

Heart-communing

(No. 2779)

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 18, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"She communed with him about all that was in her heart." [1 Kings 10:2](#).

Last Sunday evening I mentioned some of the "hard questions" which Jesus is able to answer [Sermon No. 2778, Volume 48—CONSULTING WITH JESUS]. It appears that the queen of Sheba, when

she had once obtained an interview with the great and wise king of Israel, was not content with merely putting to him various difficult questions, for she unloosed herself to him and exposed all that lay concealed in her heart—and Solomon listened attentively to her—and, no doubt, so spoke to her that he sent her away rejoicing.

It is not generally a wise thing to tell all that is in your heart. Solomon himself said, "A fool utters all his mind; but a wise man keeps it in till afterwards." There are many things which you had better not tell to anybody. Make no one your complete confidant. If you do, you run great risks of making an Ahithophel or a Judas for yourself. David said, in his haste, that all men were liars. That was not quite true. Probably what he meant was that if we trust all men, we shall soon find ourselves deceived. But if we could meet with a Solomon—one who had been Divinely endowed with wisdom, as he was—it might be safe for us to bring all our questions and tell all our troubles to him. At any rate, we know of One, who is "greater than Solomon," to whom it is most safe and blessed to tell out all that is in our heart! He is willing to listen to us, and to commune with us and, the more frank and open we are with Him, the better will He be pleased and the better will it be for us. That is to be our subject—heart-communing with Jesus—spiritualizing the action of the queen of Sheba, when she came to Solomon, and "communed with him about all that was in her heart."

I. We will begin by saying that WE OUGHT TO COMMUNE WITH JESUS ABOUT ALL THAT IS IN OUR HEART.

I do not mean all of you who are present—I mean all those who have been redeemed from among men by His most precious blood—all those who are believing in Him and who call Him their Savior, their Master, their Lord. You are bound to tell Him all that is in your heart and to have no secrets hidden away from Him within your soul.

Tell Jesus all that is in your heart, for neglect of communing with Christ, of the most intimate kind, is ungenerous towards Him. Are there any professing Christians here who have lived for a month without conscious communion with Christ? If I were to speak of a longer period and to ask, "Are there not some professing Christians here who have lived for

three months without conscious communion with Christ," I am afraid there are some who, if they were honest and truthful, would have to reply, "That is the case with us." If so, think what that means! You profess to belong to Jesus and to be His disciple, yet you confess that you have lived all this while without real, intimate communication with Him who is your Master and Lord! What is more, you profess to be not only one of His disciples, but one of His friends. "Is this your kindness to your Friend?"

I may go further than that, for you believe yourself to be married to Christ, for that is the union which exists between Him and His people. That would be a strange kind of marriage union in which the wife should be in the presence of her husband and not even speak to him by the week, by the month, by the three months, by the six months together! For them to have no fellowship with one another, no mutual interchange of love, no communications with each other would be regarded as unnatural and would be rightly condemned. But do we not, sometimes, act towards our heavenly Bridegroom in just that manner? Are we not, too often, like the men of the world who do not know Him? Do we not live as if we did not know Him, or as if He were no longer present with us? It ought not to be thus! Unless we would act contrary to all the dictates of our higher nature, we must be continually be holding intimate conversations with our Lord Jesus Christ.

And we must tell Him all that is in our heart, because to conceal anything from so true a Friend betrays the sad fact that there is something wrong to be concealed. Is there anything that you do that you could not tell Jesus? Is there anything you love that you could not ask Him to bless? Is there any plan before you that you could not ask Him to sanction? Is there anything in your heart which you would wish to hide from Him? Then it is a wrong thing—you can be sure of that! The thing must be evil, or else you would not wish to conceal it from Him whom, I trust, you really love. O my Lord, why should I desire to hide anything from You? If I want to hide it, then, surely, it must be because it is something of which I have cause to be ashamed! Help me to get rid of it. O Christian Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you to live just as you would do if Christ Jesus were in your room, in your bedchamber, in your shop, or walking along the street with you—for His spiritual Presence is there! May there never be anything about you which you wish to conceal from Him!

