

FORTS DEMOLISHED AND PRISONERS TAKEN NO. 1473

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 11, 1879,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,
and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”
2 Corinthians 10:5.*

THIS chapter presents the remarkable spectacle of a minister of the Gospel of Peace going forth to war! At first sight we wonder how the meek and gentle Paul should speak about warring and talk of pulling down strongholds and “having a readiness to revenge all disobedience.” The surprise is all the greater because he is going to war in the Church—a shepherd entering the fold with a sword! One would not so much marvel that he carried his weapons against the outside world, but on this occasion it is within the Church at Corinth that he is about to commence a campaign! Yet observe how earnestly he deprecates the conflict; how he beseeches them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ to spare him a task which was so unpleasant to his feelings as to deal sternly with those whom he would far rather have commended.

But the wonder ceases when we find that the shepherd fights only with grievous wolves and even in that conflict declares, “though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.” Note, moreover, that his weapons are of a peculiar kind, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” He is not about to assault his antagonists in the Church with bitter words of railing such as they used against him—he is not about to meet the philosophers with such philosophies and sophisms as those with which they assailed the Gospel! And neither is he coming forth with any kind of temporal weapon to inflict anything of injury upon the leaders in error—his weapons are of a very different sort. They are not carnal, but *spiritual*.

Trials under a Public Worship Act he knew nothing of. An appeal to Caesar upon *Church* matters never crossed his mind. For the Church of God ever to avail itself of force or compulsion in order to propagate its doctrines would be contrary to the spirit of Christianity! For the Christian bishop to become a soldier, or employ the secular arm would seem to be the very climax of contradiction! A warrior ambassador is a dream of folly! I remember a story which illustrates that absurdity. When a certain bishop-prince in the olden times went forth personally to battle and was taken prisoner, the Pope sent word to the king who had captured him that he was to set him at liberty at once, for he was a son of the Church.

The king, with considerable wit, sent back to the Pope the coat of armor which the bishop had worn on the field with this message, “This have we found—know now whether it is your son’s coat or not.” And so we might send back, I think, to the nominal Church, the black and blood-stained gown of the Inquisition, the garb of the headsman and the hangman, the smoke-browned raiment of those who lit the Smithfield fires and even the parchments on which are written the Test and Corporation Acts and the Act of Uniformity and say, “Know now whether these are your sons’ coats or not.” Is the raiment of a man of war the vestment of a servant of the Lord? Are robes of legal authority the adornments of heralds of peace?

Jesus Christ did not thus array His Apostles when He sent them forth to war and not with such weapons did Paul arm himself when he entered the conflict. “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.” Yet the spiritual weapons which can be wielded by the Christian minister and, indeed, by every Christian, are not to be despised, for while not fleshy, they are mighty through God! *God is in* them! *God is with* those who use them! The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; the arrows of the Truths of God which pierce the consciences of men; the weapon of all-prayer; the influence of the Holy Spirit—that Divine Power—such weapons as these are, by God’s power, made mighty to the overthrow of spiritual principalities and powers!

The Truth of God and holiness are the appointed engines for the pulling down of the castles of evil! Blessed is he who in every conflict for God takes heed to use no other weapons than those which the Lord has hung up in the tower of

David built for an armory—where hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men! Those only can fight the Lord's battles successfully who come to Him to be armed for the fight and reject all fleshy force. The *spiritual* shall be victorious, but others must fail!

The passage, if I were to confine it to its immediate connection, would represent Paul as dealing with those lofty ones who had usurped authority in the Church at Corinth; who denied his Apostleship and set themselves up as superior to him while they, themselves, preached error and led the people astray. Paul declared that when he came among them armed with the power with which God had clothed him, he would overthrow every proud opposition and convince them all of the Truth of God to their conversion or to their confusion. But I shall speak rather of a warfare carried on in individuals—a warfare in our own souls—for what is true of the triumphs of the Gospel in the masses is true because it gains the same conquest over individuals.

