A GREATER THAN SOLOMON

NO. 1600

A SERMON
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"Behold, a greater than Solomon is here."
Luke 11:31

OUR first thought is that no mere man would have said this concerning himself unless he had been altogether eaten up with vanity, for Solomon was among the Jews the very ideal of greatness and wisdom. It would be an instance of the utmost self-conceit if any mere man were to say of himself, "A greater than Solomon is here."

Any person who was really greater and wiser than Solomon would be the last man to claim such pre-eminence. A wise man would never think it. A prudent man would never say it. The Lord Jesus Christ, if we regard Him as a mere man, would never have uttered such an expression, for a more modest, self-forgetting man was never found in all our race.

View it on the supposition that the Christ of Nazareth was a mere man, and I say that His whole conduct was totally different from the spirit which would have suggested an utterance like this, "A greater than Solomon is here." For men to compare themselves with one another is not wise, and Christ was wise—it is not humble—and Christ was humble.

He would not have spoken thus if there had not been cause and reason in His infinitely glorious nature. It was because the divinity within Him must speak out. For God to say that He is greater than all His creatures is no boasting, for what are they in His sight? All worlds are but sparks from the anvil of His omnipotence. Space, time, eternity—all these are as nothing before Him, and for Him to compare or even to contrast Himself with one of His own creatures is supreme condescension, let Him word the comparison how He may.

It was the divine within our Lord which made Him say—and not even then with a view to exalt Himself, but with a view to point the moral that He was trying to bring before the people, "A greater than Solomon is here." He did as good as say, "The queen of the south came from a distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but you refuse to hear *Me*. She gave attention to a man, but you will not regard your God. You will not listen to the incarnate Deity who tells you words of infinite, infallible wisdom."

Our Lord Jesus is aiming at His hearers' good, and where the motive is so unselfish there remains no room for criticism. He tells them that He is greater than Solomon, to convince them of the greatness of their crime in refusing to listen to the messages of love with which His lips were loaded. Foreigners came from afar to Solomon, but I, says He, have come to your door, and brought infinite wisdom into your very gates, and yet you refuse Me. Therefore the queen of the south shall rise up in judgment against you, for in rejecting Me, you reject a greater than Solomon.

The second thought that comes to one's mind is this—notice the self-consciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He knows who He is, and what He is, and He is not lowly in spirit because He is ignorant of His own greatness. He was meek and lowly in heart—"*Servus servorum*," as the Latins were wont to call Him, "Servant of servants," but all the while He knew that He was *Rex Regum*, or King of Kings.

He takes a towel and He washes His disciples' feet, but all the while He knows that He is their Master and their Lord. He associates with publicans and harlots, and dwells with the common people—but all the while He knows that He is the only begotten of the Father. He sits as a child in the temple hearing and asking questions of the rabbis. He stands among His disciples as though He were one of

themselves, conversing with the ignorant and foolish of the day, seeking their good—but He knows that He is not one of them—He knows that He has nothing to learn from them. He knows that He is able to teach senates and to instruct kings and philosophers, for He is greater than Solomon.

He wears a peasant's garb, and has not where to lay His head, but He knows that, whatever the lowliness of His condition, He is greater than Solomon. He lets us perceive that He knows it, that all may understand the love which brought Him down so low. It is grand humility on Christ's part that He condescends to be our servant, our Savior—when He is so great that the greatest of men are as nothing before Him.

"He counted it not robbery to be equal with God." Mark that. And yet, "He made himself of no reputation." Some people do not know their own worth, and so, when they stoop to a lowly office it is no stoop to their minds, for they do not know their own abilities. They do not know to what they are equal.

But Christ did know—He knew all about His own Deity, and His own wisdom and greatness as man. I admire, therefore, the clear understanding which sparkles in His deep humiliation, like a gem in a dark mine. He is not one who stoops down according to the old rhyme—

"As needs he must who cannot sit upright,"

but He is one who comes down wittingly from His throne of glory, marking each step and fully estimating the descent which He is making. The cost of our redemption was known to Him, and He endured the cross, despising the shame.

