

# Charles Spurgeon on Christian War Fever

by [Laurence M. Vance](#)

We know all too well about Christian war fever – that sickening blind worship of the state that elevates George W. Bush to Messiah status and seeks to justify his immoral, unscriptural, unconstitutional war in Iraq by incessantly repeating the mantras "obey the powers that be" and "God is a God of war." But who is Charles Spurgeon and why should we care what he said about war?

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) was an English Baptist minister who served as pastor of the [Metropolitan Tabernacle](#) in London from 1861 until his death. But Spurgeon was no ordinary minister. He was a pastor, a preacher, a teacher, an author, an editor, and the overseer of a pastor's college, a Christian literature society, and an orphanage. He is still widely revered today among Baptists (and others as well) as one of the greatest Baptist ministers in history.

Spurgeon preached his first sermon as a teenager and, in 1854, was called to the pastorate of the historic New Park Street Church, Southwark, London. During his thirty-eight-year tenure, the church increased from 232 to over 5,000. During the remodeling of the Park Street chapel to house the growing congregation, Spurgeon preached at the 5,000-seat [Exeter Hall](#), a public auditorium. But because the remodeled chapel was still too small to accommodate the crowds, the church began construction of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which sat 5,500 and had standing room for 500 more. In the interim, Spurgeon preached to thousands at the [Surrey Gardens Music Hall](#). He was truly one of the most popular preachers in history. When he died in 1892, 60,000 people filed past his casket in the Tabernacle.

Spurgeon lives today through his sermons. From 1855 until his death, his Sunday morning sermons were published weekly. By 1865, Spurgeon's sermons were selling 25,000 copies every week. They would eventually be translated into more than twenty languages. The sermons were then collected in one volume and reissued at the end of each year in book form. After Spurgeon's death, the series continued until 1917 using his Sunday evening sermons. The six volumes of the New Park Street Pulpit (1855–1860) and the fifty-seven volumes of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit (1861–1917) contain 3,561 sermons, 25 million words, and fill 41,500 pages. Many of these volumes are available [online](#), and most are in [print](#).

Unlike some Baptist preachers today who shamelessly serve as spokesmen or apologists for Bush and his "splendid little war" in Iraq, Spurgeon was not the least bit excited about war and war fever.

**Spurgeon on War**

Spurgeon's comments on war can be found in his sermons on a variety of topics. He rarely preached a sermon that was specifically about war. His observations about war are overwhelmingly negative:

Long have I held that war is an enormous crime; long have I regarded all battles as but murder on a large scale ("India's Ills and England's Sorrows," September 6, 1857, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

So combustible are the materials of which this great world is made, that I am ever apprehensive of war. I do not account it wonderful that one nation should strive against another, I account it far more wonderful that they are not all at arms. Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not from your lusts? Considering how much lust there is in the world, we might well conceive that there would be more war than we see. Sin is the mother of wars; and remembering how plentiful sin is, we need not marvel if it brings forth multitudes of them. We may look for them. If the coming of Christ be indeed drawing nigh, then we must expect wars and rumors of wars through all the nations of the earth ("The God of Peace," November 4, 1855, New Park Street Chapel).

There is yet one more point which I must mention here in which the gospel is the best help to man. We must remember to-day, that there are districts of the earth where the ground is yet red with blood. There are sad portions of our globe that as yet must have the name of Aceldama, the field of gore, there are spots where the horse-hoof is splashed with blood; where the very carcasses of men are the food of ravens and of jackalls, the mounds of Balaclava are as yet scarcely green, and the spots where rest the relics of our own murdered sisters and brothers are not covered with the memorial stone. War has ravaged whole districts; even in these late times the dogs of war are not yet muzzled. Oh! what shall we do to put an end to war? Mars, where is the chain that shall bind thee like Prometheus, to the rock? How shall we imprison thee for ever, thou cruel Moloch; how shall we for ever chain thee? Behold here is the great chain, that which one day is to bind the great serpent; it has the blood-red links of love. The gospel of Jesus Christ the crucified one, shall yet hush the clarion of war, and break the battle-bow in sunder ("The Cry of the Heathen," April 25, 1858, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