While I am speaking of the war of the Gospel against sin within the heart of man, may you who have never felt its power be praying that it may conquer even you. and may those who have experienced its sacred Omnipotence be pleading to be yet more completely subjugated to its sway—

*“Great King of Grace, our hearts subdue,
May we be led in triumph, too,
As willing captives to our Lord,
To sing the victories of His Word.”*

There are three things in the text worthy of our observation. The first is *fortresses demolished*, “casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.” Secondly, *prisoners seized*, “bringing into captivity every thought.” and thirdly, *prisoners led away captive*—for such is the force of the Greek, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”—as if the captured ones were taken away and put under new service to the anointed Prince.

I. First, let us look at FORTRESSES DEMOLISHED. When the Gospel endeavors to penetrate the human heart it meets with earthworks of prejudice which men have cast up to screen their minds from the force of the Truth of God. Many things are opposed to the knowledge of God. The objective sought is that men may be brought to know God—to know who He is and what He is. To know their relation to Him as fallen men. To know His plan of restoration. To know Him in Christ Jesus and to know as to *love* Him, to *obey* Him and to become like He. This is the great objective for which the Gospel is sent into the world—that the knowledge of the Glory of God may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

But men desire not the knowledge of God's ways and shut up their hearts against the entrance of Divine Light by much evil reasoning and imaginations. Some are garrisoned against the knowledge of God by the feeling that *they do not need to know God*. The masses of our fellow countrymen are not so much *opposed* to the Gospel as *indifferent* to it. They pass by our places of worship and they see their neighbors entering and sometimes they say, “Who preaches there?” But, “*What is preached there?*” is a question seldom asked. Religious enquiry seems to be very dull at the present time. Time was when the announcement of evangelical doctrine excited universal attention, though at the same time almost universal opposition—that *opposition* was better than a state of stagnation like the present.

Men nowadays pass by the Cross as if a dying Savior were nothing to them. Graceless zealots, as they call them, may fight about their creeds—as for them—they have something more practical to think about. “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And how shall we be clothed?” are far more important questions to them, than, “What must we do to be saved?” This entrenchment has to be carried and the Gospel *does* carry it by the power of the Holy Spirit, for it flashes conviction on the soul, creates alarm, awakens apprehension and so storms the stronghold of indifference and utterly demolishes it! When the Holy Spirit convicts a man of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come, he is indifferent no longer!

We call him an, “enquirer,” and the name is correct, for he does enquire about the weightiest matters which concern eternity, God, Heaven, Hell and his own immortal destiny. He desires to know, at first, more than he is, at that time, capable of learning! He questions about high mysteries which are for *men* in Christ rather than for babies! But most of all, he wants to know, “How can I be at peace with God?” If the Holy Spirit does but apply to a man's heart such a Truth of God as this—that he is already condemned because he has not believed in Christ—then indifference is as a bulging wall and as a tottering fence! Even If a man had no other sin, it is quite sufficient to condemn him forever, that he

neglects his God and turns away from his Savior, for unbelief is an act of high treason against the Divine Majesty, plucking at the crown jewel of Jehovah's truthfulness. Hence "the wicked shall be turned into Hell with all the nations that forget God." Lay this gun in a proper position and let it be fired by the Eternal Spirit against the indifference of the human heart and it soon casts down the wall of carelessness!

Then the sinner discovers that if he does not know his God, it were better for him that he had never been born! He finds out that if he does not know his Savior, he is doomed to endless woe and this makes him cry out in anguish of heart, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Among the other, "imagination," with which man fortifies himself is the idea of many that *they know already*. Trained from their childhood in false doctrine, they hold fast to it and defy the Gospel to reach them. They are Christians by *birth*, they say, forgetting the Inspired Declaration, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Others make up their minds as to what the knowledge of God *ought* to be and, of course, they quarrel with God's view of things. They fashion a god and a gospel after their own fond notions and then they dream that they have reached the summit of wisdom! They refuse to go to school to learn Christ and when He says, "Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God," they turn from Him with disdain! They know quite enough and are resolved to learn no more.

A large proportion of our fellow men are in this condition and are perfectly content and satisfied to remain as they are. Graduates in the university of self-importance—full of ignorance and equally full of pride—they scarcely deign to give Christ a hearing and hardly go as far as the Athenians who said, "What will this babbler say?" Nothing shuts the heart more completely against the knowledge of God than the conceit that we already know and need no teaching from above! It is written of the true Church, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord," but many are not such children, for they are wise in their own eyes and refuse instruction!