Watts well sings—

"This was compassion like a God,
***That* when the Savior knew**
The price of pardon was His blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

Brethren, if our Savior Himself said that He was greater than Solomon, you and I must fully believe it, enthusiastically own it, and prepare to proclaim it. If others will not own it, let us be the more prompt to confess it. If He Himself had to say, before they would own it, "A greater than Solomon is here," let it not be necessary that the encomium should be repeated, but let us all confess that He is indeed greater than Solomon.

Let us go home with this resolve in our minds, that we will speak greater things of Christ than we have done, that we will try to love Him more, and serve Him better, and make Him in our own estimation and in the world's greater than He has ever been. Oh for a glorious high throne to set Him on, and a crown of stars to place upon His head! Oh to bring nations to His feet!

I know my words cannot honor Him according to His merits—I wish they could. I am quite sure to fail in my own judgment when telling out His excellence. Indeed, I grow less and less satisfied with my thoughts and language concerning Him. He is too glorious for my feeble language to describe Him. If I could speak with the tongues of men and of angels, I could not speak worthily of Him. If I could borrow all the harmonies of heaven, and enlist every harp and song of the glorified, yet were not the music sweet enough for His praises.

Our glorious Redeemer is ever-blessed—let us bless Him. He is to be extolled above the highest heavens—let us sound forth His praises. Oh for a well-tuned harp! May the Spirit of God help both heart and lip to extol Him at this hour.

First, then, we shall try to *draw a parallel between Jesus and Solomon*. And secondly, we will break away from all comparisons, and show where *there cannot be any parallel between Christ and Solomon at all.*

I. First, then, BETWEEN CHRIST AND SOLOMON there are some points of likeness.

When the Savior Himself gives us a comparison, it is a clear proof that a likeness was originally intended by the Holy Spirit, and therefore we may say without hesitation that Solomon was meant to be a type of Christ. I am not going into detail, nor am I about to refine upon small matters, but I shall give you five points in which Solomon was conspicuously like to Christ, and in which our Lord was greater than Solomon. O for help in the great task before me.

And first, in *wisdom*. Whenever you talked about Solomon to a Jew, his eyes began to flash with exultation. His blood leaped in his veins with national pride. Solomon—that name brought to mind the proudest time of David's dynasty, the age of gold. Solomon, the magnificent, why, surely, his name crowns Jewish history with glory, and the brightest beam of that glory is his wisdom.

In the east, and I think I may say in the west, it still remains a proverb, "To be as wise as Solomon." No modern philosopher or learned monarch has ever divided the fame of the Son of David, whose name abides as the synonym of wisdom. Of no man since could it be said as of him, "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart."

He intermeddled with all knowledge, and was a master in all sciences. He was a naturalist, "And he spake of trees, from the cedar trees that are in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."

He was an engineer and architect, for he wrote, "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards: I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees." He was one who understood the science of government—a politician of the highest order. He was everything, in fact.

God gave Him wisdom and largeness of heart, says the Scripture, like the sand of the sea. "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about."

Yes, but our Savior knows infinitely more than Solomon. I want you tonight to come to Him just as the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, only for weightier reasons. You do not want to learn anything concerning architecture or navigation, agriculture or anatomy. You want to know only how you shall be built up a spiritual house, and how you shall cross those dangerous seas which lie between this land and the celestial city.

Well, you may come to Jesus, and He will teach you all that you need to know, for all wisdom is in Christ. Our divine Savior knows things past and present and future—the secrets of God are with Him. He knows the inmost heart of God, for no one knows the Father save the Son and He to whom the Son shall reveal Him.

To Him it is given to take the book of prophetic decree and loose the seven seals thereof. Come, then, to Christ Jesus if you want to know the mind of God, for it is written that He, "is made unto us wisdom." Solomon might *have* wisdom, but he could not *be* wisdom to others. Christ Jesus is that to the full. In the multifarious knowledge which He possesses—the universal knowledge which is stored up in Him—there is enough for your guidance and instruction even to the end of life, however intricate and overshadowed your path may be.

Solomon proved his wisdom in part by his *remarkable inventions*. We cannot tell what Solomon did not know. At any rate, no man knows, at this present moment how those huge stones, which have lately been discovered, which were the basis of the ascent by which Solomon went up to the house of the Lord, were ever put into their places.

Many of the stones of Solomon's masonry are so enormous that scarcely could any modern machinery move them. And without the slightest cement they are put together so exactly that the blade of a knife could not be inserted between them. It is marvelous how the thing was done. How such great stones were brought from their original bed in the quarry—how the whole building of the temple was executed—nobody knows.

