

## THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, A SIGN

NO. 2777

A SERMON

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*“The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”*

*Matthew 12:42*

These scribes and Pharisees might easily have ascertained that Jesus was the promised Messiah if they had only taken the trouble to examine His credentials. They had the law and the testimony at their fingers' ends, and they might also have made an appeal to the prophets, and then, they could scarcely have failed to note the many wonderful points of resemblance between Jesus of Nazareth and the Messiah who was to come, but they refused to thoroughly investigate His claims, took it for granted that He was an impostor, and therefore rejected Him.

When they were driven up into a corner by the truth that He spoke, they demanded of Him a sign, and there again they showed that they were not sincere, for He had given them many signs—some of which they must have recognized, because their anger had been excited by them, as, for instance, when Jesus went into their synagogue, and healed, on the Sabbath day, a man who had his hand withered. They had condemned him as a Sabbath breaker because He wrought this miracle, so it must certainly have come to their knowledge, yet, while this and multitudes of other miracles were constantly being reported of Him, they still continued to reject Him, disdainingly to confess that He was the Christ, even though He proved it to their faces.

They asked Him for a sign, but the Savior tells them that they shall have no signs beyond those they had already had. One of those signs was the prophet Jonah coming up from the belly of the fish after having lain there three days. Christ himself would rise again, the third day, and, by His resurrection, he would fulfill the type of Jonah, this would be such a sign as they could not gainsay. Then there were the signs of the men of Nineveh, repenting at the preaching of Jonah, and the queen of the south coming to Solomon.

The Gentiles, the far-off ones, should be signs to the unbelieving Jews, they would see that Jesus was the Christ because He called unto Himself a people who knew Him not, and they ran unto Him because of the Lord His God, who had sent Him as His Messenger. If the scribes and Pharisees would continue to reject these infallible signs, no others would be given to them, but the great King's signet would be set to the writ of execution, condemning Jerusalem to destruction and the people to be scattered abroad.

I think we may truly say that the Queen of Sheba is a sign even to this generation, for each generation, though differing in some respects from others, has many points of resemblance to them. “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.” When you perceive what other men have been, you see very much what you yourself are. It is a commonly admitted truth that history repeats itself, and it does so because it is the result of the same sort of passions, the same sinful tendencies in wicked human hearts. So I believe that the present age is, in many points, very like the one in which Christ Himself appeared, and if He were corporeally here, at this moment, He could with great accuracy say, “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for

she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.”

I pray the Lord specially to bless His own Word to any of you who are unconcerned, and I beg all the Lord’s people to pray that it may be so. You, who are yourselves saved, will get a blessing through your own prayers while you are seeking a blessing on what is spoken, in the name of Christ, and by the aid of God’s gracious Spirit, and others will get a blessing too.

Our divisions shall be these—firstly, *the conduct of the queen of Sheba condemns unbelievers*, secondly, *that condemnation is strengthened by many circumstances connected with her history*, and thirdly, *the condemnation of such a witness must be solemn and overwhelming*.

### I. First, then, THE CONDUCT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA CODEMNS UNBELIEVERS.

For first of all, *she was interested in the report of Solomon’s wisdom*. We do not know much about her, except that she came from a great distance, constrained by her desire after knowledge, her wish “to hear the wisdom of Solomon.” I suppose she was a woman of intelligence and thoughtfulness, and therefore she sought the king who was of the same way of thinking. “Birds of a feather flock together,” and things are noticed by us which we admire, and of which we approve.

A man of taste, living in a city, or only visiting it, very soon knows all about its sculpture and paintings, and he very naturally gets reports concerning its chief artists brought to him. Even in a little village, a lover of science and art very soon finds people informing him of details and facts which bear upon scientific and artistic matters. He attracts to himself those who are somewhat like himself, and in similar fashion, Solomon attracted this woman because she was evidently the possessor of some wisdom, and she desired to have more.