But, O Sirs, how the Holy Spirit casts down this imagination when He makes men feel that they are blind by nature and lets them know that the natural man understands not the things which are of God, for they are *spiritual* and must be *spiritually* discerned! A little heavenly Light suffices to reveal to men their darkness, for if they will but think, they must admit that if God deigns to teach us in the Scriptures, it must be because apart from them we are ignorant! There is no need of Revelation and the Bible is worthless; there is no need of an Incarnate Deity and Calvary is a superfluity if men already know God apart from the Lord Jesus and the Word by which He is pleased to reveal Himself! But let the Holy Spirit bring this home to a man's heart and he begins to cry out against his own pride! He bemoans his own blindness and he is quite willing to become a fool that he may be wise, a child that he may sit at Jesus' feet!

Another entrenchment, behind which many are securely hiding, is the idea that *if they do not know God they can find Him out without His help*. This is a very general notion, nowadays. Scientific thought is supposed to be the way for finding out God and the old Scripture is out of date which says, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live." Plain truth is, in this wonderful century, of small account—men crave to be mystified by their own cogitations. Many glory in being too intellectual to receive anything as absolute certainty—they are not at all inclined to submit to the authority of a positive Revelation! God's Word is not accepted by them as final, but they judge it and believe what they like of it.

This is madness! I speak to those who believe in the Scriptures and I say if, indeed, there is a Revelation, it becomes us to be silent before it and accept it without dispute! The Lord knows what is better than we can ever know and if He has been pleased to speak plainly and solemnly His Word, it is ours to believe what He says because He says it! It may be all very well to prove that such-and-such a Revelation of God is consistent with reason, consistent with analogy, consistent with a thousand things—but the attitude which needs such argument is a spirit of rebellion against God! If there is a Revelation, every part of it is of authority and must be believed. Human thought is not the arbiter of Truth, but the Infallible Word is the end of all strife.

It is not ours to say what the Truth of God must be, or what we think it *should* be, or what we would *like* it to be—but reverently to sit down with open ears and willing heart to receive what God has spoken. If an astronomer were to refuse to examine the stars and teach an astronomy invented in his own brain, he would be an idiot! And those who treat theology in the same fashion are not much better! "Surely," says one, "we ought to modify our beliefs by public opinion and the current of thought." I say, "NO," a thousand times! The Incorruptible Word of God lives and abides forever and

is incapable of modification! To modify is to adulterate, nullify and render it of no effect, so that it becomes another gospel and, indeed, no Gospel.

The thought of tampering with the revealed Truth of God is vicious and ought not to be tolerated by any Christian for a second! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a thing which is to be molded according to the fashion of the period—it is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Whether the Greek philosophy rules or is exploded. Whether some more modern theory blazes up or smolders down is small concern of ours, for we are set to preach the one unvarying Gospel of Jesus Christ sent down with the Holy Spirit from Heaven! No man was ever led to a saving faith by our meeting him half way and consenting to his unbelief! No real faith was ever worked in man by his own thoughts and imaginations—he must receive the Gospel as a Revelation from God, or he cannot receive it at all.

Faith is a *supernatural* work wherever it is found and if we think that we can beget faith in ourselves or others by the use of the fleshy weapons of philosophy, we shall certainly be foiled! The Scriptures pressed home by the Holy Spirit are God’s power unto salvation—not men’s cogitations and imaginations! There is the Revealed Gospel—reject it at your own peril! There is Jehovah’s Revelation of Himself to men—receive it or be damned! This is the ground to go upon if we would speak as the oracles of God. God grant that proud thinkers may come upon this ground and become Believers.

Here we are boldly met by some who say, “We do not need this doctrine which you call the ‘knowledge of God.’ *We already know of something better.* We tell you that your Gospel, about which you make such a fuss, is outworn and done with.” Treat it so, Sirs, and perish, if you will, but as for us, we will mourn day and night over your unbelief. You will surely destroy your souls in rejecting the Divine Testimony, but in so doing you will prove that Word to be true which says that the Gospel is a savor of death unto death as well as of life unto life.