It is astonishing how distance blunts the keen edge of anything that is disagreeable. War is at all times a most fearful scourge. The thought of slain bodies and of murdered men must always harrow up the soul; but because we hear of these things in the distance, there are few Englishmen who can truly enter into their horrors. If we should hear the booming of cannon on the deep which girdles this island; if we should see at our doors the marks of carnage and bloodshed; then should we more thoroughly appreciate what war means. But distance takes away the horror, and we therefore speak of war with too much levity, and even read of it with an interest not sufficiently linked with pain ("A Present Religion," May 30, 1858, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

Better far for us to have famine than war. From all civil war and all the desperate wickedness which it involves, good Lord deliver us; and if thou smitest us as thou hast done, it is better to fall into the hand of God than into the hand of man ("Christian Sympathy," November 9, 1862, Metropolitan Tabernacle).

Oh! that God would put an end in the world to all wars between nations, as well as all strifes between individuals ("The Fruits of Grace," January 21, 1872, Metropolitan Tabernacle).

### **Spurgeon on Peace**

Like [Thomas Jefferson](#), Spurgeon did not just speak about the evils of war without also relating the blessings of peace:

He is the God of peace, for he is the restorer of it; though wars have broken out through sin. He is the preserver of peace. Whenever I see peace in the world, I ascribe it to God, and if it is continued, I shall always believe it is because God interferes to prevent war ("The God of Peace," November 4, 1855, New Park Street Chapel).

Have you not noticed how magnificently peace winneth its reprisals at the hand of war? Look through this country. Methinks if the angel of peace should go with us, as we journey through it, and stop at the various ancient towns where there are dismantled castles, and high mounds from which every vestige of a building has long been swept, the angel would look us in the face, and say, "I have done all this: war scattered my peaceful subjects, burned down my cottages, ravaged my temples, and laid my mansions with the dust. But I have attacked war in his own strongholds and I have routed him. Walk through his halls. Can you hear now the tramp of the warrior? Where now the sound of the clarion and the drum?" The sheep is feeding from the cannon's mouth, and the bird builds his nest where once the warrior did hang his helmet. As rare curiosities we dig up the swords and spears of our forefathers, and little do we reckon that in this we are doing tribute to peace. For peace is the conqueror. It hath been a long duel, and much blood hath been shed, but peace hath been the victor. War, after all, has but spasmodic triumphs; and again it sinks – it dies, but peace ever reigneth. If she be driven from one part of the earth, yet she dwelleth in another; and while war, with busy hand, is piling up here a wall, and there a rampart, and there a tower, peace with her gentle finger, is covering over the castle with the mees and the ivy, and eating the stone from the top, and letting it lie level with the earth. . . . I think this is a fine thought for the lover of peace; and who among us is not? Who among us ought not to be? Is not the gospel all peace? ("The Desolations of the Lord, the Consolation of His Saints," April 28, 1858, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society).

### **Spurgeon on Imperialism in the Name of Christianity**

Imperialism is bad enough, but it is even worse when it is done in the name of Christianity. Unlike Christian pragmatists today who think that U.S. wars and interventions will be a boon to Christianity, Spurgeon was not deceived:

The church, we affirm, can neither be preserved nor can its interests be promoted by human armies. We have all thought otherwise in our time, and have foolishly said when a fresh territory was annexed to our empire, "Ah! what a providence that England has annexed Oude," – or taken to itself some other territory – "Now a door is opened for the Gospel. A Christian power will necessarily encourage Christianity, and seeing that a Christian power is at the head of the Government, it will be likely that the natives will be induced to search into the authenticity of our revelation, and so great results will follow. Who can tell but that, at the point of the British bayonet, the Gospel will be carried, and that, by the edge of the true sword of valiant men, Christ's Gospel will be proclaimed?" I have said so myself; and now I know I am a fool for my pains, and that Christ's church hath been also miserably befooled; for this I will assert, and prove too, that the progress of the arms of a Christian nation is not the progress of Christianity, and that the spread of our empire, so far from being advantageous to the Gospel, I will hold, and this day proclaim, hath been hostile to it.