Her action is a strong condemnation of the many people in the world whose thoughts never rise above their bodies, and whose only questions are, “What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” There are thousands, who would not go half a mile to obtain even the ordinary kind of wisdom, they shun all forms of education, they have no idea beyond their usual day labor, or the pursuits in which they occupy their time, but this Queen of Sheba longed for wisdom, and traveled far to obtain it.

In contrast to her, look at the great majority of people in this vast city of London, and in various parts of our own and other lands. Some are interested in science, art, politics, and such matters, but as for the higher things, which He who is “greater than Solomon” would teach them, they seem to have no inclination for them.

You may build a chapel or mission hall in some dark neighborhood and it may be by self-denial that you provide the means for its erection, you may feel intense anxiety about the people in that region, and use all lawful inducements to bring them inside the place you have built, yet you cannot stir them, or interest them. Oftentimes, it is the very hardest task in the world to get even a moment’s hearing for the Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Plenty of people will read the newspaper through from the first word of the title to the last advertisement, but they will scarcely deign to look at a gracious treatise, or tract, or their Bibles, there is nothing there to interest them. Anything about war, or the wreck of a ship, or an accident in a coal mine, or worse still, the story of some foul crime, or the details with which the Divorce Court is familiar—there are many who are quite sure to read all that through, but as to that which concerns the soul, eternity, heaven, hell, the Christ of God—all this appears to be a matter of perfect indifference to a large mass of our fellow creatures.

***“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,  
Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?”***

We may well take up that lament, for the practical answer to our question from great multitudes among whom we dwell will be, “It is nothing to us, we care for none of these things. If you will feed us,

if you will clothe us, well and good, but if you begin to speak about the Gospel, or talk to us about our immortality, and of our need to be prepared for eternity, our ear is deaf. We are like the adder that will not hear, charm ye never so wisely.” Oh, how will this Queen of Sheba, who was so interested in the best things that she knew of, and who sought them as a merchant seeketh goodly pearls, how will she rise up in the judgment, and condemn multitudes of careless folk in this worldly generation.

She will also condemn many because *she believed the report of Solomon’s wisdom when she heard it*. She was not only interested in hearing it, but what she heard she believed. I do not know who brought the report to her, but Solomon was a great merchant, and traders came from all parts to do business with him.

So one and another, who had stayed at Jerusalem, and heard of the marvelous wisdom of the great king, and had seen some of his matchless architectural feats, his vast reservoirs, his wonderful ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord, carried the report of all this to the Queen of Sheba, and she believed it. I do not say that it was very wonderful that she should believe it, yet her belief condemns the skepticism of this age, and condemns it all the more because, in some respects, this is a very credulous age. We readily believe what travelers tell us.

There have been some very extraordinary stories told, which once were not believed, yet afterwards were found to be true, and now, we generally accept the testimony of a man who comes back, and says that he has seen such and such things. Our learned Societies invite these men to visit them, and tell their story. There may be some who doubt, but on the whole, they are believed. Yet, when we give our report concerning the Lord Jesus, we have often to ask, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” We tell men, not only what God says in his Word, but what we ourselves have tasted, and handled, and felt, yet even when we get them interested in our message, they do not always believe it.

Nothing appears to be more popular, at this present time, than the casting of doubts upon everything that is sacred, and he seems to be reckoned the cleverest man who takes a tar-brush, and goes through the sanctuary daubing all the holy vessels thereof, and whereas, of old, “a man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees,” that he might use them in building for God, it seems now as if every man’s axes were for breaking down the carved work, and damaging the cedar of which the temple of the Lord is constructed.

The Queen of Sheba, in her belief of the report which, I do not doubt, bore upon its face some degree of improbability—for marvelous stories were told about Solomon—yet believing it because it came to her upon good, fair, honest testimony of men who had no object in deceiving her—she shall rise up in condemnation of the people of this generation who will not believe Christ himself, nor God himself, but even say that this Book is God’s, and then deny the things which are most plainly taught therein, and so make God himself to be a liar.

