

“HE SHALL BE GREAT”

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A SERMON
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Being his last sermon before his journey to the South of France.

*“He shall be great.”
Luke 1:32.*

STRICTLY speaking, I suppose these words refer to the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is as to His humanity that Christ was born of Mary. The context runs thus—“Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.” The angel of the Lord thus spoke concerning the manhood of “that Holy Thing” that should be born of the favored virgin by the overshadowing of the power of the Highest. As to His divinity, we must speak concerning Him in another style than this. But, as a man, He was born of the virgin, and it was said to her before His birth, “He shall be great.”

The man Christ Jesus stooped very low. In His first estate He was not great; He was very little when He was upon His mother’s breast. In His later estate He was not great, but despised, rejected, and crucified. Indeed, He was so poor that He had nowhere to lay His head, and He was so cast out by the tongues of men that they called Him a “fellow,” mentioned Him among drunken men and wine-bibbers, and even accused Him of having a devil and being mad. In the esteem of the great ones of the earth He was an ignorant Galilean of whom they said, “We know not where He is.” His life binds up more fitly with the lowly annals of the poor than with the daily reports of the royal family or whatever stood for that in Caesar’s day. In His own time His enemies could not find a word base enough to express their contempt of Him. He was brought very low in His trial, condemnation, and suffering. Who thought Him great when He was covered with bloody sweat, or when He was sold at the price of a slave, or when a guard came out against Him with swords, and with lanterns, and with torches, as if He had been a thief? Who thought Him great when they bound Him and led Him to the judgment seat as a malefactor? Or when the cowards smote Him, blindfolded Him, and spat in His face? Or when He was scourged, led through the streets bearing His cross, and afterwards hung up between two thieves to die? Truly He was brought very low, and a sword pierced through His mother’s heart as she saw the sufferings of her holy Son. When she knew that He was dead, and buried in a borrowed tomb, she must have painfully pondered in her heart the words from heaven concerning Him, and thought within herself, “The angel said He would be great, but who is made as vile as He? He said that He should be called the ‘Son of the Highest,’ but, lo, He is brought into the dust of death, and men seal His sepulcher, and cast out His name as evil.”

Still, while I think that our text most fitly applies to the manhood of Christ in the first place, I rejoice to think that—

*“He who on earth as man was known,
And bore our sins and pains,
Now, seated on the eternal throne,
The God of glory reigns.”*

The very man who was despised and spat upon now sits glorious on His Father’s throne. As man He is anointed “King of kings, and Lord of lords.” As man He has been lifted up from the lowest depths, and set in the greatest heights to reign forever and ever. Peter and the apostles testified, “This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses, He being by the right hand of God exalted.” Stephen also said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.” While

we believe that, and rejoice in it, we shall be wise never to dissociate the deity of Christ from His humanity, for they make up one person.

I cannot help remarking that in the New Testament you find a disregard of all rigid distinction of the two natures in the person of our Lord when the Spirit speaks concerning Him. The two natures are so thoroughly united in the person of Christ that the Holy Spirit does not speak of the Lord Jesus with theological exactness, like one who writes a creed, but He speaks as to men of understanding, who know and rejoice in the truth of the one indivisible person of the Mediator. For instance, we read in Scripture of “the blood of God,” Paul says in Acts 20:28, “Feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood.” Now, strictly speaking, there can be no blood of God, and the expression looks like a confusion of the two natures, but this is intentional, that we may clearly see that the two natures are so joined together that the Holy Spirit does not stop to dissect and set out differences. But He says of the united person of our blessed Lord that which is strictly true either of His humanity or of His deity. He is called both “God, our Savior,” and “the man Christ Jesus.” The combined natures of the man, the God, Christ Jesus our Lord, are one person, and all the acts of either nature may be ascribed to that one person. Therefore I, for one, do not hesitate to sing such verses as these—

*“He that distributes crowns and thrones,
Hangs on a tree, and bleeds and groans:
The Prince of Life resigns His breath;
The King of Glory bows to death.
Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature’s sin.
See how the patient Jesus stands,
Insulted in His lowest case!
Sinners have bound the Almighty hands,
And spit in their Creator’s face.”*

We shall not labor, therefore, to preserve the niceties of theology, but we shall at this time freely speak of our Lord as He is in His Godhead and in His manhood, and apply our text to the whole Christ, declaring the divine promise that “He shall be great.”