The castings in brass and silver are scarcely less remarkable. No doubt many inventions have passed away from the knowledge of modern times, inventions as remarkable as those of our own age. We are a set of savages that are beginning to learn something, but Solomon knew and invented things which we shall, perhaps, rediscover in five hundred years time. By vehement exertion this boastful nineteenth century, wretched century as it is, will crawl towards the wisdom which Solomon possessed ages ago.

Yet is Jesus greater than Solomon. As for inventions, Solomon is no inventor at all compared with Him who said, "Deliver him from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom." O Savior, did You find out the way of our salvation? Did You bring into the world and carry out and execute the way by which hell-gate should be closed, and heaven-gate, once barred, should be set wide open? Then, indeed, are You wiser than Solomon. You are the deviser of salvation, the architect of the church, the author and finisher of our faith.

Solomon has left us some very *valuable books*—the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the matchless Song. But oh, the words of Solomon fall far short of the words of Jesus Christ, for they are spirit and life. The power of the word of Jesus is infinitely greater than all the deep sayings of the sage. Proverbial wisdom cannot match His sayings, nor can "The Preacher" rival His sermons, and even the divine Song itself would remain without a meaning—an allegory never to be explained—if it were not that Christ Himself is the sum and substance of it.

Solomon may sing of Christ, but Christ is the substance of the song. He is greater than Solomon in His teachings, for His wisdom is from above, and leads men up to heaven. Blessed are they that sit at His feet.

Again, Solomon showed his wisdom in *difficult judgments*. You know how he settled the question between the two women concerning the child—many other puzzles Solomon solved, and many other knots Solomon was able to untie. He was a great ruler and governor—a man wise in politics, in social economy, and in commerce—wise in all human respects.

But a greater than Solomon is present where Christ is. There is no difficulty which Christ cannot remove, no knot which He cannot untie, no question which He cannot answer. You may bring your hard questions to Him, and He will answer them. And if you have any difficulty on your heart tonight, do but resort to the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer, and search His Word, and you shall hear a voice as from the sacred oracle, which shall lead you in the path of safety.

My point at this time, especially as we are coming to the Communion table, is this—I want you that love the Lord Jesus Christ to believe in His infinite wisdom, and come to Him for direction. I fear that when you are in trouble, you half suppose that the great Keeper of Israel must have made a mistake. You get into such an intricate path that you say, "Surely my Shepherd has not guided me right."

Never think so. When you are poor and needy, still say, "This my poverty was ordained by a greater than Solomon." What if you seem to be deprived of every comfort, and you are brought into a strange and solitary way, where you find no city to dwell in? Yet a Guide is near, and that Guide is not foolish—but a greater than Solomon is here.

I think I look tonight into a great furnace. It is so fierce that I cannot bear to gaze into its terrible blaze. For fear my eyes should utterly fail me and lose the power of sight through the glare of that tremendous flame, I turn aside, for the fury of its flame overpowers me. But when I am strengthened to look again, I see ingots of silver refining in the white heat, and I note that the heat is tempered to the last degree of nicety.

I watch the process to the end, and I say, as I behold those ingots brought out all clear and pure, refined from all dross, and ready for the heavenly treasury, "Behold, a greater than Solomon was in that furnace work."

So you will find it, O sufferer. Infinite wisdom is in your lot. Come, poor child, do not begin to interfere with your Savior's better judgment, but let Him order all things. Do not let your little "Know" ever rise up against the great knowledge of your dear Redeemer. Think of this when you wade in deep waters, and comfortably whisper to yourself, "A greater than Solomon is here."

I have not time to enlarge, and therefore I would have you notice next, that our Lord Jesus Christ is greater than Solomon in *wealth*. This was one of the things for which Solomon was noted. He had great treasures—he "made gold to be as stones, and as for silver it was little accounted of," so rich did he become.

He had multitudes of servants. I think He had sixty thousand hewers in the mountains hewing out stones and wood, so numerous were the workmen he employed. His court was magnificent to the last degree. When you read of the victuals that were prepared to feed the court, and of the stately way in which everything was arranged from the stables of the horses upwards to the ivory throne, you feel, like the queen of Sheba, utterly astonished, and say, "The half was not told me."