But I have another string to my bow, I believe that the help of Government would have been far worse than its opposition, I do regret that the [East India] Company sometimes discourages missionary enterprise; but I believe that, had they encouraged it, it would have been far worse still, for their encouragement would have been the greatest hindrance we could receive. If I had to-morrow to go to India to preach the Gospel, I should pray to God, if such a thing could be, that he would give me a black face and make me like a Hindoo; for otherwise I should feel that when I preached I should be regarded as one of the lords – one of the oppressors it may sometime be added – and I should not expect my congregation to listen to me as a man speaking to men, a brother to brother, a Christian full of love, but they would hear me, and only cavil at me, because even my white face would give me some appearance of superiority. Why in England, our missionaries and our clergymen have assumed a kind of superiority and dignity over the people; they have called themselves clergy, and the people laity; and the result has been that they have weakened their influence. I have thought it right to come amongst my fellow men, and be a man amongst men, just one of themselves, their equal and their friend; and they have rallied around me, and not refused to love me. And I should not expect to be successful in preaching the gospel, unless I might stand and feel that I am a brother, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. If I cannot stand before them thus, I cannot get at their hearts. Send me, then, to India as one of the dominant ruling race, and you give me a work I cannot accomplish when you tell me to evangelise its inhabitants. In that day when John Williams fell in Erromanga, ye wept, but it was a more hopeful day for Erromanga than the day when our missionaries in India first landed there. I had rather go to preach to the greatest savages that live, than I would go to preach in the place that is under British rule. Not for the fault of Britain, but simply because

I, as a Briton, would be looked upon as one of the superiors, one of the lords, and that would take away much of my power to do good. Now, will you just cast your eye upon the wide world? Did you ever hear of a nation under British rule being converted to God? Mr. Moffat and our great friend Dr. Livingstone have been laboring in Africa with great success, and many have been converted. Did you ever hear of Kaffir tribes protected by England, ever being converted? It is only a people that have been left to themselves, and preached to by men as men, that have been brought to God. For my part, I conceive, that when an enterprise begins in martyrdom, it is none the less likely to succeed, but when conquerors begin to preach the gospel to those they have conquered, it will not succeed, God will teach us that it is not by might All swords that have ever flashed from scabbards have not aided Christ a single grain. Mahommedans' religion might be sustained by scimitars, but Christians' religion must be sustained by love. The great crime of war can never promote the religion of peace. The battle, and the garment rolled in blood, are not a fitting prelude to "peace on earth, goodwill to men." And I do firmly hold, that the slaughter of men, that bayonets, and swords, and guns, have never yet been, and never can be, promoters of the gospel. The gospel will proceed without them, but never through them. "Not by might." Now don't be fooled again, if you hear of the English conquering in China, don't go down on your knees and thank God for it, and say it's such a heavenly thing for the spread of the gospel – it just is not. Experience teaches you that, and if you look upon the map you will find I have stated only the truth, that where our arms have been victorious, the gospel has been hindered rather than not; so that where South Sea Islanders have bowed their knees and cast their idols to the bats, British Hindoos have kept their idols, and where Bechuanas and Bushmen have turned unto the Lord, British Affairs have not been converted, not perhaps because they were British, but because the very fact of the missionary being a Briton, put him above them, and weakened their influence. Hush thy trump, O war; put away thy gaudy trappings and thy bloodstained drapery, if thou thinkest that the cannon with the cross upon it is really sanctified, and if thou imaginest that thy banner hath become holy, thou dreamest of a lie. God wanteth not thee to help his cause. "It is not by armies, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord" ("Independence of Christianity," August 31, 1857, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

While, however, we shall anxiously watch the contest, it will be quite as well if we mingle in it ourselves. Not that this nation of England should touch it; God forbid. If tyrants fight, let them fight; let free men stand aloof. Why should England have aught to do with all the coming battles? As God has cut us off from Europe by a boisterous sea, so let us be kept apart from all the broils and turmoils into which tyrants and their slaves may fall ("War! War! War!" May 1, 1859, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