While my brother was praying for me I was wishing that I had the tongues of men and of angels with which to set forth my theme tonight, and yet I shall retract my wish, for the subject is such, that if my words were the most common that could be found—yes, if they were ungrammatical, and if they were put together in a most uncouth manner, it would little matter, for failure awaits me in any case. The subject far transcends all utterance. Jesus is such a one that no oratory can ever reach the height of His glory, and the simplest words are best suited to a subject so sublime. Fine words would be but tawdry things to hang beside the unspeakably glorious Lord. I can say no more than that *He is great*. If I could tell forth His greatness with choral symphonies of cherubim, yet I would fail to reach the height of this great argument. I will be content if I can touch the hem of the garment of His greatness. If the Lord will but set us in a cleft of the rock, and only make us see the back parts of His character, we shall be overcome by the vision. As yet, even of Jesus, the face of His full glory cannot be seen, or if seen, it cannot be described. Were we caught up to the third heaven we should have little to say on coming back, for we would have seen things which were not lawful for us to utter. I shall not therefore fail with loss of honor if I tell you that my utmost success at this time will but touch the fringe of the splendor of the Son of man. This is not the time of His clearest revealing. The day is coming for the manifestation of the Lord; as yet He shines not forth among men in His noontide. His Second Advent shall more fully reveal Him. Then shall His people “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” because He also shall rise in the clear face of heaven as the Sun of Righteousness, greatly blessing the sons of men.

I. Let me touch my theme as best I can by, first of all, saying of our adorable Lord Jesus that HE IS GREAT FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW. I might have said from *every* point of view, but that is too large a truth to be surveyed at one sitting. Mind would fail us; life would fail us; time would fail us, eternity and perfection will alone suffice for that boundless meditation. But from the points of view to which I would conduct you for a moment, the Lord Jesus Christ is emphatically great.

First, *in the perfection of His nature*; think my brethren, there was never such a being as our Well-beloved. He is peerless and incomparable. He is divine and therefore unique. He is “Light of light, very God of very God.” Jesus is truly equal with God, one with the Father. Oh, the greatness of the Godhead!

Jehovah is a being infinite, immeasurable, incomprehensible, and inconceivable! He fills all things, and yet is not contained by all things. He is indeed great beyond any idea of greatness that has ever dawned upon us. All this is true of the Only-Begotten. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” “For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.”

But our Lord Jesus is also man, and this makes the singularity of His person, that He should be perfectly and purely God, and as truly and really man. He is not humanity deified; He is not Godhead humanized. I have admitted latitude of expression, but there is, in fact, no confusion of the substance. He is God. He is man. He is all that God is, and all that man is as God created him. He is as truly God as if He was not man, and yet as completely and perfectly man as if He were not God. Think of this wondrous combination! A perfect manhood without spot or stain of original or actual sin, and then the glorious Godhead combined with it! Said I not truly, that Jesus stands alone? He is not greatest of the great, but great where all else are little. He is not something among all, but all where all else are nothing. Who shall be compared with Him? He counts it not robbery to be equal with God, and among men He is the Firstborn of every creature, among the risen ones He is the Firstborn by His resurrection from the dead, among the glorified He is the source and object of glory. I cannot compass His nature; who shall declare His generation? He is one with us and yet inconceivably beyond us. Our nature is limited, sinful, fallen, but His nature is unbounded, holy, divine. When Jehovah looks on us we ask, “What is man, that you are mindful of him? And the son of man, that you visit him?” But, “when He brings in the First-begotten into the world, He says, ‘and let all the angels of God worship Him.’” Shall it not truly be said as to His nature, “He is great”?

He is great also *in the grandeur of His offices*. Remember that He has for our sakes undertaken to be our Redeemer. You see your bondage, brethren. You know it, for some of you have worn the fetters till they have entered into your soul, from such slavery He came to redeem us. Behold His Zion in ruins, heaps on heaps, smoking, consumed! He comes to rebuild and to restore. This is His office—to build up the old wastes, and to restore the temple of the living God, which had been cast down by the foe. To accomplish this He came to be our Priest, our Prophet, and our King, in each office glorious beyond compare. He came to be our Savior, our Sacrifice, our Substitute, our Surety, our Head, our Friend, our Lord, our Life, our All. Pile up the offices, and remember that each one is worthy of God. Mention them as you may, and truly you shall never remember them all, for He, the express image of His Father’s glory, has undertaken every kind of office, that He might perfectly redeem His people, and make them to be His own forever. In each office He has gained the summit of glory, and therein He is and shall be great.

