresh power to lay them in the grave. Sin in us is not a dead thing, which, once killed by a view of Christ, lies a corpse for ever after in the recesses of the human heart. It has a million lives; in fact, it never dies, until death separates body and soul. It therefore revives again and again with fresh energy. Pride this day may seem overcome and buried: it rises with new strength to-morrow. Infidelity may seem to have received this hour a mortal blow by some manifestation of the Son of God: it springs up the next, like a phoenix from its ashes; with redoubled strength. Unbelief may seem to be so thoroughly slain by a view of Jesus that the soul many fondly dream it will never be tempted to doubt again: the next day many witness it rising up with greater power than ever. Old lusts may seem to be dead and buried: opportunity comes, temptation is presented, the object that once allured allures again; the lust rises out of its grave, like a giant refreshed with wine, and seems as though it fought against your soul's salvation and sanctification with greater vigour than ever. There is not a sin in the human heart that is killed outright at regeneration. The old man is crucified, but dies hard: and sometimes it appears as if not a single nail were driven through either his foot or his hand. Sin will ever struggle for the mastery: it will live as long as we live. Therefore we are always needing the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy these works of the devil. He has done it virtually already in the cross, for he has led captivity captive. His is a finished work; and he can and will destroy them in the heart wherever he comes with power.

But there will be no thorough destruction of sin within until the body drops into the grave, and the soul mounts aloft to

be with the Lord: nor a full destruction of its effects in the body until the resurrection morn, when the body shall be raised from the sleeping dust and changed into the glorious image of the body of the Son of God, meet companion for the immortal soul. Then will the victory be complete; then will Christ appear, shining forth with the lustre of a million suns; then will be the glorious manifestation of the Son of God, and the works of the devil thoroughly destroyed. The burden of heaven's anthem, the grand theme of eternal adoration, will be the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil. The redeemed will look down from the battlements of heaven and see what works have been executed by the devil: they will see millions of fellow-beings consigned to eternal misery, weltering in hell, whilst they view themselves safe in the arms of eternal love. They will see the Son of God, without a veil between, manifested to their eyes in such heart-ravishing glory as the three disciples had but a feeble, dim view of on the Mount of Transfiguration. It will be their joy to see him as he is. He will always wear his human nature; he will never lay that aside. That will always shine resplendent with all the glory of Godhead: that will be the object of eternal admiration and love: and to that glory of the God-Man all the saints in bliss will be for ever looking and for ever adoring, for sin will no longer have a being in them, but they will be conformed to the glorified image of the Son of God, and be celebrating for ever the grand triumph of the cross.

It may be that some of you who are toiling and grovelling here below feel more of the works of the devil than the power whereby those works are overcome. You may be even now groaning under the power of sin and the temptations of Satan, and yet be looking up with a believing eye to the Son of God as your only help and hope. Look on. He can save to the uttermost. He is able to send down messages of peace

and pardon to your soul. He is able to deliver you. Thousands and tells of thousands have been in your case.

"Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears."

The Lord appeared for them, and now they are singing his praise. And this is ours also, if the Lord enable us to look beyond the works of the devil to him who came to destroy them—to hang with all our strength and hope upon the Son of God, believing that he is able to save, and to save to the uttermost; for his own words are—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else."