This Queen of Sheba will condemn the unbelief of this generation, in the next place, because she was not only interested in the highest things that came in her way, and believed the honest report that was brought to her, but also because *she acted upon it*. She determined to go where she could hear more of the wisdom of which she had been told. She loved wisdom, and sought for it as for rubies. She, therefore, made up her mind to take the long and perilous journey, and to go and find Solomon, that she might hear his wisdom. She so believed the report that she set out upon her journey, and a journey in those days was a different thing from what it is now.

Even a century or so ago, our grandfathers made their wills before they went a hundred miles, so what must it have been for the Queen of Sheba to go to Jerusalem to see the great and wise king who reigned there? She believed that she would be fully rewarded for all the trouble she was taking, so she went.

This is a very important point, for we have, in our congregations, a large number of persons who profess to believe everything that they hear, yet in their hearts, they cannot really be believing anything, for they do not act upon it. O sirs, if you do believe yourselves to be sinful, why do you not seek

forgiveness? If you believe yourselves to be in danger, why do you not bestir yourselves, and search for a way of escape? If you believe that there is a God, why do you not ask how you may be reconciled to Him? If you believe the words of Jesus, why do you not trust in Him, and obey him? It will go very hard with those of you who have been believers in the Bible and lovers of orthodoxy all your lives, and who very earnestly condemn anything like doubt, yet who prove that you do not yourselves truly believe because your belief does not lead you to action.

A hungry man, if he believed that bread was to be had, would go and get it. A man in debt, if he believed that another would discharge his liabilities for him, would go and present the bill, and get it receipted. But he who saith, as so many do, “I believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord,” and who goes on to say, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins,” and yet who neither really reverences God nor seeks the forgiveness of sin—verily, I say unto you, the Queen of the south, who not only resolved to start upon her journey to Jerusalem, but who actually went there, shall rise up in the judgment to condemn those who sit still upon the brink of perdition, and dare to go to sleep while God is angry with them every day, and even make mirth while the furbished sword of the Eternal is drawn out of its sheath to slay them. God grant that, if any of you are guilty of such a sin as this, the arrow of conviction may pierce your conscience now!

The Queen of Sheba will also rise up in judgment against unbelievers because she not only acted upon the report she received and believed, but *she persevered in doing so under very great difficulties*. I have already said that a journey to Jerusalem was no small thing for her to accomplish. We little know what were the difficulties of traveling at that time. She may not have been afraid of thieves and other evildoers who were in the way, for Solomon’s great power, I do not doubt, kept a wide district very much more quiet than it would otherwise have been, but still, it was a serious task for her to undertake.

Yet now, alas! there are many who would like to hear of the wisdom of Christ, but they fear that it would cost them too much, and that there would be too many hardships to be borne. They would have Christ if He could be had by a careless soul, or by one who is living in sin, but the idea of starting out to seek for Christ, and facing difficulties—which indeed, would soon vanish if they had but resolute hearts—that idea daunts them. Like Pliable, they cannot push their way through the Slough of Despond, anybody else may have the Celestial City, but they cannot go to it through such a foul place as that. These people are afraid of the laugh of a foolish companion—afraid of the cold shoulder from a wealthy associate—afraid of the sneer of the unbeliever—afraid of having to give up some favorite sin.

The Queen of Sheba could go from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, but they cannot go to Christ, who is far wiser and “greater than Solomon” ever was. The way, they think, is much too long and too difficult for them. This woman hoped to get wisdom by her journey, but these people need salvation, they would go with a view to their soul’s eternal destiny, but the cost is too heavy for them, so they cannot go.

Another point that is worth noticing is, that *this Queen of the South had to stoop from a high position*. Her position, at any rate, involved her in greater difficulty than many others would have experienced. Was she to leave her throne? Then, what would become of her dominions during her absence? Perhaps there would be plots to overthrow her, she might not be able to trust her counselors in power. Shall she, a woman, nursed in luxury as she has been, brave all these dangers to make such a journey as that to Solomon’s court? Well, she did all that, so she condemns those who will not do likewise.