Have you ever stood in Westminster Abbey when some great warrior was being buried, and when the herald pronounced his various titles? He has been greatly honored by his queen, and by his nation, for which he has fought so valiantly, and he is prince of this and duke of that, and count of the other and earl of something else, the titles are many and brilliant. What a parade it is! “Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!” What use is it to the senseless clay, that it is buried with pomp of heraldry? But I stand at the tomb of Christ, and I say of His offices that they are superlatively grand, and moreover, that they are not buried and neither is He among the dead. He lives and still bears His honors still in the fullness of their splendor. He is still all to His people, every office He still carries on, and will carry on till He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all. Oh, the splendor of this Christ of God in the mighty offices which He sustains! He is the Standard-bearer among ten thousand. Who is like unto Him in all eternity? “The government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace.” “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!” Let our hearts give Him our adoring praise tonight, for He is great in the glorious offices which God has heaped upon Him.

His nature and His offices would alone furnish us with a lengthened theme, but oh, my brethren, the Lord Jesus is great *in the splendor of His achievements*. He does not wear an office whose duty is neglected, but His name is faithful and true. He is no holder of a figurehead office; He claims to have finished the work which His Father gave Him to do. He has undertaken great things, and glory be to His name, He has achieved them. His people’s sins were laid upon Him, and He bore them up to the cross, and on the cross He made an end of them, so that they will never be mentioned against them any more forever. Then He went down into the grave, and slept there for a little season, but He tore away the bars of the sepulcher and left death dead at His feet, bringing life and immortality to light by His resurrection.

This was His high calling and He has fulfilled it. His victory is complete; the defeat of the foe is perfect. “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” Springing upward from the tomb when the appointed day was come, He opened heaven’s gates to all believers, according to the word—“The breaker is come up before them, and their king shall pass before them and the Lord on the head of them.” As He opened the golden gates, He led captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, He cast down a royal largess among the poorest of His people that they might be enriched by it. This was His objective, and the design has been carried out without flaw or failure. Within the veil He went, our Representative, to take possession of our crowns and thrones, which He holds for us to this day by the tenure of His own cross. Having purchased the inheritance, and paid off the heavy mortgage that lay upon it, He has taken possession of the Canaan wherein our souls shall dwell at the end of the days when we shall stand in our lot. Is it not proven that He is great? Conquerors are great, and He is the greatest of them. Deliverers are great, and He is the greatest of them. Liberators are great, and He is the greatest of them. Saviors are great, and He is the greatest of them. They that multiply the joys of men are truly great, and what shall I say of Him who has bestowed everlasting joy upon His people, and entailed it upon them by a covenant of salt forever and ever? Well did you say, O Gabriel, “He shall be great,” for great indeed He is!

He shall be great, again, *in the prevalence of His merits*. Never a being had such merit as Christ. His life and death cover all believers from head to foot with a perfect obedience to the law. With royal vesture they are clad; Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. His blood has washed believers white as the driven snow, and His righteousness has made them to be “accepted in the Beloved.” He has such merit with God that He deserves of the Most High whatever He wills to ask, and He asks for His people that they shall have every blessing necessary for eternal life and perfection. He is great, indeed, my brethren, when we think that He has clothed us all in His righteousness, and washed us all in His blood. Nor us alone, but ten thousand times ten thousand, of His redeemed stand today in the wedding dress of His eternal merit, and plead before God a claim that can never be denied—the claim of a perfect obedience which must always please the Father’s heart. Oh, what mercy is that which has turned our hell to heaven, transformed our disease into health, and lifted us from the dunghill, and set us among the princes of His people! In infinite power to remove sin, to perfume with acceptance, to clothe with righteousness, to win blessings, to preserve saints, and to save to the uttermost, the Lord Jesus is great beyond all greatness.