### **Spurgeon on Christianity and War**

If there is anyone who should be opposed to strife and bloodshed it is the man that names the name of Christ. Spurgeon considered the spirit of war to be absolutely foreign to the spirit of Christianity:

The Church of Christ is continually represented under the figure of an army; yet its Captain is the Prince of Peace; its object is the establishment of peace, and its soldiers are men of a peaceful disposition. The spirit of war is at the extremely opposite point to the spirit of the gospel ("The Vanguard and Rereward of the Church," December 26, 1858, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

Far be it from us to lay the blood of men at God's door. Let us not for one moment be guilty of any thought that the sin and the iniquity which have brought war into the world is of God ("The Desolations of the Lord, the Consolation of His Saints," April 28, 1858, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society).

What saves us from war at this moment? What influence is it that is always contrary to war, and always cries for peace? Why, it is the Christian element among us which counts anything better than bloodshed! ("Jesus – 'All Blessing and All Blest'," February 1, 1891, Metropolitan Tabernacle).

The Lord's battles, what are they? Not the garment rolled in blood, not the noise, and smoke, and din of human slaughter. These may be the devil's battles, if you please, but not the Lord's. They may be days of God's vengeance but in their strife the servant of Jesus may not mingle. We stand aloof. Our kingdom is not of this world; else would God's servants fight with sword and spear. Ours is a spiritual kingdom, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds ("War! War! War!" May 1, 1859, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

War is to our minds the most difficult thing to sanctify to God. The genius of the Christian religion is altogether contrary to everything like strife of any kind, much more to the deadly clash of arms. . . . Now I say again, I am no apologist for war, from my soul I loathe it, and I do not understand the position of a Christian man as a warrior, but still I greatly rejoice that there are to be found at this present day in the ranks many of those who fear God and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour ("A Peal of Bells," July 7, 1861, Metropolitan Tabernacle).

If men receive Christ, there will be no more oppression: the true Christian does to others as he would that they should do to him, and there is no more contention of classes, nor grinding of the faces of the poor. Slavery must go down where Christianity rules, and mark you, if Romanism be once destroyed, and pure Christianity shall govern all nations, war itself must come to an end; for if there be anything which this book denounces and counts the hugest of all crimes, it is the crime of war. Put up thy sword into thy sheath, for hath not he said, "Thou shalt not kill," and he meant not that it was a sin to kill one but a glory to kill a

million, but he meant that bloodshed on the smallest or largest scale was sinful. Let Christ govern, and men shall break the bow and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot in the fire. It is joy to all nations that Christ is born, the Prince of Peace, the King who rules in righteousness. ("Joy Born at Bethlehem," December 24, 1871, Metropolitan Tabernacle).

### **Spurgeon on True Christian Warfare**

As I have [previously pointed out](#), there is no denying the fact that the Bible likens a Christian to a soldier. But as Spurgeon points out, the Christian's true warfare is a spiritual one:

First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is *not with men*, but with Satan and with error. "We wrestle not with flesh and blood." Christian men are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for; we are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics; we are opposed to, and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and his truth: but towards every man we would still endeavour to carry out the holy maxim, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." The Christian soldier hath no gun and no sword, for he fighteth not with men. It is with "spiritual wickedness in high places" that he fights, and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold sceptres in their hands. I have marked, however, that some Christian men – and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone – are very apt to make Christ's war a war of flesh and blood, instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness. Have you never noticed in religious controversies how men will fall foul of each other, and make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ's war is? We are not fighting against men; we are fighting for men rather than against them. We are fighting for God and his truth against error and against sin; but not against men. Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare. Touch not the persons of men, but smite their sin with a stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great; let nothing be spared that is against God and his truth; but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men ("The War of Truth," January 11, 1857, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

But now let us observe that the warfare which the Christian carries on, may be said for his encouragement, to be a most *righteous* warfare. In every other conflict in which men have engaged, there have been two opinions, some have said the war was right, and some have said it was wrong; but in regard to the sacred war in which all believers have been engaged, there has been only one opinion among right-minded men. When the ancient priest stirred up the Crusaders to the fight, he made them shout *Deus vult* – *God wills it*. And we may far more truly say the same. A war against falsehood, a war against sin, is God's war; it is a war which commends itself to every Christian man, seeing he is quite certain that he has the seal of God's approval when he goes to wage war against God's enemies.