You know better, you say, but how can this be? Do you know God better than God knows Himself? Do you know more about His way of reconciling men to Himself than His own Messenger, the Lord Jesus Christ, knows? Do you profess to know better than the Eternal Spirit who inspired the Scriptures? It is to those Scriptures that we crave your reverent attention and not to any assertions of *ours*—we pray you will not reject them! I heard one say the other day that he never felt any desire to pray and never had prayed in all his life. And though I looked at him with sorrow, I could only say to him, “Dead men never cry. You are dead in sin and so have not the Divine breath. You have not been born again. You have not a new nature or a right spirit—if you had, you could not help praying and believing.”

To me his statements were confirmations of Bible teaching concerning the real state of all unregenerate men. The Gospel, as we have said before, wherever it creates faith, begets it by its own power and by the power of the Eternal Spirit convincing men of the Truth of God and enlightening those whom the Lord our God has chosen. Now, where the Gospel comes, it undermines and overturns everything which opposes the Truth of God and makes a man feel that of God he knows nothing until the Lord reveals it to him.

Find a sinner made conscious of sin and you have found a man who does not know better than his God! Find a man with an awakened conscience and you have found a man who does not know better than his God! Find one who believes in Christ, sits at Jesus’ feet and the more he learns the more surely have you found in him a man who does not know better than his God, but who still cries out to be taught more that he may possess to the fullest the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

There is yet another entrenchment behind which some hide themselves from the knowledge of God and that is, “I never can know. I do not know and I never can know. I despair of ever being able to know the Lord.” In this despair the rebel entrenches himself as in a very cannon and becomes desperate in his resistance to the Gospel. Yet even this rampart is cast down by mighty Grace! When the Holy Spirit comes with the Word of reconciliation, the sinner catches at the idea of Atonement by a Substitute. He is charmed by the Truth of God, “I am lost in myself, but saved in Christ. I am in myself judged and condemned for sin, but in Christ I see my sin laid on Another and put away.” He catches at that Truth, so simple, so sublime and as he believes it, he begins to know Him whom to know is eternal life!

The Spirit of God, as He shines with Divine Light into the soul, soon sweeps away the Egyptian darkness of despair and in the Light of God the man sees light! You see what my drift is? It is just this, that there are certain walls of reasoning, reckoning, thinking—our version calls them “imagination”—which are to be cast down and the Gospel does this when used by the Holy Spirit! Nor is this all, for with the walls, the battlements fall. Man, having devised the

fortress of reasoning, erects towers of pride on them which the Apostle calls, “high things,” of which he says that the power of God casts down “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”

These lofty castles are such as the following—“I have a noble nature within me. My instincts are towards right. I have not done much amiss. I am as good as my neighbor. I can overcome any temptation. I am persuaded that I can fight my own way into eternal happiness,” and all such vain ideas. Let but the Gospel come with power and all these citadels are laid low! Away they go, like Jericho’s old bulwarks, rocking and reeling till, in a cloud of dust, they thunder to their fall! In how many cases we have seen this to be so! Fine men have come into this place—men that knew a great deal better than anything they could find in the Bible—they have come in quite confident that nothing would ever change them!

These have sat down like ancient knights, mailed from head to foot, invulnerable to any shafts of ours—but the Blessed Spirit has found an arrow in some simple saying that we have gathered from God’s blessed Word, and, lo, the proud warriors have fallen in the dust! Convinced that they were ignorant and foolish, the formerly proud boasters have begun to cry, “What must we do to be saved?” And before long, being made champions of the faith, it has been their delight to humbly yield judgment, will and heart to the obedience of Christ! O that the Lord would thus storm the prejudices and self-conceits of all my unconverted hearers and sweep them away by His mighty love!

II. After a breach has been made and the city has been taken, PRISONERS ARE TAKEN. This is our second point. The text runs thus, “Bringing into captivity every thought.” The word translated, “thought,” has a very broad meaning, but its best explanation is that which is placed first in the lexicon, “everything which comes from the *mind*.” The mind is like a city and when it is captured, the inhabitants which swarm its streets are the thoughts—and these are taken prisoners. Look at the process which I will rapidly describe.

The Gospel comes with power to the heart of a man and he begins to fear the wrath of God and the judgment to come. Look how he trembles! Christ has captured his thoughts of self-security. He no more says, “Though I add drunkenness to thirst, it shall surely be well with me.” On the contrary, he cries, “I am guilty! I have broken God’s Law and I am condemned.” The Lord has captured his thoughts of self-righteousness. This is the man who yesterday boasted in himself that he was righteous! The pure and holy Law of God has come near his conscience and he feels guilty and, therefore, cries for mercy!