But oh, when you consider all the wealth of Solomon, what poor stuff it is compared with the riches that are treasured up in Christ Jesus. Beloved, He who died upon the cross, and was indebted to a friend for a grave—He who was stripped even to the last rag ere He died—He who possessed no wealth but that of sorrow and sympathy, yet had about Him the power to make many rich, and He has made multitudes rich—rich to all the intents of everlasting bliss. And therefore He must be rich Himself.

Is He not rich who enriches millions? Why, our Lord Jesus Christ, even by a word, comforted those that were bowed down. When He stretched out His hand He healed the sick with a touch. There was a wealth about His every movement.

He was a full man, full of all that man could desire to be full of. And now, seeing that He has died and risen again, there is in Him a wealth of pardoning love, a wealth of saving power, a wealth of intercessory might before the Father's throne—a wealth of all things by which He enriches the sons of men, and shall enrich them to all eternity.

I want this truth to come home to you. I want you to recognize the riches of Christ, you that are His people. And in addition, to remember the truth of our hymn—

"Since Christ is rich can I be poor?
What can I want besides?"

I wish we could learn to reckon what we are by what Christ is. An old man said, "I am very old. I have lost my only son. I am penniless, and worst of all, I am blind. But," added he, "this does not matter, for Christ is not infirm. Christ is not aged. Christ has all riches, and Christ is not blind. And Christ is mine, and I have all things in Him."

Could you not get hold of that somehow, brothers and sisters? Will not the Holy Spirit teach you the art of appropriating the Lord Jesus and all that He is and has. If Christ be your representative, why, then you are rich in Him. Go to Him to be enriched.

Suppose I were to meet a woman, and I knew her husband to be a very wealthy man, and that he loved her very much, and she were to say to me, "I am dreadfully poor. I do not know where to get raiment and food"? "Oh," I should say , "that woman is out of her mind." If she has such a husband, surely she has only to go to him for all that she needs. And what if nothing is invested in her name, yet it is in his name, and they are one, and he will deny her nothing." I should say to her, "My good woman, you must not talk in that fashion, or I will tell your husband on you."

Well, I think that I shall have to say the same to you who are so very poor and cast down, and yet are married to Jesus Christ. I shall have to tell your Husband on you, that you bring such complaints against Him, for all things are yours, for you are Christ's and Christ is God's. Wherefore, "Lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees"—use the knees of prayer and the hand of faith, and your estate will well-content you.

Do not think that you are married to Rehoboam, who will beat you with scorpions, for you are joined to a greater than Solomon. Do not fancy that your heavenly Bridegroom is a beggar—all the wealth of eternity and infinity is His—how can you say that you are poor while all that He has is yours?

Now, thirdly, and very briefly indeed. There was one point about Solomon in which every Israelite rejoiced, namely, that he was *the prince of peace*. His name signifies peace. His father, David, was a great warrior, but Solomon had not to carry on war. His power was such that no one dared to venture upon a conflict with so great and potent a monarch.

Every man throughout Israel sat under his vine and fig tree, and no man was afraid. No trumpet of invader was heard in the land. Those were halcyon days for Israel when Solomon reigned. Ah, but in that matter a greater than Solomon is here—for Solomon could not give his subjects peace of mind, he could not bestow upon them rest of heart. He could not ease them of their burden of guilt, or draw the arrow of conviction from their breast and heal its smart.

But I preach to you tonight that blessed Man of Sorrows who has wrought out our redemption, and who is greater than Solomon in His peace-giving power. Oh, come and trust Him. Then shall your "peace be as a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

Am I addressing one of God's people who is sorely troubled, tumbled up and down in his thoughts? Brother or Sister, do not think that you must wait a week or two before you can recover your peace. You can become restful in a moment, for, "He is our peace"—even He Himself, and He alone. And oh, if you will but take Him at once, laying hold upon Him by the hand of faith as your Savior, this man shall be the peace even when the Assyrian shall come into the land.

There is no peace like the peace which Jesus gives—it is like a river—deep, profound, renewed, ever flowing, overflowing, increasing and widening into an ocean of bliss. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind, through Jesus Christ." Oh, come to Him. Come to Him at this moment. Do not remain an hour away from your Noah, or rest, for with Him in the ark your weary wings shall be tired no longer. You shall be safe and restful the moment you return to Him.