My theme will never be exhausted, though I may be. Let me not delay to add that our Lord Jesus Christ is great *in the number of His saved ones*. I do not believe in a little Christ, or a little heaven, or a little company before the throne, or a few that shall be saved. Hear this, for I would gladly reply to a lie that is often stated, and is the last resort of those who assail the doctrines of grace. They say that we believe that God has left the great mass of His creatures to perish, and has arbitrarily chosen an elect few. We have never thought such a thing. We believe that the Lord has an elect many, and it is our joy and delight to think of them as a number that no man can number. “Oh,” they say, “you think that the few who go to your little Bethel or Salem are the elect of God.” That, sirs, is what you invent for your own purposes, but we have never said anything of the sort. We rejoice to believe that as many as the stars of heaven shall be the redeemed of Christ—that as many as the sands that are upon the seashore, even an innumerable company, are those for whom Christ has shed His precious blood that He might effectually redeem them. As I look up to the heaven of the sanctified, my mind’s eye does not see a few dozen saints met together in select circles of exclusiveness, but my eyes are dazzled with the countless lights which shine each one from the lustrous brows of the redeemed, lustrous I say, for each glorified one wears upon his forehead the name of the Most High. My heart is glad to turn away from the multitude that throng the broad way, and to see a greater multitude that throng the heavenly fields, and day without night, celebrate redemption by the blood of the Lamb. Have they not washed their robes, and made them white in His blood? In all things our Lord will have the pre-eminence, and this shall be the case in the number of His followers, He shall therein vanquish His great enemy. His redeemed shall fly as a cloud, as doves to their windows. Countless as the drops of morning dew shall His people be in the day of His power. He shall be great in the host of His adherents in glory.

Multitudes upon earth are even now pursuing their road to heaven, and greater hosts are yet to follow them. A day shall be when the people of God shall be increased exceedingly, above anything that we see at the present, they shall spring up as the grass and as willows by the watercourses, as if every stone that heard the ripple of the brook had been turned into a man. The seed of the Lord Jesus Christ shall multi-

ply till arithmetic shall be utterly baffled, and numeration shall fail. He is great—a great Savior, of a great mass of great sinners, who shall by His redeeming arm, be brought safely, without fail, to His right hand in endless glory. As the tribes of the natural Israel increased exceedingly, so also shall the spiritual Israel. The Lord shall multiply His Zion with men as with a flock, and thus shall the King of Israel be great.

Brethren and sisters, the Lord Jesus Christ shall be great *in the estimation of His people*. If I were to try tonight to praise my Lord to the highest heavens, my brother might well follow me, and extol our Lord much more. Then I would get up from my seat again, and I would not rest until I found yet loftier praises for my Lord and God. Then might my dear brother return to the happy task, and excel me yet again, and then, for sure, I would be on my feet a third time, and keep up the hallowed rivalry, lauding and magnifying Jesus to my mind’s utmost. And if the Lord permitted, we would never stop, for I would give in to no man in my desire to extol my Lord Jesus. I am sure that none of His people would give way to others in a humble sense of supreme indebtedness, but each one would say, “There is something which He has done for me which He never did for you. There is some point of view in which He is greater to me than He is to you.” Brothers and Sisters, I admit that there are many points in which He is greater to you than He is to me, but yet to me He is higher than heaven, vaster than eternity, more delightful than Paradise, more blessed than blessedness itself. If I could speak of Him according to my soul’s desire, I would speak in great capital letters, and not in the small italics which I am compelled to use. If I could speak as I would, I would make winds and waves my orators, and cause the whole universe to become one open mouth with which to proclaim the praises of Emmanuel. If all eternity would speak, as though it too, were but one tongue, yet it could not tell all the charms of His love and the sureness of His faithfulness and His truth. We must leave off somewhere, but, truly, if it is the point of our estimation of Him, we can never express our overwhelming sense of His honor, His excellence, His sweetness. Oh, that He was praised by every creature that has breath! Oh, that every minute placed another gem in His crown! Oh, that every soul that breathes did continue to breathe out nothing but hosannas and hallelujahs unto Him, for He deserves all possible praises! Do you hear the crash of the multitudinous music of heaven? It is like many waters, and like the mighty waves of the sea, but it is all for Him. Can you hear the charming notes of “harpers harping with their harps”? Their harpings are all for Him. Can you conceive the unutterable joys of the glorified? Every felicity of eternity is a song to His honor. Heaven and earth shall yet be full of the brightness of His glory. Who can look the sun in the face in the height of his noontide? Who can tell the illimitable greatnesses of the Son of God? To Him, even to Him, let all praises be, for He has redeemed our souls with blood, and set the captives free. He has made us unto our God both kings and priests, and we shall reign with Him forever and forever. Truly, He is great, and shall be great eternally.