Now he begins to pray, “God, be merciful to me a sinner!” And it is clear that his thoughts of independence; his ideas that he could do without God are made prisoners! His thoughts of pleasure in alienation from the Great Father are now slain, for he desires to draw near to the Most High. Look! A little hope begins to dawn! He hopes that there may be salvation for him. His thoughts of rebellious despair are led captive in fetters of iron. Praise the Lord! Watch him further. The Spirit of God encourages him and he comes to believe in Jesus—his self-trust is a prisoner. That Jesus died for sinners is a Truth of God which now he accepts and he casts himself upon it—his proud intellect is a captive and he gladly bows at the Redeemer’s feet!

Listen to him as he sings, “I am forgiven! God assures me of it! I am justified because I have believed in Jesus! Oh, how I love His precious name.” His inmost heart is captured—all the thoughts of his love are now subdued and the Savior whom he once despised, he now adores! Look how, with gratitude, he brings his alabaster box to break it and pour the sweet perfume on the Savior’s feet! Jesus has won his heart! And Jesus holds it in a *willing* captivity and, therefore, the man consecrates himself to Christ—to live and to die for Him!

Thus the whole mind of the man, yes, the whole man, has thrown down its rebellious weapons and surrendered unconditionally to the conquering arm of the Lord Jesus! I dwell very briefly upon this point because I wish to enlarge upon the last.

III. These prisoners are to be LED AWAY INTO CAPTIVITY—“Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” Monarchs of the olden times, such as the kings of Assyria and Babylon, when they subdued a country, removed the people a far distance away from their old haunts to find new homes. Now, when the Lord captivates the thoughts of our mind, He leads them away, conducting them to another reason altogether. The offspring of the mind He guides into the *spiritual* realm where they delight in the Lord and bow themselves before Him.

Let us look at this procession of captives led away to Grace, the triumph of the Conqueror to settle them down in another region under another King! From the highest to the lowest, all the faculties of the soul are made to pass under the yoke—I shall not attempt a list according to mental science, but mention them as they occur to me. He who, being

made conscious of his sin, believes in Jesus Christ submits all the thoughts of his judgment and understanding to the obedience of Christ and this is a great point gained. Before, he put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness—but now, when he is in difficulty about a moral question he asks his Lord!

Now, if pleasure tempts him, he judges whether it is sweet by the question whether it would be sweet to his Lord! Now, if a certain doctrine is stated, he weighs it not in the balances of his own thoughts, much less in the scales of popular opinion, but he asks, “What did my Master say? What would the Lord Jesus think of this?” He suspends his own judgment upon his Master’s judgment. He does not say, “I am a law unto myself,” but he says, “Christ is the Way and in His steps I desire to follow.” Thus his reason is led into captivity to the higher reason and understanding of his supreme Lord!

If there is a Truth of God which he does not know, he tries to learn it. If his Lord sets it before him as a lesson and if it is hidden from him, he is content not to know. His prayer is, “Lord, teach me, or else I shall never learn. I wish to have my understanding developed to the fullest, but let it be under Your sweet Light. Let my mind blossom and open all its flowers beneath the sunlight of Your Divine instruction.” I know it is not so with some professed Christians, for they too often invent their own doctrines and think out their opinions apart from their Master. To think is admirable, but not if we mean, thereby, to supplement the teachings of Christ, or to improve upon them, or to accommodate them to popular theories in science and philosophy!

For my part, true science may say what it will and never lack for an attentive listener while I live—the more loudly it shall speak the better—if it will speak facts and not *theories*—if it will tell me what *God has done* and not what *man* has dreamed! All that true science ever can discover must tally with the Word of Revelation, for God speaks in Nature nothing but the same Truth as He has written in the Holy Scriptures. Let our wise men ransack earth to its center and climb to Heaven and make inquisition through every star—the testimony of universal Nature, if heard aright, shall never contradict the Inspired utterances of the Holy Spirit!