If we cannot tell Jesus all that is in our heart, it shows a lack of confidence in His love, or His sympathy, or His wisdom, or His power. When there is something that the wife cannot tell to her husband, or there begin to be some secret things on the part of one of them that cannot be revealed to the other, there will soon be an end of mutual love, peace and joy. Things cannot go on well in the home while there has to be concealment. O Beloved, I beseech you to love Christ too much to keep anything back from Him! Love Him so much that you can trust Him even with the little frivolous things which so often worry and vex you. Love Him so much that you can tell Him all that is in your heart—and never, for a moment, wish to keep back anything from Him. As the hymn says—

"Tell it all to Jesus, comfort or complaint"

If we do not tell it all to Jesus, it looks as if we have no confidence in His love and, therefore, thought that He would not bear with us. Or that we had no confidence in His sympathy and fancied that He would not take any notice of us. Or that we had no confidence in His wisdom and thought that our trouble was too perplexing to bring to Him—or that we had no confidence in His power and dreamt that He could not help us in such an emergency. Let this never be the case with any of you, but, each day unburden your heart to Christ and never let Him think that you even begin to distrust Him! So shall you keep up a frank, open and blessed fellowship between Christ and your own soul.

I am quite certain that if you will carry out the plan I am commending to you, it will bring you great ease of mind. Whereas, if you do not, you will continue to have much uneasiness. Is there anything that I have not told to Jesus— anything in which I could not have fellowship with Him? Then, there is something wrong with me! Are you keeping your trouble to yourself and trying to manage without consulting with Jesus? Well, then, if anything goes wrong, you will have the responsibility of it! But if you take it all to Him and leave it with Him, it cannot go wrong, whatever happens! And even if it should seem to go wrong, you would not have the responsibility of it.

I believe that our trials usually come out of the things that we do not take to the Lord and, moreover, I am sure that we make greater blunders in what we consider to be simple matters, which we need not take to the Lord, than we do in far more difficult matters which we take to Him. The men of Israel were deceived by the Gibeonites because they had on old shoes and clothes, and had moldy bread in their packs, and the Israelites said, "It is perfectly clear that these men must have come from a long distance. Look at their old boots and their ragged garments." So they made a covenant with them and inquired not the will of the Lord. If it had not appeared to them to be quite so clear a case, they would have asked the Lord for direction—and then they would have been rightly guided. It is when you think you can see your way that you go wrong! When you cannot see your way, but trust to God to lead you by a way that you know not, you will go perfectly right. I am persuaded that it is so that the simplest and most plain matter kept away from Christ will turn out to be a maze, while the most intricate labyrinth, under the guidance of Christ, will prove to have in it a straight road for the feet of all those who trust in the Infallible Wisdom of their Lord and Savior!

On the other hand, if you do not come to Jesus, and commune with Him of all that is in your heart, you will lose His counsel and help, and the comfort that comes from them. I do not suppose anybody here knows what he has lost in this way, and I can hardly imagine how you are to calculate what you have lost of spiritual good that you might have had. There is many a child of God who might be rich in all the intents of bliss, who continues to be as poor as Lazarus the

beggar—he has hardly a crumb of comfort to feed upon and is full of doubts and fears—when he might have had full assurance long ago! There is many an heir of Heaven who is living upon the mere husks of Gospel food when he might be eating the rich fare of which Moses speaks—"Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat." Very often, Beloved, you have not because you ask not, or because you believe not, or because you do not confide in Jesus and commune with Him. How strong the weakling might be if he would go to Jesus more frequently! How rich the poor soul might be if it would draw continually from Christ's inexhaustible treasury! Oh, what might we not be if we would but live up to our privileges! Might we not live in the suburbs of Heaven, and often, as it were, be close to the pearly gates, if we would but go and tell all to Jesus and commune with Him concerning all that is in our hearts?

Sometimes, our naughty habit of reticence towards Jesus is aggravated by our eagerness to tell our troubles to others. In the time of trial, we often imitate King Asa, who, when he was sick, "sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." It was not wrong to go to the physicians, but he should have gone to the Lord first. It is the same with many of you as it was with Asa—away you go to your neighbor over the fence, or you call in a friend, and have a talk with Him in your own drawing room, or you go to some great one, and tell him all your trouble—yet how much have you gained by doing so? Have you not often found that you would have been wiser if you had followed Solomon's advice, "Go not into your brother's house in the day of your calamity?" Have you not also frequently discovered that when you have talked over your griefs with your friends, they still remain? Cowper truly wrote—

"Have you no words? Ah, think again— Words flow apace where you complain And fill your fellow creature's ears With the sad tale of all your cares. Were half the breath thus vainly spent To Heaven in supplications sent, Our cheerful song would more often be, 'Hear what the Lord has done for me!'"