But, oh brethren, how great must Christ be *in the glory of heaven!* We have never seen that. Some of us shall see it very soon—

***“For we are in the border-land,
The heavenly country’s near at hand:
A step is all ’twixt us and rest,
E’en now we converse with the blest.”***

But the greatness of Christ in heaven—surely this is the grand sight for which we long to go to heaven—that we may behold His glory, “The glory which He had with the Father before the world was,” and the glory which He has gained by His service for the Father here below. Has He not said, “Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory”? What honor and majesty surround our Prince in the metropolis of His empire! What is this city? Where does its brightness come from? The sun is dim; the moon no more displays herself. “The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The whole city shines in the Redeemer’s glory. And who are these that come trooping down the golden streets?—these shining ones, each one comparable to a living, moving sun, each one as bright as the star of the morning? Ask them where their brightness comes from, and they tell you that the glory of Christ has risen upon them, and they are reflecting His brightness as the moon reflects the brilliance of the sun. If you sit down with one of these shining ones, and hear him tell his story, the sum of the matter will be, “Not unto us; but unto Him that loved us, be honor and glory.” This will be the substance of every testimony—“He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Only they will put it something like this—“HE loved *me*. He, that great HE.” How they will pronounce it as they point to His glory—“HE loved me—that little *me*.” They will sink their voices, oh, so

low, as with wonder and surprise they express their admiration that ever He could have loved such unworthy ones as they were.

But I must not—dare not—try to touch upon the *glory of Christ upon the throne of the Father*. Certain great divines have written upon the glory of Christ, but I will guarantee you that, when they died and went to heaven, they half wished that they could come back again to amend their most glowing pages. Ah me, what can ignorance say of the All-Wise? What do blinking owls know of high noon? What do we poor limited creatures, babes of yesterday, know of the Infinite, the Ancient of days, and of the splendor that flames from the Firstborn at the right hand of the Most High? It would need an angel to tell us that, but perhaps, if he did, we would not understand or else what we did understand would overpower us, and we should fall before our Lord as dead. The heavens are now telling the glory of our Lord, but the half of it will never be told throughout ages of ages. Assuredly, concerning our adorable Lord Jesus it is true—“He shall be great.”

II. Now, by your leave, I want to turn the subject around a little, and look at it in another light. “He shall be great,” and He is so, for HE DEALS GREAT THINGS.

He is a Savior, and a great one. As I have already said, it was a *great ruin* which He came to restore. The wind came from the abyss and smote the four corners of the house of manhood and it fell. Devils laughed and triumphed as they saw God’s handiwork spoiled. Human nature sank in shame, Paradise was blasted, sin was triumphant, and the fiery sword was set at Eden’s gate to exclude us. It was a hideous ruin. But, oh, when Christ came, He brought a great salvation. He came to prepare a better Paradise, and to plant in it a better tree of life, and to give us possession of it upon a better tenure than before. Oh, He is a great Savior; He worked amid the chaos of the fall, and restored what Adam had destroyed!

And beloved, we were covered with *great sin*—some of us especially so. But “He shall be great,” and therefore He makes short work of great sin. Great sinners, what a joy it ought to be to you to think that He is great, and therefore, has come to rescue such as you are, and deal with such difficulties as beset and surround *you*, for what if sin is great? His arrangement for its removal is great too. Look there at Calvary, and if you can see it through your blinding tears, behold the sacrifice He offered once, for all, to put away sin. Regard the old Tabernacle and its faulty types—Aaron has offered his bullock which has smoked to heaven, but no result has followed. Aaron has brought his lambs, and goats, and rams, and their blood in basins is thrown at the foot of the altar. The whole soil of the Tabernacle is saturated with the blood of bullocks and of goats, but no result has come of it. These can never take away sin. See now the greater sacrifice which Jesus brings. That great High Priest of ours is great indeed, for He has offered up *Himself* without spot unto God! Lo, on His great altar there smokes to heaven no longer clouding incense or burning flesh, but the body and soul of the appointed Substitute are offered up in sacrifice for men. We have none of us a due conception of the grandeur of that vicarious offering, which at once and forever made an end of sin. Think of it carefully and in detail. Count it no light thing that He who was the Father’s equal, that He who was pure and perfect in both natures, became a curse for us, and was made sin for us, and presented Himself as a victim to justice on our behalf. This is a wonder among wonders, as much exceeding miracle as miracle exceeds the most commonplace fact. It overtops the highest Alps of thought, that He who was offended should expiate the offense, He who was perfect should suffer punishment, He who was all goodness should be made sin, and He who was all love should be forsaken of the God of love. What merit and majesty are found in His glorious oblation! Great is the sin, but greater is the sacrifice. The atonement has covered the guilt, and left a margin of abounding righteousness.