There is something to be said for those who are in high places, and who fear not God. I would not say anything to apologize for their neglect of Christ, yet I remember his own words, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” But the most of you, dear friends, have not that kind of hindrance, you could not say that you have a kingdom to rule, or a large business to manage. You have your cares, but still, they are not such as to be an excuse for you if you do not seek the Lord. This woman, with a kingdom’s cares about her, went to Solomon for wisdom, how she condemns those who have very little to do, yet who say that they have not time to think about these things!

You have not to step down from a throne, which is a very trying position for any of the Lord's people to occupy, you have not to shake off the manners of the court, the vices of the court, the pomp of the court, to come down and listen to some poor minister of the Gospel—no, you know that you are not at all demeaned when you are sitting here, listening to a plain preacher like myself. There is no necessity for you to have the Archbishop of Canterbury to preach to you, I am quite big enough for you in that respect.

Well, now, there is an advantage in all this, and it is still true that “the poor have the gospel preached to them.” There are some poor, miserable, rich people who never do have the Gospel preached to them, and I do not see how they ever will. Perhaps they live in a grand mansion in the country, where everybody looks up to them, it may be, and it often is the case that, in the parish church, there is nothing but Popery.

Now, if they went to the little Methodist chapel, they might hear the Gospel, and if you were in that part of the country, you would go, but they could not. I do not know that they could not, but I do know that they think they could not, and indeed, if they did, everybody would notice them, they would be such objects of attraction and talk that there is a difficulty in their way. Well, now, you have not that obstacle, this queen had it, with all its weight, yet she came to listen to the wisdom of Solomon.

Oh, then, when Jesus, the “greater than Solomon,” is near, should not the poor, to whom He delighted to preach—the common people, like the most of us here—should not we feel that there is nothing in our way to keep us from coming to Him? We can come, on a Thursday night, or on the Sabbath day, to listen to the Gospel, and nobody thinks that there is any great condescension when we are found occupying a seat amongst our fellow worshippers, yet it might be a far more difficult matter with others in a higher station.

One thing more about this wise queen is, that *she made great use of Solomon when she reached his court*, for she asked him hard questions, and searched and pried into everything that she could. Now, in this, I think she rebukes a great many half-believing professors. You have come to Him who is “greater than Solomon,” you have come to the infinite wisdom of our great Lord, yet there is many a hard question that you puzzle over, instead of taking it to Him. You do not commune with Him concerning all that is in your heart as the Queen of Sheba did with Solomon. You do not get from Christ rich gifts as she received from Solomon. Oh, when you do get to Jesus, make use of Him!

It is no good for you to have a Savior if you do not use Him. If God, in His great grace, has given Him to you, get out of Him all that you can, and do not think that He will consider you to be intruding. It is the delight of His heart to give out of His fullness to His needy people, He is best satisfied with you when you are best satisfied with Him, He gets most from you when you get most from Him. Do remember that, and never, never, never, start back from a golden promise as though you must get it changed before you spend it.

Some Christians seem as if they could not touch the sovereigns that lie before them in heaps, but they must take only a half-crown at a time, and think they have taken a great deal then. O ye poor saints, be rich, take your spending money with a lavish hand, and lay it out for God! There is a blessed prodigality in grace, you may spend as much as you please, yet you shall not be considered a spendthrift. God grant that the Queen of Sheba may rebuke us if we have not used Him who is “greater than Solomon” after the same fashion as that in which she used Solomon when she came to Him!

Thus much by way of proof that the conduct of the Queen of Sheba condemns those of us who still remain unbelievers.

**II.** Now, secondly, THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S CONDEMNATION IS STRENGTHENED BY MANY CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH HER HISTORY.