You say that you need a friend, yet He who is the Friend that sticks closer than a brother is neglected by you! Suppose the Lord Jesus Christ were to meet some of you and you were to say to Him, "Good Master, we are in trouble"? And suppose He should say to you, "Where have you been with your trouble? You have not been to Me." And suppose you were to reply, "No, Lord, we have been consulting with flesh and blood—we have been asking our friends to help us"? And suppose He were to say to you, "And have they disappointed you?" You would have to reply, "Yes, Lord, they have." And suppose He looked at you and said, "Where you have already gone, you had better go again. You went to your friends first—are you coming to Me last? Am I to play the lackey to you and do you only come to Me after having tried all the others?" Ah, if He did talk like that, what could you reply? Why, I think your only answer could be, and I trust your answer now will be, "Jesus,

Master, I have too much forgotten You. I have not regarded You as a real present Friend. I have gone to my neighbors because I could see them, speak with them and hear what they had to say to me. But I have thought of You as if You were a myth, or, perhaps, I have not thought of You at all. Forgive me, Lord, for I do believe that You Are and that Your Word is true, which declares that You are always with Your people, and help me, henceforth, by Your Grace, to always go to You."

That is my first remark—that we ought to commune with Jesus concerning all that is in our hearts.

II. Secondly, WE NEED NOT CEASE COMMUNING WITH CHRIST FOR LACK OF TOPICS.

The queen of Sheba and Solomon came at last to an end of their talk. They could not go on speaking to one another forever. But with regard to ourselves and our Lord, there need never be an end to our communion with Him, for the subjects upon which we can have fellowship with Him are almost innumerable. Let me mention just a few of them.

There are, first, your sorrows. Are you very grieved? Are you smitten of God and afflicted? Then, Brothers and Sisters, you may well go to Jesus with your sorrows, for He is the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He knows all about you and all about your sorrows, too. There is not a pang that you have ever felt but He has felt the like. If you will only talk with Him, you will find an open ear, a sympathetic heart and a ready hand, all placed at your disposal. "What do you mean, Sir? Do you mean that I am to sit down in my room and tell Jesus all about my troubles?" Yes, I mean just that! And as you would do if you could see Him sitting in the chair on the other side of the fire, sit down and tell it all to

Him. If you have a quiet and secluded chamber, speak aloud if that will help you, but, anyway, tell it all to Him—pour into His ears and heart the story which you cannot disclose to anyone else. "But it seems so fanciful to imagine that I can really speak to Jesus." Try it, Beloved—if you have faith in God, you will discover that it is not a matter of fancy, but the most blessed reality in the world! If you can only see what your eyes perceive, it is no use for you to do as I say—in fact, you cannot do it. But if you have the inner eyes that have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and if your heart discerns the invisible Presence of the once-crucified but now glorified Savior, tell Him the whole story of your grief. Oftentimes, after you have done, you will find that it will cease to grieve you anymore.

Then, also, tell Him your joys, for He can have as much true fellowship with the joyous as with the sad. Go, young Sister, young Brother, in the gladness of your first youthful joy, and tell it all to Jesus! He rejoiced in spirit when He was upon the earth and, now He has the joy that was set before Him when He endured the Cross and despised the shame. If you tell Him your joys, He will sober them—not sour them. He will take away from them their earthly effervescence and impart to them a spiritual flavor and an abiding sweetness, so that, even in common things, your joy shall not become idolatrous and sinful. You who are bereft

of creature comforts should pray that you may find all things in God. But you who have such comforts and are full of joy, should pray this prayer—that you may find God in all things. They are both good prayers. That latter petition, you joyous souls may well pray to Jesus, and He will answer it, and you shall find that the marriage feast is all the better for Jesus being there to turn the water into wine, and that to all earthly joys He adds a bliss which they could not otherwise possess.

Some people say that we Christians get into ecstasies and raptures and then we hardly know our head from our heels, and we are so excited that we are not fair witnesses as to matters of fact. I do not think that the Church has often had too much excitement—the fault has usually been something quite in the opposite direction! But my own conviction is that we do not see the Glory of Christ when we are excited, or when we are in an ecstasy, one half as well as we do in our cool, calm, reflective moments. I know a great many Christian people who are by no means fools. If you try to do business with them, you will find that they are as shrewd and wide awake as any men. I would like to appeal to them about this matter. I believe that I have, myself, a certain degree of common sense and I venture to say that Christ never appears to me so glorious as when I am perfectly cool and collected—just as I would be if I were sitting down to write out some statistics, or to work out a mathematical problem, or to make up an account and strike a balance.