Beloved, we have no doubt whatever, when we lift up our voices like a trumpet against sin, that our warfare is justified by the eternal laws of justice. Would to God that every war had so just and true an excuse as the war which God wages with Amalek – with sin in the world! ("The War of Truth," January 11, 1857, Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens).

### **Spurgeon on Christian War Fever**

Spurgeon's remarks about war can be found not only in his sermons, but also in the monthly magazine he edited, *The Sword and the Trowel*. In an article from April of 1878, "Periodical War Madness," Spurgeon issued his most scathing denunciation of Christian war fever:

A friend who was some long time ago prostrated by African fever assures us that he still feels it once a year. The enemy was repulsed in its first assault, but it annually resumes the attack, and will probably do so as long as our friend survives. This curious phenomenon has its parallel in the moral world, for certain evils may be subdued and apparently driven out of a man, and yet they return with great fury and resume their former sway. The like is true of races and nations. At intervals the world goes mad, and mad in the very same direction in which it had confessed its former insanity, and resolved never to rave again. England, at set seasons, runs wild with the war lunacy, foams at the mouth, bellows out "Rule Britannia," shows her teeth, and in general behaves herself like a mad creature: then her doctors bleed her, and put her through a course of depletion until she comes to her senses, settles down to her cotton-spinning and shop-keeping, and wonders what could have ailed her. A very few months ago it would have been difficult to discover an apologist for the Crimean war, and yet in this year of grace 1878 we find ourselves surrounded by a furious crowd whose intemperate language renders it almost a miracle that peace yet continues. If they do not desire war, they are mere bullies; but if they do desire it, they certainly go the right way to bring it about.

One stands amazed at the singular change which has come over the populace, who, if they are faithfully represented by their journals, have learned nothing by experience, but long to throat their burned hand again into the fire. The mistakes of former days should minister to the wisdom of the present generation, for history is a nation's education; it is, therefore, to the last degree, unfortunate when the people relapse into their acknowledged errors, and repeat the blunders of their sires. If our country has been fairly depicted by the advocates for war, its condition is disappointing to the believer in progress, and alarming to the patriot who gazes into the future. We are still pugnacious, still believers in brute force, still ready to shed blood, still able to contemplate ravaged lands and murdered thousands without horror, still eager to test our ability to kill our fellow men. We are persuaded that a large portion of our fellow citizens are clear of this charge, but the noisier, if not the more numerous party, clamour for a warlike policy as loudly as if it involved no slaughter, and were rather a boon to mankind than an



unmitigated curse. A mysterious argument, founded upon the protection of certain mythical "British interests" is set up as an excuse, but the fact is that the national bull-dog wants to fix his teeth into somebody's leg, and growls because he does not quite see how to do it. The fighting instinct is asking to be gratified, and waxes violent because it is denied indulgence.

It is cause for gratitude that the cool heads among us are now sufficiently numerous to act as a check upon the more passionate. We are not now *all* mad at the same time, nor are quite so many bitten by the ban-dog. When last our people barked at the Russian bear, Messrs. Cobden and Bright and a small band of sensible men entered a protest which only enraged the fighting party; but now, thank God, the advocates of peace are heard, and even though abused, their power is felt. They may be unpopular, but they are certainly influential; their opponents have to stand upon the defensive, and exhibit some show of apologetic argument, whereas aforetime they laughed the peace-man to scorn as un-English, fanatical, and idiotic. Though our people have not advanced as we could desire, yet there has been progress, and that of a solid kind. Statesmen are now found who forego considerations of party to obey the higher dictates of humanity; ministers of the gospel now more frequently denounce the crime of carnage and pray for peace and among the masses there are juster ideas of the lamentable results of war. We are bound to be thankful even for small mercies, and on that ground we rejoice in the faintest sign of advance towards truthful estimates of bloodshed; but we are sorry to temper our rejoicing with a large measure of regret that our fellow countrymen, ay, and fellow Christians are still so far from being educated upon this most important subject. Many who did run well apparently, and were theoretical lovers of peace, lost their heads in the general excitement and went over to the enemy; some of them, fearful lest English prestige, alias British swagger, should suffer; others afraid that Russia, by capturing Constantinople, would block our road to India; and a third class, carried away by unreasoning sympathy with the dominant feeling around them. Times of feverish excitement test our attachment to great principles, and are probably intended by providence to act as a gauge as to their real growth; viewing the past few months in that light, there has been cause for congratulation, but greater reason for regret.