The evil is that the wise men add their own inferences to the facts as if they were of equal authority. What, then, is to be done? Shall we alter the deductions of the fallible or try to shape the declarations of the Infallible? The question is not difficult to answer! We are not to revise the statements of the Bible, but the inferences of the philosophers! When philosophy contradicts Revelation, what do I say? So much the worse for philosophy! In spite of the perpetual restlessness which I see in many who are forever mending that which is perfect in itself, my understanding is happy to delight in the Infallible testimonies of Jehovah! Let those fellows change—we shall not! Let them come *up* to us—verily, believers in God’s Revelation will never go *down* to them, for that would be to be disloyal to our Master, Christ, whose teachings are too sacred for us to knowingly alter a letter of them!

Whatever others may do, it is the delight of those who have felt the overwhelming power of the Divine Spirit to find in Christ the wisdom with which their intellect is more than content. The same power of the Truth of God and of the Holy Spirit leads captive the will. My Lord Will-be-Will, as Bunyan describes him, is a very stout fellow. Some men think he is exceedingly obstinate, “I will and I will, and I will,” and by no means can they be made to yield. In truth, the will has a wonderful power over all the faculties and rules them like a despot. It is boasted that the will of man is free, yet Luther was quite correct when he called it a slave! Never is it so much a slave as when it brags of its own liberty! Let the Spirit of God come into the heart and apply with power the Gospel of Jesus Christ—and the human will no longer glories in its freedom, but surrenders and is subjugated!

It still remains a will, but the will of God is supreme over it. Hear it describe itself—“Lord, this is my will, or what I want to be my will. ‘Not as I will, but as You will.’” Look how the will wears its golden fetters and kisses them with happy lips, so glad to find true freedom in being subdued to the obedience of Christ! It is also very beautiful to see how human *hopes* are spell-bound by Divine Grace. These winged things were known to flutter no higher than the tainted atmosphere of this poor world—but now they find stronger pinions and soar aloft to things not seen as yet, eternal in the heavens! The man’s *fears*, too, all nestled in the ruins of his sinful joys, were awakened by the voices of his fellow man. But now, ennobled by Divine Grace, they ascend into another sphere! They cover their faces with their wings before the Throne of God, while the man fears to grieve the Holy Spirit, fears to offend against the Father’s love, fears to do *anything* which would dishonor the Savior. His joys and sorrows are now found where they never went before—he rejoices in the Lord and he sorrows after a godly sort.

His *memory* also now retains the precious things of Divine Truth, which once it rejected for the trifles of time! His *powers of meditation* and consideration keep within the circle of the Truth of God and holiness, finding green pastures there. This done, you shall see the same enthrallment cast over the Christian man's *desires and aspirations*. He has flung away his old ambitions and aspires to nobler things. He is not without his longings, but he longs for *heavenly* blessings. His wishes and desires to fly to Christ as doves to their windows. His affection, which is no longer set upon things upon the earth, but on things above, draws his desires upward. He pines for holiness, for usefulness, for the Glory of God! His own glory he discards and is willing to be of no repute so long as he may but make the name of Jesus famous among the sons of men!

I would to God, dear Brothers and Sisters, that this sacred vassalage would be more fully felt by every motion of the mind so that no desire would dare to wander even for a moment! The same blessed servitude binds the man's *plots and designs*. He still plans, but it is not for his own aggrandizement—his grandest design is to bring jewels to the crown of Christ! He now arranges his life with circumspection and with diligence—not with cunning and craftiness—for holiness is his policy and his scheme of life is *sanctity*. Does not this talk of mine sound rather like sarcasm to some who profess to be Christians? If it does, stand convicted, for it is not I that am wrong in this, but you—for every thought is to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! And even when we are thinking about common things or matters that have to do with business, we are to be serving our Lord, for, “every thought,” not *some thought*, is to be bowed unto the obedience of Christ.

It is a wicked error to conceive that so much of our life ought to be religious and so much to be secular. A Christian's *whole* life is to be his religion and his religion is to saturate his whole life! You are as religiously to eat your meals as you eat at the Lord's Table! You are as religiously to speak the Truth of God in your parlor as you would in the pulpit! Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, it is all to be done to the Glory of God! The great thought you are to have in opening your shops, in trading, in toiling, in furnishing your houses, in nursing your children and even in taking recreation, is still to be, “How can I glorify God in all this?” All, ALL, must be brought into captivity to Christ!