The first of those circumstances is this—*the report, which came to her, could not have come with the same force as the report which comes to us.* As I have already said, it is probable that the merchants, who traded with Solomon, told what they had seen, and some of their servants no doubt talked to some of the Queen of Sheba's servants, and possibly, they told very extraordinary tales, and drew the long

bow, as we say. In this case, however, they might draw the longest bow they could get, because, when they had said all they did say, the half was not told. Solomon was wiser than they thought he was, yet they thought him to be almost impossible sage. The report of his wisdom could not have come to the queen, one would think, from many who had been eyewitnesses, yet it was sufficient to convince her. But dear friends, the report concerning Christ comes to you, in the Word of God, from many witnesses, and it is repeated to you by many ministers of the Gospel, and by many others of God's servants, living men and living women, who tell you what they know, what they have felt, what they have experienced.

Ah! some of you had the report, first of all, from one whose word you never doubted. Your mother told it to you when you were quite a child. Is she dead? Then I feel sure that, among the last words that she spoke, she told you that report again, and bade you seek Him who is "greater than Solomon." Perhaps I am addressing some, whose dear grandfather, now in heaven, told them the report when they were little children, and your brother, your sister, your friend, and several of your acquaintances have again and again said to you, "It is true, I have tried it, and proved it, I know it is so." There are very many converted people around some of you, and if you do not believe their report, you practically make them out to be liars, and as I have already reminded you, you make God Himself a liar.

The Queen of Sheba had no divine witness, she had only the testimony of men, but you believe this Bible to be the Book of God, and the witness of God is greater than the witness of men. Beware, therefore, lest ye reject the testimony of God against yourselves, and the witness of all His people, age after age, and the witness of your kinsfolk and acquaintance now. If you do not believe when you have so many to bring you the report, the Queen of Sheba condemns you, for she believed, though she had so few to report to her.

I do not wish to have a congregation that will accept teaching simply upon my bare word. No, dear friends, "let the Word of Christ dwell in you." There is always a tendency to follow this divine or that, but I charge you to do nothing of the kind. Go to the Book for yourselves, go to Christ, and to His inspired Word on your own account. We will teach you the truth as far as we know it, but we will never bear the responsibility of being the standard for other men's beliefs. It may suit so-called "priests" to take away the Bible from the people, but true preachers of the Gospel ever push the Bible to the front.

It may please those who set up a fellow being as infallible to paste up the pages of the Bible, or to keep them in some unknown tongue, but to those who know no infallibility but that of Christ, and no head of the church but Jesus Christ the Lord, an open Bible is absolutely needful. Therefore, we urge you to search the Scriptures, and we pray God to grant that, as you search them, they may search you, and as you dwell upon the reading of them, that what you read may dwell in your hearts to your permanent profit, making you wise unto salvation.

The report that comes to you, also, *concerns much weightier matters than the Queen of Sheba heard of*. Solomon's wisdom interested the Queen of Sheba because she loved all kinds of wisdom, but it did not matter much to her after all. Her country would still have been as productive of its wondrous spices and gold if she had never gone to Solomon, why, then, should she go to him? But the matters about which God's Word reports to you, and God's Spirit reports to you, and God's servants report to you, unbelievers, concern your souls, yourselves, your sins, your fears, your hopes. It is about your everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power, or your eternal happiness in Christ Jesus.

I cannot make some of you out. You are not fools in secular matters. Jingle a guinea near you, and you quickly hear the sound of it, and are pretty sharp to catch it. You are shrewd traders, keep your books correctly, and look well to your accounts, yet you neglect your souls. If you had a nurse, who took care of your child's clothes, but neglected your child, you would not keep her long. Yet that is what you are doing, you are careful about that which is only like the clothes around yourself, while you care nothing for your soul, your real self, and its best interests. If a man had a bag full of bank notes, and he went down the Borough with it, and got into a crowd, it would be strange if all his anxiety was lest he should lose a cotton pocket handkerchief, while he never thought about his bank notes. You would



conclude that there was a great flaw in his judgment, yet that is exactly what men do. They care about what, after all, are comparative trifles, and let their never dying souls take care of themselves as best they can.

The Queen of Sheba will, next, condemn unbelievers very seriously, *because the report that came to her was not nearly so touching as that which comes to us*. There was no report like this—that Solomon had died for his enemies. There was no message of love, there were no tidings of self-sacrifice, which indicated a heart of pity. No, simply that he was wise, so she resolved to go and see him.