What is the cause of these periodical outbreaks of passion? Why does a peaceful nation bluster and threaten for a few months, and even commence fighting, when in a short time it sighs for peace, and illuminates its streets as soon as peace is proclaimed? The immediate causes differ, but the abiding reason is the same – man is fallen, and belongs to a race of which infallible revelation declares "their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known." Wars and fightings arise from the inward lusts of the corrupt heart, and so long as human nature is unrenewed, battles and sieges, wars and rumours of wars will make up the history of nations. Civilized man is the same creature as the savage; he is washed and clothed, but intrinsically he is the same being. As beneath the Russian's skin you find the Tartar, so the Englishman is the savage Briton, or plundering Saxon, wearing broadcloth made

from the wool of the sheep, but with a wild fierce heart within his breast. A prizefight a few years ago excited universal interest, and would do so again if it exhibited gameness and pluck, endurance and mettle. As a race we have these qualities and admire them, and it is idle to deny that if we were unrestrained by education and unrenewed by grace, there is not a man among us but would delight to see, or at least to read of, a fair stand-up fight, whether between fighting men or fighting cocks. We are not cruel, and therefore the brutal contests of Roman gladiators, or the disgusting scenes of Spanish bull-fights, would never be tolerated among us; but we are a fighting nation, and are never better pleased than when we see an exhibition of spirit and courage. Doubtless some good runs side by side with this characteristic of our countrymen, and we are far from wishing to depreciate bravery and valour, but at the same time this is one of the difficulties which the peace advocate must not fail to recognize. A tamer people might more readily adopt our tenets, not from conviction, but from force of circumstances; we find a warrior race slow to learn the doctrine of "peace on earth, good will toward men"; nor may this discourage us, for such a race is worth instructing, and when thoroughly indoctrinated will be mighty to spread abroad the glorious truth. Rome covets England because she knows it to be the centre and pivot of the world, and we covet it also for the self-same reason: let Great Britain once declare from her heart that her empire is peace, and the whole earth shall be in a fair way to sit still and be at rest. We are far from this consummation at present, nor need we wonder when we remember the hearts of men and the passions which rage therein, and especially when we note the peculiarly warlike constituents of which our nation is composed. Observe the bold dash of the Irish, the stern valour of the Scotch, the fierce fire of the Welsh, and the dogged resolution of the English, and you see before you stormy elements ready at any time to brew a tempest.

What, then, is to be done? Shall we unite with the clamorous patriots of the hour and sacrifice peace to political selfishness? Or shall we in silence maintain our own views, and despair of their ever being received by our own countrymen? There is no need to take either course: let us believe in our principles, and wait till the present mania comes to an end. We would persuade all lovers of peace to labour perseveringly to spread the spirit of love and gentleness, which is indeed the spirit of Christ, and to give a practical bearing to what else may become mere theory. The fight-spirit must be battled with in all its forms, and the genius of gentleness must be cultivated. Cruelty to animals, the lust for destroying living things, the desire for revenge, the indulgence of anger – all these we must war against by manifesting and inculcating pity, compassion, forgiveness, kindness, and goodness in the fear of the Lord. Children must be trained with meekness and not with passion, and our dealings with our fellow-men must manifest our readiness to suffer wrong rather than to inflict it upon others. Nor is this all: the truth as to war must be more and more insisted on: the loss of time, labour, treasure, and life must be shown, and the satanic crimes to which it leads must be laid bare. It is the sum of all villainies, and ought to be stripped of its flaunting colours, and to have its bloody horrors revealed; its music should be hushed, that men may hear the moans and groans, the cries and shrieks of dying men and

