

**A SHORT MEDITATION ON
THE MORAL GLORY OF
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**

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A short meditation on the moral glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by J. G. B.

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SHORT MEDITATION
OR
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OF
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY
J. G. B.

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MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

“And when any will offer a meat-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon; and he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord.”—
LEVIT. ii. 1, 2.

INTRODUCTION.

It is the moral glory, or, as we speak, the character of the Lord Jesus, on which I meditate in these pages. All went up to God as a sacrifice of sweet savour. Every expression of himself in every measure, however small, and in whatever relationship it was rendered, was incense. In his person (but surely there only) *man* was reconciled to God. In him God recovered his complacency in man, and that too with unspeakable gain; for in Jesus man is more to God than he would have been in an eternity of Adam innocency.

But in this meditation on the moral glory of the

Lord Jesus, it is most surely but a small part of that wondrous subject I affect to have reached. I may give occasion to fruitful thoughts in the souls of others, and that will be good.

The Lord's *person* I assume—God and man in one Christ. His *work* I also assume; that suffering service, or blood-shedding, accomplished on the Cross, whereby reconciliation is perfected, and wherein it is preached for the acceptance and joy of faith.

The glories of the Lord Jesus are threefold—personal, official, and moral. His personal glory he veiled, save where faith discovered it, or an occasion demanded it. His official glory he veiled likewise: he did not walk through the land as either the Divine Son from the bosom of the Father, or as the authoritative Son of David. Such glories were commonly hid, as he passed on in the circumstances of life day by day. But his moral glory could not be hid: he could not be less than perfect in every thing—it belonged to him, it was himself. From its intense excellency, it was too bright for the eye of man; and man was under constant exposure and rebuke from it. But there it shone, whether man could bear it or not. It now illuminates every page of the four evangelists, as it once did every path which the Lord himself trod on this earth of ours.

It has been said of the Lord—"His humanity was perfectly natural in its development." This is very beautiful and true. Luke ii. 52 would verify this.

There was nothing of unnatural progress in him: all was orderly increase. His wisdom kept pace with his stature, or age. He was the child first, and then the man. By and by, as a man (God's man in the world), he will testify of the world that its works are evil, and be hated by it; but as a child (a child after God's heart, as I may say), he will be subject to his parents, and under the law, and as one perfect: in such conditions he grew in favour with God and man.

But though there was *progress* in him, as we thus see, there was no cloud, or perversion, or mistake: in this he distinguishes himself from all. His mother pondered things in her heart; but cloud and indistinctness, nay, darkness itself, beset her mind, and the Lord had to say to her, "How is it that ye sought me?" But with him progress was but one form of moral beauty—his growth was orderly and seasonable; and, I may add, that as "his humanity was perfectly natural in its development," so was his character entirely human in its expressions: all that displayed it was common to man, as I may say.

He was the tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season (Ps. i.); and all things are only beautiful in their season. The moral glory of "the child Jesus" shines in its season and generation; and when he became a man, the same glory only gets other seasonable expressions. He knew when to own the claims of his mother, when she made them; when to resist them, though she

made them; when to recognize them unsought. (Luke ii. 51, viii. 21; John xix. 27.) And, as we afterwards track him, it is the same. He knew Gethsemane in season, or according to its character; and the Holy Mount in its season, winter and summer, to his spirit. He knew the well of Sychar, and the road which led him to Jerusalem for the last time. He trod each path, or filled each spot, in that mind that was according to the character it bore under God's eye. And so on occasions which called for still more energy. If it be the defilement of his Father's house, he will let zeal consume him; if it be his own wrong at the hand of some Samaritan villagers, he will suffer it, and pass on.

And all was perfect in its *combinations*, as well as in its *season*. He wept as he was reaching the grave of Lazarus, though he knew that he carried life for the dead. He who had just said, "I am the resurrection and the life," wept. Divine power would leave human sympathies free to take their full course.

And it is assemblage, or combination of virtues, which forms moral glory. He knew, as the apostle speaks, "how to abound, and how to be abased;" how to use moments of prosperity, so to call them, and also times of depression. For, in his passage through life, he was introduced to each of these.

Thus, he was introduced, for a moment, to his glory; and a very bright moment it was. I allude to the transfiguration. He was high in his honours there. As the Sun, the source of all brightness, there

he shone; and such eminent ones as Moses and Elias were there, taking of his glory from him, and in it shining with him. But as he descended the hill, he charged those who had been with him, "the eye-witnesses of his majesty," not to speak of it. And when the people, on his reaching the foot of the hill, ran to salute him (Mark ix. 15)—his person still reflecting, I believe, though faintly, the glory which it had lately borne—he does not linger among them to receive their homage, but at once addresses himself to his common service; for he knew "how to abound." He was not exalted by his prosperity. He sought not a place among men, but emptied himself, made himself of no reputation, quickly veiled the glory that he might be the servant; the *girded*, not the *arrayed* One.

And it was thus with him a second time, after he had become the risen Jesus, as we may see in John xx. He is there in the midst of his disciples, in such a glorious character as man had never borne or witnessed, and never could. He is there as the conqueror of death, and the spoiler of the grave. But he is not there—though in such glories—to receive the congratulations of his people, as we speak, and as one naturally would, who was finding himself returned to the bosom of friends and kinsfolk, after toil, and danger, and victory. Not that he was indifferent to sympathy: he sought it in season, and felt the want of it when he did not get it. But he is now, risen from the dead, in the midst of his

disciples, rather as a visitor for a day, than as in a triumph. He is rather teaching them *their* interest, and not displaying *his own*, in the great things which had just been accomplished.

This was using a victory indeed, as Abraham knew how to use his victory over the confederate kings—a harder thing, as some have said, than to gain it. This, again, was knowing “how to abound,” how “to be full.”

But he knew “how to be abased” also. Look at him with the Samaritan villagers in Luke ix. At the outset of that action, in the sense of his personal glory, he anticipates his being “raised up;”* and in the common, well known style of one who would have it known that a person of distinction was coming that way, he sends messengers before his face. But the unbelief of the Samaritans changes the scene. They would not receive him. They refused to cast up a highway for the feet of this glorious One, but forced him to find out for himself the best path he could, as the *rejected* One. But he accepts this place at once, without a murmur in his heart. He becomes again (borrowing the word from Matt. ii.) the Nazarene, seeing he was refused as the Bethlehemite, and he fills this new character on this side of the Samaritan village, as perfectly as he had filled the other character on the opposite side of it.

Thus he knew “how to be abased,” and just so do

* As he actually was afterwards (see Mark xvi. 19; 1 Tim iii. 16; the Greek word is the same).