O sirs, what a different report I have to bring to you! I have not to set before careless souls merely a wise Savior, but a loving, condescending, self-sacrificing, dying Savior, and if that report does not lead men to seek Him, they will be fearfully condemned by this Queen of Sheba who came to see Solomon because of the report she had heard of him in her own land.

Then, again, *this report was, in her case, accompanied by no divine command*. She heard a report about Solomon, but there was no law, either human or divine, ordering her to go to Solomon. She could do precisely as she pleased about it. But when you hear about Christ, O sinners, it is not left to your own option whether you will come to Him, or not, but “God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent,” and He hath bidden us go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, and to say to them, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Besides that, *the Queen of Sheba had no invitation to go to Solomon*. He did not send to her and say, “Come, and hear my wisdom.” She came uninvited; but O sons and daughters of men, you have been invited again and again! “Come unto me,” is Christ’s constant message. You are invited to come to Him, yet you will not come.

And again, *the Queen of Sheba had no promise that she should be welcomed if she did come*. She could not tell that Solomon would receive her, yet she came, believing that he would, and he did, but you have the Savior’s gracious assurance, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Oh, with what readiness and promptness ought you to respond to the sacred invitation of love, backed by the divine command, and confirmed by the sacred promise! The Lord grant that some of you, while I am thus simply stating the claims of my Lord Jesus, that “greater than Solomon,” may resolve to come unto Him, that you may receive eternal life!

And then again, dear friends, this woman came simply through a report, but *in your case, it is not merely by report*. When I tell you about what Christ has done, which is written in the Word, that is a report, but when you see—and many of you have seen—the finger of God upon some of your friends, that is not a report. I put it to some here present who are unconverted, but who have had godly mothers, was not your mother’s life one of the things you never could get over when you tried to doubt your Bible? And is it not still to you a very wonderful life as you look back upon it?

How calm, how joyous, she was in suffering or in poverty! How quiet, how patient, she was in putting up with you! Then, as to her death, was there not something almost divine about that patient waiting for her Lord, and that dying smile, and that last triumphant hymn? Why, if ever I doubted the Word of God, some of the deathbeds that I have witnessed would bring me back to faith directly. Well do I remember a working man, who used to go out preaching the Gospel, and with whom I was intimate in my early days. I went to see him when he was dying, he was sitting up in his bed, and his eyes had failed entirely. Disease had made him blind, but when he heard me come into the room, he said to me—

*“And when ye hear my eye-strings break,  
How sweet my minutes roll!  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
The glory in my soul.”*

There is no deception about a scene like that, that is not a mere report, that is a thing to hear, to see, to know, and such things are constantly happening all round us. Old men and women lean on their staff,

and die, as Jacob did. Young men and women go down to their graves through consumption, not regretting it, but exulting to be so early in the morning home with Christ. Why, sirs, some of you must surely believe, or else you will gag your conscience, violate the best instincts of your nature, and commit spiritual suicide. God grant that you may not do this!

And then, when this woman heard the report, *she had not the opportunity of testing it at once without a long journey*. She had to go all the way to Jerusalem, but you, sirs, have not to go an inch in order to find Christ. What saith the apostle? “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth.” Note that expression, “in thy mouth.” Why, hungry man, if I say to you, “There is bread on the table, take as much as you need,” it is your own fault if you do not eat it. But if I can say, “Man, it is in thy mouth,” you will have to exert yourself to reject it. It will cost you more pains to spit Christ out than to feed upon him.

There are some men who seem to me to choke themselves in trying to get rid of the Gospel which God has put into their mouths, they will not let a crumb of it go down their throats. If that is your case, when you are damned, you will have to say “Amen” to your own condemnation, and all who hear of it will say, “That man’s destruction was indeed just, for he deliberately took the trouble to be his own destroyer.”