The fruit of the Spirit is joy. I want you to get that joy and to enter into this peace. Blessed combination, joy and peace! Peace, peace—there is music in the very word. Get it from Him who is the Word, and whose voice can still a storm into a calm. A greater than Solomon is here to give you that peace. Beat the sword of your inward warfare into the plough-share of holy service. No longer sound an alarm, but blow the trumpet of peace in this the day of peace.

A fourth thing for which Solomon was noted was his *great works*. Solomon built the temple, which was one of the seven wonders of the world in its time. A very marvelous building it must have been, but I will not stay to describe it, for time fails us. In addition to this he erected for himself palaces, constructed fortifications, and made aqueducts and great pools to bring streams from the mountains to the various towns.

He also founded Palmyra and Baalbec—those cities of the desert—to facilitate his commerce with India, Arabia, and other remote regions. He was a marvelous man. Earth has not seen his like. And yet a greater than Solomon is here, for Christ has brought the living water from the throne of God right down to thirsty men, being Himself the eternal aqueduct through which the heavenly current streams.

Christ has built fortresses and munitions of defense, behind which His children stand secure against the wrath of hell. And He has founded and is daily finishing a wondrous temple, His church, of which His people are the living stones, fashioned, polished, rendered beautiful—a temple which God Himself shall inhabit for He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands, that is to say, of this building"—but He dwells in a temple which He Himself does pile, of which Christ is architect and builder, foundation, and chief cornerstone.

But Jesus builds for eternity, an everlasting temple, and when all visible things pass away, and the very ruins of Solomon's temple and Solomon's aqueduct are scarcely to be discerned, what a sight will be seen in that New Jerusalem! The twelve courses of its foundations are of precious stones. Its walls bedight with diamonds rare. Its streets are paved with gold, and its glory surpasses that of the sun.

I am but talking figures, poor figures, too, for the glory of the city of God is spiritual, and where shall I find words with which to depict it? There, where the Lamb Himself is the light, and the Lord God Himself does dwell—there the whole edifice, the entire New Jerusalem—shall be to the praise and the

glory of His grace who gave Jesus Christ to be the builder of the house of His glory, of which I hope we shall form a part forever and ever.

Now, if Christ does such great works, I want you to come to Him, that He may work in you the work of God. That is the point. Come and trust Him at once. Trust Him to build you up. Come and trust Him to bring the living water to your lips. Come and trust Him to make you a temple of the living God.

Come, dear child of God, if you have great works to do, come and ask for the power of Christ with which to perform them. Come, you that would leave some memorial to the honor of the divine name—come to Him to teach and strengthen you. He is the wise master-builder—come and be workers together with Christ. Baptize your weakness into His infinite strength, and you shall be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. God help you to do it.

Once more. I draw the parallel upon the fifth point, and I have done with it. Solomon was great as to *dominion*. The kingdom of the Jews was never anything like the size before or after that Solomon made it. It appears to have extended from the river of Egypt right across the wilderness far up to the Persian Gulf. We can scarcely tell how far Solomon's dominions reached. They are said to have been "from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth."

By one mode or another, he managed to bring various kings into subjection to him, and he was the greatest monarch that ever swayed the sceptre of Judah. It has all gone now. Poor, feeble Rehoboam dropped from his foolish hands the reins his father held. The kingdom was torn in pieces, the tributary princes found their liberty, and the palmy days of Israel were over.

On the contrary, our Lord Jesus Christ at this moment has dominion over all things. God has set Him over all the works of His hands. Ay, tell it out among the heathen that the Lord reigns. The feet that were nailed to the tree are set upon the necks of His enemies. The hands that bore the nails sway at this moment the sceptre of all worlds—Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords! Hallelujah!

Let universal sovereignty be ascribed to the Son of man—to Him who was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Tell all, you saints, for your own comfort. The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Everything that happens in providence is under His sway still, and the time is coming when a moral and spiritual kingdom will be set up by Him which shall encompass the whole world.