Beloved, what a mercy it is for us that we have such a High Priest, for if you and I are burdened tonight with great transgression, there is *great pardon* to be had—pardon so great that it actually annihilates the sin—pardon so great that the sin is cast behind Jehovah’s back, while the pardon rings out perpetual notes of joy and peace in the soul—

*“His the pardon, ours the sin—
Great the sin, the pardon great;
Great His good which healed our ill,
Great His love which killed our hate.”*

He shall be great indeed who has worked us so great a salvation.

And now, dear friends, you and I, being greatly pardoned through the great sacrifice, are journeying through the wilderness toward Canaan, and we have *great needs* and many, pressing upon us every day. We are poverty itself, and only All-sufficiency can supply us, but that is found in Jesus. We need great

abundance of food, the heavenly bread lies around the camp, and each may fill his share. We require rivers of living water, the smitten rock yields us a ceaseless flood, the stream never ceases. We have great demands, but Christ has *great supplies*. Between here and heaven we shall have, perhaps, greater needs than we have yet known, but all along, every resting place is ready, stores are laid up, good cheer is stored, nothing has been overlooked. The commissariat of the Eternal is absolutely perfect. Do you feel sometimes so thirsty for grace that like Behemoth you could drink up Jordan at a draught? More than that river could hold is given you. Drink abundantly, for Christ has prepared you a bottomless sea of grace to fill you with all the fullness of God. Deprive not yourselves, and doubt not your Savior, why should you limit the Holy One of Israel? Be great in your experience of His all-sufficiency, and great in your praises of His bounty, and then in heaven you shall pour at His feet great treasures of gratitude forever and ever.

Yes, and He is a Christ of *great preparations*. He is engaged before the throne today in preparing a *great heaven* for His people, it will be made up of great deliverance, great peace, great rest, great joy, great victory, great discovery, great fellowship, great rapture, and great glory. He is preparing for His redeemed no little heaven, no starveling banquet, and no narrow delight. He is a great Creator, and He is creating a great Paradise wherein a great multitude shall be greatly happy forever and ever. “He shall be great”—great in the bliss of His innumerable elect. If we once get within the pearly gates, and walk those golden streets, we are not ashamed tonight to vow that He shall be great; we will make Him glorious before His holy angels. If praises can make Him great, our praises shall ring out day and night at the very loudest, and ten thousand times ten thousand of the glorified shall join with us in perpetual hallelujahs to Him who loved us before all worlds, and will love us when all worlds shall cease to be. “He shall be great.” He must be great. If we live it shall be our business to sing like the Virgin, “My soul does magnify the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”

III. I have come to a close when I have said a few words upon the last point, which is this, HIS GREATNESS WILL SOON APPEAR. It now lies under a cloud to men’s bleary eyes. They still belittle Him with their vague and vain thoughts, but it shall not always be so. It is midnight with His honor here just now, or if it isn’t midnight, it is much the same, for men are stone blind. But it will not long be darkness, nor shall human minds be blinded forever. My eyes foresee the dawning. Did you hear the clarion just now? I dream not that ears of flesh can catch the sound as yet, but the ears of faith can hear it. The trumpet rings out exceedingly loud and long, and after the trumpet there is heard this voice, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes! Go you forth to meet Him.” Hear you not the shouts of armies—“Lo, He comes! Lo, He comes! Lo, He comes!” Right gladly I hear the cry. Let the world ring with the notes of joy. He comes. That trumpet proclaims Him. I shall propound no order now as to how predicted events shall happen, but I know this, that the Lord shall reign forever and ever, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! “He shall be great.” The nations shall bow at His feet. Rebellious enemies shall acknowledge Him as their King. The whole universe shall be filled with the glory of God. There shall be left no space where His light shall not shine. “He shall be great.” To Him “every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Fret not yourselves, brethren, because of the false doctrine which roams through the world today. Worry not your hearts as though the Christ were defeated. He is clad in shining armor, through which no dart of error can ever pierce. He lingers for a little while upon the hills, surveying the battlefield with eagle eye. He leaves His poor servants to prove how weak they are, as they almost turn their backs in the day of battle. He lets heaven and earth see the weakness of an arm of flesh. But courage, brethren! The Prince Emmanuel hastens! You may hear His horse hoofs on the road. He is near. On white horses shall His chosen follow Him, going forth “conquering and to conquer,” for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will deliver the enemy into our hands. The Lord shall reign forever and ever, King of kings! Hallelujah! “He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet.”