Whenever, in the very calmest and quietest manner, I begin to think of my Lord and Master, He then, most of all strikes me as glorious. Our religion does not require the excitements and stimulants upon which some seem to live, but when we are in the most serene state of mind and heart, then we can best see the glories of Christ. O Sirs, my Master would have you sit down and count the cost of being His servants! He would make you mathematicians, that, after you have counted the cost, you may see that He is worth ten thousand times more than He could ever cost you! He would have you survey Him and look upon Him from all points of view—look at His Person, His work, His offices, His promises, His achievements—that in all things you may see how glorious He is! I ask you calmly to see what kind of Lord and Master He is and what sort of Glory it is that surrounds Him. And if you will do so—that is, if your hearts have really been changed by His Grace—you will say, "Oh, yes! Tell the wide world over that it is simple common sense to believe in Christ, that it is irrational to reject Him! Tell them that the best use of your reason is to lay it at His feet—and that the truest wisdom is to count yourself but a fool in comparison with Him—and to sit with Mary and listen to His wondrous words."

You may also go to Jesus and tell Him all about your service. You have begun to work for the Lord and you are very pleased with the opportunity of doing something for Him, but you do not find it to be all sweetness. Perhaps you are like Martha who was "cumbered" with her service for Christ. When she was preparing a dinner for Him, she was greatly worried over it. The servants might burn the meat, or she was afraid that one very special

delicacy would be spoiled altogether. Besides, somebody had broken the best dish and the tablecloth did not look as white as she liked to see it. Martha was also troubled because Mary did not help her, so she went to the Master about it, which was the most sensible thing she could do. I can speak very sympathetically about this matter, for I get to worrying concerning it sometimes. I want to see Christ served with the best that I have, and with the best that all His people have. And if things go a little awry, and will not work quite right, I am apt to become fidgety. But this will not do, either for me or for you. We must go and tell the Master about it. He will set it all right and make us see that it is all right. Suppose any of you have not been treated kind-

ly by your fellow members even when you were trying to do good? Suppose that the girls in your class have grieved you? Suppose that you have been rapped over the knuckles when you really meant to be serving your Lord, what are you to do? Again I say, as I said before—

"Tell it all to Jesus, comfort or complaint"

Do not come and tell me! If I could help you, I would, but there is One who is far better than any pastor on earth to go to, even the Great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, our Lord Jesus Christ!

Then, next, go and tell Jesus all your plans. You think you will do something for Him, do you? Do not begin till you have told Him all about what you mean to do. He had great plans for the redemption of His people and He communicated them all to His Father. No, I should rather say that He drew them out of His Father's eternal decrees. Go and tell Him what you are planning for the Glory of God, and the good of men, and you may, perhaps, discover that some of it would be a mistake.

When you have any successes, go and tell Him. The 70 disciples returned to Jesus with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Your name." If you have the high honor of winning a soul, tell Jesus—and be sure to give God all the glory of it! Sing, "Non nobis, Domine"—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give glory, for Your mercy, and for Your truth's sake."

And when you have any failures—when your hopes are disappointed—go and tell it all to Jesus. I do not know whether I make myself clearly understood upon all these points, but I feel that working side by side with Christ is the only style of working at which a man can keep on year after year. If you get alone away from your Master—if you have sorrows or joys which are all your own and which you do not tell Him, you will get into a sad state. But if you feel, "He is near me, He is with me"—and if you act upon that belief by constantly communicating with Him concerning what you feel, and what you believe, and what you do—you will lead a holy and blessed and useful, and happy life. I have not time to complete the long list of topics on which we are to commune with Jesus, but, in brief, let me urge you to tell Him all your desires. If you desire anything that you ought to desire, and may desire,

let Him know it. Tell Him, also, all your fears. Tell Him that you are sometimes afraid to die. Tell Him every fear that distresses you, for, as a nurse is tender with her child, so is Christ with His people.