When a man yields himself to Jesus, he should comprehend his house, his money, his body, his time, his wife, his children—everything in the deed of surrender—for He who bought us with His precious blood did not buy us with a reserve and leave the devil a mortgage upon us! We are our Lord's unencumbered freehold forever! We are His own conquered portion which He took out of the hand of the Amorite with His sword and with His bow and, therefore, over the whole of our being He has an absolute and undivided right of property!

The renewed man's *love and hate* are both held captive by the power of Divine Grace. He loves Jesus truly and intensely. He hates sin with his whole soul. Indignation is a hard thing to tame, but to my mind it is a grand thing to see a man's anger made the servitor of Christ so that he only grows indignant when he wars with that which is mean, cruel, unjust, un-Christlike! Then he does well to be angry, for his anger is but virtue on fire! It is a fair sight to see Christ's sacred bands worn by our tastes which are so volatile and hard to constrain. Concerning tastes, it is never wise to dispute, but Jesus' love creates a delicacy of mind, a discernment of that which is tender and gentle, pure and heavenly—an abhorrence of that which is evil so that the Lord's redeemed become very *connoisseurs* in things moral and Divine.

The fancy, too—that impalpable cloud painted as by the setting sun, that will-of-the-wisp of the spirit—even this is impressed into royal service and made to wear the colors of Christ so that men even *dream* eternal life! When godly men give their imagination rein, even Pegasus bears a royal burden and in his flight from the actual to the imaginative he feels the golden bridle of the King's rule restraining and directing all his airy motions. Yes, the Holy Spirit wins an undisputed sway, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” Do you not wish for this complete subjection, you to whom Jesus is God and Lord? I know you do and, what is more, I am sure you wish for the time when that which is worked in yourselves shall be accomplished in all mankind!

Christ's Gospel has not come into the world to be co-equal with other faiths and share a divided kingdom with differing creeds. False gods may stand face to face to each other in one Pantheon and be at peace, for they are all false together, but where Christ comes, Dagon must go down—not even the stump of him must stand! Truth is of necessity intolerant of falsehood! Love wars with hate and justice battles with wrong. Christ Jesus will be All in All and sit upon the Throne alone. May the day come in which obedience to Christ shall be universal! What a scene would present itself if every thought of every human being were in holy subjection to Christ! Not a poor woman would sing beneath her lowly

roof of thatch without rendering holy adoration—while on the throne, neither queen nor prince would plan anything but what should be for the Glory of Jesus Christ!

No council chamber would know a policy which would be contrary to the Prince of Love, nor would the freest thinker think anything contrary to the thoughts of Jesus. The wild men of the plain would cease to forget the Lord and the civilized dwellers in cities would no longer cast off His fear. The common people, in multitudes, would seek Him and the nobles would study how to honor Him. How happy will the time be when all inventive genius shall own the sway of Jesus and man shall desire no more to fashion weapons of war, but only to design that which shall minister to the well-being of mankind! When art with pencil and chisel shall refrain from all which excites lascivious thoughts and perpetuates the memory of blood and slaughter, but shall bow at Jesus' feet to honor God by setting Nature's beauties before reverent eyes!

How glorious will it be when Learning, poring over its classic books, shall find in human wisdom trophies for the surer wisdom of Jesus! And when Study, searching by the midnight lamp, shall seek out the heights and depths of Divine Love! It charms me to think of every poet singing Divine songs for earth's great King, drinking no more from the Castellan fountain, but finding all their springs in God alone! Then, too, shall Music compose her most harmonious symphonies and pour forth her richest notes in worship of the redeeming Lord, while Eloquence, no longer declaiming in the defense of wrong, shall spend her force in the maintenance of peace and righteousness and in the extolling of the Lord! Dawn even now, auspicious day! Why does the night hang so heavy? Why bides the darkness around us for so many ages?

Great Captain of Salvation, You can achieve the victory! We have compassed this Jericho these many days, but still the walls have not fallen! Up, You mighty man of war, for You are such, and come to the battle and then the battlements of sin will fall. "The Lord is a man of war: Jehovah is His name." Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old! Are You not He that has cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? Because of truth and righteousness, ride forth in Your majesty! For peace on earth and glory to God in the highest, come forth in the glory of Your might with the everlasting Gospel, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307.