ravished women. War brings out the devil in man, wakes up the hellish legion within his fallen nature, and binds his better faculties hand and foot. Its natural tendency is to hurl nations back into barbarism, and retard the growth of everything good and holy. When undertaken from a dire necessity, as the last resource of an oppressed people, it may become heroic, and its after results may compensate for its immediate evils; but war wantonly undertaken, for self-interest, ambition, or wounded pride is evil, only evil, and that continually. It ought not to be smiled upon as a brilliant spectacle, nor talked of with a light heart; it is a fitter theme for tears and intercessions. To see a soldier a Christian is a joy; to see a Christian a soldier is another matter. We may not judge another man, but we may discourage thoughtless inclinations in the young and ignorant. A sweeping condemnation would arouse antagonism, and possibly provoke the very spirit we would allay; while quiet and holy influence may sober and ultimately overcome misdirected tendencies. Many of our bravest soldiers are on the side of peace, and in the present crisis have spoken out more boldly on the right side than we might reasonably have expected of them. This must be duly acknowledged and taken into account, and we must speak accordingly. Rash advocates mar the cause they love, and this also is not to be wondered at, since a portion of the same fighting nature is in them also, and leads them to be furious for peace, and warlike on behalf of love. The temptation to fight Christ's battles with the devil's weapons comes upon us all at times, and it is not marvellous that men speak of "fighting Quakers," and "bigots for liberality." We must guard our own spirits, and not lend ourselves to the service of strife by bitter contentions for peace; this, we fear, has not always been remembered, and the consequences have been more lamentable than would at first sight appear: opponents have been needlessly created, and prejudices have been foolishly confirmed. Let us profit by all the mistakes of zealots, and at the same time let us not become so extremely prudent as to lose all earnestness. The cause is a good one, let us urge it onward with blended vigour and discretion.

Seeing that the war-spirit is not slain, and only at the best wounded, we must in quiet times industriously inculcate the doctrines of peace. The work begun must be deepened and made more real, and where nothing has been taught we must begin in real earnest. It is wise to keep the evil spirit down when it is down. We had better shear its locks while it sleeps, for if once the giant awakes it snaps all arguments as Samson broke the new ropes. As a drunkard should be reasoned with in his sober intervals, and not when he is in liquor, so must our nation be instructed in peace when it's fit of passion is over, and not when it is enraged. Have we well and wisely used the period since the last great war? Perhaps not; and it may be that the late ebullition has come to warn us, lest we beguile ourselves into the false notion that a millennium has commenced, and dream that men are about to beat their spears into pruning-hooks. Peace teaching, which is but another name for practical gospel teaching, must be incessant, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" must resound from our pulpits, and be practised in our homes. "Let us love one another, for love is of God," must be more in our hearts

and lives. Above all we must evangelize the masses, carry the truth of the loving God to their homes, preach Jesus and his dying love in their streets, and gather men to his fold. All soul-saving work is a blow at the war-spirit. Make a man a Christian, and he becomes a lover of his race; instruct him, and he becomes ashamed of blows and battles; sanctify him, and he sweetens into an embodiment of love. May the Holy Ghost do such work on all sides among our countrymen, and we shall see their outbursts of rage become less frequent and less violent, for there will be a strong counteracting influence to keep down the evil, and to restrain it when in a measure it breaks loose.

Charles Spurgeon was not alone, for as I have pointed out [elsewhere](#), Baptist ministers in America during the nineteenth century held the same opinions about Christianity and war. Christian agitation or apology for war is an aberration from the principles of Christianity, the folly of which is exceeded only by its appalling misuse of Scripture.

Modern conservative, fundamentalist, and evangelical Christians, all of whom might claim him as one of their own, have much to learn from Spurgeon, not only for his example of an uncompromising and successful Christian minister, but also for his consistent opposition to war and Christian war fever.

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