Tell Him all your loves. Bring before Him, in prayer, all upon whom your love is set. Tell Him especially all you can about your love to Himself and ask Him to make it firmer, stronger, more abiding, more potent over the whole of your life. Often sing a song to Jesus, your Best-Beloved and say, "Now will I sing to my Well-Beloved a song touching my Beloved." Sing and speak often to Him and whenever you have any mysteries which you cannot explain or tell to anyone else, go and ask Him to read the inscription that is engraved upon your heart and to decipher the strange hieroglyphics which no one else can read.

III. Now, dear Friends, I will close when I have briefly shown you, in the third place, that WE SHALL NEVER CEASE COMMUNING WITH CHRIST FOR LACK OF REASONS.

I am not now speaking to those who have never communed with my Lord. I have often communed with Him. I still commune with Him and so do many of you. And I say that we shall never cease communing with Him for lack of reasons.

For, first, it is most ennobling to have fellowship with the Son of God. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." I have heard it said of some men that to know them is a liberal education. If you are only slightly acquainted with them, you are sure to learn much from them! But to know Christ is to know everything that is worth knowing—and He is our All-in-All.

It is also highly beneficial to commune with Christ. I know of nothing that can lift you up so much above the evil influences of an ungodly world as constantly abiding in close fellowship with Christ and telling Him all that you feel in your heart of hearts.

How consoling it is to do this! You forget your griefs while you commune with Him. How sanctifying it is! A man cannot take delight in sin while he walks with Christ. Communion with Him will make a man leave off sinning, or else sinning will make him leave off communing. You will not be perfect while you are in this world, but the nearest way to perfection lies along the pathway where Jesus walks. How delightful it is, too, to commune with Jesus! There is no other joy that is at all comparable with it—and it prepares us for the higher joys above. When those who walk with Christ on earth come to live with Him above, there will certainly be a change in some respects, but it will be no new experience to

them. Did He not love His saints and seek their fellowship while they were here below? Then they shall have that fellowship continued above! Did you not walk with God here? They you shall walk with Jesus up there!

Are there any of Christ's followers who seldom commune with Him? Beloved, shall I not chide you if that is true of you? My Master is looking down upon you at this moment. Does He need to speak to you? He did not speak to Peter when the boastful Apostle had denied His Lord. Jesus turned and looked at Peter and I trust He will look upon you— that

those dear eyes, which wept for you, will gaze right down into your soul—and that His blessed heart that bled for you will look out of those eyes of His upon you. He seems to say, "Do you, indeed, love Me, as you never wish for My company? Can you really love Me?"

And then, I think that my Master looks upon some here who have never had any communion with Him at all, and He says, "Is it nothing to you that I loved mankind, and came to earth, and died to save sinners? Is it nothing to you that I bid you trust Me, and that I promise to save you if you do? Will you still refuse to trust Me? Will you turn upon your heels away from Me? Oh, why will you die!? Why will you die!?"

And then, lastly, He speaks to those of you who have long enjoyed fellowship with Him and, as He looks at you, He says, "Abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." Beloved, if you have ever enjoyed fellowship with Christ, never lose it! Oh, to hold on—to hold fast—to hold through life and to hold in death to Him whose face we have never seen, yet whom we know to be among us now! O Beloved of our souls, never leave us! No, You will not do so—we will constrain You to abide with us! Give us Divine Grace, we pray, to never vex You or grieve Your Holy Spirit. Come very near to us just now—nearer than You have ever been since the first day we saw You. Come near to all of Your people, Immanuel—God With Us—and be always with us and go with us wherever we go—and never leave us again, for Your love's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 KINGS 10:1-13; MATTHEW 12:38-45.

Let us first read part of the 10th Chapter of the First Book of Kings and, afterwards, a part of the 12th Chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew.

1 Kings 10:1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. Her visit, you see, had a religious aspect. She "heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord." He had wisdom of various kinds, but it was his knowledge of God, and of God's ways, that seemed chiefly to attract this ruler from a far-distant land.

2. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him about all that was in her heart. She came with a price in her hand to get wisdom. Well did Solomon say, "Buy the truth, and sell it not." No price is too dear to pay for it, but any price would be too cheap to sell it.

3. So Solomon answered all her questions: there was nothing too difficult for the king, that he could not explain it to her. His wisdom came from God and, therefore, it was full and complete, and could not be confounded by man. Let us seek after the Wisdom which comes from above, and remember that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Indeed, is it not the sum total of wisdom, really, to fear, in a filial sense, the Lord Most High?