The day is coming when the mighty progress of the gospel shall make Christ to be great among men, and then you need not listen long to hear that other trumpet which shall wake the sleeping dead. The Risen One descends. *Resurrection* is at hand! Oh, what greatness will be upon Christ in that hour when all shall leave their graves, even the whole multitude of the slain of death! He shall be glorious among them, the First-fruits of the resurrection, illustrious in those who rise by virtue of His rising. Oh, what honor will He have that day! Jesus, You are He whom Your brethren shall praise as they see You victorious over death in all those quickened myriads.

Then shall come the *Judgment*, and oh, how great will Christ be in men’s eyes in that day when He sits upon the throne and holds the scales of justice, and judges men for the deeds done in the body! I guarantee you that none will deny His Godhead in that day. None will proclaim themselves His adversaries in that dread hour. The earth is reeling! The sky is crumbling! The stars are falling! The sun is quenched! The moon is black as sackcloth! And Jesus is sitting on the throne! A cry is heard from all His enemies. “Hide us, mountains. Fall upon us, rocks. Hide us from His face.” That face of His—calm, quiet, and triumphant, shall be terrible to them. They will cry in horror, “Hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.” But they cannot be hidden. Fly where they may, those eyes pursue them—those eyes of love more terrible than flames of wrath. Oil, though it is soft, yet burns furiously, and love on fire is hell. Fiercer than a lion on his prey is love when once it grows angry for holiness’ sake and truth’s sake. In that day those who know His love shall admire Him beyond measure, but those who know His wrath shall equally feel that “He is great.” Though it is their hell to feel it, yet they shall know that there is none as great as He, when He shall take the iron rod, and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Their cries of remorse and despair, as they rise up to the throne of His awful majesty, shall proclaim to an awe-struck universe that Jesus is great. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

He shall be great, finally, *when He shall gather all His elect about Him*—when all the souls redeemed by blood shall assemble within His palace gate to worship Him. Oh, what a sight it will be when He is seen as the center, while, far away from north, south, east, and west, a blazing host of shining ones, all glorious in His glory, shall in ever-widening circles surround His person and His throne, all bowing down before the Son of God and crying, “Hallelujah!” as they adore Him! Not one will doubt Him there, nor oppose Him there. Oh, what a sight it shall be when everyone shall praise Him to the uttermost, when from every heart shall leap up reverent love, when every tongue shall sound forth His honors, when there shall be no division, no discord, no jarring notes, but countless armies shall as one man adore the Lord whom they love! Again they say, “Hallelujah!” and the incense of their adoration goes up forever and ever. Oh, for that grandest of cries, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigns, and His Son is exalted to sit with Him upon the throne of His glory forever and ever.” Truly, He shall be great.

Oh, make Him great tonight, poor sinner, by trusting Him! Make Him great tonight, dear child of God, by longing for Him. Make Him great as you come to the table by hungering after Him. Count it a great privilege to eat and drink with Him with overflowing delight. Come with a great hunger and a great thirst after Him, and take Him into your very self, and say, “He is my bread, He is my drink, He is my life, He is my All.” All the while let your spirit live by adoring, and let every pulse of your body beat to His honor. Tune your hand, your heart, your tongue to this one song, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! Unto Him that loved us and died for us, and rose again, be glory forever and ever!”—

*“To the Lamb that was slain all honor be paid,
Let crowns without number encircle His head:
Let blessing, and glory, and riches, and might,
Be ascribed evermore by angels of light.”*

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 1:5-80.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—387, 414.**

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