It does not look like it, does it? All these centuries have passed away, and little progress has been made. Ah, but He comes—and when He comes, or ere He comes, He shall overturn, overturn, overturn—for His right it is, and God will give it to Him. And as surely as God lives, unto Him shall every man bow the knee, "and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Do not be afraid about it. Do not measure difficulties, much less tremble at them. What is faith made for but to believe that which seems impossible? To expect universal dominion for Christ when everything goes well is but the expectation of reason. But to expect it when everything goes ill is the triumph of Abrahamic confidence.

Look upon the great mountain and say, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before the true Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." In the blackest midnight, when the ebon darkness stands thick and hard as granite before you, believe that at the mystic touch of Christ, the whole of it shall pass away—and at the brightness of His rising the eternal light shall dawn, never to be quenched.

This is to act the part of a believer, and I ask you to act that part, and believe to the full in Christ the Omnipotent. Why means this stinted faith in an almighty arm? What a fidget we are in and what a worry seizes us if a little delay arises! Everything has to be done in the next ten minutes, or we count our Lord to be late.

Is this part of wisdom? The Eternal has infinite leisure—who are we that we should hasten Him?

"His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour."

A day is long to us, but a thousand years to Him are but as the twinkling of a star. Oh, rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, for the time shall come when the God of Israel shall put to rout His adversaries, and the Christ of the cross shall be the Christ of the crown. We shall one day hear it said—The great Shepherd reigns, and His unsuffering kingdom now has come. Then rocks and hills, and vales and islands of the sea shall all be vocal with the one song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour and glory and power and dominion and might for ever and ever!"

Thus I have tried to draw the parallel, but I pray you to see the Lord Jesus for yourself, and know whether I have spoken the truth about Him. You have heard the report. Now, like the Queen of Sheba, go and see for yourself. Get to Christ. As to His dominion—come under His sway and own His sceptre. Go and trust your King. Love your King. Praise your King. Delight in your King.

How courtiers delight to be summoned to court! How glad they are to see the queen's face. How pleased they are if she gives them but a kindly word! Surely, their fortune is made, or at least their hopes are raised and their spirits lifted up. Shall we not sun ourselves in the presence of the blessed and only Potentate?

Let us come into the presence of our King tonight, or else let us sit here and weep. Let us come to His table to feed upon Himself. Let us live on His Word. Let us delight in His love, and we shall surely say, "A greater than Solomon is here."

II. I shall not detain you longer than a minute or two while I remark that we must rise beyond all parallels if we would reach the height of this great argument, for BETWEEN CHRIST AND SOLOMON THERE IS MUCH MORE CONTRAST THAN COMPARISON—much more difference than likeness.

In His *nature* the Lord Jesus is greater than Solomon. Alas, poor Solomon! The strongest man that ever lived, namely Samson, was the weakest of men—and the wisest man that ever lived was, perhaps, the greatest—certainly the most conspicuous—fool. How different is our Lord! There is no infirmity in Christ, no folly in the incarnate God. The backsliding of Solomon finds no parallel in Jesus, in whom the prince of this world found nothing, though he searched Him through and through.

Our Lord is greater than Solomon because He is not mere man. He is man, perfect man, man to the utmost of manhood, sin excepted. But still He is more, and infinitely more, than man. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." He is God Himself. "The Word was God." God dwells in Him, and He Himself is God.

As in nature He was infinitely superior to Solomon, and not to be compared with him for a moment, so was He in *character*. Look at Christ and Solomon for a minute as to real greatness of character, and you can hardly see Solomon with a microscope—while Christ rises grandly before you, growing every moment till He fills the whole horizon of your admiration.

Principally let me note the point of self-sacrifice. Jesus lived entirely for other people. He had never a thought about Himself. Solomon was, to a great extent, wise unto himself, rich unto himself, strong unto himself, and you see in those great palaces, and in all their arrangements, that he seeks his own pleasure, honor, and emolument.

And alas! that seeking of pleasure leads him into sin, and that sin into a still greater one. Solomon, wonderful as he is, only compels you to admire him for his greatness, but you cannot admire him for his goodness. You see nothing that makes you love him—you rather tremble before him than feel gladdened by him.

Oh, but look at Christ. He does not have a thought for Himself. He lives for others. How grandly magnificent He is in unselfish love. He "loved his church and gave himself for it." He pours out His heart's blood for the good of men.

And hence, dear friends, at this moment our blessed Lord is infinitely superior to Solomon in His *influence*. Solomon has little or no influence today. Even in his own time he never commanded the influence that Christ had in His deepest humiliation. I do not hear of any that were willing to die for Solomon—certainly nobody would do so now.