The Queen of Sheba had to go a long way to get to Solomon, but you have not to go a long way to get to the Savior. “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

I must not weary you with these many particulars, but I cannot help saying that *the Queen of Sheba, in coming to Solomon, did not have anything like the inducements which are put before you in coming to Christ*. Solomon could prove to her his own possession of wisdom, but he could not make her wise, though I think that, generally, people learn a good deal of wisdom by seeing and hearing it in others. But in coming to Christ, you have not the inducement of merely learning how much He knows, but He will make you wise unto salvation, and He will give you unspeakably precious gifts. Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba great gifts, of which I hope to speak another time, yet he had never promised that he would do so, but you may come to Christ with the confident expectation that of His fullness you shall receive, grace for grace, for this is his way of welcoming all who come unto him.

Who will come to my Lord and Master for the first time? It is now many years since I first came to Him, but I have never once regretted that step. Blessed was the day, and blessed was the hour, when I came unto Him. Oh, if I had not come to Him, I think that my soul would never rest until it had found Him! If it had all to be done over again—ay, if the coming had to be continually repeated, as indeed it has—“to whom coming, as unto a living stone,”—I would delight to do it all over again, and if I had to begin preaching the Gospel to you, I would still preach the same Gospel that I have preached to you. I would seek to preach it better, but it should be the same “old, old story of Jesus and His love.” I love it so much because I know that it is true, I prove it every day, by happy personal experience.

Believe it, O ye careless ones, who now are found at the post of Wisdom’s doors, and come in to see Him, the Lord Jesus, who, in His dominion, and in His person, and in His wealth, and in His grace, is “greater than Solomon”! The Lord grant it, for His mercy’s sake!

**III.** I have only time for just a few closing words upon that third point, which is, that THE CONDEMNATION OF SUCH A WITNESS MUST BE SOLEMN AND OVERWHELMING.

I have shown you that all along, that is the point at which I have continually been aiming. Surely, you will none of you wish to be condemned by a heathen queen. It is bad enough to be condemned by the example of Christian people, and by what they say, but this heathen queen, with swarthy countenance, will rise up in the judgment, and condemn you who do not believe in Jesus, though you live in the midst of Christian light, and even call yourselves Christians, and talk about being inhabitants of a Christian country.



The Queen of Sheba lived in a dark age, but this, you know, is a very wonderful age. Some people are never weary of crying it up, according to them, this is the most marvelous generation that has ever existed on the face of the earth. Our fathers—what were they, poor creatures? What did they know? Yet, somehow or other, they got through the world almost as well as we do now that we break our necks in railway accidents and send our ships to the bottom of the sea so speedily by our new inventions. We are a wonderful people, there is no doubt about that. Raise a pyramid a thousand times higher than Mont Blanc, and set the man of the times upon it. When you have got him up, I can only stand at the base, and say, “These be thy gods, O Israel,”—the man of the nineteenth century—the thinker—the critic—the philosopher—the scientific man!

Some of us poor, simple Christian people never did pay much reverence to these wonderful productions. I for one, have no reverence at all for them, but think them only magnified pieces of bombast and presumption, ever crying out about what they know, whereas there are many other things that they do not know, which, if they did know, would make them a great deal more humble. We have invented the phonograph, we have invented the telephone, what shall we not invent next? Nobody knows. We are wonderful people, yet a heathen queen, of the dark ages, will rise up in the judgment, and condemn us, if we do not believe, because she acted better with her little light than we do with our far greater light. When God teaches us more about His works, some of us think less about their Maker, and when He reveals more of the secrets of nature, some care less about the secrets of His grace.

Verily, the Queen of Sheba will condemn this generation. Christ will call her up as a witness, and at the sight of her—albeit His condemnation will also come, yet at the sight of her—this heathen queen, the unbelieving world will stand condemned. Looking into her dark face, their own faces will turn deadly pale, for her faith, and her coming to Solomon, will condemn all unbelieving ones, and especially those who only pretended to believe, yet who never acted upon the faith they professed to possess.

May God the Holy Spirit bless this word, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

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