4. 5. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of

his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. She was a queen, but she had never seen such royal magnificence as Solomon's! "The ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord" appears to have been a marvelous viaduct constructed of the most ponderous stones, by which the king went from his own house up to the Temple itself. I have read that an arch of that viaduct is standing at the present day and it is still a marvel. To this princess, it must have seemed a wonder of wonders!

6-12. And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts and of your wisdom. However, I believed not the words until I came, and my eyes have seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: your wisdom and prosperity exceeds the fame which I heard. Happy are your men, happy are these, your servants, which stand

continually before you, and that hear your wisdom. Blessed be the LORD your God, which delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore made He you king, to do judgment and justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, also harps and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. Probably these "almug trees" were trees of sandal-wood. Whatever they were, they seem to have been the best timber known to the Easterns and, therefore, Solomon very properly used them in the house of the Lord. Let the harps of our praises be made of such wood that there shall be no others equal to them in the whole world! Let us give to our Lord our best young blood, our warmest zeal, our highest thoughts, our most careful attention. Let us give Him, in fact, the whole of our being, the love of our heart. He should be served with the best of the best, "for He is good, and His mercy endures forever."

13. And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants. The king first of all bountifully gave her a present which he thought most fitting. And then, afterwards, permitted her to ask whatever she would. How much is this like our King Solomon, who has already given us all our hearts can wish for and yet, if there is any right desire that is still ungratified, He provides the golden Mercy Seat at the foot of His Throne where we may present our petitions to Him, encouraged by His gracious word, "Ask what you will; according to your faith, so shall it be unto you."

[Matthew 12:38, 39](#). Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from you. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign

of the Prophet Jonah. The queen of Sheba did not ask for a sign. She did not expect Solomon to work a miracle, but, sitting down in his presence, she proposed her hard questions and meekly awaited his answers. So should these scribes and Pharisees have done with the Lord Jesus Christ. These were His signs—

40, 41. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah and, indeed, a greater than Jonah is here. Jonah was a servant—Jesus was the Master. Jonah preached only one sermon—Jesus preached many. That sermon was a short one—Jesus Christ labored long after souls. Jonah was a man full of infirmities and with an unloving heart—Jesus was tender and compassionate. Jonah did but hurry through the streets, crying, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"—without a word of mercy—Jesus lived long among the people, giving them directions, warnings and invitations to seek and find salvation. "Behold, a greater than Jonah is here."

42. The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. As I have so recently

preached upon this verse, [Sermon No. 2777, Volume 48—THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, A SIGN—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge at

<http://www.spurgeons.org>] I need not say anything about it just now.

43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man. Mark, not when he is turned out of him by superior force, but when he has gone out of his own accord.

43. He walks through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. The devil was in the Jews of old, but he went out of them at the time of the Babylonian captivity—that heavy punishment cured them of idolatry. But the devil could never find a resting place in Gentile hearts so pleasant to himself as among God's own people.

44. Then he says, I will return to my house from where I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. "I will go back to those Jews," says the devil and, when he comes back, he finds them without any true love to God—"empty, swept, and garnished." See how correctly the Pharisee is dressed and note with what sanctimonious unction he repeats his hypocritical prayers! He fasts twice in the week and pays tithes of his mint and anise and cummin. The devil finds the house "empty, swept, garnished" and, as he does not care whether he lives in a foul heart or a clean one, so long as he can but live in it, he takes up his abode there again.

45. Then he goes and takes with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. If idolatry did not come back to the Jews, the devil of pride and self-conceit and many more came and fought against the Son of God, so that they became worse than they were before!

And the first devil of the Jewish people was nothing compared with the seven devils which afterwards possessed them. We have seen some men of this kind. Under temporary conviction, they have given up certain outward sins, but, afterwards, they have been 10 times worse than they were before. We have known a man to be a drunk and we have rejoiced to see him leave his cups but, yet, when he has made a self-righteousness out of his temperance and set himself up against God and His Truth, we have verily believed that he has had within him seven devils worse than the first! A man may reform himself to blacker stains and wash himself with the waters of his self-righteousness till he becomes more hard to clean than he would have been at the first. Oh, for the mighty hand of One who is stronger than the prince of Hell to throw the devil out! And then he will never come back again—but if he goes out by mere human persuasion, or by our own wills and wishes, he will most certainly come back to us! If the Holy Spirit turns him out, he will never gain an entrance any more.

45. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.