But how perpetually is enthusiasm kindled in ten thousand breasts for Christ. They say that if there were stakes again in Smithfield we should not find men to burn at them for Christ. I tell you, it is not so. The Lord Jesus Christ has at this moment a remnant according to the election of His grace who would fling themselves into a pit of fire for Him—and joy to do it.

"Who shall separate us"—even us poor pigmies—"from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" "Oh," says one, "I do not think I could suffer martyrdom." You are not yet called to do so, my brother, and God has not given you the strength to do it before the need arises. But you will have strength enough if ever it comes your lot to die for Jesus.

Did you never hear of the martyr who, the night before he was to be burnt, sat opposite the fire, and taking his shoe off, he held his foot close to the flame till he began to feel the burning of them? He drew them back and said, "I see God does not give me power to bear such suffering as I put upon myself, but I have none the less doubt," said he, "that I shall very well stand the stake tomorrow morning, and burn quick to the death for Christ without starting back." And so he did, for he was noticed never to stir at all while the flames were consuming him.

There is a great deal of difference between your strength today and what your strength would be if you were called to some tremendous work or suffering. My Lord and Master, let me tell you, wakes more enthusiasm in human breasts at this moment than any other name in the universe.

Napoleon once said, "I founded a kingdom upon force, and it will pass away," but "Christ founded a kingdom upon love, and it will last forever and ever." And so it will.

Blot out the name of Christ from the hearts of His people? Strike yon sun from the firmament, and quench the stars, and when you have achieved that easy task, yet have you not begun to remove the glory of the indwelling Christ from the hearts of His people.

Some of us delight to think that we bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus. "Where?" says one. I answer, it is all over us. We have been buried into His name, and we belong to Him in spirit, soul, and body. That water-mark, which denotes that we are His, can never be taken out of us. We are dead with Him, wherein also we were buried with Him, and are risen again with Him. And there is nothing at this moment that stirs our soul like the name of Jesus.

Speak for yourselves. Is it not so? Have you never heard of one who lay dying, his mind wandering, and his wife said to him, "My Dear, do you not know me?" He shook his head, and they brought near his favorite child. "Do you not know me?" He shook his head. One whispered, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" and he said, "He is all my salvation and all my desire."

Oh, blessed name! Blessed name! Some years ago I was away from this place for a little rest, and I was thinking to myself, "Now, I wonder whether I really respond to the power of the Gospel as I should like to do? I will go and hear a sermon and see."

I would like to sit down with you in the pews sometimes, and hear somebody else preach—not everybody, mark you—for when I hear a good many, I want to be doing it myself. I get tired of them if they do not glow and burn.

But that morning I thought I would drop into a place of worship such as there might be in the little town. A poor, plain man, a countryman, began preaching about Jesus Christ. He praised my Master in very humble language, but he praised Him most sincerely. Oh, but the tears began to flow. I soon laid the dust all round me where I sat, and I thought, "Bless the Lord! I do love Him."

It only wants somebody else to play the harp instead of me, and my soul is ready to dance to the heavenly tune. Only let the music be Christ's sweet, dear, precious name, and my heart leaps at the sound.

Oh, my brethren, sound out the praises of Jesus Christ! Sound out that precious name! There is none like it under heaven to stir my heart. I hope you can all say the same. I know you can if you love Him, for all renewed hearts are enamored of the sweet Lord Jesus.

"A greater than Solomon is here." Solomon has no power over your hearts, but Jesus has. His influence is infinitely greater. *His power to bless* is infinitely greater, and so let us magnify and adore Him with all our hearts.

Oh, that all loved Him! Alas that so many do not! What strange monsters! Why, if you do not love Christ, what are you at? You hearts of stone, will you not break? If His dying love do not break them, what will? If you cannot see the beauties of Jesus, what can you see? You blind bats! O you that know not the music of His name, you are deaf. O you that do not rejoice in Him, you are dead. What are you at, that you are spared through the pleadings of His love, and yet do not love Him? God have mercy upon you and bring you to delight yourselves in Christ, and trust Him!

As for us who do trust Him, we mean to love Him and delight in Him more and more, world without end. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—COLOSSIANS 1

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—390, 389, 416

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.